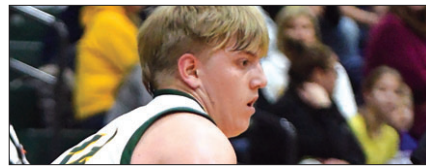


Fourth grade published poets



Garrelts posts 27 in OT victory



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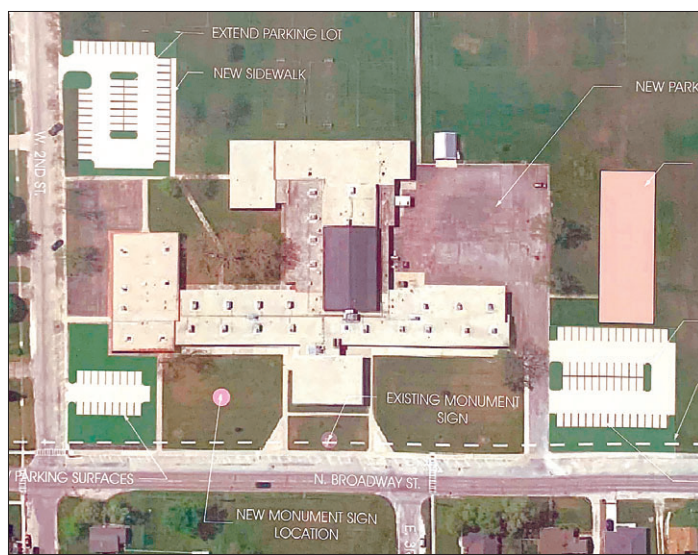
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2023

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Courtesy image

A FACILITY IMPROVEMENT plan suggests the addition of a gymnasium and two classrooms at Coal City's Early Childhood Center.



Courtesy image

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AT Coal City Elementary School are focused on exterior spaces.



Courtesy image

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO Coal City Intermediate School include renovating the original gym into a space for music classes.

Additions, renovations and reconfigurations

Facility improvement plans proposed for lower grades

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

Add Coal City's early childhood center, elementary and intermediate schools to the wish list for building upgrades.

Later this week focus groups will meet with school district architects and administrators to review improvements on the wish list.

Weighty plans have been presented for the middle and high schools.

Based on comments received from staff, architects at Cordogan Clark have drafted

potential additions, renovations and reconfigurations of spaces at the early childhood center, elementary and intermediate schools.

It was in February 1917 that the doors to the school building at 305 E. Division St. opened. The two-story building has served as a high school, middle school and now an intermediate school serving fourth and fifth graders.

There have been additions and renovations over the years to meet the needs of students and staff, and the current considerations are mainly focused on one area—the second story.

The proposal is to abandon the second

floor for various reasons, mainly accessibility. Currently that space is utilized for band and music, as well as storage.

In turn, architects have proposed transitioning the original gymnasium into a space for music. The main area would be utilized for instrumental music and practice rooms, instrument storage and office space. The stage area could then be renovated into a choir area with a designated office.

The interior spaces would receive fresh paint and graphics, as well as new furnishings and upgrades to restrooms.

As for exterior spaces, architect Richard Blair said a major concern presented by the focus group centered around traffic flow and keeping people safe.

Based on those comments the main parking lot would be relocated and a new traffic pattern and sidewalks established. The proposal includes new playground and relocation of outdoor storage.

The considerations presented, are just that. "I think before the Board makes a decision

SEE PLANS, PAGE 2

Hunt begins for new CCHS principal

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

A new principal will take over at Coal City High School, however, who that will be has yet to be determined.

Principal Jennifer Kenney announced last year she will be leaving the high school at the end of June to assume her new duties as the district's director of curriculum and instruction.

Superintendent Chris Spencer said 10 applications were received in advance of the Jan. 6 deadline. The number of internal candidates, if any, was not disclosed.

Now that the application period has closed, Spencer said the next step is to determine which candidates will be offered an initial interview. Those first interviews will likely

be held later this month.

The district is seeking a candidate with a master's degree or higher, with a major in educational administration. An individual with a valid state license to practice as a school principal and someone with experience in public school administration and supervision.

The posting further stating, "such alternatives to the above qualifications as the Board may find appropriate and acceptable."

The position comes with a July 1 start date and a salary based on qualifications and experience. District administrators also receive Board paid teacher retirement contributions and premiums for health, dental and vision insurance, as well as vacation and sick leave.

Decision pending on GE Hitachi tax assessment

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

The Unit 1 School District is still waiting for a response from the Grundy County Board of Review that a nuclear storage facility located in Goose Lake Township is being way under-assessed.

The district's complaint, filed last fall regarding the value of the GE Hitachi facility, is expected soon. A hearing was held last month and district officials were told a decision would be forthcoming after the new year.

The school district and other taxing bodies believe current \$6.1 million valuation is too low. They are seeking for an increase based on the income approach, rather than the cost approach, currently being used by the county's assessor.

The cost approach sets a value based on replacement costs, whereas the income



Courtesy photo

A DECISION is forthcoming from the Grundy County Board of Review on a tax assessment complaint filed by the Unit 1 Board of Education regarding the value assigned to the GE Hitachi nuclear fuel storage site in Goose Lake Township.

approach uses the income the property generates to calculate its value.

This is the second consecutive year the district has

appealed the plant's value.

Last year's request resulted in an increase of just under \$3 million. However, the objectors believe the number is still

too low.

According to Unit 1 Superintendent Chris

SEE ASSESSMENT, PAGE 2

Two local teachers earn national certification

BY ANN GILL EDITOR

Achieving National Board Certification is described as a grueling, but rewarding process for teachers.

It's a milestone worth celebrating and that is just what the Unit 1 Board of Education did last week recognizing its newest certified teachers—Marty Egan and Aimee Wren.

Egan, a special education teacher at Coal City High School and Wren, a kindergarten teacher at the Early Childhood Center, earned certification last month from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS] in the area of exceptional needs specialist/early childhood through young adulthood. They are among 127 Illinois educators to achieve

the distinction in 2022.

National Board Certification advances the quality of teaching and training through a series of standards based on what teachers should know and be able to accomplish in their classroom.

Research has shown that board certified teachers consistently out perform their peers in knowledge of subject matter and the ability to create

challenging and engaging lessons.

Pam Vigna, the district's NBCT facilitator, reports under 20,000 of the country's 4 million public school teachers have achieved NBC.

"That's less than half of one percent of the population of public school teachers. In our district we have seven out of 138, that's 5%, so we are way ahead of the national average

of having National Board Certified teachers in our district, which I think that is commendable," Vigna said.

Egan began the multi-step assessment process in 2019 and was in the early stages when the pandemic took hold and sent students and teachers home.

As a result of the pandemic, the NBPTS extended its deadline for candidates and

Egan took advantage of it.

Certification is achieved through a multi-year assessment that targets five core propositions—teachers com-

SEE TEACHERS, PAGE 2



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High winds, below zero temps recorded in Dec.

STAFF REPORT

Snow, high winds and below zero temperatures were recorded in Grundy County during in the final month of 2022. Grundy County's Emergency Management Agency's weather data division reported 2.8 inches of snow fell on Grundy County in December, bringing the season total to 3.5 inches. The county also had 2.32 inches of rain last month, the highest 24-hour period recorded at .97 inches on Dec. 15. There were six days in the month with measurable rain and four with measurable snow.

Total liquid precipitation for 2022 was calculated at 31.82 inches.

The county's monthly climatological data listed the average monthly temperature at 29 degrees with a high of 60 degrees on Dec. 29 and a low of minus-9 degrees six days earlier on Dec. 23.

Peak wind gust recorded in the county was 46 mph on two separate days—Dec. 3 and Dec. 23.

The report is based on weather data collected and kept on file at the GCMA office at the Grundy County Administration Center in Morris.

Plans

to renovate or expend a lot of capital on making that space workable, I think the Board would want to consider the longevity of using that spot as a campus," said Jason Smith, the district's chief business official.

The focus group at the elementary school is recommending over 100 facility improvements.

The architects' suggestions for the 68-year-old building are mainly cosmetic with system upgrades. Improvements include new lockers and cubbies, upgraded restrooms, plumbing and HVAC, as well as a fresh coat of paint, new furniture and mounting classroom screens on wheels for easy movement.

The campus could receive new parking services, expanding parking on the southside of the site, new sidewalks, upgraded playground equipment and like all district buildings—a monument sign.

The village of Coal City is currently planning to reconstruct North Broadway from Division Street to North Street [McArdle Road], a project that could influence changes to the front of the elementary school.

Built in 2008, the early childhood center is the district's newest academic center serving students enrolled in preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade.

Based on an increasing enrollment, as well as more wide ranging district needs, architects suggest the addition of a gymnasium to the west side of the building and a need for parking.

One request is to separate the existing gymnasium and cafeteria.

Superintendent Chris Spencer said sharing the gym and cafeteria space is no longer working, as physical education classes can not take

place prior to the lunch hours and with increasing enrollment there is more time and space needed for both uses.

The addition of a new gymnasium would provide the building with additional classroom space and allow for existing spaces to be reconfigured.

Another request is for a place for interior play or a gross motor skills room.

What the architects have proposed is renovating the existing gymnasium to create a designated lunchroom on one side and a gross motor skills space on the other.

A new gymnasium would include two additional classrooms, to allow the reconfiguration of an existing classroom area for large and small group instruction.

Smith said the additional gymnasium would solve some additional problems when it comes to practice spaces.

Middle school staff noted practice space it at a premium during the winter athletic season as there are three levels of basketball for girls and boys, along with wrestling.

Smith said given the building's proximity to the middle school, it would provide the additional square footage needed for training.

"This is looking at a district level, not just a building level," he said.

Additional parking would be necessary too.

Blair said with the addition of the gym being used outside of school hours you don't want to bring people all the way through the building, so the adjacent parking lot would provide direct access into the space.

Considerations for the building also address the need for upgrades to the existing parking lots, and installation of shade sails in the playground areas—again a request from the focus group.

All of the considerations outlined in the facility improvement plan are just suggestions, as Blair told the Board of Education last month. "We are looking at what's needed and what's wanted and bringing the two together."

The Board of Education still has to determine if any of the suggestions presented will move forward.

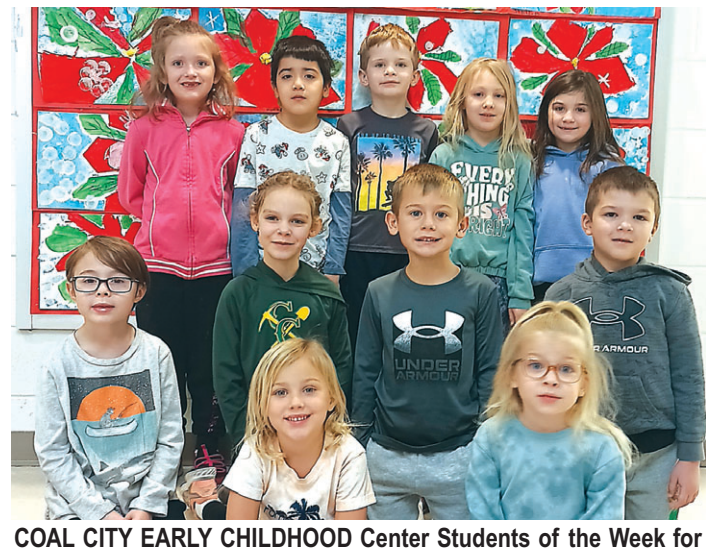
"There is a lot more vetting that needs to go into these solutions," Smith said.

"There is still further investigation [needed] to see if these are even practical. These are not final construction documents, they are lines on paper," he said.

Unit 1 names Students of the Week



Courtesy photo
COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for Jan. 11 are (from left): Lily Connor Mikos, Brayden Brncich, Tristan Brncich and Kaitlyn Adams.



COAL CITY EARLY CHILDHOOD Center Students of the Week for the week of Jan. 11 in row one are (from left) Adeline Stott and Collins Glefke. Zack Mateja, Irene Oakes, Brant Kratochvil and Vincent Gonzalez are in row two. Completing the group in row three are Nova Pearson, Noah Maldonado, Dexter Miller, Kaci Pacione and Braelyn Plata.



Courtesy photos
COAL CITY ELEMENTARY School Students of the Week for the week of Jan. 11 seated in row one (from left) are: Landon Hardy, Liana Baik, Skylar Hamilton, Keegan Lauffer and Nolan Kochenburg. Standing in row two are Evan Olson, Colin Muhlenbruch, Jacob Harris, Eron Bakii, Kenley Faletti, Leighton Luna, Michael Dehler and Keagan Douglas.

COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

Check online event calendar at ccpld.org for a description of the events and to register.

Check out our digital services available 24/7 on our website at www.ccpld.org.

