



Christmas for
convicts in the pen



Comet coaches pick
dream team kickers



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Vol. 62, Issue 52

1 section • 14 pages

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BRAIDWOOD JOURNAL

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2020

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER

Text-A-Tip help line opens for local teens

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The community coalitions in Wilmington and Braidwood have made it their missions to combat substance abuse and provide a healthy and safe community for local youth.

Now, the Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community and the Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition (BAHCC) have another resource to offer local teens — a “Text-A-Tip” line where youth can access help for free.

Wendy Hill of the Wilmington coalition explained the program during this month's BAHCC meeting on Dec. 14. “It's really a help line,” Hill said. “It's not, let me report something, it's a text to 'I need help' line, mental health for youth.”

The line works by texting a code to 1-844-823-5323. Youth in Wilmington can text the code “476-HELP” while in

Braidwood the code is “458-HELP.”

Those codes are unique to each community. If someone is not sure of their code, they can text “hello” and within minutes, a live mental health counselor will respond.

All messages are sent using SMS number masking technology that keeps the communication and identifying information anonymous.

Teens can use the hotline when they are struggling with difficult issues such as anxiety, grief, bullying and substance abuse.

Texters will reach a licensed counselor who will respond immediately.

“We are partnering with LEAD, it's an established help line, they rolled out across northern Illinois, Florida and California, and we're just joining in their already established and well functioning program,” Hill explained.

According to data from LEAD, the line is used by teens dealing with depression and anxiety, relationship conflicts,

substance abuse, self harm, suicide, peer pressure, bullying, and other needs.

LEAD stands for Linking Efforts Against Drugs. Since 1991, the non-profit organization has been dedicated to its mission of preventing substance abuse and other risky behavior by youth.

“They'll also refer to local organizations too, if people need additional follow up,” said Pete Dell'Aquila, project coordinator with BAHCC.

The Text-A-Tip line is available for anyone in need of emotional support. While intended for teens in crisis, those who have concerns about a friend or loved one are also encouraged to use the line.

Texters are anonymous, and the service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community and the Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition have sponsored the service, with funding from the Community Foundation of Will County.



Photo by Marney Simon

A NEW BILLBOARD advertising the Text-A-Tip service for youth was placed along Route 53 in Wilmington this week. The service allows local youth to text for free, anonymous help from licensed counselors.

Lest we forget Names added to Reed Township Memorial

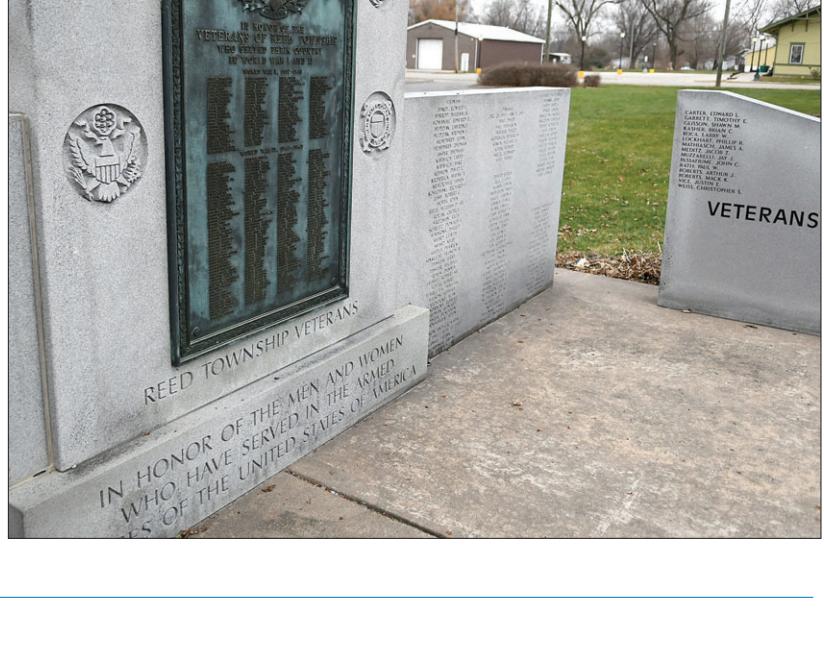


CARTER, EDWARD L.
GARRETT, TIMOTHY E.
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KASHER, BRIAN C.
KOCA, LARRY W.
LOCKHART, PHILLIP R.
MATHIASCH, JAMES A.
MEDITZ, JACOB Z.
MUZZARELLI, JAY J.
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ROBERTS, MACK K.
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WEISS, CHRISTOPHER S.

VETERANS WHO SERVED

Photos by Eric Fisher

FIFTEEN NEW NAMES were recently added to the wall of the Reed Township Veterans Memorial located on Main Street across from City Hall. Koca Post 39 of the Braidwood American Legion added the names of those brave men and women who served their country who signed up while a resident of Reed Township. The new engravings are on the south wing of the memorial. Hundreds of other names have filled the center monument. Post Commander James Canup said the Legion had been saving the names for a few years to make it cost-effective to hire an engraver. When they counted 15 they decided it was time to add them so, with the help of a \$1,500 donation from Exelon Braidwood Station, an engraver from Dwight recently completed the work. Canup said the Legion is starting a new batch of names to add to the monument. Names, proof of Reed Township residency and DD214 paperwork can be sent to American Legion Koca Post 39, P.O. Box 339, Braidwood, IL 60481.



Outbreaks continue at long term care facilities

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Vaccines approved for the novel coronavirus have been distributed throughout Illinois, with more set to come as the new year arrives.

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were granted emergency use authorization by the Food and Drug Administration for individuals

aged 18 and older.

But while these vaccines are now being distributed, outbreaks of COVID-19 continue.

Outbreaks at long term care facilities have continued to increase.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the 101-bed Aperion Care in Wilmington has 95 active cases as of Dec. 18, the most recent data available

from the department. Eleven additional cases that were identified at the facility since the start of the pandemic are no longer active.

No deaths have been reported at the Wilmington facility. The Wilmington site is currently closed to any visitations.

Aperion operates 37 long term care facilities in Illinois and Indiana. According to a statement from the adminis-

tration Aperion, each of its facilities are routinely testing staff as directed by state and local health departments and as directed by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) based on the facility's status and county positivity rates.

Will County began vaccinations of healthcare workers over the past week, after more

SEE COVID, PAGE 2



Photo by Marney Simon

OPEN FOR BUSINESS — Brent Van Duyne, Pharmacist in Charge at Wilmington Pharmacy, takes a brief pause from his busy day at the newly opened store to take off his mask for a photo. The pharmacy at 600 W. Baltimore St. opened earlier this month.

Independent pharmacy provides personal touch

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

In the midst of a pandemic, it isn't necessarily typical to see a new business come to town.

But getting the doors open at the new Wilmington Pharmacy on West Baltimore Street is exactly what owner Brent Van Duyne was able to do this month, a few weeks ahead of schedule.

The business opened on Dec. 7, a full service retail pharmacy with drive-thru service and free delivery available.

“I always wanted to run

my own pharmacy. I've been talking about it for a long time and the opportunity came up over the last year to be able to do this,” Van Duyne said. “My grandfather used to have a pharmacy in town, Hunt's, so I always wanted to have my store here, too.”

Van Duyne said becoming a pharmacist was a lot like going into the family business.

SEE PHARMACY, PAGE 2



8 0 4 8 7 9 2 9 6 4 4

School

"Also, some of our classes are small enough they can meet every day in the classroom and still be socially distanced. I've had a few calls from parents and the concern was not to have the students sitting in the room for five hours at a time," Valiente said.

Valiente cited an example of a freshman, sophomore, junior and a senior with the new schedule, showing how classroom time and remote time would be equally distributed. An email was also sent out to all parents in the district explaining the new schedule.

"The reason we did this initially was to see what the most amount per day they would be in a remote period. What this does is get them active at least every other period. It helps all the way around," Valiente said.

Designated remote learning locations will be freshman in the R-C Auditorium, sophomores in the RCHS Gymnasium, juniors in the old Cafeteria, and seniors in the new Cafeteria.

"I appreciate your ability in allowing us to hire a few more permanent subs. We are going to utilize guides, aides, and anyone we have to help us get the kids all back. As issues arise, we will reflect and revise accordingly. We want to give the kids as normal of a year as we can in education," Mitchell said.

Tax Levy Details

Board members approved the resolution regarding the certification of the Tax Levy for 2020. The levy amount is \$27,500,000; including \$20,220,000 for Education, \$4,600,000 for Operations & Maintenance, \$1,300,000 for Transportation, \$60,000 for Working Cash, \$320,000 for IMRF, \$320,000 for Social Security, \$0 for Fire Prevention and Safety, \$250,000 for Liability Insurance,

\$380,000 for Special Education, and \$0 for Lease/Rent.

Board members also approved the consent agenda including the minutes from November 18 board meeting, authorization for payment of bills, and the Treasurer's report.

Madrigal Dinner

Valiente said the Madrigal Dinner sponsored by the RCHS Music Department was a success.

"I thought they did a really nice job setting up the madrigal performance. It gave those kids their moment and they were also able to share a link for the ICE conference music festival," Valiente said.

Mitchell also complimented the group for their efforts.

"I watched it on my phone, but they did a really nice job. It was a great performance," Mitchell said.

Technology Update

Mark Hulbert, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, said some of the remaining laptops have arrived but more are still expected to come.

"We are still waiting on those Chromebooks. We did receive 40 Chromebooks earlier in the week and tech got an email there are another 170 on the way. We were told last week they planned to have them to us by the end of December, but they have told us that before," Hulbert said.

The one-to-one handbook has been completed and sent to parents of middle school and high school students. There were two Student Technology Interns who received their HT Service Qualified Certificate: Marie Simonelli (Senior) and Aiden Schott (Senior).

"The hiring of Justin Walsh has been great for the department. The staff have really come to like him and in the short time we've had him here he's made a good impression on us all," Mitchell said.

Cars for Sale

Hulbert asked for board members' input about selling three 2014 Chevrolet Impala's that are no longer necessary.

"We have cars we no longer need, they got caught up with their drivers ed students. We would like to put those out for bid. My question would be the last time we put out a bid we put out a starting price and I would like to do that again," Hulbert said.

"I don't think there's anything wrong with putting a minimum on it," Board President Greg Boyer said.

Other board members agreed to put a minimum of at least \$6,000 on each vehicle when placing them for bid.

COVID Update

Reed-Custer has experienced a total of 74 positive cases (46 students and 28 staff members) as of the morning of December 14. Except for cases in last 10 days, all individuals have reported back to school.

Superintendent Mitchell thanked school staff and parents for their efforts despite the pandemic.

"For keeping these kids in school since August, we've really had a successful run," Mitchell said.

RCHS Cafeteria Update

Miller said construction on the new cafeteria at the high school is still on schedule for completion in December.

Several trades are finalizing their work, and everything should be ready when students come back in January.

"It's good to see electricians putting switches in walls, hooking up refrigerators and the stuff we need. We had custodians in there doing some cleaning in the kitchen area with more cleaning scheduled over Christmas break. We're still planning the first day after the kids come back after Christmas to be in there, and that's still on schedule," Mitchell said.

The official ribbon cutting will be after the next board meeting, Jan. 20.

Covid

than 4,000 doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine were delivered to the county.

"Today is a great day in Will County as we witness the beginning of the end of this pandemic," County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant said of last week's delivery of the first vaccines.

The State of Illinois is following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) which is breaking up the vaccination process into four phases, focusing on "critical populations" first.

The county's allocation was shared among several healthcare sites, designated first for persons in healthcare settings who may have direct or indirect patient exposure.

The first shots were administered to healthcare workers at Amita St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet on Dec. 16.

Additional deliveries of the vaccine will be available in the coming weeks for residents of long-term care facilities and essential frontline workers, including first responders, grocery store workers, funeral directors, day care workers.

Will County health officials said that while the vaccine is now being rolled out, residents are still urged to follow guidelines to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, especially during the holiday seasons when crowds and gatherings are increased.

"This has been a long road for all of us, and now we enter into the next stage of our fight against COVID-19," said Sue Olenek, executive director of the county health department. "It is great to have the vaccine out and being distributed, but it will take a long time before the general public is vaccinated. That means we must continue to wear our masks properly, be aware of social distancing, and avoid large groups and gatherings, especially during the coming Christmas and New Year's holidays. As we move through the various phases of the vaccination process we ask for the public to educate themselves and be patient."

