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Photo by Eric Fisher

THE VILLAGE OF Coal City is seeking \$1.67 million in grant funds for a \$2.4 million project to purchase and renovate the historic Bohemian Hall building at 175 S. Broadway Street. If the grant is approved, the village would invest \$725,258 or 30% of the first phase which would include replacing windows and doors, tuck-point the exterior brick, add an elevator and public rest rooms to the second floor and a safety exit for the second floor. The village won't know if its application is approved until the first quarter of 2025.

Preserving Coal City's heritage comes with a cost

Village seeks \$2.4 million to restore historic Bohemian Hall

BY ERIC FISHER
PUBLISHER

Village leaders took the first step that could someday turn a downtown building into the envy of Grundy County and even

northern Illinois. The Coal City Board of Trustees approved a \$725,258 commitment towards a state grant that, if awarded, would allow for the purchase and rehabilitation of the old Bohemian Hall which has been a vacant storefront on South Broadway Street since Coal City Pharmacy closed four years ago. Mayor David Spesia was given the authority to sign onto a letter of support pledging the 30% local match, should the village receive an additional \$1,674,631

from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. "This is a big step for our village, one that's been in the works for a long time," Mayor Spesia commented after trustees voted unanimously. "While we know there will be more expenditures needed if our grant is approved, I am hopeful this project will come to fruition. I'd like to see this building become the landmark it deserves." The Bohemian Hall, also known as the Opera House, has

stood at 175 S. Broadway almost since Coal City was incorporated in 1881. Bohemian immigrants who came to the village to work in the coal mines, funded the construction of the brick building as a place for the Bohemian Turners, a group of 150 skilled gymnasts and baton twirlers ages 12 to adult. That heritage was renewed during a recent series of public "mapping" meetings when the restoration of the Bohemian Hall became a priority for tourism and an economic driver for down-

town development. Phase One of the project includes the \$2,399,889 grant/match to purchase the building from owner Tom Beverly for \$591,000 and \$1.8 million for accessibility improvements and exterior repairs. Additional rounds of funding will be needed to continuously improve the interior of the building. However, Phase One would allow some public use of the building

SEE BOHEMIAN HALL PAGE 2

Still no sign of missing woman from Wilmington

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Jennifer Tannhauser, aka Jennifer Murphy, 41, of Wilmington, disappeared 14 days ago without a trace. She left her dog, cell phone and medication behind. "On July 10 at approximately 4:45 p.m., our agency received a report of a missing female from Fulton Street in Wilmington, who was reportedly experiencing a mental health crisis, causing concern for her safety," Wilmington police said. Wilmington police, family, friends and volun-



JENNIFER TANNHAUSER

teers searched the city of Wilmington and surrounding areas with no luck. On July 11, Tannhauser's vehicle was

SEE MISSING PAGE 2

Village approves a backup next time #5 Well goes down

The Village of Coal City had to make emergency repairs to its #5 Well back in April and now is spending \$71,571 to make sure it has a backup plan in case it happens again. Village trustees approved the \$71,571 expenditure during their July 10 board meeting to allow Municipal Well & Pump of Waupin, WI to rebuild the motor and pump assembly as a backup for Well #5. Well #5 was down about a week due to a short in the motor assembly at the bottom of the well. Thankfully, the village kept up with demand with its three other wells and a supply connection

with the Village of Diamond while emergency repairs of the assembly were made. Those April repairs cost \$98,351 which included the purchase of a new pump assembly. City administrator Matt Fritz explained that due to the timing and available inventory, the village had to switch from a low speed to a high speed assembly which requires a pump for such motor and check valves. The motor that was taken from well number five is a slow speed motor, which is thought of as possessing greater durability and are more expensive. "Upon inspection of

the motor that failed, and was inspected by Municipal Well, it was determined it could be rebuilt," Fritz said. "It would be timely to do the same with its matching pump assembly. Since it is out of the well at this time. The cost for this rebuild would be \$71,571 inclusive of the necessary check valves." Fritz added that the cost would be partially offset by the approximate \$25,000 received due to the insurance claim that provided compensation due to the mechanical failure of the unit. "Repairing this assembly is being recommended in order to pos-

sess greater resiliency to similar outages in the future. The lifetime on these motors with current part assembly is only lasting five to seven years for high speed motors and seven to 10 years for the low speed assemblies." The recent repair is the first time Coal City has switched to a high speed motor, but was necessary due to availability. Getting the former motor rebuilt will allow it to be on the shelf and be ready for installation. Should the new motor

SEE VILLAGE BOARD PAGE 2



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Bohemian Hall, continued from page 1

The village won't know if its grant application is approved until the first quarter of 2025. Grant requirements at this time simply require a letter of support, stating the local match.

The village previously applied for a similar ReBUILD Downtown grant during the first round of funding but was not awarded. That grant included the establishment of a quiet zone along with the acquisition of the historic building.

The letter from Mayor Spesia to the Illinois DCEO states that since that time the village has worked to establish the quiet zone, setting that portion of the project into motion. This round of funding would be for the build only, urging the DCEO to award it so Coal City can "move forward on the rehabilitation of this community centerpiece."

The village hopes its quiet zone work and a 30% match, above the minimum 25% local match, makes its grant a stronger candidate for acceptance within the current round.

Letters of support have been provided by State Rep. Jason Bunting and Senator Tom Bennett, the Grundy County Chamber, Joliet Junior College EBC, The Heritage Corridor and Coal City Live Entertainment nonprofit—Small town Theatrics.

If and when the building is restored it would allow for community entertainment. The

upstairs hall would host community theater productions and receptions for special events. The downstairs will host tourism information for the community and region as well as host the local community college and entrepreneurial business center.

While the current building has been mainly vacant, the owner has done much to continually condition the building and ensure the structure remained intact.

Renovations needed include the replacement of windows, roofing and major tuckpointing throughout the brick exterior. It would be retrofitted to provide a secondary exit from the second floor as well as an exterior elevator.

The first floor renovation would allow for Joliet Junior College's EBC, a group that will promote local investment and growing a larger entrepreneurial base within the community.

The new space would allow the Grundy Chamber to host its meetings and maintain its tourism brochures.

The public hall would be maintained by a local nonprofit board in charge of operating and maintaining the building.

Although the village shall acquire the property, it would be overseen by a local nonprofit board. It would establish bylaws and be charged with accommodating the needs of the public to ensure public access is a priority and planning on the future of the facility.

One board position would be occupied by long-time and current owner Tom Beverly, who wishes to remain connected to this great asset and have a hand in its rehabilitation.

The village would work with the board on future phases to improve the building.

Studio GWA, an architectural firm from Rockford, IL, visited the building, outlining its immediate needs and challenges with its renovation. The architect said the costs for interior renovations can vary significantly.

The location of public toilets will also be challenging for the amount of space required, Studio GWA stated in a letter to Mayor Spesia and village administrator Matt Fritz.

"All the mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems need to be completely replaced. The location of these essential components needs to be thought through during the design planning process," architect Gary Anderson stated.

Anderson gave a ballpark figure of \$3.6 million to \$4 million to renovate the entire building, both inside and out.

"The space has really great potential to be a regional draw for the community," Anderson concluded.

School supplies being collected

A community wide drive is being held in Coal City, Carbon Hill and Diamond for back to school supplies.

Items are being collected now in preparation for a Back to School Bash that will be held Saturday, Aug. 10 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Campbell Park on South Broadway St.

Supplies needed include crayons, glue stick, pink eraser, coloring book, spiral notebook, highlighters, ruler, Play-Doh-4 oz., pocket folders, cap eraser, Sharpie fine point and regular markers, high quality headphones and earbuds.

Also large washable markers (thin and thick), 5 folder organizer (trapper keeper), calculator (regu-

Village Board, continued from page 1

go down, the backup could be installed, allowing a much shorter service interruption.

Currently, the field assembly is brought to the surface and then sent out for inspection to determine the next steps should the new assembly work is planned. This newly rebuilt assembly can be sold to another municipality in need on either an emergency or planned basis, Fritz noted.

The vote was unanimous to have it repaired.

In other action, trustees awarded an \$893,000 bid to Dynamic Industrial Services, Inc. of Crete, IL to repaint the North Water Tower.

The village is in need of completely servicing and repainting its north tower. This shall include draining the tower to repaint the interior, complete some maintenance and repairs and then repaint the exterior due to creating bids and undergoing the bid process.

To complete this work, village engineer Chamblin & Associates included the cost of completing the water treatment clarifiers under the same contract to see if the work could be completed at a lower cost all at one time. The bid rose a bit higher than projected. Upon awarding the bid Chamblin will discuss with the contractor timing and if there are any means of eliminating any line items to lessen the overall budget impact.

Two other bidders were Tecorp, Inc. at

\$896,050 and Era-Valdivia Contractors at \$1,034,800.

• The board awarded a \$450,149.82 bid to D Construction for this year's street renewal program.

Each year the village sets aside Motor Fuel Tax revenues for road improvements. This year's allocation was \$400,000 which must be approved by IDOT. The total between the appropriated amount and the bid total was \$50,149.82, thus requiring additional match by the village.

The bid amounts were about 10% higher than budgeted but by making needed repairs for some streets this year instead of next year the overall expense would be less than in the future.

D Construction was the lowest responsible bidder for the project.

• Trustees approved payment #3 to Brandt Excavating for \$149,226.90 for completion on the water main replacement project.

