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Lady Panthers make it down to state



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Veterans honored at Fossil Ridge Public Library

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Dec. 7 marked the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, when the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service attacked the naval base in Hawaii, prompting the United States to enter into WWII.

For nearly three decades, the Fossil Ridge Public Library has held a special service to remember WWII veterans on the anniversary of the attack.

This year, that service was broadened to include as many local veterans as could attend, as a way to thank them for their service.

Katelynn Clark is the new adult and teen librarian at Fossil Ridge. Clark organized this year's veteran's reception. The 28th annual event hosted around 75 local veterans. Each had a meal and got to socialize with one another, as well as received gift bags and entertainment from the Reed-Custer High School bands.

"When I found out that the library held a

veterans reception, it is very dear to me," Clark said, adding that she has close family members who are also veterans.

"So, I realized that although it started as a WWII vet reception to honor those who served in WWII, but I realized that being with the veterans and working with them, unfortunately they are passing away," she continued. "So, at that point we opened it up to WWII through current service members."

Clark said she started planning this year's event back in August by reaching out to local businesses and community groups for assistance. Donations of food and supplies came in from Exelon, as well as Operation Firm Handshake and Freedom Grill among others.

At the event, the library also provided long stem roses for widows and spouses of veterans.

"I've been beating the pavement since I started," Clark said about the planning for this year's event. "Next year and into the future we

SEE VETERANS, PAGE 2



Photo by Marney Simon

LOCAL VETERANS AND THEIR spouses were treated to a luncheon at the Fossil Ridge Public Library on Dec. 7, the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The veterans were also treated to music performed by members of the Reed-Custer High School bands.

Braidwood lights up the holidays



Photo by Marney Simon

MEMBERS OF THE RCMS seventh grade basketball team were the honorary tree lighters for this year's Holiday Parade in Braidwood, which rolled down Main Street on Saturday, Dec. 4. The seventh grade girls made it to the IESA state tournament for the first time in school history. More parade photos can be found on page 3.

Health Dept. urges care as COVID cases increase in Will County

STAFF REPORT

The Will County Health Department is urging the public to take health precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as cases continue to rise locally.

As of Monday, the Illinois Department of Public Health is reporting that ICU bed capacity in Region 7—Will and Kankakee counties—has fallen to just 7% available beds, as local hospitals have reported a combined total of 27 days of patient increases in the last 30 days.

As of Dec. 4, the test positivity seven day rolling average in Will County is 8.6%, up from 3.4% just one month prior.

At Silver Cross Hospital in New Lenox, as of Dec. 7, there were 69 patients currently hospitalized with COVID-19. Of those, 13 are in the ICU, and 11 are on a ventilator.

At local school districts, where increases of positive cases were seen after the Thanksgiving holiday, numbers were again on the rise at the start of this week.

This week's cases in Wilmington School District 209-U are at 25, which includes 20 students and five staff members. Fifty-four students are also in quarantine for close contact exposure.

In the Reed-Custer School District, as of Dec. 3 there were 45 new cases of COVID-19, including 18 elementary students, two middle school students, 14 high school students, and 11 staff members.

Both Wilmington and Reed-Custer school districts have asked parents and students to self-certify daily by checking each student for symptoms each morning prior

SEE COVID, PAGE 2

Reed-Custer finances remain strong in FY21

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The Reed-Custer School District has once again received a strong financial audit.

In November, the members of the Reed-Custer Board of Education reviewed the financial statements and annual audit for the 2021 fiscal year (FY21), which ended on June 30.

The audit was completed by Baker Tilly.

The analysis provides an overview of all of the district's financial activities for FY21.

In total, the district's net position increased by \$4.4 million in FY21, an increase of 6% over the previous fiscal year.

The analysis of the audit noted that while Reed-Custer has seen a decrease in enroll-

ment in recent years, that has also allowed for the reduction in staff though natural attrition, for example, not needing to replace staff who have retired.

However, some staffing needs in health, wellness, and leaning loss have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff needs added due to the pandemic are expected to be reviewed on an annual basis.

The district operates with six different governmental funds—the general fund, operations and maintenance,

SEE AUDIT, PAGE 2



They served, they're honored

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

Traveling 1,500 miles in 19 hours would tire even the spryest of souls, but for 81-year-old Earl "Red" Folkestad, of Braidwood, he said he'd do it again in a heartbeat.

He was among seven area war veterans aboard an Honor Flight Chicago where they were whisked away to Washington, D.C. to visit the nation's war memorials.

Honor Flight Chicago's mission is "to honor, thank and inspire by building awareness and appreciation of the debt of gratitude America owes its vet-

erans for their service and sacrifice for the nation."

"It's was just an amazing trip and the most organized thing I've ever been involved with," said the Korean War veteran. "They really made us feel honored from the minute we arrived at the airport to the time we got back home."

Folkestad was with Bill Zimmer of Braidwood, Leon Friddle and Jerry Siebersma of Coal City, Fred Koch of Diamond, Fred "Doc" Moffatt of Joliet and Ray Genis from Bourbonnais.

They departed by limou-

SEE FLIGHT, PAGE 2



EARL 'RED' FOLKESTAD (left) of Braidwood stands next to a drill team member while in Washington, D.C.

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Veterans

hope we can open it up on a Sunday, because a lot more people will have the opportunity to come."

The event also featured a raffle to help raise funds for future veterans programs at the library. Prizes included an antique gun and a hunting trip.

"We're also raising money through the Friends of the Library," Clark added. "Ultimately, all the money that's raised today goes back for next year's veterans reception. So, every penny from today goes directly into that fund."

While the library offers a wide array of services for everyone in the district, Clark hopes veteran-related programming can begin to grow.

"When you're in libraries, you always want to put your mark on the one thing that you're known for. I want to put Fossil Ridge on the map, and I want this veterans reception to be the talk of the town," Clark said.

Clark said she's already starting to prepare for next year's reception, hoping to involve more veterans groups.

"These are things that are in our communities that veterans are associated with," she said.

The library also offers help and information for veterans, everything from information on how to transition from active duty to civilian



Photo by Marney Simon

SOME GENEROUS DONORS helped to make the annual veterans reception at Fossil Ridge Public Library a success this year. Pictured at the reception are (from left) Max Valdez of Operation Firm Handshake, Adult and Teen Services Librarian Katelynn Clark, and JR Miller of Freedom Grill.

life, to job search assistance.

The library also has several programs that reach out to the local community, for both kids and adults.

Clark noted that the library's monthly "bagels and books" program has become a

great way for locals, not just veterans, to explore the library while socializing.

"It's well attended. It was meant to talk about books and it just became a social hour," she said. "People come and eat donuts and talk about

their lives and it's just a good way to get out of the house and get away from everyday mundane life."

Information on library services can be found on the Fossil Ridge Public Library website, www.fossilridge.org.

Flight

sine for Midway Airport at 2 a.m. They would be among 116 veterans to board a chartered flight to Washington, D.C.

While they were swiftly being checked-in they repeatedly heard two words - "Thank you". Folkestad said that became the theme throughout the day.

"It's run by some wonderful volunteers who really knew what they were doing. When we got to D.C. up comes one of them with a wheelchair and told me to get in. I told him, 'I don't need a wheelchair.' And he explained that it would be faster to get me checked in. They hustled us around to dif-

ferent tables for our passes and IDs and in about 10 minutes we were already getting on the buses. It was faster than any military operation I've ever seen."

Honor Flight Chicago has flown 95 flights filled with World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War-era veterans to Washington, D.C., since 2008. While none were taken during 2020 due to the pandemic, this year four flights were booked with veterans fully vaccinated. The interest is so strong there is a waiting list. The trips are provided at no cost to the veterans.

They visited the WWII, Korean War and Vietnam War memorials. They watched the changing of the guard and drill team perform at the Air Force memorial which he said



DEPARTING BY LIMO for the airport and Honor Flight Chicago are (from left) Ray Genis of Bourbonnais, Bill Zimmer of Braidwood, Earl "Red" Folkestad of Braidwood, Fred "Doc" Moffatt of Joliet, Leon Friddle of Coal City and Jerry Siebersma of Coal City. Missing from photo is Fred Koch of Diamond.

was all precision.

They were impressed with the war collection at the Smithsonian Museum, especially the World War II bomber, a Blue Angels fighter and a Vietnam helicopter.

While visiting the Vietnam Memorial Folkestad was asked if he knew of any local soldiers killed in action. He recalled the name Michael "Mickey" Finn of South Wilmington who served in the Army. Next thing he knew they pulled out a book and looked up his location on the wall.

"We were standing right next to his name and wouldn't have known it. The volunteer

reached over with a piece of paper and got an etching of his name and handed it to me. You can't help but get a little emotional because it really brought it home that I was one of the lucky ones in the war and it humbles you to think others weren't so lucky."

By 8:30 p.m. Red and the others were back in Illinois being told one last "thank you" from the volunteers.

"I highly recommend Honor Flight Chicago for war veterans. It's an incredible organization that does its mission well. We all felt really honored."

Mission accomplished.



STANDING AT THE reflecting pool with the Washington Monument in the background are war veterans Jerry Siebersma, Earl "Red" Folkestad, Leon Friddle and Fred Koch.

Covid

to coming to school.

Symptoms that are potentially related to coronavirus infection include elevated temperature (100.4 or above), cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea and/or vomiting, diarrhea, or any other COVID-19 symptoms as identified by the CDC or IDPH.

The youth vaccination rate in Will County is 63% fully vaccinated, and 70% having received at least one dose, according to IDPH.

Since March of 2020, the total number of positive cases in zip code 60481, including Wilmington, Symerton, and Shadow Lakes, is 1,761. In the Braidwood 60408 zip code, the total number of cases throughout the pandemic is now at 923.

The increases following the post-Thanksgiving holiday also come as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issues warning of the new Omicron variant.

Omicron was first identified in November, and the first confirmed case in the United States was discovered in San Francisco, a traveler who had returned from South Africa on Nov. 22. That individual reported mild symptoms.

Omicron was declared a "variant of concern" by the CDC on Nov. 30.

The CDC reported it has been actively monitoring and preparing for this

variant, and will continue to work diligently with other U.S. and global public health and industry partners to learn more. Despite the detection of Omicron, Delta remains the predominant strain in the United States.

The recent emergence of the Omicron variant further emphasizes the importance of vaccination, boosters, and general prevention strategies needed to protect against COVID-19, the CDC noted. The CDC recommends that everyone 5 and older should get vaccinated, and boosters are recommended for everyone 18 years and older.

A second confirmed Omicron variant case was discovered in an individual from Minnesota, who became symptomatic on Nov. 22 and tested positive on Nov. 24. That person, who had traveled to New York City and attended the Anime NYC 2021 convention at the Javits Center from Nov. 19-21, 2021, has since recovered.

"CDC has been actively monitoring and preparing for this variant," said CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky. "...CDC has expanded its capacity for genomic sequencing over the past nine months and we have more tools to fight the variant than we had at this time last year from vaccines to boosters to the prevention strategies that we know work including masking in indoor public settings, washing your hands frequently and physical distancing. These methods work to prevent the spread of COVID-19, no matter the genetic sequence."

Audit

transportation, IMRF/Social Security, deb service, and capital projects.

In FY21, the district saw total revenues of \$32.9 million. That includes \$24.8 million from property taxes. \$6.1 million in state aid, and \$1.3 million in federal aid.

Total expenditures in FY21 were \$34.7 million, which included \$8.3 million in regular instruction costs. \$1.6 million in special programs, \$4.4 million in state retirement contributions, \$877,413 for instructional staff, and \$729,429 in operations and maintenance.

The combined total fund balances at the conclusion of FY21 was \$31.6 million.

The report notes that the district continues "to efficiently monitor expenses and properly budget revenues in all funds."

District wide, Reed-Custer receives 69% of its revenues from taxes, 27% from operating grants and contributions, 3% from evidence based funding, and 1% from charges for services.

Of its expenses, roughly 68% are for instruction costs, 11% for administration and business, and 10% for operations and maintenance.

The district's assets total \$98 million, with liabilities of \$15.6 million, for a total net position at the end of FY21 of \$82.3 million.

The district's audit received a 4.0 in all categories on the state's financial scorecard.

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Community blood drive set at Morris Hospital

In response to the ongoing severe blood supply shortage, Morris Hospital is hosting a blood drive in cooperation with Versiti Blood Center on Wednesday, Dec. 15, from 12-5 p.m. in Conference Rooms 2 and 3 on the lower level of Morris Hospital, 150 W. High St. in Morris.

Those who donate will be helping replenish the local blood supply as Versiti supplies blood products for Morris Hospital. All blood types are needed, with O positive and O negative most in demand.

