

Featuring senior photos
of the CCHS Class of 2024

Soccer seniors
go out scoring



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Coal City School District photo

COAL CITY HIGH SCHOOL seniors are preparing for commencement exercises to be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, May 12 in the school's competition gymnasium. The top 10% of the Class of 2024 will be honored and remarks given by the valedictorian, salutatorian, class officers and Superintendent Chris Spencer. At the top of the class academically are (from left): Avah Housman, Mackenzie Henline, Ava Houston, Alaina Gill, Elsa Bunton, salutatorian Abby Stiles, valedictorian Dominic Cimino, Keaton Stroner, Jared Counterman, Kevin McConnell, Kylie Jackson and Amelia Fritz. Not pictured Ryland Megyeri.

The top of their class

Coal City High School congratulates seniors who ranked in the top 10%

Sunday's commencement ceremony at Coal City High School will recognize the academic achievement of the top 10% of the Class of 2024.

Valedictorian Dominic Cimino will be honored, as will salutatorian Abby Stiles. Also to be recognized, in order of class rank, are: Kylie Jackson, Amelia Fritz, Elsa Bunton, Alaina Gill, Keaton Stroner, Kevin McConnell, Ava Houston, Jared Counterman, Avah Housman, Mackenzie Henline and Ryland Megyeri.

The students in the top 10% posted grade point averages [gpa] all above a 4.0, ranging from 4.652 to 4.149.

As they close out their time in the Unit 1 School District, the students reflect on their time at CCHS and share their plans for the future.

Kylie Jackson, the daughter of Suzanne and Chris Jackson, will complete her high school studies with a 4.521 gpa. She is an Illinois State Scholar and Acclaimed Coaler.

Throughout high school she has participated in Concert Band, Jazz Band, Color Guard, Winter Guard, National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, SADD, Future Business Leaders of America and Math Team. She has been recognized with the Kindness and Organization Awards, received the Coaches' Award for Tennis and was an Academic All-Conference honoree in the sport.

Kylie will continue her studies at Eastern Illinois University majoring in Communication Disorders and Sciences.

Amelia Fritz, the daughter of Traci and Matt Fritz, has earned recognition as an Illinois State Scholar, Acclaimed Coaler and is a recipient of the National Rural and Small Town Award given by the College Board. She finishes high school with a 4.452 gpa.

Amelia said her parents have been the biggest motivators to her success. "They were consistently there for me through the good and hard times. They made sure that I maintained a social life instead of loading up my schedule. My parents have been my No. 1 supporters, believing in me even when I couldn't. At times

they forced me to get help in school before I was ready to, saving my grade and getting me comfortable to reach out to teachers," she said.

As a Coaler she was involved in Speech, Science Club, GSA, Drama Club/Musicals, Madrigals, Art and National Honor Society.

Amelia will continue her education at Ball State University majoring in Social Studies Education.

Elsa Bunton, the daughter of Brock and Natalie Bunton, said it was her parents who were her biggest motivators throughout high school. "They always believed in me and pushed me to do my best."

She wraps up her high school studies with a 4.354 gpa and recognition as an Acclaimed Coaler.

During high school, Elsa has been involved in Tennis, Musicals, Drama Club, Educators Rising, Student Council, National Honors Society and Link Leaders. She was named to the Academic All-Conference Tennis Team and was selected as recipient of the Bonnie McDowell Spirit of Music Award.

Elsa's plan is to obtain a degree in elementary education.

Alaina Gill, the daughter of Amanda and Tony Gill, is an Illinois State Scholar and earned recognition as an Acclaimed Coaler. She finishes her high school studies with a 4.291 gpa.

During high school she participated in Spanish Honors Society and Link Leaders, she served as the Volleyball manager and held the position of president in the National Honors Society and Student Council. As a student enrolled in courses at the Grundy Area Vocational Center she was twice named a GAVC Directors Award recipient.

Alaina said her mom has motivated her the most. "Her constant support and effort to help me be successful has had a huge impact on my high school career."

Alaina's future plans are to attend Joliet Junior College to study nursing.

Keaton Stroner is the son of Jennifer Stroner-Rolley, Dennis Rolley, Lisa Stroner and Sarah

Stroner. He completes his high school studies with a 4.267 gpa. He has been recognized as an Illinois State Scholar and Acclaimed Coaler.

During high school he has been involved in Soccer and Track and Field. Earning the honors of Most improved in Track during the 2022 and 2023 seasons and was selected to the Academic All-Conference Track team in 2022, 2023 and 2024 and the 2023 and 2024 All-Conference Track Teams.

Stroner noted that his teacher and track coach Mr. Keppner motivated him the most in high school.

"He never gave up on me nor let me give up when I was down. In school and sports, he is motivating, passionate, and funny. Although he didn't always listen, he made me feel heard and took time out of his day to understand me and talk to me. I owe Mr. Keppner an unpayable debt and I hope he knows how important his guidance was to me."

Honorable mentions go to some of his other teachers like Mrs. Gerber, Mr. Unger, Mrs. Fritz, Senora Sondergoth, Mr. Sink, Mr. Baer, Mrs. Peterson, Mrs. Sthay, Mr. Leman, Mrs. Cyrkiel and many more.

Stroner is headed to the University of Kentucky where he will be a pre-med major.

Kevin McConnell, is the son of Pete and Kelly McConnell. He completes his high school studies with a 4.244 gpa. His academic success was noted in his selection as an AP Scholar, Illinois State Scholar and Acclaimed Coaler.

Throughout high school, Kevin has been involved in Spanish Honors Society, Trapshooting Club, Art Club, Track and Field and Speech, advancing to the State Tournament this year.

McConnell reports that Mr. Baer, his teacher and Speech coach, has been his biggest motivator. "He taught me how to speak in front of others and was always supporting me while simultaneously putting a smile on my face."

In the fall, McConnell will begin his studies in computer science and mathematics at Simpson College.

Ava Houston, the daughter of Tracy and Devon Elliott, has achieved a 4.234 gpa and has earned recognition as an Illinois State Scholar and Acclaimed Coaler.

During high school she was involved in National Honor Society, Coalers with Character, Cheerleading and Soccer. She served as cheer captain and was named to the All-Conference Cheer Team.

Houston was her own biggest motivator throughout high school. "I held myself to an expected standard and that motivated me to do better," she said.

Houston will continue her education at the University of Missouri majoring in English with a pre-law minor.

Jared Counterman, the son of Jessica and Caleb Counterman, completes his high school studies with a 4.168 gpa and recognition as an Illinois State Scholar.

"My teachers have had the biggest effect on me in high school. Throughout high school all of my teachers have pushed me to work harder and have put within me the want to learn more. I wouldn't be able to have done as many classes or fight through sicknesses without the sympathy and friendliness from all my teachers. I am forever grateful," Counterman said.

During high school, Jared was involved in the school musicals and was a member of National Honor Society, Coalers with Character, Chess Club, Drama Club, Scholastic Bowl, Coal City Running Club and Madrigals, and he played soccer and was on the track team. He was All Conference in Track and an athletic All-Conference honoree. He will continue his education at Olivet Nazarene University studying physics prior to transferring to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Avah Housman, is the daughter of John and Rebecca Housman. She graduates from Coal City High School with a 4.158 gpa.

"My parents and my teachers motivated me the most in high school. They always pushed me to do my best and helped me with whatever I needed," she said.

At Coal City High School, Avah was involved in Yearbook, Coalers with Character and Cheerleading in which she was named to the All-Academic Team.

Avah will continue her studies at Illinois State University majoring in Allied Health Professions.

Mackenzie Henline, the daughter of Stefanie and Lonnie Henline, completes her studies at Coal City High School with a 4.154 gpa and recognition as an Acclaimed Coaler. She said her parents were her biggest motivators. "They have pushed me to do my best and work hard."

Mackenzie participated in National Honor Society, Coalers with Character and Spanish Honor Society. She played volleyball, softball and basketball for the Coalers and was an All-Academic honoree all for years in each of her sports and received All-Conference honors in basketball in 2022 and volleyball in 2023.

Her plan is to become a teacher and she will begin her studies in the field of elementary education at Illinois State University in the fall.

Ryland Megyeri, is the son of Chris Megyeri and Shanna Arnold. He finishes high school with a 4.149 gpa. His parents and the Sidemen were his biggest motivators over the past four years.

In his senior year, Ryland was recognized as an Illinois State Scholar and Acclaimed Coaler. He has also been honored as an All-Conference Academic selection in golf for three consecutive years and was first and second in conference his junior and senior year.

In addition to participating in golf, he was a member of the Spanish Honors Society and served as its director of activities this year.

Ryland will continue his education at Lewis University where he will major in data science.



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Valedictorian, Salutatorian

Cimino, Stiles earn top academic honors

As Abby Stiles collects her diploma on Sunday, she leaves high school with the tools to be successful in the next stages of her education and in life.

"Coal City High School has prepared me for my future by helping me learn the valuable asset of time management and responsibility through being held accountable—balancing work, sports, clubs and school," said Stiles, who graduates as salutatorian.

Stiles joins Dominic Cimino at the top of the class of 2024.

Cimino closes out his high school journey as valedictorian of the 110th graduating class of Coal City High School, an honor that he said means all of his diligence the past four years has paid off. "Working hard and persevering through the harder classes was worth the effort."

Cimino, the son of Racheal and Daniel

Cimino, set lofty academic goals including his classroom grades, AP exams and the SAT. His success has been spurred by his brother, Jacob.

"He has been a motivating factor to push me and set the bar high enough that it is a challenge to reach, and he has made sure that I never truly slacked off in my academics," Cimino said.

The valedictorian posted a 4.652 grade point average [gpa] and earned recognition as an Illinois State Scholar by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. He is an AP Scholar with Distinction and a recipient of the National Rural and Small Town Award given by the College Board.

Cimino and Stiles are also recognized as Acclaimed Coalers, dedicated students who have demonstrated college and career readiness.

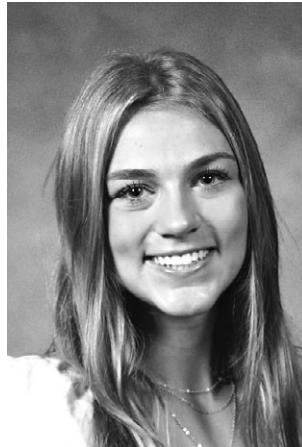
Stiles, the daughter of



DOMINIC CIMINO

Katie Warren, is also an Illinois State Scholar and completes her high school studies with a 4.558 gpa. She will continue her education at Indiana Wesleyan University majoring in finance and actuarial science.

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology is where Cimino will continue his studies in the field of



ABBY STILES

software engineering. As he moves on from high school, he said he is looking forward to, "the challenges that college will bring, and the opportunity to grow as a person enough to finally go out into the real world as an adult."

As a Coaler, Cimino participated in Scholastic Bowl, Speech, Math Team and Science Team. He was

also involved in band from freshman to junior year.

Stiles participated in National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Future Business Leaders of America, Coalers with Character, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Math Team, Footnotes and varsity choir. She was also an athlete playing tennis, basketball and volleyball. She was named the Tennis MVP multiple times and was a three time state qualifier in the sport.

Mr. Leman is the one person who motivated Stiles the most during her time as a Coaler, both in the classroom and the tennis court. "He has been a constant source of encouragement while continually pushing me to better myself," she said.

Stiles, Cimino and the class of 2024 will gather in the school's competition gym at 2 p.m. on Sunday for commencement, it will be the final time the group

will be together in the space.

As the hours of being a high school student tick away, Cimino looked back to his first day of high school and noted how his view of the world has significantly expanded.

"As people learn more, they realize just how complex everything is, and in the many classes I have taken throughout my high school years, it was amazing to finally realize how wide the world is. This is a depth I was lacking during my freshman year."

On the knowledge gained, the valedictorian's advice to the class of 2025 is, "challenge yourself. I know it is difficult to put in the effort, but it pays off. Don't slack off just because you are almost done. Sprint through the finish line, don't slow down to leisurely walk over it."

Grundy cops bust two for fentanyl



Grundy County Sheriff's Office photo

A TRAFFIC STOP on Wednesday by members of the Grundy County Proactive Unit resulted in a high count of deadly fentanyl and \$1,961 cash. Grundy County Sheriff's Office reports that a Toyota passenger car was stopped for a speeding violation on the Ridge Road off ramp of I-80 in Minooka. After speaking with the driver and passenger of the vehicle, cannabis not properly packaged was observed in plain view. A search of the vehicle was conducted where 307 bags of suspected fentanyl weighing 216.5 grams was located. A total of \$1,961 was also found. Eugene Walker, 32, of Chicago, and Christopher Sherry, 42, of Homer Glen, were taken into custody on charges of Manufacture/Delivery of Controlled Substance (Fentanyl) 100-400 grams a Class X felony. Sherry was taken to Morris Hospital due to health issues and he was cited and released with a court date. Walker was transported to the Grundy County Jail where he was held pending a Pre-Trial Release hearing. All persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Stamp Out Hunger food drive Saturday

Letter carriers with the U.S. Postal Service will be collecting food items this Saturday during the annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive held across the U.S.

The all-volunteer one-day food drive is held annually the second Saturday in May.

On Saturday, May 11, postal customers are asked to bag healthy, non-perishable food items and place them by their mailbox so that letter carriers can pick them up and deliver them to local food pantries.

Attorney Meents files Gehr estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF RICHARD WARREN GEHR, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 21

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of Richard Warren Gehr, Letters of Office as Co-Executors were issued on April 12, 2024, to Kevin P. Hart, whose address is 160 N. 1st Street, Coal City, Illinois 60416 and Kregg A. Hart, whose address is 185 E. Oak Street, Coal City, Illinois 60416; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before October 24, 2024, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org.

