

Unit 1 Schools honor students



Abby Stiles serves her way to state



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COAL CITY COURANT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2022 | A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER • (815) 634-0315

Diamond Mine Disaster monument shines once again

BY MARNEY SIMON
STAFF EDITOR

On an unseasonably warm February day nearly 140 years ago, as the winter snowfall was melting quickly, a group of miners continued their efforts to work inside the Diamond No. 2 Coal Mine.

But after the men descended into the mineshaft on Feb. 16, 1883, disaster struck, as standing water from the melted snow swept into the mineshaft, quickly flooding the mine, trapping and killing 74 of the 185 miners who went to work that day.

After the tragedy, only 28 bodies were recovered, with the remaining victims left to rest in the mine forever.

In 1898, a monument was erected to remember the men who perished in the disaster. And in 1926, the Braidwood Homecoming Committee dedicated a plaque to those victims at the site.

Now, 96 years since those names were first displayed at the memorial along Route 113 in Diamond, the plaque has been refreshed so those victims can continue to be remembered.

Braidwood resident Adam Beaty operates The Memorial Guardian, a cleaning, restoration and preservation service for cemetery headstones and monuments. Beaty and his father spent about two hours earlier this month performing work to help the plaque and the monument shine once again.

"The monument underwent a thorough cleaning from top to bottom," Beaty explained. "The concrete steps were cleaned using a biological cleaner with no hazardous chemicals, non-abrasive brushes, distilled water, and good old fashioned elbow grease. All the labor was manual. The granite portions were cleaned and polished, and the bronze plaque was carefully cleaned to return the original bronze shine which also returned the legibility of the victims names."

Beaty said the frequency of cleaning of a monument like the Diamond Mine Disaster monument depends on several varying factors, including climate and weather conditions. He said a cleaning like the one performed this month should happen on a as needed basis, but regular maintenance annually with biological cleaners should keep an already clean monu-

ment looking good for many years.

After more than a century, it's hard for residents to reflect on a tragedy as cataclysmic as the Diamond Mine Disaster. Beaty hopes keeping the monument in tip top shape can help people remember those victims.

"In a time where more and more history is being erased, I firmly believe it's extremely important to keep this monument and monuments like it vibrant and viewable," Beaty said. "Without perpetual care and the people to notice when that care is needed, nature will erase our history for us. It is just as important that we visit these monuments and learn the purpose behind them. So often we take what we have for granted without realizing and/or respecting the men, women, and, in this monument's purpose, the children who came before us and made our communities possible."

Beaty volunteered his services for the cleaning and restoration project, in hopes that folks both local and traveling through would notice the monument and stop to reflect on the terrible disaster that happened here 140 years



Courtesy photo

AFTER A THROUGH scrubbing, the commemorative plaque recognizing the 74 miners who perished in the Diamond Mine Disaster is legible once again.

SEE MONUMENT, PAGE 2

Newsies set to take the stage



Courtesy photo

THE COAL CITY Theatre Department will present Disney's *Newsies, Jr.* a musical based on the 1992 Disney motion picture of the same name and Tony Award winning Broadway musical. Rehearsals are in full swing for the production that will be presented by an all student cast comprised of sixth, seventh and eighth graders from Coal City Middle School. Preparing a scene set in Newsies Square are [from left] newsies Jack Steinhouse, Les and Alex Collins, Davey, along with newspaper distributors Gavin Clubb, Oscar Delancy; Maxx Kramer, Wiesel, and Gabriel Hamilton, Morris Delancy. Shows are set for Thursday, Nov. 10 and Saturday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 13 in the Coal City Performing Arts Center. Advanced reserved seat tickets are available at bit.ly/CCTDTickets.

Early voting brisk as Election Day nears

STAFF REPORT

There are over 35,000 registered voters in Grundy County and thousands have already cast their votes.

Grundy County Clerk and Recorder Kay Olson reports voters have been making their way into the county courthouse and to post office boxes to cast their votes ahead of the Nov. 8 General Election.

Early voting began Sept. 29 and will continue at the Grundy County Courthouse through the close of the business day on Monday, Nov. 7.

Individuals wishing to cast an early vote can do so by visiting the courthouse at 111 E. Washington St., during normal business hours—8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday—or during extended hours that have been set as Tuesday and Thursday until 6:30 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays from 8 a.m. to noon.

Mailed ballots must be postmarked no later than election day and must be received within 14 days of the election.

Individuals who requested a mail in ballot, but have since decided to appear in person must bring the mail in

ballot with them to the courthouse if early voting or their polling place on election day.

The clerk reports all election equipment has been tested, judges have completed their training and processes are in place to ensure the elections are secure.

All polling locations will be open on Election Day from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Polling locations can be found on voter cards or by visiting the county website at grundycountyil.gov. A list is also included on the specimen ballot that was distributed in this newspaper.

Olson said, the early votes and mail-in votes received prior to 7 p.m. on Nov. 8 will be rolled out first as part of the unofficial vote totals that will be posted by her office on election night.

Election results will be made official at the retabulation and canvassing that will take place two weeks after the election.

On the local ballot are the positions of governor and lieutenant governor, as well as the statewide positions of attorney general, secretary of state,

SEE ELECTION, PAGE 2



A GROUP OF students from Coal City High School recently attended the Future Educators Conference at Illinois State University. The students are members of a new club focused on careers in education. Taking part in the conference were [from left]: Adaline Dowling, Giovanni Bruno, Elsa Bunton, Lacie Good [kneeling], Haylie Masek and Mia Ratajczak.

Aspiring future educators

BY ANN GILL
EDITOR

At a time when the country is experiencing a teacher shortage, efforts are underway to boost interest in the field of education among high school students preparing for college and careers.

This fall, Coal City High School history teacher Ben Baer started meeting with students—freshmen through seniors—who have expressed an interest in teaching.

Aspiring Coal City Educators is the name selected for this new extra-curricular program that drew about 12 students to its first meeting and since then the group is

continuing to grow.

"This is a program meant to give positive experiences for students who are seeking a career in teaching or another career in education. This program is important because across the country there is currently a teacher shortage, and almost 60% of teachers work less than 20 miles from where they graduated high school," said Baer.

The new organization functions much like FFA or FBLA by providing students exposure to the field before enrolling in college and the workforce.

Through their involvement in the Aspiring Coal City Educators group, students will

have the opportunity to attend conferences and Baer said there will even be occasions for them to compete against other students in a variety of teaching related events.

Just last week, a group of students attended the Future Teacher Conference hosted by Illinois State University's College of Education.

The conference was open to all high school students interested in the field of education.

The conference, established in 2019, seeks to inform and inspire future educators. It provides information about the process of becoming a teacher and what to expect as they being teaching.

The group of Coal City students attending the club and others who are enrolled in the Grundy Area Vocational Center's Foundations of Teaching course instructed by Deb Eungard, a Coal City High School alumna.

During the one day conference, the students were able to take part in sessions that focused on topics such as STEM education, social emotional learning, diversity, student teaching, international

SEE EDUCATORS, PAGE 2



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Centennial Farm designation granted to Major Family

In September, the Illinois Department of Agriculture designated the Major Farm in Mazon as a Centennial Farm. To qualify as a Centennial Farm, a straight or collateral line of descendants must own the agricultural property for at least 100 years. Perry Major and his family

received this historical distinction to their farm after their application for designation as a Centennial Farm was approved. "I am privileged to present this distinction to this amazing family," said Agricultural Director Jerry Costello II. "This designation not only honors

their farm operation today, but also their ancestors who labored through adversity to maintain the family farm. The Centennial Farm program helps to reinforce that family farming remains a viable entity in Illinois agriculture." The Illinois Centennial Farm program has recognized

more than 10,200 farms since its inception in the early 1970s. Centennial Farm owners receive outdoor display signage and a certificate signed by the Governor and the Director of Agriculture. They are also recognized at Agriculture Day at the Illinois State Fair.

