



Enjoy a tropical drink in December

Coaches choose RC soccer dream team



BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL .COM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER

Mikel appointed as acting public health and safety commissioner

Seat to be placed on April 6 ballot

BY BRIAN MURPHY
CORRESPONDENT

After three tie votes, Braidwood Mayor Robert Jones appointed James Mikel, Jr. as the new acting Public Health and Safety Commissioner during the regular City Council meeting on Dec. 8 at Braidwood City Hall.

Mikel will serve as acting commissioner until spring, when a replacement for the late Commissioner Charlie Hart will be chosen by the voters at the April 6, 2021 Consolidated Election.

Hart passed away on Nov. 13. By state statute, the mayor had 30 days to name a replacement for Hart. Per the statute, because Hart passed at

least 130 days before the next available election, and the remainder of his term was at least 28 months, the position must be placed on the ballot at that election to fulfill the remainder of his term.

"Because of the timing of the vacancy, this appointment would only serve until the springtime municipal elections and they would serve until whoever is elected is sworn in," city attorney Bryan Wellner explained. "Whoever is elected would serve the remaining two years of the term to be up for reelection again with all of you [in 2023]."

However, naming that replacement was hardly unanimous.

Commissioner Doug Money made a motion to appoint Mikel to the seat.

City Administrator Tony Altieri described the selection process for the candidates to be considered, and

why Mikel was under consideration.

"What we did is, the mayor wanted to reach out and let everybody in the public have a say to see who wanted to step up to the plate in Charlie's place. We had about 10 people in there but a few of them thought it was a full-time job, so they weren't interested in it. I talked to Wayne, I talked to Doug, I talked to the mayor and went through the list of people with them and asked what their consideration may be for that position," Altieri said. "[Mikel] had a couple people bring him up, he's been a life-long resident, he graduated Reed-Custer in '83, he coached football for approximately 25 years. He's also indicated that in the springtime when the actual election comes, he plans on running for this position for a permanent spot."

Altieri asked Mikel to make a statement to the council.

"I would just like to get involved in the community and try to make this place a better city for all the people and I would like my grandkids to be raised here and just do the right thing for everybody," Mikel said.

But when it came time to vote, Jones and Money voted yes to the appointment, while Commissioners Wayne Saltzman and Fay Smith voted no.

Money then made a motion to appoint Ray McShane, who Altieri also introduced.

"He's been one of the guys that's always stepped up to the plate," Altieri said of McShane. "If you have seen the really nice-looking fire hydrants now, Ray spent hours and hours on them. The high school kids are supposed to be doing community service and Ray has took it upon himself to get a lot of them out there to get some community service hours."

McShane also took a moment to speak on his own behalf.

"I would just like the opportunity to work with you guys to keep pushing Braidwood forward and to make it a better place," McShane said.

But the voting once again was deadlocked, with Money and Jones voting in favor of the appointment, and Smith and Saltzman again voting no.

Finally, a third possibility was introduced, as Saltzman made a motion to appoint former administrator Andrew Galatte to the remaining term.

Once again the vote was split, with Saltzman and Smith voting yes, and Money and Jones voting no.

Continuing the theme of the four elected officials at an impasse, the vote was also tied to discuss the mat-

SEE APPOINT, PAGE 2

Shop with a cop spreads Christmas joy



Photos provided by BPD

Generous donations from members of the community made this year's Shop with a Cop event a success for the Braidwood Police Department and the community it serves. This year the department raised enough money to take 18 children from the Braidwood community/Reed-Custer School District to Walmart in Morris to shop with officers, department members and their spouses who all volunteered their time, as well as the mayor, city administrator, commissioners, ESDA members, and school district staff. The department thanked volunteers, Rosatti's Pizza for providing pizza, and of course, Santa himself!

Braidwood faces \$2 million deficit despite budget cuts

BY BRIAN MURPHY
CORRESPONDENT

The city of Braidwood's finances remain in the red. However, an audit of the past fiscal year's finances show that some progress is being made when it comes to trimming the fat off the budget.

Bill Handley, partner for Wipfli, presented the audit for 2020 Fiscal Year (FY20), which ended on April 30.

"We are going to file the annual plan for the state this week and it's well before the due date. We were a little bit delinquent in the past but this week we will have everything filed with the state," Handley said.

"The first thing I wanted to do was thank the staff, Tony, and Kyle Kasperik for all their help with the audit. They were very helpful, and this year was a little different with the covid situation. We had to do things remotely for a few days and we appreciate everyone's effort."

Handley reported that at the conclusion of FY20, the city has about \$35 million in assets and has spent nearly \$1 million less than the previous fiscal year.

"That is primarily all its property, fixed assets like the roads and the water system, so

that's positive," he reported. "However, there is unrestricted deficit of about \$2 million. The current year expenses for governmental activities including depreciation was \$5.2 million and that is about \$800,000 less than the prior year. That decrease in expenses was primarily two things, there was a lot less overtime paid out to the police department and capital outlay for road improvements in the previous year that wasn't in this year."

Handley said the water and sewer fund generated revenue in excess of expenses of about \$600,000 in FY20. The general fund expenditures were about \$164,000 more than its revenue, not quite at the break even point but, according to Handley, "we're moving in the right direction because prior year 2019, the expenditures were almost \$1 million more than the revenues. Expense controls, especially over overtime and overall cost controls, helped make that change."

Handley also reported that the water and sewer fund was already trending down and in FY20 reversed itself.

He noted the same for the

SEE AUDIT, PAGE 2

Vaccinations for COVID-19 begin

Health care workers first to receive shots

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The first vaccinations to combat the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have been administered in Illinois.

On Tuesday, those first vaccinations in the state were given to health care workers in Peoria.

"This is a beginning for the state of Illinois, people getting vaccinated, particularly our healthcare workers, is an exciting moment," Gov. JB Pritzker said during an event in Peoria, where several of those workers were vaccinated on camera.

Pritzker acknowledged that the availability of a vaccination is part of the state's final phase of the Restore Illinois plan.

"Today is the beginning of a process that allows us to move toward reopening the state entirely," Pritzker said. "It will take some time."

Pritzker said he expects it to take many more months before the vaccine is available to the general public, ultimately hoping to achieve herd immunity against COVID-19.

ence with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) on Monday, IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said there was good news with regard to the spread of the virus following the Thanksgiving holiday.

"For this last week that ended on Saturday, there was not a significant spike or surge in the cases from the previous week," Ezike said. "So, that is good news, when we break it down by individual regions, it looks like only [two regions] had a tiny increase in the number from this last week over the previous week. So we haven't seen something significant to talk about now. We'll see for sure in this coming week, but we'll keep our fingers crossed that maybe we're not going to see a big bump. Unfortunately, time is what will give us more data."

Gov. Pritzker noted that the death toll across the country continues to top 3,000 people daily, as asked residents to continue masking, social distancing, hand washing, and taking other precautionary

SEE COVID, PAGE 2

Take a seat at La Tavola

Familiar faces to serve up old favorites, new flavors at Italian eatery

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Tavola—the Italian word for table—is the foundation of a new eatery opening in Coal City. In this case, coming together around the table is the cornerstone on which the deli and bakery is based.

On Tuesday morning, the Keenan family opened the doors to LaTavola, their newest venture in the food service business.

Familiar faces will serve up old favorites and new flavors from a storefront shop at 1011 E. Division St., in Coal City's Berta Crossing Shopping Plaza.

It's been about a dozen years since the Keenan's closed the kitchen at their

popular Braidwood restaurant—Antonia's, but they never left the industry just choosing to travel in a different direction for a while.

During that time Nicholas Keenan was developing his culinary skills and will bring that into the new restaurant that will feature some of Antonia's most popular items including eggplant parmesan, football sized pizza puffs, cannoli and coffee cakes.

Antonia Keenan said she's been wanting to get back into the restaurant business the past four years, but the timing wasn't right until now.

It was a conversation with a man from church about Nicholas' skills in the kitchen and his path in the culinary world that motivated her to move forward and open the

new eatery, even during a time of pandemic.

"He said we just needed to take courage and do this, and take charge and it would fall into place and actually everything has been falling into place," Antonia said.

A lease for the space was signed in early November and Antonia reports everything just came together quickly.

The family's concept for La Tavola is based on the original Antonia's that found success in a relatively small storefront on the main street in Braidwood.

It was a place where Antonia's father would greet customers at the door handing out samples and talking to them in his native Italian even though no one really understood what he was saying.

It was within the walls of that first location that Nicholas got his start in food service, and like his brothers—Anthony and Jonathan—he started washing dishes and bussing tables, before getting into the kitchen with his mom.

He was about seven years old when the Braidwood location opened, and as he approaches age 30 he knew he wanted to get back into the business and base it on what made Antonia's successful.

In the midst of a global pandemic when many others would shy away from opening a new business, a restaurant at that, the Keenan's jumped in without hesitation.

SEE LATAVOLA, PAGE 2



Appoint

ter in executive session.

At that point, Jones stepped in. "I'm going to make an appointment, and I'm going to appoint Jim Mikel," Jones said.

"I don't think you have the right" Saltzman responded to the appointment. However, Wellner noted that as mayor, Jones did have the authority to appoint someone to the seat in an "acting" capacity.

Mikel was sworn in and took his seat on the dais with the other council mem-

bers.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Karen Hart, Charlie Hart's wife of 60 years, expressed her appreciation to everyone that has reached out to offer condolences and donations.

"I just wanted to say thank you to all the council members, and particularly Tony [Altiery] and [Police Chief] Todd [Lyons]. They were the first ones at the door when I got back from the hospital after Charlie passed with a tray of food and I can't thank you enough. I thank all of Braidwood, you have been very gracious, and I just wanted to tell you, thank you," Hart said.

The filing period for those hoping to

run to fulfill Hart's term is now open.

Petitions can be filed at Braidwood City Hall through Monday, Dec. 21 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Candidates must acquire signatures equal to at least 1% of the total vote cast for mayor at the last preceding mayoral election.

Candidates can find filing forms on the Illinois State Board of Elections website, www.elections.il.gov.

Click on the "Running for Office" tab, then the "2021 Candidate's Guide."

Links to qualifications and downloadable nomination papers for a commission form of government can be found on page 27 of the guide.

LaTavola

"This location came available and it seemed like a good look spot, a good fit, so we went in, looked at it and said yes, and we've pretty much been spending all of our time here," Nicholas said.

While the location may appear larger to those who patronized Antonia's first location, the mother and son say the new space is actually smaller which is noticeable when you enter the kitchen space, but it's the perfect location for them to get back to their roots.

In developing the concept for La Tavola, the family wanted it to be a place everyone felt comfortable coming into.

"What you can expect is a place that feels warm and inviting, a place with good customer service, a place people want to come into," Nicholas said.

In describing his vision for the business he recalls trips his family has taken to an Italian bakery near Chicago.

"When you walk in its like walking into grandma's house because of the smells and it brings back my childhood and I want that same feeling here," he said.

The Keenans have a lot of great memories from sitting around the dining table, and they want to help their customers build similar memories through food and stories shared around their own tables.

"From our table to yours" is the motto for La Tavola, and they want to help locals fill the table, be it a mid-day meal or a spread to celebrate a special occasion.

La Tavola comes from Nicholas' grandmother.

"She said, 'I had a dream you and your friends were sitting around and talking about how your friendship is like a kitchen table.' We used to joke about that how the four of us were the legs and as friends came in they were the chairs, and the leaves. And, she said that's what we should call it, the table."



Photo by Ann Gill

THE KEENAN FAMILY is back with their newest venture—La Tavola, an Italian deli and bakery. Based on the concept of their original eatery, Antonia's, the family will be cooking up Italian favorites, slicing up specialty meats and cheeses and sending out sweet treats. Antonia Keenan [left] is joined in the business by her son, Nicholas [right] who will oversee the kitchen, with additional assistance from sons, Anthony and Jonathan and fellow family members. LaTavola is open at 1011 E. Division St., in Coal City's Berta Crossing Shopping Plaza.

They took grandma's advice and are excited to welcome the community to join them at the table—La Tavola.

The menu will include Italian classics like baked mostaccioli, chicken piccata, focaccia bread sandwiches, a variety of sliced meats and cheeses, pastas and specialty condiments available for purchase. The small market they have created within the space features items and brands that can't be found in a regular grocery store.

They also have a wide selection of sweets including cookies, brownies, along with their signature tiramisu and cannoli. There's also coffee cakes and cookie trays and fresh baked bread.

Antonia said the response to the new eatery has been encouraging and they are looking forward to the days and weeks ahead seeing old

friends and making new ones.

The deli, bakery and eatery is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Saturday and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., with Monday serving as their day of rest.

Carry-outs, delivery and in-store purchases are available, with in-door dining to come once current pandemic restrictions are lifted. La Tavola also offers catering.

Along with Nicholas, Antonia will be assisted in the business by sons—Anthony and Jonathan. Her brothers and sister-in-law have also stepped in to help, as well as former employees and friends.

Nicholas has plans to add weekly specials that venture beyond his family's Italian roots. These world flavors will provide something new and different to the area's dining options.

"We're all excited,"

Antonia said. For her, this new adventure provides much joy as she gets to spend time with her family and she hopes what they are bringing to the community allows others to have that same time together.

"We want everyone to feel as through they are part of our family and in turn we a part of theirs," she said.

If planning to order the signature pizza puff—a fried dough delight filled with your choice of ingredients — Anthony Keenan reminds customers not to over order.

Based from a 12-inch dough, one puff big enough to feed two or three people. If ordering amaretti cookies, this editor suggests buying them by the dozen, they are that good.

With the eatery officially open, the Keenan's look forward to welcoming the community at La Tavola.

COVID

measures until the vaccine is widely available.

"We need to survive in order for us to be able to take the vaccine," Pritzker said, adding that mitigations will remain in place for high school sporting events until the vaccine is widely available.

On Tuesday, the IDPH announced 7,359 new cases of COVID-19 in the state, and 117 additional deaths, including 12 patients, all over the age of 60, in Will County.

The seven day rolling average test positivity rate in Region 7 — Will and Kankakee counties — is 12.6% as of Dec. 12. That number continues to decline from its highest rate of 20.7% back on Nov. 16. The positivity rate in Will County as of Dec. 12 is 13.9%.

As of Tuesday, the total cases since the pandemic began reported to the IDPH inside the 60481 zip code, which includes Wilmington, Shadow Lakes, Symerton, and surrounding rural areas, is now 816, an increase in total cases of 97 since the previous Tuesday, Dec. 8.

In the 60408 zip code, Braidwood, the total number of cases is now 394, up 29 over the previous week.

All regions of the state remain in Tier 3 mitigations.

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

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

Masks and social distancing remain mandatory in all public spaces.

Funds available to improve energy efficiency

Will County is establishing a C-PACE (Commercial-Property Assessed Clean Energy) program offering low-cost, long-term funding to local businesses for energy

efficiency. The program includes renewable energy, water conservation, electric vehicle charging and other clean energy projects.

Interested businesses should visit www.ieca.org program to the Chicagoland area.

Braidwood reminds of deadline for Commissioner seat

PUBLIC NOTICE
ELECTION TO FILL VACANCY OF COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY CITY OF BRAIDWOOD, ILLINOIS

NOTICE is hereby given, that there is a vacancy in the position of the Commissioner of Public Health and Safety to fill an unexpired term. The City of Braidwood will be open from 8am to 5pm beginning December 14, 2020 through December 21, 2020 for the purpose of accepting candidate petitions and other related documents for the 2021 Consolidated Municipal Election to be held on April 6, 2021 for the position of the unexpired term of the Commissioner of Public Health and Safety.

Teresa Fisher
Local Election Official

NOTE: The information provided on this notice does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; instead, all information is for informational purposes only. Published in The Braidwood Journal on Dec. 16, 2020.

Custer Fire District posts 2021 meeting schedule

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETINGS AUTHORITY UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT

NOTICE: It is hereby given that Custer Fire Protection District shall have regular meetings of its Board of Trustees on the following dates for the year, January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

** Agenda will be posted 48 hrs prior to meeting on District website: www.custerfpd.org per OMA.

These meetings shall commence at 6:00PM CST unless otherwise stated:

- Wednesday, January 20, 2021
- Wednesday, February 17, 2021
- Wednesday, March 17, 2021
- Wednesday, April 21, 2021
- Wednesday, May 19, 2021
- Wednesday, June 16, 2021
- Wednesday, July 21, 2021
- Wednesday, August 18, 2021
- Wednesday, September 15, 2021
- Wednesday, October 20, 2021
- Wednesday, November 17, 2021
- Wednesday, December 15, 2021

All meetings shall take place in the cafeteria of Camelot Education, 35445 Washington St., Custer Park, IL unless otherwise noted.