In-Person Adult Exercise, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays 9-10 a.m.

Thursday, Jan. 12- Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

Movie Day - Ticket to Paradise, 1 p.m.

Builder's Club, 4 p.m.

Terrific Tots, 6 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 13- Euchre, 1 p.m.

Fun Fridays, 3 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 14- Stitch Group, -9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Stuffed Animal Storytime and Sleepover, 10 a.m. Kids 2 years to 5th grade can bring their stuffed animal for a special storytime. Then you will leave the animal with us, so it can have fun at the library over the weekend. You

can return on Monday to pick it up to see what fun it had over the weekend and register for our Winter Read Challenge.

Monday, Jan. 16-Winter Read Challenge "Cozy Up With CCPLD" starts. Sign up at the library or online through the Beanstack app.

Makerspace Cart Mondays, All Day

Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

Preschool Storytime, 11 a.m.

Kids Off the Grid, 1pm

Mahjong, 1 p.m.

Family Lapsit, 6 p.m.

Preschool Storytime, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 17-Happy Scrappers, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 18-Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Family Lapsit, 10 a.m.

Preschool Storytime, 10 a.m.

Paint with Paula-Snowman, 6 p.m.

Assessment

Spencer, the legal team representing the taxing districts spent about 30 minutes presenting its case.

The GE Hitachi group, he said, provided no evidence for or against, "just insisted we [taxing districts] had no new information for the Board of Review and the Board of Review should just keep the same number they had which was around \$6.1 million."

Spencer said, "that is definitely not true. Our legal counsel presented another contract, so we have two of the five contracts with the nuclear power plants."

Nuclear facilities pay to have their

spent fuel stored at the site, a cost reimbursed by the federal government. GE Hitachi provides storage space for 3,219 fuel assemblies within the deep water pool along Collins Road. In total, the site provides storage for 773 metric tons or 1.7 million pounds of spent fuel mostly shipped from nuclear facilities located in California, Nebraska, Connecticut and Minnesota.

The contracts outline what the reactor owners are paying GE to hold onto the used fuel rods. Since the storage of spent nuclear fuel is the responsibility of the federal government, but without a central repository, the feds pay operators to store their spent fuel.

The local taxing districts believe the assessed value of the site should be calcu-

lated on the income approach and the value of that site set significantly higher than what its currently assigned.

Prior to the conclusion of the hearing, Spencer said one of the three members on the BOR asked a series of questions, a move he said was promising in that the individual was seeking to gain some additional information.

"Hopefully we will have some information [on a decision] here soon," Spencer said.

The taxing districts are still appealing the 2021 assessment having filed an appeal to the BOR's ruling with the Illinois Property Tax Appeals Board [PTAB] and it could be a few years before that matter is decided at the state level.

Teachers

mitted to students and their learning, teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students, teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience, and teachers are members of learning communities.

"I think the program is very beneficial and something every teacher should seriously consider doing," Egan said.

Wren was serving as a special education co-teacher when she entered the program in 2019. It was also at a time when pandemic mitigation's were still in place, and as she was about to welcome her third child.

"She was very diligent and determined...she spent a lot of maternity leave with baby in one hand and computer in the other writing her

written commentary," Vigna said.

Among the steps teachers must take is recording and analyzing their teaching.

"As a football coach, one of the things we harp on the kids is watching the film and figuring out the mistakes and learning from it. This program forced us to do just that. Record yourself teaching, break down what you do well and what you can improve on. I think it's really important, whatever you are doing in life, to constantly reevaluate what you are doing well, what you need to improve on and make adjustments necessary. I think I am a better teacher for having gone through this," Egan said.

Wren said the program allowed her to dive into her practice, "to make sure what I was doing was best for kids

and best for everyone in the room from an inclusion standpoint, from a special ed standpoint," she said.

Wren transitioned into a general education teaching position this year and said the NBC process has provided her a more complete understanding of her teaching because she's analyzed herself in depth.

"I am so grateful I went through this process. It is a rigorous process, it's a long process, and I feel it's helped by practice," Wren said.

Vigna is currently working with three additional teachers who are working toward certification.

Since 2000, the district has had 15 educators achieve certification. This is the fifth consecutive year the district has recognized staff members for successfully completing

the process.

"From a Board [of Education] perspective we take pride that we have more NBC teachers than everybody else in the area," said Shawn Hamilton, the board's vice president.

According to the NBPTS certification directory, the district does lead the way with valid certifications across the area. Morris has one NBCT at its high school, Minooka has three across its elementary and high school districts. Wilmington has one teacher and Reed-Custer has three, and one of those educators earned certification while teaching at Unit 1.

In recognition of their achievement, Wren and Egan will receive a plaque to hang outside her classroom that denotes their certification as NBCT.

EM Lash Studio 844 files as new business

LEGAL NOTICE

Assumed Name Publication Notice

Public Notice is hereby given that on December 19, A.D. 2022, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Grundy County, Illinois, setting forth names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as EM Lash Studio 844, located at 333 E. US Route 6, Morris, IL 60450.

Dated this 19th day of December, A.D. 2022.

Kay T. Olson, Grundy County Clerk
Published in the Coal City Courant on Jan. 4, 11, and 18, 2023.

Attorney Black files Pilch estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE No. 2023 PR 1

In the Matter of the Estate of ALBERT J. PILCH, Deceased

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Albert J. Pilch. Letters of office as Independent Co-Executors were issued to Laura Holman, 24 Lakewood Court, Morris, Illinois 60450 and Denise Hauge, 849 E. North St., Morris, IL 60450, whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington St., Morris, IL 60450, with the representative, or both, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or, if mailing or delivery of a notice is required by Section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

LAURA HOLMAN
DENISE HAUGE
INDEPENDENT CO-EXECUTORS

Frank J. Black
Black & Black
201 Liberty Street
Suite 211
P.O. Box 148
Morris, IL 60450
815-942-0594

Published in the Coal City Courant on Jan. 11, 18 and 25, 2023.

Attorney Wheeler files Xolio adoption notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS Case No. 22AD8

IN RE THE ADOPTION OF MICHAEL XOLIO, A MINOR, AND ELIZABETH RODRIGUEZ-PEREZ and JHONATAN VALVERDE-HILDAGO PETITIONERS, AND FRANCISCO XOLIO, RESPONDENT

ADOPTION NOTICE

To: All Whom It May Concern
Take notice a Petition for Adoption was filed in the Circuit Court of Grundy County, Illinois on November 16, 2022, for the adoption of Michael Xolio.

Now therefore, unless any person whom it may concern files an answer to the Petition in said action or otherwise files an appearance therein in the said Circuit Court of Grundy County, 111 E. Washington Street, in the City of Morris, Illinois, on or before the 13th day of February, 2023, a default may be entered against you at any time after that day and a judgment in entered in accordance with the prayer of said petition.

Dated: 1/3/2023, 12:59 PM, 2023
Corri Trotter SM
Circuit Clerk of Grundy County

Garret Wheeler - Att. # 6270818
Wheeler Law Firm, Ltd.
Attorney for Petitioners
305 E. North St.
Morris, IL 60450
815-942-5555
Gwheeler23@hotmail.com

Published in the Coal City Courant, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 18 and 25, 2023.

CCFPD announces 2023 meeting dates

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Coal City Fire Protection District's Board of Trustees will meet on the Third Tuesday of every month at 10:30 a.m. Coal City Fire Protection District's Station #2 Training Room, 1455 S. Berta Rd., Coal City. In the event a meeting time or place should change, a notice will be placed in the Coal City Courant and at the station prior to the changed meeting.

January 17, 2023
February 21, 2023
March 21, 2023
April 18, 2023
May 16, 2023
June 20, 2023
July 18, 2023
August 15, 2023
September 19, 2023
October 17 2023
November 21, 2023
December 19, 2023

Published in the Coal City Courant on Jan. 11, 2023.



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E-mail: News & News Photos: news@fpnusa.com
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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Ann Gill, editor

Drafting the school calendar for next year

Administrative contracts approved

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Progress is being made on the school calendar for the , a process that began in December. The Unit 1 School District is close to establishing the attendance calendar for the 2023-2024 school year.

Administrators and staff from each of the five schools have been fine-tuning the schedule, hoping to lock in the first and last day of school, as well as school breaks, parent-teacher conference dates and early dismissals.

In an update to the Board of Education, Superintendent Chris Spencer said the committee, "had some good conversation," when it met in mid-December. Much of that conversation, he said, centered around parent-teacher conferences.

Specifically trying to figure out what works best for parents/guardians and school staff. "What might work for the younger levels

might not be a great time for the middle and high school, so we have to have a little bit of a compromise," the superintendent said.

The district holds parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring, the sum of one full day and two half days.

Spencer expects the topic will be revisited when the calendar committee reconvenes this week.

The calendar must include a minimum of 185 days to ensure there are 176 days of student attendance.

Spencer noted the final calendar takes into consideration attendance days set by the Grundy Area Vocational Center [GAVC].

"I feel like we are getting close to putting a calendar together for the Board to approve," Spencer said

In other matters from the January Board meeting:

- One year administrative contracts were extended to Kristin Monbrum, human resources representative, \$63,000; Corey Mikula, high school assistant principal, \$83,947.50; Rodney Monbrum, middle school assistant principal, \$83,947.50 and Brad Boresi, dean of students/assistant athletic director, \$80,850.

Three year contracts—fiscal years 2024-2026—were approved with the following salaries for LaWanda Gagliardo, administrative assistant, \$50,883.08, \$52,409.58 and \$53,981.86; Luke Krippel, director of special populations, \$101,000, \$104,030 and \$107,150.90; Jennifer Kenney, director of curriculum and instruction, \$110,853.75, \$114,179.36 and \$117,604.74; Amanda Davidson, early childhood center principal, \$96,000, \$98,880 and \$101,846.40; Tracy Carlson, intermediate school principal, \$99,849.09, \$102,845.09 and \$105,930.44; Taryn Trotter, elementary school principal, \$82,040.39, \$84,501.60 and \$87,036.64 and Denny Wickiser, head of maintenance and buildings and grounds, \$82,000, \$84,460 and \$86,993.80 .

- Board members approved renewing the district's membership in the Three Rivers Education Partnership at a rate of \$650. The organization provides programs that address issues facing education.

- Jason Smith, the district's chief school business official, was re-appointed the Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act officer for 2023.

- A \$7,050.24 donation was accepted from

the Touchdown Club, the amount reflecting the purchase of new alternative jerseys for the varsity football team.

- A second reading was held on revised district policies that will be presented for approval at the Board's meeting in February.

- A brief discussion was held on the seniority ranking for certified and educational support staff. Prior to Feb. 1, the district is required to post the listing that indicated the length of employment of each individual and the areas teachers are certified to teach.

- Kenneth Litchfield and Rylee Bolden were hired as full-time custodians at the high school. Both began their new positions on Jan. 9.

- At the recommendation of athletic director Dan Hutchings, the board approved coaching assignments for Keegan Clampitt, high school fresh/soph softball; Dirk Morris, Adam Rodriguez and Vince Piatak, middle school wrestling, and Trish Scully, high school cheer team volunteer.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 1 with a study session slated for Wednesday, Jan. 25. Both meetings begin at 6 p.m. in the administrative center's boardroom.

Three displaced in Diamond fire

STAFF REPORT

The American Red Cross is assisting a family displaced from a fire that broke out in their Diamond home over the weekend. Coal City Fire Protection District personnel were dispatched to 13 Churchill Drive in the Burt Estates Subdivision around 6:50 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 7 for a residential structure fire.

Deputy Fire Chief Nick Doerfler reports the cause of the fire was determined to be electrical and resulted in \$15,000 in damage.

No injuries were reported.

Firefighters were on the scene for about two hours and assisted by fire and emergency medical service personnel from multiple agencies.

Virtual Baby Valentine Contest

The GFWC-IL Coal City Junior Woman's Club is sponsoring the Baby Valentine 2023 Contest. The contest is open to children from birth to 2 years old. There are prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. This year's contest will be online only.

To enter the Baby Valentine contest, please submit your child's photo by e-mail to Coal City Junior Woman's Club at coalcityjuniors@yahoo.com. Include

parents' name, address, e-mail and phone number along with the baby's name and birth date. Pictures and information must be submitted by Jan. 18, 2023 by 11:59 p.m. No late entries will be accepted.

Online voting will take place from Feb. 1-10, 2023. Voting information will follow at a later date. Information will also be posted on the Coal City Junior Woman's Club Facebook page.

Fourth graders become published poets

Students in Betsy Cowherd's fourth grade class recently entered a national poetry contest and many were chosen to become published poets.

According to Creative Communication, this is not a contest where every entry is published. Rather it highlights the best poems for inclusion in its anthology, *A Celebration of Poets*. In fact, less than 50% of the poems submitted are published.

