

A double win for the Coalers





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# COALCITY COURANT &

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023

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# Multi-year road plan coming for Diamond

**BY ANN GILL** 

When the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning [CMAP] put out a call for projects, the village of Diamond requested help with road improvements so that the village could get the

CMAP granted the town's request and a multi-year plan to improve the town's roadways is forthcoming.

"I'm really excited about this grant," Mayor Terry Kernc said about the written plan.

survey vehicle traveling village streets to collect digital imagery of the pavement surface and roadside assets.

Data collected from the drive will be used to develop a 10-year paving plan.

According to the mayor, the village really doesn't have any excellent road surfaces—most falling in the moderate to below category—but the hope is that will change in the years ahead.

The village has completed various pavement and patching projects over the years, however no large scale improvements have

Moving forward the mayor would prefer to see larger sections completed at one time and said the plan should facilitate that.

'If you do one road in a subdivision that's great. But later when you have to go in and do more, then you have all of this heavy equipment coming in and going over roads you already did. To me it just makes more sense to do a whole neighborhood at a time and then move on to the next and at the end of the 10 years, create a schedule where you go back and maintain those roads," Kernc said.

When road improvements do take place the village's plan is to complete required ADA ramp improvements per its ADA transition plan—a state requirement.

Along with the ramps, Kernc said the idea is to also repair and or replace any cracked or heaving sidewalks in that neighborhood.

And, while the work is being done, the mayor wants to see about reinforcing the sides of the road closest to the curb. Kernc said there is a noticeable wearing down of the roadway

SEE ROADS, PAGE 2

# Diamond to improve water flow

**BY ANN GILL EDITOR** 

Close to \$1 million will be invested in the village of Diamond's water and sewer infrastructure. The village received \$340,000 from the American

Rescue Plan [ARP] which will be combined with a federal earmark of just over \$600,000 to replace approximately 2,000 feet of aging and failing water main, rehabilitate lift stations and replace service line connections to a handful of homes along Division Street [Route 113].

According to Mayor Terry Kernc, the village will replace an old water main

located in the area of School Street and Perona Court, a project that has been on the village's to-do list for a long time.

"We use about 240,000 gallons of water a day and we used to use more. But we've located leaks and we've got them down as much as possible so we are not wasting water. If you keep your mains in shape vou have a better chance of doing that," Kernc said.

GALLONS OF WATER A DAY AND WE USED TO USE MORE. BUT WE'VE LOCATED LEAKS AND WE'VE GOT THEM DOWN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE SO WE ARE NOT WASTING WATER. IF YOU KEEP YOUR MAINS IN SHAPE YOU HAVE A BETTER

"WE USE ABOUT 240,000

**TERRY KERNC** 

CHANCE OF DOING THAT."

A 1.5 inch water service line that runs along the north side of Division Street from Dewey Street west to McGinty Street will be abandoned and the homes serviced by that line will be connected to a larger main located on the southside of the roadway. That will require the village to bore under the state highway to make the connection.

The rehabilitation of lift stations include pumps and installation of a a supervisory control and data acquisition

SEE WATER. PAGE 2

# Ching, ching, ching Illinois cashes in on video gaming

**BY ANN GILL** 

The bright lights of Las Vegas might be a draw, but you don't have to travel far to hear the distinctive ring of slot There are 43 locations

within the communities of Braidwood, Coal City and Wilmington where individuals can wager a dollar in a video gaming machine. And in 2022 more than \$40 million in the three communities went into those machines.

While that is a lot of cash, it's pocket change compared to the \$10.53 billion fed into gaming machines across the state, a 9.2% increase from the year

The Illinois Gaming Board [IGB] reports over \$31.8 billion was played with individuals cashing out \$7.82 billion.

In 2022, the state of Illinois collected \$786 million in gaming taxes, an increase of around 9.5% from the prior

The increases seen in the past year can be attributed to additional licenses going machines on-line, amounts being played and cashed out. Whatever the reason, the state continues to cash in and that means local municipalities are too.

A portion of the net terminal income collected by the state goes back to the municipalities where gaming is allowed and last year that amounted to \$135.5 million

Braidwood's cut was \$70,544.17 while the city of Wilmington's share was



MORE THAN \$10.5 billion—\$40 million of that locally—was pumped into Illinois video gaming terminals according to reports posted by the Illinois Gaming Board.

\$216,133.34.

City area, the village of Carbon When it comes to the trio Hill received \$33,730.50, Coal of towns that make up the Coal City's came in at just under

\$98,000 and Diamond collected over \$112,200 which went toward utility reimbursements for its residents-ultimately eliminating the debt surcharge from the bill.

Video gaming went online in September 2012 and in that time Illinois residents and visitors to the Land of Lincoln have pumped \$53.3 billion into gaming machines located in bars, restaurants and even gas stations— especially those located along the state's highways and interstates.

Over 10 years and three months, those players have cashed out \$39.55 billion and contributed over \$4.4 billion to the state and local communities-that's about 8% of Illinois' 2023 budget.

At the close of 2022, Illinois had 8,693 licensed establishments operating 47,378 gaming terminals—figures that increased throughout

Just last week, IGB posted the December 2022 gaming report that put the final totals on how much money went in, how much was played and the amount cashed out over the course of 12 months, as well as the state and local municipalities share.

Here's what is reported locally:

Braidwood-seven establishments with 37 terminals. Amount in \$5,590,767, \$17,498,928.16 played, \$4,179,886.29 cashed out, state share \$409,156.33, municipality share \$70,544.17. Emmy's Cafe generating the most play Joneseeze Bar-B-Que

**SEE GAMING, PAGE 2** 

## Coal City taking a new look at solar panels

BY ANN GILL

A homeowner's request to install solar panels is prompt-

ing a fresh look at the town's When Sarah Stroner's permit application was denied

because it failed to comply

with Coal City's rules for small

scale solar energy conversion

Prior to a scheduled pub-

lic hearing on Feb. 6, Stroner appeared before the Planning and Zoning Board to layout her the rules that govern the placement of solar panels' alignment, surface area and inset from the roof edge.

At a meeting last week,

systems, she filed a variance Stroner told planning commissioners that when she tried to comply with the code she discovered the rules place the inset of the panels at 48 inches [4 feet] from the edge of the request that seeks relief from roof rather than the industry standard of 3 feet or 36 inches.

For that reason her permit was denied, however the plan for installation on her home in the 1000 block of North Street

doesn't quite meet some other case, the panels need to be maximum offset of her energy terms outlined in the code such as the alignment of the panels on her roof.

Stroner's request is that the panel installation be in a, "singular concurrent L shape," that follows the shape of her

The code states panels must be aligned in a rectangular shape and in her particular

mounted on the street side of costs, she needs 22 panels on her south-facing home which her roof. However, based on its also appears to be a deviation from the rules.

'We've kinda restricted ourselves into a box and we need to make some corrections," said Maria Lewis, the Board's chairman.

Stroner told commissioners that in order to achieve the

SEE SOLAR, PAGE 2





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### **Roads**

edges due to the weight of the

garbage trucks.
"The trouble is if we get in there and start paving and don't reinforce that part alongside the curb and gutter, we are going to have to replace curb and gutter in those neighborhoods," Kernc said.

Where the improvements begin will be based on recommendations put forth in the pavement management plan. The mayor has an idea of

what areas are in the most need-Orchard Park, Clark, Stellon, Hugh and McGinty and Meadow Lane.

"I can't wait to get [the report]. I can't wait to see if they agree," Kernc said. The plan takes personal opinion out of the decision making process and puts it all on technical and factual data.

"I think it lends credibility and gives the village an actual plan to move forward with and stick to," Kernc said.

The CMAP grant doesn't come with any funding for improvements, therefore any upgrades would come from general fund dollars.

Kernc said there is also a

donation that has been agreed to for the village. The funds coming from the developers of a large scale solar farm going in between Gardner and Dwight that is utilizing the town's enterprise zone.

Although not a requirement, Kernc said the developers graciously offered the

"The idea is to fuel that money right in from the get-go and kick this [improvement] off and try to get a big chunk done and continue from there," Kernc said.

CMAP is supporting 20 projects out of 64 applications Seven of the submitted. approved projects were for pavement management planning-Diamond and the city of Wilmington among them.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has a long history of preparing communities for better futures. These projects foster collaboration throughout the region, making our communities safer and more prosperous. We look forward to building a stronger region where all communities can thrive together," said CMAP executive director Aleman.'



A COAL CITY homeowner's request to install solar panels on their home in the 1000 block of North St. is prompting a fresh look at the town's code. A subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning Board has been established to review and recommend possible changes to the rules.

# Unit 1 Students of the Week



**COAL CITY ELEMENTARY** Students of the Week for Jan. 23 in row one are (from left): Brady Shaw, Aubrey Czaja, Keeley Conrath, Logan Frese and Jameson Lindley. Drew Poeschel starts off row two along with Gabriel Watters-Lopez, Nolan Frederiksen, Anden Gagliardo, Ainsley Viano and Slater Hill.



COAL CITY EARLY Childhood Center Students of the Week for Jan. 23 in row one are Bella Shaw and Addison Reszel. Amelia Olszewski is in row two with (from left) Makenna Aspel, Ailbe McCants, Larkyn Kaluzny and Eleanor Egeland. Standing in row three are Zayden Palmer, Martina Pruim, DJ Murphy, Blakely Riley and Fiona Shabani.



COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for Jan. 23 are (from left): Rylan Davy, Sienna Ruffato, Liam Cheney and Aubrie Kavanaugh.

### History, genealogy event scheduled

The Coal City Public Library District (CCPLD) will hold a Local History and Genealogy Resources event on Tuesday, Jan. 31 at 1 p.m. Join Head of Reference, Bryan Gilligan, in the meeting room at CCPLD to explore a little local history and some of the genealogical resources that you can find here at the library. Learn more about the materials and resources available to explore your ancestry.

### Solar

size, the most she can have put up is 16. Although she would like the full 22 panels, she is asking for at least 20 and that would still achieve 100% offset on the cost, but 105% is currently allowed. Lewis pointed out that a move to solar power is something that is being pushed at the state and federal levels, even with

electric suppliers such as ComEd. "In looking at our code that we have, we have a little bit of

work to do bring this into more conformity. This is the wave of

the future," Lewis said. Before the code can be amended, the Planning and Zoning Board needs to review what's on the books and present a recom-

mendation for consideration among its members. Lewis and commissioner John Hawkinson will take on that

"I'm sure this is the way it's going to move in the future for a lot of people and this gives us an opportunity to review our code and make corrections and make it a little smoother process,"

Lewis said. In the meantime, Stroner's plan for solar panels is on hold until the public hearing and a final approval from the Village Board that will come based on a recommendation from the

Î would love to get it approved for that original design, but

I would also be happy with even putting 20 in a rectangle with the 36 [inset]," Stroner said.

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 Black files Younger estate claim

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE
No. 2023 PR 2
In the Matter of the Estate of

ELMO RAY YOUNGER,

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Elmo Ray Younger. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Raymadier Younger, 220 W. Spring Rd., Coal City, Illinois 60416, whose attorney is FRANK 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.

RAYMADIER YOUNGER

INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR Black & Black 201 Liberty Street P.O. Box 148 Morris, IL 60450 815-942-0594 Published in the Coal City Courant on Jan. 18, 25 and Feb. 1, 2023

Suite 211

Circuit Clerk of Grundy County Garret Wheeler - Atty. # 6270818 Wheeler Law Firm, Ltd. Attorney for Petitioners 305 E. North St.

