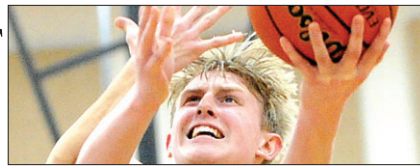


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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2020

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER

## It's tax levy time

### Unit 1 proposes \$24.9 million levy

BY ANN GILL  
EDITOR

Each year in the month of November the Unit 1 Board of Education places its tentative tax levy on file, the amount of its request is intended to cover expenses in the coming year.

For tax year 2020, the board was presented with two options both generating over \$24 million to cover the education and operational needs of the district during the 2021-2022 school year. Option one would result in a tax receipts of \$24.7 million while the second options would add a few cents to the rate and bring in an additional \$258,000.

Based on the situation the board finds itself in with the intended closure of Exelon Nuclear's Dresden Generating Station, it was suggested by administration and the district's finance committees to consider various options and one being to charge a higher tax rate to what the board defines as all other EAV [equalized assessed value].

Unit 1 denotes its property tax revenue in two ways—Dresden EAV and all other EAV.

Based on figures provided by the county assessor, the school district's total estimated EAV for tax year 2020 is \$859 million—\$490 million of that is assigned to the nuclear plant.

All other EAV is valued at \$369 million, a figure representing a 16% growth. A number significantly higher than the district's models of a 2% growth in all other EAV.

Jason Smith, the district's chief school business official, reports the district is working to get clarifications on that number prior to final levy adoption in December, but in the meantime is moving forward with a levy based on the provided information.

As part of its negotiated tax agreement with the power generator, trigger rates are included as a mechanism to establish the plant's EAV and payment schedule.

Since the Dresden EAV is already pulled out, the board has the opportunity to charge a higher tax rate to the remaining tax base.

As Smith explained, "what levy number two's option does for us is leave the trigger rate

SEE UNIT 1, PAGE 2

### Coal City projects 8.8% levy increase

BY ANN GILL  
EDITOR

It's tax levy time, the time when public bodies must determine the amount of property tax dollars necessary to operate for the coming fiscal year.

Preliminary projections indicate the village of Coal City is looking at an 8.8% jump due to increases within operational expenses and the last step increase related to the town's stormwater project refinancing and tornado debt.

However there is a bit of a good news. As Village Administrator Matt Fritz shared with town trustees last week, a projected increase in the taxable assessed valuation of the village will result in a slight reduction in the tax rate from 2.05026 last year to 2.02789 for tax year 2020.

The preliminary levy that Fritz has drafted reflects a 10% increase in the town's estimated equalized assessed value [EAV] from \$123.3 million to \$135.6 million, although the county's assessment data reflects a 16% increase.

"The projected increase in EAV is difficult to predict because although the Assessor's

Estimated Report on EAV throughout Grundy County has been provided, its increase will likely decline much as occurred in 2019," Fritz said.

The 10% increase in property values that was utilized in drafting the levy would result in an additional \$30,852 for general fund operations.

A review of the tentative levy indicates the corporate, police protection and park line items are increasing 10% respectively due to the projected increase in the village's EAV.

The amount being levied to cover the \$792,250 tornado and stormwater bond and interest payment reflect a 12.63% increase.

This year's payment, Fritz said, "marks the last step in total debt being collected annually. Following this year's increase, the annual debt payment will remain similar until this debt issuance is repaid with its last levy in 2029."

In a further review of the tentative levy, Fritz pointed out to trustees the liability insurance and workers compensation lime items reflect proposed values.

SEE COAL CITY, PAGE 2

## A schedule for the school day

BY ANN GILL  
EDITOR

At its past two meetings the Unit 1 Board of Education has talked about modifications to its Return to School Plan, particularly if additional time should be added to the school day.

The plan was put in place as a guideline for educating students in the midst of a pandemic, and over the past few weeks the administrators and committee members who developed the plan have been analyzing the document with regard to what is working well and what can be improved upon.

Unit 1 Superintendent Dr. Kent Bugg said there have been some discussions at the board level about the potential of having students in class a little longer during the school day and at what time does the district move forward on that.

Initial discussions started before the second wave of COVID-19 infections that have impacted the school in recent days.

The good news, as Bugg noted, there is no evidence of virus transmission involving district students and staff occurring within the school buildings.

"I think our mitigation strategies at school are working," said Bugg.

School day mitigations include the use of face coverings, social distancing when possible, health checks and enhanced cleaning and sanitation.

Even with all the precautions, there's a problem with the plan of spending more in-person time on studies.

The problem, Bugg said, comes down to staffing. In a single day he had 34 staff members out for legitimate reasons—COVID symptoms or kids in the house with symptoms. Per the plan, anyone testing positive for the virus, experiencing symptoms of COVID, been exposed to or living in the same household as someone exhibiting symptoms is excluded for a minimum of 10 to 14 days.

Due to the exclusion rules the district has found itself short on staff.

"The schedule we are on right now allows our teachers some release time in the morning and we're able to use them to internally substitute. If we were to change that and loose that time I can't staff the buildings anymore, I don't have the people

"THERE ARE CHANGES TO THE PLAN THAT WE NEED TO MAKE, BUT THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY IS NOT GOING TO BE ONE OF THEM RIGHT NOW."

DR. KENT BUGG  
UNIT 1 SUPERINTENDENT

SEE SCHEDULE, PAGE 2

## It's a musical movie

STAFF REPORT

Creativity is not lost on the Coal City Theatre Department.

At a time when theaters remain dark, producers and directors are forced to come up with new ways to share the performing arts with audiences and that's happening with socially distanced outdoor shows, virtual performances and pre-recorded content.

To ensure the show goes on for theatre students at Coal City Middle School, producer/director Jack Micetich came up with a plan that takes the annual fall production from stage to screen.

In the past few weeks, students have been learning their lines, recording vocals and filming scenes for the upcoming productions of "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown."

The Broadway musical is based on the popular Peanuts comic strip created by Charles M. Schulz and will feature vignettes and production numbers featuring some of the comics favorite characters including Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus and the lovable Snoopy.

The 22 students selected to comprise the Peanuts gang were divided into two casts—yellow and blue. Both groups spent an entire day filming scenes for the shows that will be presented this weekend—Nov. 20-22.

Over 1,200 video clips and audio recordings were captured of the two casts and have been edited into a musical movie.



COAL CITY MIDDLE School eighth grader Kylee Kennell takes on the role of Lucy in the school's upcoming production of "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown." Kennell is a member of the show's blue cast, as two groups were selected to perform in the production that was filmed and will be available for in-home viewing Nov. 20-22.

Unlike past productions that have found audience members filling the seats inside the Coal City Performing Arts Center, show

patrons can watch the production from the comforts of their home by purchasing an access code at [bit.ly/CCTDTickets](http://bit.ly/CCTDTickets) for the show or shows of their choice set to air at 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 20 and Saturday, Nov. 21 and 2 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 22.

The student performers had just a handful of rehearsals prior to filming.

"They all did an wonderful job, I am incredibly proud of what these students were able to accomplish in such a short time, and under unique circumstances," Micetich said.

The yellow cast is let by eighth grader Mason Natyshok as Charlie Brown and seventh grader Dane Noffsinger has the role in the blue cast.

Rounding out the yellow cast is Bella Byers, Sally; Katie Huston, Lucy; Olivia Sage, Peppermint Patty; Logan Hausman, Linus; Bobby Stoudt, Snoopy; Dakota Clubb, Woodstock; Kyah Hawkins, Marcie, and Bella Bartholomew and Bridget Feeney comprising the ensemble.

Fellow blue cast members are Melody Kinder, Sally; Kylee Kennell, Lucy; Brody D'Orazio, Snoopy; Eliana Chernesky, Peppermint Patty; Theo Fritz, Linus; Caroline Childers, Woodstock; D'Arcy Ness, Marcie, and ensemble members Stana Milinkovic and Riley Walker.

Jordan Olson takes his place at the piano as Schroeder in both casts, and Alex Carlson is the productions one and only Pig Pen.

## Getting tested

STAFF REPORT

As a second wave of COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations surge people of all ages are seeking testing, and its resulting in a flood of phone calls and misuse of hospital emergency rooms.

More than 9 million COVID-19 tests had been administered in the state of Illinois as of Monday, over 175,440 of those occurred in the previous 48 hours, and as the virus resurges more and more Illinoisans are searching for testing sites.

As reported by the Grundy

SEE TESTING, PAGE 2

## Pandemic plea...stay home

### Grundy positivity rate tops 25%

STAFF REPORT

As a second wave of COVID-19 outbreaks continue to sweep across the state, Illinoisans are being urged to stay home as much as possible for the remaining days of November.

The pandemic plea is not a renewal of the stay at home order from the spring, rather a call to limit outings in hopes of once again slowing the viruses spread.

At the close of last week, Grundy County's seven day rolling test positivity rate topped 25% and the number of new cases was just short of 500 according to the Illinois

Department of Public Health [IDPH].

On Monday, Nov. 9, the state health agency reported a total of 1,557 cases had been identified in the county and on Nov. 16 the case count was up to 2,053. Since the start of the pandemic the state has recorded 19,572 tests conducted on Grundy residents and 12.3% or 2,158 of those tests were conducted within the past week.

As of Friday, Nov. 13, the Grundy County Health Department reported it was following 434 people who had recently tested positive and were in isolation, and each of their close contacts.

The county remains at an orange warning level as it saw increases in four of eight indicators the state uses in determining if a county is experiencing stable

COVID-19 activity or if there are warning signs of increased risk.

For the week of Nov. 1-7, Grundy County was at warning level for the number of new cases beer 100,000, test positivity, tests performed and emergency room visits for COVID like illness.

On a regional level, the most recent positivity rate for the North Central Region was at 16.7% a figure that has increased since the governor implemented mitigation strategies on the 20 county region two weeks ago.

Each of the state's 11 regions have mitigation's in place that are aimed at slowing the spread, however the numbers are not showing improvement.

Gov. JB Pritzker has given warning that if mitigation measures are not followed and the metrics

don't begin to show improvement more drastic actions will be needed.

"With many community leaders choosing not to listen to the doctors, we are left with not many tools left in our toolbox to fight this. The numbers don't lie. If things don't take a turn in the coming days, we will quickly reach the point when some form of a mandatory stay-at-home order is all that will be left," Pritzker said last week.

At particular concern is the number hospitalizations. As of Sunday, 5,581 hospital beds were in

SEE COVID, PAGE 2



# Unit 1

for the Dresden piece which will generate \$16 million in revenue, but then we would be able to add on pennies above that trigger rate that we would apply to all other portions of the EAV.”

“In this model I have identified seven additional cents that we would apply to the all other EAV part of the tax rate which would generate about \$258,000 in additional revenue. Obviously this makes the percentage higher when compared to this year’s extension,” Smith continued.

In 2019, the school district levied \$22.8 million for corporate and special purposes. Obviously this makes the percentage higher when compared to this year’s extension,” Smith continued.

The levy board members placed on file this month represents a 9.18% increase for corporate and special purposes. The addition of \$3.49 million to cover the district’s building debt brings the total proposed extension to \$28.4 million.

“The reason we present this, is again from a strategy perspective. It gives the board some flexibility with respect to increasing revenue, it is however a different strategy than the board has used in the past,” Smith said.

The concept is to begin preparing for the \$16 million revenue loss that would come with the plant’s closure.

As the superintendent has indicated efforts are being made at multiple levels to keep the plant open, and work is also being done to safeguard

the community in the event it does close next November.

The tax proposal on the table is a strategic move to lessen the overall impact on taxpayers.

As Superintendent Dr. Kent Bugg has said, the district can not tax its way out of a \$16 million loss, but district taxpayers will take on more financial responsibility in the years to come.

Board vice president Shawn Hamilton, a member of the board’s Finance Committee, said the additional 7 cents on the tax rate will allow the district to start moving the needle incrementally.

The difference to the average homeowner, he said, is about \$40.

“The sooner we can start moving that needle with what we know is coming for Dresden the better,” Hamilton said.

As district officials note, the levy is tentative and subject to change prior to final adoption in December.

Based on the increases outlined in the proposed levy, the district is required by law to hold a Truth in Taxation Hearing. Even in years when such a hearing is not required the board of education holds one as a matter of fiscal transparency.

The hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 2 in the district administration center. The board is slated to approve the final levy at a meeting immediately following the hearing.

By statute, the levy must be filed with the county clerk’s in Grundy and Will counties by the last Tuesday in December.

# Schedule

to staff the buildings,” the superintendent told the Board of Education.

“We are struggling in terms of staffing the buildings right now,” he said, noting building level administrators have also been taking shifts in the classroom when needed.

While it is not to a point where the district cannot staff buildings, if the schedule was to change and the release time was gone, Bugg isn’t sure he would have the staff to cover.

“I think for right now we’re going to have to stay in a holding pattern in terms of schedule. Even if the [Teaching and Learning] committee came back and said we’d like to add that extra hour, I can’t do it right now and staff the buildings, there’s just no way. I hope it changes down the road and we get through this second wave of COVID cases, but until then the schedule we are on now is going to have to stay the way it is,” Bugg said.

Currently students spend about four hours each morning in the classroom with an additional hour of remote learning taking place from home.

The decision to keep the school day schedule does not mean the district is going to stop reviewing the plan.

“There are changes to the plan that we need to make, but the length of the school day is not going to be one of them right now,” said Bugg.

# COVID

use by COVID-19 patients and according to Pritzker just 1,100 intensive care beds are open across the state. On a regional level about 65% of ICU beds are in use.

“If we wait to take action until our hospitals are full, it will be too late, and countless patients-COVID patients as well as those with all the other ailments and injuries that bring people to the hospital will die unnecessary deaths, because there aren’t enough beds or people to staff them,” Pritzker said in his daily press briefing on Monday.

Ventilator usage is also up with 514 in use as of late Sunday. Utilization on a regional level was most recently reported at 22%.

State officials also indicated concerns about proper staffing as health care workers are being forced into quarantine because of virus exposure in the community.

Public health officials continue to urge citizens to wear face coverings and maintain appropriate social distance when in public, and to practice good hygiene including frequent hand washing and sanitizing.

These steps along with others like gath-

ering limits and limiting non-essential travel were outlined by the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus as ways to help flatten the COVID curve.

“While each of our 275 member municipalities is unique, they all agree that it is critically important that we come together in the days and weeks ahead to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Endorsing these strategies is one of the most coherent methods for dealing with the current increase in positivity results, hospitalizations, and loss of life,” the Mayors Caucus stated in a Nov. 16 release.

As the holiday season approaches, state officials continue the call for individuals and families to rethink Thanksgiving plans that include travel and mixing household.

IDPH director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said people should consider virtual get-togethers and food drops on family member’s doorsteps.

Ezike indicated the next few months could be difficult ones for Illinoisians, “just how bumpy it really gets depends on each of us. Let’s hang in there together and be all in for Illinois,” she said.

Capitol News Illinois contributed to this report.

Located at 1106 Interstate Dr., the Bloomington site is open daily while supplies last from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The state agency also sponsors mobile testing sites and testing will be conducted this week in Joliet and Minooka. Again, testing is available to anyone regardless of symptoms while supplies last.

IDPH staff will be at Minooka Community High School Central Campus, 301 S. Wabena Ave., Minooka from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 21. Testing will also be conducted from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 18-Sunday, Nov. 21 at the Joliet Park District, 3000 W. Jefferson St.

Additional testing locations can be found by visiting the IDPH website at [dph.illinois.gov/testing](http://dph.illinois.gov/testing).

Additionally, CVS Minute Clinics report providing lab and rapid testing at select locations to eligible individuals. Testing must be scheduled at [cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing](http://cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing). When signing up for testing individuals will be asked a few questions to determine if they qualify for testing. Qualified individuals will select a test site and available time and will be asked to complete a registration form. Insurance card, proof of identity and test confirmation is required. Upon arrival at the testing site, individuals should follow the posted instructions. Rapid test results are delivered the same day and lab results are typically provided within 3-4 days.

# Coal City

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Additionally he shared the actuary for the police pension fund has included new underwriting assumptions and the fund balance at the time of consideration did not meet expectations and resulted in a 7.8% increase in the levy to generate the required pension fund payment of \$632,000.

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[IMRF] and Social Security funds are to receive increases projected for the payroll adopted within the town’s budget, while the audit and street lighting levy lines remain unchanged.

The street and bridge levy has been set at its maximum rate of .06000 reflecting an 11.1% increase. Based on the new rate the fund is expected to take in \$81,387.

The total tax extension, as currently outlined, is \$2,750,728.

As Fritz further noted, despite increases in all but three line items, the assessed valuation increase will result in a low rate and thus a savings to municipal taxpayers.

