

Mayor Spesia has a target list for 2024

**BY ANN GILL
CORRESPONDENT**

Coal City Mayor Dave Spesia is looking forward to all that 2024 has in store for the village as there are a number of projects to be completed in the next 11 months.

At the top of the list is an expansion of the town's water treatment plant.

The improvement, approved last year, will double the village's total treatment capacity.

D Construction was awarded the work and is expected to get started on construction once all of the necessary equipment has been received.

The list of projects also includes the remediation of lead service lines as the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency [IEPA] has selected to assist the village with the costs.

An item that has been on the village's project list for more than a decade is a railroad quiet zone, and although not everyone of the Village Board is in favor of silencing trains passing through town, it's on the mayor's list.

In the coming months, Spesia said the quiet zone concept will enter into its final design and town officials will begin gaining the necessary agreements from various agencies to stop the horns from sounding as they pass along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe lines.

This project is expected to result in some crossing closures including the one at Lincoln and Division streets.

As reported last fall, Riverside Medical Center is expanding its Coal City site.

The health care company announced it will double the size of its current treatment space and expand its offerings.

Construction of the new Riverside addition will result in the facility connecting to the town's sanitary treatment plant.

Once the connection has been made, the village will complete improvements to Carbon Hill Road and that will include filling the gaps in the sidewalk that runs along the roadway.

In his comments, Spesia noted the addition of a new dining option as The Clubhouse is set to open along West Division Street in the space that once housed LaPiazza.

After considerable discussion and review, the village is moving ahead with plans to replace the North Broadway bridge over the drainage ditch and it also has plans to reconstruct the Valerio Road bridge on the town's east side.

According to Spesia, 2024 will also be the year when the Park Board determines a refurbishment plan for North Park, and a series of homes will be updated with funds secured through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development's Housing

SEE LIST PAGE 2

Ice jam causes highest flood in 137 years

**BY ERIC FISHER
Publisher**

It will take weeks to estimate the cost of damage caused by the highest flood to hit Wilmington in 137 years.

The City of Wilmington is working with the Will County Emergency Management Agency to survey the damage caused by flooding that began shortly after 10 p.m. Thursday as ice piled up in the main channel, causing the water level to rise nearly three feet through the island parks and mill race.

Will County EMA issued a mass notification message to residents just before midnight, advising them of the rising water levels and the need to evacuate. Water rescue teams were deployed, and 14 individuals were successfully evacuated to a temporary shelter opened by Wilmington ESDA.

The flash flood closed Highway 53 from Water Street to First Street as water surrounded the Van Dwyne Motel, portions of Nelson's Furniture and nearby businesses. The river flowed across the highway for approximately 12 hours. By noon Friday the roadway was reopened. Police remained on standby since the island parks were still under water. Both islands remain closed to the public until damage can be assessed and roadways repaired.

"City staff worked around the clock to ensure the safety of residents during this flood event," said Wilmington Mayor Ben Dietz. "I appreciate everyone who stepped up to keep residents safe during this flooding event. Our work isn't finished yet. We are working to fully assess and repair the damage that occurred over the last few days."

The mayor praised first responders for their quick response in preventing loss of life and the city crew for working nonstop to keep the water plant operational even though its pump house flooded.

"For 14 hours I watched from the command center as our people operated with such professionalism," Dietz said. "Our first responders are top-notch. Foremost, they evacuated everyone safely, then had mutual aid and EMA from the county here within 30 minutes as the river continued to rise. The communication between agencies was tremendous. Even though we had been planning for two weeks for possible flooding, you don't really know how things will go until it happens. And when it did, I was impressed with everyone's professionalism."

The Will County EMA and Wilmington ESDA had been monitoring the river for days as ice dams formed from the warm water discharge pumps near Bardwell Island upstream over eight miles to Custer Park. About 5 p.m. Thursday it began shifting downstream in the Lakewood Shores area causing pile ups in Wilmington. The ice jams between the city and the Des Plaines River confluence cleared out Saturday.

By 10:45 a.m. Saturday the U.S. Geological Survey Kankakee River gauge upstream of Interstate 55 recorded water levels at 6.89 feet. That was a drop of almost 9 feet from the recorded high of 15.62 feet on Friday evening due to a brief ice jam that formed near I-55. The peak level of water was the 3rd highest level recorded on the Kankakee River in history and the highest since 1887.

The south island road suffered the most damage as ice piled up near the mill race bridge, damaging a new guard rail and lifting away sections of pavement. Dietz said Monday the city has yet to inspect the emergency water well and building on the South Island.

"We do not know the extent of damage for it. It was flooded and surrounded by ice. Fortunately it's just an emergency well we don't need right now."

Workers at the water treatment plant have been drying out and cleaning the pump house after water backed up into the low-lying area of Widow's Road. Clennon Electric is inspecting all the electronics that operate the pumps. Dietz said backup equipment, including spare pumps, are on site in case they fail to restart when everything is turned back on.

Dietz said that at no time

THE NORTH ISLAND was under water Friday morning after an ice jam on the Kankakee River caused the water level to rise along the mill race. Highway 53 through Wilmington was closed late Thursday night until noon Friday while flooding impacted the island parks. The parks remain closed until city officials can assess the damage and repair the roadway.

Photo by David Quigley

ROAD DAMAGE—The tip of the South Island park suffered the brunt of an ice dam on Thursday as it piled up against a guard rail that was installed last year while lifting up sections of pavement. The parks remain closed to the public.

Photo by Eric Fisher

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Flood, continued from page 1

did the city fear it would be without water.

“We’ve kept a cushion of at least a day’s worth of water, about 1/2 million gallons. It was being tested all week before the flood for any higher concentrations of nitrates from farm runoff. It didn’t occur but to error on the side of caution, we issued a boil order just in case.”

On Monday the city was waiting for 24-hour results from the lab and clearance from the IEPA. On Tuesday morning the boil order ended.

The mayor was grateful for the preplanning done by several agencies including Will and Grundy officials. The public was warned of potential flooding which he thinks prevented a bad situation from being worse.

“I am thankful to everyone in the community that came together over the last two weeks,” said Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Farrant. “Strong partnerships between all our local agencies helped to minimize the damage from flooding. I appreciate the hard work of the first responders, emergency management staff, and local officials during this challenging time.”

Cleaning up

The motel may have suffered the most water damage. On Sunday several mattresses and pieces of furniture were piled up outside.

Nelson’s Furniture the water level lapped the front of the building about six inches high. Store manager Kevin Webb said some water entered the building at its lowest spot soaking the carpet. Thankfully much of the furniture was spared although some recliners with electronics were being repaired.

“It could have been a lot worse. Thankfully the upper level of the building stayed dry,” he said. “We expect to reopen by Thursday.”

Nearby Nelly’s Restaurant on Route 66 was high and dry, along with The Wine Cafe and Old School Brewing. They were re-opened by Sunday morning. The Wilmington House Family Restaurant was cleared to re-open Sunday. The water level got close but never entered the building.

Downstream watch

Grundy County EMA assisted Will County EMA by monitoring the County Line subdivisions and visually monitoring river levels leading up to the flooding.

Water did impact Phelan Acres (Will County) for the

second time in two weeks. The earlier event caused residents to already evacuate or were very well aware and had contingency plans for any worsening.

Joe Schroeder, Director of Grundy County Emergency Management reported that aerial footage confirmed that the warm water siphons from the Dresden Energy Center cooling lake created a larger channel of water, allowing more ice to melt and water to flow. However, large portions of the river remain covered with solid ice into Wilmington.

As a precaution Kelly Road, West Blodgett Road, Phillips Road and River Road west had already been closed.

Schroeder reported that water and ice were flowing down stream all night Saturday until the jam at the County Line. At about 6:40 a.m., the ice jam broke free and a large amount of water and ice began pushing downstream on the Grundy County side. Nearly half of the width of the river was on the move. It moved pushing through the ice pack and water with haste. This movement took place until it got to the curve of the river along the Macintosh Subdivision (westend of

Mallard Lane) and then came to stop once again. This did not result in any flooding on the Grundy County side.

This ice sat there with pressure building about 3.5 hours and began moving once again. In the 11:00 am hour the ice had pushed through on the Grundy County side all the way to the mouth of the Illinois River. At this time the Kankakee and Illinois River are free flowing water with ice chunks.

An American Red Cross emergency shelter was established at First Christian Church in Morris but went on standby Sunday. Anyone in need of emergency shelter due to flooding should call Will County EMA at 815-740-0911.

Will County EMA has launched a public reporting survey for residents and businesses to begin reporting any damages they may have sustained. These reports will support the efforts of damage assessment teams who are visually inspecting damage to personal property, businesses, and public infrastructure.

The residential and business damage assessment surveys can be found at: <https://www.willcountyma.org/flood>.



Courtesy photo

LAURA JONES (right) is looking forward to serving the community by serving on the Park Board. She was sworn in last week during the Village Board meeting by village clerk Alexis Stone.

Jones takes oath to serve on park board

The Coal City Village Board approved the appointment of Laura Jones to the Park Board.

Jones took the oath of office during the Jan. 24 board meeting. She was sworn in by village clerk Alexis Stone.

Laura (formerly Burmaster of Diamond) currently resides in Carbon Hill with her husband and two children. She is the owner of The Cove, a nutrition club located at 30 N. Broadway St. in Coal City, which opened in September of 2022.

Jones was selected to fill a vacant position intended for a local owner to give a business perspective.

The Cove offers healthy beverage options while providing space for the community to hold events, meeting space and local entertainment for students and families.