Morris, IL 60450 815-942-5555 Wednesday, Jan. 11, 18 and 25, 2023

### Water

[SCADA] system—a cloud based communication software program designed to monitor equipment.

The improvements being undertaken by the Village Board will prepare the community for the next 20 years or so, the

The federal earmark was secured by U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin who secured more than \$182 million for Illinois projects as part of the fiscal year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations

"Our state and our nation are stronger when we invest in our communities and families-and that's what this bipartisan funding agreement does,' Duckworth said.

Durbin adds, "the use Congressionally directed spending provides members of Congress, who know their states and districts better than federal agency personnel in Washington, with the ability to direct federal funding to priority projects in their communi-

The North Central Illinois Council of Governments [NCICG] assisted the village in applying for the funds.

· Coal City-seven estab-

played,

lishments operating 38 termi-

nals. Amount in \$7,668,834,

\$5,714,161.65 cashed out,

state share \$566,855.81, village

share \$97,733.76. Emmy's Cafe

licensed establishments oper-

ating 41 terminals. Amount in

\$7,986,685, \$25,141,472.77

played, \$5,742,131,94 cashed

out, state share \$650,921.20,

village share \$112,277.77.

Generating the most play was

lishments with 108 active ter-

Wilmington—20 estab-

Amount

Diamond—seven

generating the most play.

\$22,585,275.19

Minit Mart, LLC.

Kernc and the Village Board are looking to gain additional funding to support the planned improvements through a grant being offered by Will County—the money coming from its share of ARP dol-Kernc said the request will seek fund-

ing to support the installation of the SCADA system at the water and wastewater treatment plants and three lift sta-The secured system would provide

the village with 24/7 monitoring of the facilities and equipment, providing staff with off-site monitoring and immediate notification of system failures.

### Gaming

ceased gaming operations in February.

• Carbon Hill—two establishments with 11 terminals. Amount in \$2,274,429 in, \$8,136,930.67 played, \$1,599,821.14 cashed out, \$195,636,67, share municipality share \$33,730.50. Bum's Tavern—the first local establishment to go on-line in 2013—generated the most

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 ELIZA-BETH RODRIGUEZ-PEREZ and JHONATAN VALVERDE-HILDAGO PETI-

TIONERS, 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

Subscription rates: \$43 Grundy & Will counties; \$50 other Illinois counties and \$57 out of state

\$16,759,358, \$52,025,562.79 played, \$12,436,695.61 cashed out, state share

\$1,253,574.58, city share \$216,133.34. TA Operating LLC generated the most play with 10 terminals. • Grundy County—six

establishments with 33 terminals, Amount in \$4,932,485, \$15,054,250.52 played, \$3,710,157.70 cashed out, state share \$354,475.91, county share \$61,116.55.

• Will County licensed establishments with 115 terminals. Amount in \$23,998,423, \$74,868,207.72 played, \$17,571,739.96 cashed out, state share \$1,863,740.13, county share \$321,334.29.

 Essex —three establishments with 18 active terminals, Amount in \$2,026,623 \$6,648,696,43 played, \$1,496,553.91 cashed out, share \$153,720.63, municipality share \$26,503.55.

 Godley—one establishment with six terminals. \$1,319,015 Amount in \$4,068,461.29 played, \$964,911.56 cashed out, state share \$102,690.21, village share \$17,705.20.

• Braceville—one establishment with six terminals. Amount in \$697,643, amount \$2,122,104.94, played \$486653.74 cashed out, state share \$61,187.19, town share \$10,549.51.

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> Eric D. Fisher, publisher Ann Gill, editor

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# Mayor looking to beautify town with grant funds

On the corner of her desk is a stack of grant applications requesting funds to improve roads, municipal infrastructure and beautify the com-

It's not uncommon to see the mayor's car parked outside the Diamond Village Hall on a weekday

evening or weekend. It's her time to benches and flowers, a place where put down in writing funding requests people can stop and relax while out and this would be a nice place to stop put down in writing funding requests for projects that would benefit the

One of the grants Mayor Terry Kernc is working on seeks money to purchase and install an electronic marquee sign.

My plan is to tear out all the landscaping at the front of Village Hall, install the new sign and create a courtyard in that space with pavers,

walking," Kernc said.

There has been a noticeable increase of walkers in the village, and Kernc expects that will amplify once the village completes a sidewalk project that will increase the width of walkways from five to six feet—a project that is also projected to be completed with grant dollars.

"I think we will see more people

and this would be a nice place to stop and relax for a while," Kernc said.

The project is being submitted to T Mobile's Hometown Grant program, a five year initiative by the company that will award a total of \$25 million to small towns and rural communities across the United States.

The concept of the grants is to assist individuals and organizations make their communities stronger.

"I THINK WE WILL SEE MORE PEOPLE OUT WALKING WITH THE NEW SIDEWALKS AND THIS WOULD BE A NICE PLACE TO STOP AND RELAX FOR A WHILE.

**TERRY KERNC** 

VILLAGE OF DIAMOND MAYOR

### Conference champion speaksters

The Coalers are the top speaksters in their conference. With eight individual first place finishes and 19 medals overall, the team won the conference championship title in the Illinois Central Eight.

In a rare weekday tournament, 19 members of the speech team traveled Wilmington High School for the conference meet on Wednesday, Jan. 18.

Individual conference champions were McDonnell and Chessa Kuhel in humorous duet acting [HDA], Izzy Kostbade humorous interpretation [HI], Amelia Fritz in informative speaking [IS], Corinna Barkley and Karli Pierson tied for first in special occasion speaking [SOS] and Logan Hausman and Madison Wilson also tied for first in dramatic interpretation [DI].

Additional members of the conference team were Kinder, Kayla Connelly, Gio Bruno, Jada Moore, Lana Larson, Alyssa Parks, Jacob Cimino, Sam Vota, Angie Seeley, Dominic Cimino and Grey Vanek.

A few days prior to the conference meet, the Coalers captured second place at the Waubonsie Valley tournament.

First place medals were won by Kostbade, HI; Kuhel and McConnell, HDA, and Barkley, SOS.

Second place finishers were Hausman and Bruno, dramatic duet acting [DDA] and McConnell in original



COALERS ARE CONFERENCE champions in speech. The team captured the title at the Illinois Central Eight [ICE] Conference Speech tournament at Wilmington High School on Wednesday, Jan. 18. The winning team is comprised of [from left, row one]: Jada Moore, Lana Larson, Madison Wilson, Kayla Connelly, Izzy Kostbade, Kevin McConnell, Jacob Cimino and Karli Pierson. Standing are: Melody Kinder, Gio Bruno, Alyssa Parks, Logan Hausman, Chessa Kuhel, Kate Promis, Carrina Barkley, Sam Vota, Angie Seeley, Grey Vanek and Dominic Cimino.

tive speaking [INF] and Vanek and Kuhel in prose [PR].

place in DDA and Cimino, 21. Wilson and Kinder all earned a fifth place finish in extemporaneous speaking [ES], radio [RS] and original oratory [OO] respectively.

The team also had to sixth place finishes with Pierson in SOS and Wilson in DI.

Additionally, Kinder and

Coaler cheer takes third in conference

comedy [OC]. Fritz earned a Dominic Cimino were finalists third place finish in informa- in oratorical declamation [OD]

The team finished out the Vanek and her speaking week at the Sandwich partner Sam Vota took fourth Invitational on Saturday, Jan.

> Seeley captured second place in OC and Dominic Cimino was third in ES.

> to Vanek and Vota in DDA, Moore in INF and Pierson in SOS. Vanek also earned a medal in HI.

posted by Grace Heatherwick in INF, Moore in poetry reading and the HDA duo of Seeley and

Heatherwick and Connelly also earned sixth place finishes in ES and OD respectively.

The Coalers are preparing for the upcoming state series that begins with regional Fourth place medals went action Feb. 4 followed by the sectional tournament and the state finals in Peoria the weekend of Feb. 17 and 18. Reed-Custer is set to host the region-Fifth place finishes were al and Morris the sectional.

### Route 113 crossing to close for repairs

The Illinois Department of Transportation announced Route 113 [Division Street] will be closed for approximately two days next week in order to complete repairs to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad crossing in Coal City.

Work will begin Tuesday, Jan. 31. A detour will direct eastbound motorists around the

work area using North Broadway to North Street and east to First Avenue where they will turn south back to Route 113. Westbound traffic will use the same route just in the opposite order of travel First Avenue to North Street, west to Broadway and south to Route 113.

Motorists can expect delays and should allow extra time for trips through the area and be prepared for slow and stopped traffic. Motorists should avoid the work area, when feasible, use of alternate routes should be consid-

Drivers are urged to pay close attention to changed conditions and signs in the work zone, obey posted speed limits and refrain from using mobile devices and be alert for workers and equipment.

# Building a bigger branch

STAFF REPORT

Midland States Bank has gone vertical, as the structural steel framing has been set in place for its new, bigger branch office in the village of Diamond.

After weeks of little to no activity at the site, the frame was set onto the foundation, a sign that the project is gaining

The financial institution currently operates a drive-thru banking center at the southeast corner of Route 113 [Division Street] and Berta Road and the new facility will expand operations at that location as the new building is being constructed just west of

the existing building. At 2,058 square-feet, the tions of Missouri.

new walk-in facility will feature two drive-thru lanes on the east side of the building with parking to the west. Construction of the bank-

ing facility was announced in 2021 and came shortly after the company closed the doors to its location in downtown Coal City. Village officials say the

project was slowed due to several factors, but is back on track and moving along.
"It's looking good and I

can't wait to see it," Diamond Mayor Terry Kernc. said. The existing brick struc-

ture will be demolished once the new bank is up and run-

Midland States Bank operates over 50 banking locations throughout Illinois and por-

### Senator Rezin renamed **Deputy Minority Leader**

103rd General Assembly begins its work in Springfield, State Senator Sue Rezin (R-Morris) has been renamed as the Deputy Minority Leader for the Illinois Senate Republican Caucus.

"It is my great honor to remain the Deputy Minority Leader for the Illinois Senate Republicans under the new leadership of Leader John Curran," said Rezin. "I am grateful for Leader Curran's confidence and eagerly look forward to working with him as we strive to make Illinois a better place for everyone who calls it home."

Senator Rezin previously served as the Deputy Minority

SPRINGFIELD- As the served as state senator since December 2010.

> "Senator Rezin has shown a true commitment to the people of our state and improving Illinois government on their behalf," said Leader Curran. "I have full trust in her leadership abilities and know that she will continue to be a tremendous asset to me and

> our entire Caucus." Senator Rezin, who previously represented the 38th Senate District during the 102nd General Assembly, will continue to serve as the state senator for the District in the 103rd General Assembly. The new 38th District contains parts of Bureau, Dekalb, Grundy, LaSalle, Kendall, and

Photo by Zadie Sims Leader during the 102nd General Assembly and has THE COAL CITY CHEERLEADERS (from left) Ava Garrelts, Cambree Davidson, Gabby Babcock and Brooklyn Labanowski perform dur-

Will counties.

### ing the start of their routine during the I.C.E. conference at Reed-Custer. The Lady Coalers finished in third place. Johnson named to president's

Preston Johnson, of Coal City, was among the more than 800 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa named to the president's list for the 2022 fall semester.

list at Iowa

Johnson is a fourth year student in Iowa's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and is majoring in Neuroscience.