Per his estimates the owner of a \$150,000 home could expect to see a \$10 savings, or \$6.50 per \$100,000 of market value. Absent the increase in the debt payment Coal City property owners would have witnessed a savings of close to \$57 per \$100,000 of market value.

The tentative levy will be the subject of village Finance Committee meeting that has been called for Thursday afternoon.

Trustees are slated to adopt the town’s levy at its first meeting in December in order to get the document filed with the county clerk prior to the Dec. 28 deadline.

# Testing

County Health Department, testing is available through local hospital systems, as well as sites staffed by the Illinois Department of Public Health [IDPH]. A number of medical clinics and even some pharmacies offer COVID testing.

Protocols at each location are subject to change based on available resources, and the availability of results differ from site to site.

Medical professionals are seeing many asymptomatic people turning to their local hospital emergency department with the hope of seeking quick testing, and they want to remind people emergency rooms should be reserved for medical emergencies.

A simple internet search of COVID-19 testing sites yields multiple returns, but before heading out to get tested individuals should understand the protocols at the various locations—typically outlined on-line.

Locally testing locations include:

- Morris Hospital outpatient drive-thru testing is available by appointment only Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 150 W. High St., Morris [corner of Lisbon and High streets]. A physician order is required and a scheduling representative from the hospital will call once the order is received from the physician. Results are typically available in 3-6 days.
- Morris Hospital Diamond-Coal City Campus Convenient Care, 1450 E. Division St., Diamond. Walk-in testing is available Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Requires an exam with a convenient care provider who determines if testing is appropriate based on patient’s medical history and symptoms. An exam with a provider does not guarantee a COVID test will be done. Results for those tested are typically available in 3-6 days.
- Riverside Medical Center Coal City Campus, 5775 E. Route 113, Coal City, offers testing Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Testing must be scheduled, walk-ins are not accepted, and a physician’s order is required. COVID testing must be scheduled on-line at [riversidehealthcare.org/covid19-testing](http://riversidehealthcare.org/covid19-testing). There are two ways to schedule testing including through the MyChart account for current patients and for those who are not a MyChart user, open scheduling is available. The scheduling links are available on the website. Those arriving for testing will e-check in and remain in their vehicle until called in for their scheduled test. A mask and identification is required.

• Will County — The Will County Health Department hosts free walk-in clinics throughout the week at two county locations.

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Walk-in testing is also available at Governor’s State University Grants Office, 1 University Parkway, University Park, each Wednesday except holidays.

The Will County Community Health Center is providing COVID-19 testing to anyone who wants to be tested. The health center will not collect any money at the location. If you have insurance, a small administrative fee may be billed directly to your insurance by the Illinois Department of Public Health to cover the cost of processing the sample at the laboratory.

Will County also hosts testing by appointment in Romeoville and Joliet.

Site information can be found online at [www.will-countyhealth.org](http://www.will-countyhealth.org).

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# Coal City

“The annual renewal meeting to learn of the village’s expiring rates will occur on Dec. 1. The last meeting predicted a very hard market for public entities due to repeated storm damage experience as well as the liability related to processing public safety departments while repeated civil unrest has occurred,” Fritz said.

The line item for liability insurance reflects a 12%

increase and workers compensation is up 5% in the proposed levy.

Additionally he shared the actuary for the police pension fund has included new underwriting assumptions and the fund balance at the time of consideration did not meet expectations and resulted in a 7.8% increase in the levy to generate the required pension fund payment of \$632,000.

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Cheddar  
Garden  
Vegetable

**Saturday, Nov. 21 • 9 a.m. to Noon**  
Drive-Thru Pick up at Coal City High School

No pre-orders

**DRIVE THRU**  
Socially Distant Fundraiser

Cash only

Masks required in the Drive-Thru lane. Brought to you by the Coal City PSO.  
Thank you for supporting our students.

increase and workers compensation is up 5% in the proposed levy.

Additionally he shared the actuary for the police pension fund has included new underwriting assumptions and the fund balance at the time of consideration did not meet expectations and resulted in a 7.8% increase in the levy to generate the required pension fund payment of \$632,000.

According to the administrator’s report the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund

County Health Department, testing is available through local hospital systems, as well as sites staffed by the Illinois Department of Public Health [IDPH]. A number of medical clinics and even some pharmacies offer COVID testing.

Protocols at each location are subject to change based on available resources, and the availability of results differ from site to site.

Medical professionals are seeing many asymptomatic people turning to their local hospital emergency department with the hope of seeking quick testing, and they want to remind people emergency rooms should be reserved for medical emergencies.

A simple internet search of COVID-19 testing sites yields multiple returns, but before heading out to get tested individuals should understand the protocols at the various locations—typically outlined on-line.

Locally testing locations include:

- Morris Hospital outpatient drive-thru testing is available by appointment only Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 150 W. High St., Morris [corner of Lisbon and High streets]. A physician order is required and a scheduling representative from the hospital will call once the order is received from the physician. Results are typically available in 3-6 days.
- Morris Hospital Diamond-Coal City Campus Convenient Care, 1450 E. Division St., Diamond. Walk-in testing is available Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Requires an exam with a convenient care provider who determines if testing is appropriate based on patient’s medical history and symptoms. An exam with a provider does not guarantee a COVID test will be done. Results for those tested are typically available in 3-6 days.
- Riverside Medical Center Coal City Campus, 5775 E. Route 113, Coal City, offers testing Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Testing must be scheduled, walk-ins are not accepted, and a physician’s order is required. COVID testing must be scheduled on-line at [riversidehealthcare.org/covid19-testing](http://riversidehealthcare.org/covid19-testing). There are two ways to schedule testing including through the MyChart account for current patients and for those who are not a MyChart user, open scheduling is available. The scheduling links are available on the website. Those arriving for testing will e-check in and remain in their vehicle until called in for their scheduled test. A mask and identification is required.

• Will County — The Will County Health Department hosts free walk-in clinics throughout the week at two county locations.

All locations will test from 9 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Lewis University will have testing each Tuesday and Thursday except holidays at 1 University Dr., Romeoville (at the Fieldhouse in the back). This location is walk-in, first-come-first-served.

Walk-in testing is also available at Governor’s State University Grants Office, 1 University Parkway, University Park, each Wednesday except holidays.

The Will County Community Health Center is providing COVID-19 testing to anyone who wants to be tested. The health center will not collect any money at the location. If you have insurance, a small administrative fee may be billed directly to your insurance by the Illinois Department of Public Health to cover the cost of processing the sample at the laboratory.

Will County also hosts testing by appointment in Romeoville and Joliet.

Site information can be found online at [www.will-countyhealth.org](http://www.will-countyhealth.org).

• IDPH has testing sites open every day for everyone regardless of symptoms, and sites closest to our reading area including Aurora and Bloomington.

The Aurora location, 2450 N. Farnsworth Ave., is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. while daily supplies last.

Located at 1106 Interstate Dr., the Bloomington site is open daily while supplies last from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The state agency also sponsors mobile testing sites and testing will be conducted this week in Joliet and Minooka. Again, testing is available to anyone regardless of symptoms while supplies last.

IDPH staff will be at Minooka Community High School Central Campus, 301 S. Wabena Ave., Minooka from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 21. Testing will also be conducted from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 18-Sunday, Nov. 21 at the Joliet Park District, 3000 W. Jefferson St.

Additional testing locations can be found by visiting the IDPH website at [dph.illinois.gov/testing](http://dph.illinois.gov/testing).

Additionally, CVS Minute Clinics report providing lab and rapid testing at select locations to eligible individuals. Testing must be scheduled at [cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing](http://cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing). When signing up for testing individuals will be asked a few questions to determine if they qualify for testing. Qualified individuals will select a test site and available time and will be asked to complete a registration form. Insurance card, proof of identity and test confirmation is required. Upon arrival at the testing site, individuals should follow the posted instructions. Rapid test results are delivered the same day and lab results are typically provided within 3-4 days.

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX LEVY FOR COAL CITY COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

The Coal City Board of Education will approve a proposed property tax levy for Coal City Community Unit School District Number 1 for 2020 on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Coal City Administration Building Board Room located at 550 South Carbon Hill Road, in Coal City, Illinois. This notice is to inform the public of the opportunity for comment on this matter.

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district may contact Jason Smith, CSBO, 550 S Carbon Hill Road, Coal City, Illinois, 815-634-2287.

The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended for 2019 were **\$22,871,085**.

The proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2020 are **\$24,970,818**. This represents a **9.18%** increase over the previous year.

The property taxes extended for debt service and public building commission leases for 2019 were **\$3,495,767**.

The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2020 are **\$3,496,131**. This represents a **0.010%** increase over the previous year.

The total property taxes extended or abated for 2019 were **\$26,366,852**.

The estimated total property taxes to be levied for 2020 are **\$28,466,949**. This represents a **7.96%** increase over the previous year.

County Health Department, testing is available through local hospital systems, as well as sites staffed by the Illinois Department of Public Health [IDPH]. A number of medical clinics and even some pharmacies offer COVID testing.

Protocols at each location are subject to change based on available resources, and the availability of results differ from site to site.

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- Riverside Medical Center Coal City Campus, 5775 E. Route 113, Coal City, offers testing Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Testing must be scheduled, walk-ins are not accepted, and a physician’s order is required. COVID testing must be scheduled on-line at [riversidehealthcare.org/covid19-testing](http://riversidehealthcare.org/covid19-testing). There are two ways to schedule testing including through the MyChart account for current patients and for those who are not a MyChart user, open scheduling is available. The scheduling links are available on the website. Those arriving for testing will e-check in and remain in their vehicle until called in for their scheduled test. A mask and identification is required.


## FELIX TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS FELIX TOWNSHIP, IL

*Dear Residents of Felix Township, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time serving as your Felix Township Clerk. However, I have decided to retire and not run for re-election. My time in this position will always be held near and dear to my heart because being able to serve such great people has been a huge blessing for me.*

*I have always enjoyed serving my fellow residents, and I look forward to helping the next clerk of Felix Township in any way that I can.*

*Again, thank you for this experience and have a wonderful Holiday Season.*

**Yours Truly, Patricia Christensen**



Award Winner

ILLINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION

Serving newspapers since 1865

The Coal City Courier  
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• 271 South Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416  
(815) 634-0315; Fax: (815) 476-7002

Deadlines for the Prairie Shopper  
Display Advertising: Thursday, 2 p.m.  
Classified & Public Notices: Thursday 5 p.m.

Deadline for The Free Press Advocate, Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courier  
News and Advertising: Monday, noon

E-mail: News & News Photos: [news@fpnusa.com](mailto:news@fpnusa.com)  
Ads & Artwork: [ads@fpnusa.com](mailto:ads@fpnusa.com)

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher  
Ann Gill, editor

# Post 1336 honors veterans

St. Juvn Post 1336 Veterans of Foreign Wars is once again honoring area veterans with the presentation of military tapestry throw blankets.

This year's Blankets for Vets Christmas distribution kicked-off on Tuesday, Nov. 10 with post members delivering 14 of the personalized service logo tapestry throws to skilled care and assisted living facilities in Wilmington, Dwight and Morris.

Santa's helpers for the 2020 distribution were St. Juvn commander James [Hoppy] Phillips, adjutant/quartermaster Keith Roseland and Bill Bomba.

Due to current restrictions on visiting long-term care facilities, Post members were unable to present the throws and visit with the veterans receiving the personalized gifts. Therefore, facility staff members accepted the gifts and delivered them to the veterans.

The Blankets for Vets program, started in 2013, has distributed nearly 500 of these symbols of the veteran's service to a grateful nation repre-



Photo by Bill Bomba/St. Juvn Post 1336

**ST. JUVN POST 1336 Veterans of Foreign Wars, located in Coal City, has been providing personalized service logo tapestry throws to veterans since 2013. The Blankets for Vets program continued last week as Post 1336 commander James [Hoppy] Phillips [left] and adjutant/quartermaster Keith Roseland [right] delivered throws for the staff at the Gardens at Park Pointe in Morris to distribute to select veterans residing at the facility.**

senting about \$27,500 that St. Juvn members have raised

through its Buddy Poppy events, raffles, and generous

donations from the public.

# Propane explosion destroys new home

## STAFF REPORT

Residents on Shady Lane in Goose Lake Township felt a blast and upon inspection could see smoke and flames coming from an area just to their south.

It was just after 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 12 when the first emergency call was answered at the Grundy County Dispatch Center alerting first responders to a structure fire in the 2000 block of Jugtown Road.

Callers reported hearing a loud explosion just prior to discovering the fire that sent Coal City Fire Protection District personnel to the area west of Jugtown Road between Shady Lane and Beaver Lake Drive.

Upon making their way down a long driveway, fire units found heavy fire coming from the back of the home and report within minutes the blaze had engulfed the entire structure that was under construction and nearing comple-

tion, according to Lt. Nick Doerfler, the Coal City Fire Department's public information officer.

The cause of the blaze was determined to be a propane tank that exploded in the home.

The explosion reportedly blew out a portion of the house that was deemed a total loss with damage estimated at \$400,000.

According to Doerfler no one was inside at the time of the blaze and no injuries were reported.

Due to the location of the structure, Coal City called in multiple mutual aid units many of them assigned to bring water to the site. Among the units called in were Morris, Wilmington, Braidwood, Gardner, South Wilmington, Minooka, Elwood, Dwight, Troy and Seneca.

Fire units were on the scene for about 2.5 hours and were called back to the site for a short time just before 5 a.m. to put out some hotspots.

# Unit 1 Board seeking student transportation bids

## STAFF REPORT

Illinois Central School Bus has denied the Unit 1 Board of Education's request for a two-year extension of the student transportation contract.

The district sent a letter to the transportation company seeking to extend the current terms of the agreement approved back in March 2018 and valid through June 2021.

Unit 1 Superintendent Dr. Kent Bugg said the board should now seek bids for the service.

"That doesn't commit you to it, just means you are going out for bid to see what is out there. That doesn't mean you have to approve an agreement with anyone. You still have options we can talk about, but that's a process we need to get started so the board can see

what bids look like," Bugg said. The board agreed, directing the superintendent to new bids.

In other matters from the Nov. 4 board meeting:

- At the recommendation of the district's director of special populations, the board entered into an agreement with Timberline Billing Services to process Medicaid claims for reimbursements of covered school based services.

- Board members approved the appointment of Luke Krippel and Amanda Herrera as the district's complaint managers in accordance with board policy.

- The board approved the quarterly dropout report with the Regional Office of Education for the quarter ending Oct. 16.

- The transfer of part-time elementary recess aide Alison Gill to full-time health aide at the school was approved by the board, with member Mary Gill abstaining.

- Board members approved leave requests submitted by middle school library media aide and lunchroom supervisor Danielle Diamond for 12 days ending Oct. 13, high school guidance counselor Erin Dransfeld for 13 days from Nov. 4-24, first grade teacher Tricia Togliatti for 11 days ending Nov. 6, Amanda Herrera-Ford for 60 days, plus an additional 10 COVID days ending March 12,

assistant high school custodian Kaeli Hovis for 10 days through Nov. 9, and Allison Anderson an additional 15 days of maternity leave to the 32 days previously approved by the board, she is to return to the classroom on Jan. 19.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 6 p.m. in the Unit office. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the November study session has been canceled.

## Braceville Township to host Democratic Caucus

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF CAUCUS**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 1, 2020 a Caucus of the Democratic Party in Township of Braceville, Grundy County, Illinois will be held at 3935 N. Merrill St., Braceville commencing at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of nominating candidates for the following offices: Township Supervisor, Township Clerk, Township Road Commissioner (Highway) and Township Trustee (4).  
Dated Nov. 16, 2020  
Penny L. Willis, Presiding Officer  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Evening with Santa Claus files as new business

### LEGAL NOTICE

**Assumed Name Publication Notice**  
Public Notice is hereby given that on November 16, A.D. 2020, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Grundy County, Illinois, setting forth names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as Evening with Santa Claus, located at 1051 Park Blvd., Morris, IL 60450.  
Dated this 16th day of November, A.D. 2020.  
Kay T Olson, Grundy County Clerk  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, Nov. 25 and Dec. 2, 2020.

## PUBLIC NOTICE DRAINAGE NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Commissioners of the Claypool Drainage and Levee District did, on November 10, 2020 present and file in the Circuit Court of Grundy County, Illinois, their Financial Report for said District for the period ended October 31, 2020. Objections to the report must be filed with the clerk of the court within 10 days after the first publication of this notice.  
**PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Commissioners of the Claypool Drainage and Levee District did, on November 10, 2020 present and file in the Circuit Court of Grundy County, Illinois, their Certificate of Levy of Annual Maintenance Assessment for said District for the period ended October 31, 2020. The total amount of the annual maintenance assessment contained in the assessment roll is \$99,235.32. Objections to the Levy must be filed on or before December 10, 2020. A hearing to confirm the levy has been set for December 14, 2020 at 9:00 A.M. before the Circuit Court of Grundy County in the East Courtroom of the Grundy County Courthouse, Morris, Illinois.  
Corri Trotter, Circuit Clerk  
Robert Koerner, Terry Bitner and Joseph Brown Commissioners of the Claypool Drainage and Levee District  
Published in the Coal City Courant and Braidwood Journal on Nov. 18 and 25, 2020.