As of Tuesday afternoon, the test positivity seven-day rolling average in Region 7, which includes

Will and Kankakee counties, is 11.7%. That rate in Will County alone is 13.2%.

The IDPH reported on Tuesday 6,239 new cases of COVID-19 in Illinois, and 166 additional deaths, including four people in Will County.

In the 60481 zip code, which includes Wilmington, Symerton, Shadow Lakes, and surrounding communities, the total number of positive cases reported since the start of the pandemic is 886.

The total number of active cases inside the city limit of Wilmington as of Tuesday is 87, according to the Wilmington Police Department.

In the 60408 zip code, Braidwood, the total number of cases since the start of the pandemic is 408.

As of Tuesday, IDPH is reporting a total of 911,308 cases statewide, including 15,414 deaths, in 102 counties in Illinois. The age of cases ranges from younger than one to older than 100 years.

As of Monday, 4,571 in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 981 patients were in the ICU and 557 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from Dec. 15 - Dec. 21 is 7.4%.

Tier 3 resurgence mitigations remain in place throughout Illinois.

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.

Vaccine information can be found on the health department website at will-countyhealth.org/covid-19/covid-vaccine, and the IDPH website at www.dph.illinois.gov/covid-19/vaccination-plan.

Pharmacy



WILMINGTON NATIVE BRENT Van Duyne is the Pharmacist in Charge at the newly opened Wilmington Pharmacy. The pharmacy at 600 W. Baltimore St. in Wilmington offers a drive thru window, which Van Duyne said is helpful during the pandemic when folks might not want to come inside.



WILMINGTON PHARMACY opened on Dec. 7. The new pharmacy is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. The business is closed on Sunday.

Rapid testing for COVID-19 available through Will County

As the vaccine era of the Coronavirus pandemic moves forward, it is important to remember that full attention to testing as much as possible will remain important all the way to the finish line.

One way to make this happen would be more organizations participating in the BINAXNow program. These rapid COVID-19 tests, available through local health

departments, are able to take some of the testing burden off all the entities already offering the PCR testing.

The BINAXNow tests are recommended for anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, and who may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. The final result is more time saved, and more people being conveniently tested.

Any organization, such as a school district, private school, health clinic, congregate living or long term care facility, workplace, or other organizations with any level of a licensed healthcare professional on staff can participate in this program.

The tests are provided at no cost to the organization, nor to the patient. Although those conducting the tests may charge for the delivery of it, they cannot charge above what insurance will cover.

By contacting the Will County Health Department, and signing up with the state for proper reporting of test results, your organization can obtain these tests, and have them administered by your licensed healthcare professional.

The test is done by swabbing both nostrils to the point of first resistance, and results are available within 15 minutes. The healthcare professional administering the test needs required PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) that includes a fit-tested N-95 respirator, a face shield, and gown and gloves.

The more organizations that sign up (20 are currently participating), the more

BINAXNow rapid tests that Will County will continue to receive.

For more information, email the Will County Health Department at Binaxtests@willcountyhealth.org.

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The more organizations that sign up (20 are currently participating), the more

Braidwood Lions Club hosts Christmas lights recycle event

The Braidwood Lions Club will be collecting used/non-working strands of Christmas lights now through Jan. 31.

Collection bins are located inside Whitmore Ace Hardware in Braidwood and Coal City, and inside Braidwood City Hall.

The strands of lights will be recycled by the Lions of Illinois Foundation with proceeds to benefit the foundation's sight and sound services provided to local Lions Clubs.

For more information please call (815) 791-8093 or visit www.braidwoodlionsclub.org.

Merry Christmas



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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

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Christmas in the pen, 145 years ago



TIME WAS....

Sandy Vasko

This Christmas will be the strangest in most of our lifetimes. Covid has us staying home, some feel like they are in prison. But they are not. Today we will find out what Christmas in a prison is really like. Set the wayback for 1875, place the Joliet Penitentiary.

The reporter from the *Joliet Weekly* visited the prison on Christmas Day, and strangely enough, so did many other people from the area. The very sight of the righteous may be a good example to the convicts, or at least that is how they looked at it. The following is from that reporter's article.

"According to the order put on the bulletin board Thursday, work was suspended Saturday at noon (Christmas Day), and Christmas was celebrated Sunday in chapel. Quite a large number of visitors were present to witness the exercise. The Warden, after announcing that for obvious reasons the celebrating of Christmas had to be postponed till Sabbath. The choir rendered the music in excellent style. Prayer was offered and the choir sang again a piece from J. C. White, 'Christmas Carol.' It was rendered beautifully and in a superior manner, after which the Chaplain introduced Mr. Reynolds as the speaker."

"This gentleman is one of Peoria's leading business men, a popular citizen, prominent Christian and the 'prisoner's

friend.' His address, though extemporaneous and conversational, was highly interesting and replete with happy incidents and practical illustrations from everyday life. The entire audience showed him their appreciation by the closest attention to his words. After he had concluded, the choir sang the anthem, 'Antioch.'

"The Warden then delivered a brief address in his usual elegant, graceful, easy style; the address contained some sound, practical counsel, and made a visible impression - as his remarks always do on the minds of the convicts. He produced a letter from Philip Martin, pardoned last Christmas. It was a letter of thanks for freedom, he stated that he had been steadily employed at his trade (cooper) since he was pardoned, and that he had saved and put in bank during the last year \$200. (about \$4,700 today.)"

"By way of encouragement, the Major gave a sketch of the conduct of the two prisoners whose Christmas pardons he held in his hand. At this juncture the most solemn and impressive silence pervaded the room. The eyes and ears of every convict were open and every head inclined forward in eager and profound attention."

"Holding up one of the pardons, the Warden said, 'By the authority of the Governor of the State of Illinois, I have this pardon for Wm. Butler. Butler was overcome with emotion and wept for joy. When he walked up the aisle to receive his pardon, he tottered and trembled like an aspen leaf. He is a negro and was sent from Cairo in '66 for murder for life. He was chief cook for the Warden seven years. For the last year or two he has been cook for the hospital. He was an exemplary convict, never having been reported, reprimanded or even reproved.'

"The Warden next gave, by the authority of the Governor, a pardon to Jack Gallagher, sent from Henderson county in '68, for murder, for twenty-five years."

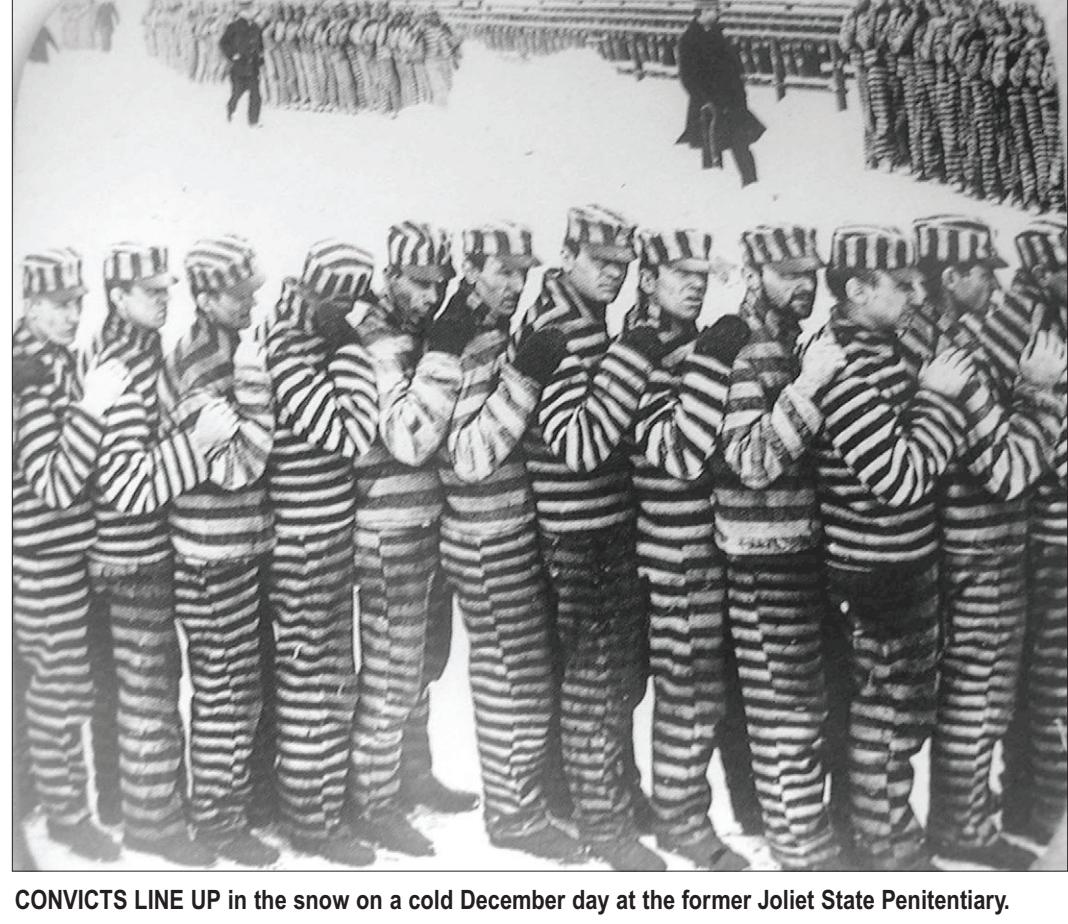
"There was loud applause among the convicts when the names were announced as pardoned. It has a good effect and stimulates them all to good conduct and to expect a like reward. On account of the solemnity occasion by the granting of pardons, the choir struck up 'Murray's Chant'.

"The Capt. and Mrs. Wheat deserve special mention for organizing and training so good a choir. The Chaplain then made a few appropriate remarks, the doxology was sung and Elder Knapp pronounced the benediction."

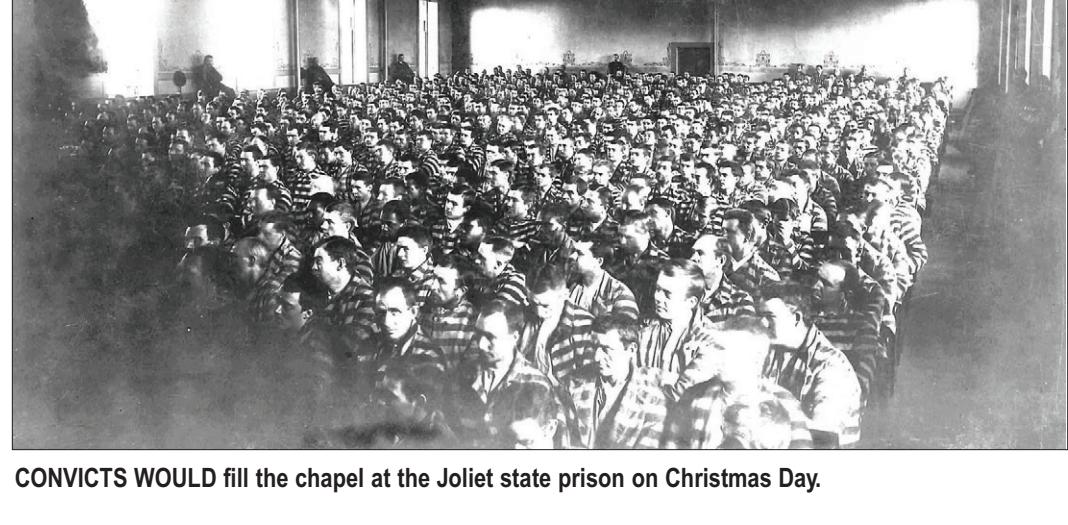
"The chapel had been previously arranged and ornamented expressly for the occasion. Over the pulpit were the words, in large ornamental letters, 'His name was called Jesus,' and on the left 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.' In the rear end, 'come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' On the left, 'God gave his beloved son to die for us.' On the right, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.' Immediately behind the pulpit on the wall was an ornamental cross, above which were the words, 'Simply to thy cross I cling.'

"The convicts' Christmas dinner was rich and abundant, consisting of potatoes and turnips boiled and mashed and richly seasoned, pickles, roast mutton, and bread and coffee with five apples apiece. It was indeed a merry Christmas."

And to my gentle readers, I hope that you can find joy this Christmas season. Happy Holidays!



CONVICTS LINE UP in the snow on a cold December day at the former Joliet State Penitentiary.