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### 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. Curbside Pick Up - Monday thru Thursday 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Friday 9 a.m.-6 p.m., and

Winter Read Challenge. Calling CCPLD library cardholders of all ages to "Cozy up With CCPLD" this winter. From now thru Feb. 20 log your reading and complete activities through the Beanstack app. Don't want to use the app? Pick up a paper copy at the front desk in the Library. Get

#### COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS Preschool Storytime, 6 p.m.

Check online event calendar

Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information on the procedures for curbside pick up go to our website at www.ccpld.org.

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

prizes for completing the challenge and enter to win a grand prize. Keep going for more chances to win.

Thursday, Jan. 26- Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

Terrific Tots, 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27-Storytime at The Cove, 10 a.m.

Fun Fridays, 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28-Teen Hygge Day, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Teens 6th thru 12th grade can register to drop in the Teen Zone to experience a cozy Hygge day of self care, relax-

ation, and a sugar scrub craft.

Monday, Jan. 30-Makerspace
Cart Mondays, All Day

Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

Preschool Storytime, 11 a.m. Eager Readers Homeschool Edition, 1 p.m.

Eager Readers, 4 p.m. Family Lapsit, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 31-CCPLD Local History and Genealogy Resources, 1-2 p.m. Join the head of reference, Bryan Gilligan, to explore a little local history and some of the genealogical resources that you can find here at the Library. Refreshments will

Wednesday, Feb. 1-Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

Family Lapsit, 10 a.m. Paper & More, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Preschool Storytime, 10 a.m. Early Dismissal Day, 11:45

a.m.-2 p.m. Teen Hot Cocoa Bar, 2:30-4 p.m. Teens 6th thru 12th grade can drop in the Teen Zone and have a cup of hot cocoa with all

Teen Anime Club – 4-5:30 p.m.

COALER CHEERLEADERS Carlie Ellena and Addy Ritchie embrace after getting third place during the ice conference competition held at Reed-Custer.

# Free Press Newspapers readers

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

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

Ťhe Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel. In cases where the publisher selects not to publish these remarks the newspaper makes every effort to forward unpublished comments to the parties to whom they

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

Submissions by email courant@fpnusa.com with "soundoff in the subject line or go to www.freep ressnewspapers.com, -> Submit Soundoff or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. Mail comments to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

### Karma for Joe

SHADOW LAKES—I have only one thing to say about Joe Biden and the documents: Karma. Joe is a Hillary. Eddie

### Minutes of meetings

BRAIDWOOD—Someone called in last week complaining about the city not posting the minutes of the city council meetings. I don't care how long or short the meetings are and I don't think other taxpayers care too. So don't waste a city worker's time and expense of paying somebody to keep track of how many minutes the meetings are. Some people will complain about anything.

#### Too much control

WILMINGTON-Ever since an Iowa farm was donated to the Wilmington Area Historical Society, it seems some want to control the land for their own benefit. According to the bylaws and constitution it's illegal for anyone to use the land as a benefit to themselves or otherwise. When the land came up for possibility being donated to the museum, many questions still lurked in the minds of others. The Board was not told the truth and why was the property tax put in an WAHS officer's name and sent to their home address? Some have not been honest in the beginning. Is this how a Board of Directors act towards each other? Each time a question is raised about the acquisition this individual gets upset? It's because the Board had questions that needed to be answered and the vice president did not want anyone's opinion except theirs. It's been a battle since the land became the museum's. Seems like there are two different Boards: One that does the correct thing and the other who aren't honest. What will happen to this land if the museum was to fold? Please residents of Wilmington. Come to the meetings. Ask questions. The land is at stake. The only twist words were wrote in the Sound Off last week. See who is telling the truth and who is lying to the public. It's your

Running out of money
SHADOW LAKES—Every day that I watch the news it brings a tear to my eyes. That tear is caused by our elected officials who can't solve the problems of this country. The mayor of New York received \$9 million so far to care for illegals shipped there. Mayor Lighthead is asking Washington for millions of dollars for the same problem. Here is the rub: What happens when this money runs out? Answer to the problem is to close the border. Also, did everyone receive their Social Security check? I am waiting for the government to tell us. At this rate Social Security will run out of money. Maybe, they don't understand, to make this system work, you have to pay in. If you look at the US debt clock, you will see 10 million people who are capable to work are not. That is 10 million not paying into the system. What do you think these people are doing for money?

### Religion is dying

WILMINGTON—I found last week's Soundoff page hilarious. Evangelical Christians love to portray themselves as persecuted martyrs when the opposite is actually true. Historically speaking the church tortured and killed what they deemed heretics and blasphemers. Today the Evangelicals persecute the LGBTQ community as if they have the right to enforce their own dim view of morality. Religion is used as a weapon because this is the new inquisition. When these people whine about Christianity is under attack they ignore the statistics that show it's still the dominant religion in America but is losing influence due to the rise of other forms of spirituality, especially the "nones" who don't belong to any organized religions. The younger people are not signing on to the old orders. Religion is dying out all by itself. But the irony on display is these people claim to have faith in God and Iesus but are so terrified of the future. Where is that sense of serenity they were promised? They get heaven and their enemies get hell, yet that doesn't comfort these doubters. In closing, religious freedom is not under attack but is being perverted from a hateful minority angry that the world is changing and they are becoming more irrelevant every day. Amen.

### Frivolous spending

COAL CITY—In answer to Better Things. I was glad to see your comments about the school spending. Thought I was the only one in Coal City who thinks the School Board's frenzied spending should be curtailed. I ask myself are they nuts? Real estate taxes are out of sight now. We do not need the extra and frivolous spending which the Board and others are pushing. Maybe we need a whole new Board who puts taxpayers first.

### As you are told

SHADOW LAKES—First, it's your gas stove. Then it's your gas fireplace. Then your wood fireplace, then burning outside. Remember the government knows what's best for you. Do as you are told. Eddie

### School choice

SHADOW LAKES-Why is it parents can't use school choice across the country and use their tax money they paid for education to be put toward the school of their choice? Is this a communist, Democrat plan to indoctrinate

children? After all, a parent should be able to choose where their money goes to educate their own children. Can anybody answer this?

### Corruption costs

BRAIDWOOD-Thank you king Mike Madigan. He controls the politicians in Illinois. Thank you for your corruption with ComEd. Each and every family in Illinois will pay \$218 more a year for their electric bill thanks to the proposed rate raise ComEd is asking for. Thank you king Madigan. Thank you for your corrup-

#### A foreign invasion

DIAMOND—Dear Cindy and Ryder from Wilmington. The states of Arizona and Texas are on the border with Mexico. In the last two years over two million illegal aliens have come across these borders. That doesn't include the boat loads coming from Cuba and some Asians to Florida's borders. New York City is the only U.S. city having a larger population than that. U.S. citizens from Arizona and Texas live extremely close to these borders. Imagine living one of these homes where you and your family carry on your daily lives the best you can. Hoards of people trespass on your land every single day. Your land and home have been vandalized, entered and stolen from and terrorized you and your family. Would you want protection from local police or the National Guard? Would you want your Governor to intercede and act on your behalf. If your Governor acted to protect you would you still question their Christianity at this point? Who is the least of us in this daily event, you as a homeowner and family or these daily multitudes of interlopers? Never judge another until you walked a mile in their shoes. These strangers trespassing on people's yards and homes have a different perspective than you or I sitting comfortably in our own homes. These are not immigrants. My late husband was a first generation from his family born in the United States. They made preparations and agreed to all requirements to be here. Praise God for that. Please pray for these citizens dealing with this terrible situation 24/7 through no fault of their own. Sharon

#### Know the facts

BRAIDWOOD—In response to the five negative soundoffs about Braidwood. Fact, yes there is an election coming and the only thing this group has is to write fictitious posts trying to make this administration look bad. Fact, the city is in great shape: Businesses are coming to Braidwood and there are plenty of new houses going up that are selling as quickly as they are being built. We now have a great police department that cares about the community. People are moving to Braidwood instead of leaving. Fact, Mr. Smith has been in office 16 years. He continually tells us how much good he does. Why didn't he purchase these much needed vehicles before this council took office? Could it be that when this council took office he was \$55,000 over budget and since this council took over he has been held accountable. Post the bills. Fact, since the city does not have a full time webmaster it is not required to post on the city's website. Men who served. Fact, not one person on the council disagreed with Ms. Dixon about a street named after her father. There is protocol that has to be followed and an ordinance must be passed just like when Wayne Saltzman's was done. Residents in the dark. Do you work in the city office to know what goes on? It is a fact that Ford, Chevy and Ultimate Rides will be built here. It is also a fact that there are corporate offices, engineers, architects and many other people involved in building these businesses. There is also a colored rendering available at city hall for anyone to see these future buildings. I don't see you complaining the Jewel in Diamond isn't being built yet. The only business the last administration brought in was an ice machine. And yes several of you are involved in writing these fictitious soundoffs in hopes of getting back into office to finish the destruction you started. As Senator Moynihan once said, "You are entitled to your own opinion but not your own facts.

### The yes men

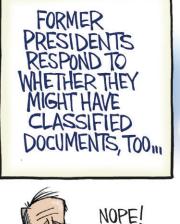
BRAIDWOOD—After reading "Infrastructure Projects" article in the Jan. 18 Braidwood Journal, one thing became very clear to me. The city engineer has confirmed everything that commissioner Smith has been saying for years. The article contains a list of at least 10 projects that the engineer participated in. Not a single one dealt with the Street Department. Commissioner Smith was apparently correct when he kept protesting the depletion of his budget in order to inflate other departments, in particular the Administration Department. After all, the huge raises that other city council members voted for themselves have to be paid for. And you can bet that they will vote a big raise for the administrator if they are all back in office. Of course that raise won't happen until shortly after election day. I suppose though that some of this is Commissioner Smith's fault. If only he could have learned to not question anything that the administrator wants and say "yes sir" just as the other council members do at every meeting.

#### The national debt WILMINGTON-Trump added \$8 trillion

to the national debt so I hope the readers understand that the debt ceiling needs to be raised to cover the debt incurred during the Trump administration and not the current one. After all they raised the ceiling for Trump three times with no conces-

### A special time

BRAIDWOOD—For decades, the time period between Jan. 1 and the municipal Consolidated Election held on the first Tuesday in April has become a gruesome reminder to everyone on just how crooked and underhanded our local elected officials are. Small town politics are













honest and having strong moral principals, moral uprightness." Are you sure about integri-

### Viva Las Braidwood

BRAIDWOOD-How many gaming businesses do we really need? The city currently has eight gaming businesses in town: Marathon, Freaks Top Fuel, Hog Wild, Abbi's Video Slots, Korner Keg, Emmy's, BP and Golden Mine. The newest Liquor and Gaming going up now in the old laundromat location on Rt. 129. Just heard it's not the newest one folks. Heard our administrator is bringing in another liquor and gaming business into Braidwood, Birdie's from Wilmington. Of course our administrator is all for them coming to town. So we are going to have 10 gaming businesses here soon. In last week's sound-off someone stated that in order to have a gaming license you have to have a liquor license with both the city and the state to get gaming through the state. This doesn't include the liquor license only for Braidwood Liquors. Also in last week's sound-off it said the administrator knows this brings in the most revenue with the state. It may be bringing in more revenue to the city but how is this helping to lower our property taxes? We need more retail business here. Maybe if we keep bringing in businesses from Wilmington to Braidwood one day we'll have the retail sales tax like they

### The first thing

WILMINGTON—McCarthy said the first thing the 118th Congress would do would be to read the Constitution on the house floor. That didn't happen so is there any reason to believe he would punish George Santos for lying?