## Braceville Township to host Republican Caucus

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF CAUCUS**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 1, 2020 a Caucus of the Republican Party in Township of Braceville, Grundy County, Illinois will be held at 3935 N. Merrill St., Braceville commencing at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of nominating candidates for the following offices: Township Supervisor, Township Highway Commissioner, Township Clerk, and Township Trustee (4).  
Dated Nov. 16, 2020  
Penny L. Willis, Presiding Officer  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Coal City Library audit report available

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF AUDIT REPORT**  
Notice is given pursuant to the Public Funds Statement Publication Act of the availability of an audit report for the Coal City Public Library District. The audit report:  
1. Covers the time period from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.  
2. The audit was conducted by Brian Zabel & Associates, certified public accountants.  
3. The audit report is available for inspection at the Coal City Public Library District, 85 N. Garfield Street, Coal City, Illinois between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Friday, 9:00 and 4:00 p.m. Saturday.  
By the Board of Trustees  
Coal City Public Library District  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Attorney Black files Sammy estate claim notice

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE No. 2020 P 105**  
In the Matter of the Estate of Wallace Sammy, Deceased  
**CLAIM NOTICE**  
NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Wallace Sammy. Letters of office as Independent Executor were issued to Gary Matteson, 926 E. Jefferson St., Morris, Illinois 60450, whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.  
Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington St., Morris, IL 60450, with the representative, or both, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or, if mailing or delivery of a notice is required by Section 5/18-3 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 to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.  
GARY MATTESON  
INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR  
Frank J. Black  
Black & Black Lawyers  
201 Liberty Street  
Suite 211  
P.O. Box 148  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0594  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18 and 25 and Dec. 2, 2020.

## Airete files as new business

### LEGAL NOTICE

**Assumed Name Publication Notice**  
Public Notice is hereby given that on November 4, A.D. 2020, a certificate was filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Grundy County, Illinois, setting forth names and post-office addresses of all of the persons owning, conducting and transacting the business known as Airete located at 2565 Indian Grass Rd. Morris, IL 60450.  
Dated this 4th day of November, A.D. 2020.  
Kay T Olson, Grundy County Clerk  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 11, 18 and 25, 2020.

## Davis applies for property variance

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that a Public Hearing will be held by the Coal City Zoning Board of Appeals on the Zoning Ordinance on the 7th day of December, 2020 at 7 o'clock p.m. in the office of the Board of Appeals, Coal City Village Hall, 515 South Broadway, Coal City, Illinois on the following matter:  
To consider: Building inground pool and structures and garage addition.  
At the following address: 910 S. Illinois St., Coal City, IL.  
Legal description of property: Lot 37 of Spring Meadows Subdivision in Section 3-32-8  
Request for the above appeal was applied for by: Robert and Debbie Davis.  
Said Board of Appeals will be at said time and place to hear all persons in support of such matter or any objection thereof.  
Persons may appear in person or by agent.  
Dated this 28th day of October, 2020.  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Attorney Black files Gram estate claim notice

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE No. 2020 P 100**  
In the Matter of the Estate of Marian R. Gram, Deceased  
**CLAIM NOTICE**  
NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Marian R. Gram. Letters of office as Independent Co-Executors were issued to Susan Stangland, 1684 Dupont Ave., Morris, Illinois 60450 and Nancy Ascolani, 1587 Fernwood Ct., Morris, Illinois 60450 whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 60450.  
Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Court at Grundy County Courthouse, 111 E. Washington St., Morris, IL 60450, with the representative, or both, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice or, if mailing or delivery of a notice is required by Section 5/18-3 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 to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.  
SUSAN STANGLAND  
NANCY ASCOLANI  
INDEPENDENT CO-EXECUTORS  
Frank J. Black  
Black & Black Lawyers  
201 Liberty Street  
Suite 211  
P.O. Box 148  
Morris, IL 60450  
815-942-0594  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 4, 11 & 18, 2020.

# Thanksgiving closures announced

Coal City Village Hall and the administrative office of the police department will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27 in observance of Thanksgiving. The village board meeting scheduled for Nov. 25 has been rescheduled to Monday, Nov. 23 at 7 p.m. Additionally, waste removal service will be pushed back one day.

Diamond Village Hall will be closed Nov. 26 and 27. Waste pickup will also be delayed by one day.

The Coal City Public Library will close at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 25 and remain closed for Thanksgiving Day. The library will reopen at its regular time on Friday, Nov. 27.

The Unit 1 School District will observe the holiday from Wednesday, Nov. 25 to Friday, Nov. 27. Classes will resume Monday, Nov. 30. The district's administrative office will also be closed those days.

With the exception of essential services, all Grundy County offices will be closed Nov. 26 and Nov. 27.

The U.S. Postal Service has announced there will be no mail delivery and postal offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day.

## Maine Township to host democratic Caucus

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF CAUCUS**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 1, 2020 a Caucus of the Democratic Party in Township of Maine, Grundy County, Illinois will be held at Maine Township Hall, Braceville and Gorman Rds., Mazon, IL, commencing at 7 p.m. for the purpose of nominating candidates for the following offices: Road Commissioner, Township Supervisor, Township Clerk and Township Trustee (4).  
Dated Nov. 18, 2020  
Debra Hauschild, Township Clerk  
Maine Township  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Maine Township to host republican Caucus

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF CAUCUS**  
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Dated Nov. 18, 2020  
Debra Hauschild, Township Clerk  
Maine Township  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Felix Township to host Republican Caucus

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF CAUCUS**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 1, 2020 a Caucus of the Republican Party in Township of Felix, Grundy County, Illinois will be held at Felix Township Building, 6525 E. Whitetie Rd., Coal City, IL 60416 commencing at 6 p.m. for the purpose of nominating candidates for the following offices: Supervisor, Clerk, Highway Commissioner, Trustees (4) and Assessor.  
Dated Nov. 16, 2020  
Patricia L Christensen, Presiding Officer  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Felix Township to host Democratic Caucus

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE OF CAUCUS**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 1, 2020 a Caucus of the Democratic Party in Township of Felix, Grundy County, Illinois will be held at Felix Township Building, 6525 E. Whitetie Rd., Coal City, IL 60416 commencing at 7 p.m. for the purpose of nominating candidates for the following offices: Supervisor, Clerk, Highway Commissioner, Trustees (4) and Assessor.  
Dated Nov. 16, 2020  
Patricia L Christensen, Presiding Officer  
Published in the Coal City Courant on Nov. 18, 2020.

## Foreclosure notice of 2375 Chestnut Lane

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 13TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT GRUNDY COUNTY - MORRIS, ILLINOIS**  
LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC, PLAINTIFF, VS. MORRIS G SMITH; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, DEFENDANTS.  
20 CH 34  
2375 CHESTNUT LANE, MORRIS, IL 60450  
JUDGE  
PRESIDING JUDGE  
**NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**  
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO YOU, Morris G Smith, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, defendants, that this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, asking for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to wit:  
LOT 13 BOLDER HILL SUBDIVISION, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF A PORTION OF WEST HALF OF THE EAST 1/2 OF SECTION 33, TOWNSHIP 34 NORTH, RANGE 7 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, RECORDED OCTOBER 15, 1986 AS DOCUMENT NO. 286039 IN PLAT CABINET F AT SLIDE 101; IN GRUNDY COUNTY, ILLINOIS.  
Commonly known as: 2375 Chestnut Lane, Morris, IL 60450 and which said Mortgage was made by, Morris G Smith, Mortgageor(s), to JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A., Mortgagee, and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Grundy County, Illinois, as Document No. 578893; and for other relief.  
**YOU MAY STILL BE ABLE TO SAVE YOUR HOME. DO NOT IGNORE THIS DOCUMENT.**

By order of the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court, this case is set for Mandatory Mediation on January 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the Grundy County Law Library; 111 E. Washington Street, Morris, Illinois. A lender representative will be present along with a court appointed mediator to discuss options that you may have and to pre-screen you for a potential mortgage modification. For further information on the mediation process, please see the attached NOTICE OF MANDATORY MEDIATION.

**YOU MUST APPEAR ON THE MEDIATION DATE GIVEN OR YOUR MEDIATION WILL BE TERMINATED.**  
UNLESS YOU file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case, on or before December 18, 2020, A JUDGMENT OR DECREE BY DEFAULT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED IN THE COMPLAINT.  
E-filing is now mandatory with limited exceptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider.  
If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org). If you are unable to pay your court fees, you can apply for a fee waiver. For information about defending yourself in a court case (including filing an appearance or fee waiver), or to apply for free legal help, go to [www.illinoislegalaid.org](http://www.illinoislegalaid.org). You can also ask your local circuit clerk's office for a fee waiver application.

**PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.**  
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Attorney for Plaintiff  
1 N. Dearborn St. Suite 1200  
Chicago, IL 60602  
Ph. (312) 346-9088  
File No. 20-026681L  
13160137  
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Free Press Newspapers readers

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## You're fired

CUSTER PARK—What's so hard about conceding an election? It's pretty certain that Joe Biden has won the presidency. Yet loser Trump is refusing to concede and instead is forcing millions of dollars to be spent on legal proceedings that will end up going nowhere. Come on ex-president Trump, just admit you've been fired by America's voters.

## Election questions

SHADOW LAKES—What I'm very surprised at in my lifetime of voting is that the liberal media has already confirmed Biden as President-elect. He has also been on TV announcing some of his plans as President-elect when states have not confirmed their votes yet. So how can he be President elect? It's simple, liberal media is projecting this without any confirmation. There were 100,000 votes that showed up in Pennsylvania with the only part of the ballots that were filled out was for president, nothing else, and they were all for Biden, which raises some questions. In Michigan, 140,000 votes were mysteriously found and these were all mailed in and it happened right after Biden had his campaign there. If you remember back when Al Gore ran for president it took 30 days before he was actually confirmed the loser. So the liberal media is really jumping at something because they want Biden. Why? I don't know. Dan Hill

## Celebration will end

COAL CITY—All the people who are enjoying the election of Joe Biden for president had better enjoy celebrating now. When he gets through enforcing the things that he is going to do after the inauguration, the people that elected him president will discover that their lives will also be affected by the new rules which they will also have to obey. And when the employment is taken over by China again and all their taxes will rise, then maybe you can say to yourself, what have I done, my children will not be able to live the American dream. But every person from foreign lands will have the American dream handed to them on a silver platter while Americans become third class citizens and have to cater to every foreign country. Good luck trying to survive while government employees live on easy street.

## America going to pot

COAL CITY—I read voters in Arizona, Montana, New Jersey and South Dakota approved to legalize recreational marijuana. Now 15 states as well as Washington D.C. allow recreational marijuana use and 36 permit for medical usage. Oregon residents voted to decriminalize possession of small amounts of harder drugs like cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine. It's like a sledge hammer is being taken to the war on drugs. Brain specialists will confirm using those drugs causes brain damage. Next the users will be wanting their marijuana for free.

## Sold out America

WILMINGTON—According to the news media we have a president named Joe Biden. They say he is a great world leader, so let's take a short look at his resume. Joe Biden was involved with giving over \$1 billion to Iran. Joe Biden may have some ties with his son's involvement with the Chinese corporation. Joe Biden stated on the news that he demanded the individual in

Ukraine be fired that was investigating this corporation while his son was on the board of directors or Ukraine would not receive any aid from the USA. The individual was fired from the investigation within six hours and Joe Biden bragged about this on the news. He is truly a great leader that sold out the USA once and he will sell out our country again so that the Democrat party in Washington DC can play mommy and daddy to American citizens. Everyone should go get a dictionary and look up the words traitor and treason.

## What a fake

WILMINGTON—Did you see Trump lay a wreath at the tomb of the unknown sucker?

## Like a vacation

BRAIDWOOD—Gov. Pritzker gets on TV to announce that COVID numbers are going up so what happens next? We have state offices, yes with all those government paid workers, close up before the day this through. The DMV locked up its doors, now the court system is talking about closing down. That's like giving all those employees a paid vacation at a time when this state can least afford it. If these state agencies are going to close then the governor should force them all to take furlough days.

## Hand them over

WILMINGTON—I don't know why Trump won't give Biden the daily intelligence briefings, it's not like he reads them.

## Check red states

WILMINGTON—Why isn't the GOP suing states that Trump won? Maybe there were ballots illegally cast for the president in those states.

## Life flows by

COAL CITY—It is easy to be pleasant when life flows by like a song, but the man worthwhile is the one who will smile when everything goes dead wrong. For the test of the heart is trouble and it always comes with years and the smile that is worth the praises of earth is the smile that shines their tears.

An avid President Trump supporter



## PLUCKED

## Winter is coming

COAL CITY—I read that 33 million Americans are unemployed. Thanks to an extra \$600 per week in expanded unemployment benefits some of them got more money from unemployment than their old wages. But Congress let that supplement expire in August and the jobless are facing a desperate situation as their savings quickly dwindle. White-color layoffs are mounting. Many had been able to work from home. Corporate America is tightening its belt in anticipation of a rough economic winter. Europe is going into lockdown. What's happening in Europe is a leading indicator for the USA for sure to anticipate a rough economic winter.

## No blue wave

COAL CITY—The Democrats spent \$1 billion to win the election. The Blue Wave did not happen. Their plan was to take over the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives by 10-12 seats. We remain a very much divided country. There seems to be something sinful spending that kid of money on an election while many are struggling to make ends meet. Trump voters still make up half the country. Political polling is a fraud.

## Still lying

COAL CITY—Donald Trump ran for president twice in the last five years. Both times he lost the popular vote by millions of votes. Due to the electoral college he served the last four years as president, but this time he lost. He told us a few weeks ago that we were rounding the curve on the coronavirus. He failed to mention that around the curve are the hospital and the cemetery. Trump, unfortunately, is not man enough to accept reality and admit he lost. The whiny lowlife continues to make up unfounded lies about the election and thus undermines our democracy, but that is exactly what his benefactor Mr. Putin wants him to do.

## Why invoke God?

WILMINGTON—It's Saturday and I'm watching the rally for Trump and these people keep invoking God, but if He was really on their side wouldn't Trump have won?

## Biden the actor

SHADOW LAKES—Why is it the day after the election Biden is standing in front of a blue wall with the printing president-elect? That has never happened in my voting history. Also, CNN always had a little news print on the bottom of how bad the Coronavirus is. After they announced Biden won you can no longer see it there. Does anyone have an answer? Maybe Biden waved a magic wand and it's gone? After all, he is quite an actor. Dan Hill

## Letter to the editor

## The costs of failing to protect our planet

Dear Editor,  
There is no question that the health of humanity is inextricably tied to the health of nature. As explorers, we have witnessed the wonder of our world's biodiversity firsthand. However, we have also seen the threats it faces - and the clear correlation between promoting natural security abroad and strengthening our national security at home.

During Geography Awareness Week, it is appropriate to consider how actions on the other side of the planet can affect us here in the United States. When tropical forests are destroyed, fisheries collapse, coral reefs die off, or elephants are killed by ivory traffickers, this 'nature loss' has catastrophic impacts that can ripple across the globe. There is much uncertainty in this world, but one thing is clear: America's security and prosperity depend in part on protecting our planet's eco-

logical integrity and stopping criminals from robbing its natural resources for profit.

The past year has driven home the costs of failing to protect our planet. We've seen record breaking hurricanes and wildfires, and our health and economy are suffering from a new disease that, like other pandemics, originated from the exploitation of wildlife and nature.

The good news is we have effective and affordable solutions to address these problems, starting with U.S. government investments in international conservation. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and conserving nature can help us prevent many future challenges. As a new political era dawns, enhancing our natural security should be among America's top priorities.

Thank you,  
Ashlan & Philippe Cousteau

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# It pays to get a flu shot



**STEVE FRANCIS** (left) of Oak Knoll Financial Strategies accepts a pile of vaccination receipts from **Anita Goulding** of Trinity Services. The staff and clients at Trinity Services recently held a flu shot day at its Buchanan Street facility when 52 people were vaccinated. For each shot Oak Knoll Financial will donate \$5 to each of three local charities including the Christian Help Association, Kuzma Care Cottage and the Caring Closet. Goulding said this is the third year in a row Trinity Services has held a clinic on site, making it convenient for workers and clients. "We can't afford to have the flu spread through our facility so it makes more sense to get vaccinated. Plus the incentive by Oak Knoll Financial in donating to the community helps too," Goulding said. Anyone who recently has been vaccinated can bring their receipt to Oak Knoll at 207 S. Water St., Wilmington through Dec. 31

# Illinois facing long-term deficits, growing bill backlog

BY PETER HANCOCK  
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — A new report from the Governor's Office of Management and Budget shows that without significant new revenue, spending cuts or a combination of both, the state will face a budget deficit of \$3.9 billion in the current fiscal year and continuing deficits of \$4 billion or more in each of the next five fiscal years.