Jones is an active member of the community and has volunteered for various community organizations, fundraising efforts and special events such as the Holiday Hustle and Fall Fest.

She is also an active member of the Grundy Chamber of Commerce, Coaler Business Alliance, and Leaders Learning Together district group. Her background work has included growth and strategy work for the Girl Scouts of Chicago, former village trustee of Carbon Hill, and co-instructor of "Leading with Heart" - a high school leadership and philanthropy program.

List, continued from page 1

Rehabilitation grant program.

The village will continue its investment of American Rescue Plan funds in replacing the oldest portions of water mains located south of Route 113 and east of Broadway.

And, one of the biggest projects slated is negotiating the terms of a new collective bargaining agreement with the Coal City chapter of the Metropolitan Alliance of Police, the union that represents Coal City’s police officers.

“It’s going to be a big one and one I look forward to getting resolved,” Spesia said.

“That’s a long, lengthy list and I look forward to getting it all done. It’s going to be a great year,” Spesia said.

JV Coalers live up to expectations

While the varsity Coalers took the week off, the freshman wrestlers carried on the winning effort, claiming first

place in the IC8 JV Wrestling Invite held at Lisle.

Coal City (108 points) easily surpassed Herscher (88), Wilmington (79) and the rest of the conference thanks to five champions, two seconds, three thirds and one fourth.

At 106, Landon Bomba (11-5) placed 2nd. He opened with a 6-1 decision over Kadon Lindemuth (Coal City) 3-8, then was pinned in 3:53 by

Sebastian Lara (Lisle, 13-8).

At 106, Lindemuth (3-8) placed third after losing to Lara (Lisle (Sr.) and to Bomba (Coal City) by dec 6-1.

At 132, Enzo Mugnolo (20-8) placed first by pinning Michael Furmansk (Lisle) in 1:06; Kayden Budimir (Manteno) in 3:39; and Sean Couch (Wilmington) in 3:00.

At 138, Alex Carlson (17-3) placed first by earning fall against Mason Buczkowski (Peotone) in 0:58; Hunter Johnson (Wilmington) in 1:05; Blake Debuhr (Lisle) in 1:48; and Bryce Reordanz (Herscher) in 2:39.

At 150, Josh Martin (9-7) placed 3rd after winning his first three match by decisions over Landon Richardson (Reed-Custer) SV-1 10-6, over Zohaib Khan (Lisle) (MD 8-0) and Evan Romano (Wilmington) 6-2 decision. He was bumped by Mohammed Abunijmeh (Peotone) in a fall 3:06 before losing by :35 fall to Aiden Morenberg (Wilmington).

At 157, Aidan Edmonds (14-5) was a champion after getting back-to-back falls over Zach Markle (Reed Custer) in 1:01 and over Ibraheem Harb (Lisle) in 5:26.

At 175, Kyle Odam (7-16)

placed 4th, losing to Barnabus Rivera (Coal City) by fall 1:45 before pinning Angel Farias (Peotone) in 2:34. He won by :45 fall over Jimmy Watson (Reed Custer) 0:45 before getting pinned by Frankie Diaz (Peotone) and Sylas Riedstra (Wilmington).

At 175 Barnabus Rivera (7-9) placed 2nd, beating Odam (Coal City), Jimmy Watson (Reed Custer) by fall 0:36 and :58 fall over Frankie Diaz (Peotone). Sylas Riedstra (Wilmington) won by fall over Rivera in 2:57 before he pinned Angel Farias (Peotone in 1:09.

At 215, Cameron Minuth (11-13) placed 3rd after getting pinned in 2:55, then upending Collin Mclain (Manteno) in 1:09. He was pinned by Alec Waliczek (Coal City) in 1:08.

At 215, Waliczek (6-1) placed 1st, won by fall over Collin Mclain (Manteno) in 1:00, beating Mavric Strahan (Herscher) by 2:11 fall and beating Minuth.

At 285, Dane Eaton (20-10) placed 1st with pins over Matthew Dummitt (Streator) in 0:33 and Matthew Dummitt (Streator) in 1:54.

The Coalers will compete in the regional at Wilmington on Saturday morning.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC TEST OF AUTOMATIC TABULATING EQUIPMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Public Test of the Verity Scan, in-precinct tabulating equipment and program to be used at the March 19, 2024 General Primary Election, will be conducted in the office of the Grundy County Clerk, Room 12, Courthouse, Morris, Illinois at 1:00 p.m., on Wednesday, February 7, 2024. As prescribed by the Election Code, this test is open to representatives of the political parties, the press, representatives of the State Board of Elections and the public.

Please Note: Cell phones are not allowed in the Grundy County Courthouse.

Dated this 31st day of January, 2024.

KAY T. OLSON
Grundy County Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE EARLY VOTING SITES

GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION – MARCH 19, 2024

Early Voting will begin on Thursday, February 8, 2024 and continue through Monday, March 18, 2024.

LOCATION – Grundy County Courthouse (Lobby)
111 East Washington Street, Room 12
Morris, IL 60450

Please note: Cell phones are not allowed in the Grundy County Courthouse.

TIME – Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (unless noted below)		
Tuesday	February 13th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	February 15th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	February 17th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Monday	February 19th	CLOSED PRESIDENT'S DAY
Tuesday	February 20th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	February 22nd	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	February 24th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	February 27th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	February 29th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 2nd	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 5th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 7th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 9th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Sunday	March 10th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 12th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 14th	8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 16th	8:00 a.m. to Noon

LOCATION – Village of Minooka (Community Room A)
121 E. McEvilly Rd.
Minooka, IL 60447

Available only during dates/times listed below:		
Tuesday	March 5th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 7th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 9th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Sunday	March 10th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 12th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 14th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 16th	8:00 a.m. to Noon

LOCATION – Coal City Library (Annex Building)
85 N. Garfield St.
Coal City, IL 60416

Available only during dates/times listed below:		
Tuesday	March 5th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 7th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 9th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Sunday	March 10th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 12th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 14th	3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 16th	8:00 a.m. to Noon

Please call the Grundy County Clerk’s Office at (815) 941-3222, if you have any questions.

KAY T. OLSON
GRUNDY COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER

Hometown Storage to dispose of property

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Lien
Hometown Storage, 2920 E. Division St., Diamond, IL 60416, 815-634-3333 hereby is asserting a Possessory Lien in pursuant to your contract and the State of Illinois Self-Service Facility Act.
Tenant: Tawny Pierard, 102 Oreo Court, Morris IL 60450. Unit #97
If unpaid rental charges, late fees and associated charges are not paid for in full by January 31, 2024 the property will be sold to satisfy the lien.
Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, Jan. 17, and 31, 2024.

Sisk Builders LLC gives notice of dissolving

PUBLIC NOTICE

CLAIM NOTICE
Pursuant to 805 ILCS 5/12.75, Notice is hereby given that SISK BUILDERS, INC. was dissolved on December 31, 2023. Any and all claims against the company, its members, employees, agents, or their transferees must be delivered to the Office of Frank J. Meents, Attorney for the company, Post Office Box 578, Channahon, Illinois 60410, on or before April 9, 2024. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred.
Frank J. Meents
Attorney for SISK BUILDERS, Inc.
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Post Office Box 578
Telephone: (815)534-9515
Facsimile: (815)534-9516
Attorney No: 06298859
Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, Jan. 17, 24, and 31, 2024.

Attorney Wheeler files Connor estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF CYNTHIA CONNOR, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 1
CLAIM NOTICE
NOTICE IS GIVEN of the death of CYNTHIA CONNOR. Letters of Office were issued on January 19, 2024, to Garret Wheeler, as Independent Executor, of Wheeler Law Firm, Ltd., located 305 E. North Street, Morris, Illinois, 60450.
Claims against the estate may be filed on or before the 15th day of August, 2024. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Claims may be filed in the Circuit Clerk’s Office, at the Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington St. Morris, Illinois, 60450, or with the personal representative in care of their attorneys, or both. If filed with the Clerk, the claimant must, within ten (10) days, mail or deliver a copy of the claim to the personal representative and their attorneys at the address below and file with the Clerk proof of such mailing or delivery.
Garret Wheeler, Independent Executor
Garret Wheeler
Atty. Number- 6270818
Wheeler Law Firm, Ltd.
305 E. North St.
Morris, IL 60450
815-942-5555
Gwheeler23@hotmail.com
Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, Jan. 24, 31 and Feb. 7, 2024.

Coal City Self Storage to dispose of property

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois, on Friday, February 16, 2024 Coal City Self Storage will sell or otherwise dispose of a Mattress, Furniture, Pet Carrier and misc. items stored at Coal City Self Storage, 815-476-7232, 435 N. 5th Street, Coal City, IL 60416
Occupant: Michael Spinale Unit 28
Property: Mattress, Furniture, Pet Carrier and misc. items
Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, Jan. 31 and Feb. 7, 2024.

Jensen applies for name change

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS
In re the Petition to Change the name of: Melissa Rose Jensen No. 2023MR 33
Petitioner
NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the undersigned on behalf of herself shall appear in the Circuit Court for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois 60450 on the 23rd day of February, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. before the Judge assigned to hear said matter and then there present a Petition requesting the name of MELISSA ROSE JENSEN be changed to MELISSA ROSE JETT.
Signed: Melissa Rose Jensen
Published in the Coal City Courant on Jan. 24, 31 and Feb. 7, 2024.



The Coal City Courant
USPS No. 120-060
Published weekly, 52 times a year, on Wednesdays by
G-W COMMUNICATIONS, INC.,
271 S. Broadway St.
Coal City, IL 60416
Periodicals postage paid at Coal City, Illinois

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
Free Press Newspapers; 111 S. Water St.;
Wilmington, IL 60481

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

G.W. Communications, Inc publishes the weekly subscription newspapers named The Free Press Advocate, The Braidwood Journal and The Coal City Courant.

