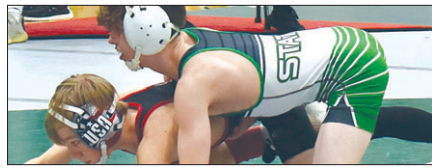


COALER SPORTS
15 headed to IESA State



\$1.00
Vol. 122, Issue 10
1 section • 14 pages
Not over 75% advertising
www.coalcitycourant.com



A Veteran Committed to Community Service

DAVID SPESIA
For Coal City Mayor

Coal City Village Trustee - 2018 To Present
Streets & Alleys Committee Chairman
Broadway Reconstruction Project Completed
Reed Road Reconstruction Project Completed
Alley Paving Construction Projects Restarted
New Waste Hauler Contractor In 2020
(Weekly Recycling & Yard Waste Tote Pickup)

United States Marine Corps (4 Years)
Honorable Discharge As Corporal
Overseas Service In Okinawa, Japan
Fastrak Construction Management
Small Business Owner for 23 Years
Family Roots Planted In Coal City Area In 1890
Married To Lisa With Four Children
Jessica, Megan, Zachary, Abbey & Five Grandchildren

Endorsed By The Will & Grundy Counties Building Trades Council

Paid for by friends of David Spesia

COAL CITY COURANT

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 634-0315



Photo by Ann Gill

THE ESCAPE—On a train heading out of Russia, Anya [Elaina Patten] and her counterparts Vlad [Stephen Byers, Jr.] and Dmitry [Derek Carlson] find themselves in need of a quick escape. The scene plays out in the Coal City Theatre Department's production of "Anastasia." The musical opens this Friday for a two weekend run. Shows are March 10-12 and March 17-19 in the Coal City Performing Arts Center.

Another perfect score for Unit 1

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The Illinois State Board of Education has given the Unit 1 School District another perfect score for its outstanding financial position.

The 2023 School District Financial Profile, based on fiscal year 2022 data, places the district within the financial recognition range for a 20th consecutive year. This is the highest rating a district can receive.

This measure of financial strength goes to school districts that receive an overall score of 3.54 to 4.0 and Unit 1 is at the top of that range.

Superintendent Chris Spencer pointed out the work of Jason Smith, the district's chief school business official, and his team for the work they do to ensure the district's finances are in order.

The overall score achieved by the district is calculated on five indicators—fund balance to revenue ratio, expenditure to revenue ratio, days cash on hand, percentage of short-term borrowing ability remaining and percentage of long-term debt.

Fund balance to revenue reflects the overall financial strength of the district where the expenditure-to-revenue ratio identifies how much is expended for each dollar received. Days

SEE FINANCES, PAGE 2

A new school year set for Coal City

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The Unit 1 Board of Education is already preparing for a new school year and has approved the calendar for the 2023-2024. The first day of student attendance will be Wednesday, Aug. 16.

The calendar is based on 176 instructional days with the final day of student attendance scheduled for Wednesday, May 22, 2024 pending the use of emergency days. Should the district need to use emergency days it could push the school year to the end of May.

Superintendent Chris Spencer said the calendar was built with input from the district's faculty union and building level administrators, along with guidance from the Grundy Area Vocational Center. [GAVC].

The district consults with the vocational center to insure students enrolled there will not miss class time.

The calendar committee consisted of at least one representative from each school building who met four times to work out the attendance plan for the coming year.

Spencer said the calendar is aligned to other districts within the county including early dismissal staff development days.

"Having the same schedule really benefits us so students are not missing any instruction," the superintendent said.

The calendar approved by the Board of Education at its March 1 meeting outlines parent teacher conference days, school holidays and extended breaks.

Winter break is scheduled to begin with an early dismissal on Friday, Dec. 22 with students returning to class on Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024. Teachers will return one day earlier for an institute day.

The 2024 spring holiday will coincide with Easter. The break will run from Monday, March 25 to April 1 with everyone back in their school buildings on Tuesday, April 2.

Students and staff will have Thanksgiving Day off, as well as the day before and day after the holiday.

Additional school holidays will be Labor Day, Sept. 4; Columbus Day, Oct. 9; Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday, Jan. 15; Presidents Day, Feb. 19;

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 2



On a journey

Coal City Theatre Department to present "Anastasia"

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

In 1917, the reigning imperial house of Russia went down, the Tsar and his family killed by the Bolsheviks, but did they all die?

A decade earlier the Dowager Empress Marina Feodorovna bids farewell to her son the Tsar and his family as she departs for a new life in France. Upon her departure she gifts a music box to her youngest and favorite grand-daughter, Anastasia Nikolaevna Romanov. The two promised to meet in Paris one day where they would walk together across the Le Pont Alexandre—a bridge named for the young girl's grandfather.

The two would not see each other again. The Bolsheviks invade the palace and as the family attempts to escape, Anastasia runs back for the music box but did she survive?

Rumors around St. Petersburg proclaim that one daughter may still be alive.

The story of Anastasia Romanov, or should we say the woman who claims to be royal, will be told by an all student cast in Coal City Theatre Department's production of "Anastasia."

The musical, on stage in the Coal



Photo by Ann Gill

THE ROMANOV FAMILY and guests gather for a ball, unknowing what is about to come. The "Anastasia" cast members are [from left] Kilen Davidson, Chris Collins, Amelia Fritz, Elaina Patten, Mason Natyshok, Sammy Thackeray, Jared Counterman, Jack Steinhouse and Logan Hausman.

City Performing Arts Center, features music and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, based on a book by Terrance McNally. The stage production inspired by the animated film of same

name. To further set the story for audiences, rumors of Anastasia's survival begin to swirl among the people of St. SEE MUSICAL, PAGE 2

BERKOT'S SUPER FOODS

SALE VALID 3/8-3/14/23

WILMINGTON 815-476-6272
COAL CITY 815-634-4224
BRAIDWOOD 815-458-2114

CHECK OUT OUR WEEKLY AD AT BERKOTFOODS.COM

7 Up Family Soda- 2 L

99¢ EACH

Berkot's Homemade Corned Beef Brats- **WOW!**

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE!

Guinness, Harp, or Smithwicks- 12 pk 12 oz btls

\$14.99 EACH

TEXT GROCERIES to 24272 & follow instructions!

Save \$10 when buying \$10.01 of Groceries and (1) 12 pk with Digital Rebate



Photo by Ann Gill

THE COUNTESS AND THE COMMON MAN—Upon his arrival in Paris, Vlad [Stephen Byers, Jr.] reconnects with his former love, Countess Lily [Izzy Kostbade]. See the two tango in Coal City Theatre Department's production of *Anastasia*.

Musical

Petersburg, a town that has since become Leningrad now that the Bolsheviks have control.

Overhearing the rumors of the possible survival of the Princess Anastasia and her grandmother's willingness to pay a reward for her safe return, two con men—Dmitry and Vlad Popov—set out to find a girl to become Anastasia in order to cash in.

Several options come their way, but it isn't until they meet Anya—a street sweeper who has little memory of her past who comes to them for exit papers to secure her departure from Russia—that they find their girl.

Unclear of who she is to meet, Anya is on a journey to her past knowing someone is awaiting her in Paris.

In this strange meeting, Dmitry, played by Derek Carlson, and Vlad, a role taken on by Stephen Byers, find Anya, played by Elaina Patten, is the perfect girl to pass off as the Grand Duchess Anastasia.

Having been earlier dismissed by the con men, three women report the plot to Gleb Vaganov, a general for the Bolsheviks.

Gleb, a role played by Collin Dames, has Anya taken into custody and brought in to his office where he warns her of what will happen if they continue with the ruse.

As Dmitry and Vlad groom their Anastasia, Anya appears to have some memories of the past and her demeanor points to an aristocratic life. She is even recognized by others as the woman she is claiming to be.

A gem found sewn into the hem of Anya's dress when she was first discovered provides the trio a means to secure the papers needed to exit their homeland as the borders continue to close.

Having successfully made it to Paris—although the journey is not easy—the time to connect with the Dowager has come and Vlad turns to an old love—Countess Lily Malevsky-Malevitch—for help in setting up the meeting.

It's also revealed, Gleb has followed Anya to France—does he know who she really is?

Or is Anya the grand-daughter the Dowager has sought to find? Those who attend the musical will find out.

Anastasia will take audience members from the opulence of the Russian Empire to the joyfulness of 1920s Paris.

This historic tale comes to life in the professional quality that Coal City Theatre Department audiences have come to know from producer/director Jack Micetich.

Although the principal roles are limited to a few, the musical provides for an extended and notable ensemble of 25-plus students ranging from freshman to senior, with an appearance by middle schooler Jack Steinhouse in the role of Alexei Romanov.

Patten said she is thrilled to be in this production in the title role of *Anastasia*.

A junior at Coal City High School, Patten has been performing in school and community productions since intermediate school.

A majority of Patten's stage time finds her alongside Carlson, a senior, who was most recently seen in the Illinois Theater Association's All-State Production of *Shrek, The Musical*.

Carlson is also thrilled to be performing and sharing this story with audiences. He's exceptionally excited to once again be performing with a live orchestra.

It's been two years since the spring production featured live music and this year the cast is accompanied by a 32-piece orchestra.

Astonished, is the word Byers uses to describe what audiences will feel when they see this year's musical.

Like his stage partners, Byers, a junior, has appeared in multiple productions. He was also in the All-State Production this year and has performed in several community shows also.

In this show, his on stage romance is with Countess Lily, played by senior Izzy Kostbade.

No stranger to the stage, Kostbade is a long

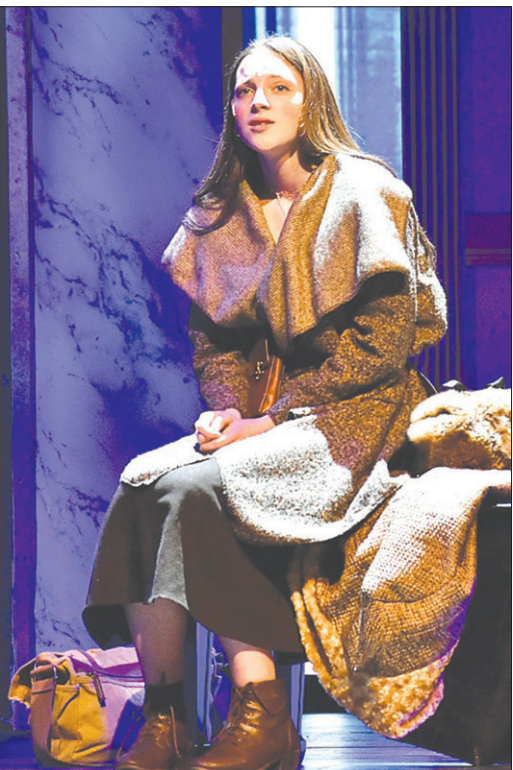


Photo by Ann Gill

ELAINA PATTEN AS Anya in Coal City Theatre Department's production of *Anastasia*.

time member of the theatre department and showcased her acting skills in community productions also.

This being her final show is a bit, "bittersweet," she said, acknowledging her director, vocal director and choreographer for their time and investment in helping her develop her skills over the years.

The show is comprised of six principal roles and one of those is covered by Dames, who joined the theatre department as an actor his sophomore year. The prior year he was a member of the orchestra.

A senior, he said he is happy to be given the opportunity to perform with such an amazing cast and work with equally amazing crew members, pit musicians and production team.

Melody Kinder, a sophomore, is the sixth member of the group and reports she ecstatic to be performing this spring as she takes on the role of Dowager.

They are supported by cast members Mason Natyshok, Tsar Nicholas II; Sammy Thackeray, Tsarina Alexandra; Jared Counterman, Count Ipolitov and Count Leopold; Kat Huston, Young Anastasia; Kayla Connelly, Paulina; Chesterine Kuhel, Marfia; Adaline Dowling, Dnya and Logan Hawkins, Gorlinsky.

The dance ensemble is comprised of Bella Byers, Chris Collins, Kilen Davidson, Amelia Fritz, Logan Hausman, Ethan Scrogam, Evelyn Wills and Jordan Olson.

And, no show is complete without the multi-talented ensemble and this show's group is comprised of Jacob Nadess, Elsa Bunton, Eliana Chernesky, Dakota Clubb, Madison Wilson, Mason Hamilton, Austin Harding, Jullian Micetich, Dane Noffsinger, Olivia Sage and Gianna Savarino.

Anastasia with its stunning costumes, scenic and lighting design, perfectly crafted choreography, beautiful vocals and instrumentals, stellar acting and special effects is one not to be missed.

The show opens Friday, March 10 at 7 p.m. with additional shows on March 11, 17 and 18 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 12 and 19 at 2 p.m., in the Coal City Performing Arts Center.

Reserve seat tickets available at bit.ly/CCTDTickets—\$5 student and senior citizen and \$8 adult. Remaining seats can be purchased at the door beginning one hour prior to show time, cash only at the door.

Audience members are encouraged to arrive and be seated 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of show.

Driver busted for drugs, stolen Lottery tickets

A California man traveling on Interstate 55 was arrested by Grundy County's ProActive Unit for possession of a controlled substance and possession of stolen property, and he faces charges of arson and burglary in Missouri.

Grundy County Sheriff Ken Briley announced the Feb. 28 arrest of Shawn Stankewitz, 38, of Arroyo Grande, CA following a traffic stop on Interstate 55 near the 225 mile marker—just south of Gardner.

The Grundy County Sheriff's ProActive Unit made a stop on a northbound Dodge pickup truck that was straddling the fog line for approximately one half mile and bore Utah license plates that were registered to a different vehicle.

According to the sheriff, members of the ProActive Unit spoke with Stankewitz, who advised he was trying to get to the Normal, IL area, yet he was 60 miles north of the intended area.

During the interaction with Stankewitz, they observed a glass smoking pipe and butane torch which are commonly used to ingest methamphetamine. A K-9 was requested to the stop and once on scene the Grundy County K-9 alerted to the presence of drugs inside the vehicle.

During a search of the pickup truck, deputies located eight dosage units of Suboxone, a controlled substance. Stankewitz did not possess a prescription for the Suboxone.

During a search of the vehicle deputies recovered 416 Missouri Lottery scratch off tickets, the drugs, the smoking pipe and 37 Nevada license plates.

