

COAL CITY COURANT.com

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Roadwork for Jewel-Osco to begin

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The first step in the construction of a Jewel-Osco is infrastructure and work is expected to begin this spring.

Initial site work will include grading, construction of a retaining wall, multi-use paths and access points.

Ingress and egress from the future grocery store and pharmacy will be along Will Road and that will require enclosing the deep ditch running along the east side of the roadway.

Diamond Mayor Terry Kernc said that part of the project will result in the installation of 4-foot by 8-foot culvert and that comes at a cost of around \$1,000 per linear foot.

In all, these first steps will come at a price of more than \$1 million and the village of Diamond is contributing \$450,000 from its reserves to get the work completed.

"As I've always said this is the anchor for Diamond. This is what we have to do to get others to follow Jewel into town," Kernc said.

"There are others that are talking about coming, but they want to see Jewel break ground. You know how people say 'show me the money,' well in this case it's show me the Jewel," the mayor said.

What businesses are looking at Diamond is



Photo by Ann Gill

THE VILLAGE OF Diamond continues to seek funding to complete needed improvements to Will Road from Route 113 [Division Street] south to Will Road. Some of the planned work is part of the initial phases of development slated to come with the construction of a Jewel-Osco on the southeast corner of Will Road and Route 113.

something she's not ready to reveal, but the hope is the new grocery story will trigger the development of the town's commercial corridor

that is Route 113.

"There are certain stores that like to be located next to another store. For some strange

reason your [big box] are not opposed to being in the same general area because they know people go to one and if they can't find what they are looking for they go to the other and that is the same with grocery stores and pharmacies, they feed off each other and I hope that is the case," Kernc said.

Long planned improvements to Will Road will be included, however the village is still looking to acquire the funding necessary to improve the roadway from Route 113 [Division Street] south to Spring Road.

Diamond's plan has been to enclose the ditch, construct a multi-use path, add in curb and gutter and expand the roadway to 36-feet with a center turn lane.

The cost of the improvement is projected at over \$8 million and village officials are working to acquire federal funding through he Surface Transportation Program [STP] Shared Fund. Those dollars required a 20% match.

The village has already identified some private funding and the town has over \$800,000 in motor fuel tax [MFT] dollars set aside for this improvement.

Kernc said a decision was made by the Village Board more than 13 years ago to put its annual MTF dollars away to meet its local match for large projects like Will Road.

SEE ROADWORK, PAGE 2

In the land of yesterday



COAL CITY THEATRE Department's production of "Anastasi" opens in just two weeks and this week began the extended rehearsal process with the entire cast. This group gathers at the Neva Club to socialize and reminisce about the grand imperial heyday they all knew before fleeing Russia for a new life in France. The ensemble includes Izzy Kostbade [on piano] as Countess Lilly Malevsky-Malevitch. Additional members of the cast are [seated] Jared Counterman, Mason Natyshok and Chris Collins. Standing are Jullian Micetich, Amelia Fritz Evelyn Wills, Bella Byers, Sammy Thackeray, Madison Wilson, Logan Hawkins, Jordan Olson, Ethan Scrogam and Chessa Kuhel. The musical will be presented in the Coal City Performing Arts Center March 10-12 and March 17-19. Reserved seat tickets available at bit.ly/CCTDTickets.

A new concept for neighborhood living

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The idea of a residential development where young families, empty nesters and senior citizens live together is a concept the mayor of Diamond fully embraces.

A subdivision with a mix of single family, duplex and four-plex units is the vision of Mayor Terry Kernc. She's looking for a builder who would embrace the idea and develop the concept within the village and she has a site in mind.

"If you could put in a multi-use with the duplexes and four-plexes covered by a

homeowners association that covers lawn care and snow removal that would be a main thing," Kernc said.

And, if these multi-family units were built for handicapped accessibility with zero entry doorways, wider hallways and reinforced walls for hand bars it would be a further benefit and allow residents to stay in their homes as they age.

"If you have your house set up like that you age in place, you don't have to move somewhere else," the mayor said.

The concept of aging in place allows individuals to continue to enjoy independent living in a home they've built,

and when residences are built to meet a person's future needs its considered a plus for longevity.

"In a neighborhood such as this there is always fun stuff going on and children playing outside," Kernc said.

This could be said for many neighborhoods, however the mayor's vision plays to the idea where individuals of all ages and abilities can live together for long periods of time, if they so choose.

Kernc said she ran her idea by an individual working in real estate, and they

SEE LIVING, PAGE 2



FEWER THAN 20 new homes were constructed in the villages of Diamond and Coal City last year. The two building departments report there were 14 single family home permits issued in Coal City and just three in Diamond. Overall, the two towns granted 170 permits for various projects from commercial to residential.

Fewer than 20 homes permitted in 2022

Fences a popular addition around Coal City, Diamond

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Fewer than 20 new single family homes were built last year in the villages of Coal City and Diamond.

There were a few residential additions permitted, along with a few commercial building buildouts between the two towns.

Coal City did issue permits for the construction of two commercial properties—a fitness center and storage tanks to support the new Airgas storage depot on Broadway south of Reed Road.

Overall the number of permits issued by the two building departments came to 170—130 in Coal City and 40 in Diamond.

"2022 was the year of fences," said Cindy Haywood, Diamond's planning and zon-

ing coordinator.

Permits for the construction of fences was at the top of the list in both towns—38 in Coal City and 15 in Diamond.

As for new homes, the village of Coal City issued 14 permits and Diamond granted three. All were for single family structures, as neither town recorded any new multi-family construction in the past year.

Many of these new homes went up in the Meadow Estates, Farmstone and Devin Ridge subdivisions.

Among the commercial buildouts recorded by the village of Diamond include modifications to the Diamond Indoor Trap Range to support its new offerings—ax throwing and a pistol range, and the inclusion of a smoke shop in the building that houses the

SEE PERMITS, PAGE 2





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The many flavors of the melting pot

If there was ever a place that could be called a "melting pot" of nationalities, ethnicities, skin color and religions, it has to be the coal fields of Braidwood and vicinity. Almost all of these were documented in the invaluable book written by M. J. Donna called *The Braidwood Story*. I only wish he had written his own autobiography because he was such a fascinating man, who lived a fascinating life. Today though, we look at what he told us about the other early pioneer stories.



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

Donna is quick to point out that not all early settlers came from Europe, some were already here when Braidwood was born in 1865. One of these was James Smith. He was born in New York City in 1860.

After his mother died, he and his brother were put into the infamous Juvenile House, and from there put on an Orphan Train headed for the Midwest. James was adopted by a Wilmington couple, the Adam White's where he grew to manhood on their farm.

Smith became a pharmacist, taking his practice to Braidwood where he flourished. Eventually he became the President of the First National Bank of Braidwood, served on the school board, and was a City Commissioner. He died in 1937 having served the community for over 57 years.

One of the usually forgotten nationalities

who made their home in the Braidwood vicinity oot the end of the 19th century was the Assyrian's.

Assyria was located where the present day northern Iraq and southwestern Turkey are located. Donna mentions the Joseph Nahas family. The Assyrians were not miners, but made their way in life as door-to-door peddlers. This occupation is looked down upon today, but back in then they were an essential part of the community.

Joseph settled in Braidwood in 1898 while his cousins went to Braceville, both making an excellent living as peddlers. Eventually Joseph bought a "bricks and mortar" store. He had six children, two of the boys becoming crack baseball players on the Braidwood Grays team.

Nicholas M. Agamy, another Assyrian, also worked as a peddler, but in 1907 moved to South Wilmington to operate a general store until his death in 1929.

The Belgians are next on Donna's list, starting with Antone Matone family, who arrived in Braidwood in 1869. He worked in the mines for 30 years, raising a family of 8 children. Antone Jr., moved to Wilmington where he had a shoe store in what is now known as the Eagle Hotel.

Another Belgian mentioned is Felecion Francis Ghilain, who Donna described as founding a dynasty in Braidwood. His son Frank, worked in the mines, marrying Marie Katherine Culley in 1879. They had ten children who spread out across the country, becoming superintendents of steel mills, master brick layers, teachers and more.

Bohemia is next on Donna's list. The former country of Bohemia now makes up half of



A PHOTO OF Anton Cermak and his favorite car. the Czech Republic, The most famous Braidwood Bohemian was, of course, Anton Cermak, Jr. Tony, as he was known in Braidwood, left school at the age of eleven.

He went to Chicago finding work at a sash and door company. He returned to Braidwood during the financial panic, first working at the Peter Rossi Macaroni factory, then later as a mule driver at the I shaft.

He worked for 85 cents a day, and when he asked his boss for a raise, the boss gave him a raise alright, right up the shaft elevator and out onto the street - he got fired. He worked for the E. J. & E in Chicago for a while, saving enough money to buy a team of horses and a wagon, finally becoming his own boss. To make up for his lack of an early education, Tony went to night classes and attended a business college.



A PHOTO of Anton Cermak's funeral in February 1933.

His interest in politics bloomed and there was no stopping him. His steps upward were; elected to four terms in the Illinois legislature, Chicago alderman for several terms, Baliff of the Municipal Court in 1912, President of the Cook County Board for 10 years beginning in 1922, defeated for Senator in 1927 but was elected Mayor of Chicago in 1931.

Cermak's life came to a screeching halt on Feb. 15, 1933, almost exactly 90 years ago, when a fanatic named Giuseppe Zangara shot him at a reception honoring the newly elected President of the United States, Franklin Roosevelt, in Miami, Florida.

Roadwork

The village has moved on to phase two engineering for the improvement, the cost of that being covered by a grant.

Planned improvements to Will Road are aimed at bringing additional development to the area by improving the overall driveability and safety of the roadway that also happens to be the town's main truck route.

The work being undertaken by Jewel is what would be required by any commercial developer looking to locate along that stretch of roadway.

Diamond has long hoped the improvements would be completed to serve as an incentive to developers.

Permits

Domino's Pizza restaurant.

The village of Diamond also saw construction of a new Midland State Bank on the southeast corner of Route 113 and Berta Road begin in 2022, however, according to Haywood, the permit for that structure was issued in 2021.

Something relatively new to appear on the list of permits is solar panels, and last year Coal City's Building Department issued 15 permits for their installation.

With Illinois being ranked among the top 20 states in the nation for solar, it's likely the number of permits issued in the years ahead will continue at a steady pace.

Diamond and Coal City allow solar panels as accessory uses in all zoning classes, and both have rules on the books outlining certain requirements including size of the panels, placement, location and pitch.

Last year, the towns also issued permits for decks, garages, sheds, pools, signs and even generators.

Living

indicated with some incentives to build it might just be something that could take off in the village.

There is no plan for high density residential, it's a concept the mayor and her fellow board members are opposed to. However, these smaller multi-family units fit within the town's plan and attract individuals of all ages.

"I just think if I could get one builder in who would offer one model in each—Single family, duplex and fourplex—to try it, I think people would flock to it. If they can get a place where they are not responsible for snow removal or grass cutting, a place that is accessible and to be in a place where the action is, I think it could be successful," Kernc said.

And of course, as with every development in the village, there would be multi-use paths to facilitate movement through the village be it walking, bicycling or running.

Unit 1 honors its Students of the Week



Courtesy photos

COAL CITY ELEMENTARY School Students of the Week for Feb 22 in row one are (from left): Sylvia Leman, Lydia Stramaglia and Miah Farley. **Standing in row two are** Tempi Kuhel, Eliee Kuchta, Kassi Valdez, Dakota Gurney, Sawyer Hodge and Kennedy Suggs. **Not pictured:** Josiah Howard, Evelyn Chambers, Wyatt Oswald and Emerson Hansen.



COAL CITY EARLY Childhood Center Students of the Week for Feb. 2 in row one (from left) are: Madison Cardenas and Hunter Terrell. **Casen Schott is in row two with** Kassidy Brodnick, Rayden Richards, Ariana Bakiu and Abby Mailhot. **Standing in row three are** Skylar Wagner, Clay Surman, Michael Tworek, Eli Wendler, Caitelynn Wintermute and Andrew Virona.



COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for Feb. 22 are (from left): Ryker Senodenos, Leah Aldridge, Jordyn Owen and Chase Clubb.

Montgomery named to dean's list

Brooke Montgomery, of Godley has been named to the Saint Mary's College Dean's List for the Fall 2022 semester.

Schaddelee on dean's list

Each semester, students at Missouri State University who attain academic excellence are named to the dean's list.

Jessica Schaddelee of Coal City was among those students.

Village of Coal City accepting permeable parking install bids

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

VILLAGE OF COAL CITY
The Village of Coal City will receive requests for proposals from qualified permeable paver installation companies for the completion of the -
Coal City Core Area Permeable Parking Area Installation

Proposals to complete this work will be received by Linda Sula, Village of Coal City, 515 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 until 12:00 P.M., Friday, March 3, 2023, prevailing time. RFP Responses may be e-mailed to Ms. Sula at lsula@coalcity-il.gov; those emails with the subject "2023 CORE AREA Permeable Parking Installation" shall not be opened until that time.