Blood donors must be age 17 or older, weigh at least 110 pounds, be in good health and free from cold or flu symptoms on the day of donation. In Illinois, 16-year-olds may donate with written approval from a parent or guardian. Donors will be required to wear a mask while inside Morris Hospital.

The entire process for donating blood takes about one hour, including registration, a brief medical screening, blood collection and refreshments. Donors should bring a photo ID with proof of age. Those planning to donate should eat a healthy meal and drink plenty of water before donating.

Appointments are recommended by calling Morris Hospital at 815-705-7386. Walk-ins are welcome.

Grundy Co. records its first snowfall

STAFF REPORT

The first flakes of snow fell on Grundy County last month with the first measurable accumulation of .10 inches in a single day.

The first snowfall of the season was in the monthly summary prepared by the Grundy County Emergency Management Agency's [GCEMA] Weather Data Division. GCEMA provides an overview of the monthly weather including temperature, precipitation amounts and peak wind gusts—40 mph on Nov. 21.

In November temperatures ranged from a high of 67 degrees on Nov. 7, to a low of 17 degrees on Nov. 26. There were 22 days when the recorded temperature failed to surpass 32 degrees.

There were seven days with measurable precipita-

tion although rainfall for the month was under one inch—.71 inches— bringing the total precipitation for the year to 35.23 inches.

The monthly report is based on weather data collected at the Grundy County Administration Center in Morris.



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IDEAS

Who was the baddest of the bad in Braidwood?

It is no secret that Braidwood was a rough and ready town back in the day. Murders, assaults, fist fights, there was no lack of it. But I thought perhaps I am giving Braidwood a bad rap. There were plenty of other mining towns around, surely those villages would be similar to Braidwood. So I decided my criteria would be murder and lynchings, and made a list of towns nearby. The results are as follows.



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

I started my search in Coal City. Surely this mining town would be Braidwood's equal. But I was disappointed. The worst I could come up with was a scam involving a bunch of stolen hides. We read in April of 1880 in the Kankakee Gazette; "A skin game" - A few days ago St. Germain, of this

city, bought twelve beef hides of some men from Coal City, Grundy County. The property was shortly afterward claimed by the alleged owner, who got out a warrant for three suspected men from Coal City, and had them arrested and brought to Kankakee to answer the charge of grand larceny. A lot of witnesses to the number of about twenty came over and the trial before Durfee resulted in the discharge of the three men and the arrest and commitment of Michael Hanley, a young man who came over with the witnesses and who was proven to be the person who sold the hides to St. Germain."

I turned next to Diamond, another Grundy County town. In this case I needed to go all the way to March 10, 1905 to

find just one murder. "In a saloon quarrel at Diamond in Grundy County Wednesday night, Fred Vianco shot and killed Anton Quirie and wounded Giacinto Crevolo. Vianco was captured Thursday morning just over the line in Will County. The crime was one of the most cold-blooded in the history of Grundy County. Vianco committed the murder seemingly without provocation and shot Crevolo simply because he remonstrated with him."

Braceville was next on my list. Here I found no lynching's, and only one murder. In September 22, 1882 - Last Friday was payday in Braceville. A Frenchman, among others, was paid off, receiving his own wages and that of his partner, who worked with him in the coal mine. He visited a saloon on Friday evening, and on Saturday morning his lifeless body was found, considerably bruised, near the railroad track. While it

is possible that he was killed by the cars, it is more than probable that the man was murdered and robbed, as his pockets were only found to contain two five cent pieces, out of a considerable amount of money which he is known to have had on the night previous."

Further south I looked at Essex, but found no murders at all, just one measly robbery. From December 4, 1885, "A daring robbery occurred last night at the store of D. M. White, in Essex. The story is that at about midnight three masked men broke into the store and bound MR. W. with cords; that they then took about \$190 from the safe, and also a large quantity of goods. They then took White's team and buggy and escaped, being still at large."

I know! Surely Godley would out distance Braidwood. But again, I was disappointed. The crime in this town involved mainly liquor licens-

es. We read in October 6, 1883 in the Joliet Weekly Press, "Mr. Glasser, an Israelite, who was running a saloon in the town of Godley without a license, was sent by Judge Strips, in the Circuit Court, Wednesday, to jail ten days each on four counts."

And from June 11, 1886 Wilmington Advocate, "Five men and women from Godley were this week each fined \$180 and sentenced to thirty days in jail for unlawfully selling liquor. All are to stand committed until the fines and costs are paid." I guess the folks of Godley worked on the "make love not war" principle.

Lastly, I tried Wilmington, and did find a promising candidate. Certainly, before Braidwood was a light in her founder's eyes, Wilmington had a killing. From August 1, 1854 Joliet Signal; "Homicide at Wilmington - A man named Welch was killed at Wilmington, in this county, on

the 28th, by Joseph Lyons, of that place. The circumstances as related to us, are as follows: An officer had arrested a friend of Welch for an assault, and Welch, being under the influence of liquor, made an attempt to rescue him from the hands of the officer when Lyons was called upon to interfere, which he did by striking Welch on the head with a spear, killing him instantly. It seems to us, from this version of the matter, that this cannot be classed justifiable homicide and that Lyons, who we understand has fled, should be pursued and brought to justice for the awful deed."

And, although killing someone with a spear is sort of kinky, Wilmington lets us down by not having any more murders in the century that I can find.

So I guess that's it. Yes Braidwood, you were the baddest of the bad.

Santa pays a visit!

Good turnout for this year's Holiday Parade in Braidwood



Photos by Marney Simon

DESPITE THE CHILLY WEATHER, folks lined up along main Street on Dec. 4 to watch this year's annual Holiday Parade in Braidwood.



ON THE CASE! Braidwood Police Chief Todd Lyons and Chase from PAW Patrol were ready to hand out treats to kids at the head of this year's Holiday Parade in Braidwood on Dec. 4.



BRAIDWOOD POLICE TOOK the Grinch into custody during the parade on Dec. 4, to keep the green guy from tampering with anyone's Christmas spirit.



AS IS TRADITION, THE parade concluded with Santa himself riding atop a Braidwood Fire Department engine, waving to kids young and old. The night finished at the fire house with hot cocoa, treats, and pictures with Santa.



Garrelts in the 'Spotlight' for December

The Reed-Custer High School Senior Spotlight winner for the month of December is Dylan Garrelts.

Dylan is the son of Jason and Courtney Garrelts. During his high school career, Dylan was involved in Football, Basketball, Baseball, and SSA. He was also an ACE Award winner, on the Homecoming Senior Court, on the Honor and High Honor Roll, Captain of the Football Team, and Academic All-Conference in Football, Basketball, and Baseball.

His future plans are to attend Olivet Nazarene University, play baseball, and study Athletic Training.

Here are a few thoughts from Dylan's teachers. Mr. Johnston believes that Dylan is "a true team player. He always puts the team before any individual accomplishment. He is always able to bounce back no matter how tough things get."

Mrs. Arseneau says that "it has been so much fun getting to know Dylan over the last four years! I can still remember him being a little freshman in my Foods class. Now he is a master in our F.A.C.S classrooms! Dylan can live up any classroom, even if it's first hour and everyone is sleepy, or it is a class of 10 students. However, he knows when it is time to get to work and focus. He has definitely had some curve balls and struggles thrown his way throughout high school, but he always manages to get through it. My favorite memories are just watching him interact with the preschool children. He is patient and kind, and they adore him! He is a won-

derful example of a student athlete for our school and community, and Reed-Custer has been so lucky to claim him as our own!"

Mrs. Leveille remembers that she "had Dylan in her 7th period Biology class. He was always polite, positive and friendly with me and with the other students. His genuine caring for others is a great quality and adds to his strong character. He is a strong leader, and I foresee nothing but success in his future."

Mrs. Redwitz is thankful that Dylan is "a student that is always smiling. He is kind and outgoing and cares about others. He is easy to talk to and always makes us laugh."

Mrs. Lee believes that Dylan is "a very hardworking, kind person. He always has a smile on his face and tries his best at everything he does!"

Mr. Klein thinks that Dylan is "a great student athlete. Although he has experienced setbacks his entire high school athletics career, he has always overcome them. His positive attitude and leadership are two of his best qualities. Dylan is also always willing to put other people ahead of himself. His dedication to becoming the best he can possibly be does not go unnoticed either. There is no doubt Dylan will overcome this latest setback, just like he's done so many times before, and be better for it on the other side."

Mrs. Tyree says that Dylan is "a respectful person and a breath of fresh air to be around. He is kind, funny and gives a 100% to everything he does. He will succeed in whatever he sets his mind to."

Mrs. Sukley believes that Dylan is "a GREAT KID! He's polite, respectable and goal oriented. Dylan is willing to help others in need and I have seen this firsthand with this year's underclassmen as he was willing to help freshman football players get acquainted with high school at the start of the school year. Dylan always has a smile on his face and is a joy to have in class. He can crack a joke and be goofy but knows when it's time to go to work. He is a great role model for his peers and is a kid who definitely deserves this honor!"

Mr. Carrescia says that Dylan is "a joy to have in class. He always has something light-hearted to say that just lifts people up and puts them in a good mood."

As a final thought, Dylan's advice to younger students is, "Participate in as many things as you can while you are because you never know what might happen tomorrow."

On behalf of the teachers and staff at RCHS, congratulations Dylan Garrelts as the December winner of the Senior Spotlight.

Braidwood Fire Protection District posts audit report

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF AUDIT REPORT FOR THE BRAIDWOOD FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

The Board of Trustees of the Braidwood Fire Protection District, Will County, Illinois, hereby provides public notice that an audit of its funds for the fiscal year beginning on June 1, 2020 and ending on May 31, 2021 was prepared by our auditor, Brian Zabel & Associates, 1040 W. Route 6, Morris, IL 60450.

The fiscal year 2020-2021 audit has been filed with the County Clerk of Will County in accordance with 30 ILCS 15/0.01 et seq. The entire audit report and the annual statement of receipts and disbursements are available for public inspection at the Fire District Fire Station #1 located at 275 W. Main Street, Braidwood, IL from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

/s/ Michael Dillon
Secretary, Board of Trustees
Braidwood Fire Protection District
Published in the Braidwood Journal
on Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021.

Lions to collect used Christmas lights

The Braidwood Lions Club will be collecting used/non-working strands of Christmas lights.

Collection bins will be located inside Whitmore Ace Hardware in Braidwood and Coal City until January 31st. The strands of lights will be recycled by the Braidwood Lions with proceeds to benefit the club's sight & sound services provided to the visually and hearing impaired residing in the Braidwood, Godley and Shadow Lakes communities.

A collection bin will also be available during the club's annual Christmas Tree Sale fundraiser hours of operations. For more information please call (815)791-8093 or visit www.braidwoodlionsclub.org.

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WILMINGTON—Kuzma Care Cottage in Wilmington feeds hundreds of families in need each year. This time of year can be especially difficult for many. Several people have come forward anonymously to match your dollar donations, up to \$3,000. Every dollar counts. Let's all help our neighbors. Please drop off or mail your donations to Kuzma Care Cottage, 635 S. Main Street, Wilmington, IL 60481. Not only are your donations matched, but every dollar donated buys \$8 worth of food through the Northern Illinois Food Bank. We can all make a difference together. No donation is too small!

With gratitude

BRAIDWOOD—I was speechless on Friday when I went to Berkot's and the man in behind me stepped up when it came time for me to pay for my groceries and swiped his credit card before I did mine. He smiled and said "Merry Christmas" and I just stood there not knowing what to say. I felt like a fool for not showing more gratitude but I want you to know that you made a little old lady realize there are still good people in this world. I intend to pay it forward some day, somewhere, somehow, and may God bless you young man for the goodness you have spread.

Christmas surprise

Kudos to the three elves who delivered Christmas goodies to the shut-ins and seniors in their Santa Mobile. It was a nice Christmas surprise and I believe the three elves enjoyed making people happy. Jean

Laptop from hell

SHADOW LAKES—I'm sure all of you remember the Russia collusion between Trump and Putin. Well none of it turned out to be factual, it was false. But now the laptop from hell. I don't hear anybody, especially all the people that have articles in every week about the Russia collusion with Trump. People like the Dahlkes, the Weideners they've been silent on this. I would just like to know why. Maybe they could answer me in the sound-off column. Dan Hill

All for themselves

MORRIS—There is a phrase that says the hardest part of doing nothing is knowing when you're through. But our elected individuals in this country have decided to do nothing to aid the American citizens except to dictate rules and regulations that they do not obey. It is not hard for them to do nothing for the American citizens because they live on money they leach from taxpayers which the public servants only serve themselves, foreign countries and criminals. The people that were elected to help us should be prevented from having any finances until they start to obey their oath to the U.S.A. and the American citizens. But that won't happen because one crook will always help another crook while the rest of us suffer. Politicians make new laws so they can legally steal tax payers funds for their wallets.