Advertising and Business Offices:
• 111 South Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481
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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Morris Hospital Auxillary Gala to support Cardiac Cath Lab

The Morris Hospital Auxiliary will hold its 54th Annual Charity Gala on Saturday, Feb. 10, at Jennifer's Garden, 555 Gore Road, Morris, with proceeds supporting Morris Hospital's life-saving interventional cardiovascular services.

The event will begin with cocktails and a silent auction at 5:30 p.m., followed at 7 p.m. by dinner and a live auction. Dancing will follow, with live music provided by Standing Room Only. Black tie is optional.

The live auction will feature spectacular trips, tickets to major Chicago sporting events, and other unique items.

According to Hannah Wehrle, Morris Hospital Auxiliary & Foundation

Officer, proceeds from the Gala will help support the purchase of a new, \$1.7 million cardiac catheterization table and digital radiographic system for Morris Hospital's Cath Lab. The Cath Lab is where advanced cardiovascular diagnostic testing and interventional procedures are performed, including coronary and peripheral angiography, angioplasty, stenting, and pacemaker and defibrillator implantation, along with interventional radiology special procedures.

"More than two decades ago, Morris Hospital made a commitment to provide advanced cardiovascular services that aren't typically found in a community hospital setting. This has resulted in lives being saved, especially when

someone is having a heart attack," explains Wehrle. "The Auxiliary is very happy to be supporting the purchase of new equipment for the Cath Lab in order to assure the continued availability of this life-saving service for our community."

Tickets are \$175 per person with seating available in tables of 10. Sponsorship opportunities are also available at various levels.

Reservations can be made by going to morrishospital.org/gala or contacting the Morris Hospital Auxiliary at 815-705-7024. Donations are also welcome from those who would like to help support the cardiac catheterization project but are unable to attend the Gala.



Courtesy photo

THE 54TH ANNUAL Morris Hospital Auxiliary Gala on February 10 will support the purchase of a new cardiac catheterization and digital radiographic system for our Cath Lab. This is where lives are saved when someone is having a heart attack.

Students of the week



Courtesy photo

THE COAL CITY EARLY Childhood Center has announced its Students of the Week for the week of Jan. 29. The honored students were selected by their teachers for the weekly recognition. Honored were (from left, front): Jackson Ingalls and Ayla Sheedy. Middle row: Vinnny Morrison, Shayne Shelly, Rylie Ahern and Isaac Mcumber. Back row: Shawn Pearson, Skye Romano, Raegan Picchi and Sully Pfeifer.



Coal City School District photo

COAL CITY MIDDLE School has announced its Students of the Week for the week of Jan. 29. The honored students were selected by their teachers for the weekly recognition. Honored were [from left, front]: Reid Sulzberger, nominated by Mr. Nicholson; Damion Libner, nominated by Mrs. Sobieck; Jason Piatak, nominated by Mrs. Swink, and Emmy Kaluzny, nominated by Mrs. Sweeney. Honored students in row two are: Trevor Walker, nominated by Mrs. Piatak; Grace Sitar, nominated by Senora Aldridge; Kayla Caples, nominated by Mrs. Mark, and Peyton Boyd, nominated by Mrs. Dzibuan.



Courtesy photo

COAL CITY PATRIOT Pen finalists attending the Awards Pizza Party held at Malcolm J. Mayo Post 5422 Wilmington (from left) Cash Wetenkamp, Cameron Haas, Avery Male, Heli Patel, and Lauren Jacovech.

St. Juvn Post 1336 VFW partners with Coal City Middle School for Patriots Pen

Patriot's Pen is a national Program of the Veterans of Foreign Wars that invites, 6th,

7th and 8th graders to submit a 300-400 word essay on a subject chosen by the National

Commander. This year's subject was "How Are You Inspired By America". Students submitting entries compete for nearly one million dollars in local, state, and national awards. All students participating received a commemorative pen.

Students were encouraged and guided by St. Juvn's point man and Army vet Social Studies teacher Jim Hitchcock and the "usual suspects" teachers Kate Cade, Melanie Urquiza and Michelle Sobieck, who also screened the submissions and forwarded the most relevant to the Post.

Coal City middle schoolers stepped up to the plate with 320 essays, a 64 percent participation rate. Contest rules allow a Post to submit one entry for each 15 received to the District level for judging. St. Juvn Post submitted 21, the largest number in the Illinois VFW's 18th District.

Six of the 21 Coal city finalists were able to attend the Awards Pizza Party held on Jan. 6th at the Malcolm J. Mayo Post 5422 VFW in Wilmington.

Coal City Middle School Student Daniel Fite placed second in the 18th District and his award was received by St. Juvn Commander James "Hoppy" Phillips.



Courtesy photo

ST. JUVIN POST Commander James "Hoppy" Phillips received Daniel Fite's 2nd place award from (LtoR) District 18 Patriot Pen Chairman John Davin 18th District Auxiliary President Jennifer Peihl and 18th District Commander Ken Peihl.



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We will have a new Internet winner each week throughout the school year, so watch the Courant each week for the lucky Coaler Fan Winner.

"Support Coal City High School Athletes"



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

Long underpaid

BRAIDWOOD—Once again, another oblivious author to how the city actually functions. First, Mayor Hart has and is giving more "heart" to this city that you may realize. Not only is she trying her best given the circumstances, lest we forget she lost her husband, Charlie while he served our city! So before you make that leap of ignorant faith, consider the field of mud Mayor Hart has already walked through yet you still want to keep her tied to the bumper. Secondly, the petition being "circulated" for the removal of the City Administrator has maybe 60 signatures. Maybe. Anyone can create fictitious accounts and add a signature. Not to mention 60 out of 6,200 is no where near a majority, therefore lacks the necessary weight. Third, the City Administrator has long been underpaid in this City. Yes, I said under paid. Only as of this year is the Administrator salary close to median. Surrounding towns of and even our 2nd state capitol, Vandalia, their administrators make more and are either stagnant or losing businesses. Administrators in nearby towns are paid \$130,000 and \$145,810, and the Vandalia Administrator \$117,710. Let's not forget Wilmington is losing its car dealerships to us, Coal City is going to have two vacant businesses with the move of Ultimate Rides. Those deals were secured while Tony made less than \$100,000. I think that bringing a couple million dollar businesses that will bring revenue and permanent infrastructure to the City is worth a bit of a raise, but that's just my two cents. As for the related employee, that salary isn't even set by the city. That's set by a union contract. And we should be so lucky that's what the salary is! If you had the workload that a Detective Sergeant has being the only investigator in the department by title plus all the administrative functions he has, any non-union employee would be screaming for a raise. So, with all that said, I would suggest you say less and learn more.

Quit making excuses

COAL CITY—Americans hate a fixed fight, be it in sports, their personal life, or in politics. Many people that I know think that the last presidential election was rigged. The years of poor performance out of Washington roves they were right. We have had to put up with weak leadership like never before and most people are sick of it. A strong leader is needed and the voters want a person who will treat current problems with courage and strength toward real solutions. The vote is all we have and we want it honest and reliable. Our freedom depends on it. We want the U.S.A. to be the land of the free and home to the brave, especially for our leaders. Each of us should do our best to make this world be a better place if we can. It is said that God helps those that help themselves. We must quit making excuses and find a good solution to the homeless situation. Business needs leaders who will not be pushed around by politicians. Every one in the world would be here if they could be so we need strong borders. We need the freedom to be free to do what is best for us. We all deserve ways to better places if our talents will get us there. It is supposed to be our own personal choice and not that of someone else. We are now boxed in by those in charge and this must change. We can save ourselves if we will. Well we? U.S.A. all the way!

Thanks for plowing

SYMERTON— Thanks for plowing. Many thanks for Wilton Center plowing the streets in Symerton. Good job Ray and Ryan Nugent for cleaning the streets in town by your bar.

Clearing snow

WILMINGTON—I'm a resident of Ward 2. Things have changed, I definitely live in Wilmington Township. I was thanking the township and Public Works for removing snow in such a timely fashion and keeping the roads safe. I have friends that use township roads and they are very grateful driving that there is no snow. I know everybody drives in the city appreciates the fact the streets are all clear. So what happens with grass and leaves I don't know. I was only thanking people for taking care of the roads with the snow. Sheri Michaels.

Not treated right

WILMINGTON—The building inspector didn't bother to go and take a look and see what was going on at Winchester Manor apartments. A lot of these tenants was born and raised here

and never left this city till this day who are tenants of Winchester Manor apartments and the disabled are also tenants. It's a shame the way the elderly seniors and the disabled are treated at Winchester Manor apartments by the new owners and the new management. I would like to know if the new owners and new management talked to Wilmington Public Library about their elderly seniors and the disabled. Some have animals coming to the Wilmington library from eight in the morning sitting there all day till 5:00 at night everyday until they get their apartments renovated and remodeled. It's a shame the way the elderly seniors and disabled are treated.

Less than half

WILMINGTON—Nikki Haley pointed out the fact that the Republicans have lost the popular vote in seven of the last eight presidential elections. The electoral college was established by the slave states as a condition of joining the union. It's function is to undermine the majority. So the Republicans should stop saying they represent the American people it's actually less than half which is why they hate Democracy and majority rule. Whether the issue is abortion, gun control, or LGBTQ rights the Republicans are on the wrong side of the polling. Trump saying he would be a dictator was at least honest for a change. Vote.