CONVICTS WOULD fill the chapel at the Joliet state prison on Christmas Day.

Kinzinger gives thumbs up to COVID-19 relief bill

After voting in favor of the year-end stimulus package, H.R. 133 – Consolidated Appropriations Act, Congressman Adam Kinzinger (IL-16) released the following statement touting the many wins included for the American people:

"Once again, the American people have been caught in the middle of a political stand-off. Still, I'm glad to see so many Republican priorities included in this funding package, and relieved that our Democrat colleagues finally decided to negotiate in good faith on a COVID-19 relief package that we could get passed through Congress and on to the President's desk.

"Despite this package being long overdue, I was proud to vote in its favor because of the many provisions that will positively impact the American people facing the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding measure includes many bipartisan wins that take important steps to help provide COVID-19 relief through funding for vaccines, PPP loans, unemployment insurance, and \$13 billion to support the agriculture sector, among other provisions.

"The package also includes spending bills that will protect our energy sector, our environment, our national security and cyber defenses, and our consumers. Several of my own bills have been included in this package like measures increase energy efficiency in the public and private sectors, and provisions to secure our telecom and information networks and their supply chains from foreign threats. The funding package also expands the telehealth grant program authorized under the CARES Act, ends the egregious practice of surprise billing, and funds community health centers

(CHCs), and includes many other reforms to protect patients and taxpayers."

A few of the different legislations sponsored by Kinzinger included in the year-end H.R. 133 funding package include:

- H.R. 1430, the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Support Act - This legislation would reauthorize an existing program that encourages the use of energy efficient technologies by generating electricity and capturing heat (that would otherwise be wasted) to provide useful thermal energy.

- H.R. 2044, the Smart Building Acceleration Act - This bill assists in the building sector of adopting smart building technology to increase energy efficiency by requiring the Department of Energy (DOE) to establish a Federal Smart Building Program.

- H.R. 1420, the Energy Efficient Government Technology Act - This bill sets forth the requirements to increase energy efficiency of information technologies and data centers within the federal government.

- H.R. 8000, the Ensuring Network Security Act - This legislation amends the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act to expand eligibility from providers with 2 million customers to those providers with up to 10 million customers.

- H.R. 3079, the Energy Savings Through Public-Private Partnerships Act - The bill requires federal facilities to implement energy and water efficient measures.

- Following its passage in the House, the Senate moved to consider the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which passed 92 to 6.

Fighting the pandemic



Courtesy photo
CAPTAIN MIKE SHORKEY with the Braidwood Fire Protection District gives a thumbs up after receiving a shot of the COVID-19 vaccine on Saturday. First responders are being administered the vaccine during the first round of shots in Will County.

Village of Godley files treasurer's report

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ordinance # 20-09

ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

I, Roxanne Alton, Treasurer of Village of Godley, Will and Grundy County, Illinois, being duly sworn, depose and say that the following statement is a correct report for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020. Subscribed and Sworn to this 21st day of December, 2020.

Cash Balance, July 1, 2019 \$128,844

Income:

Municipal sales tax	1,587
Utility tax	18,891
Illinois income tax	39,481
Personal Property tax	23,517
Local use tax	21,031
Excise tax (Telecommunication)	5,700
Video gaming tax	9,930
Permits and licenses	2,981
Interest Income	1,774
Motor Fuel Tax	22,370
Cannabis Tax	149
Miscellaneous	127
Total Income	\$147,538

Available Cash Balance

Expenditures:
Payment: Salaries, Wages and Meetings

0-\$25,000..... \$57,354

AT&T..... 6,556

ComEd..... 9,703

Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund

Illinois Municipal League Risk Management Association

Misc. (under \$2,500)

Total Expenditures

Cash Balance, June 30, 2020

I, Roxanne Alton, Village of Godley, Will and Grundy County, Illinois do hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the Annual Treasurer's Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

Roxanne Alton, Treasurer

J. Uehling, Mayor

(1) - Payroll Detail

\$0-\$25,000: G. Alton, T. Branum, D. Butler, D. Morris, R. Alton, C. Brockett, J. Duran, J. Uehling, J. Peters

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2020 and the Prairie Shopper Monday, Dec. 28, 2020

Custer Township posts 2021 meeting schedule

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF MEETINGS UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT

NOTICE IS hereby given that Custer Township shall have regular meetings of its Board of Trustees on the following dates for the year, January 1, 2021– December 31, 2021.

These meetings shall commence at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Tuesday, April 13, 2021 (7:00 p.m. or directly after Annual Meeting)

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

These meetings shall take place at the Custer Township Hall, Grant Street, Custer Park, IL.

The Annual Meeting of the Town Electors for this Township shall take place on April 13, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. at the Custer Township Hall.

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

Any questions concerning meetings of the Board of Trustees or the Electors shall be directed to Christine Olson,

Township Clerk, 23125 McGuire Rd., Wilmington, IL (815)458-2756 or e-mail chrisolsoncuster@gmail.com

Published in the Braidwood Journal on Dec. 23, 2020.

Seatbelt patrols to begin

Illinois State Police Dist. 5 will conduct Occupant Restraint Enforcement Patrols (OREP) in Will County in the month of January 2021.

OREP allows the state police to target an area with saturation patrols that focus on traffic violations and related compliance with safety belt and child safety seat laws. Safety enforcement zones will also be set up to ensure compliance. Illinois law requires that all passengers, front and rear seats, be buckled up.

According to the Illinois State Police, seat belt laws save more than 12,000 lives annually.

Helping you protect what matters most.

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



Brian Lown
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66 N Oak St
Manteno, IL 60950-1522
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0520-513_HC_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

Because he does

COAL CITY—This is in response to last week's caller about the Pritzker sucks signs. Should have told your kid plain and simple, we have a governor who has forced one in three businesses to close due to his statewide shutdown. Should have told your kid that in May Gov. Pritzker passed a budget \$5 billion out of balance, banking of a bailout by the federal government and the passage of his "fair tax" constitutional amendment of which the voters soundly rejected. Instead of manning up like a good leader would, he blames the Republicans saying he's forced to raise taxes. Pritzker should have said because the trifecta Democrats, with super majorities in the Illinois House, Senate and governor's office, have promised too good of pensions for union workers, judges and college professors. Just look at Coal City's budget where 23 percent of the yearly levy will go to pay pensions. That's what the Democrats want, big pensions, so unions help them get reelected. It's the voters who decided that Pritzker, Madigan and those in Springfield can't be trusted, not the Republicans. You should have told your kid that Pritzker defrauded the public \$320,000 by taking the toilets out of his second mansion. Sure, after he got caught avoiding the property taxes, he paid them because he was running for office. Pritzker is one of the richest guys in the state who bought his election into office. And now, when we really need good leadership, all we have is a guy who's sucking the life right out of Illinoisans.

Wear a mask!

WILMINGTON—It is becoming increasingly concerning to me that people are still not wearing a mask when coming out into public spaces. I have the right to go grocery shopping with my mask on and feel safe. You do not have the right to come in without one and knowingly spread a deadly virus to all in the stores. I think it's reckless and disgusting! I don't feel safe shopping in town. I don't want you near me without a mask on. This is hurting the local businesses and the mayor needs to step up to the plate and protect our town. So does the police department. There has been a real failure in this town to protect the citizens and store employees. Perhaps, someone needs to be fired for failing to protect the community. Also, I find it disgusting that there is a business in town selling alcohol and gas with the owner and his employees never wearing masks. I hope you get fined and your license suspended. Most of their patrons aren't wearing them either. I have no mercy if you catch this horrible virus. The sad part is that you're spreading it throughout the community. I'm really disappointed in the amount of people in this town who apparently failed science class. Yes, you look really dumb without a mask on. Stay home and out of public spaces if you're too dumb to simply wear a mask to protect others.

So many on the list

COAL CITY—Read in AARP Nov. 2020, 92,000 Americans were on waiting lists for a kidney transplant. About one in three Medicare patients are dealing with end stage renal disease and are receiving dialysis. Medicare has new rules come January 2021, they will have a choice of their dialysis treatment at home. Medicare will increase the amount it pays providers of home kidney treatment to encourage the change. The move is expected to save the program \$24 million over five years according to Medicare officials. We're shocked to learn of the high numbers on dialysis. Modern medical treatments extends life for sure.

Vicious gang members

WILMINGTON—According to the Justice Department, three quarters of MS-13 gang members indicted by federal authorities in the last four years have been living in our country illegally. The report claimed at least 749 MS-13 defendants have been prosecuted with 500 sentenced to prison and 37 given a life sentence. Many other defendants are awaiting trial including two whom the department is seeking the death penalty. Thanks President Trump for drawing attention to vicious behavior of MS-13 gang members.

Best eating

SHADOW LAKES—This is a compliment to Nelly's in Wilmington, I guess you could call it a fast food restaurant. They definitely have the best fast food of any surrounding community and including Joliet. I have to say the help is very nice, polite. The food is cooked the way you want it. You can have things added to your burgers, not everything but most things lettuce, tomato, onion for no extra charge and cheese of which Burger King charges you an extra dollar to have cheese on it. I think they have some of the best food around. The problem is I'm gaining weight because I'm eating there so often. Thank you. My name is Dan Hill.

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.

Wait until the end

WILMINGTON—With the coronavirus vaccine being distributed in Illinois, Wilmington should not have to request too many doses. With nearly 800 positive cases in Wilmington since this pandemic began, it will be easy to decide who gets the vaccine first. The self-centered no-mask wearers will not qualify for the vaccine since they ignore and thumb their noses at the Phase 3 mitigations. There should then be plenty of vaccines for the people who follow the rules and respect the health of others! From a mask-wearing senior citizen.

Presidential pardons

WILMINGTON—Even after our President Trump leaves office in January for him and his loved ones, the news media will never end with vicious attacks on everything about him. Recently he pardoned former National Security Advisor General Michael Flynn and it's gone on and on. Yet President Obama holds the record by pardoning 2,000 convicted criminals including 330 during his final few days. President Clinton pardons are also questionable. President Carter pardoned and gave amnesty to more than 200,000 men who "dodged" the draft during the Vietnam War. God bless those men that served. Washington D.C. is full of "nasty" politics.

Better transparency

REED TOWNSHIP—Transparency is important. Last week there was a Sound-off that attempted to "call out" candidates for township office based on their attendance at meetings and then went on to state that the way municipal government and township government operate is "completely different." I couldn't agree more; the way Braidwood's City Council operates and Reed Township's current elected officials operate couldn't be more different. Braidwood's City Council has every single agenda posted online for the public to see prior to every meeting, the minutes are readily available, the meeting dates/times are posted, and I have gone so far as to Live Stream every single meeting since August for everyone to see. Regardless of your individual circumstances or availability, you are still able to stay up-to-date with what's happening in municipal government. Reed Township is the exact opposite. You won't find any agenda, minutes, budget, or even meeting times/dates posted anywhere online. There's no website or social media page to try to keep people up-to-date with what's happening in their township government. How can you expect anyone to show up to meetings if you don't tell them when they are? I doubt that many people even know who runs their township or what the township does; they don't post anything for you to be able to know what they do. Last week's Sound-off proves that those running Reed Township (all of which are members of the Democratic Party and most of them have never been challenged in races) are afraid of the noise that's going to be made in the next few months; they couldn't even be transparent and honest enough to sign their name to what they said in last week's Sound-off. People have the right to know what their elected officials are doing. Transparency is important...and that's exactly what our Republican candidates, including myself, are going to give the people of Reed Township. In response to our "mystery writer" in last week's Sound-off, you are correct. The two government bodies do operate very differently and it's time to make Reed Township government as, if not more, transparent and honest as our municipal government.

John Guistat, Reed Township Republican Chairman and candidate for Reed Township Supervisor

Not surprised

SHADOW LAKES—Early Christmas gift to the citizens of Illinois, from the Democrat party. Quote from the Braidwood Journal, "Democrats vote to end the investigation of Madigan." Did you really expect anything less? It has all been a show, headed by our beloved governor. Our Christmas present to them must be, just keep voting these people back in the office. We know the Democrat party is the people of the people, and they are there to help you. Always, Margot Lane.