A full description of the RFP is on file for inspection and may be downloaded from the Village's website www.coalcity-il.gov or picked up at the Coal City Village Hall, 515 S. Broadway, Coal City, Illinois 60416, between the hours of 9 A.M. and 5 P.M. Monday through Friday. There is no charge for the package.

The Village of Coal City reserves the right to reject any or all interested parties and to waive any informalities in bidding and to award the project to the party that proves it can fulfill the needs of the Board of Trustees in the most advantageous manner.

Pamela Noffsinger
Village Clerk
Published in the Coal City Courtant on Feb. 22, 2023.

COAL CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS

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

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

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

Thursday, Feb. 23- Terrific Tots, 10 a.m.

Versiti Blood Drive of Illinois, 3-7 p.m.
Terrific Tots, 6 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 24- Storytime at The Cove, 9-10 a.m.

Fun Fridays, 3 p.m.

Teen Lock-In - 5:30-8 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 25- Drop in Mini Canvas Painting, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., 3 year olds thru 12th graders drop in the meeting room to paint your mini canvas for us to display during Youth Art Month in March. You will be able to pick it up at the end of March.

Monday, Feb 27- Makerspace Cart Mondays - All Day

Terrific Tots - 10 a.m.

Preschool Storytime - 11 a.m.

Eager Readers Homeschool

Edition, 1 p.m.

Eager Readers, 4 p.m.

Family Lapsit, 6 p.m.

Preschool Storytime - 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb 28- History of Coal City and surrounding areas, 7-8 p.m.

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

Paper and More, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Family Lapsit - 10 a.m.

Preschool Storytime - 10 a.m.

Early dismissal day, 11:45 a.m.-2 p.m.

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

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- 271 South Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 (815) 634-0315; Fax: (815) 476-7002

Deadline for The Free Press Advocate,

Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courtant

Display Advertising: Friday, noon

News and Classified Advertising: Monday, noon

E-mail: News & News Photos: news@fpnusa.com
Ads & Artwork: graphics@fpnusa.com

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Ann Gill, editor

Notice of Foreclosure of 925 E. North St.

PUBLIC NOTICE

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GRUNDY COUNTY - MORRIS, ILLINOIS**

PennyMac Loan Services, LLC; Plaintiff, -v.- Katherine McClelland; Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Edward Konopasek Jr; Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants; Defendants,
2022 FC 95

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

NOTICE IS GIVEN TO YOU: Katherine McClelland
Unknown Heirs and Legatees of Edward Konopasek Jr
Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants

That this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, praying for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to-wit:
COMMONLY KNOWN AS:
925 E North St
Morris, IL 60450

and which said Mortgage was made by: Edward Konopasek Jr the Mortgagor(s), to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Mortgage Research Center, LLC dba Veterans United Home Loans, as Mortgagee, and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Grundy County, Illinois, as Document No. 578985; and for other relief, that summons was duly issued out of said Court against you as provided by law and that the said suit is now pending. **YOU MAY STILL BE ABLE TO SAVE YOUR HOME. DO NOT IGNORE THIS DOCUMENT.**

By order of the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit, this case is set for Mandatory Mediation on 3/17/2023 at 10:00 am at the Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington St., Morris, IL 60450. A lender representative will be present along with a court appointed mediator to discuss options that you may have and to pre-screen you for a potential mortgage modification.

NOTICE OF MANDATORY MEDIATION. YOU MUST APPEAR ON THE MEDIATION DATE GIVEN OR YOUR RIGHT TO MEDIATION WILL TERMINATE. NOW, THEREFORE, UNLESS YOU file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case in the Office of the Clerk of this Court, Corri Trotter Clerk of the Circuit Court, Grundy County 111 East Washington Street, Room 30 P.O. Box 707 Morris, IL 60450 on or before March 17, 2023, A DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU AT ANY TIME AFTER THAT DAY AND A JUDGMENT MAY BE ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID COMPLAINT. CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Attorneys for Plaintiff
15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
(630) 794-5300
DuPage # 15170
Winnebago # 531

Our File No. 14-22-08983
NOTE: This law firm is a debt collector.
13213426

Published in the Coal City Courtant on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 22 and March 1, 2023.

Bunting sworn in as 106th's new State Representative

Jason R. Bunting was sworn in this month as the newest member of the Illinois House of Representatives, serving the 106th District.

Bunting, of Emmington, was selected to fill the seat of Thomas Bennett who was appointed in January to fill a vacant seat in the Illinois Senate.

"I am honored to serve as the State Representative for the 106th District," said Bunting, a Republican, who took the oath on Feb. 4 to serve the residents of the district that covers parts Ford, Livingston, LaSalle, Iroquois and McLean counties.

Bunting is a former Livingston County Board member. He serves as president of the Livingston County Farm Bureau and is a director for the Illinois Corn Growers Association.

"As farmers and small business owners, my family has seen firsthand how bad policies from Springfield have hurt the business climate in Illinois and driven families and job creators away. I promise to



Courtesy photo
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JASON BUNTING**

work tirelessly to bring the conservative values of the residents of this district to Springfield," Bunting said.

He holds an associate's degree from Joliet Junior College and is a graduate of Dwight Township High School.

Bunting and his wife, Tasha, are the parents of three children.

Education scholarships available

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) awards scholarships throughout the state to students in college who are enrolled in a Teacher Certification Program. Applicants must have and maintain at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. In 2023, awards can be earned from four sources, each with varying requirements.

The IRTA awards six \$2,000 scholarships throughout the state to incoming juniors and seniors in college who are residents of Illinois or are graduates of an Illinois high school. They may attend college in any state as long as the school attended maintains an accredited teacher-training program.

The Helen Kennedy Scholarship awards one \$2,000 scholarship to an incoming sophomore, junior, or senior enrolled in a recognized college or university. Applicants must be a graduate of an Illinois high school and have

declared a major in education.

The Rose Sandstrom Scholarship awards a \$2,000 scholarship to an incoming senior who is a graduate of an Illinois high school. Applicants must have a declared major in physical education and be enrolled at Monmouth College or Western Illinois University.

The Moler-Austin Scholarship awards two \$4,500 scholarships to Kendall County high school graduates who will be entering their sophomore, junior, or senior year in college as declared education majors.

All scholarship information and applications are available on the IRTA website (www.irtaonline.org) under the Foundation tab or by contacting the IRTA office at 1-800-728-4782. The application deadline is March 7, 2023. Recipients will be announced at the end of April 2023. This notice is provided by the Grundy County Retired Teachers Association.

Water works Coal City well 5 in need of repairs

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The village of Coal City serves 5,700-plus residents water from four different wells.

Depths of those wells range from 1,785 feet to 360 feet, the shortest being well 5 and it's in need of repairs.

Recent testing determined that the column pipe—used to draw groundwater to the surface—needs to be descaled and sprayed.

The testing conducted on the well was to ensure the proper procedures were planned for its rehabilitation. The last maintenance on the well was about 8 years ago.

Village Administrator Matt Fritz said this is the first time that the descaling

process has been recommended on the stainless steel pipe. In fact the pipe has never been descaled since it was first installed.

Descaling removes lime and mineral build-up. The process, Fritz said, is to pull the pipe out of the ground, wirebrush the inside and spray it with a chemical solution.

Once the cleaning is complete, the pipe will be inspected to ensure there are no holes. Should something be discovered, the village engineer said there are methods to fix from replacing sections of pipe to installing couplings.

It's been recommended to lower the pipe deeper into the ground from its current depth so not to be at the same saturation point.

Fritz said, "It's not because it's not getting the water, but because they want it

at a different level as far as where its saturation point is from where its pulling from the ground."

The initial cost for well maintenance was approved at \$25,000, however the cost tripled with the recommendation for descaling and spraying.

With the cost now projected at \$75,000, Fritz said the village is seeking cost proposals for the additional work with the hope being the final price tag will come in below the updated figure.

According to the engineer, the removal and maintenance of well parts is recommended every 8-10 years.

Fritz told town trustees earlier this month that he anticipated an update by the time they meet again—Wednesday, Feb. 22.

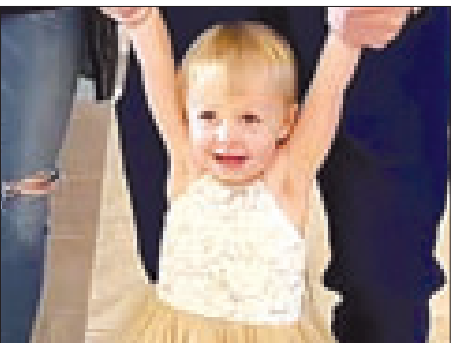
In the meantime, village well 5 remains off-line.

A night focused on fun, family and wellness



THE UNIT 1 School District Wellness Committee hosted its annual Family Wellness Night on Wednesday, Feb. 15. Around 800 people attended the event visiting with more than 80 vendors focused on all types of wellness. There was a healthy food court and activities for the kids that included breaking a board with the masters from Chang Lee's Taekwon Martial Arts.

Baby Valentine winners announced



THE ANNUAL BABY Valentine Contest sponsored by the GFWC-IL Coal City Junior Woman's Club is excited to announce the winners for Baby Valentine 2023. The first place winner is Zoey Benson, daughter of Drew and Ashley Benson, of Coal City.



SECOND PLACE WINNER in the Baby Valentine Contest is Adalynn Henderson, daughter of Danielle Babcock of Coal City. The winners received a gift certificate from the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce.



THIRD PLACE BABY Valentine winner is Leo Nicholson, son of Samantha and Cody Nicholson, of Coal City. All participants of the contest received a Certificate of Participation

Shaela O'Keefe on dean's list

In recognition of academic achievement for Fall 2022, Shaela O'Keefe, of Coal City, has been placed on the Bellarmine College of Arts and Sciences Dean's List. Students qualifying for this distinction must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or above for the semester. O'Keefe is the daughter of Tim and Marla O'Keefe, of Coal City.

O'Keefe named to dean's list

East Tennessee State University has announced the names of students who attained a grade point average qualifying them for inclusion in the dean's list for fall 2022.

To receive this honor, undergraduate students must successfully complete a minimum of 12 hours of undergraduate course work with no grade below 'B-' in any course taken, and a grade point average of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.

Nolan O'Keefe, of Coal City, was among the students honored. O'Keefe was also named as a finalist in a national marketing competition. He is the son of Tim and Marla O'Keefe, of Coal City.

Congratulations

**CCHS
INDIVIDUAL
STATE
QUALIFIERS
& OUR 4 ALL
STATE MEDAL
WINNERS**



Joey Breneman - 3rd
Braiden Young - 4th
Brody Widlowski - 4th
Jake Piatak - 6th
Gramps & Grandma Hamilton

Golf outing to support childhood cancer research

Megan's Mission Foundation will host its annual golf outing to continue Megan Bugg's mission of ending childhood cancer.

The Megan Bugg Memorial Golf Outing is scheduled for Saturday, July 22 at The Creek—Nettle Creek Golf Course—in Morris with a shotgun start at 9 a.m.

All proceeds from the event will go to further the work taking place at the Megan Bugg Global Rhabdomyosarcoma Research Laboratory at Children's Cancer Therapy Development Institute [CC-TDI].

The foundation recently donated \$100,000 to continue supporting two promising childhood cancer research projects that Megan founded at CC-TDI, according to Kent Bugg, Megan's father and foundation president.

The cost to play a round of golf in honor of Megan is \$500 per foursome—\$125 per golfer—and includes 18 holes of golf and lunch. Check-in on the day of the outing begins at 8 a.m. Breakfast will be available.

Non-golfers who would like to support Megan's Mission can do so by signing on as sponsor—various levels are available—or participating in the post golf lunch that will include raffles, silent auction and a presentation about Megan's Mission.

To register for the outing, inquire about sponsorships or make a donation text 815-210-6394 or e-mail debbugg@gmail.com.

Registration payment and donations—checks made payable to Megan's Mission Foundation—can be sent to Megan Bugg Golf Outing, 7920 Bowman Rd., Lodi, WI 53555.



THANK YOU

We would like to express our deep appreciation to those who have offered such kindness, support, and message of sympathy upon the passing of Shirley Miller, our beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. We especially wish to thank the Coal City EMS/Fire Department for their quick response and care; Matt Baskerville and his team at Reeves & Baskerville Funeral home for their compassion and exceptional attention to detail; Pastor Jay Regennitter, Shanan D'Agostino, and Clare Everitt for the beautiful message and music at the Coal City United Methodist Church service, and the Whistle Stop Cafe for the funeral dinner.

Most of all, we would like to say thank you to all those who joined us at Mom's Celebration of Life. The love shown for our mother lifted our spirits during a very difficult time, and we will be forever grateful.