Notice of special meetings of the Board of Trustees or Electors shall be given as required by statute.

Any questions concerning meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be directed to Ron Pruss, President of the Custer Fire Protection District (815) 458-2680 or by email: president.custerfpd@hotmail.com
Published in The Braidwood Journal on Dec. 16, 2020.

Audit

general fund, where expenses were more than the revenue in the past few years.

The TIF fund transferred about \$700,000 to the water and sewer fund to make loan payments to the Illinois EPA. In his advice letter to the council, Handley cautioned against moving money between funds without proper planning.

"When one fund was short some money and another fund had excess money, there would be entries made to show interfund borrowing," he said. "So, one fund would loan the other fund money. An example of that, the motor fuel fund has a deficit of about a million dollars which means that it has borrowed about one million from the water and sewer fund to pay for some projects.

"What the board has to consider is what's the overall plan for these interfund balances," Handley continued. "If there is a plan to have a surplus in one fund and we have the ability to pay that money back, that's great. However, if that's really not going to happen, and that was a decision in the past that you're not going to change or can't change, then I think there should be a formal decision by the board to actually show and approve a transfer of one fund to another."

City set to pay more in insurance premiums

BY BRAN MURPHY
CORRESPONDENT

I care about what happens to Braidwood and you don't."

The following briefs were recorded during the Dec. 8 meeting of the Braidwood City Council:

- During his report, City Administrator Tony Altiery said insurance costs have increased due to the pandemic.

"We ended up getting the insurance premium quotes for the city of Braidwood... and because of COVID and all the riots and everything going on, there are so many lawsuits going on that of course the insurance premiums are skyrocketing," Altiery said.

"We normally pay about \$320,000 a year which includes workers comp, this year it looks like we are going to be right up at \$400,000. Not only do we already have to make ends meet, but now we have to come up with another \$80,000 for insurance premiums so it just makes it a little tougher every day."

• Mayor Bobby Jones said the recent holiday festivities in town were a success.

"We had a great Christmas parade and a good turnout for everybody along the street. It was good to see everybody out doing stuff with the community," Jones said.

• During public comment, resident Charles Galbraith questioned the mayor's availability, the efficacy of the police department, and prompted a response from Jones.

"First of all, I would like to say thank you to Mr. Smith because he seems to be the only one in his role that makes himself accessible to the people of Braidwood," Galbraith said. "I'd like to know why it is that a mayor that was elected to do a job for the people of Braidwood, but instead of doing the job only shows up for five hours a week. The bottom line is you're not doing your job and you're never here;

But Jones took issue with the comment.

"I would have to disagree with you; I'm in town all the time," Jones said.

• Also during public comment, Joe Beyers said the police department was doing a great job and gave a different perspective on the enhanced security around town.

"I would like to thank the council for doing a good job. Our town is known for Christmas parades, food pantries and helping the neighborhood. A business with bars on the window does not represent the police force or Braidwood. It represents a sign of the times. It's pretty simple to figure that out," Beyers said.

• The city will hold a special meeting later this month in order to finalize the numbers for the tax levy.

"On Dec. 28, City Hall is going to host a special city council meeting to vote on the passage of that tax levy ordinance that will be for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2020 until fiscal year end of April 30, 2021," city attorney Bryan Wellner explained.

Wellner noted that the tax levy is \$1.73 million, a 4% increase over the previous year.

• The council approved payment of bills for \$122,656.52 and payroll expenses of \$132,820.81.

The largest bills were \$43,604.68 for garbage, \$23,019.22 for water/sewer and \$19,264.32 for police.

The largest payroll expenses were \$23,709.80 for water salaries, \$16,417.87 for full-time patrol wages and \$10,563.33 for sergeants salaries.

• The council approved the minutes of the Nov. 24, 2020 regular meeting by a vote of 3-0 with Commissioner Doug Money abstaining due to his absence.

www.braidwoodjournal.com

Time for a year-end investment review.



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

Member SIPC
www.edwardjones.com

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING



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

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
The Braidwood Journal, P.O. Box 327;
Wilmington IL 60481

Subscription rates: \$40 Grundy & Will counties; \$48 other Illinois counties and \$54 out of state
G.W. Communications, Inc publishes the weekly

subscription newspapers named The Free Press Advocate, The Braidwood Journal and The Coal City Courant, and an advertising shopper known as the Prairie Shopper.

Advertising and Business Offices:
• 111 South Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481 (815) 476-7966; Fax: (815) 476-7002
• 271 South Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 (815) 634-0315; Fax: (815) 476-7002

Deadline for the Prairie Shopper
Display Advertising: Thursday, 2 p.m.
Classified & Public Notices: Thursday 5 p.m.

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

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

©2019 All news, photographs and advertising material used in this publication are the property of G.W. Communications, Inc. Use of the material without the consent of G.W. Communications, Inc. is strictly prohibited. Violators of this property right are subject to legal action.

Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Ann Gill, editor

Brace yourself for wild Braceville



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

Braceville, “.” Indeed, this town of Braceville is in many respects a wonderful one; it has more high priced poor land, more railroads, more coal and more children to the acre than any other town in the county, and is ready to take a contract to double discount 492 children on short notice.”

We know that the first coal shaft in Braceville Township was sunk in 1858 by a co-operative group of miners on land belonging to N. Cotton. It was this same N. Cotton that laid out the town of Braceville.

One of my first pieces of information about Braceville was the following entry in the April 12, 1865 Wilmington Independent, “A young man named Francis Bradley, died at Braceville, on Monday, the 31 instant. He was a member of the 16th Illinois Cavalry, and had been in the service about three years.

Was a prisoner in Richmond nine months, and had been home about two weeks when he died. He was buried in this city with military honors.”

The confusing part about this entry is that I cannot find his name on any Civil War Roster of Illinois veterans. Perhaps one of you may have a clue about this chap.

We know that Braceville was a wild town because of this next entry from the February 26, 1867 Joliet Signal, “Fearful assault near Braceville - A murderous assault was committed

near Braceville, on Tuesday evening, the 5th instant. We gather the following particulars. A man named George Whalen, went to the house of Austin Shaw, armed with a corn knife, and threatened to cut him into inch pieces.

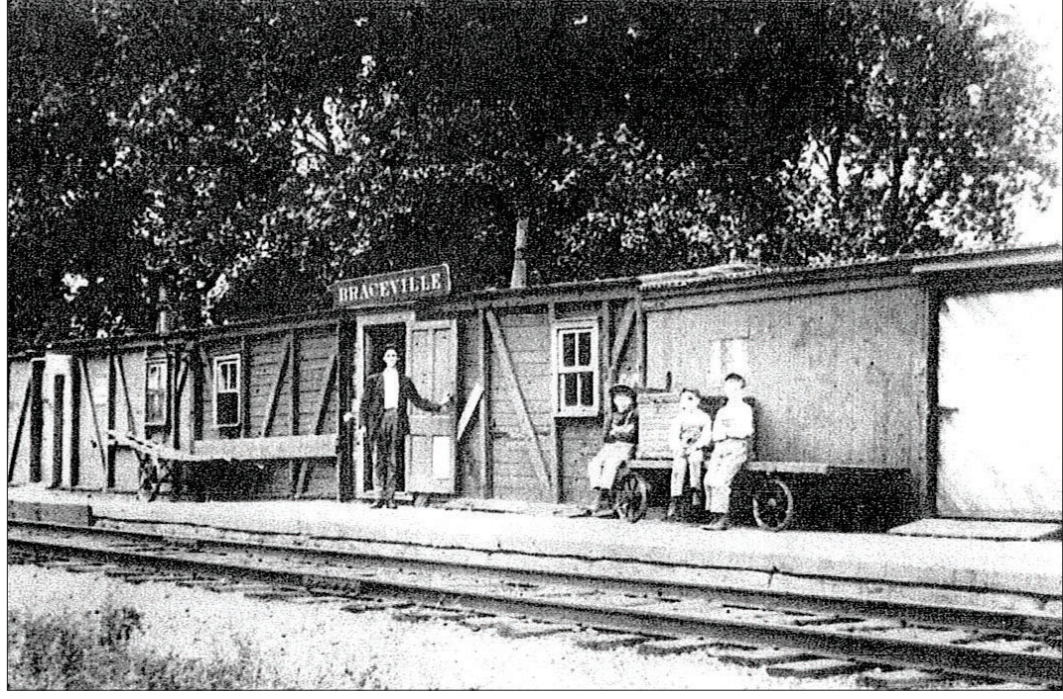
He at once commenced carrying out his threat by inflicting a terrible wound on Shaw's hand and arm, about ten inches in length, and cutting the radial artery of the wrist and part of the tendons.

He also attacked Mrs. Ida Shaw, wife of Orville Shaw. She raised her hand to protect herself, and received a blow which cut off the third finger of the hand, entirely, and partly severed the second.

The knife passed down the wrist, cutting off the ulnae artery. Both the wounded parties had a narrow escape from bleeding to death, before assistance could be obtained. Dr. McMann was called, and dressed the wounds, and the parties are recovering.

Whalen was arrested by Officer David Cotton and plead guilty to the charge of assault with intent to kill. He was lodged in the Grundy County jail, at Morris, where he now awaits trial.”

Another interesting fact about Braceville is that it was the site of many early boxing matches. Boxing was banned in Will County, so men would cross the county line to Grundy where there was no ban.



A PHOTO OF the temporary depot in Braceville, made out of boxcars.

We read in October of 1872, “On Wednesday evening, two pugilistic sports - Joe and Bill - met in fistic combat on the sands in Braceville. The “mill” is said to have lasted twenty minutes, when Bill threw up the sponge, and Joe and his numerous admirers gave vent to three rousing cheers for Greeley, Brown and victory.”

Braceville went through a down cycle after 1865 after the ending of the Civil War. Those early shaft owners did not have

the capital it took to sink truly deep mines and build the infrastructure needed to remove the coal and ship it.

All that ended in 1873 when investors turned their eyes south from Braidwood and rediscovered the coal fields of Braceville. We read, “Southern Grundy, more particularly the town of Braceville, is destined to be one of the greatest coal mining regions in the State.

Several companies and individuals, possessed of

ample capital, are operating there, raising coal from old mines and opening new ones. The coal mined there sells readily at the highest prices realized for Illinois coal in Chicago. The vein does not lie as near the surface as it does near Morris, however, and the first cost of the getting a mine in operation is much less here than there.”

Next week we will discover if Braceville became “one of the greatest mining regions” or not.

A little help this holiday season in Coal City

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

COAL CITY — At a time when some in the community could use a little extra help, the Coal City Food Pantry is there to see them through the holiday season and beyond.

The pantry doors are open weekly allowing individuals and families to shop the shelves once each month for perishable and non-perishable foods, along with other necessities such as laundry soap and paper products when available.

Long before the pantry became a year round operation, community volunteers organized a holiday distribution that provided families in need with boxes of food filled with donations made during the annual Cub Scout food drive. Those distributions often included a few extras like bread, eggs and ham that were donated by community members and businesses. And, during those times local residents would contribute wrapped gifts that were handed out to children.

The gift distribution ended a few years ago and was replaced with cards for recipients to use at their discretion.

Once again the pantry handed out gift cards, \$25 for every family being assisted this year.

Pantry president Barb Kent said recipients were unaware of the gift cards until they arrived to collect their holiday meal boxes on Saturday.

Unlike past years donations collected from the annual food drive were not handed

out as part of the holiday distribution, those items went directly onto the pantry shelves.

The holiday meal boxes—200 of them—were purchased from the Northern Illinois Food Bank for distribution to families. The boxes arrived at the pantry about one hour prior to distribution that was scheduled for 9 a.m.

The giveaway consisted of a ham, bag of fresh sweet potatoes and box of shelf stable food—larger families received more than one box, according to Kent, who noted many of the pantry's patrons are part of larger families—three or more people.

The change to the holiday meal boxes was made several months ago by the pantry's board of directors to ensure the annual Christmas distribution continued.

At that time, Kent said it was unclear if the scouts would be given the go ahead to conduct the food drive during the pandemic, and when the authorization came through to move forward with the door-to-door collection the pantry had already secured its holiday items.

The annual community food drive organized by Cub Scout Pack 466 provides the pantry with a significant amount of shelf stable food items, as well as household cleaning and personal care items that are regularly needed.

This year's drive was move up a month and allowed volunteers the time necessary to sort the donations and stock the shelves. Current guidelines limit the number of volunteers the pantry can have working at



Photos by Ann Gill

VOLUNTEERS GATHERED AT Coal City United Methodist Church earlier this month for the Coal City Food Pantry's drive-thru holiday food distribution. Each recipient received a box of shelf stable food, a ham and fresh yams, along with laundry and dish detergent. The pantry had 120 local families pre-registered for the giveaway that has been taking place in the community for more than three decades.

one time.

Kent said the community once again came through with an abundance of donations. The door step collections filled two enclosed trailers.

“The outpouring was phenomenal given the situation we are in,” Kent said.

Due to pandemic guidelines the pantry conducted a drive-thru distribution with volunteers placing the items in

cars as they made their way through the line.

Employees from ExxonMobile were on site to assist pantry volunteers with the Saturday morning distribution.

The pantry relies on volunteers and donations to carry out its mission of alleviating hunger for families in need.

One former recipient of the pantry's assistance pro-

grams is now giving back to the non-profit, and the annual donation is matched by their employer.

“We are so grateful for the support,” Kent said.

Given the pandemic, she wasn't quite sure if donors would have the same resources to lend a hand this year, but as she's discovered in the past few weeks the community continues to step in to help their neighbors.

The pantry recently received an anonymous \$5,000 donation, along with several others that will help keep the shelves stocked this year, include donations that will be coming in soon from the annual bag sale conducted at

Berkot's Super Foods that allows its customers to purchase a bag of food for donation to the pantry.

Kent said the number of people seeking assistance from the pantry has gone up in the past year and she expects those numbers to rise the longer the pandemic has a grip on the state.

Monetary donations for the Coal City Food Pantry are accepted year round and can be sent to 6805 E. McArde Rd., Coal City. Food donations are also accepted and can be placed in the donation box located outside the southeast door of the Coal City United Methodist Church.



COAL CITY FOOD Pantry member Deb Gowdy was up early on Saturday, Dec. 5 to assist with the annual holiday food distribution.



COAL CITY FOOD Pantry volunteer Dave Gowdy was bundled up and masked up for the pantry's contactless drive-thru holiday food giveaway.

Helping you protect what matters most.

Let's set a time to discuss your auto, home and life insurance needs.



Brian Lown
Financial Representative
66 N Oak St
Manteno, IL 60950-1522
www.countryfinancial.com/brian.lown
brian.lown@countryfinancial.com
(815)468-8968



Auto and Home policies issued by COUNTRY Mutual Insurance Company*, COUNTRY Casualty Insurance Company* or COUNTRY Preferred Insurance Company*. Life insurance policies issued by COUNTRY Life Insurance Company* and COUNTRY Investors Life Assurance Company*. All issuing companies located in Bloomington, IL.

0520-513HC_24775-11/30/2020

Free Press Newspapers readers

SOUND-OFF

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

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

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

paper makes every effort to forward unpublished comments to the parties to whom they are directed.

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

To voice your opinion, please go to

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

Double standard

BRAIDWOOD—During the December 8th meeting of the Braidwood City Council a resident spoke up in regards to his dissatisfaction of the Mayor and his performance. The comments resulted in a heated back and forth exchange of words between the resident and the Mayor at which time the Mayor banged his gavel to restore order and enforce the 3 minute time limit allowed during public comment. What's funny is that when another outspoken critic of two other city council members went on the attack of these commissioners over several meetings, not once did he try to restore order, enforce the time limit or bang his gavel. It's nice to see that our Mayor has an obvious double standard.

Blocked by ILGOP

WESLEY TWP—After constantly hearing how social media has been blocking conservative voices, I felt that it was important to illustrate the conservative hypocrisy behind free speech. After asking several folks on The ILGOP Forum, the official page of the Illinois Republican Party has blocked me from asking questions in response to their search for a new ILGOP leader now that Schneider has stepped down. As of now, my comments are still there for everyone to see - they do not violate their published guidelines, there was no personal attacks, just basic questions of what are the GOP's Plans for the future of our state. If the ILGOP is going to block inquiries regarding their plans for our future of IL, is it safe to assume that they have no plans?