It also projects that the state's backlog of unpaid bills could grow to as much as \$33 billion by fiscal year 2026, up from the current backlog total of about \$7.8 billion, if lawmakers do not make structural changes.

"Sizeable deficits in the general funds budget are projected for fiscal years 2022 through 2026, ranging from \$4.8 billion in fiscal year 2022 and falling to \$4.2 billion by fiscal year 2026," the report stated.

The report does not actually predict that those deficits will occur. Instead, it is intended to show what would happen under the state's current revenue structure and spending obligations.

The report, which was released late Friday, Nov. 13, attributes much of the current fiscal year's deficit to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in dramatic revenue losses for state and local governments throughout the country.

But it also notes that vot-

ers' rejection of Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed constitutional amendment to allow for a graduated income tax on the Nov. 3 ballot — which would have allowed higher tax rates to be levied on people with higher incomes — means the state will have fewer tools at its disposal to address its ongoing "structural" budget deficits.

Revenue officials had estimated that passage of the amendment would have brought in an additional \$1.2 billion during the last six months of the current fiscal year, and roughly \$3.2 billion per year after that. But the rejection of that amendment now means lawmakers and the administration will have to look elsewhere for solutions.

"Looking ahead to the fiscal year 2022 budget [which begins July 1, 2021] and recognizing that Illinois continues to face significant financial challenges, there are limited ways to address the structural deficit of the state budget in the absence of the tax rate structure flexibility that would have been provided under the changes in the proposed constitutional amendment," the report stated.

Earlier this year, Pritzker advised state agency directors to prepare for a 5% budget reduction this year, and to make plans for a potential 10% cut in fiscal year 2022, which begins July 1. But the report says even that would not be enough to close the gap between anticipated revenues and expenditures, and that Pritzker is unwilling to make

deeper cuts, which means he will have to seek legislative approval for some form of tax increases.

According to the report, one of the options being considered is some form of tax increase or elimination of corporate and business tax "loopholes."

"As the cuts that would be required to bring Illinois' budget to balance would harm education and human services programs and damage essential areas of the state's economy, the Governor continues to believe that cuts alone cannot be the solution and revenue adjustments need to be considered as well," the report states. "The Governor will work with the legislature to identify corporate and business tax loopholes that can be closed and tax adjustments that can be made that will minimize the impact to lower- and middle-class families while ensuring that Illinois can meet its financial responsibilities."

It remains unclear, though, how much the state could raise through such measures or whether that would be enough to address the state's long-term revenue problems.

## Illinois 126 to close

The Illinois Department of Transportation announces that repairs to the Canadian National Railway crossing on Illinois 126, just east of Illinois 59 in Plainfield, will require a full closure now through Nov. 21.

A detour will direct vehicular traffic to Illinois 59, 135th Street/Pilcher Road and Essington Road. Truck traffic will be detoured to Illinois 59, U.S. 30, northbound Interstate 55, Weber Road exit, southbound Interstate 55 and Illinois 126 exit.

Motorists can expect delays and should allow extra time for trips through this area.

# Springfield moves to fine people \$50 for not wearing masks

BY GREG BISHOP  
THE CENTER SQUARE

Potential fines for businesses that don't follow COVID-19 masking mandates have been in place for months across the state, but some municipalities are taking the mandate further, including the city of Springfield.

Springfield will now issue fines to people who don't wear a mask when required.

The Springfield city council held back a resolution that requires bars and restaurants with indoor dining to have 25 percent capacity and require patrons to answer a questionnaire. Local officials are allowing indoor dining despite Gov. J.B. Pritzker's blanket prohibition he's issued in regions across the state because of increased COVID-19 positivity rates.

While Springfield leaders held back the resolution laying out the local guidelines to allow indoor service, it passed a mandate, not just for businesses, but for individuals with a \$50 fine if they are caught by police without a mask inside a bar, restaurant or retailer.

Springfield Mayor Jim Langfelder said the ordinance requires individuals to wear a mask while indoors at a bar, restaurant or retailer. He said the civil penalty will be in

place as long as necessary and enforcement is immediate.

"Right now a restaurant can be cited, right now," Langfelder said. "The addition is really the \$50 per violation for the individual."

Alderman Joe McMenamin said the ordinance cuts through having multiple steps for immediate enforcement.

"I think this is trying to get right to the police officer eyeballing the violation, someone being maskless, and writing the citations," McMenamin said.

McMenamin attempted to amend the measure to remove an exemption for someone who claims to have a medical condition, but that provision remains in the ordinance.

Illinois Retail Merchants Association's Rob Karr said the move puts the onus on the individual, not the business owner.

"You can't physically detain them, you open yourself up to a lot of different charges of discrimination," Karr said. "So it is where it belongs, having the enforcement done by law enforcement and on individuals."

Karr said he'd like to see a statewide mandate, but urged other communities to follow suit.

Illinois Municipal League Executive Director Brad Cole applauded the city for the mandate.

Springfield is believed to be the first municipality in Illinois to pass such a measure.

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## Post 1336 observes Veterans Day

Tropical storm Eta with 50 mph winds and flooding rain couldn't stop the Floridian Club of Sarasota and St. Juvin Post 1336 Veterans of Foreign Wars from sponsoring a Veterans Day luncheon for 24 vets and guests.

Veterans and guests enjoyed lunch and a patriotically decorated cake along with the camaraderie usually found when vets gather. Post 1336 past commander Charlie Brown and his wife, Kathy served as hosts.

Coal City's St. Juvin Post and the Floridian Club also sponsor a monthly veteran's coffee and doughnut event at the Venice, FL housing development.

## How to track down old friends online

*Dear Savvy Senior, I'm interested in tracking down some old friends I've lost touch with over the years but could use some help. What websites can you recommend that can help me find them? Tracking Tom*

Dear Tom,  
Thanks to the Internet, tracking down long-lost friends from many years ago is relatively easy to do and, in most cases, it won't cost you a cent. Here are some tips and online tools to help you get started.

Before you begin your search, a good first step is to jot down any information you can remember or find out about the people you're trying to locate. Things like their full name (maiden and married), age or birth date, last known address or phone number, old e-mail address, names of family members, etc. Knowing details can help you turn up clues while you search.

After you compile your information, a good place to start your search is at social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. And search engines

like Google and Yahoo.

When using search engines, type in the name of the person you're searching for in quotation marks, for example, "John Smith." You can narrow your search by adding other criteria like their nickname or middle name, the city or state they may live in, or even their occupation.

If your initial search comes up empty, you can also use people searches like AnyWho.com, Intelius.com or WhitePages.com. These sites will provide a list of potential matches from across the U.S.

Because many people share the same name, these sites will also supply details to help identify the right person, perhaps including their age, prior hometowns, names of relatives, colleges attended or employer.

While these sites are free to use at a basic level, they charge a small fee for providing certain details like the per-



**SAVVY SENIOR**  
Jim Miller

sons contact information. WhitePages, however, sometimes provides home phone numbers for free.

Here are a few other niche people-finding websites to help you with your search.

To look for old high school classmates, try Classmates.com. This site has contact information only for people who have registered with it. But even if your friend hasn't registered, it could provide contact info for another classmate who remains in touch with your friend.

Another option is to check out your high school alumni website. Not every school has its own site, but some do, and you can look for it by going to any search engine and typing in the name of the school with the city and state it's located in. You can also search at AlumniClass.com, a huge hosting site for thousands of high schools across the U.S.

If you're looking for old

college friends, look for an alumni directory on the school's website. You might be able to access your friend's contact info by completing an online registration. Or, try calling or emailing your alumni relations department and ask them to pass on your contact info to your friend.

If you're looking for someone you served with in the military, Military.com offers a free "Buddy Finder" service that has a database of more than 20 million records - visit Military.com/buddy-finder. You can also search for free at G I S e a r c h . c o m , TogetherWeServed.com and VetFriends.com.

If you can't find any current information about the person you're searching for, it could be that he or she is dead. To find out if that's the case, use obituary databases such as Tributes.com and Legacy.com, which has a newspaper obituary search tool from hundreds of U.S. newspapers.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org.

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## Library to host family reading night

The Coal City Public Library will celebrate a Virtual Family Reading Night with the theme "Dig Deeper: Read, Investigate, Discover."

Join the library staff as it observes the state of Illinois' Family Reading Night virtually.

Complete at least three of the activities on the Choice Board posted on their Facebook page beginning at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 19 to receive a small prize bag of goodies.

Google forms must be filled out by Tuesday, Nov. 24 at 8 p.m. to receive your prize. Register only if you want to do the craft and the Secret Decoder, so the library can get the supplies. Otherwise, participants can stop in to pick up a recording sheet. Activities to choose from include Masked Readers who will read a story and you guess who the reader is, crafts, escape room and more.

CCPLD also offers digital resources that are fun, interactive and educational such as ABCMouse.com, only available in library; BiblioBoard, Novelist Plus, and TumbleBooks. These resources can be accessed from the library website at [www.ccpld.org](http://www.ccpld.org) using a CCPLD library card. For more information call the library at 815-634-4552.

## Woman's Club makes birthdays brigher



**GFWC-IL COAL City Junior Woman's Club** collected items for Birthday Bags for Advocate for Children's Week in October. Some of the items the bags held were cake mixes, frostings, cake plates, napkins, small toys, bracelets, birthday badges, as well as other items to assist parents in having a birthday party for their child. These bags were donated to Help for Hope. Coal City Juniors are "making a difference" in the lives of others. Anyone wishing to help make a difference in our community are welcome to join. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month September-June at 6:30 p.m. in person and virtually. Pictured are Marsha Vaughn, Coal City Junior member and Cathy Milne of Help for Hope.

## Unemployment claims remain high in Illinois

BY CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

As the number of infections and hospitalizations for COVID-19 are setting daily records, new unemployment claims continued pouring in to the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

During the week that ended Saturday, Nov. 7, IDES reported, 67,158 workers filed first-time unemployment claims, down roughly 9% from the previous week, but still more than six times the number who filed such claims during the same week a year ago.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 338,899 Illinois workers were receiving continuing unemployment benefits during the week, down about 1% from the previous week.

In addition, another 9,726 people filed initial claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, a federally-funded program for gig workers, independent contractors and others who don't normally qualify for traditional unemployment insurance.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker noted that the PUA system has been plagued by fraud nationwide, and he blamed federal officials for failing to enact adequate controls to prevent fraud.

## Make a Difference Day



**FOR MAKE A Difference Day**, the GFWC-IL Coal City Junior Woman's Club collected new socks and underwear for those in need. They collected 149 pairs of socks and 58 pairs of underwear and delivered them to Help for Hope. Seats and Feet's: Coal City Juniors will continue to collect new socks and underwear as well as blankets and throws. There will be a collection bin at the Coal City Library or contact any club member to donate. Items will be collected through Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021. All donated items will be delivered to Help for Hope. Everyone is encouraged to show kindness to others through giving. Pictured is Marsha Vaughn (left), Coal City Junior Club member and Cathy Milne from Help for Hope.

## Braidwood Lions to collect used Christmas lights

The Braidwood Lions Club will be collecting used/non-working strands of Christmas lights starting Sunday, November 15th.

Collection bins will be located inside Whitmore Ace Hardware in Braidwood and Coal City, and inside Braidwood City Hall until January 31st. The strands of lights will be recycled by the

Lions of Illinois Foundation with proceeds to benefit the foundation's sight & sound services provided to local Lions Clubs.

A collection bin will also be available during the club's annual Christmas Tree Sale fundraiser, hours of operations. For more information please call (815)791-8093 or visit [www.braidwoodlionsclub.org](http://www.braidwoodlionsclub.org).

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# As the cold comes, warm up with a Hot Whiskey

I can't say that I look forward to cold weather, but I do look forward to the first Hot Whiskey of the year. This week we will take a look at a drink with no "official" recipe, many regional variants, and a legend that has survived every winter for over 200 years.

The Hot Whiskey is technically a Hot Toddy that calls for whiskey, but most of the time when a spirit other than whiskey is used. The recipe below works with nearly any dark, aged spirit. Aged rum, brandy, and cognac are all popular spirit options in the Hot Toddy.

The "hot" anything is more of a platform than it is a recipe. The platform traces its roots back to a time when nearly all cocktails were served hot. A few cocktails may have been served at room temperature, but most were served hot. Why? Because in the era before commercially available ice, there were simply no other options.

Hot Toddy-type cocktails were popular during the Colonial era, and were often prepared in large batches to be served to weary travelers in early American inns and taverns. The hot drinks of this era likely used brandy, or dark rum which was acquired via trade routes.

Meanwhile, the Irish were enjoying Hot Whiskey using their own Irish whiskeys, and the Scots were doing the same.

Is there a "best" whiskey for the Hot Whiskey? There

sure is, and it's the whiskey in your cabinet. Use your favorite if you have one. If you do not have a favorite, use bourbon. Bourbon is great in the Hot Whiskey because it pairs well with honey and brings natural vanilla/oak flavor notes to the drink.

If you decide to use scotch or Irish whiskey, used something blended. Blends are typically smoother in character and are better suited to mixing.

The same general mixology principles that work in cold drinks will also work well in hot drinks. For example: most whiskey cocktails are spirit, something sweet, and something sour. In a Hot Whiskey, the sweet comes to us through the honey, and the sour is the fresh lemon juice.

Sure, there is no ice to dilute the Hot Whiskey, but the drink has plenty of dilution due to the hot water. Speaking of the hot water, there are some advantages to mixing a drink with hot water. The main advantage to using hot water is the dissolvability of granulated sugar and honey. In a cold drink, granulated sugar simply will not dissolve. This is why simple syrup is used in most cold drinks as opposed to granulated sugar or raw honey.

Speaking of sugar, go



**THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL**  
Brian Rung

ahead and use sugar in place of honey if you are not a fan of honey. Sugar works quite well in Hot Whiskey, be sure to use a "dark" sugar. Brown sugar or demerara sugar will bring a nice complexity to the drink and will not overpower the whiskey. The hot water does a great job of taming ingredients that would normally overpower a drink, such as a lower quality whiskey or pure lemon juice.

How hot should the water in the Hot Whiskey be? It should be hotter than warm, but not boiling. I guess the optimal temperature for the Hot Whiskey would be "simmering", about to boil. This way the water will be hot enough to dissolve your honey or sugar, and will be at a nice warm temp long enough to finish the drink.

Start your water in a saucepan on the stove, serve in a quality "tempered" mug.

If you have a Hot Toddy/Hot Whiskey fan in your family, you may have noticed their crockpot filled with whiskey, water, honey, apples, cinnamon, oranges, cloves, and you name it. The sky really is the limit here, the recipe below is merely a jumping off point for your own version of Hot Whiskey. Any combination of the aforementioned ingredi-

ents will work, I also add a dash of Angostura Bitters to my Hot Whiskey.

If you are serving a group, heat enough water to fill the mugs. Once your water is heated, add the water to the mugs and follow the recipe below. When serving Hot Whiskey, garnish each mug with a lemon wheel or lemon wedge, and a cinnamon stick to stir. Stirring the Hot Whiskey with a cinnamon stick

is a delicious way to dissolve the honey or sugar into the drink.

I get it. Winter is coming, and that means shoveling side-walks, disappointment in college football teams not named Clemson or Alabama, and two solid months of Christmas music. Hang in there, and remember that with each setting of the sun we are one day closer to the end of 2020.

I'll drink to that.

The classic Hot Whiskey is built and served in a preheated tempered mug.

Combine in mug:  
3/4 cup hot water  
1 1/2 oz. whiskey  
2 to 3 teaspoons honey  
2 to 3 teaspoons fresh lemon juice  
Stir until honey dissolves  
Garnish with lemon wheel and cinnamon stick  
Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

## Democrats cancel veto session

BY CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – The fall veto session of the Illinois General Assembly that was scheduled to begin this week has been canceled amid a worsening COVID-19 pandemic.

Democratic leaders announced their decision to cancel the session, prompting Republicans to question the motives behind that decision.

House Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate President Don Harmon, both Democrats, said that the decision was made out of concern for the safety of lawmakers, staff, their families and the general public, although they left open the possibility that it could be rescheduled if public health conditions improve.

Lawmakers typically hold a brief session in the fall to deal with any legislation from the regular session that was vetoed by the governor. This year's

session was scheduled to run Nov. 17-19 and Dec. 1-3.

This year, however, there were no vetoes to deal with, largely because the regular session was severely shortened due to the pandemic, which reached its initial peak in April and early May. The House and Senate held a brief, four-day special session in late May.

