

Coalers medal at Skills contest



Lady Coalers claim regional title



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Photo by Ann Gill

THE COAL CITY High School class of 2023 was honored during the school's 109th commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 14. Class vice-president Reagan Robson (left) gave the farewell address and led her classmates in the traditional turning of the tassel.

“Never be afraid to dream big” 109th class of Coalers graduates from Coal City High School

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

As the Coal City High School class of 2023 sat together one last time, they were reminded that their presence in the school's gymnasium on a Sunday afternoon was a celebration of all they had accomplished the past four years.

“Yet that is not all. We are here to accept the challenge of having prosperous futures,” salutatorian Logan Hawkins said in his graduation day address to his classmates.

As the school's 109th class to graduate, they head out into a world that has changed since they first stepped into the school as freshmen.

This, their senior year, was the first “normal” school year since they began their journey as high schoolers.

“I want to commend you for your resilience and perseverance. The last four years have not exactly been normal,” principal Jennifer Kenney told the class.

Just over half-way through their freshman year a worldwide pandemic took hold and forced them from their classrooms and activities. They were students who were learning remotely, wearing masks, and sitting six feet apart.



Photo by Ann Gill

COALER GRADUATE Chad Reinert is all smiles ahead of Sunday's graduation ceremony. An Acclaimed Coaler, he will continue his education at the University of Nevada Las Vegas.

Yet, they persevered and found success in academics, on the playing field and the stage. They set the bar higher

for future Coalers to achieve.

“It was a long journey back to a normal life, but we made it. On the positive side, we have also experienced triumphs, achievements and moments of pure joy. Each of these experiences has shaped us, and molded us into the people we are to day,” said Carley Morris, the class secretary/treasurer.

The graduates are state championship wrestlers and award winning actors and actresses. They have won numerous titles in math, scholastic bowl and academic competitions, not to mention regional and sectional athletic titles. They have created prize winning artwork and qualified for national competitions.

“You have shown that in the face of adversity, you have the strength and determination to succeed,” Kenney said.

As the principal pointed out, success in school is usually a good indicator of success in the future.

The 160 members of the class have chosen a variety of paths to follow after graduation.

According to Kenney, 41% plan to attend a four year college or university, 30% will continue their studies at a jun-

SEE GRADUATION, PAGE 2



Photo by Ann Gill

DAVE SPESIA WAS sworn in as the village of Coal City's 26th mayor on Wednesday, May 10. The oath of office administered by Grundy County Judge Scott Belt.

Spesia seated as town's 26th mayor

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

An afternoon of golf provided Dave Spesia with a mayoral view of the village of Coal City, and his first hole in one.

As Spesia prepared to take on his duties as the town's mayor he called on his predecessor to provide some background, insight and instruction, but instead of a telephone chat or meeting in a room with fluorescent lights, the two headed out into the sunshine for a round of golf to discuss a range of topics.

The meeting, dubbed by two as their, “smooth transition of power,” provided the time necessary to address several topics of importance ahead of Spesia taking the oath.

Spesia was sworn in as the village's 26th president/mayor on Wednesday, May 10.

Grundy County Judge Scott Belt administered the oath and outgoing mayor Terry Halliday was there to witness the transition.

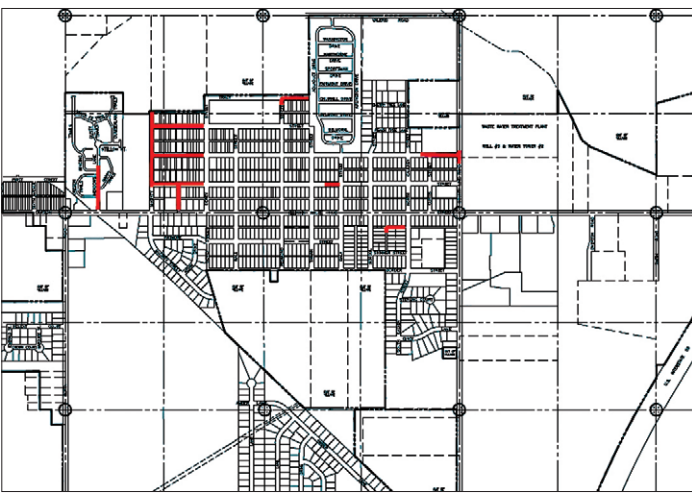
Upon taking his new seat, Spesia shared some thoughts and stories from the mayoral golf outing.

“At one point during our meeting, around the 15th hole, I told Terry I was at a mass on a day he spoke about giving time, talent and treasures. For the rest of the 15th hole we talked about the topic of time, talent and treasures and how that applies to aspects of community service and how important it actually is,” Spesia said.

Then as they came upon hole 16, the conversation took a detour.

“Hole number 16 is a 157 elevated T-Box, par three. Terry hit straight but short of the

SEE SPESIA, PAGE 2



Courtesy image

THE VILLAGE OF Diamond will complete over \$294,000 in roadway upgrades this summer. D Construction, of Coal City, was awarded the contract at a meeting last week. The streets slated for upgrades are marked in red.

Diamond to complete \$294,000 in street repairs

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

The Village of Diamond will invest over \$294,000 in town funds to improve streets and alleyways.

Mayor Terry Kernc announced last week that the Village Board had agreed to move forward with the improvements and accepted a bid submitted by D Construction at a cost of \$294,127.50. The project will be paid for with village funds.

This year's street maintenance work will focus on various areas within the village, including additional patching and drainage work.

Streets to be repavement include

- Meadow Lane in Country Meadows Subdivision from Route 113 [Division Street] to Winding Trail.
- McGinty Street north of the Morris Hospital Diamond-Coal City campus to the dead-end just north of Hugh Street.
- Clark, Stellan and Hugh streets from McGinty east to Dewey Street.
- Tash Street from Route 113 to Clark Street.
- Will Road at the intersection of Stellan Street and approximately one block of Stellan Street to the west.

The project also includes some additional small projects

including the transition of Redmond Street to Tracy Street and Perona Lane.

Areas slated for improvement were determined through a review of the town's streets and are the start of what the mayor plans to be a multi-year street improvement project.

Kernc would like to see the village embrace a plan that would allow for annual neighborhood improvements.

“I like to do a neighborhood at a time. Get one section done including ADA ramps and fix any sidewalks needing repair and then move on to the next block,” the mayor said.

In the coming weeks, the village will undergo a pavement management survey through a grant awarded by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning [CMAP].

A digital survey vehicle will travel village streets collecting digital imagery of the pavement surface and roadside assets.

Data collected from the drive will be used to develop a plan village officials can use to schedule roadway upgrades

SEE STREETS, PAGE 2



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Little business on Village Board last and first agenda

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

In a brief meeting that started with one mayor and ended with another, the Coal City Village Board conducted little business last week.

When the Board gathered for its regular meeting last week, it started as every meeting does with approval of the previous meeting minutes and payment of bills totaling \$47,728.89. The recently elected vil-

lage officials were sworn into office and with no business to attend to like contracts, pay request or variances. The only thing left to address were the individual reports of trustees and appointed officials. The Board and public

were provided with an update from the village engineer regarding two projects—wastewater treatment plant modernization and road maintenance.

Engineer Ryan Hansen, of Chamlin & Associates, said the

Illinois Department of Transportation responded to the town's submission of motor fuel tax for street improvements.

Bids for the project will be opened at 10 a.m., Tuesday, June 6 at the Village Hall. The lowest responsible bid will then go before the Board for a vote.

Hansen further reported the treatment plant modernization is quickly coming to completion with paving work at the entrance to the facility one of the last remaining pieces. That work should be completed within the next few days.

The monthly police activity report was presented by Chief Chris Harseim who noted total officer activity in the month of April was 549 calls, bringing the year to date total to 2,328 calls.

Last month, officers issues 36 citations, 17 criminal

charges and 189 verbal warnings, and responded to seven traffic crashes.

The chief provided an update on the activity of the countywide Pro-Act Unit that made nine arrests in April—six felony and three warrant.

The group seized .57 grams of cocaine, 9.82 grams of fentanyl and 3.5 grams of methamphetamine bringing the total amount of narcotics taken off the streets to 81,518 grams since March 2021.

Additionally, ProAct officers seized four firearms last month. Since the group's inception, 21 firearms have been taken off the streets, and 10 vehicles and \$53,000 have been seized.

"That is extraordinary," Harseim said.

The next meeting of the Village Board is scheduled for 7 p.m., Wednesday, May 24 at the Village Hall.

Spesia

green, we lost mine as it hit the green and when we arrived on the green Terry checked the cup and bingo mine was my first hole in one. Our conversation quickly turned from Coal City golf instruction," the new mayor said, noting with a chuckle it was at that point there was a shift with him offering the outgoing mayor some instruction—in the sport of golf.

That late April meeting on the golf course was beneficial and successful.

The new mayor thanks Halliday for his service and commitment to the community.

"You have given your time, talents and treasurers while serving the residents of for 26 years. The fact that you were able to commit 26 years while raising a family and working full-time to provide for you and your family is admirable. So on behalf of the residents of Coal City I thank you for your service," Spesia said.

Spesia went on to thank those who provided support during his candidacy and acknowledging his challenger, Ross Bradley.

"Together Ross and I proved it possible for two candidates to run for political office without personal attacks," Spesia said. He thanked Bradley for his 12 years of service as a trustee.



Photo by Ann Gill

NEWLY ELECTED VILLAGE Trustees Pam Noffsinger, Dan Greggain and Dave Togliatti were sworn into office last week along with village clerk Alexis Stone. Grundy County Judge Scott Belt administered the oath of office.