Still waiting

WILMINGTON—Do children not say thank you anymore? The times, they are a changing. I did when I was growing up under my parents' roof after receiving gifts for birthdays, graduations etc. Still haven't heard anything from nieces that got gifts this year. There is another old saying from the past, "Wait till next year." Uncle Frank

Follow procedure

BRAIDWOOD—A Braidwood resident recently questioned a Commissioner during a public meeting if he had received the FOIA requests that she had sent directly to him via email and asked why he had not fulfilled them yet. Why on earth would anyone submit a FOIA request to the incorrect person and expect them to complete it? Everyone knows that the City Clerk is the designated FOIA officer for the city and that all FOIA requests get submitted to her. As someone who has submitted multiple FOIA requests in the past, you would think that they would be well aware of the correct procedure. Sounds like a fishy setup to me and a poor excuse to create something to complain about.

It's their right

WILMINGTON—If anyone hasn't noticed there are some people who won't shut down some restaurants and bars since they can't afford to stay shut down. Some politicians are having them arrested. But what people really don't understand is that these small business owners have become political prisoners because they are standing up against some politicians who have overstepped their authority by allowing big business to operate freely and not allowing small businesses from operating so they can gain control over the lives of the Americans. Welcome to Communism part

What's coming next?

COAL CITY—We happen to have some schools throughout the U.S. that decided to stop children from reading certain books like "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Of Mice and Men." This is just one more form of control of the lives of citizens. Next will be "Fahrenheit 451" which is a movie about burning books, the temperature of which paper burns. And to go back prior to World War II when the dictator of Germany banned books, controlled the news and arrested people who objected to any of these things and even indoctrinated children to think only one way. They also removed radios and weapons from all the citizens and today some of these same things are happening in America by the Democratic party which is party of the left and so is Communism the party of the left.

Voter fraud

Vote early, vote often! Living in the Chicagoland area, we have all heard that saying. Finding out it may be true, is disheartening. Every legally registered voter should be angry at the possibility that there may have been widespread voter fraud in our elections. Nationwide, no matter what politician you choose, you should feel confident that your vote will not be nullified by an illegal ballot. Before we call Biden our president, everyone should want to make sure he won by an election that was fair and legal. Without legal elections, our democracy will be destroyed. We need to demand voter reform and require ID's to vote! Andrea Grant

One great, other not

WILMINGTON—The greatest and most humble Republican President of the United States was Abraham Lincoln who ended the Civil War. The worst and most arrogant Republican President of the United States is Donald Trump who wants to start a Civil War!

At warp speed

SHADOW LAKES—Next week the virus vaccine comes out thanks to Donald Trump's Warp Speed. If Joe Biden had been president he would have been more worried about the race and gender of the makers.

Attendance is important

REED TOWNSHIP—The Reed Township Republic Caucus has put together a slate of candidates for the April election but how many of them have ever attended a single township meeting? You would think that in order to know what's going on or what you're going to be changing as stated publicly on social media, you would have been attending these meetings all along. Attending a city council meeting is entirely different than attending a township meeting and the way the two bodies of government operate is completely different. So don't think you're going to run it like a municipal form of government, because you can't.

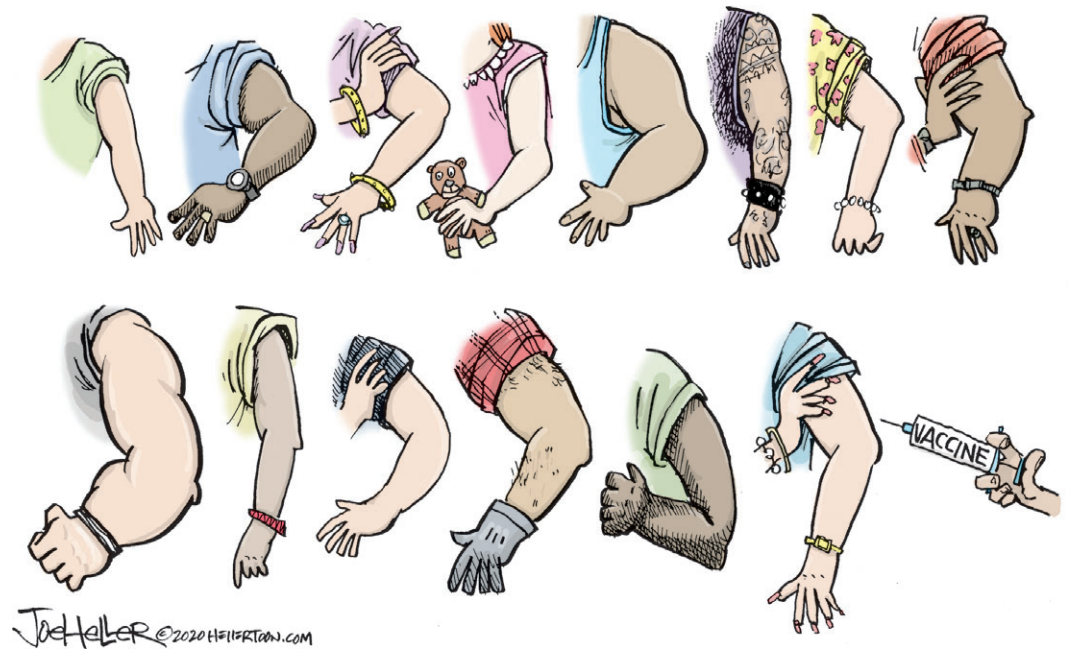
Will never forget

COAL CITY—I still miss the big beautiful white house on Broadway with the white Christmas tree in the window. Thanks Lindy, it was suppose to be the Lindy house but it burnt down instead. What a beautiful house.

Tornado tax

COAL CITY—In regards to the Coal City tornado tax. Maybe the village would have

A CALL TO ARMS



more money to go to that if the people that we have trusted to our money would quit spending it as if the money were coming out of their own pocket. Spend it more carefully.

Manipulating America

SHADOW LAKES—For years there's been the opinion that all Americans had some form of basic intelligence. But after seeing all the people that want Communism to control their lives, there is now the belief that U.S. citizens do not even have the intelligence to understand that they have been played like balloons filled with hot air. They are being manipulated like puppets on a string by people who only want to control their lives and do not care if they live as long as the millionaires and the career politicians are able to take all the money from them and destroy our country. Understand that right now there are two political parties, the Republican party and the party of crime and corruption with dictatorship policies known as the Democratic party.

Life lesson response

WILMINGTON—I was driving through town when my young son asked "Daddy, what does Pritzker sucks mean?" I told him it means a sad, angry, possible violent person lives there and to be safe avoid any house that has that sign. And that goes double for confederate flags.

Call and complain

SHADOW LAKES—Do you want service? There sure doesn't seem to be too much service at US Bank. First, we close the branch, next we cut personnel and last they went paperless. Everything they have done is for the benefit of them and not the customer. With the paperless deposit, if you don't have a cell-phone you must print your own deposit slips. The only thing I can recommend to the patrons of the bank is to call corporate in Minnesota and complain. I could walk to the branch before, now I must drive five miles. Margot Lane

Mayhem in America

COAL CITY—Armed protesters recently threatened Michigan's Secretary of State and her young child outside their home and the children of a health official in Idaho were likewise endangered by mobs. A month ago 13 conspirators plotted to kidnap and kill the Michigan governor and Wichita's mayor was nearly kidnapped for enforcing masks. In May the state of Michigan shut down its state capitol because men with rifles threatened the legislative body. Yes, right-wingers are jeopardizing American streets as Trump overturns our democracy. Instead of challenging the tweeter-in-chief, the Republican Party allows law-and-order to be abandoned. Sasha M.

Works both ways

SHADOW LAKES—To Ralph D: Just read your commentary, and for a second, I thought you were talking about the Biden family, Always, Margot Lane

License to kill

WILMINGTON—Small businesses and millions of unemployed Americans are hanging by their fingernails trying to survive the pandemic. But Republicans don't care and refuse to budge on relief legislation to help mom and pop companies. Not only that, Senate Leader McConnell is pushing legislation to allow billion dollar corporations to abuse their workers. McConnell insists that fat cats should be able to deny employees protective equipment and safety practices and legally get away with it. McConnell is truly living up to his nickname, the Grim Reaper. How much more abuse must Americans take from the GOP? Kate L.

Few are listening

BRAIDWOOD—Braidwood's self proclaimed truth seeking FOIA vigilante is costing the taxpayers quite a bit of money. Why doesn't the city administrator tell the public just how much time and money it is costing the taxpayers for this cheerleader's pursuit of information. This person is all about trying to dig up the truth with their FOIA shovel and then flaunting their findings about like they just did the residents a favor and found the lost city of Atlantis. Their intentions might be somewhat

Wilmington Chamber discounts membership

The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce is offering a \$25 discount off memberships before Dec. 31.

The incentive lowers the cost of membership to \$100 for the year 2021 as long as payment is postmarked by Dec. 31.

The Wilmington Chamber currently includes over 90 businesses who benefit from

the Chamber gift certificate program, business networking, promoting Wilmington with its web page and social media, the representative voice for small business when it comes to local, county and state government and more.

Among the accomplishments for 2020 the Chamber started a Hometown Heroes program - had 28 banners

installed through town; started a tourism & beautification program; raised funds for the Christian Help Association; launched a campaign to bring benches and flower pots to the downtown district and more.

For more information and to complete a chamber application to join visit www.wilmingtonchamber.org or call 815-476-5991.

50/50 Split The Pot

Buy Your Button

Proceeds To Help Fund
The Wilmington Tourism
Beautification Program

**Drawing to be held
December 21**

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

Thank you for your support!

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

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

FAMILY



Bruce and Deanna (Dede) Trotter

Trotters to celebrate 50th Anniversary

Bruce and Deanna (Dede) Trotter will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18, 2020. Bruce and the former Dede Savage were married on Dec. 18, 1970 at Hope Presbyterian Church in Gardner. The couple has one son, Michael (Cathy) and two granddaughters, Morgan and Lauryn.

ALDI joins Illinois grocers now accepting SNAP buying online

Illinois residents have a new retail option for using Electronic Benefit Transfer and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (EBT SNAP) online through Instacart.

The Illinois Department of Human Services announced Monday that ALDI will accept EBT SNAP via Instacart, allowing recipients access to more fresh foods with same-day delivery and pick-up services.

"The health and wellness of Illinois families is a top priority of my administration and I am pleased to announce this partnership which offers increased options for SNAP recipients to acquire groceries via online pickup or delivery," said Governor JB Pritzker.

"Especially amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important that all Illinois families have access to healthy, nutritious options, regardless of their background."

As part of this new program, EBT SNAP participants will be able to shop from ALDI via the Instacart online site and mobile app. To begin, eligible SNAP customers can visit www.DHS.Illinois.gov/OnlineSNAP.

Once an Instacart customer profile is created, customers can enter their EBT food card information as a form of payment in their profile. Customers will need a secondary form of payment for non-food items such as taxes, tips, and fees for delivery, per federal guidelines.

Customers can shop and select items from ALDI's EBT SNAP-eligible products. After filling their online shopping carts, customers can choose grocery delivery or pickup for their order and determine how much of their SNAP benefit they would like to allocate to the order.

Illinois' initial Online SNAP EBT option launched in June 2020 including Amazon and Walmart. The Illinois Department of Human Services will continue working to encourage even more Illinois retailers to participate.

Currently, any SNAP-Authorized Retailer can allow for customers to complete orders online and pay at the store when they pick up. The Online EBT capability allows the customer to complete the entire transaction online and avoid completing the purchase at the retailer location.

Coloring contest underway for those ages 3-6

Wilmington VFW Post 5422 Auxiliary is sponsoring a patriotic coloring contest for boys and girls ages 3 through 6.

Entry forms to be colored by youngsters from Wilmington and Braidwood can be picked up at the VFW, 557 W. Baltimore St., Wilmington.

Winners of the local contest will be entered into a District competition. The name, age and address of child must be written on the back of each entry.

Deadline to enter is Jan. 15, 2021. For more details call Kathy at 815-823-4324 or 815-926-2651.



Volunteers needed to lay wreaths at veterans cemetery

The laying of wreaths at the markers of U.S. soldiers will take place Saturday, Dec. 19 at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Volunteers of all ages are needed to place wreaths following a brief ceremony at 11 a.m. Volunteers should dress for the cold and show up.

New jobless claims surge in Illinois

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — More than 107,000 Illinois workers filed first-time unemployment claims last week, a 45% increase over the week before as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to wreak havoc on the state and national economies.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security reported that there were 107,616 new claims filed during the week that ended Saturday, Dec. 5, up from 75,536 the previous week. That compares to 14,798 initial claims filed during the same period last year.

That increase was part of a nationwide trend as the entire country has experienced record numbers of new cases and hospitalizations due to the pandemic. But the increase in new jobless claims in Illinois was sharper than it was nationally.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, new unemployment claims nationwide rose 32% over the prior week, to 947,504.

The number of people receiving continuing unemployment benefits has also

risen. In Illinois, that number went up 14.5%, to 340,919, while nationally it rose 10%, to just under 5.8 million.

During his daily COVID-19 briefing on Thursday, Dec. 10, Gov. JB Pritzker declined to say whether the state's increase was due in any part to the stricter Tier 3 mitigations that went into effect Nov. 20. Those include closing bars and restaurants to indoor service, closing casinos, video gaming facilities, theaters and indoor recreation centers, and limiting the size of both indoor and outdoor public gatherings.

941-HELP filling Crisis Line gap

With the closing of Crisis Line of Will & Grundy counties, the Community Foundation of Grundy County has edited 941-HELP (4357).

"The phone line for 941-HELP used to ring at Crisis Line during evenings and weekends. We have edited it to instead answer with a greeting where the caller can choose to be transferred immediately to the National Suicide Hotline," reported Julie Buck, executive director of the Community Foundation of Grundy County.

In addition to the option to transfer to the National Suicide Hotline, callers needing assistance with groceries, rent, utilities and other resources can "Press 2" to leave a voicemail for staff, who will return the call during the next business day.

For those wanting to browse all of the services available throughout Grundy County, residents can use their computers, tablets, or smartphones to research services at 815941HELP.com

"815941HELP.com was created over 15

years ago through the Foundation's Workforce Development Committee of our Communityworks project. At the time, the Committee felt that Grundy County doesn't have enough resources. Come to find out, Grundy has resources, but residents didn't know how to find them when they need them," explained Buck. "The resulting 941-HELP project started with card racks and kiosks, in addition to the phone and website, but with evolving technology and the popularity of smartphones and tablets, the card racks and kiosks faded away. Now everyone can look for resources 24/7 either by phoning 815-941-4357 (HELP) or by scrolling through 815941help.com."

If your nonprofit or government agency services are not listed on 815941HELP.com, please add a new listing by clicking the green button at the bottom of the 815941HELP.com page. Service providers can also call or e-mail the Community Foundation of Grundy County at 941-0852 or julie@cfgrundycounty.com

FUNNEL YOUR DEBT & SAVE

PERSONAL LOANS

MEDICAL BILLS

CREDIT CARDS

TITLE LOANS

5.99%^{APR*} ON

VISA BALANCE TRANSFERS

FOR THE LIFE OF THE TRANSFER

+ No Transfer Fees
+ No Annual Fees

SOCU

SOCU.ORG

815.416.1170
1544 CREEK DR
MORRIS, IL 60450

*All Visas subject to credit approval. The 5.99% APR promo rate will be in effect for the life of the balance transfer. Limited time offer. Promotions cannot be combined. SOCU is federally insured by the NCUA.

now OPEN

We proudly accept
Blue Cross
Blue Shield

Stop By Your Local Pharmacy


with drive-thru and free delivery!
A full store inside.

From fast prescription service to competitive everyday prices on a quality selection. We deliver the convenience, value and great customer service you deserve.


Fast, Friendly & Helpful Service

Friendly, knowledgeable, local Pharmacist to answer your questions.

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Brent VanDuyne
PharmD
pharmacist/owner



Jenny Urban
CPHT

Following in his grandfather's footsteps, Brent is the grandson of well respected Pharmacist Tom Hunt. Tom was the owner/operator of Hunt's Pharmacy in Wilmington for over 25 years.

Wilmington

Rx

Pharmacy

600 W. Baltimore St.,
Wilmington, IL
Ph: 815-926-1770
Fax: 815-476-9476
info@wilmingtonpharmacy.com

Warm Wishes

come true when you call the experts at Breeze-Air

- Free Estimates -

\$100 Menards Gift Card

Free with new install!



BREEZE-AIR

Local, Trusted Company

HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

Call (815) 476-6615

American Standard

MOVING SALE

We're moving to 316 Liberty St., Morris and need to reduce craft inventory.

ONLY

12

SHOPPING DAYS LEFT!

UP TO

20% OFF

BEFORE DEC. 27TH

THE CRAFTER'S GALLERY

- Your local resource for DIY & Craft Ideas -

ARTS & CRAFTS SUPPLIES AVAILABLE THROUGH OUR ONLINE STORE!