Blood drive Nov. 2

Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Road in Coal City, will host a Community Blood Drive in conjunction with Versiti Blood Center on Wednesday, Nov. 2, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Anyone willing to donate blood can contact Karen Hart at 708-217-5808 to schedule a preferred time or you may register online at www.versiti.org. Walk-ins are also welcome, but appointments are recommended. Please bring a photo ID and eat a good meal before donating. Please consider giving blood - one pint of blood can save up to three lives.

CCMS honors outstanding students



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Middle School



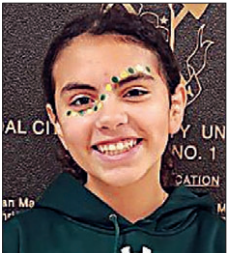
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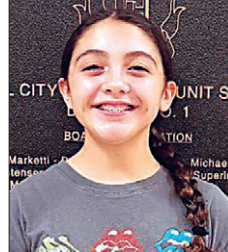
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COAL CITY EARLY CHILDHOOD Center Students of the Week for Oct. 24 are row one (from left): Russell Derby, Spencer Colegrove, Ava Mannoja, Catherine Milne and Nova Vespie. Henry Gabehart is pictured in row two along with Stellan Kramer, Lucy Draino and Cooper Lardi.

"Hallelujah" dinners return to Coal City United Methodist Church

Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Road in Coal City, is bringing back their "Hallelujah" Soup Suppers on Saturday, Nov. 5, from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. They will be serving delicious homemade chicken noodle & vegetable beef soups. Each meal includes your choice of soup, a sandwich, crackers, a beverage, ice cream & dessert. Carry-outs are available. The cost is \$12 for ages 13 & older; \$5 for children ages 3-12; and children age 2 & under eat free. All proceeds will go to the church's building fund. Tickets will be sold at the door. You don't have to be a member to enjoy the Coal City United Methodist Church's Soup Suppers.

Unit 1 Students of the Week



COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for Oct. 17 are (from left) Ryleigh Kargle, Nolan Cardenas, Autumn Decker and Carter Shain.



COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School Students of the Week for Oct. 24 are (from left) Dylan Rich, Olivia Beach, Caleb Hall and Lila Symons.

Monument

ago. "I volunteered for this project because I am an avid historian and I believe a bright clean monument will attract the eyes of passers-by and garner more visitors and, thereby, interest in its purpose," he

said. "I thank the Mayor of Diamond for this treasured opportunity, and I look forward to assisting Diamond and any surrounding community that would like to have their memorials cleaned. It's truly a work of passion and something I highly value." Beaty's work can be found on Facebook by searching The Memorial Guardian.

Educators

teaching, civic engagement and teaching high school. One of the students attending the conference was Mia Ratajczak who is planning to enter the field of special education. Also attending were Adaline Dowling, Elsa Bunton, Giovanni Bruno, Haylie Masek and Lacie Good. The Aspiring Coal City Educators meet regularly and are led by president Rachel Hall. She wants to become an elementary school teacher. Ratajczak serves as the organization's vice president and Dowling, who aspires to teach high school English or history, is the secretary/treasurer. High school students interested in learning more about the organization are encouraged to attend an upcoming meet-



A NEW CLUB at Coal City High School focusing on careers in education was established this year. Attending the first meeting of the Aspiring Coal City Educators organization were [row one, from left]: Haylie Masek and Rachel Hall. Row two: Lacie Good, Karli Pierson, Giovanni Bruno, Lilith McCants, Adaline Dowling, Elsa Bunton, Mia Ratajczak, Marianna Hren, Miki Torino, Angie O'Connor and Kody the service dog. ing, questions can be directed to Baer or any of the officers.

Elections

comptroller and treasurer. Voters will be asked to cast votes for representation in the United States Senate, as well as in the Illinois Senate and House. In Grundy County races, incumbents Olson, Sheriff Ken Briley, Treasurer Todd Koehn and Regional Superintendent of Schools Chris Mehochko are all unopposed. For representation on the Grundy County Board in District 3—an area that includes Braceville, Felix, Goose Lake, Maine, Goodfarm, Greenfield, Highland and Mazon Townships—there are nine candidates [four Democrats and five Republicans] seeking the six available seats. On the ballot [in order of appearance] are Ann Gill, James [Jake] Olson, Mike Onorato, Dave Stover, Douglas M. Boresi, James K. Riley, Caleb Counterman, Harold Vota and Georgette Vota. On the ballot in County Board District 1—Morris, Wauponsee, Mazon, Norman, Erienna and Vienna Townships—are seven candidates for six seats. In ballot order are Cody Mulac, Drew Muffler, Dan Cheshareck, Jerald White, Christina Jenkins-Likar, Douglas Ferro and Nathanael Greene. And, District 2—Aux Sable, Saratoga and Nettle Creek Townships—candidates for the six seats are Debra [Deb] Warning, Chris Balkema, Joseph Dominic Schiavone, Eric Rasmussen, Joshua A. Harris and Greg Ridenour. Voters will also be asked to cast votes in judicial races

including Supreme Court—Third Judicial District—that includes Mary K. O'Brien and Michael J. Burke; Appellate Court in the third Judicial District and 13th District Circuit Court that has Grundy County State's Attorney Jason Helland facing Christina Cantlin. Voters in Braceville will also have a question on the ballot regarding an increase in the corporate tax rate not to exceed .35% of the value of taxable property within the boundaries of the Braceville Fire Protection District. The additional revenue generated would provide funds for the fire district to replace outdated equipment, cover increasing payroll and insurance costs and cover dispatch system fees. Appearing on ballots across the state is a

Constitutional Amendment Proposal that if approved would, "guaranteed workers the fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively and to negotiate wages, hours, and working conditions, and to promote their economic welfare and safety at work." Additionally, it would "prohibit from being passed any new law that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety."

ing, questions can be directed to Baer or any of the officers.

Thank You!

Beans-and-Bites Coffee Café would like to extend our appreciation to the following organizations and business who have allowed us to provide beverages and baked goods to their events. We had seven individuals take part in our non-profit work exploration both in the kitchen, and serving the public. Thank you to Coal City Soccer Club, Ta-Ta-Trot, and Every Buddies Pub & Grub.

The support of the community has been enormous, and we are looking forward to the day when we can welcome you into our restaurant.

With gratitude,
Kris Sayers & Brittany Cochran

PUBLIC NOTICE

EARLY VOTING SITE - GRUNDY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

General Election - November 8, 2022

Early Voting will begin on Thursday, September 29, 2022 and continue through Monday, November 7, 2022

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

TIME -	Monday - Friday	8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (unless noted below)
Tuesday	October 4	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Thursday	October 6	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	October 8	8:00 a.m. to Noon
Monday	October 10	CLOSED-HOLIDAY
Thursday	October 13	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	October 15	8:00 a.m. - Noon
Tuesday	October 18	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Thursday	October 20	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	October 22	8:00 a.m. - Noon
Tuesday	October 25	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Thursday	October 27	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	October 29	8:00 a.m. - Noon
Sunday	October 30	8:00 a.m. - Noon
Tuesday	November 1	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Thursday	November 3	8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	November 5	8:00 a.m. - Noon

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

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

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
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Immaculate Conception to host Halloween party

Immaculate Conception church is hosting a family fun Halloween Party Friday, Oct. 28, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Father White Hall, on 110 S. School St., in Braidwood.