The mayor went on to thank his family, his wife and children were among those looking on as he took the oath.

And, the new mayor acknowledged the community he will lead for the next four years.

"I would like to thank the residents of Coal City for having the confidence in me to serve as your president/mayor, I am eager to start and I am extremely optimistic for the future of Coal City," Spesia said.

Following the swearing in of the mayor, Belt administered the oath of office to the newly elected village clerk,

Lexi Stone and trustees Dan Greggain, Dave Togliatti and Pam Noffsinger.

"Thank you to the residents for putting me here and I can't wait to get started," said Noffsinger, who moves from the position of clerk to trustee.

She shared that she will be around to assist Stone transition into her new position and the two plan to sit side-by-side at the table.

Several family members of the officer holders were in the room for the first meeting of the new board, and Trustee Tim Bradley took a moment to thank each of them for their attendance and the support

they will provide in the coming months and years.

As the Board expressed a readiness to get a new term started, so did the mayor.

"I am looking forward to working with each of you as we navigate thought the next few years. Future decisions, some of which will be difficult and even at times unpopular should be informed decisions with input from our staff and professional services, and always be made on what is best for our community and residents," Spesia said.

The first full meeting of the new Village Board is set for Wednesday, May 24.

Promotion ceremony to honor eighth graders

STAFF REPORT

The Unit 1 School District will hold its promotion ceremony for the eighth grade class at Coal City Middle School on Friday, May 25. The ceremony will be held in the competition gym at the high school beginning at 7 p.m.

A number of end-of-year activities have also been planned for the students including a recent dance and an upcoming class trip to Six Flags Great America.

The final day of school for all students [with the exception of seniors and eighth graders] is Wednesday, May 24. It will be an early dismissal day with the Early Childhood Center letting out at 1:15 p.m., with the following building dismissal times elementary school, 1:35 p.m.; 1:25 p.m., intermediate school; 1:45 p.m., middle school, and high school at 1:40 p.m.

Support group helping Alzheimer's caregivers

The Alzheimer's Association, Greater Illinois Chapter would like to invite anyone caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia to a monthly Caregiver's Support Group held the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Coal City, 4470 E. Rt. 113 in Coal City. The church is located one mile west of Coal City on Highway 113.

Alzheimer's caregiver support groups have many benefits for both caregivers and patients.

Support group participants benefit from social and emotional support while learning more factual information about dementia.

This meeting is for caregivers only. For more information, contact Becky Halderson at 815-791-2658.



Photo by Ann Gill

LUKE HAWKINS, valedictorian of the Coal City High School class of 2023, addresses his classmates at Sunday's commencement ceremony. Joining Luke on the stage is his brother, Logan Hawkins, salutatorian of the class. The brothers will continue their education at the University of Alabama majoring in civil and aerospace engineering respectively.

Graduation

ior college, 12% will enroll in a trade or technical school, 15% will head into the workforce and 2% will serve their country in the armed services—Anthony Cirrencione, Skyler Milinkovic and Landen Selio.

Cirrencione joined the Army National Guard in December 2021 and Milinkovic will begin her service with the U.S. Navy in September.

As for Selio, moments after accepting his diploma and tossing his cap into the air, he bid farewell to his family and friends walked out of CCHS to begin his training and responsibilities as a member of the United States Marine Corps.

Responsibility, a point made by the principal, who shared that in graduating they are accepting a responsibility.

"A responsibility to be good citizens, to contribute to society, and to make the world a better place. I have no doubt that you are up for the challenge, and I am excited to see the impact you will make," Kenney said.

In their final moments as high school students, the graduation speakers reflected on their days at CCHS. The impact of their teachers, the dances, football games, contests, state championships and stage performances.

"We will always be able to share moments that made CCHS most memorable," class vice president Reagan Robson said.

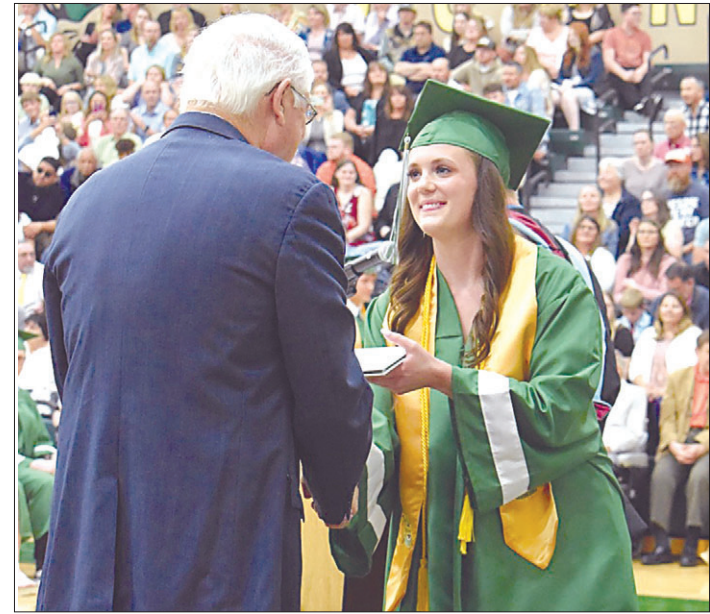
As the graduates prepared to accept their diplomas issued by superintendent Chris Spencer and the Board of Education, valedictorian Luke Hawkins offered his classmates a few words of advice.

The most powerful six words in his address, "never be afraid to dream big."

With diplomas in hand and tassels turned to the left, the class of 2023 was left with this from its president, Braiden Young.

"This is an amazing accomplishment for all of us, to be a part of the life long learning culture here at Coal City. With that being said even when we go off into our own lives, we will still have Coal City to come back to, whenever in need, because of the great community we have established here. Once a Coaler, always a Coaler."

As the ceremony concluded the graduates clad in Coaler green robes rose from their golden chairs and exited the gymnasium to the Coaler fight song.



CARLEY MORRIS, secretary/treasurer of the class, accepts her diploma from Unit 1 Board of Education president Ken P. Miller.



THE 160 MEMBERS of the Coal City High School class of 2023 were honored during the school's commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 14. Among the graduates [from left]: Mateo Blessing, Collin Dames and Peyton Benson

Streets

based on pavement conditions over the course of 10 years.

In addition to the pavement work approved last week, Kernc said the village

plans to complete some patching work this summer in various locations within the village. In advance of the planned roadwork the town's public works department will be completing some drainage improvements to ensure the longevity of the pavement upgrades.

ASSUMPTION CHURCH FAMILY

BINGO NIGHT

Saturday, May 20
 @ Berst Hall Assumption Church, Coal City
 Hours: 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.
 First game starts at 5:30 p.m.

\$10 per person includes 20 games of bingo, a dauber, a slice of pizza, drink, popcorn, and dessert

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 Sponsored by Assumption Catholic Church and the FCSLA.

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An illegal hire

BRAIDWOOD—It's just the first meeting of the new city council and the four commissioners have already shown that they are going to be ganging up on our new mayor in order to do what they want, regardless of what he thinks or what the public thinks. The appointment of Mr. Altieri to the Supervisor of Public Works position was done in the most back-door and non-transparent means possible. His name was not listed on the agenda for the public to be made aware and the position was never even advertised as a job opening with the city for interested applicants to apply. Is this position even included in the FY24 budget which was approved by the previous council? I don't think so. Is this position going to be included in the Local 150 Operators Union? I don't think so. Since this is not a union position, will he be able to operate machinery, backhoes, snow plows, etc.? I don't think so. Since he does not have the required EPA licenses and certifications, will he be able to supervise the employees of the water treatment and a sewer plants? I don't think so. If a position is not included in the budget, how can someone be hired for it? Those are all reasons why the previous Supervisor of Public Works stepped down to take a position within the union which resulted in the position not being filled by the previous council which Mr. Altieri was affiliated with. So what exactly did the four commissioners just illegally hire? Seems awfully fishy, doesn't it? Twelve pages of qualifications and achievements isn't a justifiable reason to an underhanded deed. All of this, on top of committing a violation of the Open Meetings Act which requires the public body to indicate in the motion the reasons as permitted by the Open Meetings Act for which they are entering into closed session. Hopefully someone will submit a complaint to the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor. The four commissioners need to learn that they cannot do whatever they feel like. Either play by the rules, be completely transparent or face the consequences. Oh wait, they all had extreme difficulty explaining to the voters what the word transparency meant during the Meet The Candidates night, so maybe they truly have no clue what it means.

Not Kamala

SHADOW LAKES—Biden said he appointed Kamala to be in charge of artificial intelligence, no joke. I hope it's Kamala the Uganda giant the wrestler from the WWF in the 90's? I would feel better after the wonderful job she did on the border.

Eddie

Miss The Grill

COAL CITY—Why did The Grill close so many years ago? I wish it was still here instead of the places we have now.

Good credit doesn't pay

WILMINGTON—How does it feel to know that you work all your life to pay your bills and have a good credit rating and now the Feds (Liberal Democrats) pass a bill that went into effect Monday that says we get charged higher mortgage fees than those with poor credit? This is what the Biden Administration is doing to take from the good and give to the free loaders. Tell me how this is any different than those who go into businesses, take what they want and walk out without paying for it? Thanks to the Democrats the whole world is turned upside down and the crooks have the right of way.

