

Coalers prepare for sectionals



Regional champs as expected



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Everyone is a Coaler

Warrior mascot being retired at Coal City Middle School

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The saying, "Once a Coaler, always a Coaler," has never been more true as the Unit 1 School District is adopting a single mascot.

Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year Coal City Middle School will transition from the Warriors to the Coalers, a move to unify the district under a single mascot.

Superintendent Chris Spencer said there has been some discussion over the past few years of coming together under one mascot, but

there was never any movement.

Then last summer, athletic directors Dan Hutchings and Brad Boresi came forward with middle school administration to discuss the possibility of making a change.

Needing to gather more information, the concept was presented as a discussion item for the district's Learning Leadership Team [LLT] comprised of district administration, staff, students and community members who make recommendations to the Board of Education.

"I will tell you at first it was something some people were hesitant of, but the more we

talked about it and Mr. Boresi and Mr. Hutchings spoke about it the positives of it made sense," Spencer said.

He noted during his time as principal at the lower grade buildings there was often questions about what mascot they identified as.

"We even talked at the elementary school if we should select a mascot as something for our kids to look up to, and now this unifies the district and everyone as a Coaler," Spencer said.

There is an on-going effort in the district to boost school spirit across the board from students to community members.

In his opening day address, Spencer shared that his vision is to see everyone in Coal City green, gold and white on Fridays.

Spencer pointed out there are not many school districts in the area that have separate mascots for their middle and high schools.

There should be minimal cost associated with the transition as the school's uniforms simply say Coal City and there is not much around the building that designates the middle school as the Warriors.

Spencer said there are some championship

SEE MASCOT, PAGE 2

The Princess Anastasia



Photo by Ann Gill

COAL CITY THEATRE Department will present its spring musical, "Anastasia" over two weekends—March 10-12 and March 17-19—in the Coal City Performing Arts Center. The cast of 34 students will take the stage to tell the story of Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna Romanov, played in this production by Elaina Patten. The musical opens as the Grand Duchess is bidding farewell to her grandmother, the Dowager Empress as she leaves Russia for a new home in Paris. As the opening sequence comes to a close, word arrives in Paris that Romanov family has been killed, but the question remains did Anastasia survive the invasion of the Bolsheviks. The answer comes in the telling of the story and the first performance will be at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 10. Reserved seat tickets for "Anastasia" are available on-line at bit.ly/CCTDTickets. Members of the Romanov Family and palace staff include [from left] Kilen Davidson, Jordan Olson, Amelia Fritz, Chris Collins, Patten, Bella Byers, Mason Natyshok, Evelyn Wills, Jackson Steinhouse, Jared Counterman, Mae Connor, Ethan Scrogam and Logan Hausman.

A new principal for Coal City High School

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Arthur Stafford has been hired as the new principal at Coal City High School.

"I feel he is going to do a really nice job, and fit in well at the high school with the staff, students and administrative team," Superintendent Chris Spencer said.

Stafford will fill the position on July 1, taking over for Jennifer Kenney who is transitioning into the role of director of curriculum and instruction.

Stafford comes to Coal City from Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202 where he holds the position of assistant principal of students services at Plainfield North High School.

The district received 11 applications for the position and nine individuals were offered an initial interview.

Each candidate met with three groups—six interviewers in each—one comprised of administrative staff, another with faculty and students, and a third that included a faculty, food service personnel, student services and an athletic director.



Courtesy photo

ARTHUR STAFFORD has been hired as principal of Coal City High School starting with the 2023-2024 academic year. He will assume the post from Jennifer Kenney who will assume the duties of director of curriculum and instruction on July 1.

SEE STAFFORD, PAGE 2



Courtesy photo

THE UNIT 1 Board of Education is taking its tax assessment complaint over the assessed value of the GE Hitachi facility to the state's Property Tax Appeals Board. The move comes in response to a decision by the county's Board of Review to maintain the assessed value of the site at \$6.1 million. Located in Goose Lake Township, the GE Hitachi operation is the only permanent high level radioactive nuclear waste storage site in the country.

"We are not going to quit"

Unit 1 Board of Education taking its property tax complaint to the state

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The Unit 1 Board of Education is going higher up the ladder in its quest to prove the multi-million dollar GE Hitachi site on Collin Road is still under-assessed.

The district will take its assessment complaint to the state's Property Tax Appeals Board and other local taxing bodies are likely to join in.

The move comes in response to a decision by the Grundy County Board of

Review [BOR] that maintains the assessed value of the site at \$6.1 million, an amount the school district and a few other taxing bodies believe is too low.

"I would challenge anybody and let's start with the county to show us a single piece of property that's value did not change from last year to this year, not by \$1. Even if they did have others it's probably a handful and because of a property tax settlement agreement that's been pre-approved," Board vice presi-

dent Shawn Hamilton said.

The decision of the three-member BOR, in Hamilton's words, "makes no sense."

This is the second consecutive year the district has appealed the facility's value with the BOR. Last year's request resulted in an increase of just under \$3 million. However, the objectors believed that number was still too low and took the case to the state PTAB. The matter is still pending and could be for quite some time.

Now at the school board's

direction—a formal vote to come at a special meeting on Feb. 22—a complaint on the 2022 assessment will be going to the state.

"Our stance is that we just want GE Hitachi to pay their fair share just like every other taxpayer has to do, and unfortunately that is not the case. We are trying to protect our

SEE APPEAL, PAGE 2



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Mascot

signs up in the gymnasium that state Warriors, but that will stay as it's part of the school's history. Overall, the superintendent-

ent believes it will be a smooth transition into a unified mascot. "I think it makes sense for us to be uniform, if we're going to be a uniform district, then let's do it that way," Spencer said.

Stafford

Based on the feedback that came from the interview groups, the superintendent called two candidates back to speak to him and other district office staff. Those interactions went on for about 75 minutes and resulted in Stafford being recommended for the position.

At its meeting on Feb. 1, the Board of Education offered Stafford a one year contract with a salary of \$105,000 and benefit package that includes Board paid teacher retirement contributions and premiums for health, dental and vision insurance, as well as vacation and sick leave.

It was Stafford's experiences that set him apart from the field of candidates.

While in the Plainfield School District, Stafford taught high school social studies and served as the head of that department and then transitioned to the division chair for English. He's served in his current role for the past eight years.

Social emotional learning is one of the goals outlined in the district's strategic plan, and according to the superintendent, the incoming principal's experience in that area is something that set him apart from the other candidates.

"His extensive experience in curriculum and social emotional learning will be important in the continued development and implementation of the Board's strategic goal of providing a safe school environment that meets the academic, social and emotional needs of all students and staff," the Board said in a release announcing Stafford's hiring.

Stafford, Spencer said, is focused on building relationships. "He talked a lot about that and we need someone who is going to continue to build relationships with the staff and students."

The new principal has extensive experience in building a master schedule, analyzing data and using that to improve delivery of curriculum.

According to Spencer, one thing that set Stafford apart in the interview process was his demeanor and desire to get to know the students and school community.

"Overall, I think because of his demeanor and building relationships it should be a smooth transition," the superintendent said.

Stafford, who is set to meet with the high school staff in the coming days, has indicated to the superintendent how impressed he is with the school district, especially the high school.

Stafford will be assisted in his duties by assistant principal Corey Mikula and dean of students/assistant athletic director Brad Boreis.

"I'm excited for him to get started," Spencer said, with the Board adding they look forward to him continuing to build on the excellence the high school and school district are known for.

Appeal

taxpayers with having GE Hitachi pay their fair share." Unit 1 Superintendent Chris Spencer said.

The six other taxing bodies that receive property tax payments from the site include Coal City Fire Protection District, Coal City Public Library District, Goose Lake Township, Goose Lake Township Road District, Grundy County and Joliet Junior College. They are considering if to join in the PTAB complaint. The complaint must be filed within 30 days of the BOR's written notification which would put the deadline around Feb. 26.

The position of the district has been the facility should be assessed based on the income approach—rather than the cost approach—that is currently being used by the county's assessor when placing a value on the site.

The cost approach sets a value based on replacement costs, whereas the income approach uses the income the property generates to determine its value.

Owned and operated by GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, the facility is the only permanent high level radioactive nuclear waste storage site in the country.

It provides storage space for 3,219 fuel assemblies within deep water pools at its facility along Collins Road. In total, the site provides storage for 773 metric tons or 1.7 million pounds of spent fuel. The majority it was shipped to the site from nuclear facilities located in California, Nebraska, Connecticut and Minnesota. Dresden

Generating Station also has spent fuel stored there.

Local taxing districts have obtained two of the five contracts outlining what reactor owners are paying GE to hold onto their used fuel rods. Storage of spent nuclear fuel is the responsibility of the federal government, but without a central repository the feds pay operators to store their spent fuel and in this case those companies are paying GE for what they have shipped to the Goose Lake Township site.