Faces please

WILMINGTON—When pictures are taken of students winning an award could they be allowed to remove their masks for one second while the photo was taken? I don't think they would die of Covid because of it. I am a grandmother who would like to keep the photo. Not one of a masked bandit.

Pothole patrol

GODLEY—Will anyone lift up their voice to ask that the pandemic money for Godley/Grundy County be used in part to fill in the holes on Grundy County side of County Line Rd. through Godley? Maybe then the Will County side will be looked at!

Wise up

WILMINGTON—Because of the stupidity of Republicans, it's possible that we will never be rid of Covid. Why? Because surveys say 24% of Republicans intend to never get vaccinated. These stubborn Republicans comprise about 12% of the population as a whole which means that the best we can hope for is 88% of the population vaccinated. Medical experts believe that getting back to normal would require 95% vaccinated. We've already seen good results by the vaccination increases under President

Biden which decreased the death toll to 1,000 daily Covid deaths from 4,000 daily Covid deaths under former President Trump. So wise up. Get your shot. Hopefully we can get back to normal. A.D.

We are good people

SHADOW LAKES—I really believe most Americans are good decent people that believe in the golden rule. When you watch the news and see all the racial divide and hate remember it's the media and politicians. The politicians want a divided country to pit us against each other and the media only cares about ratings. We are Americans, we are good people. Think for yourself. Eddie

It's good to know

COAL CITY—Remember the constant chaos from the White House for four long years? Remember the childish tweets? Remember the big tax cut for the wealthy while the middle class was left out in the cold? We were the laughing stock of the world. Today government does its job by trying to help everyone, especially the middle class. President Biden already created 6 million jobs which is more than the last three Republican presidents combined and the current drop in unemployment is the fastest on record. Inflation is a problem which is worldwide due to the whip-saw effects of the pandemic but it's good to know our president is quietly working hard to curb inflation instead of wasting time blaming everyone else. Kurt K.

It makes sense

SHADOW LAKES—I don't know if it's true but I hear Biden is playing Santa Claus on the weekends in DC. It makes sense he gets to do two of his favorite things, promising free stuff and having children on his lap. Eddie

Big government

WILMINGTON—Republicans are against abortion. To prevent unwanted pregnancy you'd think they'd be in favor of birth control. But no. To prevent unwanted pregnancy you'd think they'd be in favor of sex education. But no. To provide for the care of children, you'd think they'd be in favor of parental leave, expanded medical benefits and tax credits. But no and no and no. Republicans may be against abortion but they're not pro-life. Instead, Republicans are in favor of big government intruding in people's lives. Furthermore, it's big government penalizing women without likewise penalizing men. SL

War on drugs

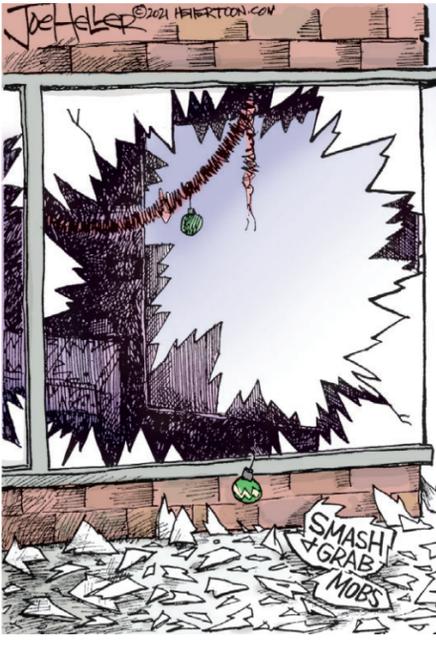
SHADOW LAKES—We sure have come a long way with this problem after 50 years. I think it is just great what the left is doing for us on this problem. I am sure what you have seen coming to New York. Isn't it wonderful, I can go to one of the centers, where it is nice and clean and sterile and shoot up with my illegal drugs. Maybe these people will be killing themselves or others. It is a nice lesson for the left, to teach our youth that illegal drugs are OK. Maybe one of these centers will be coming to your city soon? Always, Margot Lane

Good riddance

WILMINGTON—Have you heard the recent talk about Texas seceding from the nation? Great idea. Every time one of Texas' political good old boys like Congressman Gohmert makes a public statement, he embarrasses himself. When the people of Texas had no power during a snowstorm last year, Senator Ted Cruz took off for a vacation in Cancun instead of pitching in and helping at a soup kitchen. With its extreme right-wing Governor Abbot, Texas brings shame to our country. I say to Texas, don't let the door hit you on the way out. KL

Here's hoping

WILMINGTON—While it's good to see some area residents are aware and looking at the big picture, Dan Hill is dominating this column with his far right wing blathering his opinion, as if he spoke for Wilmington. If there was just 1 week his name wasn't present, some of us would be gloriously happy. Some of us actually do our research and share truth in this column. All Dan has is wild conspiracy theories. Give us



something that matters for a change and let Dan cease think out is his diary.

It's about transparency

BRAIDWOOD—During the public comment part of the Nov. 23 Braidwood City Council meeting a citizen who said he was relatively new here thanked the council for video recording the meetings and posting them online. The mayor, who never has anything to say and always defers to the administrator, as usual said nothing. But the administrator, who is always quick to loudly toot his own horn, whether deserved or not, also remained silent on the topic. Why? Because the city does not video record the meetings; a private individual does and he posts them online as his time permits. Mr. Altiery should have said that. And he should have added the fact that at one time the city did video record the meetings and post them. But this administration quickly put a stop to it. Video recording the meetings only facilitates transparency, which terrifies this administration. The same citizen asked to have the agenda put out several days before each meeting, a reasonable request considering that in the past it hasn't been posted until a few hours before the meeting. But that would also facilitate transparency. Mr. Altiery's solution? He said "We can always e-mail it to you." Really? We're expected to make individual requests to find out what the "Council clique" is up to? And then Mr. Altiery chastises those who file FOIA requests. How else is a person to get proper information? As an example, consider Commissioner Money's report at the same meeting. There were mistakes in payroll and new figures had to be approved. What mistakes? Whose mistakes? What departments? How much? Pennies or dollars? He didn't elaborate one bit. That would be too transparent. And don't expect any details to be released by the administration. As was recently submitted to Sound-off by another writer regarding the city's website, "information is not updated, city council meeting minutes have not been posted since May 25." It seems that either something very wrong is going on at city hall and must be hidden from the public or the administrator and the new city clerk are just too busy with their other full time day jobs to properly oversee city government. Then again, it could be both.

Spiking gas prices

MORRIS—President Biden has ordered the release of 50 million barrels of oil from U.S. Petroleum Reserve. Since its establishment in the 1970's only three presidents directed the sale of oil from the reserve. It's been the Democrats' policy and goal for over a decade to spike fossil fuel prices to depress the use and save the planet. Democrats have done all they could too discourage production and these problems are going to get worse. President Biden has signed slew of executive orders from day one of his presidency to halt new drilling. Gas in New York is \$5.29 now. No change in prices anytime soon. Heating your homes and



cooking this next year will be costly. It's called inflation caused from overspending by Congress and our president. President Biden's \$3 trillion Build Back Better bill the Democrats are attempting to pass would dole out \$500 billion of taxpayer dollars to the wind, solar and electric vehicle to break the back of oil and gas production. Real cost of the bill is \$5 trillion.

None vaccinated

COAL CITY—If you watch Fox News or Newsmax on TV you would learn 58,000 illegals crossed our southern borders in November alone. None vaccinated for the viruses. Regular media won't tell you the truth. Merry Christmas.

The big giveaway

COAL CITY—The Wall Street Journal calls the Build Back Better multi-trillion dollar spending frenzy just passed in the House of Representatives "the biggest expansion of the entitlement state since the 1960s and maybe ever." Let's see what the US Senate does before Christmas.

Food for thought

WILMINGTON—The 10 Commandments are not multiple choice.

No surprise

WILMINGTON—It's no surprise that Mississippi is leading the charge to overturn Roe vs. Wade. I guess if angry white men can't enslave black people, pregnant women will have to do. Penny Lane

Be more specific

WILMINGTON—To the person who called in and said one person was using four identities to call soundoff, please call back and be more specific and name names. I always want to be better informed and get the facts.

Founded on...

WILMINGTON—Hey Dan, I'd like to correct your assertion that "this country was founded on laws, not public opinion." Historically speaking, this country was founded on genocide, murder, rape and theft with slavery the cherry on top. I thought you would want to know.

Wisconsin shooting

WILMINGTON—Why would a mother of an immature 17-year-old take him across state lines so he could protect the stores from the protesters? I guess you don't get arrested for stupidity.

Signs were there

COAL CITY—The parents of the boy who killed five students at the school in Michigan deserve to be arrested. You don't go buy a teenager showing signs of aggression a handgun. A tragic end for the victims' families, the school and the community all because they supported his maniac actions. School officials met with the parents the day before and the parents failed to get the teen help. Instead they got him a 9mm. So sad.

Commentary

Don't save those give cards, spend them

BY MICHAEL W. FRERICHS
ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

Odds are you, or someone you know, will receive a gift card during the holiday season.

It is easy to see why. The cards are easy to purchase and (typically) easy to use. They can be the perfect primary gift for that difficult-to-buy-for-friend or a great stocking stuffer for a college student.

However, too many times there are stories about a gift card that was saved for a rainy day only to find out that there was no money on the card because too much time had elapsed.

One of the lesser-known roles of the Illinois State Treasurer's Office involves gift cards. I hear the stories. Here is what you can do to protect yourself

- Know that retail gift cards and bank gift cards are the two most common types

of cards. Retail gift cards are only redeemable at a specific retailer or restaurant. Bank gift cards, which carry a payment network such as American Express, MasterCard, or Visa, can be used at any location that accepts that specific brand.

- Resist the urge to save the card for a rainy day. Doing so may increase the likelihood that some of the card's value will be consumed by fees. Instead, use the card and set aside an equal amount of cash for a rainy day.

- Remember that while money on a typical bank gift card cannot expire for at least five years, depending upon the circumstances, inactivity fees can begin in as little as 12 months. Therefore, it is possible that inactivity fees could consume the cash value of a bank gift card before the five year window has expired.

- Under Illinois' Consumer Fraud Act, most gift cards sold in Illinois that are

usable only at a specific retailer or restaurant are not allowed to charge inactivity fees

- Businesses that close likely will not honor an outstanding gift card.
- Treat a gift card like cash. If lost or stolen, report it to law enforcement. Contact the card's issuer to determine if a replacement card is possible and at what cost.

\$3.5 billion unclaimed

The state treasurer's office holds more than \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property. Because our records are updated twice each year, we encourage residents to frequently check our I-Cash database, which can be found at www.illinoistreasurer.gov.

Our office never charges a fee to search for, or return, unclaimed property.

Light Up Your House contest returns to Custer

The Custer Park Town Hall will sponsor its 13th annual Lighting Up Your House For the Holidays Contest. Enter your house or a neighbor's.

Entry forms are available at Santa's mailbox at the Custer Park Fire Department, or use the one below, and return it to the mailbox by Friday, Dec. 17. Judging will be done that weekend.

Prizes will be awarded on Tuesday, Dec. 21, at 6:30 p.m., at the Custer Park Village Board meeting.

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

Lighting Up Your House for the Holidays Contest

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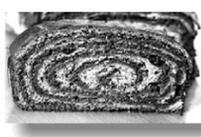
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FAMILY



Mr. and Mrs. Heath VanDyke

Begeske, VanDyke united in marriage

Laura Begeske and Heath VanDyke were married at Hermann Hills in Hermann, MO, on Nov. 19, 2021 at 3:30 p.m. with immediate family in attendance. The bride is the daughter of Jim and Helen Begeske, of Custer Park and graduated from Reed Custer. The groom is the son of Tim and Lori VanDyke, of Louisville, IL. The couple is currently residing in Limestone, IL.

Forest Preserve District offers family outdoor excursions in December

Baby, it may be cold outside, but that doesn't mean you have to stay indoors as 2021 draws to a close. Check out these winter programs and hikes organized by the Forest Preserve District of Will County. Registration is available on the Event Calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org. Here is the lineup:

Channahon—Winter Hike and Craft: 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Dec. 18, Four Rivers Environmental Education Center. After a chilly hike, warm up indoors with a cup of hot cocoa while making a special ornament or card to remember your family's adventure. Free, all ages. Register online by Dec. 17 or call 815-722-9470.

Channahon—Happy Mornings Yoga and Hike: 9-10:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 19, Four Rivers Environmental Education Center. Enjoy a 45-minute, all levels yoga session indoors followed by a 45-minute hike along scenic trails. Bring a yoga mat, water and warm layers for the winter weather. Free, ages 14 or older. Register online by Dec. 18 or call 815-722-9470.