Join us for a free night of games, hot dogs, candy and fun. Don't forget to wear your costume. Call Tami Favero 815-405-40982 for more information

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An ice cream-based dessert drink from the 1940s

Anyone feel like going out for ice cream? The universal answer across all age groups is a resounding "yes". However, going out for ice cream looks a bit different depending on where you are in life, and where you are in the USA.

This week we visit The Badger State for a treat that is part cocktail, part ice cream, and 100% Wisconsin. If you know, you know. Anyone up for a Pink Squirrel?

The Pink Squirrel is an ice cream-based dessert drink straight from the vintage blenders of America's Dairyland. The cocktail was invented at Milwaukee's famous Bryant's Cocktail Lounge in the early 1940s and has been a staple of Milwaukee mixology ever since.

The drink is not as popular outside of the Midwest, and has evolved into a drink made with heavy cream instead of ice cream outside of Wisconsin. If you order the drink in Wisconsin, expect ice cream, and lots of it.

The Pink Squirrel rose to prominence in 1940s/1950s Wisconsin as electric blenders were becoming popular in America's kitchens, and sup-

per clubs were all the rage.

A typical night at a supper club in mid-century Milwaukee would start with a Brandy Old Fashioned at the bar, followed by a meal, then wrapping up the evening with a return to the bar for a Pink Squirrel.

So, what's in the Pink Squirrel? Pink ice cream? Actually, the ice cream is straight up vanilla and the "pink" comes from crème de noyau.

What exactly is crème de noyau? I had to look up this one myself as I have never encountered this particular liqueur. Crème de noyau is a French almond liqueur, similar in color to the Italian almond liqueurs (amaretto). The Italian almond liqueurs such as Disoranno carry a strong almond flavor, whereas crème de noyau carries lighter, sweeter almond notes.

The Pink Squirrel isn't an all sweetness/no substance cocktail. In fact, for a "sweet" dessert drink the Pink Squirrel is surprisingly complex.



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

Most of the complexity comes courtesy of the almond notes in the crème de noyau, the rest comes from the balance of chocolate and vanilla flavors.

Think of it as adding chocolate syrup to a milkshake, or pouring chocolate syrup on your vanilla ice cream. The cocoa notes add a satisfying depth to the vanilla sweetness.

The chocolate notes in the Pink Squirrel come from crème de cacao, the chocolate liqueur used in the Grasshopper and the Brandy Alexander. There are two types of crème de cacao, light and dark.

The dark variety is a coffee-colored liqueur whereas the light variety is clear. Use the light variety over the dark. You will not achieve the light pink hue if you use the darker crème de cacao.

Speaking of the signature pink hue, the Pink Squirrel should turn out a light pink and should not be a darker red or bright neon pink. If it is "too

pink" dial back the crème de noyau or add more ice cream.

Ice cream cocktails are unofficially in a separate category of mixology, and Wisconsin owns the category. In addition to the Pink Squirrel, Bryant's Cocktail lounge has been turning out perhaps the best Grasshoppers in the Midwest for decades.

If you ever find yourself thirsty in Milwaukee, and you're not counting calories, Bryant's Cocktail Lounge is located at 1579 S 9th Street, west of I-94 and north of Lapham Boulevard. It's not all ice cream and dessert drinks at Bryant's, they serve all of the classics and are consistently rated among the best bars in America by Esquire Magazine.

The Pink Squirrel is built in a blender and served in a Hurricane glass.

Combine in blender:
1 oz. crème de noyau
1 oz. white crème de cacao
3 scoops vanilla ice cream
Blend until smooth
Serve with whipped cream on top, garnish with sliced almonds
Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

Rutherford earns Chamber EOM trophy



THE WILMINGTON CHAMBER of Commerce recently presented Debbie Rutherford (left) from Kerr Management Consultants with Employee of the Month Trophy. Presenting the trophy is Chamber ambassador Dee Yehling from The Corner Tap. Rutherford has been with Kerr Management Consultants for 26 years, and was recognized for her passion for hard work, thoroughness and friendliness. She is also treasurer for the chamber, an unpaid position, who volunteers much of her time and fundraising ideas for the benefit of the community.

Braceville Gardner Cemetery clean up

The Braceville Gardner Cemetery is announcing their fall clean up. All grave decorations must be removed by Nov. 10 or they will be discarded.

Also, during the year all wilted, faded and broken grave decorations will be removed.

Please use garbage cans located by the Maintenance Building. Do not replace decorations until the clean up is completed.

Everyone's cooperation is greatly appreciated by the cemetery board and manager.

Mortgage assistance program to reopen Nov. 1

Qualifying homeowners can receive up to \$30,000 in assistance

BY CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

The state will reopen a mortgage assistance program for pandemic - impacted homeowners on Nov. 1.

The Illinois Homeowner Assistance Fund, run through the Illinois Housing Development Authority, provides up to \$30,000 in assistance to homeowners through payments made directly to mortgage servicers, taxing bodies or other approved entities.

The program is funded through an appropriation from the federal American Rescue Plan Act and can be

used for past-due mortgage payments and up to three months of future payments. The funding can also be used for delinquent property taxes, homeowner's insurance, condominium or homeowner association fees, and mobile home lot rent.

Funds received do not need to be repaid.

More information is available at illinoishousinghelp.org/ilhaf, and the application portal will be open from Nov. 1 through the end of January 2023.

To qualify, Illinois homeowners must:

- Have experienced a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic after Jan. 21, 2020, or a hardship that began before that date and continued afterward.
- Currently own and occu-

py the home in the state as their primary residence.

• Be at least 30 days late on their monthly housing payment.

• Have a household income at or below 150 percent of the area median income.

• Be able to demonstrate they have either communicated with their mortgage provider about their inability to pay or sought counseling with a federally approved counseling organization.

Individuals who participated in a previous round of

mortgage assistance may apply again in the upcoming round, but the maximum amount a person can receive is \$30,000 cumulatively.

IHDA and its housing partners will hold information sessions on the program, and a schedule is posted online at illinoishousinghelp.org.

Information can also be obtained by contacting the

ILHAF hotline at 1-866-454-3571.

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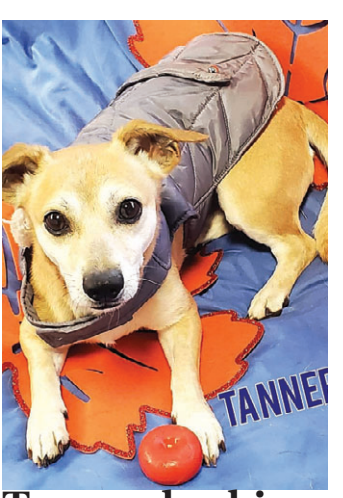
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Tanner looking to be adopted

MEET TANNER, he is approximately 6-years-old and weighs just 17 pounds. He loves to play with his toy and carry it around. He walks well on a leash and has done well with other dogs. Adoption fee includes neuter, rabies shot, distemper, heartworm test, microchip and fecal exam. Please contact Hopeful Tails Animal Rescue if you are interested today at hopefultailsadoptions@outlook.com.

In Loving Memory

In Memory of Cora Mae (Hoffman) Love
Mother, friend and junken buddy

As I sat intending to write a brief memorial and memories of (Mom) Cora Mae. Memories just flooded into my mind. All the good stuff. My mother loved going to garage & estate sales. We would check the Free Press for the first ads to appear in spring, reading and picking what we thought were the best sales the night before. Early the next morning we were off, arriving sometimes an hour early for the first sale to start. Sorry, yes we were some of those (Early Birds). We would last until noon. Then it was time to go for lunch or in my mother's case - dessert. Pie, cake, cookies you name it, she was good with it as long as it was sweet. I heard the sweettooth was from the Hoffman side of the family. We would enjoy our lunch and talk about all our great finds.