Final payment to Brandt will be processed after the final paving repair occurs at Spring Road. With the previous payments made by the village, the project will be 97.5% complete. It included work at Carbon, Elm and Spring roads on the east side of South Broadway. It was noted the D Construction will assist Brandt within the next two weeks with the final repaving of Spring Road.

Marshall's Motor Works LLC files articles of organization

PUBLIC NOTICE

Illinois Limited Liability Company Act Articles of Organization File #14922644 Filed July 1, 2024 MARSHALL'S MOTOR WORKS LLC

Address of Principal Place of Business where records of the company will be kept: 40 N. BROADWAY ST COAL CITY, IL 60416, has filed Form LL-5.5 with the Illinois Secretary of State's office.

The Limited Liability Company has one or more members on the filing date.

Registered Agent's Name and Office Address: JARON MARSHALL, 40 N. BROADWAY ST COAL CITY, IL 60416

Purpose for which the Limited Liability Company is organized: "The transaction of any or all lawful business for which Limited Liability Companies may be organized under this Act."

The LLC is to have perpetual existence.

Name and business addresses of all the managers and any member having the authority of manager: MARSHALL, JARON J., 40 N. BROADWAY ST, COAL CITY, IL 60416.

I affirm, under penalties of perjury, having authority to sign hereto, that these Articles of Organization are to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, correct and complete.

Dated July 1, 2024 /s/ Jaron Marshall 40 N. Broadway St Coal City, IL 60416

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, July 10, 17 and 24, 2024.

Attorney Harrop files Pokornicki estate notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS

In the Matter of the Estate of MICHAEL POKORNICKI, Deceased.

Case No.: 2024PR34

CLAIM DATE NOTICE

NOTICE IS GIVEN of the death of Michael Pokornicki, and Letters of Office were issued on MAY 31, 2024, to Edward Pokornicki, 10 Hazel Plaza, Uxbridge, MA 01569, as Independent Administrator, whose attorney is GOMIEN & HARROP, LTD., 220 West Main Street, Suite 300, Morris, Illinois 60450.

The estate will be administered without court supervision, unless under 755 ILCS 5/28-4, any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Circuit Clerk.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit https://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 https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Circuit Clerk, Probate Division, Grundy County Court House, 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois, 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before January 27, 2025. Any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

Edward Pokornicki Independent Administrator
Joan N. Harrop GOMIEN & HARROP, LTD. #6237262 Old National Bank Building 220 West Main Street, Ste. 300 Morris, Illinois 60450 (815) 942-0071 joanharrop@sbcglobal.net A.R.D.C.#6237262

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, July 17, 24, and 31, 2024.

Attorney Harrop files Keplinger estate notice

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 A. KEPPLINGER, Deceased.

Case No.: 2024PR44

CLAIM DATE NOTICE

NOTICE IS GIVEN of the death of Richard A. Keplinger, and Letters of Office were issued on June 14, 2024, to Donna M. Keplinger, 318 E. Main Street, Gardner, IL 60424, as Independent Executor, whose attorney is JOAN N. HARROP, 220 West Main Street, Suite 300, Morris, Illinois 60450.

The estate will be administered without court supervision, unless under 755 ILCS 5/28-4, any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the Circuit Clerk.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit https://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 https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Circuit Clerk, Probate Division, Grundy County Court House, 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois, 60450, or with the representative, or both, on or before January 27, 2025. Any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

Donna M. Keplinger Independent Executor
Joan N. Harrop GOMIEN & HARROP, LTD. #6237262 Old National Bank Building 220 West Main Street, Ste. 300 Morris, Illinois 60450 (815) 942-0071 joanharrop@sbcglobal.net

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, July 17, 24, and 31, 2024.

Attorney Meents files Wilson 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 AVERY L. WILSON, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 40

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Avery L. Wilson, Letters of Office as Independent Administrator was issued on July 3, 2024, to Derek Mumm, whose address is 645 W. Daisy Place, Coal City, Illinois 60416; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 West 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 January 20, 2025, 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.illinoislegallaid.org.

Derek Mumm Independent Administrator of the Estate of Avery L. Wilson, 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, July 10, 17 and 24, 2024.

Coal Bin Storage to dispose of property

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois a sale or other disposition of property by COAL BIN STORAGE INC will be held online at www.BID13.com, auction ending on August 7, 2024 1:00 PM, to sell or dispose of the personal property of the following person, Leinie Grace Reavis, 40 Arlington Dr, Diamond, IL Unit G19/Location#1 and H10/Location#1, to enforce a lien for storage pursuant to the self-storage facility act, in the amount of \$2,025.00, plus attorney fees & costs. Published in the Coal City Courant on July 24 & July 31, 2024.

Published in the Coal City Courant on July 24 and 31, 2024.

Attorney Meents files Taylor 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 RONALD DALE TAYLOR, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 42

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Ronald Dale Taylor, Letters of Office as Independent Executor were issued on June 27, 2024, to Roberta J. Taylor, whose address is 690 N. 7th Street, Carbon Hill, 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 January 13, 2025, 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.illinoislegallaid.org.

Roberta J. Taylor Independent Executor of the Estate of Ronald Dale Taylor, Deceased
Frank J. Meents 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

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Missing, continued from page 1

located in the fishermen's parking lot at the Kankakee River State Park on Warner Bridge Road. Her wallet and keys were still in the car, according to a relative.

Police searched the area where her vehicle was found with K-9 officers and drones. The Dept. of Natural Resources also searched the Kankakee River with no success.


"We are aware of flyers that have been circulated inviting people to assist in searching the abandoned women's prison of IL-102," Wilmington police said. "We advise that no one enter this area without the escort of law enforcement due to extensive safety issues with the remaining structures and general landscape of the area."

Tannhauser has brown hair and hazel eyes. She is 5'4" and weighs approximately 250 pounds. She has a large tattoo running vertically down her back.

According to Wilmington Chief of Police, Adam Zink, as of Monday, there have been no updates in the case.

"We are still working closely with the conservation police to follow up with all leads," Zink said. "And we will continue searching."

If you have information, call Wilmington Police Dept. at (815) 476-2811.



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Eric D. Fisher, publisher



THE BOHEMIAN HALL, also known as the Opera House, was home to the Bohemian Turners featuring skilled gymnasts and baton twillers who trained and performed as a group. The Turners were an extension of European culture that became a part of Coal City. This is believed to have been taken in the early 1900's.

History of the Bohemian Hall, also known as the Opera House

Excerpt from the Coal City Courant, Special Edition, Aug 7, 1981 (Coal City's Centennial 1881-1981)

"The Bohemian Tradition"

When the pioneer Bohemian immigrants followed the coal mining operations to Coal City, they settled in a concentrated area because of the language barrier. Gordon Avenue was the main Bohemian artery, with a few blocks of intersecting streets taking the overflow. Because of the native custom of raising geese, which these people continued in their new surroundings, the Bohemian sector of the village became affectionately known as "goose alley."

These wonderful people were strong on "tradition" and were not about to forget their early training and ideals. They felt a great need for a place to practice these ideals and to strengthen their ethnic ties. A committee was formed, ideas and plans were discussed, and the terrific sacrifice agreed upon. These miners, who were struggling to eke out a living for their families, pledged a weekly payment of land and the construction of a meeting place. The beautiful brick National Bohemian Hall on the corner of Broadway and

Church Streets was the result.

Great believers in health, discipline and togetherness, the Bohemians put to use the facilities they built. Many of these immigrants were skilled gymnasts and were eager to share this skill with others. Thus, the Bohemian Turners, an extension of the European culture, became a part of Coal City.

The Turners had about 150 members, children from twelve years old through adults, who worked out assigned evenings with instructors who were miners by day. Their program consisted of exercises in unions, marching, baton work and Indian Club drills for the beginners. The advanced groups had stunts, tumbling and apparatus which included the side horse, horizontal bars and parallel bars. All of the participants had uniforms and a great sense of pride in their performance. They put on exhibitions and demonstrations which were accompanied by Jack Red's band. Often gymnasts from Chicago would come to view their performance, help them and participate with them. They learned from each other and their dedication was reflected in their years of successful continuance. It was a wonderful "outlet" for these hardworking peo-

ple who had so little, but gave so much.

The Turners was an "all Bohemian" organization. Bohemian was spoken exclusively as they were there to relax and they would have to struggle with the new language. Frank Albrecht was one of the excellent instructors. Frank Vodacek was an outstanding performer of the older group and George Smith sparked in the younger set. The Bohemian Hall, sometimes referred to as the Opera House, was also the hub of many other activities but "Kajdo nights" were a favorite.

What other ethnic group has left such a landmark and a sector of impressions and memories to their chosen community, as did the Bohemians. To these wonderful people it was simply TRADITION.

The Bohemian Hall hosted many musical and literary programs. Shown above is a flyer announcing the appearance of Miss Laura Campbell, Pianist, and Miss Rose Trotter, Reader, in the early 1900's. General Admission was 25 cents, as shown on an accompanying ticket. Coal City was home to many fine musical groups, such as Bonino's Orchestra. Barney Falletti and his orchestra were another well-known musical group.

Survey input requested from local residents and businesses

As Grundy County works to plan for a more diverse economy, it is imperative to hear from those who live and work here on what they envision and hope for in their community.

Local residents and business owners are asked to provide their input through the Advancing Grundy survey, as part of the Grundy Resiliency Project being done by the Grundy Economic Development Council and the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

"We have completed the data gathering and now our experts are looking for the story behind our community. What makes it tick? Why do its residents choose to live here? What do you think are the most pressing

issues for its future and what opportunities are there? This input is crucial for the strategic plan of our future economy," Chamber President & CEO Christina Van Yperen said.