A big sell out

WILMINGTON—Let's take a look at the USA Today. Maybe people will see how much damage has been done to the American citizens with all the corruption throughout the country. First you look at our borders where people came into the USA illegally. Then our borders were closed, that helped the American citizens. Next the borders will be open again by Joe Biden. Amnesty will be given to people here illegally, by Joe Biden. We cannot forget about the Biden family deals with communist China. Just recently there were a lot of problems with the presidential election and even with a lot of documented evidence that proved numerous crimes in the election process. The judicial system will not look at any of the evidence but decided to keep Joe Biden as the new president. So it looks like Republicans and Democrats will suffer since the judicial system is just as crooked as the politicians that cater to communist China. Sold out by the Democrat party. What happened to the

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BE ON THE LOOKOUT for Elf boxes in Wilmington stores like the one introducing Brycen Boersma located at The Wine Cafe on Bridge Street.

Drop your change into an elf box while shopping local

Still need a last minute gift? Do your shopping in Wilmington, support the local businesses and you can make a donation to the Christian Help Association.

Over 30 merchants in the Wilmington area are displaying collection boxes with photos of cute little elves. The money collected in these boxes will be donated to the Christian Help Association to help offset the expenses of providing Christmas gifts, foods and toiletries to approximately 250 local families.

As you check out, look for a bright painted box with a photo of a cute elf or two. Deposit your change, or a few dollars or even a check. Boxes will be displayed until January 4.

The three "elves" that receive the most donations win a Chamber of Commerce gift certificate. Monetary

donations can also be mailed to CHA at 635 S. Main St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

So many families have

struggled this year. Any size donation will help make a difference. In a world that has

had so much sadness and

darkness; help bring a bright smile to someone.

Cyndi Ragain
CHA volunteer

Sound-off, continued from page 4

What's it costing?

BRAIDWOOD—Braidwood city officials need to come clean with how much money and time is being spent on fulfilling FOIA requests each month. A monthly report breaking down who submitted what would definitely be beneficial. That way we know just how much money some of these FOIA cheerleaders are costing us.

Getting away with it

DIAMOND—To Sasha M. I am an independent and do not disagree with what you are saying and I am not a Trump supporter but it goes both ways. The Democratic controlled cities who allow their cities to be burned down and allow looters to destroy people's livelihoods when their businesses are destroyed is not a nice thing either. When Trump was elected in 2016 cities burned and stores were looted. I do have to ask why this is not happening now that Biden is elected? I'm not against Biden but why does that side get away with destroying people's livelihoods?

John Chiqua

Election integrity matters

BRAIDWOOD—I watched the Pennsylvania and the Wisconsin hearings. I listened to dozens of eye witnesses tell what they saw take place during ballot counting. Hundreds more signed affidavits under threat of perjury declaring irregularities they saw take place. In many states official poll watchers were ushered out of the rooms, even shoved out the doors. I saw those videos too. Windows were covered over so poll watchers could not even see into the room. Ballot counters cheered and applauded when the poll watchers were sent away. I heard the truck driver say he transported 280,000 ballots wrapped on pallets from New York to Pennsylvania. Later his trailer disappeared. I saw the video from Georgia showing ballot counters pulling rolling suitcases from under a long table draped in black after they had sent the poll watchers home for the night under the guise that they were all leaving. The ballots they removed from the suitcases were put through the machines over and over again. They sent the witnesses home but they forgot about the video running the whole time. In Wisconsin the state Supreme Court voted not to hear the evidence of fraud. Three of the judges declared it was a shame "the court could not be bothered to hear the case." Trump got 11 million more votes this time around than in 2016. Yes he won in a landslide and yes we will keep on fighting to get out the truth. There's a new book coming out next month, "Stolen." We will tell our children and grandchildren the truth about this election. The truth will never die. Chief Justices Roberts and Breyer have been texting each other and saying "we will never let Trump be re-elected." That's why the SCOTUS would not hear any election fraud cases. So much for putting aside personal opinion and partisan beliefs while on the bench.

The Joe influence

SHADOW LAKES—Remember last year when the song "Baby It's Cold Outside" became a big deal for the Me too movement? It was banned on radio stations till Joe Biden was accused and the Me too movement ended. I do.

Some kinda hero

CUSTER PARK—Margo Lane, you forgot to thank Donald Trump for not being honest about Covid-19 in January and every month thereafter. You forgot to thank him for encouraging people not to wear masks or social distancing while at rallies and parading in our streets with guns. You forgot to thank him for putting pressure on the CDC to skew numbers. And you forgot to thank him for the compassion he has shown for the 300,000 plus deaths in our country. Yes, a big thank you for your hero.

Hanging in shame

I am a person born in the 1930s. I grew up loving our country and being proud of it and what it stood for. I am now embarrassed and ashamed by it. I'm not a die-hard Republican or Democrat, but who we now have as president representing our country is so humiliating. I want to hang my head in shame. Hopefully this new year will be better and kinder.

Couldn't do better

SHADOW LAKES—What president do you think would have done this much, this fast

for a vaccine for Covid 19. But yet the Democrats were against him, the medical community which is controlled by Democrats said that oxychlorosene was dangerous but yet it has been used for 55 years with no problems. And that has now been used recently by the medical community. Why did they wait so long? And do you think that Biden would have gotten this done this fast? Or Clinton? No, I don't because they prefer to keep the country locked down. I am for small business, because I was small business and small business employs more people throughout the nation than big businesses. And why is it you can't go to church in a lot of these Democrat controlled states but you can go to Walmart and Target and all the other big stores that are really nonessential. That includes Menards. So tell me, where is the logic? This statement is directed to Gary Weidner and his wife, Gloria and what in the world has Trump done wrong? Even your retirement incomes have increased dramatically until Covid 19 which Nancy Pelosi was in Wuhan China back in November 2019. Dan Hill

Just plain stupid

GARDNER—I don't understand why Kamala Harris and Cuomo of New York refuse to take the vaccine because it came out under President Trump. Is this political or are all you Democrats really stupid?

Hunter who?

WILMINGTON—I didn't vote for Hunter.

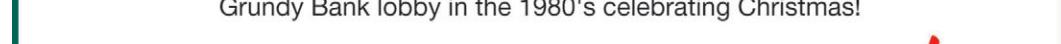
A reality check

COAL CITY—if you are past middle age you may remember hearing stories many years ago about finding Japanese soldiers in remote areas of the Pacific who still had their uniforms and weapons and were not aware that World War II had ended. These soldiers remind me of the fanatical Trump supporters who still fly their flags and keep signs in their yards despite the fact that more than 81 million Americans rejected the lies, corruption, incompetence and divisive tactics of the Russian puppet who inhabits the White House. So it's time to stop drinking the koolaid and accept the reality that your hero is going back to the golf course if he avoids prison.

Communism defined

Last week five callers used the word communism incorrectly by equating it with authoritarianism or with a single party dictatorship. So let's define our terms according to the dictionary. Communism: Any economic theory or system based on the ownership of all property by the community as a whole. Socialism: Any of various theories or systems of ownership and operation of the means of production and distribution by the society or the community rather than by private individuals with all members of society or the community sharing in the work and the products. And to those who don't know, a dictionary is a book filled with definitions of words and their usage. So if there are billionaires in Russia and China it would mean everyone is a billionaire and we know that's not true. Ergo, these countries are not communist but like capitalism, most of the wealth is accrued by the elite who don't really believe.

Penny Lane



Grundy Bank lobby in the 1980's celebrating Christmas!

Merry Christmas from Grundy Bank

This has been a trying year for everyone...but we're not going to let the Covid-19 stop our officers, directors and employees from wishing you a very Merry Christmas.

It will be a different Christmas Season for all of us. We hope you're able to enjoy this special time of year with your loved ones and good friends.

Our wish for the New Year is for life to return to normal for all of us worldwide, with renewed hope for good health and much happiness.

Our banks and drive-up facilities will close at noon on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, closing on Christmas Day and New Year's Day so our employees and enjoy this special time of year.

It has been our pleasure to serve you in Morris, Wilmington and the surrounding communities of Grundy and Will counties. We Thank You for choosing Grundy Bank for your banking needs and we look forward to a healthier and more productive year in 2021.



Kevin Olson
President & CEO

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morrishospital.org/urgentcare



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Special measures are in
place to keep you safe!



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HOSPITAL**
& HEALTHCARE CENTERS

OBITUARIES

Linda L. Bockman

MORRIS—Linda L. Bockman (nee Stewart), 74, of Morris, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020, at Morris Hospital.

She was born March 27, 1946, in Peoria, IL where she was raised and educated. In 1963, she married her lifelong partner, Richard and they built a home in Channahon where they lived for 30 years raising their two girls. They then built a home on 6 acres on a lake near Goose Lake where Linda loved the outdoors and entertaining and feeding friends and family when they would visit.

Linda loved to play cards and other games with her children and grandchildren, fishing for bluegills, and having the family over for large meals and gatherings. She also enjoyed antiquing and crafting. She will be terribly missed by her family and friends.

Linda is the beloved wife of 57 years to Richard Bockman; loving mother of Jackie (Jim) Jennings and Terri (Bill) Kelly; devoted grandmother of Jessica (Justin) Holman, Colton



(Michelle) Kelly and Mackenzie Kelly; proud great-grandmother of twins, Teagan and Camden Holman and Dixon Kelly; dear sister of Richard (Lois) Schall, of Lakeland, FL; Judy (Lloyd) Frazier, of Magnolia; Shirley (George) Schafer Sr., of West Peoria; Ricky (Michelle) Stewart, of Morris and Peggy Hanson, of Odell and aunt to many nieces and nephews.

Linda was preceded in death by her parents, Edward Stewart and Virginia Lloyd, and siblings, Penny (Hubert) Sherman and David Stewart.

Funeral arrangements for Linda are pending.

Memorials can be made in Linda's honor to the American Cancer Society.

For more information, visit her Memorial Tribute at www.fredcdames.com where you can share a favorite memory or leave a condolence.

Fred C. Dames Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Walter H. Bradley

CARBON HILL—Walter H. Bradley, 84, of Carbon Hill, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2020 at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born Nov. 8, 1936 in Joliet, the son of William and Mildred (nee McCowan) Bradley.

Walter graduated from Minooka High School and later served his country honorably in the United States Marine Corp. Walter married Linda Vee Decker on Nov. 1, 1958 at the New Hope Presbyterian Church in Coal City. He was a Machinist for Local # 124 and retired from Johns Manville. He was also a past board member for the Carbon Hill Museum.

Walter is survived by his sons, Scott (Sally) Bradley, of Gillette, WY and Ross (Joann) Bradley, of Coal City; his five grandchildren: Bill (Teresa) Bradley, Kristin (Eric) Bauer, Tim Bradley, Evan (Stephanie) Bradley and Amy Bradley; great-grandchildren: Milana, Indira and Walter Bradley, Jack Bauer and Ember and

Rowan Bradley. Also surviving are his sisters-in-law, Mary Decker and JoAnn Decker.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Linda Bradley; his sister, Elsie Nadler; his sisters-in-law, Louise Jensen and Joyce Sumner and his brothers-in-law; Boyd Decker, Kenneth Decker and John Jensen.

Memorial donations may be made in Walter's name to the Carbon Hill Museum, 875 N. Second St., Carbon Hill, IL 60416

At Walter's request, cremation rites will be accorded.

A graveside inurnment was held on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020 at Braceville-Gardner Cemetery.

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

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City were entrusted with arrangements.

William V. Martin

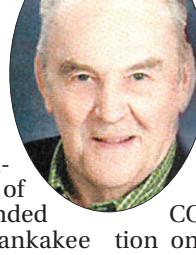
MORRIS—William V. Martin, "Bill," 90, of Morris and formerly of Odell, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020 at Park Pointe Gardens in Morris.

Born July 7, 1930 in Pontiac, IL, William Vincent was the son of William Frederick and Ellen "Nellie" (Condon) Martin. He was raised in Odell and graduated from St. Paul's with the class of 1948. Following high school, Bill attended Gallagher School of Business in Kankakee before entering into the United States Navy (1951-1955). Following his honorable discharge he went on to marry Patricia Ann Fraher on Nov. 26, 1955 in St. Paul Catholic Church in Odell, and together they made their home in Odell until relocating their family in the summer of 1972. Bill began his career with the United States Postal Service, where he served as Postmaster of Odell until 1971 when he took the postmaster position with Morris. He then served the Morris community for the following 19 years until his retirement in 1990.

Bill and Pat were dedicated members of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Morris; he was a member of Morris Country Club and the American Legion Post 294 in Morris. In addition, Bill belonged to the Lions Club, Moose Lodge, and the Postmasters Association.