Since early October, however, cases throughout the state have been rising sharply to levels exceeding those of the early pandemic phase, particularly in Region 3 of central Illinois, which includes the capital city.

Even though there were no pressing veto issues to deal with, the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus had hoped to use the veto session to advance its agenda of racial justice and equity reforms across a wide range of issues – an agenda that both Harmon and Madigan said they would support.

But Senator Kimberly Lightford, D-Maywood, the Senate Majority Leader and chair of the ILBC, said those issues would have to wait until it is safe for the General Assembly to convene.

The 101st General Assembly officially comes to an end on Jan. 12, the day before the next session begins and newly-elected and reelected lawmakers are sworn into office. If the committee does not conclude its work before then, Republicans will have to petition again to form a new committee in the next General Assembly.

Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker, who had hoped to use the veto session to get legislative approval for significant budget cuts in the wake of the failure of his proposed graduated income tax amendment on Election Day, also expressed disappointment over the cancellation.

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# OBITUARIES

## Connie J. Adams

BRAIDWOOD—Connie J. Adams (nee Fielder), 63, of Braidwood, passed away Monday, Nov. 16, 2020 at the Joliet Area Community Hospice Home in Joliet.

She was born Feb. 8, 1957 in Joliet. Connie married Harry "Jim" Adams on Feb. 28, 1976 in Wilmington. She previously taught Sunday School and Kindergarten at the Christian Faith Center in Wilmington. She was a member of the Christian Life Assembly in Diamond. Connie enjoyed making jewelry, shopping and her two cats.

Surviving are her husband, Harry James Adams; one son, Todd Adams, of Custer Park;

her mother, Margaret (nee Sullivan) Fielder, of Wilmington and one brother, Mark (Donna) Fielder of Braidwood.

Preceding her in death were her father, Robert Fielder and one brother, Bob Fielder.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Private services will be held. Inurnment will be at Oakwood Cemetery in Wilmington.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, log on to [www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com).

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

## Charlie Hart

BRAIDWOOD—Charlie Hart, 83, of Braidwood and formerly of Westchester, IL, passed away Friday, Nov. 13, 2020 at Morris Hospital.

Born Oct. 3, 1937 in Waukesha, WI, Charles Owen was a son of Francis "Frank" and Ida Elizabeth (Bolland) Hart. He moved to Westchester at an early age with his family where he was raised and educated. Charlie graduated from Proviso High School with the class of 1955 and went on to honorably serve in the United States Army. On Oct. 30, 1960, Charlie married Karen Compton in Westchester and together they made their home and raised their family in Westchester until moving to Braidwood after his retirement.

Charlie worked as a lineman for Commonwealth Edison and retired after 37 years of faithful service. He was a charter member of Westchester Community Church; belonged to CECO Recreation Club, where he served on the board for more than 25 years; was a member of Midwest Street Rod Association (MSRA) and was currently serving on the council for the City of Braidwood.

One who truly enjoyed being retired, Charlie remained active with various hobbies. He was an avid purist woodworker, who leaves behind countless handmade white oak pieces both big and small. In addition he cherished his '32 Ford three window coupe street rod, and took pleasure in being in the yard and gardening. Charlie will be missed over early morning coffee meetings with the guys, and afternoon beers.

Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Karen; son, David (Tina) Hart, of Port Orchard, WA; two daughters, Julie Hart, of Wilmington and Tracy (Jeffrey) Markey, of Westchester; eight grandchildren: Katelin (Colt) Monroe, of Wilmington; Christine (Damien) O'Brien, of Australia; Martin Patrick, of Kentucky; Bobby Markey and Olivia Markey, both of Westchester and Tad Campbell, Zachary Campbell and

Hanna Campbell, all of Washington; three great-grandchildren: Revan, Luke and Anabelle; one brother, Jon (Betty) Hart, of Sun City, AZ; four brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; one niece, Elizabeth (Kevin) Drum and nephew, Peter (Linda) Hart, in addition to more than 100 nieces and nephews on Karen's side of the family; numerous great-nieces and great-nephews, as well as cousins including his cousin, Jim Hart, of Oquawka, IL who was like a brother to Charlie.

Charlie was preceded in death by his parents and one son, Brian Hart on Nov. 5, 2013.

Per Charlie's wishes, green flameless cremation rites have been accorded.

Due to the current restrictions of the pandemic, a private family memorial service will be held at Coal City United Methodist Church with Reverend Brad Shumaker officiating.

Those wishing to participate in Charlie's memorial are welcome to join the live streamed service available on Charlie's memorial page, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020 beginning at 11 a.m.

Charlie will be laid to rest in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood with full military honors at a later date.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Charlie's memory to Westchester Community Church, 1840 Westchester Blvd., Westchester, IL 60154 or to a charity of the donor's choosing.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guestbook, upload photographs, join the live stream memorial, and share Charlie's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: [www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Charlie-Hart](http://www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Charlie-Hart)

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

## Joyce Brimer

WILMINGTON—Joyce Antoinette Brimer (nee Righton), 79, of Wilmington, passed away Friday, Nov. 13, 2020 at home.

Born April 14, 1941 in Chicago, IL, she was the daughter of Stanley and Petronella (nee Pronckett) Righton. Joyce married Donald A. Brimer on Aug. 20, 1960 in Chicago. She was previously an administrative assistant for Lemont School District. Joyce enjoyed her card club and attending her grandkids sporting events. She was a member of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Wilmington.

Surviving are one son, Daniel (Dawn) Brimer, of Wilmington and two daughters, Dawn Peatross and Susan (Karl) Ruraede, both of Wilmington; five grandchildren: Lynsey

Marshall, Tyler and Madison Brimer and Kelsey and Kendall Peatross; one great-grandchild, Kaelen Kelly; two sisters, Audrey Manley and Wynn Righton, both of Lockport, IL.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her husband, Donald A. Brimer (Jan. 2, 2009); one son, Richard Brimer and son-in-law, Randy Peatross.

Cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, log on to [www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com).

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

## Edward L. Pierard

COAL CITY—Edward L. Pierard, 85, and a lifelong resident of Coal City, passed away Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2020 at Riverside Rehabilitation Center in Kankakee.

Born April 18, 1935 in Coal City, Edward Louis was a son of Ernest Joseph and Talia (Farrero) Pierard. He was raised in Coal City; graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1953, and later went on to earn his Associates in Applied Science from Joliet Junior College.

Edward honorably served in the United States Army, as well as the United States Corps Reserves from 1957-1963. On Sept. 23, 1961 Edward married Lorraine Novotney in St. Stephen Church in Streator, and together they made their home and raised their family in Coal City. Ed was a member of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church in Coal City and retired from Exelon in 1992, following 33 years of faithful service.

Remembered for his sharp sense of humor and financial savviness, Ed took pleasure in automobiles and computers, as well as watching NASCAR.

Survivors include his loving wife of 59 years, Lorraine; four children: Mark Pierard, of Summerville, SC; Aaron Pierard, of Rumford, RI; Monique Pierard Freeman, of Joliet and Brandon Pierard, of Bloomington, IL; five grandchildren: Michael Pierard, of Rumford; Derek Freeman, of Joliet; Justin Pierard, of Bloomington; Mason Freeman, of Joliet and Talia Pierard, of Bloomington; brother, Ernest Pierard, of Santa Fe, NM and several nieces and nephews, as well as dear friends, Pete Giandrone and Tom Fedash.

Edward was preceded in death by his par-

ents; son, Jason Edward in infancy (1970); sister, Alice Fedash Pierard and brother, David Pierard.

Green flameless cremation rites have been accorded.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 25, 2020 at 11 a.m. in Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Roman Catholic Church, 215 S. Kankakee St. in Coal City. Reverend Robert Noesen will preside.

Due to current pandemic guidelines, face masks will be required for attendees and measures of safe social distancing practices will be in order. The funeral home staff will assist the family not to exceed the safe number set forth for the service.

Those wishing to participate in Ed's services remotely are welcome to join the live streamed service available through a link on his memorial page beginning at 11 a.m. on Nov. 25, 2020.

Burial with full military honors will follow in Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, where Ed will be laid to rest with his son, Jason.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Ed's memory to the Assumption Catholic Church Building Fund, Joliet Area Community Hospice or to Mercy Home for Boys and Girls.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Ed's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: [www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Edward-Pierard](http://www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Edward-Pierard)

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

## Wanda Lou Johnson

ELWOOD—Wanda Lou Johnson, nee Button, 82, of Elwood, surrounded by love from her four adult children and while holding her husband's hand, breathed her last breath in comfort and peace and was welcomed into the presence of God on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2020 at 11:50 a.m. Wanda was born in Joliet on Oct. 6, 1938 to Vernon and Lucille (Walker) Button and grew up in the Ridgewood neighborhood. She and her loving husband of 61 years, Gerald (Jerry) Dennis Johnson, raised their family in Elwood. Wanda has been under hospice care at Sunny Hill Nursing Home of Will County since January 2020.

An inspiration to all who knew her for her kindness, gentleness and integrity, Wanda graduated from Joliet Central High School in 1956. She then worked as an executive secretary at the United States Atomic Energy Commission and married the love of her life on Sept. 18, 1959. Together, she and Jerry grew a successful family grocery business that included J.V. Supermarket on Cass Street in Joliet, Festival Foods in Bourbonnais, and Food Expo stores in Kankakee and Streator. An accomplished bookkeeper and business administrator, Wanda's favorite career was as wife, mother and grandmother.

In addition to her husband, Jerry, Wanda is survived by their children: Susan (Christopher) Markgraf, Sharon (Cedric) Hentsch, Sandra (Mark) Chellios and Steven (Melanie) Johnson,

as well as her brother, Donald Button and brother-in-law, Ronald (Kathryn) Chaplin. She is the beloved grandmother of Matthew (Asia Burnett) Markgraf, Lindsay (Tyler) Chambers, Sarah (Adam Necklows) Markgraf, Alex Johnson, Kyle (Malai) Chellios, Brittany Hentsch, Corinne (Kory) Mitcheff, Kali Hentsch and Hannah (Marcus Melancon) Johnson. Her beloved great-grandchildren provided Wanda with great joy. They are: Carson Chambers, Ellie Johnson, Charlotte Chambers, Fitz Chellios, Griffin Markgraf, Mika Melancon and Briar Chellios. Wanda is also survived by many dear nieces and nephews. She will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her.

Wanda is preceded in death by her parents, Vernon and Lucille Button; mother and father-in-law, Verner and Corinne (Allendorf) Johnson; sister, Kathryn Sue (Button) Chaplin and granddaughter, Lindsay (Chellios) Chambers.

Funeral services were held on Monday, Nov. 16, 2020. Private interment followed at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Memorials are appreciated to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, [www.stjude.org](http://www.stjude.org) or the Alzheimer's Association, [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

Wanda's arrangements were entrusted to Forsythe Gould Funeral Home in Manhattan, [www.forsythegouldfh.com](http://www.forsythegouldfh.com).

## Joe A. Silvey

ESSEX—Joe A. Silvey, 80, of Essex, passed away peacefully, Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2020 at his home.

Born June 6, 1940 in Xenia, IL, he was the son of Leslie and Mary (nee Cope) Silvey. He was a Veteran of the United States Army Reserves. He served on the former RUCS School Board and was a member of the Coal City United Methodist Church and was the former treasurer of the parsonage committee for the Essex, Braceville and South Wilmington Methodist Churches. Joe was very active within his community, where he also served on the Essex Village Board, was a trauma coordinator for the Essex Ambulance, as well as a secretary, treasurer, EMT and Fireman for the Essex Fire District. If you knew Joe, you knew he had a love for gardening and will forever be remembered for his massive vegetable garden.

He also had a love for sports and was an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan. His children were his pride and joy; when they were in their youth he was passionate about coaching little league and the County West Soccer Association. Joe will be missed by many, but will never be forgotten.

Surviving are his wife of 58 years, Pamela (nee Wells) Silvey, who he married June 1, 1962 in Flora, IL; two sons, Todd (Jo Beth) Silvey, of Elgin, IL and Brock (Justine) Silvey, of Evanston, IL; one daughter, Robin Egerton, of Mulberry, AR; seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, one sister, FayeAnne (Dale) Baker, of Farina, IL; one sister-in-law, Joy Silvey, of Leadbetter, KY and numerous nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death were his parents and his brother, Edward Silvey.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Private committal services will be at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, Elwood.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in his name to the Coal City United Methodist Church or to Joliet Area Community Hospice Home would be appreciated.

For more information and to visit his online guestbook, log on to [www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com](http://www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com) or find them on Facebook.

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

## Ronald Parsley

WILMINGTON—Ronald Parsley, 62, of Wilmington, passed away Monday, Nov. 9, 2020 at his home.

Born May 29, 1958 in Smithville, TN, Ronald Earl was a son of Travis M. and Elvirda "Judy" (nee Saylor) Parsley. He was raised and educated in Wilmington and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1976. On Oct. 2, 1976, Ronald married Kimberly Ann Jessen in Wilmington. Ronald had a passion of music and loved playing his guitar.

Survivors include his wife, Kim Schleeter; daughter, Melissa (Michael Holland) Parsley, of Manchester, TN; two grandchildren, Michael and Morgan Holland; siblings: Terry (Pat) Parsley, of Michigan; Pam (McClure) Cantrell, Travis E. (Shelly) Parsley and Regina (Jeff) Stone, all of Smithville, TN, as well

as numerous nieces and nephews. Ronald was preceded in death by his parents, one grandson in infancy, Matthew Holland and his niece, Charity Stone.

Per Ronald's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded and private family services are being planned for a later date.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Ronald's name to the American Cancer Society.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Ronald's memorial page by logging onto: [www.BaskervilleFuneral.com/obituary/Ronald-Parsley](http://www.BaskervilleFuneral.com/obituary/Ronald-Parsley)

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

## Frances Strobel

WILMINGTON—Frances Ruth Strobel, 80, of Wilmington, passed away Thursday, Nov. 12, 2020 at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee.

Born Oct. 28, 1940 in South Amboy, NJ, Frances was a daughter of William Edward and Ruth Ann (nee Conner) Klegman. She was raised and educated in Coal City and graduated Coal City High School with the class of 1958. On Nov. 12, 1960, Frances married Douglas Strobel in Coal City. She was a member of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Wilmington and was active with the County Line Kickers, line dancing group. Frances was a former board member of the Wilmington Public Library and remained a longtime supporter of the library. After high school, she was employed at the Joliet Arsenal and later in life enjoyed working with her sister, Peggy at Western World Racing Hut. She was accomplished at crocheting and enjoyed sharing her work with family and friends. She enjoyed playing tennis, gardening, cooking, and was dedicated to sending birthday cards and cards of celebration to those she knew and loved.

Survivors include her husband, Doug; three children: Reverend Scott (Renée) Strobel, of Lockport, NY; Sandra (Ron) Van Epps, of Northfield, IL and Amy (Patrick) Burke, of Macomb, IL; 11 grandchildren: Douglas (Holly) Strobel, Michael (Ashalea) Strobel, Timothy (fiancé Hope) Strobel, Wesley (Anja) Strobel,

Jacob Strobel, Annika Strobel, Kaitlyn Strobel, Krista (fiancé Alex Bloom) Van Epps, Zachary Van Epps, Joseph Burke, and Edward Burke; three great-grandchildren: Clayton, Kira and Nathanael; two sisters, Patricia (Ron) Fox and Kimberly (Dave) Brown; one brother, James Klegman and three sisters-in-law: Debbie Klegman, Ilene Kelgman and Sheri Friddle, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Frances was preceded in death by her parents; three brothers: Donald (Carol) Klegman, Thomas Kelgman and William "Jersey" Klegman and two sisters, Cathy Broderick and Margaret "Peggy" Ragain.

Per Frances' wishes cremation rites are being accorded and memorial services are being planned for a later date.

Frances will be laid to rest at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Braidwood.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in Frances' memory to Kuzma Care Cottage, Our Caring Closet, or to the Wilmington Fire Department.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Frances' memorial page by logging onto: [www.BaskervilleFuneral.com/obituary/Frances-Strobel](http://www.BaskervilleFuneral.com/obituary/Frances-Strobel)

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

**The Free Press Newspapers will limit hours of operation as Covid-19 positivity rates continue to climb. We are an essential business and intend to continue print operations as normal. However, we encourage you to call 815-476-7966 or 815-634-0315 before visiting either of our offices. Odds are we can service you over the phone. If not, we will arrange it so we can still conduct your business. We appreciate your understanding and please wear a mask everywhere you go**



# Bison Crawl brings worldwide audience to Midewin

On National Bison Day, bison enthusiasts learned about America's National Mammal in a virtual cross-country learning expedition from the Prairie State to the Treasure State.