The Family of Shirley Miller
Cynthia Miller Webb and family
Jacqueline Miller Kuntz and family
Carol Miller Crawford and family

Top Quality Groceries, Amazing Prices! - Berkot's Is Your Meat Headquarters

BERKOT'S
SUPER FOODS

Experience the
Berkot's difference

Fresh. Friendly. Focused on you.

SALES VALID 2/22/23-2/28/23 | STORE HOURS: 7 AM - 9 PM

ALL ITEMS AVAILABILITY BASED ON SUPPLY. QUANTITIES MAY BE LIMITED. NO RAINCHECKS WILL BE PROVIDED.

Berkot's Homemade
Whole Corned
Beef Brisket-Bulk

\$3.99
LB

Berkot's Homemade
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Front Row L to R: Declan Crutchfield, Caleb Machalek, Henry Lewis, Cain Machalek. Back Row L to R: Ryan Sukley, Liam Sukley, Luke Medlin, Chase Brueggert, Kasey Kolb, Chase Chandler.

The Wilmington Wildcats 11u Baseball team hosted their first Trivia Night this past weekend and wanted to thank the following businesses for their donations and support: Kathy and James at the Wilmington VFW for your hospitality and patience with us as we navigated our first ever trivia night - we couldn't have done it without you both!

Derek Hogberg and City Pizza & Sub for donating all of the pizzas for the tables - your pizza and support of these kids and the Wilmington community is second to none!!

Kelly Van Duyn for being our emcee for the evening and loving and supporting these boys like your own; Joey Rivera and Consolidated Pipe & Supply Co., Nick Dziuban, Brieser Construction, Trinity Barkery, Cici & Lala's, Rich Kuchar and the Chicago White Sox, Elizabeth Strong, Wilmington Park District, Nelly's, Old School Brewery, The Wine Cafe, Riverfront Lanes, Bryce Antos, The Flower Loft, Melinda Mounts, and Marty Orr - thank you all for your donations, generosity and support of Wildcats 11u baseball!

The cost of insulin: Don't forget the plight of diabetics

I wrote last November about my diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes, my own little effort at education during what was then Diabetes Awareness Month.

But this month I reached an anniversary of sorts, marking one year for a lot of changes, a lot of challenges, a lot of frustration, a handful of tears, a few outbursts (sorry to my husband about that one), and most importantly, a significant amount of gratitude.

Gratitude for my family. Gratitude for my privilege. Gratitude for my life.

On Feb. 17, 2022, somewhere around 4 a.m., weak and sick and finally realizing that what was happening to me was more than just a bad bout with the flu, I woke up my husband and told him I needed to go to the hospital.

"Which one should we go to?" he asked, thinking I was telling him it was time to get in the car and head off to the ER.

"The one the ambulance takes me to," I told him.

It was urgent. I had waited too long to ask for help.

It was pre-dawn on a Thursday, and I had been sick since Tuesday night. I had convinced myself that it was probably the flu. After all, influenza was a bit rampant last year (as it has been this year as well). Ask anyone with children in school, parents have been battling "the mystery virus," one that is not covid, for the bulk of the last two cold and flu seasons.

But, I was ignoring symptoms that I knew were not part of the typical flu. My skin was gray. I couldn't catch my breath. My heart was racing. I was dizzy and disoriented. I had lost track of time. And as the hours progressed, I was only getting worse. I lost the ability first to get up and walk to the bathroom, then later to even sit up in bed. Yet still I was waiting, thinking, the worst will pass.

It did not.

When the endocrinologist in the emergency room at St. Joe's in Joliet said the words "diabetic ketoacidosis," I

immediately started to cry.

My husband was confused, and one of us (but I cannot remember which to be honest) asked how that could possibly be right? I was a Type 2 diabetic. I was well controlled.

"No, you are Type 1," the doctor told us. "You are not well controlled. You need insulin."

I was admitted to the ICU on an insulin infusion. I vaguely remember being told several times that my "gap" wasn't closing as quickly as they had hoped.

I had to look that one up later. The anion gap is the measure of acidity in your blood. It's the rate of positively charged electrolytes to negatively charged ones. The higher the gap, the more acidic your blood is. Too much acidity in your blood equals metabolic acidosis, which is life threatening.

A normal gap is 4-12.

Mine was 25 and stubbornly was not budging.

So what happened? How did I end up this way? I had been diagnosed as Type 2 years earlier, so how did it end up that my diagnosis was wrong?

Over the course of time, but no one really knows exactly how much time, my pancreas essentially failed. So, while many T1Ds are diagnosed after a sudden loss in pancreas function, mine took a slow roll, presenting as Type 2 until my pancreas just stopped pushing out beta cells, the cells that create your natural insulin.

When you think of organ failure, you think of transplants. The heart. The lungs. The liver. The kidneys.

But I was in organ failure, it just so happened that the organ was my pancreas.

This past year has been rough. But at least for me, if I was going to have an organ fail, my pancreas was a better



SIMON SAYS...
Marney Simon

bet. We have good insurance and access to decent healthcare. We are mobile. We are young (hey, 49 is still young, right?).

We are lucky enough to have the tools we need to take care of my T1D.

It's a controllable, though highly frustrating, disease. But without insulin, Type 1s will die.

Some days I am low. Some days I am high. Some days these things both happen in a short period of time, and there is no rhyme or reason to it. Just this past Saturday, my glucose dropped below 40 and stayed there for well over an hour, causing me to become quite fatigued. I bounced back thanks to attention from my husband and a few bags of fruit snacks. Twenty-four hours later, I struggled to bring it down from 200. This is how it goes.

Your glucose is not just affected by food. It's affected by stress, by illness, by lack of sleep, by activity. I have actually had my glucose spike in my sleep because I had a vivid dream. And other times, I have gone high or low, or stayed high or low despite treatment, and there's just no solid explanation as to why.

So here I am again, now that I am at the one year point of my diagnosis, once again imploring anyone reading this to understand a little bit more about diabetes.

You don't have to become an expert. You don't have to develop a deep understanding of the pancreas and how it works.

But awareness. Especially with insulin.

Insulin is the only thing keeping Type 1 Diabetics alive, and it costs entirely too much money. There's always a reason for politicians to say no to the \$35 cap proposal, and it usually involves pork that is hidden inside those bills to reduce the

cost of insulin.

But my argument to you is that \$35 per month is still too much money. I can buy medication to ease my non-life threatening pain over the counter for under \$5, but the medication that actually keeps me alive is \$1,000 per month without my insurance.

That. Is. Insanity.

Drug prices are killing people. A lack of insulin will kill diabetics. You can't diet and exercise your way out of T1D. Insulin is non-negotiable.

High blood pressure can also kill you. But my husband's medication to treat his hypertension only costs a few dollars per month. Why is mine so different? Why are profits put above diabetics?

This past year, I have done a lot to alter my diet. To increase my activity. To learn about my disease, how to administer my insulin and how to administer correction doses, to recognize signs of highs and lows. I've gained back about 40 pounds, because I was unaware that my weight loss had also been a sign of my illness. It was not healthy, but I still don't like it that I gained that all back. But it's better than the alternative.

But the cost to treat my disease will follow me for the rest of my life. And it's not okay.

Please. I'm asking all of you. There are diabetics in your life. And, while T1D was previously referred to as juvenile diabetes, because it was believed to only exclusively affect children, that is simply not the case. No one really knows why the pancreas fails, but it can happen to anyone, at any age. I was 48.

Please learn more. Please support measures that will allow for affordable insulin.

You can learn more about diabetes and diabetes advocacy efforts through the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, www.jdrf.org.

Hike the three longest trails in to earn Triple Crown

Up your game and your mileage this year by hiking the three longest trails in Will County as part of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's new Will County Triple Crown Hiking Challenge.

The challenge kicks off March 1 and runs through June 30. This program is patterned off the national triple crown challenge which involves hiking the three longest U.S. trails: Appalachian, Continental Divide and Pacific Crest.

"We are taking a fun twist on this idea to encourage people to hike the three longest trails in Will County," said Jen Guest, the Forest Preserve's recreation coordinator. "This program is targeting local outdoor enthusiasts and encouraging everyone else to give extended hiking routes a try."

The challenge requires hikers to walk: the 22-mile Wauponsee Glacial Trail from Joliet to Custer Park, 14 miles of the Old Plank Road Trail from Washington Street in Joliet to Harlem Avenue in Frankfort and 13 miles of the I&M Canal State Trail from McKinley Woods in Channahon to Brandon Road in Rockdale.

Hike all three paths to earn your Triple Crown and a



prize of an adjustable bottle sling cooler with a zipper pouch. Route details will be posted on the Forest Preserve website when the program begins March 1. Submission

requirements include a selfie or landscape photo on each of the three trails.

The free hiking challenge is for ages 10 or older. The program is sponsored by The

Nature Foundation of Will County.

Hiking is an excellent way to stay in shape and spending extended time outdoors can boost your mental health, Guest added. "We hope participants will feel a great sense of accomplishment after completing the challenge," she said.

Participants can walk the routes in their entirety or do them in sections. And hikers can arrange to be picked up or can leave a car ahead on the trail so they don't have to duplicate mileage.

"We encourage you to pack a lunch, bring your binoculars or camera and really get out on the trails," Guest advised. "If you are new to hiking, take it slow. It doesn't matter how you hike it as long as you complete the three longest trails."

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

IRS tells taxpayers to wait

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) told Illinois taxpayers to wait to file their 2022 tax returns if they received the special, one-time property tax and/or income tax refund check from the state of Illinois last year.

The IRS was trying to determine if those refunds or payments are taxable by the federal government.

The refund checks in question are the ones that most Illinoisans received last fall and were part of Gov. Pritzker's temporary "tax relief" plan.

This plan received sharp

criticism from Senator Tom Bennett (53rd, Morris), as it was seen as an election-year gimmick by the governor. "At a time when he had the opportunity to provide permanent, long-lasting relief, the Governor instead chose to issue one-time payments that arrived in the mail right ahead of his 2022 election," Bennett said.

The income tax rebate checks were sent to those who earned less than \$200,000 for individual filers, and less than \$400,000 for joint filers. Single filers received \$50 and joint filers received \$100, and those

with dependents received \$100 per dependent up to \$300. The election-year plan also sent property tax rebates up to \$300 to homeowners.

It was determined that these payments are not taxable on the state level; however, it is unclear if the refunds are federally taxable.

On Friday it looked as though the IRS will not challenge the taxability of payments related to general welfare and disaster relief.

This means that Illinois taxpayers do not need to report these state payments on their 2022 tax return.

REO Speedwagon returning to the Illinois State Fair stage

The Illinois Lottery Grandstand will be rocking when REO Speedwagon returns to the Illinois State Fair on Tuesday, Aug. 15. The group, which was loosely formed in the late 1960's at the University of Illinois, has been a constant in the rock world over the last five decades.

From their chart-topping rock love ballads "I Can't Fight This Feeling Anymore" and "Keep On Loving You" to rock

classics like "Ridin' the Storm Out" and "Keep Pushin," REO will bring a catalog of songs that span generations.

"REO Speedwagon always bring everything they have to the stage," said Illinois State Fair Manager Rebecca Clark. "In the over 50 years they have been together, there has not been a year where REO Speedwagon didn't perform live. This will be one of those performances where we will be

able to hear the crowd singing along throughout the whole fairgrounds."

Their 2023 stop will mark the groups seventh time headlining at the Illinois State Fair, the last coming in 2013. Ticket sales for announced shows will go on sale at a date that is yet to be determined.

Mark your calendars for the 2023 Illinois State Fair, running August 10 through 20 in Springfield.

Chamber trophy a farewell to Ed Koziol



THE EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH trophy didn't travel far this month, staying at Arnie Bauer Chevy-Buick to honor long-time service manager Ed Koziol (left) who is retiring. Presenting the trophy is Angela Eartley who works the front office at the Wilmington dealership who named the employee of the month during January. Ed will retire at the end of February. The customers, community and the Chamber wish him well in retirement.

Hospital to host open house to view surgical suites

The community will have an opportunity to tour Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers new, state-of-the-art Surgical Services Suite during an open house scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 26, from 1-3 p.m. at Morris Hospital, 150 W. High St., Morris. Guests should enter through the hospital main entrance off High Street.

On the tour, community members will see Morris Hospital's new operating rooms, the new ambulatory surgery rooms where outpatient start and end their surgical visit, and the new sterile processing area where surgical instruments are cleaned, sterilized, and transported to the operating rooms.

"We recently notified the Illinois Department of Public Health that we are ready for the inspection that is required before we can begin using our newly constructed surgical area for patient services," explains Tom Dohm, President & CEO of Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers. "In the meantime, now is the perfect opportunity for community members to come and see this very impressive area of our hospital that is typically reserved for patients who are having surgery."

Along with three new replacement operating rooms

that were built for today's modern technology, the \$13.2 million renovation project is resulting in five additional private ambulatory surgery rooms, new sterile processing facilities and sterile core hallway, a holding area for inpatients who are having surgery, improved storage for surgery and anesthesia equipment, and new locker rooms, work space and break room for staff.