America's melting pot

COAL CITY—Every year different organizations come out with the happiest countries on the planet. It is almost the same list every year starting with 1. Finland, 2. Denmark, 3. Iceland, 4. Norway, 5. Netherlands, 6. Sweden, 7. Luxembourg, 8 Switzerland, 9. New Zealand and 10. Australia with the United States coming in at #16 (not bad). These top ten countries are the countries you liberals always point out and state that we should be more like them but they all have one glaring problem: They are almost 100% Caucasians goes as follows: Finland 92%, Denmark 91%, Iceland 95%, Norway 88%, Sweden 90%, Luxembourg 92%, Switzerland 90%, New Zealand 88% and Australia 86%. The United States is the only country in the top 20 that has any diversity at all with 58% Caucasian, 19% Hispanic, 13% African American, 4% Asian with the remaining 6% a mix of every ethnic group known to exist on the planet. We also have almost every culture and religion known to exist on the planet in this country. The top ten countries that you liberals just drool over don't even come close. So I guess the real message from you liberal hypocrites is that the United States needs to be more like the top ten happiest countries which means we need to have a higher percentage of Caucasians. How exactly do you plan to do that with 100,000's of illegal Hispanic migrants pouring over the border every month.

Pack up and leave

COAL CITY— Empty houses for sale. For those individuals wanting to purchase a home for the first time but are having trouble finding something they can afford, just wait until the November 5 election is over and Trump is back in the White House. The left-wing liberal Democrats will be leaving the country as fast as the illegal aliens are crossing the southern border. They always cry that if the election doesn't go their way they will pack up and leave the country. Boo-hoo poor liberal Democrats. Maybe this time you will make good on your promise, pack your bags and make the residents in some other country hate you. Anyway, there will be plenty of empty houses for sale at rock bottom prices.

Open borders

SHADOW LAKES—On the news it was stated that the president and the Democratic leaders are now concerned about the border crisis and the sanctuary cities have decided to turn off the welcome sign. But it is now an election year that brings out their concern since they have allowed the destruction for three years by allowing the southern border open for crime and drugs. These leaders want your vote and will promise anything. If there is a Democrat president again all their promises will go down the drain just like the promises that the rule of law must be obeyed.

Random thoughts

WILMINGTON—Rudy Giuliani recently filed for bankruptcy, meaning he won't have enough money to pay off the two Georgia poll workers he slandered. Here's a thought, Rudy. Keep your big lying mouth shut if you can't pay



the fiddler. Same for Trump whining about the \$83 million defamation case he just lost. Same advice. And for the local MAGAs, do you think Trump will pledge loyalty to Nikki Haley if she wins the Republican nomination or cry election fraud? Never mind. Stupid question.

Dog outlook

COAL CITY—There are a lot of dogs in Coal City. That is good.

Migrant love

WILMINGTON—Just asking, do Biden voters take in illegal immigrants that they love so much? Or is it love them, just not anywhere close to my home?

Life under Democrats

WILMINGTON—Do you know that in some states illegal immigrants can get a sex change for free while vets wait in line for health care?

Crisis is good

SHADOW LAKES—People read this carefully, because I am going to explain why the crisis at the border may never be solved among many reasons. First of all, the government doesn't want to solve the problem because of reality for the government. It's not really a problem, in reality. What it is, is a modern form of slavery. Yes, slavery benefits both the American people and the American government. Second reason, the politicians. The people that we elect are supposed to represent us. Those people don't want to solve the problem. It works really good for them come election time when they can blame each other for the crisis at the border. This is not an unsolvable problem, if the people in power wanted to they can solve this issue. So I want to explain modern form of slavery. You have millions of undocumented people living and working in the United States in deplorable conditions. Everything I'm saying here can be easily confirmed by anybody that knows how to do research. Look up American Farm workers and you will find that most of the fruits and vegetables that are produced in the United States are produced by undocumented workers who worked under deplorable conditions for pennies. People that do the cleaning in the restaurants, people that do the cleaning in the hotels and many other manual labor jobs are done by undocumented workers. They get paid next to nothing, a modern form of slavery. Also, some people make false statements that these people don't pay taxes. How can this be possible? They say they shouldn't send their kids to school because they don't pay taxes. Well aren't most of the school systems funded with property taxes? These people live somewhere, so if they own a house, I'm sure they pay property taxes and if they rent I'm sure their landlord pays property taxes. When they buy groceries and clothes do they get their stuff cheaper because they don't pay taxes? Nonsense, not only that for these people to get a job at a company or a business, they are required to show a Social Security number which in many cases it's a made up number that doesn't exist. The company deducts Social Security federal tax income and tax everything same like everybody else. Undocumented workers in the United States contribute billions not millions, billions of dollars every year to the Social Security administration and many cases they will never be able to claim any benefits. That is the reason why the government turns the blind eye to undocumented workers. When the Democrats are in power, the Republicans would do anything possible to stop them from doing anything that can help the border crisis and it's the other way around. Also when the Republicans are in power, the Democrats will do anything possible to stop them from doing anything to solve the problem because this way during election time they can blame each other

to gain votes from the American voter. So there it is plain and simple

What do we say?

BRAIDWOOD—Our nation has become the laughing stock of the world due to former President Trump. In New York a rape charge has just concluded and the case of hush money to a porn star will begin; in Manhattan, tax fraud will be ruled upon; in Georgia, racketeering charges relating to election fraud will be decided; in Florida, stolen national documents will be adjudicated; finally, the Federal Supreme Court will consider the insurrection to overturn our nation. What do we say? We say nobody's above the law. We say when you do the crime you do the time. We say no whimpering, no crying, no temper tantrums. Above and beyond all this, the democracy we have brought to so many people throughout the world may be wiped away here in our own land, the United States of America, due to the threat of a dictatorship promised by the same, former President Trump.

Getting worried

BRAIDWOOD— After reading soundoff the past couple of weeks, you can see an election is coming up. Since Chief Lyons announced he is running for mayor we will be seeing a lot more negative comments being put in soundoff. Someone in city administration must be worried about their job.

It's treason

COAL CITY—The Federal Government is now allowed to cut the razor wire on the U.S. Mexican border which means that our leaders in Washington, D.C. have become the leaders of illegal immigration and are going to continue to destroy the lives of the American citizens by allowing our taxes to be given to people that are not U.S. citizens. Taxpayers will wind up as poverty stricken people so that our leaders in Washington DC can collect more finances for their pockets and bring in everyone from around the world to take over U.S. jobs as they have also allowed foreign governments to buy up our farmland so foreign governments can control the USA food. Treason is the violation of the oath of office to protect the American citizens' lives.

With split tongues

DIAMOND—Closing the border is the only thing that should happen, but our leaders in Washington DC want the borders open. They speak about security being primary but this is a pure lie since they are stopping everything protecting the lives of Americans when all they care about is their own comfort. Our leaders in Washington DC have stated that the rule of law must be obeyed but they are talking out of both sides of their mouths with their split tongues like a poisonous snake in the grass.

Absolute impunity

WILMINGTON—Donald Trump said he had absolute immunity. Actually it's absolute impunity.

No longer free speech

WILMINGTON—A lot of people on the right think freedom of speech without consequences. You can say whatever you want but there just might be blow back.

They signed up

WILMINGTON—It is said that three soldiers were killed in Jordan but one must remember that these three voluntarily joined the military whose primary function is to kill people on behalf of the United States. Who would Jesus kill?

Snubbed by Academy

WILMINGTON—Barbie was snubbed by the academy because of the patriarchy. I guess like Ken, they're all smooth down there.

Letter to the Editor

Take Trump's threat to democracy seriously

To the Editor:

This month marks three years since the January 6 insurrection—a direct attack on our democracy, our freedom to vote, and a preview of how far Trump is willing to go to cling to power.

January 6th was the violent and deadly culmination of a months-long criminal conspiracy after the 2020 election, when Trump attempted to stop the peaceful transfer of power for the first time in American history.

But even as he faces multiple indictments for this criminal conspiracy he led, Trump is still running for president in 2024.

If elected to a second term, Trump pledges to weaponize the Department of Justice to seek

revenge against his political opponents, to pardon himself and his allies for crimes they commit, and to deploy the military against demonstrators exercising their First Amendment rights—all while purging the federal government of anyone who doesn't agree with him.

After seeing how far Trump was willing to go on January 6th, we should take these campaign promises seriously. Trump and his allies pose an urgent threat to our democracy, our fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. It's up to all of us to ensure they do not return to power.

Mary E. Variola
Wilmington

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Like it or not, migrant buses still coming

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson's budget that he passed last November deliberately underfunded programs for asylum-seekers. The meager appropriation could be exhausted by April, but nobody knows yet what the city plans to do when it reaches that point.



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

Also last November, Gov. JB Pritzker made it clear to reporters that, "the state doesn't run shelters," and said he was waiting for the city to recommend shelter sites.

"The state doesn't control property in the city of Chicago that could provide a location. The city really has to do that," Pritzker also criticized the city for not asking the General Assembly for additional money and noted, "we have spent much more money to support the system of asylum-seekers arriving here than the city has."

In December, the state declined to fund a huge, 2,000-bed tent shelter in the city's Brighton Park neighborhood after an evaluation of a city contractor's report by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency found that the remediation completed by the city "did not meet IEPA standards to receive [a formal

letter stating no more mediation was needed] and was therefore not approved," an IEPA spokesperson reiterated last week.

The city was furious at the denial, and Mayor Johnson complained to reporters again last week that the state still has not fulfilled its promise to open those 2,000 new beds.