Kevin P. Hart and Kregg A. Hart
Co-Executors of the Estate of Richard Warren Gehr, Deceased
Frank J. Meents
Meents Law, P.C.
25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Telephone: (815) 534-9515
Facsimile: (815) 534-9516
Attorney Code: 06298859
E-mail: frank@meentslaw.com

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, April 24, May 1 and May 8, 2024.

Attorney Meents files Reardanz estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF HERMAN WALTER REARDANZ, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 22

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of Herman Walter Reardanz, Letters of Testamentary as Independent Executor were issued on April 25, 2024, to Cathleen Rose Reardanz, whose address is 895 E. Division Street, Coal City, Illinois 60416; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before November 12, 2024, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org.

Cathleen Rose Reardanz
Independent Executor of the Estate of Herman Walter Reardanz, Deceased
Frank J. Meents
25158 West Eames Street, Unit A
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Telephone: (815) 534-9515
Facsimile: (815) 534-9516
Attorney Code: 06298859
E-mail: frank@meentslaw.com

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, May 1, 8 and 15, 2024.

Attorney Meents files Maland estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF PETER JOSEPH MALAND, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 25

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of Peter Joseph Maland, Letters of Office as Independent Executor was issued on April 25, 2024, to Anthony E. Maland, whose address is 6571 Spruce Lane, Winneconne, Wisconsin 54986; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before November 12, 2024, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org.

Anthony E. Maland
Independent Executor of the Estate of Peter Joseph Maland, Deceased
Frank J. Meents
25158 West Eames Street, Unit A
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Telephone: (815) 534-9515
Facsimile: (815) 534-9516
Attorney Code: 06298859
E-mail: frank@meentslaw.com

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, May 1, 8 and 15, 2024.



Ofc. Brennan latest academy graduate

POLICE ACADEMY GRADUATE—Kyle Brennan (center) is the newest police officer who will serve and protect to people of Coal City. Officer Brennan recently completed 16 weeks of training at the University of Illinois Police Training Institute. Attending the graduation and welcoming Brennan to the Coal City Police Department were Field Training Officer Kevin Jones (left) and Sgt. Mike Imhof. They will be the officers who will work with Brennan over the next four months as he complete his field training before going on solo patrol.

Uncle Fuzz's Varmint Removal files as new business

LEGAL NOTICE

Assumed Name Publication Notice

Public Notice is hereby given that on April 30th, A.D. 2024, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Grundy County, Illinois, setting forth names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as Uncle Fuzz's Varmint Removal located at P.O. Box 75, Mazon, IL 60444.

Dated this 30th day of April, A.D. 2024.
Kay T Olson, Grundy County Clerk
Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, May 8, 15 and 22, 2024.

Maine Township annual Budget Hearing

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Maine Township Budget Hearing

Notice is hereby given that a Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Township of Maine, in the County of Grundy, State of Illinois, for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2024, and ending March 31, 2025, will be on file and conveniently available to public inspection at Maine Township Hall on May 8, 2024 by request or appointment pamhazzard@icloud.com

Notice is further given hereby that a public hearing on said Budget and Appropriation Ordinance will be at 6:15 p.m., June 10, 2024 at Main Township Hall and that final action on this ordinance will be taken at the public hearing.

Dated this 9th day of April, 2024.
Published in the Coal City Courant on May 8, 2024.

Hometown Storage to dispose of property

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Lien

Hometown Storage, 2920 E. Division St., Diamond, IL 60416, 815-634-3333 hereby is asserting a Possessory Lien in pursuant to your contract and the State of Illinois Self-Service Facility Act.

Tenant: Carol Marcus, C-3 Corp., 822 N. 129th Infantry Dr., #105, Joliet, IL 60435, Unit #403.

If unpaid rental charges, late fees and associated charges are not paid for in full by May 31, 2024 the property will be sold to satisfy the lien.

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, May 8 & 22, 2024.

Maine Township annual Road District Budget Hearing

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Maine Township Road District Budget Hearing

Notice is hereby given that a Tentative Budget and Appropriation Ordinance for the Maine Township Road District, in the County of Grundy, State of Illinois, for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2024, and ending March 31, 2025, will be on file and conveniently available to public inspection at Maine Township Hall on May 8, 2024, by request or appointment pamhazzard@icloud.com

Notice is further given hereby that a public hearing and final action on said Budget and Appropriation Ordinance will be at 6:20 p.m., June 10, 2024, at Maine Township Hall and that final action on this ordinance will be taken at the public hearing.

Dated this 9th day of April, 2024.
Published in the Coal City Courant on May 8, 2024.

Hometown Storage to dispose of property

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice of Lien

Hometown Storage, 2920 E. Division St., Diamond, IL 60416, 815-634-3333 hereby is asserting a Possessory Lien in pursuant to your contract and the State of Illinois Self-Service Facility Act.

Tenant: Johnny Crawford, 408 S. East St., Gardner, IL 60424, Unit #G-47.

If unpaid rental charges, late fees and associated charges are not paid for in full by May 31, 2024 the property will be sold to satisfy the lien.

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, May 8 & 22, 2024.

CCUSD #1 to discuss Special Education Services for the 2024-2025 school year

PUBLIC NOTICE

Meeting set to discuss special education services

Coal City Community Unit School District 1 will conduct a meeting on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 at 8:00 a.m. at the Coal City School District Administrative Center, 550 S Carbon Hill Rd., Coal City, IL.

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the district's plans for providing special education services to students with disabilities who are home-schooled within the district for the 2024-2025 school year.

Any parent of a home-schooled student who has been or may be identified with a disability and resides within the district boundaries is invited to attend.

Published in the Coal City Courant on May 8, 2024.



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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Senior athletes recognized during sports banquet

The Coal City High School Athletic Department held its first annual Senior Sports Banquet on Sunday, May 5. The event recognized senior athletes for their contributions while honoring select members of the class of 2024 for outstanding achievements in their various athletic endeavors.

Jim Feeney—Male Athlete of the Year

Makayla Henline—Female Athlete of the Year

Recipients of the Athlete of the Year Awards were nominated by the high school coaching staff and both are three sport athletes.

Feeney was selected as the Male Athlete of the Year for his skills in football, basketball and baseball for the Coalers. Female Athlete of the Year, Makayla Henline, has been part of the volleyball, basketball and softball teams at CCHS.

Both will be playing collegiate athletics, Henline in softball at Rock Valley College and Feeney will be a part of the St. Norbert College football team.

Abby Stiles—Career Achievement Award

Buddy Widlowski—Career Achievement Award

Stiles had great success as a student-athlete at CCHS. She played tennis, basketball and volleyball for the past four years. She

found the greatest success on the court as a member of the Coalers Tennis Team advancing to the State Tournament three consecutive years. For this, and her other contributions, she was recognized with the Career Achievement Award.

Widlowski earned his 100th varsity career win in wrestling his senior year. He also qualified for another IHSA Individual State Wrestling Tournament appearance. He's a multiple state qualifier in wrestling at both the individual and team level, earning a championship dual team medal with his teammates in 2023. He is also a state qualifier in bass fishing and finished in the top 15 at last year's tournament.

He will once again be in the boat for the Coalers at the 2024 state fishing finals. Buddy also has played football for the Coalers. For his many years of dedication to the athletic department and his success he was awarded the Career Achievement Award.

Tanna Curry—Female Teammate of the Year

Joe Watson—Male Teammate of the Year

Nominated by their peers, Curry and Watson were named Teammates of the Year. "One of the best compliments you can get as a member of any team,

whether it be on the high school level or the next level is being a great teammate," Assistant Athletic Director Brad Boreis said.

Curry was a member of the golf and basketball teams while Watson played football and baseball for the Coalers.

Ethan Scrogam, Colten Sztapka, Keaton Stroner, Jared Counterman, Adaline Dowling and Kevin McConnell—Coaler Pride Award

The recipients of this year's Coalers Pride Award are all senior members of the track and field team who, in the words of Boreis said, "display what our school represents at all times." These student athletes, "took the high road, respected decisions and are model athletes for our school."

Due to construction within the stadium, this year's track and field season resulted in no home meets, not the way the seniors wanted it to go. But, as Boreis said, they handled it professionally and therefore they are most deserving of the Coalers Pride Award.

Abby Stiles—Academic Athlete of the Year

Stiles is the salutatorian of her class with a 4.558 grade point average. She has earned recognition as an Illinois State Scholar and Acclaimed Coalers. She will

continue her education at Indiana Wesleyan University to study finance and actuarial science.

Mark Masters—Coach of the Year

Masters is a Hall of Fame Coach who has led the Coalers Wrestling Team to multiple Dual Team State Final appearances over the years with the team being crowned State Champions in 2023 and Runners-Up in 2024. Masters has also coached dozens of wrestlers who have qualified for the Individual State Finals with several champions including 2024 champ Landin Benson.

Three Sport Career Athletes

Makayla Henline—volleyball, basketball and softball

Makenzie Henline—volleyball, basketball and softball

Colten Sztapka—football, basketball and track and field

Jim Feeney—football, basketball and baseball

The names of these students will be added to a plaque that hangs in the school's events corridor.

All senior athletes in attendance were presented with a certificate noting each of the sports they participated in during their senior year.



Coal City School District photo

COALER WRESTLING coach Mark Masters was named the 2024 Coach of the Year. He is pictured with wrestler Buddy Widlowski who earned the Career Achievement Award for his success in wrestling and bass fishing.



Coal City School District photo

COALER TEAMMATES of the Year, an award nominated by students, was presented to [from left]: Tanna Curry and Joe Watson.



Coal City School District photo

FOUR COALERS were recognized as Three Sport Career Athletes. They are [from left]: Makayla Henline, Mackenzie Henline, Colten Sztapka and Jim Feeney.



Coal City School District photo

COALER CAREER ATHLETES of the Year are [from left] Buddy Widlowski and Abby Stiles.



Coal City School District photo

SENIOR MEMBERS of the Coal City High School Track and Field Team were recognized as recipients of the Coalers Pride Award. Those honored were [from left]: Kevin McConnell, Keaton Stroner, Colten Sztapka, Jared Counterman and Ethan Scrogam. Not pictured is Adaline Dowling.



Coal City School District photo

COALER ATHLETES of the Year are [from left]: Jim Feeney and Makayla Henline.



Coal City School District photo

ACADEMIC STUDENT Athlete of the Year is Abby Stiles, salutatorian of the class of 2024.

Historical Society to host annual dinner

The Grundy County Historical Society and Museum will be hosting its annual dinner/meeting on Tuesday, May 21 at Maria's Ristorante, 1591 N. Division St., Morris.

Cost for dinner is \$30/person, reservations are required, please respond by May 15 to the Museum at 815-942-4880.

Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. Program will begin around 7 p.m. This year's speaker is Gerald Savage, a member of the HoChunk tribe. He will describe the culture and history of the HoChunk Nation. He will examine this history of his tribal territory and settlements, how his family was relocated to Starved Rock, his tribal names and culture.

For additional information contact the Museum.

In loving memory of

Grandma Judy

May 11th

But we remember now in love,
Your life from start to end,
And we're just glad we knew you,
As our Grandma!

Love & miss you,
Devun, Dylun, Aricana, Ryleigh,
Blake, Kaitlyn, Marlie, Preston,
& Grant

Local Advertising

That Works as Hard as You Do

In Loving Memory

of

Gary Lissy Jr.

May 11th

Ever since you went away
The days go slowly by,
And the hardest thing to cope with
is never knowing why...

That we don't understand
And maybe never will,
Questions left unanswered
Now your voice is still.

To lose you was unbearable
And time and time again,
We've tried to look for reasons
that no one can explain.

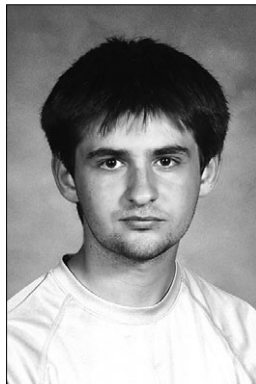
Life and death hold mysteries
But one thing is for sure,
We loved you then, We love you now
And will forevermore...