The taxing districts, through legal channels, are trying to obtain the other three fuel storage contracts.

Based on what is currently known, the taxing districts are of the opinion that the assessed value should be closer to \$80 million

"What a disservice the Board of Review has done to the taxpayers of Grundy and this district, and all others. It's just ridiculous, they need to pay their fair share," board member Quint Harmon said.

"I think the path has been pretty much determined from what we are going to get from the Board of Review, which is no fair and impartial—use whatever phrase you want to use—value of that property out there. So we are going to continue down the road and continue to have Board of Review hearings that will continue to do absolutely nothing and we will continue to file PTAB appeals and maybe someday we will get this thing resolved for the taxpayers we will be made whole," Hamilton said.

"We are not going to quit," Board president Ken P. Miller said.

And, Hamilton confirmed, "We are not going to quit at all."

Family Wellness Night is just a week away

STAFF REPORT

The Unit 1 School District's Family Wellness Night will be bigger than before with over 80 vendors scheduled to participate.

After a pandemic hiatus, the popular community event returns with an expanded offering of activities for individuals of all ages.

"We are glad to be able to bring this event back, it is such a great event for our community," Unit 1 Superintendent Chris Spencer said.

Sponsored by the district's Wellness Committee, the Wednesday, Feb. 15 event will feature health and wellness services

offered by a variety of local businesses, organizations and public service agencies.

The event provides attendees a variety of wellness activities and vendors in the areas of physical, emotional, mental and financial health.

As the committee has long pointed out there is more to wellness than good eating and exercise.

On the topic of good eating, the event will see the return of the food court where samples will be provided.

There will be demonstrations and kids activities throughout the event that will take place at Coal City High School.

Admission is free. Doors open at 6 p.m. and close at 8 p.m. Everyone attend-

ing will be entered into a drawing for prizes provided by the various vendors and local businesses and organizations.

Spencer said he is excited for the upcoming event and the interest its receiving with new vendors and groups reaching out to be a part of the program.

Students from Grundy Area Vocational Center will be participating in the event, Spencer saying its a great opportunity for the community to not only see what programs the vocational center offers, but to see the great things students are doing through their studies there.

"It's a wonderful event and we hope to see everyone on Feb. 15," Spencer said.

Unit 1 names Students of the Week



COAL CITY EARLY Childhood Center Students of the Week for Feb. 6 in row one (from left) are: Tobi Kuhel, MacKenzie Sarff, Camden Brueggert and Arya Dholariya. Emma Stukel is in row two with Raegan Picchi and Greysen Nugent. Completing the group in row three are Isabella Steenson, Oliver Rubio, Liam Santos, Jack Terrel and Avery Swanson.

COAL CITY ELEMENTARY School Students of the Week for Feb 6 in row one are (from left): Brady Loughran, Santiago Rodriguez, Ethan Magana, Bradlee Severson, Annabella Burnett and Piper Kubina. Standing in row two are Ethan Lambert, Jordy Hossack, Kaleb Mcumber, Emma Cvitanovich, Evelyn Gonzalez, Remi Aichele and Rosaria Mugnolo.



MARINA FIGGE Middle School

PAISLEY JACKSON Middle School



COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for Feb. 6 are (from left): Kamden Gabehart, Mortisha Rutherford, Blake Jones and Aubrey Olszewski.



COLTON BAILEY Middle School

MIA MCKIM Middle School

Coal City VFW Post 1336 to award scholarship

A scholarship grant is awarded annually to a Coal City High School student or graduate based upon demonstrated academic achievement and community service.

The scholarship is available for a college student who is a qualified Coal City High School graduate, or an honorably separated veteran who has served in the U.S. military to include active duty, Reserves or National Guard. A high school applicant must

continue their education in the Health Care/Medical field which can include Emergency Serice degrees such as Paramedic/Firefighter, etc. A Veteran applicant is eligible for any type of continuing education that is approved for reimbursement by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

The scholarship grant will be in the amount of \$1,000. An applicant awarded a scholarship will be notified by the selection committee via U.S.

Postal Service. The scholarship is a monetary grant and does not have to be repaid. The student must maintain a 2.8 grade point average, or equivalent. Payment will be made by check directly to the applicant upon successful completion of a designated semester of study.

An official school transcript or a certificate indicating successful completion of the education/training in the name of the recipient must be submitted to initiate payment.

The scholarship grant will be awarded once to the student or veteran applicants.

An interested applicant needs to call 815-634-2435 or contact the High School Guidance Counselor to acquire an application and do the following: complete the application, submit two letters of recommendation, an essay and any other documentation the applicant may deem appropriate.

Parade entries sought for Carbon Hill Homecoming

The village of Carbon Hill is gearing up for its 73rd annual Homecoming celebration by inviting community businesses and organizations to be a part of its annual parade.

The parade will step off from the corner of Rathburn [McArdle Road] and Carbon Hill Road at 1 p.m. on Sunday,

June 25.

The parade will travel north on Seventh Street to Lacy Street and east on Lacy to First Street where the parade will turn south on to First Street making its way back to Rathburn Street.

The parade is a total of 10 blocks traditionally lined with residents and guests.

Parade applications can be obtained at the village hall, 695 N. Holcomb St. or by contacting the village clerk at vchclerk@sbcglobal.net.

Line up numbers will be assigned and information sent out to all participants one week prior to the parade.

COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

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

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

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

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

Thursday, Feb. 9- Terrific Tots - 10am
Early Dismissal Movie Day - 11:45am-2pm - K thru 5th graders can watch the movie "The Bad Guys."

Teen Fleece Pillow Making - 12-2pm - Teens 6th thru 12th grade can register to make a Fleece Pillow in the Teen Zone.

Galentine's Day - 2-8pm - It's the 5th Annual Galentine's Day event - Ladies Night Out! Ladies gather your girlfriends and come out for a night of spoiling yourselves this Valentine's Day! Participating locations will give out gift basket tickets to anyone wearing red or pink. Tickets can be dropped in any of the baskets on display here at the Coal City Public Library District between Thur., Feb. 9th and Sat., Feb. 11th at 4pm. The library will also hand out tickets to anyone checking out materials or using our services. Minnie's Travel Boutique will be in the meeting room from 5pm to 8pm.

Terrific Tots - 6pm
Friday, Feb. 10- Euchre - 1-4pm
Fun Fridays - 3pm
Tween Lock-In - 5:30-8pm

Monday, Feb 13-Makerspace Cart Mondays - All Day
Terrific Tots - 10am
Country Meadows Book Group - 10am-12pm

Preschool Storytime - 11am
Eager Readers Homeschool Edition - 1pm
Eager Readers - 4pm
Family Lapsit - 6pm
Preschool Storytime - 6pm
Tuesday, Feb 14- Memory Keepers - 9am-4pm
Tween Club - 3:15pm
CCPLD Board Meeting - 6:30-8pm

Wednesday, Feb. 15-Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) - 9am-12pm
Family Lapsit - 10am
Preschool Storytime - 10am
Adult Movie Day - Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris - 1-3pm



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Check Out Our Valentine's Day flowers & Bouquets!
See Page 11 for Details

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Lewis Univ. dean's list

Just over 1,300 students were honored on the Lewis University Dean's List for the 2022 Fall Semester.

To be eligible for this honor, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours during the semester with a grade point average of at least 3.5 and with no "D" or "F" grades.

Area students on the list include Jaden Christian,

McKenzie Marcum and Haley Crescenti, of Wilmington; Cain Headrick, of Custer Park; Lexi Banas, Jessica Leasure, Victoria Miller, Jevin Reed and Ryleigh Christensen, of Coal City; Nicole Wiltz, of Diamond and Alexander Crickman, Alec Dinh, McKenzie Ellison, Molly Gustafson, Kyla Kjellesvik, Jennifer Murphy and Jon Overton, of Morris.

If you favor rum, try a classic Jamaican Wray & Ting

In recent years both the whiskey and the rum world have been blessed with "cask strength" or "barrel proof" expressions from distillers, meaning that the spirits are bottled higher than the standard 80 proof. In some cases, much higher.

One of the highest-octane expressions in the rum world comes from Jamaican distillers Wray & Nephew. Despite the "overproof" bottling, Wray & Nephew has solidified its place in Jamaican culture as part of one of the most popular Caribbean cocktails, the iconic Wray and Ting.

Wray & Nephew began producing Jamaican rum in 1825 and has marketed many different expressions of their rum with varying degrees of success and staying power. The Wray flagship brand is their overproof white rum bottled at 63% ABV, or 126 proof.

Wait a minute, 126 proof? Is it flammable? As a matter of fact, it is. Outside of Jamaica Wray & Nephew overproof is primarily used as a "float" on top of flaming drinks and shots.