While outpatients having surgery will continue to enter the building through the main lobby and check in at the registration desk, once the new surgical services area opens, surgery patients will leave the hospital through a dedicated exit on the west side of the building, offering greater privacy for surgical patients when leaving the hospital.

The cost of the project also includes new equipment along with a dedicated heating, ventilation and cooling system for the surgical area of the hospital.

The next phase of renovations will involve turning the current operating rooms into new procedure rooms for gastrointestinal (GI), bronchoscopy, and other procedures involving anesthesia. The second phase will also result in dedicated surgical consult rooms and a new sur-

gical waiting room, giving support persons who accompany surgical patients a dedicated area to wait while their loved one is in surgery. Renovations to the Post Anesthesia Care Unit and Ambulatory Surgery department are expected to take place in a later phase of construction.

Dohm said that the upgrade to the surgical area of the hospital has been part of the hospital main campus modernization plans for some time but had to occur in sequence.

"Three years ago at this time we were celebrating the opening of our new emergency department, infusion therapy center, women's imaging center, outpatient laboratory, and main lobby," he said. "Since then, we completed renovations to our cardio-diagnostics and imaging departments, along with the interventional prep/recovery area adjacent to the cath lab. The changes that we have been making over the past few years have created the space needed to bring state-of-the-art surgical facilities to our community." "We hope everyone will take the opportunity to come and see for themselves during our surgical services open house on Feb. 26."

IDENTITY THEFT TIP

Don't overshare on social media. A simple post about a first pet, first car or favorite high school teacher can give scammers the information they need to hack into your account.

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• **NEW** Sterile Processing facilities for cleaning, storing, and transporting instruments used during surgery
• **NEW** private exit for patients leaving the hospital after having surgery
This is just the first step in a multi-phase project that will modernize our entire Surgical Services Suite!
Sunday February 26 1-3 pm
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OBITUARIES

Brian DuBois

APPLETON, WI—Brian Andrew DuBois, 55, of Appleton, WI, formerly of Braidwood, passed away Monday, Feb. 13, 2023 in Wisconsin. Born on April 18, 1967 in Joliet, he was the son of Richard and Ann DuBois. As a young boy Brian loved all sports, but baseball was his passion. He was very competitive and always felt the need to win. Brian graduated in 1985 from Reed-Custer High School. That same year he was drafted to the Baltimore Orioles, then went on to play with the Detroit Tigers. After his years of playing in the MLB he continued work with AT&T and also enjoyed his time coaching. He is survived by his mother, Ann DuBois, of Wilmington; his sons: Tyler, of New Jersey; Bryan (Kayla), of Springfield, IL and Zach (Nikki), of Springfield; granddaughter, Emmy Maye of Springfield; siblings: Dennis (Kelly Larkin) DuBois, of Essex; Christine (the late Jeff), of Braidwood, Laura (Randy Davis)



DuBois, of Gardner; niece, Kaylee Crompt; nephew, Ryan Garbin and girlfriend, Elizabeth Lehrer, of Wisconsin. Preceding him in death were his father, Richard DuBois; maternal grandparents, Eldon and Laura Flint; paternal grandparents, Andrew DuBois and Catherine Reaney and brother-in-law, Jeff Crompt. Cremation rites have been accorded. Memorial visitation for Brian will be at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023 from 11 a.m. until the time of memorial services beginning at 1 p.m. For more information and to visit his online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook. R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood is in charge of arrangements.

Mark Enz

TEMPE, AZ—Mark John Enz, 70, of Tempe, AZ, passed away Saturday, Jan. 21, 2023. Born Oct. 28, 1952, in Clinton, IA, Mark John was a son of Robert Mark and Wilma Jean (Potter) Enz. During Mark's childhood, he lived in Japan, France and Germany before the family settled in Wilmington. He attended St. Rose School and graduated from Wilmington High School where he played football, basketball and baseball (class of 1970). Mark furthered his education at Lewis University, where he majored in education. At Lewis University, Mark played baseball as an outfielder and during this time his team won two NAIA National Championships. ('74, '75). After college, Mark worked alongside his father for the family landscaping business, Enz Landscaping, in Arizona and went on to make a home for himself there. Mark loved spending time skeet shooting with his brothers while growing up, and won the European Junior Championship while in France in 1963. Mark will be remembered for his quick wit, intelligence and fun loving personality. Survivors include his one daughter, Amnesty (Noah) Sherwood; one brother, Martin (Sarah) Enz; four nieces: Christy (Ryan Dwyer)



Enz, Michelle (John Sullivan) Enz, Renee (Tyler) Crater, and Alicia Enz, and one nephew, Martin (Gina) Enz. Mark was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Mark and Wilma Jean Enz; two brothers, Robert Enz and William Enz, and one sister, Rhonda Jefferson. Cremation rites have been accorded, and a memorial visitation and service is being planned. Mark will be laid to rest in Mt. Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wilmington along with his parents and sister, Rhonda. A complete obituary will follow as information becomes available. Preferred memorials in lieu of flowers may be made as memorials to benefit Mark's daughter, Amnesty. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Mark's memorial page online through social media. Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington.

Judith L. Lavicka

BRAIDWOOD—Judith L. Lavicka, 68, of Braidwood, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023 at Morris Hospital. Born Feb. 19, 1954 in Joliet, she was the daughter of George and Norberta (nee Kinkin) Lavicka. A life-long Braidwood resident for 34 years, she was employed at Fox Developmental Center in Dwight as a tech and ATR instructor. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Braidwood, Goose Lake Prairie Partners, Braidwood Area Historical Society and Livingston County Humane Society. After her retirement Judith also volunteered at Fox Developmental Center and both Braidwood and Wilmington Libraries. She enjoyed researching genealogy and history. Surviving are her mother, Norberta Lavicka, of Braidwood; brother, Tony (Vicki) Lavicka, of Shorewood; sister, Jeannie (Will) Bell Thomas, of Braidwood; nieces and nephews: Robin (Paul) Duffey, Jennifer Lavicka,



Christopher (Stacy) Bell and Joshua Lavicka; great-nieces and great-nephews: Amelia, Brianna, Kaitlyn and Daisy Bell; Zoey and Zachary Duffey and Maleah and Chase Lavicka. Preceding her in death was her father, George Lavicka. Funeral services were held on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023 at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory in Braidwood. Cremation rites were accorded following the service. Memorial donations may be directed to the Livingston County Humane Society, 21179 N. 1358 East Rd., Pontiac, IL 61764. For more information and to visit her online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook. R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood was in charge of arrangements.

Betty Oswald

BROADVIEW, IL—Betty Oswald, 80, of Broadview, IL, passed away Monday, Feb. 13, 2023 at Aperia Care in Wilmington. Born Sept. 1, 1942 in Chicago, Elizabeth Ann was the daughter of William and Catherine (nee Daley) Hutcherson. She was raised in Broadview and graduated from Proviso High School. On March 27, 1963, Betty married Donald Raymond Oswald Sr. She worked for many years at Century 21 Real Estate in Darien, and she also volunteered her time with numerous organizations. Betty volunteered with the Brookfield Zoo and the Darien Public Library where she helped start the Bookmobile program. She was a past member of Saint Mary Catholic Church in Darien where she participated with the Golden Hands. Betty loved to go to garage sales and enjoyed reading, especially romance novels. She was a truly kind and generous heart, always making sure to volunteer her time with the elderly and those in need. Betty was a loving mother and grandmother who leaves behind a beautiful collection of family and friends who will



miss her dearly. Survivors include her three children: Wendy Oswald, of Wilmington; Christine Oswald, of Bonfield and Donald (Heather) Oswald Jr. of Queen Creek, AZ; nine grandchildren: Robert, Victor, Nicole, Neil, Nicholas, Lily, Ashton, Bailey and Daisy; 10 great-grandchildren: Collette, Joey, Alex, Donald, Bentley, Hunter, Elizabeth, Ben, Kolton and Weston, with another expected in July and several nieces and nephews. Betty was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Donald; and one brother, James Hutcherson. Per Betty's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded and services will be planned at a later date. Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Betty's memorial page via social media. Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington.

David Smith

MORRIS—David Smith, 59, of Morris, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 15, 2023 at Bethany Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center in DeKalb, IL. Born Dec. 5, 1963 in Morris, David Maurice was a son of Robert and Betty (Christensen) Smith. He was raised and educated in Morris and graduated from Morris High School with the class of 1981. He worked as an automotive mechanic for several years in Wilmington before gaining employment with Empress Casino in Joliet where he would work for the next 28 years. Dave was proud to have founded and be past president of the Morris VFW Men's Auxiliary, working to raise funds and support veterans in need. He was a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Morris and also volunteered his time with the Corn Fest Committee. Dave loved hotrods and working on cars, and especially enjoyed watching NASCAR. He took great pleasure in going golfing with friends and watching movies, and was always willing to lend a helping hand to



anyone in need. Survivors include his son, Matthew (Kailey) Smith, of Morris and his granddaughter expected in March; his brother and sister: Reverend Richard Smith, of Naperville and Deborah (Chris) Gough, of DeKalb; several nieces and nephews, and numerous relatives and friends. Dave was preceded in death by his parents and one daughter in infancy, Shelby Dawn Smith. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Monday, Feb. 20, 2023 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Morris celebrated by Reverend Richard Smith, and burial followed at Mount Carmel Catholic Cemetery in Morris. Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Dave's memorial page via social media. Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Morris.

Richard G. Reichman Jr.

COAL CITY—Richard G. Reichman Jr., "Dick," 68, of Coal City, formerly of Crest Hill, passed away Monday, Feb. 13, 2023 at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, IL. Born July 15, 1954 in Joliet, Richard George was a son of Richard Sr. and Marilyn (nee Cantu) Reichman. He was raised and educated in Crest Hill and graduated from Romeoville High School. He attended Joliet Junior College, and then went on to serve in the United States Navy from 1973 until his honorable discharge in 1979. While in the service, Dick would meet Teresa Southerland, and on April 2, 1978 they married in Charleston, SC. They later moved to Illinois where they would live and raise their family. Dick was a computer architect who owned and operated Vital Analysis Consulting Services for 23 years. After retiring, he continued to utilize his skills and abilities, doing jobs and contracted services until recently. Dick enjoyed water sports and boating. He was also a private pilot and built his own ultralight aircraft. Dick took great pleasure in restoring vintage motor-



cycles. Survivors include his wife of 44 years, Teresa Reichman, of Coal City; two children, Richard Reichman III (Tina Wesolowski), of Tellico Plains, TN and Marlaina (Chris) Figge, of Morris; three grandchildren: Marie Reichman and Marina and Drake Figge; one brother and one sister: Marilou Reichman, of Plainfield and Mark (Joan) Reichman, of Hawaii; and several nieces and nephews. Dick was preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Marilyn Reichman. Per his wishes, cremation rites are being accorded. Funeral services with full military honors were held Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023 at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Dick's memorial page via social media. Cremation services and memorial arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

Robert Swisher Jr.

BRACEVILLE—Robert Leroy Swisher Jr., 74, of Braceville, passed away Feb. 4, 2023 at home with his loving family by his side. Born Aug. 31, 1948 in Joliet, he was the son of Robert Sr. and Clara Louise Swisher. He married Pat Parkinson Smith on March 22, 1975. Bob spent over 20 years bringing smiles and joy to households throughout the area every Christmas season with his white beard, rosy red cheeks and his Santa suit with the big "SC" belt buckle. His favorite moments were when he and his wife, Patricia and close friend, Donny Hart were all on Harleys riding to Sturgis, SC and beyond. He also enjoyed moments with a house full of children and grandchildren at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Survivors include his wife, two sons, Robert III (Dyanna) of Braceville and Roy of Wilmington; daughter-in-law, Gayla Smith, of Ottawa; sons-in-law, Greg Williams, of Coal City and Jeff (Dana) Blatti, of Braceville; granddaughters: Holly Swisher, Kathryn (Robert) McLuckie, of Coal City; Morgan Crosby, of Naperville; Kaly Jo Swisher, of LaGrange; GA;



Nicole (Ken) Mack, of Morris; grandsons: Robert IV (Tonya) of Braceville; Gage Swisher, of Morristown, TN; Robert Christopher Blatti, of Streator; Jeffrey (Nicole) Blatti, of Diamond; Patrick Wren (Carrie), of Chicago; Chad Williams, of Mazon; great-grandchildren: Josie, Belle, Ripley and Toby Swisher; Ronald, Jayden, Damon and Jackson Blatti; Colton and Vincent Blatti; Kane and Mack and one on the way McLuckie; Grace, KC, Lane, Liam, Jackson and Owen Mack; Colten Williams; one sister, Kathleen Noel (Tom) and one sister-in-law, Doris Swisher, both of Wilmington and several nieces and nephews. Bob was preceded in death by his parents, two brothers, Ronald and Michael; two daughters, Jerri Lynn Blatti and Roycann (Rocky) Williams and one son, Richard Smith. Cremation rites have been accorded. A private service will be held at a later date to be determined. Family and friends are encouraged to share on line through social media with photos or share any memories of his life.