Love always and forever,
Ashleigh, Billy, Devun, Dylun, & Aricana
Aimee, Billy, Ryleigh, & Blake
Anthony, Kristin, Kaitlyn, Marlie, Preston, & Grant
Dad, Michelle, & John

Coal City High School Class of 2024



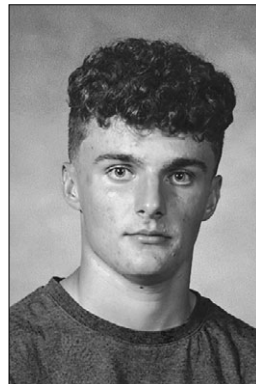
**ZECHARIAH
ABBOTT**



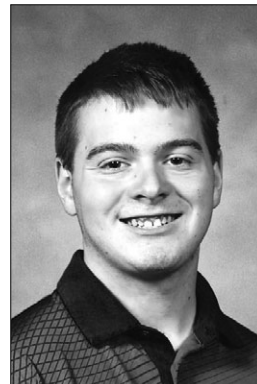
BRODIE AGNOLI



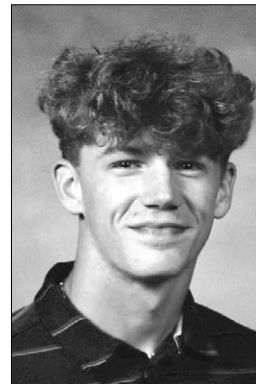
MASON ALDRIDGE



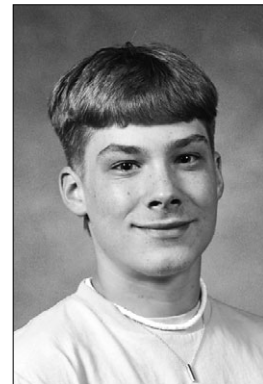
**TIMOTHY
BABCOCK**



ETHAN BACH



CADE BALDAUF



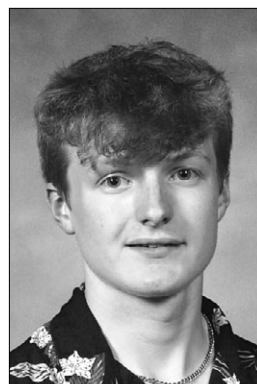
BRANDON BOYD



LAUREN BROWN



**MACKENZIE
BROWN**



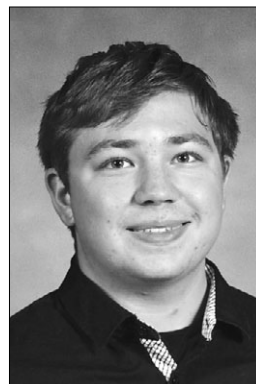
TREY BUCK



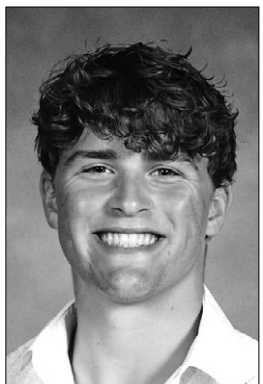
ELSA BUNTON



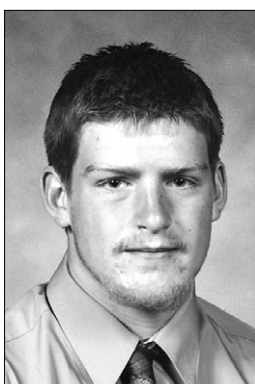
RHION BERKETT



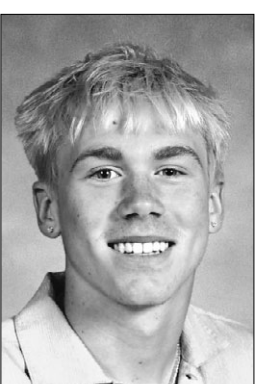
BRADLEY BURLA



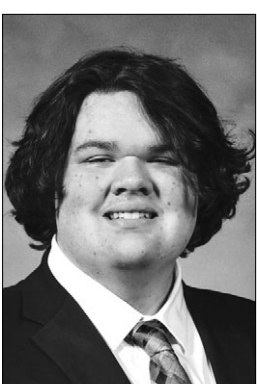
STEPHEN BYERS JR



GAVIN CARPENTER



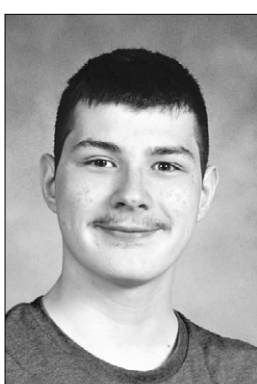
**AIDEN
CHRISTOPHER**



DOMINIC CIMINO



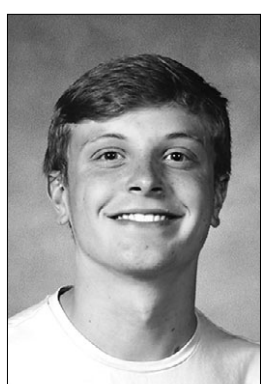
**BRIAHNNA
COMBES**



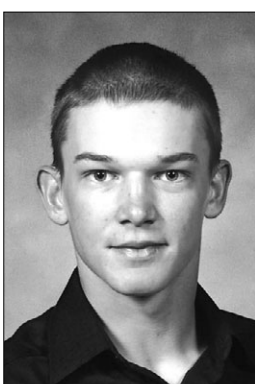
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**JARED
COUNTERMAN**



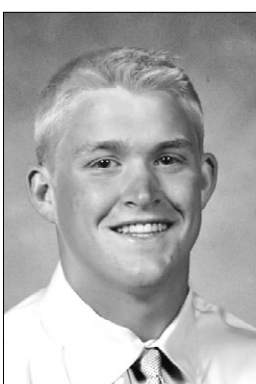
DENNIS CUDDY



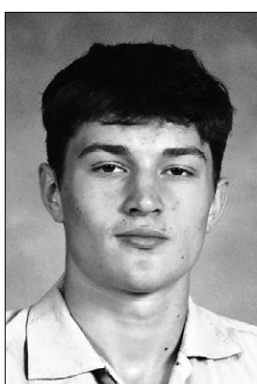
TANNA CURRY



KILEN DAVIDSON



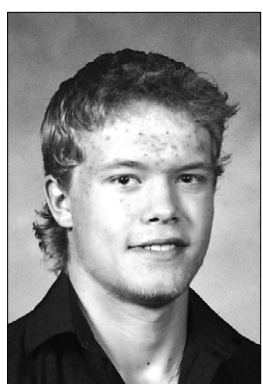
AUSTIN DAVY



CHASE DEHLER



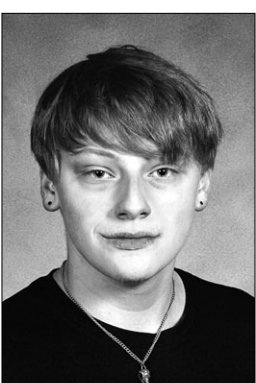
**MAKAYLA
DEMARSE**



BLAKE DILLON



**ADALINE
DOWLING**



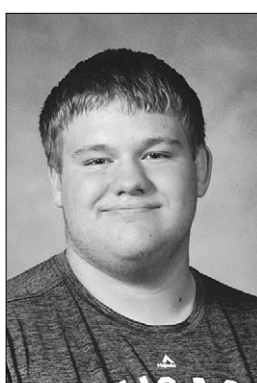
ADAM DUKE



BRIANNE DURKEE



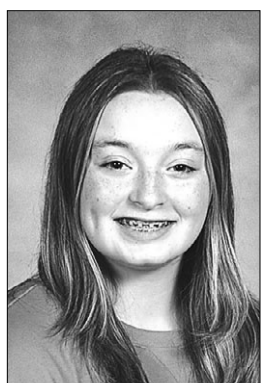
DANIKA EATON



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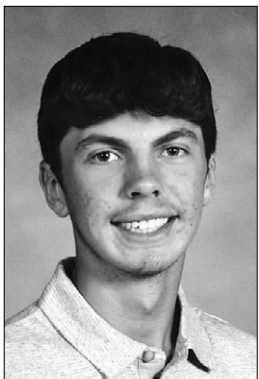
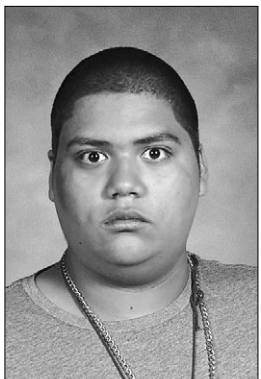

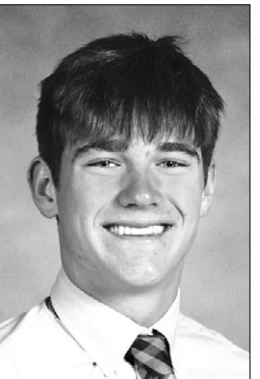

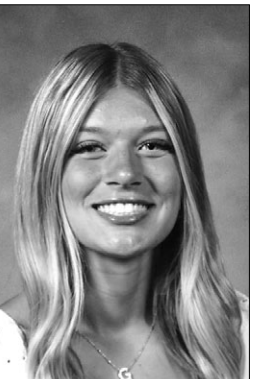
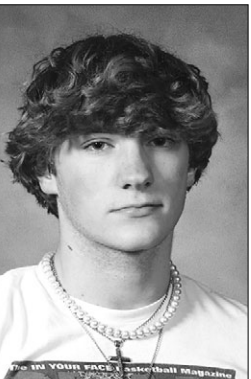
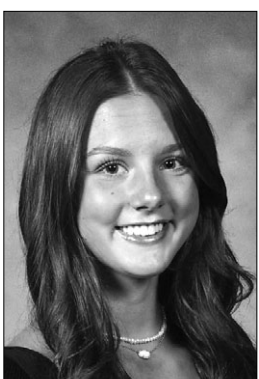
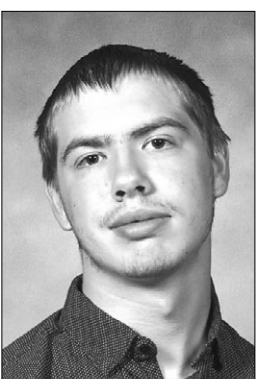

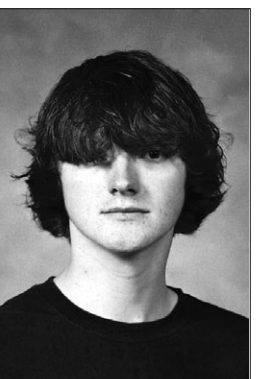




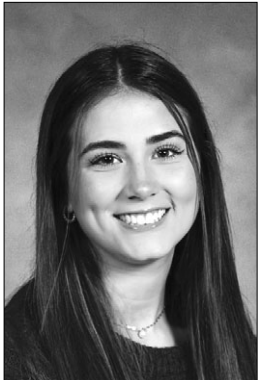



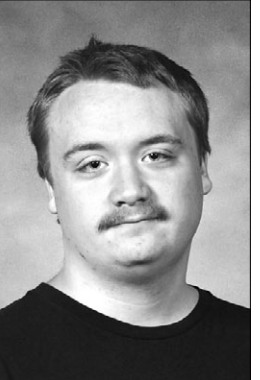

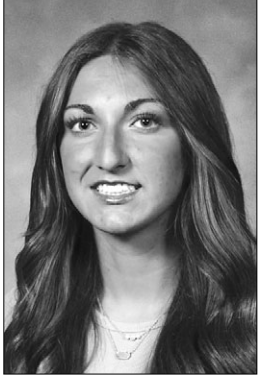
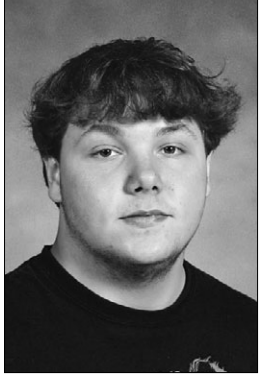

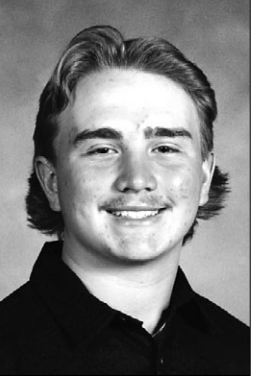
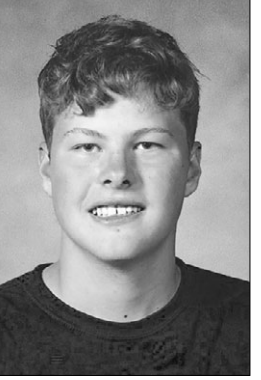


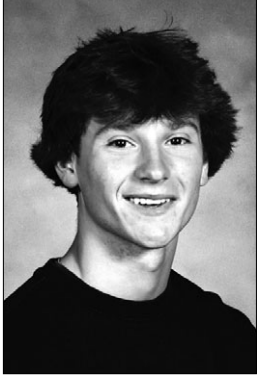
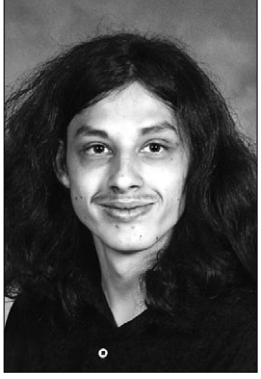
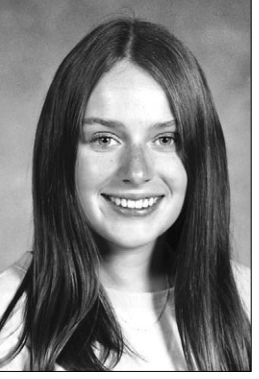

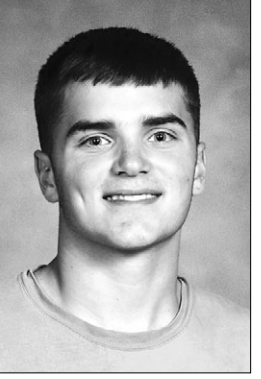
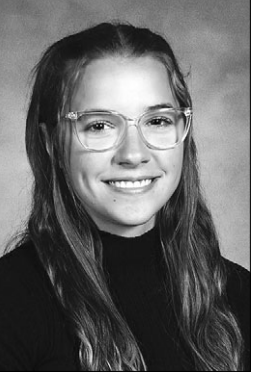
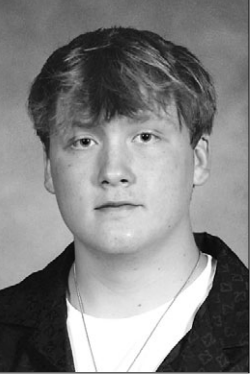


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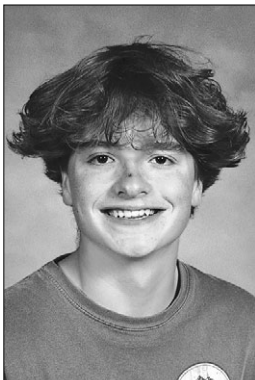


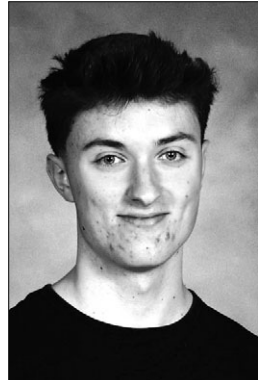
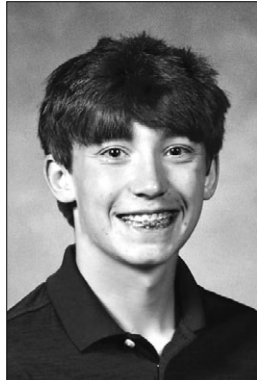