### Opposed to dues hike

COAL CITY—Shame on the Coal City Area Club board members for the ridiculous hike in dues which will hurt senior citizen members. All their excuses for doing this make no sense and we all know they depend on nobody attending the meetings. That's exactly what they needed to get that passed. And did they even have enough board members present to legally pass a vote? Something on the agenda that important should have been announced in the newspaper so members could have been present to voice their opinions about it. Time to get some new board members in there who actually care about the senior citizens because

#### this board sure doesn't. Hard drive in question

WILMINGTON—Some people need to be reminded there is no Hunter Biden laptop. There's a hard drive that Rudy Giuliani brought back from the Ukraine that has all kinds of chain of custody problems.

### Both bad

WILMINGTON-A lot of people say guns don't kill people. Neither does Fentanyl. Just curious. How many of you gun owners are members of a well regulated militia?

### So blessed

WILMINGTON—This town is so blessed. We have many wonderful restaurants: Hayden's, The Island, the Chick-A-Dee, the Chinese Restaurant and El Patron's dine in. We have many places to have a nice glass of wine or any other kind of drink. We have two grocery stores, our amazing Rt. 66 attraction Nelly's, banks, dollar stores, a bowling alley, a movie theater, all the denominations of houses of worship where we can worship God in our own ways. We have an amazing school system. This town is really amazing and we are so blessed. I have been fortunate have to meet five men who held or are holding the title of mayor and all the men and women who have served as aldermen over the years. All of you have my admiration, thanks and appreciation for the job that you do. I know their job is not easy and they are criticized more than they are thanked. If anybody thinks they can do a better job then by all means run for office. We have so many organizations in this town that care about the community and help people. I'm very fortunate that I'm able to help organizations in town. My two major projects are helping the rotary get the playground done in Linda's memory and the Historical Society in Roger's memory. I'm not a perfect person. I don't claim to be and I never will be. And to anyone in Wilmington if I've ever hurt you in any way in something that I said or did it was not intentional and I apologize from the bottom of my heart and I hope that you can forgive me for anything I may have hurt your feelings about. I will always be so happy that I moved to Wilmington and you all will always hold a special place in my heart. God bless you all. Sheri Michaels

often worse than politics on a national level. Lies, baseless accusations, finger pointing, name calling, fear tactics and more get caked in mud and thrown over the heads of the residents and all that happens is that our community gets torn apart. Targets get put on the backs of those who don't agree with the powers that be and their appointed henchmen in an attempt to silence any possibility of reality or truth from seeping through the walls of city hall and giving our current leaders a black eye.

#### Wasting tax dollars WILMINGTON—Other than a vendetta or

retaliation, how does investigating Hillary, Trump, Biden, Hunter and all the rest help you and me? My wallet doesn't show any help. Think how all the investigation money spent could help people. It's all for political theater.

#### Majority wants it WILMINGTON—Since when do county

sheriffs pick and choose what laws they are going to enforce and not enforce. A majority of Illinoisans want assault weapons banned. So, once again, the minority whines and the squeaky wheel gets all the grease.

#### Protecting Social Security WILMINGTON—It's that time again when

we must protect the middle class. Now that the GOP once again controls the House, Social Security and Medicare are threatened. When President Bush tried to privatize them in 2006, voters kicked Republicans in the backside because nobody messes with these sources of financial support and gets away with it. So Republicans know they must be sneaky by using the excuse that the national debt should be eliminated. And what does this mean? It means everyday people must tighten their belts and sacrifice what they have worked their entire lives to attain, Social Security and Medicare. So when House Speaker McCarthy and company pretend to be looking out for the country, remember that the welfare of our nation was the last thing on their minds not so Irene

### Electioneering

BRAIDWOOD—Maybe city employees shouldn't be giving their candidates papers or any city documents that should be FOIA'd by the candidates if they're wanting information. All city employees should be remaining neutral during this campaign on city time or on city property or using city computers. By state statute 10 ILCS 5/17-29, Electioneering is influencing voters/soliciting votes and political persuasion are prohibited. So two of the candidates chosen by the administrator who were in and out of city hall in his office behind closed doors and leaving with paperwork before turning in their petitions for nomination should not have happened. Once again, who's going to stop him? Question is, why didn't this city clerk put a notice in the Braidwood Journal about upcoming election like previous city clerks have for the last 30+ years? This notice would give a timeline of when petition packets could be picked up in city hall, what the filing dates were for those petitions, filing of objections to those petitions, withdrawing of a candidate, etc. The mayor stated at a meeting that anyone wanting petition packets would have to go to the county to pick up or go online. Once again he had no clue what he was talking about. Stop listening to the administrator. I inquired with the county clerk's office and they advised that packets are to be distributed by the municipality where they were running for office as it has always been. The county does not hand out petition packets. So question is, why had individuals who were persuaded by the administrator to run for office come to city hall, met with him behind closed doors and walked out with papers and other candidates who would be running against these individuals not of his choosing, not being given the same privilege? One of his candidates got their petition signatures within one day, next day had to go to Will County Clerks office to record their Statement of Economic Interest, then back into city hall to notarize petitions by clerk's clerical staff and filing the petition for nomination on the same day with the city clerk. Boy that was quick, one day? Once your petitions for nomination are filed with the city clerk you're considered a candidate in the April 4 General Election. With that being said, no candidate running for office should be allowed to come and go inside city hall behind the administrator's closed door with their petitions, paperwork or any reports or documentation he wants them to have without doing an FOIA for any public records and walks out of city hall. If you're handing them reports or any documents they should be given to all candidates. All city employees should be remaining neutral, no comments about candi-

dates on city time, city property, city Facebook

Unfortunately there were city employees that

have been posting on social media the week

after petitions were filed. Others were persuad-

the

discussing

upcoming

election.

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### **Beat The Cold With These Hot Deals!**



### Stranded drivers on tollways can call \*999

While the Illinois Tollway prides itself on its ability to keep drivers moving, it also quickly provides help to customers who suddenly find themselves stopped or stranded along the Tollway system.

Dialing \*999 should be the first call made by any driver highways in northern Illinois whose vehicle becomes disabled or who needs help while using the Tollway system.

The Tollway's staff of telecommunicators and call takers responds to those calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week to rapidly dispatch H.E.L.P. trucks, maintenance vehicles or Illinois State Police District 15 troopers to provide assistance to customers help is always only a four-digit stopped or stranded along the phone call away--\*999.

Last year, nearly 37,000 drivers dialed \*999 for assistance, whether it was changing a flat tire, arranging for a tow or diverting traffic away from a stalled vehicle.

Drivers on other major also can dial \*999 to receive assistance from the appropriate transportation or law enforcement agencies.

Drivers may also use \*999 to report other non-emergency situations, including unsafe drivers, roadway debris or even pedestrians on the

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### 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

### **Bobcat Jr. Football & Cheerleading**

## **BIG GAME**



### Sunday, Feb. 12 Four big winners!

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Get your square and support the Bobcats organization Call Joe at 815-693-8284

### Packed with a punch, try this Derby Daiquiri

for the bar and restaurant business over the last three vears. A shut down during a global pandemic followed by uncertainty around rules and regulations for reopening proved to be too much for many bars.

Fort Lauderdale's legendary Mai Kai Polynesian Restaurant and Tiki Bar has been closed since late 2020 for a myriad of reasons, and its tion boom when future was in doubt until a roadside attrac-South Florida-based investment group teamed up with the Thornton family to save one of the world's greatest

While there is no official reopening date posted on the Mai Kai's website, they plan to reopen in 2023. Renovations are likely running in the millions of dollars. Yes, the Mai Kai is that special. This week we toast the legacy of the king of Polynesian bars with one of their own creations, the Derby

Tiki lore is built on legendary bars, innovative bartenders, and amazing rum drinks. The Mai-Kai is 3 for 3 and is regarded by many (including myself) as the best tiki bar in the world.

Everyone wearing Hawaiian shirt today knows the names Trader Vic and Donn Beach, they may not be familiar with Chicago natives Bob and Jack Thornton.

Bob and Jack Thornton were captivated by tiki culture as children during the 1940's during which time the Thornton family frequently visited Don the Beachcomber's Chicago locathe tion at 101 E. Walton Place.

The Thornton brothers would go on to attend Stanford where they were regular visiSan Francisco further fueling their dream of opening a Polynesian themed restaurant.

After completing their military service in 1955, the brothers opened the Mai-Kai in 1956 during the postwar Florida vacathe Sunshine State.

The Mai-Kai wasn't just a bar with some bamboo décor and the occasional hula dance routine, it was an experience. It still is. Once you cross the wood slat bridge you will find an island escape complete with waterfalls, tropical gardens, world-class tiki drinks, authentic Polynesian artifacts, top-notch nightly

Behind every great tiki bar is a great tiki bartender. Trader Vic's had Vic Bergeron, Don the Beachcomber had Donn Beach, and the Mai-Kai had Mariano Licudine. Bob and Jack Thornton

Polynesian floor shows.

did not leave Chicago empty handed on their venture to create what would become the world's greatest tiki bar. They lured master mixologist Licudine away from the Don the Beachcomber's Chicago location giving the Mai-Kai instant credibility in the tiki

menu from tiki drinks made in the tradition of Don the Beachcomber. Donn's classic Zombies, Mai Tais, Daiquiris, and Grogs are still served daily in Fort Lauderdale.

The Mai-Kai was in continuous operation for over 60

THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL

Brian Rung

sure in 2020 and is the only operating establishment with a direct connection to tiki's golden era. In 2015 the Mai-Kai was added to the of Historic Places. Licudine

credited inventing a laundry list of tiki

tions were popping up all over drinks and spin-offs of existing tiki drinks before his retirement in 1980 He was known for his

innovative approach to the

Daiquiri platform, particularly

with his Derby Daiquiri which put him in the national spotlight after winning a 1959 contest to create a drink to promote the Florida Derby. I hope that everyone has an opportunity to sip a Derby Daiquiri at Mai-Kai at some point, but if that just isn't possible we'll have to make one at

home. Good news all around

for the Derby Daiquiri. It's

easy to make, easy to drink, and the ingredients are easy to Daiquiris are drinks that are often made and rarely made well. There are a few basic principles to follow when turning out a quality Daiquiri. The two keys to the Daiquiri (and every other blended drink) are flavor and

Flavor is no-brainer. Use Licudine built the Mai-Kai fresh ingredients whenever possible, mix with good rum and the end result will be a great drink. This means using only fresh squeezed lemon and lime juice, "100% juice" options if you must use canned or bottled fruit juice, and rum that doesn't taste like

consistency.

Consistency in recipes is tough to gauge in blended cocktails because blenders aren't just blenders anymore, some are super juicing vitamin extracting machines that can liquefy just about anything.

Take this into considera-National Register tion when following this, or any recipe that requires blending for any amount of time. You have to know your blender. Try not to over-blend or under-blend.

The best way to do this is pulse in 5 second increments, checking after each pulse until you get a feel for your machine. It is best to use crushed

ice in your blender and blend less as opposed to using large ice cubes and blending more. Large ice cubes will take longer to blend, turning out a watered-down flavor with the occasional irregular chunk of original Derby

Daiquiri used light Puerto Rican rum, but genuine Puerto Rican rum has largely disappeared from the mixology landscape even though Bacardi is labeled Puerto Rican In recipes that call for Puerto Rican rum use the

entry level offerings from Cruzan, Flor de Cana, or Mount Gav. The Derby Daiquiri is

built in a blender and served in your favorite cocktail glass. Combine in blender:

1 1/2 ounces light rum 1/2 ounce fresh lime juice 1/2 ounce simple syrup 1 ounce fresh orange juice Handful of crushed ice Blend on high until smooth, usually 15 seconds

Pour unstrained into

### Federal suit file against Illinois' assault weapons ban

BY PETER HANCOCK CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Illinois State Rifle Association has joined forces with other gun rights advocates in filing a federal lawsuit challenging the state's new ban on the sale and manufacture of semiautomatic weapons and high-capacity magazines. It's the latest legal chal-

lenge to the law, which went into effect upon Gov. JB Pritzker's signature on Jan. 10. and the first filed in federal

The case, which will be heard in the Southern District of Illinois, was filed within a week of a similar case being filed in state court in Crawford County. Additionally, Thomas DeVore, a private attorney and filed suit in Effingham County injunction to block the new law's enforcement.