This stage of the project is to create a roadmap for Grundy's economic future. The organizations were given a \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration in 2022. These grants help nuclear host communities plan for and build more diverse, resilient economies.

Grundy's grant is being matched 20% by Grundy County, and North Central Council of Governments is assisting as the grant administrator.

The GEDC and Chamber contracted with TIP Strategies, Inc., an eco-

nomc development consulting firm to conduct the Economic Diversification and Resiliency Plan to identify, recommend and justify key initiatives, action items, and market-driven opportunities for economic diversification in Grundy County to enhance the county's economic prosperity and resilience. The plan will be used as a guide for comprehensive planning, business attraction, infrastructure investments and marketing.

"Your voice matters. We want this plan to fully reflect the best version of what Grundy County can be and to do that, we need everyone's ideas," GEDC President & CEO Nancy Norton said.

The survey takes about 10 minutes and asks participants to rate the county's economic performance among different categories, and to select descriptive words on a variety of topics.

The survey has a version for both residents and for businesses. The links can be found at resilient-grundy.com, as well as on the Chamber and GEDC's websites, grundychamber.com and gedc.com, and the organizations' Facebook pages.

Grundy County 'Jane Doe' identified 47 years later

After more than 47 years, the remains of a young Black woman found near Seneca, IL have been identified as JoAnn "Vickie" Smith of Ohio by a dedicated team of volunteer investigative genetic genealogists with the DNA Doe Project.

Investigators on the scene in 1976 quickly ran out of leads to the identity of the Jane Doe found in a ditch alongside US Highway 6. They knew she had been shot in the head, and knowing her name was an important first step in solving her murder. After two months of searching, she was buried in an unmarked grave, but her case was far from closed.

In late 2017, the Grundy County Coroner's Office reopened the cold case, in the hopes of using modern day DNA and forensics. On Dec. 18, 2018, Jane Doe was subsequently exhumed from her unmarked resting place of 42 years.

With the assistance of NamUs, remains were sent to the University of North Texas Center For Human Identification in Fort Worth, TX. DNA was then developed and entered into CODIS, a national DNA database, which yielded negative results.

Deputy Chief Brandon Johnson of the Grundy County Coroner's Office connected with the DNA Doe Project to try a newly developed technique to find her identity.

DNA Doe Project deploys teams of expert volunteer investigative genetic genealogists who analyze the relative matches to the unknown person's DNA to build a family tree. It would take four and a half years of dedicated work to narrow the search to the right branch of Vickie Smith's tree and find her name.

"At some point everyone worked on this case," said Margaret Press, who founded the DNA Doe Project in 2017. "She has been at the top of my list of cases I wanted to see identified."

In fact, the list of volunteers who have worked on this case reads like a Who's Who of DNA Doe Project leadership, including more than 20 expert genetic genealogists and all of the original volunteer cohort.

Their work resolves one of DNA Doe Project's oldest and most intractable active cases.

African-American Jane and John Does are often much more difficult to

Identified! Grundy County Jane Doe



JoAnn "Vickie" Smith
DNADoeProject.org

THE SEARCH for an unidentified woman whose body was found dumped in Grundy County included an artist rendering of what the woman was thought to look like. At right is an actual photo of JoAnn "Vickie" Smith who was later identified by DNA.

identify than people of Northern European descent because African-Americans are underrepresented in the public databases that allow law enforcement cases like this. This case was further complicated by the fact that Vickie had been adopted.

Her DNA profile matched to a number of her distant biological relatives, but most people in her birth family didn't know she existed. Her name was finally found after the team located a branch of her tree with three sisters, one of whom was her birth mother.

With the assistance of Cincinnati Health Department Vital Records, Johnson located her original birth certificate. After extensive searches, Johnson requested assistance from the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and subsequently adoption records were located by the Hamilton County Probate Court based on the lead provided by the DNA Doe Project team.

"The team really thought that she would be identified last summer once her grandparents had been identified," said Eric Hendershott, team leader on the case. "However, it was only after contact was made with her biological family that adoption was suspected."

In addition to DNA work on this case, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) also supported the case, providing resources, a facial reconstruction, and publicity in

the hopes that she would be recognized. NCMEC kept her face and story in the public eye, contributing to numerous press articles over the years.

"A lot of people worked to keep this young woman's story alive for 47 years so that she could get her name back and give her family some answers about her disappearance," said Pam Lauritzen, Executive Director of Media and Communications with the DNA Doe Project.

"It is an honor for all of us to say her name - Vickie Smith - and to know she's on her way home."

The DNA Doe Project is grateful to the groups and individuals who helped resolve this case: Brandon Johnson of the Grundy County Coroner's Office, who entrusted the case to the DNA Doe Project; DNA Solutions for extraction of DNA; HudsonAlpha Discovery for sequencing; Greg Magoon for bioinformatics; GEDmatch Pro and FTDNA for providing their databases; the team at NCMEC for bringing so much attention to the case; our generous donors who joined our mission and contributed to this case; and DDP's dedicated teams of volunteer investigative genetic genealogists who work tirelessly to bring all our Jane and John Does home.

To date, DDP has helped resolve more than 110 cases of unidentified human remains. For more about our work and to join our mission, visit our website: [https:// dnadoeproject.org](https://dnadoeproject.org).

Fresh Hot Delivery

The Coal City Courant

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#1 Sports Fans Weekly Internet Winner

Pamela Burla

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

Must redeem by July 29, 2024

"Proud to be serving the community for the past 39 years!"

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

"Support Coal City High School Athletes"

Village of South Wilmington provides annual audit report

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS

Village of South Wilmington Annual Audit Report Available for Public Inspection

An audit of the funds of the Village of South Wilmington for the year ending April 30, 2024 has been completed by the audit firm of Mack & Associates, P.C., certified public accountants. A copy of the audit report has been filed with the Grundy County Clerk and is available for public inspection at the South Wilmington Village Hall located at 380 Lake St., South Wilmington, Illinois, 60474. If you would like to view the report please contact Village Clerk, Terry Schultz at (815)237-2241.

Published in the Coal City Courant on Wednesday, July 24, 2024.

FRESH HOT DELIVERY!

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Sound-Off is a 24-hour phone line provided to give readers a chance to voice their opinions. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to edit remarks for taste, length, personal attacks, racism, threatening, calls for boycotts and libel. The comments stated are the opinions and ideas of the callers and not that of the newspaper. Information may not constitute the actual events or facts of a particular topic. Submissions by email to: courant@fpnusa.com with "soundoff" in the subject line or visit www.freepressnewspapers.com, or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. Mail comments to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481. There can be only one submission of 250 words or less per person during any given week.

Theft and fraud

DIAMOND—There are companies on the Internet that are now double billing individuals for purchases of one item. They are calling this authorization and pre authorization of payment. So if you purchase one item for \$50 you will be charged \$100 for this purchase. Banks will tell you the pre authorization will drop off and it does but the double payment has already been taken. So if the Internet companies do this it could cause a problem with the bank balance and your payment of other bills could be affected by causing an overdraft of finances. Which means you may have to pay an overdraft fee to the bank. You may receive your pre authorization payment back in one week or more but the damage will already be done to your bank account. Double payment is theft and fraud and it is up to the banking commission to stop this type of action. Pre authorization is a new term for theft. Everyone should check their bank accounts and contact your bank if there has been any double payments taken from your bank account. Why have the Internet companies been allowed to commit this type of theft of finances?

Full of bologna

SHADOW LAKES—I never liked Trump from the day that I saw a documentary called the Central Park 5. I believe he is the biggest con artist that ever lived. But as much as I dislike him I want him to win the election, because this would be the only way that all the people he brainwashed are going to realize that all he says is a bunch of bologna.

Blaming Democrats

SHADOW LAKES—All that I've seen so far at the Republican convention is the best example of reverse psychology I have ever seen in my entire life. One after another Trump supporter getting on stage are telling people that Trump has been charged and convicted with crimes and that is the reason that people should vote for him. Republicans are getting on stage saying how bad things are in this country and blaming the Democrats. The Republicans have the majority in the House of Representatives and that gives them control of Congress. No new laws can be passed without Republicans approval. They also have the power to propose and approve legislation. If things in this country are bad like they say, it is as much their fault as the Democrats. Instead of using their power in Congress to make changes they just blame Democrats for their incompetence. What a joke.

Not kid friendly

BRAIDWOOD— This is a request to the person living on Center Street in Braidwood near the police station. Would it be possible for you to put your profane

signs on the inside of your fence facing your house? We all got the message, you have political opinions. The problem is that every child in this city also reads your message and we are trying to teach them to express their thoughts using different words. I think perhaps you would not appreciate children shouting those profanities toward you. Or anyone for that matter. Can you not put them toward your home and enjoy!