It has culinary applications as well, many chefs use the potent Jamaican rum to flambé desserts. Occasionally bartenders will use it to give a kick to an overly sweet drink such as a Rum Runner or a Zombie.

In Jamaica, they actually drink the Wray overproof, and they drink a lot of it.

Throughout the years I have heard that 90% of all rum consumed in Jamaica is pro-

duced by the Wray distillery, and I wondered exactly how Jamaicans were enjoying their Wray & N e p h e w . Overproof rum has a certain jet fuel burn to it, although it has sweet notes on the front end. The finish is every bit rough as you can imagine.

Sure, it's an acquired taste, but one that is celebrated on the island. Wray & Nephew overproof is a great source of pride for the island and toasting with the iconic spirit is a part of many milestones and celebrations in Jamaican life.

It turns out that the most popular rum in Jamaica is used to make the most popular mixed drink in Jamaica, the Wray and Ting.

Wray and Ting? We know by the name that the drink uses Wray & Nephew, but what is Ting?

Ting is a Jamaican grapefruit soda, one that is wildly popular on the island. Many tourists have enjoyed a Wray & Ting on a Jamaican cruise and attempted to replicate the drink at home using Squirt, or a store brand American grapefruit soda.

Squirt is not an ideal substitute for Ting as Squirt is sweetened with high fructose corn syrup whereas Ting is sweetened with pure cane sugar.



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Runq

The pure cane sugar complements the white overproof rum in the Wray and Ting, squeeze in a wedge of lime and you will see what the hype is all about.

Are you ready for a Wray and Ting? I have some good news for you. US distribution for Ting soda is as strong as it has ever been, it may be in a supermarket near you. Be sure to check the "international foods" section of your local store if you do not see Ting in the soda aisle.

I picked up a six pack at my local store and had a few sips of the Ting on its own, and it does have a unique and refreshing sweetness to it. I am not a huge fan of soda, but Ting over ice does the trick and tastes like actual grapefruit.

If you are unable to find Ting locally, it can be ordered from Amazon or any number of other online retailers. As mentioned earlier the distribution is getting better, and you have social media to thank for that.

Thousands of Facebook posts depicting vacationers with Wray and Ting has managed to create worldwide demand for Ting.

Pick up some Wray & Nephew overproof, and I hope that you can track down a six pack of Ting. Let's pour one of these.

One thing that you will

notice in the recipe below is that the starting point for this drink is 6 ounces of soda to 1 ounce of rum.

That seems like a bit much on the soda side, but remember that we are dealing with a rum bottled at 63% ABV. In terms of ABV, one ounce of overproof rum equals approximately 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 ounces of standard 80 proof rum.

If you want more kick in your Wray and Ting you can certainly turn up the heat by adding more of the overproof rum.

One more thing, and this is important: Don't forget the lime. I prefer to squeeze in at least 1/2 oz. fresh lime juice, maybe a bit more. Keep in mind that this is a 7 ounce drink on ice, it can take a little lime.

Simple as it may be, the Wray and Ting is a cultural phenomenon that must be sampled if you are a fan of Caribbean cocktails.

Building a dynamite reggae playlist is not a requirement to enjoy a Wray and Ting, but it certainly doesn't hurt either.

The classic Jamaican Wray and Ting is served over ice in a Collins (tall) glass.

Fill glass with ice and add:
1 oz. Wray and Nephew White Overproof Rum
6 oz. Ting Grapefruit Soda
Squeeze in juice from one lime wedge

Stir and garnish with lime wedge

Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

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Illinois' biometric law strengthened by latest ruling

BY HANNAH MEISEL
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — People who've been subject to fingerprinting, face or retinal scans as either employees or customers of Illinois companies have five years to file lawsuits if they believe the business violated a stringent state privacy law, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled last week.

It's the latest in a handful of cases that have reached Illinois' high court in recent years, all refining the state's Biometric Information Privacy Act. Also known as BIPA, the first-of-its-kind law has, since 2008, made Illinois the only state that grants a private right of action to sue over the improper collection and mishandling of biometric data.

Justices ruled BIPA has an unequivocal five-year statute of limitations on all claims under the law — not a one-year window as employers and business groups had hoped for.

In this case, logistics company Black Horse Carriers Inc., which has since been acquired by trucking giant Penske, faced a class action lawsuit. A former employee initiated the suit, alleging the company violated BIPA by requiring time clock fingerprint authentication without maintaining a publicly available policy on how the company would treat employees' biometric data.

The suit also claimed Black Horse failed to provide notice to employees that the timeclock was collecting their fingerprints, and didn't explicitly get employees' consent.

The company argued the court should've applied the one-year statute of limitations under Illinois' Right of Publicity Act. But the court unanimously disagreed.

In issuing a blanket five-year statute of limitations for all BIPA claims, the 5-0 majority of the court emphasized that "the full ramifications of the harms associated with biometric technology is unknown." Without the law, the court wrote, individuals whose biometric data was improperly collected or disseminated might never even know it — at least until they felt the consequences.

Nearly 1.5 million Illinoisans were eligible for their share of a \$650 million class action settlement with Facebook under BIPA in 2020, a five-year case that was one of

the first among thousands of suits filed under the law, with the trend really taking off around 2018, Kays said.

Thursday's opinion was another legal victory for proponents of BIPA — especially a handful of law firms specializing in filing class action cases over biometric data. Those attorneys have made the same basic argument in thousands of lawsuits over the last several years: if someone's identity is stolen, they can obtain a new social security number. But if their biometric data is stolen, it's impossible to get a new fingerprint or face.

So far, Illinois' high court has agreed — as did a federal jury in October, granting \$228 million in damages in a class action BIPA case against BNSF Railways, the first jury test of the law.

Pritzker says COVID-19 disaster proclamation to end in May

BY HANNAH MEISEL
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Exactly 38 months after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, Illinois will no longer be under a disaster proclamation as of May 11,

Gov. JB Pritzker announced last week.

That's the same day President Joe Biden will end the national public health emergency, which just passed the three-year mark last week.

Pritzker had declared a public health emergency two days before the WHO's pandemic determination and has renewed his disaster proclamation every 30 days since then.

The repeated proclamations gave the governor authority for COVID-related actions such as closing schools, issuing stay-at-home orders and mandating masks and vaccines. But they were a source of consternation for Pritzker's political opponents.

The governor had slowly rolled back his COVID-19 mandates over the past year, including an action in October when he reversed the requirement for vaccines, testing and

masks in health care settings.

But Illinois is still one of seven states with some sort of COVID-related emergency proclamation on its books.

These disaster declarations have allowed those states — including Republican-run Texas — to continue benefiting from COVID-era bumps in federal reimbursements for programs like Medicaid, additional benefits for those on food stamps and the ability to quickly deploy emergency workers to respond to areas in need, like hospitals with severely short staffing.

"Our state's disaster proclamation and executive orders enabled us to use every resource at our disposal from building up testing capacity and expanding our health care workforce to supporting our vaccine rollout and mutual aid efforts," Pritzker said in a statement.

Pritzker said 1.4 million

children in Illinois received nutrition support under the additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. He also pointed to the expansion of telehealth during the pandemic under his disaster proclamation, which has largely been adapted into state law after it proved popular with doctors and patients alike.

Opponents to Pritzker's repeated issuance of disaster proclamations insisted the governor was limited to the 30 days laid out in state law, but legal challenges to that effect ultimately failed after months of litigation.

The governor's disaster proclamation also allowed for the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center, which brokered cooperation between the leaders of different state agencies in response to COVID-19.

As Illinois aims to add more wind farms, concerns raised about wildlife

BY KEVIN BESSLER
THE CENTER SQUARE

As Illinois forges ahead with plans to assist in the adding of more wind farms around the state, environmentalists say there is a downside.

Hundreds of thousands of birds and bats perish annually in collisions with turbine blades and other equipment at renewable energy installations.

The country's solar farms have a bird problem as well. Utility companies reportedly have been finding bird carcasses littering the ground at their facilities for years. In 2016, a study by ScienceDirect estimated that the hundreds of utility-scale solar farms around the U.S. may kill nearly 140,000 birds annually.

During debate on legislation at the Illinois statehouse about county control over placement of renewable energy projects, state Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, cited another study in which a large portion of the deaths involved eagles and hawks.

"Why is that important? Because they're the ones that keep all the other species in check," Rose said. "They are the ones who eat

mice and rats and prevent vermin from spreading disease."

Last year, a wind energy company was ordered to pay more than \$8 million in fines and restitution after at least 150 eagles were killed at its wind farms in eight states, including Illinois. NextEra Energy subsidiary ESI Energy pleaded guilty to three counts of violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Conservation biology professor Angelo Capperella at Illinois State University is concerned about bats, which help control insect populations.