Too much liability

WILMINGTON—We finally got our islands back for the taxpayers to enjoy without having outsiders partying down and swimming in the river at the South Island with all the lawsuits and now you're moving all the trouble to the North Island with this kayak launch. Explain to me how you're going to do this without the financial liability when someone drowns making the Wilmington citizens being on the hook to pay for it. By the way our taxes have almost doubled this year and now you're dreaming up a kayak launch that's going to cost us at least over \$110,000 plus more if you don't get your \$80,000 grant. All I can envision is a lot of people partying with their kids swimming in the river and overloaded kayaks and someone drowning and big lawsuits plus our taxes going up to pay for outsiders' fun. Remember we have two car dealers leaving and another that just sold out so who's going to pay for your pipedream? How's that Ventrac 2120 sidewalk snow remover doing that was costing us \$36,392 plus \$6,000 maintenance? All this great spending for outsiders and we can't even find money to bring back the leaf vac which is something that everyone can use.

Sheer stupidity

MORRIS—New York has now banned gas

stoves for everyone and soon there will be a ban on gas stoves throughout the nation. But before this happens, every public servant and every Hollywood actor and actress, along with every millionaire, should be forced to have all gas stoves removed from their homes which they would never tolerate. Every other American citizen was bent through the will of stupidity that is being imposed upon the USA by individuals that will never abide by the same rules or laws that they are forced upon the American citizens. Natural gas is the purest form of clean energy but the woke says "do as I say, not as I do." If you don't listen to the woke then you will suffer at the hands of spoiled brat crybabies that do not know the difference between fantasy and reality.

What they wanted

BRAIDWOOD—So the city council had their first meeting and would you realize what happened. They took the mayor in the back and whipped him right into shape and he gave them what they wanted.

Who they hate

WILMINGTON—They got rid of Roe vs. Wade and now this fixation with drag queens. The Republicans have shown us they hate women and anybody who looks like one.

Keep landlines for seniors

WILMINGTON—Illinois' most vulnerable groups will be affected by a recent FCC decision that approves deregulation allowing telecom companies to replace copper wire landline phone service with Internet-based phone service. According to the FCC Order, the existence of landline service is preventing us from transitioning to the next generation of communication technology because it requires expensive infrastructure maintenance. However, this decision will negatively impact the 1.6 million seniors in Illinois who still rely on landline service, including my parents. They struggle to use their cell phone, and their Internet connection is often unreliable. It is irresponsible for the FCC to prioritize telecom giants' profit over the needs of rural communities, senior and elderly folks, and places with poor Internet connectivity. How can we tie the primary means of communication of these groups to something as unreliable as an Internet connection? They would lose Internet connectivity completely if the power went out. If the federal government does not protect the interests of vulnerable groups, it is the responsibility of the Illinois state legislature to step in and advocate for them. They must ensure that no one is left behind in this so-called "upgrade."

A good deed

BRAIDWOOD—I just wanted to say thank you to the person who paid for my stuff at Casey's this morning. I had an issue with my card and didn't have cash on me. I went out to check my vehicle for cash, came back in and she paid for it. Thank you so much. It's an embarrassing thing that can happen but I appreciate you stepping in and saving the day. Thank you so much. You are awesome!

Been done before

BRAIDWOOD—I saw a Facebook post by a previous city mayor and clerk complaining about Tony Altieri, being rehired as the supervisor of public works. In your post you talk about friends hiring friends. How can you complain about something like this when your son was hired as the foreman of the Street department under your friend Fay Smith when he was the street and public improvement commissioner? Based on your history nothing surprises me out of you and your regime.

Focused commissioners

BRAIDWOOD—In response to the three negative sound offs about the Braidwood election. It is obvious you had the information about what the mayor was doing before it was announced at the city council meeting. You are all the same group that once again tried to get re-elected for the 2nd time and failed once again. You know what's going on in advance because the mayor is your puppet. The new mayor won with 20% of the vote from all regis-

Commentary

President Biden's electric vehicle folly

America lacks the grid to power an electric vehicle fleet

BY ROBERT ZUBRIN

The Biden administration is currently preparing regulations to drastically cut the number of new combustion combustion-powered vehicles sold in the United States. The new regulation being prepared by the EPA would require that by 2032, 64% of all new cars sold in the U.S. would need to be electric vehicles, an elevenfold increase over their 5.8% market share now. According to the administration, this massively costly intervention into the market is necessary to save the world from the "existential threat of climate change."

Aside from its fantastic costs, which also include building millions of electric vehicle charging stations, the strategic, economic, and environmental consequences associated with vastly expanding our nation's reliance on Chinese rare earth metal exports, and the question of whether electric cars really do reduce overall carbon emissions, there is a fundamental problem with this initiative. Electric cars require electricity. Biden wants to use our grid to

drive America's vehicles. But we don't have the juice to power them. Not by a long shot.

In 2021 the United States used 26.9 quadrillion BTU's (or quads) of energy to power its transportation sector. At the same time, it produced 12.9 quads of electricity, over 99% of which went to existing residential, commercial and industrial users.

It's true that internal combustion engines only have an efficiency of 28% while diesels have an efficiency of 43%, so that between the two, America's vehicle fleet is about 35% in converting 26.9 quads of fuel into 9.4 quads of motive power. The electrical utility system is also about 35% efficient, outputting its 12.9 quads of electricity from 36.7 quads of raw energy input. That's why powering an electric car using grid power produced from fossil fuels does little to reduce overall carbon emissions. Furthermore, charging the battery of an electric car is typically around 83% efficient, and the car itself is 90% efficient in turning the electricity in its battery into motive power, for a net vehicle efficiency of about 75%. That means that it would take about 12.5 quads of electricity – roughly equal to the entirety of our current electric power output – to drive the current

American transportation fleet.

Of course, Biden is not demanding that we switch our entire fleet to electric vehicles instantly. He only wants two thirds of new vehicles to be electric by 2032, and it would take some time after that before they constituted a large portion of the fleet. This would give us time to expand our power generation capacity. So let's say we have 20 years to expand our grid enough to power half the current fleet – or about 40% of the anticipated fleet size of the year 2053. To do that, we would have to increase our power output at a rate of 0.337 quads per year. This is equivalent to adding 99 billion kWh of output (or 13.3 GW of capacity operating at 85% full load) to our grid every year for the next 20 years.

In contrast, for the past 15 years, The United States has increased its electric power output at a rate of 3.3 billion kWh per year. To implement Biden's plan, America would have to immediately start bringing new power plants online at 30 times the rate it now does.

In principle, that is not impossible. From 1957 to 1977, the United States increased its electric power output at an average rate of 70 billion kWh per year, 20 times

the current rate, and that was accomplished by a country with (in 1967) one-third of America's current GDP. Based on orders received during this period, from 1981 to 1991, U.S. nuclear electricity output alone was increased at a rate of 35 billion kWh per year.

But then regulators slammed on the brakes. U.S. nuclear capacity today is no more than it was in 1991, and total electric production capacity, from all sources combined, has barely increased at all since 2010.

If Biden's program is to be implemented without crashing America's power grid, what is required is a total reversal of the regulatory state's War on Energy. Furthermore, if the electrification of transportation is to actually result in a reduction of carbon emissions, the vast amount of new capacity required will need to come from a carbon-free source.

The only way to do that is through nuclear power.

Robert Zubrin @robert_zubrin is president of Astronautics, an aerospace R&D firm. His latest book, "The Case for Nukes: How We Can Beat Global Warming and Create a Free, Open, and Magnificent Future," was recently published by Polaris Books.



tered voters. If you look at the percentage the four commissioners won with you will see nobody wants any of you or your opinions in the city of Braidwood we have four commissioners who care about this city. Unfortunately until the mayor removes himself from your control he will never do what's right for Braidwood. Fortunately, the commissioners will continue to keep this city moving forward.

Better news

WILMINGTON—Must be short of good interesting news in the Wilmington paper as the front page carried an article of some woman giving birth in an ambulance. Really we don't need an actual account and description of her giving birth with our morning coffee. Seriously, is there not something else news worthy?

Four years of nonsense

BRAIDWOOD—It certainly didn't take long to learn that the top priorities of the present city commissioners is threefold: Don't work with the mayor, provide for your friends, and keep the public in the dark. When the mayor did exactly as he said he would during the campaign and did not re-appoint the administrator, the council gave their friend a new job as a supervisor of Walsh's and Wietting's departments in spite of the fact that each department already has someone in charge. The chain of command above that is supposed to be the commissioner of that department. I guess Walsh and Wietting simply want a paycheck on the backs of us taxpayers without having to do any work. There was no advance notice that Altieri was going to be appointed, no discussion on the topic, the public didn't have an opportunity to address the matter and there was absolutely no mention of how much he will get paid, what his benefits might be or anything else that the public should be informed of. The mayor very correctly did not vote for the appointment but with the clique it really doesn't matter. The commissioners have him outvoted. So I'm sure it will be four more years of the same old nonsense. After all, the commissioners have to work toward getting their friend vested in the city pension.

Town Hall lies

WILMINGTON—Watching the town hall meeting with the ex-president on CNN, I could only take 10-15 minutes of watching and hearing the tired old lies. Why didn't the moderator ask the ex-president these questions? "You say there is video evidence of voter fraud? So where is it? On Hunter Biden's laptop?" "You say you could end the Ukraine War in 24 hours. If you believe in democracy, as you say you do, why don't you share this master plan? Would it upset your boyfriend Putin?" "You said the U.S. should default on the debt, even though you had Congress raise the debt ceiling three times as president. Does that explain why you increased our national debt by over \$7 trillion in just four years?"