One who was an avid sports fan, Bill took great pleasure in following the Chicago Bears, Notre Dame Football and the Chicago White Sox. Throughout the years he also enjoyed hunting, fishing, playing golf, and working in the yard with Pat. He was truly a 'Jack of all trades,' and could fix or repair anything. His number one hobby was his family, and Bill will be most remembered as a loving husband and devoted father, who was his grandkids biggest fan at their sporting and school events.

Survivors include his children: Michael (Ann) Martin, of Stamford, CT and Sheila (Thomas) Riccolo, Mary (Terrence) O'Connor and Bill (Meghan) Martin, all of Morris; seven



grandchildren: Caroline Riccolo, Peter Riccolo, Sean Martin, Brendan Martin, Caitlin O'Connor (Ben Wollam), Eileen (Cameron) Berner and Erin O'Connor (Matt Wiehl), and numerous nieces and nephews.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents; son, Mark W. Martin; wife, Patricia Martin; sister, Ruth Mobus and granddaughter, Regina Martin.

The family will receive friends for a COVID observant and walk through visitation on Monday, Dec. 28, 2020 between the hours of 9 and 11 a.m. at Reeves Funeral Home, 408 E. Washington St., one block east of Illinois Route 47, in Morris. Due to current pandemic guidelines, face masks will be required for attendees and measures of safe social distancing practices will be in order. The funeral home staff will assist the family not to exceed the safe number set forth for the visitation.

Funeral services will follow at 12 noon in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 600 E. Jackson St. in Morris. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Jason Stone presiding.

Those wishing to participate in Bill's funeral service online are welcome to join the live-streamed service beginning at 12 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 28, 2020. This virtual service is accessible by logging onto his memorial page.

Burial will be in St. Paul Catholic Cemetery in Odell, where Bill will be laid to rest with his late wife, Pat.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Bill's memory to Immaculate Conception School or Immaculate Conception Church.

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

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

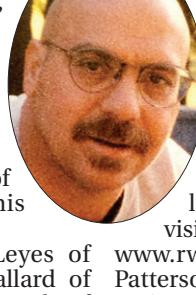
Lester A. Leyes

MARSEILLES—Lester Alan Leyes, 67, of Marseilles, IL, formerly of Wilmington, passed away Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020 at his home. Born August 11, 1953 in Joliet, IL the son of Lester F. and Dorothy (nee Stehl) Leyes.

Lester married Kathy Paulsen on July 26, 2013 in Ottawa, IL.

Lester retired from Akzo Nobel in Channahon, IL, following 35 years of employment. He enjoyed riding his Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

Surviving are his wife, Kathy Leyes of Marseilles; daughter, Sandi (Tim) Stallard of Wilmington; step-son, Scott (Nikki) Boundy of Morris; step-daughters, Megan (Rob) Ragland of Gardner and Rachel Boundy of Morris; one



grandson, Rylan Stallard; three step-grandchildren, Madison, Mackenzie, and Colton; and two sisters, Linda (Victor) Cuputi of St. Charles, IL, and Becky Burkett of Murphysboro, IL.

Lester was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers; and 3 sisters.

Cremation rites will be accorded.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. For more information and to visit his online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com. R.W. Patterson Funeral Home and Crematory, 401 E. Main St. Bradwood, is in charge of arrangements.

Daniel Willis Sr.

TUSCOLA—Daniel Willis Sr., 72, of Tuscola, IL, formerly of Braidwood, passed away Monday, Dec. 14, 2020 at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana, IL.

Born May 29, 1948 in Braidwood, he was the son of Vern and Stella (nee Lasley) Willis. Dan worked as a laborer in construction for many years. He enjoyed watching old western movies, especially John Wayne.

Surviving are his close friend, Barb Wiborg; children, Alan Hopping, Janis Lee, Darin Hopping, Judy Broussard, Jody Patton, Aaron Willis and Patrick Willis; 28 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, siblings: Roy and Gary Willis and Betty Harden; numerous nieces and nephews and too many friends to name.



Preceding him in death were his parents, his wife of 49 years, Beverly Jean (nee Leonard) Willis; children, Doug Hopping and Daniel Willis Jr. and his siblings: Maxine, Farena, Pete, Rudy, Les, R.A. and Coy.

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

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

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

WILMINGTON—Jeanette Lewis, 88, of Wilmington, passed away Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020.

Born Oct. 23, 1932 in Wilmington, Jeanette Rose was a daughter of Alfred and Olive (Hundley) Kuriger. She was raised in Wilmington and graduated from the Wilmington Public Schools with the class of 1950. Jeanette worked for many years at Braun Sales and went on to retire from the First National Bank in Wilmington.

Survivors include her two children, Kathleen Lewis, of Morris and Jack (Kristine) Lewis, of Wilmington; grandchildren: Tanya (Brian) Funk, of Morris and Jill (Glen) VanDuyne, Brett Lewis, Kyle Lewis and Kaden Lewis, all of Wilmington; great-grandchildren: Mike Funk (fiancé-Olivia Aimone), Nina Funk, Brianna Funk, Hunter Funk, Jackson VanDuyne and Brady VanDuyne; great-great-grandsons: Hudson and Henry Funk, and one sister-in-law, Norma Kuriger, of Coal City, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Jeanette was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Jack in 2001; sister, Betty

Jeanette Lewis

(Joseph) Peterson; brothers: William Kuriger, Alfred (Lorraine) Kuriger and twin brother, James (Cona) Kuriger; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Frank and Mary Catherine Lewis and three nieces.

Cremation rites have been accorded, and a private family inurnment will be held in Oakwood Cemetery, Wilmington, where Jeanette will be laid to rest with her late husband, Jack.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Jeanette's memory to the Alzheimer's Association or to a charity of the donors choosing.

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

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

James Helsing

within playful monkey, a soaring eagle or a force of nature. Never forgotten, always remembered.

Survivors include his parents, Jeremy and Debbie Helsing, of Braidwood; one brother, Justin Murphy, of Coal City; one sister, Madison Helsing, of Braidwood; his grandparents: Gary Helsing, of Dwight; Kathleen Reynolds, of Fairbury; Pamela Alioto, of Arlington Heights and Mary Ann Oko, of Braidwood; great-grandmother, Rose Bonarigo, of Michigan and three uncles including Steve Murphy and Tony DePaulo who was like an uncle to James. Not to forget, James leaves behind the countless friends too many to mention, as well as the Wrestling Family at Reed Custer.

James was preceded in death by his papa and nana, Joseph and Wylo "Dee" Alioto and his uncle, Mike Murphy.

The family will begin to assemble Saturday morning, Dec. 26, 2020 at Reed Custer High School at 12 noon for a procession and escort which will depart at 12:45 p.m. to Ignite Christian Church, 1180 W. First St. in Braidwood. There will then be a COVID observant visitation in the church from 1 p.m. until time of funeral service at 5 p.m. Pastor Jeff Whittum will officiate and cremation rites will be accorded following the services.

Those wishing to participate in the services virtually, are welcome to join the live streamed services beginning at 5 p.m. on Saturday evening, Dec. 26, 2020. A link is available on his memorial page.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to support the services and memorialize James. Contributions may be made directly through the appeal link on his memorial page.

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

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

Leand E. Myers

Shiner of Coal City, and Hannah (Kyle) Crickman of Salina, KS; one great grandchild, Logan Arroyo; and two more great grandchildren expected; three brothers, Douglas (Brenda) Myers of Rover, MO, Joey (Susie) Myers of Havana, AR and Arlie (Jackie) Brinkley of West Plains, MO; one sister, Kathy (Bobby) McClanahan of Alton, MO; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his parents, sister, Wanda Wolfe; son, Darrin Myers; and granddaughter, Madison Hayden.

Funeral services were held at the Island City Baptist Church, Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2020. Pastor Jeff Logsdon officiated.

Private interment with military honors will be at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Island City Baptist Church or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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

R.W. Patterson Funeral home and Crematory in Braidwood was in charge of arrangements.

Linda K. Schultz

nephew, Ryan (Catie) Monroe. Preceding her in death were her parents.

Visitation for Linda will be at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home and Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood, Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2020 from 11a.m.-1 p.m., with a funeral service commencing at 1 p.m. All attendees are required to wear face coverings, follow social distancing guidelines, and due to the capacity requirements, please be brief with your condolences to allow other guests to pay their final respects.

Interment will follow at North Cemetery in Essex.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in her name may be directed to the Trinity Lutheran Church, 515 E. Stonewall Rd., Dwight, IL 60420.

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

R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory is in charge of arrangements.

OBITUARIES

OBITUARIES

Feel regal drinking a Crown Royal Flush

The rebirth of classic cocktails over the last decade has led a new generation to appreciate both the cocktails of yesterday and the spirits that fuel these classics. Let's face it, whiskey as a category is probably bigger now than it has ever been.

Bourbon, scotch, and Irish whiskies are basking in the glow of craft cocktail boom, while other whiskies are being excluded. One such whiskey is literally the crown jewel of whiskies from our neighbors to the north, the legendary Crown Royal.

First a brief history lesson. Crown Royal is a specially blended product from the Seagram's line that was created in 1939 to commemorate King George VI and Queen Elizabeth's visit to Canada. This was the first time that a reigning monarch had visited Canada, and Seagram's blended over 50 whiskies for the

Crown formulation and designed the now iconic bottle for the occasion.

Canadians may have forgotten the royal visit, but they remembered the whiskey. The new blend from Seagram's was an instant success. The Crown Royal blend quickly gained popularity in Canada before eventually finding its way to the US in the 1960s.

Shortly after introduction to the US market, Crown became the top selling Canadian whiskey. Sales of Crown Royal were still growing as of 2019, a year in which nearly 7 million cases were sold in the United States alone.

What kind of resources does it take to turn out such a high level of production?

The main facility in Manitoba is located on Lake Winnipeg where the distillery process 10,000 bushels of grain each day, along with nearly 1 million gallons of water.

The aging whiskey is then stored in 2 million barrels across 50 unique warehouses, each of which adds a little something different to the complex blend. Some warehouses may store barrels that have been charred, some allow more or less fluctuations in temperature, and so on.

This wide variety of variables used in the aging process gives the distillery nearly endless options when blending.

The end result is a high-quality, approachable blended whiskey that doesn't require much (if any dilution) to drink neat.

Think of Crown Royal as what the automotive market refers to as "affordable luxury". It is a quality blend that will stand on its own as a sipping whiskey, but one that can be mixed into a wide variety of cocktails without overpowering the drink.

Crown Royal performs well as a mixer when substituted for other types of whiskey in classic cocktails, and the "Crown and Coke" is one of the most popular mixed drinks on the planet. The Old Fashioned, Manhattan, and Whiskey Sour can all be made with Crown.

In addition to the classics, there are a few cocktails that the brand has shared through their website that are best made with Crown Royal. One such cocktail is the light, sweet, and refreshing Crown Royal Flush.

The Crown Royal Flush is one of two cranberry cocktails promoted by Crown Royal, the other is the Crown Royal Red Snapper. Crown is unique in the whiskey world in that it mixes well with cranberry juice.

Vodka or gin are most commonly paired with cranberry juice, but Crown's light mix of fruit and vanilla notes are a perfect complement to fruit juice and/or fruit

liqueurs.

Other than Crown and cranberry, the Crown Royal Flush calls for peach schnapps. Peach schnapps is the unsung hero of several contemporary cocktails, including the Jolly Rancher and the Fuzzy Navel.

If you have options when shopping for peach schnapps, choose Bol's or DeKuyper. There are a few cheaper options, but the less expensive options are of a lower quality and have a dominant "artificial" taste to them.

In the mixology world, when a drink calls for cranberry, the drink calls for Ocean Spray Cranberry. Ocean Spray Cranberry is found behind nearly every commercial bar around the globe. Make sure that you pick up the standard unsweetened variety, avoid blended and artificially sweetened juices.

Crown Royal Flush preparation is straight forward: shake with ice, strain into glass, serve. The blend of Crown and cranberry is a nice departure from Crown and Coke, or Crown and 7. You probably have a bottle of Crown from last year's Christmas party in your liquor cabinet, why not give this one a

try?

The Crown Royal Flush is built in a shaker, and served in a rocks glass.