The USDA Forest Service's third annual "Bison Crawl" included live presentations from Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington, the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Montana and from nearby First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park.

The first stop on the virtual education tour was at the spotting scopes along old historic Route 66 at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

Forest Preserve District of Will County Community Partnerships & Outreach Coordinator Ben Hecke and Midewin NTP Visitor Information Assistant Jasmine Lyons reported live from the Henslow Trail. They used mobile devices to show three bison grazing far off in the distance.

"It's just a beautiful day out here and everyone is happy to see bison on National Bison Day," Hecke said. "Jasmine tells me the entire herd might be headed this way."

As more bison approached, the expedition went to First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park in Ulm, Montana. From the edge of the cliff that is known to be the largest buffalo jump in the world, Park Manager Clark Carlson-Thompson said the jump was critical to human survival for hundreds of years.

"A buffalo jump is a site that was used by native peoples to harvest large numbers of buffalo, usually entire herds," Carlson-Thompson explained. "This spot has forever been known as a place of peace and gathering. Thousands of pounds of meat, hides; bones for tools and more were harvested. It looks just like a hill and as we get closer and closer to the cliff, it just appears out of nowhere."

Carlson-Thompson said that the jump was used for at least 600 years, starting at the year 900. The jump was used by 13 tribes from all over.

"From Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and even up into Canada." Depending on the specific spot, the buffalo jump is 20 to 50 feet tall. In some spots, bison bones are up to 22 feet deep. He said that most recent carbon dating is from 1500.

The next stop was the USDA Forest Service's Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana. Supervisory Interpreter Jeff LaRock said bison were essential to the expedition of Captain Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

"They came here knowing that there was this creature called the bison, although many of them had never seen one before and had only heard about them," LaRock said. "They found their first sign of bison less than two months after they set out in 1804, but it wasn't until two months after that when Private Reuben Field



EDUCATION OUTREACH



Sarah Norlin



Clockwise, from top left: Midewin NTP Public Affairs Officer and Public Services Team Leader Veronica Hinke explains that female bison horns are c-shaped; Clark Carlson-Thompson, park manager of First Peoples Buffalo Jump and Tower Rock state parks, looks out on one of the most historic buffalo jumps in the world; bison are visible through spotting scopes along old historic Route 66 at Midewin NTP; Supervisory Interpreter Jeff LaRock at The Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center. Photo by Allison Cisneros / The Nature Conservancy in Illinois

bagged the first bison. It was a bull. They dragged it back from the river. The meat filled two barrels."

LaRock said bison hide was used as waterproof material for packing gear; for sleeping and winter clothing. "Even bison dung was used for creating a hot flame with not a lot of smoke," LaRock said. "Lewis thought it 'impacted a spicy flavor to the meat.'"

Interpreter Karlene Faulkner described bowls made of bison ribs, pudding made of bison blood enhanced with berries and bone marrow. Pemican, dried meat, was popular. Hair and cattail fluff stuffed mattresses and more.

"This way of life lasted for hundreds of years," Faulkner said. "Today, the bison are making a comeback thanks to partnerships with Tribal Nations and local, state, and federal partnerships."

Back in the Prairie State, Midewin NTP Range Management Specialist Kelly Gutknecht told about the bison project there.

"Bison were introduced five years ago, and the point is to see if the bison can help improve diversity of native vegetation during restoration," Gutknecht said. "Through natural seed dispersal and more, we hope to see increases in grasses like big bluestem, Indian grass and more."

Staff with Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie organize the Bison Crawl each year to bring together dozens of government and non-profit organizations that offer in-person or virtual education programs for the public.

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## Morris Hospital COVID testing supply is limited

In an effort to balance limited testing supplies with increased demand for testing, Morris Hospital has asked providers on its medical staff to limit COVID testing orders to those who need it most: symptomatic patients and those at high risk for complications.

"Right now, there is a very high demand for COVID testing," says Kimberly Wolfer, Director of Laboratory Services at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers. "Due to our limited testing availability, we are unable to serve as a testing resource for all situations, especially in the case of asymptomatic people who are seeking testing because of concerns about potential exposure."

Wolfer says the recent increased demand for testing has also slowed test results. "We have a limited allocation of rapid tests each week and at this time have to reserve the rapid tests for patients being admitted to the hospital or having pre-surgical testing," explains Wolfer. "The rest of our COVID collections have to be sent out to a reference laboratory, and the results are currently taking 5-6 days. Previously, we were seeing a 2-3 day turnaround for test results that were sent out."

Morris Hospital continues to operate its outpatient COVID drive-thru testing site on the hospital main campus for patients who have a physician's order. After the physician's order is received, a Scheduling representative from Morris Hospital calls the patient to schedule the appointment. The drive-thru testing does not accept self-referrals or walk-ins.

COVID testing is also done at Morris Hospital's urgent care locations only if the provider determines testing is appropriate after evaluating the patient's medical history and symptom severity through a medical exam. The cost includes a physical exam

and a separate charge for COVID-19 testing if testing is ordered. Both get billed to insurance.

Morris Hospital's urgent care locations are in Channahon, Diamond-Coal City Campus, Morris and Yorkville. The rapid test is not being used at these locations at this time.

"Our immediate and convenient care centers are not the same as state testing sites where people can come just to get tested for COVID," explains Kim Smith, Director of Immediate Care and Occupational Medicine at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers. "This is where we provide walk-in care for patients with mild to moderate injuries and illness, including flu-like symptoms. Having an exam with an immediate/convenient care provider does not guarantee a COVID test will be performed. It's up to the discretion of the provider."

Morris Hospital also advises that the hospital emergency department should be reserved for those who are in need of emergency medical care.

## New doctor joins Morris Hospital

Local internal medicine physician Dr. Olga Peplos has merged her independent practice with Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers. The partnership allows Dr. Peplos more time to focus on patient care, while Morris Hospital oversees the business management responsibilities associated with her practice.

As a result of the affiliation, Dr. Peplos is now seeing patients at two locations: the

## Remember our veterans by sponsoring a wreath

Sponsor a wreath for a veteran's grave at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. The wreath laying will be held on Saturday, Dec. 19.

The ceremony will be held at 11 a.m. Wreaths are placed after a brief ceremony. Volunteers of all ages are needed to help place wreaths, dress appropriately for the cold.

Sponsorship is a tax deductible donation and may be made for a specific veteran or any veteran.

Complete the form below. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Wreaths Across America and mailed to: Will County Farm Bureau, c/o OCP Wreath Project, 100 Manhattan Rd., Joliet, IL 60433 Group# IL0013P

Sponsorships are being collected through Nov. 24 for the year 2020 campaign. Donations after Dec. 2 will be for 2021. Order online at Wreaths Across America and include cemetery ID: ILALNE. For updates pertaining with wreath placement and coronavirus precautions visit the Facebook page: Wreaths Across America Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery.

### Grave specific sponsorship

Complete a separate form for each veteran. Sponsors who attend the wreath laying on Saturday, Dec. 15, may place the wreath on that specific grave.

Veteran's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Section and grave marker (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be there to place the wreath yourself: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

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Family: four wreaths for \$60 \_\_\_\_\_

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Courtesy photo

**Dr. Olga Peplos, a local internal medicine physician, has merged her independent practice with Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers.**

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# Think before you shoot

Deer hunters better know how to process own meat  
**BY SHAWN LONG**  
 Sports Writer

Deer hunters may want to think twice before pulling the trigger this weekend when the first of the split firearms season open.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has meat lockers already backed up few, if any, are willing to process deer meat.

Barney Faletti, owner of Faletti Meats in Wilmington, typically processes deer for hunters but up until last week he is turning hunters away.

Faletti processed about 40 deer the previous two weeks but was so backed up with butchering beef, pork and chicken that he was forced with drawing a line.

"We're so busy despite the COVID pandemic I can't keep up with processing meat for my year-round customers," said Faletti.

In the past Faletti's would have as many as three butchers processing deer. In about 20 minutes they'd skin a deer and process the venison into steaks, chops, backstraps and roasts. The rest would be ground into venison hamburger.

Faletti Meats would process as many as 150 deer during a normal year. This year with the way COVID-19 is keeping more people at home, Faletti's is busy selling more beef, pork and chicken for the table.

"I had a guy in here Thursday begging for me to process his deer. He drove 45 minutes and said he was in no hurry to get the meat. I explained I just don't have the time these days and I was sorry but it's hard to find an hour and a half to do a deer by myself when I have to take care of my regular customers."

The only other place the Free Press Newspapers could find still processing deer was S&J Lisbon Locker, about a 40-minute drive in Newark, IL.



File Photo

**DON'T SHOOT BEFORE** you know where you're going with the deer. There have been deer processing facilities that have shut down their operations for the season because they were not able to keep up with the rush. There are other deer processing plants but they may not be within 10 minutes.

Julie Guerrero from the S&J Lisbon Locker said that as of now, they don't intend to put a cap on the number of deer they will accept.

In addition to processing the venison they make jerky and salami sticks as well.

"We book it in and they tell us how they want it cut," said Guerrero. "We cut it, skin it and make whatever people want. It usually varies. A lot of people will take their cuts, their steaks, chops and roast, and a lot of people do cheese and jalapeno sticks."

Guerrero, daughter of the owner Sandy Marlat, estimated they have already processed around 80 deer for bow hunters. Their four-person operation has so far been

able to keep up but they are bracing for the rush of the shotgun deer season Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

"I personally think that a lot of new people are out hunting because of COVID," added Guerrero. "I think we're going to get buried. I think we've already gotten more from bow season than we have in past years."

Guerrero, who has been at S&J Lisbon Locker for the last 16 years, notes last year they processed around 250 deer.

They've already had several out of state hunters arrive with deer as they are having a hard time finding other meat lockers not backed up with the processing of beef and pork. When the coronavirus shut-

down several large meat packing plants back in the spring, farmers turned to smaller meat lockers to process their livestock. Most are still booked through 2021.

"We have customers that come from Wisconsin," commented Guerrero. "In previous years, we've had a guy come up here to hunt from Alabama, his brother lives here but he makes the trip back to come and get it. There are quite a few that come from the city. It just varies."

The best advice is to call butcher shops and meat lockers and check if they're accepting deer before heading into the field.

# Free vouchers to visit national forests now includes fifth graders

The USDA Forest Service will expand its Every Kid Outdoors program to offer fourth- and fifth-grade students and family members free access to more than 2,000 sites on national forests and grasslands for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

A new voucher is available for download now through August 31, 2021.

"The year's events have made it harder for many students to get out to their local National Forest and to use their Every Kid Outdoors Annual 4th Grade Pass as intended," said Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen. "We hope the added time will encourage millions of families to use their free pass to get out to their National Forest, connect with nature, and experience the mental and physical benefits of the great outdoors."

Every Kid Outdoors is a federal public lands partnership created to inspire fourth-grade students and their families across America to recreate, explore cultures, discover connections to nature and spark a lifelong passion for America's great outdoors.

The program focuses on children ages 9-11 who, research shows, are beginning to understand the world around them, and are uniquely receptive to engaging with nature and the environment. By focusing on this age group year after year, the program aims to ensure every child in the United States has the opportunity to create a lifelong connection to America's big backyard.

To obtain a free 5th Grade Voucher, visit the Every Kid Outdoors website, click on the "Hey, fifth graders!" banner, and download a voucher.

## Will County building closed

The Will County Office Building is now closed to the public. With the number of coronavirus cases rapidly rising across the state of Illinois, Will County Executive Denise Winfrey has closed the county office building to the public.

Residents are urged to contact any office within the county building by telephone or via e-mail to inquire how to handle any application, transaction, etc. This decision follows the Illinois Department of Public Health's new recommendations to work from home when possible, participate in only essential activities, limit any gathering to 10 people, and only travel if necessary.

"The number of positive cases for COVID-19 has risen dramatically," Winfrey said. "The health and wellness of our county employees and our residents is of

utmost importance. We want to do everything we can to protect people which includes encouraging the public to wear a mask at all times, wash your hands often, and to maintain social distance. Closing our office building to the public is a responsible move to help limit the spread of this highly infectious virus."

Statewide, the IDPH reports COVID-19 hospitalizations, including patients in Intensive Care Units and on ventilators, are at the same levels as the first peak of the virus earlier this year.

"We must all take these statistics seriously and not let down our guard," Winfrey added.

For more information about the IDPH and its response to the COVID-19 crisis, visit the website at [www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19).

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### HOMES FOR RENT

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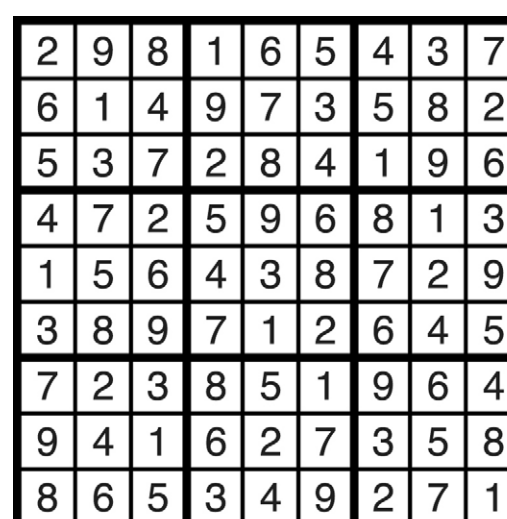
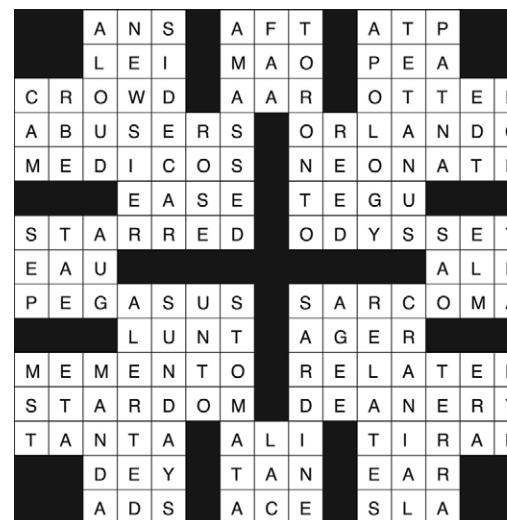
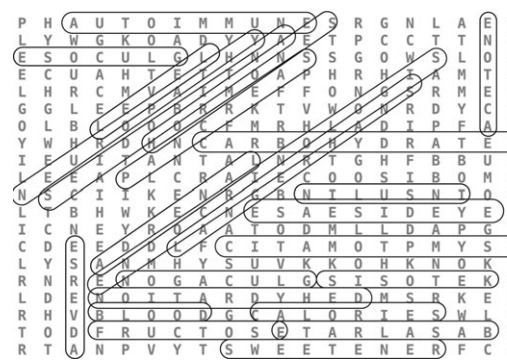
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# The one person who could turn the tide against Madigan

With the announcement by Rep. Bob Morgan (D-Deerfield) earlier this month that he will not vote to reelect Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan in January, the opposition numbered eight House Democrats, with at least a few more privately leaning their way.

They'll need 13 or 14 Democrats, depending on final general election results, to deprive Madigan of the speaker's gavel. So, they may need some help to get over the hump.

And there's one person outside the House who may have enough votes to tip the balance either way.

And, no, it's likely not Gov. JB Pritzker. Not yet, anyway.

Pritzker controls no votes in the House. He can't just push a button and make something happen in that chamber.

Perhaps if he had followed through on his 2018 promises to supplant the moribund state party with a true statewide political organization for all Democrats at all levels, he might have some buttons to push. But he didn't, and the pandemic intervened and here we are.

Whatever the case, a governor directly confronting the House Speaker has never worked here. Others have tried. All have failed. A governor's opposition would, as it has in the past, give Madigan something external and concrete to push back against in order to distract from his internal problems.

And if Pritzker's effort to dislodge Madigan failed, so would the remainder of his legislative agenda. Not to mention that Pritzker certainly hurt himself when he not so subtly threw resources Sen. Kimberly Lightford's way during her unsuccessful run for Senate President almost a year ago. Once bitten, twice shy.

There is definite pressure on Pritzker to act, though. As the saying goes, "governors own," so he'll wear the jacket in 2022 if Madigan is still standing and remains as spectacularly unpopular as he is today.

Maybe Pritzker could quietly do something at the very end to make it happen if the opposition is still slightly short, but don't expect anything before that unless something major happens with the feder-

al investigation into the House Speaker's operation. But if Pritzker swings and misses, Madigan will still be around, Pritzker won't get anything accomplished and the voters will not be pleased.

The dude spent a zillion dollars to get elected governor only to find himself in a dozen trick bags. Welcome to Illinois!

The one person outside the House who could make a real and immediate difference is U.S. Rep. Chuy Garcia.