Channahon—Senior Coffee Talk - Winter Solstice: 10-11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 21, Four Rivers Environmental Education Center. Enjoy a sunlit morning on the shortest day of the year. Learn about the history of this celestial event and how it still influences us today. Ages 55 or older. Register online by Dec. 19 or call 815-722-9470.

Channahon—Stress-free Sunrise Hike: 6:30-8 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 29, Four Rivers Environmental Education Center. Rejuvenate yourself and focus on the beauty of nature as you hike while the morning sun casts its glow over the frozen prairie and winter trees. Dress for the weather. Free, ages 12 or older. Register online by Dec. 28 or call 815-722-9470.

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A path forward for Adam Kinzinger

BY JIM NOWLAN

What is Adam Kinzinger going to do? What should he do? Friends ask me. His options aren't good, yet I have a path forward for Kinzinger. First, some background.

Kinzinger is the typically conservative, four-term Republican congressman from the edge of the Chicago suburbs, who has been dissing Donald Trump since even before the Jan. 6 confrontation at the U.S. Capitol.

Democrats have drawn new congressional districts in Illinois, which put Kinzinger in a Deep Red GOP district with Trump ally Rep. Darin LaHood. And when a Republican crosses their man, the intensely loyal Trump fans cross him off their list, for good. No path forward here.

What about running for U.S. Senate, or governor? Even though Adam is young, attractive, an Air Force pilot with Afghanistan tours, would he — would you — want to run against an unobjectionable woman senator who had her legs blown off in Iraq piloting an Army helicopter in defense of her country?

As for governor, Kinzinger could not win the GOP primary next June, because Trump voters dominate the Grand Old Party. Even if he did win the primary — say against a large field of Trumpsters — he couldn't win the general election, because Trump Republicans would lay off and not vote in his race. I tell you, the Trump base is loyal to their man.

So, to give himself some breathing room, Kinzinger has created Country

First, a national movement (he hopes), which is against toxic politics and wants to unite the country. The website is glossy, positive, and bland. I agree with all of it, yet it doesn't arouse me, because there is little detail.

The problem with Country First is that it positions Adam on the sidelines, along with former moderate Ohio GOP Governor John Kasich, who has his own movement. Only coaches are important on the sidelines. To be a player, you have to be in the arena.

So, here is my path forward for Adam: Run for a fifth term in the U.S. House, from one of the several new suburban districts. The most likely would be the redrawn 14th, where Democratic African-American nurse Lauren Underwood is the incumbent. The district includes some of Kinzinger's former territory, and is arguably more moderate than the other suburban CDs.

Adam's legal residence is in small-town Channahon, which is being enveloped by southwest Chicago suburban sprawl. A candidate does not have to live in the district in which he runs. And Adam is really a Washingtonian, rather than, let's say, a longtime member of the Channahon Rotary. His wife is a Capitol Hill staffer, so that's where their life is centered. I don't say that as criticism. If you want to move up the ladder in D.C., you have to spend lots of time there.

Adam could run as a member of the Country First Party, not a bad label, or as an Independent, also a positive label for someone with Kinzinger's established credentials and visibility.

Other advantages: 1) he would avoid

an expensive primary contest, and 2) he would not have to win 50% plus one of the votes, but only a plurality, say, 38 percent or so. This, on the premise, likely, that both the Dems and GOP will field competitive candidates. (Abraham Lincoln won the presidency in 1860 with 39 percent of the vote in a four-way contest.)

With his frequent appearances on the national news shows, Adam could draw attention to this test in Illinois of whether there is indeed a new, Third Way forward in American politics. If he won, he could trumpet such as proof positive for others to run similarly across the country, building a new force inside the political arena. (In the 1850s, the new Republican Party required four election cycles to win the presidency.)

If he lost, Adam would still have his Country First movement, which he could grow during his run for the House next year. Or, he could become a high-paid talking head.

There are no guarantees in fickle politics. I think too many in the political game look for guarantees, which is why they never make it to the top. Based on my experience, admittedly decades cold, of running U.S. Senate and presidential campaigns, I think a run for the House in the suburbs — which is the crucible of American politics right now — is the path forward for Adam Kinzinger.

Jim Nowlan is a former state legislator and aide to three unindicted Illinois governors. A retired professor of American politics, he writes a newspaper column on Understanding Illinois.

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Sat., Dec. 4 9:30-0 p.m. WOTM Moose Christmas Craft Show — Lunch will be available	
Wed., Dec. 8 7:00 p.m. WOTM Meeting	
Sat., Dec. 11 5-7:30 p.m. Steak Fry Live Music - "MIKE & STAR PRODUCTIONS"	
Mon., Dec. 13 7:00 p.m. All One Meeting	
Mon., Dec. 13 5:30 p.m. Legion Meeting	
Fri., Dec. 17 5-7:30 p.m. Fish Fry	
Sat., Dec. 18 9-11:00 a.m. Breakfast with Santa	
Sun., Dec. 19 9-11:30 a.m. Moose Riders Breakfast	
Fri., Dec. 24 Close Early	HAPPY HOLIDAYS
Sat., Dec. 25 CLOSED	
Mon., Dec. 27 7:00 p.m. All One Meeting	

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Dairy farmers could see \$20 milk in 2022

BY DANIEL GRANT FARMWEEK

Dairy farmers who endured paper-thin margins in recent years have reason for optimism in the year ahead.

USDA's current price projections for 2022 surpass the \$20-mark (at \$20.25 per hundredweight) for all milk, with Class IV and Class III average price estimates close behind at \$18.70 and \$17.75, respectively.

If realized, the price increases for the three milk classifications would range between 80 cents and \$2.70 per hundredweight above USDA's November 2021 estimates.

"There's reasons to finally be upbeat in dairy," Dan Basse, president of AgResource Company in Chicago, said recently at the annual Agricultural Bankers Conference. "It's taken us eight years to get back to where we were in 2014 (if milk prices surpass \$20)."

Basse estimates Class III and IV milk prices could reach

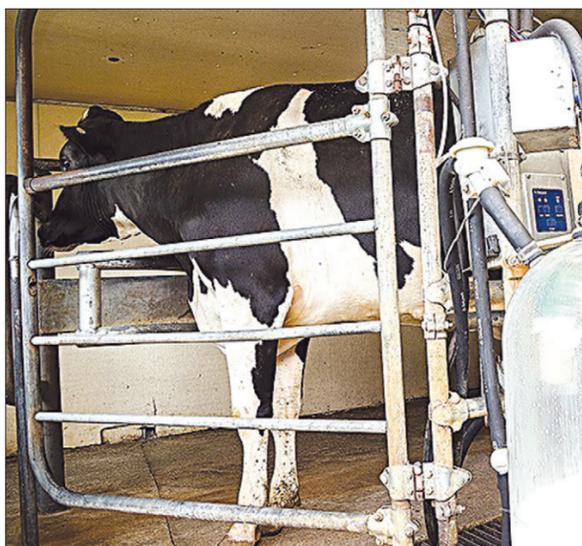


Photo courtesy of Illinois Farm Bureau

THE USDA IS projecting an increase in milk prices in the new year.

as high as \$21 to \$23 next year, driven by surging demand, a possible smaller supply and inflationary pressure.

Longer-term, a proposed shift in ag policy in the European Union could shift the EU market from a net exporter to net importer of dairy.

"World demand for dairy products remains strong," Basse said. "I believe exports are the bullish driver of the future."

The U.S. exported an all-time high of 16% of milk solids produced nationwide in 2020. And, exports so far this year, from January through

September, bubbled a whopping 14% above last year's record pace.

"As we head into 2022, we'll have another record year for dairy exports," Basse said. "One of the bigger buyers is China. They use a lot of whey as a milk replacer for piglets."

U.S. dairy cow numbers increased 2% from 2020 to July 2021 to 9.5 million head. But, Basse believes the yearly total could decline due in part to strength in the beef market, with slaughter up 14%.

"U.S. dairy cow slaughter has been elevated. Cull prices have been strong," Basse said. "That's a big margin enhancer for dairies."

But what effect will price inflation have on demand for dairy products and beef?

"Inflation is not going to be leaving us any time soon. I think it will be around at least the next 12-18 months," the analyst said. "There's no indication of protein switching. World demand for dairy products remains strong."

That includes surging demand for cheese and butter, with global butter demand growing at a 7% clip.

"U.S. butter supplies are ample. It's an export opportunity now," Basse said. "World butter prices have been rising."

Price inflation also represents one of the biggest risks for the dairy industry heading into 2022, as well, with feed costs near historic highs.

"We're bullish for the milk market. But, my biggest concern is the price of feed. It could be the Achilles heel of the dairy industry," Basse said. "It's how you manage risk. Lock up profitable margins."

Potential growth in the dairy industry also could be squeezed by processing bottlenecks.

"We're almost at maximum (milk processing) capacity," Basse said. "We need more capital and investment."

Overall, Basse believes farmers are in the midst of a commodity supercycle that could last 2-3 years.

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Remember our veterans by sponsoring a wreath

Sponsor a wreath for a veteran's grave at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. The wreath laying will be held on Saturday, Dec. 18.

Due to current COVID protocols, a public ceremony will not be held. Staggered wreath laying with limited attendance will be done by volunteers of all ages throughout the day. Attendance will be limited to 100 volunteers per hour and a ticket will be required to access the cemetery. Volunteers must register in advance online through the Wreaths Across America website.

Sponsorship is a tax deductible donation and may be made for a specific veteran or any veteran. Order online at Wreaths Across America and include cemetery ID: ILALNE. Wreaths are \$15 for one, \$30 for two or \$75 for five.

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Coal City Library provides holiday help



Courtesy photos

COAL CITY PUBLIC Library District was proud to present Hope 4 Hope with check in the amount of \$623.48. This money represents funds collected for fines during the month of October along with generous donations from the community. The library appreciates all who contributed to help support these worthy causes. Debi Trotter (left) is pictured presenting the check to Gordon Milne and Cathy Milne with Hope 4 Help.

Donate at the door for concert



THE JOLIET AMERICAN LEGION BAND will perform its Sounds of Christmas Concert at the Rialto Theatre in Joliet on Sunday, Dec. 19 at 2 pm. This year's performance will be like no other for getting into the holiday spirit as well as helping those less fortunate. The Bell Choir of United Methodist Church in New Lenox will be performing in the rotunda prior to and during intermission under the direction of Michael Weirman. As the band performs their array of musical selections conducted by director Mike Fiske, assistant directors Rick Ellenberger (Retired Army Major), Jill Kohler and Jim Kreuz will also each take the podium. The band's very own clarinet player Gary Picha will be hosting as emcee and additionally there will be a guest vocalist; Kathy Haldorson Boyer. Tickets for the concert will be available on Monday, Dec 13 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Wednesday and Friday, Dec 15 & 17 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Rialto Theatre as well as prior to the concert on Sunday, Dec 19th with doors opening at 1 pm. The cost of a ticket is requested in the form of a generous donation consisting of either non-perishable food items or paper/hygiene products; monetary donations will also be accepted. All donations are directly received by the Catholic Charities Daybreak Center.

Christensen inducted to honor society

Ryleigh Christensen, of Coal City, was among the 19 students inducted into the Gamma Chi Chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma at Lewis University in Romeoville. Christensen is currently studying political science at Lewis University.

Delta Epsilon Sigma is a national scholastic honor society for students, faculty and alumni of colleges and universities with a Catholic tradition. It recognizes academic accomplishments, fosters scholarly activities, and encourages a sense of intellectual community among its members.

Undergraduate students must have completed at least 50% of the credit requirements for their baccalaureate degrees with a distinction of performance, which, if continued, would make them eligible for graduation cum laude.

Lewis University junior and senior students must have at least a 3.5 gpa as well as received three DES faculty

nominations in order to be nominated for membership to the Gamma Chi Chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma.

A Very Elvis Christmas

starring Rick Saucedo

In concert at the historic Mar Theatre
121 S. Main St., Wilmington

Rick Saucedo
The Spirit of Christmas

Saturday, Dec. 11
All Ages Matinee Show.
Show time 4:00....Doors open at 3:00
Fun For The Entire Family..Tickets \$10

Advance tickets available at the Mar Box Office.
121 S. Main St. Wilmington IL.
Contact Debbie...815-693-2969

Tickets also available by mail to: larryt@comcast.net via Paypal.
A " Good Larry" Production.

AA meetings at Masonic Lodge

The Wilmington Masonic Lodge at 311 N. Main St., offers Alcoholic Anonymous meetings on Thursdays at 7 p.m.

Anyone seeking more information can contact Geoge Roesel at 815-509-7001

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OBITUARIES

Rosemary Horn

WILMINGTON—Rosemary Horn (nee Byron), 93, of Wilmington, passed away Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021 at Aperion Care of Wilmington.