Pick our food

WILMINGTON—At the Republican National Convention people were carrying signs calling for "Mass deportations now". If they are advocating the deportation of undocumented immigrants coming from our southern border, who will pick our food in the hot fields of California? Don't count on white people. During the Great Recession 15 years ago, ads were placed looking for workers to stoop down in the farm rows to provide consumers with fruits and vegetables. But of course, spoiled whites did not apply for those back-breaking jobs which proves that economists are telling us the truth that immigrants bring strength to our economy. And lest we forget that white Christians now among us were also helpless immigrants long ago, would it have been a surprise if a few scalps had been taken at the Milwaukee convention to remind everyone of the brutality white men inflicted on the native Americans in years past? But no, it seems that native Americans have succumbed to the deceit of white men without demanding revenge. Likewise there should be no room for Trump's Christian nationalism which is nothing more than hatred for people of color. Irene

Their own agenda

DIAMOND—The leaders in Washington, D.C. are two faced individuals that do not want any opposition to their socialist agenda and they are turning over the U.S.A. to foreign countries. Leaders in Washington, D.C. are going to continue to destroy the lives of the American citizens so they can fill their wallets and give away taxpayers funds to people that have no legal right to be here. It seems that all that matters to our leaders is their ability to destroy our country. The leaders in Washington, D.C. are suppose to work for the American citizens but they don't. So their salaries should be denied until they stop their socialist agenda and obey their oath of office.

Neither one

COAL CITY—Donald Trump and Joe Biden both shouldn't win the election. It is stupid. They should just get new people or have Robert Kennedy on the ballot if he isn't already. Everyone is cheering on Trump and Biden when neither of them are fit to be president.



Freedom for all

BRAIDWOOD—Project 2025 declares that gay people should not be guaranteed recognition nor dignity under federal law. That doesn't sound like the America we know and love as the land of the free and home of the brave that assures freedom for all. And what about disagreements on various interpretations of Christianity? For example, my Christian church and the Merriam-Webster dictionary define adultery as married couples who are unfaithful to each other. But Project 2025 accuses gay people as adulterers without justification. Yes, religion and the interpretation thereof is personal and varies for everyone and yet Project 2025 has the unmitigated gall to tell all Americans how to behave. Trump judges others despite the numerous transgressions of his own such as: a felony conviction of 34 counts for election hush-money payments; liability for sexual abuse; impeachment the first time for abuse of power when he tried to prevent aid to Ukraine; impeachment the second time for deadly insurrection against our government while President; conviction of criminal tax fraud in New York; indictment for stealing documents which may have put human lives in jeopardy; and indictment for election interference in Georgia. With that record, how does Trump have the arrogance and audacity to authorize Project 2025?

Take your pick

WILMINGTON—As a senior citizen, I am stunned by MAGA senior citizens, especially the women, who worship at the temple of Trump. Don't these fools know

that Social Security and Medicare could be on the chopping block if their "idol" gets back into the White House? Trump has said these are off limits and we all know that Trump never lies. Just like he never heard of Project 2025. Besides blindly following their cult leader, what do they really think they will get if he wins? This man is in it for two reasons - himself and revenge. If he should win, the MAGA's will be left out in the cold with nothing but the MAGA shirt and hat they proudly wear in support of their dictator-to-be. Or is it king-to-be? Or Pictin boot licker? Take your pick. They all fit.

Act of Satan

WILMINGTON—I've heard a lot of people say that it was an act of God that saved Trump from assassination but I say it could have just as easily been an act of Satan.

Penny Lane

Confused

WILMINGTON—When the Wilmington Police Department wanted to block of Rt. 53 on Sunday at Coal City Road they should park across the lanes on 53 and not just be parked in just one lane. Very confusing.

Sliding the rules

COAL CITY—What's going on with so many unkept yards in town? Long grass, weeds, overgrown bushes? And people need to stop shooting their grass in the streets when they are cutting their yards. Also, there must be a limit on how many vehicles, boats and campers you can have in your driveways. This town is slipping in keeping up with ordinances.

Wilmington Community Band to perform post Catfish Days concert

The Wilmington Area Community Band will perform the fourth concert of the 17th season on Sunday, July 28, at 6 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park.

Martino's Mobile Pizza will have food available.

Bring a lawn chair, mosquito spray, snacks, and water and relax as the band performs the following music with a concert theme of "Treasure and the High Seas".

• Star Spangled Banner - Bonnie Huston, soloist

- Hands Across the Sea
- Barrier Reef
- Sailor's Hornpipe (featuring the flute section)
- Of Sea and Song INTERMISSION
- Island City Brass Quintet
- Sea Songs
- Beyond the Sea
- Seadragon Concert March (featuring the low brass section)
- Russian Sailors' Dance
- Raiders of the High Seas
- The Wellerman
- Pirates of the Caribbean Highlights

Veteran's Memorial Park is located at the intersection of Williams and Vine Streets - across from Oakwood Cemetery and Island City Baptist Church.

In the event of rain or excess heat, our alternative concert location is Wilmington High School and signs will be posted at the park.

The band is a volunteer group of local musicians from ages 13 up. Contact Wes Smith at 815-476-5517 for details.

Joliet American Legion Band on a quest



THE 105TH ILLINOIS American Legion Department State Convention convened during the week of July 10-13 at the BOS Center in Springfield. The four-day program included a performance by the Joliet American Legion Band with associate director Army Major Richard S. Ellenberger (Retired) honorably taking the podium. As delegates from across the state reconvened for the afternoon session on Saturday, they were greeted with an array of chosen patriotic selections and military marches. Veterans from the attending districts were also recognized for their service during the playing of Armed Forces Salute with each military branch flag being presented by the band's color guard and Navy Veteran Veronica Konow. Proceeding this convention, the Joliet American Legion Band will be representing the State of Illinois in the Competitive Concert Band Contest on Aug. 24 during the American Legion National Convention being held in New Orleans with their quest of becoming the 2024 National Champions.

Illinois State Museum seeking personal stories of Route 66

The Illinois State Museum is seeking individuals to share their personal experiences with the original Route 66 in Illinois, including travelers, businesses that operated along the route, workers who built the highway, and others.

Route 66 will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2026. Specifically, museum

historians would like to interview:

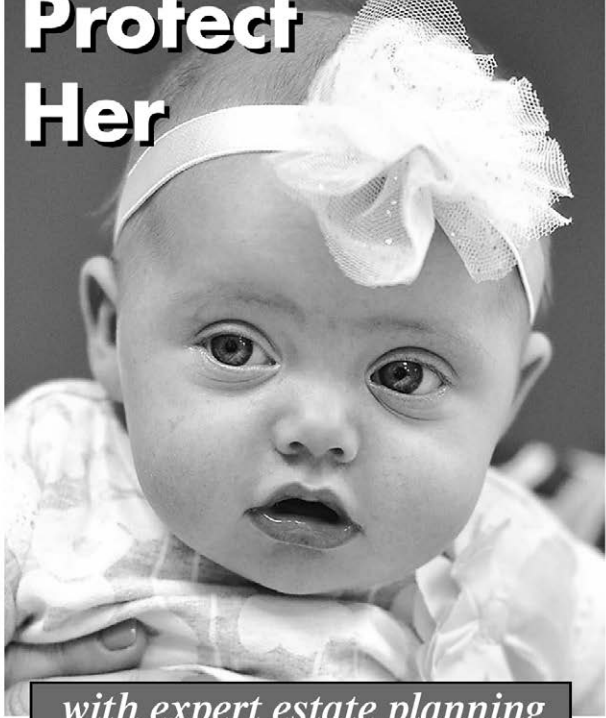
- People who have memories of driving on Route 66 or traveling the highway with family or for business.
- Those who were involved or whose families were involved in operating restaurants, hotels, or auto service businesses along the route.
- Anyone who partici-

pated in the building, maintenance, or rerouting of the Mother Road.

• Those who have any other firsthand experiences with Route 66 to share.

Contact Route 66 project coordinator Judy Wagenblast at jwagblastp@gmail.com. The oral history project is funded in part by the National Park Service.

Protect Her



Yes, your newborn is precious! And you're busy taking care of her every need. That's what good parents do. But will she inherit your assets if something tragic happens?

Make sure she does with a solid estate plan. As experienced attorneys, we have the expertise to protect your assets and ensure they are distributed according to your wishes, while helping your loved ones minimize taxes and avoid probate.

Don't wait another day to make sure your family and your final wishes are protected. Schedule a consultation today, and get the answers you need.

with expert estate planning you can trust



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25 YEARS OF
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July 25-28, 2024



THURSDAY, JULY 25TH

Teen Night

Sponsored by Riverfront Lanes

- 9am Medallion Hunt clue
- 6pm Dunk Tank & Fear Factor sponsored by Wilmington Coalition and St. Rose
- 6pm Ice Ice Baby
- 6-9 pm DJ Roy Gregory on Main Stage
- 6:30-9pm Pixy Face Painting
- 6-10pm Carnival, food vendors & info tent OPEN
- Wristband Night-\$25/all you can ride
- 9pm Fearless: A Tribute to Taylor Swift on Main Stage

FRIDAY, JULY 26TH

- 6pm-12am Carnival, Food vendors, info tent & Beer Garden OPEN
- 6pm Reptile Show by Crosstown Exotics
- Shuttle OPEN Sponsored by Illinois Central Bus Co.
- 7pm Line Dancing with DJ, Doug Pfaff
- 8pm Cowboy Co. The Country Music Show on the Main Stage
- 8pm Late Night food on N Water St *Downtown*
- 9:30pm Fireworks
- 10pm Shuttle CLOSES



SCAN HERE FOR ALL THE LATEST INFO!