"Gov. Pritzker and the legislators who voted for this law did this for self-serving political purposes and are not upholding the United States Constitution," Richard Pearson, executive director of the ISRA, said in a statement. 'The Second Amendment is fundamentally about selfdefense, and the Amendment is about not having our rights infringed. This new law makes criminals out of law-abiding citizens.

manufacture of a long list of firearms - including certain SPRINGFIELD - The rifles, shotguns and handguns - that it categorizes as "assault weapons." It also requires people who currently own such weapons to register them with the Illinois State Police by Jan. It also bans the sale and

manufacture of magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition for a long gun or 15 rounds for a handgun. Those who already possess such devices would be able to keep and possess them on private property, on a gun range, at a licensed gun shop to undergo a repair, or while traveling to one of those locations, provided the magazine is unloaded and kept in a case. The assault weapons ban

unsuccessful candidate for also prohibits the use, sale and attorney general in 2022, has possession of devices - including items known as "switches" and is seeking an emergency and "bump stocks" - that increase the rate at which a gun fires by either converting it into a fully automatic weapon or making it fire like one. A fully automatic weapon continues firing as long as the user squeezes the trigger, while a semiautomatic weapon fires only one round for each trigger pull.

But plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit argue that the weapons banned under the law are commonly used in the United States, that they have been traditionally accepted as lawful firearms, and that they

popular weapons among gun owners, accounting approximately 20 percent of all firearms sold in recent years.

They also challenge the use of the term "assault weapon," arguing that it was coined by "anti-gun publicists' and that the weapons covered by the law are vastly different from those used in the mili-The suit alleges that the

law violates the plaintiffs' constitutional rights under the Second and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

The law was prompted in large part by the July 4 mass shooting at an Independence Day parade in Highland Park that left seven people dead and dozens more injured or traumatized.

The alleged shooter in that case used a Smith & Wesson M&P 15 rifle with three magazines of 30 rounds each, items that are included within the scope of the new

That weapon is similar to AR-style rifles that have been used in numerous mass shootings in the U.S. But the plaintiffs in the lawsuit argue that those weapons actually account for only a small percentage of overall gun crimes in the country.

When Pritzker signed the legislation, Illinois became the ninth state in the nation to enact some form of assault weapons ban. But those laws are now under scrutiny amid shifting legal and political opinions about the meaning of the Second Amendment, which reads: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.'

As far back as 1938, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld

Oklahoma bank robbers charged with transporting a sawed-off double-barrel shotgun across state lines, holding that such weapons had no reasonable relationship to a wellregulated militia and thus were not protected by the Second Amendment.

Seventy years later, however, the court struck down a Washington, D.C., ordinance banning the possession of handguns in the district, holdthat the Second Amendment does guarantee an individual's right to keep and bear arms. That ruling held that the clause referring to well-regulated militias was only "prefatory" in nature and does not limit or expand the "operational" clause that guarantees a right to keep and bear

Even in that case, however. former Justice Antonin Scalia wrote that the Second Amendment is not absolute and that it does not guarantee a right to keep and carry any type of weapon for any pur-

"We think that limitation is fairly supported by the historical tradition of prohibiting the carrying of 'dangerous and unusual weapons," he wrote.

But then last year, in a case striking down the state of New York's requirement that people had to demonstrate proper cause" for a concealed carry permit, the court said the Second Amendment protects the right to keep and bear arms that are "in common use," and that restrictions violate the amendment if they are not "consistent with the Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation."

As of Jan. 18, the federal court in the Southern District had not yet set a schedule for hearing the case.

### **Custer Park Fire Dept.** offering smoke detectors

The Custer Park Fire Department is teaming up with the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance to provide safety education as well as free 10-year sealed battery smoke detec-

This program was started firefighter/paramedic Leslie Crum who was the victim of a house fire in 2018 and suffered smoke inhalation after going back inside for a family pet and noticed the smoke detectors that previously had worked, were not.

Thankfully Crum saved the dog, but almost lost her life due to being overcome with smoke. She was taken to a local hospital where she was placed on a ventilator to breathe and then was flown by Life Flight to a burn center in Rockford, IL.

Now Leslie has a passion for public safety and education and wanted to bring a smoke detector program to her fire department.

The smoke detector proram is designed to educate Illinois residents on the dangers of home fires and how to prevent fires from occurring as well as making sure residents have the proper working smoke detector. The 10-year sealed bat-

tery detector ensures that the power source can not be removed from the detector. If properly maintained, these detectors will last their 10-year lifetime.

For more information on the smoke detector and installation program, please contact Leslie at 815-252-4768 or paramediclcrum@yahoo.com.



### Gigantar welcomed to Route 66



LIGHTING THE WAY – Gigantar made its way to Joliet and the Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66, with an official lighting ceremony held on Friday, Jan. 20. Hundreds of visitors showed up to watch the ceremony despite the freezing temperatures.

### Gas prices continue to rise

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 3.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.52/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 36.5 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 5.8 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$2.99/g while the most expensive was \$4.49/g,

a difference of \$1.50/g. Locally, prices jumped 16 cents per gallon in Braidwood (\$3.52/g. Monday), 12 cents

(average) in Wilmington to \$3.49 and remained unchanged in Coal City at \$3.49/g average.

"Gasoline prices continued their upward trajectory last week as oil prices pulled them higher across the majority of the country, and continued refinery challenges kept supply of gasoline from rising more substantially," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at

"Macroeconomic factors have continued to weigh on oil and refined products, as strong demand in China hasn't been slowed much by a surge in new Covid cases. In addition, releases of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve have wrapped up. Concerns are increasing that without additional oil, supply will tighten in the weeks ahead, especially as the nation starts to move away from softer demand in the height of winter. Moving forward, it doesn't look good for motorists, with prices likely to continue accelerating."

The national average price of gasoline has risen 11.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.39/g. The national average is up 30.2 cents per gallon from a month ago.

The national average price of diesel has risen 2.6 cents in the last week and stands at

### **Epilepsy Support Group forming in Coal City**

Illinois Epilepsy Support als, access to counseling, and and Resources provides support to people with epilepsy in tion.

Central and Northwest Illinois. These include but are not limited to: peer support, caregiver support, support in accessing benefits, navigating insurance, identification and

linkage to medical profession-

An introductory meeting will be held Tuesday, Jan. 31, beginning at 10 a.m. in New Hope Presbyterian Church, 80 N. Garfield St., Coal City. Beans-and-Bite will be hosting

the group.

the Illinois Epilepsy Support and Resources Facebook page, streatorunlimited.org/epilepsy or contact Stephanie Harcharik at 815-673-5574.

Streator Unlimited, Inc. administers this project under a grant from the Illinois Dept. of Human Services.



Last Will and Testaments, Trusts, Durable Power of Attorney and Health Care Power of Attorney are serious concerns that need to be addressed while you are living. Gain peace of mind knowing your affairs are in order by calling for an appointment in taking care of these important life decisions.





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It's the largest handmade guitar sculpture ever created. And now, it's nestled into its home as part of the marquee at the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 in downtown Joliet.

On Jan. 20, hundreds of rock & roll fans waited in the cold for the official opening ceremony at the museum at 9 W. Cass St. in downtown Joliet, as the lights were turned on by Cheap Trick frontman Rick Nielsen, with help from local dignitaries, sign designer Shannon MacDonald, and singersongwriter Jim Peterik, founder of the rock band

The 24-foot-long guitar that was fashioned for the museum even has a name: Gigantar The Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 is a public charity 501c3 nonprofit organization that exists to preserve the history of musicians and bands with ties to Illinois while educating visitors about the state's rich music history.

The mission of the museum is to meet their goals through operation of a worldclass museum that collects, preserves and exhibits artifacts of artists who have reached national and international recognition, and by providing enlightening educational programs.

The museum is currently undergoing renovations. The building will include exhibit space, a performance music hall and the Illinois Rock & Roll Museum on Route 66 Music Hall of Fame, gift shop, and is the home of the Road To Rock Radio online streaming radio station.

Prior to installation at the museum, Gigantar made a short tour of Route 66 from Springfield to Chicago, stopping in towns along the way, including a quick stop in front of the Gemini Giant.

### Wilmington Freemason's chili cook-off seeks entries

Freemasons Lodge #208 will be having their 13th annual Chili Cook-Off to fund the Pedals for Progress program on Sunday, Feb. 26 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Tasting and a bowl of house chili \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids over 11 and free for

Wilmington kids 11 and under. There will also be \$1 hot dogs available.

Wilmington Lodge is located at 311 Main St., Wilmington.

Think you have what it takes to be the Chili King? Register to be a contestant. Call Ben Stickel 815-370-7331 or Matt Lohmar 815-210-9606









**Email submissions** questions contact: GymshoeArt@gmail.

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### OBITUARIES

### Troy C. Dixon \_\_\_\_\_

MORRIS-Troy C. Dixon, 49, of Morris, passed away peacefully on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023. Born Sept. 6, 1973 in Joliet, Troy

Christopher was a son of Karen Jean (Willett) Dixon, of Coal City and the late Jimmie Melvin Dixon. He was raised in Morris and in past years attended Phelan Acres Bible Church. Troy worked as a mechanic; was employed by Meineke Car Care Center in Crest Hill for several years, as well as other local automotive repair shops. Troy took pleasure in fishing, and cherished the time spent with his son, Ďakota. Survivors include his mother, Karen; son,

Dakota Christopher and the mother of his son, Caryl Dixon, both of Stafford, VA; brother, Sean (Suzanne) Dixon, of Morris; half-brother, Josh; half-sister, Felicia; two nephews, Justin and Noah; four aunts: Martha McKinnis, of Texas; Linda Gray, of Oklahoma; Joyce Jackson, of Texas and Wanda Davis, of Morris and numer-

Troy was preceded in death by his father, Jimmie Dixon on Feb. 8, 2016 and his grandparents: Ida and Jimmie Dixon, formerly of Texas and Charles and Wilma Willett, formerly of Kentucky and two uncles, Gary Ďixon and Danny Dixon, both formerly of

Private family visitation and services were held at Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City with Pastor Rodney Chappell officiating. Cremation rites were accorded at the conclusion of the services, and Troy will be laid to rest in Evergreen Cemetery in Morris.

Preferred memorials may be made as contributions to his family for their distribution.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Troy'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.

### \_ Lori Regan-Suski \_

BOURBONNAIS—Lori Regan-Suski, 59, of Bourbonnais, and formerly of Romeoville, passed away Friday, Jan. 20, 2023 at the home of her brother in

Born July 2, 1963 in Chicago, Lori Ann was a daughter of Eugene Robert and Louise Ann (Mareczyk) Regan. She was raised and educated in Romeoville and graduated from Romeoville High School with the class of 1981. Lori was a compassionate caregiver, who throughout

the years was active with A.B.A.T.E, volunteered with Toys for Tots and was always a tremendous supporter of Veteran Organizations. She had a love of animals; enjoyed motorcycles and traveling, and cherished her nieces and nephews. Lori's life was always centered on family, and she was fortunate to have many dear friends who were like family.