VISIT THECRAFTERSGALLERY.NET

115 N. Water St., Wilmington • 815-926-2432

Democrats vote to end investigation of Madigan

Committee adjourns after 3 meetings in 4 months

BY SARAH MANSUR
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — After just three hearings in four months, Democrats on the special committee probing House Speaker Michael Madigan's alleged misconduct and role in a bribery scheme involving Commonwealth Edison voted Monday to end their investigation.

Throughout the combative three-hour hearing, the three House Republicans and three Democrats clashed repeatedly over the rules of procedure, disagreed about the facts contained in the federal court documents and levied accusations of political stunts and a "kangaroo court."

The House Democratic members — Representatives Chris Welch, of Hillside, Natalie Manley, of Joliet, and Elizabeth Hernandez, of Cicero — voted no on a motion, presented by Manley, that Madigan engaged in conduct unbecoming of legislator.

With a deadlocked vote along party lines, the motion failed to pass.

Madigan issued a statement on Monday that criticized his Republican counterpart, Minority Leader Representative Jim Durkin of Western Springs, who filed the petition creating the committee.

"Jim Durkin insisted on initiating this political theater, and through this process we've come to learn that he was involved in the very conduct he claims to be so offended by — recommending people for various jobs.

If Jim Durkin actually believes it is conduct unbecoming of a legislator to recommend people for jobs or help constituents, he might want to review his own hypocritical behavior. Rather than finger pointing, I suggest we focus on the important work that lies ahead of us," Madigan said in the statement.

The Special Investigating Committee was formed in late August after the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago charged ComEd in a deferred prosecution agreement that alleged ComEd officials conspired with Madigan's associates to secure no-work jobs and contracts for Madigan's friends in exchange for favorable legislation in the Illinois General Assembly.

The committee was tasked with investigating whether there was evidence to find Madigan's conduct was unbecoming of a legislator and whether Madigan should face disciplinary proceedings.

Under the deferred prosecution agreement, ComEd admitted to the bribery scheme and agreed to pay a \$200 million and cooperate with the investigation.

Madigan has not been charged with a crime and he denies wrongdoing. He is mentioned in the deferred prosecution agreement and indictments as "Public Official A."

In September, a former ComEd executive, Fidel Marquez, pleaded guilty to a role in the bribery scheme. Last month, federal prosecutors in Chicago indicted four others — Michael McClain, a former ComEd lobbyist and close Madigan confidant, former ComEd CEO Anne Pramaggiore, former ComEd executive John Hooker, and Jay Doherty, a lobbyist who worked on contract for

ComEd — with bribery for allegedly conspiring to influence Madigan with no-work jobs and contracts to his associates.

Last month, Welch released hundreds of pages of documents that the committee had requested from ComEd, including numerous emails between McClain and Marquez, Pramaggiore and others seeking favors for Madigan's associates and individuals from his district.

The Republicans on the investigating committee — Representatives Tom Demmer, of Dixon, Deanne Mazzochi, of Elmhurst, and Grant Werhli, of Naperville — extensively referenced the emails to show McClain was working on behalf of Madigan, and with Madigan's knowledge, to secure jobs, contracts and internships that were meant to curry favor with the Speaker.

"This was not a mere job recommendation, this was a demand," Mazzochi said in reference to an email from McClain instructing ComEd officials to add former CEO of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority Juan Ochoa to the ComEd Board of Directors at the request of Madigan.

Other emails show McClain asking the company to provide work for attorney Victor Reyes and his law firm, Reyes Kurson, again at the request of Madigan, who is referred to as "our Friend."

In one email, McClain wrote, "I am sure you know how valuable [Reyes] is to our Friend," and then went on to write, "I know the drill and so do you. If you do not get involve [sic] and resolve this issue of 850 hours for his law firm per year then he will go to our Friend. Our Friend will call me and then I will call you. Is this

a drill we must go through?"

Mazzochi said the exchange was "not a job recommendation. That is an unethical quid pro quo."

"These internal documents certainly confirm that there is no innocent explanation," she said.

The three Republican House members of the committee called for additional witnesses to appear before them, including those named in the federal indictment, but a motion to issue subpoenas failed to pass, with a partisan vote deadlocked at 3-3.

In a news conference after the committee adjourned, Demmer said the Democrats on the House committee shut down their investigation.

"It was our duty to conduct this investigation to support and try to rebuild the integrity and trust of the House of Representatives. But what we saw under the leadership of Chairman Welch was a process that sought not to hear from additional witnesses, sought not to have adequate number of hearings and sought to bring the committee to a conclusion before we had the information necessary to make a qualified judgment," Demmer said.

The committee met twice in September, and has heard testimony from only one witness, David Glockner, the executive vice president of compliance and audit for Exelon Corporation, which is the parent company of ComEd.

Democrats on the committee also used the emails to suggest Durkin improperly sought ComEd jobs for his friends, citing an email from a lobbyist for the Illinois State Medical Society that asked McClain to consider recommending a woman who had been working in Durkin's office.

Hernandez, along with her Democratic colleagues, maintained that McClain's emails simply showed someone making job recommendations.

"Recommending jobs is legal, and Leader Durkin asked for job recommendations too," she said. "In neither case is this illegal or unethical."

Furthermore, Democrats claimed that the committee's motive was a power grab by Durkin in an effort to become the next House Speaker, even though he would need the votes of at least 15 House Democrats to be elected to the position.

"This is a political show that was concocted by Minority Leader Durkin. It was a plain power grab by the minority party, as the Republican members of this committee and petitioner have shown in spite of our attempts to conduct this investigation in a nonpartisan impartial manner," Welch said during a news conference following the committee's adjournment.

In his own statement Monday, Durkin criticized the Democratic members of the committee for protecting Madigan.

"The Democratic Party shows again today there is no limit to the lengths they will go to protect Speaker Madigan. Chairman Welch, Representative Hernandez and Representative Manley have turned the rule of law on its head by refusing to investigate the charges and demand the testimony of Speaker Madigan in this scandal. I call on Governor Pritzker to finally demand Speaker Madigan resign as it is clear he refuses to answer any questions about his corrupt practices," the statement reads.

Renewed calls for gun license reforms amid delays

ISP has seen 167% rise in new FOID applications this year

BY SARAH MANSUR
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Four GOP state House lawmakers on Wednesday, Dec. 9 voiced complaints from their central and southern Illinois constituents who say they have waited months after applying for new or renewed gun ownership licenses without an update from the Illinois State Police amid an unprecedented volume of applications this year.

Representatives Avery Bourne, R-Morrisonville, CD Davidsmeyer, R-Jacksonville, Patrick Windhorst, R-Metropolis and Mike Marron, R-Fithian, repeated their criticisms of the Firearm Ownership Identification card and concealed carry license systems during a virtual news conference.

The group discussed reforms they have suggested in the past which have stalled in the General Assembly.

Bourne said FOID and concealed carry issues and delays have been the top complaint from her constituents, eclipsed only by issues related to unemployment.

"There is no way around it. These people are experiencing lengthy and unreasonable delays, which is an infringement on their constitutional rights," Bourne said.

According to ISP, the current average processing time for new FOID applications is 121 days. For new CCL appli-

cations, the average processing time is 145 days.

ISP, in a release issued Dec. 8, stated the processing times "are unacceptable."

"Our people believe in building a system that makes it hard for the bad guys and simple and safe for the good guys. The Illinois State Police will keep pushing hard, but frankly we will need authority from the legislature to untangle, streamline and integrate the aging patchwork of FOID, concealed carry, firearms transactions, and records checks if we are going to fulfill this mission," ISP Director Brendan Kelly said.

The Illinois State Police Firearms Services Bureau is responsible for issuing FOID cards and concealed carry licenses. Under state law, "no person may acquire or possess any firearm, stun gun, or taser," or ammunition, without having a state-issued FOID card.

ISP has 30 days from the date it receives an application and filing fee to either approve or deny that request. For renewals, state police officials have 60 days.

State law also requires individuals obtain an Illinois Concealed Carry License in order to carry a concealed firearm in Illinois. ISP typically has 90 days from the date it receives an application and fee to approve or deny the license request. If the application does not include a set of the applicant's fingerprints in digital format, ISP has an additional 30 days.

ISP and Kelly are also named in at least two pending federal lawsuits that allege the excessive delays in issuing new and renewed FOID cards ren-

deners the system unconstitutional because it effectively denies Illinoisans their Second Amendment right to possess a gun.

The long delays and significant backlog at the Firearms Services Bureau trace back to the budget impasse under Gov. Bruce Rauner, but these issues were exacerbated in 2020 when the agency saw increased applications for FOID cards and concealed carry licenses, according to the news release.

ISP reported it received 147,862 FOID card applications from March through June, and that figure was more than double the amount received in the prior four-month period.

The agency reported a 167 percent increase in FOID card applications, from 166,649 in 2017 to 445,945 as of November 2020.

There were 144,476 new FOID applications pending as of Dec. 7, 2020, according to ISP, while total new CCL pending applications are at 27,248.

Efforts at ISP to address the backlog and delays include hiring 21 Firearms Eligibility Analysts since March 2020, with 11 more set to start in January 2021, and adding 19 temporary contracted employees to the Firearms Services Bureau, according to the news release.

ISP also issued an emergency rule earlier this year for FOID card and CCL holders whose cards or licenses have expired. The rule allows for the card or license to remain valid during the duration of the state's disaster proclamation and for 18 months following the end of the disaster, as long as the card or license holder

submits a renewal application.

Davidsmeyer said this does not resolve the problem facing his constituents with expired cards because gun stores can decline to sell guns or ammunition to someone with an expired card.

"My constituents are going in during hunting season trying to purchase ammunition or even a new gun to go hunting, and they can't do it because their FOID (card) is expired. Even though the state police have said, we are going to extend this, the retailers are so concerned about the liability they may have if they do sell to the wrong person that they will not sell to anybody. And it's an understandable position to be in," Davidsmeyer said.

Windhorst said he would prefer to eliminate the FOID card requirement, although he conceded such a proposal would not likely pass, given the makeup of the Illinois General Assembly.

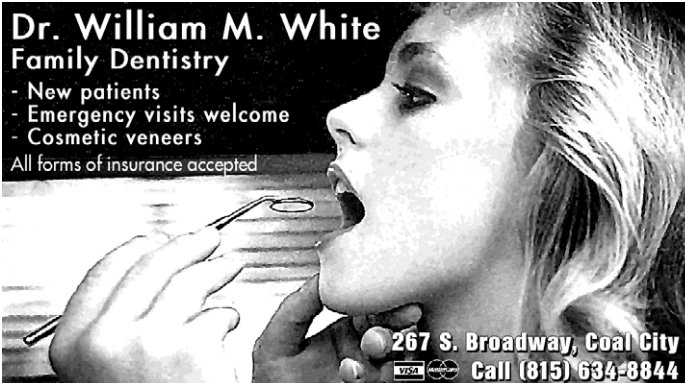
"But, as I continue to push for repeal, I believe we can pass commonsense legislation to ease the burden on law abiding gun owners. These bills are designed to address complaints about delays of the FOID card, concealed carry license and firearm transfer system," Windhorst said.

Those bills include a measure that would eliminate the 72-hour waiting period after purchasing a firearm for certain individuals who possess a valid conceal carry license; and a measure to require the Illinois State Police to automatically renew any concealed carry license holders' FOID card, as long as their concealed carry license is in good standing.



Warren's Collision Center
860 E.Z. St., Braidwood
815-458-3300

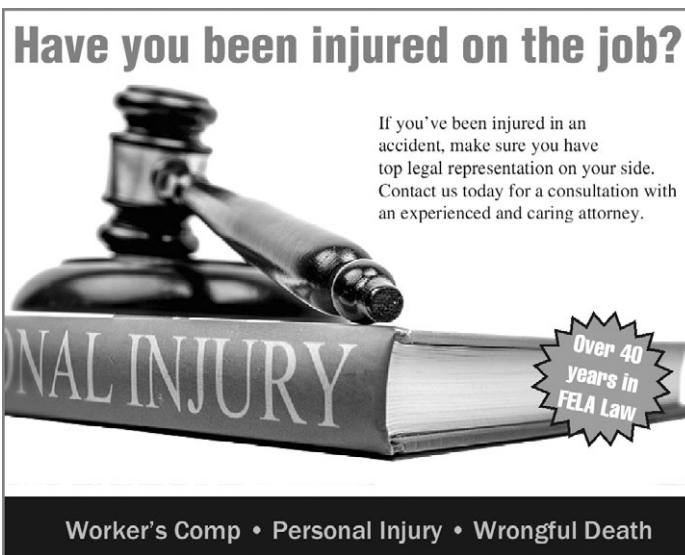
- ✓ Rentals available
- ✓ Certified technicians
- ✓ All insurance accepted
- ✓ Completed in a timely fashion
- ✓ Finest quality warranted collision repair



Dr. William M. White Family Dentistry
- New patients
- Emergency visits welcome
- Cosmetic veneers
All forms of insurance accepted

267 S. Broadway, Coal City
Call (815) 634-8844

Have you been injured on the job?



If you've been injured in an accident, make sure you have top legal representation on your side. Contact us today for a consultation with an experienced and caring attorney.

PERSONAL INJURY Over 40 years in FELA Law

Worker's Comp • Personal Injury • Wrongful Death

CHURCH & FISHER, LLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
Protecting the rights of accident and injury victims
Call (630) 338-8740



Surf Broadband Solutions
Connect Further, Faster.

RELIABLE, FAST & AFFORDABLE INTERNET SERVICE
Mention this ad and receive FREE INSTALLATION—Call Today!



(888) 274-6381 • www.surfbroadband.com

Wrap gifts in newspaper

Wrapping paper represents a few challenges when it comes to recycling. Some is metallic, which can't be recycled. Some has glitter embedded in it and can't be recycled. While other is low quality, heavily dyed but still recyclable.

When possible, use reusable bags and ask children to decorate newspaper with markers or butcher block paper. Never place bows or ribbons in the recycling cart. Consider tying gifts with natural twine that can be composted.

Fioritto's
Antenna & Satellite Sales & Service
Since 1969
7 days a Week
• HD Antennas
• Direct TV
• Dish
Locally Owned • Veteran
(815) 474-1365
Fully Insured

Expect delays if shopping online this year
BETTER YET - SHOP LOCAL



Wilmington Chamber of Commerce & Industry
GIFT CERTIFICATE

Given to _____
From _____
Good for one year from issue date.

Present this gift certificate to any Wilmington Chamber business displaying the chamber decal. Not redeemable for cash.

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce & Industry Gift Certificate

Online retailers are warning of supply and shipping delays. To avoid paying extra for expedited shipping **JUST SHOP LOCAL!** You'll avoid extra costs, invest in your community, and walk out the door with product in hand.

Don't know what to give? Give Wilmington Chamber gift certificates

They're good at any of 80 different businesses in Wilmington. They're easy to buy, easy to use and you don't have to travel far to spend them. Just stop at Grundy Bank, 120 S. Main St., Wilmington to purchase them. They can be redeemed anywhere you see a Wilmington Chamber of Commerce member sticker. They're good for groceries, hardware, liquor, crafts, automobile repairs, gasoline, ordering off a menu and much more.

For questions call the Chamber at 815.476.5991

Escape holiday stress with a tropical drink in December

It's the most wonderful time of the year! For holiday cheer? Decorations? Letters to Santa? All of those things are wonderful, but there is one thing that home tiki bar enthusiasts look forward to each December: the arrival of white grapefruit in local supermarkets.

Some drinks simply must have white grapefruit as opposed to the more popular ruby red variety, and this week we will mix up one of the all-time greats. I'm talking about the curiously strong sweet and sour tiki staple, the Navy Grog. Before we get into the Navy Grog, let's talk white grapefruit. They begin to appear in produce aisles around mid-November and hang around until the end of January if the growers in Florida had a good harvest.

If a recipe is over 50 years old and calls for grapefruit juice, then the recipe calls for white grapefruit juice. Ruby red grapefruit may rule the citrus aisle in modern grocery stores, but white grapefruit was the only option for chefs and bartenders of yesteryear.

Can't we substitute ruby red grapefruit for white grapefruit? No. The flavor profiles are completely different. Ruby Red is tart and very sweet, whereas the sweetness of the white grapefruit is more subdued.

The white grapefruit may have lost the popularity contest to the bright ruby reds, but the less complex sweetness of the white grapefruit makes it more ideal for mixing drinks.

By the way, the European and Asian markets love white grapefruit. Most of the white grapefruit grown domestically is bottled and juiced for international markets.

If you cannot locate fresh white grapefruit, there are a few juice options available, be sure to buy only "100% juice" options without added sweetener.