Deputies contacted the



Courtesy photo

A TRAFFIC STOP by Grundy County's ProActive Unit, assisted by one of its canine officers, resulted in the arrest of a 38-year-old California man for possession of a controlled substance and stolen property. Police said the man was on parole in California and is accused of burglary, theft and arson in Missouri.

Missouri Lottery security office to inquire about the lottery tickets. They learned the tickets were recently stolen from a gas station in Taylor, MO. They followed up with the Marion County, MO Sheriff's Department who told them at approximately 1:15 a.m. the same day, the gas station has been burglarized and set on fire.

A Marion County detective provided Grundy County deputies a description from surveillance footage of the offender and it matched Stankewitz, down to the exact clothes he was wearing when he was stopped.

Stankewitz was booked into the Grundy County Jail and is being held on a \$100,000 bond. Arrest warrants for arson, burglary and theft were obtained in Missouri, and his bond on those charges was set at \$100,000.

Briley reports the deputies also followed up with the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles to determine if the license plates—in sequential order—were stolen. That investigation continues.

The ProActive Unit also learned that Stankewitz was on parole in California and a no-bond arrest warrant was issued for a parole violation.

Students of the Week

COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for March 8 are: Daisy Bell (left) and Kahler Popovich.

Courtesy photo

Two killed in Custer Township crash

STAFF REPORT

An accident on Tuesday morning in Custer Township along Route 113 left two people dead.

The accident happened around 5:10 a.m. on March 7. Braidwood and Custer Fire Protection Districts were called to the scene at Route 113 and Irish lane, north of Warner Bridge Road, for a report of a head on collision between a pickup truck and a car.

According to reports, two occupants of one

of the vehicles were pronounced dead at the scene, while an occupant of the other vehicle was transported to the hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

Route 113 was closed for several hours while police investigated the incident and cleared the scene.

The roadway re-opened by 10:30 a.m.

As of press time, further details on the incident and the names of the deceased had not been released.

Finances

cash on hand looks at the estimated number of days a district could meet operating expenditure provided no additional revenues were

receive and when figuring short term debt ability the state utilized a formula that take several factors into consideration including EAV and tax rates.

"Our district is in a good financial state and it's good to get a perfect score," Spencer said.

Calendar

Casimir Pulaski Day, March 4 and May 27, Memorial Day.

Parent teacher conference dates for the fall are Oct. 19 and 20 and the spring conference is set for Feb. 24, 2024.

The calendar further denotes seven early dismissal days for staff development. Those are held on Wednesdays with the first set for Sept. 13 followed by Oct. 11, Dec. 13, Feb. 14, March 13, April 10 and May 8.

Five emergency days are

built in at the end of the school year. Should all five days be needed it would put the last day of school at May 31.

There are 88 student attendance days scheduled during each of the two semesters.



Photo by Ann Gill

ON THE STREETS of St. Petersburg, the new Leningrad, Gleb Vaganov, a general for the Bolsheviks, makes his first encounter with Anya. Does he know who she really is? Gleb is played by Coal City High School senior Collin Dames and in the role of Anya is junior Elaina Patten. *Anastasia* opens Friday in the Coal City Performing Arts Center.

Award Winner

ILLINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION

Serving newspapers since 1865

The Coal City Courant

USPS No. 120-060

Published weekly, 52 times a year, on Wednesdays by G-W COMMUNICATIONS, INC., 271 S. Broadway St. Coal City, IL 60416

Periodicals postage paid at Coal City, Illinois

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

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

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

Advertising and Business Offices:

- 111 South Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481 (815) 476-7966; Fax: (815) 476-7002
- 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 Courant

Display Advertising: Friday, noon

News and Classified Advertising: Monday, noon

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

Ads & Artwork: graphics@fpnusa.com

©2023 All news, photographs and advertising material used in this publication are the property of G-W Communications, Inc. Use of the material without the consent of G-W Communications, Inc. is strictly prohibited. Violators of this property right are subject to legal action.

Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Ann Gill, editor



Courtesy photo

COAL CITY HIGH School students [from left] Mia Ratajczak and Rachel Hall earned top honors in their respective categories during the annual Educators Rising Conference held Monday, March 6 at Illinois State University. The students are members of the Aspiring Coal City Educators organization at Coal City High School.

Future educators earn top honors

STAFF REPORT

On a day when most students were enjoying a school holiday, a group of future teachers spent the day focusing on education.

The 2023 Educators Rising Conference drew over 800 aspiring future educators to Illinois State University on Monday.

The one-day conference included a keynote address from Illinois' 2022 Teacher of the Year, breakout sessions, networking and competitions—Coal City winning half of the events.

Mia Ratajczak, who plans to enter the field of special education, competed in and won top honors in Educators Rising Moment. Her presentation included a brief speech describing why she wants to become a teacher.

"Mia shared her wonderful experience working with special needs students as part of our PALS program," said Ben Baer, advisor of the Aspiring Coal City Educators

organization.

Rachel Hall competed in Children's Literature K-3 and took top honors.

"For this competition she wrote, illustrated and produced a children's book and read the book for judges," Baer said.

Hall's story "Seasons Change," is about teaching children to be resilient and patient.

A third member of the organization, Mariana Hren, also competed in the Educators Rising Moment, and in the words of her advisor, "did a fantastic job."

The Aspiring Coal City Educators organization was established at the start of the school year and is open to all students—freshmen through seniors—who have expressed an interest in teaching.

Educators Rising, a career and technical student organization focused on teacher preparation programs, is the state and national organization from which local chapters are affiliated.



IT WAS A night of introductions as the Unit 1 Board of Education recognized the state champion Coaler wrestling team and state speech qualifiers on March 1. The first introduction of the night was Arthur Stafford [row two gray suit] as the new principal of Coal City High School. He will assume the duties on July 1.

Stafford introduced to Coaler community

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The cafeteria of Coal City High School was packed with Coalers—students, parents and community members—who came out to celebrate the success of the wrestling and speech teams.

So if there was good time to introduce the community to the incoming high school principal, Wednesday was the night.

Arthur Stafford was hired in February to assume the principal's post starting with the 2023-2024 school year. He will take over for Jennifer Kenney who is moving into the role of director of curriculum and instruction upon the retirement of Tammy Elledge at the end of June.

Stafford, dressed in a gray suit, stood out in the crowd of green and white. The 20-year educator was given a round of applause by those in attendance.

Stafford told Board of Education members and the crowd he views this new position as one for the "long term."

Stafford's entire career in education has been with Plainfield District 202. He started as a social studies teacher and coach. He was been at Plainfield North for the past 15 years, the last eight as assistant principal for student services. He's also served that district as a social studies department chair and division chair for social studies and English.

"I feel very prepared for this opportunity," Stafford said, noting that everyone he met in Coal City has been welcoming.

"I'm looking forward to being here, meeting everyone and getting to know a little bit more about the school and what I know at this point is great. I feel this is a good fit for me...I feel very comfortable with this move," Stafford said.

Board president Ken P. Miller welcomed the new administrator, saying that the Board is looking forward to working with him.

A resident of the Minooka area, Stafford and his wife are the parents of four children. Their oldest is a first year student at Joliet Junior College. They have two enrolled at Minooka High School and their youngest attends Minooka Intermediate School.

Facility improvements moving forward

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

Survey crews were on the Coal City Middle School campus last week, part of the school district's plan to alleviate traffic congestion and improve parking surfaces.

The district's facility improvement plan has outlined parking lot improvements at the various school buildings, as well as the construction of an access road just south of the district administration center to improve traffic flow at the middle school.

The plan includes a new parking lot to the southeast of the school building to provide additional parking for indoor and outdoor events.

"All of this depends on what the numbers come in as," Superintendent Chris Spencer said.

The survey work is the start of the process. "We are excited to see the [survey] trucks in the parking lots," the superintendent said.

Additionally, a list of equipment is being developed for planned upgrades to the high school weight/fitness room.

The improvements call for new work-out equipment, new flooring, electrical

upgrades and opening up the area into one large space, so the district is getting cost estimates together on demolishing the block wall that separates the two spaces.

"There's a lot of stuff going on and this summer could be a busy time for our district," Spencer said.

In other matters from the March 1 meeting:

- The Board accepted the resignations of high school Spanish teacher David Gutierrez effective at the close of the school year, middle school counselor Lauren Kempes as of June 30, high school science teacher Melissa Backus effective March 1, and cafeteria server Michelle Banas who left the district in February.

- The employment of Kara Claypool as a part-time speech pathologist and Hayleigh Roach as a part-time one on one aide at the early childhood center were approved.

- Extra curricular resignations were accepted from Joshua Loomis, fresh/soph baseball coach and Jackie Larson, Web Leader coordinator at the middle school.

- Greg Wills was named the fresh/soph baseball coach and Emily Halliday was approved as an assistant

track coach at the high school.

- As it does each year, the Board authorized support staff reductions in force. These positions are all full-time one-on-one special education aides. The positions are determined annually based on student need.

- Honorable dismissals were made for the district's permanent substitute and substitute teachers.

- An anonymous donation of \$3,000 was accepted for the theatre department.

- A \$150 donation was accepted for the elementary school lunch program.

- A student teaching agreement with Campellsville University was approved.

- The Board approved a memorandum of understanding with Childcare Resource and Referral in Joliet. The agency provides resources for low income families with young children such as day-care assistance, education and supplies. The agreement allows the school and agency to work together to provide assistance for local families in need.

The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 16 at the district administration center. A study session is slated for March 29 at 6 p.m.

Unit 1 Student of the Week



Courtesy photos

COAL CITY ELEMENTARY School Students of the Week for March 1 in row one are (from left): Tristan Johnston, Kendall Perino, Addie Bitner and Kaylee Veronda. Completing the group in row two are: Janelle Price, Serenity Steadman, Reese Brown, Gray Wetenkamp, Jaxon Marquez, Jayden Echevarria and Evelyn Chambers.



Courtesy photo

COAL CITY EARLY Childhood Center Students of the Week for March 8 in row one (from left) are: Jacob Thill, Jax Poeschel, Brody Buzzard, Drake Wysocki, is in row two with Kennedy Wix, Jonathan Kerr, Savannah Zamora, Erik Tonnessen and Brynlee Krueger.

Wickiser earns dean's list honors at Baylor

Skyler Wickiser, a 2021 graduate of Coal City High School, has earned dean's list honors during the fall academic semester at Baylor University in Texas.

Students named to the university's dean's academic honor list have achieved a 3.70 grade point average or higher in their classes during a semester.

Wickiser, the daughter of Denny and Kristi Wickiser, is enrolled in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Kostbade named to dean's list

Aidan Kostbade, a 2022 graduate of Coal City High School, has made the dean's list for fall 2022 at Millikin University.

Students who attempt 12 graded credits during a fall or spring semester and earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher earn dean's list honors.

Kostbade is the son of Michael and Amy Kostbade, of Coal City.

UNFORGETTABLE

freepressnewspapers.com

Coal City zoning map available for inspection

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to all persons in the Village of Coal City that the Official Village of Coal City Zoning Map illustrating existing zoning districts, regulations and classifications of the Village of Coal City in effect on and prior to February 8, 2023 is available for public inspection at the Village Hall, 515 S. Broadway, Coal City, Illinois. This notice is provided in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 65 ILCS 5/11-13-19 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes. Pamela M. Noffsinger Village Clerk

Published in the Coal City Courier on March 8, 2023.

Students named to dean's list

Blackburn College has announced its dean's list for the fall 2022 semester. Students named to the dean's list must earn a grade point average of 3.6 or higher for the semester.

Local students named are Lexi Snow, of Coal City and Logan Ullrich, of Diamond.

NOTICE

PUBLIC TEST OF AUTOMATIC TABULATING EQUIPMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Public Test of the Verity Scan, in-precinct tabulating equipment and program to be used at the April 4, 2023 Consolidated Election, will be conducted in the office of the Grundy County Clerk, Room 12, Courthouse, Morris, Illinois at 1:00 p.m., on Thursday, March 9, 2023. As prescribed by the Election Code, this test is open to representatives of the political parties, the press, representatives of the State Board of Elections and the public.

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

Dated this 8th day of March, 2023.

KAY T. OLSON
Grundy County Clerk

PUBLIC NOTICE

EARLY VOTING SITE – GRUNDY COUNTY COURTHOUSE CONSOLIDATED ELECTION – APRIL 4, 2023

Early Voting will begin on Friday, March 10th and continue through Monday, April 3, 2023.

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

TIME – Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (unless noted below)

Saturday	March 11th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 14th	8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 16th	8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 18th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 21st	8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 23rd	8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	March 25th	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Tuesday	March 28th	8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Thursday	March 30th	8:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	April 1st	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Sunday	April 2nd	8:00 a.m. to Noon

Please call the Grundy County Clerk's Office at (815) 941-3222, Option #1 if you have any questions.

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

KAY T. OLSON
GRUNDY COUNTY ELECTION AUTHORITY

Free Press Newspapers readers

SOUND-OFF

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

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

The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel. In cases where the publisher selects not to pub-

lish these remarks the newspaper makes every effort to forward unpublished comments to the parties to whom they are directed.

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

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

Some Braidwood history

BRAIDWOOD—There was a question in the Braidwood Journal about the history of Rossi Field in Braidwood. Italian immigrants in the 1900's by the name of Stephen Rossi and family settled in Braidwood on the corner of Mitchell at the time and owned that entire section. A two story building stood where Casey's blacktop stands today. The family lived in the upstairs section and ran a store below on the ground level selling hardware, etc. Sons John and Peter Rossi built a gas station, restaurant and motel. Lucenta bought the gas station, vacant today yet still standing. Weitz ran the restaurant, then Raymond and Evelyn Barnett ran the restaurant, which became a laundromat which was torn down recently. Rossi's Motel owned by various owners still stands. In the 1930's and 40's Rossi Field was always full of young children playing baseball and football. When carnivals came to town they used Rossi Field in the 30's and 40's. Visit Braidwood Historical Society. It has many history lessons about the town years ago.

Being left out

COAL CITY—Sorry to hear how Coal City Area Club Board decided to raise senior dues \$100 more and regular members less than half that amount. That is unfair. The seniors over 70 go out for a walk, take a ride around to look at the water or watch grandchildren. What is worse was when the board admitted no more seniors allowed to join. Sounds like discrimination. Why would they choose to do this? Plain and simple with food, gas, water, clothes, medicine etc. going up so high they are hoping they will exit. Some have already. They want more of a party club. I hope you same people are not made to feel not wanted the way you made those seniors feel. If it weren't for the seniors you would not have had that club. I felt a need to say you should have thought this out much better. Talked to several of your members, even younger ones, they also said should of been more thoughtful toward seniors.