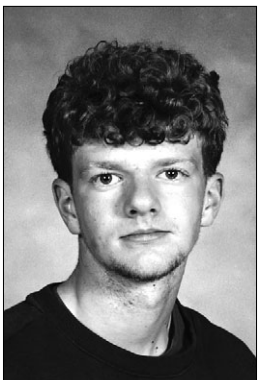


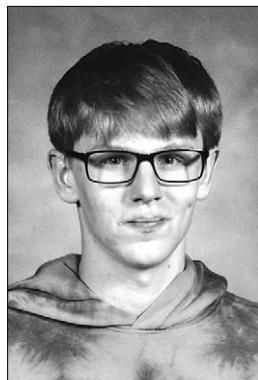

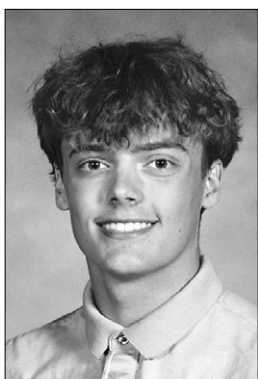



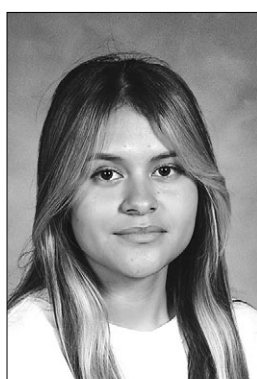


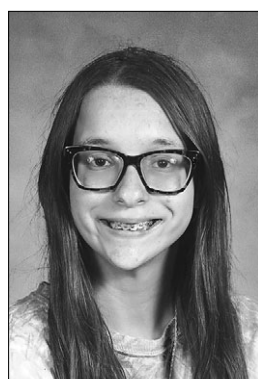
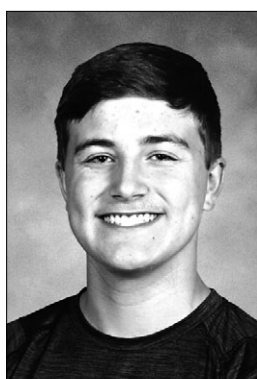



Coal City High School Class of 2024

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 MIA FERRIAS	 KLYE FOSTER	 TEAGAN FOX	 OWEN FRANKLIN	 AMELIA FRITZ	 ABIGAIL GAGLIARDO	 TYLER GIBSON
 ALAINA GILL	 MADISON GOMEZ	 KARLY GREMAR	 GISELLE GUERRERO	 GAVIN HARDEN	 MAX HATLEY	 MAKAYLA HENLINE
 MAKENZIE HENLINE	 ETHAN HENNINGS	 ALEXIS HIGGINS- WEATHERHEAD	 MAXWELL HONE	 JOSEPH HORKAVY JR.	 AVAH HOUSMAN	 AVA HOUSTON
 OWEN HREN	 CYRIS HULL	 KYLIE JACKSON	 CASSIDY JENKE	 JAMES KEIGHER	 CHESTERINE KUHEL	 OWEN KURDENOK

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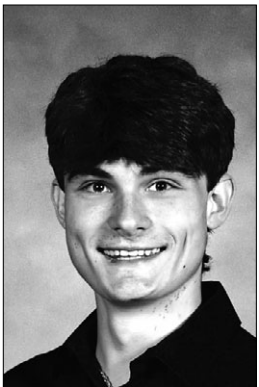
Coal City High School Class of 2024

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 ZACHARY PELLETIER	 KIMBERLY PEREZ	 MATTHEW PERINO	 TANNER PHILLIPS	 DAKOTA PIERCE	 KARLI PIERSON	 LANDON POLLWORTH
 JENNA PRICE	 BARNABAS RIVERA	 NICHOLAS RODRIGUEZ	 DAKOTA RUSSELL	 ELIZABETH SACCO	 RAEGAN SANDENO	 KYLEE SCHEER

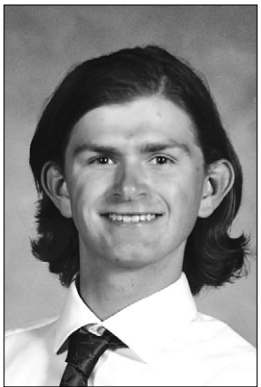
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Coal City High School Class of 2024




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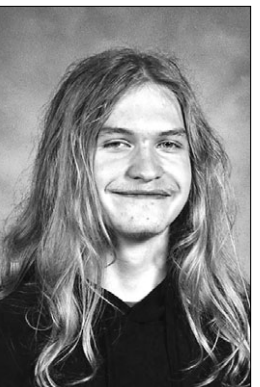
ETHAN SCROGHAM



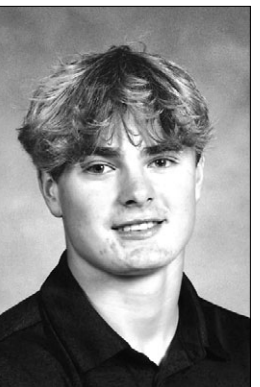
SHPETIM SHABANI



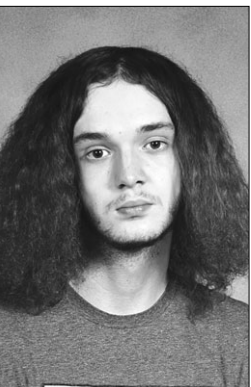
JADYN SHAW



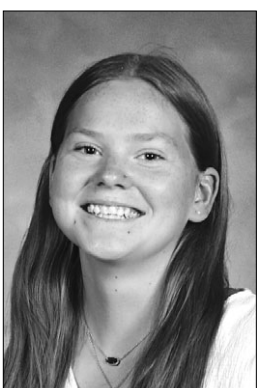
SEBASTIAN SINGER



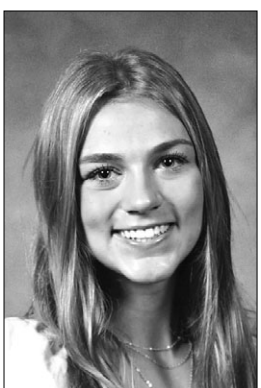
CREIDE SKUBIC



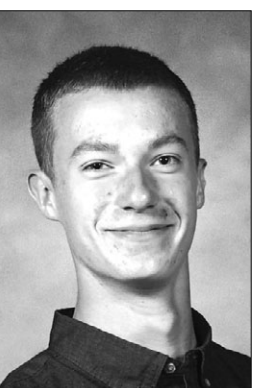
MICHAEL SMITH




ELLA SORENSEN



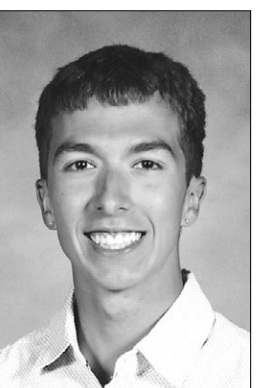
ABBY STILES



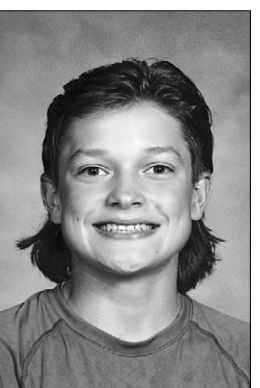
KEATON STRONER




HAILEY STROUD




COLTEN SZITAPKA



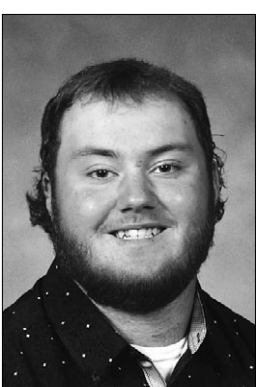
JACK VARNAK




JONATHAN VOIGHT



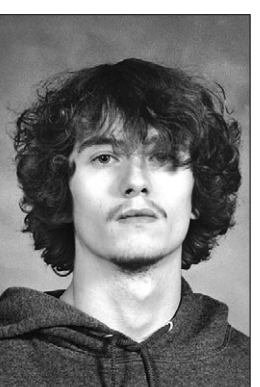
PAIGE WALKER



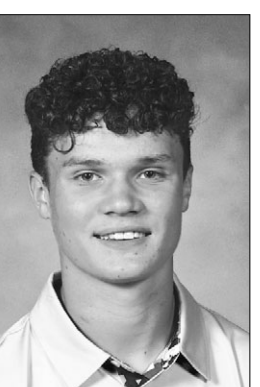
TANNER WALLACE



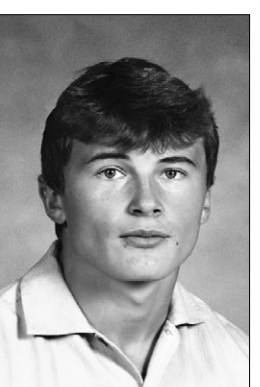
JOSEPH WATSON




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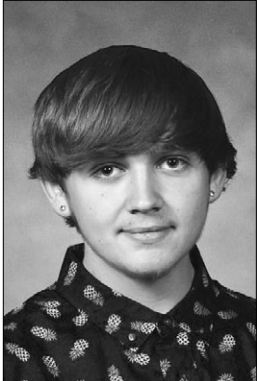
WYATT WICKISER



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MAXWELL ZOLECKI

Commencement exercises for the Class of 2024 will be Sunday, May 12 at 2:00 p.m. in the CCHS gymnasium



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THE WOMEN that make my motherhood web.

Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund

The power of your motherhood web

ELAINE FISHER-OHLUND
FOOD FOR THE SOUL

I don't think any of us moms realize the complexity of motherhood until we are deep in it. I mean all the hats we wear: chaffuer, maid, tutor, nurse, life coach, a baker and a cook who sometimes gets met with turned up noses.

It can sometimes feel like a thankless job, but at the same time the most meaningful. I would like to add the most important job too, we are raising the next generation.

Such an important job can be heavy. Most of the time, the hardest parts are hidden deep within us, but we put a smile on our face no matter how much worry or pain is stirring within. We do it for them because they are so worth it.

Ups and downs come with the territory of being a mom, especially a special needs mom. However there was a pivotal moment in my special needs mom journey. I had just gotten some hard news about my youngest Layla who has cerebral palsy.

My head was spinning and it felt like I had just been punched in the gut. I ran out back to our river property where I often find peace. Now I grew up going to Catholic schools but drifted away from my faith in hard times. Then I had somewhat of a spiritual awakening after a near death experience. But this time I dropped to my knees and prayed. I realized then it never hurts to have some type of faith.

It had been almost 20 years since I had done that. Of course I started with "dear God, Gaia (the Mother Nature goddess), Buddha, universe, guardian angels and spirit guides (I didn't want to leave any of them out), I'm giving this one to you. I don't know what to do but you do. Please take this one off my shoulders."

After a while I rose to my feet feeling somewhat ridiculous and out of place, but I did feel peace. As I was walking back from the river my phone rang. I didn't recognize the number. When I answered, a woman's voice was on the other end, it was one of the women that work with Layla.

She said, "Hi Elaine, I'm really not suppose to do this (which is why I will not say her name) but I wanted to give you my personal number. My son has cerebral palsy and I know I had so many questions and cried alone a lot. I just want you to know you can call me anytime especially

when you don't want to cry alone."

There is not a doubt in my mind that that was divine intervention. I will forever be grateful for this woman. I am grateful for all the women that make a difference in my kid's lives, especially my Layla.

The therapists, the teachers and principal at Bruning. The women who greet Layla every day at school with a smile. My family of women. My friends that allow me to lean on them in dark times. My cousin-in-law, Charli Fisher, who inspired me to have faith in a higher power again.

I started to make a list and couldn't believe how long it was. I felt so blessed and realized they were such a big part of my motherhood journey. Each one helping me in some way to be a better mom to my children.

The more woman I talk to I realize how many of us are touched by special needs kids and need that support. Whether it be autism (which is at an all time high), a foster child, cerebral palsy, the list goes on. I encourage you to reach out to others and spread your motherhood web. Motherhood is a powerful thing especially when we come together.

So here's to the women that dig down deep to help make a better world for our kids. If you need a friend to be a part of your web contact me at the Free Press and remember diamonds are made under immense pressure. You were meant for this job.

All moms, like diamonds under pressure, Their strength and resilience a priceless treasure. Through challenges and triumphs she never gives in, Her unwavering love is a powerful force within. She celebrates milestones big and small. Cherishing each moment, giving her all. With patience and grace, she guides the way, A beacon of hope, in the darkest of days. She advocates fiercely for what is right, Standing up for all children with all her might. In a world that may not always understand, She's a warrior, leading with a gentle hand Her heart a wellspring of endless love, Watching her children grow and rise above. In the chaos of life, she finds her calm, A mother's love, a soothing song, So here is to the mothers that go above and beyond, You are cherished and admired in every single way, Moms help the world shine bright every single day. Happy Mothers day and thank you dear friends.

Charity Car Show to Benefit Operation Christmas Child

Cruise on over to the First Baptist Church of Coal City's Charity Car Show on Sunday, May 19, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 pm. The event will take place in the church parking lot at 4470 E. Rt. 113 (1 mile west of Coal City High School).

Prizes will be awarded for Best of Show People's Choice and Best of Show Exhibitor's Choice. There is a \$20 entry fee per car.

The church will also be serving roast beef sandwiches for lunch as well having several wonderful Silent Auction items to bid on, including Dollywood Tickets! There will be a Bake Sale with mouthwatering baked goods and the FBC Praise Team will be providing uplifting music for attendees.

100% of all donations will go towards FBC's mission to send 500 shoe

boxes to children in need across the world through Operation Christmas Child.

If you have questions about the Car Show, contact Sam Payne at 815-263-6677, or through Messenger @ Sam Scott Payne. Questions about Operation Christmas Child or the Silent Auction, contact the church at 815-634-2654. Please leave a message.