Born Feb. 6, 1928 in Custer Park, Rosemary Anne was the daughter of Michael and Laura (nee Evans) Byron. She was raised in Custer Park and graduated from Reed-Custer High School, and in March of 1947, Rosemary married Wayne E. Horn at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Wilmington.

She was an active member with the Women's Auxiliary of Wilmington VFW Post 5422 in Wilmington and Saint Rose Catholic Church. Rosemary worked for many years for Total Concepts in Manteno as a receptionist, and was proud to serve as a poll worker during election season. Her number one priority was her family, and she took great pleasure in raising her children and maintaining a nurturing environment for them. In her spare time, Rosemary enjoyed reading, being outdoors, and hunting down that next great find at any yard sale that crossed her path.

Survivors include her three children: Joseph (Marsha) Horn and Rose Taylor, both of Wilmington and Dennis Horn, of Rockdale; her daughter-in-law, Donna Graefen, of Bradley; eight grandchildren: Michelle (John) Littig, Stacy Horn (Jamal Ahmad), Daniel (Anne) Horn, Brian (Andrea) Horn, Krista (Rich) Barton, Karey Taylor, Hannah (Zach) Keese, and Jacob Horn (fiancé Lydia); 10 great-grandchildren: Johnathon, Joshua, Samantha, Brooke, Madilyn, Julia, Ella, Gavin, Adalyn and Brock; three great-great-grandchildren: Joshua, Declan and Jace and her best friend, Marie



Swanson, of Coal City.

Rosemary was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Wayne on Nov. 13, 2002; two sons, Michael and Patrick Horn and her son-in-law, Kenneth Taylor.

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

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington from 3 p.m. until the time of memorial service at 6 p.m.

Those attending the visitation and memorial service are kindly asked to wear face masks while in the funeral home.

Those wishing to participate in the services virtually are welcome to join the live stream on Friday evening beginning at 6 p.m. A link for the event is available on Rosemary's memorial page.

A private inurnment will be held at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, where Rosemary will be laid to rest with her husband, Wayne.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Rosemary's memory to: Alzheimer's Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Floor 17, Chicago, IL 60601.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Rosemary's memorial page by logging onto: www.BaskervilleFuneral.com.

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

MINOOKA—Connie R. Reiter (nee Lauterbach), 61, of Minooka, formerly of Joliet, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021 at Morris Hospital.

Born March 26, 1960 in Joliet, Connie Rae was the daughter of Robert Lauterbach and Marilyn (nee Deiter) Chrossfield. She was raised and educated in Joliet. On Feb. 16, 1979, Connie married Thomas George Reiter in Joliet, and together they lived in Joliet and later in Minooka for 40 years. She was a devoted member of Families of Faith Church in Channahon and was a founding staff member and teacher at the Families of Faith Christian Academy. Connie's calling in life was being an educator, dedicating the past 15 years of her life to her school. She was beloved at Families of Faith and touched countless children's lives with her gifts as an educator and role model.

Connie also excelled at crafting, utilizing her talents not only at school but for her own pleasure, and always made sure her home was meticulously decorated, especially for the holidays. She loved listening to Christian and holiday music and enjoyed traveling with her family to warmer climates in Florida, Arizona and the Carolinas. As busy as she was, Connie always made her family her priority. She was a loving and devoted wife, mother and grandma, whose legacy of love and kindness will live on through them, as well as the countless students and members of her church and community that she touched.

Survivors include her husband of 42 years, Thomas Reiter, of Minooka; three children: Heather Renee Reiter, of Minooka; T.J. (Stephanie) Reiter, of Mazon and Daniel Reiter, of Minooka; four grandchildren: Malachi,



Chloey, Isaiah and Lily; two brothers and two sisters: Michelle (Mike) Zytrowski, of Pell Lake, WI; Alan (Arlene) Chrossfield, of Joliet; Cindy Lamborn, of Florida; Robert Lamborn, of Bloomington; three brothers-in-law: James Reiter, of Flaagan; David (Rachel) Reiter, of Schaumburg and William (Nancy) Reiter, of Minonk; numerous nieces and nephews and the many friends, students, and colleagues of her Families of Faith Church Family.

Connie was preceded in death by her parents, Robert (Bea) Lauterbach and Marilyn (Leo Michael) Chrossfield; her father-in-law and mother-in-law, Melvin and Phyllis Reiter; several aunts and uncles, her nephew, Brandon Chrossfield; her dear friend, Lois Clements and her pastor and friend, Clark Llewellyn.

The family will receive friends on Sunday, Dec. 12, 2021 at Families of Faith Church, 24466 W. Eames St., in Channahon from 3 p.m. until the time of funeral services at 5 p.m., with Pastor Randy Blan officiating. Burial will follow Monday, Dec. 13, 2021 at Minonk Township Cemetery.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Connie's memory to: Families of Faith Christian Academy, 24466 W. Eames St., Channahon, IL 60410.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Connie's memorial page by logging onto: www.BaskervilleFuneral.com

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

Willie E. Miner

COAL CITY—Willie E. Miner, 58, of Coal City, passed away Dec. 2, 2021 at St. Anthony's Hospital in Rockford, with his family and friends by his side.

Willie was born July 19, 1963 in Jacksonville, IL and was raised in Coal City where he was a 1982 graduate of Coal City High School. Willie played football and wrestled. He loved Dodge cars and trucks. He also loved to fish, hunt and be outdoors in general. He might best be described as a gentle giant, with a generous spirit, a devotion to family and friends and a heart of gold. He worked many years as an over the road truck driver.

He is survived by one daughter, Joellyn Lea Miner May (Aaron); two grandsons, Aaron and Zaelen May, of Chicago; his mother, Phyllis Musgrave; father, Roland Miner; brothers, Vincent Miner and Michael Bone (Shenon); one



step-sister, Liz Neven (David); three half sisters, Michele Miner, Bobbie Jo Ruppe and Tomi Doyle, plus numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, step-father, Coil Musgrave; step-son, Justin Graser and nephew, Aidan Bone.

Cremation rites have been accorded.

A Celebration of Life was held on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021 at Ferrari Funeral Services, 1044 Ferrari Dr., Coal City. Pastor Bradley Shumaker officiated. Inurnment will be in Burnt Prairie, IL.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrarifuneral.com

Ferrari Funeral Services are entrusted with arrangements.

Kay Lynn Shoemaker

COAL CITY—Kay Lynn Shoemaker, 64, of Coal City, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021 at Morris Hospital.

Born July 2, 1957 in Chicago, Kay was a daughter of Donald and Viola (nee Reader) Shoemaker. She was raised and educated in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School. Kay Lynn furthered her education by attending Olivet Nazarene University where she achieved her Bachelor of Sciences in Nursing degree. She was a nurse her entire life. Kay Lynn worked as the Director of Nursing at Embassy Care in Wilmington for several years, and later as a home health nurse. Most recently, she held employment with the Grundy County Health Department as the Director of Nursing from 2003 to 2009 and as the Administrator from 2009 to 2013. During the COVID 19 Pandemic, Kay Lynn was proud to work part time as a contact tracer.

She was a devoted member of the Coal City United Methodist Church, where she participated in numerous groups such as Bible Study, Rebekah Conference of Women, and Sunshine Circle. Through the church, Kay Lynn also volunteered with the Coal City Food Pantry and the Coal City Disaster Response Team. Her spirituality and church family were an integral part of her life, providing great motivation and creating precious memories that were near and dear to her heart.

Kay Lynn loved spending time outdoors at the Coal City Area Club camping and letting her dog, Remi, go out for his morning run. She always looked forward to the change in season when she could take a drive to see all the leaves fall, or to find the perfect spot to watch the sunset. Kay Lynn was an animal lover and enjoyed trivia games like Jeopardy and solving riddles. She was a die-hard Chicago Cubs fan and horse racing fan, always anticipating Triple Crown season, especially the Kentucky Derby. Holidays were very important to Kay Lynn,



especially the Fourth of July which she called "her holiday" due to how close it was to her birthday; her patriotic spirit, and her enjoyment of fireworks.

She had a magnetic personality that always gravitated to, seemingly always making her the center of attention when she was telling one of her great many stories. Kay Lynn was a true Christian woman, always willing to help anyone in need, who treasured her family and friends more than anything.

Survivors include four children: Robert (Abbie) Shoemaker and Jessica Shoemaker (Coty Hoffman), both of Morris; Carlos Shoemaker (Amy Roszak), of Worth, IL and Jimmy Elkin, of Morris; seven grandchildren: Lilah Shoemaker, Sakura, Selena and Violet Hoffman and Anthony, Lily and Rylan Elkin; one uncle, George (the late Joan) Reader, of Coal City and the many members of her church family, whom she loved dearly.

Kay was preceded in death by her parents and several aunts and uncles.

The family will receive friends for a visitation on Monday, Dec. 6, 2021, at the Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 E. McArld Rd., from 4 p.m. until the time of funeral service at 7 p.m. Reverend Bradley Shumaker will officiate. Per Kay's wishes, cremation rites will be accorded following the services.

Those attending the visitation and funeral are kindly asked to wear face masks per CDC guidelines.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Kay Lynn's memory to the Coal City United Methodist Church.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Kay's memorial page by logging onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com

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

William C. Rath

MINOOKA—William C. Rath, 80, of Minooka and formerly of Morris, passed away Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021 at the Lightways Hospice Home in Joliet.

Born June 28, 1941 in Morris, William Carl was a son of Carl and Ann (Pawlowski) Rath. He was raised in Morris and graduated from Morris High School with the class of 1959. Bill began his career with Commonwealth Edison at Dresden Station and went on to retire as a Training Supervisor from Exelon in Essex following 27 years of service. In his free time, Bill enjoyed fishing, golf and hunting. No hobby however was greater than that of family, and Bill cherished being together, especially with the grandkids.

Survivors include his wife, Clair; three children: Jennifer (Alex) Davis, of Cary, IL; Sarah Smith, of Coal City and Jonathan (Lisa) Rath, of Minooka; one step-son, Erich (Hillary) Matthews, of Coal City; 13 grandchildren: Megan, Clarissa, Abby, Avery, Darien, Miranda, Turner, Bailey, Mason, Vivienne, Camden, Mayday and Rosie; one great-grandson, Oliver; siblings: Josetta (the late Bruce) Nelson, Ronald (Barbara) Rath and Laurie (Duane) McComas,



all of Morris; one sister-in-law, Billie Williams, of Texas; one aunt, Agnes "Cookie" Killelea, of Iowa and numerous nieces and nephews.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, Carl and Ann Rath and his first wife who was the mother of his children, Sherry (nee Lanier) Rath on July 16, 1987.

Per Bill's wishes, green flameless cremation rites have been accorded.

A private family memorial is scheduled, and Bill will be laid to rest with his late wife, Sherry in Mt. Carmel Catholic Cemetery in Morris.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Bill's memory to a Humane Society or Animal Shelter of the donor's choosing.

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

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

Randy Wilkey

GARDNER—Randy Wilkey, 64, of Gardner, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, Dec. 6, 2021 at Edward Hospital in Naperville.

Born Feb. 4, 1957 in Pontiac, IL, Randy Thomas was a son of William Harold and Beata (Benson) Wilkey. He was raised and educated in Reddick, and went on to serve in the United States Navy (1974-1977), where he served both stateside and abroad on the USS Detroit. On Sept. 24, 1983, Randy married Nancy Campbell in Coal City, and together they built a life they loved, and raised their boys in Gardner. He was employed as a machinist for R.R. Donnelley for 17 years from 1979-1996, and most recently worked as a Paramedic with Dwight, Gardner and currently DULY Health and Care (Formerly DuPage Medical Group).

Randy was a member of the Gardner American Legion and was active in fire service for many years. He was past Fire Chief of Reddick Fire Department and involved with Gardner Fire Department for over 20 years, where he also served as Chief. Randy was an instructor with Chief Shabbona Fire Academy; taught CPR, and was an EMT instructor for Riverside Medical Center. In addition, he was a member of the Illinois Fire Inspector Association, and served as a Fire Investigator for numerous years.

In his free time, he enjoyed golfing and fishing, but could more often be found wood-working, as well as working in the yard. Randy was a man of many projects and was always building something. He was a fan of both the Chicago Bears and Cubs, and most of all enjoyed spending time and cooking with his family, especially the grandchildren. His big breakfasts will be missed most of all.

Throughout the years, Randy held many titles: son, husband, father and chief to name a few. No title was more important to him however, than Grandpa, and Randy's grandchildren were the light of his life. He absolutely loved the time spent with each of them.