A few tips and tricks when preparing white grapefruit for your home bar:

First, use a juicer if you have access to one, even an inexpensive juicer will get the job done. When juicing, do not press the fruit so hard that you force the juice out of the pith of the fruit as it will be a tad bitter compared to the juice from the center of the fruit.

I buy a box of white grapefruit every year, which yields nearly a gallon of juice. Another great tip for bar home bar service is to bottle and refrigerate the juice that you will use over the next few days, and freeze the rest.

The best way to freeze white grapefruit juice is to fill ice trays with the grapefruit juice, which yields perfect 1 oz. cubes, ideal portions for mixing future drinks.

Also, white grapefruit juice is an excellent way to lightly sweeten your fruit or vegetable smoothie.

On to the Navy Grog. This is an iconic drink that has been a fan favorite at Polynesian-themed bars and restaurants since it was first served in 1941. There are two main varieties of the Navy Grog, one made famous by Don the Beachcomber and the other made famous by Trader Vic. The recipe below is closer to the Trader Vic version.

The Trader Vic version has



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL

Brian Rung

had many fans over the years, including former president Richard Nixon. The rival Donn the Beachcomber recipe was one of Frank Sinatra's favorite cocktails, one that he would sip while dining in California. Do you have a favorite version? Let's try the recipe below on for size.

A quick glance at the six-ingredient recipe may be a bit intimidating, knowing what to buy is half the battle. As far as rum goes, this drink is best with two types of dark rum. I like Myer's Original Dark or Appleton 12 for the Jamaican rum and El Dorado 12 for the demerara. You could also get by using Pusser's Navy Rum, which is a blend of Jamaican and demerara rums.

The Navy Grog calls for allspice dram, a pimento liqueur that you may not run across every day. Allspice dram is a complex Jamaican liqueur with notes of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves that you can prepare at home using any number of online recipes.

If you do not have the time or the ingredients to go the DIY route, pick up a bottle of St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram, a high-quality liqueur made in the Jamaican tradition. It doesn't smell or taste like anything else, and less always more when using allspice dram. However, you will not achieve Navy Grog nirvana without it.

If it seems out of season to drink tropical drinks in December, think of it as an escape. Perhaps this is a drink that we would have had on vacation this year had we taken

vacations. Also, if you start working on your Navy Grog now, you will have it perfected by summer. Just in time for the Navy Grog's 80th birthday. Hopefully we can add that to a lengthy "cause for celebration" list in 2021.

The Navy Grog is built in shaker and served in an ice-filled double Old Fashioned glass.

Combine in shaker:
3/4 oz. fresh lime juice



1/2 oz. fresh white grapefruit juice
1 oz. dark Jamaican rum
1 oz. demerara rum
1/2 oz. simple syrup
1/4 oz. St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram
Shake with ice and strain into ice-filled glass
Garnish with lime wheel
Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

YOU DESERVE COMFORT OF MIND

We are open giving everyday people comfort of mind in planning their estate.



Last Will and Testaments, Trusts, Durable Power of Attorney and Health Care Power of Attorney are serious concerns, during this serious time. Gain peace of mind knowing your affairs are in order by calling for an appointment in taking care of these important life decisions.

Call 815-476-7635

207 S. Water St., Wilmington •
www.fisherberardilaw.com

ATTORNEY
JEFFREY L. FISHER

You can now reach Attorneys Mark Berardi and Andrew Costa of Berardi & Associates LLC at their Homer Glen office **708-942-8030**

Seven from area make Olivet dean's list

Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais has named seven area residents to its fall 2020 dean's list.

To qualify for inclusion on the dean's list, a student must have been enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student

and must have attained a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 grading scale.

Earning a spot on the list are Faith Vinci, of Custer Park, and Braidwood residents Rachel Barks and McKenna

Snyder.

Also Sean Micetich, of Coal City, and Wilmington residents Matthew Baumeister, Conner Dempsay and Abby Holmes.



Merry Christmas

& HAPPY NEW YEAR!



from Wee-Sip Liquors and the Shell Family

This month we're celebrating our 50-year business anniversary!

Thank You!

Thank you Wilmington and surrounding communities for supporting a small business reach a big milestone! We are grateful for your patronage and for the dedication of our employees, past and present.

WEE-SIP LIQUORS

and Winchester Gas

Open 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. daily

1099 S. Water St. Wilmington
(815) 476-2764




All Wines

10% off

(Any size)
Dec. 17-21

OBITUARIES

Frank A. Mantia Jr.

WILMINGTON—Frank A. Mantia Jr., 67, of Wilmington, passed away suddenly on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020 at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee.

He was born June 9, 1953 in Joliet, the son of Frank and Edith (Fortey) Mantia. He was a graduate of Wilmington High School and Joliet Junior College. Upon graduation from high school, Frank became a proud member of Ironworkers Union Local #444 in Joliet, retiring in 2016 following 45 years of service.

In his free time, Frank enjoyed boating on Lake Michigan while spending many weekends and holidays at North Port Marina. He also enjoyed Chicago Bears football and had a passion for animal rescue. Frank will continue to enhance lives by his gift of organ and tissue donation through the Gift of Hope Network.

Frank is survived by his loving partner in



life, Cheryl-Ann Koren; sisters, Phyllis Mantia and Gayle (Dennis) VanDuyne of Henderson, NV; brothers, William and Scott Mantia, both of Wilmington.

Frank was also the proud uncle of Evan, Jack and David VanDuyne, of Henderson, NV.

He was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

As it was Frank's request, cremation rites will be accorded. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, service and burial honoring Frank's life will be held at a later date for all family and friends. Details will be forthcoming.

To visit his Memorial Tribute go to www.fredcdames.com to share a favorite memory or leave an online condolence.

Fred C. Dames Funeral home in Joliet is in charge of arrangements.

Leslie Wessman

BRAIDWOOD—Leslie (Sutter) Wessman, 71, a 17 year resident of Braidwood, passed away Dec. 13, 2020 in Temecula, CA.

She was born Aug. 18, 1949 to Lee and Ruth Sutter. She was a member of The Lighthouse Church of Alsip and Wilmington Church of the Nazarene. Leslie loved the Lord and her family with her whole heart. She was always around with a smile, talking to everyone she met, writing in her bible, tending to her garden, dancing with her tambourine and bells on at church, or sitting around the campfire



playing music with her husband, Kurt. Leslie sang to her own beat loud enough for all to hear, spreading joy and love everywhere she went.

She is survived by her husband, Kurt Wessman; sister, Dawn (John) Pecnick; sons: Eventide (Nicole) Wessman, Luke (Ashli) Wessman and Judah (Ashley) Wessman; daughter, Sara Wessman and grandchildren: Celeste, Angelina, Cole and Gwendolyn.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Lee and Ruth Sutter and brothers, Scott and Bradley Sutter.

Michael W. Davies

SOUTH WILMINGTON—Michael Wayne Davies "Miky," 37, of South Wilmington, passed away on Dec. 6, 2020. He was born Nov. 7, 1983.

Michael will be missed by so many, including his mother, Karyn Mitchell, of South Wilmington; his dad, Mark A Page, of Elgin, IL; Auntie's Jo Jo (Robert Dwyer), of Flannigan and Dawn Temke and family, of Kentucky; cousins: Nicole (Mike Corrigan) and family, of Flannigan and Anthony (Megan Dwyer) and family, of Hoffman Estates and



uncle, Robert Davies, of Lansing, IL.

He will be missed by many other family members and friends. Miky could walk into a room knowing no one and walk out with many friends.

Cremation arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Planet Green Cremations, Glenwood, IL.

There will be no memorial or services. Michael will be brought home to his mother where he belongs. Rest in Peace sweet baby, your fight is over.

Ryan S. Ford

RIVERVIEW, FL— Ryan S. Ford, 31, passed away on Friday, Nov. 27, 2020, at home in Riverview, FL after an asthma attack.

Born July 17, 1989 in Joliet, he was the son of devoted mother, Brenda "Kat" Falasca Ford, of Riverview, FL and father, Sean L. Ford, of Wilmington.

Ryan was raised in Coal City. He was a graduate of Coal City Elementary and High School. He attended college at Scottsdale Community College. He was employed at Ford Family Law and worked from home. As a child, he enjoyed Motocross. He also enjoyed riding dirt bikes, fishing, Ultimate Online, visiting his grandparents in Arizona and vacationing in Hayward, WI. He had many



friends in Arizona and Illinois.

Surviving are his mother and father, his brother and best friend, Brandon "Bubba" Ford, of Riverview, FL; siblings: Courtney Simons, Adam and Carly Ford; his maternal grandparents, Jack and Lori Reid, of Falasca, Corpus Christi, TX; his aunt, Linda Falasca Haley, of Chippewa Falls, WI; his paternal grandparents, Lawrence "Cubby" and Joy Watson Ford, of Mesa, AZ; uncles, Shane Ford, of San Francisco, CA and Jason Ford, of Gilbert, AZ and nieces and nephews.

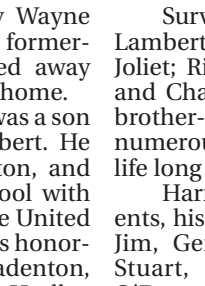
At Ryan's request, cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Harry Lambert

CUSTER PARK—Harry Wayne Lambert, 69, of Custer Park, formerly of Bradenton, FL, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020 at his home.

Born Dec. 20, 1950 in Joliet, Harry was a son of Elra and Frieda (Krumwiede) Lambert. He was raised and educated in Wilmington, and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1969. Harry enlisted into the United States Army in 1970, and served until his honorable discharge in 1972. He lived in Bradenton, FL for many years and worked for Harlee Packaging Inc. in Palmetto, FL as a foreman until his retirement.

Following his retirement, Harry moved to Custer Park and was a member of the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 241. He found great joy in being outdoors and watching local wildlife. Harry was an avid gardener who loved to tend to his flowers and vegetable garden. He enjoyed cooking and canning, and loved to read. Harry had a great appreciation for animals, especially his feline companion, Pita.



Survivors include his wife, Narcisa (Cleary) Lambert; three siblings: Marilyn Scholari, of Joliet; Richard (Judy) Lambert, of Jordan, MN and Charlene (Bill) Engler, of Hixton, WI; one brother-in-law, Roy Stuart, of Kankakee and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as his life long friend, Marie Calhoun.

Harry was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers: Tommy, Elra, Elwin, Elwood, Jim, Gene and John and his sisters: Janice Stuart, Janet Adamson and Charlotte O'Donnell.

Per Harry's wishes, cremation rites have been accorded and memorial services will be held at a later date.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Harry'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.

Peter Odo

DIAMOND—Peter Odo, 70, of Diamond, passed away Monday, Dec. 14, 2020 at Morris Hospital.

Peter was born Oct. 9, 1950 in Chicago, IL. He was raised and educated in Braidwood, and graduated from Reed-Custer High School with the class of 1968. On Aug. 17, 1970, Peter married Linda L. Endrst in Morris, and together they would raise their family in Diamond.

He served as a police officer in Coal City from 1972 to 1986. Peter then entered the trucking profession and was a proud member of Teamsters Local Union 710 and 736. He was also a member of Assumption Catholic Church in Coal City and the Coal City Area Club. Peter was an avid fisherman and looked forward to any opportunity he had to go fishing, especially his family trips to Cape Faar, MO. More than anything, he was a true family man that devoted himself to being a loving husband and father, and cherished anytime spent with his grandchildren.

Survivors include his wife of 50 years, Linda Odo, of Diamond; four daughters: Kimmy Odo, Tami (Peter) Maland, Shari (Chad) Talkington and Gina (Keith) Wharrie, all of Coal City; seven



grandchildren: Dakota and Carson Collins, Rita, Peter and Charles Maland and Gwen and Thor Wharrie; sister-in-law, Janice "Pinky" (the late Ed "Butch") Olson, of Coal City; brother-in-law, Dave Powell, of Coal City; several nieces and nephews, as well as Tony Maland, who was like family to Peter.

Peter was preceded in death by his mother-in-law and father-in-law, John and Rita (Giro) Endrst, and his sister-in-law, Janet Powell.

Per Peter's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded and he will be laid to rest at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please make any donations in Peter's memory to: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

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

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

Raymond T. Briggs Jr.

KYLE, TX—Raymond T. Briggs Jr., 68, passed away peacefully in his home in Kyle, TX on Dec., 5, 2020, after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Ray was born on May 25, 1952 in Chicago to Raymond T. Briggs Sr. and Joan (Thompson) Briggs. In 1973, Ray married Linda (Recchia) in Chicago. Ray attended Bogan High School before joining the Army. He served our country for 6 years and always made sure to support our veterans. Throughout his life, Ray was most proud to provide for his wife and children, and exceptionally proud that all of his children graduated college.

In his free time, he was an avid Chicago Bears and White Sox fan. He enjoyed vintage cars and loved Chicago style pizza. Nothing made him happier than going to his oldest grandson's baseball games, his granddaughters' dance recitals, and experiencing his youngest grandson's giggles.

He will be most remembered for his generosity and putting everyone else's needs before himself. Everyone knew Ray by his old school mustache, great sense of humor, and we all enjoyed his South Side Chicago accent.

Ray is survived by his wife of 47 years, Linda (Recchia) Briggs; daughter, Michelle; her husband, Scott and grandchildren: Nico, Brixie Sue and Savannah; son, Scott; his wife, Elicia and



step-grandchild, Monyca; son, Jeff; his wife, Natalie and grandchild, Wyatt and son, Steven and his fiancé, Marcela. Ray is also survived by his siblings: Jean Wagner, Jackie Durrant and Mary Porter.

A private family service was held on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington and the virtual service is accessible by logging onto his memorial page.

Raymond was laid to rest with military honors at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. Due to cemetery limitation of only 10 being able to be in attendance, this virtual service event is also accessible by logging onto his memorial page.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials in Ray's name to the Wounded Warriors Project <https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org> would be appreciated.

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

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

Braceville-Gardner Cemetery donations

As the year comes to a close the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery board would like everyone to think about family, friends and loved ones buried at the cemetery. The board is in great need of financial help to keep the cemetery running. They run strictly on grave sales and burials with no other source of income.

The following donations to the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery are gratefully acknowledged by the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery Association.

In memory of Nels Olson family, by Alan and Beth Olson.

In memory of Delores and Donald Vacca, by John Vacca and family.

In memory of loved ones, by Marvin and Kris Perino.

In memory of Wharrie Family, by Larry and Shirley Wharrie.

In memory of Sam Brancato, by Avis Brancato.

In memory of loved ones, by D Construction family.

In memory of John, Elizabeth, Nell and Gary Jr., by Gary Lissy.

In memory of Kathy Kratochvil, by Lynn Kratochvil.

In memory of Mable and Jim Morris and Gordie Allison, by Wayne and Joyce Morris and family.

In memory of Allison family, by Allison Family Farm.

In memory of Herman and Mary Cullick, by Bernie and Debra Burla.

In memory of family and friends, by Scott Benson.

In memory of loved ones, by Shirley Simpson.

In memory of loved ones, by Shirley and John Lardi.

In memory of Junior W. Zilm, by Bettie Zilm.

In memory of Iona Rabe, and Smith family, by Ray and Bonnie Hill.

In memory of Edwin and Ann Crompt, by Marla Crompt.

In memory of John McLuckie, by Tessler family.

In memory of Isaac and Russell Bull, by Betty Bull.

In memory of Ida and Jeff Grant, by Bernard Grant.

In memory of Gary Lissy Jr., Audrey Endrst and Keith Wills, by Raymond and Kathy Lissy and Bonnie and Steve Raulerson.

In memory of David Allen Sinnott, by Ernadine Sinnott.

In memory of David Allen Sinnott, by Scott and Lynn Allison.

In memory of loved ones, by Beverly Grant.

In memory of Audrey Endrst, by Guy and Marilyn Huston family.

In memory of Cobb family, by Gretchen Marks and Terri Bailey.

In memory of Audrey Endrst, by Robert Barre.

In memory of Vidmar family, by Vidmar family.

In memory of loved ones, by John and Shirley Lardi.

Donations can be sent to Braceville/Gardner Cemetery, 7295 W. Braceville Rd., PO Box 246, Braceville, IL 60407. The association appreciates all donations during these trying economic times.

Board of Directors
Braceville-Gardner Cemetery Association

More than one-in-three small businesses closed since January

Illinois businesses see 39.2 percent drop in revenue

BY GREG BISHOP
THE CENTER SQUARE

Illinois has lost more than a third of its small businesses since the beginning of the year, according to TrackTheRecovery.org.

A small business association said it is heartbreaking.

The data compiled by Harvard and Brown universities and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation shows as of Nov. 16, the number of small businesses open decreased by 35.4 percent compared to January of this year.