The state claimed then and has ever since then that, despite repeated requests, the city has not yet offered up any more sites. Mayor Johnson told reporters this was not true. I'm still checking on this.

Also in December, Mayor Johnson announced a program to ticket and even impound buses carrying migrants to the city from Texas unless drivers followed rules for when and where their passengers could be dropped off.

That quickly had the effect of forcing the bus companies to dump their human cargo in the suburbs and exurbs, where they are then directed to public transportation to Chicago. During the week ending January 19, not a single bus from Texas arrived directly in Chicago, according to a document released to city officials.

The city has opened no new migrant shelters since

November, although Chicago officials made it appear as if they were still working on plans to do so in December, specifically a shelter on the city's Northwest Side at a site owned by the Catholic Archdiocese. Will Chicago still open and operate that shelter?

No. But the city has been hoping that the state and/or the Archdiocese could open it and now I'm hearing that the shelter might possibly go forward.

On January 12th, city officials went even further and told state legislators the city had "begun planning for right-sizing" its shelter system. That's corporate-speak for "downsizing," although a city official now says they probably shouldn't have used that word.

And then last week, Mayor Johnson told reporters that the state government "can build a shelter anywhere in the state of Illinois," adding the state "does not have to build a shelter in Chicago."

This, of course, ignores the fact that the migrants' stated preference is a Chicago destination. More importantly, it's also the politically targeted destination set by the Texas governor. In other words, the mayor can say what he wants, but they're coming regardless.

His comment also ignores the fact that the state has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on infrastructure and caring for asylum-seekers in Chicago. Expanding that out would be

prohibitively expensive and disperse scarce human resources.

There are only so many people who are willing to do the work and qualified to do it. Dispersing those workers throughout a large geographic area would make their task a lot tougher. It may be unfair to the city, but that's where the infrastructure is.

Not to mention that suburban mayors aren't exactly falling all over themselves to take any of these folks in. When a reporter asked Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle last week if any suburban mayors had taken up her offer to open shelters, Preckwinkle said, "Those conversations didn't result in offers of assistance."

It's becoming more clear almost every day that, despite his initial promises to welcome the new arrivals with open arms and share with them the city's "abundance," Mayor Johnson's aim for weeks, if not months, has been to pull back from the task of accepting and caring for the continuing influx of asylum-seekers and return to his progressive agenda, like banning natural gas connections in most new construction.

Meanwhile, April gets closer every day.

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

Mobile food pantry to visit Kuzma Cottage

Catholic Charities of Joliet will be hosting Mobile Food Pantry at Kuzma Care Cottage on Friday, Feb. 2, at 635 S. Main St., Wilmington from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

When you arrive, please line up in the St. Rose Church parking lot by entering on the Main Street side. (Please do not arrive before 9 a.m.) All Mobile Food Pantries will use a "drive thru" method to distribute food.

Please clear space in your trunk or backseat so volun-

teers can load boxes of food directly into your vehicle. Food is free to neighbors in need; no ID, proof of address or income is required. Everyone is welcome.

Food is distributed on a first-come, first served basis, while supplies last.

Wilmington Freemason's chili cook-off seeks entries

The Wilmington Freemasons Lodge #208 will be having their 14th annual Chili Cook-Off to fund the Pedals for Progress program on Sunday, Feb. 4 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

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

Wilmington Masonic 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.

I-PASS switching to stickers

BY ZETA CROSS
THE CENTER SQUARE

Illinois drivers can now pay their I-PASS highway tolls with a smaller windshield sticker tag instead of the current plastic box transponder.

The compact blue and purple windshield sticker tags allow drivers to skip toll booth lines. A bar code on the sticker uses radio frequency ID to connect with toll collection technology.

Executive Director Cassaundra Rouse of Illinois Tollway says the sticker tags do the same job as the bulkier plastic transponders do.

"Sticker tags are a more convenient, reliable and less expensive travel experience for our customers," Rouse said.

Louisville, Atlanta, Denver and California have transitioned to sticker tags.

"Technology has evolved and we want our customers to benefit," Rouse said.

Illinois Tollway wants more drivers to take advantage of I-PASS. Drivers who use I-PASS get a 50% discount on tolls.

"I-PASS is the best way to travel our system and to avoid fines and fees," Rouse said.

The sticker tags work in conjunction with E-Zpass to give Illinois drivers streamlined toll payments in 18 states.

Sticker tags are free. No deposit is required. Households with more than one car can get free sticker tags for every car that is tied to the same I-PASS account. No more need to share transponders.

Open an account online at getipass.com.

Illinois Tollway will mail sticker tags to account holders. In February, people can pick up sticker tags

at Jewel-Osco and Road Ranger stores and the Chicago Auto Show. They will also be available at Illinois Tollway headquarters and tollway oases.

The I-PASS plastic box transponders will continue to work until their 10-year battery runs out, Rouse said. Motorists who upgrade to sticker tags will get a \$10 I-PASS account credit as a refund for the deposit that they paid when they signed up for their transponder.

No need to return the transponder but they should be recycled. I-PASS plastic transponders contain lithium batteries and should not be thrown in the trash. Once a driver has received the sticker tag, they can dispose of their plastic box transponders at designated recycling locations, including Lowe's and Home Depot stores.

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Winners named in G-SW Dodgeball Tournament



TEAM NO HIT Sherlock won first place in the 5th/6th division in the Gardner Grade School annual dodgeball tournament that was held January 28.



GARDNER GRADE SCHOOL held its 2nd annual Dodgeball Tournament on January 28. The tournament had 19 teams ranging from grades 2-8. Area students from Braceville, Coal City, Dwight, Gardner, MVK, Reed-Custer, & South Wilmington were represented well in the tournament. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Gardner GS Outreach Program. First place for the 3rd/4th division was the Coalers.

Cardiologists discuss heart disease at free program

Individuals wanting to learn how to reduce their risk of heart disease are invited to a free program featuring Morris Hospital Cardiologists Dr. Mostafa Ghanim and Dr. Mary Menz on Thursday, Feb. 8, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Morris Community YMCA, 320 Wauponsee St. in downtown Morris.

The program is part of the Morris Community YMCA and Morris Hospital's new Healthy Happens Here health and wellness seminar series. To register, call the Morris Community YMCA at 815-513-8080, or go to www.jolietymca.org and enter "Heart of the Matter" in the search bar.

Forest Preserve's Four Rivers site to host wedding open house

When Bailey Testerman was first scouting for wedding venues, the bride-to-be said she was looking for a site that was as "green" as possible. "The health of our planet is incredibly important to me ...," she said. "I wanted to reduce the environmental impact of our wedding as much as possible. Choosing an environmentally conscious venue was a way to live out my values while wedding planning."

Testerman and her fiancé, Kole El-Talabani, of Kankakee chose the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon because of the venue's eco-friendly vibe, beautiful setting and all-inclusive wedding space. They were married Aug. 12 in an "eclectic" and "whimsical" celebration that incorporated many items from thrift shops.

Nestled in McKinley Woods preserve, the Forest Preserve District's Four Rivers is a popular wedding venue, but there are still some couples who aren't aware it exists,

said Mary Thomas, the site's reservation manager. That's why the Forest Preserve District will host a Four Rivers Wedding Open House from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3, at Four Rivers to help more couples discover the venue. Registration for the open house is encouraged. Sign up on the Event Calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org.

The open house will highlight the Illinois River Grand Hall, which can seat up to 150 people, an outdoor patio, a picnic shelter suitable for outdoor ceremonies, and wedding suite, all in a beautiful setting in the woods near where the DuPage, Kankakee and Des Plaines rivers meet to form the Illinois River.

The building's unique interior also has exhibit space filled with a 2,000-gallon river fish aquarium, a mussel display and an oversized bird feeder/birdbath viewing area.

Five approved Four Rivers' caterers will be at the open house: Angeli's Catering, Chic Chef Catering, My Chef Catering, Polonia Catering and Uncle Bubs "Award Winning



BALLS OF STEEL won first place in the 7th/8th division of the Gardner Grade School Annual tournament on Sunday.

Letter to the editor Young people need a Hero

As a former teacher and school administrator, I had to deal with students who were troubled and had difficulty learning. These students often had poor attendance, behavior problems, or were tuned out in class. Usually, the standard recommendation to address these behaviors was counseling or therapy, which had some success. However, we failed to realize that these students needed a "Hero," someone to listen to

them and provide support. But most importantly, care about them and be there for them. A hero could be a teacher, administrator, coach, or neighbor â they are often located in a school, after-school program, government agency, or youth center. If you are aware of a young person who is dealing with depression, anxiety, or another emotional issue, please consider finding a hero or being one. We need more "Heroes."

Richard Trotta
Andover, MI

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OBITUARIES

Kenneth A. DeZee

WILMINGTON—Kenneth A. DeZee, 68, of Wilmington, formerly of Elwood, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024 at his residence.

Born May 28, 1955 in Joliet, Kenneth Allan was a son of William and the late Philomena (Benco) DeZee. He was raised in Joliet where he attended St. Patrick Catholic School, and later graduated from Tremper High School in Kenosha, WI. Ken worked for Exxon Mobil oil refinery in Joliet as a process operator and served on the Mobil Fire Brigade for 35 years until he retired. He was a sociable guy who enjoyed spending time with his friends at the Wilmington VFW and Goose Lake Club. Ken was a great sports fan, especially of basketball and football, and also took pleasure in fishing and camping at the Yogi Bear Camp Ground in Amboy, IL. Above all else, he loved his family and treasured time spent with his children and grandchildren.