Cowherd announced this week that 17 of her students had their work published.

The published poets are Steven Breen, Olivia Mierzwa, Kassandra Watters-Lopez, Jackson Pruium, Reagan Jeschke, Grayson Marizza, Addelyn Hines, Jett Johnson, Kylee Looper, Reese Watson, Lilly Connor-Mikos, Jillian Erhard, Jaycob Wilson, Bentley Plotts, Jullian Carver, Collin Ness, and Brayden Brncich.

"The fact that you have numerous students accepted makes a strong statement about your school. The list of your students that have been accepted to be published represents a lot of talent, hard work, and dedication from your teachers and students," Creative



Courtesy photo

SEVENTEEN STUDENTS IN Betsy Cowherd's fourth grade class at Coal City Intermediate School have become published poets. The published writers are Steven Breen, Olivia Mierzwa, Jackson Pruium, Reagan Jeschke, Grayson Marizza, Addelyn Hines, Jett Johnson, Kylee Looper, Reese Watson, Lilly Connor-Mikos, Jillian Erhard, Jaycob Wilson, Bentley Plotts, Jullian Carver, Collin Ness, Brayden Brncich and Kassandra Watters-Lopez [not pictured].

Communication.

In correspondence from the company, Cowherd said that among the thousands of poems judged each year, judges find the single most important factor in creating a

quality poem is the quality of the instruction.

"With excellent teachers come excellent writers, and sometimes over 50% of a class is accepted. Your school stands out and will be recognized in

the anthology as receiving a Writing Achievement Award. This honor is given to the top 10% of the schools who entered the contest," Creative Communication stated.

Fisk honored as Fire Starter of the month

When Sheri Fisk interviewed for a Patient Service Representative position with Morris Hospital in 2019, the hiring manager knew immediately that Fisk would make a great addition to the team. As it turns out, Fisk ended up far exceeding initial impressions. In recognition of the countless ways that she makes a difference for patients and staff, Fisk was selected as Morris Hospital's December 2022 Fire Starter of the Month.

When Fisk started out with Morris Hospital at the Ridge Road Campus, she already had ample healthcare experience, having worked a variety of roles at another area hospital for 27 years. She used her knowledge and experience to dive right in and made such a notable difference that it wasn't long before she transitioned to a new role that involved training new staff.

During that time, Fisk found herself spending quite a bit of time at Morris Hospital's Diamond-Coal Campus, which had only been opened for a short time. A life-long resident of Coal City/Diamond who lives just one block away from the facility, Fisk decided that's where she wanted to be permanently and took a position as Registration/Scheduling Representative where she has continued to shine through her interactions with patients and staff.

"Sheri is an amazing asset to Morris Hospital," said Kathy O'Neill, Practice Manager at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers. "She is professional and has a positive attitude with everyone she interacts with, regardless of the situation. Sheri focuses on excellent service, and the patients are her priority. She talks to them like family, makes them feel

important, and makes sure things are taken care of correctly. To me, she just really exemplifies the standards of conduct."

For Fisk, everything that O'Neill describes comes easily. "I know what it's like on the other side after going through so much with my husband and his doctors' appointments. I always found it comforting when we came across somebody nice who tried to guide us through," says Fisk. "With our patients, I look at it from the perspective that if that was my family, I would want someone to take good care of me."

"Plus, I really like to help people," Fisk adds. "A lot of patients coming in for outpatient testing are really nervous, and it feels good when I can help put them at ease. Sometimes patients turn to me because I'm a familiar face in the community."

Along with all that she does for patients, Fisk is an incredible resource for the team at the Diamond-Coal City Campus. O'Neill said that whenever she asks the staff if there's anyone they want to recognize, Fisk's name is always mentioned.

"Sheri is so down-to-earth and easy to talk to," said O'Neill. "She's the first to offer help or share her knowledge to assist her coworkers. And she does it in such a way that it



SHERI FISK

makes a pleasant learning experience for her peers.

Fisk's only regret is that she wishes she made the move to Morris Hospital sooner.

"There's something about Morris Hospital that's different - it's a happy place. And the teamwork here is amazing. The people I work with who are in my same role are like sisters to me. We're a close family here."

Student enrollment at Coal City schools increasing

STAFF REPORT

Student enrollment in the Unit 1 School District increased by 1.6% in the first semester of the academic year.

According to enrollment numbers provided by the district's building principals at the end of December total enrollment grew by 34 students from a first day enrollment of 2,121.


Enrollment numbers fluctuate throughout the school year with students moving in and out of district.

At the end of December student enrollment was recorded at 2,155 students with 488 enrolled at the early childhood center, 286 at the elementary school and 296 attending the intermediate school. First day enrollments at those buildings were 398, 283 and 296, respectively.

The middle school began the year with an enrollment of 502 students and completed the first half of the year with 492 students. At the high school enrollment went from 642 on the first day to 633 as of Dec. 29.

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"Support Coal City High School Athletes"

CCIS to host bingo

The public is invited to participate in Coal City Intermediate School's community bingo scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 22 from 1-4 p.m. in the school cafeteria.

Bingo cards will be sold for 25¢ each or five for \$1. The event is open to all ages. Hot chocolate for all at no charge. Water, chips and candy will be available for purchase.

All proceeds from the annual winter event will support the school's Muffins with Me and Donuts with Grownups events slated for this spring.

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Just trying to survive

WILMINGTON—Has anyone ever seen a deer with three arrows stuck in its side, still trying to survive after a human, with their belly full, went out for a joy hunt with the family on an unarmed creature, who is, truly just trying to survive off the land? Man!

Million\$ spent

DIAMOND—U.S. tax payers foot \$324 million annual health care bill for illegal aliens. Sharon

Misusing the word

WILMINGTON— OK Dan here we go again. Get a dictionary and look up Communism because you continue to misuse the word. For your information it is legal to be a Communist and there is a Communist party in America. Democrats have their own party and it is not Communist. The problem here is you use the word as a pejorative to insult people who don't agree with your views. I don't agree with any of your positions that wreak of racist and fascism but I'm not going so low as to call you names. Get your facts together before you open your mouth again comrade.

Revival in faith

Our nation needs a revival in faith. We know the recipe. God gives it to us in 2nd Chronicles 7:14. "If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my faith and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Cause of it all

WILMINGTON—After watching the debacle of Republicans choosing a leader can we all agree it is not the Democrats causing congressional gridlock?

Destroying America

DIAMOND—If you really wanted to destroy the U.S. then... First, surrender energy independence. Kill the Keystone Pipeline. Make war on coal and nuclear power. Drain strategic oil reserves. Demonize frackers and horizontal drillers. Declare internal combustion engines and fossil fuel generations dangerous to the environment. Second, print trillions of dollars new currency. Keep all interests low. Inflate prices to a 40-year high. Spread the wealth, pay workers to become unemployed. Damn the rich in open but court them in secret. Third, end America's physical boundaries. End all differences between citizen and resident. Allow 3 million illegal aliens per year. Destroy public trust in elections. Render election day irrelevant. Normalize ballot harvesting and curing. Make auditing 110 million early votes impossible. Urge leftist billionaires to infuse riches to media to insure correct turnout. Blast anyone who disagrees with final counts as insurrectionists, deniers, Democracy destroyers. Fifth, redefine crime. One is rich man's crime but poor man's necessity. Let those in need exercise free entitlement. Exempt oppressed to take as atonement to racism. Sixth, encourage each tribe, race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation to ban and oppose white privilege. Green light statue toppling, vandalizing, cancel culturing, ostracizing and Trotsky rising. Erase the past but control the present. Seventh, render U.S. just one nation abroad. Leave behind thousands of Afghanistan allies. Abandon some military to certain death. Leave billions of dollars of equipment. Leave a billion dollar embassy. Abandon largest air base in Central Asia. Re-enter Iran nuclear deal. Trash then beg Saudi Arabia to pump more oil. Eighth, Looter first amendment. Enlist Silicon Valley monopolies to silence free speech. Use Big tech mega profits to warp elections. Declare free expression as hate speech, Criminalize contrayion social media. Ninth, Demonize half the country as semi fascist, insurrectionists and potential domestic terrorists. Change inconvenient ancient rules. Seek to pack the court. End the Filibuster. Bring in two more states. Twice impeach a president who stood in the way. Tried President Amiridis just as a private citizen, raid his home, seek to indict a future rival to Biden. Ten, Never mention origins of CCP Covid-19 virus. Never blame China for release of CCP Covid virus. Exempt investigations of U.S. health officials who subsidized Chinese gain oppression research. Ignore Bill of Rights/mandate vaccinations, masking and quarantine. Our present government has done all ten of these. It would be difficult to imagine any planned agenda to be anymore injurious to America and it's people than what we have already endured the last two years. Sharon

Crisis at the border

COAL CITY—I read Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers can't locate records of 378,000 illegal immigrants from Alternatives to Detention program. In November alone there were 283,740 illegal migrant encounters across the southern borders reported by U.S. Customs and Border pro-

tection. Report released Dec. 24 it's a crisis! Now Chicago Mayor Lightfoot wants millions of dollars to care for 1,500 illegals. Mayor of New York received \$9 million so far to care for illegals shipped there.

Social Security increase

COAL CITY—If you received an increase in your Social Security check don't credit President Biden, it was a written law stating an increase was due for cost of living for those on Social Security long ago. Eight million new claims were filed for benefits last year, 59 percent were for retirement benefits, 31 percent were for survivor benefits and 10 percent were for disability benefits. Three million children get Social Security benefits, about \$1.3 million get survivor benefits from a deceased father or mother's Social Security record. Another one million are minor children of some one getting Social Security disability benefits. The remainder are children of retirees. More than \$1 trillion was in the S.S. program revenues last year. Ninety percent came from payroll taxes.

What a shame

COAL CITY—In Dec. 2022 all Confederate statues building signs street signs etc. were removed from West Point Academy in New York. Robert E. Lee graduated from West Point. More U.S. history put in garbage.

To get their way

WILMINGTON—After watching the four day Speaker of the House election on C-SPAN (Fox News was too busy talking about the college murders and border concerns), I learned that the House Republicans want to cut Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security now that McCarthy is Speaker. They also hint at a government shutdown if they don't get their way. If that happens, Congress should pass legislation that states that members of Congress cannot collect their salaries while any shutdown is in effect. I also noticed that these four days showed that the minority truly rules.

Looks trashy

BRAIDWOOD—There has been a bicycle with a bunch of junk attached to it chained up to the Rt. 66 Park pavilion next to the "Zoo" in Braidwood for over 3 months now. When is the city of Braidwood or the Braidwood Police Department going to remove it? There's absolutely no way that they haven't seen it. Talk about making our town look trashy, or is that what our city council wants for the look of our community?

Trash talk

BRAIDWOOD— The city of Braidwood administration has once again kept the residents in the dark about the new waste service contract. There is lots of speculation going around about how much the cost is going to go up over the life of the contract. How about the city put the entire document on their Facebook page or website for the public to read it. They probably won't because they want to see who is looking at their information and know who to target if the information gets leaked out. They said they stuck it on a countertop in the hallway of city hall, but did they make any public notice to the residents that it was available for viewing? The answer is no. Talk with a few other communities who use this new company and find out what they think about them.

Town is thriving

BRAIDWOOD—You are going to see a lot of fictional negative posts and mailings about this administration because that is all the old administration has to run on in the next election. How can saving citizens \$100,000 for the new garbage disposal contract and bringing in three new car dealerships be bad for Braidwood? This administration has cut frivolous spending and increased revenue, while improving the image of Braidwood. This town is thriving. Please do your research. Don't believe the negative soundoffs. You can tell when reading them it's obvious that it's always the same author.

The next meeting

COAL CITY—In regards to the upcoming Coal City Area Club meeting on Jan. 18th, I encourage as many as possible members to attend. I have heard dues are being raised on members. Also, an substantial increase on dues being paid by senior citizens. I also heard senior citizens are not permitted to join as new members. I'd love to see their upcoming meeting agenda published in the Coal City Courier, front page! I know they are a private club and they can make their own rules, however, the members deserve better. Maybe a better alternative would be to vote the present Board out and start over.

Three-day siege

BRAIDWOOD—There are a few who write into soundoff that white males get favorable treatable consideration. Fortunately "The Week" magazine free offer showed me a comparable thing to what it and people are currently saying about the Jan. 6 insurrection of the capital that blacks would not get. "Whoa." Early 1977 "Black Muslims" took control of three Washington DC buildings, killed a reporter, held 150 people hostage and shot Marion



Barry, a future mayor of DC. My being an old man of 76 years, I don't recall it. I do recall the nation of Islam movement. Oh, it was a three-day siege. Check "The Week," Dec. 23, 2022 page 20.