Arland E. Percy Jr.

WILMINGTON—Arland E. Percy Jr., 62, of Wilmington, and formerly of Joliet, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2022 at Silver Cross Medical Center in New Lenox. Born Sept. 20, 1960 in Mattoon, IL, Arland Edward was a son of Arland "Edward" Percy Sr., of Diamond and the late Linda Jean (Paden) Percy. He attended Laraway School and graduated from Joliet East High School with the class of 1978. Following high school, Arland worked in the Steel Mills before gaining employment with the city of Wilmington Water Department. Most recently he had been working security. On Oct. 1, 1994, Arland married Brenda (nee Davis) in the First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, and together they made their home together in Wilmington. Over the years, Arland took pleasure in playing baseball and fishing, and was a fan of all sports, particularly following the Chicago Blackhawks and Chicago Cubs. He enjoyed old movies and radio shows, and had a love of animals, especially his dogs. To his family he was known to be a gentle giant and never mean, vindictive or aggressive to anyone. Arland always enjoyed making people laugh and will be remembered for his witty sense of humor. Survivors include his wife, Brenda; father,



Ed Percy; two sisters, April Veerman, of New Lenox and Georgianna (Jeff) Shenk, of Braidwood; his mother-in-law, Annette Kincheloe and brother-in-law, Douglas Davis, both of Wilmington, and numerous nieces and nephews. Arland was preceded in death by his mother, Linda Percy; brother-in-law, Brad Veerman; maternal and paternal grandparents, and his father-in-law, Benjamin Kincheloe. 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 Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023 between the hours of 12 and 3 p.m. Any mail correspondences may be directed to the family c/o Baskerville Funeral Home. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guestbook, upload photographs and share Arland's memorial page online through social media. Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Arland's memory to his family for their distribution. Cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington.

Laura "Mikie" Valdez

COAL CITY—Laura "Mikie" Valdez, 74, of Coal City, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023 at Morris Hospital. Born Sept. 16, 1948 in Marion, IL, Laura Michelle was a daughter of Robert and Freda (Vaughn) Schellenberger. She lived in several states throughout her youth, until her family settled in Minooka where she graduated from high school. Mikie attended Joliet Junior College for legal studies, and on Dec. 19, 1970 she married Maximo Valdez in Morris. She spent the first few years of marriage on the east coast while Max was serving in the United States Navy, where she worked on the Naval Bases. Following their return to Illinois, Mikie was a stay at home mom to care for her children. She then owned and operated The Yarn Bin in Coal City, until she began her career as a paralegal. She worked for the law offices of Mueller and Garretson in Morris and Bateson and Taylor in Joliet for over 20 years. Mikie was always volunteering her time with programs such as Operation St. Nick and Easter Seals in Joliet, and with Operation Firm Handshake who hosts the annual Veterans Picnic at the Coal City Area Club. She also was co-owner and office manager of Midwest Bedliners in Coal City from 1999 to 2021. Mikie was an avid quilter who shared her talents in many ways. She would showcase her quilts which were featured at several quilting shows, but also generously donated countless quilts through fundraisers and donations. Mikie was involved in the Pieces from the Heart Quilt Guild and also had a local group that would meet once a month to share their talents together. She made sure that each family member received a beautiful quilt from her, sometime for an occasion, but often just to have as a token of her love. Family was always Mikie's number one priority and she relished time with her children



and grandchildren. She loved spending time camping and pontoon boating out at the area club. Mikie was a great baker as well, specializing in peach pie, and would often share her baked goods with any and all. Her big heart and generous nature was well known to many and will be missed dearly by those who knew and loved her. Survivors include her husband of 52 years, Max Valdez, of Coal City; two daughters, Moree (Bud) Harney, of Coal City and Kristina Carmen, of Coal City; four grandchildren: Maximo Valdez II, Frank Carmen, Lilly Harney and Xander Carmen; one sister, Nancy (Joe) Dunn, of Delaware, OH; five brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Eddie Valdez, of Coal City; Jesse Valdez, of Coal City; Teresa (Roberto) Cortez, of Diamond; Manuel Ramat, of Joliet and Ben Minor, of Joliet; one uncle, Sherman "Spud" Vaughn, of Romeoville and numerous nieces and nephews. Mikie was preceded in death by her parents, two sisters, Connie (Lloyd "Red") Crosby and Darla "Deeg" Fuller; mother-in-law, Martha Consuelo Ramat; one sister-in-law, Carmen Minor and one niece and great-nephew: Melinda and Jaxon Cullen. Funeral services were held Monday, Feb. 20, 2023 at Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City. The live stream can be accessed via Mikie's memorial page. Cremation rites were accorded, and Mikie was laid to rest at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Mikie's memory to Max for the benefit of Mikie's family. Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook, upload photographs, and share Mikie's memorial page via social media. Funeral services and cremation arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Coal City.

OBITUARIES

Mary Hansen

WILMINGTON—Mary Hansen, 87, of Wilmington, passed away Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023 at the Lightways Hospice Home in Joliet.

Born Sept. 6, 1935 in Schneider, IN, Mary Ann was a daughter of Louis and Anna (Martin) Camus. She was raised and educated in Lowell, IN, where she graduated high school. On Oct. 9, 1954, Mary married Richard "Bootsy" Hansen in Wilmington, and together they made a home and raised their family in Wilmington. Mary worked at Johnson & Johnson Personal Products before gaining employment with Precision Components, where she worked until retiring. In her free time, Mary enjoyed jigsaw puzzles, playing cards and going to Bingo.

Survivors include her son, Rick (Becky) Hansen, of Wilmington; seven grandchildren: Alicia (Robert) Bolser, Michael Hansen, Curtis (Colleen) Hansen, Jeremy (Kim) Durham, T.J. (Krista) Hansen, Brad Meyer and Nick (Deanna) Hansen; 12 great-grandchildren: Brock, Isabel, McKenzie, Kylie, Kody, Olivia, Ella, Carsyn,



Mason, Noah, Carter and Owen; one brother, Robert Camus and one sister, June Smith, as well as nieces and nephews.

Mary was preceded in death by her parents, one son, James Glen Hansen; one daughter, Diana Meyer; three brothers: Louis Jr., Ronnie and Richard, and three great-grandsons: Caden, Connor and Elijah.

Cremation rites have been accorded and there will be no services. A private inurnment will be in Oakwood Cemetery in Wilmington at a later date.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Mary's memory to Kuzma Care Cottage, 635 S. Main St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

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

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

Judy Crawford

WILMINGTON—Judy Crawford, 69, of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023 at her home.

Born March 12, 1953 in Paducah, KY, Judy Ann was a daughter of Lester and Macie Crawford. She was raised and educated in Wilmington, and worked many years locally at R-Way Plastics.

One who cherished her family and enjoyed spending time with friends, Judy also took pleasure in putting puzzles together, playing cards and bingo, and baking. She was a great fan of Elvis and was dedicated to the care of her bird, 'Little Annette.'

Survivors include three siblings: Joann (the late Jerry) Giasson, of Washburn, IL; Johnny Crawford, of Wilmington and Lloyd Crawford, of Essex; one brother-in-law, Bob Neese and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as great-nieces and great-nephews.

Judy was preceded in death by her parents, siblings: Robert (Betty) Crawford, Lester Ray Crawford, Betty Sue Neese and Annette



Crawford; two nieces: Deb Neese and Penny Crawford; one nephew, Robert Neese, and one great-niece, Grace.

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 Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023 from 12 p.m. until time of service at 2 p.m.

She will be laid to rest in Oakwood Cemetery in Wilmington with her parents.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Judy's memory to Luries Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

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

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

Phillip Kodat



CARBON HILL—Philip Douglas Kodat, 79, a long-time resident of Carbon Hill, passed away on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023 at Morris Hospital.

Philip was born March 12, 1943 in Morris to Leonard Kodat and Mary Walsh Kodat. He attended school in Coal City, graduating with the class of 1961. That same year, he joined the United States Army and was stationed in Germany until 1964. There, he met and married Karin Baechtle. Phil worked for 30 years at Caterpillar in Joliet. His love was working in his garden, raising flowers and vegetables. He enjoyed woodworking and building patio furniture. Phil also raised bees and had over 200 hives for honey. He was a trustee for the Village of Carbon Hill and also for Felix Township.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Karin Kodat; his son, Thomas Kodat, of Winston Salem, NC; one granddaughter, Mary Kodat Metz, of Little Rock, AK; one great-grandson, Henry Metz, of Vacaville, CA; his brother, George (Rita) Kodat; his sister, Judy (Rich) Martin and sister-in-law, Ana Koval and many nieces and nephews in both the United States and in Germany.

He was preceded in death by his parents,



Leonard and Mary Kodat and his brothers, Tom and Pete.

Memorials in Phil's name may be made to Just Animals Shelter, 505 Depot St., Mazon, IL 60444 or the Carbon Hill Historical Society and School Museum, 875 N. Second St., Carbon Hill, IL. 60416

Cremation rites have been accorded.

A "Celebration of Life" visitation will be held from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, March 12, 2023, which would have been Phil's 80th Birthday, at Ferrari Funeral Services, 1044 Ferrari Dr., Coal City, IL 60416. A "Celebration of Life" memorial service will begin at 4 p.m., also at Ferrari Funeral Services.

Inurnment with full military honors will be at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, March 13, 2023 at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, 20953 W. Hoff Rd., Elwood, IL 60421. Family and friends wishing to attend may meet at the cemetery Information Center at 10:15 a.m.

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

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City is entrusted with arrangements.

Tom Bishop Sr.

BRAIDWOOD—Tom J. Bishop Sr., 69, of Braidwood, left to join his beloved son and daughter in Heaven on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023.

Tom was born in Effingham, IL on Oct. 23, 1953 to Donald and Bessie (Warner) Bishop. He was the eighth of 10 children. Tom spent time growing up in Mason, Elwood, Braidwood and a little time in Indiana. He was a 1972 graduate of Joliet East High School.

As a teenager Tom spent his time learning the art of masonry eventually starting his own union business, Bishop Masonry Inc. Tom was a successful and respected businessman for many years. Tom's first bout with cancer ended his business days but not his life. He fought a long and courageous battle with the effects of his extended treatments giving him 16 extra years with his family. A stronger man you will not meet.

Tom always enjoyed outdoor activities. Many years were spent camping, fishing, water-skiing, riding his motorcycle and hunting Morell mushrooms with his family. Fishing on the Saint Joe River in Michigan was one of his greatest joys. Most of all Tom loved his family. His grandchildren brought him much joy in his later years. It was a normal thing to find him sitting on the floor playing cars or in his chair baby-sitting baby dolls. He will be truly missed by his whole extended family.

He is survived by his loving wife of 45 years,



Diane (Kezerle); sons, Tom Bishop Jr. (Daniela), Jacob (Haley) and daughter, Hannah (Andrew) and his daughter, Tessa (Brandt); grandchildren: Mason and Ruby Bishop, Carter Bishop and Ivy Brandt. He is also survived by his sisters: Pat, Peggy, Judy, Betty and brother, Charles (Connie); sister in-law, Karen Kezerle; brother in-law, Robert (Sally) Kezerle; numerous nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins. Lots of love from an extended family.

Tom was preceded in death by his son, William and daughter, Abbey; his parents, Donald and Bessie; brothers, William and Richard; sisters, Evelyn, Linda and in-laws, Robert and Betty Kezerle.

A visitation for Tom will be held Saturday, Feb. 25, 2023, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 202 W. Jefferson St., Morris, from 10 a.m. until time of service at 1 p.m. A luncheon will immediately follow the service at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

An online guestbook has been made for the family, where you may sign the guestbook, share memories and photographs. You can access this by visiting the website at www.ucdaviscallahan.com.

Arrangements have been entrusted with U.C. Davis-Callahan Funeral Home, 301 W. Washington Street, Morris.



CHILLICOTHE—Jack Lawrence Stoner, 76, of Chillicothe, passed away on Monday, Feb. 13, 2023 at his home.

Jack was born on Oct. 14, 1946 in East St. Louis, IL to George Lawrence and Genevieve Glendora (Harness) Stoner. He married Elaine Lee Clark on Aug. 20, 1976 in Edwardsville, IL. Jack served in the U.S. Marines at Camp Lejeune, NC during Vietnam. He then was a boilermaker with the Local #1 in Chicago. He was also a member of the VFW Post #4999 in Chillicothe.

Surviving are his wife, Elaine; his children, Andrew Stoner, of Decatur, IL; Angela Marie Luck, of Chillicothe and Jennifer Lynn (Brett)



Mellen, of Chillicothe; his grandchildren: Jack Henry Mellen, Genevieve Sumner and Lucy Mellen; his sister, Diane McDonald, of Greenville, OH and his nieces and nephews. Also surviving is a special friend and caregiver of Jack and Elaine, Geanna Atkinson.