The national average businesses not open compared to January is 28.9 percent fewer. Washington D.C. had the worst loss at 47.1 percent fewer small businesses. Nebraska and North Carolina had the best showing at 20.5 percent fewer.

Small business revenues have also taken a hit nationwide. The national average is a

decrease of 32.1 percent in small business revenue since January. Washington D.C. had the worst loss in the nation at 61.6 percent. Oregon small businesses lost 16.3 percent. Illinois small businesses saw 39.2 percent decline in revenue since January.

National Federation of Independent Business Illinois State Director Mark Grant said Illinois isn't the worst in the nation.

"But that's no consolation for somebody who has had to close their business and it's really, really difficult to see this," Grant said.

He said Illinois was a tough place to run a business before the pandemic with higher costs like property taxes and workers' comp, among other policies.

"Just make it tougher for the business owner and the pandemic and of course all the closures, the reduced hours, and reduced amount of traffic, have just exacerbated that tremendously," Grant said.

While many businesses have thrown in the towel or decided to retire early, he sees many young entrepreneurs

determined to keep going as a hopeful sign.

"It's really heartening to see that generation, some of our younger folks, who are just really working hard to get through this, because there is a light at the end of the tunnel," Grant said.

But part of the challenge is the uncertainty of the governor's executive orders, which have changed month-to-month and seem open-ended pending a vaccine. He also worried about where the state could look to make up lost tax revenue.

"It will probably be targeted towards the business community and so there are concerns about that," Grant said. "I know there have always been concerns about taxes on services."

Besides the flat income tax, Illinois also taxes goods, but does not tax services.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has said he will focus on cuts before tax increases to balance the budget, but last week he announced \$2 billion of additional borrowing from the federal government to cover short term spending.



pregnancyresourcecenter

All of our services are offered at no cost to the client:

- Free on-site pregnancy testing
- Ultrasound Scanning
- Options education
- Confidentiality & caring support
- Parenting education for new & expectant mothers
- Post-abortion mentoring

410 N. Broadway St. Coal City, IL 60416 v Phone: 815-709.0920

E-mail: grundywill@hopeforafuture.com v www.pregnancyresourcecenter.org

Noticing Memory Problems? What to Do Next

Dear Savvy Senior,
 My mom, who's 76, has become more forgetful lately and is worried she may be getting Alzheimer's disease. What resources can you recommend to help us get a handle on this?
 Oldest Daughter

Dear Oldest,
 Many seniors worry about memory lapses as they get older, fearing it may be the first signs of Alzheimer's disease or some other type of dementia. To get some insight on the seriousness of your mom's problem, here are some key warning signs to be vigilant of and some resources you can turn to for help.

Warning Signs
 As we grow older, some memory difficulties such as

trouble remembering names of people or places or forgetting where you put your glasses or car keys are associated with normal aging. But the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease are much more than simple memory lapses.

Knowing the early warning signs is a good first step in recognizing the difference between typical age-related memory loss and a more serious problem. To help you evaluate your mom's condition, here's a checklist of some common early symptoms to watch for:

- Asking the same questions repeatedly.
- Getting lost in familiar areas.
- Failing to recognize familiar people.

- Having difficulty following directions.
- Misplaces items in inappropriate places, for example putting her keys in the microwave.
- Having difficulty completing familiar tasks like cooking a meal or paying a bill.
- Having trouble remembering common words when speaking or mixing up words.

For more information, see the Alzheimer's Association list of 10 early signs and symptoms at 10signs.org.

Another good tool to help you evaluate your mom is the Self-Administered



SAVVY SENIOR
 Jim Miller

Gerocognitive Exam (SAGE test) that was developed at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. This free test helps identify mild cognitive impairment and early dementia and can be taken at home in about 10 to 15 minutes. The SAGE test can be taken online at BrainTest.com.

Get Help

If you would rather have professional assistance in evaluating your mom, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (see alzfdn.org) is

another good resource you can turn to.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday they provide free, confidential virtual memory screenings done via video chat in real time. Your mother will need a phone, tablet or computer with a webcam and internet capability to complete the screening.

The screenings are given by healthcare professionals and take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Once the screening is complete, the screener will review the results with her and let her know if she should see a doctor for further evaluation. To set up a memory screening for your mom call 866-232-8484 and make an appointment.

If you find that your mom does need further evaluation, make an appointment with her primary care doctor for a cognitive checkup and medical

examination. Depending on what's found, she may be referred to a geriatrician or neurologist who specializes in diagnosing and treating memory loss or Alzheimer's disease.

Keep in mind that even if your mom is experiencing some memory problems, it doesn't necessarily mean she has early-stage Alzheimer's. Many memory problems are brought on by other factors like stress, depression, thyroid disease, side effects of medications, sleep disorders, vitamin deficiencies and other medical conditions. And by treating these conditions she can reduce or eliminate the problem.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

Winning opossum pic brings joy to ER tech during pandemic

A cuddly-looking baby opossum nestled in the woods won November's portion of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Preserve the Moment photo contest.

The picture was taken by Teresa Wisnieski at Lower Rock Run - I&M Canal Access in Joliet.

Wisnieski, of Joliet, who is an emergency room technician at Edward Hospital in Naperville, said her hikes in the preserve and her wildlife viewing and photography have all helped with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic at work.

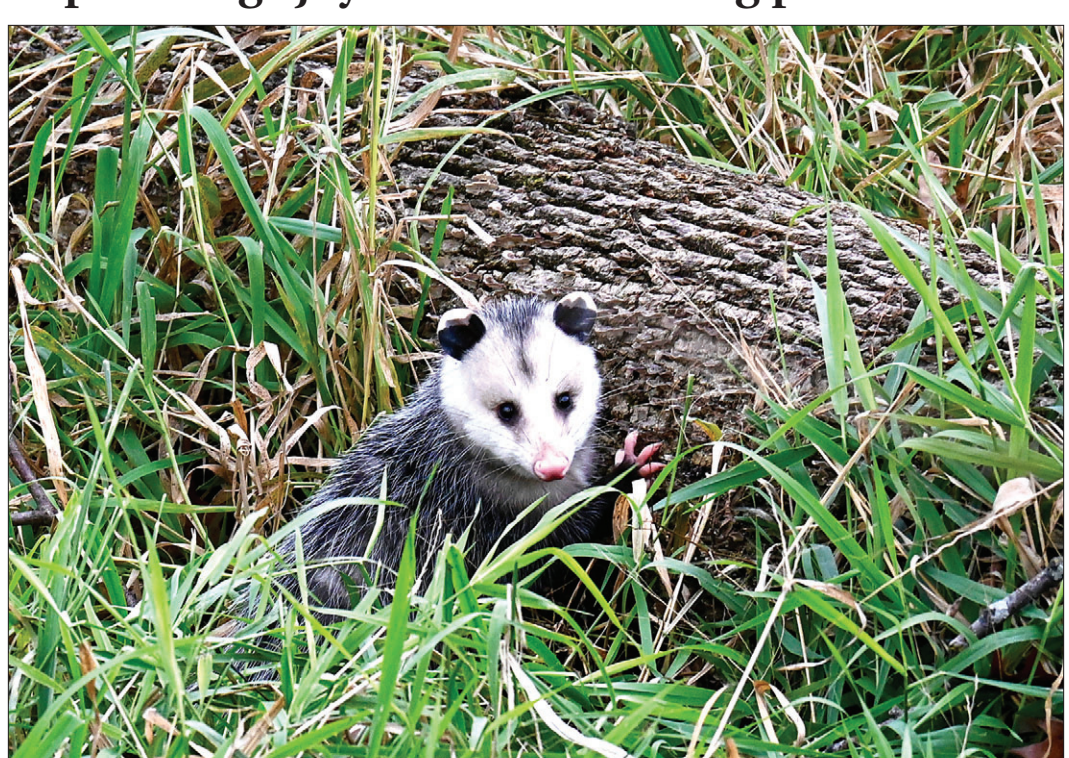
"It has been a great source of happiness during the pandemic," she said. "It is such a good stress reliever to get outside and be in nature. It's a great source of relaxation. That preserve is so full of wildlife and nature and it's ever changing."

On a recent hike, she heard some rustling in the woods and looked down and saw a large opossum foraging for food. She watched it for a while until she noticed a baby opossum waiting for the larger opossum, which appeared to be the baby's mother. So Wisnieski quickly snapped some photos of the pink-nosed baby, with its pink paw resting on a fallen tree, and then left it alone so as not to disturb the creatures.

"It made me smile because it's such a cute little opossum," she said of the marsupial in her winning photo. "So I thought I would share it (to the contest) because it brought me some joy."

Wisnieski also has begun sharing her photos to the Forest Preserve's Will County Wildlife Facebook group.

"I look forward to contin-



Courtesy photo by Teresa Wisnieski

JOLIET RESIDENT Teresa Wisnieski, who works as an ER tech at Edward Hospital in Naperville, won November's portion of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's photo contest with this photo of a baby opossum.

ued walks in the preserves and sharing my photos with others online," she said. "Thanks to those behind the scenes who give us nature lovers a place to go to share photos and also stories to read that help us learn more about the nature and preserves in Will County."

Honorable mentions for November were awarded to: Matt Serafini, of Lockport, for a photo of a camouflaged deer in tall grass at Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve in Lockport Township; Tyler Paul, of Wilmington, for a photo of a great horned owl roosting in a

tree at Forked Creek Preserve in Wilmington; Michael Masallis, of Naperville, for a photo of oil beetles "snuggling" at Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve in Reed Township and Caitlin Satalic, of Plainfield, for a photo of a colorful cecropia caterpillar at Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve.

Wisnieski is the seventh monthly winner in the 2020 photo contest. Only one more monthly winner will be chosen by a panel of judges before the contest concludes Dec. 31. In January, all eight monthly win-

ners will vie for top honors via public voting on the District's Facebook page.

Monthly photo contest winners receive \$75 gift cards. Overall winners chosen in January will receive MasterCard gift cards worth \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place and \$150 for third place. The photo contest is sponsored by The Nature Foundation of Will County.

For more details on the contest, including how to enter and the rules, visit www.reconnectwithnature.org.

INSURE CAREFULLY, DREAM FEARLESSLY.
 CALL TODAY TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST

American Family Insurance
 American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I.
 American Family Insurance Company,
 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783
 006441 - Rev. 11/15 ©2015 - 8504912

Gerald Gresham
 815-729-3570
 815-476-6364
 863 Center Ct., Unit B, Shorewood, IL 60404
 Email: ggresham@amfam.com

Wilmington Moose Family Center
 32050 S. West River Rd • 815-476-6472

- DECEMBER EVENTS -

DECEMBER 2, 9, 16, AND 23 WEDNESDAY TACOS
 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Fri., Dec. 4	5-7:30 p.m.	Fish Fry
Sat., Dec. 12	5-7:30 p.m.	Steak Fry
Fri., Dec. 18	5-7:30 p.m.	Fish Fry
Sun., Dec. 20	9-11:30 a.m.	Moose Riders

OPEN TO EVERYONE
 Carry out orders only.
 Order by phone or come in and order.
 815-476-6472

Wish your customers a Merry Christmas

We have children from area schools drawing Christmas art to be featured in our Dec. 21 & Dec. 23 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.

Make sure your business isn't left out by scheduling TODAY.

Deadline is Dec. 17

Call 815-476-7966 to be included

email: efisher@fpnusa.com or fpnpatti@comcast.net

Parent, grandparents and children love this!

Merry Christmas

Artist Name - School
 Business Name • Address • Phone #

Tips for making Christmas less wasteful

Dear EarthTalk: The holidays are so wasteful given all the consumerism and decorations. Do you have any tips for making this year's celebration less wasteful?
-- Shelly R., New York, NY



The holidays are indeed a hugely wasteful time of the year, but there are many ways we can reduce our impact and still enjoy this special season.

Gift wrap is a great place to start. Much of the wrap we buy in stores can't be recycled because of its mixture of paper with glitter, plastic, dyes, laminate and other materials, so it goes straight to the landfill after we use it once.

Wrapping gifts in brown grocery bags or parcel paper makes use of an everyday item that you may already have in your home while keeping your wrapping recyclable. Cut open paper bags from the grocery store, wrap up your present like you would with any other kind of paper, and tie it up using recyclable twine, paper ribbon or a shoelace (you can even put it back in the shoe later).

To decorate your gifts, use

stamps and leafy embellishments to make for a cute or sophisticated look. Go out into your neighborhood to forage for flowers or shoots of leaves to slip under your ribbon or twine. Another alternative to wrapping with brown paper is wrapping your gift with a scarf (two presents in one)!

The debate over which kind of Christmas tree (real or artificial) is better for the environment has been raging for a long time, but the real right answer is a live tree that you can plant in the ground outside after the holidays. If you decide to get a cut tree, look for one that's grown sustainably and pesticide-free.

Going to the closest tree farm lowers the carbon footprint of buying a tree that was

imported. If you want to get an artificial tree, most experts agree that you would need to reuse it for about 18 years to keep the environmental impact lower than that of a real tree.

There are plenty of ways to decorate your home festively for the holiday seasons without being wasteful. First of all, if you already have decorations, use them! If you don't, try DIYing your decorations this year.

You can use recycled paper or salt dough to make ornaments for your tree, and collect branches, holly, and leaves outside to create a wreath to hang on your door. Additionally, if you enjoy advent calendars for the month of December, try investing in a reusable wooden one this year so that you can fill it up with your own favorite treats, toys, or surprises for years to come.

It's also important to be conscious consumers while we shop for holiday gifts. Be sure to think (and think again) before buying something this season. Try to buy long-lasting gifts and shop at small, sustainable and/or local businesses to make your shopping greener.

Etsy is a great place to find small businesses that sell ethical and sustainable products. Finally, if you enjoy unwrapping your creative side over the holidays, making your own gifts (upcycling thrifted clothes, jams or chutneys, knitting, painting, pickling or whatever you want to do) is another way to reduce waste. Cheers for the holidays, and have a crafty one!

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



WRAPPING GIFTS IN brown grocery bags or parcel paper makes use of an everyday item that you may already have in your home while keeping your wrapping recyclable.

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

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14			15					16				
17			18					19				
20		21				22						
23				24	25					26	27	
	28			29			30					
31	32			33	34	35	36			37		
38			39	40						41		
42			43				44	45				
46	47	48			49			50				
51			52	53	54			55			56	57
	58					59						
60	61				62	63				64		
65					66					67		
68					69					70		

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Popular pickup truck
 - Profoundly wise men
 - Camera company
 - Folk singer DiFranco
 - Passerine birds
 - Plum-shaped fruit used for preserves
 - Popular kids channel
 - Dodgers' skipper
 - Removes
 - The Atlantic is one
 - Badgerlike mammal
 - Foulness
 - Luke's mentor --Wan
 - Commercial
 - A type of gin
 - Tempress
 - Shuts in an enclosed space
 - Milligram
 - Actress Adams
 - Strive to equal or match
 - Health insurance
 - A detective's source
 - Small American rails
 - Alfred __, Brit. poet
 - Crest of a hill
 - Atomic #52
 - __ Caesar, comedian
 - Breaks apart
 - Register formally (Brit. sp.)
 - Worker
 - Chemical compound
 - Disgraced newsman
 - Born of
 - Chemical substance
 - Supernatural powers
 - Clothes
 - Indy footballers
 - Moves forward
 - Midway between south and southeast

- CLUES DOWN**
- Driver
 - Bone cavities
 - Menacing
 - Where coaches patrol
 - Greek mythological figure
 - War-based board game
 - Midway between northeast and east
 - 18-year period in astronomy
 - Mid-century term used to describe Japanese-Americans
 - Large bodies of water
 - Eurasian rye grass
 - Perform on stage
 - Greek island
 - 10th month of the year (abbr.)
 - One point east of southeast
 - Belgian city
 - Praise excessively
 - River in France
 - Edible lily bulbs
 - Quarterbacks take them
 - Organic compound
 - Tears down (Brit.)
 - Beloved Hollywood alien
 - Unconscious
 - Missouri
 - Firemen use them
 - Pig noise
 - Greatly dismay
 - Imitator
 - Moves by turning over
 - Boxing's GOAT
 - Swarms with
 - Margarines
 - Feudal superior
 - As fast as can be done
 - Reciprocal of a sine
 - Chinese city
 - Tell on
 - United

First health care workers vaccinated

Ezike lauds vaccination as 'beginning of the end' of pandemic

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – Five health care workers at a hospital in Peoria became the first people in Illinois to receive a COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday, Dec. 15 marking what Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike called “the beginning of the end” of the pandemic.