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New tax may be needed to bail out RTA

Governor JB Pritzker unexpectedly moved away last week from his long-standing opposition to taxing services, saying he didn't want to start taking ideas off the table as lawmakers search for ways to fund and reform the Chicago region's mass transit system.



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

ed event if he wanted to take any state taxes off the table before the talks heat up, including the service tax. "I have never been in favor of that before," Pritzker said of the service tax. He has indeed opposed the tax all the way back to his first 2018 gubernatorial campaign, often calling it regressive.

"There may need to be a source of revenue here," Pritzker said, "but that's not something that I have favored in the past."

As far as specifically ruling out a service tax, however, the governor said: "I really don't want to start saying, 'We're not going to do this, we're not going to do that.' At this point, there are just so many pieces of this that we have to look at before we're going to pay for what's necessary here as we come off of support from the federal government and making sure we're restoring transit services."

Some legislative Democrats pushing transit agency consolidation and reform welcomed the news of the governor's new openness to a service tax, which seems to be evidence that the governor is serious about finding a fix.

"I appreciate the governor being open to it, and I appreciate him recognizing this is a complicated matter," Rep. Eva Dina Delgado (D-Chicago) told me. Rep. Delgado introduced legislation (HB5828) last week to provide the systems an annual \$1.5 billion state appropriation once the mass transit system is consolidated.

Rep. Kam Buckner (D-Chicago), whose House Bill 5823 would create a consolidated transit agency, told me he's also opposed a service tax in the past. But Rep. Buckner said he is open to it now and said he appreciates that the governor is keeping an open mind.

Pritzker also reiterated last week that he's not yet endorsing any particular mass transit reform proposal, but insisted that "change is going to have to come."

"We just know that we're going to have to upgrade service, make sure that we're dealing with the transit funding challenge that's coming up," Pritzker said. "I hope to see several proposals so that we can consider what direction to take."

That change in direction will be a complex endeavor, the governor said.

"We've got to look at cuts that need to be made, along with, you know, are there changes in fares for certain types of riders that need to be made," Pritzker said.

A Pritzker spokesperson later explained that when the governor said "cuts," he meant efficiencies to save money, like

consolidating the regional transit system, but not service cuts.

Most transit agencies hotly oppose consolidation, including the Chicago Transit Authority.

A spokesperson for the Illinois Chamber told me the organization holds the governor remains ambivalent about a service tax.

"From our position, taxing Illinois' service businesses - especially our smallest businesses - to close a budget gap is a non-starter. The tax would negatively impact the smallest of businesses: service-based small businesses and startups - especially businesses in counties that border other states as customers can save just by crossing the state line," the Chamber spokesperson said.

One issue with a service tax is that implementing it would take time. Many of the businesses that would be covered are not currently set up to pay sales taxes, for example. The Chamber predicted it could take several years to implement a service tax, so it won't solve short-term gaps.

"As the voice of Illinois business, we would welcome sitting down with the governor's team to discuss pragmatic ways to address the budget gap, but taxing services is not one of them," the Chamber spokesperson said.

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

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Severe weather season off to an active start

BY RHIANNON BRANCH
FARMWEEK

Severe weather season made a bold entrance in the Midwest this year and the potential for more dangerous storms lingers.

Frequent rains have delayed planting in some areas. Storms have damaged farm buildings and equipment, and high winds have created challenges for spring herbicide applications.

As of April 24, Illinois had had 42 tornadoes, 127 hail events (greater than 1 inch) and 95 severe wind events, according to the Storm Prediction Center.

Ed Shimon, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Lincoln, told FarmWeek those statistics mostly came from two storms in February, two in March and three so far in April.

"Forty-two tornadoes total in Illinois already is pretty high," he said.

"Over the last 30 years,



STORM CLOUDS move in over central Illinois while a farmer hurries to ready his field for planting. Severe weather, including 42 tornadoes, have so far touched down in Illinois.

the running average in Illinois is about 56 per year."

He said the active pattern is following the path of 2023 when Illinois had 123 tornadoes, the most of any state in the country.

Shimon pointed out the storm systems have been widespread with tornadic activity recorded in the southern, central and northern portions of the state.

"Storms follow the jet

stream and the way the jet stream is buckled in the west and kind of lifting up to the northeast through Illinois on a pretty frequent basis this spring has given us more frequent severe weather," he said.

There was a preliminary count of 68 severe hail reports across the state in March alone, with another 30 to 40 this month, as of April 22, State Climatologist Trent Ford told the RFD Radio Network.

The 10-day outlook is a bit milder but favors warmer than average temperatures and slightly above normal precipitation. There was potential for torrential downpours over the weekend, according to forecasts as of press time.

"When you have a really warm air mass in the April and early May time frame, there is always potential for severe weather when a storm does develop. So people need to be weather aware for sure," Shimon said.

There is potential for severe weather year-round, but the most reports come in during April, May and June, which is why that period is commonly referred to as severe weather season in the Midwest, he added.

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.

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OBITUARIES

Evelyn Chester

JOLIET—Evelyn Josephine Chester, 83, of Joliet, passed away on April 28, 2024. She was a loving wife, mother, cousin, and friend. Evelyn enjoyed spending time with her family and tending to her garden.

She attended Braidwood High School and Governors State University. Evelyn dedicated her career to the United States Department of Energy, working at Argonne National Lab until her retirement in 1995.

She is survived by her children William B. Neeley (Lynn), Thomas Chester, Jr., and Erika Chester; grandchildren Thomas A. Chester and Christianna Neeley; aunts Mary Martha Thompson, Eva Pinnick and Annie Pinnick; and several cousins, including Rita Pinnick Gordon, Pam Humphrey, Janis Love, Edna



Anderson Singleton, and Karen Anderson Baker.

Evelyn was preceded in death by her husband, Thomas Chester, Sr.; father, William M. Pinnick; mother, Gertrude S. Pinnick (Anderson); brother, William 'Buddy' Pinnick; and sisters Patricia Y. Woods and Sandra Takeda, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

A memorial service is planned for Friday, May 10, 2024, visitation 10:00-11:00 a.m. with service at 11:00 a.m. at Mt Ebal Baptist Church, 221 Cameron Avenue, Lockport, IL. A repast will follow at 1:00 p.m. at Merichka's Restaurant in Crest Hill, IL.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to a charity of your choice in memory of Evelyn Chester.

Unetta Jirus

EAST BROOKLYN—Unetta Jirus, 96, of East Brooklyn, IL passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 4, 2024 at The ARC of Dwight.

Born on March 23, 1928, Unetta Marie was a daughter of Richard and Marie (Wood) Golding. She spent her formative years in Reddick, IL and on Sept. 18, 1948, she exchanged vows with Joseph Jirus. Together, they established their first home in Gardner before eventually settling in East Brooklyn where she has resided for the past 73 years.

In her early days, Unetta worked as a waitress at her family's restaurant in Reddick and later had a stint at the Grinchuck Pants Factory in Braidwood. However, her most cherished role was that of a devoted wife and mother. She actively participated in various community organizations such as the South Wilmington United Methodist Church's Woman's Star Club, where she was a member; the Kankakee Moose Lodge and the South Wilmington Senior Citizens group. In addition she and Joe were also Charter Members of the South Wilmington Fireman's Club.

Unetta was known for her love of staying active through walking and exercising. She found joy in maintaining a well-kept home, tending to her garden, preserving her harvests through canning, engaging in ballroom dancing, and showcasing her talent in sewing. A spirited individual who enjoyed shopping excursions and indulging in sweet treats like ice cream and milkshakes; she had an infectious smile coupled with a distinctive laugh that left an imprint on all who knew her. Above all else, Unetta will be fondly remembered for her unwavering love for family. Her heart overflowed with joy at the sight of her grandchildren thriving and witnessing the growth of succeeding generations including her great-grandchildren.

Unetta Jirus will forever hold a special



place in the hearts of those who were lucky enough to be touched by her presence.

Survivors include her two children, Robert Jirus, of Gardner and Helen (Larry) Elliott, of South Wilmington; three grandchildren: Brian (Heather) Jirus and Kelley (Al) Johnston, both of Wilmington and Christina (Kyle) Veronda, of Lebanon, IN; four great-grandchildren: Alyssa Johnston, Anthony Johnston, Hunter Veronda and Brooklyn Veronda, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Unetta was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Joseph (1993); daughter-in-law, Janice Jirus (2023); three sisters: Waunetta Golding, Garnetta (Dominic) Ferrari and Juanetta Patti, and two brothers, Richard Jr. (Evelyn) Golding and John (Ardes) Golding.

Funeral services were held at Reeves Funeral Home in Gardner on Wednesday, May 8, 2024.

Burial followed in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery, where Unetta will be laid to rest with her late husband, Joseph.

Pallbearers were Brian Jirus, Anthony Johnston, Al Johnston, Kyle Veronda, Richard Ciluffo and Charles Harvey. Honorary Pallbearers were Hunter Veronda and Rick Yatuni.

A heartfelt thank you is extended to the dedicated and caring staff at The ARC of Dwight, as well as with UpliftedCare Hospice for the care and support shown to Unetta and the family. Your kindness will always be remembered.

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

Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Gardner.

Uplifted Care to host free workshop and grief support services

All veterans are invited to the UpliftedCare Community Grief Center to attend the Vet-To-Vet Café from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Wednesday, May 15.

Veterans will have the opportunity to meet other veterans, share stories, access resources and make new connections. Coffee and light snacks are provided. For more information or to register, please call UpliftedCare at 815.939.4141.

The Honoring Mothers Workshop is being

held on Saturday, May 18, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This free workshop is a safe space for anyone who has lost their mother to join others who have experienced a similar loss.

Through activities and discussion, attendees will have the opportunity to connect with others to realize you are not alone on your grief journey and learn powerful coping tools to deal with the difficult emotions that often accompany grieving a parent. Everyone will create a

keepsake to take home to remember mom.

This workshop is open to individuals and families with children ages 5 and up. The workshop will be held at the Uplifted Community Grief Center, 3115 N. 1000 West Road, Bourbonnais. All workshop materials and light refreshments will be provided.

To register for this free grief workshop or for grief support services, call 815.939.4141.

Elections bill's hurried passage

BY JERRY NOWICKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

This week saw major muscle flex from Illinois' majority party in the final month of session. Democrats introduced a major elections bill Wednesday morning, clearing it through both chambers and sending it to the governor for his signature, all within 48 hours. The governor signed it Friday.

Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea, introduced Senate Bill 2412 making several changes to state election laws—most notably including a measure to protect incumbents. That change bars political parties from appointing a candidate to a legislative general election race if no candidate ran for the seat in the primary election.

Pritzker on Thursday described the measure as “actually an ethics bill,” while Republicans accused Democrats of ethical failings for moving the measure with little time for substantive debate or public input.

Republicans in both chambers voted “present” on the bill in protest, while a handful of Democrats voted against it or skipped voting altogether.

House Minority Leader Tony McCombie, R-Savanna, noted at a news conference Wednesday that the GOP has grown accustomed to legislation moving with little public notice—but it usually happens closer to the General Assembly's end-of-May adjournment.

“But we don't understand the sense of urgency right now, unless the goal is to stifle the democratic process through the changes on slating candidates,” she said.

The GOP contended the measure was specifically designed to block one candidate, former Edwardsville police chief Jay Keeven, from challenging Rep. Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville, in November in the 112th House district.

Keeven filed his nominating petitions to the State Board of Elections on Thursday afternoon. Another candidate, Daniel Behr of Northbrook, filed petitions to run in the 57th House District, a race that Democrat Tracy Katz Muhl was otherwise slated to face uncontested. Behr's petitions were filed six minutes after Pritzker's signature was recorded on the bill.

The state GOP noted in a news release at least one other candidate, a challenger to Democratic Sen. Mary Edly-Allen of Libertyville, had intended to seek ballot access under the now disallowed method as well.

The measure would also put three nonbinding referendum questions on the November ballot, crowding out citizen-led questions by hitting the statutory limit of three for a single election.

Those questions would ask voters if they favor civil penalties for candidates who interfere with election workers' jobs, whether health insurance plans that cover pregnancy benefits should be required to cover in vitro fertilization, and whether the state should adopt an additional 3 percent tax on income over \$1 million to fund property tax relief.

The measure also moves back petition gathering and filing deadlines for the 2026 election cycle by 28 days, among other changes.

Bob Soukup Sr.



COAL CITY—Bob Soukup Sr., 95, of Coal City, formerly of Chicago, passed away Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at his home.

Born Sept. 28, 1928 in Chicago, Robert Joseph was a son of Joseph and Mary Soukup. He was raised and educated in Chicago, and at the age of 17 he enlisted in the United States Navy where he served honorably between 1945 to 1947. Bob married his wife, the late Dorothy Ann Swartz, and together they made their home and raised their family in Chicago.

He was a firefighter for 35 years with the Chicago Fire Department, stationed with Engine 34 and was a member of the Chicago Fire Fighters Union. Upon retirement, Bob would eventually settle in Coal City where he was able to enjoy nature and wildlife. He loved to cook and watch movies, as well as listening to music and singing. Bob understood the meaning of putting in a hard day's work, always working on something around the house well in to his 80s. And above all else, he always tried to make sure that those he loved were taken care of.

Survivors include his three grandchildren: Cassandra and Krystalene Anculis,



both of Coal City and Nicolette (fiancé Daniel) Anculis of Florida; one brother, Edward (the late Alice) Soukup of Tinley Park, IL and numerous nieces and nephews.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Mary, and his wife, Dorothy Soukup; as well as his brothers and sisters: Marie (John) Miglin, Bernice (Frank) Konfrst, Arlene (John) Morgucz, Anna (Henry) Dusak, Alice (Frank) Dudzik, Betty (Tony) Bogden, Grace (Robert) Sutherland, Lorraine (Raymond) Del Lango and George (Lorraine) Soukup.

Per Bob's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded.