Then fall would come and the Garage Sales slowed; which marks the start of card playing and best of all puzzle season. Mother must have put hundreds of puzzles together in all her years and remembered every one of those pretty pictures.

So try to be a pretty puzzle piece today, in memory of Cora Mae Hoffman. Love,
Who passed one year ago Oct. 27, 2021.

HALLOWEEN MONDAY, OCT. 31
Trick-or-treat hours
4-6 P.M. SUNDAY, OCT. 30
DIAMOND 4-7 P.M.
SOUTH WILMINGTON GODLEY

4-7 P.M.
COAL CITY
CARBON HILL
BRACEVILLE
MAZON

4-7:30 P.M.
WILMINGTON

5-8 P.M.
BRAIDWOOD



Apply now for assistance in paying heating bill

Low-income families in Illinois can now apply for state assistance on their natural gas, propane and electricity bills.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, has \$300 million available. Families can apply by visiting helpillinoisfamilies.com or by calling 1-833-711-0374. Information on other state assistance programs can be found on that website as well.

LIHEAP provides one-time payments directly to energy service providers on behalf of recipients.

Families who earn up to two times the federal poverty level are eligible for LIHEAP. That works out to a 30-day gross income below \$2,265 for a one-person household, \$3,052 for a 2-person home, \$3,838 for a three-person home, \$4,625 for four people, \$5,412 for five people and \$6,198 for six people.

The level of assistance received is needs-based, and last year's LIHEAP recipients received an average of \$1,330 per household, according to the governor's office.

Grundy County residents seeking assistance can call Kendall-Grundy Community Action at 815-941-3262 and Will County residents can obtain information through the Will County Center for Community Concerns at wccccc.net or by calling 815-722-3262.



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Grundy Bank joins campaign to help consumers from being scammed

America's banks join forces in a coordinated, industry-wide campaign to protect consumers during National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

"We want to take the opportunity to join this industry-wide campaign and bring awareness to phishing scams that con people daily. We hope that joining this campaign that we give our customers the best practices for phishing defense," said Christine Mendez, Marketing and Sales Director of Grundy Bank.

Grundy Bank joined the American Bankers Association and banks across the nation to promote an industry-wide campaign educating consumers about the persistent threat of phishing scams. The FTC estimates that consumers lost \$5.8 billion to phishing and other fraud in 2021, an increase of more than 70% compared to 2020.

To combat phishing, the #BanksNeverAskThat campaign uses attention-grabbing humor and other engaging content to empower consumers to identify bogus bank communications asking for sensitive information like their passwords and social security numbers.

"Phishing attempts are at an all-time high

and scammers are targeting consumers from every direction -by text, phone, and email," said Paula Benda, Senior Vice President, Operational Risk and Cybersecurity at ABA. "Education and awareness are key to helping consumers spot a scam, and with help from participating banks like Grundy Bank, we're able to reach bank customers across the country so they can stay one step ahead of the scammers."

Grundy Bank, along with more than 1,000 banks from across the U.S. and ABA, kicked off the month of October with National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Grundy Bank is sharing consumer tips on social media and in bank branches to highlight common phishing schemes. Because cybersecurity education and fraud awareness can often be dull and forgettable to many consumers, the campaign is designed to be bright and bold with a bit of comedy.

The campaigns short videos offer similarly ridiculous scenarios like wallpapering a room with cash, roasting marshmallows over a cash fire and recycling cash on garbage day. Consumers are directed to BanksNeverAskThat.com for more.



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Less seasonal use, not politicians helping gas prices to decline

Area gasoline prices continue to drop as local motorists are seeing most stations with fuel under \$4/gallon.

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 9.8 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$4.20/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Locally, Braidwood stations on Monday were priced at \$3.65 to \$3.68/g. Wilmington stations were \$3.68/g to \$3.99/g near the interstate while in Coal City GasBuddy was reporting prices at the pump at \$4.04.

"Average gas prices have declined for the second straight week with significant declines in the West and Great Lakes having an oversized effect on the drop in the national average," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.


"With oil prices struggling a bit after reaching \$93 after OPEC+'s decision to cut production, many regions could see falling gas prices again this week as demand continues to decline seasonally, especially if more data points to a significant economic slowdown."

According to GasBuddy

price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was \$3.43/g while the most expensive was \$5.87/g.

"While gasoline prices have seen a large drop, diesel prices have been somewhat mixed, with prices heading higher in the Northeast as inventories drop to extremely tight levels ahead of the heating oil season. Motorists are reminded that the decline in gasoline prices is seasonal and should continue into the fall, and is unrelated to the coming election. Seasonality is king in driving prices, not the desires or hopes of politicians."

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A tribute to Gary Brieser



Photo by Eric Fisher

OVER 75 VEHICLES and roughly 200 people lined up at Wilmington High School on Sunday morning to parade to the home of Gary Brieser, the owner who started Brieser Construction, who passed away Saturday. The line-up stretched over a mile long as police escorted vehicles through downtown Wilmington. The circled the driveway at his home near Harborside Marina where each vehicle dropped a carnation in his honor. It was a fitting tribute to Brieser who turned a small construction company into a reliable general contractor who employed about 3,000 people over the past 44 years. Brieser's tradesmen were often encouraged by Gary to volunteer their time and talent for building community projects. The main office was in Wilmington on Lorenzo Rd from years 1978 - 2000 before locating currently in Channahon. It's still a very Wilmington-heavy corporation with about 25% of its employees having a Wilmington address. The company Gary started is now one of the largest woman-owned civil industrial contractors in the United States. His obituary information was unavailable at press time as arrangements were still being made.

OBITUARIES

Jim Noffsinger

LEROY—Jimmie Lee Noffsinger, 71, of Leroy, passed away unexpectedly Oct. 14, 2022. He was born Feb. 20, 1951 in Oak Park, IL to Thomas and Gracie Noffsinger.

Jim graduated from Reed Custer High School class of 1969. Being naturally athletic, he excelled in many sports while in high school. He found a great love for bowling and golfing and enjoyed those for many years. Jim worked for years in the Carpentry and Sheetmetal Unions and was the proud owner for years of a hardware store in Mackinaw, IL. He enjoyed putting together puzzles and proudly displayed them in his home.

Surviving are sisters, Dee (Bill) Beasley and Darnell (Don) Christenson; brothers, Ed (Terry) Noffsinger and Jack (Juanita) Noffsinger; five

children: daughters, Dana (Kelly) Lardi, of Coal City and Stacy Belz, of Mahomet; sons: Michael (Brenna) Noffsinger, of Coal City; Kevin Noffsinger, of Lacon and Arthur (Brooke) Noffsinger; grandchildren: Abby Lardi, Grace Lardi, Claire Lardi, Lucy Lardi, Alice Lardi and Caroline Lardi; Dane Noffsinger, Brady Noffsinger, Caleb Conover, Riley Conover, Wyatt Belz, Derek Belz, Cameron Noffsinger, Bryson Noffsinger and Brynlee Noffsinger.

Jim was preceded in death by his parents and his late wife, Teresa Noffsinger.

A graveside service was held Thursday, Oct. 20, 2022 at Dawson Cemetery. Those who wish to remember Jimmie can make donations to the Calvert-Balangee-Bruce Funeral Home at 101 W Center St, LeRoy, IL 61752.

Joe P. Gleason

COAL CITY—Joe P. Gleason, 62, of Coal City, formerly Elwood and Joliet, passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2022 at Joliet Hospice House.