Survivors include her fiancé, and the true love of her life, Eddie Anderson, of Bourbonnais; three brothers and sisters-in-law: Robert and Cheri Regan, of Coal City; Kevin and Gidget Regan, of Yorkville and Christopher and Bridget Davis, of Forsythe, MO; nieces and nephews: Laura Regan, Loren (Jason) Klinker, Darius (Gabby) Regan, Amber (Ryan) Jerz, Cheyenne (Sean) Conn, Faith Regan (fiancé, Aaron Harrison) and Dakota Regan; several great-nieces and great-nephews, and aunts and uncles: Cathy Albright, of Plainfield; Ronald (Penny) Pilarczyk, of Clarendon Hills, IL; Robert ( Joyce) Pilarczyk, of Naperville; June Swiec, of Chicago and Nancy DiChiria, of Northlake, IL.

Lori was preceded in death by her grandparents, parents, step-father, William Davis and nephew, Brandon

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

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation and open house at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of IL Route 113 in Coal City on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2023 from 1 p.m. until the time of Life Celebration at 4 p.m. Lori's cousin, Pastor Thomas Nowaczyk will officiate.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Lori's memory to her family for their distribution in offsetting final expenses.

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

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

### Paul Stein

GERMANTOWN HILLS—Paul Daniel Stein, 41, of Germantown Hills, formerly of Chillicothe, found eternal peace on Friday, Jan. 20, 2023. Born April 27, 1981, Paul Daniel

was the son of Mark Stein and Diane Perkins. He was an idea guy with clear focus on his professional goals. Paul worked tirelessly to earn supervisory and managerial jobs throughout his long tenures with Mediacom and most recently Sherman's. He won the respect of all who worked with him and made many friends during his life. Paul had many shared interests with friends and was an avid concert goer who was committed to every mosh pit he could find. He

humor, humongous heart, and willingness to help friends. To know Paul was to love Paul. He is survived by his sweetheart, Lauren, married in 2017, and their daughter, Ava, born

and nephews: Taylor, Logan, Spencer, Gabrielle,

will be forever remembered for his sense of

Wyatt, Haylee, Haven, Skyla and Aeris; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins. Paul was preceded in death by his grandparents: Harry and Carolyn Stein and Homer Jr. and Jean Smith.

"Changes come...Keep your dig-nity...Take the high road...Take it like a man" -- Puscifer

The family will receive friends for a visitation on Friday, Jan. 27, 2023 at Great Oaks Community Church, 515 IL Route 116, in Germantown Hills from 3 to 6 p.m. A celebration of life will follow at 6 p.m., officiated by Pastor Jason

Cremation rites will be accorded following

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Paul's memory to the family in order to establish an education fund for his daughter, Ava.

Family and friends are encouraged to log onto ReevesFuneral.com to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Paul's memorial page via social media. Those in 2019; his parents, Mark (Nancy) Stein and who wish to access Paul's services virtually are Diane (Dave) Perkins; his sister, Gretchen also welcome to join the live stream or watch who wish to access Paul's services virtually are (Brandon) Williams and step-siblings: Erin on-demand by following the link on Paul's (Chris) Rebholz and Carl Whitecotton; nieces memorial page. memorial page.

Funeral services and arrangements are being made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes in Coal



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### **Pauline Pelton**

WILMINGTON-Pauline Pelton, 98, of Wilmington, passed away on Monday, Jan. 23, 2023 at Park Point in Morris.

Born July 11, 1924 in Mattoon, IL, she was a daughter of Robert and Jessie (Fritchley) Erwin. Pauline was raised and educated in Wilmington. 30, 1941 she married Raymond Pelton in Beecher, IL and together they cherished 45 years until his passing on April 22, 1987. Pauline worked as a furniture buyer for DeYoung Furniture in Wilmington for many years. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington and served as past treasurer for the church. Pauline enjoyed volunteering her time at Kuzma Care, liked gardening and quilt-

ing, and loved traveling. Survivors include two children, Raymond K. (Darlynn) Pelton, of Wilmington and Linda M. (Gene) Kinder, of Coal City; five grandchildren: Hope Becker, Heather Jurzak, Amy Best, Shawn Kinder and Derek Kinder; 11 greatgrandchildren, 10 great-great-grandchildren, two sisters-in-law, Joan Erwin, of The Villages,

FL and Joanne Erwin, of Indiana; one daughter-in-law, Bonnie Pelton and numerous nieces, nephews and

Pauline was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Raymond; son, George Pelton and three brothers: Clifford (Sarah), Bernard and Marion A private family service will be held

and burial will follow in Oakwood Cemetery in Wilmington where Pauline will be laid to rest beside her husband, Raymond. Preferred memorials in Pauline's memory may be made as gifts to the First Presbyterian

Church, 301 N. Kankakee Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 or Lightways Hospice. Friends and family are encouraged to log

onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, submit photos and share Pauline's memorial page via social media.

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

### The best apps to help identify the wild

Dear EarthTalk: What are some of the best apps out there for helping identify plants and/or wildlife?

-- J. Moser, Summertown,

Not surprisingly in this day and age, you don't need a PhD to identify plants and animals out in the natural world. All you need is a smartphone and an app.

One of the best known and most downloaded of this new breed of ID apps is iNaturalist, a joint initiative of the California Academy of National Sciences and Geographic.

You can use it to take a photo of a plant or animal and get a list of possible species based on your location. And if that doesn't work, you can escalate to a community of expert naturalists via the app to help identify more obscure

If footprints are all you have to identify wildlife passing through your area, check out the iTrack Wildlife app.

To use it, simply input a few basic descriptors (size of the track, number and shape of toes, claws visible or not, etc.) and then get back a list of likely matches. The app is also searchable offline if you're beyond cell range.

Bird enthusiasts will appreciate Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Merlin Bird ID. You can upload a photo and/or enter information about the bird you saw, such



as its size, location, and colors observed, and the app uses

artificial intelligence (AI) to

give you back a list of possible

Meanwhile, the Birdnet app, also from Cornell's ornithologists, utilizes recordings of birdsong to tell you which avian species are near-When you launch Birdnet,

it records the noise in your surroundings and can zero in on a specific chirp or call to identify which bird is making it. So far, the app has cataloged more than 1,000 of the most common bird species in North America and Europe.

Want to identify that creepy crawly making its way across the path? Picture Insect uses AI to match the insect you have photographed against its database of insect photos contributed by some three million users to make a match and let you know just what you're dealing with.

Likewise, the company behind Picture Insect (Glority)

Picture Bird, Picture Mushroom, Picture Animal and Picture This (for plants) all of which use Al to help ID different types of living things from your photos.

Meanwhile, the LeafSnap app, developed by the Smithsonian Institution, Columbia University and the University of Maryland, uses visual recognition technology to identify thousands of plants, flowers, fruits and trees from user-submitted photos of

LeafSnap's developers report that the app can recognize 90 percent of all known flora species on the planet. You can download the app to your phone and make use of it even without an Internet connec-

Another app beloved to help identify plants and trees PlantSnap, which uses machine learning technology and AI to determine the species of the plant, flower or shrub pic you have just snapped. The Colorado-based start-up behind this app has collected upwards of 475 million plant images in its database which it has leveraged to identify more than 650,000 plants for users around the

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



SHOREWOOD RESIDENT Joe Viola's photo of a turkey vulture at Rock Run Rookery in Joliet won first place in the Forest Preserve District of Will County's 2022 Preserve the Moment Photo Contest. The vulture picture was a monthly finalist photo that won the overall contest after receiving the most votes on Facebook.

### Vulture photo victorious in photo contest

Viola's turkey vulture photo was the big winner in the Forest Preserve District of Will County's 2022 Preserve the Moment photo contest.

Viola's vulture picture was one of eight monthly finalists chosen throughout the course of the contest from May through December 2022. His photo went on to win the overall contest after receiving the most votes on Facebook in early January 2023. Viola will receive a \$500 MasterCard gift card for his first-place finish.

"I took that photo on Route 6 at Rock Run Rookery on the way home from work, Viola said via email after being notified of his win. "I saw it sitting in the trees along the water's edge and was able to pull over and get the shot. At first I thought it was a juvenile top honors, and more than

camera and was able to see the red head. It was still great to

The photo's detail and painting-like quality immediately drew the attention of online voters in the contest, who called it a "majestic" and "glamorous" photo.

MorschChad Romeoville will receive a \$250 MasterCard gift card for his second-place photo of a fox squirrel. Naperville resident Bertrand Leclercq will receive a \$150 MasterCard gift card for his third-place photo of an

Facebook voters picked monthly finalists after Forest Preserve judges narrowed the entries to the top five. For the final round of voting, all eight monthly finalists competed for

Shorewood resident Joe eagle until I looked into the 1,250 votes were cast on the

Forest Preserve's Facebook p a g e Facebook.com/WillCoForests.

Monthly finalists received \$75 gift cards. Three contest participants chosen at random to receive \$75 MasterCard gift cards were: Tiffany Adams of Chicago, Robert DesCamps of Plainfield and Emilie Brazinski of Plainfield. All prizes are The Nature funded by Foundation of Will County,

willcountynature.org.

During the 2022 contest,
almost 1,000 photos were submitted for consideration. To view all contest entries, visit the Forest Preserve District's Flickr Flickr.com/WillCoForests.

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

### Lawmakers fired up over sheriffs' dissent on weapons ban

"All they are claimed Sheriff's Association executive director Jim Kaitschuk about dozens of his members. 'We're not going to knock on people's whether they have registered their firearms. And if they're arrested solely on that



Rich Miller

charge, we will not house them in our jails until ordered to do so by a competent

Springfield's WICS TV reported that Kaitschuk also believes the reaction to what those sheriffs have said about refusing to enforce the state's new assault weapons ban law because of their constitutional objections has been "overblown."

Well, when you put it that way, maybe so. But if that's the case, then why even facilitate the release of a nearly identical statement by as many as 90 (according to Kaitschuk) county sheriffs saying they won't enforce a law?

Kaitschuk admitted to Chicago's ABC TV that there's nothing in the law mandating local compliance checks. "That is not a charge that is provided to us, or mandated to us in the bill that passed and was signed by the governor.'

What the sheriffs have basically done is to deliberately inflame the public for no good reason, and then tossed in an empty threat to not house violators in their jails. unless they have an order from a judge.

And while there has been much rejoicing in some Downstate areas over their local sheriffs' performative "virtue pushback in the suburbs, where, for to enforce executive orders, and many instance, DuPage County Sheriff James eagerly contributed to the hysteria over Mendrick released one of those boiler plate statements vowing not to enforce the new registration law because he believed the statute was unconstitution-

In response, DuPage County's 15 Democratic state legislators released a statement saying they were "dismayed and angered by the recent pronouncement by the DuPage County Sheriff to unilaterally direct his office to flout and disregard the duly passed and signed Protect Illinois Communities Act. The Sheriff has no authority to determine the constitutionality of a law - that is up to the

'The Sheriff's words send a clear message that lawbreakers are welcome here," the statement read.

One of the signatories was Rep. Maura Hirschauer (D-Batavia), who introduced an assault weapons ban and worked her bill for months before it was taken over by more experienced hands.

Sheriff Mendrick barely won election in 2018, but the Democrats didn't field a candidate against him in 2022, which turned out to be an even stronger year for the local party.

Elections obviously have conse-

But the sheriffs currently have significant powers in state statutes, and legislative elections can have consequences, too. And some legislators are obviously starting to get pretty fired up over the sheriffs' behavior of late.