Private memorial services will be held, and Bob will be laid to rest at Bohemian National Cemetery in Braidwood with his wife, Dorothy.

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

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

John Wandless

WILMINGTON—John M. Wandless, 63, of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, April 29, 2024 in Wilmington.

Born Aug. 3, 1960 in Joliet, John was a son of Kenneth Wandless and Deanna (Forsythe) Casteel. He was raised and educated in Wilmington and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1978. John worked for Precision Components Inc. in Wilmington for several years before gaining employment with Caterpillar Tractor Company for 25 years as a machinist. Upon retirement from Caterpillar, he continued to stay busy by working for Advanced Auto Parts in Diamond where he was currently employed.

John was an avid Chicago Bears fan and NASCAR enthusiast. He also enjoyed being in bowling leagues at Riverfront Lanes in Wilmington. John also took great pleasure in being out on the open road, especially riding on his Harley Davidson. Nothing brought him more pleasure than being with his family. John was a great father and excellent grandfather who cared deeply about those whom he loved.

Survivors include two children, Brian (Ashley) Wandless, of Wilmington and



Steven (Michele) Wandless, of Nashville, TN; three grandchildren: Tristan, Brayden and Easton Wandless; one brother and two sisters: Kenneth (Linda) Wandless, of Akin, SC; Karen (Richard) Blackwell, of Jacksonville, FL and Lisa (Hank) Buczkiewicz, of Bull Shoals, AR and four nephews: Daniel Wandless, Nicholas (Andrea) Wandless, Scott (Brooke) Wandless, and Brian Casteel.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Kenneth Wandless and Deanna (Jim) Casteel; and his maternal grandparents, John and Madeline Forsythe.

Funeral services were held at Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington on Monday, May 6, 2024. Burial followed at Mt. Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wilmington.

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

Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington

Rezin says ‘no’ to changing the name of Starved Rock State Park

In light of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) public confirmation that the Department may be open to a possible name change of the famous Starved Rock State Park, Illinois Senate Deputy Republican Leader Sue Rezin (R-Morris) has filed a resolution in support of keeping the park's current name.

“While I recognize desires to create open dialogue on issues such as naming parks and places after Indigenous peoples and their legends, I believe that this well-intended but misguided proposal will result in more harm than good,” said Sen. Rezin. “The Starved Rock name has become a treasured part of the local community's identity and brand. There are far too many people who rely on the park's nationally recognized name for their livelihoods.”

Senate Resolution 956 advocates for the preservation of the state park's historic name. It notes the importance

that the Starved Rock name has on the local community and acknowledges the concerns of residents and businesses regarding the potential renaming of the state park. Finally, it encourages open dialogue with relevant stakeholders, including Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, to address concerns and explore ways to honor the park's heritage while respecting diverse perspectives.

“It is vital that we honor the important history of Starved Rock State Park,” said Sen. Rezin. “I truly believe that there is a path to accomplish that goal in a way that preserves the park's iconic name while respecting the heritage of Indigenous people.”

The Resolution was filed in the Illinois Senate on April 30 and is currently awaiting assignment.

Will County hosting textiles, working home goods recycling

Have a small appliance that still works but you don't want to throw away? Then this is your week to take it to a collection event where it will continue its usefulness with a new owner.

Will County is hosting is annual Textile and Small Home Goods Collection Event at the Will County Office Building, 302 N. Chicago St., through Friday, May 10.

A wide range of items will be collected for reuse and recycling during the week, including coats, shirts, pants, neckties, hats, sneakers, towels, bedding,

boots and shoes. Items with mold, mud or other dirt will not be accepted and all small home goods must be in working condition. Items will be accepted in the building parking lot between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. daily, with extended drop-off hours from 5:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 12.

“This event offers an opportunity for residents to responsibly dispose of old clothes and home items during their Spring cleaning,” said Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant. “Donated items will be repurposed, reused,

or recycled, instead of being sent to the landfill.”

The collection event is hosted by the Will County Land Use Department's Resource Recovery and Energy Division. The event is free and open to all County residents.

The County is partnering with Helping Hands, which distributes usable textiles, second-hand clothing and small goods to thrift stores. Their efforts keep millions of pounds from being sent to landfills.

For additional information, including a list of accepted items, visit www.willcountygreen.com

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Migrants are vital

SHADOW LAKES—The undocumented immigrants problem won't be solved anytime soon mainly because they are vital for the economy. There are anywhere between 18-20 million undocumented people in this country and these people are doing jobs that most Americans will not do. Who are these people working on 100-degree temperatures on their hands and knees, picking the vegetables that we eat? Mostly undocumented migrants that's who. They are mopping the floors, vacuuming the carpets and cleaning the washrooms toilets in the hotels and restaurants. They are washing dishes, working on factory assembly lines, landscaping and more. I know that I didn't work my butt off to put my kids through college so they could go work in a factory or so they could be landscapers. When Ronald Reagan was president, one of the biggest immigration reforms was passed in this country, hundreds of thousands maybe even millions of documented people were able to legalize the status at the same time there was some new laws putting in place to discourage illegal immigration. There are also penalties in place for companies that hire undocumented workers. But the companies that hire these people don't care because the penalties are not enforce by the government. The reason the government does not enforce the penalties because undocumented workers contribute to the economy. Most of the workers when they apply for a job, they present false documents. Social Security numbers don't exist. The Social Security administration receives billions of dollars from undocumented workers each year. Same thing with federal taxes, state taxes. Fear mongers will tell you that these people don't pay taxes. Nothing could be further from the truth, not only do these people pay taxes, most of them will never benefit from the money they pay. They will not be able to collect Social Security or Medicare. So yeah, you could say oh there was some undocumented workers in New York were fighting with the police. You can say they're bringing drugs into this country, which by the way is not true. The drug cartels that are bringing drugs into this country are not undocumented immigrants. As painful as it might be for some people to admit it undocumented immigrants are vital for this country.

Dishonest Donnie

WILMINGTON—Trump and his buddies better come up with better nicknames for Biden. "Crooked Joe"? There has been zero evidence that Biden did anything criminal, unlike 91 felonies associated with Donald. "Dishonest Donnie"? "Sleepy Joe seems out of place since Trump snoozed in court multiple days of his New York trial. "Dozing Donnie"? And lastly, tell us Trump, what evidence do you have that Biden is behind your criminal trial cases. "Delusional Donnie?"

Speak for themselves

COAL CITY—It's a darn shame how Coal City runs the sports programs. Playing to people please at the high school level is out of control. Parents do game

changer and won't give the "red carpet" children errors so they can pad their stats. Grow up parents. These kids should be fighting for their spots based on talent not on who you know. Or how many emails you send a coach or AD to complain. These kids are 15 years old or older. They need to speak for themselves. Coaches don't cave to the pressure.

Weak-knee president

WILMINGTON—When America needs leadership we have always had that person, the leader that could pull America together. Unfortunately we have Joe Biden, a weak-knee president that is a windsock. If he can't blame Trump he has nothing. I think we should be blaming Biden for how bad things are. He's an empty vessel. He can't even read a teleprompter any more. The Obama crew is running the White House. You can tell because everything always ends up about race, you're a racist if you disagree about anything. It worked for Obama for eight years so why not?

I don't understand

BRAIDWOOD—Here in Altiery-wood, I just love how things are done however the city council members want them to be done, and does not take in consideration what the townspeople want. We have many gaming facilities and here we are adding another. Not to mention two dollar stores, but no bank or laundrymat. Then they wonder why no one wants to spend money in this town. Now we are quoted in the newspaper to say that "Mastodon Travel Center planned for Division Street and Coal City Road has paperwork nearly completed." Funny no zoning meeting has been had for months and I am positive that the people of Braidwood do not want this. I think the zoning board better have many chairs available at that meeting, because it will be packed. I just don't understand how you can you be a contractor, Realtor and city administrator all in same town? Sounds like triple dipping to me. Different rules for different people happen constantly in this town. No transparency and you hear nothing from the puppet mayor. Everything is said by the city administrator. But in Altiery-wood, what he wants he gets. Wake up. People need to start coming to city council meetings and zoning meetings before it's all too late.

Back in the day

SHADOW LAKES—I remember back in the days when I started learning about the United States Constitution, and how the United States government works. I remember when I registered to vote and how proud I was to be part of a democracy or people's rights and freedom protected by the United States Constitution. I have never missed an election ever since then local or countrywide. I always vote because I know how important my vote is. I always thought that it was impossible for this country to ever be ruled. I am monarchy or dictator till now. We now have a fascist party that's being led by a man that doesn't even hold a political office. These people are using scare fear mongering tactics to get people vote for them. The worst part of it is that these people are



dividing the country. They don't care that they are turning Americans against each other. Their tactic is to appeal to their largest race of people in this country and making them believe that everybody else is inferior or unfit to be an American. The so-called MAGA group are going as far as obstructing government proceedings so that the current president doesn't get credit for new laws, they will benefit the country and all Americans the worst. Worst thing that could happen is for this fascist to take control of the Supreme Court which actually they're pretty close to doing. There are already three Supreme Court justices. They were appointed by their fascist leader and three more that tend to side with them. I believe that if these people could take control of the country, they're gonna start changing the constitution in the loss to suppress those who don't agree with them, and some people in this country are going to start being singled out. Start with a few, but eventually it will grow. It might start with your nationality your race, the color of your hair your eyes. There's no telling how far these lunatics will go. And just like history has shown, extreme fascists like that will eventually destroy the country.

Far from it

WILMINGTON—There seems to be some misunderstanding about our three branches of government. The Legislative branch refers to the Senate and the House of Representatives which create bills before becoming law. The Executive branch is made up of the President and his cabinet. The President decides to sign any bills. If signed, they become law. The Judicial branch is made up of the court system and includes the Supreme Court whose duty is to interpret the laws as either constitutional or unconstitutional. Since Joe Biden has been president, he has signed 77 executive orders which are listed in a few places on the internet. One of these orders was to open the border to let

in millions of illegals and another was to stop drilling of oil when we were energy independent before he took office. These are only two examples. Please do not say the President is powerless--far from it.

Overwhelmed by taxes

WILMINGTON—I just got my property tax bill for a 1932 house in downtown Wilmington. It went up \$500 from last year. Our home needs new siding, new windows, new roof, etc. I honestly don't mind paying taxes, because Wilmington is a wonderful town to live in. I am just starting to feel very defeated. This government is corrupt and there's literally nothing we can do about it which frustrates me. I'm not blaming the city of Wilmington because they're doing a phenomenal job. I just don't know what to do about this in general and it's so frustrating and it's making it hard for people to live on a day-to-day basis. Our car insurance went up \$700 for six months, our property taxes went up \$500, our house insurance doubled over a span of four years. No claims, great credit score, no accidents. etc. and we're just getting hit big time. My husband and I have the money to absorb the increase but not for long. The money is going to run out if they keep gouging us like this. What I'm really worried about are those people that live paycheck to paycheck. And with the rent and mortgage rates and utilities so high, how are people going to be able to afford to live in a home let alone rent an apartment? Not to mention the price of everything else. I feel helpless, because as a Christian woman and a citizen of the United States we are supposed to have a voice. Our voice does nothing these days. I'm not blaming Wilmington for my high property taxes which are now \$5,400 a year for a house that needs a ton of work. I'm posting anonymously because I don't know what to do about it. Hoping that perhaps we can come together as a town and fight this like we fought to save the Gemini Giant.

Commentary

More states giving parents control over education funds. Why not Illinois?

BY HANNAH SCHMID

There are 18 private school choice programs called "education savings accounts" in 16 states and growing. But Illinois leaders refuse to let parents decide how their taxes are used to educate their children.

Around 20 million students nationwide are eligible for a private-school choice program, with 16 states offering "education savings accounts" that give parents greater control

over how taxes will be used to educate their children.

Three of those states started their programs in 2024, and many states started or expanded private school choice programs in 2023. Not Illinois. Lawmakers in 2023 killed the state's only private school choice program, the Invest in Kids tax-credit scholarship program, under pressure from Illinois' powerful teachers unions.

Education savings accounts are an increas-

ingly popular private-school choice program for families in other states. Here's what you should know and why they should be an option in Illinois.

Education savings accounts are a form of private-school choice program that provides families with publicly-funded, government-authorized savings accounts to use for specified educational expenses. Each program has its own regulations for approved expenses that vary between states, but they generally give parents choices about how taxes to educate their child will be spent – sometimes with savings that can be put towards college.

Approved educational expenses can include school tuition, tutoring, therapies for special education students, educational products and services and more.

Research by EdChoice found two-thirds of families use their education savings account funds to pay for private school tuition, while nearly one-third spent their funds on multiple learning resources, such as tutoring or online learning, among other services.

Nearly 330,000 students are using education savings accounts in 2024, up from over 130,000 in 2023.

There are currently 18 programs across 16 states: Alabama, Arizona,

Arkansas, two in Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, two in Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming.

So far in 2024, three of those states have enacted legislation to create new programs: Alabama, Georgia and Wyoming.

How is student eligibility determined for education savings account funds?

Each program differs in how it determines eligibility of students. Some programs offer 100% eligibility to students in the state, sometimes with tiered priorities. Other programs have restricted eligibility based on income or disabilities of students.

Two programs currently enable 100% of students statewide to be eligible. Three additional programs in Alabama, Arkansas and Iowa are set to increase to 100% eligibility in the coming years.

Five programs have income restrictions regulating which students are eligible to receive an education savings account.

Eligibility based on disability

Six programs have disability restrictions designating which students are eligible to receive an account. For example, Montana's Special Needs Equal Opportunity Savings

Account Program is given to students who have an individualized education plan and are identified as a "child with disabilities" under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee all have programs to help those with special needs.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed the state's Promise Scholarship program into law on April 23, establishing a program that offers education savings account funds to students in low-performing public schools. Students who attend a Georgia public school that ranks in the bottom 25% of schools in terms of academic performance will be eligible for the program.