Born April 6, 1960 in Joliet, he was a son of Edward L. and Theresa M. (Caron) Gleason. On Dec. 11, 1985, Joe married Deborah Moore in Joliet, and together they cherished 36 years. Joe lived many lives in one lifetime. He started working at the age of 8, making lunch deliveries to neighborhood business, paper delivery, bicycle repair and mowing lawns. By his teens Joe started working with a traveling carnival for the summer. This eventually lead to owning his own concession vehicle, allowing him to travel with carnivals and circuses. In time he joined the Hawk Gas Co. working up to management while continuing many side ventures. Joe loved music, comedy, stage performances and discovering new experiences. He always looked for a

good laugh, good food and getting a good bargain.

Survivors include his wife, Deborah, of Coal City; three brothers: Dave (Dawn), Steven and Wayne Gleason; one sister, Susan Gleason; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents, one brother, Brian Gleason and one niece, Lisa Marie.

Cremation rites have been accorded and no services will be held per Joe's wishes.

Preferred memorials in Joe's memory may be made to the American Diabetes Association.

Friends and family are encouraged to sign onto www.ReevesFuneral.com to sign the online guestbook, submit photos and share Joe's page via social media.

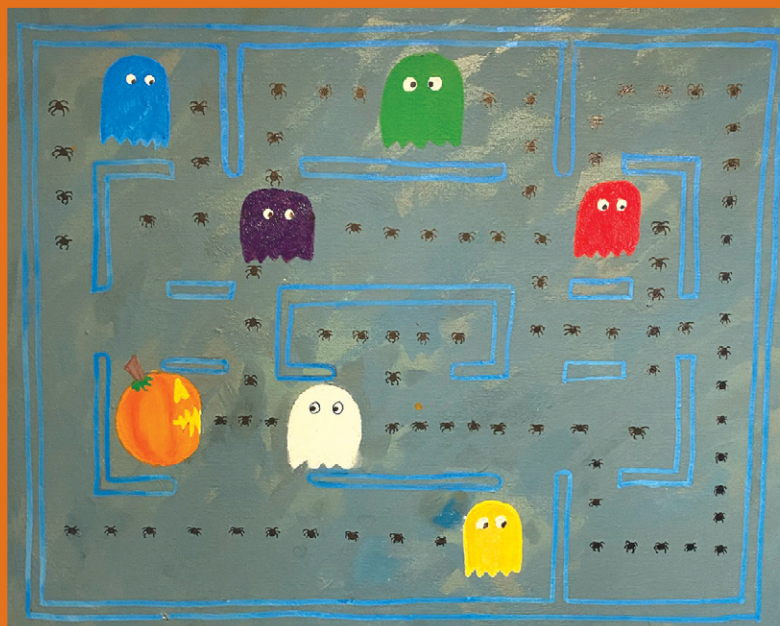
Cremation rites have been made under the direction and care of Reeve Funeral Home, Ltd., 75 N. Broadway Street, in Coal City.

Drawing by Morgan F.

Sponsored by Gymshoe Art

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

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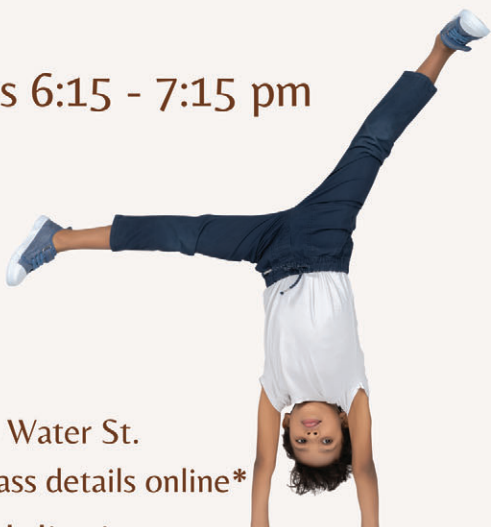
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Custer Park to have tree lighting

The 10th annual Lighting of the Trees will be on Friday, Nov. 18, at 5:45 p.m., at the Custer Park Town Hall. The Reed-Custer High School madrigal singers and instrumentals will be playing holiday music for the occasion. Santa will make an appearance at approximately 6:45 p.m. so have your cameras ready. Hot dogs, hot chocolate will be provided all for free.

Sweet and scary

Ranking the best, worst and favorite Halloween treats

STAFF REPORT

Chocolate and peanut butter appear to be the perfect combination and that's why when it comes to Halloween candy, the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup reigns. It's tradition that on Oct. 31, costume characters roam the streets in search of sweet treats, everyone seeking out their favorites as they empty their pumpkin buckets, bags and pillow cases to inventory the stash of candy they collected going door-to-door. For the majority of Americans, finding a peanut butter cup is a win while finding a peanut butter kiss—the ones wrapped in black and orange paper—is a loss. Each Halloween the rankings of the most popular and worst trick-or-treat candy are released, and CandyStore.com provides a comprehensive listing of both by analyzing published reports and comparing it to its own survey of 15,000 customers to determine what trick-or-treaters want and don't want to find at the end of the night. The 2022 list of America's favorites

once again starts with the peanut butter cup, followed by Skittles, M&M's, Starburst and Hot Tamales. This year's favorites have not changed in the last 365 days as Hershey Kisses, Snickers, Tootsie Pops and candy corn maintained their spots in the top 10. Candy corn also ranks among the top 10 worst candies—for the record it's #2 this year, dropping down a spot from last season. The list of the worst starts with circus peanuts up from #2 last year, followed by candy corn, peanut butter kisses, Necco Wafers, wax cola bottles, Smarties, Mary Janes, Tootsie Rolls, black licorice and Good & Plenty. CandyStore.com reports 172 million Americans are expected to celebrate Halloween this year and among them 96% will purchase candy spending about \$27.55 on average. Overall, Halloween spending this year is expected at about \$10.6 billion with \$3.1 billion going toward the purchase of candy, according to an estimate provided by the National Retail Federation. The annual CandyStore.com survey also breaks down the favorite candy choices by state. Illinoisians' top picks continue to be Sour Patch Kids followed by Kit Kat and

Starburst. The on-line candy retailer reporting some 152,928 pounds of Sour Patch Kids being bought and consumed this year. Neighbors in Iowa prefer M&M's, Wisconsin residents like Butterfingers and in Indiana Starburst is the favorite. Missouri residents continue to favor Milky Way and in the state of Kentucky the peanut butter cup is the treat of choice. The top ranking candy in each of the neighboring states has not changed in the past year. Out of all the states, Arizona residents consume the most of their favorite treat downing 779,828 pounds of Hershey Kisses. Among the more unique candies making the favorites list is salt water taffy coming in at #2 in both Nebraska and Washington. And, Hot Tamales are ranked the favorite in four states—Minnesota, Nevada, North Dakota and Virginia—and were a runner-up in eight others. As a point of note to parents, it's OK to stash some of those surgery treats—half of parents across the U.S. say they hide some of the candy their kid collect to enjoy at a later time.

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Illinois Democrats have millions more to spend

House Speaker Chris Welch reported raising a whopping \$14 million in the third quarter, with almost half of that, \$6 million, coming from Gov. JB Pritzker. That gives Welch a huge cash advantage for the home stretch over his Republican counter-part.

Welch's personal campaign committee reported raising \$7 million between July 1 and September 30 and reported having \$11.6 million cash on hand at the end.

Welch's caucus committee, Democrats for the Illinois House, also reported raising \$7 million in the same time period, with \$6 million of that coming from Gov. Pritzker. The committee ended the quarter with about \$5.8 million in the bank after spending \$6.4 million.