Combine in shaker:
1 1/4 oz. Crown Royal
1/4 oz. peach schnapps

3 oz. cranberry juice
Shake with ice, strain into ice-filled rocks glass
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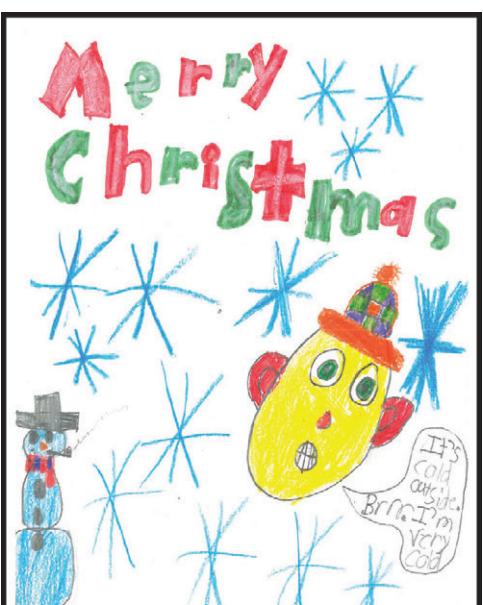
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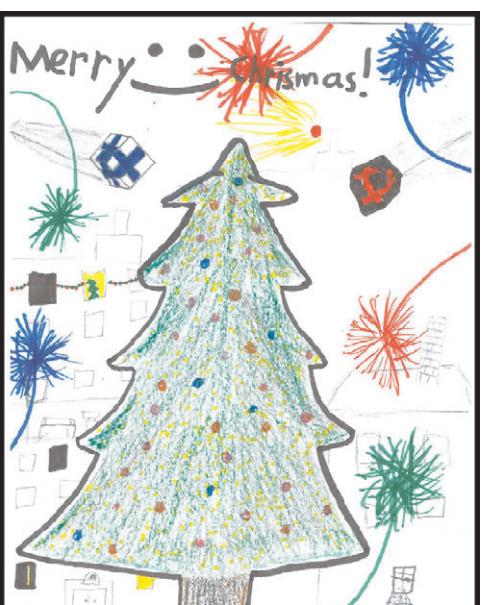
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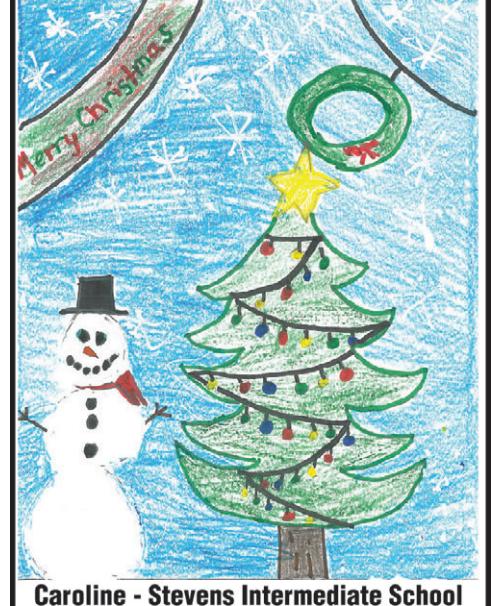
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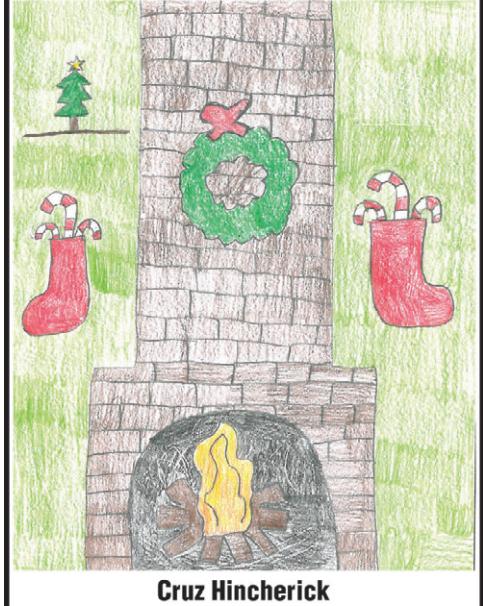
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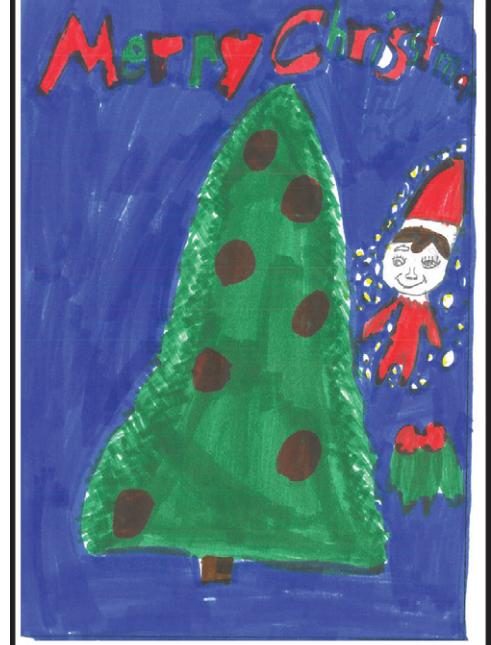
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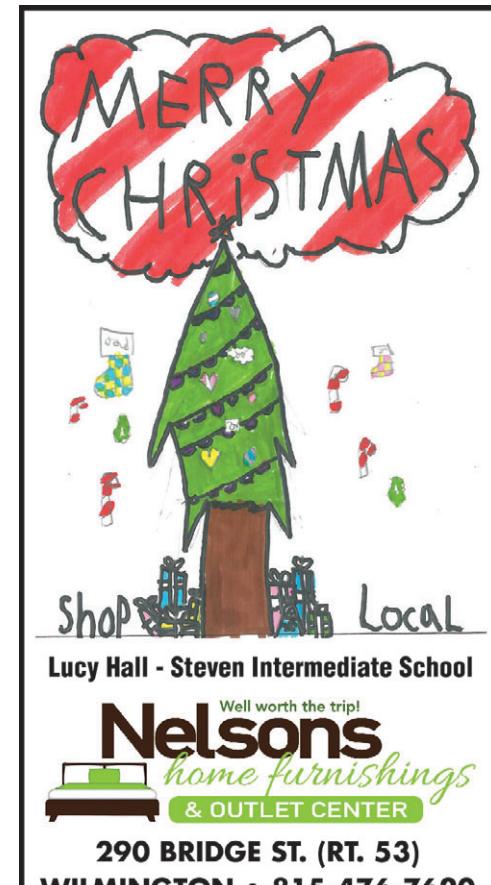
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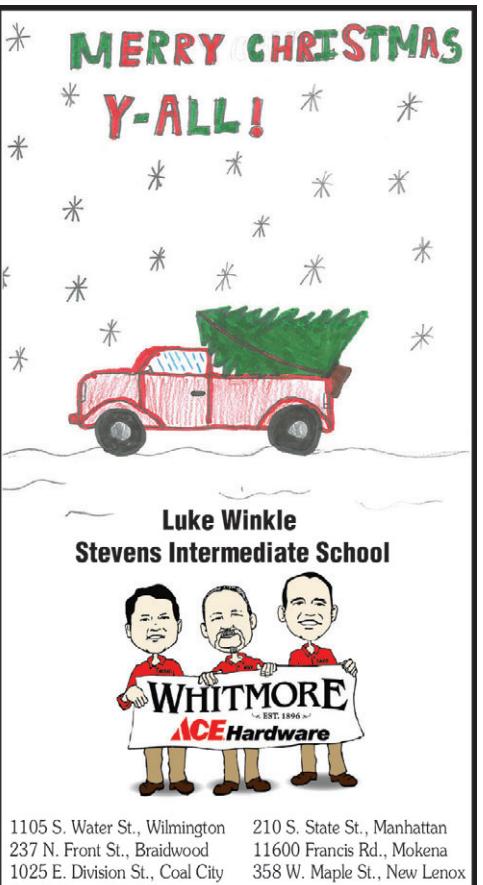
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Don't know what to give a teen? How about giving a good book

BY BRIDGET KNOWLES
 WHS STUDENT REPORTER

Although this year has been challenging, The Wilmington Public Library District and the Wilmington High School Library are both open. Students can now check out books to read over winter break.

Around this time every year, The Wilmington Public Library sees an increase in books checked out over winter vacation which starts Friday. Many people have time off of work and school, which gives them more time to cozy up by the fire and read a good book.

However, due to the pandemic, the library has seen an increase in digital reading. "Any reading of any nature is extremely beneficial," commented Maria Meachum, the public library's director.

Books can be checked out inside the Wilmington Public library, or can be picked up from their contactless pick up locker. WHS students can also check out books from the WHS library before they leave for winter break.

The WHS librarian, Ms. Turner, and the WHS sophomore english teacher, Ms. Keane, compiled a top 10 list of books they think students would enjoy, to keep them reading over break. Books on this list would also make great Christmas gifts.

- *Throne of Glass* by Sara Maas
- *Red Queen* by Victoria Aveyard
- *The Program* by Suzanne Young
- *Between Shade of Gray* by Ruta Sepetys
- *They Both Die at the end* by Adam Silvera
- *The Amulet Series* by Kazu Kibuishi
- *Scott Pilgrim Series* by Bryan O'Malley
- *One of Us is Lying* by Karen McManus
- *It* by Stephen King

• *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams

Genre: Science Fiction, Humorous Fiction

Synopsis: In this collection of novels, Arthur Dent is introduced to the galaxy at a large when he is rescued by an alien friend seconds before Earth's destruction, and embarks on a series of amazing

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.

Go with a bar of soap

Here is a tip to reduce waste related to soap and shampoo. Use bars instead of liquids because they are easier to use completely, have less packaging and save the cost of transporting water, since you supply that when you lather them at home.

Soap bars last longer if you allow them to dry between uses. If a soap dish holds water, consider placing a bottle cap under the bar to keep it dry.

Vaccine optimism driving up gas prices

Illinois gas prices have risen 8.7 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.26/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,378 stations.

Gas prices in Illinois are 12.0 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 24.1 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois is priced at \$1.94/g while the most expensive is \$2.83/g, a difference of 89.0 cents per gallon.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 4.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.21/g. The national average is up 9.8 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 34.5 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

"The sudden spike in gas prices last week was brought on by a continued rise in the price of oil, which jumped last week to nearly \$50 per barrel, the highest we've seen since March, when prices collapsed

due to COVID-19," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"While last week's gas price surge isn't likely to repeat this week, it could be a sign of things to come in the year ahead," said De Haan.

"A weakening U.S. dollar and vaccine optimism continued to push oil higher last week, along with stock markets. While some are wrongly pointing to the coming shift in the White House as driving up prices, I can assure motorists that what we're seeing has nothing to do with such a change and everything to do with market optimism that demand will rise, and the weaker dollar which makes oil cheaper to anyone holding non-dollar currencies, putting upward pressure on demand."

GasBuddy's survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country.

State Police bust driver hauling pot

If an Ohio man thought cannabis was now legal in Illinois, he learned real quick that it's not when you're carrying 103 pounds with the intent to sell it.

An Illinois State Police (ISP) District 5 unit conducted a traffic stop in Grundy County Tuesday that resulted in multiple felony charges and the seizure of three firearms (1 stolen), 103 pounds of cannabis and \$20,259 cash.

The State Trooper pulled a passenger vehicle over on Interstate 80 eastbound at milepost 112 just south of

Route 47 in Morris after observing a traffic violation. Probable cause to search the vehicle was then established.

A subsequent search of the vehicle resulted in three carryon bags containing 103 pounds of cannabis, three firearms and a fourth bag with \$20,259 cash.

Henry O. Umpierre, 33, of Cleveland, OH was arrested on multiple felony charges including, attempt to manufacture/deliver cannabis-more than 5,000 grams (a Class X felony); Attempt cannabis tracking-More than 5,000

grams (Class 1); Possession of cannabis-more than 5,000 grams (Class 1); Conspire/possession of a weapon by convicted felon (Class 2); Possession of a stolen firearm (Class 2) and Armed violence (Class X).

Umpierre is being lodged at the Grundy County Jail and has been formally charged by the Grundy County State's Attorney.

Umpierre's bond was set at \$150,000 (10% applies). All subjects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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Pritzker could have done the responsible thing to balance the budget

"What if" games are never quite accurate, but I don't think it's a stretch to say that Gov. JB Pritzker had the opportunity and most probably the votes to balance the state budget with an income tax hike during 2019, his "honeymoon" year with the General Assembly.