Survivors include his wife, Nancy; three



children: Jamie (Eleanor) Wilkey, of Gardner; Chad (Danielle) Wilkey, of Essex and Jordan (Jessica) Wilkey, of South Wilmington; six grandchildren: Cole, Tyler, Jaci, Avery, Kedzie and Drake, not to forget his four legged granddaughter, Ella; seven siblings: William (Jeanette) Wilkey, of Dwight; Duane Wilkey, of Tennessee; Kathy (Dave) Curl, of Reddick; Herb (Kathy) Wilkey, of Braceville; Su (Robert) Wilkey, of Florida; James (Kelly) Wilkey, of Cullom and Doug (Julie) Wilkey, of Dwight; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, Nora Wilkey, of Braidwood; Dan (Mary) Campbell, of Duluth, MN; Mike (Debbie) Campbell and Mark Campbell, both of Braceville and Linda Tira, of Duluth and numerous nieces and nephews.

Randy was preceded in death by his parents, son, Seth on Feb. 14, 1995; siblings: Wayne Wilkey, Wes Wilkey, Patsy Wilkey-Perry, Sandra Jensen and Terry Wilkey; his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Howard and Faye Campbell and his sister-in-law, Carri Campbell.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 203 Liberty St. in Gardner on Friday, Dec. 10, 2021 between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m., and again on Saturday morning, Dec. 11, 2021 from 9 a.m. until the time of funeral service at 10 a.m. Pastor Greg Linkous will officiate, and burial will follow in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery, where Randy will be laid to rest with his son, Seth.

Palbearers will be Jamie Wilkey, Chad Wilkey, Jordan Wilkey, Cole Mack, Tyler Wilkey and Jerry VonQualen.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Randy's memory to Ronald McDonald House Charities, 5444 S. Drexel Ave., Chicago, IL 60615 (<https://rmhccni.org/donate/>)

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

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

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The mission of a conservation dog

Dear EarthTalk: What are conservation dogs?

-- Jon Gretcham, Portland, OR

Simply put, conservation dogs are canines specially trained in sniffing out evidence of specific wildlife species that scientists are seeking to learn more about for one reason or another. Most commonly these dogs are used to help biologists understand where and how threatened or endangered wildlife species are hanging on-or if they are still around at all.

At the forefront of this burgeoning field is Rogue Detection Teams (RDT), a Washington State based non-profit that sends their specially trained dogs around North America and beyond to help scientific researchers, government agencies and non-profit groups gather field evidence in order to further their conservation work.

It's no wonder that conservationists have started using detection dogs, a standard practice in the military and law enforcement since the 1940s when U.S. troops first employed canines to detect German land mines in North Africa. By pairing human handlers well-versed in ecology and biology (the "bounders") with detection dogs trained on a specific scent, conservationists can monitor the density, distribution and overall health



certain species of concern.

To wit, Rogue's dogs have worked all over the world helping conservation groups bolster their cases with hard data collected in the field. The majority of the Rogue's work so far has been in the American West, but teams are scattered as far afield as Brazil, Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and the Middle East in search of everything from sea turtles to grasshoppers to pygmy rabbits, big cats, red foxes and bumblebees.

What makes for a perfect conservation dog? The best detection dogs wouldn't necessarily make a great pet, as they tend to be obsessed with reward accumulation. "Our dogs are typically considered unadoptable due to their high energy and obsessive desire to play fetch," says Rogue's Jennifer Hartman.

"This obsessive energy is quite perfect for us because we pair this with detecting an odor and reward our dogs with their ball for locating the odor." Rogue's dogs can cover up to 15 miles a day in survey work, and still have energy left



"PIPS" OF ROGUE Detection Teams was able to find larvae and larval poop of the endangered checkerspot butterfly for the Forest Service in Washington State in 2019.

over for more playtime after the search.

And it doesn't take a specific breed or size dog-it's all about the dog's so-called 'high ball drive'. "We have quite a few Labrador mixes as well as heeler mixes because these seem to be high drive dogs that end up in shelters, but we also have a chihuahua mix and what might be a papillon mix in our program," reports Hartman. "We love all dogs though, and don't discriminate as long as they like to play fetch!"

Currently Rogue runs 19 dogs out of its Washington State headquarters. The organization, founded in 2019 by a

group of conservation-oriented dog handlers who had been doing this sort of work on their own for more than a decade, also runs programs to train others' dogs (and their owners) in these canine "detection" practices. Through its training work, Rogue hopes to develop the next generation of bounders to carry on the innovative work of the conservation dogs in helping other species hang on in this warming-compromised world.

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://lemagazine.com>. Send questions to: question@earth-talk.org.

Illinois gas prices drop

Illinois gas prices have fallen 3.7 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$3.49/g, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Gas prices in Illinois are 5.9 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand \$1.32/g higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois is priced at \$2.79/g while the most expensive is \$4.52/g, a difference of \$1.73/g. The lowest price in the state is \$2.79/g while the highest is \$4.52/g, a difference of \$1.73/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 5.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.34/g. The national average is down 6.9 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.19/g higher than a year ago.

"The downturn in average gas prices continued to gain momentum last week as oil

prices remained at a hefty discount. This is largely due to continued anxiety over the omicron variant and because some countries have begun issuing lockdowns, keeping motorists in some countries from consuming as much fuel," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

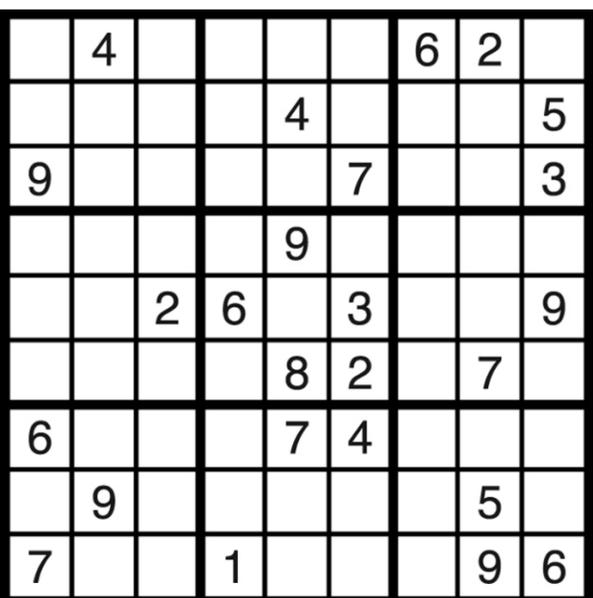
"While the Great Lakes region, the fastest to see prices respond to market fluctuations, is seeing hefty monthly declines approaching 30 cents per gallon, much of the rest of the country is lagging behind.

"But, we will see precipitous declines in the next week or two as stations continue to sell through higher price inventory before slowly lowering their prices. It's not impossible given the conditions that price wars, where stations lower their price significantly, could emerge as stations now have considerable room to lower prices."

The gift of clean air

As we huddle inside this winter, consider adding some plants to improve your air quality. They make great gifts to your friends, co-workers, family and yourself. NASA was recommending them before the global pandemic and a few compete with electric air purifiers.

A home can have allergens, new materials that may off-gas and other natural air contaminants. Adding some plants can make the air cleaner and many require little care to be effective.



Letter to the editor

Seats should be added to The Supreme Court

To the Editor:

This is a scary moment. This term, the 6-3 hyperpartisan supermajority on the Supreme Court is hearing oral arguments on some of the most consequential cases of our lifetime. These cases open the door to gutting gun safety laws, further rolling back a woman's right to choose, and undermining clean air protections.

Our fundamental rights hang in the balance. But there's a way to fight back, which is why I'm urging Congress to pass the Judiciary Act of 2021.

The Judiciary Act would rebalance the Supreme Court by adding four new seats, giving us 13 judges in total. It's just what we need to move away from extremely partisan rulings and make the court a more unbiased institution—and it's been done before. In fact, Congress has changed the size of the Supreme Court seven times already in our nation's history.

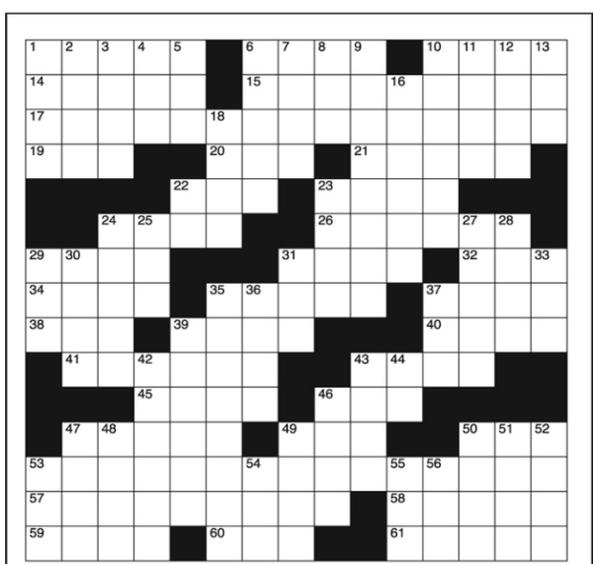
It's time for Congress to get on board with this crucial bill—before it's too late.

Diane M. Andrews
Wilmington

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Polish city
6. Very eager
10. Identifies a specific person or thing
14. Tennis great Naomi
15. One concerned by professional advancement
17. PGA Championship reward
19. A fashionable hotel
20. Norse mythology afterlife location
21. Stood up
22. Car mechanics group
23. Weather forecasters use it (abbr.)
24. Broken branch
26. Astronomy unit
29. East Asian nursemaid
31. "Airplane!" actor
32. Exclamation that denotes disgust
34. "Batman" villain
35. Downfalls
37. Philippine province
38. Once-vital TV part
39. Valley
40. Tax
41. Classic Scorsese film
43. Subway dwellers
45. Book part
46. Taxi
47. Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
49. Swiss river
50. Founder of Babism
53. Have surgery
57. Withdrawal from a larger entity
58. Lot's father
59. Greek war god
60. 2,000 lbs.
61. Lemur

CLUES DOWN

1. Quarrels
2. Right away
3. Comedian Carvey
4. Egyptian unit of weight
5. A Brit's mother
6. Tropical tree
7. One who speaks Gaelic
8. NHL legend Bobby
9. Vacation spots
10. Military personnel
11. Shakira's don't lie
12. Wimbleton champ
13. Teletypewriter
16. Mistakes
18. Whale ship captain
22. Thus
23. From end to end
24. Kids love him
25. One and only
27. Fencing swords
28. Taxis
29. Basics
30. Refuse of grapes
31. Go quickly
33. French ballet dynasty
35. Most open
36. Popular soap ingredient
37. US time zone (abbr.)
39. Items of food
42. Backbones
43. Infrequent
44. Blood type
46. "Let It Snow!" songwriter
47. Dutch colonist
48. Pike
49. Egyptian sun god
50. A cardinal is one
51. From a distance
52. Bolivian river
53. N. American student organization (abbr.)
54. River (Spanish)
55. Chinese life force
56. Chinese surname

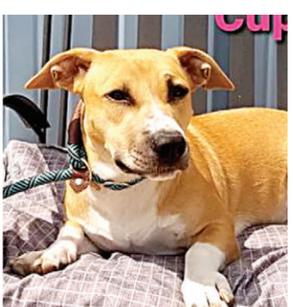
Blood donors needed

In response to the ongoing severe blood supply shortage, Morris Hospital is hosting a blood drive in cooperation with Versiti Blood Center on Wednesday, Dec. 15, from 12-5 p.m. in Conference Rooms 2 and 3 on the lower level of Morris Hospital, 150 W. High St. in Morris.

Those who donate will be helping replenish the local blood supply as Versiti supplies blood products for Morris Hospital. All blood types are needed, with O positive and O negative most in demand.

Blood donors must be age 17 or older, weigh at least 110 pounds, be in good health and free from cold or flu symptoms on the day of donation. In Illinois, 16-year-olds may donate with written approval from a parent or guardian. Donors will be required to wear a mask while inside Morris Hospital.

Appointments are recommended by calling Morris Hospital at 815-705-7386. Walk-ins are welcome.



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For questions call the Chamber 815-476-5991



SIS names high honor roll

STEVENS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL announces the high honor roll for fourth grade for the first trimester of the 2021-2022 school year (front row, from left): Nathan Cutter, Kaylee Lovig, Tandon Sukle and Jayce Strong. Back row: Charlie Prendergast, Baylee McInerney, Jackson Van Duyne, Cooper Rivera, Mason Hansen, Gage Sorensen and Edie Petrovich. Not pictured: Tessa Biskupski.



STEVENS INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL announces the high honor roll for fifth grade for the first trimester of the 2021-2022 school year (front row, from left): Payton Govero, Tracy Jones, Adelle Freeman, Violet Turcany and Taylor Tenn. Middle row: Lillian Govero, Cainen Machalek, Lucas Reynolds, Robert Jimenez, Phoenix Uthe, Kelsie Roeder and Isabelle Edgeworth. Back row: Peyton Adams, Chesnee Geiss, Shawn Schnittger, Drew Daniels, Nick Pridemore, Weston Lancaster and Eli Spicer.