The vaccine, developed by the drug companies Pfizer and BioNTech, was granted Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration last week and is now being shipped throughout the United States. Early studies have shown that after two doses that are given 21 days apart, the vaccine is 95 percent effective in preventing the disease.

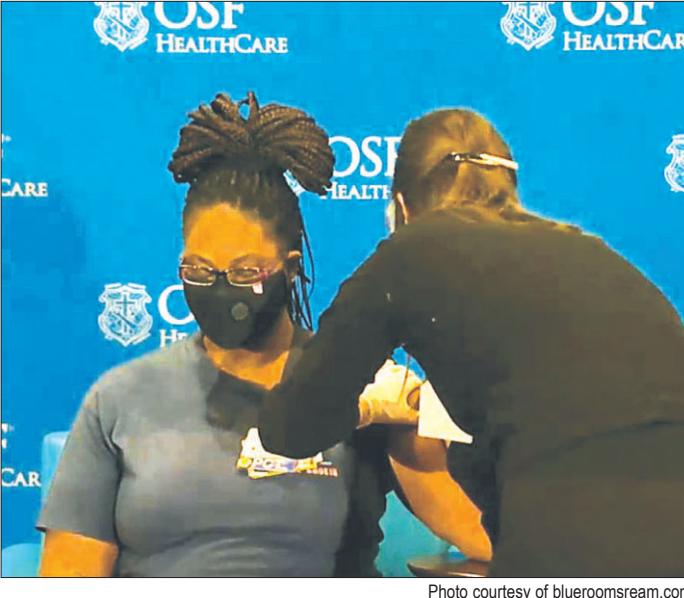
The FDA is also expected to approve a second vaccine from the drug company Moderna, possibly before the end of the week.

But Ezike said even as more vaccines become available, it will take several months to reach everyone in Illinois.

“I think most of 2021 will be spent in this effort,” Ezike said at the event at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria. “But I’m excited for the engagement and for the support of the community to get this done as rapidly as possible.”

Guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the state’s own vaccination plan calls for health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities to be the first in line for the vaccine.

“People getting vaccinated, particularly our health care workers, is an exciting moment,” Gov. JB Pritzker said. “I hope that everybody will take note that you were part of this and witnessed this. These health care workers have been working all throughout this pandemic, taking care of people on the front lines. These are our heroes.”



CHEMICA JONES, 41, a certified nursing assistant, receives one of the first COVID-19 vaccines administered in Illinois during an event Tuesday at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria.

In addition to the supply of vaccines going to the state, the federal government is also shipping vaccines directly to Cook, Lake, Madison and St. Clair counties.

Pritzker said he expects roughly 85,000 people in Illinois will receive their first dose of the vaccine this week. Those doses are being shipped to 96 hospitals in 50 counties that have had the highest death rates from the disease. The release of the vaccine in Illinois came on a day when the state recorded another 117 virus-related deaths, bringing the total number of fatalities since the pandemic began to 14,509.

⊙ * ✎ ☼ ☽ ☿ ♀ ♁ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓ ♀ ♁ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

CRYPTO FUN

☼ ☽ ☿ ♀ ♁ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to hygiene. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 3 = A)

A. 8 3 9 19
Clue: Clean up

B. 9 3 2 22 10 22 16 12
Clue: Make clean and hygienic

C. 5 25 12 3 2
Clue: Opposite of dirty

D. 19 12 3 25 10 19 1
Clue: Not diseased

Answers: A. wash B. sanitize C. clean D. healthy

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to hygiene.

F C E U T A

Answer: Faucet

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in Missouri on December 15, 1949. I had my first acting role in a stage production in 1969. I am best known for a TV gig in the 1980s that followed Florida police detectives.

Answer: Don Johnson

HAND HYGIENE WORD SEARCH

M Y V Z S O D S R R Z O S E I S I G C G
 U T I M P T T A M H W E E I E R N A P K
 A P R S R O I T E T V D T T L I U C C P
 H O U Z P R I N I O R U A I H T P C I G
 W L S S E M S E L O D N T C I B H N T M
 F I T T M C U G H Z I V U O U G E S P I
 N O C Y O V V R V M A O N R S B D A E C
 H A U U I D D E A A T A C R O I W N S R
 B D I E K R C T K E L S S S S B Y I I O
 S O I L E D N E L C C E B I C T H T T O
 O F M B S O P D O O C P N H R K C I N R
 A M N R C I H N F A H F D I K I M Z A G
 P N C E R R T A F R E O D L B G O E H A
 Y O D C D A R R K C G S C R I V K R P N
 Z H I H C D U N T O H E E L Z F S N B I
 C B E T Z S I I N G C T R O A P O A Y S
 L P M Y S S O L K R A R Y M F N O G R M
 Z Y M B W N B N W W D K B N S I I K U S
 C D M T D D W O F Y S V N E E K E I D U
 A V A N G N I H S A W D N A H H P E F D

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

WORDS

ALCOHOL
 ANTISEPTIC
 BACTERIA
 CAUTION
 CONTACT
 DECONTAMINATE
 DETERGENT
 DIRTY
 DISINFECTION
 GERMS
 GLOVES
 HANDWASHING
 HOT SPOTS
 MICROORGANISMS
 NAILS
 SANITIZER
 SCRUB
 SINK
 SOAPY
 SOILED
 SURFACES
 TOUCHING
 VIRUS
 WATER

Madigan still the fixer king who gets things done

Outsiders may not get it, but it makes some sense that the majority of House Democrats still back House Speaker Michael Madigan's reelection.

He's been a genius at getting things done for his caucus. He is loyal to his people and has infinitely more institutional memory and can pull more strings and push more buttons than anyone alive.

In his nearly 50 years in office, Madigan has been heavily

involved with four legislative remap processes and has been in the House for five of them.

Madigan has played a decisive role in every income tax increase (temporary and permanent) since the tax was established in 1969 - and he was a delegate to the constitutional convention which created it.

He has also negotiated dozens of budgets since he became House Speaker in

1983. His campaign operation meticulously tracks the number of knocked doors in contested races and every contact made, and he reviews that data each week and calls candidates to provide his feedback. He knows how to win.

And at this moment in history, with redistricting coming up, a huge revenue shortfall, horrific budget problems, a massively destructive pandemic causing rampant suffering and, in less than two years, a midterm election under a Democratic president (with a new map), most of his members are rightly worried sick.

For these and many other reasons, this is exactly the moment when his members would need Madigan the most, and he most certainly knows this and is deftly playing on that angst as 19 of his members are in open revolt.

But the sweeping and aggressive federal investigation is this/close to Madigan now. Despite all of his protests of innocence and some reasonable arguments that he did nothing illegal, the G is obviously after Madigan's head.

Gov. JB Pritzker has taken loads of heat for not pushing Madigan out of office, even though he couldn't do it if he tried. Pritzker is up for reelection in 2022 and a Madigan reelection would certainly mean big trouble. Yes, Pritzker won by 16 points two years ago, but that was during an unpopular Republican president's midterm against a super-weak incumbent. He's going to have to hustle to win.

A gubernatorial confrontation with a reelected Madigan is inevitable.



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

Pritzker pledged during the campaign and ever since taking office that he will veto a legislative redistricting plan that isn't "fair" which was defined (by me) in March of 2018 as any proposal "that is in any way drafted or created by legislators, political party leaders and/or their staffs or allies."

So, when Madigan told the House Black Caucus during a recent private meeting that he is the best person to draw the new map, he guaranteed that Pritzker had to veto it. There will be no finessing Pritzker's pledge. And overriding a veto will be hugely difficult because suburbanites who ran as good government types in swing districts and true-blue progressives are gonna be in a major quandary. It's pretty difficult to see how this fight gets as far as an override showdown.

Speaker Madigan also said during the meeting that he was prepared to pass another income tax increase if the governor requests it. Like with his remap pledge, his statement likely killed the already very slim prospects for a tax hike.

Just imagine the governor (or any vulnerable Democrat) running in 2022 with Madigan still in office, a Madigan-drawn district map in place and a Madigan tax hike. Maybe the Democrats will get lucky and the Republicans will nominate unelectable far-right candidates, but basing your plan on your opponent collapsing is never a wise idea.

So, it's just difficult to see how Speaker Madigan can keep all the reelection campaign promises he's making.

If he wants to avoid the risk of a new district map being possibly drawn by the

Republicans after a losing veto fight, he'll likely have to submit to a new process which won't be nearly as advantageous to his members.

A Madigan-backed tax hike is pretty much out of the question. Same goes for a gimmicky Madigan budget. And while he's been the patronage and fixer king for decades, how much can he actually accomplish for his members when he's under this horribly dark cloud?

No matter what, Madigan still has his unmatched campaign prowess going for him.

But if he somehow manages to flip enough votes to get reelected in the first place and the feds don't take him out, the reality going forward will be much different than he's making it out to be.

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

Illinois gas prices cool down from last week's spike

Illinois gas prices have fallen 1 cent per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.16/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,378 stations. Gas prices in Illinois are unchanged versus a month ago and stand 40.7 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois is priced at \$1.11/g Monday while the most expensive is \$2.81/g, a difference of \$1.70/g. The lowest price in the state is \$1.11/g while the highest is \$2.81/g, a difference of \$1.70/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 0.7 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.14/g Monday. The national average is up 1.4 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 41.4 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices: Peoria - \$2.24/g, down 2.1 cents per gallon from last week's

\$2.26/g. St. Louis - \$1.91/g, down 0.3 cents per gallon from last week's \$1.91/g. Champaign - \$2.13/g, unchanged from last week's \$2.13/g.

"After gas prices spiked last week in their biggest weekly rise since August, we've seen them cool back down for the time being. With COVID-19 cases continuing to rise and restrictions weighing on gasoline demand, we're likely to see optimism over vaccinations offset by lower current demand for the most part," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"In the weeks ahead as that balance shifts and millions get the vaccination, if things look much improved, I would expect for a longer upward move in gas prices. For now, however, the holidays will be marked by the lowest seasonal prices in years."

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT

WEE-SIP LIQUORS AND GAS

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

Visit the Winchester Green shopping area. Friendly and helpful staff can guide you through the broad selection of adult beverages. And top off the gas tank before you leave.

Remember to SHOP LOCAL

www.wilmingtonilchamber.org

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

SISTEK RENTALS

We **SELL, REPAIR,** and **RENT**
Outdoor Power Equipment

YOUR NEXT MOWER®

815-237-8298
740 Oak Street • South Wilmington, IL

TIRE ZONE

Tires & Alignment

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8-5; Saturday, 8-12

Shocks/Struts • Batteries • Wheel Alignments
Tire Balancing • Oil & Lube

24 Hour Towing - 815-353-8511
85 N. 1st Ave., Coal City • 634-3000

PROFESSIONAL PRO REAL ESTATE

JUDY SUNDINE
BROKER

Direct: (815) 405-6758
815-476-7916

FAX: 815-476-7566
Email: judysundine@sbcglobal.net

506 S. WATER ST., WILMINGTON, IL 60481

PROTECT-YOUR-DECK DECK BUILDER

Deck, fence maintenance & house painting

- Ext. wood restoration
- Power washing vinyl siding & concrete

Free Estimates
Insured & Bonded
815-935-9949

• Driveway stone
• Pulverized topsoil
• Pool & play sand
• Hardwood mulch
• Decorative stone
• Bobcat Service

We Deliver!
www.jdlandscapesupply.com
815-478-3717
708-921-3535

SHORKEY PAINTING

(815) 546-1321

Interior/Exterior
Est. 1989

VIKING ROOFING

Specializing in Tear Offs
Fully Insured
State Lic# 104002993

10 FREE vents & 100 sq. ft of lumber

815-476-6010
Over 40 Years Experience

Mini Storage

CLEMENTINE'S CLOSETS

515 Davy Lane, Wilmington

Affordable Clean, Secure Monthly Rentals

No Deposit Required
815-530-0200

FULL COLOR

- Banners -
- Yard Signs -
- Post Cards -
- Brochures -

Customized to your liking. Competitive prices.

THE FREE PRESS
111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL

MIDWEST BETTER BUILT CONSTRUCTION

EXTERIOR/INTERIOR REMODELS
NEW CONSTRUCTION
CARPENTER CONTRACTOR

(815) 530-0630
Brandon

Free Estimates Fully Insured

FOR ALL YOUR CARPENTRY NEEDS

ORDER YOUR BUSINESS CARDS

from the Free Press Newspapers
Call 815-476-7966 and ask for Eric

A & E SEPTIC SERVICE

Pumping - Repairs New Installation
Sewer Rodding - Sanitary - Party Potties
Ed Bonnavier
Goal City • 634-4691

JOHNKE TREE SERVICE

No Job Too Big Or Too Small!

- Power line clearance certified
- Free Estimates
- 18 years experience

Fully Bonded & Insured

815-791-5146

Veterans, Military & Senior Discount

AJ's Promotional Products and Apparel

Adidas® Koozies®
Oakley® Bic® Pens
Champion® Sharpie®

815-263-5990

Janet Fisher-Schatz
EMAIL: ajsprint@comcast.net
WEB: ajsprint.esppwebsite.com

This space could be yours!

Call
815-476-7966

CULLEN LAWN WORKS LLC

www.cullenlawnworks.com
cullenlawnworks@gmail.com

Residential and Commercial

- Mowing • Bush Trimming
- Yard/Leaf Cleanup
- Snow Plowing/Salting
- Aerating/Rolling/Dethatching

Dave: 815-278-0626 April: 815-955-0416

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

Pre-payment required for all classified ads unless customer has a pre established business account

Deadlines

Classified Display
The Prairie Shopper - Thurs., 4 p.m.
Paid Newspapers - Fri., 5 p.m.

Classified Word Ads
All Newspapers - Thurs., 4 p.m.
Paid Newspapers - Mon., Noon

Reach over 42,200 readers

with a classified ad in
The Free Press Newspapers

- The Prairie Shopper
- The Braidwood Journal
- The Coal City Courant
- The Free Press Advocate

Cost

Line Ads are up to 30 words
(20¢ for each word over 30)
1 wk. - \$21; 2 wks. - \$25;
3 wks. - \$28; 4 wks. - \$30
\$1.20 Extra per line for bold or caps on classified

The Free Press Newspapers will be responsible for the first incorrect insertion, and its liabilities shall be limited to the price on one insertion. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to classify correctly, edit, reject or cancel any advertisement at any time in accordance with its policy. All ads must be checked for errors the first week of publication by the advertiser.

Phone (815) 476-7966 or (815) 634-0315 for details.