All for votes

SHADOW LAKES—I know Dan Hill can be a little extreme at times but he was spot on about LBJ and the New Frontier. It was the start of the welfare system that is still used to get votes almost 60 years later. It gave us fatherless families that led us into crime, gangs and drug addicts. This was all done to get votes and we will never recover.

Eddie

Praying for St. Rose

WILMINGTON—I feel very bad for the parishioners of St. Rose Parish and the fact that the Joliet Diocese has started to renew my church program. I know people whose parishes were in the Chicago Archdiocese and went through the renew my church program and had their church close and worked with another parish. It's a very long and drawn out process. They hold meetings and basically dangle a carrot in front of your nose. You walk out of the meeting knowing as much as you did when you walked in, absolutely nothing. They take many things into account, the size of the church building, how many people the sanctuary can hold, how much the church is in debt and how much the church takes in so basically the bottom line is it's all about the money. I know St. Rose is struggling financially. They are not meeting their weekly offering goal so this is something the diocese will definitely take into account, a fact my friends who have gone through it have talked about with their parishes. So I pray for the people of St. Rose and asking God to intervene won't do any good. It's going to be up to the Joliet Diocese so I wish you the best of luck in this very long and drawn out process.

Speaker promises

WILMINGTON—I hope you Republicans know that whatever McCarthy promised those right wing know-nothing extremists you are going to pay for it. He is literally playing with House money. So much for winning hearts and minds.

Lawmaker pay raise

COAL CITY—It disgusts me what the lame duck Illinois Democrats did. They gave themselves a \$12,000 pay boosts on the eve of a new session. What a sham for taxpayers. The Democrats mapped out the state so they could keep the majority going and then gave themselves a pay raise. Just another case of politicians taking care of themselves before taking care of the middle class working men and women.

Better things

COAL CITY—Surely, there are more important things we need in our school than turf for the football field. Keep the focus on education, not frivolous things. There are a lot of things that I would like to have but my good old common sense tells me that I must live within my means. If the school district has that much to spend, give it back to the taxpayers instead.

Investigating Hunter

WILMINGTON—Apparently investigating Hunter Biden is going to lower inflation and high prices and fix the border. Penny Lane

That's on them

WILMINGTON—Republicans can't blame Democrats for the Speaker fiasco. They let an angry 10% take their party hostage. That's on them. Had they really wanted to elect the first black speaker they could have voted for Jeffries.

Close the border

MORRIS—So I see where Mayor Lightfoot in Chicago demands that Colorado stops busing immigrants to the city. While first they are illegal immigrants, anybody can claim asylum in the state of Illinois and Chicago as a sanctu-

ary city and state. They want them here so what is she complaining about? She should tell her big boss in Washington DC, our illustrious President Biden, to close the border, put up a wall and stop that. He hasn't even been down to the border. He was going down to the border Sunday but it's a big joke. Biden and Harris are the worst president and vice president of the United States. Lightfoot and Pritzker want these immigrants so let them stay at their houses.

Twisted words

WILMINGTON—It is very sad what is happening with the Historical Society. I'm sure that the people who worked many years ago to get this project started are rolling over in their graves. The problems are stemming from two people on the board, the president and the treasurer. In a soundoff on Jan. 4 someone made a comment that someone was put on the board and has never attended any of the meetings. There was a person who was chosen to be a trustee and a few months ago that person had the president read a letter at a meeting which I attended stating that because of health issues they felt they could not give the time needed to serve as a trustee so they were resigning from the board. The president twisted the words around and said that they resigned as a member. The following month at a meeting I also attended this person had the vice president read a letter stating that under no circumstances were they quitting the museum as a member. They were only resigning from the board. The secretary said this person deserves an apology. The president said nothing. In the past the former president always had the secretary send the members e-mail reminders of meetings and also the agenda and when we came to the meetings on the table were the agenda, the minutes from the previous meeting that we would approve or amend if necessary and a financial report from the treasurer. When we attend meetings now there is absolutely no information available and when you ask the president he ways says if you want an agenda, attend the meeting. So this is where the problems with the Historical Society are coming from. I hope that the president will resign.

Elvis event rocked

WILMINGTON—I would like to thank Maria, our librarian, and her staff for showing the movie "Elvis" on Friday, Jan. 6. It was a very nice afternoon. When the movie played here in town unfortunately I got sick and had to leave the theater and missed over half of the movie and never got a chance to go back and see it so it was really nice to see it on Friday. A friend of mine from where I used to live came down and saw the movie as well and I had my first peanut butter and fried banana sandwich and I could see why that was Elvis's favorite snack. Thanks again for a wonderful afternoon. I know everyone who was there truly enjoyed the movie. If that young man doesn't win an Oscar for best actor there is definitely something wrong in Hollywood.

Calling them out

COAL CITY—I know it's political posturing but thank you State Senator Sue Rezin (R-Morris) for calling out lawmakers after they passed a supplemental spending bill, Senate Bill 1720, which contains a pay increase for Illinois legislators and gives the Governor \$400 million for a so-called "business closing fund" with little oversight. Resin said, "This supplemental spending bill is appallingly irresponsible. Not only does this bill give legislators a \$12,000 salary increase after they already voted to increase their salaries this spring, but it also gives the Governor nearly half a billion dollars to use with little oversight on how he chooses to use it. Far too many people in our state are struggling to keep up with the staggering increase of the cost of living for us to be giving ourselves a raise and the Governor hundreds of millions of dollars for his pet projects." I hope more people pay attention to where this money is going to be spent.

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A cocktail recipe for "Dry January"

Welcome to the 2023 installment of "Dry January", a month-long break from consuming alcoholic beverages. On average, one in seven Americans will take part in the trend that began as a public health campaign in the United Kingdom in 2012.

Dry January brings great opportunities to test your willpower and brush up on your non-alcoholic "mocktail" game. There's a mocktail that I look forward to in Dry January, and it's the classic Southampton.

As limiting as Dry January may sound, you have some delicious options. Non-alcoholic versions of the Daiquiri, Mojito, Pina Colada, and Margarita are delicious, though they are probably not part of the diets that many of us are trying to start the New Year.

Back to my all-time favorite mocktail. I assume that the drink originated in Southampton, but don't know for sure. Very little is known about the origin of the Southampton yet the drink is served all over the world. How did the world learn of this amazing mocktail?

The answer is on a bottle that can be found in nearly every bar on the planet, the

iconic Angostura Bitters bottle.

I read labels. Perhaps it started when I was a kid reading cereal box labels at breakfast. A few years ago I was enjoying a Manhattan when I noticed that there were several recipes printed at the bottom of the Angostura Bitters bottle in very fine print. There was a Daiquiri, a Manhattan, and this non-alcoholic drink called the "Southampton".

The Southampton recipe was simple: tonic water, lime juice, and a few dashes of Angostura Bitters. I figured that I would give it a shot as I had all of the ingredients handy.

It was love at first sip. The Southampton instantly became my favorite mocktail. It's crisp, refreshing, and satisfying to drink.

The non-alcoholic options at most bars are usually limited to flat Coca Cola or Sprite from a soda gun that is badly in need of calibration.

The Southampton gives designated drivers and those abstaining from alcohol the opportunity to enjoy a deli-



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

cious drink to enjoy with their friends.

Do you have a bottle of Angostura Bitters? Add one to your home bar immediately if you do not. You don't even have to make a trip to the liquor store to pick up a bottle, most grocery stores carry Angostura Bitters.

These "bitters" are not actually bitter, they are a mix of herbs and spices that can be added to everything from an Old Fashioned to pumpkin pie. There are even claims of medicinal properties for the legendary aromatic bitters.

It's difficult to describe the taste of Angostura Aromatic Bitters, but it's unmistakable and you wouldn't have much of an Old Fashioned without the proprietary blend of herbs and spices.

Let's celebrate Dry January with our very own Southampton.

Start with a glass, preferably a tall glass. Fill that glass with ice.

Next, squeeze in some fresh lime juice. How much? That's up to you. I would say no less than a wedge, no more

than half a lime. It all depends how high your sour tolerance is.

Next, fill the glass to nearly full with tonic water. Make sure it's fresh tonic water, not "flat" tonic water leftover from Thanksgiving dinner. If you haven't tried Fever Tree tonic water, pick up a bottle and give it a shot. Canada Dry and Schweppe are also great, whatever you have in your bar so long as it's fresh.

Add three dashes of your Angostura Bitters, stir, and serve. A "dash" is not an exact science, 3 dashes from one bottle may be 4 dashes from another. Either way, the deep reddish bitters should leave your drink with a slight pink hue.

Give this one a shot even if you're not celebrating Dry January. Odds are you'll like it. Here's to trying new things in 2023!

The Southampton is built and served in a Collins (tall) glass.

Fill glass with ice
Squeeze in 1 lime wedge
Fill glass with tonic water
Add 3 dashes Angostura Bitters

Stir and serve
Garnish with lime wheel
Until next week, enjoy responsibly.



HIKE TO SEE bald eagles gathered along the Des Plaines River during the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Eagle Watch on Saturday, Jan. 14, at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon. Live bird shows featuring an eagle and owls will be presented inside the facility.

Eagle Watch planned this Saturday at Four Rivers Center

The Forest Preserve District of Will County's annual Eagle Watch will feature many ways to celebrate a species that was once on the verge of extinction but is now thriving.

The free event is set for 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, located at 25055 W. Walnut Lane in Channahon.

Hike the trails to see bald eagles fishing and hunting for waterfowl on the open waters of the Des Plaines River.

Warm up inside Four Rivers by a crackling fire and view eagles from afar with a spotting scope manned by a bird expert. Or meet Victor E., a bald eagle that will be part of live indoor raptor presentations.

Forest Preserve staff have their fingers crossed for frigid weather because the colder the temperatures, the more likely eagles will gather around the open waters of the Des Plaines River near Four Rivers.

And when they do gather, it's a wonderful sight to see these massive birds soaring around the Four Rivers area, said Jess McQuown, a Forest Preserve program coordinator.

"They're one of the few birds that can coast in the air," she said. "And they're so distinct because they're big and they're ferocious predators. They dive and catch fish with their feet and watching it is pretty magical. It's like watching an adventure movie."

If the weather is warmer, "You're guaranteed to see an eagle one way or another because of the bird presentations," McQuown added.

Eagle Watch activities
Victor E., the bald eagle, and four owls will be part of

the bird presentations offered by Milton, Wis.-based Hoo's Woods Raptor Center. Two 45-minute bird presentations will take place at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. A 20-minute "meet and greet" is set for 12:30 p.m. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

In addition to the bird presentations, Eagle Watch attendees can join 40-minute guided hikes to search for and learn about eagles at 11:50 a.m., 12:55 p.m. and 2:20 p.m. Or they can hike the McKinley Woods site on their own.

Also, three 15-minute Talon Talks will be offered. The times and topics are: noon, Eagles of the World; 1 p.m., Eagle Eyes and Other Awesome Adaptations; 2:30 p.m., Comeback Kid - The Bald Eagle's Road to Recovery.

Other activities include family crafts, an Eagle Eye Scavenger Hunt and food available for purchase from Lil' Deb's Mobile Eats.

Bald eagles have rebounded from a low of around 400 breeding pairs in the early 1960s to an estimated 316,000 today in the lower 48 states, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

And the Illinois Department of Natural Resources states that Illinois hosts more wintering bald eagles than any other state outside of Alaska. There are an estimated 3,100 eagles wintering in 27 Illinois counties each year.

Eagle Watch is supported by funding from Alliance Pipeline, a joint venture of Enbridge and Pembina, and through the assistance of The Nature Foundation of Will County. This is an inclusive program, welcoming individuals of all abilities.

Ag industry producing more with fewer workers

BY TIMOTHY EGGERT
FARMWEEK

Agriculture remains a top employer in rural parts of the U.S. but who worked in the industry has changed during the past three years, according to new data released by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS).

In its annual report, "Rural America at a Glance," ERS found overall population growth in rural or "nonmetro" areas "took a dramatic upswing" between July 2020 and July 2021 when it increased 0.3% to 46.1 million total residents.

It marked the first time since the mid-1990s that nonmetro areas grew at a faster rate than metro areas and was largely because of the coronavirus pandemic, according to the report.

Specifically, as COVID-19 infection rates increased, more people moved into less densely populated areas at a faster rate than those who were leaving them.

But despite those positive shifts, rural America is becoming older, with people 65 years and older making up more than 20% of the nonmetro population in 2021 — the first time in history. The size of the working-age population also declined in 2021, with 58% of rural residents aged 18 to 54.

"Declines in the working-age population may make it harder to meet labor demands in some rural industries and local labor markets," the report's authors noted. "At the same time, many rural areas lack sufficient health care capacity, broadband service, community centers and other services to address the challenges associated with an aging population."

While data for 2021 wasn't

available, the report found that as of 2019, the strongest rural job gains came in the real estate, administrative services, education, professional services, health care/social assistance and finance/insurance industries.