As I've told you before, Garcia, the Chicago Teachers Union and Madigan came to an understanding not long after Garcia, with the CTU's backing, lost the city mayor's race in 2015. Madigan's 13th Ward carried Mayor Rahm Emanuel to victory, but that took an extraordinary amount of work in Madigan's Latino-dominated area. Better to just cut a deal.

Since then, one after another of Congressman

Garcia's close allies have been elected or appointed to the General Assembly.

There are probably no better examples of this than in Madigan's own neighborhood. Garcia ally Celina Villanueva was appointed to the House in the summer of 2018 when Madigan loyalist

Rep. Silvana Tabares was appointed to the Chicago City Council in the neighboring 23rd Ward.

Rep. Villanueva then ran unopposed in a special election to replace resigned Sen. Martin Sandoval (Madigan's Senator) and Garcia's congressional aide Edgar Gonzalez was appointed to Villanueva's House seat. In between, Madigan successfully supported another Garcia staffer for a Cook County Board slot over Sandoval's daughter.

Congressman Garcia has significant influence over at least three Chicago Democratic House members

(Gonzalez, Aaron Ortiz and Delia Ramirez). But if he makes a strong statement either way on Madigan, several other progressives in the chamber could very well follow his lead.

Garcia, by the way, is also a member of Madigan's state party central committee. A few committee members have spoken out against Chairman Madigan, but Garcia has a stronger political organization and a larger public platform. He could make a real difference there, too.

But a deal is a deal and, in the long term, Garcia has the better end of it. Madigan gets peace and Garcia gets more of

his people into influential positions every time there's a path (or close to it, like when Madigan tried unsuccessfully to block Eva-Dina Delgado's appointment to the House this year after Garcia and the CTU supported someone else).

And that probably explains why Congressman Garcia isn't returning my phone calls and texts these days to ask what he's planning to do about all of this.

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



CAPITOL FACTS  
Rich Miller

# Illinois gas prices fall

Illinois gas prices have fallen 3.1 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.16/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,378 stations.

Gas prices in Illinois are 1.6 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 44.0 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois is priced at \$1.82/g Monday while the most expensive is

\$2.79/g, a difference of 97.0 cents per gallon.

The lowest price in the state is \$1.82/g while the highest is \$2.79/g, a difference of 97.0 cents per gallon. The national average price of gasoline has risen 1.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.12/g Monday.

The national average is down 4.3 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 49.0 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

"For the first time in seven weeks, GasBuddy data showed average gas prices rose last week, unsurprising given the previous 18% jump in the price of crude oil on promising vaccine news," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"This year has been anything but normal and such news of promising vaccine results will likely rekindle gas prices for a short while. We're likely to see prices inch up

slightly again this week as gas stations continue to try to pass along the rise from last week to retail, but ahead of Thanksgiving, prices should be mostly stable.

"For now, motorists shouldn't expect too many fireworks at the pump, but the upcoming release of GasBuddy's Holiday Travel survey highlights some big changes motorists are making for the last six weeks of the year."

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Coal City Community Unit School District No. 1 files annual financial report

PUBLIC NOTICE

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS SUMMARY FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020

The summary must be published in the local newspaper.

Copies of the detailed Annual Statement of Affairs for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020 will be available for public inspection in the school district/joint agreement administrative office by December 1, annually. Individuals wanting to review this Annual Statement of Affairs should contact:

Coal City Community School District #1, 550 S. Carbon Hill Road, Coal City, IL 60416, 815-634-2287, 7:00 am - 4:00 pm

Also by January 15, annually the detailed Annual Statement of Affairs for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020, will be provided on the Illinois State Board of Education's website at www.isbe.net.

SUMMARY: The following is the Annual Statement of Affairs Summary that is required to be published by the school district/joint agreement for the past fiscal year.

Statement of Operations as of June 30, 2020

Table with 11 columns: Local Sources, Flow-Through Receipts/Revenues from One District to Another District, State Sources, Federal Sources, Total Direct Receipts/Revenues, Total Direct Disbursements/Expenditures, Other Sources/Uses of Funds, Beginning Fund Balances - July 1, 2019, Other Changes in Fund Balances, Ending Fund Balances June 30, 2020. Rows include Educational, Operations & Maintenance, Debt Services, Transportation, Municipal Retirement/Social Security, Capital Projects, Working Cash, Tort, and Fire Prevention & Safety.

STATEMENT OF REVENUES RECEIVED/REVENUES, EXPENDITURES DISBURSED/EXPENDITURES, OTHER SOURCES/USES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE - FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020

Table with 11 columns: Description, Acct No, Educational, Operations & Maintenance, Debt Service, Transportation, Municipal Retirement & Social Security, Capital Projects, Working Cash, Tort, Fire Prevention & Safety. Rows include Receipts/Revenues, Disbursements/Expenditures, and Other Sources/Uses of Funds.

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS OF JUNE 30, 2020

Table with 11 columns: Description, Acct No, Educational, Operations & Maintenance, Debt Service, Transportation, Municipal Retirement & Social Security, Capital Projects, Working Cash, Tort, Fire Prevention & Safety. Rows include Current Assets, Current Liabilities, and Long-Term Liabilities.

GROSS PAYMENT FOR CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

Table listing names and salary ranges for certified personnel. Salary ranges include: Less Than \$25,000; \$25,000 - \$39,999; \$40,000 - \$59,999; \$90,000 And Over.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ANNUAL STATEMENT OF AFFAIRS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING June 30, 2020

Form with various fields: School District/Joint Agreement Name, RCFT Number, Address, County, Name of Newspaper, District Type, Assurance, Capital Assets, and Tax Rate by Fund.

REPORT ON CONTRACTS EXCEEDING \$25,000 AWARDED DURING FY2020

Table with 4 items detailing contracts exceeding \$25,000 awarded during FY2020, including total number of contracts, total value, and breakdown by ownership type.

GROSS PAYMENT FOR NON-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL

Table listing names and salary ranges for non-certified personnel. Salary ranges include: Less Than \$25,000; \$25,000 - \$39,999; \$40,000 - \$59,999; \$90,000 And Over.

Payments to Person, Firm, or Corporation over \$2,500

Table listing payments to various entities over \$2,500, including Frontline Technologies Group, LLC, GORDON FOOD SERVICE, INC., and many others.

Payments to Person, Firm or Corporation of \$500 to \$999 Excluding Wages And Salaries

Table listing payments to various entities between \$500 and \$999, including Jerbi, Daniel, Hren, John, and others.

Payments to Person, Firm or Corporation of \$1000 to \$2500 Excluding Wages And Salaries

Table listing payments to various entities between \$1000 and \$2500, including Phoenix Industrial Cleaning, Inc., Brad Trotter & Associate, and others.

# COALER SPORTS

## Former Coaler coaches give the boys hoops dream team

BY SHAWN LONG  
SPORTS WRITER

They're Coalers considered the best of the best when it comes to boys basketball.

Two Coal City coaches from two different eras provided their lists on who would make their dream team. John Cullick, who coached the Coalers to a regional title with a 105-98 record from 1978-86, had a pretty good idea year by year which players he would pick.

### 1979-80

Cullick listed Joe Blaine and Tim Halliday as top players on a 1980 team that went 19-7.

"Those two guys really were the mainstays along with Al Swiggett and Dean Waldschmit," said Cullick.

Halliday was 6-2 but he played so much bigger. He was a 1,000 point scorer for the Coalers.

"Halliday was probably one of the best big guys we ever had play inside for us. Halliday was very muscular, had very good moves around the basket and also could shoot his free-throws. It was the kind of the players we'd like to have. His game was pretty much inside. He was a good relentless rebounder."

### 1980-81

Mike Lissy, a point guard, joined Ken Spelde, Brian Residore, Dan Badino, the current mayor, Terry Halliday and Earl Mack on a team that went 20-8, winning the regional championship over the powerhouse Dwight Trojans.

Dan Badino was a good three-point shooter before they had the three point lines.

"Dan Badino, way before his time if they had the three point line when he would have been playing, I mean he would have been awesome. He shot from way outside all the time and at that time, it was just two points no matter what.

"Earl Mack was very important to that year because he was the guy who made the winning basket in the regional championship over Dwight, who had beat us in the regional semifinals in 1980. Dwight was the epitome of good basketball and the rivals to us every year."

Cullick noted Lissy, who went on to score 1,000 points for the Coalers, was a great overall player who could do a lot of good things.

"He was probably more of an all-around player because he was a point guard for us who had the capabilities to run the offense and so forth. He could handle the pressure. He was just a good smart ballplayer, could shoot from the outside, could take the ball to the basket and just was able to get us into our offense."

### 1982-83

Cullick noted 1983 was a year when the team improved with each game and made it to the regional championship again before losing to Dwight.

On that team, Cullick names Billy Smith and Rick Sisk as the top two players.

"The best player on that team we had was Billy Smith and then Rick Sisk was a big guy inside for us who did a lot of good things," commented Cullick.

### 1984-85

Cullick said the team got to the regional finals again with the current Coal City athletic director Dan Hutchings

leading the way. Hutchings was good but a future 1,000 point scorer Mike Overby, who was 6-6, led the way that year when the Coalers were 17-9.

"Dan Hutchings was one of our better players on that team. His game was like Mike Lissy's. Dan was quite a bit bigger but they were the same kind of player. He was maybe more of a penetrator than Mike was. Mike liked to shoot that three-pointer. Dan liked to take the ball to the basket but he was a really good leader on that team. That kind of led him to where he's at now."

Overby was the top player on that team until he was forced to transfer his senior year.

"But the big thing was, Mike Overby could really play. He was the top scorer, could shoot it and his dad was the Superintendent here at the school and unfortunately for us, his dad got a job down in Quincy."

Overby was more of a mobile big guy who had the versatility to play all the positions.

"He too would've been in the same three point situation as Baudino. He was a good player inside, scored a lot of points for us inside and just was an awesome three-point shooter. He had the capability of shooting outside which made it tough for people to defend him. He was very coachable. Most of the kids I've coached were. They were pretty good kids to have."

Overby went on to play at Quincy College.

### 1985-86

Coal City had Hutchings to rely on in 1986 during Cullick's final year when they went 11-14.

"We were at .500 or a little below that year," continued Cullick. "We didn't have the same scoring potential. Dan got hurt so he didn't play the whole year."

Cullick said Brad Schmitt, who played from 1991-94, was another standout. He was one of eight members to join the 1,000 point club.

"Brad was like an Austin Pullara-type of player," commented Cullick. "Offensively, he could go to the basket and shoot from outside. He was just a good all-around player. Brad wasn't quite as physical as Austin was but he was that type of player."

### Sectional success

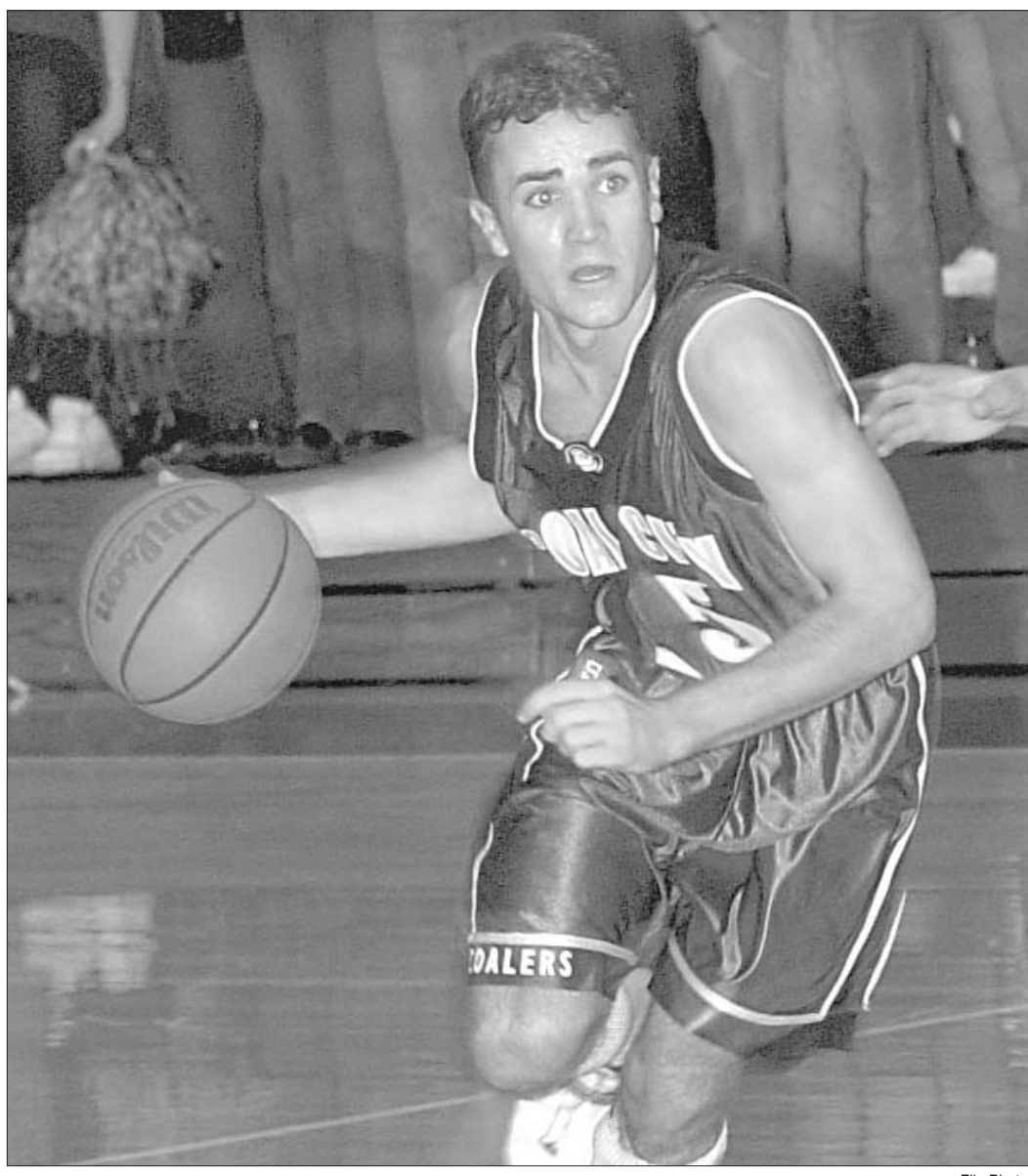
Mitch Hamann coached the Coalers to a sectional and two regional championships with an overall record of 142-70 in his nine years (1996-2004). Hamann gave some insight on which players he would choose if he were to assemble a dream team.

Hamann highlighted the 1998-99 sectional championship team.

Nick Cardone, who was a 6-7 center, earned All-State his senior year during the sectional championship where the Coalers won 26 out of the 28 games played. They beat Newark 59-53 to capture the sectional championship.

Matt Hines, who scored over 1,000 points at Coal City, played forward on the sectional championship team. He was 6'6.

"They both had good size. At the time, they were 6'6, 6'7," said Hamann. "They both had matured. They each put on 20-30 pounds. After graduation. That's what got us in trouble. We were tall, athletic, they lift-



File Photo

COAL CITY FRESHMEN girls basketball coach Brad Borelli was recently selected by coach Mitch Hamann to be on the Coaler boys basketball dream team.

ed but they hadn't fully physically matured yet.

Nick had so much versatility as a player.

"What was special about Nick, in fact we had won the Plano Tournament one year with him guarding the point guard who was a really good shooter," commented Hamann. "Nick was able to do that with his size. I think the kid only took two shots all game because it was tough to shoot over that size but he was quick enough and smart enough to anticipate the drive."

Matt played hard to the whistle every single play.

"Matt was just endless energy. He could just run the floor. Very enthusiastic type of a player. He could shoot outside more but Matt played more inside where Nick played more outside than he did inside. Nick was a good three-point shooter."

Nick went on to play basketball four years at St. Francis University where he played center after always being an outside shooter with the Wildcats.

"He was a good three-point shooter," commented Hamann. "Here he was playing outside for me. Then, he went to St. Francis to play center."

Nick is still listed in the top free-throws, connecting on 280 from 1999-2003. He also had 70 career blocks and shot a .643 percentage from the floor during the 2001 season, good for the highest percentage at USAF.

John Gockman was one of the top point guards who led in assists.

"He was very unselfish," said Hamann. "He ran the show, he was one of the best defenders and he just did it all. He was capable of scoring a lot too."

Gockman went on to kick field goals at the University of Illinois.

Mike Noffsinger was another standout player from the sectional championship team. After graduating, he went on to St. Francis to play soccer, where he became an All-American goalie.

During his time at Coal City, he played guard but Hamann notes he could have played anywhere with how well he played.

"Noffsinger was a really good rebounder but he had to be a guard because he'd jump so high, he'd jump out of the gym. In fact, we played a game against Reed-Custer. First play of the game, I set it up a lob pass and we ran a set play for a lob dunk for Noffsinger and Gockman threw a perfect pass. They're coach still talks about that to this day. 'You're running a lob to a six-foot guard?'"