He was preceded in death by his parents and two sisters, Georgia Stoner and Sandra Reed.

Services with military honors were held on Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023 at Weber-Hurd Funeral Home in Chillicothe. Cremation rites were accorded following the services.

Memorials may be made to the Veteran's Memorial in Chillicothe.

Online condolences may be made through www.weberhurdfuneralhome.com.

Immaculate Conception Church to host March 4 mystery dinner

The Immaculate Conception Church in Braidwood will be hosting a mystery dinner, "A Trip to Die For" on a 1950's themed Orient Express, on Saturday, March 4 at 6 p.m.

The passenger manifest includes a variety of rich, influential individuals from the upper classes of Europe (and possibly some spies), as well as members of the train's crew.

Everyone is expecting a luxurious train ride including dinner and drinks. However, they aren't expecting foul weather, a dastardly deed and getting involved in an international incident.

It will be held at Father White Hall, 110 S. School St. in Braidwood. You will be assigned a role as a passenger

or staff member aboard the Orient Express and will play that character for the evening. You are encouraged to come dressed as your character. There will be great food, laughs, suspense and mystery solving.

Space is limited. Advance sign ups are required, as each person will play a vital role in

solving the mystery. You must be at least 21 to participate. Character assignments will be sent out Feb. 27.

Your ticket to fun will cost \$30 which includes dinner and drinks. Deadline to grab your ticket is Feb. 26. To register online go to icparishbraidwood.org or call Sara Wollagst (815) 287-2036.

Free seed giveaway with Unv of IL Saturday

Getting ready for gardening? Need seeds?

Join the University of Illinois Will County Master Gardeners, Naturalists and Composters for their annual SeedFest on Saturday, Feb. 25,

from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Will County Extension Office.

This is a family friendly free event. Each attendee may choose up to 15 packets of seeds. No registration needed!

THANK YOU FIRST RESPONDERS



To the brave men and women who put their lives in harm's way every day! You work hard at what you do.... **Don't let anyone take that away.**

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



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One night only!

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Headliner Fritz Nothnagel

Time... 8:03pm



Featured act Mike Fountain



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Guest Comic Ree Ledbetter



For tickets call (815) 476-2700



MC/Host Bill Brady



Presale \$15.00 (Up to 3 p.m. on 03/04/23) Door \$20.00

The good news in Pritzker's proposed budget

After taking a pandemic-induced hiatus from proposing large, permanent base spending increases and instead using most revenue increases for one-time expenditures, Gov. JB Pritzker's recently proposed Fiscal Year 2024 state budget appears to increase base operational spending by at least \$2.75 billion, or 7.9 percent.

Annual pension payments will also rise by a relatively modest \$201 million, which ups the total base spending increase to \$2.95 billion.

The Republicans warned that Gov. Pritzker was setting the state up for a massive tax hike if revenues plummet. But Pritzker and his people repeatedly pointed out that their revenue projections actually factor in a recession later this calendar year. Their projections are, the Pritzker folks say, "conservative."

After raising the current (2023) fiscal year's revenue projections by \$1.24 billion, to \$51.36 billion, revenues are projected to fall by \$1.4 billion in the coming fiscal year.

Net individual income taxes are projected to rise in Fiscal Year 2024 by \$778 million, or about 3.3 percent. But corporate income taxes are projected to fall by \$175 million, or about 3 percent. Sales tax revenue will be relatively flat, rising by just \$25 million.

The governor's budget director said one factor in the sales tax projection is the gradual shift of sales taxes on motor fuel purchases from General Funds to the Road Fund which was negotiated when the capital bill was passed in 2019. She didn't say, but another aspect of the flat growth is likely the projected recession. Transfers in will fall by about \$1.3 billion below the current fiscal year, which the governor's budget office has been



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

assuming since last year.

And, even if their revenue projections are wrong, "We've cut budgets before," one Pritzker administration official said.

Even Comptroller Susana Mendoza, who spent the past couple of years warning legislators and the governor not to increase permanent spending programs, backed off, depriving Republicans and conservative pundits of a Democratic champion who they had already been using as a cudgel against Pritzker and the super-majority party.

After the governor's budget address, for example, Senate Republican Leader John Curran issued a statement saying, "We must heed the warnings of Comptroller Mendoza and be disciplined in our fiscal approach at a time when we are likely to experience a recession."

Instead, Mendoza deemed the large base spending hike as, "careful, strategic, and necessary investments."

Human services will receive the largest spending increase at \$912 million. Education, including higher education, will receive the next largest increase at \$791 million. Healthcare costs will rise by \$709 million and public safety expenditures will go up by \$224 million.

To some, particularly progressives and social service providers, the governor's proposed increase is a floor, not a ceiling. "The proposed budget's lack of investment in the home care workers who make it possible for seniors to stay in their homes may force some to forgo needed care or be forced into nursing homes," claimed an SEIU Healthcare leader.

"We now ask the General Assembly to build on this proposed budget and advance our legislation to increase the wage

rate for Direct Support Professionals by \$4 an hour to help address the workforce crisis Gov. Pritzker discussed today," said an IARF official.

The Illinois Education Association wants vision and dental insurance coverage for retirees, and several groups are pushing a \$500+ million annual state child tax credit.

The governor's people say their proposed increases are a hard ceiling. Any new funding proposals will have to come from within the proposed budget framework and forecasts. However, revenue forecasts have been known to change in the past. Often, even.

The two Democratic legislative leaders issued statements in general support of the governor's outline. The House Democrats' chief budget negotiator, Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth said she wanted to work toward a "budget that is both fiscally and socially responsible."

The governor's budget director Alexis Sturm pointed out some other good news.

"For the four years before the governor came into office, the average interest payment was about \$400 million," Sturm told reporters. "We're running nearly \$300 million, if not more, below that average now," she said.

And Ralph Martire at the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability said the revenue this fiscal year is high enough, "to create true balance at the end of FY 2023, with no accumulated deficit carrying forward into FY 2024." He also claimed that the deficit at the end of the coming fiscal year will be the lowest "in nominal, non-inflation-adjusted dollars that it has been in 25 years."

Not bad.

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

Cemetery clean-up

Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Wilmington is planning a Spring clean-up March 3 (weather permitting). All decorations wanting to be kept must be removed at that time.

When decorating, please remember the following rules: Trees, shrubs, fence borders of any kind are not allowed and

will be removed.

The purpose of the new section being all flush markers is to remove difficulties with maintenance and burials. All statues, figurines, etc., are not allowed in any section of the cemetery.

Anything not removed by the end of clean-up, will be removed and disposed of by the cemetery employees. When clean-up has commenced, shepherds hooks, only one per grave, can be placed.

Remember to remove them by Nov. 1. Plastic flowers must be in a ground vase and no flower pots. For a complete list of decorating rules and regulations, please contact the St. Rose Parish Office.

Attorney Vazquez files Stewart estate notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

In the Matter of the Estate of
JERRY D. STEWART, deceased.
Case No. 2023 PR 000066

DEATH AND PROBATE NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Jerry D. Stewart. Letters of Office were issued on February 15, 2023, to Wilma Stewart, 405 Bass Street, Wilmington, IL, 60181, as representative.

The estate will be administered without Court Supervision, unless under section 28-4 of the Probate Act of 1975 (755 ILCS 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the court clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of Andrea Lynn Chasteen, Circuit Court Clerk, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois, or with the representative or both on or before the 22nd of August, 2023, or if mailing or delivery of this notice form the personal representative is required under by Sec. 18.3 of the Probate Act of 1995, the date state in that notice.

Any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Circuit Court Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney, if any, within ten (10) days after it has been filed with the court clerk.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Wilma Stewart,
Representative

Attorney Staci L. Vazquez
ARDC#6339790
Geiger, Durkee & Vazquez LLC
Attorney for Petitioners
415 Liberty St., Morris, IL 60450
815-942-5072
staci@gdv-law.com
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Feb. 22, March 1 and 8, 2023.

Notice of Foreclosure of 725 E. Elmo Court

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 12TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

GRUNDY BANK; Plaintiff, -v- DANIEL DIETRICH, TARYA L. DIETRICH, ILLINOIS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, UNKNOWN OWNERS, AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS; Defendants,
Case No. 22FC1371

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE

The requisite Affidavit for Publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendants in the above-entitled cause, that the above-entitled Mortgage Foreclosure action was filed on December 27, 2022 and is now pending.

- The names of all Plaintiffs and the Case Number are identified above.
- The Court in which this action was brought is identified above.
- The names of the titleholders of record are Daniel Dietrich and Tarya L. Dietrich.
- A legal description of the real estate sufficient to identify it with reasonable certainty is as follows:
Lot 11 in Unit 1 of Mourning Subdivision, a Subdivision of Part of the Northwest Quarter of Section 19, in Township 32 North, and in Range 9 East of the Third Principal Meridian, According to the Plat Thereof Recorded April 3, 1969 as Document No. R69-5780, in Will County, Illinois
- A common address or description of the location of the real estate is as follows:
Commonly known as: 725 E. Elmo Court, Godley, Illinois 60407
Permanent Index Number: 24-19-102-002-0000
- An identification of the Mortgage sought to be foreclosed is as follows:

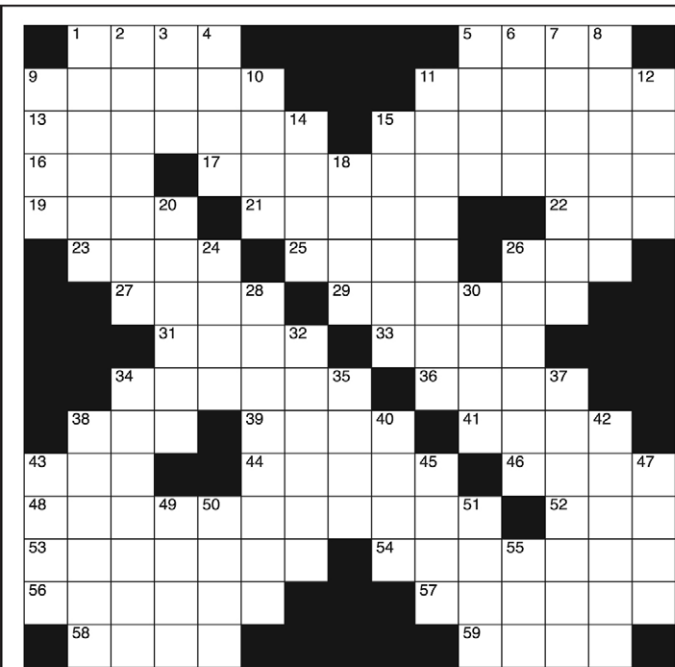
- Names of Mortgages: Daniel and Tarya L. Dietrich
- Name of Mortgagee: Grundy Bank
- Date of Mortgage: December 2, 2013
- Date of Recording: December 20, 2013
- County Where Recorded: Will
- Recording Document Identification: R2013142537

NOW, THEREFORE, unless you, Unknown Owners and Non-record Claimants, file your answer to the Complaint for Foreclosure in this cause or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson St., Joliet, IL 60432, on or before February 8, 2023, default may be entered against you and each of you at any time after that day and a Judgment for Foreclosure may be entered in accordance with the prayer of the Complaint for Foreclosure.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or contact the Clerk of this Court.

Andrea Lynn Chasteen, Circuit Clerk

James M. Durkee - Trial Attorney
(6296297)
Geiger, Durkee & Vazquez LLC
415 Liberty St.
Morris, IL 60450
815-942-5072
staff@mglawoffices.com
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 15 and 22, 2023.



CLUES ACROSS

- Sea grape
- European public health group (abbr.)
- A way to delight
- Appetizers
- Ancient heralds' wands
- Make a booking
- death do us part
- Pearl Jam frontman
- Spider genus
- Fill with high spirits
- A major division of geological time
- Catch
- An independent ruler or chieftain
- Electronic music style (abbr.)
- Influential Spanish cubist painter
- Illegally persuades
- A way to derive
- British School
- Appear alongside
- Surely (archaic)
- Harsh cry of a crow
- A day in the middle
- Kansas hoops coach Bill
- The longest division of geological time
- The first sign of the zodiac
- Appetizer
- Link together in a chain
- A bacterium
- In a way, forces apart
- Cheese dish
- Combines
- In an inferior way
- Colors clothes
- Dried-up

CLUES DOWN

- Gastropods
- Confusing
- Romanian monetary unit
- The rate at which something proceeds
- A prosperous state of well-being
- Asked for forgiveness
- Makes less soft
- Part of speech
- Outside
- Advice or counsel
- Badness
- Protein-rich liquids
- Not moving
- Call it a career
- Poetry term
- Not wide
- Pastries
- Turns away
- Satisfies
- Gift adornments
- San Diego ballplayers
- Manufacturing plant
- Check or guide
- Dogs do it
- Chilled
- Scorch
- Unproductive of success
- Electronic counter-countermeasures
- Attack with a knife
- Feel bad for
- Enclosure
- Assert
- Geological times
- Midway between east and southeast

Area gas prices remain unchanged

While the average gasoline price in Illinois fell 2.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.49/g, area prices remain unchanged according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 3.8 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 21.1 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

"Motorists across many areas of the country have seen gas prices inching down for another week, while some states have moved higher. We've seen some refinery challenges in pockets of the country, while others are starting the transition to summer gaso-

line, weighing on prices. For diesel, the outlook remains bright with prices continuing to fall," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

The cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$2.99/g while the most expensive was \$4.79/g, a difference of \$1.80/g. Locally, Braidwood stations' lowest price was \$3.49/g, in Wilmington \$3.48/g and Coal City \$3.65/g.