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Single: \$16.99
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A journey to Madagascar



THE COAL CITY High School Drama Club and Coal City Theatre Department will present "Madagascar, A Musical Adventure, Jr." on Friday, May 19. The musical features fourth and fifth grade students from Coal City Intermediate School and is directed by Coal City High School senior Derek Carlson with assistance from his fellow drama club members that include Amelia Fritz, Kilen Davidson, Izzy Kostbade and Stephen Byers, Jr. The single public performance of the show will begin at 7 p.m. in the Coal City Performing Arts Centers. Reserved seat tickets can be purchased on-line at bit.ly/CCTDTickets.

Celebrating 50 years of musical theatre



IN OBSERVANCE OF the 50th anniversary of the musical theatre program at Coal City High School, the Coal City Theatre Department is inviting the cast, crew and pit orchestra of the school's first musical, "So this is Paris," directed by Sue Borrer Boldt and Lynn Wright, to reunite and be recognized at its annual Broadway Revue performance on Sunday, May 28 at 2:30 p.m. in the Coal City Performing Arts Center. Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by e-mail to agill@coalcityschools.org.

Grief support group starting in Coal City

A Grief Share Support Group is starting at Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Road, on Tuesday, June 6, at 6 p.m. The group will meet monthly and will be administered by Mary Baudino, certified grief counselor, and Karen Hart, parish nurse. Anyone who is grieving the loss of a loved one is invited to attend this caring, supportive group. For more information, please contact Karen Hart at 708-217-5808.

Extended hunting, fishing license may soon be available

Sportsmen in Illinois may soon get the optional of purchasing fishing, hunting and trapping licenses on a three-year basis instead of annually. The measure, championed by State Senator Patrick Joyce (D-Essex), passed the Senate 56-0 Thursday to allow an easier way to obtain a hunting, fishing, trapping and sportsmen license. "This is a commonsense measure that will save people time," said Joyce. "People will have more time to engage in outdoor activities without having to worry about if their license is expired." The bill would allow residents to obtain the license at three times the cost of an annual one. "This is a big convenience factor for people who hunt, fish and trap, but it also helps out our state's conservation," said Joyce. "By switching to three-year license options, we will save people the hassle of renewing their license every year while also helping generate more revenue at a time for the state's conservation efforts."

Five generations



A NEW ADDITION to the family. Terry Kernc, of Diamond, is excited to welcome the newest addition to her family, a great-granddaughter. The littlest member, Elizabeth Diaz, is pictured with [from left] her mother, Madalyn Fredericks; grandmother, Jillian Fredericks; great-grandmother, Terry Kernc, and great-great-grandmother Patricia Plough.

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WE ARE HAVING A PARTY!



Open House Retirement Party for Charlene (Charlee) Cohoon
 Wilmington Lion's Club
 805 River Street
 Sunday, May 21 • 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Charlee is retiring, from the Ken Laczynski American Family Insurance Agency Wilmington, after 24 years of service, hope to see everyone there!

Letter to the editor

Let's do a little more to honor our veterans

Dear Editor:
 Memorial Day is one of the most difficult days of the year for our service members, Veterans, families, and survivors. While some will celebrate the holiday with picnics and vacations, many of us will be remembering those we lost — our shipmates, battle buddies, wingmen, and Marines who died for our country.
 Out of the many famous and impactful quotes I have heard over the years, one stands out in particular: "Ceremonies are important. But our gratitude must be more than visits to the troops, and once-a-year Memorial Day ceremonies. We honor the dead best by treating the living well." — Jennifer Mulhern Granholm, former Governor of Michigan.
 Those simple and impactful words serve as an "ah ha" moment to channel our energy into thoughtfulness, generosity, and kindness — throughout the year. We honor our nation's heroes by creating

positive experiences, harmonious communities, and a country that respects the freedoms they gave their lives protecting.
 I have the incredible honor of serving Illinois' nearly 600,000 Veterans as the Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA). Each day, I witness a dedicated and talented staff serve Veterans through our Field Service Offices and our five residential homes in Anna, Chicago, LaSalle, Manteno, and Quincy.
 Each day, our teams arrive at work to help Veterans thrive in Illinois. This is just one of the many ways we honor the Veterans who have gone before us.
 Over the past two years, I have met Veterans who served our country in every major conflict beginning with World War II. We honor their legacy by learning about them and helping them reach their career, education, health care, and housing goals. Our

Veteran Service Officers are positioned around the state to work one-on-one with Veterans to discuss their personal and family aspirations and assist them in obtaining their earned benefits and services.
 Illinois' Veterans are IDVA's north star, and we honor their service with support customized to their individual needs.
 Returning to Illinois just a few years ago was a homecoming of sorts. My wife and I met at Great Lakes many years ago, married at the Bluejackets Chapel, and kicked off our lives right here in Illinois.
 Thirty years later, we are wholly dedicated to honoring all Veterans: those who lost their lives and those who are still with us today.
 Being a Veteran is a unique experience, one that less than one percent of our population will ever know. I'm asking everyone to remember the community's role in the

lives of our Veterans, their families, and survivors. Join us on Memorial Day (and every day) in tribute of those who served.
 The smallest gesture — planting a tree, volunteering, or checking in on a Veteran who is alone, can make a tremendous difference. Simple gestures have enormous impact, and if we all share in this effort, we will continue to nurture a world that truly honors those who have given their lives.
 We know there is so much love and support going on in our communities. This Memorial Day, remember the words of Gary Sinise (AKA "LT Dan"),
 "While we can never do enough for our defenders and their loved ones, we can always do a little more."
 Blessings to you on this Memorial Day.
 Terry Prince
 Director, Illinois Dept. of Veterans' Affairs

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Tips to avoid check fraud

Check fraud has been surging across Illinois, with criminals using elaborate and organized methods to target consumers and businesses.
 Grundy Bank is partnering with the Illinois Bankers Association (IBA) to share tips for consumers to protect themselves, and their bank accounts, from this fraudulent activity.
 Check fraud is one of the most common forms of identity theft. These criminals target their victims with sophisticated schemes that can involve a legitimate payment request, a blank check stolen from a checkbook, a previously paid or canceled check found in the garbage, or a check placed in the mailbox to pay a bill.
 In addition to wiping out bank accounts, this form of identify theft can also tarnish the victim's credit report.
 Data from the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, a bureau of the U.S.

Department of Treasury, shows that at least 23, 949 Illinois consumers and businesses fell victim to check fraud in 2022.
 This is a whopping 86 percent increase from 2021, and a 347 percent increase over the last decade. It's estimated that the average loss per check fraud incident is \$2,412.
 These losses can be especially detrimental to families struggling to get by amid the high inflation or small businesses seeking stability after years of pandemic-related disruptions.
 These are steps consumers can take to protect their checkbook, including: ordering checks from a reputable source, properly disposing of checks, safeguarding checks and account information, imprinting digital checks with a bold font that is difficult to alter, tracking and monitoring bank accounts regularly, filling checks out properly and

completely while avoiding abbreviations and mailing checks at the post office instead of using mailboxes.
 If consumers suspect suspicious behavior, they should contact their bank immediately.
 "With this dramatic increase of check fraud in Illinois, it is imperative that individuals take steps to protect themselves," said Randy Hultgren, President and CEO of Illinois Bankers Association.
 "These tactics are constantly evolving, and the best way to protect your hard-earned money is to be aware of these ploys and take the steps to avoid fraud before it happens."
 The IBA encourages consumers to reach out to their financial institutions or visit Illinois.bank for more information about security features and safety tips.

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

Drawing by Aleks



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Limit what you eat from IL lakes, streams

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced updated consumption advisories for sport fish caught in Illinois waters.
 Methylmercury (PCB) advisories were relaxed for certain species in the Fox Chain O'Lakes, the Illinois River, and Waukegan North Harbor. PCB advisories were removed for certain species in the Fox Chain O'Lakes, Frank Holten State Lakes, Powerton Lake, and the Illinois,

Mackinaw, Mississippi, and Wabash Rivers.
 Most notably, all PCB advisories were removed for channel catfish throughout the Mississippi River.
 A statewide methylmercury advisory remains in place for all Illinois waters. It cautions sensitive populations (those who are nursing, pregnant, or may become pregnant, and children less than 15 years of age) to eat no more than one meal per week of all

species of black bass, gar, salmon, and trout, as well as striped bass, white bass, wall-eye, sauger, flathead catfish, muskellunge, northern pike, and associated hybrids.
 While there is no known immediate health hazard from eating contaminated fish from any Illinois water body, there are concerns about effects of long-term, low-level exposure to PCBs and methylmercury in fish. More information is at the IDPH Fish Advisories website.

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OCC Shoebox Ministry Secret Tour

Date: May 20, 2023
 Time: 11:00 am / Lunch 11:45 am (RSVP lunch)
 Place: Island City Baptist Church | 120 Vine St. Wilmington, IL 60481 | 815-476-9750

Come on out to see someone who has received a Christmas Shoebox through Operation Christmas Child and the impact it has had on his life! General public is invited. We will provide a soup and sandwich luncheon afterward if you would like to stick around and ask more questions.



Alex Nsengimana

Growing up in midst of an unstable Rwandan government, ALEX NSENGIMANA experienced first-hand the tragedies of his nation's genocide. At the height of tribal unrest, the genocide claimed the lives of his caregivers. Fleeing for his life, Alex escaped gunmen and eventually ended up in an orphanage that was his home for the next several years. He received a shoebox from Operation Christmas Child one year after arriving at the orphanage and remembers being so excited to have a gift to call his own. The shoebox gift sowed seeds of hope and love that he desperately needed. He realized that God had a specific plan for his life. Alex now serves with Operation Christmas Child paying forward the hope and love he received through a shoebox gift. To find out more about how God protected and intervened in his life after surviving the Rwandan genocide, please join us for a special time of Alex telling his story of redemption and forgiveness.