Instead, the governor came into office and proposed what was essentially a pension payment holiday and other magic budgetary solutions.

I was told in early 2019 by a high-level administration figure with influence over the budget that the Pritzker administration would not take the "easy" route of raising taxes and wanted to instead focus on the "hard" choices.

But hiking the flat tax to balance the budget ahead of a hoped-for 2020 change to the state constitution to allow for a graduated income tax would not have been the "easy" route. A pension holiday was the easiest route he could've possibly taken. There was nothing "hard" about that, except for

convincing legislators that shorting the pension funds was the right thing to do.

Pritzker's budget was eventually saved by an unexpected tax receipt boost in the spring which eliminated the immediate need for a pension holiday, budget cuts or a new revenue infusion.

And then came 2020, the mother of all lousy years.

The international pandemic has punched all states and local governments in the fiscal gut. But the lack of preparedness hit Illinois even harder.

The state's current revenue situation isn't that bad in comparison to last fiscal year, partly because the state income tax filing deadline was moved from April to July, which is in the current fiscal year.



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

But because the governor's Fair Tax failed, and because the current fiscal year's budget depended upon those new revenues plus a nearly \$5 billion federal bailout from the federal government, the state budget office last month projected a \$3.9 billion deficit for the current fiscal year, which is now almost half over.

The immediate deficit projection has been lowered by \$2 billion because the state is borrowing that money from the Federal Reserve, less than half the \$5 billion it was eligible to receive.

That borrowing leaves the state with a \$1.9 billion or so hole to fill by June 30th, and Gov. Pritzker outlined \$711 million in unilateral cuts last week.

\$75 million of those reductions relies on an agreement

with AFSCME, and the union appeared to reject the notion out of hand. Bruce Rauner's attempt to wipe AFSCME out of existence backfired so badly that the union has been strengthened to the point where even asking for minor concessions is beyond difficult.

The governor pointed to the failure of his Fair Tax proposal as a big reason for the need to make cuts, and AFSCME countered by saying it was also all-in on the graduated income tax. But while Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden lost Sangamon County to President Donald Trump by just 4.3 percentage points (down from Trump's 9-point winning margin in 2016), the Fair Fax lost AFSCME's home-base county by a whopping 26 points.

Heckuva job.

We can't go back and change history and it's often maddening to engage in the exercise. But, if the governor had just done the responsible thing in 2019 and used a flat

tax hike to balance the budget when he could've drawn on an almost infinitely deep well of goodwill among his super-majority legislature, we wouldn't be in nearly this mess right now. And he could've then painted the 2020 constitutional amendment vote as a very real and substantial income tax cut for 97 percent of the populace instead of the few dollars he ended up promising.

I'm only writing this now because when I laid out this very scenario in an early 2019 meeting with that high-level Pritzker person who has significant budget influence, I was laughed at and waved off with "We're not taking the easy way out with a tax increase, Rich."

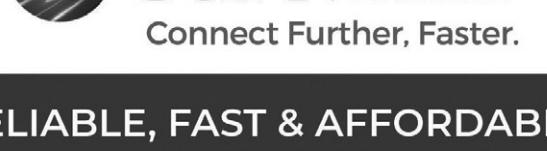
Also, the governor said that he'll need the General Assembly's cooperation to

make more cuts than the \$711 million he outlined. That's not totally true.

Under Rauner, the vast majority of the state's budget was put on auto-pilot, either by statute or by judges. A big chunk of that money falls under various consent decrees entered into by the state. The administration could attempt to change those consent decrees without any help from the legislature.

But doing so would bring enormous heat on the governor because those consent decrees involve things like minimum funding and staffing levels for the state's care of children.

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



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The nuclear power plant employees pledged more than \$2.9 million to over 2,000 different charities in their surrounding communities this year. And for every dollar pledged by employees, the Exelon Foundation donated 50 cents to their local United Way, bringing the total donation to more than \$4.4 million.

At Exelon's three area generating stations: Dresden, Braidwood and LaSalle, employees pledged more than \$470,000 to 440 charities during this year's Employee Giving Campaign.

Organizations supported include Special Connections of Grundy County; Grundy Area Pads; Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago; Community Care Center (Braidwood Food Pantry); Kuzma Care Cottage Community; Joliet Area Community Hospice; National

Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI); We Care of Grundy County; Midwest Veterans Association; Illinois Valley Food Pantry; Gary Sinise Foundation; and more.

"You can feel that giving back is embedded solidly within the Exelon culture, and employees do that in so many ways - through donations but also by giving their time and talent in the form of labor and volunteerism," said Karen Nall, executive director of the United Way of Grundy County. "It's truly feels like neighbors taking care of neighbors."

"This has been a challenging year for many, and our nuclear power plant employees answered the call for help, giving to charities and causes that mean the most to them," said Bryan Hanson, Exelon chief generation officer. "Our people have strong bonds with the communities that surround our nuclear plants. Their generosity will bring resources to organizations that need them, along with hope and relief for the people who rely on them."

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The Free Press Newspapers

Coal City Wilmington



Professional insight

GAVC criminal justice students strike up professional relationships

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Creativity in teaching has taken on a whole new meaning this year for Grundy Area Vocational Center criminal justice instructor Jeff Hanley who isn't letting the pandemic stand in his way.

When one of the most anticipated projects in his class couldn't proceed as planned, Hanley teamed up with law enforcement colleagues from across the world to provide a new opportunity for his senior students, and they are embracing the change.

As part of their second year of study in the program, students job shadow local law enforcement officers, but the pandemic has put a pause on those opportunities.

"So I was trying to think of a unique way to get them [students] involved with somebody in the field," said Hanley.

He established a mentoring program to fill the void. Each student is paired with at least one professional that matches with their interest in

the criminal justice field.

There are patrol officers, detectives, conservation officers, and even an agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigations [FBI] and a SWAT team member. The mentors are based in local police and sheriff's departments, and those as far as New Zealand.

"Our list is pretty extensive," Hanley said.

And, since not everyone in the vocational center's program is looking to enter the law enforcement field, Hanley has paired them up with social workers and counselors.

He's even gone so far as to place students with professionals who followed the same path into their selected field of interest.

Drake, a senior at Coal City High School, is enlisting in the U.S. Air Force and will be in security forces. He is paired with a law enforcement officer who also began his service in the military.

Faith, a fellow Coal City senior, is also looking at military service as a member of the National Guard and she has been paired with an officer who also served in the

National Guard.

The students have been communicating with their mentors through e-mail and text message, and a few with phone calls.

The connections began with introductory e-mails that went hand-in-hand with another assignment—the completion of a personal biography that was sent to introduce themselves to mentors.

Hanley was looking for the students to connect two or three times a month to avoid overburdening the mentors and their departments. For some, the interactions are more frequent.

The mentors are sharing details of their path into the field, the duties that perform on a regular basis, unique cases and simply answering the students' questions.

Connor, a senior at Coal City, is planning to enter the law enforcement field with a goal of securing a position with the FBI.

Having reached out to his mentor with a number of questions, the agent he was paired with has since reached out and the two are talking via phone.

The mentoring program is working well for Hanley's students who represent Coal City, Reed-Custer, Wilmington and Gardner-South Wilmington high schools.

However, the instructor said nothing can compare with the job shadowing that allows the students to ride along with an officer.

"This is the best we could do under the circumstances. I think the advantage of this will be on a more personal level because they can get to know who their mentor is and form a relationship," said Hanley. He notes that in the job shadowing program, students often are assigned to different officers so there is no solid connections made.

Students in the class say they wanted the job shadowing experience and hope that before the school year closes they will get a chance to do that ride along.

"It's obviously been kind of rough, because I am really interested in criminal justice and my brother who took this class has remarked how he got to ride along with the police officers. That's kind of tough,

but we've been able to work around it in this class pretty well and explore our options and make due with what we can. I think we are still getting a good experience talking to the different officers and agents," Connor said.

Hanley said he feels bad for his senior students in that they have lost out on so many opportunities as a result of the pandemic.

"It's actually worse for these guys this year because they are enduring it for the foreseeable future. I don't think anyone saw it lasting this long," the instructor said.

The students all say they're grateful for the opportunity that has been presented to them.

For Robbie, a senior at Reed-Custer High School who's area of interest is in conservation, he has been able to connect with a conservation officer working in another state, but has local ties. In fact, his mentor's sister is in his GAVC class and he notes it's helped develop a connection.

"I just wanted to turn this over to them to strike up a relationship and build on that. I

just wanted them to build relationships, one that can continue past graduation in May and I hope those mentorships continue on to the next phase," Hanley said.

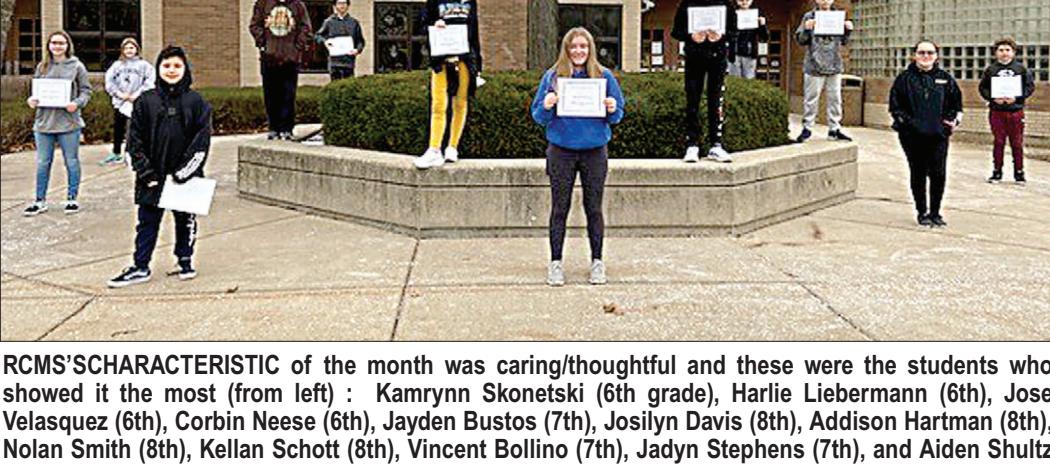
The students say they are enjoying the mentor program and have learned so much about the field from their studies in Hanley's course.

Justin and Kaden, seniors at Wilmington High School, say they will both be pursuing careers in the criminal justice field. One will get his start through military service and the other is heading to college.

Hanley tells his students there are two paths into the field—college and military. The path one chooses is a personal preference, with the majority of his current class of second year students heading toward college.

High school students with an interest in criminal justice are encouraged to check out the GAVC program through its virtual classroom tour that can be accessed through the GAVC Criminal Justice Facebook page.

RCMS names December Students of the month



RCMS'SCHARACTERISTIC of the month was caring/thoughtful and these were the students who showed it the most (from left) : Kamrynn Skonetski (6th grade), Harlie Liebermann (6th), Jose Velasquez (6th), Corbin Neese (6th), Jayden Bustos (7th), Josilyn Davis (8th), Addison Hartman (8th), Nolan Smith (8th), Kellan Schott (8th), Vincent Bollino (7th), Jadyn Stephens (7th), and Aiden Shultz (7th).

RCMS announces December ACE winners



RCMS PROUDLY NAMES their December ACE winners. Pictured (from left): Collin Monroe (8th grade), Skylar Zebell (7th), Logan Bean (6th), Reese Brown (6th), and Dhane Debelak (7th).

Van Duyne elected president of Will County Forest Preserve board



Photo by Forest Preserve staff | Laura Kiran

JOE VANDUYNE of Wilmington has been elected president of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Board of Commissioners.

The Forest Preserve District of Will County's Board of Commissioners elected Joe VanDuyne, of Wilmington, as president during the board's Dec. 14 reorganization meeting.

VanDuyne succeeds Kenneth Harris, who stepped in as president when former president Laurie Summers resigned from the board in October 2019. Harris declined to seek re-election to the post.

VanDuyne is a union electrician who served as a Wilmington alderman from 2013-2017 before being elected to the Forest Preserve Board in 2018.

"As president, I would like to continue to provide top-notch amenities to all of the residents of Will County including those who enjoy running, bicycling, hiking, fishing, camping and so much more," VanDuyne said. "With Will County being one of the fastest growing counties in Illinois, I think it is imperative that we also commit to continue to acquire land and to restore it to its natural state."