And in 2019, the four industries in rural America with the highest employment were government, manufacturing, retail and health care/social assistance.

Those industries dovetail with the next highest employed industry — agriculture — as "families on small- to mid-sized farms often depend on nonagricultural jobs in their local economies as off-farm sources of income," the report noted.

Here are three other ways the report found the rural ag industry has changed:

Top rural industry
Agriculture remains a primary source of employment for rural America, as 7% of all nonmetro jobs in 2019 were related to the industry, compared to 1.1% of all metro jobs.

The report said that disparity in employment can largely be attributed to comparative advantages, like the availability of resources and land costs.

Rural ag becoming more diverse

The rural ag industry continues to feature more white workers than workers of color, but the share of minorities employed in the field has improved, the report found.

As of 2019, Hispanic workers performed 14.4% of rural jobs in agriculture, while 2.4% of the rural ag workers were Black. American Indian and Asian workers each made up less than 2% of rural ag jobs.

Jobs down, productivity up

While ag still accounts for a higher share of rural jobs compared to other industries, the total number of jobs in agriculture has gone down, according to the report.

Specifically, the total number of rural ag jobs in 2020 was about 89% of the total number that were available in 2001. That long-term decline in industry jobs, however, has aligned with a long-term rise in agricultural productivity.

Since 2012, the labor productivity, or output per worker, and the total output, or gross domestic product, of the ag industry have both increased by at least 50%. And both measures have nearly doubled since their 2001 levels.

"Due to advances in technology and capital deepening, the rural agricultural industry has thrived," ERS economist and report co-author James Davis said during a webinar about the report. "This industry produces a lot more with the same or fewer workers."

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

Dropoff string lights, electronics Jan. 12

Will County's free electronics drop-off event will be held Thursday, Jan. 12, from 5-7 p.m. at the Wilmington City Hall parking lot, 1165 S. Water St.

Holiday string lights that are no longer working may be dropped off for recycling. This is for string lights only, no stand alone LEDs, CFLs or other fluorescent lights.

Participants are reminded to remain in their vehicles at all times, show ID by holding it to the window for staff

to see and then allow staff to remove items without assistance from each vehicle.

Items accepted include: Televisions (limit 2), monitors, printers, computers (desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets), electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players, DVD players, DVD recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable

receivers, satellite receivers, cell phones, computer cable, portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

Electronic items contain materials that can be recycled countless times while other materials in items are considered hazardous.

The recycling takes place in Wilmington the second Thursday of each month. An ID showing Will County residency may be required.

Gas prices rise second straight week

Area gas prices stayed below the statewide average despite a 13.9 cents per gallon increase in the last week.

The average price on Monday was \$3.38/g according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois. Prices in Illinois are 8.2 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 5.4 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$2.59/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$4.99/g.

Locally, Braidwood stations were charging \$3.17/g Monday while in Wilmington the price ranged from \$3.19 to \$3.28/g. Coal City stations were at \$3.29/g, Monday while in Morris, Joliet and Bourbonnais the lowest price found was \$3.19/g.

"Last week, the rise in gasoline prices continued, still due to previous refinery outages caused by the cold weather the week of

Christmas. However, I'm optimistic that as refiners get back online, we could see the increases slow down as we head into the time of year when gasoline demand is at its weakest," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

The national average price of diesel has fallen 2.1 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.64 per gallon, according to GasBuddy price reports. "While gasoline prices have rallied, average diesel prices continue to drift lower, which certainly bodes well for the overall economy. As long as refiners are able to get back online soon from previous cold-weather outages, we could see supply start to recover at the same time demand is weak, which could bring gas prices down again. The window of opportunity, however, is shrinking, and by late February or early March, we'll likely kick off the seasonal rise in gasoline prices."

Go green: Switch to cloth towels

Paper towels are viewed as convenient and clean but cloth towels can be just as handy, and as clean when washed; while also being far more economical.

Annual spending on paper towels is around \$24 per household but by switching to

cloth towels you would get by with \$21 in a decade.

Paper towels are usually made from trees and often are not as absorbent as cloth, resulting in more being needed for a clean up. Most brands are not made with recycled content and go to the landfill.

Cloth dishtowels, many made from cotton, can be recycled with textiles after being used for 10 to 30 years! Be sure to have at least 7 so you can toss one in the laundry each day. They make excellent gifts

Essex Township Request for Proposal for Cemetery Mowing and Trimming

Essex Township is requesting proposals for cemetery mowing services at the two township cemeteries for the period April 1, 2023-March 31, 2024. The two properties total 4.5 acres combined.

Please supply quote on a per-time basis to include mowing, trimming, small debris cleanup, and blowing clippings off markers/monuments. All services will be done on an as-needed basis, not to exceed 3 times per month. Also supply quote for spring and fall cleanup as well as outlining any additional costs or fees. Provider must include proof of liability insurance with proposal.

Quotes due no later than January 30, 2022

Mail quotes to:
Essex Township Supervisor
PO Box 309, Essex, IL 60935
For any questions call: 815-351-3554 or email: supervisor@essextownship-il.org

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Final voting begins for photo contest

It's time to vote for your favorite pictures in the Forest Preserve District of Will County's 2022 Preserve the Moment Photo Contest now that December's winner has been chosen.

The contest began in May and all eight monthly winners will now vie for overall contest honors via voting by members of the public on the Forest Preserve's Facebook page, Facebook.com/WillCoForests.

Voting will begin at noon Tuesday, Jan. 10, and end at 11:59 a.m. Friday, Jan. 13. Once all the votes are tallied, winners will receive gift cards of \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place and \$150 for third place.

Three contest participants chosen at random will receive \$75 gift cards. Monthly winners received \$75 gift cards. All prizes are funded by The Nature Foundation of Will County, willcountynature.org.

December winner
Chad Morsch of Romeoville won the month of December by snapping a shot of a fox squirrel at McKinley Woods in Channahon.

Morsch said he was walk-



Courtesy photo by: Chad Morsch

THIS SQUIRREL SHOT snapped at McKinley Woods in Channahon won Romeoville resident Chad Morsch the month of December in the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Preserve the Moment Photo Contest. Voting for the overall 2022 contest winners begins at noon Tuesday, Jan. 10, on Facebook.com/WillCoForests.

ing back to his car when he saw the squirrel enjoying a meal of smashed hedge apple from an Osage-orange tree. Judges selected the top five photos from submissions in December, and members of the public chose the squirrel shot as the best photo of the

month via Facebook voting. "The squirrel was so pre-occupied with its meal that it allowed me to get relatively close," Morsch said in an email after being notified of his win. "It was quite amusing watching it try to dissect the hedge apple into small enough

pieces it could hold on to. I spent several minutes watching it eat and took several shots. When it was finished it simply ran back to the grass and we both went our way. The squirrel had a full belly, and I had some nice photos."

The other December finalists were:

Jennifer Mathews of Joliet for her shot of a curved wooden boardwalk and water illuminated by the sun at Rock Run Rookery Preserve.

Greg Winkelmann of Romeoville for a yellow warbler with its wings stretched out in flight at McKinley Woods and also for a ring-billed gull snaring a fish in the water at Rock Run Rookery.

Thomas Hahn of Mokena for clouds reflected in the water at Hickory Creek Preserve.

To see all photo entries for the 2022 contest, visit the Forest Preserve's Flickr account, Flickr.com/WillCoForests.

For more information on the Forest Preserve District of Will County, visit ReconnectWithNature.org.

Circle jam on Saturday

There will be a circle jam Saturday (the second Saturday of the month), from 5 to 8 p.m. in the hall under the water tower at the Godley Park District, 500 S. Kankakee Street, Godley.

Bring your instrument and play, sing or just enjoy. The free event is open to

everyone including musicians and listeners. Donations will be accepted.

Circle jams are social hours featuring a mix of music from classic country to bluegrass and more. For more information call Randy Kiefling at 815-237-8139.

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Pritzker signs bill giving state pay raises

BY JERRY NOWICKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – Officials at the highest levels of state government will receive substantial pay raises this month after the House and Senate passed a budget bill that also advances a \$400 million business incentive fund proposal pushed by Gov. JB Pritzker.

Under the bill, lawmaker salaries will increase to \$85,000 annually, up from approximately \$73,000 – a roughly 16 percent increase to their base salary. Lawmakers also receive per diem reimbursements and stipends for leadership positions. Additionally, the measure adds new leadership positions within any caucus that maintains a supermajority – which Democrats currently do – that are eligible for stipends.

The state's constitutional officers are also slated to receive raises, which created a frantic timeline for lawmakers in the

General Assembly to send the bill to the governor to sign before 11:30 a.m. Monday, when those officers are scheduled to be sworn in to their new terms.

Shortly after the measure was filed Friday night, Democrats pushed the measure through the Illinois House over Republican objections. It received a Senate committee hearing late Sunday afternoon before being approved by the full chamber later in the evening. Pritzker signed it Monday hours before the new statewide officers were sworn in at a Springfield convention center.

Under the pay schedules outlined in the bill, salaries of the lieutenant governor, comptroller and treasurer will increase from \$143,400 to \$160,900; and the attorney general's and secretary of state's from \$165,400 to \$183,300.

The governor's pay would increase to \$205,700 from \$181,670, although Pritzker, who has a net worth exceeding \$3 billion, does not take a salary.

Top state agency directors and some of their deputies will also receive raises. That includes a salary of at least \$200,000 for Department of Children and Family Services director Marc Smith, up from \$182,300.

Several other agency heads, including that of the Department of Corrections (to \$200,000), Department of Agriculture (to \$180,000) and the Department on Aging (to \$165,000), will also see raises. The raises generally range from 10 to 15%, and the governor will have the authority to up those salaries under the measure.

Senator Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, faulted the measure for including the automatic raises, calling it "bad policy." He noted that lawmakers already effectively received a 2.4% pay bump in July, as Democrats declined to negate the automatic cost-of-living increase laid out by state law.

Illinois lawmakers agree on assault weapons bill

Bill clears Senate, awaits House action on final day of lame duck session

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – Negotiators in the Illinois House and Senate have reached agreement on a bill to ban the purchase, sale and manufacture of semi-automatic assault weapons and large-capacity magazines while still allowing people who already own such weapons to keep them.

On Sunday, the House and Senate seemed to be far apart, both on the weapons ban and a bill expanding access to reproductive health services, two of the biggest items being considered in a lame duck session that was to conclude Tuesday.

But by Monday night, House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch, D-Hillside, Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, announced that they were all in agreement on a final proposal.

One of the key sticking points concerned a requirement that people currently owning such weapons register them with the Illinois State Police. Those individuals

would be required to disclose the make, model and serial number of the specified weapons to obtain a special endorsement on their Firearm Owners Identification, or FOID card. The House had included that in the bill it passed shortly after midnight Friday morning, but an early draft of a Senate plan reportedly proposed dropping it.

The final version of the bill, contained in a package of amendments to House Bill 5471, includes the requirement but extends the deadline for compliance to Jan. 1, 2024, instead of 180 days after the governor signs the bill into law, as the House had proposed.

The Senate bill also clarifies that any device that makes a semi-automatic weapon fire more rapidly – whether it converts the weapon into a fully automatic one or merely increases the rate of fire – will be illegal. And it defines large-capacity magazines as those capable of holding more than 10 rounds for a long gun or 15 rounds for a handgun.

The Senate version also does not change the age limit to obtain a FOID card, meaning people between the ages of 18 and 21 will still be able to obtain one with the consent of a parent or guardian. The House had proposed eliminating that exception.

In an effort to ease concerns of hunters and sports-

men, the bill also contains a provision authorizing the Department of Natural Resources to adopt administrative rules exempting weapons used only for hunting that are expressly permitted under the Illinois Wildlife Code.

That, however, was not enough to quell the opposition of gun rights advocates who argued that the weapons to be banned are "commonly used" weapons in American society and thus, under standards of recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings, will likely be deemed unconstitutional.

"I think folks at home need to know, and folks here in the chamber, that many of the commonly used semi-automatic shotguns will still have to be registered as assault weapons," Senator Terri Bryant, R-Murphysboro, said during debate on the floor of the Senate. "So even though some may come off, we're still going to have many commonly used shotguns that will be listed as assault weapons."

The bill passed the Senate, 34-20, and was sent to the House, which is expected to vote on whether to concur with the Senate changes.

The outcome of that vote, however, seemed a foregone conclusion when Harmon, Welch and Pritzker issued a joint statement Monday evening praising the bill's passage.

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OBITUARIES

Warren B. Brown

 CREST HILL—Warren B. Brown, 87, of Crest Hill and formerly Coal City, passed from this life on Monday, Dec. 26, 2022 at Ascension St. Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.