OBITUARIES

Michael R. Mizerka Jr.



WILMINGTON—Michael R. Mizerka Jr. "Mike," 64, of Wilmington, passed away on Thursday, May 11, 2023 at his home.



Born on Oct. 2, 1958 in Hinsdale, IL, he was the son of Michael and Joanne (nee Muehlnickel) Mizerka Sr. He proudly served in the United States Navy from 1980-1984. For over 10 years, Michael has been employed by Eco-Lab. Michael had many hobbies including jeep club, fishing, morel hunting, R.C. trucks, metal detecting, geocaching, moonshine, crossbows, astronomy, four-wheeling, ice fishing, bicycling and fossil hunting. His favorite hobby was proudly showing off his sandrail, Toxic Tomato.

Michael is survived by his mother, Joanne Mizerka, of Westmount, IL; daughter, Kaley Smith, of Downers Grove, IL; brother, John (Amber) Mizerka, of Goose Lake; sister, Liz Mizerka (David Black), of Coal City; Uncle Rudy and Aunt Carol Majeske, of Goose Lake; nieces: Cassy, Jessi, Nikky, Tyler, Faith and Alexis; as well as his beloved fur baby, T.J. Michael was preceded in death by his father, Michael Mizerka Sr. and Cheryl Biniak Bear. Funeral services will be held at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home and Crematory on Friday, May 19, 2023 at 11 a.m. Interment will follow at 1:30 p.m. at Bethania Cemetery in Justice, IL. The visitation will also be at the funeral home on Thursday, May 18, 2023 from 3-8 p.m. In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations that can be made to the Michael Mizerka Legacy Fund through paypal: michaelmizerkalegacyfund@outlook.com. For more information and to visit his online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpatersonfuneralhomes.com. R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood has been entrusted with arrangements.

David V. Scroggins

BRACEVILLE—David V. Scroggins, 52, of Braceville, passed away suddenly, Saturday, May 13, 2023 at Morris Hospital.



He was born March 31, 1971 in Joliet to Robert and Pamela (nee Worley) Scroggins. How do you sum up someone's life with a dash, especially when that life lived was only 52 years? In the words of David, "Tomorrow isn't promised and this thing called life is nothing but a test, no one makes it out alive." His family meant everything to him, he was a devoted dad, husband, papa, and friend. He was brutally honest and he would tell you that he wasn't perfect, but he sure made it known that he loved God, his wife, kids and grandbabies. David had an amazing work ethic and never did anything halfhearted, it was all or nothing. Over the years he climbed out of poverty, earning his associates degree, eventually owning and operating his own HVAC business. He was sarcastic, had a great sense of humor and would get a kick out of this final joke, "Faced with the prospect of another 30 years of April's cooking, David chose to pass into the Eternal love of God."

David married April on July 26, 1997. Together two families became one. April had her daughter, Breanne Elizabeth and David had his children, Amber and Angela Scroggins and in October 1997, their son, DJ was born. Surviving are his wife of 25 years, April (nee Pritchard) Scroggins of Braceville; children: Breanne (Jon Wills) Wren, of Plano, IL; Amber

(Alex Vandenberg) Scroggins, of Land O' Lakes, FL and David "DJ" Scroggins, of Braceville; grandbabies: Isabella, Tripp and Lina of Florida; Grayson, Everleigh and Norah Wills, of Plano; brothers and sister, Robert "Bobby" (Brittney) Scroggins and their children, Cullen, Zadie, and Gavin of Tennessee; Brandy (Adam) Rochelle and their children, Ridge and River, of Tennessee; William "Billy" Scroggins and his daughter, Violetta, of Tennessee; sister-in-law, Stephanie Zaragoza, of Tennessee; sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Angela and Rodney Ridgley and their children, Austin, Brandy Zack, RJ, the late Brittney, and Jason Pritchard; and mother-in-law, Patty Pritchard. He is preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Pamela; daughter, Angela Lynn Scroggins and sister, Mildred "Millie" Scroggins. Visitation for David will be at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, Braidwood, Saturday, May 20, 2023 from 3 p.m. until the time of funeral services beginning at 7 p.m. Cremation rites will be accorded following services. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the family would be appreciated. For more information and to visit his online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpatersonfuneralhomes.com. R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory, 401 E. Main St., Braidwood is entrusted with arrangements.

Neal E. Tjelle

SOUTH WILMINGTON—Neal E. Tjelle, 66, of South Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at Ascension Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet.



Born Dec. 4, 1956 in Morris, Neal Edwin was a son of Harry and Nina (Horrie) Tjelle. He was raised in Gardner and graduated from Gardner South Wilmington High School with the class of 1975. Neal worked as a laborer with Local #75, and made his career with D Construction. He was a member of St. Lawrence Catholic Church in South Wilmington, and belonged to the South Wilmington Firemans Beach and Park Club where he enjoyed camping for many years and was a member of the Hillbilly 500 Club. Neal was a very kind and hardworking guy, who jumped at every opportunity to help family and friends. He took great pleasure in gardening and doing anything outdoors, including afternoons spent with his siblings. He was a loving dad to his daughters and the best "Papa Neal" to his grandkids. Throughout the years, he loved traveling and taking road trips, particularly spending time out west and in Colorado. A friend to all, Neal will be remembered for his kind demeanor and great smile. Survivors include his three daughters: Brittney (Kyle) Halliday, of Coal City; Karli (Jarad) Otløe, of Normal and Karla Price, of

Pana, IL; seven grandchildren: Jack and Elle Halliday, Owen and Avery Otløe, Chase and Layne Price and Noah Weddle; four siblings: Don Tjelle and John Dale (Villa) Tjelle, both of Gardner; Bruce (Deb) Tjelle, of South Wilmington and Susan Tjelle, of Gardner and numerous nieces and nephews. Neal was preceded in death by his parents. The family will receive friends for a visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 203 Liberty St. in Gardner on Saturday, May 13, 2023 from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. Funeral services will follow at 1 p.m. in St. Lawrence Catholic Church, 165 Rice Rd. in South Wilmington. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Rev. Stanley Drewniak presiding. Burial will be in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery. Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Neal's memory to Make-A-Wish Foundation or to the Ronald McDonald House. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Neal's memorial page online through social media. Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves and Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Harry W. Paulson

COAL CITY—Harry W. Paulson Sr., 66, of Coal City, passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 13, 2023 at his home surrounded by his family.



Harry was born on Feb. 9, 1957 in Chicago to Howard and Dorothy (Jeffers) Paulson. Harry was employed as a Manager of Vehicle Maintenance by the City of Chicago. He enjoyed working as a mechanic and only retired a few years prior to his passing. He spent his free time fishing out at his summer home in Shadow Lakes, spending time with his friends, children, grandchildren and granddogs. Harry was a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend to all.

and his wife, Nicole and the late SPC Kevin Paulson. Also surviving are his dearest grandchildren: Angela Paulson, Michaela Martinez and Addyson Paulson. He was preceded in death by his parents, Howard and Dorothy Paulson. Funeral services were held Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at Ferrari Funeral Services, 1044 Ferrari Drive, Coal City. Cremation rites were accorded following services, as were Harry's wishes. Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrarifuneral.com Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City were entrusted with arrangements.

Harry is survived by his wife, Maureen Koranda; his daughter, Sarah Martinez and her husband, Brian; his sons, Harry W. Paulson Jr.

Delphine Kozlowski

ELWOOD—Dephine Kozlowski, 92 of Elwood, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at the Ascension Living Villa Franciscan Place in Joliet.

Born May 23, 1930 in Chicago, Delphine Frances was a daughter of Peter and Jane (nee Nowicki) Skiba. She was raised and educated in the Southshore neighborhood of Chicago, and on May 1, 1954, she married Aloysius Francis Kozlowski. Survivors include four children: Diane (Michael) Tomaselli, of Florida; Michael Kozlowski and David Kozlowski, both of Wilmington and Susan (Raymond) Schillaci, of Elwood; as well as seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Delphine was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Aloysius; one daughter, Karen Babczak-Harris; one granddaughter, Christina Kozlowski; and one brother and one sister. Funeral services were held Monday, May 15, 2023 at Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington to Saint Rose Catholic Church in Wilmington for a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated with Reverend Sebastian Gargol presiding. Interment followed at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. Memorials may be made as gifts in Delphine's memory to Saint Rose Catholic Church, 604 S. Kankakee St., Wilmington, IL 60481 where she was a member. Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Delphine's memorial page via social media. Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Survivors include four children: Diane (Michael) Tomaselli, of Florida; Michael Kozlowski and David Kozlowski, both of Wilmington and Susan (Raymond) Schillaci, of Elwood; as well as seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Delphine was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Aloysius; one daughter, Karen Babczak-Harris; one granddaughter, Christina Kozlowski; and one brother and one sister.

Francis Kulas



HOT SPRINGS VILLAGE, AR—Francis "Frank" Kulas, 94 of Hot Springs Village, AR, and formerly of Wilmington and Chicago, passed away Thursday, May 11, 2023.