From the start of October through October 21st, Welch reported raising another \$1.5 million for his personal committee and about \$500,000 for his caucus committee, giving him a total of \$19.4 million to

spend in the final five weeks or so of the campaign if he cleans out the accounts. Welch earlier transferred close to \$10 million from his personal committee to his caucus committee. So, his available cash for the final push is likely up to \$16 million, but could be more if the need arises.

Senate President Don Harmon reported raising \$4.9 million during the third quarter for his personal committee and ended with \$13 million in the bank.

Harmon's caucus committee, ISDE raised about \$9 million, with \$7 million of that coming from Harmon's personal committee and another \$1 million from Gov. Pritzker. It ended the quarter with \$4 million after transferring out \$4.5 million to members and



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

spending \$1.9 million on polling, media production, etc. plus some overhead.

Harmon has reported raising another \$1.8 million Oct. 1-21 for his personal committee and \$6.1 million for his caucus committee, with \$1 million from Gov. Pritzker and \$5 million transferred from Harmon's personal committee.

So, he's sitting on a total of \$19.9 million, plus another million or so in his other accounts.

As expected, Republican fundraising could not even come close to keeping pace with the Democrats. House Republican Leader Jim Durkin's personal committee reported raising \$820,000 in the third quarter, just 12 percent of Welch's haul. Durkin ended the quarter with \$319K, after spending \$1.8 million, including sending \$300K to his caucus committee, House Republican Majority. He's since reported raising \$1.4 million through October 21.

House Republican Majority reported raising about \$1.4 million in the third quarter, plus Durkin's \$300K. It spent \$1.6 million and ended the quarter with \$220K. It has since reported raising \$1.6 million through Oct. 21, but \$850K of that came from Durkin's personal committee.

All told, that left Durkin with about \$2.5 million to spend in the final five weeks - about 16 percent of Welch's grand total.

Senate Republican Leader Dan McConchie reported raising \$2.7 million in the third quarter, with about \$2.2 million of that coming from Richard Iihlein. He reported spending \$3.1 million, with \$2.9 million going to his caucus committee, Senate Republican Victory Fund. He ended the third quarter with \$1.2 million cash on hand and has since reported raising \$870K.

The Senate Republican Victory Fund reported raising about \$400K in the quarter, plus the \$2.9 million trans-

ferred in by Leader McConchie. It spent \$3.3 million, and ended the quarter with \$296K. It has since reported raising \$1.3 million, with \$1 million of that coming from McConchie's personal campaign.

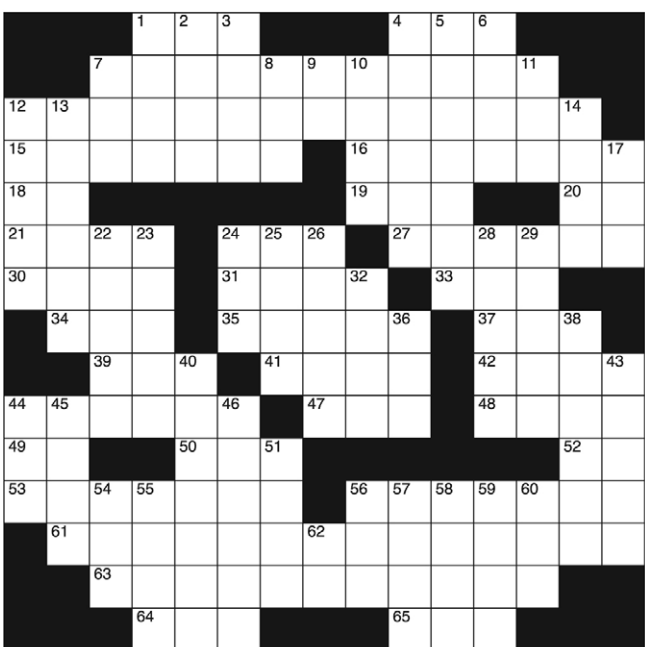
Total it up, and it appears that McConchie has about \$2.6 million to spend on the final five weeks - about 12 percent of what Senate President Harmon has.

Legislative caucuses, the governor and other candidates all qualify for a major postage discount by using their respective state parties to handle their mailing operations. So, looking at party spending gives us an idea of what's happening on the mailer front.

After shedding leadership that couldn't legally raise or spend state campaign funds, the Democratic Party of Illinois reported bringing in \$8.3 million in the third quarter and ended with \$5.8 million. It has since reported bringing in \$4.3 million, giving it \$10.1 million in available mailer spending during the final weeks.

The Illinois Republican Party raised \$2.2 million, spent \$1.5 million and ended with \$1.1 million cash on hand. The ILGOP has since reported bringing in \$3 million, giving it \$4.1 million for the home stretch - much less than half what DPI had.

The Democrats have zero excuses for failure.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Unhappy
4. Clairvoyance
7. One who works under you
12. What happens there stays there
15. Not ingested
16. Got the picture
18. One thousandth of a gram
19. Breakfast item
20. About
21. Tall deciduous trees
24. Safe keeping receipt
27. Cowardly
30. Pueblo people of New Mexico
31. Herring-like fish
33. A very large body of water
34. Angle (abbr.)
35. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
37. White clerical vestment
39. Cool!
41. Matchstick games
42. Thick piece of something
44. A state that precedes vomiting
47. Burned item residue
48. Jaguarundi
49. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)
50. The home of "60 Minutes"
52. Dorm official
53. Give cards incorrectly
56. One who is learning the job
61. Popular R.L. Stevenson novel
63. Attentively
64. CNN's founder
65. Criticize

CLUES DOWN

1. Fijian capital
2. Assist
3. Elected lord in Venice
4. The capacity of a physical system to do work
5. People of the wild
6. Parent-teacher groups
7. Midway between south and southeast
8. Moved quickly on foot
9. Handheld Nintendo console
10. "Top of the Stairs" playwright
11. Electronic data processing
12. "Dog Day Afternoon" director
13. Leaned
14. About aviation
17. Mountain is a popular type
22. Lake along Zambia and Congo border
23. Heroic tales
24. Soviet Socialist Republic
25. "Star Trek" villain
26. Hand gesture popular on social media
28. Renters have one
29. Tubular steel column
32. Database management system
36. Similar
38. Providing no shelter/sustenance
40. Death
43. What a sheep did
44. Midcentury Asian battleground
45. Horizontal passage into a mine
46. Mortified
51. Improper word
54. No seats available
55. Financial obligation
56. It can be hot or iced
57. Tough outer skin of a fruit
58. ___ Spumante (Italian wine)
59. Misfortunes
60. Negative
62. Camper

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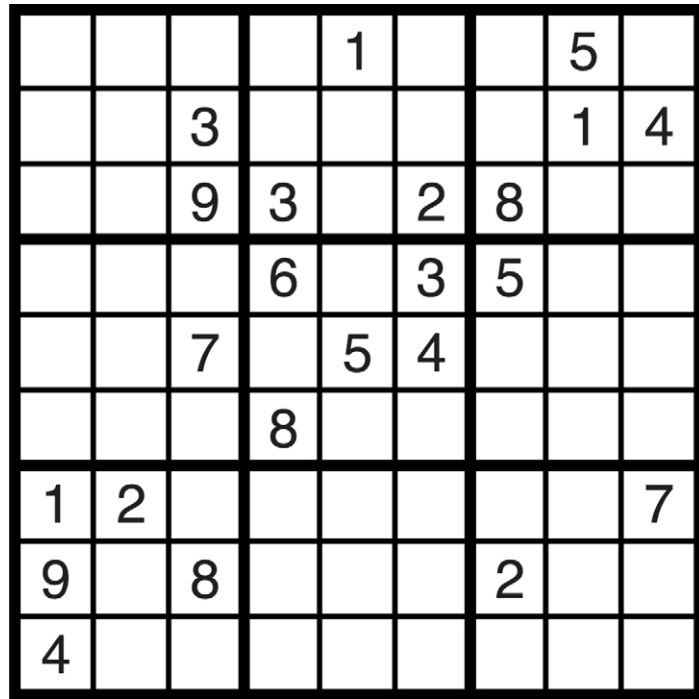
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COALER SPORTS

Lady Warriors give Channahon a good fight

The Channahon Indians rolled into town on Thursday, for the 8th grade Lady Warriors' final IVC match-up of the season.