Illinois Valley Area of NA host meetings

The Illinois Valley Area of Narcotics Anonymous holds meetings Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays for anyone who needs help coping with drug abuse.

On Tuesdays, "Fight for life" meeting can be found in

Coal City at the United Methodist Church on 6805 E. McArdle Rd., from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

On Wednesdays, "Working the steps" meeting is in Channahon at the United Methodist Church, on 24751

W. Eames St. The meeting is from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday's meeting is "Making amends" and will be located at the United Methodist Church in Coal City. Meeting times are 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Vote for your favorite display

Voting begins Friday for the Wilmington Rotary Club's third annual fundraiser holiday lighting contest and holiday lights tour.

The contest is for residents and businesses, and the winners will be decided by Rotary Club members and popular vote.

Each holiday lights display is entered in one of five categories: Most whimsical, most traditional, the Clark Griswold award, people's choice and Rotarian's choice. The winning entry in each category will receive \$100 in Wilmington Chamber of Commerce gift certificates.

The Rotary has mapped the locations of the entries, so that families can ride around and view the amazing displays, and also vote for their favorites. (Contestants are encouraged to get friends and family to vote for them.) The map is updated as the entries are received.

A link to the map can be found on the Wilmington Public Library District's website, www.wilmingtonlibrary.org. Click on Light the Way

Wilmington that will be in the box at the top of the page.

Public voting takes place through Sunday, Dec. 19.

The public can vote for the people's choice winner online. Go to the Light the Way Wilmington page on the library district's website; the

link is in the first paragraph of the contest details.

Contest sponsors include Oak Knoll Financial Services, and the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce.



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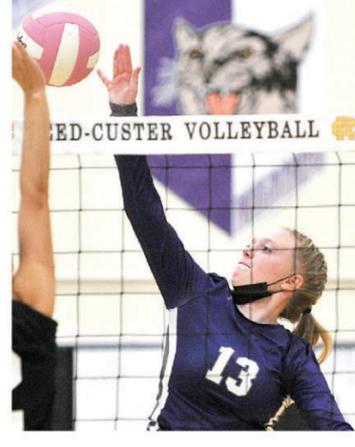
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APARTMENTS FOR RENT

1 BR apartment for rent in Coal City. \$750/month. No pets, one year lease, call 815-634-8660. cc46b-49a

AUTOS

2014 Ford Fiesta S, 4 door sedan, 5 speed manual transmission, clean, 98,000 miles, \$6,000 OBO, 815-390-5337. ca 49b-51a

WANTED: 2002-2012 Chevy GMC 4x4 pickup in good shape. Serious buyer. 815-941-0405.

FOR FREE

Free - Corner fit, whirlpool tub. Good condition. 815-476-2805. fr48b-51a

HELP WANTED

Braidwood business seeks PT custodian to clean mechanics shop, restrooms, floors, etc. 6-10 hrs a week \$15.00 an hour. Make your own schedule. No services. Apply in person 520 W Coal City Rd. cc49b-1a

Looking for a part-time job? Do you want to work from home? Do you have a license to sell Life Insurance? I'm looking for a part-time Life Insurance sales person to work from home on a commission basis. Email Resume Melodie Luckett Farmers Insurance Email: mluckett@farmersagent.com cc46a-49b

Nelson's Furniture now hiring for an immediate full time sales associate. Please email resume to Nelsonsfurnituremedia@gmail.com ch48b-50a

Offering CNA classes, days, evenings and weekends. Home health nurses needed. Call for class dates, 630-771-1162 or 630-771-9069, www.spectrumnursesca.com cc41a-12b

Reliable caregiver needed in my South Wilmington home. Monday-Friday from 8am-3pm for a kind, elderly lady who needs assistance. 815-378-1186. cc47b-51a

HOMES FOR RENT

Braceville - Country home, 3 BR, 1 1/2 BA, all utilities included, 1 car garage, generator, pets negotiable, 815-405-6134. ca 48a-49b

Braidwood area, 3BR, 2 full baths, stove, refrigerator, w/d hook up, central air. 1st, last, security, references and credit check required. 107 N. Blake St., Godley, \$1,350. Call 815-476-6462. cc47a-50b

Braidwood area, 3BR, 2BA, stove, refrigerator, C/A, washer/dryer, storage shed, large lot. 1st, last, security. Credit check required. 745 E. Mary Ln, Godley, \$1,250. Call 815-476-6462. cc47a50b

Wilmington - 3BR, 1.5BA house. Laundry, 2 car garage. 1st, last and deposit. Background check. \$1,250/mo. No pets. Call 815-476-2805. ca48b-51a

Wilmington, 1 BR, stove, refrigerator (courtesy), \$750 month, security deposit, first month's rent and lease. No smoking, no pets. Utilities not included. 815-931-9537. ck48b-52a

HOMES FOR SALE

Coal City-2BR, possible 3, 1 BA, remodeled kitchen and bathroom, hardwood floors, perfect location, 1 block off Broadway, 85 S. Kankakee St., \$119,900, 815-585-3497, 815-634-8926. ca 49b-51a

LOST & FOUND

Have you found a lost pet or lost a pet in Will County? Please call Will County Animal Control. We may have your pet. We want to reunite your family, 815-462-5633. fr1fn

MISCELLANEOUS

Firewood for Sale
Seasoned, mixed & hardwood. Dry & delivered for \$115.00 Call 815-791-0257. cc48a-51b

New Teeter Inversion Table X2. Asking \$200 obo. New Excaliber Dehydrator 5 Tray System, fruits, veggies & meats. Asking \$100 obo. Call 808-389-3583. cc49a-51b

MISCELLANEOUS

Hall Rental - Available for parties, showers & meetings. Seats 100 people, full kitchen available. If interested call New Hope Presbyterian Church in Coal City, 815-634-8332. ch 27a-tfn

HOMEMADE POTICA
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MOBILE HOMES FOR SALE

3 BR, 2 BA, 2009 mobile home for sale - 63 Chaucer in Bookwalter Woods. Everything in good working condition. Please call for more information 779-456-2877. cc46b-49a

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REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE of 918 South Water Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 (Single Family Residence). On the 23rd day of December, 2021 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse Annex, 57 N. Ottawa Street, Room 201, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **BankUnited, N.A. Plaintiff V. Jeffrey A. Hundley, Theresa L. Hundley State of Illinois Defendant**. Case No. **19 CH 0887** in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **Randall S. Miller & Associates** 120 N. LaSalle Suite 1140 Chicago, IL 60602 P: 1-312-239-3432 F: 1-312-284-4820

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers Wed., Dec. 1, 8 & 15, 2021.

REAL ESTATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - MORRIS, ILLINOIS NEWREZ LLC, F/K/A NEW PENN FINANCIAL, LLC, D/B/A SHELL-POINT MORTGAGE SERVICING Plaintiff, -v- AUSTIN L. HOUGH et al Defendant 2018CH100 NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on March 29, 2019, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 9:00 AM on December 22, 2021, at the Grundy County Courthouse, 111 East Washington Street front door entrance, MORRIS, IL, 60450, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate: Commonly known as 249 PRAIRIE RIDGE COURT, MINOOKA, IL 60447 Property Index No. 03-12-326-017 The real estate is improved with a residence. Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court. Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale. The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation

as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1). IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW. You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales. For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876 THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjisc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales. CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100 BURR RIDGE IL, 60527 630-794-5300 E-Mail: pleadings@il.cslg.com. Plaintiff's Attorney ARDC No. 00468002 Case Number: 2018CH100 TJC#: 41-2813 NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. Case # 2018CH100 13181727 Published in the Free Press Newspapers Wed., Nov. 24 & Dec. 1, 8, 2021

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COAL CITY \$169,900 3 BR bungalow with updated bathroom and 1 3/4 garage is ready for you to move right in! Chisty 815-693-5757. DK185	WE ARE OPEN AND SERVING OUR CLIENTS! • We are Showing homes to Buyers. • We are Listing homes for Sellers. • We are Selling Homes every day! Our office is open seven days a week and we continue to work full time serving our clients! 815-942-9190	PRICE REDUCED S.WILMINGTON \$119,900 Well built 3 BR, 1 BA home in a quiet neighborhood with a big lot! Call/Text Lorrie 815-715-5959. SM40	MAZON \$103,000 2 BR home with 3 car garage. Newer furnace, a/c, windows, kitchen and more on a large lot. Text Shawn 474-6670. JM619	RESIDENTIAL LOTS Including Wooded and Waterfront
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We have children from area schools drawing Christmas art to be featured in our Dec. 20 & Dec. 22 issues.

Your business can sponsor a child's drawing to send out a season's greetings message to your customers.

Parents, grandparents, and children comb through the ads looking at all the businesses who supported these community pages.

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Deadline is Dec. 15

Artist Name - School
Business Name • Address • Phone #

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Judges rule NAACP too late for Illinois map changes

One of the things that I most certainly did not have on my 2021 legislative Bingo card last January was that an Oak Park liberal Democratic Senate President and the state's first Black House Speaker would be fighting multiple legal claims that their new state legislative district maps deprive protected minorities of their constitutional rights.

And the ante was upped last month when both men went on record opposing an attempt by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., Chicago Westside Branch NAACP and NAACP Chicago Southside to intervene in the redistricting case.

The brief was filed in U.S. District Court. The groups asked to intervene because, they claim, the reduction of Black-majority legislative districts in the new maps was unconstitutional.

The NAACP hoped to join lawsuits already filed by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the NAACP of East St. Louis which contend the maps were drawn in violation of the federal Voting Rights Act, which protects minority interests. Illinois Republicans have filed another lawsuit on the same grounds.

But attorneys for Senate President Don Harmon and House Speaker Chris Welch argued that amicus briefs at the trial level are highly unusual, the motion was untimely ("due to the necessary yet break-neck speed of this case, Defendants are already tasked with responding to three plaintiffs' submissions and

nine expert reports in a matter of 12 days") and would prejudice the defendants' case ("by seeking to inject new claims and new relief into the case at this late stage, the NAACP denied Defendants the opportunity to test their claims through motion practice and discovery").

You gotta do what you gotta do in cases like these. I'm not trying to imply anything nefarious here, and both leaders have firmly maintained that their maps will withstand constitutional scrutiny, but you gotta admit it's very weird and a little unsettling watching all of it play out.

Meanwhile, the NAACP's own filing mentioned that the group had earlier sent a letter to Gov. JB Pritzker "expressing concerns over the lack of engagement with the Black community in the redistricting process and the negative impact of S.B. 927 on Black representation in the Illinois General Assembly."

A letter sent by the NAACP to Pritzker, dated Sept. 22, complained that the map legislation was "developed in a top-down manner, with little opportunity for actual engagement from community-based groups such as the NAACP."

The NAACP also complained in the letter that it wasn't able to adequately assess the impact of the new maps without weeks of work

because of the data's format.

"In short, the process used by the state deprived residents of the opportunity to have their voices heard."

The organization then asked the governor to delay any action on the remap plan until Oct. 19.

"This will give the NAACP and other groups a chance to take part in the democratic process and to provide you with maps that we believe are fair and preserve the voting power of Black voters in the state legislature."

Pritzker, who won the 2018 Democratic primary partly because of strong support in the Black community and who pledged during the campaign to veto a politically partisan redistricting bill, signed the remap legislation two days after the NAACP sent its letter, claiming the maps "align with the landmark Voting Rights Act and will help ensure Illinois' diversity is reflected in the halls of government."

Again, weird and unsettling.

Oh, and, by the way, the legal push-back from the two legislative leaders did indeed prevent the NAACP from having a major say in the outcome of the redistricting case.

The three-judge federal panel hearing the case ruled last week that they would accept the groups' proposed amicus brief "for limited pur-

poses." The court will consider the insights offered by the civil rights groups "into the history of racially polarized voting in Illinois."

But, more importantly, the panel decreed that the judges won't allow the organizations to assert any new claims or challenge any districts beyond those already under review by the court.

The judges explained that the remap plan has been out there in the open since the end of August, all of the existing complaints were filed by the middle of October and the litigants "have been proceeding at a greatly accelerated pace ever since." That process was fast approaching its conclusion by the time the [NAACP's] motion was filed, and there is no time for a do-over," the judges wrote.

So, the super-majority legislative Democrats dodged a potentially harmful legal bullet on timing grounds alone.

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



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File Photo

REED-CUSTER'S Dylan Garrelts was a three-sport athlete at Reed-Custer High School. He was a forward on the hardwood, a wide receiver on the gridiron and he will be an outfielder on the baseball diamond when he plays for the Tigers next spring.



File Photo

MAKING THE CATCH for the Comets during Friday's home game is outfielder Dylan Garrelts. Garrelts has signed to play baseball at ONU next spring where he will play a little outfield, a little infield and he could pitch some as well.