Born March 6, 1929 in Chicago, Francis Chris was a son of Francis Chris Sr. and Bridgett (Maloney) Kulas. He was raised in the Bridgeport neighborhood; graduated from De LaSalle High School and went on to attend American School of Banking. Frank honorably served in the United States Army during the Korean Conflict, and was stationed in Germany. His career was in banking, and Frank retired from Exchange Bank in Chicago in 1989. He was a former member of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Parish in Wilmington and was a life member of Hickory Hills Rod and Gun Club. In his free time, Frank enjoyed picnics, fishing and shooting. Survivors include his children, Robert (Sandra) Kulas, of Hot Springs Village and Marybeth (Michael) Costello, of Addison, IL; three grandchildren: Matthew Gatz (Sarah), Francesca Gatz (Ken) and Samantha (Tyler)

Bice, and four great-grandsons, as well as numerous nieces and nephews. Frank was preceded in death by his parents; three sisters: Catherine Kulas, Margaret (Roman) Ziolk and Lorraine (Stanley) Gill, and one brother in infancy. A Mass of Christian burial was held Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at St. Bernard Parish in Homer Glen and was celebrated with Father Joe McCormick, OSA presiding. Burial followed in Resurrection Catholic Cemetery in Justice, IL. Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Franks memory to: The Veteran's Administration "Charities." Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Frank's memorial page online through social media. Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Jessica Casey

On May 11, 2023, God reached down to Jessica Turner Casey and said, "Come with me."



She was born Feb. 15, 1990, to Bobbi (Jerry) Curl, of Coal City and Kevin Turner, of Dwight. Jessica graduated Dwight High School in 2008. Her love for family and friends was present everyday she shared with each of us. Jessica will be remembered for her generosity and compassion for helping others. This love and compassion also carried on to the care of many animals particularly helping rescue dogs. Jessica was a devoted Kansas City Chief fan and loved to watch her favorite team with family. She will be sadly missed by each one of us. Jessica is survived by her parents, significant other, Nathon Hogan, of Odell; her children: Audrina, Logan and Lorelai; brother, Tim

(Stephanie) Turner and niece, Emerson, of Newnan IL; extended family: Steve, Megan, Calleigh, Talan, Kaysen VandeWerken, and Tyler, Cassidy and Emmett Curl and many loving aunts, uncles and cousins. She is also survived by her grandparents, Judy Schott, of Pontiac and Larry and Mary Ellen Turner, of Dwight. Jessica was preceded in death by her Grandfather, Dave Schott and cousin, Don Foley, both formerly of Pontiac. A celebration of life will be held at the Dwight United Methodist Church on June 11, 2023 at 5 p.m. Visitation will be held from 2 p.m. until the time of services, also at the church. Cremation rites have been accorded. Memorials in honor of Jessica may be made to the Livingston County Humane Society.

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Take into consideration "No Mow May" for your lawn

Dear EarthTalk: What's the background on the "No Mow May" movement?

- J.D., via email

Lawns cover some 40 million acres—or two percent—of land in the United States, making them the single largest irrigated crop we grow. We mow, rake, fertilize, weed, chemically treat and water them—sucking up time, money and other resources.

And in spite of all that they provide little if any benefit to wildlife. In fact, they likely do more harm than good. Indeed, grass-only lawns lack floral resources and nesting sites for bees and other pollinators, and serve up a cocktail of toxic pesticides.

The idea is to let wildflowers and other plants grow, providing important habitat for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. The campaign was started in the United Kingdom by the environmental charity Plantlife in 2018. Since then, it has gained popularity in other

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

countries, including the U.S. and Canada.

The goal of No Mow May is to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and to encourage people to take action to support pollinators.

Many people mow their lawns frequently, often using gas-powered mowers that emit carbon dioxide and other pollutants.

This can be harmful to the environment, as well as to human health. Mowing also destroys wildflowers and other plants that provide food and shelter for pollinators. By refraining from mowing their lawns during the month of May, people can help to create a habitat for pollinators.

This can include bees, butterflies, moths and other insects, as well as birds and

small mammals that feed on them. These creatures play an important role in pollinating crops, which is essential for the production of many types of food.

No Mow May is not only good for the environment, but it can also be good for your lawn. Allowing wildflowers and other plants to grow can help to improve the health of your soil, reduce erosion, and provide a natural fertilizer. This can lead to a healthier lawn that requires less maintenance over time.

If you decide to participate in No Mow May, there are a few things you can do to ensure that your lawn stays healthy and safe.

First, make sure that your lawn is free of any hazards, such as large rocks or debris, that could pose a risk to people or pets. You should also check for any weeds or invasive species that could harm native plants.

During the month of May, you can still perform basic lawn maintenance, such as watering and weeding. You can also mow any areas that are high traffic or that pose a safety risk. However, it's best to

avoid mowing any areas where wildflowers or other plants are growing.

No Mow May is just one example of how individuals can take action to support biodiversity and protect the environment. By making small changes in our daily lives, we can help to create a healthier, more sustainable world for ourselves and future generations.

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



PART OF NO Mow May is to let wildflowers flourish on lawns where they would otherwise be mowed away.

Local gas prices below statewide average

Six out of 10 area stations had gasoline prices Monday that were below the statewide average.

That's good news for motorists who saw the price at the pump drop 5.0 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.88/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

"With oil prices bouncing back over \$70 per barrel after

reaching as low as \$66 in early May, we've seen gasoline prices move higher in some states, while others have continued to decline- the national average has seen little change as a result. But overall, gasoline prices continue to see significant relief from year ago levels," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

The low price locally was

\$3.54/g on Monday in Braidwood. Nearby stations were \$3.56/g, while in Wilmington the average was \$3.74 with a low of \$3.68/g at Lorenzo Road. Coal City stations were priced at \$3.89/g to \$3.94/g.

Prices in Illinois are 19.0 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 95.1 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.26/g while the most expensive was \$5.19/g, a difference of \$1.93/g.

"We're likely to soon see gasoline prices slip to their largest year on year deficit since Covid hit, when prices fell over \$1 per gallon from 2019- so the relief at the pump as been significant, and even though the gas price decline hit pause last week, it's looking more likely that barring a major hurricane or series of refinery outages, the national average may not end up hitting the \$4 per gallon mark- something that will make most motorists very happy."

St. Rose to hold Memorial Day Mass

St. Rose will be hosting a Memorial Day Mass celebrated at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Wilmington on Monday, May 29, at 10 a.m., weather permitting. Bring a lawn chair if you are unable to stand for Mass.

Our nation pauses each year to remember the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice of giving their life in the service of our nation.

Please join us for the celebration of Mass and to pray and remember the faithful departed.

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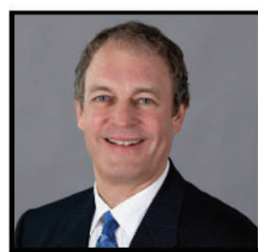
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Senator puts threats in proper perspective

My associate Isabel Miller recently interviewed Sen. Robert Peters (D-Chicago) about the national controversy he found himself in after posting a statement on Twitter. I thought I'd share it with you this week. Here's Isabel...

A few weeks ago, Sen. Robert Peters posted a tweet that he knew would generate backlash. What he didn't know was that it would go national.

The tweet was in response to teens converging on downtown Chicago. The Chicago Tribune reported three teenagers were wounded in two shootings and 16 were arrested during the violence: "I would look at the behavior of young people as a political act and statement. It's a mass protest against poverty and segregation."

Now-former Fox News host Tucker Carlson jumped in, telling his millions of viewers: "So, what happens if you encourage this kind of behavior, if you cheer the mob rather than restraining the mob? Well, ugly and totally inevitable things will happen. Productive people will flee, innocents will die and ultimately you will get from this mob racial attacks. All of that is happening in Chicago right now. All of it."

Peters said he was paraphrasing a 1966 quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "A riot is the language of the unheard."

"If I actually said what Dr. King said, I think... [people] could've responded even more harshly," Peters said. "I don't want anybody to ever get hurt. I have a district where there's a lot of violence, particularly in a lot of working class areas. And I think everybody deserves to have their fair share of safety and comfort and I think we seem to be caught up responding to the same questions in relatively the same way. And I think a lot of people are sick and tired of it."

"And we have to look at it from both the historical context and the present context about what are we going to do to change things. If a kid has had their school closed, or healthcare institution closed, or they've had their housing foreclosed or they've been evicted, or they're living cooped up in housing too small, mismanaged, then we have to do whatever we can to change that. And it's clear that we need to push back on what has been a terrible, terrible status quo for people."

Despite receiving hate and threats for his comments, Peters said he remains com-



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

mitted to his stance.

"I do not believe in violence, that needs to be clear. I just want a good-faith discussion about what it means to have safety in every zip code. Instead, I was met with a person [Carlson] who defended terrible people and far-right extremism and thought it would be good to come after me."

Peters said he struggles with whether speaking out is worth the threats. "I don't want to have to worry about not only my well-being, but the well-being of the people I care and love."

"Everyone's 'tough on crime' until they want to send dangerously violent, anonymous emails," Peters said. "There was a massive contradiction and hypocrisy by some people, and it just goes to show some people authentically want to bring safety to every community and make sure that every kid and every parent and every person, whether they're struggling with housing and health care, there are people who really want to do that. I think I belong to those people."

Peters is known for carry-

ing a heavy workload in Springfield, and he also served on Chicago Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson's transition team. Asked how he balances all of his tasks, Peters said, "Well, I mean, I have the unfortunate thing of having been born with ADHD. And, you know, it has its ups and downs. But it's almost sometimes this work is kinetic; you know what I mean? It's moving quickly. And you have to make quick assessments and you need to power map what you can and cannot do, and you need to know... what is an immediate thing you can make happen and what is something that might be longer term."