Illinois is an educational outlier

Education savings accounts aren't the only type of school choice program. In all, 31 states have some form of private school choice program and school choice is steadily advancing across the country. Unfortunately, the advancements are missing in Illinois because teachers unions and state lawmakers have decided to deny families these educational opportunities or any real choice in their children's educations.

Lawmakers ignored the needs of more than 15,000 disadvantaged students and overwhelm-

ing public support for Illinois' Invest in Kids tax-credit scholarship program. Instead, they kowtowed to the wants of teachers unions, who put significant dollars behind their attack on the program.

Teachers unions have invested over \$21.5 million in sitting state lawmakers between 2010 and the end of October 2023. Nearly \$1.5 million of that was in the five months leading up to the General Assembly's fall session when lawmakers let the program die, Illinois State Board of Elections records show.

Union bosses proved they were more concerned with protecting their monopoly on education than in supporting the needs of Illinois' students. They aren't against private schools, making that choice for their own children thanks to generous union salaries. They just want low-income children and families denied an option.

If union bosses and state lawmakers really prioritized students' interests, they would follow the national wave and support programs which expand educational options for students, even if that means some students choose private schools.

Hannah Schmid is an policy analyst with the Illinois Policy Institute

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GARAGE SALES

1655 E. Clark St., Diamond. Friday, May 10 & Saturday, May 11, 9am-4pm. Misc. tools, power tools, compound miter saw w/stand, ext. ladder, grill like new, Misc. home decor inside & out, seasonal/holiday decor, mixer, coffee pot, crock pot, insta pot, cook books, bird feeders, bedding, gnomes, women's clothing S/XL, lg. assortment of women's shoes, too much to list. Sale will be held May 17/18 if rain.

Multi-Family Sale, Diamond - 2502 E. Border Street. Thursday, May 9, 8am-6pm, Friday, May 10, 8am-5pm. Home Decor, purses, plus size clothing, games, toys, legos, books, some kitchen items, something for everyone! cc19

GARAGE SALES

Lake Shannon Annual Multi-Family Garage Sales
 Saturday, May 18, 2024. 8:00am to 4:00pm. 18530 W 3000N Rd, Reddick. cc19-20

MULTI-FAMILY GARAGE SALE
 525 E Campbell Dr, Coal City Thurs. & Fri., May 9 & 10 from 8AM-4PM and Sat., May 11 from 8AM-Noon. Houseware, house decor, Christmas, lots of shoes of all sizes, dresses, DVDs, books, brand new pool floats. Name Brand CLOTHES — ladies / juniors-size 0-18, mens-size S-4XL. Newborn-24 mths baby boy clothes. Collectors Christmas dish set, Sorel sandals. Many Brand New items, all priced to sell. cc18-19

GARAGE SALES

Coal City - 385 E.Short Dr. (Meadow Estates Sub. behind Ace) Fri. & Sat. May 10-11. 8am-4pm. Multi family, Girls 7-10, boys 6-14, boys 0-12 months, shoes, juniors + Ladies S-XL, Womens 1X, young men, baby toys, high chair, baby jumper, house hold items and much misc. ca19

Mazon - Garage /Estate Sale. 407 8th St. Sat. & Sun., May 11 & 12, 8am-2pm. Hummels. Collectible plates, Jewel Tea, Emmitt Kelly, China plates, China bowls. Watch for more sale dates. Tons still in boxes. ca19

GARAGE SALES

15th ANNUAL WILMINGTON ALL-TOWN GARAGE SALE
Thurs., June 6 (8 am-5 pm); Fri., June 7 (8 am-5 pm); Sat., June 8 (8 am - 2 pm) Sponsored by First United Methodist Church, 401 E. Kahler, Wilmington. Everyone is welcome to come out and explore all the great sales at the church and throughout the whole town. Stop by for lunch at the church on Friday from 11:30-1:00. Listing Maps will be available for pick up at the church beginning at 8 am on June 6 and throughout the sale dates. For more information, call: 815-476-5474. ch19-21

CHECK OUT THESE GARAGE SALES!

15th ANNUAL WILMINGTON ALL-TOWN GARAGE SALE

Thurs., June 6 ~ Fri., June 7 ~ Sat., June 8

The 15th Annual All-Town Garage Sale will be sponsored by the First United Methodist Church. We will be producing MAPS of listings throughout the town. All of the advertising will be done for you and bargain hunters will be out all over town. You may sign up for one or all days, and specify your hours. We may have sellers inside the church and vendors/crafters can have a space in our parking lot for an additional \$10 (for all 3 days). MAPS can be picked up at the church on Thursday, June 6th beginning at 8 a.m. through the entirety of the sale. Please fill out the form below by May 28 with a \$10.00 donation to have your information in our Map Listing (60481 RESIDENTS ONLY). These forms are also available at Wilmington City Hall, Wilmington Library, FUMC church, or download from our website at: www.fumcwilm.org. Make your check payable to First United Methodist Church and you may drop off or mail your check to FUMC, All-Town Garage Sale, 401 E. Kahler Road, Wilmington, IL 60481. Call our church office at 815-476-5474 with any questions. (The First United Methodist Church of Wilmington is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items. All unsold items and trash must be removed after the sale.)

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Yes, _____ I want a CHURCH PARKING LOT SPACE for my own table (June 6: 8-5; June 7: 8-5; June 8: 8-2)

MAP LISTING INFORMATION:

Dates/Times of your sale: _____

Address of participating sale: _____

Subdivision/Neighborhood: _____

Items to be sold: _____

BOATS

1972 Quachita Chief Flat Bottom John Boat for sale. Excellent condition. Comes with trailer, motor, canopy top. \$1,200 cash. Call 779-279-5945. cc19-21

HELP WANTED

Hot Shotz, 725 S. Broadway in Coal City. Bartender needed for afternoons & evenings. Please call 815-685-2919 and leave message.

Lifeguards needed at local sportsmen's club in Wilmington. Must be certified or able to become certified. Please send inquiries to wcsc1946@gmail.com or call the office at 815-476-6561. cc17

Spectrum Nurses, Inc. is looking for Director of Nursing for Home Health. Experience preferred. Please call 630-771-9069 or 630-330-4590. ch8-19

Will County Sportsmen's Club is looking for a reliable Maintenance Worker. Must be able to operate the Skidsteer, Backhoe and other equipment. Please call the office at 815-476-6561 or email: wcsc1946@gmail.com cc17-22

Will County Sportsmen's Club is looking for a full-time office employee. Must have experience with Microsoft Office, POS systems, and phone etiquette. Please send inquiries to wcsc1946@gmail.com or call the office at 815-476-6561. cc17-

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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

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

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REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 37150 S MACKS ROAD, CUSTER PARK, IL 60481 (Not applicable). On the 30th day of May, 2024 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 904, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING LLC Plaintiff V. MARK R. RAMSEY AKA MARK RAMSEY; MIDLAND CREDIT MANAGEMENT, INC.; LARRY LIBERSHER; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS**, Defendant. Case No. 22 FC 0819 in the Cir-cuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, Will County, Illinois. Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following

application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **ANSELMO LINDBERG OLIVER LLC**, 1771 W. Diehl Rd. Suite 120, NAPERVILLE, IL 60563 P: 630-453-6960 F: 630-428-4620 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., May 8, 15 & 22, 2024.

OPEN HOUSE IN DIAMOND

Home for sale by owner.
 1735 E Hugh St., Diamond
Sat, 5/11, 10a-4p and Sun, 5/12, 10a-2p



Well maintained 3BD/2BA ranch home in quiet neighborhood.
Contact: (815) 216-1568 or (815) 212-1929

Entry-Level Police Officer Hiring Process

Lateral hires call 815-476-2811 for info



Deadline to apply is May 14

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: \$65,911
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 (May 23, 2024):**
 - 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 (May 23, 2024).**
- Any applicant who would like to schedule a ride along with a Wilmington police officer may call 815-476-2813.
- Successfully pass a written examination with a minimum overall passing score of 70%;
- 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 May 14, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

To apply for this position or obtain additional information, please visit the following website: <http://www.applytoserve.com>
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MORRIS \$329,900
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MORRIS \$314,900
 Commercial building w/2 commercial units on 1st floor, 2nd flr is a 2 BR apartment with a deck. Shawn 815-474-6670. MS513

MORRIS \$309,900
 4 BR, 3 BA home in Hatcher's Woods! Fenced back yard. Near 1&M canal, Gebhard Woods and towpath. Jo 815-252-1724. GB103

MORRIS \$289,900
 4 BR, 2.5 BA, Living, Din, Family Rm w/ fireplace. Partial fin. bsmt. plumbed for bath. Call Tammy 325-0550. SM4927

MORRIS \$239,900
 Previously used as a two-unit home. 3-4 BR, 2 BA, 2 Car Garage. Near Downtown. Shawn 815-474-6670. NF230

MORRIS \$214,900
 3 BR, 2 BA, ranch needs updating. Full bsmt., 1 car attached & 2 car det. garages. Jo 815-252-1724. 1stD623

MORRIS \$209,900
 Updated 3 BR, 2 BA ranch w/ fenced yard, covered/screened patio & 2 car garage. Call/Txt Tom 815-368-5330. LL36

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Algae has potential as a renewable source

Dear EarthTalk: We used to hear a lot about algae's potential as a renewable source of biofuels. Is it still being cultivated and processed accordingly?

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

— PK., Richmond, VA

In recent years, algae has emerged as a potential renewable and less pollutive energy resource. Some species have high levels of fat, carbohydrates and proteins that can produce up to 30 times more energy than other biofuels.

And algae, unlike corn and soy-based biofuels, can thrive well in a variety of environments (including otherwise unusable waste or brackish water). Combined, the high-energy content and abundance of algae make it a promising alternative to current fuel sources.

Some companies, including the low-carbon energy research organization, Decerna, experimented with algae, hoping it could be produced at an industrial level. They cultivated it in artificial light, feeding it a mixture of glycerol, yeast and various chemicals.

They then extracted



A RESEARCHER HOLDS up laminaria saccharina sugar kelp algae in Southeast Alaska.

the functional fats and converted them into biodiesel. The researchers calculated the energy required during each stage of the process and the carbon emissions produced from burning the resulting biodiesel.

They concluded that the production process required more energy than the final product generates, and that total emissions produced during the production and combustion phases of the algae surpassed those of traditional petroleum diesel.

It was also learned that the extraction of the algae's biomolecules may involve the use of harsh chemicals or solvent, and that the growth of algae may also require chemicals like fertilizers and pesticides, which can have adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems if they get into surrounding water bodies through runoff, or if they accumulate in the algae biomass.

Mechanical procedures require fewer chemicals but are less effective at separating the diverse array of materials within the algae. Also, cultivation of algae on a large scale uses large amounts of electricity as it often relies on artificial lighting to ensure optimal and controlled growth conditions.

Moreover, the space required to grow and process algae on a commercial scale can also be a significant environmental concern. Large-scale algae cultivation facilities often occupy substantial land areas or require dedicated infrastructure such as ponds, bioreactors or photobioreactors.

Despite the promise that algae holds, there is a clear need for technological advancements across the entire supply chain. Techniques for seaweed cultivation, harvesting and transportation must be made more efficient.

Several laboratories, such as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the Los Alamos National Laboratory, have been cultivating and manipulating particular strains of algae to genetically maximize the production of fuel biomolecules and other bioproducts. Additionally, improvements in pre-treatment methods, co-digestion processes, and the development of eco-friendly extraction techniques are essential.

Furthermore, advancements in fuel conversion technologies are necessary to ensure that the algae is economically viable and able to be implemented into the current infrastructure. With these changes, perhaps we will see the rise of algae-based biofuels in the future.

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

Grundy County seeking bids for public transit scheduling software

PUBLIC NOTICE

Advertisement for bids

Grundy County is inviting sealed proposals from responsible and responsive vendors for the procurement, implementation, and integration of a web-based dispatching and scheduling solution. Sealed proposals must be submitted in an envelope and clearly marked on the exterior "Scheduling Software" and contain four (4) copies of the complete proposal with one (1) original packet with an original signature. No responsibility or liability will be attached to any County official, employee or agent for the premature opening or failure to open any proposal not marked according to this instruction.

Grundy Transit Service (as referred GTS) is seeking competitive proposals from interested, qualified and experienced contractors to provide dispatch and scheduling software solution to manage its ADA complementary demand responsive service as well as several ancillary paratransit services. These transportation services are summarized within this RFP document. The intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) and the ensuing process is to provide companies with the information, requirements, and specifications necessary for the preparation of a professional and comprehensive proposal. Specific terms and conditions are outlined.

If the Participant will not be selling directly to the County, it is the Participant's responsibility to choose one reseller with whom they will partner on this project.

Sealed proposals will be accepted until 3:00 pm (cst.) June 13th, 2024 at the Grundy County Finance Department, 1320 Union St., Morris, IL 60450. At 3:00pm (cst.) June 13th, 2024; sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud. Fax and electronic submissions will not be accepted.

The proposed project will require full compliance with all Federal, state, and local regulations. You are invited to submit a proposal that includes your qualifications and a work plan for completion of the stated project.

Proposal documents are available at the Office of the Grundy County Finance Department, 1320 Union St., Morris, IL 60450, and for inspection online at www.grundycountyil.gov/proposals-and-rfp/ or Demandstar www.demandstar.com. The proposer remains responsible for obtaining all addenda, which will be posted at the same website.

The County of Grundy reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive technical errors or informalities in proposal.

Chris Balkema
County Board Chairman

Published in the Coal City Courant on May 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024.