Survivors include his father, William DeZee, of Orangeville, IL and children: Heather DeZee, of Minooka; Jennifer DeZee, of Naperville and Jacqueline DeZee (William Russell), of Morris; one step-son, Ruebin (Julia) Conterez, of Carbon Hill; five grandchildren: McKenna,



Bre'Anna, Antonio, Carmine and Jaxson; four siblings: Deborah (Doug) Kohls, Margaret "Peggy" DeZee, Mike DeZee and Mary DeZee (Darrell Scaze); and numerous nieces and nephews.

Ken was preceded in death by his mother, Phyllis DeZee; his wife, Cressa DeZee and two brothers, Jacque and Billy DeZee.

Per his wishes, cremation rites are being accorded, and the family will receive friends for a celebration of life at the VFW Malcom J. Mayo Post 5422, 557 W. Baltimore St. in Wilmington on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024 from 2 to 7 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Ken's memory may be made as gifts to the Wilmington VFW.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Ken's memorial page via social media at www.ReevesFuneral.com

Cremation services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.

Michele L. Krik

BRAIDWOOD—Michele L. Krik, 54, of Braidwood, passed away on Friday, Dec. 29, 2023 at Silver Cross Hospital in New Lenox, IL.

Born in St. Claire, MI, she was the daughter of the late Charles and Mary Ellen (nee Danser) Krik. She was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church Goodfarm in Dwight. Michele was a faithful woman. She worked in customer service and was very patient and kind with her customers. She enjoyed going out to dinner with friends and adored her pets. She was a devoted aunt to her nieces and nephews and took them on many outings. She will be dearly missed by all who loved her.

Surviving are her sisters, Debra (Dennis) Dean, of Naperville, IL and Cheryl (Randy)



Maca, of Lake in the Hills, IL; nieces and nephews: Elizabeth Rusnak (Jack Rowe), Joshua (Miranda) Maca, Kyle (Rebecca) Maca, Ethan (Deanna Fiejdasz) Maca, Nathan (Kristine) Dean, Michael (Bethanne) Dean and Jonathan (Qian) Dean; many great-nieces and great-nephews; as well as many beloved friends.

Preceding her in death were her parents, Charlie and Mary Ellen Krik.

Cremation rites have been accorded and a memorial service will be held on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024 at 10 am at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 1910 Black Road, Joliet.

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

Ronnie L. May

WILMINGTON—Ronnie L. May, 81, of Wilmington, passed away on Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024 at StoryPoint Senior Living in Romeoville, IL.

Born Feb. 22, 1942 in Chicago, Ronnie Lamont was a son of Lester and Florida (Noe) May. He gained his primary education in Coffeen, IL and went on to graduate from Hillsboro High School. On June 10, 1961, Ronnie married Janet Kay Headley in Vernon, and together they relocated to make their home in South Wilmington for four years before settling in Wilmington, where they spent the following 52 years.

Ronnie had a fulfilling career which began at the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant before he joined Mobil. He dedicated 30 years of service to Mobil/BASF before retiring. Ronnie was a member of the Wilmington Moose Lodge #241 and the Ponderosa Area Club. He was also a proud member of the Wilmington Lodge #208 A.E. & A.M.

Ronnie's true passion lied in the great outdoors. Fishing, hunting, boating and the search for morel mushrooms were activities he relished. His English Setter hunting dogs held a special place in his heart, even those that were not the best hunters. A St. Louis Cardinals fan by birth, Ronnie eventually converted to support the Chicago Cubs. Additionally, he played pool on leagues and had an affection for collecting - with garage sales being irresistible to him. Just taking leisurely drives around town to observe what was happening gave him contentment.

Ronnie will be remembered as a loving and supportive husband, father, grandfather and cherished friend to many. His kindness was genuine and his disposition always pleasant - qualities that earned him loyalty from all who knew him.



Survivors include his loving wife of 62 years, Janet; daughter, Carla (Glen) Hawks, of Tega Cay, SC; son, Kerry (Kathleen) May, of Plainfield; six grandchildren: Lucas (Lara) Hawks, Alison (Ricardo) Alvarado, Jessica (Trevor) Marshall, Travis Hawks, Kaitlin May and Jacob May; five great-grandchildren: Grayson, Hayden, Leah, Carter and Jace; one sister, Deanna (the late Kenneth) Traylor, of Hillsboro, IL; sisters-in-law and brother-in-law: Marilyn (the late David) Scott, of Corinth, MS; Diana (the late Gary) Foltz, of Patoka, IL and Sena (Harry) Landreth, of Vernon, IL and numerous nieces and nephews.

Ronnie was preceded in death by his parents; father-in-law and mother-in-law: Merle and Frances Headley and brother-in-law, Dale Headley.

Cremation rites have been accorded. The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd. in Wilmington on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024 from 11 a.m. until the time of memorial service at 1 p.m. Inurnment will immediate follow in Oakwood Cemetery, Wilmington.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Ronnie's memory to the Alzheimer's Association for Alzheimer's and Dementia Research (www.alz.org) or to Lightways Hospice and Serious Illness Care (www.lightways.org).

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

Cremation and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Barbara Bailey

BRAIDWOOD—Barbara Gayle Bailey, 72, of Braidwood, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 16, 2024 at the ARC of Dwight, IL.

Born on April 8, 1951 in Montcalm, WV, she was the daughter of the late McKinley and Mae (nee Johnston) Blevins. She married James Earl Bailey on Oct. 10, 1967 and together they made their home and raised their family in Braidwood. She was a member of Main Street Baptist Church in Braidwood. For 35 years she was a school cook at Reed-Custer. Barb enjoyed playing bunco, gambling and loved to shop. More than anything she loved to spend time with her family including many visits to Florida.

Surviving are her daughters: Cathy Bailey, of Braidwood and Lori (Dustin) Johnson, of Diamond; granddaughters, Mariah and Molly Johnson, of Diamond; adopted grandson, Tim Gallagher and brother, Jonny (Zelma) Blevins,



of West Virginia.

Preceding her in death was her husband, James Bailey (11/18/2015) and brothers, J.C. Blevins and James Blevins.

Cremation rites have been accorded.

A Memorial Visitation was held on Thursday, Jan. 25. Barbara will be inurned with her beloved husband, Jim, at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Braidwood at a later date.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be directed to the family.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpatersonfuneralhome.com or find them on Facebook.

R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory were entrusted with arrangements.

Tammy Francisco

COAL CITY—Tammy Sue Francisco, 60 and a lifelong resident of Coal City, passed away Friday, Jan. 26, 2024 at Morris Hospital, following a valiant enduring battle with Marfan Syndrome.

Born July 3, 1963, in Joliet, Tammy Sue was the daughter of Carol Morin (nee Phillips), of Coal City and the late Leonard "Swede" Onsen. She grew up in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School in 1981. She was a devoted mother to her son, Tony, and in addition cared about her nephews, Tiger and Cody. She owned a daycare business out of her home, and later joined the Coal City School District where she worked in the high school cafeteria. Tammy actively participated in the community and took great pleasure in supporting Coal City sports and school activities. With a passion for photography and drawing, she showcased her creative talents. Furthermore, Tammy was known for her exceptional cooking skills.

Tammy possessed an incredible capacity for love and displayed immense kindness throughout her life. She was blessed with countless friends who cherished her warm-hearted nature. Above all, Tammy held her family dear to her heart. Let us not forget Piper, her faithful canine companion.

Survivors include her mother and best friend, Carol Morin; one son and his fiancé, Anthony (Rose) Francisco, of Elmwood Park, IL; her brother and sister-in-law, Lenny and Carrie



Onsen, of Coal City; two nephews, Tiger (Jen) Onsen and Cody Onsen; one great-nephew, Griffin, and aunts and uncles: Mary (the late John) Manietta, William "Billy" Onsen (Dee Perona), Karen (Tommy) Summers, Betty (the late Raymond) Onsen and Pat (the late James) Onsen.

Tammy was preceded in death by her father who passed when she was 12; grandparents: Ervin and Jenny Phillips and Harold Onsen and Anna Bengie; her stepfather, Ronald Morin; aunts and uncles: Marilyn (Gerald) Krell, Joan Shumacher, Jerry Lee Onsen, Faye Legg, Betty Lou Vandygriff, Wayne (Dorothy) Onsen, Richard Onsen and David (Kathy) Onsen and cousins: Lori Grosvenor, Tiger Krell and Annette Onsen.

Per Tammy's wishes cremation rites have been accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at First Baptist Church of Coal City, 4470 E. IL Route 113, one mile west of Coal City High School, on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024 from 10 a.m. until time of memorial service at 12 p.m. Pastor Sam Payne will officiate.

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

Cremation services have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Barbara Ann Kurecki

MORRIS—Barbara Ann Kurecki, 85, of Morris, and formerly of Seneca and Burbank, IL passed away Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024 at Hinsdale Hospital in Hinsdale, IL.

Born Jan. 17, 1939, in Chicago, Barbara Ann was a daughter of Bruno and Frances (Manchik) Shimkus. She was raised and educated in Chicago and on June 16, 1956, Barbara married Ronald Kurecki at St. Brendan Parish in Chicago and he preceded her in death on Sept. 26, 1991.

Following her relocation to Morris in 1995, Barbara quickly ingrained herself within the community's fabric. She dedicated her time and efforts to First Christian Church, the Morris VFW Auxiliary, the Morris Hospital Auxiliary, and the Morris Moose Lodge #967. Her generous spirit and unwavering commitment reflected her deep-rooted values.