He was born July 21, 1935 to the late Edith (Wharrie) and Norman Brown in Coal City where he was raised and educated. He was a United States Navy Veteran who was honorably discharged in December of 1957 after completing his final assignment at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Oakland, CA. This assignment led to his employment with Metropolitan Life Insurance working out of the Chicago, London, Kansas City and San Francisco Office. He was the Manager of Auditing out of the San Francisco office for the majority of his career.

His last years were spent at Rock Run Assisted Living in Joliet. He received excellent



care and made many friends with the staff, nurses and residents.

Warren is survived by his niece, Janet Brown; two nephews, Norman (late Beth) Brown and Richard (Joey) Brown and two stepsisters, Judy (Richard) Kreiter and Joyce (Robert) Zanello.

He is preceded in death by his parents, one sister, Marilyn (late Leroy) Brown; one brother, Norman (late Mary) Brown and one stepsister, JoAnne (Tony) Danosky.

As it was Warren's wish, cremation rites have been accorded and there will be no services.

For more information visit his Memorial Tribute at www.fredcdames.com to share a favorite memory or leave a condolence.

Fred C. Dames Funeral Home and Crematory was entrusted with arrangements.

Charles Brian Smith

CHICAGO—Charles Brian Smith, 58, of Chicago, and formerly of Wilmington, passed away Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 at Ascension St. Francis Hospital in Evanston, IL.

Born July 2, 1964 in Evergreen Park, IL, Charles Brian was a son of William Thomas and Ida Lucy (Campana) Smith.

Raised and educated in Wilmington, Charles was a 1978 graduate of St. Rose School, and a 1982 graduate of Joliet Catholic High School.

Survivors include his two brothers, Tony Smith, of Chicago and Tom (Gretchen) Smith, of Tampa, FL and formerly of Wilmington, and one nephew, Matthew Smith, of Tampa.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Bill and Ida Smith, and his sister-in-law, Sandra



Toussaint Smith.

Cremation rites have been accorded, and the family gathered for a graveside service on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023 in Mt. Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wilmington, where he will be laid to rest with his parents. Rev. Sebastian Gargol from St. Rose Parish presided.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Charles memory to Kuzma Care Cottage, 635 S. Main Street, Wilmington, IL 60481.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Charles memorial page online.

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

David Huston

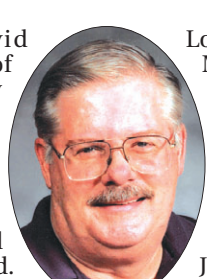
 WILMINGTON—David "Butch" Huston, 78, of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023 at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee.

Born Feb. 5, 1944 in Peoria, David was the son of John and Clara (nee Walker) Huston. He was raised and educated in Wilmington and Braidwood. David served in the United States Army with an honorable discharge in 1970. On March 6, 1971, he married Bonnie Jean Blazer in Decatur, IL, and together they would make their home and raise their family in Wilmington.

David served First Baptist Church in Wilmington as a deacon and trustee. Later he served Island City Baptist Church in Wilmington on their Benevolence committee and as a Deacon Emeritus. He worked for the Wilmington 209-U School District for over 20 years as a custodian and also provided custodial services for the Presbyterian Church. Other employers included Caterpillar, Uniroyal, and PCI. David was an avid reader, die hard Chicago White Sox fan, and he especially enjoyed Celtic music along with Bonnie's piano music.

He was a bit of an agitator, but he had a gentle nature and a truly sweet heart. David was a proud family man who loved his family immensely. He was a devoted father to his two sons who he loved unconditionally. He cherished his grandchildren and fondly had nicknames for each. David's love of life and family has left a lasting legacy that will be carried on by all who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his wife, Bonnie Huston, of Wilmington, with whom David would have celebrated 52 years together on March 6, 2023; two sons, Matthew John (Miranda) Huston, of Kennewick, WA and Mark David Huston, of



Louisville, KY; four grandchildren: Jonah Michael, Libby Jayne, Samuel David and MacKenzie Joy; his twin sister, Suzanne (James) Johnston, of Wilmington; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Gary Underwood, of Stockton, IL; Phyllis (the late Joe) Armstrong, of San Diego, CA; Beverly (David) McGlade, of Mt. Zion, IL and Joyce (Lynwood) Langer, of Aurora, CO; as well as several cousins, numerous nieces and nephews, and his two grandpups, Ivy and Charlie.

David was preceded in death by his parents, his step-father, John Watling Sr.; father-in-law and mother-in-law, John and Dorothy Blazer and his brother and sisters: Donald E. Barnes, Marilyn (Mick) Collier, Charlotte (Loran) Barr, Joanna (Jim) McGraw, and Sharon Underwood; granddoggies, Roxie and Aspen.

Cremation rites are being accorded, and the family will receive friends for a memorial visitation on Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 at Island City Baptist Church, 120 Vine Street in Wilmington from 1 p.m. until the time of memorial service at 4 p.m.

David will privately be laid to rest with full military honors at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

In Lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made as gifts in David's memory to Island City Baptist Church or Wilmington 209-U Foundation for Excellence.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share David's memorial page via social media.

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

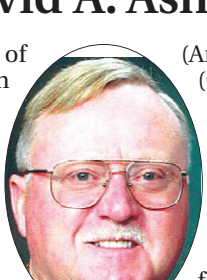
David A. Ashley

COAL CITY—David A. Ashley, 68, of Coal City, passed away peacefully on Monday, Jan. 9, 2023 at his home, surrounded by his family.

He was born on March 8, 1954 in Morris, to George and Docia Mary (nee Shain) Ashley. David grew up in Minooka and graduated from Minooka High School class of 1972. He was an operator with Local #150, retiring after 35 years. David married Debra Goode Phillips at the Park Street Congregational Church in Mazon on May 24, 1997.

A man who took pride in his home, David spent much of his time landscaping, gardening and caring for his house. He enjoyed puttering around in his shop. At 1 p.m. though, Dave would take a break from his chores to watch The Maury Povich Show and after Deb's retirement, he was happy that she would join him to watch. Most of all, Dave was devoted to his family and especially appreciated being "Papa."

He is survived by his wife of 25 years, Debra; his daughters, Mary Ashley, of Minooka and Elizabeth (Jeremy) Russell, of Morris; his sons: Justin Ashley, of Minooka; Matthew



(Angie) Phillips, of Coal City and Adam (Christine) Phillips, of Goose Lake; three grandchildren: Tristen, Tanner and Tyler Phillips; one sister, two brothers and his brothers-in-law, Ronald (Lonnie) Goode, of Dwight and James (Melanie) Goode, of Morris.

He was preceded in death by his parents, George and Docia Ashley; his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Erlene and Lucille Goode and his sister-in-law, Darlene Franklin.

Memorials may be made in David's name to the Coal City United Methodist Church.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A Memorial Visitation will be on Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 from 10:30 a.m. until the time of the Memorial Service at 12 noon at the Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 E. McArdle Rd., Coal City. Rev. Dr. Jay Regennitter will officiate.

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

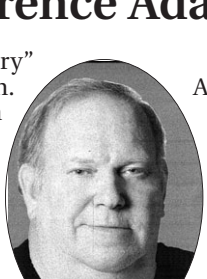
Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.

Terrence Adams

DWIGHT—Terrence Lee "Terry" Adams, 71, of Dwight, passed away Jan. 4, 2023 at OSF St. James Hospital in Pontiac, IL.

Terry was born Jan. 6, 1951 in Streator, the son of Charles and Marion (Sipe) Adams. He married Lorene Burton on Sept. 20, 1969 in Indiana. She survives in Dwight.

He attended local Dwight Schools and owned and operated Terry Adams Plumbing & Heating in Dwight for more than 22 years. Terry enjoyed woodworking, photography, fishing and making jokes. He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered by all who knew him.



Also surviving are his children, Terry Adams Jr., of Dwight and Charles (Tammy) Adams, of Forrest, IL; seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, a sister, Marianne Decker, of Dwight; several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers: Mike, Charles, David, Jim and Tommy.

Cremation rites will be accorded. Services will be held Jan. 12, 2023 at 3 p.m. at Hager Memorial Home in Dwight. Visitation will be held one hour prior to the services.

Memorials in honor of Terry may be made to the Livingston County Humane Society.

John Frederiksen

COAL CITY—John Frederiksen, 73 of Coal City, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2023 at his home.

Born March 28, 1949 in Streator, IL, John Lee was a son of Betty Jean (nee Irvin) Vilt and the late Earl Leroy Frederiksen. He moved to Coal City in the third grade; graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1967, and went on to attend both Joliet Junior College and DeVry Institute of Technology. On Nov. 1, 1969, John married Sue Togliatti in the Coal City United Methodist Church and together they made a home and raised their family in Coal City. In that same year, 1969, John gained employment with Caterpillar Tractor Company in Joliet, where he went on to work as an Electrician for the following 34 years, when he retired in 2003. Following his retirement, he returned to work at CAT with various other subcontractors for an additional 15 years.



He was a member of the Coal City United Methodist Church, where he participated in the United Methodist Men's Group and served as a Trustee. He also belonged to the Coal City Area Club. John enjoyed fishing, camping and running, and took pleasure in gardening and tending to his roses. Many memories were made traveling on alley adventures and taking off on random cheese runs. John drew roads on the map before they made print, and in his travels he could almost always find a fellow Caterpillar employee to visit with. He was a true storyteller, could strike up a conversation with anyone he encountered, and as a jokester, enjoyed making others laugh. He bowled in years past, but in more recent years took pleasure in classic television and could often be found enjoying his popcorn drizzled in Bagna Caualda. Gone from our sight, John Frederiksen leaves behind a wonderful legacy that he built alongside his family and those who knew and loved him.

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, Sue;

three children: Amy (Tom) Borchelt, Amanda (Steven) Burns and Erik (Alanna) Frederiksen, all of Coal City; five grandchildren: Jacob and Natalie Borchelt, August and Victoria Burns and Nolan Frederiksen; his mother, Betty Vilt of Dwight; step-mother, Lois Frederiksen, of Arizona; five siblings: Maryann (Jimmy Dean) Krug, of Coal City; Doug (Cheri) Sutton, of Texas; Cinda (Michael) Conroyd, of Arizona; Lark (Deb) Frederiksen, of Verona; Leann Havekost, of Arizona and Michelle (Don) Wilson, of Shorewood; two aunts, Ethel McConnell, of Ottawa and Marie Frederiksen, of Aurora; two brothers-in-law, Dave (Donna) Togliatti, of Coal City and Marc (Merikay) Togliatti, of Morris, and numerous nieces and nephews.

John was preceded in death by his father, Earl Frederiksen; brother-in-law, Vince Hodgson and two nephews: Kevin Togliatti and Craig Holmes.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at the Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 E. McArdle Road in Coal City on Friday, Jan. 13, 2023 from 3 p.m. until the time of funeral service at 6 p.m. Rev. Jay Regennitter will officiate, and cremation rites will be accorded following the services.

John will be laid to rest in the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery Columbarium.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in John's memory to the Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 E. McArdle Road, Coal City, IL 60416.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto: www.reevesfuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs or share John's memorial page through social media.

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

Gwendolyn Panici

COAL CITY—Gwendolyn Joyce Panici (nee Dierking), 89, of Coal City, passed away Friday, Dec. 16, 2022 at Goldwater Care Nursing Home in Pontiac, IL.

Born Jan. 17, 1933 in Beecher, IL, she was the daughter of Emil and Louella Mae (nee Burns) Dierking. She was a graduate of the Crete-Monee High School with the class of 1951. Gwen formerly owned and operated Mr. Softy Ice Cream in New Lenox and Sugar Cone Ice Cream in Richton Park, IL. She enjoyed sewing, making quilts, cooking, and most of all loved spending time with her family. She was hardworking, kind, loving, devoted, and overall a good person, who will be greatly missed by many.

Surviving are two daughters, Suzan Panici-Hakey, of Braidwood and Laura (Greg) Pearson, of Orland Park, IL; one son, Bruce Panici, of Wisconsin; one step-daughter, Lana (Rich) Bogden, of North Carolina; 15 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, sister-in-law, Beverly Dierking, of New Port Richey, FL and numerous



nieces, nephews, and their families.

Preceding her in death were her parents, husband, Emanuel Angelo Panici, (1982) who she married in 1953; step-sons, Robert Panici and Joseph Panici; brother, Richard Dierking; and sister, Shirley (Harold) Parkinson.


Cremation rites have been accorded. Memorial visitation for Gwen will be at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Braidwood, Saturday, Jan. 14, 2023 from 3 p.m. until the time of memorial services at 5 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in her name may be directed to the Alzheimer's Association.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, please 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.

Bruce Trotter

 GOOSE LAKE TWP.—Bruce A. Trotter, 85, and a life-long resident of Goose Lake, Township, Grundy County, passed away Thursday, Jan. 5, 2023 at the Lightways Hospice Home in Joliet.