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

PROMOTIONAL OFFER - take \$75 off 1st month rent. Coal City, ground level, 2BR, 1BA, living room, dining room, laundry room w/washer-dryer hookup in your apt. Lots of closet space, outdoor storage shed, small deck & patio. 1 year lease, NO PETS, \$795/mo. Call 815-634-2294. cc51a-1b

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Very nice large 2 BR apt. in South Wilmington, 1,400 sq. ft., no pets, \$650/mo. plus utilities, call any time, 815-302-4406. cc49b-53a

Braidwood, Upstairs, 2BR apartment, newly remodeled, \$725 mo. \$1,000 security deposit. Laundry on sight, references and lease, No pets. 815-365-2829 leave message. cc51b-2a

AUTOS

2005 Chrysler 300, interior, exterior & mechanical very good condition. 16 month old tires, new battery, new complete brake job. 101,100 miles, Weather Tech mats f&r. \$5,500. Call 779-240-1124. cc50a-51b

FARM EQUIPMENT

For sale by sealed bid. 1990? Case International 885 tractor with TA 26 loader. 5,255 hrs. Can be seen at Maine Township building. Gorman and Braceville RD. Bids will be taken until Jan. 8, 2021 and will be opened Jan. 11, 2021. The board has the right to reject any bid. Send bids to: J. Jackman 4100 S. Gorman Rd., Gardner, IL. 60424. ch51b-1a

HELP WANTED

Applications are being taken for one, full-time (eight hours per day) Custodial/Maintenance position. Resumes should be sent to: Mr. Jim Habing Wilmington High School 209U is in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which states that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicapping condition be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity in which District 209U receives federal assistance. ch50b-52a

HELP WANTED

60 E. Chestnut
Coal City
815-634-0004

Bob's Advanced Auto & Tire, Inc.

is seeking a Service Writer/Advisor with automotive experience

- Candidate must be qualified to:
- Meet and greet customers promptly
 - Determine requested and/or needed service for their vehicle
 - Answer incoming calls & schedule appts
 - Advise customers of estimated service & repair costs & completion date
 - Coordinate repairs/service orders w/technician
 - Computer skills a must
 - Ensure customer satisfaction by getting it right the first time
 - Must have a valid drivers license

Also, seeking:

MECHANIC WITH AUTOMOTIVE EXPERIENCE
Apply in person at 60 E. Chestnut, Coal City

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

Are you looking for a unique and different Christmas gift for outdoor typed loved ones? I have a wooden gun/bow rack with 4 sets of hooves and a storage cabinet (\$130). I also have a piece of wooden furniture that is a lined ice chest/cooler that holds 2 cases (\$90). Also, an antler chandelier (\$50), cabin type pictures, paintings, plates, switch plates, picture frames, candle holder, lantern, moose plates, ornaments, pillow, and much more. Call 815-954-4647. cc51b-52a

Dry, seasoned oak firewood \$139, cherry BBQ firewood \$169. Wood racks \$49. The best firewood & quick, friendly service. 815-260-0108. cc50a-53b

HOMEMADE POTICA

Nut, poppy seed, apricot, raspberry; order now for the holidays. Banana, Pumpkin and Zucchini mini breads also available. Pick up at the Wine Cafe in Wilmington and receive \$3 off a bottle of wine. Call Charlotte 815-545-8767. ck46b-52a

PETS

Large Selection of Dog and Cat Food, treats, accessories, health aids, clothing, Birthday treats, wall art, jewelry, gifts, greeting cards and Home of Fritters for Critters Pet Treats. New! Brew and Chew Dog Treats. Trinity Barkery 240 W. Baltimore Wilmington., IL 60481 815-476-5104 slewis@trinity-services.org. ch22b-tfn

REAL ESTATE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF GRUNDY - MORRIS, ILLINOIS US BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION AS TRUSTEE FOR AEGIS ASSET BACKED SECURITIES TRUST MORTGAGE PASS THROUGH CERTIFICATES SERIES 2005-4; Plaintiff, vs. DEBBIE MILLER; LAKEWOOD TRAILS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION; ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE; MORTGAGE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION SYSTEMS, INC UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; UNKNOWN SUCCESSOR TRUSTEE OF THE JOHN C. MILLER REVOCABLE TRUST DATED MARCH 6, 2012; JOHN C. MILLER REVOCABLE TRUST DATED MARCH 6, 2012; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS; Defendants; 19 CH 19 NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercountry Judicial Sales Corporation will on Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at the hour of 2:00 p.m. in the office of Donald F. Black, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate: P.I.N. 03-14-202-003. Commonly known as 1305 Clifton Drive, Minooka, IL 60447. The improvement on the property consists of a single family residence. If the subject mortgaged real estate is a unit of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Condominium Property Act. Sale terms: 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. For information call Law Clerk at Plaintiff's Attorney, The Wirbicki Law Group, 33 West Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois 60603. (312) 360-9455. INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION intercountryjudicialsales.com I3160547 Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., Dec. 2, 9 & 16, 2020.

SERVICE & REPAIRS

A Thousand Words Photography
385 N. Second Ave.
Coal City
Mandy Eaton
815-791-2913

Bradley Pest Control Termite/Pest Specialist.
Real estate inspection Rodent Control and Exclusion Call Phil at 815-405-5020 cc42a-42a

Gas Fireplace Repair. 38 years experience. Licensed, insured & bonded. Call Margo at 708-712-5012 to schedule an appointment. Can repair most brands. Weekends available. Thank you. cc49b-22a

PAINTING
Interior only, 20 years experience, referrals available. Call 815-585-0904. cc48a51b

Julie's Remodeling
Siding, soffit, roof repairs, painting, welding repairs, seamless gutters, fencing, tree removal, lawn care, Complete Handyman service! Bonded and Insured, 20 yrs., call 815-791-5731. cc28b

Mike Collins Roofing, re-shingles and modified rubber and gutter cleaning, aluminum gutter screen, blown-in insulation in attics.

INSULATION. Get a free estimate for blown in insulation for attics from Mike Collins Roofing. Keep your house cooler in summertime and warmer in the winter. lic # 104.007296. Ask for Mike at 815-730-1303. cc41b-12a

Ron's Drywall, Hang, Tape & Paint, 25 years experience. Reasonable rates including dry-wall repairs, plaster repairs, cracks, holes, & patches. Carpenter available by request. 815-549-5136. cc40a-2b

SITUATIONS WANTED

Wanted: Stories about local people, organizations and events. If you know a neighbor with an interesting hobby, collection or cause, give the editor a call at 1-815-634-0315 or 1-815-476-7966. tfn/47b

STORAGE

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

WANTED

WANTED:

- Scrap Metal
- Garden Tractors
- Snowmobiles
- Appliances
- Anything Metal

Free pickup 7 days
815-210-8819



WE LOVE OUR READERS

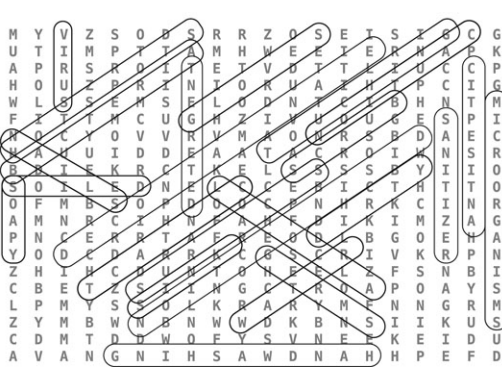
ILLINOIS CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING NETWORK

MISCELLANEOUS

NEW DISCOVERY
ELIMINATES COMMON SEXUAL PROBLEMS!
All Natural Male Enhancement Product Increases Staying Power, Performance, & Pleasure. Risk FREE 60 Day Guarantee + FREE SHIPPING. 15% Discount with Coupon perform03. Visit: TryProZyte.com

WANTED

FREON WANTED: We pay \$\$\$ for cylinders and cans. R12 R500 R11 R113 R114. Convenient. Certified Professionals. Call 312-598-1758 or visit RefrigerantFinders.com



R	A	M	S	A	G	E	S	K	O	D	A	K	
A	N	I	I	R	E	N	A	I	C	A	C	O	
C	T	N	D	A	V	E	R	O	B	E	R	T	S
E	R	A	S	E	S	O	C	E	A	N			
R	A	T	E	L	N	A	S	T	I	N	E	S	
		O	B	I	A	D			S	L	O	E	
S	I	R	E	N	M	U	R	E	S		M	G	
A	M	Y	E	M	U	L	A	T	E	H	M	O	
C	I		S	O	R	A	S	N	O	Y	E	S	
K	N	A	P	T	E	S	I	D					
S	E	P	A	R	A	T	E	S	E	N	R	O	L
		P	R	O	L	E		A	L	K	A	L	I
C	H	A	R	L	I	E	R	O	S	E		N	E
S	A	L	O	L	M	A	N	A	S	T	O	G	
C	O	L	T	S	S	T	E	P	S	S	S	E	

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

THE HOLIDAY GIFT SUBSCRIPTION

52 weeks for as little as \$40

That's a \$12 SAVINGS off the newsstand price!
Outside Will & Grundy \$48; out of state \$54.

Call 815-476-7966 or 815-634-0315

Give the gift that keeps on giving, with a gift subscription to the Free Press Newspapers!

With in-depth coverage of local news, lifestyle features, local sports and money saving special offers, what's not to love?



COMET SPORTS



File Photo

RCHS GRADUATES Jackson Crater (left) and, Cody Mass (right) were picked by former coach Andy Gleixner to be dream team members. Mass was one of the top scorers at RCHS while Jackson was a very good defender.



File Photo

NICK ZARECKI was named to the Comet soccer dream team. Zarecki remains one of the leading scorers at Reed-Custer High School.

RCHS Soccer Team

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

because of his experience.”
Jackson was another midfielder/defender, who was a very talented defender.

“Jackson was a great leader by example and a hard worker. An engine that never ran out of gas. You’d be surprised when other guys would slow down but he’d still be going 100 miles a minute to balls.

Nick Zarecki

Nick would be slotted behind Bailey but he was a great forward in his own right.

“Nick definitely was able to...again another kid that played four years and had older brothers that played and comes from a soccer family and he really was one of those kids that could finish a ball and intelligent enough to get through a defense.

Brett Hedrick

Former Comet coach Brandon Randall, who coached the Comets for two years from 2003-05, selected Brett as his first pick at midfielder.

“Brett was a great team leader,” said Randall. “He has great vision and could distribute the ball as well as anyone in the area. He was also a great athlete and could win the ball, and played all over the field to help the team.

David Blackburn

Blackburn, who is the former soccer coach at Wilmington High School, played all over the field for Randall in the early 2000s.

“David was the ultimate utility player being able to play goalkeeper and on the field as well. He was a talented athlete with a very high soccer IQ. He also had the great technical skill to be effective in the back and in the attack.”

Two dominant years

A couple other players also worth a mention include members of the 1999 and 2000 Comet soccer teams that went 27-7-5 over those two seasons.

Beginning with the 1999 team, it was a combination of Diego Salazar, Eric Milton and Dustin Veigelt that led the charge on the offensive end.

Veigelt led the Comets with 18 goals as he

scored with any chance that he was given.

Behind him, Salazar rocketed 14 goals past the opposing goalies.

Eric Milton was the third leading scorer on the 1999 team that went 11-5-2, registering 13 goals with six assists.

CJ Abney was very good at getting the ball to those players as he led the team in assists, delivering 15 assists to the top scorers, who knew exactly what to do. Abney also scored a few goals here and there, sending seven goals through but he was mainly concerned getting the ball to those guys.

In the goal for the Comets was Keith Janczak, who locked opposing offenses down with 101 saves, including a few shutouts that set this team up for many of its wins.

Other goal scorers that season included Jacob Walsh (7), Abney (6), Greg Zaleski (5), Roger Fegan (4), Bill Simpson (3), Jeff Blackburn (2), Dan Plusinski (2) and Lee Cote (2).

In 2000, Veigelt and company led the Comets to an astounding record of 16-2-2.

Veigelt also led Reed-Custer that year as he tried to better his junior seasons where he netted 18 goals.

He was off to a good start, banging five goals through during one of the games in the Somonauk Tournament. That still remains the most ever. Veigelt finished his senior season with 19 goals, bringing his total to 37 in his final two seasons at Reed-Custer.

The other big scorer that year was Eduardo Lupeunte, who drilled 16 goals past opposing goalies, including five in one game that tied Veigelt’s single game goal record.

None of that scoring would have been possible without Abney, who delivered 13 assists to lead the team, and bring his two season total to 28.

In the goal that season was a combination of Jeff Blackburn, Fegan and Zac Bailey, who combined for over 100 saves, keeping opposing offenses off the board.



File Photo

COMET 2014 GRADUATE BJ Bailey was selected for the Reed-Custer soccer dream team. Bailey was the leading goal scorer at RCHS. Bailey found the back of the net over 50 times in high school.

Deer harvest up slightly during 2020

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) released a preliminary total of 76,579 deer were taken by hunters during the seven-day firearm deer season that concluded Dec. 6. That’s up slightly over the 75,417 deer harvested the year before.

The preliminary harvest for the second segment of the firearm season (Dec. 3-6) was 29,432, compared with 25,176 during the second season in 2019. The preliminary harvest

for the first segment of this year’s firearm season (Nov. 20-22) was 47,147 deer.

Hunters in Will County reported 250 deer harvested, up from 238 in 2019. Grundy and Kankakee Counties had declines of 252 (266 year before) and 193 (197 in 2019), respectively.

The top four counties with the largest harvest were Randolph (2,245 deer), Adams (2,226), Jackson (2,082) and Fulton (1,913)

Remaining 2020-21 deer season hunting opportunities in Illinois in the weeks ahead include:

- The Late-Winter Antlerless-Only Deer Season and CWD Deer Season (in designated counties only) will be on two upcoming weekends - Dec. 31, 2020-Jan. 3, 2021 and Jan. 15-17, 2021;
- The Archery Deer Season continues through Jan. 17, 2021.

FRESH HOT DELIVERY!

“Proud to be serving the community for the past 34 years!”

34TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

1 X-Large - 2 Topping Pizza
XL Geo's Nuggets, FREE Double Chocolate Caramel M&M's Gourmet Brownie & a FREE 2-Liter of Soda
(Limit 1 coupon per party per visit)

ONLY **\$27.99**

Not valid with any other offer. Plus sales tax. Expires 12/31/20.

Order online at www.geospizza.net

634-8858
 715 S. Broadway • Coal City

Gift Certificates Available



File Photo

HISTORY IN THE MAKING - The Reed-Custer Soccer team presented the first team trophy in the history of the soccer program after winning the Bobcat Round Robin Tournament in Somonauk 21 years ago in 1999. Squad members include (from left, kneeling) Gary Blank, Jill Nolan, C.J. Abney, Eric Milton, Dan Pucinski, Roger Fegan and Jeff Whitten. Standing are Keith Janczak, Annemarie Dell'Aquila, Bill Simpson, Chad Dysvick, Josh LaGrange, Diego Salazar, Zack West, Dustin Veigelt, Justin Meents, Jeff Blackburn, Jake Walsh and Coach Bill Geasa.

The standouts who would make a soccer dream team

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

They were the best of the best at playing Reed-Custer soccer.

It's one of the youngest sports, starting in the 90's, so to come up with a dream team roster the choices were more narrow.

The soccer coach with the most experience is Andy Gleixner who has coached the Comets from 2006-19. He was perfect to list a dream team lineup.

"If I could put all these players on a team together, we'd probably have a better record every year," said Gleixner.

Richmond (BJ) Bailey

He started with one of the best overall players in Comet soccer history and that was 2014 graduate BJ Bailey, who has the record for the most goals in school history with over 50 goals scored in that four year time span.

"To this day, I still have coaches that remember him," said Gleixner. "He played forward. He had the speed to get behind defenses as he got older, he was able to put the ball in the back of the net easily."

Bailey went on to Olivet Nazarene University to run track.

He was one of the fastest overall runners at ONU, setting

a new mark for the 100 meter dash, finishing the race in 10.88. He was also involved in the 4x100 relay that set the new mark, finishing in 41.67 seconds. The best and most impressive finish he ever had was during the CCAC Indoor Championships where he ran the 60 meter dash in 7.09 seconds. That is currently the ninth best time.

Along with that, Bailey has the seventh fastest 200 meter dash time (22.19) and the sixth best 100 meter dash (10.88).

Lebeda brothers

Gleixner noted Thomas, Kenny and Matt Lebeda were three hard-nosed brothers that really took charge on the soccer field.

Kenny, who was a forward, was a great all-around player, who had about 30 career goals.

"Kenny was the best all-around soccer player I've coached," added Gleixner. "His IQ and all that stuff was just on point. He could put the ball in the back of the net, he could assist and he was probably the best all-around player I've ever coached."

Matt and Thomas were midfielders and while they don't have the stats like Kenny did, they controlled the rest of the field. They got the ball back so guys like Kenny could score.

"All three were hard-nosed and they were very intelligent soccer-wise. Defensively, they were wing, 50-50's. The intensity and their tenacity was there. They made things happen with the ball. Their leadership was better and better as they got older."

Brian Hedrick

Brian would be the goalie for the Comet dream team. He was a big player but moved gracefully.

He had a lot of high school experience. Brian was a bigger kid but really moved well with his size, would make some really low shot saves. Brian was definitely a good goalkeeper for us. He was a bigger body but made some saves that you didn't think a guy that size could make. He really grew into his own and became a great leader there during the back end of his career.

Brian leads in career saves with 478 career saves.

Jon Costain

Costain would be slotted in the goal for Gleixner. Costain could save any ball that was hit his way and he'd do it in style.

"He was the most athletic goalkeeper I've ever had but I only had him for one year as a freshman. He was so athletic. I can remember him making saves that I didn't think a freshman could make. He was very athletic and very unforgiving on his body. He was very aggressive for his age."

Cody Mass

Mass was the other for-



File Photo

KENNY LEBEDA earned a spot on the RCHS boys soccer 'dream team'. Lebeda was one of the top goal scorers as a Comet.



File Photo

FORMER RCHS SOCCER PLAYER Brett Hedrick was named to the Comet soccer dream team. Brett was a midfielder back in 2005.

ward Gleixner mentioned. Mass was a midfielder that wasn't afraid to go all out.

"Cody was a great player for me," commented Gleixner. "He kind of touched with BJ and Kenny and all those guys too. For me, our most successful season was 2012 where we had nine wins and I think that was the year I had all three of

those guys on the team. He was a club player and he was a physical player. He controlled the midfield really well."

Christian Williams & Jackson Crater

The next two picks would be back-ups to Bailey, Mass and Kenny Lebeda.

Williams was a very good soccer player and the leading

goal scorer in every season he played. He finished with 23 goals.

"Christian was a very smooth and intelligent player. He played for many years, was a club player and definitely one that...his IQ was very high."

SEE RCHS SOCCER TEAM, PAGE 13