During the 2019 cannabis legalization debate, for instance, sheriffs disseminated tons of disinformation (one even claimed that sheriffs would be forced to euthanize all their drug-sniffing dogs). Several sheriffs sided with the far right during the signaling," there has been some strong COVID-19 mitigation period and refused

the SAFE-T Act. And now, this.

Many legislators are former local government officials, so they've traditionally been reluctant to take up issues like consolidation, the limits of local authority, etc. I do not know if this latest blow-up will change anything. But, at the same time, I don't recall ever seeing a reaction quite like the one issued by those 15 state Lake County's sheriff issued a state-

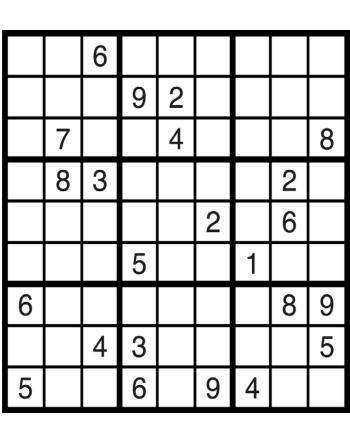
ment in favor of the law, and one of the principal sponsors who helped drag the bill across the finish line, Lake Countybased state Rep. Bob Morgan (D-Deerfield), had this to say on the radio the other day about the other sheriffs' statements: "I keep coming back to the fact that I think it's embarrassing for them. They really literally only have one job. Their job is to follow the law and enforce the law. And they're saying, 'We're not going to do that.' And so, I think they should be pretty embarrassed." State statute requires sheriffs, acting

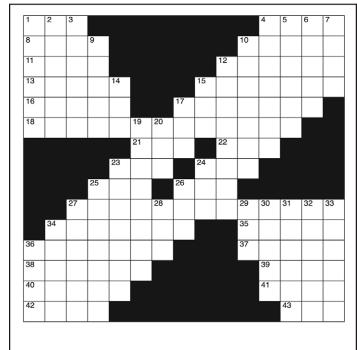
as their counties' supervisors of safety, to enforce all state traffic laws. But there is no requirement to enforce other laws. And their state-mandated oaths of office require them to support the U.S. and Illinois constitutions, but not individual

Law enforcement discretion is a longaccepted policy. But sheriffs issuing written statements flatly declaring that they will not enforce a state law no matter what, sure does appear to go well beyond

Crafting a law to deal with the problem, though, could be difficult.

Rich Miller also publishes Capitol Fax, daily political newsletter, and





### Report predicts billions in motor fuel tax revenue losses if state meets EV goals

BY NIKA SCHOONOVER CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD - Despite Illinois' efforts to smoothly integrate electric vehicles into the state's economy, a new from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute is warning of a potential steep decline in transportation revenue as more EVs hit the road.

The primary issue is motor fuel taxes, which will see a significant drop as more electric vehicles make their way to the road and fewer people fill their cars with gas.

Since motor fuel taxes make up the backbone of state funding for road and bridge projects, ILEPI, which has strong ties to organized labor, warned in a report that new revenue sources will have to be identified to ensure the state's 10-year capital improvements plan remains on track.

"There's absolutely a benefit to having EVs but it will ultimately have a strong impact on transportation funding," Mary Tyler, the author of the report, said in an interview. "It's something that I

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City, will hold a Hallelujah"

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don't think is talked about enough."

Motor fuel tax is the state's leading source of transportation funding and makes up 52% of Illinois' total transportation revenue and 82% of its contributions to the federal highway trust fund.

The report's main policy recommendation is implementing a vehicle miles traveled, or VMT, fee which would replace the existing motor fuel tax with a fee determined by the number of miles a car travels on Illinois roads.

The idea has been floated in the past, including by Gov. JB Pritzker in an interview with The Arlington Heights Daily Herald during his initial gubernatorial campaign in 2018.

'In some states (such as Oregon), they have done tests recently for a VMT tax because we have more and more electric cars on the road, more and more hybrids, and because gas mileage is rising," then-candidate Pritzker told the outlet. "It's only fair if you're on a road and traveling on that road that you should pay your fair share.'

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older; \$5 for children ages 3 -

12; and children age 2 & under

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In his four years as governor, however, Pritzker has not made a serious legislative push for a VMT.

It's an issue that ILEPI says will become more pressing as the state moves toward its goal of putting 1 million electric vehicles on state roads by the end of the decade - a goal written into law with the passage of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act in 2021.

Even before this promise was made, Illinois was seeing a yearly increase in electric vehicles. From 2017 to 2021, electric vehicle registrations have increased from 8,255 to 36,482. The most recent data from the Illinois Secretary of State's office shows that, as of December 2022, there are 57,311 electric vehicle registra-

Looking at the growth we're seeing, we're seeing it grow at a faster rate than what we ever have before," Tyler

According to Tyler's estimate, Illinois would have to add 119,000 electric vehicles every year in order to meet their goal of one million by 2030. If that came to fruition, the state would lose \$765 million in combined sales and motor fuel tax when accounting for added EV fees. Counting federal revenues, that figure would jump up to \$1.1 billion.

Electric vehicles aside, Tyler said fuel-efficient vehicles pose an additional threat to the state's transportation revenue. Roughly 10% of registered vehicles in Illinois are electric, while the rest of the 11 million are increasingly becoming more fuel-efficient.

"If you take a look at the picture of all the vehicles on

the road, as newer vehicles come out that are more fuelefficient, that means we're just having overall, on average, a more fuel-efficient fleet," Tyler

Tyler calculated that the total state and federal revenue loss over the next decade would be about \$4.3 billion.

That loss would be especially threatening to the back half of Pritzker's historic 10year, \$45 billion capital infrastructure plan known as Rebuild Illinois.

The roads-and-bridges portion of the 2019 program was made possible in large part by doubling the state's motor fuel tax, which hadn't seen an increase since 1990. then tying it to inflation in subsequent years.. The infrastructure plan also increased Illinois' annual electric vehicle registration fee by \$100 annu-

Tyler said while the fee hike helped replace some of the lost revenue, it won't go far

"As soon as the change can be made, the better," Tyler said. "Even to this day, there are EVs on the road that are not paying as much as they would be on motor fuel tax. So there is an impact, it's just right now the impact isn't as big as what it will be in the future.

Other policy areas to explore, Tyler suggests, include increasing existing registration fees even further, implementing a separate hybrid vehicle fee and creating an electric vehicle-specific kilowatt-perhour fee.

#### **CLUES ACROSS**

1. Tax collector 4. Fishes without the line

touching water 8. Brooklyn hoopsters

10. Actress Lathan

11. A metric for athletes

12. Food storage location

13. Colossus 15. Desolations

16. Accustom to something

unpleasant 17. \_\_Kubrick, filmmaker

18. You might ask this at Thanksgiving

21. Arkansas city

22. Gave food to 23. Request

42. Top-quality

43. Midway between south and

southeast

24. V-shaped open trough

26. It accompanies feather

37. Having the shape of a cube

39. Believed by some to be the

27. Blonde bombshell

34. One who revolves

supreme being

41. Leak slowly through

40. Checks or guides

35. Bluish greens

36. Charity

38. Unwind

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15. British thermal unit

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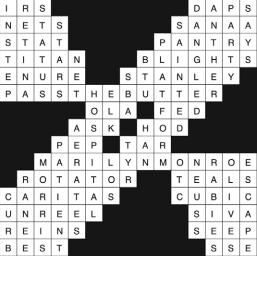
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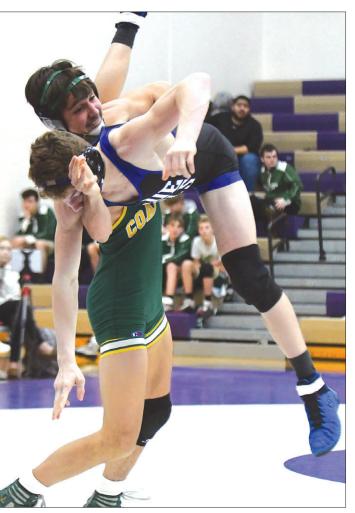
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### COALER SPORTS



season with a 35-3 record and #4 ranking in the state.



AT 145 POUNDS Coal City's Mataeo Blessing has been a threat all ALMOST DONE—Buddy Widlowski works his opponent for a pin at 138 pounds where he is presently ranked 9th in the state.

# Eight Coalers champion ICE tourney

Saturday when Wilmington hosted the ICE conference wrestling tournament.
The state-ranked Coalers

easily took the team title with 250.5 points, outdistancing second place Reed-Custer with its 121.5 points and third place Lisle with 112 points. Wilmington finished fifth with

Coal City had eight tournament champions, three second placers, two finish third and one fourth.

Coming in first place were Coalers Culan Lindemuth (106), Brody Widlowski (113), Aidan Kenney (120), Brant Widlowski (138), Mataeo Blessing (145), Derek Carlson (170), Joey Breneman (182) and Braiden Young (195). Finishing second were Brock Finch (126), Jack Poyner (160) and Drake Dearth (220) and Drake Dearth (220)

Claiming third place were Coal City's Evan Greggain (132) and Tyler Porth (285) while set-tling for fourth place was Zakk Kramer (152).

Reed-Custer brought nine wrestlers and all nine placed including champions Kody Marschner (220) and Gunnar Berg (285). 2nd Place: 170 Rex Pfeifer (170) finished in 2nd Dominic Alaimo (182) all decide third place. placed third. Finishing fourth were Judith Gamboa (106), Max Lichaj (120).

Wilmington entered five wrestlers with all of them plac-

There were few surprises were Wildcats Landon Dooley urday when Wilmington (113), Matt Swisher (152) and Brody Benson (285). Capturing third place at 195 pounds was Hunter Hayes while freshman Logan Van Duyne (170) settled for fourth place.

At 106 pounds, Coal City sophomore Lindemuth (34-9) pinned Ryan Hsu from Lisle (22-8) in 2:46 for the title bout. Reed-Custer junior Judith Gamboa pinned her first opponent in 1:26 before suffering a 1:58 fall to settle for fourth.

At 113 there were just three opponents which meant Brody Widlowski (30-1) had a bye until facing Wilmington's Dooley (33-8) for the championship. Widlowski won it by a 13-8 decision. Reed-Custer freshman Jayden Sanchez (10-16) placed third.

At 120, five wrestlers battled with Kenney (27-11), a Coal City freshman beating Lisle's Alexander Ferari (24-7) by 7-2 decision. Comet Max Lichaj (14-13), who went 1-2 for the day, was upended by 2:36 fall in the third place

At 126, Micah Spinazzola from Peotone came in with a 2-0 record to surprise Coal City's Brock Finch (29-12) with a 2-1 decision in the championship Pfeifer (170) finished in 2nd decision in the champions. place while Jayden Sanchez bout. Comet Kris Budick (17- Reed-Custer's Eggleston (28-7)

(113), Kris Budick (126), 17) earned a 3:34 fall over battled back after a first round wrestlers with Coal City's boundary boundary. Derek Carlson (29-5) winning the title by defeated Reed-

At 132. Coaler Evan Greggain (20-12) lost by 5:44 fall to eventual champion Santino Izzi of Peotone. He then had a pin in the wrestleing. Coming in second place back and a 4-3 decision over

### Coalers own the mat against Reed-Custer

The Comets did what most teams have done when they wrestled against state-ranked Coal City: They lost.

This is Coal City's year as they are 38-2 and the ICE conference winners. The good news is they won't be any weaker in years to come with over 40 on their roster and 14 are seniors. Many underclassmen were on the team that won state as mid-

Reed-Custer had some highlights during their 69-12 loss to the Coalers. Winners for RC included 170 Rex Pfeifer, 220 Kody Marschner and 285 Christian Mounts. RC is now 17-6.