SATURDAY, JULY 27TH

- 9am-4pm Women of Wilmington Flea Market *Downtown*
- 9am Medallion Hunt clue
- 10am Skinners Bike & Pet Parade sponsored by Skinners Animal Clinic Skinner's Meet at Wilmington Park District at 9:30am
- 10am Shuttle OPEN Sponsored by Illinois Central Bus Co.
- 12pm-12am Carnival, Food vendors, info tent & Beer Garden OPEN
- 12-5pm DJ Roy Gregory on Main Stage
- 1-5 pm Millers Petting Zoo
- 1pm Performances by WHS Spiritline, Park District Dancers, and Belly Dancing by Cassandra Corette
- 2-5 pm Youth Bean Bag Tournament Sponsored by Wilmington Park District
- 8pm Any Given Weekend on Main Stage
- 8pm Late Night food on N Water St. *Downtown*
- 9:30pm Laser Show
- 10pm Shuttle CLOSES

SUNDAY, JULY 28TH

- 8am-12pm VFW Breakfast Buffet @ VFW
- 10am-4pm Rusty Nutz Car Show
- 12-1pm Sensory hour at the carnival
- 12-6pm Carnival, Food vendors, info tent & Beer Garden OPEN
- 1pm CFD Parade*leaves from Steven's Intermediate School to Water St to Mill St.
- Mr. D's Magic Show and Ice Ice Baby Immediately following parade in Downtown Parking Lot
- 2-6 pm Rick Lindy Band on Main Stage
- 2-6pm Wristband hours-\$25/all you can ride
- 3pm Fear Factor Finals
- 3:30pm Coloring Contest Winners announced
- 4pm Duck Races sponsored by Lions Club
- 6-7:30pm Wilmington Community Band at Veterans Park

Official Schedule 2024



Utilize our new shuttle for convenient no hassle parking at CFD 2024! Generously provided by Illinois Central Bus Co. Look for 'Shuttle Stop Here' signs posted!

Stops Include:
City Hall
South Island
Walkbridge to Downtown

catfishdays
wilmingtoncatfishdays
www.catfishdays.com

All events are on the North Island unless otherwise specified
All activities are subject to change

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- THURS., JULY 25 - LADIES NITE
\$1 OFF all night for ladies!
Guest Beertender with Angie

- FRIDAY, JULY 26 - Rolling Smokes / mobile cigar lounge in the parking lot
Friday is Guest Beertender and Bri.

- SAT., JULY 27 - BABY CONTEST
11 a.m.
(must be registered)

- SAT., JULY 27 - FIDDLE ROCK - CASEY McGRATH
With your favorite songs in rock, pop, country and more.
Rolling Smokes / mobile cigar lounge in the parking lot

- SUN., JULY 28 -
Watch for us in the parade and bring in your OSB Koozie (from the parade) and receive **\$1 off your pour!**



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COME TO THE CORNER TAP

TAP

THURS., JULY 25	FRI., JULY 26	SAT., JULY 27	SUN., JULY 28
ALEX HOFFER 8:30 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.	DJ NITRO 8:00 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.	ALEX HOFFER w/HERB WILDE 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	ACOUSTIC WILL BUCCELLATO 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
THE CORNER TAP 201 N. Water St., Wilmington 815-476-6146		DJ SKOOB 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	DJ SKOOB 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
		HYPER DJ w/JPG 9:30 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.	HYPER DJ 9:30 p.m. - 12:30 a.m.

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Come see old friends starting at 6 p.m.

Sat., July 27

LIVE BAND!

8pm-midnight

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VANCURA BROTHERS
WAR PATH
DONE DIRT CHEAP
THE LAST SUPPER
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THURSDAY BINGO
6-10 p.m.

FRIDAY CATFISH FILET & SHRIMP DINNERS and BAKE SALE
3-8 p.m.

SUNDAY BREAKFAST
8 a.m. - noon
Pancakes, bacon, sausage, eggs, biscuits & gravy, fried potatoes.
\$12 adults, \$6 kids 12 and under.
Free kids 3 and under.



SATURDAY MINI FISH FRY
6-8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON BINGO
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OBITUARIES

Dean E. Plese

WILMINGTON—Dean E. Plese, Jr., 64, of Wilmington passed away on July 16, 2024 due to complications from bacterial pneumonia. Born in Joliet in 1960, Dean was the first of Dean and Judy Plese's six children, growing up in the family's home on Widows Road and was a lifelong resident of Wilmington. Gentle, kind and wise by nature, Dean was a calming presence and patient leader. First with his brothers and sister where he showed a natural ability for quietly leading by example, and later with his own family who were his greatest joy. Dean was a very kind, supportive and loving son, brother, husband, father and grandfather and the happiness he received in his role in his large family gave him great contentment and deep personal fulfillment all his life.

Dean attended Wilmington area schools including St. Rose and Wilmington High School before going on to trade school, learning to become a pipe fitter, after which he worked in the trades for more than 40 years before he retired in 2022. He was a well-known and respected member of Pipefitters Local 597 who established many strong lifelong friendships among his peers which brought him much happiness.

Dean loved his hometown. He believed in giving back to his community and always supported the high school football team where he could often be seen in the stands cheering on his team. He enjoyed spending his free time with family and friends - particularly traveling to visit his sister and brothers or fishing at his lakefront home where he spent more than 45 years of summer vacations with family in the Orr, MN area.

Optimistic by nature, Dean never let the challenges that life dealt him affect his always cheerful outlook toward people and life in general. He simply saw the good in others and approached everything in life with an open and happy heart. He was truly an angel among us.

A man of deep faith all his life, Dean regularly attended St. Rose Church and later Island City Baptist Church where he was ordained as a Deacon in March of this

year. His dedication to God provided both him and his family with a strong, unshakable foundation. That faith became especially important in the face of leukemia when he was diagnosed first in 1995 and again in 2022. He loved God, his family, his hometown and the Chicago sports teams. He will be dearly missed every day by all who knew and loved him.

Dean is survived by his loving wife Stacy, children Michael (Nicole) Plese and Breanna (Alex) Crippen and his granddaughter Fiona Violet; his stepchildren: Danielle (Charles) Eavenson, Josh (Sarah Markus) Henderson and her son, Logan, Elizabeth and Zach Henderson; his siblings David (Angela), Martin (Maureen), Maria, Eric (Christine) and many nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends all of whom loved him and heavily grieve his loss. He was predeceased by his parents and brother, Tony.

In honor of Dean's memory, please call someone dear to you today and tell them you love them. Today is a given, but tomorrow is never promised.

Cremation rites have been accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 East Kahler Road in Wilmington on Sunday, July 21, 2024 between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. and again Monday morning July 22, 2024 at Island City Baptist Church, 120 Vine Street in Wilmington from 10:00 a.m. until time of memorial service 11:00 a.m. Pastor Jeff Logsdon will officiate.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Dean's memory to Kuzma Care Cottage, 635 S. Main Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 or to the Leukemia Lymphoma Society.

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

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



Judith M. Sizemore

WILMINGTON—Judith M. Sizemore, 82, formerly of Bridgeview, Chicago and Crest Hill, IL, passed away Monday evening, July 16, 2024 at Aperion Care of Wilmington.

Born Dec. 23, 1941 in Chicago, Judith Marie was the daughter of Stanley and Bernice (Ostrowski) Borucki. She was raised and educated in Chicago, and went on to marry Silas Sizemore, who preceded her in death.

Judith dedicated 30 years of her life as a credit analyst for ITT Diversify, where her diligence and commitment were widely recognized. Beyond her professional life, Judith found joy in simple pleasures; she was an avid reader and took delight in solving jigsaw and crossword puzzles.

Survivors include her two children: Larry (April) Smrz of Essex, and Terry Condra of Crest Hill; seven grandchildren: Larry (Corri) Smrz, Richard (Katie) Smrz, Kristal Smrz, Joel (Alex) Condra, Cynthia (Brian) Nash, Katie Condra and Julie (Cory) Strong, and (11) great grandchildren: Riley, Natalie, Dominic, Kira, Aleah,

Knox, Silas, Declan, Rogan, Aiden and Maverick.

Judith was preceded in death by her parents and husband, Silas.

The family will receive friends for a visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 East Kahler Road in Wilmington on Friday, July 19, 2024 between the hours of 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Funeral services will follow on Saturday morning, July 20, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. in the funeral home.

Entombment will be in Resurrection Catholic Cemetery in Justice, IL, where Judith will be laid to rest with her late husband.

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

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



Wanda L. Bertoglio

VERONA—Wanda L. Bertoglio, 77, of Verona, and formerly of Morris, passed away Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at the ARC of Dwight.

Born July 31, 1946, in Joliet, Wanda Lee was a daughter of Walter and Lucille (Hughes) Harris. She was raised and educated in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1964.

Wanda's employment included working in the cafeteria at Morris High School as well as at Hornsby's Department Store. She later gained a position in the house-keeping department at Morris Hospital from where she retired. She was a member of the Morris VFW Women's Auxiliary, and also belonged to the Coal City Area Club and attended both Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Morris, as well as Assumption Catholic Church in Coal City.

She loved flowers and gardening and spent much time riding her three-wheel bicycle. Known for her sweet nature and thoughtful heart, Wanda was always appreciative of others, radiating kindness wherever she went. Above all, Wanda cherished her family. Her love for her grandchildren was boundless, and she took immense pride in being a loving and dedicated mom and grandma. Her memory will be a source of comfort and inspiration for her family, who will forever hold her in their hearts.