Born Aug. 30, 1937 in Goose Lake Township, Bruce Anthony was a son of Robert Winston and Anna Marie (Baudino) Trotter. He attended the Coal City schools and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1955. Following high school, Bruce entered the work force before going on to serve in the United States Army and United States Army Reserves from 1960 until 1966. On Dec. 18, 1970, Bruce married Deanna "Dede" Savage in the New Hope Church in Gardner, and together they settled at the home in Goose Lake Township, where they started their family.

Bruce spent his career in construction, and retired from Local 130 in 2000. He served the Township in various capacities over the years, but most notably as road commissioner for over 30 years, retiring in 2018. Bruce was a member of the Coal City United Methodist Church, and will be remembered as one who always kept active and busy. He was willing to help anyone in need; he loved animals, and his family was always his first priority.

Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Dede; son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Cathy



Trotter, of Yorkville; two granddaughters, Morgan and Lauryn Trotter; one brother, Robert (Elizabeth) Trotter, of Morris; his aunt, Catherine Baudino, of Morris; sister-in-law, Brenda (Col. Thomas) Boyd, of Moline, and numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Bruce was preceded in death by his parents, sister and brother-in-law, Jean and Louis Naretto; one sister in infancy, and his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Dean and Helen Savage.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of IL Route 113 in Coal City on Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m. Funeral services will be Friday, Jan. 13, 2023 at 10 a.m. in the funeral home with Reverend Jay Regennitter from the Coal City United Methodist Church officiating. Burial will follow.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Bruce's memory to the Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 East McArdle Road, Coal City, IL 60416 or to Lightways Hospice.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Bruce's memorial page online through social media.

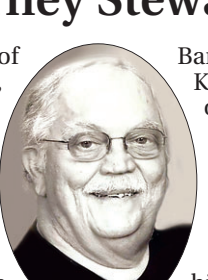
Funeral services and arrangement have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Barney Stewart

COAL CITY—Barney Stewart, 78, of Coal City, and formerly of Chicago, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023 at his home.

Born June 23, 1944 in Chicago, Barney was a son of Hugh Stewart and Emily (Joseph) Smolka. His career was that of a Stationary Engineer and he was a member of IUOE Local 399. Barney worked at various places throughout the years, but most notably at The Chicago Tribune and the Hotel InterContinental. He was a member of the Coal City Area Club, which aligned with his love of the outdoors and fishing. He took pleasure in gardening, trees, rocks and landscaping, and enjoyed science fiction both literary and on television. In addition, Barney was a woodworker and could often be found tinkering in the shed with his tools. He also had a great love for animals, particularly dogs. Gone from our sight, Barney leaves behind a legacy of great pride for his home and most importantly, his family.

Survivors include his wife, Nancy (nee Harvey), who he married June 9, 1972 in Chicago; two daughters: Elizabeth (Stephen) Scofield, of Bristol, England and Debbie (Rich) Carollo, of Aurora, CO; six grandchildren: Andi Stewart and Chris Fischer, who were raised by



Barney and Nancy; George Carollo and Kevin, Thomas and Anthony Stewart; one very special great-granddaughter, Lizzy Marie; two brothers: Chris (the late Harriette) Smolka, of Hawaii and Joey (Carol) Smolka, of Colorado; one sister-in-law, Linda Harvey-Knight and numerous nieces and nephews.

Barney was preceded in death by his parents, one son, Troy Stewart; his father-in-law and mother-in-law, Roland and Victoria Harvey, and two brothers: Douglas Stewart and John Smolka.

Funeral services were held Monday, Jan. 8, 2023 at Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City. Rev. Jay Regennitter from the Coal City United Methodist Church officiated. Burial followed in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Barney's memory to PAWS Chicago.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.reevesfuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Barney's memorial page online through social media.

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

Immaculate Conception to hold benefit for local family

Immaculate Conception Church Braidwood is holding a multicultural fundraiser to help a church family in need.

Lazara Yanira Carrasco, age 35, was hospitalized on a ventilator for seven months due to COVID. She is currently on a waiting list for a lung transplant.

She, her mother, and brother Enrique are struggling to pay for her insurmountable medical bills. Lazara also has two small children.

The fundraiser is a multicultural potluck Saturday, Jan. 21, in Fr. White Hall, 110 S. School St.

Food will be served from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. with carry outs available. Doors will open at 4 p.m. for anyone wanting to help by donating a heritage dish to pass.

A freewill donation for dinner will be accepted to help offset Lazara's medical bills. Please call Tami Favero 815-458-6802 for more information.

Morris Hospital offers CPR and First Aid Training

The power of CPR AED training was never more evident than during the Jan. 2 incident involving NFL player Damar Hamlin.

Hamlin, a safety with the Buffalo Bills, went into cardiac arrest after a tackle during the nationally televised Monday Night Football game. The quick actions of training staff and immediate use of life-saving resuscitation efforts were universally praised as the reason behind Hamlin's remarkable recovery.

This incident is an important reminder to all about why CPR AED training is vitally crucial to saving someone's life. With that in mind, Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers is offering the American Heart Association's Heartsaver CPR AED & First Aid Training

course on Tuesday, Jan. 17, from 4-8:00 p.m. at Shabbona School, 725 School St., Morris. Participants should enter through Door #26 on the southwest corner of the building near the gym.

The course is for anyone interested in learning skills that could save the life of a loved one, friend, co-worker, or community member. Participants will learn the skills needed to perform high quality CPR, proper use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), relief of foreign-body airway obstruction, and basic first aid. The cost is \$110 and includes American Heart Association materials.

Register online at www.morrishospital.org/even ts. For more information, call 815-705-7360.

U.S. dairy poised to grow

BY DANIEL GRANT
FARMWEEK

Milk demand is projected to grow by 21% globally between 2020 and 2030, according to Matt Daley, president of GEA Farm Technologies.

And he believes much of that demand could be met by U.S. dairy farmers.

"With more people, more dairy is consumed," Daley said this month at the Agricultural Bankers Conference in Omaha, Nebraska. "What's amazing is we're doing it with fewer cows."

"A dairy cow in the U.S. produces two to three times more milk because there's more sunshine and greater access to grains (than other parts of the world)."

The world population reached an estimated 8 billion people as of Nov. 15, a new milestone in human development. The rising population and a growing middle class in some areas likely will drive increased demand for dairy products.

But with tighter environmental regulations in Europe, dairy output could actually decrease in that part of the world. Daley believes dairy expansion is also unlikely in New Zealand.

"Who's slated around the world to produce more milk? It's us in the U.S.," he said.

Technology and automation will be critical for U.S. farmers to continue to boost milk output with fewer cows. GEA manufactures about 25% of robotic milking technology in North

America, according to Daley.

"As long as we can expand processing capabilities, we'll produce more milk, because the world needs it," he said. "As labor continues to get tighter, more automation will come."

GEA is quoting plans for new dairy plants in Nebraska, Kentucky and Georgia and three new whey distilleries are going up in the U.S.

DEA is also building more concentration facilities, which separate the milk and can lower shipping costs by 70%.

A strong appetite for dairy is also driving local demand, which bodes well for small dairies looking for niche markets.

"The last four or five years, we've never put in so many small cheese plants," Daley said. "The craft cheese industry is booming. A lot of dairy farmers are making their own cheese and selling it locally."

If you've never heard of DEA Farm Technologies, chances are you've eaten food produced with its technology or at a plant it built. DEA is one of the world's largest system suppliers for the food, beverage and pharmaceutical sectors.

"We do food on a small and massive scale," Daley said. "Every third chicken nugget in the world is produced with GEA technology. If you eat cheese, GEA technology likely sliced it and put it in the package."

About a quarter of processed milk in the world comes from GEA or is processed with its equipment.

It will be months for court to decide on SAFE-T Act

Kankakee County Judge Thomas Cunningham set off a chaotic chain reaction Dec. 29 with his ruling that the General Assembly overstepped its constitutional grounds when it voted to eliminate cash bail. Cunningham essentially said that a cash bail requirement, even though not specifically mentioned in the constitution, could be inferred; and that the General Assembly had exercised powers that properly belonged to the judicial branch.

TRO without any ability for the state to respond.

Finally, on Dec. 30, the Democratic state's attorney for Kane County, Jamie Mosser, and the Republican state's attorney for DuPage County, Bob Berlin, filed an emergency motion for a supervisory order from the Illinois Supreme Court. Mosser had supported the push to eliminate cash bail and Berlin helped work behind the scenes to get the revisions in place during veto session.



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

Judge Cunningham's ruling only applied to the jurisdictions where 64 lawsuits had been filed to block implementation of the law on January 1, without regard to the fact that some cities are in multiple counties. Aurora, for instance, is in four counties, including Kane and DuPage counties, which did not sue to stop the law from taking effect. Aurora is also in Kendall and Will, which were plaintiffs. Naperville straddles DuPage and Will counties.

Some county leaders who were not part of the lawsuit added to the confusion by filing for local Temporary Restraining Orders, often giving minimal or even no warning to the attorney general's office. Some counties actually filed for TROs without giving any notice at all to the AG's office, including Alexander, Lawrence, Pike and St. Clair, according to the office.

It seemed to some that a few counties may have been coordinating their efforts to thwart the attorney general's efforts to dispute their TRO demands. In Menard County, for instance, the AG's office asked for a one-hour delay while they argued in another county. The request was ignored, and the state's attorney reportedly entered the

and the county plaintiffs set out an agreed briefing schedule and the Supreme Court adopted it. Opening briefs will begin in late January and will run through the end of February. Oral arguments will be held during the court's March calendar.

From there, it'll be up to the Supremes to hash out their decision and draft their opinion(s). So, it could possibly be a while.

Meanwhile, a poll taken November 15-20 by Impact Research found that 32 percent of voters had a favorable view of the SAFE-T Act, which included the elimination of cash bail, while 40 percent had an unfavorable view. The super-controversial law was the subject of millions of dollars in campaign advertising, not just statewide, but also in state legislative districts.

So, it's not surprising that those who had a strongly unfavorable view of the law out-

numbered those with strongly favorable views by 20 points (34-14). Even so, 28 percent had no position on the law. Criticism of the law didn't seem to ultimately harm Democrats except maybe in a couple of legislative races.

The poll of 800 likely 2024 voters with a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points was taken for a group called Giffords, a gun control organization founded by former Congressperson Gabby Giffords.

The poll also found that Gov. Pritzker's favorables were 51 percent, while his unfavorables were 46 percent. 29 percent had a very favorable view of Pritzker, while 40 percent had a very unfavorable view of the incumbent.

And 41 percent of those polled said they had a positive view of the National Rifle Association, while 53 percent had an unfavorable view (46 percent said they had a very unfavorable view).

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

Mobile food pantry coming to Wilmington

Catholic Charities of Joliet will be hosting a mobile food pantry at Kuzma Care Cottage, 635 S. Main St., Wilmington on Tuesday, Jan. 17, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Participants need to line up in the St. Rose Church parking lot by entering on the Main Street side. The mobile food pantry will use a "drive thru" method to distribute

food.

Please clear space in your trunk or backseat so volunteers can load boxes of food directly into your vehicle.

Food is free to neighbors in need; no ID, proof of address or income is required. Everyone is welcome. Food is distributed on a first-come, first served basis, while supplies last.

A Note of Thanks from the Wilmington Lions Club

The Wilmington Lions Club would like to thank all the community organizations and businesses for your part in making the Island Christmas Walk held on the North Island a success again for 2022. We are grateful for your efforts. We acknowledge the following for their part in the Walk: Wesley 4H Hustlers, Bonfield Lions Club, Facetastic Faces face painting Kelly Surma (artist), Free Press Newspapers, Wilmington Baseball and Softball Association (WBSA), Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, Wilmington Coalition (WCHC) our Spyder Saturday Sponsor, Wilmington Collision Minion Monday Sponsor, Wilmington Fire Department, Wilmington Library, Wilmington Park District our Co partner, Wilmington Police Department, individual volunteers who lended a helping hand you know who you are.

Finally, Mike Kelly for being so Jolly in his red suit and his sidekick Elf. The undertaking lasted for the Christmas Season Kicking off November 26 through December 31. Weather wise, Mother Nature was not kind a few nights we were not able to open or literally keep the lights on. We would also like to extend a gracious Thank You to the generous visitors for your monetary donations which will in part be used right here to help folks in our community. Happy New Year from the Wilmington Lions Club. WE Serve.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX INCREASE FOR ELWOOD COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT #203

- I. A public hearing to approve a proposed tax levy increase for Elwood Community Consolidated School District #203, Will County, IL, for 2022 was held on December 13, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Education meeting room, 409 North Chicago Avenue, Elwood, IL.
Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district may contact Mr. Tim Page, Superintendent, Elwood Community Consolidated School District #203, at 409 North Chicago Avenue, Elwood, Illinois, telephone number 815-423-5588.
- II. The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended for 2021 were \$5,029,893.
The proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2022 are \$6,620,000. This represents a 32% increase over the previous year.
- III. The property taxes extended for debt service and public building commission leases for 2021 were \$0. The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2022 are \$0. This represents a 0% decrease over the previous year.