"When I was younger, I was told I would amount to very little. After my dad passed away, I struggled with what the meaning of the world was and sort of figured that out and you combine all the sort of kinetic sort of ADHD energy with a drive that the meaning of my existence is to show that nobody has to go through the things that myself or my family, or the people I love around me had to go through."

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

Brandon Rd. bridge closed

Brandon Road bridge over the Des Plaines River, in Joliet, has been closed for emergency repairs. The closure is necessary to replace a mechanical component on the bridge that failed Saturday morning.

Motorists should cross the river at McDonough Street via

U.S. 6, U.S. 52/Illinois 53 and Laraway Road. Signage will alert drivers at U.S. 6, immediately north of the bridge, as well as near Larkin Avenue on U.S. 6. To the south of the Brandon Road bridge advance signs will alert motorists at Woodruff Road, Patterson

Road, and Laraway Road. IDOT is working to get all traffic detours in place.

The evaluation of the necessary repairs is ongoing. A more definitive timeline for when the bridge can reopen will be announced later.

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The 14th 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 three days, and specify your hours. We will also 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 1st beginning at 8 a.m. through the entirety of the sale. Return the filled-out form below by May 26 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

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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 the church office M-F 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. 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.)

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COALER SPORTS

Lady Coalers ready for post season run

Don't let Monday's 7-5 softball loss to Beecher fool you. The Bobcats are a powerhouse team just like Coal City and the Lady Coalers can build off their last two games, both losses, as they head into the regionals.

They were scheduled to host Wilmington last night, a team they've beaten 16-5, 15-0 during the regular season so there is loads of confidence they will be playing Friday at 4:30 p.m. for the regional trophy.

On Monday, the Lady Coalers (27-8 overall, 14-0 conference) trailed 5-0 after a pair of home runs in the first two innings. Beecher may have out-hit Coal City 14-9 but the Lady Coalers made a run at them scoring one in the third and two more in the sixth to narrow the gap to 5-3. But the Bobcats added two insurance runs in the top of the seventh while Coal City scored two in the bottom of the frame to come up short 7-5.

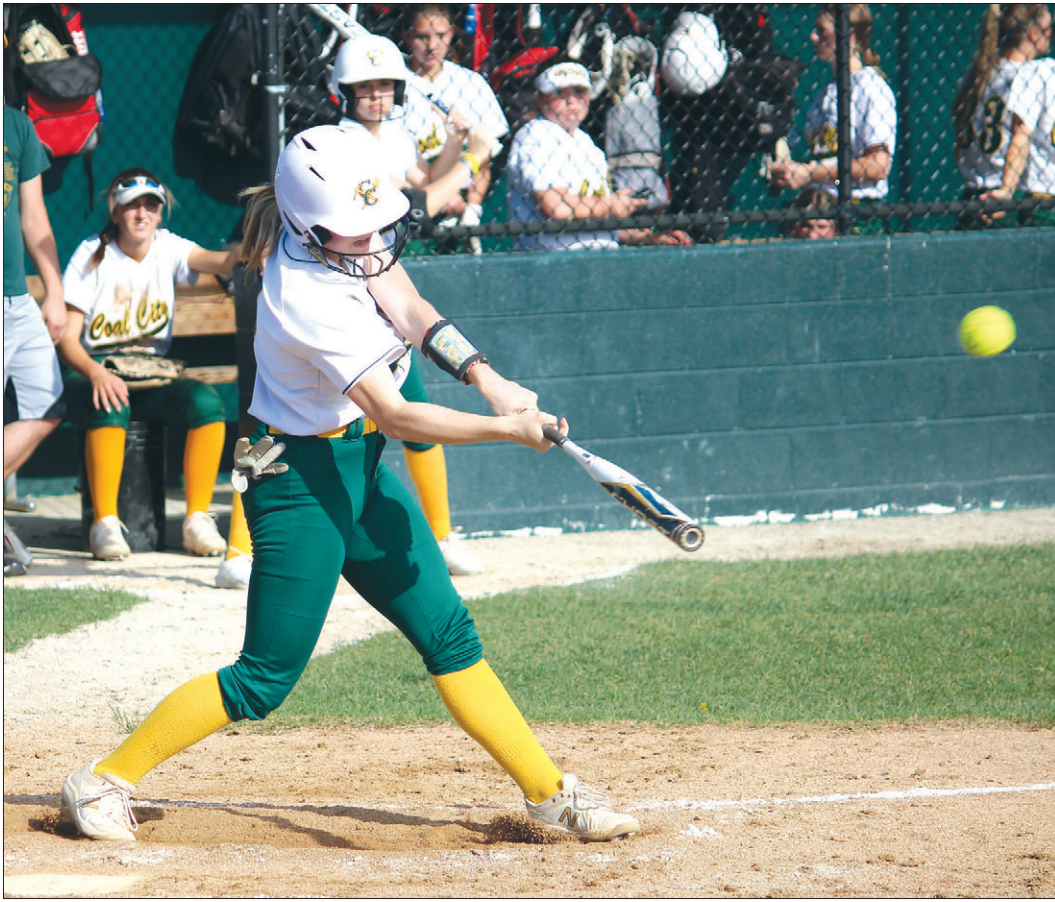
"We battled all night and had nine hits against a very good Beecher program," noted coach Rodney Monbrum. "I'm happy with the way we competed tonight. Addison Harvey hit a monster two run homer to keep us in the game. Hopefully we get another shot at Beecher in a couple of weeks."

Abby Gagliardo and Addison Harvey came through with RBIs to lead the rally.

Makenzie Henline and Kuder pitched well against a very tough Bradley lineup.

The Lady Coalers took a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Jadyn Shaw lofted one out of the park. Then in the seventh Makayla Henline hit a solo home run to help the Coalers to six hits total. Shaw had a double and Henline a single to lead the effort with two hits each. Kerigan Copes singled in fourth at bats.

Kuder gave up four runs on six hits over six innings,



RIPPING A HIT for Coal City is Addison Harvey.

Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

"I was proud of the way our team competed in all 7 innings today," said coach Rodney Monbrum. "We got out of some defensive jams and Kuder pitched well against a very tough Bradley lineup."

The Lady Coalers took a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Jadyn Shaw lofted one out of the park. Then in the seventh Makayla Henline hit a solo home run to help the Coalers to six hits total. Shaw had a double and Henline a single to lead the effort with two hits each. Kerigan Copes singled in fourth at bats.

Kuder gave up four runs on six hits over six innings,

striking out four and walking one.

"We made progress today going into the post season and I'm happy with the way we're playing," Monbrum commented.

Coal City 2, Morris 1
Kuder, the freshman pitcher, dominated on the mound, throwing her best outing of the year. Kuder pitched all 7 innings giving up 1 run, 2 hits, a walk and a season-high seven strikeouts.

After Morris scored one run in the first, Kuder shut them down the remaining six frames.

Makayla Henline had a

pair of hits leading the way for Coal City. Makenzie Henline had an RBI single.

"Tonight marked our 27th victory of the year and I'm proud of the way our girls battled all 7 innings. We've competed and won in about every way possible this season which will prepare us for the upcoming post season," Monbrum said.

The ICE clincher

Coal City finished conference play without a loss (14-0), clinching it with a 13-1 mercy rule win over Lisle on Tuesday.

"Tonight our girls clinched the conference championship going a perfect 14-0. I'm proud



AT THE WALL—Lady Coalers Abby Gagliardo makes the catch on the run to get the batter out.

Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

of the team effort and how everyone has contributed all season. All year it's been everyone on board and buying in," the coach said.

"Both of our pitchers have kept us in games, our defense has been rock solid, and our bats have been our strength."

The Lady Coalers out-hit the Lions 13-3 and made only one error while the Lions com-

mitted four.

With four runs in the first and five in the second the Lady Coalers took away their momentum early for the win.

Copes went 3-for-4 for four RBIs including a triple. Shaw (three RBIs), Harvey and Henline each hit doubles.

Kuder and Bri Combes combined for pitching the win.

Coalers primed for regionals, must get by 'Cats, Joliet Catholic

The Coalers picked up two more victories on Saturday as they hosted Rochester and Pleasant Plains.

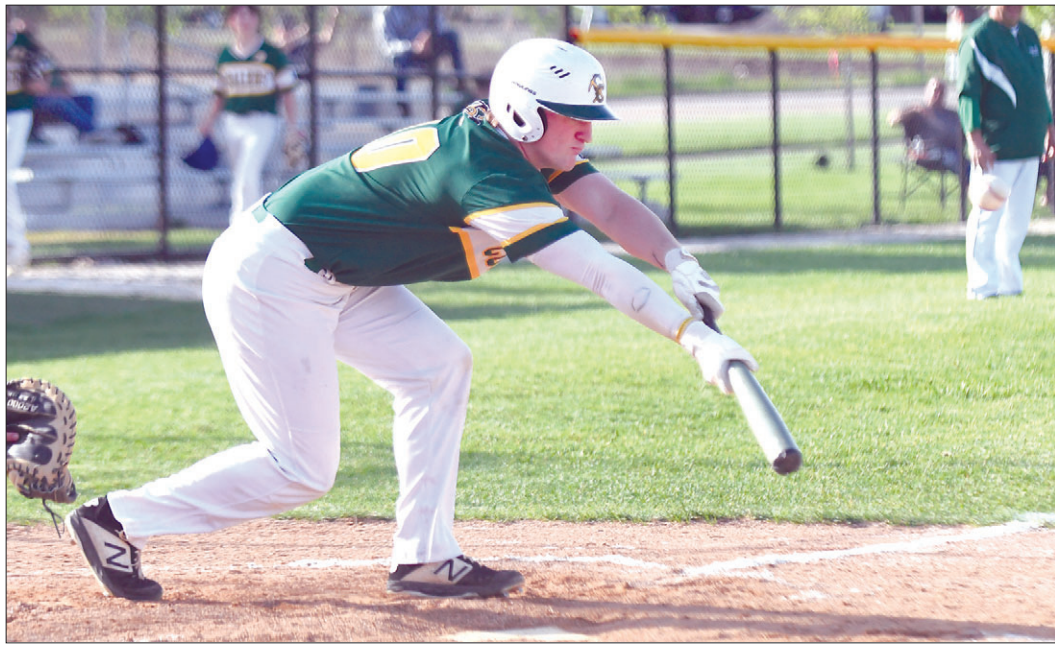
The Coalers (19-8) have won 15 of their last 17 games as they prepare for Thursday's regional start at home against Wilmington.