Wanda Bertoglio leaves behind a legacy of love, kindness, and a life well-lived. She will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Survivors include her loving compan-

ion of 38 years, Rich Knop; children: Philip (Lisa) Bertoglio, of Diamond; Lisa Bertoglio, of Morris and Alan Bertoglio, of Joliet, as well as Don (Mary) Knop, of Oklahoma; grandchildren: Ryan (Jasmine) Shannon, of Algonquin, IL; Brittany (Mike) Sutton and Jeremy (Paige) Shannon, of Iowa; Jules (Jayson) Nowak, of Wisconsin; Morgan Bertoglio, of Seneca; Nicholas (Alyssa) Arndt, of Florida; Nathan Arndt, of Chicago; Kristen Arndt, of Diamond and Melissa (Justin) Brous, of Oklahoma; great-grandchildren: Kamden Shannon, Kaeden Shannon, Eevie Nowak, Annie Nowak, Knox Sutton, Elijah Shannon and Myla Rose Brous; one sister, Charlene Orolin, of Morris and several nieces and nephews.

Wanda was preceded in death by her parents, two sisters, Joanne Ferrari and Mary Lou Baker; the father of her children, Joseph Bertoglio; Terry Knop and aunt, Florence Passet.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A graveside service will be held on Saturday, July 27, 2024 at 10 a.m. in Ward Cemetery in Verona.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Wanda's memory to ARC of Dwight Activities Department or to Lightways Hospice.

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

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



Mike Folsom

JOLIET—Mike Folsom, 66, of Joliet, passed away peacefully on July 15, 2024, at the Lightways Hospice Home in Joliet, surrounded by his loving family.

Born on March 17, 1958, in Chicago, Mike was a son born to Ivan Folsom Jr. and Brenda (nee Smith) Richards. He spent his formative years in Joliet and upon completing high school in 1976, he embarked on his career path. Mike's entrepreneurial spirit led him to establish his own carpentry business where he dedicated himself to hard work and craftsmanship.

A member of the Southside Civic Club, Mike had a deep passion for nature and the outdoors. Whether casting a line while fishing or enjoying time on the water, he found joy and tranquility in the elements. An avid hunter and fisherman, Mike had an innate connection with the natural world.

Survivors include his father, James Virklan, of Joliet; two children, Samantha

and Sarah Folsom; three grandsons: Dasmin, Kingston, Canan; three brothers: Daniel (Linda) Folsom, of Joliet; Ivan (Cherie) Westcott, of Yorkville and Mark (Beth) Folsom, of Chicago; one sister, Angie (Tim) Lesak, of Dwight; several cousins; numerous nieces and nephews, the mother of his children, Gail Callahan, of Louisville, KY and his beloved companion, Linda Schargorodsky.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents, Ivan and Brenda and his dear aunt Sarah and uncle Charlie.

Per his wishes, cremation rites have been accorded.

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

Cremation services have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.



Gary R. Skubic

DIAMOND—Gary R. Skubic, 74, of Diamond, passed away peacefully on Sunday, July 14, 2024 at his home surrounded by his family.

Born June 20, 1950 in Joliet, Gary Raymond was a son of Raymond John and Helen (Griot) Skubic. He was raised in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1968.

On April 16, 1969, Gary was inducted into the United States Army where he went on to honorably serve in Vietnam where he earned a Bronze Star and was discharged on March 23, 1971. Later that same year on July 17, Gary married Jean Hanley in Assumption Catholic Church in Coal City and together the two made a home and raised their two sons.

Gary gained employment with Mobil Oil in 1972 and made his career there for the following 34 years. Shortly following his retirement he returned to Exxon Mobil as a Consultant and worked another 5 years from 2007 until 2012.

He was a member of the Wilmington VFW Post #5422, where he was active with their Memorial Squad; he coached little league baseball when the boys were young and served on the board at the Outdoor Area #1 Club. In 2022, Gary was honored and found solace to his time in the service as he participated in the August Honor Flight; an experience he held dear.

In his free time, Gary enjoyed fishing, hunting, golfing and gardening. He found enjoyment in watching the birds and was an avid Chicago Cubs Fan. In year past he bowled on a Wednesday night league, and his love of country was shown in his dedication to honoring veterans alongside his fellow honor guard members.

Remembered as a quiet man who kept to himself, Gary was known to be stubborn and do things his way. His family was his first priority and nothing gave him more joy than to see his family grow to include grandchildren and a great granddaughter. He as highly intelligent guy who was always a hardworker, Gary leaves behind a legacy of a perfectionist whose greatest titles were husband, father and grandfather.

Survivors include his loving wife of 53 years, Jean; two sons and daughters-in-

law: Craig and Carrie Skubic, of Coal City and Curt and Amy Skubic, of Diamond; grandchildren: Jared Skubic, Olivia Skubic, Connor Skubic and Creide Skubic; one great-granddaughter, Audrey; his mom of 42 years, Joanne Skubic; four brothers: Ron Skubic, of North Carolina; Mark (Lynette) Skubic, of Minnesota; Norm (Sue) Shambaugh, of Aurora and Chris (Bill) Gulburgh, of Kirkwood, IL; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Judy (Richard) George, of Cocoa Beach, FL; Cathy (Jim) Hutchings and Tim (Jodi) Hanley, both of Coal City; Mike (Sharon) Hanley, of Loveland, CO; Jane (James) Calcaterra, of Sugar Grove, IL; Ruth Ann (Dan) Mulhall, of Virginia Beach, VA; Albert Hanley, of Minocqua, WI; Patty (Terry) O'Bert, of Morris; Janet (John) Peters and David Hanley, both of Coal City; Jeff (Nancy) Hanley, of Minooka; Tom (Rhona) Hanley, John Lissy and Gail Hanley, all of Coal City and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

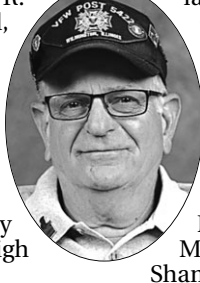
Gary was preceded in death by his parents, Raymond and Helen Skubic; father-in-law and mother-in-law: Joseph and Ruth Hanley; granddaughter, Casi Skubic and sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law: Reid Skubic, Kris Skubic, Jane Skubic, Suzanne Lissy, Jim Hanley, Joe Hanley and Bill Hanley.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of Illinois Route 113 in Coal City on Thursday, July 25, 2025 from 9:30 a.m. until time of family remembrance at 12:30 p.m. Inurnment with full military honors will follow in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, IL.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Gary's memory to the Wilmington VFW Memorial Squad or to Lightways Hospice.

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

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



Dennis P. Walsh

WILMINGTON—Dennis P. Walsh, 69, of Wilmington, passed away peacefully on Saturday, July 13, 2024 at his home with his family at his side. Dennis was born May 7, 1955.

Dennis was a graduate of Joliet East High School. He was born and raised on a farm in Elwood. Dennis worked his entire adult career as an Operator at Stepan Chemical from age 18 until he retired in 2018 at age 63. He was also member of the Teamsters Local Union #179. Dennis enjoyed watching the stock market daily, shopping for cars or just about anything that was a good deal, attending estate sales and auctions, and as a true Walsh, he always enjoyed gardening and farming. Dennis will be truly missed by all who knew and loved him.

He is survived by his children Jacob Walsh, Christopher Dixon, and David Nugent, his siblings Patricia (Phil) Carlos,

Joseph (Mary Jane) Walsh, and Timothy (Cindy) Walsh, numerous nieces and nephews and his faithful canine companion "Duke".

Preceded in death by his parents Raymond and Margaret (Nee Foreman) Walsh, his wife Janet (nee Nugent) Walsh in 2014, his brother Michael Walsh, and his brother-in-law Terrence Cavanaugh.

Visitation for Dennis will be on Friday, July 19, 2024 from 4-8:00 p.m. at Forsythe Gould Funeral Home.

Funeral service will be the following day, Saturday, July 20, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. also at the funeral home.

Interment will immediately follow at Mt. St. Patrick Cemetery, Wilton Center where he will be reunited with his wife Janet.

Arrangements entrusted to Forsythe Gould Funeral Home, 507 S. State St., Manhattan.



Dennis E. Cox

MILAN, TN—Dennis E. Cox, 79, of Milan, TN, formerly of Wilmington, passed away Monday, July 1, 2024 at his home.

Born Feb. 4, 1945 in Hammond, IN, Dennis Edward was a son of Edward and Bessie (Bumgardner) Cox. He was raised and educated in Decatur, IL and went on to enlist in the United States Armed Forces. Dennis served from 1965 to 1967 when he received his honorable discharge from service. On Dec. 9, 1968, he married Judith Elaine Jordan, and together they would relocate to Joliet before settling in Wilmington.

Dennis worked for Vulcan Materials in Joliet as a heavy equipment mechanic, giving 40 years of dutiful service until he retired. He was a past member of the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 241 in Wilmington and a member of the Goldwing Roadriders motorcycle club. There was nothing Dennis loved more than being out for a long ride on his Goldwing. He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who will be remembered fondly by all who loved and knew him.

Survivors include his wife, Judith Cox, of Milan, TN; four children: Don Cox, of Lake Village, IN and John (Summer) Cox, of Wilmington; Tanya (Darrin) Jones, of Wilmington and Denise (William) Taylor, of Rensselaer, IN; 14 grandchildren: Phillip Zavala, Alaina Zavala, Kayla Cox, James

Cox, John Cox Jr., Jesse Cox, Grace Taylor, Finnegan Taylor, Murphy Taylor, Josh (Hailey) Jones, Molly Jones, Sam (Sydney) Jones, Allison Taylor and Cody Taylor; 10 great-grandchildren: Anna Taylor, Colt Taylor, Owen Shinn, Marcus Shinn, River Jones, Walker Jones, Jayce Zavala, Alexander Guzman, Payton Perry, and Chloe Perry; one sister, Debbie Cox, of Decatur, IL and several cousins and numerous nieces and nephews.