College a priority

BRAIDWOOD—Stay in school. I attended the meet the candidates event at Main Street Banquet Hall on Wednesday, March 1. The conversation and venue were good, and the candor displayed was impressive. All of the candidates were very good. Our City will be well served. I wanted to comment on one of the school board candidate's remarks concerning the value of a college education. In essence, the gentleman suggested that students should pursue a trade first, college education second path. He referred to an individual with a degree who had to settle for a job at Walmart. The implication was that a college education is a poor choice and a bad investment. To the extent the gentleman was suggesting that our students should be steered away from college, I disagree. All of us know the master's degree type who had to initially start off at an entry level, perhaps low paying job. But the vast majority of educated individuals find their way and do just fine. College educated people earn substantially more over their lifetimes than those with only a high school diploma. They live longer, and they are happier. There is no substitute for the analytical and critical thinking skills that college provides. And the social relationships that are made available in school enhance the quality of life for life. Major does not matter. All of them have potential value. There is no doubt that colleges and universities have irresponsibly inflated education costs over the past 40 years or so. It is also true that college is not for everyone. And I am certainly not putting down the trades. Many of the finest people I know are having or had great careers in them. But in my view, the best path is college first. It is still a good investment for those who decide to go. Jobs not requiring a degree will always be available to college educated individuals, and those having a degree are in a better position to have their choice of them. College offers immeasurable opportunities for those who decide to go. Let's not suggest that a choice not to go is a better one. It isn't. Michael F. Tomasek

Know before you vote

BRAIDWOOD— I attended meet the candidates tonight. I left with a lot of questions answered. The candidates who didn't show up are tied together, most of them prior city administration. There are many reasons why

they are previous administration. If they get in, this city and its reputation will go backwards. One candidate for mayor made it clear he is not bringing back Chief Lyons and Altiery as City Administrator. If you want a Police Department that cares about the community, and a city that is moving forward with a council that works together vote for Doug Money. Educate yourself on the issues and the candidates' motives for running before you cast your vote.

Please explain

COAL CITY—More on Coal City Area Club. In answer to, Get Out And Vote, the person sitting at the board table was given the title of Operations Manager by the current board. I have no idea why after over 50 years of this club being in existence we need this position. Perhaps a little more information from the board would clarify their position.

What's the point?

WILMINGTON—What is the point of praying if God will not answer the prayers of children being raped by clergy?

Best of luck

WILMINGTON—I would like to wish Steve and Tina Nelson the best of luck in the relocating of Nelly's and the brewery. I hope that this decision proves to be very successful for them. I would like to make one suggestion. I would suggest putting one of those signs outside the brewery saying Nelly's is located inside the brewery. That would save people time walking to the opposite end of the building thinking that Nelly's is still down there. It's just a suggestion from someone living in town. I hope everyone has an amazing summer and that all the restaurants, bars and merchants will prosper and make a lot of money with all the events we have in the summer. The Red Carpet Corridor, The fireworks show, Catfish Days and The Rotary car show. I also hope a lot of amazing movies coming up that The Mar can show, especially the one that was filmed in town which comes out in April. As far as I'm concerned when it comes to popcorn The Mar has the best popcorn of any movie theater I have ever been in. So I hope everyone has a great summer and that everyone in town will be very busy and make a lot of money. Sheri Michaels.

Bad things happen

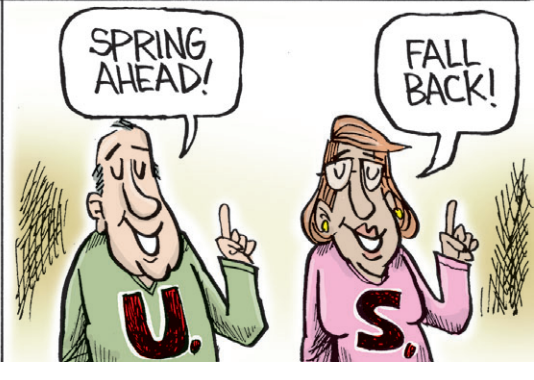
WILMINGTON—I too am a proud Democrat with a question for Sharon. If your God is good and in charge then why are all the bad things you listed happening?

No to annexation

BRAIDWOOD—I guess hundreds of trucks through town and more gambling, liquor and tobacco wasn't enough to ruin our little town. Now it's cannabis too. No joke folks. At a June 2022 city council meeting a group spoke of wanting to grow and sell marijuana. So far the proposed site is on Route 53 near Coal City Road which is just close enough to possibly be annexed into Braidwood. According to their presentation, thousands of people from all over the country will come to Braidwood just to buy and smoke cannabis on site. Of course they don't refer to it as a dope den. Rather it will be a "spa" where users can come to relax; relax being another name for getting high. While there are drugs that have legitimate medicinal uses, medicine is not what this proposal is about. Since I hadn't heard anything about it since then, I thought the issue might be dead. But last month the city administrator appeared at a Braidwood Recreation Club meeting in an attempt to annex the Club's property. By annexing the recreation club, the city limits would extend farther east and the "spa" would become contiguous, thereby allowing it to become part of Braidwood. As a life-long recreation club member, I don't want the city officials dictating how the club is run nor do I want drugs next door to where I take my family and young children. I am so thankful that the club board voted unanimously to reject annexation. They deserve to be commended for their wise decision.

Rossi Field

BRAIDWOOD—In last week's Braidwood Journal someone didn't know the history behind the name of Rossi Field in Braidwood. Peter Rossi and his family members owned that field and a home that sat where Casey's is today. They also owned the Macaroni Factory located in the area of the Golden Mine



Restaurant and Rossi Hotel on Rt. 129 that still stands today. As for the high school holding any practices on the field, never ever saw that.

Best selling book

COAL CITY—The "Truth be told" article in the March 1, 2023 article by retired teacher Sharon was "brutally honest." Yes, we do believe eight out of 10 Americans still believe in God and His word for hundreds and hundreds of years. The Bible does continue to be the world's best selling book of all time. It's refreshing to be reminded during Lent. Good versus evil.

A classic example

COAL CITY—In the March 1 Soundoff column an 80 year old retired teacher wants the whole world to know he or she is a "Proud Democrat" and listed all that the good Democrat presidents plus Governor Pritzker have done for all of us. Your article was a classic example of why we have such a divided nation. Plus we found after you claim you're an excellent writer to be rather smart-alecky in judging others. Why are millions of children in the USA today being home-schooled?

10,000 and counting

WILMINGTON—This is in response to "Pants on fire. I, too, remember when "liar, liar, pants on fire" was a great comeback. While I am not naive enough to believe everything a politician on either side of the aisle says, you seem to forget the last Republican President. People stopped counting his known lies after the total reached 10,000. KBL

It's their goal

BRAIDWOOD—According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, of the 107,375 people in the U.S. who died of drug overdoses in the year ending January 2022, 67 percent involved synthetic opioid like Fentanyl. All this coming from China, all a part of the Chinese communist goal to control the world.

Liars Hall of Fame

WILMINGTON—After I read "Pants on fire" in Sound-off, I couldn't believe the hypocrisy of the post. Fox News election denying professional liars with their pants on fire who knew the election was not a fraud were Maria Bartiromo, Sean Hannity, Jeannine Pirro, Lou Dobbs, plus lawyers, Sidney Powell and Rudy Giuliani, and let's not forget the creator of The Big Lie, Donald himself. Throw in George Santos from New York and we have a good Liars Hall of Fame.

Lawmakers explain 'shell bills' at the Illinois statehouse

BY GREG BISHOP
THE CENTER SQUARE

Both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly return this week and with deadlines to move bills out of committee, legislation is expected to abound.

In the House and Senate, there are 6,545 bills filed for consideration. Many of those are what is referred to as a "shell bill." State Sen. Steve McClure, R-Springfield, gave his take on shell bills.

"Shell bills can be used after deadlines have passed to get sometimes important bills passed but more often than not they're used to ram a piece of legislation at the very last moment where you can change the bill number by attaching an amendment to a brand new shell bill," McClure

told The Center Square. State Rep. Maurice West, D-Rockford, said shell bills can help with last-minute fixes that are needed to state law.

"As we know, a lot of people don't want to know how the sausage is made, but this is part of the process of getting things to the finish line," West told The Center Square.

Many of the dozens of shell bills range from various topics and can be as simple as legislation that crosses out the word "the" in a statute to replace it with the word "the."

The deadline to pass House bills, including such measures with single word changes, out of House committees and Senate bills out of Senate committees is Friday.

"Put your mind at ease in terms of this trying to be the run around over you," West said. "It's just part of the

process in how we get things done and at the end of the day let us see what the results are with these shell bills and that should give you pause or give you comfort on the process."

McClure said while some legislation may require such maneuvers, he's seen it happen for controversial issues like the recent gun ban, or the SAFE-T Act.

"It's a way for them to hide all the witness slips that are opposed to bills. It's a way for them to be less transparent and try to sneak things through and I think the people of this state deserve better than that," McClure said.

The legislature is scheduled to be in spring session through mid-may. They have a May 31 deadline to pass bills, including the budget, with simple majorities.

Commentary

Overcoming fear sometimes requires a patient friend

THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER LIFE

Every day, there are 25,000 flights in America. Accidents are so rare that flying is much safer than car travel. But that doesn't stop many people from feeling panicked when they are moving at 500 mph, 33,000 feet above the ground.

Not being at the controls makes us feel a bit helpless. That's when the negative thoughts begin to swirl, and the cycle deepens until, even in a very safe place, we suddenly feel panic.

That's what happened recently to a woman flying on a commercial airline. Many of us can go along doing ordinary things and suddenly be overcome with fear. The physical symptoms are real, and it requires a calming force to steady our emotions.

In panic mode, the senses are hypervigilant. Every sound

and movement feels like a threat. The passenger responded accordingly, jumping at every sound and the slightest turbulence.

Floyd Dean-Shannon noticed the woman's distress. As a flight attendant, he has plenty to do during a flight. But he paused and spoke reassuringly to the woman. Floyd calmly explained what the noise was and that it was normal. The landing gear, the wing flaps, all perfectly routine sounds you hear as a plane flies.

As the woman began to calm down a bit, Floyd sat down in the aisle beside her and held her hand. He told her she was safe. He made her feel safe. He sat with her through the entire flight. At one point, Floyd learned it was another passenger's birthday, so he led the plane in a song to celebrate — another way of making the woman feel safe by distracting her from her fears. He stayed

by the woman's side until it was time to land.

We all have friends who become distressed, who overworry, who may struggle with some internal demons that keep them from enjoying life. Like Floyd, we can be open enough to see, to be there. We don't have to be professional counselors; we just need to be friends.

In a world that seems most focused on what's happening on a screen, we can look up occasionally and check on those around us.

According to the Mayo Clinic, having a friend reduces the risk of many significant health problems, including high blood pressure and depression. And having a friend when you most need it not only gets you through the rough patches in your life — it also gives you the confidence to be a friend to others.

Be a Friend...
PassItOn.com®

To be as fair as possible, submissions to Sound-off considered accusatory, inaccurate, unproven or attacking candidates running for local office will be restricted from now through the April 4 consolidated election. Endorsements require paid space so contact our advertising department at 815-476-7966.

Get Lucky With Berkot's Newest Weekly Deals!

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

Only the BEST Fresh Meat & Produce! - Join Berkot's Loyalty for Savings!



Experience the Berkot's difference
Fresh. Friendly. Focused on you.



2 DAY SUPER SALE
3/11-3/12

Sales valid 3/8/23-3/14/23 | 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

WOW!
Berkot's Homemade Corned Beef Brats
BUY 1 GET 1 FREE!

EASY TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS = DELICIOUS RESULTS



\$3.99 PER LB

Berkot's Fresh, Famous Homemade Corned Beef Round Flats

Berkot's Own Corned Beef Eye of Round or Brisket Flats
\$4.99 PER LB

Berkot's Own Corned Beef Brisket Points
\$2.99 PER LB

Green Cabbage
39¢ PER LB

Baby Carrots 1 lb bag
99¢ EACH

Red Potatoes 5 lb bag
2 FOR \$4

USDA CHOICE
USDA Choice Top Sirloin Steaks
\$6.99 PER LB

USDA CHOICE
USDA Choice Angus Top Sirloin Filets 5 oz portion (sold in 3 pk for \$15)
\$5 EA

FROZEN
Frozen Tilapia Fillets- 3-5 oz (Sold in 3 pk for \$6)
\$2 EACH

FROZEN
Censea Large Raw, Peeled, and Deveined Shrimp- 31/40 (Sold in a 1 lb bag)
\$7.99 EACH

FROZEN
Cold Water Lobster Tails- 7-8 oz
\$14.99 EACH

FROZEN
Fully Cooked Whole Lobster- 16-20 oz
\$14.99 EACH

Berkot's Has The Freshest Produce!

1/2 PRICE!
Berkot's Fresh Made Tropical Salsa- 15 oz
\$1.99 EACH

99¢ PER LB WITH LOYALTY
Brussels Sprouts

99¢ EACH WITH LOYALTY LIMIT 4*
Crisp California Head Lettuce

99¢ PER LB
Pink Lady Apples

\$2.99 EACH WITH LOYALTY LIMIT 4*
Clementines- 3 lb bag

3/11/23-3/12/23 ONLY PRICE W/ LOYALTY ONLY

\$7.99 LB
\$2.00 LB
\$5.99 LB with loyalty LIMIT 3*

Berkot's Famous Burgundy Peppercorn Tri-Tips- 1 lb

3/11/23-3/12/23 ONLY FROZEN

\$7.99 PER LB LIMIT 30 LBS

LARGE Snow Crab 5-8 oz

3/11/23-3/12/23 ONLY PRICE W/ LOYALTY ONLY

2 FOR \$3 WITH LOYALTY LIMIT 4*

Driscoll's Super Sweet Strawberries- 1 lb

3/11/23-3/12/23 ONLY

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE!