"The bats are a really huge issue, one that I don't know how the wind farm companies are going to deal with it because bats have been declining for other reasons as well," Capperella said.

One solution would be to turn off the windmills at night when bats are migrating, Capperella said.

It now appears Illinois will become involved in the siting of wind and solar projects. Gov. J.B. Pritzker is expected to sign legislation which essentially takes away local control from counties for the siting of wind farms. It is a reversal from last summer when Pritzker said the state would not get involved.

Who makes the best chili?



Freemasons invite you to turn in your best

LOOK WHO'S IN the kitchen. Ben Stickel may have a secret ingredient in his chili but to find out you'll have to come to the Wilmington Masonic Lodge, 311 Main St., Wilmington, on Sunday Feb. 26. From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. the Wilmington Freemasons Lodge #208 will have its 13th annual Chili Cook-Off to fund the Pedals for Progress program. Tasting and a bowl of house chili is \$10 for adults, \$5 for kids over 11 and free for kids 11 and under. There will also be \$1 hot dogs available. Think you have what it takes to be the Chili King? To register as a contestant call Stickel 815-370-7331 or Matt Lohmar 815-210-9606.

Dropoff string lights, electronics Thursday

Will County's free electronics drop-off event will be held Thursday, Feb. 9, from 5-7 p.m. at the Wilmington City Hall parking lot, 1165 S. Water St.

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

Participants are reminded to remain in their vehicles at all times, show ID by holding it to the window for staff to see and then allow staff to remove items without assistance from each vehicle.

Items accepted include: Televisions (limit 2), monitors, printers, computers (desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets),

electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players, DVD players, DVD recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, cell phones, computer cable, portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

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

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

Mobile food pantry coming Monday to So. Wilmington

Catholic Charities' Mobile Food Pantry will be distributing food on Monday, Feb. 13, at 4 p.m. at St. Lawrence Church (135 Rice Road in South Wilmington) in the church parking lot (rain or shine).

Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank have partnered to deliver nutritious food (meat, produce and nonperishable items) to people in need.

Participants are asked to

stay in their cars. The Mobile Food Pantry will use a "drive thru" method to distribute pre-packed groceries to ensure that all participants are safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You do not have to be Catholic to participate. Catholic Charities helps people of all faiths and beliefs. For more information about Catholic Charities, please visit catholiccharitiesjoiel.org.

SIUE fall deans list

Southern Illinois University announced the names of students qualifying for the fall 2022 dean's list, maintaining a grade-point

average of 3.5 or better and have 12 hours calculated (B is equivalent to 3.0; A to 4.0).

Among those students were Destiny Dodge and Colleen Feeney, of Coal City; Carley Wilkerson, of Wilmington and Elizabeth Carroll, of Mazon.

McDonough Street bridge to reopen, Jefferson St. to close

The Illinois Department of Transportation announced that the McDonough Street bridge over the Des Plaines River in Joliet will reopen, weather permitting, Monday, Feb. 13.

The bridge was closed in November as part of ongoing efforts to upgrade the movable bridges in downtown Joliet to allow them to be controlled

from a central location, creating a more efficient system of lifting and lowering the bridges and increasing safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and marine traffic.

Shortly after the reopening of McDonough Street, the Jefferson Street (U.S. 30) bridge will be closed until, weather permitting, the evening of Friday, Feb. 17. The

closure is necessary to complete final testing of the remote-control system that was installed on the bridge last year.

A detour will direct motorists to Raynor Avenue (U.S. 52) and McDonough Street (U.S. 52) to cross the river and reconnect with Jefferson Street via Chicago Street (Illinois 53).

Nutrition experts rank best diets

One month has passed and are you still sticking with that new year's resolution to try to lose weight?

There's a lot more to it than just grabbing every "reduced fat" item off the grocery store shelf.

Karen Whitehorn, MD, an OSF HealthCare internal medicine physician, hears questions all the time about diets. Her first question back is usually: what do you want out of your diet? Do you want to be healthy? Lose weight? Manage a medical condition? Sort through the details, and you'll find the best option.

U.S. News and World Report recently consulted a panel of medical and nutrition experts to rank the best diets. The Mediterranean diet topped the list. Dr. Whitehorn says this diet is based on the eating habits of people who live near the Mediterranean Sea. It's a plant-based diet, incorporating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, brown rice and seafood.

"The Mediterranean diet is actually pretty easy to follow. But you need to make sure you have the right food in your home," Dr. Whitehorn says. "It might be a little more difficult during the winter to get fresh fruits and vegetables. If you can't, frozen is OK. Canned is OK. But we recommend you rinse the canned food first to decrease some of the salt."

Number two on the U.S. News list is a plan Dr. Whitehorn recommends often: dietary approaches to stop hypertension, or the DASH diet. It recommends foods that are low in sodi-

um and high in magnesium and potassium.

Some people may incorporate fasting into their diet. Dr. Whitehorn says fasting, when done in consultation with a medical expert, can work. But she's hesitant to recommend it broadly.

"Our bodies need nutrients every couple hours. So to not eat anything for 12 hours can cause other problems," Dr. Whitehorn says. "If you're diabetic and don't eat for 12 hours, your blood sugar could drop too low. Then when you eat, it could go too high."

Watch out for fad diets on social media, Dr. Whitehorn says. Remember the saying: if it's too good to be true, it probably is.

"Fad diets are not consistent. They're not healthy. They don't provide you the nutrients you need. If it requires you to take a pill or drastically reduce your calories, it's not really a healthy diet. It can only be followed in the short term."

On the contrary, working out a diet plan with your health care provider has a better chance of achieving long term results.

"A healthy diet gives you the energy you need to do everyday activities," Dr. Whitehorn says. "It has been shown to increase your life expectancy. And it helps prevent chronic medical problems like high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer and heart disease."

Visit the OSF HealthCare website for healthy recipes.

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Barge traffic back to normal; lock closures loom

BY DANIEL GRANT
FARMWEEK

Barge traffic is getting back to normal on the lower Mississippi River for what's typically a slower time of the year anyway.

"The water levels are back up to normal south of Cairo versus where it was in September and October," Tom Torretti, of Consolidated Grain & Barge Co., told FarmWeek at the Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association's (IFCA) annual convention in Peoria in mid-January. "The low water issue last year was the worst we'd seen since 1988."

The low water issues, which Torette said made parts of the mighty river temporarily look like a creek, snarled barge traffic and caused freight rates to skyrocket in 2022.

Fortunately, barges are moving again and freight rates are coming down as the planting season approaches. Much of the fertilizer and other input products used on Illinois farms arrive in the state via barge.

"After harvest, things slow down and then start picking up around February as shippers move fertilizer up the river system," Torretti said. "Bulk rate contracts out of New Orleans are 15 to 20% higher than a year ago. All our costs are up. But what southbound grain freight values do remains to be seen. They're back to normal for now."

When asked if farmers will have access to adequate supplies of inputs moved on the river this spring, Torretti said, "I think so (based on current conditions and barring spring flooding)."

"The fertilizer industry is so good at what it does, buyers



Photo by Army Corps Rock Island District

A TOW ENTERS the lock chamber moving upstream at Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Joliet. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to close four locks on the upper Illinois River at Starved Rock, Marseilles, Dresden Island and Brandon Road for rehabilitation work from June 1 through Sept. 30.

always get their products," he continued. "Just, maybe not when they want it."

The barge industry added 226 new covered hopper barges to the fleet last year from previous orders, which will help increase the flow of products on the river system.

But, with the current cost of a new covered hopper barge between \$900,000 and \$1 million, the existing fleet of around 11,800 barges likely won't grow much more any time soon.

"Until steel prices come down, we probably won't see many new builds," Torretti said.

Meanwhile, the barge industry faces more shipping issues this spring and summer

— this time of the planned variety.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans to close three locks on the Upper Illinois River at Marseilles, Dresden Island and Brandon Road for rehabilitation work from June 1 through Sept. 30. The planned closure for work at the Starved Rock lock has been deferred to a later date, yet to be determined.

"There'll be no traffic at all. You'll have to plan accordingly," Torretti told attendees of the IFCA convention. "We've known about this for two years and been through this before. It is what it is."

The Corps previously closed five locks on the Illinois River at LaGrange, Peoria,

Starved Rock, Marseilles and Dresden Island from July 1 to Oct. 29, 2020, for major rehab and maintenance work.

"The timing of the repairs (this year) is after spring planting and before harvest, so it's probably the best time to do it," Torretti said. "But, when the locks do reopen, it will be a mad dash on all commodities. We potentially could be harvesting grain and will certainly be moving fertilizer to put down for the fall season."