The 3-9 Warriors played the Indians tough defensively, but came up short in the 26-15 loss.

Maisy Franklin was the game's leading scorer with 9 points. Franklin also tallied 4 rebounds and was 3 for 4 from the free-throw line. Kyla Stark, Rileigh Eddy, and Mia McKim rounded out the scoring for the Warriors with 2 points each. Rileigh Eddy also grabbed 3 rebounds and had 2 steals, while Mia McKim racked up 4 rebounds and 3 steals.

"This was our 9th loss of the season, but we didn't play poorly, and there are a lot of takeaways from tonight's game. Our defense was pretty solid tonight; we gave them trouble getting the shots they wanted despite being greatly out-sized," said coach Andy Leve.

"We did not match-up well with them at all, but we were helping on screens like we do every night and not giving them much. We also were much, much more patient on offense and took care of the ball really well. We only had 9 turnovers, and that is definitely a season low for us.

"Hopefully it finally clicked tonight that we can keep the ball on offense as long as we want and we don't have to force passes in where they don't belong, causing turnovers; we can keep working the defense until something opens up that we can take advantage of.

"Plus, if we have the ball, that means the other team doesn't, and that limits the number of chances they get to try and score. We went 3 for 7 from the line tonight, and that is lower than we want to be, but Kyla Stark had 2 free-throws that were halfway down before they rattled back up and out somehow.

"Both shots looked really

good, and I was sure they were dropping; I think everyone in the gym thought so too. Either way, our free-throws are getting better. I know our record doesn't show it, but we really are improving as a team.

"We just have a long way to go before it will show in the win column. The good news is that, even despite our record, and with the exception of the Minooka game, the girls still come out and compete and play hard every night.

"So they're aware that they are getting better, otherwise they'd just go out and lay down every game.

"As a coach, I like to see that because I'm sure it would be really easy to barely show-up every game when the losses keep piling up. There's still 5 or 6 wins out there for us, and we're ready to get them. We aim to turn a few of the close losses from last year into wins, and we're going to start with Sandwich on Monday," said Leve.

Coal City Soccer Club hosts Pumpkin Cup Tourney



Courtesy photos

COAL CITY SOCCER Club hosted a Pumpkin Cup Tournament at the Coal City Elementary School on Oct. 29 and 30. **SECOND PLACE WINNERS** for U6 were Redi Mix. Pictured (from left) are: Coach Devan Gagliardo, Ryan Vironda, Averie Nichols, Lydia Mikula, Merik Schott, Ember Dearth, Gianna Gagliardo, Ruger Hodgen, Oakley Parks and Coach Corey Mikula.



THIRD PLACE WINNERS for U8 were Coal City Harborside. Pictured (from left) are: Casen Schott, Riley Matsko, Greyson Trofimchuck, Veronica Pershey, Logan Ingalls, Corrine Gibson, James Susan, Jack Terrel, Mikey Thetard, Colton Brnich and Coaches Jason Schott, Matt Trofimchuck and Joe Terrel in back.

Done with classy Stiles



Photo by Amy Walker

FREE PIZZA! The Coal City volleyball team gave Abby Stiles a send off to state last week when the Coal City junior was challenged to serve the ball over the volleyball net and in play within 30 seconds to win free pizza for the student section. Stiles nailed it on her second try bringing cheers from Lady Coalers and fans. Stiles won her first round match 4-6, 6-2, 10-5 before losing 6-2, 6-1 in the second round.



FOURTH PLACE WINNERS for U8 were Coal City Coal Bin. Pictured in row one (from left) are Boden Boresi, Dallas Barrie, Brant Kratochvil and Lexi Christensen. Coach Christina Christensen is in row two with Andrew Vironda, Charlie Christensen, Coltin Allen, Myles Marketti, Presley Franciskovich and Coach Colleen Christensen.

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Library news

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

30th Annual Quilt Show -Check out the quilts displayed in the Library thru Nov. 15 and enter a drawing to win a quilt or gift basket.

Thursday, Oct. 27- Terrific Tots, 10-10:30 a.m.
Terrific Tots, 6-6:30 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 28-Fun Fridays, 3 p.m.
Dungeons and dragons game night, 7-9 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 31-Makerspace Cart Mondays - All Day
Terrific Tots, 10-10:30 a.m.
Preschool Storytime, 11-11:45 a.m.

Eager Readers Homeschool Edition, 1-2 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 1-Adult Book Club, 1-3 p.m.
Merry Grinch MAS Sign Class, 3-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 2-Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Paper & More, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Family Lapsit, 10-10:30 a.m.
Preschool Storytime-10-10:45 a.m.
Teen Anime, 5-5:30 p.m.

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Reilly's big night leads Coalers past Streator

BY JIM SHELDON
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

On a night where 49 passes were attempted, it was Coaler senior quarterback Braden Reilly who had a night to remember to close out the regular season Friday in Streator.

He completed 11-of-16 passes for 251 yards and five touchdown passes to five different receivers, four of which came in the first half as the

Coalers built a 35-8 half-time advantage and cruised to a 41-14 win.

"Offensively, we're getting better each week in our passing game to compliment our running game and Reilly had a very good night for us," said Coaler coach Francis Loughran.

"He spread the ball around to a lot of different receivers."

Streator got on the board first with a five-minute drive capped by a Matt Williamson six yard touchdown reception and an 8-0 lead. Williamson had 53 yards receiving on the drive, including a 37 yarder.

"They came out and got a couple of big plays on us. I thought we settled in pretty well after that."

Braiden Young had the answer with a 34 yard touchdown catch to make it 8-7.

Landin Benson added a 44 yard touchdown reception, making a great run after the catch to give the Coalers a 14-8 advantage and they never looked back.

Drake Dearth recorded a 15 yard touchdown catch at the 7:54 mark of the second quarter, 21-8.

"I think it was mixing up the play calls. We kept Streator guessing and took shots when we had them" said Reilly.

"The best part for me is having full trust in all my



Photo by Ann Gill

COALER QUARTERBACK Braden Reilly had a night to remember against conference foe Streator on Oct. 21. He completed 11 of 16 passes for 251 yards and five touchdown passes.

receivers. I can throw a jump ball up to any of them and I trust them to make the catch."

After Jim Feeney's second interception of the ballgame, Reilly found Silvestre Mayorga for a 42 yard touchdown catch, 28-8 CC.

Austin Davy added a one-yard td run late in the second quarter for a 35-8 half-time advantage.

Reilly capped his big night with a 31 yard touchdown pass to Chris Cholico late in the third quarter.

"It was good to get Cholico involved. He had a very good game for us. Young has been solid all year," said Loughran.

"Benson had a great catch and run out of the backfield and to be able to get Mayorga a touchdown was great. Dearth does the dirty work on the defensive line and as a fullback and it's good to get him in the endzone as well.

Streator recorded an 18 yard touchdown pass early in the fourth quarter, but quarterback Christian Benning

completed just 16-of-30 passes for 141 yards and three interceptions, the last coming from Crede Skubic who returned it 26 yards to seal the victory.