Stan's St. Patrick's Day Donuts 4 pk 10 oz - Single Price: \$5

SALE PRICE \$4.99 EA
DIGITAL COUPON -\$1.00 EA
FINAL PRICE WITH DIGITAL COUPON \$3.99 EA

CONNIE'S PIZZERIA 23.7-28.6 OZ - OR THIN CRUST PIZZA 20.36-25.49 OZ

*** Must Clip Coupon @ BerkotFoods.com - Offer Limited to One Use from 3/8-3/14/23 - Share Loyalty Phone Number at Register to Redeem Up to the Limit in Single Transaction- While Supplies Last.**

Guinness, Harp, or Smithwicks 12 pk 12 oz btls
\$14.99 EACH

TEXT GROCERIES to 24272 & follow instructions!

Save \$10 when buying \$10.01 of Groceries and (1) 12 pk with Digital Rebate

Great Grocery Deals to Fill Your Basket!

General Mills Honey Nut Cheerios, Cinnamon Toast Crunch, or Reeses Puffs Bag Cereal- 32 oz
\$3.99 EACH

7 Up Family Soda 2 L
99¢ EACH

Arm & Hammer Detergent Plus OxiClean- 118.1 oz
Clean Burst and Dye Free- 144.5 oz
\$5.99 EACH

Absopure Purified Water 24 pk
4 FOR \$10 LIMIT 4

Best Choice Butter Quarters 16 oz
\$2.99 LIMIT 2

Brew Pub Pizza 23-30.75 oz
\$5.99 EACH

3/11/23-3/12/23 ONLY

49¢ EACH LIMIT 12

Manwich Original Sloppy Joe Sauce 15 oz

3/11/23-3/12/23 ONLY

99¢ EACH LIMIT 12

Post Cocoa Pebbles- 11 oz
Honeycomb- 12.5 oz
Golden Crisp- 14.75 oz
Fruity Pebbles- 11 oz

*Offer Limited to One Use from 3/8-3/14/23 - Share Loyalty Phone Number at Register to Redeem Up to the Limit in Single Transaction

If you favor a sour, try this Whiskey Sour

Cocktail trends will come and go, but there always seems to be a few drinks that are "in" no matter what the flavor of the month may be. One of those drinks is the iconic Whiskey Sour.

It may be your favorite cocktail, your father's favorite, or perhaps your grandfather's favorite. Springtime will arrive (finally) this month, keep that bottle of winter bourbon handy and get ready for Whiskey Sour season!

The Whiskey Sour is a cocktail that is often made, but rarely made well.

If you have tried one and did not like it, I encourage you to try a "scratch made" Whiskey Sour using quality ingredients in your home bar. Even with increase in quality that has accompanied the craft cocktail boom, the Whiskey Sour is often not given the attention that it deserves behind the bar.

Even some of the better bars are using a store-bought mix in their whiskey sours, mainly in the interest of time. It takes more time to squeeze fresh lemon juice and add simple syrup than it does to simply grab a bourbon from the well and throw it in a glass with the mix.

Speaking of the mix, and I'm sure there is a decent sour mix out there, I have yet to taste one that can compete

with fresh lemon juice and pure cane sugar.

Sure, many of the mixes use natural lemon flavor, but for the most part the mix is prepared from concentrate and uses high fructose corn syrup as the sweetener. In addition to high fructose corn syrup and lemon flavor from concentrate, most mixes are loaded with artificial coloring and preservatives.

If you ever had a Whiskey Sour at a bar and it was literally the worst drink that you have ever had, it's quite possible that the bourbon was cheap and the mix was flat. The store-bought mixes begin to go flat immediately upon opening and are really rough if served a day or two after opening.

As is the case with nearly all food and drink recipes, fresh is always better.

To make your springtime Sour the absolute best it can be, start with a decent whiskey. In the Whiskey Sour the consensus is bourbon, although the purists among us will likely use rye. The Sour was originally made with rye when it first became popular in the 19th century, and rye is also an great



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

option.

Bourbon works well in the Whiskey Sour, and you're in luck if you're a bourbon fan in 2023. The quality, value, and selection of bourbon has never been better. For value, Evan Williams, Old Forester Signature, and Maker's Mark are tough to beat.

For quality, Buffalo Trace, Eagle Rare, and Woodford Reserve are at the top of my list. If I had to pick just one "all around" bourbon for mixing and sipping, it would be Woodford Reserve.

Taste a few different bourbons if you have options to find one that you like. If you like a bourbon outside of a cocktail, you will like it in a cocktail.

Add 2 oz. of bourbon to your shaker, then squeeze in 1 oz. of fresh lemon juice. If you are making 2 or more drinks in a large shaker, note that the recipe calls for 2 parts bourbon to 1 part fresh lemon juice, and nearly 1 part of simple syrup.

One note on simple syrup. Yes, it's simply equal parts sugar and water, but are you getting the most out of your simple syrup? Always use fil-

tered water in your syrup, and stir it in to your heated saucepan slowly until dissolved.

For best results, "simmer" your water before stirring in the sugar, do not boil the water. Make more than you will need today as it will keep for a few weeks in the refrigerator.

When you shake your Whiskey Sour, do not mail it in. Only 100% effort will do. Add ice to your shaker and give it a good shake of about 20 seconds, or until the outside of the shaker is too frosty to handle.

This will aerate the drink and calm down the 2 oz. pour of bourbon with a bit of dilution.

When the warmer weather arrives, you'll be ready. Warmer weather is coming, I promise. Sunshine, baseball, and homegrown tomatoes are all right around the corner.

The classic Whiskey Sour is built in a shaker, served in an ice-filled Double Old Fashioned glass.

Combine in shaker:
2 oz. bourbon
1 oz. fresh lemon juice
3/4 oz. simple syrup
Shake with ice, then strain into glass over fresh ice
Garnish with 1/2 orange wheel and cherry

Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

Morris Hospital Foundation offering healthcare scholarships

The Morris Hospital Foundation is offering scholarships to students who are pursuing an education in healthcare. The scholarships are intended to encourage education in any health-related course of study while enhancing the availability of healthcare providers in the local community.

The \$1,000 Carol Harrington Endowed Morris Hospital Foundation Scholarship and the \$1,000 Relucio Family Healthcare Scholarship will each be awarded to a student who is pursuing an undergraduate education in a healthcare related field. Applicants must be accepted into, or currently enrolled in, a hospital-related health care curriculum at an accredited college, university or vocational/technical school and reside in one of the communities within Morris Hospital's service area, which include: Braceville, Braidwood, Channahon, Coal City, Dwight, Gardner, Kinsman, Marseilles, Mazon, Minooka, Morris, Newark, Ottawa, Ransom, Seneca, South Wilmington, Verona, Wilmington and Yorkville.

The Hugo Avalos Endowed Scholarship awards up to \$5,000 to a student who has been accepted into or is currently enrolled in an accredited medical school, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant program. Applicants must be or have been a resident of Illinois.

The Morris Hospital Foundation also offers three, \$1,000 scholarships for Morris Hospital employees and/or dependents of Morris Hospital employees who are pursuing an education in healthcare.

Scholarship applications are available at morrishospital.org/scholarships. Students may apply for as many scholarships as they would like by checking the appropriate boxes on the scholarship application. A separate application is available for the Hugo Avalos Endowed Scholarship.

Completed applications must be postmarked by April 14, 2023. Scholarship winners will be announced in May. For more information, contact the Morris Hospital Foundation at 815-705-7021.

Spring cleanup at Braceville Gardner Cemetery

All grave decorations must be removed by March 15 or they will be discarded. Also, during the year, all wilted, faded and broken grave decorations will be removed. Garbage will be placed in containers located next to mainte-

nance building.

Please do not replace decorations until the cleanup is completed.

Braceville Gardner Cemetery Association
Board of Directors

AUTO • HOME • LIFE • BUSINESS • PROPERTY

State Farm "Your local State Farm Agent for 30 years!"
Jerry Hallahan - Agent
1350 E. Division St., Diamond
(815) 634-2222 jerry@jerryhallahan.com

MOTORCYCLE • REC VEHICLES • WATERCRAFT • LIABILITY

Dr. William M. White
Family Dentistry
- New patients
- Emergency visits welcome
All forms of insurance accepted including Meridian and Dentaquest

267 S. Broadway, Coal City
Call (815) 634-8844

warrencollisioncenteril.com

✓ Finest quality warranted collision repair
✓ Rentals available
✓ Certified technicians
✓ All insurance accepted
✓ Completed in a timely fashion

WARREN'S COLLISION CENTER
860 E.Z. St., Braidwood
815-458-3300

WE CARE BEYOND THE REPAIR!

Surf Broadband Solutions
Connect Further, Faster.

RELIABLE, FAST & AFFORDABLE INTERNET SERVICE

Mention this ad and receive **FREE INSTALLATION—Call Today!**

(888) 274-6381 • www.surfbroadband.com

Farm bill is critical to keeping food supply affordable

BY RICHARD GUEBERT JR.
IL FARM BUREAU PRESIDENT

With winter weather on the horizon, farmers across the state are gearing up for another productive spring planting season. Once the frost melts and the soil temperatures rise, it will be time to hit the fields, but for many farmers high prices for fertilizer, fuel and other critical tools remain a challenge.

Like consumers, farmers are feeling the pain of ongoing inflation. The ripple effects of the war in Ukraine and supply chain issues pose significant hurdles for farmers. Heading into the spring season and farm bill negotiations, these difficulties remain top of mind at Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB).

In early February, the United States Department of Agriculture's latest Farm Sector Income Forecast report indicated that U.S. net farm income will fall nearly 16% from the previous year while production costs are expected to increase more than 4%. That's on top of an already record increase in production costs in 2022.

While fuel and fertilizer prices are expected to soften, other costs related to marketing, storage and transportation are

expected to increase 11%, and labor by 7%. Rising interest rates and farm sector costs are another concern as the USDA projects farm sector debt will increase \$31.9 billion to a record \$535 billion.

General inflation is a long-term issue squeezing the pocketbooks of families across America, but the farm income forecast is a reminder that farmers are not benefiting from higher prices at the grocery store.

While some commodity prices are rising, farmers are grappling with additional circumstances, such as drought, avian influenza and supply and labor costs. After accounting for business expenses, farmers' share of the food dollar is only 7.4 cents.

That is why the farm bill is so important for everyone, not just farmers. Farm bill programs provide farmers with critical support to mitigate natural disasters and other crises. Other programs secure America's domestic food supply, which keeps our agricultural economy strong while providing consumers with affordable, high-quality products at the grocery store.

The farm bill also addresses hunger through nutrition programs, which serve our most vulnerable populations and

ensure that everyone has access to affordable, fresh and healthy food. Conservation is another key focus of the farm bill, which invests in agriculture research and conservation programs to increase sustainability.

IFB is dedicated to working with our members and elected officials on both sides of the aisle to pass a farm bill that meets the needs of all agriculture segments.

Our members and leaders believe the farm bill must maintain the link between nutrition and commodity programs. IFB also supports maintaining the current crop insurance program, providing price and revenue protection for farmers, and retaining both SNAP and TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) in the farm bill in their current form.

As we head into another eventful spring, I look forward to working with our members and elected officials to get this critical piece of legislation to the president's desk.

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

McDonald's sees value from pork partnerships

BY DANIEL GRANT
FARMWEEK

McDonald's, the world's largest restaurant chain, is not only a large end user of pork but also a net exporter of "The Other White Meat."

The Illinois-based company therefore has found great value in partnering with the pork industry to ensure it sources high-quality products in a sustainable system.

Jeff Edwards, manager, U.S. quality systems for McDonald's USA, discussed its work with farmers and the value of pork at the Illinois Pork Producers Association's annual meeting in Springfield. The event kicked off the Illinois Pork Expo.

"We're committed to delivering safe, high-quality products," Edwards said. "How do we do that? We get involved in every step (from the farm to the restaurant).

"We strive to partner with (farmers) as much as possible," he noted. "We understand ag is a good ally."

McDonald's sourced more than 200 million pounds of pork in the U.S. annually as of

2021, with roughly 10% of that coming from Illinois (the nation's fourth-largest pork producer).

Globally, McDonald's consumes about 440 million pounds of pork and serves a wide variety of pork products in an estimated 75 countries. It sources more than 70% of all pork used in the restaurant chain from the U.S.

"We've seen growth in the pork category internationally the last five years, especially with strip bacon. It's become very popular in Europe," Edwards said.

But, while pork products continue to sell like hotcakes, McDonald's responded to consumers and pressure from non-government organizations to phase out the use of gestation stalls from farms where it sources pork.

So, back in 2012, McDonald's announced plans to purchase pork from farms that phase out the use of gestation stalls by 2022. But, due to animal disease pressure and the COVID pandemic, McDonald's extended the deadline to 2024, with a goal to purchase 85-90% of pork from

those farms as of last year.

While the move represented a major challenge to the industry, McDonald's partnered with pork producers and is on track to meet the goal. It purchased more than 90% of its pork from farms that phased out gestation stalls last year.

"We did meet the goal for 2022," Edwards said. "Continued engagement with producers was the difference maker."

McDonald's began sending employees and executives on tours of hog farms to better understand the industry and also implemented animal

health and welfare training.

"McDonald's values partnerships. It's engrained in our business model since 1955," Edwards said. "Consumers increasingly want to know where their food comes from and how it's produced. Engagement allows us to have better, more meaningful conversations."

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

Morris Hospital hosting Stroke Support Group

Morris Hospital is hosting its Stroke Support Group on Tuesday, March 14, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Diagnostic & Rehabilitative Center of Morris Hospital, 100 Gore Rd., Suite H, Morris. The support group facilitator is a speech pathologist from Morris Hospital.

The Stroke Support Group is for individuals who have a history of stroke or any neurologic event, as well as their caregivers, spouses, and loved

ones. The focus is to support, educate, and bring people together who are facing similar issues. The session typically includes a guest speaker who provides education and is available to answer questions.

Those planning to attend are asked to register online at www.morrishospital.org/events, or call Morris Hospital's Speech Therapy Department at 815-705-7440.