Barbara possessed a keen intellect and enjoyed challenging puzzles that she effortlessly conquered. She also took pleasure in playing Bingo and trying her luck playing slots, however it was in her kitchen where she truly expressed herself. Baking delightful treats was both an art form and a passion for Barbara Ann. It brought immense joy to her heart to share these delectable creations with friends and loved ones, especially with her daughters and grandson making holiday cookies and for their family cookoffs.

Survivors include her children: Karen McGovern, of Seneca; Kristine (William)



Grieger, of Lockport and Kimberly (Craig) Leary, of Morris; five grandchildren: James Railsback Grieger (Amanda Schoenecker), Shannon Bordeaux, Jared Kurecki, Alyssa Kurecki and Bradley Kurecki; five great-grandchildren: Michelle, Kendall, Madison, Maya, and Lexi; two sisters, Geraldine Wilkison and Sandra (Spencer) Waagen, both of Manteno; sister-in-law, Mary Kurecki, of Murphysboro, IL and numerous nieces and nephews, including special niece, Carrie (Jerry) Witherow.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents and husband; son, Ronald Kurecki; one grandson, Michael McGovern; son-in-law, Jamie Railsback and siblings: Larry Reese, Robert Reese, Margaret Reese, Helen Reese, Dorothy Reese, Eugene Shimkus and Ronald Shimkus, Dolores Mikalauskas and Lorayne Hillig.

Per her wishes, cremation rites are being accorded, and the family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024 from 12 p.m. until the time of memorial service at 4 p.m.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Barbara's memorial page via social media at www.ReevesFuneral.com.

Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.

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Number 1

Time to Vote for Baby Valentine 2024!

The GFWC-IL Coal City Junior Woman's Club is hosting its annual Baby Valentine Contest. Contestants are babies and toddlers age newborn to 2-years-old. The contest is virtual only.

Photos will be posted in the Coal City Courant and on the GFWC-IL Coal City Junior Woman's Club Facebook page. Votes are .50 each and minimum online vote is \$1. Online voting will be open from February 1-10, 2024. Voting will end at 11:59 pm on February 10, 2024.

There will be a Baby Valentine photo album on our GFWC Illinois Coal City Junior Woman's Club Facebook page at the top of the page. **Submit payment via Venmo or Paypal and in the comment or**

notation section, please indicate what candidate you are voting for. Each candidate will have a number. Individual names will not be posted. The email address is coalcityjuniors@yahoo.com. If a contestant number is not noted, the monies will be distributed equally between candidates.

There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. All contestants will receive a participation certificate which will be sent via US Mail to the address given in your email. All proceeds go toward community projects sponsored by the club. Contest winners will be announced in an upcoming edition of the Coal City Courant and the GFWC-IL Coal City Junior Woman's Club Facebook Page.



Number 2



Number 3



Number 4



Number 5



Number 6



Number 7



Number 8



Number 9



Number 10

Price under \$3 but gas may soon rise

Local gas prices remain unchanged from a week go as the statewide average has fallen 1 cent per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.19/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Braidwood stations were at \$3.19/g on Monday and Coal City averaging \$3.09/g. They were the exception as pricing in Wilmington (\$2.78/g), Morris (\$2.99/g), Bourbonnais (2.84/g) and Joliet (2.93/g) slipped under \$3.

The lowest price in the state on Monday was \$2.59/g while the highest was \$4.59/g, a difference of \$2.00/g.

Prices in Illinois are 15.7 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 46.4 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

"We've seen the national average price of gasoline bounce back up after cold weather

related refinery shutdowns pushed up the wholesale price of gasoline. Plus, recent GDP data and new attacks in the Red Sea have pushed oil prices to their highest level since November," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"While prices have inched up and may continue to slowly rise, I believe the larger increases will be witnessed in a few weeks as we enter mid-February, lasting through April or May, during which the national average could rise 35 to 85 cents per gallon. Other issues and tensions could complicate how quickly prices rise or how high they go, so while the rise is not completely charted, it could deviate from our expectations."

The national average price of diesel stands at \$3.87 per gallon.

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How solid-state electric vehicle batteries might change the game of electric cars

Dear EarthTalk: Are solid-state electric vehicle (EV) batteries a solution to some of the issues with the lithium-ion batteries powering our EVs today?

-- Jack Whitcore, Salem, OR



Solid-state batteries have emerged as a promising technological advancement that could potentially revolutionize the EV industry. As concerns about climate change intensify, there is a growing need to transition away from nonrenewable energy sources, not only in power generation but also in transportation.

The widespread adoption of solid-state batteries could play a key role in driving the prevalence of EVs, offering a cleaner and more sustainable alternative to fossil fuel-powered cars.

To understand the significance of solid-state batteries for EVs, one needs to grasp the current challenges with lithium-ion batteries—the main energy storage technology in

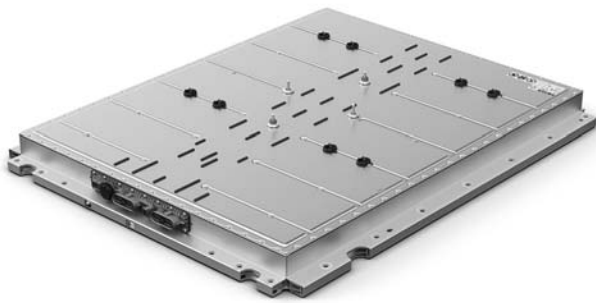
EVs today. They have many drawbacks: limited energy storage, fire safety concerns, short lifespans and a huge carbon footprint due to the mining of lithium and other heavy metals. These have prompted researchers to explore alternatives.

Solid-state batteries address many issues by replacing the liquid electrolyte in lithium-ion batteries with a solid electrolyte. This cuts the risk of fires, and allows for more storage.

And the solid-states have a lower carbon footprint than the lithium-ions and have longer lifespans, so they're a more durable and sustainable EV option. According to the Centre for Process Innovation's Scott Gorman, solid-state batteries use fewer materials, and could reduce climate impacts by 39 percent compared to lithium-ion batteries.

The environmental implications of moving to solid-state EV batteries are significant. As demand for EVs keeps rising, reducing the carbon footprint associated with their production and operation becomes imperative.

Solid-state batteries can help by offering a cleaner and more efficient energy storage solution. With nonrenewable energy sources a major contributor to climate change, the adoption of solid-state batter-



VOLKSWAGEN IS ONE OF the leaders when it comes to the development of solid state EV batteries.

ies in EVs aligns with global efforts to mitigate the impact of transportation on the environment.

Moreover, the development of solid-state batteries is driving innovation in the automotive industry. Companies investing in research and development to improve the performance and cost-effectiveness of solid-state batteries are likely to spearhead the next wave of EV technology and lead to more affordable and accessible EVs, making them a viable option for a broader segment of the population.

So far, Toyota is leading the race to develop solid-state batteries. Volkswagen, Hyundai, Nissan and Honda are also developing their own solid-state batteries.

And several smaller companies - Schaeffler,

QuantumScape, SolidEnergy Systems, Solid Power, Sila Nanotechnologies, Albemarle and Ilika, to name a few—are dedicated to developing solid state batteries that can be mass produced inexpensively.

However, challenges remain in scaling up the production of solid-state batteries to meet growing demand for EVs. Manufacturers need to overcome various production costs and scalability issues.

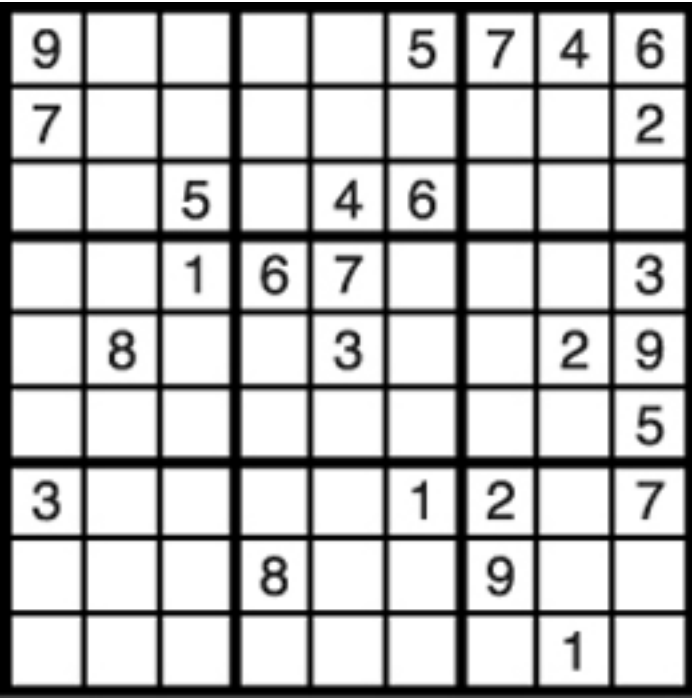
Proponents of the technology are pushing for government support to help bolster R&D and commercialization efforts so that someday in the future we can have EVs with the safest, greenest batteries possible.

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Send questions to: question@earth-talk.org.

Kylinn Lowery award EOM trophy



WENDY HILL (left) from the Coalition for a Healthy Community presents the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce trophy for Employee of the Month to Kylinn Lowery who works at Wilmington Pizzeria. "Kylinn has been with us for over 2 1/2 years and is a great employee," said owner Elena Mozzamuto. Lowery was nominated by the public for her friendly customer service, attentiveness and always being helpful. Mozzamuto invited the public to come see the trophy in the dining room at 205 E. Baltimore St., Wilmington.