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

New kids programs

The Forest Preserve District of Will County will host two new programs for kids this month. The first is "Rivers of Color - Winter Greens" Saturday, Feb. 11, from 1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. at the Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon.

Enjoy a short hike and discover the magic of mosses, and then head inside to make

your own plant creation to take home. Free, ages 10 or older. Register by Feb. 10.

On Wednesday, Feb. 15, "Little Explorers - Animals in Winter" will take place at Four Rivers from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Learn about animals in winter with a story, a hike, hands-on activities, crafts and free play. Free, ages 3-5. Register by Feb. 14.



Thank you Alex, the rest of the Baskerville crew and Michelle Clark for orchestrating David's service at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery on Friday the thirteenth of January, 2023. David had always wanted a bagpiper playing "Amazing Grace", and you made it happen Alex. The flag ceremony, taps, special gun salute, and personal care from Michelle Clark helped to honor my loving husband of almost 52 years. Our family and I will be forever grateful.

Matthew, Miranda, Mark, Jonah, Libby, Samuel, MacKenzie and Bonnie Huston

Thank You

Thank you Wilmington Fire Protection Department for your response to my frantic call and for your valiant efforts to revive my husband on February 4, 2023 (and for even putting my groceries in the freezer when I had to hurriedly leave for Riverside). A special thank you to Todd Friddle for your care and compassion. Thank you Donna and Dale Kirk for driving me to Riverside. Thank you to those who gathered around me in the ER and a special thank you for Dr. Lacheta's attention and compassion. Our family has been so blessed by all of the beautiful cards, thoughts, prayers, meals, flowers, kindnesses, donations to David's memorials and love in action (even laundry and housecleaning) of many friends and family. May God bless all of you for your support at this very difficult time.

Matthew, Miranda, Mark, Jonah, Libby, Samuel, MacKenzie and Bonnie Huston and Suzanne and Jim Johnston

Temporary halt for proposed CO2 pipeline

BY ZETA CROSS
THE CENTER SQUARE

A proposed CO2 pipeline through parts of Illinois is on hold.

The Texas pipeline company Navigator has withdrawn its application for a certificate of authority to build a pipeline to carry liquid carbon dioxide through 13 Illinois counties.

Pam Richart, co-founder of the Coalition to Stop CO2 Pipelines, said Navigator has not been able to persuade landowners in Christian and Montgomery counties that a large repository of CO2 can be safely stored under their farms and land.

"Eighty percent of the landowners in Christian County who are in the sequestration area have refused to sign leases," Richart said to The Center Square.

Opponents are working closely with Montgomery County to help people there understand the implications and potential risks of injecting and storing large quantities of

CO2 in neighboring Montgomery County, Richart said.

The goal of the pipeline project is to transport CO2 from 32 different sites across 1,300 miles to central Illinois where the Cambrian-age Mt. Simon Sandstone Formation overlies the Precambrian granite basement of the Illinois Basin. Geologists believe concentrated CO2 can be safely injected underground under the Mt. Simon formation in a saline reservoir where it will take 100 years to calcify. If the CO2 is stored deep under the cap rock in central Illinois, geologists maintain that it will stay there. But there are no guarantees, Richart said.

"We are concerned that they can't guarantee that the CO2 will stay put and not move," Richart said.

People fear the CO2 could leak through the well itself. There could be fractures in the cap rock that are not mapped that will allow CO2 to leak.

"The cap rock may be damaged in the process of high-pressure injection of the

CO2," Richart said.

Leaked CO2 has the potential to contaminate local drinking water, Richart said.

"When CO2 mixes with water, it creates carbonic acid. That releases heavy metals and toxins from underground that can ruin the local water," she said.

If leaked CO2 rises to the surface and changes the CO2 levels in the soil, crop yields could be affected, Richart said.

"Plant roots would not be as strong, or as deep and or as dense," she said.

In Oklahoma and Texas, injection of wastewater in the ground has caused earthquakes, Richart said. Earthquakes would release the CO2 that they want to sequester, defeating the purpose of the effort.

"They say it won't happen here, but why should we believe them," Richart said. "It's happening in places where they are injecting lesser volumes of fluid at lower pressures than they intend to use here."

And there is the question

of the rights of the neighbors, Richart said. One neighbor may agree to have CO2 injected in their land, but the neighbor a mile or two away may not want the risk.

"The CO2 is going to move," Richart said. "The neighbor will wind up with CO2 under his or her property."

Navigator said it intends to file a new pipeline application with the Illinois Commerce Commission this month that would specify what route the pipeline will take. Opponents are anxious to see the proposed route, Richart said.

Goal: draw, color and create your own artwork to express encouragement, positive attitude, funny humor, or just feelings from past memories.



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Drawing by Lucy Rozak



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Gas prices slowly dropping

Local gasoline prices are trickling down as in Illinois saw prices fall 6.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.59/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 21.6 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 2.2 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has fallen 5.2 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.60 per gallon.

"For the first time in 2023, the national average price of gasoline has seen a weekly decline, primarily thanks to a sharp and sudden drop in the price of oil," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"While the decline in both gasoline and diesel prices is terrific, it's not unusual to see prices falling in February,

which tends to be the month with some of the lowest gasoline prices of the year thanks to seasonally weak demand.

The lowest price in the area on Monday was \$3.49/g in Braidwood and Wilmington. Coal City stations were \$3.69 to \$3.75/g on Monday.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.07/g while the most expensive was \$4.79/g, a difference of \$1.72/g.

"For diesel, we're likely to see more declines, and potentially much more significant in the weeks ahead as imports of distillate have accelerated, leading to a sell off. And, with warmer weather ahead, demand may struggle as well.

"However, especially for gasoline, high levels of coming maintenance and the eventual transition to summer gasoline

could lead today's declines to reverse down the road. For now, motorists should enjoy the decline, but be wary as we're likely to eventually see increases again down the road," De Haan said.

The many benefits of traffic roundabouts

There are some interesting changes happening to our roads and it may leave a few folks wondering about the reasons.

Take traffic circles, also known as Roundabouts. Instead of the usual "t" shape, with 2 or 4 stop signs or a traffic light; a circle is built where the streets intersect.

This formation allows vehicles to avoid a full stop when no traffic is coming,

gracefully making a right turn to enter the circle. This acts to slow the traffic overall but reduces idling and the severity of vehicular accidents when they happen.

The advantages are fewer crashes and less severe crashes, lower vehicle speeds, less vehicle pollution, lower maintenance costs as compared to a traffic signal, increased landscaping opportunities and reducing confusion.

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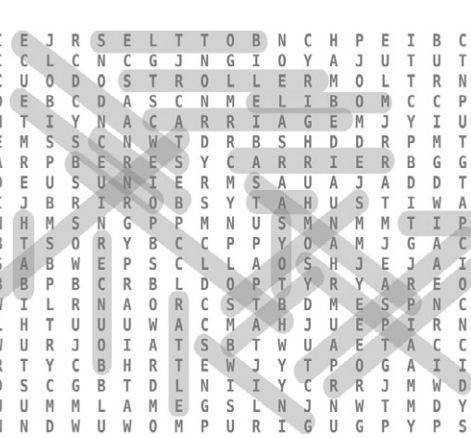
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8	4	3	1	9	5	2	7	6
2	5	7	6	3	4	9	8	1



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Own campaign loan backfires for DeVore

State records show that Dan Proft's People Who Play by the Rules PAC spent almost \$36 million during the second half of 2022, mostly on advertising boosting Sen. Darren Bailey's gubernatorial bid and opposing Gov. JB Pritzker.

Of that, \$2.4 million was spent on consulting. Former ABC7 political reporter Charles Thomas was paid \$100,000 in two \$50,000 installments. Thomas appeared in some of Proft's ads praising Bailey.

that reporting, the company is run by Brian Timpona, a longtime Proft associate. I wasn't able to reach Timpona.

Richard Uihlein, who was the principal funder of Bailey's campaign via Proft's PAC as well as some direct contributions, controls a committee called Restoration PAC, which paid above the by-then-negated limit.



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

contributed \$50,000 to Paul Vallas' Chicago mayoral campaign.

DeVore also received a \$50,000 contribution in late September from the Anthony M a r a n o Company (which sells produce to Chicago-area restaurants). The contribution was \$38,000 above the by-then-negated limit.

designed to win. But we pretty much knew that during the campaign itself. He got thumped by Raoul.

DeVore did manage to elevate and give voice to some folks on the far right. Shannon Adcock was a significant DeVore contributor, kicking in \$2,500 during September. Adcock is one of the founders of Awake Illinois, a far-right group that opposed pandemic mandates in schools that has since morphed into firing up moral panic over gays and trans people in schools, libraries and coffee shops. Vallas spoke at one of her events.