2023 12U Wilmington Wildcats

EUCHRE NIGHT

Saturday, March 11
Tuffy's Lounge
1099 S. Water St., Wilmington

Check In: 6:00 p.m.
Rules: 6:45 p.m.
Play: 7:00 p.m.
\$20 to Play
\$10 to Spectate

TICKETS:
TJ Hansen
815-325-8631
Any 12U Wildcat Family
Tuffy's Lounge

• Food
• Beer
• Raffles
50/50

Mendoza pushing for law requiring greater deposits in 'rainy day' fund

Highest-ever balance slated to exceed \$1.9 billion by end FY year

BY NIKA SCHOONOVER
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – A bill that would trigger automatic payments into the state's so-called "rainy day" fund is heading to the Illinois House for consideration after unanimous passage out of committee this week.

Under House Bill 2515, automatic deposits in the rainy day fund and pension stabilization fund would be triggered if the governor's proposed general revenue estimate exceeds the prior year by at least 4% and the state has less than \$3 billion in bills awaiting payment from the General Revenue Fund.

In that case, the law would require 1% of budgeted spending to be split between the rainy day fund and added payments to the Pension Stabilization Fund.

The "rainy day" fund, officially known as the Budget Stabilization Fund, was created in 2000. It was to serve as a fund reserve to reduce the need for short-term borrowing and future tax increases when revenues slow. Having such a fund reserve would theoretically help the state maintain high credit ratings, address budgetary shortfalls and ensure bills are paid in a timely manner even in tough economic times.

But the fund remained woefully short of a meaningful balance throughout the first two decades of its existence.

Within Comptroller Susana Mendoza's first year in office beginning in December 2016, the rainy day fund's balance dropped to roughly \$69,000 – which she often quipped wouldn't keep state government running for more than 30 seconds. It was a drop from about \$276 million in June 2016 as the funds were used to keep state government functional amid a two-year budget impasse between Democrats in the General

Assembly and Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner.

Now Mendoza is the most vocal backer of the bill to require the annual payments to the fund when the state's financial situation allows it.

"This is the right time to move this legislation forward because I just believe that history teaches us that not every governor believes that Illinois shouldn't spend every penny that they bring in," Mendoza said in an interview. "This has been an administration...who really understand the value of saving and preparing for both the rainy day but also saving money and pension obligations."

The fund's balance is scheduled to reach \$1.9 billion by the end of this fiscal year, but Mendoza said it's not enough when compared with the national average. According to the most recent data from the National Association of State Budget Officers, the average number of days that states currently have in their rainy-day reserves is about 54 days.

Local students named on Univ. of Missouri fall dean's list

Mizzou recognizes the following area students to the fall 2022 dean's list:



Anna Schulte, of Coalwood; Joseph Piatak, of Coal City; Harley Felker, Courtney Meyer and Joshua

Michalak, all of Diamond; Mazie Meyr, of Essex and Rhianna Brown, Raelene DesRochers, Rebecca Horton and Emily Watson, all of Wilmington.

YOUR NEW HOME DESERVES THE BEST PROTECTION

American Family Insurance is proud to be named Best Homeowners Insurance of 2021 by Forbes Advisor.

Contact me today and get the protection you deserve.

Gerald Gresham
815-729-3570
815-476-6364
863 Center Ct., Unit B, Shorewood, IL 60404
teamgresham@amfam.com
Email: ggresham@amfam.com

AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & its Operating Companies, American Family Life Insurance Company, 6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53761 ©2022 1974-4021-14722730

Gather electronics, string lights for recycling this Thursday

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Statehouse bill would allow online sales, home delivery of craft beer

BY ZETA CROSS
THE CENTER SQUARE

In a world where people buy everything under the sun online, some at the state Capitol are looking to let consumers buy Illinois-made craft beer the same way and have it delivered directly to their homes.

Ray Stout, executive director of the Illinois Craft Beer Guild, says 90-year-old state liquor laws have shut Illinois' 297 regional craft brewers out of the e-commerce marketplace.

"In the 1930s, nobody would have imagined this thing called the internet where people can have everything delivered to their houses," Stout told the The Center Square. "Our laws need to be modernized to keep up with the wave of time."

The Illinois Craft Beer Guild is behind legislation in the Illinois General Assembly that could make that happen. Senate Bill 2193, sponsored by state Sen. Ram Villivalam, D-Chicago, would allow consumers to buy a limited number of cases of Illinois-made beer every year

and have the beer delivered directly to their homes.

Since 2007, Illinois consumers have been able to buy wine for home delivery, Stout said. It is time for craft brewers to have the same opportunity.

The change in the law would be particularly welcome for craft brewers right now because local breweries are still recovering from the effects of the pandemic. Before COVID, Illinois craft brewing was a \$3.2 billion dollar industry with close to 350 regional breweries.

For the typical brewer, 70% of sales came from on-site tap rooms and in-person purchases. Three years out from the start of the pandemic, on site sales remain down by 20% to 30%, Stout said. As many as 40 craft breweries have gone out of business altogether.

Overall, sales have dropped to \$2.8 billion. Home delivery has the potential to keep the majority of small regional brewers up and running, Stout said.

"Direct to consumer is a good path to allow small breweries to compete alongside the 3 tier [distribution] system," he said.

Stout points to artisan producer Scratch Brewing Company in Ava, Illinois, as an example. Scratch makes award

winning "foraged beer" from native plants and ingredients found in the Shawnee National Forest region. Distributors don't carry Scratch because its beers don't taste even remotely like mainstream American lagers that Illinois beer drinkers are used to. Its beers are made seasonally, in small batches. They are sold in growlers and 25-ounce bottles.

"People all over the state love Scratch, but the only way they can get it is to drive seven hours," Stout said, noting direct shipping would give Scratch the market reach it deserves.

Stout estimates that 150 other Illinois craft brewers are in the same boat as Scratch where they need a way to get their beers to their customers. And a lot of them are struggling.

"Craft breweries are small local businesses," Stout said. "We need to support them or they are going to be gone."

Internet sales and home delivery can keep them viable, he said.

Stout calls craft brewers "cornerstone businesses" because they are gathering places that are important for local communities. Local breweries contribute to a region's sense of identity.

Circle jam in Godley Saturday

There will be a circle jam Saturday, March 11, from 5 to 8 p.m. in the hall under the water tower at the Godley Park District, 500 S. Kankakee Street, Godley.

Bring your instrument and play, sing or just enjoy.

The free event is open to everyone including musicians and listeners. Donations will be accepted.

Circle jams are social hours featuring a mix of music from classic country to bluegrass and more. For more information call Randy Kiefling at 815-237-8139 or 815-210-8563.

IDENTITY THEFT TIP

Make sure you're using a secure website with a URL that starts with "https" and not "http" before you provide personal information online. Check websites' privacy policies to find out if, where and how your information will be shared.

Don't let pain keep you from enjoying activities you love.



WE CAN HELP!

Our orthopedic specialists provide expert care and treatment of sports injuries and problems associated with the neck, back, shoulder, elbow, hand, knee, hip, foot, and ankle, always considering conservative treatment methods first. And if surgery is needed, we offer the latest innovations and techniques.

It's time to improve your quality of life. Call today for an appointment:
Diamond-Coal City and Morris 815-942-4875
Ottawa 815-433-0850 Joliet (Houbolt Rd) 815-741-4000



MORRIS HOSPITAL
ORTHOPEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE

Orthopedic Surgeons: Dr. Raymond Meyer, Dr. Keith Rezin, Dr. Stephen Treacy, Dr. Robert Williams
Orthopedic Spine Surgeon: Dr. Mir Ali
Foot & Ankle Surgeon: Dr. Kyle Pearson

morrishospital.org/orthopedics

Eye Care Specialist close to home

SUMIT BHATIA, M.D.
BOARD CERTIFIED RETINA SURGEON

SIGNATURE RETINA CONSULTANTS

Now seeing patients for

- Wet Macular Degeneration
- Dry Macular Degeneration
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Retinal Tears
- All other Retinal diseases

170 E. Main Street, Braidwood • (815) 390-7271
Learn more at www.signatureretina.com



2,100+ WINNERS SHARING \$250,000 IN CASH & PRIZES

PLAY SLOTS & WIN!

CHECK-IN TO WIN AT Wee-Sip Liquors
1099 S. Water St., Wilmington
We'll help you sign up for players rewards on our new kiosk!
\$1 million scratch off Lottery Ticket sold here in December!

SCAN TO DOWNLOAD THE AE PLAYER APP TO CHECK IN AND VIEW THIS MONTH'S PRIZES!

AE PLAYER REWARDS
www.aeplay.com



OBITUARIES

Henry S. Bale Jr.

JOLIET—Henry S. Bale Jr., 85, of Joliet, passed away peacefully after a brief illness, on Saturday, March 4, 2023, at Ascension St. Joseph Medical Center, Joliet.

He was born on June 11, 1937, in Joliet the son of Henry S. and Lois (nee Blatt) Bale. Henry graduated from Joliet Township High School, class of 1955, where he was a band member, playing the flute, and Northern Illinois University, class of 1959. He began working with his father at Bale and Bale Insurance Agency in Joliet. He purchased a business in Wilmington, which became The Bale Agency, specializing in insurance and real estate. Henry resided in Wilmington from 1966-2016, where he served as past president of the Wilmington Rotary Club. He was also a parishioner of Christ Episcopal Church in Joliet.

In 2016 Henry retired to Joliet. He loved feeding the birds, especially cardinals, garden-

ing, and his pet feeding station for his dog walking friends.

Henry is survived by his loving wife of 59 years, Diane (nee Sutherland) Bale; his son, Andrew Bale, of Joliet; daughter, Elizabeth (Dr. Andrew A. Roechner Jr.) Roechner, of Joliet; granddaughters: Sinclair, Isabella and Sutton Roechner, all of Joliet; several cousins, including Miriam Merrill, of Joliet; several nieces and nephews and his cats, Snap, Jinx and Pippa.

He was preceded by his parents and sister, Georgia L. (Rev. Joseph A. Sr.) Howell.

A Memorial Service for Henry S. Bale Jr. will be held at a later date. According to his wishes cremation rites have been accorded.

For more information, contact the Fred C. Dames Funeral Home at www.fredcdames.com to share a favorite memory or online condolence.



Nick Korczak

MINOOKA—Nick Korczak, 71, of Minooka, passed away March 4, 2023. He was peacefully surrounded by his family following a battle with Leukemia.

Born March 11, 1951 in Joliet, Nicholas Anthony was a son of Robert and Theresa (Canino) Korczak. He was raised and educated in Joliet; graduated from Joliet West High School, class of 1969, and went on to attend Northern Illinois University where he earned his bachelors in business in 1973.

On June 16, 1973, Nick married his high school sweetheart, Cindy Rausch and together they made a home together and raised their three children. Nick worked for Midwest Generation in Chicago, from where he retired in 2015. In addition to being a true family man, Nick also was active in the community where he served on the Channahon Volunteer Fire Department for 15 years and belonged to the Channahon Lions Club. He coached his boys' soccer teams when they were growing up, and nothing gave him greater joy than spending time with family and watching his grandchildren participate in their activities.

One who loved the outdoors, Nick was the family Grill Master and took pleasure in both grilling and smoking on a Weber grill. Family time was always accompanied by good cocktail, particularly a martini or an old fashioned, and he cherished spending time at the family cottage on Saddle Lake in Michigan, which was his "Happy Place."

Nick and Cindy were fortunate to winter in Madeira Beach, FL following retirement, and the two simply enjoyed being together. Whether on a brewery tour enjoying a craft beer or driving around in his naked Jeep, when Nick was with his beloved wife, and best friend Cindy at his side or amongst his beloved family, he was truly living his best life.

When reflecting on the life of Nick Korczak,

it is easy to see both his unwavering strength and his unconditional love for his family. He was always willing to go above and beyond to serve others in ways both great and small. Nothing brought Nick greater joy than spending time with his loved ones, even in the simplest of moments. He was never afraid to stand up for what he thought was right, and he was well known for his big heart and his insatiable zest for life. Dearly loved, Nick will be forever missed by those who knew him best.

Survivors include his loving wife, Cindy; three children: Nikki (John) Randich, of Joliet; Kyle (Nancy) Korczak, of Bolingbrook and Erik (Gina) Korczak, of Plainfield; four grandchildren: Ella Randich, Lily Randich, Aidan Korczak and Kieran Korczak; grand dogs: Chico, Luna, Jada and Lena; grand cats: Random and Ace; his brother, Leo Korczak, of Florida and sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law: Sandra (Bill) Baron, of Plainfield and Randee (Tom) Beverly, of Coal City.

Nick was preceded in death by his parents, Bob and Theresa Korczak and father-in-law and mother-in-law, Dr. Ralph and Mary Rausch.

A private family visitation was held at Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City and cremation rites were accorded thereafter, per Nick's wishes.

Nick will be laid to rest at Saddle Lake in Michigan at a later date.

Preferred memorials in lieu of flowers may be made as gifts in Nick's memory to the American Cancer Society.

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

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

Roger Johnson

WILMINGTON— Roger J. Johnson, 62 of Wilmington and formerly of Joliet, passed away Sunday morning, Feb. 26, 2023, at his residence.

Born Aug. 11, 1960, in Joliet, Roger was a son of the late Joseph Johnson and Carole (Hoffstadt) Cerone. He was raised in Joliet, and was a graduate of Joliet West High School. On February 12, 1981 he met the love of his life, Susan Lynn Herman after leaving a car show. He married Susan on Sept. 21, 1985, they have been together for 43 years. Roger worked as a group leader at Peddinghaus prior to gaining employment with Exxon Mobil, from where he retired with 31 years as a machinery specialist.

Roger was a well-known as an all-around perfectionist and master-craftsman. Thanks to his detailed oriented personality, his talents as a painter were unmatched. He was an artist of colors with his "out of this world" paint jobs that he used to gift people with the cars of their dreams. Roger was awarded numerous awards for his craft such as "Best Paint Job" and "Best in Show". He was also responsible for the construction of an iconic home here in Wilmington. Roger spearheaded and completed the project, from designing the plans to even nailing the final shingle himself. He was the definition of what a true family man should be.

Survivors include his wife Susan (Herman) Johnson of Wilmington; three children Amanda (Stephen) Gerdez of Bourbonnais, Brooke

(Andy) Crutchfield of Wilmington, and Justin (Laci) Johnson of Wilmington; four grandchildren: Logan Gerdez, Kai, and Xavier Crutchfield, and Ryder Johnson; his mother, Carole Cerone of Bonney Lake, WA; two sisters: Diane Cooper of Bonney Lake, WA and Cathy Arnold of Naperville, IL; and one brother, Brian Cole of Joliet.