"Oil prices have softened over the last week, helping to limit any upside at the pump, with strong economic data leading to concern that the Fed will continue to use interest rates to slow the economy. This could weaken demand as we head into the peak summer driving season," DeHaan said.

"For diesel, the great news is that the most common price in the U.S. for diesel is now \$3.99 per gallon, with average prices continuing to drop. In the next couple of weeks, diesel will finally flip to deflationary compared to a year ago, which is excellent news for the economy."

Chili cook-off Sunday

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

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

Prom Dress Collection

Please donate your prom dresses for our dress event on Saturday March 4th at Godley Park District where all dresses are \$5.00

All students should be able to afford prom!

All students welcome

Melissa's Closet & Crystal's Jewelry Box has dressed over 4,207 students for prom

Please donate gently worn prom dresses purchases after 2018, purses, jewelry, shoes or any prom attire.

In memory of Melissa Michalowski & Crystal Carr

Braidwood plant to get major upgrade

More jobs, more megawatts with \$800 million

Constellation, operators of the Braidwood Generating Station, will invest \$800 million in new equipment to increase the output of its Braidwood and Byron Generating Stations in Illinois by approximately 135 megawatts, enough to power the equivalent of 100,000 homes around the clock every year.

The project will require thousands of union workers during construction while expanding economic activity for surrounding businesses in the plant communities. The additional jobs come on top of the 1,200 permanent workers at the two plants.

Once the upgrades are complete the additional carbon-free power generated will be equivalent to removing 171,000 gas-powered vehicles from the road per year, or the equivalent of adding 216 intermittent wind turbines to the grid.

"These investments in our world class nuclear fleet will allow us to generate more zero-carbon energy with the same amount of fuel and land, and that's a win for the economy, the environment and Illinois families and businesses who rely on our clean energy," said Joe Dominguez, president and CEO of Constellation.

"These projects will help create family-sustaining jobs and are a direct result of state and federal poli-



Courtesy photo

BRAIDWOOD GENERATING STATION will install new state-of-the-art turbines that will help expand output by 135 megawatts under an \$800 million upgrade for Braidwood and Byron stations. The project over the next six years will involve thousands of union jobs and increased spending in local communities.

cies that recognize the incredible value of nuclear energy in addressing the climate crisis while keeping our grid secure and reliable."

The Braidwood and Byron projects involve replacing the main turbines at the two facilities with state-

of-the-art, high efficiency units that are expected to add approximately 135 megawatts. Constellation expects to see increased output at the stations as early as 2026, with the full uprated output available by 2029. Work on the uprates will occur in stages during

scheduled refueling outages.

Braidwood and Byron were among the Illinois nuclear plants saved from premature retirement by passage of the state Climate and Equitable Jobs Act in 2021.

Since then, Congress passed the

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) last year, which provides a base level of support for nuclear energy nationwide. Both pieces of legislation have enabled renewed investment in nuclear energy.

Support for nuclear in the IRA has made extending the lives of U.S. nuclear assets to 80 years more likely assuming continued support. It has caused Constellation to examine nuclear uprate opportunities that were cancelled a decade ago due to market forces.

The 45Y tax credit for the production of new carbon-free electricity helps make these investments economic.

The Illinois uprates come on the heels of Constellation's announcement of significant progress at its clean hydrogen project at Nine Mile Point Generating Station in upstate New York, and the start of work on operating license renewals at the Clinton and Dresden nuclear plants in Illinois.

"It is gratifying to see new long-term projects at our nuclear facilities getting the green light. This is an exciting time for our industry as we continue our investment in the future of our plants," said Dave Rhoades, chief nuclear officer, Constellation.

"Our workers stand at the ready to welcome new employees for these projects as we continue building upon creative new efforts that provide additional clean energy to the communities we serve across the nation."

The possibility of AI fighting climate change

Dear EarthTalk: How can we harness the power of AI to fight climate change?

-- P.K., Old Forge, PA 18518

No doubt, artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to play a significant role in addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

One way that planners are already utilizing AI is for so-called predictive modeling about the potential impacts of climate change on different regions and ecosystems to help identify areas that are most vulnerable and prioritize mitigation and adaptation efforts.

AI algorithms' ability to process decades of historical weather and climate data and crunch the numbers make it far superior at predicting the future than a few humans could ever be. (But at least we still need to be here to program the AI and interpret the results.)

Another way AI is already playing a role in reducing emissions is by helping optimize energy use and other systems in buildings, transportation systems and industrial processes.

EARTH TALK
Questions & Answers
About Our Environment

To wit, optimized manufacturing processes have led to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions at individual factories and other industrial facilities by as much as 40 percent.

Direct carbon emissions from the manufacturing sector account for almost one-quarter of all U.S. greenhouse gas output; finding ways to trim back emissions therein could mean significant reductions in our overall national carbon footprint.

The ability of AI software to continuously optimize industrial processes means that the companies that employ such technology can reap a whole host of benefits beyond greenhouse gas emissions reductions, including increased yields, reduced waste, faster design iteration and less energy consumption—all which result in lower costs and higher profits.

Meanwhile, AI is also in use to help industrial facilities still burning fossil fuels to monitor and optimize carbon capture and storage systems to make our dirtiest facilities do less damage.

AI is also optimizing our capture and storage of energy from renewable sources. Hydroelectric systems are using AI tools to optimize water levels according to seasonal needs and other factors.

Wind farms and solar arrays are employing AI systems to improve their efficiency and reliability which in turn makes them easier to scale as market demand dictates.

And yet another recent application of AI in the fight against climate change is monitoring and tracking deforestation by analysis of satellite imagery; this kind of climate surveillance can help detect and prevent illegal logging—and the loss of critical carbon sinks—in real time.

Conservation groups like Global Forest Watch, Conservation International and World Resources Institute have pioneered various uses of AI to analyze satellite and/or drone imagery to map and monitor forests "on the fly" so to speak.

While the climate crisis is more dire than ever these days, environmental advocates and others are keeping their fingers crossed that we can realize the potential power of AI to rein in emissions in time before things get outright cataclysmic.

New Hope Presbyterian Church

80 N. Garfield St., Coal City

HAM AND BEAN SOUP DINNER



Dine in or
Drive - up
815-634-8332

Saturday, March 11, 2023

Price: \$8.00
per dinner

4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Price: \$8.00
per dinner

- Pick up on East 1st Street -

Includes: soup, coleslaw, corn bread, beverage and dessert.

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Classified Word Ads
Mondays - noon

The Free Press Newspapers will be responsible for the first incorrect insertion, and its liabilities shall be limited to the price on one insertion. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to classify correctly, edit, reject or cancel any advertisement at any time in accordance with its policy. All ads must be checked for errors the first week of publication by the advertiser.

Phone (815) 476-7966 or (815) 634-0315 for details.

Cost

Line Ads are up to 30 words (20¢ for each word over 30)
1 wk.- \$15; 2 wks.- \$19;
3 wks.- \$22; 4 wks.- \$25
\$1.00 Extra per line for bold or caps on classified

The Braidwood Journal — The Coal City Courant — The Free Press Advocate

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Wilmington - 2 BR apartment, one car attached garage, central air. \$1,000/month. Call 618-383-6330. cc7b-10b

Wilmington - Apartment for rent, very nice, 2 bedroom. All new carpet. \$650 a month. 618-383-6330. cc7-12

AUTOS

1997IH 4900 truck with DT466 engine & Allison automatic transmission. Includes 11 foot Monroe snowplow. Also, available separately, SaltDogg SS Spinner Spreader. Call Bill at 815-325-9450. ch8-9

FARM EQUIPMENT

I am selling a 40' C-box (shipping container). The thing is completely tight with no leaks. It is in Minooka currently. So shipping should not be too expensive. I am asking \$2,500. Call 815-666-6426.

HELP WANTED

Coal City Area Club, hiring all positions. Gateguards, Lifeguards, Area Maintenance and Main Office Admin. \$15. LG Supervisors, \$16. Applications @ our website or main office. 285 S. Broadway Street. www.coalcityareaclub.net ch8-11

Now hiring, 2 positions available. Part-time office & sales assistant. Help with filing, computer work, answering phone, assisting customers and sales staff, Monday-Saturday.

Full-time forklift and yard attendant. Assist in trailer assembly, maintenance/repairs, yard organization, assisting sales with trailer customer hook up and prep. Please contact Ruth at Morris Trailer Sales, 815-941-2800 or email your resume to subeoat@msn.com. Vets welcome to apply. ch8-9

HELP WANTED

Office help needed at a local sportsmen's club. Seasonal part time hours. Experience with computers and knowledge of Excel and Access preferred. Please send inquiries to wcsc1946@gmail.com cc2-13

HOMES FOR RENT

House for rent: 3 bedroom, 2 bath, attached garage. Cottage Rd. on Kankakee River with boat launch. \$2,200/month. Call 708-205-4826.

LOST & FOUND

Have you found a lost pet or lost a pet in Will County? Please call Will County Animal Control. We may have your pet. We want to reunite your family, 815-462-5633. fr/tfn

SHOP YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES!

MISCELLANEOUS

Hall Rental - Available for parties, showers & meetings. Seats 100 people, full kitchen available. If interested call New Hope Presbyterian Church in Coal City, 815-634-8332. ch

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Godley - Small mobile home, recently remodeled, no pets, no smoking. \$700/month, 1st, last and security. One year lease required. 815-263-8597. cc8-11

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Source: Midwest Real Estate DataBase, (MLS) Single Family Detached Homes Sold in 2022 By Grundy County Offices.



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Storage units for rent. Long term rental only. Large enough for a car. Call 815-557-4010. ch7b-10b

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Entry-Level Police Officer Hiring Process



Wilmington Police Department, Wilmington, Illinois

The Wilmington, Illinois Board of Police Commission is accepting applications for the position of police officer with the Wilmington Police Department.

Starting Salary: \$61,530 - \$73,376
Population: 5,735
Sworn Police Officers: 22* (17 Full-Time and 5 Part-Time)
*Will add four (4) full-time within next 2 years.

The Wilmington Police Department is proud to announce that they are now certified by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs for the Police Officer on-the-job Training Program.

Please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthethejob_apprenticeship.asp

All applicants must meet the following minimum requirements established by the City of Wilmington:

- U.S. citizenship;
- No felony convictions;
- Possess a valid state-issued driver's license with good driving record;
- Must be a minimum of 21 years of age and UNDER 35 years of age at the time of application unless otherwise exempt by State Statute 65 ILCS 5/10-2.1-6;
- Possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. equivalent;
- Possess a valid NIPSTA card – **OR** - equivalent criteria as per the State standard, **issued within 12 months of the written exam date (April 15, 2023);**
 - POWER Test Cards issued by NIPSTA, Triton College or Joliet Junior College will be accepted.
 - Applicants must present the POWER Test card **NO LATER** than the written exam date **(April 15, 2023).**
- Any applicant who would like to schedule a ride along with a Wilmington police officer may contact Sergeant Dan Brimer at 815-476-2813.
- Successfully pass a written examination with a minimum passing score of 70% on each of the (4) sections;
- Successfully complete an oral interview with the Board of Police Commission;
- Successfully complete a background investigation, polygraph, and psychological testing;
- Successfully complete a medical physical, to include drug and alcohol screening;
- There is no application processing fee.
- Applications must be submitted prior to April 3, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

To apply for this position or obtain additional information, please visit the following website: <http://www.applytoserve.com>
The City of Wilmington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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2023 Desk Calendars ON SALE!

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COALER JUNIOR Jim Feeney drives the baseline on Saturday at Reed-Custer. He contributed 14 points during the 70-61 loss.



CHARGING TO THE BASKET during Saturday's playoff game at Reed-Custer is junior Owen Wren who scored 10 points.

Coalers' rally falls short against Comets

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

The Coalers needed a miracle Saturday while playing at Reed-Custer for the opening round of the regional. And they almost got it, coming back from a 15-point deficit to close within five before the Comets held on to win it 70-61.

"Survive and advance, it's that time of year," said Reed-Custer coach Mark Porter. "That's what you want to do and we were able to do that. We played extremely well offensively, especially in the second quarter. We attacked the basket how we wanted to and gave ourselves a nice lead."