DeVore is now busily lining up clients to fund a third lawsuit against the state's assault weapons ban at \$200 a person. He raised more than half a million dollars with that same flat fee to fund his first two suits.

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

And that brings us to Republican Illinois attorney general candidate Tom DeVore.

When DeVore busted the campaign contribution caps in his race last August with a \$250,000 personal loan to his campaign committee, some thought he might be opening the door to large contributions, perhaps from the billionaire Richard Uihlein.

Instead, all DeVore really did was allow Democratic incumbent Kwame Raoul to take a million-dollar contribution from Gov. JB Pritzker's campaign fund - \$940,100 more than Pritzker could've contributed had the contribution caps been in place. A few labor organizations also contributed sums slightly above the previous cap limit of \$59,900, but it wasn't much.

DeVore received a \$10,000 contribution from James Hoeg in late October, which was \$4,000 more than he would've been able to receive had it not been for the caps being lifted (Hoeg, by the way, recently

contribution was \$38,000 above the by-then-negated limit.

And that's it. \$42K is all DeVore appears to have netted from his cap-busting loan.

There's often an expectation when candidates loan money to their campaigns that they'll spend most of it. Instead, DeVore reimbursed himself almost all of that cash, including a \$200,000 payment on Oct. 14th, even though the campaign was entering its final few weeks, and then another \$15,000 the day after election day.

DeVore reported \$226,072 in contributions starting the day after he loaned himself that money, which was just about \$11,000 more than what DeVore reimbursed himself.

Outside of the loan repayment, DeVore reported spending less than \$142,000 in the fourth quarter, which ended December 31. By contrast, AG Raoul reported spending almost \$1.9 million in the same quarter.

DeVore spent just \$8,642.98 on advertising during the fourth quarter. Raoul reported spending almost \$1.7 million.

In other words, DeVore did not run a campaign

Library to hold Craft Corner

The Wilmington Public Library will be hosting "Kat's Craft Corner" on the second Thursday of every month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Kat will gladly teach interested patrons how to knit, or you can feel free to bring your own craft project to work on and enjoy some company.

Congratulations!

Chandler Wuchter

on making the
Dean's List of Scholars
for Fall 2022 at
North Central College!
We are proud of you!

Chuck & Ginger, parents

Support group for people with oral, head and neck cancer

Morris Hospital will hold its next support session for people with oral, head and neck cancer on Wednesday, Feb. 22, from 3-4 p.m. at the Radiation Therapy Center of Morris Hospital, 1600 W. U.S. Route 6 in Morris.

The support group is offered the last Wednesday of each month free of charge. Anyone who has experienced a diagnosis of oral, head and neck cancer and their family members are welcome to attend regardless of where cancer treatment was received.

The support group is led by an oncology nurse from the Morris Hospital Radiation

Therapy Center and is held in collaboration with SPOHNC, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to meeting the emotional, physical, and humanistic needs of people with oral or head and neck cancer and their caregivers. People who attend support groups often share experiences and advice in hopes of helping others cope with their life changing event.

Those planning to attend are asked to register online at www.morrishospital.org/events, or call the Radiation Therapy Center of Morris Hospital at 815-364-8915.

A huge thank you to all who made our Spaghetti Dinner/Wonder Land Camp fundraiser a success.

Wilmington Moose Lodge 241/781, Women of the Moose, Wilmington Moose Riders, Wilmington VFW, The Wine Café, Fox's Pizza, Whitmore Ace Hardware, Mar Theater, El Patron Mexican Restaurant, Rosati's Pizza, Hog Wild, Faletti's Meats, Axe Factor, Al's Steakhouse, Crusade Burger, Southern Belle, Advanced Auto Parts, Babes Tap, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Crew Clips, The Purple Monkey, Audacious Ink, Darla's Deli, Magic Nails, Wilmington Pizzeria, Route 66 Bar, Mancuso Cheese, The Body Shoppe, The Pain & Wellness Group, FOP 94, Trinity Barkery, PMTT, McWethy's, Riverfront Lanes in Wilmington, and many people who donated various other baskets and raffle items.

And to all our volunteers, families, friends and especially all the people who attended and generously donated, we thank you tremendously.

Thank you!!! Thank you!!! Thank you!!!

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Container gardening tips? Hear an expert on Feb. 15

Looking for tips on container gardening? Then you might want to sit in on the next Wilmington Garden Club meeting at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 15, at the Wilmington Park District building, 315 N. Water St. Special guest will be Gary Ward, a master gardener from Lockport who specializes in container garden-

ing. Ward, former president of the Will County Historical Society, will address all container gardening questions during the free event. Garden Club meetings are open to the public and bring a friend. For more information call 815-476-2469.

Morris Hospital hosts community blood drive

Morris Hospital is hosting a blood drive in cooperation with Versiti Blood Center on Thursday, Feb. 16, from 2-6 p.m. in Conference Rooms 2 and 3 on the lower level of Morris Hospital, 150 W. High Street in Morris. Those who donate will be helping replenish the local blood supply as Versiti supplies blood products for Morris Hospital. All blood types are needed. Blood donors must be age 17 or older, weigh at least 110 pounds, be in good health and free from cold or flu symptoms on the day of donation. In Illinois, 16-year-olds may donate with written approval from a parent or guardian.

The entire process for donating blood takes about one hour, including registration, a brief medical screening, blood collection and refreshments. Donors should bring a photo ID with proof of age. Those planning to donate should eat a healthy meal and drink plenty of water before donating. Donors may be required to wear a mask while inside Morris Hospital depending on COVID community transmission levels. To schedule an appointment, call Ashley Wagner at Morris Hospital at 815-705-7370. Walk-ins are welcome.

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NFL to reduce it's enviromental impact

Dear EarthTalk: What is the National Football League doing to reduce its enviromental impact and carbon footprint?

-- Mitch Trevino, Las Vegas, NV

Like any major spectator sport league, the National Football League (NFL) is no darling to environmental advocates. Stadium construction, maintenance and energy use contribute significantly to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and resource depletion.

Transportation of fans to games, waste generated during games, and production and disposal of merchandise and equipment can also contribute to environmental harm.

That said, given these points against it, the NFL has made a concerted effort in recent years to reduce its enviromental impact, even vowing to become a "net zero" emissions league—meaning it will offset all of its greenhouse gas emissions through a combination of reducing its own emissions and supporting projects that remove or reduce CO2 from the atmosphere—in the near future.

Indeed, the NFL has made a major push to offset CO2 emissions over the past few years, offsetting upwards of 20,000 metric tons of CO2 per year, league-wide.

The leading non-profit Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) is partnering with the NFL on its emissions reduction and offset strategy.

The goal of this unusual partnership is to reduce emissions through improved energy efficiency and the increased use of renewable energy sources.

The league also encourages and promotes sustainability practices—recycling, reducing single-use plastics, and using environmentally-



friendly transportation—at stadiums across the country. And an NFL tree planting campaign also helps reduce the league's carbon footprint.

The league rounds out its emissions reduction strategy by purchasing renewable energy credits to "offset" emissions from energy usage in NFL facilities and events. The league proudly offsets all energy used at major Super Bowl venues.

Waste reduction is also a source of pride for the NFL. Starting in 2019, upwards of 90 percent of the waste generated at and around the Super Bowl was diverted from landfills through recycling and composting.

Likewise, the league has started to take water conservation seriously, implementing low-flow plumbing fixtures and drought-resistant landscaping at various stadiums nationwide, while simultaneously working to educate fans on water conservation through its sustainability outreach program.

Another area where NFL planners have made strides is sustainable building and retrofits, implementing green building practices—such as the implementation of energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems and the use of recycled building materials in several facilities across the country.

For example, Levi's Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers, is LEED Gold Certified and has a 27,000-



THE NFL HAS made great strides in the last few years to green up its operations, and will soon become a net zero emissions league.

square-foot green roof (green roofs provide numerous benefits, including stormwater management, improved air quality, energy efficiency, fire retardation and noise reduction).

National Hockey League (NHL) has its "Green Initiative" that promotes sustainability year-round.

The NFL isn't the only American sports league fixated on sustainability of late. The National Basketball Association (NBA) has its annual "Green Week" celebration, Major League Baseball (MLB) has its "Green Game" initiative that runs the length of the baseball season, and the

But the NFL runs the highest profile sporting event on the planet—the Super Bowl—so it has a much larger opportunity to reach fans across the continent and around the world with its messages and examples of sustainability.

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

Area students named to Uni. of Iowa fall dean's list

More than 7,500 undergraduate students at the University of Iowa were named to the dean's list for the 2022 fall semester. Among those students

were Ashley Bollino and Madeline Bollino of Braidwood, Natalie Durham of Diamond, Preston Johnson of Coal City, Amelia Earley and Chloe Sanford of Wilmington.