The estimated total property taxes to be levied for 2022 are \$6,620,000. This represents a 32% increase over the previous year.

Jennifer Wedic, Secretary Board of Education
Elwood CCSD 203, Will County, Illinois

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Coaler matmen rule the PIT

For the second straight Saturday the Coal City matmen claimed first place in highly-touted tournaments as they continued to dominate the class 1A.

First they took the Able's Rumble dual team title in Springfield and on Saturday they scored 245.5 points to outdistance 32 other teams for the Princeton Invitational Tournament. The 59th annual tournament, known as The PIT, features some of the best Class A wrestlers in the state.

Of 14 Coalers to compete, 12 placed including two champions, two second place, two third place, one fourth, three fifths and two seventh. Coal City won the overall team championship with 245.5 points, far surpassing second place Dakota (188) and Port Byron (176). Reed-Custer placed 11th while Wilmington finished 28th overall.

Landin Benson (152) and Braiden Young (195) were tournament champions. Finishing in second place were Mataeo Blessing (145) and Derek Carlson (170) while Drake Dearth (220) and Michael Gonzalez (285) brought home thirds. Brock Finch (126) placed fourth while Culan Lindemuth (106), Jack Poyner (160) and Joey Breneman (182) placed fifth. Luke Munsterman (113) and Noah Houston (126) medaled seventh.

Coach Mark Masters was proud his team took back-to-back titles in two tough tournaments. "You know, winning is nice but team-wise these two tournaments are scheduled to give our guys team bonding time," Masters said. "It's a nice measuring stick for us. We've found out where we're at as a team and where we are in individual match-ups. We've got some solid weight classes but we've learned what weight classes where we need to do some more work. We've got talent there, we just need it to evolve. It's been going pretty well though. We're pretty excited knowing our kids have already been battle-tested weeks before state."

Benson improved his record to 19-1 with two pins, a tiebreaker 4-3 decision over Carsen Behn of Byron and a 7-4 title bout victory over Eli Hinde from Riverdale.

Young's (27-1) first place finish included back-to-back pins before getting a tech fall 18-3 over Wyatt Dothager from Vandalia in the semi and a 12-6 decision over Gibson City's Aiden Sancken for the championship.

Blessing (30-3) made it to the first place match with a pin, 5-3 decision and 3-1 sudden victory before falling 5-2 to undefeated Paul Ishikawa from Illini Bluffs.

Derek Carlson (28-6) was impressive with pins of 2:43, 1:46 and 3:36 in his first three matches. In the final though he fell 5-2 to Alex Watson (28-1) from Riverdale.

On Thursday at Wilmington the Coalers battled Peotone and Lisle but not the Wildcats. Double winners on the night were Lindemuth, Widlowski, Kenney, Blessing, Poyner, Carlson, Breneman, Dearth and Gonzalez. Blessing recorded his 100th career win.

Coal City 66, Lisle 9

- 106—Lindemuth, Culan (CC) over Doe, John, decision 7-1
- 113—Widlowski, Brody (CC) over Cashro, Noah, fall 0:50
- 120—Kenney, Aidan (CC) over Ferrari, Vander, decision 6-1
- 126—Finch, Brock (CC) by Forfeit
- 132—Houston, Noah (CC) by Forfeit
- 138—Guzik, Nobert (Lisle) over Garner, Mason, decision 7-1
- 145—Blessing, Mataeo (CC) over Doe, John, fall 1:26
- 152—Kramer, Zakk (CC) over A, Deigo, fall 3:29
- 160—Poyner, Jack (CC) over Doe, John, fall 3:03 42
- 170—Carlson, Derek (CC) by Forfeit
- 182—Breneman, Joey (CC) by Forfeit
- 195—Doe, John (Lisle) over Feisley, Andrew, fall 4:48
- 220—Dearth, Drake (CC) by Forfeit
- 285—Gonzalez, Michael (CC) by Forfeit

Coal City 65, Peotone 6

- 106—Lindemuth, Culan (CC) by Forfeit
- 113—Widlowski, Brody (CC) by Forfeit
- 120—Kenney, Aidan (CC) by Forfeit
- 126—Spinazzola, M (Peotone) over Finch, Brock, decision 7-2
- 132—Gregg, Evan (CC) by Forfeit
- 138—Widlowski, Brant (CC) over Abunigmeh, L, fall 2:39
- 145—Blessing, Mataeo (CC) over Kreske, T, decision 10-3
- 152—Spinazzola, M (P) over Benson, Landin, decision 8-4
- 160—Poyner, Jack (CC) over Ayers, A, fall 2:44
- 170—Carlson, Derek (CC) over Bengeion, J, maj dec 14-6
- 182—Breneman, Joey (CC) over Hart, R, fall 2:44
- 195—Young, Braiden (CC) by Forfeit
- 220—Dearth, Drake (CC) over Cardinal, A, maj dec 9-0
- 285—Gonzalez, Michael (CC) over Hart, R, fall 1:42

Coal City will host Wilmington at 5:30 p.m. and Herscher at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday. On Saturday they return to Princeton for a dual with Dakota/Tremont.



Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

CHANGING DIRECTIONS for the varsity Coalers during their home contest against Reed-Custer is Carter Garrelts.

Garrelts scores 27 during OT win over Morris

The Coal City varsity boys may have gotten the job done when they traveled to Morris Saturday, but it took an overtime period to decide a winner.

The Coalers, anchored by Carter Garrelts who led all scorers with 27 points, upended Morris 56-52 in overtime after a 12-8 run in the final frame.

On paper Morris should have won it but the deciding factor was the hosts had more turnovers while the Coalers had a 10-to-4 edge on steals.

Garrelts was solid all game, grabbing 16 rebounds and blocking three shots while shooting 4-for-4 at the free-throw line.

Carson Shepard was a big factor too, scoring 16 points including three treys while dishing out four assists.

Cason Headley chipped in with seven points while Garrett Keeley put in four and Jim Feeney two.

Rival Comets

If Friday was suppose to be a rival match at Coal City, the Reed-Custer took the hosts out of contention from the get-go, limiting the Coalers to just two points during the opening stanza.

Reed-Custer ran up a 20-2 lead in the first quarter and by half were set on cruise control with a 46-15 advantage.

Coach Mark Porter put in his reserves after three quarters as Reed-Custer won it 77-45.

The Coalers had no answer in stopping Jake McPherson who led Reed-Custer with 24 points after playing the first half. The Comet senior was 6-for-10 from three-point range while dishing out six assists and grabbing five rebounds.

In all, nine Comets scored points in a balanced attack that included 13 three-point buckets.

Coal City hosts Lisle Thursday before traveling to Peotone Tuesday.



THE CCMS WRESTLING TEAM won the Warrior Invite over 16 other teams. Wrestlers include (kneeling, from left) Cooper Morris, Jake Munsterman, Brody D'Orazio, Bobby Stoudt, Jason Piatak, Tyson Price, Ryder Gill and Gavin Ziech. Standing are Gabe Hamilton, Kyle Odom, Ryder Krammer, Maxx Krammer, Connor Rodriguez, Eathyn Rivera, Chris Groves, Theo Fritz, Fabian Hernandez, Wyatt Ricke, Tanner Gullquist, Alex Carlson, Enzo Mugnolo, Jakex Shimp, Gavin Clubb, Owen Petersen and Cameron Minuth.

CCMS wrestlers capture Warrior Invite championship

The Coal City middle school wrestling team hosted a 17-team tournament over the weekend.

Coal City finished in first place ahead of Minooka and Troy with five Warriors finishing as champions.

Ryder Gill at 70 pounds, Jake Munsterman at 80 pounds, Tyson Price at 95 pounds, Brody D'Orazio at 167 pounds, and Cameron Minuth at 215 all finished in first place.

The Warriors had three earn second place finishes. They included Owen Petersen, Cooper Morris, and Aidan Edmonds.

Finishing in third place were Warriors Landon Bomba

and Alex Carlson. Fourth place went to Gavin Roudis, Max Christesen and Maxx Krammer. Placing fifth for Coal City were Jason Piatak, Cole Russell, Brantley Brooks, and Bobby Stoudt.

Put your health first this New Year!

Start the New Year out right by scheduling your annual check-up with your primary care provider! Annual check-ups help you monitor existing health issues, keep you up-to-date on vaccinations and screening tests, and increase the likelihood of detecting new health issues before they develop into something serious.

If you have fallen behind with your routine check-ups, the New Year is the perfect time to get back on schedule.



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JV Lady Coalers get back to business

The junior varsity Lady Coalers didn't skip a beat after the holiday break, getting back to basketball business on Thursday with a 47-30 victory over Lisle.

"It was nice to come out of break with a performance like this," said coach Brad Boresi. "I thought everyone contributed, and it was a great start to the second half of the year."

Coal City was led by Kylee Kennell with an impressive 22 points. Emma Rodriguez contributed nine points while Sydney Larson and Becca Hall added six points each. D'Arcy Ness and Jori Tucker made a field goal each.

The Lady Coalers are 10-3 overall and remain undefeated in the conference with a 6-0 record. They will host Wilmington on Thursday.

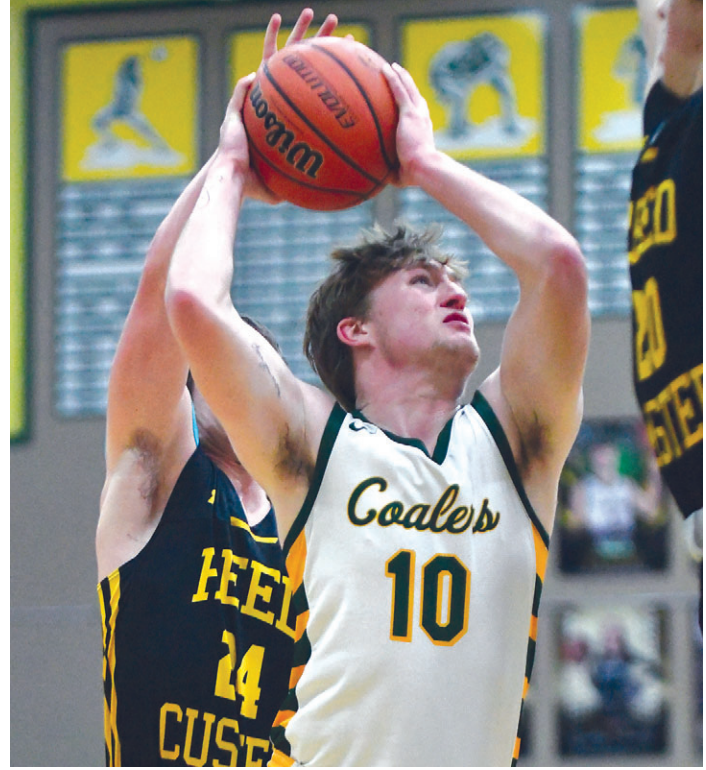


Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

TAKING THE BALL to the basket on Friday against a stingy Reed-Custer defense is Coal City's Cason Headley.

Lady Coalers turnover the win to Peotone

The Lady Coalers stayed within striking distance through three quarters Monday at Peotone before scoring just two points in the fourth to lose 55-32.

Down 37-30 entering the final quarter, Coal City struggled with turnovers (24 for the game) and from the perimeter, hitting just 10-of-35 field goal attempts and 3-for-12 from beyond the arch.

The Blue Devils made the most of their 21-for-50 shooting and picked up some crucial rebounds.

Mia Ferrias hit a pair of three pointers to finish with 11 points. Makayla Henline had the other three-pointer for Coal City to record seven points total and six rebounds.

Abby Gagliardo scored four points to go along with three rebounds while Makenzie Henline also scored four with five rebounds. Adding two points each were Lady Coalers

Audrey Cooper, Abby Stiles and Kerigan Copes.

Cage the Lions
At Lisle on Thursday, the Lady Coalers jumped to a 16-6 lead after one quarter and never looked back. They won it 55-45, making some key free throws and 3-for-4 three-point shots from Ferrias who finished with 15 points.

Makayla Henline was the points leader with 16 and six rebound. Henline shot 50% at the line with 7-for-14 shooting.

Paige Walker came off the bench for an eight-point effort while Cooper tallied six points and Gagliardo and Kerigan Copes (six rebounds) with four points each. Makenzie Henline contributed two points while grabbing 10 rebounds.

Coal City's record is 13-5 overall, 4-3 in the conference. They will host Wilmington on Thursday before hosting the MLK Shootout at 10 a.m. Saturday.