Roger was preceded death by his father Joseph Johnson, and stepmother, Barbara Johnson; his sister Lorrie Johnson, and step-brother Alex Cole.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation on Saturday, March 4, 2023 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 East Kahler Road, in Wilmington from 12:00 p.m. until the time of memorial service at 4:00 p.m. Roger will be laid to rest at Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Morris at a later date.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Roger's memory to St. Paul Lutheran School, 1780 Career Center Road, Bourbonnais, Illinois 60914.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upoad photos and share Roger's memorial page at www.baskervillefuneral.com

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



Arnold Sikler

WILMINGTON— Arnold Sikler, 85, of Wilmington, formerly of South Chicago, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023 at his home. Born July 16, 1937 in Chicago, Arnold was a son of David and Anna Elliot Sikler. He was raised and educated in Chicago, and on Aug. 11, 1962 he married Donna Jean Johnson at St. Gabriel Catholic Church. Arnold served the city of Chicago as a police officer for 30 years until he retired. He was an avid golfer, and he also enjoyed playing 16 inch softball and going fishing.

Survivors include four children: Michael Sikler and Madonna (Jeffrey) Czemske, both of Wilmington; Michele (Bill) Madia, of Griffith, IN and Arnold (Sara) Sikler, of Mokena and four grandchildren: Bryan (Ali) Czemske, Kelsey (Nathan) Florey, Shelby Sikler and Shane Sikler;

three great-grandchildren: Reid Czemske, Russell Czemske and Teagan Florey and one brother, Rudy Sikler, of Surprise, AZ.

Arnold was preceded in death by his parents and his wife, Donna Sikler.

Per Arnold's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded, and a private family memorial service will be held at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, where he will be laid to rest with his wife.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book and share Arnold'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.



Dawn Scamen

COAL CITY—Dawn Delaine Scaman, 60, of Coal City, passed away peacefully on Sunday, March 5, 2023 at her home, surrounded by her loved ones.

She was born on March 24, 1962 in Joliet to Everette Green and Janet (nee Kyles) Kastman. She grew up in the Coal City area, graduating with the Coal City High School Class of 1980. Dawn was self employed providing cleaning services and housekeeping. She married Steven F. Scaman on Nov. 18, 2016 at the Wisconsin Dells. Dawn enjoyed crafting with her Cricut, making diamond art and also playing Bingo.

She is survived by her husband, Steven Scaman; her father, Everette (Gayle) Green; her step-father, LaVerne Kastman; her daughter, Melissa (Roger) Clark; her son, Michael (Katie) Foster; her step-children: Jacob (Lauren) Watts, Jillian (Rick) Foster, Justin (Charlie) Watts, Cailey (Jeffrey) Middleton and Taylor Scamen; her grandchildren: Samantha (Brandon) Ehlers, Halie Foster, Kyle Foster, Nathan Foster, Emma Clark, Jayden Jones, Jase Jones, Jaylee Middleton, Aubrey Watts, Riley Watts, Cailey

Watts and Jacob Watts Jr.; her great-grandchildren, David Bohn and Barrett Ehlers; her sisters: Laura (Mark) McNames, Kathleen (Doug) Fuse, Deborah (Jessica) Kastman and Kimberly (Matt) Hicks; her brother, Robert (Melody) Green; her aunt, Karen (Robert) Woznica and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, David Watts and her mother, Janet Kastman.

Memorials in Dawn's name may be made to Lightways Hospice and Serious Care Illness, 250 Water Stone Circle, Joliet, IL 60431.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at Ferrari Funeral Services, 1044 Ferrari Drive, Coal City. Rev. Jim McGuire officiated. Burial followed at Braceville Gardner Cemetery.

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

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City were entrusted with arrangements.



Thomas Wilson

BRAIDWOOD — Thomas Raymond Wilson, 73, of Braidwood, passed away Monday, March 6, 2023 at his home surrounded by his loving family.

Born on Nov. 7, 1949 in Joliet, he was the son of Robert and Marie (nee VanDuyne) Wilson. He graduated from Reed-Custer High School. On May 6, 1989 he married Vicky Schultz in Braidwood. Tom retired from Exxon Mobil and following his retirement he and Vicky enjoyed traveling. He loved to golf with his buddies BJ Fitzpatrick and Joe Buentipo and attended Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. More than anything Tom was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, as well as a friend to many. He will be dearly missed.

Surviving are his wife, Vicky Wilson; sons, Thomas (Tram) Wilson Jr., of Olympia, WA and Phil (Rechelle) Wilson, of Braidwood; daughter, Nicole (Josh) Duncan, of Rathdrum, ID; grandchildren: Kalah (Austin) Grimes, Jenna (Josh) Winter, TJ (Khiah) Wilson, Audric Duncan and Ian Duncan; great-grandchildren: Brantley, Baylee and Gwendolyn Grimes and Huntleigh Wilson; sisters, Donna Wilson, of Braidwood;



Rita (Paul) Nacey, of Braidwood and Kim (Robert) Tribble, of Sheldon, IL; brother, Dan Wilson, of Braidwood; brother-in-law, John Humphrey, of Huntsville, TN; as well as many nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his parents, Robert and Marie Wilson; sister, Betty Humphrey; brother, Robert Wilson and sister-in-law, Dorra Wilson.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial visitation will be held at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Sunday, March 12, 2023 from 2-6 p.m. Memorial services will also be at the funeral home, Monday, March 13, 2023 at 10 a.m. with Pastor Dale Tolly officiating. Inurnment will follow at Oakwood Cemetery in Braidwood.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in his name may be directed to Lightways Hospice.

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

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

CURBSIDE CARE

Diapers, Wipes, Formula, Baby Hygiene Items

Every second Thursday of the month

January 13	July 14
February 10	August 11
March 10	September 15*
April 14	October 13
May 12	November 10
June 9	December 15*

CALL FOR PICK UP TIME



pregnancyresourcecenter

Excellent Care.

Compassionate Support.

Honest Information.

410 N. Broadway Street -Coal City
(815-709-0920)

OUR SERVICES

FREE & Confidential

- Material Assistance
- Pregnancy Test
- Limited Ultrasound
- Options Counseling
- Pregnancy & Parenting Education
- Pregnancy Loss Support
- Post Abortion Support
- Adoption Support
- STI/STD Information

Legislation that would allow ground sparklers in Illinois faces opposition

BY KEVIN BESSLER
THE CENTER SQUARE

A new bill in Springfield would allow ground sparklers in Illinois.

Fireworks are banned in the state, one of only three states to do so. Novelty items like hand-held sparklers and smoke bombs are allowed.

Transportation and use of any consumer fireworks such as firecrackers or bottle rockets is deemed a Class A misdemeanor, which is punishable by fines up to \$2,500.

Ground sparklers typically emit sparks and can also have noise effects like crackles and whistles.

State Rep. Robert Rita, D-Blue Island, has introduced a measure that would allow for

the sale of ground sparklers in Illinois to anyone over the age of 18.

During a recent committee hearing, Matt Murphy with Mac Strategies said allowing ground sparklers may keep some Illinoisans from buying elsewhere in Missouri, Wisconsin or Indiana.

"That's one less person that's gone across the border and buying far more dangerous fireworks that even under this bill will still be illegal in Illinois," Murphy said.

Margaret Vaughn with the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance said the legislation could lead to consequences.

"The unintended consequences of this, the catastrophic injuries, the deaths that are going to result in this

is something no one would want as part of their legislative record," Vaughn said.

There are some who want to lift Illinois' fireworks ban. State Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, has been a champion in the effort, saying the state is missing out on millions of dollars in sales tax revenue each year.

Meanwhile, Indiana has some of the most lenient fireworks laws in the country. Anyone 18 and older can buy and use fireworks from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on non-holidays and later on holidays. A large part of fireworks stores business is from neighboring Illinois.

The ground sparkler bill was passed out of committee.



Local apples used

UNPOSSIBLE MEAD of Dwight, owned by Brian Galbreath of Diamond, made a hard cider with apples picked locally from the Wills Family Farm in Coal City. The hard cider is named Mazon River Hard Cider due to the location of the orchard. The cider is made up of eight different varieties of apples. Can artwork was also done by Galbreath. **Impossible Mead** is currently working to get these cans into local grocery stores besides the few bars they are sold at currently. It's nice to see locally sourced produce turned into a tasty local cider.

Gas prices expected to rise

Local gasoline prices are trickling up, after holding steady the week before, getting closer to the statewide average of \$3.50/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois. Braidwood stations were priced at \$3.37/g, up from \$3.36 the week before. In Wilmington gas stations averaged \$3.47/g up seven cents while in Coal City the price declined to \$3.55 after being \$3.58 a week ago. Average gasoline price in Illinois is \$3.50/g Monday, with the cheapest station at \$2.97/g yesterday while the high was \$4.48/g. Prices in Illinois are 7.9 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 81.1 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of gasoline has risen 3.5

cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.36/g. "The national average rose last week as the transition to summer gasoline has now started across the entire country. The higher cost of these various blends is being passed along to motorists, as we see every year ahead of the summer driving season," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. The national average is down 6.5 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 69.3 cents per gallon lower than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data. "Some regions are moving to the required summer gasoline in different steps than others, and the fragmentation of required blends absolutely plays a role in these price

increases. Logistical challenges in making the transition during a time when refiners are also doing maintenance work can create hotspots and lead to noticeable jumps in prices during the spring. While we may not see weekly increases, the overall trend will remain upward through much of the spring. By Memorial Day, most of the nation will be transitioned to their respective required blend of fuel, and gas prices could ease, but a \$4 per gallon national average remains possible by then." To find the cheapest gas in the area you'd have to travel to Bourbonnais priced at \$3.20/g. Joliet stations were priced at \$3.29 while Morris stations average \$3.42/g.

Still time to register for conference on Kankakee River

Organizers of the Kankakee River Watershed Conference said the time is now to restore the pristine waterway. "Sand and sediment flow into the river are being caught by fallen trees forming sand bars, turning sand bars into islands and redirecting the flow of water" say conference organizers Frank Koehler, former Wilmington City Administrator, and Angel Crawford. "The time is now to address these challenges and protect the areas' greatest asset—the Kankakee River Watershed." With the theme "The Time is Now", a one-day conference on the Kankakee River will be held on Friday, March 10, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the campus of Kankakee Community College. Issues that will be discussed include water quantity and quality, biodiversity, nutrients and agriculture, river recreation, watershed initiatives, and most importantly, sand and sediment.

There is no fee to attend, but individuals are asked to register online. Lunch and refreshments will be provided to attendees. Registration and conference schedule are available at Kankakee Community College's Continuing Education. Course Detail: LECT-7045 - Kankakee River Watershed Conference. The conference should be of interest to residents of Illinois and Indiana, particularly those in the Kankakee River, Iroquois River, and Yellow River watersheds. Wilmington City Administrator Jeannine Smith will give a presentation on local initiatives and members of the Will County Forest Preserve District will be presenting on sand and sediment projects. For more information, email Koehler through the Potawatomi Paddlers Association Fjkoehler1952@gmail.com or Crawford from the Iroquois Economic Development Association at iedaillinois@gmail.com

Top 10 consumer complaints in Illinois

In recognition of National Consumer Protection Week, Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul highlighted the most frequent complaints the Attorney General's office received during 2022. The annual top 10 list of consumer complaints ranks every complaint his office receives on a range of topics. The Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Bureau saved consumers more than \$8 million through mediation in 2022 and secured more than \$207 million through enforcement actions. The office received a total of 20,012 written complaints in 2022, in addition to tens of thousands of phone calls. Complaints about construction/home improvement, consumer debt and identity theft topped the list.

1. Construction/home improvement (remodeling, roofs and gutters, heating and cooling, plumbing)
2. Consumer debt (residential mortgage lending, banks/financial institutions, collection agencies)
3. Identity theft (credit cards, data breaches, utilities, government document fraud)
4. Motor vehicle/used auto sales (as-is used cars, financing, advertising, warranties)
5. Internet/mail order products (internet and catalog purchases, TV and radio advertising)
6. Promotions/schemes (phone scams, work at home scams, lottery scams, investment schemes, phishing)
7. Telecommunications (cable and satellite TV, telemarketing, wireless phones, phone service and repairs)
8. Motor vehicle/non-warranty repair (collision, engines, oil changes and tune-ups)
9. Motor vehicle/new auto sales (financing, defects, advertising)
10. Health/medical services (COVID-19 testing, hospitals/doctors/pharmacy, nursing homes, vision/dental).

Mobile food pantry coming to So. Wilm.


Catholic Charities' mobile food pantry will be distributing food Monday, March 13, at 4 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. at St. Lawrence Church, 135 Rice Rd., South Wilmington in the church parking lot (rain or shine). Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank have partnered to deliver meat, produce and nonperishable items to people in need. Participants are asked to stay in their cars as a "drive thru" method will be used. Catholic Charities helps people of all faiths and beliefs. For more information about Catholic Charities, please visit catholiccharitiesjoliet.org.

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

Sponsored by
Gymshoe Art

Email submissions or if you have questions contact:
GymshoeArt@gmail.com

Drawing by Adalyn Barton



Help us express kindness! Create!

THANK YOU NURSES & DOCTORS



We have come to appreciate nurses and doctors who save lives every day.

But don't forget about yourself.

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.

FISHER MEENTS LLC




207 S. Water St., Wilmington • 815-476-7635

It's Your Choice. Be Informed.

Your local newspaper keeps you informed. For over 152 years we've been the local paper that educates the community on city government, school developments, births, deaths, sports, police & fire news and more. We focus on news that is important to you.