Dennis was preceded in death by his parents; one brother, Bob Cox, and one sister, Donna Sue Pollard.

Per Dennis' wishes, cremation rites have been accorded.

The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Tuesday, July 30, 2024 from 11 a.m. until the time of memorial service at 12 p.m. Interment with full military honors will immediately follow at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book at www.ReevesFuneral.com, upload photographs, and share Dennis' 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 Wilmington.



Catfish Days offers a special treat for 'Swifties'

It's hard to believe a year has passed since last year's Catfish Days celebration. Beginning tomorrow, Catfish Days, with the theme of "25 years of Rocketing the River", begins with a bang. New, this year, is big name "Fearless: A Tribute to Taylor Swift," appearing on the main stage at 9 p.m.

Impersonator Rikki Lee Wilson has become a pop sensation in her own right. Wilson and her band have performed throughout the United States and Europe. Without a doubt, local Swifties will remember her performance for a lifetime.

Catfish Days fun begins Thursday at 9 a.m. with a Medallion Hunt Clue. Return to the North Island park in Wilmington at 6 p.m. when the carnival opens, with all you can ride wristbands for \$25.

Fear Factor contestants are needed at 6 p.m. to compete in age divisions. You never know what you might have to touch or eat in order to win a prize.

Meanwhile, enjoy the sounds of "Ice Ice Baby," DJ Roy Gregory, and finally the performance of Fearless at 9 p.m.

On Friday, things heat up. The beer garden opens at 6 p.m., along with the carnival and food vendors. From 6 to 9 p.m., you'll have a choice of the Reptile Show by Crosstown Exotics or a boot-scootin' round of Line Dancing with Doug Pfaff. At 8 p.m. enjoy Cowboy Co., The Country Music Show on the main stage, or late night food downtown. At 9:30 p.m. fireworks will light up Wilmington's skies.

On Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Women of Wilmington will host a flea market with over 100 vendors stationed along North Water Street. At 9



TAYLOR SWIFT IMPERSONATOR Rikki Lee Wilson will kick off Catfish Days at 9 p.m. Thursday, July 25, when she takes the north island park stage for "Fearless: A Tribute to Taylor Swift."

a.m. another Medallion Hunt clue will be made public.

At 10 a.m. the popular Skinner's Bike and Pet parade sponsored by Skinner's Animal Clinic will step off from the Wilmington Park District parking lot at 315 N. Water St. Participants need to line up starting at 9:30 a.m.. They will parade to the north island stage where trophies will be awarded.

At 11 a.m. judging begins at Old School Brewing at 110 Bridge St. for the Catfish Days Baby contest. Contestants, ages 6 to 24 months, had to pre-register in advance. It's good opportunity to watch parents and grandparents do funny things to get their youngsters smiling.

The carnival, food vendors and beer garden open at noon. DJ Roy Gregory

will appear on the main stage on the North Island from noon to 5 p.m.

The kiddies will have a chance to visit Miller's Petting Zoo from 1 to 5 p.m. At 1 p.m. the WHS Spiritline, Park District Dancers and Belly Dancing by Cassandra Corette will perform on the north island stage. From 2 to 5 p.m., a Youth Bean Bag Tournament will be held.

At 8 p.m. "Any Given Weekend" will play on the main stage with Late Night Food on N. Water Street.

At 9:30 p.m. a laser light show will be held on the North Island.

On Sunday VFW Post 5422 at 557 W. Baltimore St., will host a breakfast buffet from 8 a.m. to noon. Afterwards head to the north island to enjoy the Rusty Nutz Car Show from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

At noon, the carnival, beer garden and food vendors open, with "sensory hour" at the carnival with \$25 all you can ride wristbands.

At 1 p.m. the annual Catfish Day parade will leave from Steven's Intermediate School heading north on Water Street to Mill Street.

Following the parade, enjoy Mr. D's Magic Show and "Ice Ice Baby" on the north island. From 2 to 6 p.m. Rick Lindy Band will appear on the main stage, and at 3 p.m. it's the Fear Factor Finals, with coloring contest winners announced at 3:30 p.m. At 4 p.m. the Duck Races sponsored by Wilmington Lions Club will take place.

The grand finale will be at free concert by the Wilmington Community Band at Veterans Park beginning at 6 p.m.

To help you get around there will be a shuttle bus sponsored by Illinois Central Bus Company. Look for the "Shuttle Stop Here" signs for places to board.

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Cans for Kuzma during CFD parade

Need never ends at Kuzma Care Cottage in Wilmington.

That's why the local food pantry is entering its empty van in the Catfish Days parade on Sunday,

July 28, hoping that by the end of the parade route it is overloaded with non-perishable food items.

Cans For Kuzma is the summer campaign to restock the shelves at the

food pantry. Summer isn't typically the time when people think of donating food items so the shelves are low at Kuzma and the parade it the easiest way to replenish them.

The non-profit is asking spectators along the parade route to bring a sack or two of packaged food items. As the Kuzma van passes north on Water Street, walk your bag to the van and hand it to a volunteer. Be generous.

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Pritzker refutes \$1.1 billion more for CPS

An oft-repeated \$1.1 billion demand from Chicago's mayor would actually wind up costing state taxpayers \$5.5 billion. And Gov. JB Pritzker is turning a big thumbs down.

Chicago Public Schools made the huge mistake of putting a ton of temporary federal pandemic aid into its permanent spending base for years and that money is just about gone. It also recently over-estimated some state tax revenues.

Mayor Brandon Johnson also dumped \$170 million in pension costs onto the district from his own budget, and the Chicago Teachers Union is asking for the moon in its contract negotiations. The end result is deficits as far as the eye can see.

Johnson has suggested CPS borrow money in the interim, but he has said over and over again that the state "owes" CPS \$1.1 billion and he wants the state to pony up.

But does the state really owe CPS that much money? "No" is the simple answer.

First, a quick primer. The state's Evidence-Based Funding law was passed in 2017 after years of work. The idea of EBF was to move to a system based on "adequate" state and local funding levels.

A lot of factors determine adequacy, like regional salaries, how much districts spend, how much they have the capacity to spend, the types of district students (with an emphasis on low income, English learners, special education), and more.

The legislation was designed to help districts eventually reach 90 percent of adequate funding. This fiscal year, the state will spend \$8.6 billion on evidence-based funding.

Negotiators realized

from the beginning that the state didn't have enough money to fund every school at 90 percent adequacy right away, so it's been spending \$350 million more each year (except Fiscal Year 21) in order to reach the eventual target where all districts have 90 percent adequacy. \$50 million of that goes to property tax relief grants.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, if the state had decided last fiscal year to just all of a sudden abandon the funding "ramp" and immediately reach 90 percent adequacy, the total state cost would've been \$2.5 billion.

Of that \$2.5 billion, the ISBE says, Chicago would've received \$503 million, less than half the \$1.1 billion that Mayor Johnson claims the state owes.

So, where does the \$1.1 billion number come from? According to the state board, that amount would've been owed to Chicago last fiscal year if the state immediately funded schools at 100 percent of their adequacy levels.

However, the board points out that 100 percent funding is not in state law, despite what the mayor is



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

saying.

Johnson has always said that all Illinois schools should get what's coming to them right away, not just Chicago. But EBF funding for all public schools at 100 percent last fiscal year would've cost taxpayers a whopping \$4.85 billion, according to the State Board of Education.

But wait, there's more. Mayor Johnson's spokesperson released a statement to me saying in part: "(T)he State of Illinois provides all other school districts with nearly \$3,000 more per student by fully paying their teacher pensions," and went on to say they would work with the state to make that happen.

That's about \$969 million. Take out what the state already gives CPS for teacher pensions and you wind up with a tab of \$615 million.

Add now you're at \$5.47 billion.

The mayor hasn't mentioned that state law gives Chicago a special pension carveout. The Chicago school district's ability to pay (known as the "local capacity target") portion of the formula is reduced by whatever CPS spends on teacher pensions.

This reduces the city's amount that it has to pay for its own schools. Last fiscal year, CPS was given a nearly \$700 million reduction in its local capacity target.

Gov. Pritzker told me this past Friday that, despite all the public rhetoric, Mayor Johnson has never once personally asked him to help fund that \$1.1 billion.

I told Pritzker that I assumed other school districts also put temporary federal money into their permanent spending bases and would also be demanding more state aid. "I don't think that that's the job of Springfield, to rescue the school districts that might have been irresponsible with the one-time money they received."

"Poor fiscal management on the part of a local government is not necessarily the responsibility of Springfield," he added.

Is CPS poorly fiscally managed? Pritzker at first hedged, then, when pressed, said he'd like to answer the question his own way.

"One-time money shouldn't be spent for ongoing operations."

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

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Elwood Community Church will host a free Vacation Bible School starting July 29 to Aug. 2, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. The school will be for ages pre-k (potty trained) through entering fifth grade.

Online registration will be available at elwoodchurch.org. For further information or to volunteer please call (815) 423-5113.

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Honor Rewards offered to veterans

A free program entitling military veterans to discounts and incentives at Will County businesses is being offered by the Will County Recorder's office.

"With this program, veterans can sign-up in person or online to receive an Honor Rewards card which qualifies them for discounts and services at

participating businesses," said Karen A. Stukel, Will County Recorder.

Stukel also encourages service members to record their DD-214, military discharge papers at no charge to the veteran. By recording this important document, they can keep their original document safe and simply use the certified copies that

the office provides.