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55 56 57 58
59 60 61
62 63 64

- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Functions
 - 5. Records electric currents associated with contractions of the heart
 - 8. Trigonometric function (abbr.)
 - 11. Secret political clique
 - 13. Type of gibbon
 - 14. Nocturnal S. American rodent
 - 15. Famed American playwright
 - 16. Mesopotamian goddess
 - 17. Abba __, Israeli politician
 - 18. Long ridge of gravel and sediment
 - 20. A place to stay
 - 21. Actor Idris
 - 22. One who behaves in a rebellious way
 - 25. A way to measure movement
 - 30. Distinguish oneself
 - 31. Type of drug (abbr.)
 - 32. Basketball great Baylor
 - 33. Masses of salivary matter
 - 38. Calls balls and strikes
 - 41. Plant that grows along the ground
 - 43. A recreational activity in the air
 - 45. Consumes too much
 - 47. Island nation
 - 49. Pistol
 - 50. Mixtures of soul and calypso
 - 55. Ancient Greek City
 - 56. Similar
 - 57. Roughly trimmed tree trunk used in a Scottish game
 - 59. Semitic fertility god
 - 60. Born of
 - 61. Frogs, toads, tree toads
 - 62. School in the northeast (abbr.)
 - 63. Soviet Socialist Republic
 - 64. "___ the Man" Musical, baseball player

- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Fiddler crabs
 - 2. Discount
 - 3. Partner to "flows"
 - 4. Ethnic group of Laos
 - 5. Beloved "Seinfeld" character
 - 6. Book of tickets
 - 7. The last name of "Hermione"
 - 8. Type of TV package
 - 9. Helps to heal a cut
 - 10. Town in Galilee
 - 12. Actor Horsley
 - 14. "Hocus Pocus 2" actor Ed
 - 19. Bird-loving group (abbr.)
 - 23. They respond when someone is sick
 - 24. Emerged
 - 25. Midway between south and southeast
 - 26. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
 - 27. Unit of work or energy
 - 28. Indicates near
 - 29. Famed river
 - 34. For each
 - 35. News organization
 - 36. CNN's founder
 - 37. They __
 - 39. Areas off to the side
 - 40. Satisfies
 - 41. A spare bed
 - 42. Legendary singer Diana
 - 44. Frothy mass of bubbles
 - 45. A kind of sorcery
 - 46. River in South Africa
 - 47. Philippine Island
 - 48. County in China
 - 51. S. American plant
 - 52. Beverage containers
 - 53. Edge
 - 54. Protein-rich liquids
 - 58. Moved quickly on foot

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to infants. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 18 = A)

A. 25 18 9 21 20 21 11 22
Clue: Keeps child calm

B. 19 5 18 23 1 11 26
Clue: Provides warmth

C. 9 22 18 14 5 11
Clue: Sleeping spot

D. 19 21 19
Clue: Protects clothes

Answers: A. pacifier B. blanket C. cradle D. bib

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to babies.

FITNAN

Answer: Infant

Guess Who?

I am a singer born in Mississippi on February 11, 1979. I grew up in a family of musicians. My younger brother is a performer as well. I gained fame on a hit TV series in the 1990s.

Answer: Brandy

ALL ABOUT BABY WORD SEARCH

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

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

- WORDS**
- BABY
 - BASSINET
 - BATH
 - BOTTLES
 - BOUNCER
 - BURP CLOTH
 - CARRIAGE
 - CARRIER
 - CAR SEAT
 - CRIB
 - DIAPERS
 - HAT
 - MOBILE
 - MONITOR
 - ONESIE
 - PAJAMAS
 - RATTLE
 - SLING
 - SPLIT
 - SPOONS
 - STROLLER
 - SWADDLE
 - SWING
 - TOYS

COALER SPORTS



LADY COALER Audrey Cooper grabs a loose ball during their home game against Herscher.

Courtesy photo by: Amy Walker



Photo by Eric Fisher

COALER SENIOR Nick Cook steps to the three-point line on Friday while playing Herscher. Coal City shot seven three-pointers to defeat the Tigers 46-29.

Wins

Coal City out-rebounded Streator 39 to 16 and blocked three shots to tame the Bulldogs.

Garrelts led all scorers with 22 points and 10 rebounds. Headley was a threat all night, scoring 17

while pulling down four rebounds. Harrington muscled up 14 points while Carson Shepard made 10 from the point guard position.

Feeney also made a bucket.

The Coalers travel to Reed-Custer Friday before visiting Lisle on Tuesday.

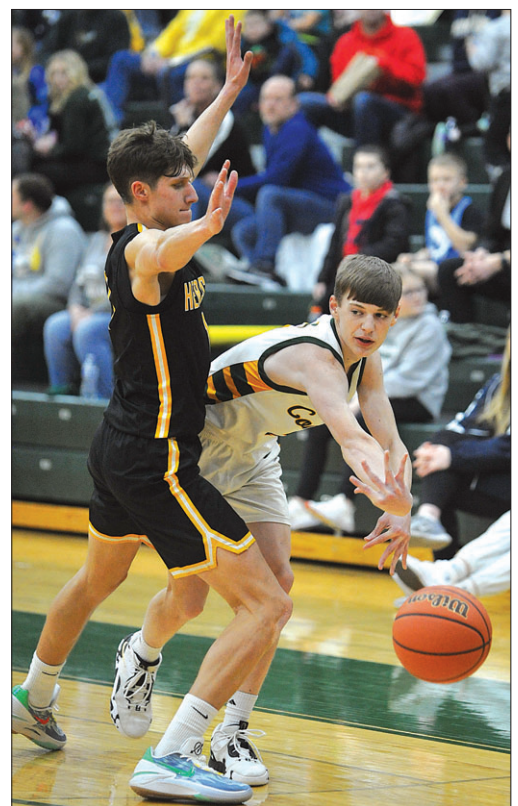


Photo by Eric Fisher
BACKDOOR PASS—Coal City senior Chris Cholico feeds the ball low to a teammate during Friday's Senior night victory over Herscher.

F/S Lady Coalers finish conference undefeated

On Monday the Coal City fresh/soph girls basketball team defeated Lisle, 46-22, to remain undefeated on the Interstate Central Eight Conference.

"We have continued to play well and hopefully we can finish strong with a win against Dwight on Wednesday," said coach Brad Boresi.

"These girls have improved a ton since the beginning of the season. Winning games is great, but knowing these girls are better prepared for varsity basketball next year is what it's about."

Emma Rodriguez scored 12 points, Becca Hall scored 9

points, Kylee Kennell scored 7 points, Chloe Pluger scored 6 points, D'Arcy Ness scored 4 points, Jori Tucker scored 3 points, Sydney Larson and Laura Christopher each scored 2 points and Calleigh Hamilton scored 1 point.

Current Record: 19-3 ICE Record: 14-0

On Thursday, Coal City (19-3) outscored Reed-Custer 37-4. Kylee Kennell scored 10 points, Emma Rodriguez scored 8 points, Sydney Larson scored 5 points, Bridget Feeney and Becca Hall each scored 4 points. Jori Tucker, D'Arcy Ness and Chloe Pluger each scored 2 points.



Photo by Amy Walker

ONE STEP AWAY from scoring for the Lady Coalers is Mia Ferrias who tallied 31 points during a 63-60 overtime win over Herscher.



Photo by Amy Walker

COAL CITY'S KERIGAN Copes lines up to shoot a home game against Herscher.

Victory lifts the Lady Coalers just before regionals

If the Lady Coalers begin regional play like they did on Monday, count on them making it to the championship game on Feb. 17.

Coal City was in total control on Monday, beating Lisle 68-50 thanks to 25 points from

Mia Ferrias.

The Lady Coalers improve to 20-7 overall, 10-4 in the conference, as they'll enter the Prairie Central Regional in Fairbury as the #6 seed.

Coal City built a 13-10 lead in the opening quarter

and was up 29-23 at the break. They consistently scored in the second half, going on a 39-27 run, to win their final conference game of the season.

Ferrias had a stellar performance, hitting five three-pointers while shooting 4-for-4 at the free throw line. She had four steals which helped the Coalers turn them into points.

Abby Gagliardo chipped in with nine points and four rebounds while Audrey Cooper put in eight points while grabbing seven boards.

Scoring six points while pulling down seven rebounds was Makayla Henline. Contributing five points was Kylee Kennell while Makenzie Henline and Tanna Curry recorded four points each. Abby Stiles was 2-for-2 at the free throw line.


Comet surprise The Lady Coalers gave up too many points in the fourth quarter on Thursday when they lost an away contest at Reed-Custer, 39-36.

It was low scoring affair through three quarters as both teams had single digits in each frame. Up 24-23 entering the last quarter, Coal City was outscored 16-12 as they finished with 20 turnovers.