Call and order a one-year subscription today!
815-476-7966 or 815-634-0315



CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

Pre-payment required for all classified ads unless customer has a pre established business account

Deadlines
Classified Display
 Fridays - 5 p.m.
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 Courier — The Free Press Advocate

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Wilmington - Beautiful 2 bedroom with all new carpet, 1 car attached garage. \$1,200 a month. 618-383-6330 cc10-13

AUTOS

Accepting bids, 1996 International 4900 as is. 4x2 single axle, 26,000 miles, 11R/22.5 tires, fixed bed, V Box with conveyor, rear spreader, Monroe 11 Ft Poly Snow Plow. Repairs needed. Contact Highway Commissioner Jeff Sorensen at 815-476-7869 with questions. Sealed bids due to Wesley Township Hall by 3:00 PM on April 11, 2023 and will be opened at the monthly township meeting later that evening at 7:00PM. Wesley Township Road District 21333 W Ballou Rd Wilmington, IL 60481 ch9-11

DUPLEX FOR RENT

2 bedroom, 1 bath, 2 car garage. 140 W. Fourth Street, Coal City. \$1,200/month plus security. 815-210-9220. ca9-11

HELP WANTED

Bartender wanted. Saturday & Sunday, 11-6. BASSETT and food handler license required. Call Tuffy's Lounge, 1099 S. Water Street, Wilmington for an interview, 815-476-2700. ch9-10

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

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 wssc1946@gmail.com cc2-13

Office help wanted. Experience with excel, QuickBooks and payroll. Approximately 30 flexible daytime hours per month. Send resume to P O Box 181, Gardner, IL 60424 or email to admin@gardnerfpd.com ch9-10

HELP WANTED

The Braidwood Recreation Club is hiring for the 2023 Season. Concession Stand - Must be at least 16 years old. Operating hours are from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day. Open daily 10:30am to 6:00pm, 7 days per week. Must be willing to work flexible hours and duties include stocking, cleaning, and customer service. Shifts will be approximately 5 hours each. Custodians - Must be at least 16 years old and be open to a flexible schedule. Certified Lifeguards - All applicants must be CPR and Lifeguard Certified and be at least 16 years of age. Proof of certification must be provided at time of application. Gate Guards - Average 5 hour shifts. Applications can be printed off the club website (on Club Documents page) at braidwoodrecreclub.com and emailed or picked up at the office. Please call with questions 815-458-2150. ch9-12

HOMES FOR RENT

House for rent: 3 bedroom, 2 bath, attached garage. Cottage Rd. on Kankakee River with boat launch. \$2,200/month. 708-205-4826. ck10-13

HOMES FOR RENT

Braidwood area, 3 BR, 2 bath, stove, refrigerator, C/A, W/D hookup, storage shed. Large lot & deck, 169 N Vernon Dr., Godley. \$1,250/mo. 1st, last, security, credit check. 815-476-6462. cc10-13

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

MISCELLANEOUS

Electric reclining loveseat, gray, like new, \$250; solid oak Keller Tressle dining table with two leaves, w/chairs, needs a little TLC, \$400 obo. Call 815-476-2972. cr10-12

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 27a-tfn

SaltDogg SS Spinner Spreader. Call Bill at 815-325-9450. ch11

MOBILE HOMES FOR RENT

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

SHOP YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES!

PETS

Large Selection of Dog and Cat Food, treats, accessories, health aids, clothing, Birthday treats, wall art, jewelry, gifts, greeting cards and Home of Fritters for Critters Pet Treats. New! Brew and Chew Dog Treats. Trinity Barkery 240 W. Baltimore Wilmington, IL 60481 815-476-5104 slewis@trinity-services.org. ch22b-tfn

SERVICE & REPAIRS

-CLIP AND SAVE- Sewing and alterations (including formal wear) services. Contact Theresa Farrell at 815-718-2690. Braceville, IL. cc7-10

FIREWOOD, Cherry BBQ firewood \$159. Dry, seasoned, oak firewood \$149, mixed woods \$129, plus delivery. Quick, friendly service. 815-260-0108. cc8-15

Gas Fireplace Repair 40 years experience. Licensed, insured & bonded. Call Margo at 708-712-5012 to schedule an appointment. Can repair most brands. Weekends available. Thank you. ck34-33

GOT GRASS Lawn Care Jim Baudino 815-342-6394 cc9-24

Mike Collins Roofing, re-shingles and gutter cleaning, aluminum gutter screen, no repair to small or too big. **INSULATION.** Keep your house cooler in summertime and warmer in the winter. Free estimate for blown in insulation for attics from Mike Collins Roofing. lic # 104.007296. Ask for Mike at 815-730-1303. ck17b-16b

A Thousand Words Photography 385 N. Second Ave. Coal City Mandy Eaton 815-791-2913

SITUATIONS WANTED

Wanted: Stories about local people, organizations and events. If you know a neighbor with an interesting hobby, collection or cause, give the editor a call at 815-634-0315 or 815-476-7966.

STORAGE

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

PUBLIC STORAGE
 Clementine's Closets
 815-530-0200
 - No Deposit - Starting at \$50
 515 Davy Lane, Wilmington

WANTED

WANTED SCRAP METAL

- Farm Machinery
- Garden Tractors
- Snowmobiles
- Appliances
- Anything Metal

Free pickup 7 days
 815-210-8819

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/onthejob_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.

T	R	A	N	C	E	S		E	E	R	I	E				
R	E	M	O	R	S	E		K	N	A	V	E				
A	P	P	R	O	P	R	I	A	T	E	D	O	R			
C	E	E				E	B	B	E	D		F	R	I		
E	A	R				N	I	L	E			E	R	I	E	
S	T	E	R	I	L	I	Z	E			C	R	E	E	S	
			A	K	I	T	A			B	A	R	E	S	T	
			C	O	N	Y		S	R	N	A					
A	C	C	E	N	T			M	A	N	E	T				
C	O	O	R	S			P	A	N	O	R	A	M	A	S	
A	P	I	S			E	A	S	E			A	S	H		
D	E	N			A	L	L	A	N				S	H	I	
E	P				W	I	L	L	I	E	N	E	L	S	O	N
M	O	N	A	D					S	I	N	C	E	R	E	
E	D	U	C	E					S	L	E	D	D	E	D	

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

GRUNDY COUNTY'S #1 HOME SELLER

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

SEE EVERY HOME ON THE MARKET AT C21.COM

(815) 942-9190

99% Customer Satisfaction Rating

Century 21 Coleman-Hornsby

2023 Desk Calendars ON SALE!

Great for writing in all those important dates for doctor's visits, family events and more. Featuring phone numbers for area carryouts.

\$6.00 each

While supplies last!

FPN

FREE PRESS NEWSPAPERS

111 S. Water St., Wilmington
 271 S. Broadway, Coal City

Fishing for great buys?

Check out our classifieds! To place an ad call **815-476-7966** or **815-634-0315**

www.freepressnewspapers.com

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

'Wackos' seem to be proliferating in Illinois

Last month, I wrote a tongue in cheek headline for my blog: "Poll conducted for IEA finds about 10 percent of Illinoisans are wackos."

The Normington-Petts and Next Generation Strategies poll of 1,000 Illinoisans conducted in January found that 11 percent strongly favor, "the fighting, yelling, or other contention at school board meetings that has been happening around the country."

Ten percent strongly opposed, "Teaching Illinois high school students about slavery in the United States and its impacts." Another 14 percent strongly opposed "Teaching Illinois high school students about racism and its impact in the United States." And 11 percent strongly favored, "Banning books from Illinois school libraries."

But we didn't need a scientific survey to know that "wackos" are proliferating.

Last year, then-Rep. Deb Conroy (D-Villa Park) came under attack after false and ridiculous claims were made that she sponsored a bill to forcibly round people up and lock them in internment camps for refusing to take a vaccine.

The attack was patently absurd on its face, but it was fanned by some Republican legislators and even so-called "moderates" like Republican DuPage County Board Chair candidate Greg Hart, who lost to Conroy last November. The result was, I wrote last year, "profanity-laden, disgusting, misogynistic messages from

hateful and violent-sounding people."

It got so bad that Conroy closed her district office for a time, and a man was eventually charged with two felonies for making threats against her. Conroy stood firm, but the bill as introduced died on the vine and more than 21,000 electronic witness slips were filed in opposition.

Then, the other day, Rep. Katie Stuart (D-Edwardsville) announced that she had canceled a constituent meet and greet over threats against her own bill.

House Bill 1286 merely sets state guidelines for commercial property owners who want to construct multiple-occupancy, all gender restrooms. The Illinois Retail Merchants Association, the American Institute of Architects - Illinois, the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, the Illinois Public Health Association, Equality Illinois, Illinois NOW and large numbers of other reputable groups filed electronic witness slips in support.

But the same usual suspects fanned the flames against Stuart's bill. Some current legislators, Rep. Stuart's former Republican opponent, former Rep. Jeanne Ives and groups like Awake Illinois and the Illinois Family Institute



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

ginned up yet another social media explosion, warning people that Stuart wanted to mandate all gender public restrooms everywhere.

The result was "phone calls, emails filled with vile language," to Rep. Stuart, according to a House Democratic spokesperson. None of the communications referenced the people and groups spewing the misinformation, the spokesperson said. "There's no specific connection other than they're all saying the same things essentially, all using the same language as these groups are, and they're all taking the same misinterpretation."

Rep. Stuart "has shared everything she has" with the Illinois State Police and other local law enforcement, the spokesperson said.

So far, the number of electronic witness slips generated against Stuart's bill hasn't come close to the massive numbers recorded on former Rep. Conroy's legislation (perhaps partially because last year was an election year and groups had been organizing around vaccines in general for years), but the end result is essentially the same: A legislator was forced to temporarily back away from the public because a bunch of easily manipulated, perpetually angry "wackos" got all worked up over nothing -

Birding for beginners

The Forest Preserve will be hosting a program "Rivers of Color-Birding for beginners, color" on Saturday, March 18, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., at Four Rivers Environmental

Education Center in Channahon.

Learn how to use color as a primary tool to identify birds. Free, ages 12 or older. Register by March 17.

101.19 Acres +/- Farmland - Coles County Illinois
ENDS: March 29th at 1PM

The Koenig Farm
 Located 15 miles northeast of Charleston, IL on North CR 2600 E. Offered as one tract. Mix between timber and 45.15 cropland acres providing hunting and recreational opportunities.

Details and BID ONLINE at firstmidag.com

Call Justin Wheeler, Auctioneer at 217-855-8358

Brock Norris, Broker, 217-258-3556, Mattoon
 Bailey Reynolds, Broker, 217-421-9619, Decatur

First Mid AG SERVICES

OREGON GFWC WOMAN'S CLUB PRESENTS
Oregon, IL Antique Show
 OVER 40 DEALERS FROM THE MIDWEST
March 25th & 26th, 2023
 Saturday 9am-5pm & Sunday 10am-3pm

- Antique Appraisals Sunday only 10am-2pm (\$5 per item)
- Plenty of Parking
- Door Prizes
- Concessions
- Handicap Accessible

BLACKHAWK CENTER
 1101 W. Jefferson St., Oregon, IL 61061

Entry \$6 • \$1 Discount for 1 person with this ad

Burning to start at Midewin

The USDA Forest Service will be conducting prescribed burning starting next week in parts of the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington.

Preparations are being made to conduct burning as weather permits. You might see smoke due to the controlled burning.

USDA Forest Service staff will initiate prescribed fire operations as weather patterns shift to favorable, modest temperatures and moderate humidity that is conducive to burning. Wind speed and direction, temperature, relative humidity, and measurable moisture in vegetation are taken into consideration.

Burning will be conducted in wide array of areas across Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie along Highway 53 and North River Road near Wilmington.

Since 1996, volunteers and staff have been working with over 275 native Illinois prairie plants to restore and enhance natural areas. Approximately 3,000 acres of land are actively undergoing restoration or enhancement, and

several tools are necessary to attaining restoration goals.

Some of the restoration tools include invasive species control through judicious herbicide application; field mowing; hand-pulling invasive plants; brush removal and use of prescribed fire. Use of prescribed fire is among the most effective and necessary pieces of the restoration process.

Prescribed fire provides the following benefits:

- Reduces hazardous fuels;
- Minimizes the spread of plant and animal disease;
- Removes invasive species that threaten species that are native to an ecosystem;
- Provides forage for animals;
- Improves habitat for threatened and endangered species; and
- Recycles nutrients back to the soil; and promotes the growth of forbs, tallgrasses, wildflowers, and other plants.

Forest Preserve to provide boating class

The Forest Preserve will be providing a U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary class, which is required for those born after 1998 who operate a motor vessel on public waters.

It will be held Saturday, March 18, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., at Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon. Ages 12 or older; \$40 per person.

To register, call Bob Allen from the Coast Guard Auxiliary, 630-621-5544.

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone who came to Brian DuBois's service, sent cards, flowers or just had him in their prayers. God Bless each & every one of you, for the overwhelming support and love you showed us. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

The DuBois Family

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Riverfront Lanes

402 S. Water St., Wilmington
 • Birthday parties (815)
 • Fundraisers 476-2600
 • Corporate parties
 • Child & adult leagues
 www.riverfrontlanes.com

LIFTED
 SPRAY FOAM INSULATION
 CONCRETE RAISING

Spray Foam Insulation

- garages
- pole buildings
- attics
- basements
- commercial
- industrial

Concrete Raising

- driveways
- sidewalks
- patios
- stairs
- and more!

Wilmington • 815-200-6880

SISTEK RENTALS
 We **SELL, REPAIR, and RENT**
 Outdoor Power Equipment

CubCadet **GRASS HOPPER**
 YOUR NEXT MOWER®

815-237-8298
 740 Oak Street • South Wilmington, IL

VIKING ROOFING & CONSTRUCTION CORP.