Elwood Fire Protection District seeking bids for digital sign

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Elwood Fire Protection District will be accepting sealed bids for the following: The purchase and installation of a digital station sign. Bid specifications/packets are available for pick up at the Elwood Fire Protection District MonFri, 9am- 3pm or you may email admin@elwoodfpd.com to request a packet. Bids must be submitted by 3pm, Feb 7, 2024. Each submitted bid must be in a separate envelope, sealed and clearly labeled "Sign Bid".

The bids may be mailed to: Elwood Fire Protection District 309 Mississippi Street Elwood, IL 60421, or dropped off in person 9am-3pm, Mon-Fri. The Fire District will not receive bids after the Feb 7, 2024 deadline. All bids shall be opened at the Fire District on Feb 8, 2024 at 9:30 am. The Elwood Fire Protection District reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Any questions should be directed to Chief Locacius at clocacius@elwoodfpd.com.

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.

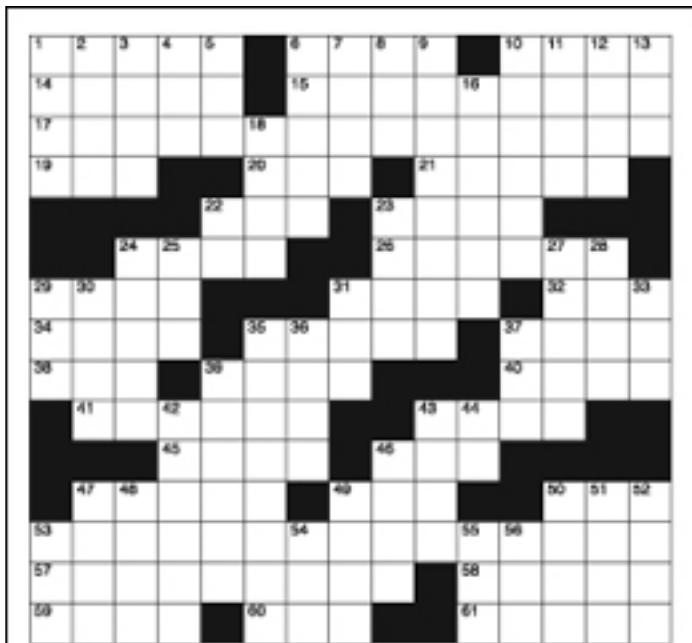
Elwood Fire Protection District seeking bids for new hydrants

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Elwood Fire Protection District will be accepting sealed bids for the following: The installation and purchase of two (2) Clow Medallion with auxiliary valves and boxes. Connect to existing 6-inch water service line. Bid specifications/packets are available for pick up at the Elwood Fire Protection District MonFri, 9am- 3pm or you may email admin@elwoodfpd.com to request a packet. Bids must be submitted by 3pm, Feb 7, 2024. Each submitted bid must be in a separate envelope, sealed and clearly labeled "Hydrant Bid". The bids may be mailed to: Elwood Fire Protection District 309 Mississippi Street Elwood, IL 60421, or dropped off in person 9am-3pm, Mon-Fri. The Fire District will not receive bids after the Feb 7, 2024 deadline. All bids shall be opened at the Fire District on Feb 8, 2024 at 9am.

The Elwood Fire Protection District reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Any questions should be directed to Chief Locacius at clocacius@elwoodfpd.com.

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Jan. 17, 24 and 31, 2024.



- CLUES ACROSS**
- Become less intense
 - Variety of pear
 - Religion native to China
 - Type of tooth
 - Fitted out
 - Make every effort
 - Autonomic nervous system
 - Complete
 - Alternate name
 - River in France and Belgium
 - Miami's mascot is one
 - Turfs
 - Most cognizant of reality
 - Broad volcanic crater
 - Canadian surname
 - Satisfaction
 - Mythological Greek
 - mythological prince
 - Collide
- CLUES DOWN**
- Siberian river
 - Blessing
 - Substitutes (abbr.)
 - Principle underlying the universe
 - Work unit
 - Yellow edible fruits
 - Gemstone
 - A place ships dock (abbr.)
 - Evergreen tropical tree
 - Reality TV star Richards
 - Nonflowering aquatic plant
 - Stakes
 - Antidiuretic hormone
 - Make warm again
 - Light beams
 - Lethal dose
 - Terrorist group
 - Kids love him
 - Naturally occurring solid
 - German surname meaning "man from Saxony"
 - Popular cuisine
 - Partner to cheese
- Immune response
 - Feline
 - High opinion of one's own appearance
 - Thin strip to align parts
 - Containers
 - Convicted American spy
 - Breathe noisily
 - Taxi
 - Pancakes made from buckwheat flour
 - Swiss river
 - I.M. __, architect
 - Have surgery
 - Formal withdrawal
 - Dutch and German surname
 - Square measures
 - 2,000 lbs.
 - Degrade someone

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to organization. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 12 = E)

A. 4 19 14 24 18 2 22 12
Clue: Put into an order

B. 5 4 19 20
Clue: Cull

C. 3 2 26 12 5
Clue: Storage devices

D. 18 12 24 20
Clue: Orderly

Answers: A. organize B. sort C. files D. neat

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to organization.

T S M Y E S

Answer: System

Guess Who?

I am a singer born on January 29, 1982, in Indiana. I performed in theater groups, and moved to Los Angeles to pursue a musical career. I appeared on "American Idol" and went on to release an album that reached the top ten. I now tour with the rock band "Queen."

Answer: Adam Lambert

ORGANIZING WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- ATTIC
- BASEMENT
- BELONGINGS
- CATEGORY
- CHORES
- CLEAN
- CLOSETS
- CLUTTER
- DONATION
- FILED
- GARAGE
- GARBAGE
- HAZARD
- HOARDING
- LABEL
- MESS
- ORGANIZE
- PATTERN
- PROFESSIONAL
- SORTED
- STORAGE
- SYSTEM
- TASK
- THINGS



LADY COALERS Paige Walker (left) and Makayla Henline trap Wilmington's Alaina Clark during Thursday night's win. Coal City improved their record 18-3.

Lady Coalers stay in the hunt for ICE championship

The Lady Coalers easily handled two ICE Conference opponents last week as they improve to 18-3 overall and still in the hunt for the league title at 9-1.

On Thursday Coal City scored double digits in all four quarters proving once again that the Lady Coalers play hard from start to finish.

They built a 12-6 lead over Wilmington in the opening quarter and was up 31-12 by the half. They went on a 26-16 run in the second half to ice the win.

The Lady Coalers finished with seven three-pointers including three each for Mia Ferrias, who led with 18 points, and Abby Gagliardo who tallied 16 points, four rebounds and four steals.

Emma Rodriguez put up seven points while grabbing five rebounds, Makayla Henline scored five and had four steals, and three points each for Sydney Larson and Paige Walker. Makenzie Henline and Tanna Curry con-

tributed two points apiece.

The Lady Coalers stole the ball 22 times and controled the boards with 33 rebounds.

At Streator

Coal City came out shooting at Streator, connecting for seven treys during a 47-17 win over the Lady Bulldogs.

A good pressure defense helped to build a 15-4 lead in the first and 23-15 advantage at the half. They allowed Streator just two points the entire second half as they coasted to victory.

Makayla Henline had the hot hand with three three-pointers to finish with 12 points. Gagliardo chipped in with 10 points and five steals while Larson and Ferrias had five points each.

Scoring four points each were Kylee Kennell and Abby Stiles. Makenzie Henline and Dacy Ness finished with three points apiece.

Coal City will host Reed-Custer on Thursday and Manteno on Monday.



COAL CITY'S Tanna Curry puts up a shot against Wilmington during Thursday night's game. Curry had two points and three rebounds.



SHOOTING FOR TWO points for the Coalers is Dylan Young.

Coalers win a pair during shootout

The Coal City boys basketball team picked up a pair of wins on Saturday against to unknown opponents during the Beecher Shootout.

The Coalers upended Iroquois West 51-40 in the first game, led in scoring by Jim Feeney with 12 points and Zander Meents who finished with 11.

Scoring eight points each were Gabe McHugh, Gavin Carpenter and Dylan Young.

The Coalers edged Armstrong in the second contest of the day, 48-46.

McHugh paced the good guys with 18 points while Feeney chipped in with 14.

Coal City faced a tough Pontiac squad when they traveled there on Friday.

They ended up on the down side of a 77-37 score as the hosts came out shooting and applied a pressure defense.

High-point man for the Coalers was McHugh with 8 points while Feeney and Young finished with seven points each. Owen Hren helped out with six points.

The Coalers visit Herscher Friday before hosting Morris on Tuesday.

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DOUBLE D - Coalers Jim Feeney and Gavin Carpenter cover their man while playing in the Beecher Shootout on Saturday.

Larson's 22 points sparks JV Lady Coalers

Sydney Larson had a big night for the Coal City fresh-soph girls basketball team on Thursday, scoring 22 points to lead her team to a 44-38 win over Wilmington.

"Sydney had another big game for us. I also thought Laura Christopher hit a couple big shots for us when the lead started to slip," said coach Brad Boresi.

Christopher finished with 9 points while Riley Walker and Becca Hall chipped in with five points each. Calleigh Hamilton also had two points.

On Wednesday the JV Lady Coalers (12-5) upended Streator, 53-22, due to a balanced

scoring attack.

Riley Walker lead all scorers with 16 points. Sydney Larson finished with 13 points while Maisy Franklin added 10 points.

Aubrey Jensen tallied four points. Laura Christopher and Kyla Stark put up three points each while Becca Hall and Bridget Feeney contributed two points each.

"Riley Walker has done a great job all year, and she really had a big game for us tonight. Since the holiday tournament, we have really found our stride and have been playing well," Boresi said.