City Council to hold hearing for outdoor storage at 211 N. First St.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, IL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, on June 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., a public hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Wilmington at City Hall located at 1165 S. Water Street, Wilmington, IL to receive and consider testimony and public comment on the request of the agent of the petitioner, City of Wilmington, acting on behalf of Begler's, Inc., for Annexation, Conditional Use to Allow for Outdoor Storage and Map Amendment to B3-General Commercial of approximately 0.36 acres of property located at 211 N First Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 which property is described as follows:

The property is described as LOT 3 (EX THE W 176.9 FT) & (EX THE N 216 FT) & LOT 4 (EX THE W 176.9 FT) & (EX THE N 4.3 FT OF THE S 225.3 FT OF THE E 11.47 FT OF THE W 188.37 FT) & (EX THE S 221 FT OF THAT PRT OF LOT 4 LYG E OF THE W 188.37 FT) IN THE HEIRS OF SC THOMPSONS SUB OF THE E1/2 OF THE SE1/4 SEC 26 T33N-R9E PIN 03-17-26-405-038-0000

All interested persons are invited to attend the hearing and will have the opportunity to be heard. For additional information on this application, please contact the City of Wilmington Clerk's Office at 1165 S. Water Street, Wilmington, IL (815) 476-2175.

Joie Ziller
Deputy City Clerk
City of Wilmington

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, May 8, 2024.



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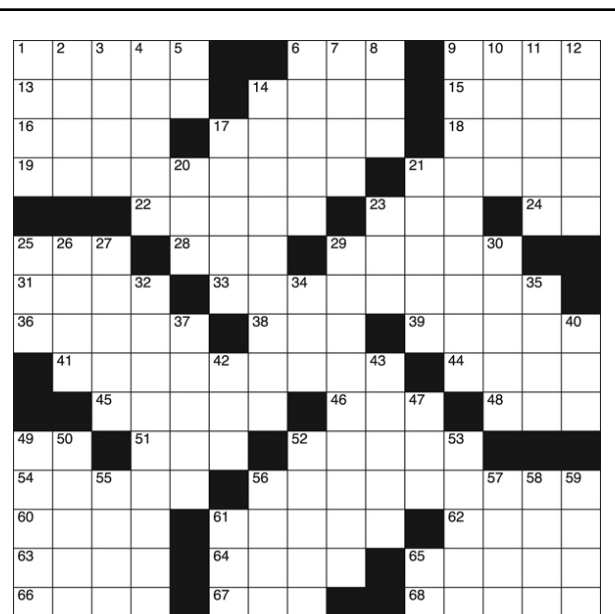
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- Body parts
- Hit Dave Matthews Band song
- Depicts with pencil
- Make into leather without tannin
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- Alias
- Fingers do it
- More dried-up
- Clod
- Senior officer
- A way to listen to music
- The bill in a restaurant
- Historic center of Artois region
- Cyprinid fishes
- Poisonous perennial plant
- Scottish Loch
- Heads
- Extra seed-covering
- Wings
- Britpop band
- Forearm bones
- Small immature herring
- Female sibling
- Hymn

CLUES DOWN

- Vipers
- Not on time
- Resembling a wing or wings
- Tears down
- Professional designation
- Noise a sheep made
- Type of poetry
- Speak loudly
- Ties the knot again
- Apron
- Studied intensively
- City in Finland
- One who monitors
- 18-year astronomical period
- Trent Reznor's band
- Takes to the sea
- Split pulses
- Valentine's Day color
- Wyatt
- Type of rail
- One from the Big Apple
- Asteroids
- Made more sugary
- Change in skin pigment
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese
- Koran chapters
- A place to relax
- Young woman ready for society life
- Female horses
- Half of Milli Vanilli
- Icelandic poems
- Indiana town
- Golden peas
- Closes tightly
- It's mined in mountains
- Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
- Monetary unit
- Primordial matter
- TV station
- Rise

Lady Coalers come up short against conference leaders

The Lady Coaler softball team put up a good fight Monday in a conference showdown with Manteno, almost knocking off the ICE leaders.

But Manteno (26-1, 13-0) held on just as the Coal City was threatening, winning 2-1.

The Lady Coalers (20-8) trailed through six innings before Addison Harvey scored in the top of the seventh. Coal City's rally was cut short after that as the Panthers locked in the conference championship. Coal City was second with a 10-3 league record.

Coal City scraped together four hits, including two singles and one

RBI by Kaycee Graf, and one hit each by Madi Petersen and Makayla Henline.

Bri Combes pitched a gutsy seven innings, giving up two earned runs off seven hits, one walk and one strike out.

JCA 4, Coal City 3

Saturday's contest wasn't decided until the seventh inning when the visiting Hilltoppers scored one run to break a 3-3 tie.

"It was a great game today vs a solid Joliet Catholic team," commented Coal City coach Rodney Monbrum. "Hats off to their defense today as they came up big when it counted most."

The Lady Coalers were

led by Graf who went 2-for-3. Also getting hits were Makayla Henline, Makenzie Henline, Jady Shaw, Abby Gagliardo, Khloe Picard, Sierra Anderson and Petersen.

Combes started in the circle, lasting five innings with three runs (1 earned) off eight hits. Naomi Rodriguez came on for two innings, giving up one run off four hits including a home run while striking out one.

Sweep the Comets

Coal City defeated their rivals from Reed-Custer 12-7 on Wednesday and 11-1 in five innings on Tuesday.

On Wednesday Coal City went up 3-0 in the first and 9-0 in the top of the third. The Comets got on the board with five runs in the bottom of the frame but that was a close as they would get as the Coalers scored three more in the fourth but were not needed.

Makayla Henline finished with four RBIs with a double and a single. Makenzie Henline went 3-for-4 with a double, RBI and walk. Picard also had three hits, including a double, while Gagliardo doubled in two runs. Graf and Shaw also had two hits.

Combes got the win, throwing five innings with 13 hits, seven runs and one strike out. Makayla Henline pitching two innings with no runs off three hits and one walk.

On Tuesday at home the Coalers beat the Comets in five innings, 11-1.

Highlights included doubles for both Henlines, Petersen and Graf. Makenzie Henline had two hits and three RBIs. Harvey singled and walked for two RBIs. Graf also had two hits and two RBIs. Makayla Henline went 3-for-4.

Combes threw all five innings, allowing eight hits, one run, one walk and one strike out.

The Lady Coalers were to play Manteno on Tuesday at home. On Thursday they will host Morris and then Pontiac on Friday.

Coal City enters the Manteno Regional May 15 as the #4 seed. They will face the winner between Momence (11) and Bishop McNamara (7). If they win odds are they will face Manteno for the championship on Friday at 4:30 p.m. The winner advances to the Herscher sectional May 22.

CC seniors get a nice sendoff

Thursday's Senior Night for the Coal City soccer team couldn't have any sweeter as they end up scoring 10 goals against Plano in a 10-1 victory.

Four seniors led the charge scoring six of their points, mostly in the second half.

Scoring for the Lady Coalers were seniors Madie Gomez with three goals, Aubrey Mellen with one goal, Cassidy Jenkins one goal and Kiley McKim with one goal and one assist.

Kylee Kennell, a junior, scored two goals and delivered two assists. Sophomore Hayden Francisco scored a goal while freshman Maggie Sterba contributed two assists.

Coal City goalkeeper Chloe Pluger finished with three saves.

The win was their sixth in a row to improve to 11-4-2, 5-3 in the conference.

On Tuesday they upended Manteno on the road, 3-0.

Claire Mohler, a freshman, scored one goal while Kennell and Francisco kicked in one each. Nettle Connor, Madie Gomez and Kennell each dished out an assist.

The Lady Coalers travel to Manteno on Friday as the #3 seed in that regional. They will play the hosts at 6:30 p.m. If they win they will return May 14 for the 5 p.m. title match. Wilmington and Beecher are the other two teams in that regional.

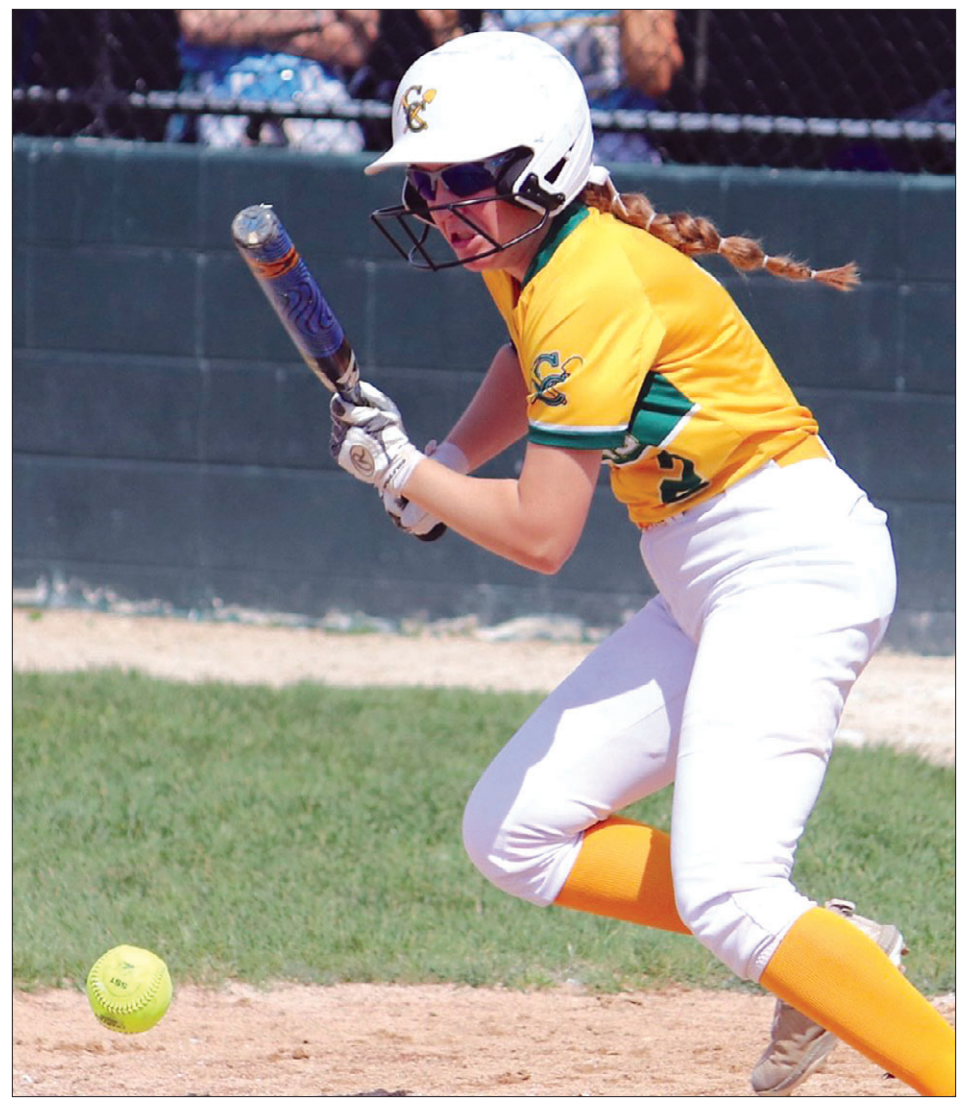


Photo by Amy Walker

BUNT AND RUN—Coal City's Maddi Petersen bunts the ball safely at home.

Coalers have a busy week before playoffs begin

The final week of the regular season will be a busy one for the Coal City baseball team with six games in five days on the eve of the playoffs.

The Coalers (15-8 overall and second in conference with a 10-2 record) played their final conference game on Monday and Tuesday against Manteno. Now they're on the road Thursday to Newark, Friday at Bradey-Bourbonnais and Saturday to Pleasant Plains for a double header against the hosts and Rochester.

Their gain will hopefully be momentum leading into the Reed-Custer Regional which starts Monday between Peotone (11) and the Comets (9). On Wednesday Wilmington (1) will play the winner between those two and then on Thursday Coal City (4) will take on Beecher (7). If the Coalers win, odds are they will be playing Wilmington for the regional championship at 11 a.m. on May 18.

JCA too tough

Coaler pitchers Gabe McHugh, Lance Cuddy, and Jack Varnack combined to hold Joliet Catholic Academy to 4 earned runs, but a few Coaler miscues lead to a 10-0 non-conference home loss to the visiting Hilltoppers.

Lance Cuddy, Wyatt Wickiser and Danny Olson added hits. The Coalers drop to 15-8.

Sweep the Comets

Coal City 7, Reed-Custer 5
The Coalers completed the ICE sweep at Braidwood on Wednesday.

Tanner Wallace tossed the first 4 innings surrendering 4 runs (0 earned) on 2 hits while walking 3 and striking out 4. AJ Wills came

on to toss the final 3 innings to get the win. AJ allowed just 1 unearned run on 1 hit while walking 1 and striking out 3.

Wyatt had 3 hits and 3 RBI including the big swing — a two run homer to give the Coalers the lead late in the game. Danny Olson was 2-3 with an RBI. Will McArdle doubled and drove in a run. Lance Cuddy (RBI), Dylan Young, and Cade Baldauf added hits in the win.

Coal City 7, Reed Custer 3

The Coalers grabbed a home win vs Reed Custer, 7-3, on Tuesday.

Joe Watson earned the win on the bump hurling 4.1 innings, allowing 3 runs (1 earned) on 6 hits with 1 walk and 8 strikeouts. Austin Davy notched the save with 2.2 innings of shutout relief allowing just the 1 hit, on 1 walk with 4 strikeouts.

Gabe McHugh was 2-3 with an RBI. Tanner Wallace doubled and drove in 3. Creide Skubic and Danny Olson (RBI) both doubled. Lance Cuddy (RBI), Luke Nolan (RBI) and Dylan Young added hits in the win.



Photo by Amy Walker

ROBBING Joliet Catholic from scoring a run is Coal City outfielder Sierra Anderson who caught the ball on the run.



Photo by Eric Fisher

LEAPING TO BLOCK the ball for the Lady Coalers during their win over Plano last week is Ava Houston.



Photo by Zandie Sims

THROWING FOR THE force out at first base is Coal City's Dylan Young.

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