Now Offering IL Public Adjuster Services

FREE PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

- Shingle/Flat Roofs
- Gutters
- Siding
- Fascia/Soffit
- Insurance Claims

IL State License # 104-002993
 (815) 476-6010
 www.vrcc.us

Landscape Supply

- Driveway stone
- Pulverized topsoil
- Pool & play sand
- Hardwood mulch
- Decorative stone
- Bobcat Service

We Deliver!
 www.jdlandscapesupply.com
 815-478-3717
 708-921-3535

FARMERS INSURANCE

MELODIE J. LUCKETT

326 E. Baltimore St.
 Wilmington, IL 60481
 Office 815-476-5242
 Cell 815-671-1356
 mluckett@farmersagent.com

Agent, Notary

Auto • Home
 Life • Commercial

A & E SEPTIC SERVICE
 Pumping - Repairs - New Installation
 Sewer Rodding - Sanitary - Party Potties
 Ed Bonnavier
 Coal City • 634-4691

This space could be yours!
Call (815) 476-7966

PROFESSIONAL REAL ESTATE

JUDY SUNDINE
 BROKER

Direct: (815) 405-6758
 815-476-7916

Fax: 815-476-7566
 Email: judysundine@sbcbglobal.net

506 S. WATER ST., WILMINGTON, IL 60481

SHORKEY PAINTING
 Est. 1989
 (815) 546-1321
 Interior/Exterior

Mini Storage
CLEMENTINE'S CLOSETS
 515 Davy Lane, Wilmington

Affordable
 Clean, Secure
 Monthly Rentals

No Deposit Required
 815-530-0200

BASEMENT & CRAWL SPACE SOLUTIONS

**WATERPROOFING
 FOUNDATION REPAIR
 INSULATING
 ENCAPSULATION
 SUMP PUMPS
 DRAINAGE SYSTEMS
 GUTTER GUARDS**

(815) 715-6050 DryToday.net
 Braidwood, IL

AJ's Promotional Products and Apparel

Adidas® Koozies®
 Oakley® Bic® Pens
 Champion® Sharpie®

EMAIL: ajsprint@comcast.net
 WEB: ajspromotional.dcpromosite.com

Janet Fisher-Schatz **815-263-5990**

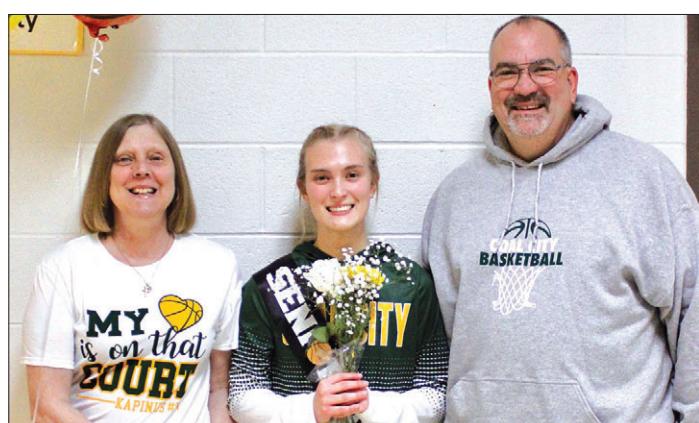
ORDER YOUR BUSINESS CARDS
 from the Free Press Newspapers
 Call 815-476-7966 and ask for Eric

COALER SPORTS

Coaler basketball players, parents honored on senior night



SENIOR CARLEY MORRIS, guard for the Lady Coalers, is escorted by Dirk Morris and Alison D'Orazio. She has been in the program for four years. Her future plans include attending a university and majoring in psychology or speech and hearing sciences to earn a degree in Occupational Therapy.



MADISON KAPINUS, escorted by her parents Don & Debby Kapinus, was among Coal City basketball players recently honored during Senior Night. She has been in the program for two years. Her future plans are to attend Joliet Junior College for the pre-vet tech program and then transfer to a four year college.



SENIOR BELLA VERAVEIC, forward for the Lady Coalers, is the daughter of James Veraveic. This is her first year in the program. Bella has participated in volleyball the past two seasons. Her future plans are to attend JJC to study real estate and continue her volleyball career.



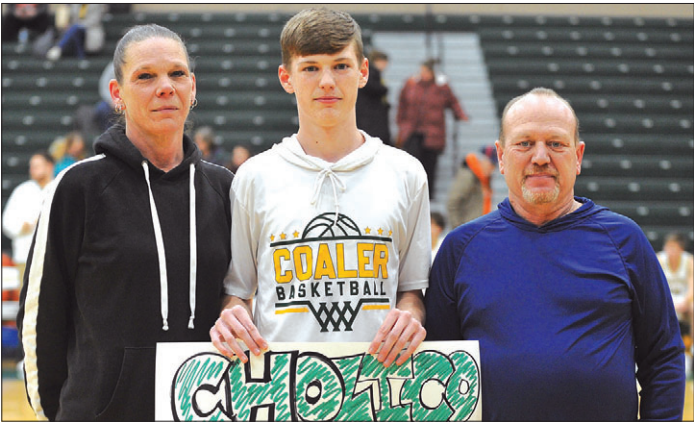
SENIOR BETH GREENE, guard for the Lady Coalers, is the daughter of Tabatha Greene. She has been in the program for two years. Her future plans are to move to Florida and go to school and major in criminology.



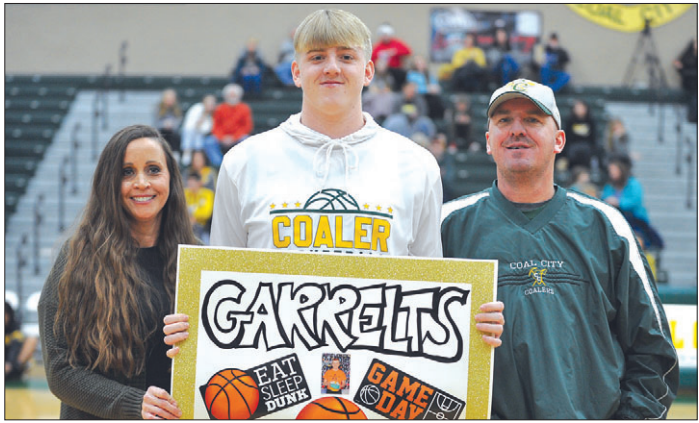
SENIOR KERIGAN COPES is escorted by her parents Lance and Kristin Copes. She has been in the basketball program for four years. Her future plans are to attend Coe College to major in psychology with minor in sociology and continue her softball career.



SENIOR PEYTON BENSON, forward for the Lady Coalers basketball team, is the daughter of Lisa McCure and Brandon Benson. This was her first year in the program. Her future plans are to attend South Alabama University to study professional health services & hospital administration and minor in creative writing.



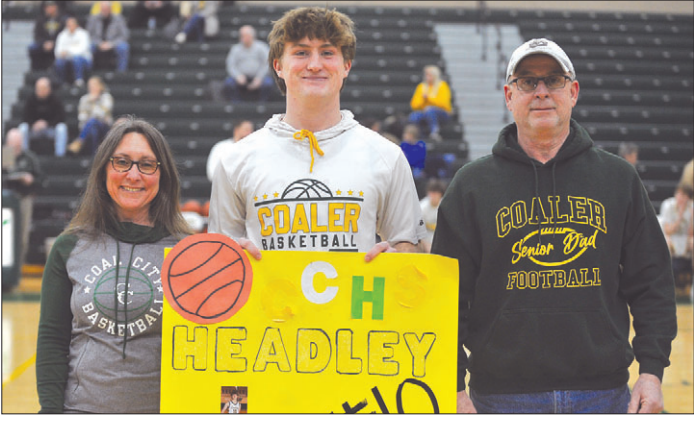
COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Chris Cholico is escorted by his parents Teresa Franklin and Bob Cholico. He has played basketball for four years. His future plans are to be a Real Estate Agent.



COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Carter Garrelts is escorted by his parents Brett and Leigh Garrelts. He has played four years of basketball. His future plans are to attend Spoon River College to play Baseball and is undecided about his major.



COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Nick Cook is escorted by his parents Andrew and Julie Cook. He has played basketball for three years and has also participated in track for one year. After graduation Nick plans on joining the trades for his career.



COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Cason Headley is escorted by his parents Nicole and Tony Vaira. He has played basketball for four years. He also participated in baseball and football at CCHS. Cason's future plans are to be a lineman at ComEd.



COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Garrett Keeley is escorted by his parents Matt and Casey Keeley. He has played four years of basketball. Garrett's future plans are to join the construction trades for his career.



COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Carson Shepard is escorted by Julie Offerman. He has played four years of basketball. He is undecided about his future plans.



COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Dillon Harrington is escorted by Allison and Steve Wren. He has played two years of basketball. Dillon's future plans are to go to College and major in education.



COAL CITY BASKETBALL senior Nolan Ness is escorted by his parents Jenn and Randy Ness. He has played four years of basketball. His future plans are to attend college and major in actuarial science.

Fresh Hot Delivery

The Coal City
Courant

Benson Insurance
Agency, Inc.

ALLEGRA
Printing

Coal City Coalers Team Pride
#1 Sports Fans Weekly Internet Winner

Clara Highbaugh
Winner of a large 2-item
Pizza, carry-out only

Must redeem by March 13, 2023

"Proud to be serving the community for the past 37 years!"

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

"Support Coal City High School Athletes"

GSWB upends ICS in three

The 8th grade GSWB volleyball team from Gardner South Wilmington Braceville school defeated ICS last week in three sets 19-25, 25-19, 25-15.

The victory improves their record to 15-6

Leaders of the match were Olivia Siano- 6 aces, 4 kills, 10 assists, Maddy Grivetti- 3 aces, 6 kills, 6 digs, Lily Buck- 2 aces, 2 kills, Abbie Olsen- 5 kills, 4 digs, 2 assists and Aubrey Male- 5 assists, 2 kills.

PEOPLE WHO READ NEWSPAPERS ARE

STUDENTS WITH BETTER GRADES

It all starts with newspapers

FRESH HOT DELIVERY!

"Proud to be serving the community for the past 37 years!"

37TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

1 X-Large - 2 Topping Pizza
XL Geo's Nuggets, FREE Double Chocolate Caramel M&M's Gourmet Brownie & a FREE 2-Liter of Soda

(Limit 1 coupon per party per visit)

ONLY \$28⁹⁹

Not valid with any other offer. Plus sales tax. Expires 03/31/23.

Order online at www.geospizza.net

634-8858
715 S. Broadway • Coal City



RYDER GILL, a sixth grader, is headed back to the IESA State Wrestling finals. He captured the sectional title at 65 pounds last weekend. He is looking to improve from his second place finish at last year's state finals.



COAL CITY MIDDLE School eighth grader Cooper Morris earned the sectional title last week and a return trip to the IESA State Finals in DeKalb. Morris is looking to be a two time state champion.



MACKENZIE HENLINE was one of three Lady Coalers selected to the All Conference Basketball team.

CCMS advances 15 to state wrestling

On Saturday, the Warriors competed in the IESA sectionals. Coal City brought 22 boys to compete and 15 of them are advancing to State this weekend in DeKalb, IL

The top four in each weight class get to compete with the best in the state. Coal City Middle School finished with five sectional champions, five runners-up and four in third place.

- State qualifiers include:
- 65—Ryder Gill placing 1st
 - 70—Landon Bomba placing 2nd
 - 70—Brantley Brooks placing 3rd
 - 75—Jake Munsterman placing 1st
 - 80—Jason Piatak placing 2nd
 - 95—Owen Petersen placing 1st
 - 95—Tyson Price placing 2nd
 - 100—Cooper Morris placing 1st
 - 105—Bobby Stoudt placing 2nd
 - 126—Alex Carlson placing 3rd
 - 135—Fabian Hernandez placing 3rd
 - 145—Theo Fritz placing 3rd
 - 155—Aidan Edmonds placing 3rd
 - 167—Brody D'Orazio placing 1st
 - 185—Cole Russell placing 2nd



ALEX CARLSON gave it all he had and came out of the sectional with a third place finish and a spot in the IESA State Finals. The Warriors advanced 15 wrestlers to this weekend meet in DeKalb.



FIRST YEAR WRESTLER Theo Fritz is looking to close out the season by placing at the state finals this weekend. Fritz finished third at the sectional tournament in Coal City last weekend.

Area players make All Conference team

The Illinois Central Eight has selected 22 girls for the All Conference girls basketball team. Peotone led with four All Conference players including seniors Jenna Hunter, Mady Kibelkis and Marissa Velasco, along with junior Madi Schroeder. Coal City had three All Conference picks, including senior Audrey Cooper and juniors Mia Ferrias and Mackenzie Henline. Reed-Custer senior Brooklyn Harding and junior Kaylee Tribble were named to the first team. Wilmington junior Lexi Liaromatis was also chosen while seniors Kaitlyn O'Donnell and Breanna Horton earn All Conference special mention.

JV Lady Warriors upset Troy, fall in regional title

Congratulations to the 4th seeded 7th grade volleyball team from Coal City Middle School for upsetting the #1 seed, Troy, at Troy Middle School in the regional semi-final. The team defeated Troy in two games with scores of 25-20 and 25-23, advancing them to the regional championship against Channahon. Scoring for the Warriors were: Maggie Carlson- 15 pts, 6 aces; Tori Morales- 7 pts, 4 aces; Rese Symons- 4 pts, 1 ace; Lilly Gerrish- 3 pts, 1 ace; Lexi Dearth- 2 pts, 1 ace; Sydney Jones - 1 pt

Leading kills were Ashlyn Siron with 3, Victoria Morales and Lilly Gerrish each with 2 kills, and Maggie Carlson and Kaylin Walker each had 1 kill. Ashlyn Siron also led digs with 4, Maggie Carlson, Lilly Gerrish, and Lexi Dearth each had 2 digs, and Kaylin Walker, Sydney Jones, and Victoria Morales each had 1 dig. A special thank you to all the 8th grade and 6th grade volleyball players for bringing their "A game" cheering. Also to Coach McMurtey and Coach Painter for all their amazing help. It was awesome. The Lady Warriors lost to Channahon 25-22, 26-24 during the regional championship on Wednesday, March 1.

Coal City athletes sign for college play



COLLEGE COMMITS—The Coal City Athletic Department held a ceremony for family and upcoming Coaler graduates who have signed a letter of intent to play for college teams. Seven Coal City athletes so far have committed to colleges, with more expected. Included are (from left, seated) Cara Planeta who will play soccer at Concordia University-Wisconsin; and Kerigan Copes who will join the softball team at Coe College. Standing are Caden Kuder who will play baseball at Spoon River College; Carter Garrelts who also will play baseball at Spoon River College; Kaelan Natyshok who signed for baseball at Missouri University of Science and Technology; and Collin Dames who will join the track and field team at North Central College. Not pictured is Gabrielle Babcock who will be a cheerleader at Greenville University.

Hang a state champion on your wall!

Coaler State Wrestling poster

TAKING PREORDERS

We need an idea how many are interested in high quality 16 x 24 posters on card stock so we're taking preorders at \$22 each (no shipping charges). Call or stop by **The Coal City Courant** 271 S. Broadway, Coal City 815-634-0315

Capable
Conscientious
Caring
Credible
Competent
Communicative
Confident
Collaborative

VOTE Bradley for Mayor

Paid for by Ross Bradley