Garrelts signs to play baseball at ONU

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

Reed-Custer baseball standout Dylan Garrelts will be taking his versatility elsewhere next spring as he has signed to play baseball at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, IL.

Garrelts is currently recovering from an injury he sustained in football. He's going to get surgery, won't be able to play basketball or baseball this year and the hope is he'll be ready to play next baseball season.

"The goal is being able to be ready for next baseball season," said Garrelts. "I'm having my ACL reconstructed and my LCL reconstructed and my bicep femoris, they're going to

have to pull that back down and reconnect it. It's pretty banged up but my doctor is really confident I'll be back and ready to play in time for college."

Garrelts said he's wanted to go to Olivet Nazarene for a while and his dad went there so it was always on his list, and when he saw it firsthand, he was sold.

"It's always been one of the top schools. I always got to go there for basketball tournaments and see the campus like the baseball field and everything so when I went on a visit, I really liked all the facilities that they had. They had a nice turf room.

Garrelts got the ball rolling with ONU when he sent his highlight tape to them in months prior to being signed.

"They liked what they saw on my film so they invited me for a visit and to compete in a showcase. I took a bunch of live bp and live fielding and stuff, and that's what they offered me from," commented Garrelts.

For Garrelts, baseball was always the number one sport for him and it was no contest. He played basketball and football as well but when he didn't get to play one year, he realized he couldn't live without playing baseball.

"I've played baseball since I was like four, basketball since I was eight and football since I was like 10 or 11. During sophomore year, I played every sport and COVID canceled the baseball season. During that time, all I had to look forward to was my travel baseball sea-

son and I ended up breaking my hand, and I went a whole year without baseball and I kind of realized how much I needed to play it.

His favorite part about the game is putting the bat on the ball and he has kept it up even during the COVID shutdown.

"I had a lot of free time so I had a tee and my net in my backyard.

Garrelts started to see how talented he was when he was in middle school playing for the Braidwood Baseball and Softball Association.

"It was probably around BBSA. It was probably sixth or seventh grade and I was on a team that didn't have many of my friends on it or anybody good. And the other BBSA team was stacked with all of my friends and I struck like

every one of them out so that was one of the early games I remember. I was hitting my spots."

The Tigers, who finished '21 campaign 39-19 (26-6), will be looking for Garrelts to play multiple positions.

"They like when players play different spots so when I did the showcase there, I was playing some third base, some outfield and I did some pitching."

Garrelts' number one goal for his freshman year is to be healthy by the time the baseball season starts.

"I also would like to have some pretty good playing time. I'm willing to work really hard and I'll play wherever I need to play. I'm a pretty good fielder. I just need to work on arm velocity and putting on some

weight, and I'll be good to go."

Garrelts wants to pursue a degree in either Athletic Training or Exercise Science. He got almost all A's at Reed-Custer High School and did it by putting things off. He likes to focus on one subject at a time.

"Obviously, it's not a good strategy but I put things off because I don't want to stress about them when I have other things to do. I try to prioritize the closest. Say I have three tests in a week, I won't study for one of them until I've done the other one so that's what's in my mind."

Garrelts will cheer on the Comet baseball team as a spectator this spring. After that, he'll be on his way to ONU to continue his athletic and academic career.

RGHS names students of the month



REED-CUSTER HIGH School named the students of the month for November (from left): Alex Delp, Vanessa Votta, Ashley Bollino, Zach Randall and Emiliano Guerra. Not Pictured: Samantha Bruns, Rachael Hamilton Christian Koca and Ava VanDuyne.

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Courtesy Photo

STATE QUALIFIERS—The Reed-Custer Middle School seventh grade girls basketball team qualified for the first time with a 22-4 win over Lisle in the Sectional Championship game. The Lady Panthers fought hard but came up short at state. The Lady Panthers are (from left, front) Peyton Schipour, Hailey Compton, Brooklyn Gonzalez, Izzy Toller, Reese Brown, Kirsten Klein and Caysie Esparza. Standing are coach Coronelli, Harlie Liebermann, Atiana Hood, Gracie Robinson, Kenzie Foote, Amber Syc, Kayla Schott, Alyssa Wollenzien and coach Graham.

Seventh Lady Panthers make it to state for first time in history of program

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

The Reed-Custer seventh grade girls basketball team made it to the state tournament where they lost by two points, 14-12, to Manteno on Saturday.

The Lady Panthers grabbed the lead with a lay-up in the first quarter but Manteno started a 6-2 run in the second to make it 6-4. Both teams matched each other's output with eight points the rest of the way and Manteno was able to hold on.

Mackenzie Foote led the Panthers with six points while Alyssa Wollenzien banked in four and Amber Syc added another lay-up.

The Lady Panthers finish their season with a terrific record of 17-6 with the seventh grade team's first state appearance and first

middle school girls basketball trip since 2001 when the eighth grade girls went.

They started out by making quick work through the Morris Saratoga Class 3A Regional. It began with a shutout win over Morris (15-0), a big win over Peru Parkside (25-14) and finally a 24-7 victory over Channahon in the regional championship game.

They destroyed Lisle 22-4 to get to a state match with Manteno.

Manteno clobbered Beecher, 35-8 and followed that with a 30-12 win over Peotone in the regional championship game to make it to the sectionals. In the sectional title game, Manteno destroyed Glenwood Brookwood, 40-6 to get to their state matchup.

After they beat Reed-Custer, Manteno was eliminated from the state cham-

pionship by Eureka, 49-17. Manteno still has a chance to earn third place in a matchup against Paris Mayo (22-2). That match would tip-off at 6 p.m. on Thursday. The state championship between Eureka (25-1) and Pittsfield Pikeland (20-3) will be played at 7:30 that same day at Auburn High School.

The seventh grade Lady Panthers basketball team consists of Peyton Schipour, Hailey Compton, Brooklyn Gonzalez, Izzy Toller, Reese Brown, Kirsten Klein, Caysie Esparza, Harlie Liebermann, Atiana Hood, Gracie Robinson, Kenzie Foote, Amber Syc, Kayla Schott, Alyssa Wollenzien, coach Coronelli and coach Graham.

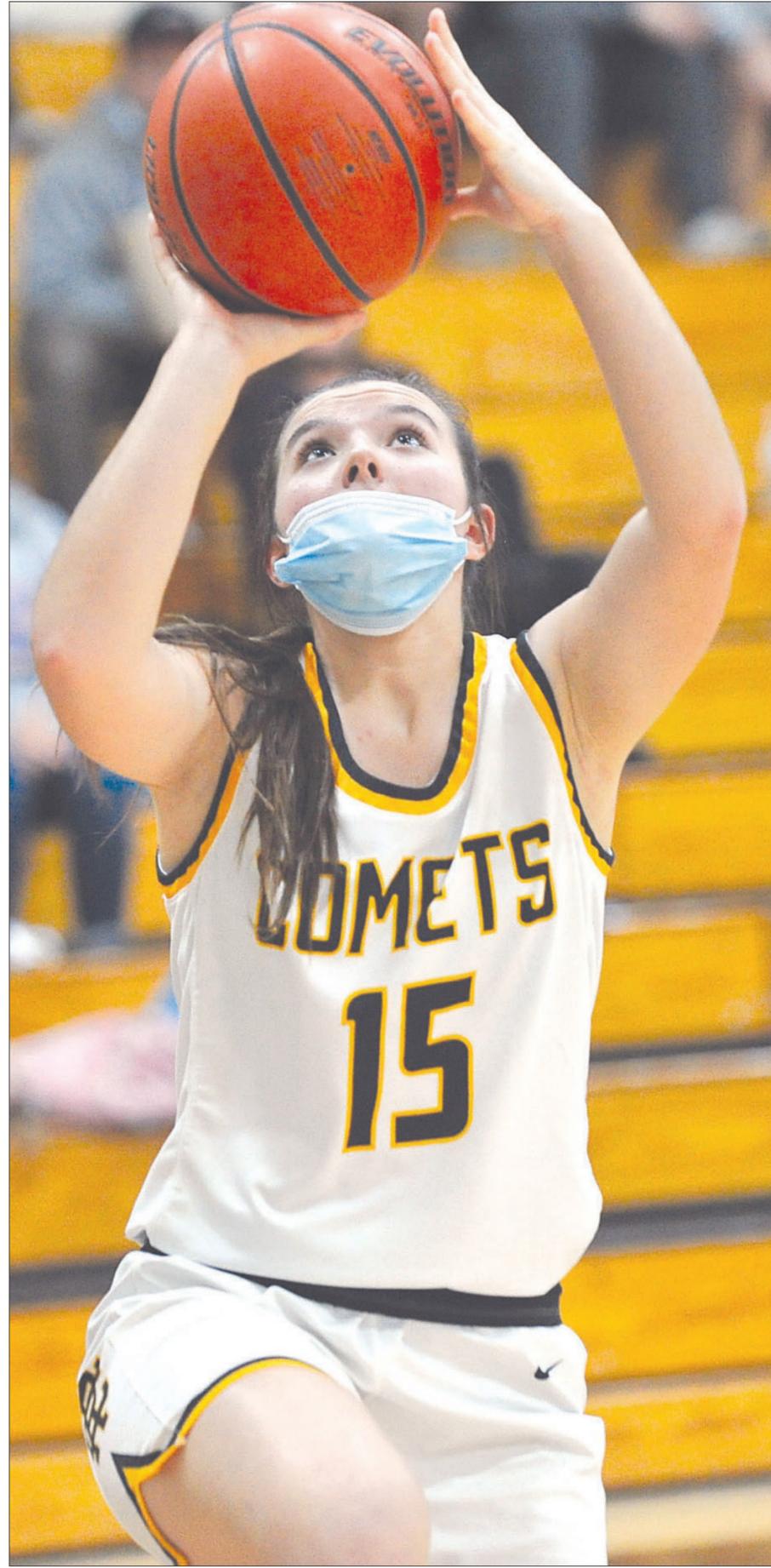


Photo by Shawn Long

LADY COMET Mya Beard attempts a lay up during Monday's home game with Yorkville Christian in the Lady Comet Classic.

Lady Comets beat Manteno, unable to erase early deficit in loss to Lions

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

The Reed-Custer girls basketball team was defeated 37-20 by a good Lisle team on Monday.

Lisle grabbed an early advantage by outscoring Reed-Custer in the first and it led to a 21-13 half-time cushion.

The Comets were held to just seven points the rest of the way and the Lions scored another 16 to end the game.

"Turnovers, blocked shots and leadership hurt us tonight," said RCHS girls basketball coach Shelby Zwolinski.

Emily Lochner led the Lady Comets with six points while Sam Sprimont added five with two boards. Adriaona Williams led the team with nine rebounds.

The Lady Comets will look to get back on track against Peotone Thursday.

**Reed-Custer 36
Manteno 27**

The Lady Comets had a balanced scoring attack on Thursday.

The Comets were led by Caelan Cole, who scored eight points with two threes. She also collected five rebounds with two assists.

Sprimont and Williams chipped in six points.

Sprimont pulled down four boards with an assist while Williams pulled down three rebounds. Both girls made multiple shots from the floor as Sprimont was 3-of-4 from the floor and Williams was 2-of-7.

Mya Beard and Lochner also had five points. Beard made 1-of-2 from the line with a couple of lay ups while Lochner drilled a three with a lay up. Beard added six rebounds.

Sylvia Crater made their other three with four points. She also added five rebounds. Laci Newbrough chipped in two free-throws with a team-high, 11 boards. She also had an assist.

Kaylee Tribble also pulled down two boards.

The Lady Comets also collected 11 steals.

Crater and Beard swiped three steals to lead them while Cole added another two.

Newbrough, Lochner and Sprimont chipped in another steal.

**Reed-Custer 30
Seneca 47**

The Comets came out cold on Tuesday and never warmed up.

The Irish went on a 20-1 run in the first to build a 32-8 half-time lead.

The Comets started to

score in the third and actually would outscore the Irish 13-4 in the fourth but it would be too little too late as the Irish held on.

Cole had eight points to lead the offense. She hit a three and made 3-of-4 from the line. Cole also pulled down two boards with an assist.

Madison Keenan chipped in six points with two lay ups and two from the charity stripe. She also pulled down three boards with an assist.

Newbrough and Lochner added five points. Lochner drilled a three and 2-of-2 from the line while Newbrough banked in four points with a free-throw. Newbrough pulled down seven rebounds with an assist.

Lochner added four boards.

Sprimont had two lay ups for four points with a rebound while Haley Buchanan also had two free-throws with two rebounds.

Williams and Beard had four rebounds while Addison Harms and Crater also had a rebound.

The Lady Comets defense had three steals.

They were led by Cole with two steals and a block.

Lochner also had a steal while Newbrough chipped in another block.

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