"I'm very proud of the team," said Coal City coach Jerry McDowell. "They have worked very hard to get where they are today. They've won a lot of close games all year and playing well under pressure."

"When I first met them in February to today they took it all in and pulled together. All 22 have contributed in one way or another. They earned this, it's a total team effort," McDowell said of the ICE conference champions.

The Coalers split with the Wildcats 1-2, 3-1 during the regular season. The Wildcats are playing well too, winning 14 of their last 16 games after a rocky start. Wilmington, with only two seniors, relies on several underclassmen who are showing their varsity experience.

In the 5-0 win over



LAYING DOWN A BUNT during last week's win at home is Coal City's Cason Headley.

Photo by Alyssa Ohlund

Rochester, Coal City pitcher Caden Kuder allowed only two hits through six innings with four strikeouts. Austin Davy pitched the 7th, leading his third save. Braden Reilly, Jim

Feeny, Derek Carlson and Braiden Young all had a double and scored a run or an RBI.

In the game two, the Coalers shut out Pleasant Plains 5-0. Senior Carter Garrelts picked up his sixth victory of the year, giving up only one hit in six innings to go along with nine strikeouts.

Leading hitters were Cade Baldauf, Joe Watson, Wyatt Wickiser, Lucas Nolan and Will McCardle.

"We played really great all around baseball for two games today," said McDowell. "This is nice to see playing our best baseball going into regional week."

Coal City traveled to Sandwich on Tuesday before Thursday's post season run against Wilmington.

The Coalers secured the ICE conference title last Tuesday by edging Lisle at home, 7-6.

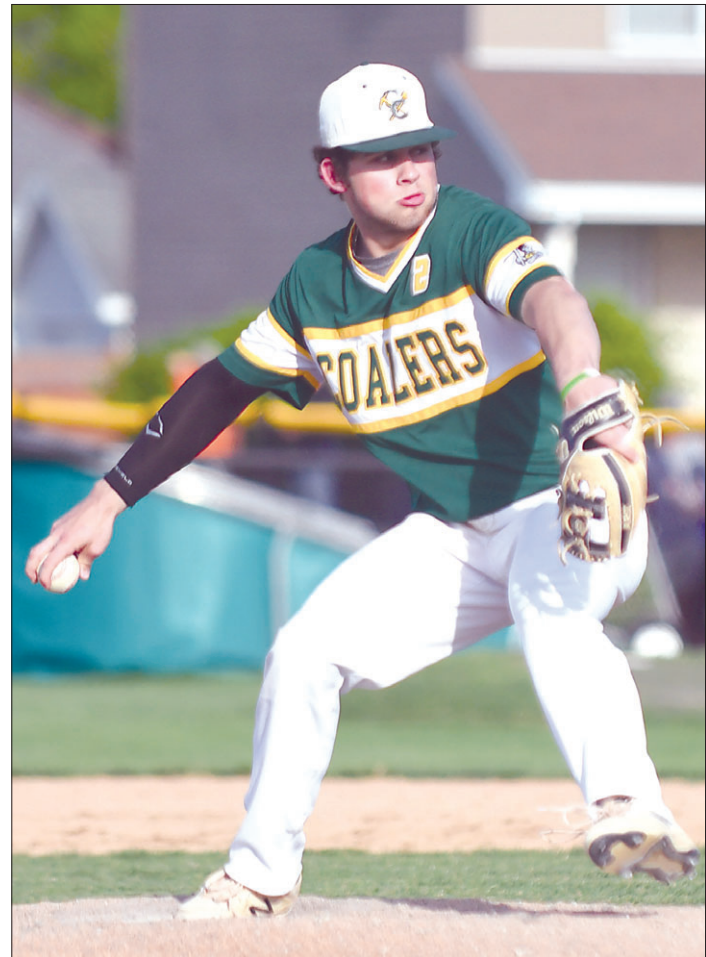
Coal City got out to a five-run lead in the sixth inning and held on for the win. The Lions threatened in the seventh with four runs but Austin Davy threw one-third of an inning to get the Coalers out of a jam.

Reilly got the win pitching 6 2/3 innings, allowing five hits and six runs while striking out eight.

Eddy led the Coalers with two hits. Baldauf, Carlson, Feeny, Nolan Ness and Creide Skubic each had hits.

The Coalers need to get past Wilmington to advance to Saturday's 11 a.m. regional championship against mostly

likely Joliet Catholic Academy who they lost to 17-2 earlier in the season. If they beat the Hilltoppers they move on to the sectional tourney at JCA.



IN CONTROL on the mound for the Coalers last Tuesday is senior Braden Reilly who was credited with a 7-6 victory.

Photo by Alyssa Ohlund



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Photo by Amy Walker

REGIONAL CHAMPIONS! The Coal City girls soccer team won the regional plaque at Manteno Friday, beating Bishop McNamara 3-2 to improve to 11-6-2 overall. Team members include (front, from left) Kimberly Perez #25, Azra Malovski #8, Cassidy Jenke, Ana Flores, Aubrey Mellen #3, Beth Greene, Cara Planeta, Maddie Gomez and Corina Barkley. In the back row are coaches Mike Kostbade and Todd Painter, Ayliana Castle, Alaina Morales, Ava Meyer, Mariah Pena, Kiley McKim, Makayla DeMarse, Peyton Benson, Kylee Kennel, Chloe Plueger, Hayden Francisco, Audrey Cooper and coach Steven McCleary.



Photo by Amy Walker

STANDING HER GROUND during the regional win over Bishop McNamara is Lady Coaler defender Ana Flores.

Lady Coaler kickers claim regional title

The Coal City girls soccer team held on to beat Bishop McNamara 3-2 to claim the regional championship at Manteno on Friday.

The Lady Coalers advanced to the sectional at Manteno last night and if they beat Chicago University they will play either Herscher or Peotone for the sectional title on Friday at 4:30 in Manteno.

Against Bishop Mac the Lady Coalers went up 2-1 in the first half. Goalkeeper Chloe Plueger did a good job defending the goal in the second half (eight saves) to escape with the victory and regional plaque.

Coal City (11-6-2, 3-3 conference) goals were scored by Kylee Kennel 2 with 1 assist. Cara Planeta contributed a goal and 1 assist. Corina Barkley had 1 assist.

The got to the title match by defeating Beecher 2-1 on Wednesday. The score was tied 1-1 at half-time before sophomore Kylee Kennel kicked the game winner to do all the scoring for Coal City.

Keeper Plueger had six saves. It was a nice way to rebound after losing their final match of the regular season to Streator, 1-0, ending in penalty kicks. Keeper Plueger had 6 saves.



Photo by Amy Walker
MY BALL! Coal City's Audrey Copper doesn't let a Bishop McNamara defender prevent her from getting to the ball during the regional championship game on Friday.



Photo by Eric Fisher

MAKING A LEAPING serve during a recent match is Coal City's Owen Franklin.



Photo by Eric Fisher

NO. 1 SINGLES player for Coal City, Timi Shabani, keeps the volley alive with a back-handed return last week at home.

Ramirez gives Coalers a highlight against L-P

LaSalle-Peru would have swept the Coal City tennis team last week but No. 2 singles Coaler Martin Ramirez held on to win.

Ramirez defeated LaSalle's Lucas Hardy 6-4, 7-6 (1) to give Coal City a reason to celebrate. All other matches ended in defeat as the team score leaned 4-1 for L-P.

Singles:
No. 1 - Adam Kasperski, LaSalle (L.-Peru) def. Timi Shabani, Coal City, 6-2, 6-0.

Doubles:
No. 1 - Andrew Bollis and Danny Santoy, LaSalle (L.-Peru) upended Max Zolecki and Owen Franklin, Coal City, 6-1, 6-0.

No. 2 - Michael Milota, LaSalle and Jon Milota, LaSalle (L.-Peru) beat Coal City's Chad Reinart and Devon McVey, 6-4, 6-2.

No. 3 - Colin Krug and Michael Peters (L.-Peru) out-scored Will Thompson and Carson Hart, Coal City, 6-1, 6-1.

The Coalers will compete in the Ottawa Sectional May 19-20.

The first pitch



Photo by Amy Walker

THE FIRST PITCH—Dr. Kent Bugg, retired superintendent of the Coal City School District, threw the honorary first pitch during the Strike Out Cancer game against Reed-Custer. Bugg returned to the Coal City field in memory of his daughter Megan who's battle with cancer ended in March 2022.