"Feeney was very impressive in the secondary and Skubic just has a nose for the football and grabbed a deflected pass for another interception."

"Streator was able to move the ball through the air, but I thought defensively it was a pretty good night."

The Coalers outgained Streator 387-298 with 136 rushing yards.

Benson had 61 yards on seven carries and Buddy Widlowski added eight rushes for 28 yards. T.J. Babcock had a 15 yard run, Chase Cora tallied seven carries for nine yards, Stephen Byers Jr added a six yard run and Layne Cuddy recorded two yards on three rushes.

Cholico had three receptions for 37 yards, Derek Carlson added 32 yards on two catches and Wyatt Wickiser recorded a 10 yard grab.

"Our line also worked their tails off and gave me time to read and let the plays develop," said Reilly.

"It was definitely a game where everyone did their part to get the win."

Defensively, Carlson, Davy, Michael Gonzalez and Tanner Phillips all made five solo tackles to lead the charge.

Cason Headley and Feeney both made four stops and Gavin Carpenter and Nolan Ness both tallied three tackles.

Jack Poyner, Skubic and Kaelan Natyshok all recorded two stops. Also in on a tackle were Young, Widlowski and Tyler Porth.

The Coalers will host Wood River (East Alton) in the opening round of the Class 4A playoffs Saturday at 2 p.m.

Coalers excited to host playoff opener

BY JIM SHELDON
SPORTS CONTRIBUTOR

After securing their all-important sixth win to close out the season, the eighth-seeded Coal City football team's reward is a home playoff game against ninth-seeded Wood River (East Alton) to open the Class 4A playoffs Saturday at 2 p.m.

The Oilers faced five playoff teams during the season and went 2-3 in those games. They also went just 2-2 on the road and will be making the three-and-a-half hour trek to Coal City.

"We've already exchanged films and they are a run-heavy team. They are going to look to establish the run early and often," said coach Francis Loughran.

"We've got to be ready for that. The offensive line gets off the ball really well."

East Alton dropped their last two contests after a 6-1 start. Six of their nine games were decided by nine points or less so they are no stranger to close games.

The Oilers are averaging 28.1 points per game and giving up 21.3 as opposed to the Coalers who are averaging 30.2 and giving up 18.7.

"Our kids are excited to be playing in front of the community. We're going to look to do what we do well which is run the ball and play good defense."

"The best way to use our homefield advantage is to do well and put pressure on them."

The winner of this game will likely face top-seeded Cartersville (9-0) which is a good four-and-a-half hours south of Coal City. The Coalers were placed in the South bracket which means lots of travel if you win.

"It was trending that way the lady few weeks, but it's kind of out of your control," said Loughran.

"You're excited to be in the playoffs and you really don't worry about where you're playing."

Springfield (Sacred-Heart Griffin) and Macomb are the second and third seeds respectively and they are both 9-0.

Rochester (4th, 8-1) and Breese (Central) (5th, 7-2) are likely quarterfinal foes.

The Coalers three losses this year were to 7-2 Morris, 8-1 Wilmington and 9-0 Reed-Custer, so they are certainly battle tested which will help them in the playoffs.

They won five of their last six outscoring their opponents 225-100 over that stretch.

"I think overall we're doing a lot of things well. I'm really impressed with how much they've improved throughout the season."

"It's been really exciting to watch these guys develop and mature."

Wood Alton has never won a playoff game in their history, sitting at 0-9.

CC is hoping to keep that record intact. With the strides they've made in the passing game along with a tough running attack, they are going to be a difficult offense to contain.

"It's going to be a huge advantage for us. It will help us keep defenses on their toes," said quarterback Braden Reilly.

"We feel way more comfortable mixing it up now and it's great to see everything clicking at the right time."

Tickets for playoff game can be bought in advance

Coaler football fans who want to save \$1 and avoid any lines at the gate might consider buying tickets for Saturday's first round Class 4A playoff game online.

Per the IHSA, fans who use **G o F a n** : <https://gofan.co/app/events/750350?schoolId=IL15444>, will pay \$5 per ticket while those waiting at the gate will pay \$6.

Gates will open at 1 p.m. with the kickoff between Coal City (#8 seed, 6-3 record) and East Alton Wood River (#9 seed, 6-3) at 2 p.m.

No passes will be allowed and it's general admission with no reserved seating.



Photo by Amy Walker

SENIOR NIGHT FUN - Coal City breezed past Lisle in two games last week while holding Senior Night. Hitting the ball for the Lady Coalers is Kenzie Henline (26).

Lady Coalers capture ICE championship

The Varsity Lady Coalers beat Lisle in two quick sets, 25-3, 25-16, to claim the Illinois Central Eight conference championship with a 13-1 league record and 23-7 overall.

"The Lady Coalers have worked so hard to earn 1st in conference," praised coach Pam McMurtrey. "Now it's on to regionals and hopefully another championship run."

Coal City, the top seed in the Seneca Regional, held its first regional match last night against either Peotone. If they win, they will return to Seneca on Thursday at 6 p.m. for the regional title.

Against Lisle, Addyson Waliczek had 12 setting assists, 3 digs, 1 kill and 1 service ace. Kayla Henline had 5 setting assists, 3 digs, and 2 service aces.

Emma Rodriguez had 8 kills. Bella Veraveic had 3 kills and 1 dig. Paige Walker had 1 kill and 2 digs.

Kenzie Henline had 1 kill, 1 block, 2 service aces, and 1 dig. Jady Shaw had 5 digs. Addison Gagliardo had 3 digs. Aubrey Mellen had 2 digs.

The JV Lady Coalers beat Lisle 25-21 and 25-23 bringing their record to 14-10-1 and 9-5 in conference. JV Coalers are third in conference.

The freshmen Lady Coalers beat Lisle 25-3 and 25-20 bringing their record to 24-3 and 14-0 in conference to also claim the ICE title.



Photo by Amy Walker

RIGHT SIDE HITTER Teagan Fox (8) scores a kill for the Lady Coalers during last week's home match.



MAKING THE CUT into a gap while carrying the ball during a recent game for the junior varsity Coalers is Rey Gonzalez.

JV Coalers finish on a high note

The frosh-soph Coal City football rolled Streator at full steam Friday night during a 50-8 victory to end the season. The win improves their final record to 7-2 overall.

"It was a huge night for all three phases of the game," coach Marty Egan commented. "Defensively, we got our first defensive touchdown on a pick 6 and had several big stops to give our offense great field position."

"On Special Teams we pinned them deep in their own end on nearly every kickoff and had a kickoff return touchdown (82 yards by Rey Gonzalez) in the first half," Egan noted.

"Offensively we were able to spread the ball around and capitalize on the short field all night. It was a great team win with everyone getting involved and stepping up when their number was called."

Touchdown runs were made by quarterback Zander Meents (40 yards in six carries), Gonzalez (one for 4

yards), Tyler Hogan (two carries, 17 yards) and Alec Waliczek (four yards in two tries).

Will Endrst contributed 24 yards in five touches while Dylan Young had one carry for four yards and Nate Brodnick one for two yards.

Meents finished with 98 yards passing and a touchdown of 7-for-11 attempts. Porterfield made that TD catch to finish with 16 yards in two grabs. Hogan had a 42-yard pass reception while Gonzalez finished with three catches for 31 yards.

Mason Garner was 4-for-5 in PAT kicks while Lucas Pfitzenmaier came through with a fumble recovery.

The defense was led by Hayden Porterfield with six tackles and Logan Vance and Hogan with five stops each. In on four tackles apiece were Ayden Housman, Meents, Endrst and Gonzalez. Contributing three tackles each were Young and Owen Kent.