The Comets crashed the boards for 31 offensive rebounds, turning many into points as they built a 15-10 first quarter lead.

Meanwhile, the Coalers stayed within striking distance thanks to senior Carson Shepard who hustled after the ball. He got a little too aggressive, picking up his fourth foul 6:26 into the second quarter and had to come out. That's when the Comets built their lead to 15.

But Shepard returned in the third and Coal City big man Carter Garrelts sank back-to-

back threes to close to within 43-38 with just over two minutes in the third.

"The plan wasn't to tie a knot at the end of a rope and then hang on. That was never the plan but it wound up being what almost happened. Give Coal City credit, they came out in the second half and started knocking down shots, started knocking down threes that they didn't knock down in the first half," Porter said.

Reed-Custer (24-6 overall) was just too tall underneath, grabbing 53 total rebounds, including 15 for senior Jake McPherson who finished with 15 points. Even more impressive Jace Christian who grabbed 11 rebounds and turned them into second-chance shots as he led with 28 points.

Lucas Foote also helped the Comets, scoring 13 points while pulling down five rebounds. Wes Shats had 11 rebounds to go along with nine points.

Collin Moore made a three-pointer, one of five for Reed-Custer, while Josh Bohac chipped in with two points.

"We just have to react a little bit better," Porter said. "We wound up getting hurt, regained our composure, knocked down free throws, and we've been able to do that

all year long. We're not the best free-throw shooting team in the world. But we've been able to knock down free throws when we need them."

For Coal City there was no head hanging as they played their hearts out until the end.

Four players finished in double figures including Garrelts with 16 points (three treys) and 13 rebounds. Shepard, who took the bench in foul trouble with only two points, returned to end up with 15. Feeney tallied a couple of treys to end up with 14 points while Owen Wren made two three-pointers to score 10 total points.

Coaler senior Chris Cholic came off the bench to make a pair of three-pointers to finish with six points. In all Coal City made 10 treys and shot an impressive 11-for-13 at the line.


It was the third time this season the Coalers lost to Reed-Custer and it was the closest. Their previous losses were 60-50 and 77-45. Coal City finishes its season with an 11-19 record.




JUMP SHOT—Coal City got supports from its bench on Saturday during the first round regional game at Reed-Custer as Zander Meents takes a shot.




UP THE MIDDLE—Coaler senior Carter Garrelts cuts to the basket at the top of the key on Saturday during the playoff game at Reed-Custer. Garrelts led Coal City in scoring with 16 points and 13 rebounds.



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Coalers the top pick for return to state

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

The outcome of Tuesday night's dual team sectional championship was unknown as of press time, but we're betting that the Coal City wrestling team won and will advance to state.

The Coalers were to face Chicago Hope Academy in the Wilmington sectional, a team that didn't advance anyone to the state individual tournament while Coal City had 14 qualifiers.

Hope Academy won their own regional with a 12-man roster, without wrestlers to fill in the 106 and 113 weight classes. The best wrestler on the roster is 132-pounder Sammy Saez with a 28-4 record. He is among six of the 12 wrestlers for Hope with a winning record. With the other half of the team with losing records, it's a surprise they won their Chicago regional by 40 team points.

While Coal City may not have crowned any state champions on Saturday in Champaign, as a team they are tough. They're ranked No. 1 in Class 1A with a 39-2 record, tied for best in school history.

The Coalers have made dual team state five

of the last seven times (none in 2021 due to Covid), placing second three times and third twice.

For Coach Mark Masters his best crack at winning state was in 2016 with a 31-3 team that lost the championship 31-30 to Dakota.

"I would say that we probably are better than that team was, top to bottom," Masters commented. "There's been other teams for us with the same star power but overall, this team probably has them beat. They go out there and they are just pinners. This group has really taken it to the next level."

Masters knows he's fortunate to have above average talent at every single weight class and there are a dozen more underclassmen who are eager to step in if needed.

"Everybody's pretty focus-driven. They all hang out together. Winning makes it easier to hang out and be good friends but we're talking freshmen through seniors hanging together. It's a great group of kids."

Masters noted that the freshmen come from the first group of kids that got started when the Little Coalers youth wrestling program started. And the seniors were in fourth grade, all having the right coaches at the right

time, at the right place.

"That is what has gotten our high school program to where it is right now. Making state five times since 2015 says a lot about the Coalers. You have to have talent, and we have some talented kids and some athletic kids, but the Little Coalers program gives them a huge jump on things."

Masters likes it that all his Coalers are multi-sport athletes.

"We don't have any specialization. All of our kids either played football or soccer. We've got a bunch of kids that are playing baseball. There's some guys who run track in the spring. I don't know how many three-sport athletes we have, but we have quite a few. This is just part of life for these guys, going from one sport to the next, to the next sport," Masters said.

But what makes this group stand out more than the rest?

"They spent a lot of time at it in the off-season. And when they get done with practice here, the majority of our kids go to the gym in town to get an extra workout. And they're doing it together, as a group. These guys are doing all the extra stuff to try to put themselves in the best position."

Masters knows that having 14 qualifiers for the individual state tournament makes them the team everybody wants to beat.

"It's the 'let's get after Coal City attitude'". When you have success you become a bigger target, we know that."

He notice that during the sectional held in Coal City.

"When we won, it was pretty loud. We're dealing with obviously a big following being at home and all. But when we lost, there was a lot of cheering going on too. So it's just one of those things...everybody wants to knock off the guys at the top."

Coaler confidence is running high for state dual team bid and let's hope they get the chance on Friday to make it to Bloomington. The tournament will be held in the Grossinger Motors Arena with six mats for 5 p.m. or 7 p.m. quarterfinals. Exact time was unknown depending on whether Coal City was in the top or lower bracket.

If they win on Friday they stay for Saturday when the semi-finals will be held at 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. depending on bracket placement. The championship and third place meets will be at 6 p.m. Saturday night.



Photo by Jeff Chumbley

STATE EFFORT—Coal City's Landin Benson wrestles on Friday during the state tournament at 152 pounds. He won in the wrestlebacks but did not place.



Photo by Jeff Chumbley

GETTING THE PIN—Coal City senior Michael Gonzalez pins his opponent on Friday during the state tournament wrestlebacks. He was one of 14 Coalers to qualify for the finals held in Champaign, IL.

Coaler wrestlers bring home some hardware

Six of 14 Coal City wrestlers who qualified for the state finals tournament came home with medals Saturday.

The Coalers entered a school record 14 qualifiers, hoping for couple of champions at best. But you never know how the brackets play out and, it seemed, it wasn't in Coal City's favor as they finished with one third place, two fourths, a sixth and two eighth place standings.

Placing third at 195 pounds was senior Joey Breneman (43-6). He pinned Macomb's Max Ryner (52-5) in 5:26 to win the bronze.

Breneman started the tourney with a 1:36 fall over Aiden Sancken (Gibson City, 35-6) He won his quarterfinal with a 9-6 decision before getting pinned in the semifinal by Nick Nosler (Tolono, 52-2) in 4:17. Breneman beat Sancken again in the wrestlebacks 7-5 to reach the third place match.

Brody Widlowski (39-3) placed 4th at 113 pounds after winning his prelim 6-2 and losing in the quarterfinal 10-3 to Clinton VerHeecke (Decatur-Lutheran, 48-2)

Widlowski won 3-2 in the cons. round two before going up against Wilmington's Landon Dooley (39-11) getting the fall in :38. In the semifinal he won 6-3 over Andrew Alvarado (Marian, 21-10) to reach the 3rd place match against Clinton VerHeecke (Decatur-Lutheran, 48-2) which he lost 7-4.

Also placing fourth for the Coalers was senior Braiden Young at 182.

Young (41-3) started with a 5-4 decision and 4:24 fall before suffering a 10-6 loss to Bryar Lane (PORTA, 51-4). In the cons. semi-final Young won 8-3 before getting pinned in the third place match by Kyle Jones (Byron, 42-9) in 3:08.



Photo by Jeff Chumbley

COAL CITY SENIOR senior Jack Poyner (36-14) won a 9-2 decision during the 160-pound state finals wrestlebacks on Friday.

Placing sixth for Coal City was senior Jake Piatak (132).

Piatak (9-4) won a 6-0 decision for starters. He then suffered a 17-2 tech fall before edging Reed-Custer's Sam Begler (11-5) 6-5.

In cons. round 3, Piatak recorded 1:22 fall. He lost the semifinal to Holden Brazelton (S.J.-Ogden, 49-3) 6-2, then in the 5th place match he was outscored 10-2 by Dillon Hinton (Vandalia, 46-7).

Coal City seniors Mataeo Blessing (43-5) and Derek Carlson (36-8) placed eighth.

Blessing (145) went 2-2, getting a 5:20 fall before losing a tie breaker 6-5. He recovered with a 6-4 decision but then lost by 1:09 pin to Augie Christiansen (Princeton, 50-6).

Carlson (170) also went 2-2 with a 5:07 pin, 12-4 loss and 4:54 pin before bowing out of the tourney with a 7-3 loss to Zane Pannell (Fulton, 52-2).

Other Coal City qualifiers who did not place were:

106—Sophomore Culan Lindemuth (39-11) who went 1-2, losing twice by fall and winning a 6-4 decision.

120—Freshman Aidan Kenney (30-16) won by 3:43 fall, lost by 2:58 fall and lost a 5-4 decision.

126—Freshman Brock Finch (35-16) was shutout 10-0 and lost 6-2.

138—Junior Brant Widlowski (22-3) won 12-0 major decision, lost 5-0 and lost 8-3.

152—Sophomore Landin Benson (23-7) lost 8-7, won with a 4:22 fall and lost 12-1.

160—Senior Jack Poyner (36-14) was pinned in 2:57, then won a 9-2 decision before falling 3-2 in the end.

220—Senior Drake Dearth (38-10) suffered a 2:32 fall, won by fall, then lost 1-0 in the end.

285—Senior Michael Gonzalez (28-9) lost by fall 5:57, won by fall 3:46, then lost by sudden victory 4-2.

It probable the Coalers will be back at state on Friday as a team. They had to win Tuesday's Dual Sectional at Wilmington to advance. If they did they wrestle at the Grossinger Auto Arena in Bloomington, IL starting Friday night.



Photo by Jeff Chumbley

WINNING A 6-4 DECISION at 106 pounds during the state tournament on Friday is Coal City sophomore Culan Lindemuth.



Photo by Jeff Chumbley

STATE QUALIFIER Brock Finch (left) battles at 126 pounds on Friday during the wrestlebacks. He made it to state his freshman season but did not place.

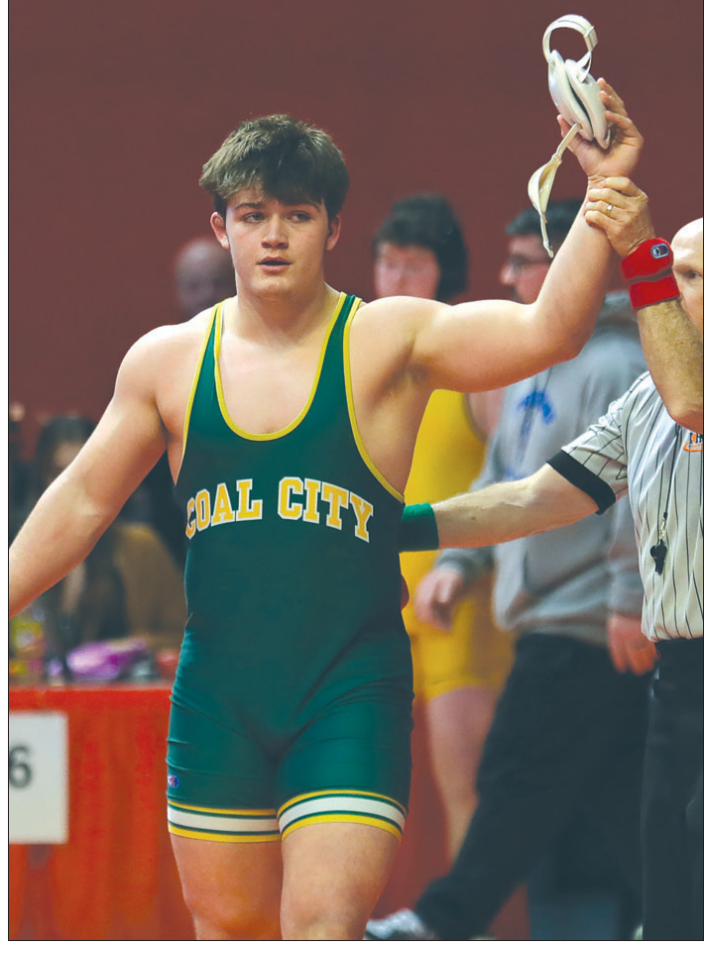


Photo by Jeff Chumbley

DRAKE DEARTH, a Coal City senior, gets a victory handshake at 220.