To sign up, visit www.willcountyrecorder.com, click on the Honor Rewards button and fill out the form with their information and with what branch of the armed forces they have served.

For details, call 815-740-4637 or visit www.willcountyrecorder.com.

Power failure raises gas prices

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 7.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.90/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

"While a good portion of the nation saw average gas prices decline, severe weather completely knocked out power to a major refinery (Mobil Refinery in Channahon) early last week, immediately impacting gasoline supplies to Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan, and pushing prices up considerably," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"For now, as we approach the end of summer vacations, I'm hopeful gas prices will continue to edge slightly lower in the week ahead."

Prices in Illinois are 8.6 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 9.0 cents per gallon higher than a year ago.

The national average price of diesel has fallen 4.0 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.79 per gallon.

In Braidwood, gas prices ranged from \$3.49/g at Casey's to \$4.19/g at Marathon. In Wilmington, expect to pay \$3.47/g at Mohsen's and \$3.75/g at BP. The cheapest you'll find gas in Coal City is Shell at \$3.64/g with the price at \$3.69/g at BP.

In Morris, gas ranged from \$3.53/g at Circle K to \$3.79/g at Amoco. Bourbonnais gas runs \$3.42/g at Road Ranger to \$3.51/g at BP.

"Most of the country has seen a reprieve from rising gasoline prices, thanks to weaker-than-expected gasoline demand, building supplies and a quiet period in the tropics," DeHaan noted.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.14/g while the most expensive was \$5.19/g, a difference of \$2.05/g.

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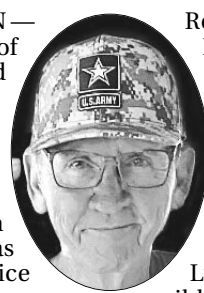
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OBITUARIES

Donald E. Parrish



WILMINGTON—Donald E. Parrish, 86, of Wilmington, passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, July 20, 2024 singing in his last words "Everything's Gonna Be Alright..."



Born on June 30, 1938, in Kankakee, Donald Earl Parrish was a son of Elmer and Bernice (Howard) Parrish. He spent his formative years in Braidwood and graduated from Reed Custer High School with the class of 1956.

Don proudly served his country in the United States Army from 1961 to 1963, demonstrating his dedication and commitment to his nation. Following his honorable discharge, he embarked on a successful entrepreneurial journey, owning and operating Parrish Blacktop for an impressive 49 years until his retirement. Not one to sit idle, Don continued his passion for sealcoating until the age of 79, and throughout the years earned the nickname "Phantom."

Don was actively involved in various organizations including the Wilmington Moose Lodge #241, Wilmington VFW #5422, and the Wilmington A.F. & A.M. Lodge #208. He had a deep appreciation for music and shared his talent as the lead of the Getimany's Band, a local favorite for many years. Don's voice resonated through Wilmington as he annually sang the National Anthem, marking the opening seasons of baseball, a testament to his patriotism and love for the sport.

Beyond his professional and community accomplishments, Don cherished his adventures with his late wife, Susie, particularly their travels and their shared passion for following the NASCAR Circuit. Among his most cherished possessions was his '59 Ford Skyliner Retractable Hardtop, affectionately known as "Old Blue."

Known for his infectious laughter, warm smile, and genuine kindness, Don was a true good Samaritan who never met a stranger. However, above all else, his devotion to his family shone brightest. He leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, and an unwavering commitment to those he held dear.

Donald E. Parrish will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. His memory will live on through the countless lives he touched and the indelible mark he left on his community and beyond.

Survivors include his children: daughter, Jill (Brian) Gill, of Wilmington and son,

Ron (Tammie) Parrish, of Braidwood; grandchildren: Shane (Tara) Longest, Jerrick (Ivana) Longest, Hunter Gill, Bre Parrish, Alyssa Parrish, Rachel (Dave) Valencia and Mark (Ashley) Vaughn; great-grandchildren: Nashtyn, Kyson, Kade, Khloë, Malena, Makiah, Tyler, Caeden, Nolan, Annistyn, Elliette, Audrey, Lucas, Bailey, Lydia, Zoi and Issac; siblings: Richard (Jinnie) Parrish, Bonnie (Bill) Favero, Barb (Pat) Duffy, Bev (Mike) Duffy, Michael (Jan) Parrish, Peggy (Jimmy) Cole, Linda (Doug) Mandat, Lillie (Steve) Heitke, and Donna (the late Tommy) Thompson; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law: Sandy Parrish, James (the late Jane) Balentine, Steve (Donna) Thomas, Terry Thomas, Robert Thomas, Mary (Fred) Gaddis and Denise (the late Mike) Thomas, and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as great-nieces, great-nephew, cousins and friends. Not to forget his extraordinary caregiver, Alejandro who was truly an angel on earth.

Don was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Susie (Thomas) on Aug. 29, 2022; one grandson, Thomas Vaughn; one great-grandson, Liam Vaughn; one brother, John Parrish; one sister, Lois (Ray) Martin and two nephews, Eric Parrish and Ryan Heitke.

A private family visitation was held, and green flameless cremation rites have been accorded.

The family will receive friends for a celebration of Don's life at the Wilmington Moose Lodge, 32050 W. River Road in Wilmington on Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024 from 2 p.m. until time of remembrance at 4 p.m. Food and fellowship will then follow until 6 p.m.

He will be laid to rest with Susie in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood on Monday, Aug. 12, 2024 at 9:30 a.m. Those wishing to attend the cemetery committal are welcome to join the funeral procession which will depart Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Road in Wilmington at 8:45 a.m.

Preferred memorials in lieu of flowers may be made as gifts in Don's memory to a charity of the donor's choosing. Family and friends are encouraged to log onto www.BaskervilleFuneral.com to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Don's memorial page online through social media.

Green flameless cremation services and memorial arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory.

Dan Bendel



WILMINGTON—Dan Bendel, 77, of Wilmington, passed away peacefully Friday, May 31, 2024, under home hospice care after a long battle with cancer, surrounded by his family.



Born June 29, 1946 in Berwyn, IL, Daniel Wayne was a son of Raymond and Sarah (Davis) Bendel. He was raised in Wilmington and served in the United States Army from 1966 to 1969, during which time he was stationed in Germany. On Oct. 24, 1970 Danny married Barbara Anderson at the First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington. He began his career as a mechanic working for local car dealerships, including Lombardi Chevrolet, before gaining employment with Bunge Loders Croklaan in Channahon.

Danny was a member of the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 241 in Wilmington, and he was a friendly guy who could have a conversation with anyone he met. He enjoyed being outdoors and took great pleasure in fishing, especially at South Padre Island in Texas. Danny was a helpful person, inclined to lend a hand when someone was in need, and worked hard at being the best husband, father, grandfather, and brother he could be.

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. Romans 8:18

Survivors include two daughters: Bobbi Lynn Adams-Stumpf, of Scottsdale, AZ and Kimberly Lynn Bendel Rose, of Wilmington; his biological son, Bryan

Steele, of Bourbonnais; five grandchildren: Jonathan Daniel Rose, Hana Evelin Rose Stumpf, Abigail Jordan Rose, Sommer Daniella Stumpf and Lacibella Skye Stumpf; two sisters, Barbara Bendel, of Gardner and Anita (Tom) Proffit, of Wilmington; one sister-in-law, Margaret Bendel, of Stafford, AZ and several nieces and nephews, including Mary Palmer, of Wilmington.

Danny was preceded in death by his parents, his wife, Barbara on July 25, 2022 and his brothers: David, Russell, James, and Bruce "Buzz" Bendel.

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

Family and friends will gather at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Monday, July 29, 2024 by 12:15 p.m. Funeral procession will depart to Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, 20953 W. Hoff Road, where Dan will be laid to rest with Full Military Honors.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made as gifts in Danny's memory to the American Cancer Society.

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

Cremation services and memorial arrangements are being made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington.

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THE COAL CITY High School Cheer Team hosted summer camp July 15-19 for first to eighth grade students interested in learning cheerleading and the skills necessary to lead fans. Over 30 future Coaler cheerleaders took part in the weeklong camp.



Coach Francis Loughran and his players introduced over 50 future players to the Coaler Football program during a weeklong camp held July 15-19 at Coal City High School. The camp focused on offensive and defensive philosophy and terminology, introduction to player positions and fundamentals of the game of football.

Baseball, softball tryouts approaching

Coal City Middle School students interested in being a part of the softball team need to report to tryouts on Monday, July 29 from 10-11:30 a.m. and July 30 from 8-9:30 a.m.

Tryouts for middle school baseball will take place Monday, Aug. 5 from 1-3 p.m. and Tuesday, Aug. 6 with eighth grade players reporting from 8-9:30 a.m. with pitchers and catcher tryouts from 9:30-10 a.m. Seventh grade reports from 9:30-11 a.m. with pitchers and catchers trying out between 11-11:30 a.m., and sixth grade tryouts being held from 11 am-12:30 pm. With pitcher and catcher tryouts running from 12:30-1 p.m.

Tryouts will be held at the middle school fields. Due to construction, students need to be dropped off by the gym door and walk back to the fields.

Middle School soccer starts Aug. 7. Soccer kicks off at Coal City Middle School on Wednesday, Aug. 7. Any middle school student interested in playing soccer should report to the middle school soccer field at 8 a.m. The first day practice will run from 8-10 a.m. There will be no tryouts for soccer this year.

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