Brad Wren was another tall player on the 1999 team that grew into his own, going on to play basketball at Clark College in Dubuque, IA.

Aaron Hines  
Matt's brother, Aaron, was mentioned next. He played on the 2000 team that went 16-13 team that won a regional championship, making it to

the sectional championship.

"He was a nice player inside and out. We won the regional that year. We were three games under .500 going into the regional and we got to the sectional championship. We were leading late in the first half. Our best three-point shooter, Todd Bailey, we thought he had a three-point play, they called him for a charge, no-play. He ended up leaving that game with a high ankle sprain which eliminated our outside threat and we ended up losing by five or six points."

### Zach Rouse

Rouse played on the 2003 team that won 21 games. He was another one of those versatile players, who could play anywhere.

"He was a good all-around player for me," he continued. "He was an All-Conference, all-area, just a workhorse. I would say he wasn't blessed with the most athletic basketball build. He just was a good athlete, a really hard competitor and him and Gockman were both two of the most competitive kids I've ever coached."

Also on that team was Dan Tucker and Justin O'Bert. "Dan was a very good all-around player while O'Bert was a great rebounder," added Hamann.

### Eric DePodesta

DePodesta, who was the top scorer on the 1989-90 regional championship team, was named to the team next.

"He had the top three or four at the Plano Tournament for points scored. I know he held that. He was maybe only a 6'1 center but he played hard and ran the court with a jump hook. We had several nice players on that team but he would be the one that stood out the

most."

### Austin Pullara

Pullara, who just graduated this past year, was a forward mentioned next.

"He was a good all-around hard nosed player that could play inside, outside, he could D-up if you wanted him to," added Hamann.

Pullara joined the 1,000 point club this past year and concluded his senior campaign with 1,302 points.

### Nick Peters & Brennan Shetina

Nick Peters was a phenomenal Coal City basketball player, who led the Coalers to a regional title in 2013 when the Coalers were 19-13.

He was the highest scorer on that team, putting up 458 team-leading points that year.

Peters was a great athlete who drove the ball to the rim with excellent pace.

That is why he is a part of the 1,000 points club, finishing with 1,220 points. He also had 552 career boards as he was also a really good defender.

Shetina, who was on that same regional championship team with Peters, was the other leader and the next selection.

Shetina was their second leading scorer that season, putting up over 400 points. He finished with 778 total points.

Both players were sound defensively as Shetina finished with 161 rebounds and was an assist leader with 154 career assists. Peters had 139.

"They were definitely the tandem when Brad Borelli was coaching that team and they won the regional," said Hamann.

### Kyle Hamann

Hamann said his son, Kyle, who played on the 2003-

04 team that went 19-7, was a really good three-point shooter. He connected on 63 in one season.

"He had the best percentage at three point shots. He shot 43 percent from three-point range. You'll take 43 from anywhere."

### Brad Borelli

Coal City freshman girls basketball coach Borelli, played the 2003-04 team with Kyle and was an excellent three-point shooter as well as just a tremendous athlete.

"That 2003-04 team had the best three-point shooters next to the sectional championship team. Brad Borelli, my son and Josh Lardi.

"Borelli hit some big threes. He was a nice player. He was quarterback on the football field but a quarterback on the basketball court too. He was really smart, ran the show and he made all-conference his junior year and averaged only four points a game. You don't see that too often. Coaches in the area could see what type of player he was. He'd probably be the assist leader next to Gockman."

### Blake Yankovich

Yankovich was a standout guard on the 2000-01 team with Aaron Hines

"He really shot up when he hit high school," added Hamann. "He handled the ball well at the guard spot but he wasn't afraid to go inside."

### Austin McDowell

Hamann says that McDowell leads in three-point shots. He was a great shooter.

"He has the most threes in school history," he noted. "He thought he could shoot anywhere on the court. He probably could've been right up there in the best three point percentages. He was just on a team where they needed him to score."

### Justin Wharrie & Lonnie Henline

Hamann says they were standouts on his first team as a coach, who worked hard.

"They worked hard to finish 13-13. I only had like three seniors on that team but those guys just played hard. They didn't win many games as freshman and sophomores and then to come as seniors, and .500, that was good for that group of kids."

### Top players in early years

Assistant girls basketball coach Joel Micetich helped fill in the gaps in the early years of Coal City basketball.

Jay VanDuyne, who played in the mid 60's, was a 500 point scorer.

Doug Wills was a 1,000 point scorer with two back-to-back 500 point seasons in the 70s.


Also in the late 70's was Micetich, who is the top scorer at Coal City, putting up 1,406 career points.

Cullick noted he was the best player of his time.

"At that particular time in Coal City basketball, Joel was the guy that everybody wanted to be like. Joel could shoot it anywhere you wanted him to. He was not bashful about it. He was true to himself and just a nice player."

He scored the most points in a single season, putting up 656 during his senior season.


Andrew Trotter was the other top scorer with Micetich on that team, scoring close to 500 points.



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## Gagliardo hopes to bolster Redbirds pitching staff

BY SHAWN LONG  
STAFF WRITER

Coal City 2019 graduate Keegan Gagliardo has recently signed a letter of intent to pitch for Illinois State University in Normal, IL.

Gagliardo has been playing under scholarship at Lincoln Trail College, a small community college in Lincoln, IL.

He was a three-sport athlete throughout high school but he knew baseball would take him farther in college.

"Out of all the sports I played, I enjoyed baseball the most," commented Gagliardo. "And it seemed like it was the one I had the most success in so that's when I decided to put more work in."

It also helped that he was blessed with accuracy to throw a high 80's fastball. He found that out in his freshman year.

"Going into high school, with all the stats I put up in high school with the lowest ERA and just stuff like that, I was performing better than other kids."

It always helped that his dad and family were behind him every step of the way.

"He was always there for me," added Gagliardo. "Whatever I needed, he would always support me. If it was 'let's go play catch or let's go work on something in the backyard or lessons'. Whatever I wanted he was always there and always willing to help me."

Gagliardo pitched for three seasons at Coal City and still holds the record for the lowest ERA there when he tied Curt Skubic's school record in 2019 with a 1.15 career ERA.

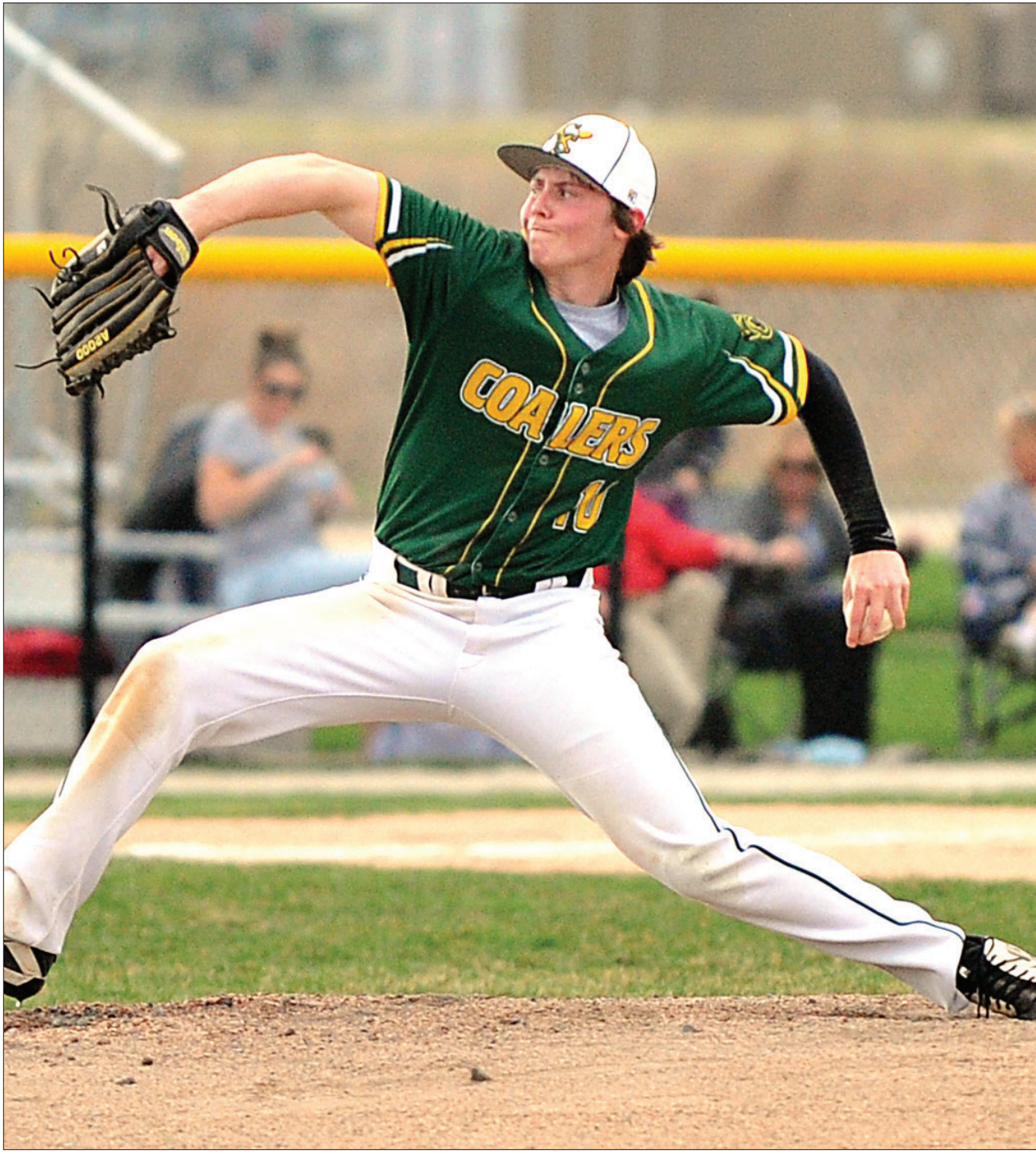
After two seasons at Lincoln Trail he knew it was time to hit the trail again so he started weighing college options. This time it was between Illinois State, Southern Illinois University, Murray State and USE Ashville

Out of those options, Gagliardo felt right at home at Illinois State. It helped that it's about an hour from home.

"I just felt like it was the right fit for me," said Gagliardo. "They said a lot of good things and I just pretty much fell in love with it. It's close to home too so that's always a bonus."

But the biggest thing that swayed Keegan was how the pitching coach worked with the pitchers to get them ready for the season.

"I just liked the way they talked



File Photo

COAL CITY GRADUATE Keegan Gagliardo signed his letter of intent to play Division 1 baseball at Illinois State University. The southpaw just finished up his two years at Lincoln Trail College.

about how their pitchers do their thing. A lot of the things they said is a lot of things I like to do. I guess pitcher prep."

Gagliardo does a lot of the same things they did to warm-up so he was

already comfortable.

"We do plyballs pre and post. I do a lot of flat ground and long toss too. Long toss gets your arm stretched out and loose. All those exercises were beneficial for me at Lincoln."

After getting to look at the team and the campus, Keegan and the coach got down to talking about the details. The ISU coach said there was a chance he could start.

"They said they projected me to

be a starter but nothing is guaranteed. I still have to go in there and bust my butt."

Gagliardo knows he'll have to try hard to start but the biggest thing will be not changing who he is as a pitcher.

"I think I just need to keep working hard and being true to who I am just like attack the zone and command it with all four of my pitches and just compete every day."

There's no doubt Gagliardo can help the Redbirds, who finished the shortened season 7-9 with a team ERA of 5.74.

He was undefeated his senior season at Coal City with an 8-0 record and a 0.62 ERA. He took that success into four appearances in college where he posted a 2.38 ERA with 12 strikeouts in 11.1 innings.

"I just want to compete," said Gagliardo. "Be a top arm on their team and just keep getting better is the main thing. Don't stay stagnant."

The southpaw has a nasty mix of pitches including a fastball that'll top out at 90 mph, a change-up that will drop off the table at 78, a curveball with an over the top break at 74 mph and a wipe out slider at 76 mph.

If he gets a rotation spot, he'll keep it with the way he goes at the hitters.

"Usually the first time through my lineup, I'll usually go fastball heavy," commented Gagliardo. "Then, the second time I'll try to work backwards so I'll do both."

Keegan, who currently has a 3.40 GPA, is pursuing a career in physical education. All his general education courses done so he knows he won't have to worry about that.

"I think the main thing is just making sure you're staying on top of your classes," explained Gagliardo. "Our coaches here at the junior college give us a lot of time to stay on top of our classes. We have study tables. We could do homework whenever we want and they give us time to do work outside our practices too."

Illinois State plans to begin its season in the middle of February with a conference schedule in place to limit teams traveling to other states. Keegan notes there will be three double-headers a week so that means a lot of opportunities to impress his new coaches.

After college, he hopes to achieve his dream of pitching in the Major Leagues.

"That is 100 percent the next goal for me is to sign for pro ball somewhere."

## Local teams put winter season on hold

BY SHAWN LONG  
STAFF WRITER

Basketball will have to wait as Reed-Custer and Wilmington High School join Coal City in announcing there won't be winter sports played locally.

The local schools are going to abide by the Illinois Department of Health in taking COVID-19 safety precautions by waiting until the go-ahead is given.

Coal City sent a press release out Thursday saying they would be following the guidance of the IDPH and Illinois State Board of Education on the winter basketball season. Coal City basketball players will be working on no-contact skill development and conditioning until the sports are approved.

After the Illinois High School Association went forth with planning for the winter season on Wednesday, Oct. 28, Gov. Pritzker held a press con-

ference the day after, stating schools could face legal consequences if illness or injury results from playing in defiance of the state's guidance.

So far 34 schools have said they intend to start their seasons while 300 said no and 212 are undecided.

Reed-Custer athletic director Chuck Anderson explained the Comets will be following the IDPH.

"We're like everyone else," said Anderson. "It's like the rest of the schools in our conference, most of them and the area, we're just not able to do it."

Anderson is hopeful for a more clear view on the season when the IHSA has a board meeting on Thursday.

"We'll hope to have a better direction on Thursday when everyone gets together but at this point in time, it's not feasible to move forward."

What influenced the decision for many was insurance companies that are warning that coverage will be dropped

if they don't abide by the state.

"I expect they'll push our season back," added Anderson. "Who knows what will happen but that's what I expect they'd do."

Wilmington athletic director Brian Goff said the liability issue was the exact reason the Wildcats are going to wait.

"It was 100% that," said Goff. "The insurance company told us, 'that's on you'. They said if you go against the Illinois Department of Public Health Guidelines, we can't be liable. We would be liable for that so we would lose tort immunity which means if somebody sued the school, we wouldn't be covered. Now, they're going after individual coaches. It's just not worth it."

The IHSA had a virtual board meeting on Wednesday to discuss Thursday's agenda. Representatives from the IDPH and governor's office have been asked to attend. They also invited the Illinois Principals Association, the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois State Board of Education and a coalition of the 200 school superintendents who made an effort to contact the Governor regarding school sports.

"The Board hopes to create a dialogue and build a more collaborative relationship with all the entities involved with developing sports policy in our state as everyone tries to navigate the myriad issues caused by the pandemic," said IHSA Executive Director Craig Anderson.

"The Board's decision to move forward with the IHSA basketball season was not meant to be adversarial. It was rooted in a desire to receive more direct communication and data from our state partners. They hope all the groups will see the mutual benefit of increased discourse and be represented at the meeting on November 19."

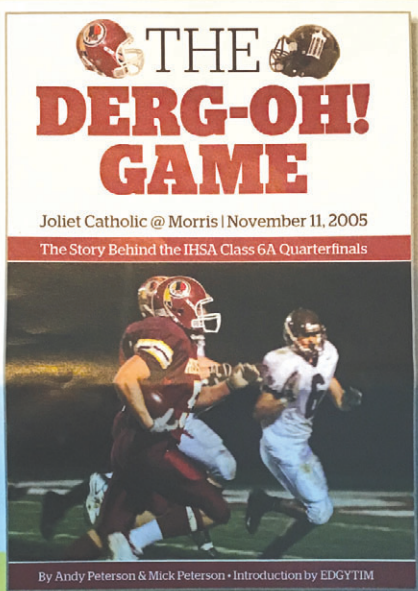
The IHSA Board said that while the schools can start practicing on Nov. 16, they will be held to Level 1 mitigations from the IDPH All Sports Policy until at least Nov. 19. They'll hope to have more direction after the meeting on Thursday.



File Photo

COAL CITY SENIOR Kyle Burch will have his ears and eyes peeled on Thursday for the decision the state and the Illinois High School Association make regarding the basketball season that they will talk about during their board meeting. As of now, Coal City is following the guidelines of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

### BOOK COMING THIS OCTOBER!



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