Coal City 69, Reed-Custer 12 106—Lindemuth, Culan (CC) over Gambia, Judith, fall 0:39

113—Widlowski, Brody (CC) over Sanchez, Jayden, fall 3:54

120—Kenney, Aidan (CC) over Billingsley, Brock, fall 3:18 126—Finch, Brock (CC) over Budick, Kristofer, fall 1:04 132—Houston, Noah (CC) by forfeit 138—Widlowski, Brant (CC) over Eggleston, Jeremy, fall 0:35 145—Blessing, Mataeo (CC) over Davis, Jason, fall 2:15

152—Kramer, Zakk (CC) over Shultz, Aiden, tech fall 18-2

160-Waliczek, Alec (CC) by forfeit

170—Pfeifer, Rex (RC) over Poyner, Jack, fall 2:00

182—Breneman, Joey (CC) by forfeit 195—Young, Braiden (CC) over Alaimo, Dominic, maj dec 12-1

220—Marschner, Kody (RC) over Dearth, Drake, fall 4:06 285—Porth, Tyler (CC) by forfeit

CULAN LINDEMUTH goes up against Reed-Custer's Judith

Gamboa during Thursday's match on the road. The Coalers won

Nolan Kelly of Lisle for a third place finish.

At 138, Coal City's Brant Widlowski (16-1) had back-toback falls in the five-man It was his only match in the finish in third.

At 145, Mataeo Blessing (35-3) of Coal City had the best record, giving him a bye in the three-man weight class. He had to wrestle only once, beating Ian Kreske (1-1) of Peotone

by 11-3 major decision. At 152, Wilmington junior Matt Swisher (14-14) got by Coal City's Zakk Kramer (6-4) with a 4-3 decision before being pinned 4:43 in the title bout to settle for second place.

At 160, Coaler Jack Poyner (29-10) was edged 7-6 by Carter Watkins (21-6) of Manteno in the championship.

the title by defeated Reed-Custer's Rex Pfeifer (32-4) with a 5-1 decision. Wilmington's Logan VanDuyne (14-10) was pinned by Carlson 1:25 for starters before getting a 1:40 on Trevor Miller from Herscher. Van Duyne battled hard against Jackson Bergeron (2-1) from Peotone to decide third place but was pinned

182, Coaler Joey At Breneman (33-5) won both of

to claim first place. Dominic onship. Alaimo (21-14) from Reed-1:31 fall and tech fall 4:00 to At 170, there were five earn third place.

started with a 2:51 fall before taking first place with a tech fall 4:34 over Joe Raineri of Lisle for the championship. Wilmington's Hunter Hayes (23-7) lost to Raineri in the opening round before beating Gavin Collins of Herscher by 3:12 fall to decide third place.

At 220, the five-man field was bested by Comet Kody Marschner (26-1) who started with a 2:53 fall before defeating Coal City's Drake Dearth (30-6)

his matches by first period pins in :30 seconds for the champi-

At 285, Reed-Custer senior Custer lost his first match by Gunnar Berg (32-2) bumped 5:54 fall but finished with a Coaler Tyler Porth (13-7) with an opening 1:38 fall. Berg the faced Wilmington's Brody At 195, with four wrestlers Benson (13-12) for the chambattling, Braiden Young (33-1) pionship, beating him with 1:13 fall. Porth came back with a 4:59 fall over Tate White of Herscher to settle for third

> The three teams now join eight others for the Feb. 4 regional which will be held at Reed-Custer. The team with the most points advances to the dual team sectional (Feb. 21) while the top three individuals at regional advance to the Feb. 10-11 sectional at Coal

### Pack the auditorium Thursday

Pack the auditorium this against Thursday night Plainfield East as the

Coalers battle the Bengals Coal Čity, 38-2, is current-

ly ranked #1 in Class 1A with 10 wrestlers ranked in the top 10 with two others honorable mention.

106 Lindemuth #7

- 113 Widlowski #9 126 Finch HM
- 138 Buddy Widlowski #9
- 145 Blessing #4
- 152 Benson #9
- 160 Poyner HM
- 170 Carlson #5 182 Breneman #8
- 195 Young #9 220 Dearth #4
- 285 Gonzalez #3

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**Coal City Coalers Team Pride** 

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Coalers remained undefeated in the Illinois Central Eight

conference with a 10-0 record after picking up two more wins last week.

have a great end to a successful season. We need to continue to play the same type of

On Monday at home they routed Manteno 33-16 to

stepped up for 6 points each. Becca Hall and Sydney Larson

Comets come to town

eight points while Naomi Stoudt and Sydney Larson added four points each. Jori Tucker scored three points while Riley Walker, Chloe Pluger and Becca Hall finished

Next game up is hosting tonight (Wednesday) before traveling

F/S Lady Coalers still in I.C.E lead The fresh-soph Lady to Streator Thursday. They will be back at home Monday against Herscher.



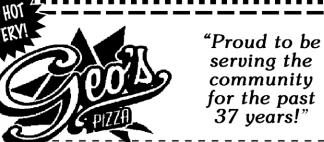
improve to 14-3 overall.

The young Lady Coalers were led by Kylee Kennell with 10 points. D'Arcy Ness, Emma Rodriguez and Chloe Pluger tallied two points each while Jori Tucker made a free throw.

On Thursday the Lady Coalers breezed past Reed-Custer, 40-8, thanks to a game-high 15 points from Emma Rodriguez.

Kylee Kennell hustled for with two points apiece.

Sandwich Sandwich



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### COALER SPORTS

### Double win week for Coalers

It was a good week for the varsity Coalers with a pair of victories to improve to 8-12 overall.

The Coal City boys went on the road Tuesday to beat Peotone 46-39 and then upended Wilmington at home 75-43 on Friday.

The Coalers came out shooting against the Wildcats when they grabbed a 22-12 lead. After going up 31-26 at the half, Coal City enjoyed a 26-9 run in the third thanks to a hot-handed Cason Headley who led the Coalers with 28 points and five rebounds. Headley shot an impressive 7for-8 at the line.

Carson Shepard was a big help with 14 points, nine assists, three steals and three rebounds. Carter Garrelts had 9 points, nine rebounds, 2 assists and one block. Owen Wren chipped in with 5 points, one steal and one rebound.

Nolan Ness also made five points while scoring four points each were Dillon Harrington and Zander Meents. Making a three-point bucket each were Jim Feeney and Garrett Keeley. Colton Sztapka came off the bench to grab four rebounds and one steal.

#### At Peotone

While the Blue Devils may have upset Reed-Custer in it bid to win the I.C.E. Conference title, the Coalers were having nothing of it, taking a 16-5 lead and never looking back.

Three Coalers ended up in double figures.

Carter Garrelts played well under the basket with 11 rebounds and had a total of 16 points with one assist. Carson Shepard also scored 16 points for Coal City with one steal,



COALER GUARD Carson Shepard drives for the lane during

Friday's home contest against Wilmington.

three assists and six rebounds. one block, one assist and two Cason Headley helped out rebounds. with 12 points, two steals, two assists and six rebounds. Jim on Friday then travel to Feeney chipped in 2 points, Streator on Tuesday.

Coal City will host Pontiac



SCRAMBLE FOR THE BALL - Coal City's Dillon Harrington grabs a loose ball and passes it off on Friday during a Coaler home win.



DRIVING TO THE BASKET on Friday when he scored 28 points against Wilmington is Coal City's Cason Headley.



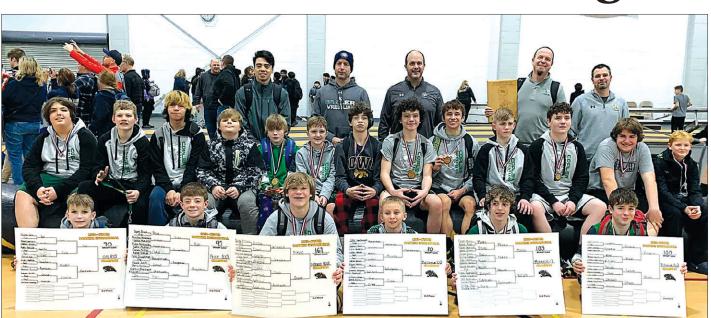
LOOK...LOOKING for an open teammate on Friday is Coal City senior Garrett Keeley.



Photo by Amy Walker

GOOD DEFENSE—Coal City's Paige Walker ties up Wilmington's Breanna Horton for the ball during a recent win at home.

# Warrior matmen do it again



THE WRESTLING WARRIORS traveled to Reed-Custer for a 16-team tournament over the weekend claiming their third title of the year. The Warriors scored 322 points to surpass Mahomet Seymor with 249, followed by Leroy and Mattoon. The Warriors had six champions including Ryder Gill (70 lbs.), Jake Munsterman (80), Tyson Price (95), Owen Petersen (100), Cooper Morris (105) and Brody D'Orazio (167). The Warriors had 2 runners-up Jason Piatak and Cole Russell. Finishing in third were Alex Carlson and Theo Fritz. Fifth place went to Landon Bomba, Gavin Roudis, Max Christensen, Cameron Minuth, and Chris Groves. Bobby Stoudt finished in 7th. Warrior wrestling include (sitting, from left) Ryder Gill, Tyson Price, Brody D'Orazio, Jake Munsterman, Cooper Morris and Owen Petersen. Middle row: Chris Groves, Wyatt Ricke, Fabian Hernandez, Kyle Odam, Jason Piatak, Gavin Roudis, Bobby Stoudt, Theo Fritz, Alex Carlson, Max Christensen, Cole Russell, Cameron Minuth, and Landon Bomba. Back row: Coach Rivera, Coach Piatak, Coach Morris, Coach Petersen and Coach Lindemuth.

# All team effort makes winning easy for the Lady Coalers

Chalk up two more wins for the varsity Lady Coalers as it

seems every player was a contributor last week. "We had a great team win tonight. Proud of how we played in all facets of the game," said Brad Schmitt after beating Reed-

Custer on Thursday.

The Lady Coalers (17-6, 6-3) dominated from the get-go, building an 18-5 in the opening frame and expanding it to 35-13 at the half. By the final buzzer eight Lady Coalers scored one or more points while five others had rebounds.

Abby Gagliardo led the Lady Coalers with 13 points, five steals and one rebound. Mia Ferrias was right behind her with 12 points, four steals and two rebounds. Audrey Cooper contributed 8 points.

Makayla Henline added 7 points with two steals and three rebounds. Mackenzie Henline played a great defensive game with eight steals and eight rebounds, she also had 2 points. Paige Walker and Tanna Curry each had 6 points. Kerigan Copes added four points.

### Manteno Monday

Coal City steam-rolled Manteno at home Monday, 60-35. It was the second game in a row were they went on a big run in the second quarter, this time to own a 35-15 half-time lead.

Mia Ferrias led the Lady Coalers with 14 points, two of them -pointers. She also had five rebounds and three steals. Audrey Cooper followed with 13 points. Makenzie Henline chipped in 8 points and had a great defensive game with four rebounds and

Kylee Kennell had 7 points. Makayla Henline also added 6 points to the board. Abby Gagliardo had a great defensive game with six steals, two rebonds and 1 point. Abby Stiles chipped in 4 points. Carly Morris had 3 points and Tanna Curry and Kerigan

Copes each had 2 points. The Lady Coalers host Sandwich tonight (Wednesday) before traveling to Streator Thursday. They will be back at home Monday against Herscher.