VanDuyne said he personally appreciates the value of open space and how it improves the quality of life for county residents.

"Exercise is a daily part of my life, and it brings me joy to know our residents are also being health conscious, enjoying outdoor activities and getting fresh air."

Also elected by the board were: Rachel Ventura, vice president; Mica Freeman, secretary and Tyler Marcum, treasurer.

Denise Winfrey will chair the operations committee, Harris will chair the finance committee and Margaret Tyson will serve as chair of the ad hoc rules committee.

Will County Sheriff department to purchase body cameras

The Will County Sheriff's Department got the green light to purchase body cameras for its 212 deputies. The county board voted last week to appropriate \$1.2 million to purchase the cameras which will be worn by deputies that respond to calls for service.

"Law enforcement body cameras are an important tool that provides transparency for deputies and the public," said Will County Board Speaker Mimi Cowan. "I'm pleased that the county board will fund this initiative."

The \$1.2 million appropriation will cover the cost of new body cameras, and storage of footage captured on the cameras.

"These funds will cover the cost of the cameras and video storage for about five years," said Finance Committee Chair Ken Harris.

"We've seen the benefit of these cameras for law enforcement and also for the public," said County Board Minority Leader Mike Fricilone. "I'm glad that our deputies and residents now have this valuable tool."

Patriot's Pen finalists announced

Patriots Pen is a national patriotic program of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is open to all sixth, seventh and eighth grade students.

Each year the national commander picks a theme for the 300 to 400 word essay that each student submits. This year's theme was, "What is Patriotism to Me?"

St. Juvin Post 1336 sponsored the essay contest at Coal City Middle School and its members selected the top essay to move on to the next level of competition.

An essay penned by seventh grader Olivia

Weatherbee was selected by Post 1336 to move on to the 18th District—Will, Grundy and Kendall counties—contest for judging and possibly going on to the state VFW competition.

Nationally over \$50,000 in prizes will be awarded.

Along with Weatherbee, St. Juvin Post recognized six other finalists that included eighth grader Madi Peterson, and seventh graders Jacob Cimino, Grace Heatherwick, Dane Noffsinger, Brandon Rentauskas and Colin Schimandle.

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COMET SPORTS

IHSA's additional guidelines for spectators, officials

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

If and when high school sports resume, it will be up to each individual schools to decide whether they will allow spectators under guidelines issued last week by the Illinois High School Association.

If fans are allowed, there will be strict guidelines they will have to follow.

Everyone will have to wear a mask and social distance so forget about sharing high fives in the stands.

Spectators will be assigned to designated areas, a minimum of 12 feet away from the court or field.

In tournaments with multiple teams extra time will be allotted to clean and sterilize the bleachers and playing equipment before the next contest can begin.

In basketball, fans must be kept in separate groups with home spectators on one side and visitors on the other, breaking tradition at Reed-Custer, who usually has all spectators on the west side of the gym.

In cheer or dance competitions, fans will enter as one group of 50, watch the performance then be asked to leave.

Spectators in theaters

The IHSA also put out guidelines for spectators of plays and musicals.

Fans are required to wear face coverings except when eating.

The crowd will be limited to immediate family only.

In addition, indoor theaters and performing arts/activity spaces should operate at 50% capacity; outdoor theater can operate at 20% of overall space. Spectators must reserve their seats. It will be up to administrators and venue operators to post a link for registration.

Before attending, spectators will be expected to call to check for available capacity. Temperature checks will be taken at the door.

If applicable, it is also suggested that fans order tickets online instead of at the door to avoid closed contact with people.

Uniform requirements

The IHSA also set new guidelines for game officials. Their whistles must be covered or the use of electronic whistles is preferred.

Officials will be required to wear face coverings when they're not actively exercising and performing their officiating duties.

Masks should be solid black as well.

Officials are allowed to wear gloves and long sleeves. It's not a requirement. If they so choose to wear gloves or sleeves, the gloves must be either clear or black and the sleeves must be black.

Officials must maintain social distancing during pregame. It's suggested the pregame conference be moved to the center of the court with everyone spaced out three to six feet.

The pregame conference should be limited to one official, a head coach from each team with one captain from each team.

Exchanging hand shakes, fist bumps, etc. with players or coaches will not be allowed.

Scorer's table

Seats will be limited at the scorer's table to one home team official scorer and a scoreboard operator properly spaced out. Visiting team personnel will need to find a different location.

The scoreboard operator and scorer will be masked.

Preparation for game day

Officials who don't feel well should not officiate. They should also notify their assignor ahead of time giving them enough time to find a replacement.

Officials will be asked as a precautionary measure to take their temperature when they wake up and before they come to a game.

Some officials may be vulnerable individuals (people 65 or older with underlying health conditions) will have to check with the Centers of Disease Control before returning to work.

In baseball and softball, face coverings are required when umpires cannot maintain social distance. If umpires and coaches cannot maintain a social distance during the pregame meeting, umpires must wear a mask. Plate umpires won't be required to wear the mask when they are actively officiating.

No jump ball will take place, social distancing during free throws and throws ins are also required during basketball games.

All of these restrictions are subject to change.

IESA far short of funds to continue

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

It's been two weeks since the Illinois Elementary School Association appealed to the public to support a 'Go Fund Me' page to keep the organization operational. If the IESA doesn't get financial help by April, it will be forced to close.

As of Monday the Go Fund Me page reached \$22,200, far short of their \$500,000 goal.

If the IESA is unable to pay their bills, their doors will shut and that may mean the end of

middle school sports as we know it.

What's been the impact of having a statewide organization that puts on state tournaments for 7th and 8th grade athletes? One of the best to experience the workings of the IESA is middle school wrestling coach Yale Davis

He said there is no better influence on aspiring athletes than to watch them advance in a state series and see them achieve their goal. He saw it first-hand how winning state or even placing at state builds confidence in young teens.

Davis had Kody Marschner capture a state title, had Gunnar Berg place second, Landon

Markle place fifth and had the team as a whole capture sixth in state in 2019. He also had five state qualifiers this past year and he has nothing but positive things to say about the way IESA Executive Director Steve Endsley has been running things for years.

"The IESA is a class act organization that goes out of their way to give kids great experiences," said Davis. The tournaments are very well run too."

Yale says it means so much more than a one time event. To them, it's a chance to put all that hard work to the ultimate test.

"It does tell us something that the IESA is

not just an organization, it allows middle school kids to dream or something and work hard to get there. That's invaluable for a kid to want something that bad at such a young age."

If the IESA shuts its doors, Yale notes the middle school wrestling will never be the same.

"I remember what it feels like to have those dreams and to work for those dreams with a team of friends. Plain and simple, if IESA gets shutdown, my kids and many other hardworking kids may not get an opportunity to reach their goals and to chase that dream."

Comet coaches make their picks for dream team kickers

MBY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

Girls soccer has been a sport at Reed-Custer High School for 17 years.

David Acevedo was the coach in 2003 when the program was launched and since then there have been several standout players who would make a Lady Comet soccer dream team.

David Blackburn, who was an assistant coach under Emily Redmann and Jose Smith from 2011-13, had a few players who stood out.

Emily Bushue

Bushue, who is one of the top scorer in Lady Comet history, would be his first pick. Bushue finished with 26 goals and is currently second in goals.

"She was center mid," said Blackburn. "She was probably one of the top two or three players in the area. She was the one player on the field that you always had to know where she was at and she was the one player other teams had to

the few teams in the conference to score on them and it was off of her foot."

Bushue and Swan were complements of one another on those teams. Swan was just behind Bushue as she finished with 19 goals.

Natalie Cash

Cash, a defender for the Comets, would be his next pick. She was the silent leader. When she spoke, the girls listened.

"Somehow she always put herself in the perfect position as a defender body-positioning wise," added Blackburn. "She knew when to make those runs for those loose balls. She always took control of the back. Her foot skills were very good."

Brennan Swan

Swan was another top scorer at Reed-Custer who played alongside Bushue.

"She always played an outside mid position for us," commented Blackburn. "Rarely you would find a player on the opposing team that could keep up with her endurance-wise. That year, Manteno ended up winning state in soccer. We were one of

the few teams in the conference to score on them and it was off of her foot."

Bushue and Swan were complements of one another on those teams. Swan was just behind Bushue as she finished with 19 goals.

Brooke Billingsley

Billingsley was a good goalkeeper and second in saves in Reed-Custer history with 307.

Kim Askew, who is the current Comet coach, has coached for four seasons. She had four players she added to the dream team list.

Gabi Perez

Perez is the save leader at Reed-Custer with 491 saves in her four seasons.

"Ever since I've been there, she's had the most saves," said Askew. "She's also had the most shutouts. She was really good at tracking the ball."

Karina Maars

Maars was one of the better defenders for Askew. She linked up with Perez very nicely to preserve wins and shutouts.

"Her and Gabi were a dream team in themselves. We didn't win a lot of games those years but we definitely cut down on the goals we were allowing which was a huge part with Karina and Gabi those two."

Lily Kilpatrick

Kilpatrick was one of the top scorers for Askew and had a really strong leg.

"She was very aggressive," commented Askew. "She was very good at placing the ball. Her ability to win the ball anywhere on the field was a big strength for Lily."

Marissa Escobedo

Escobedo, who played forward for Askew, was very versatile. She'd be able to play anywhere on the dream team.

"Marissa was great at playing anywhere you needed to. She was just a kid you could put anywhere on the field and she would succeed. Usually, she would be someone that sets up plays for other people. That was a strength for her."

Gracie Smith

Beverly Johnson, who coached the Comets for three seasons, had a list of her top players in that time and it started with the do-it-all soccer star Gracie Smith.

"Grace could do everything," said Beverly Johnson. "She could play everywhere too. She had really good endurance and always got stuff done. She was very good at receiving the corner kick from Jessica in the box."

Cash, who played forward under coach Beverly Johnson, is a consensus pick for the dream team. She was and still is the top goal scorer at Reed-Custer.

"She was one of the top scorers," said Johnson. "She was really fast and once the through ball got through, she

was gone."

Cash scored 30 goals as Comet. She found the back of the net 16 times in one season.

That number is the second most in a season. She has the third most as well, knocking 14 in the back of the net in 2014.

Jessica Kirkland

Kirkland, who played with Cash, complemented Natalie very well as she was the second leading scorer in that time. She rocketed 13 goals in the net during her time on the Comet soccer team. She played midfield.

"Jessica was good at scoring goals and she was fast so she could play the whole field as well. She was also good at getting the ball to Natalie."

Madison Williams

Williams was another one of those hybrid players for Johnson but she mostly played the midfield.

"She was good at scoring goals and she was also good at getting the ball to Natalie." commented Johnson.

Tia Zastrow

"She was coming on strong as a freshman goalie though."

Zastrow was a really good defender for Johnson's teams. She had a motor that no other player could match.

"I put her on defense a lot and she was pretty aggressive. Tia could clear the ball really well too."

Nicole Mazon & Gabi Perez

Mazon was Johnson's goalkeeper, who did a good job but split time with another really good goalkeeper Gabi Perez.

Perez became the best goalie in Lady Comet history and currently has the most saves ever. She is a consensus pick from coach Askew.

"She and Nicole could play anywhere," added Johnson. "Gabi was coming on strong as a freshman goalie though."

Karina Maars

Karina, who played for both Johnson and Askew, played the defense, and was a consensus pick.

"She was coming on strong as a freshman as a defender."

Kailey O'Connor

O'Connor, who played for Johnson as a forward, was one of the top scorers.

"She was good at scoring and being a leader," continued Johnson. "Kailey was very good at clearing the ball to Natalie as well."

Brett Dickerson

The final girl she added to her team was Brett Dickerson, a girl who played great on defense.

"She was primarily a defender and she was like a wall. They were not going to get anything past her. She ended up winning the most improved award her senior year. She was extremely hard-working."

Patty Mora

Mora, who played forward for Dennis Pommier in 2006, was one of their top scorers, placing in eight goals during the 2006 season where the Comets ended up dropping a 2-1 loss to Herscher in the Sectional quarterfinal game.



GABI PEREZ was selected for the girls soccer dream team. Perez is the leader in saves.



PATRICIA MORA was named to the Reed-Custer girls soccer dream team. Mora led the 2006 Lady Comets with eight goals.