Ferrias shot a team-high 11 points including three treys while Gagliardo put in nine points. Cooper helped out with eight points, Makayla Henline scored six and Makenzie Henline two to go along with eight rebounds.

The Lady Coalers will host Pontiac (#9) on Saturday at 1


p.m. for the first round of the regional. The winner will travel to Fairbury on Tuesday for a semi-final contest against Peotone (#2) at 6 p.m. The winner will then play for the championship at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 17 in Fairbury.



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REGIONAL CHAMPION! Brant Widlowski won the title at 138 pounds Saturday during the Reed-Custer Regional. He advances to the sectional tournament that will be held Friday and Saturday in Coal City.



LIFTING HIS OPPONENT during a recent home match is Coal City's Joey Breneman who earned the regional championship at 195 pounds on Saturday.

Regional champs as expected

Coal City High School wrestled up to expectations Saturday during the Reed-Custer regional, capturing the team title with ease.

The Coalers (286.5 points) crowned eight regional champions, had three place in second and three third. All Coalers who wrestled advance to the Coal City Sectional on Friday.

Reed-Custer finished second in the team standing with 161 points, advancing two champions, four runners-up and a pair of third place finishers.

Wilmington, in seventh place with 50 points, qualified two wrestlers for sectional.

Champions for Coal City included 106-Culan Lindemuth, 113-Brody Widlowski, 132-Jake Piatak, 138-Brant Widlowski, 145-Mataeo Blessing, 170-Derek Carlson, 182-Braiden Young and 195-Joey Breneman. Coming in second place were Coalers 120-Aidan Kenney, 220-Drake Dearth and 285-Michael Gonzalez while placing third were 126-Brock Finch, 152-Landin Benson and 160-Jack Poyner.

Lindemuth (37-9) wrestled just two matches winning both by fall. He needed only :26 to pin Thomas Raschke (Peotone) in the semi-final. He then stuck Blake Arseneau (McNamara, 25-8 in 2:58 for the title.

Brody Widlowski (33-1) earned a bye in the quarterfinal before pinning Blake Hemp (Clifton, 30-18) in 0:42. That paired him up for the championship against Landon Dooley (Wilmington, 34-8) who bowed out due to injury default.

At 132, Piatak (7-0) placed 1st after pinning Alex Kostecka (McNamara, 12-19) in 1:16 and Santino Izzi (Peotone, 34-13) in 3:22. He faced Sam Begler (Reed-Custer, 6-1) for the championship, getting busy done in 3:10 with a pin.

Brant Widlowski (20-1) pinned his two opponents. He surprised Cole Kimberlin (McNamara, 17-14) with a 0:48 fall before taking the title with a 4:41 fall over Jeremy Eggleston (Reed-Custer, 34-8).

Blessing (41-3) had a three-match day by first pinning Joe Carney (Manteno, 5-23 with :26 second pin. In the semifinal, Blessing won by 12-0 major decision over Ian Kreske (Peotone, 33-15). In the cham-



COAL CITY'S Aidan Kenney advances to Friday's Sectional in Coal City after placing second at 120 pounds during the Reed-Custer regional.

pionship he outscored Gianni Panozzo (Central, 37-11) 6-2 to punch his ticket to sectionals.

At 170, Carlson (34-5) defeated both his opponents to claim first. He grabbed an 8-3 decision over Austin Burkhardt (Dwight, 24-11) before upending Rex Pfeifer (Reed-Custer, 39-5) with a 3:57 fall.

Senior Braiden Young (38-1) won by 5:42 fall over Logan Smith (Manteno, 8-16) then won by forfeit over Jackson Bergeron (Peotone). In the first place match, Young got a 7-4 decision over Hunter Hull (Clifton, 31-6).

At 195, Joey Breneman (38-5) pegged Maxwell Joseph (Clifton, 20-12) in 1:14, then outscored Chris Peura (Seneca, 41-6) 9-2.

Aidan Kenney (28-14) started with a :42 fall over Avery Phillips (Seneca) and beat Trevor Torres (McNamara, 17-16) by 16-0 tech fall. Dwight's Dylan Crouch (30-7) then spoiled things with a 2-0 decision over Kenney.

At 220, Drake Dearth (33-7) settled for second place after pinning Terry Wilkey (Dwight, 0-2) in 1:28 and won in

tie breaker - 1 over Alex Cardenas (Peotone) 33-10 (TB-1 2-1). He then faced Kody Marschner (Reed-Custer, 34-1) who got the 2:58 fall to claim the title.

Gonzalez (24-7) also lost to a Comet in the 285 title bout. He started with back-to-back pins (0:44) and (2:27) before squaring off against Gunnar Berg (Reed-Custer, 36-4) who was just too tough. Berg stuck Gonzalez in :28 to claim first.

The third placers for Coal City each started with a victory before suffering a loss and having to win two straight to make the sectional cutoff.

At 126, Finch (35-13) won by 14-4 major decision over Evan Cox (Clifton, 23-11) for third place. At 152, Landin Benson (22-4) lost his second match by injury default before pinning Matt Swisher (Wilmington) and Giona Panozzo (Clifton). At 160, Poyner (36-12) lost a 9-3 decision to Carter Watkins (Manteno, 27-6) after winning his first match. He claimed a 3:37 fall in the semi before getting an 8-0 major decision over Asher Hamby (Seneca, 35-5).

E-tickets must be purchased online for wrestling sectional

Coal City High School, 655 W. Division St., will host the IHSAA Class 1A Individual wrestling sectional on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 10-11.

On Friday the preliminary-quarterfinal round will start at 5 p.m. Then at 9 a.m. Saturday the first round of wrestle-backs will be at 9 a.m.; 10:15 a.m. will be the semi-finals and 2nd round of wrestle backs; then at 11:45 will be the semi-final wrestlebacks. Lunch break will be 12:30 p.m. Finalist line-up and introductions at 2 p.m. with the finals; session 2 at 2:15 p.m. Times are subject to change.

Doors will open 45 minutes before wrestling begins. E-Tickets must be purchased at <https://gofan.co/app/school/IHSA>. Tickets are \$7 per session with three different sessions: session 1 - Friday night, session 2 - Saturday morning until approximately 2 p.m.; and session 3 - the finals, after 2:15 p.m.

The gym will be cleared after session II on Saturday. A video can be watched on how to buy tickets at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkZqTY5d6Bg>.

For IHSAA wrestling info visit www.ihsa.org/Sports-Activities/Boys-Wrestling/State-Series-Information-Results. For questions on the sectional contact CCHS Athletic Director, Dan Hutchings at dhutchings@coalcityschools.org.

Warriors still perfect after clash of champs

A clash of state champions was hosted on Tuesday night as Minooka, the 2A state champions, wrestled the 1A champions Coal City. The Coal City Warriors were once again victorious beating Minooka, 52-45, to improve their dual record to 18-0.

Varsity winners were Ryder Gill, Brantley Brooks, Jake Munsterman, Jason Piatak, Tyson Price, Owen Petersen, Cooper Morris, Alex Carlson, Brody D'Orazio, and

Cameron Minuth.

JV winners were Gabe Hamilton, Fabian Hernandez, Zack Babcock, Kory Lovell, Carter Thill, Jakob Phillips, Roman Taylor, Dom Zucarello, William Teague, Ryder Kramer, Phoenix Senodenas, Enzo Mugnolo, Connor Rodriguez, Trenton Whitehead, Jack Stienhouse, Patrick Osipavicius, Ryker Long, Tanner Gullquist, and Wyatt Ricke.

Coalers add two more wins to their record

The Coal City varsity boys basketball team picked up two impressive wins last week, beating Streator on Tuesday, 65-57, before romping Herscher, 46-29, Friday.

It was Senior Night for the Coalers (11-15) on Friday when Herscher came to town and it took a bit before Coal City found its groove. They trailed 13-7 after the opening quarter.

But the tables turned in the second quarter when Coal City went on a 22-10 run thanks to a couple of three-pointers by Carter Garrelts and three made by Jim Feeney.

rebounds for the game while Feeney finished with 13 points and four rebounds.

The most impressive task was holding the Tigers scoreless during the fourth period.

Carson Headley showed his frustration at times yet still ended up with nine points. Owen Wren chipped in with five points while Dillon Harrington scored two. Leash the Bulldogs

At Streator the Coalers grabbed an 18-11 lead and never looked back. They were up 31-20 at the intermission and coasted after three with a 47-31 lead.



SWARMING DEFENSE—The varsity Coalers got a 46-29 victory on Friday over Herscher thanks to its quick-attack defense. Going after the ball lost by a downed Herscher player are Coal City's Carter Garrelts (left) and Garrett Keeley.

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