

Coalers achieved a lot before COVID





COALCITY COURANT &

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2020

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER

Holding out hope, Unit 1 prepares for Dresden closure

"SOMEONE TOLD ME YEARS AGO A SCHOOL DISTRICT HAS TO PROVIDE THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION THE TAXPAYERS ARE WILLING TO SUPPORT, AND WE'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THAT IS."

DR. KENT BUGG UNIT 1

BY ANN GILL

Dresden Generating Station in 2021 has local officials traveling parallel paths. They're hopeful the plant might remain open while at the same time safeguarding the community from a premature

Unit 1 Superintendent Dr. Kent Bugg, with support from community leaders and economic stakeholders, is leading the effort to advocate for Dresden's continued operation.

term financial impacts a closure would lizing assessed values, tax rates and

Under an agreement with the Exelon Nuclear's intent to close its seven taxing districts within the footprint of the generating station, Exelon pays around \$24 million annually in property taxes with \$16 million of it going to the school district.

If the plant closes that guaranteed income would disappear and a reduced assessment on the facility would be made. If that happens the school, fire, library, township and county would all see significantly fewer tax dollars.

District officials have provided the Bugg has been meeting with the district's finance committees and crunching numbers with the school's process move along. They offered some chief business official to grasp the long- general guidance as a starting point uti-

budget figures.

What we came up with after a lot of discussion was a starting point for the board to look at was [fiscal year] 2006 and we chose 2006 for a couple of reasons, No. 1 we remember back in 2006 the tax rate for the Dresden Station was at the end of the ramp down agreement and we were assessed at \$105 million for that plant and the total EAV [equalized assessed value] in the district for that time including Dresden was about \$340 million and the tax rate

As Bugg notes the district's current tax rate is well below the 2006 figure, and has maintained over \$1 lower since

Currently the assessed value of the district is close to \$860 million with about 60% of that coming from the nuclear plant and the tax rate is at

Back in 2006, the district's assessed value was round \$340 million and according to Bugg, should efforts to keep the plant open fail, a closure would result in a reduction of assessed value to around that \$340 million mark.

'If we were able to run the district back in '06 with that amount, what does it look like now?" he said.

So they have been comparing how the size of the staff and programming have changed in the past 14 years,

SEE UNIT 1, PAGE 2



IN ORDER TO assist restaurants and bars that had been forced to closed, the village of Coal City amended its code to allow outdoor dining under the terms of the Restore Illinois plan. Additionally, it provided businesses with tables and safety barriers.



LOCAL GROCERY STORES had trouble keeping items in stock; bath tissue, paper towels, sanitizing wipes, milk and bread caused store shelves to become bare as a stay-at-home order was issued by the governor in mid-March sparking panic buying.



SOCIALLY DISTANCED PARADES became the way of celebrating milestones in 2020. After two months of remote learning, students said good-bye to teachers with an end of the year parade around Coal City's three elementary level building.

Unprecedented

2020 is one for the history books

BY ANN GILL

As the final hours of 2020 tick away, we are reminded of the events that shaped the past 12 months—from COVID-19 to Coal City's construction, the doings in Diamond and the deafening silence that fell over Carbon Hill during what is traditionally its busiest week of the year.

Without a doubt, 2020 was unprecedented and one for the history books, a year we certainly will

January and February were relatively normal months with municipal boards meeting, sporting evens in full swing and high school seniors looking forward to end-of-year events like prom and gradu-

In those early days of the new year national news outlets were reporting on a new strain of a virus that was beginning to take hold worldwide. By mid-March COVID-19 had a firm grip on the United

Locally, the first confirmed case of the coronavirus was reported by the Grundy County Health Department on March 23. Since then more than 3,700 cases have been reported here, with the disease known to be a contributing factor in the deaths of 40 Grundy County citizens.

The first COVID headline appeared in the Coal City Courant March 11 and within days a mandated stay-at-home order was in place with hopes of slowing the spread of the virus. Schools were closed, sports halted and with the exception of essential services, businesses closed.

At first it looked like a manageable two-week shut down. But two weeks turned into two months and then 200 days and as we enter the final 24 hours of the year—42 weeks after the state's initial shut down—we continue to quarantine.

Over the past 9 1/2 months, we've witnessed a lot of changes as we've started working and learning from home, cooking and collecting carry-outs rather than dining out, many started shopping on-line and opting for curbside pickup. We've seen student programs and productions go virtual or socially distanced in an outdoor setting. We've seen birthday parades and children visiting grandparents through



LONG-TIME COAL CITY firefighter James Seerup was sworn in as the fire protection district's new chief in August. His golden badge pinned on by his wife,

We've seen fellow citizens step up to help those most affected by the pandemic by volunteering and contributing at local food pantries and meal sites, delivering goods and services to their doors, and providing treats to healthcare and emergency workers on the front lines of the pandemic.

Locally, municipal officials have done their part to support residents and businesses impacted by the pandemic, offering free face masks and interest-free

Coal City has partnered with a handful of businesses to secure state emergency funds and their efforts have been successful with at least two businesses. However, more than five months after those businesses were approved for nearly \$50,000 in combined assistance, the state has only released a small percentage of those emergency operating funds.

In the early days of the pandemic, the village sent out \$25 gift certificates to its citizens in an effort to assist them and local businesses. They even waived fees for the town liquor license holders who's doors have been shut, not once, but twice.

The pandemic forced the cancellation of local events including the much anticipated Carbon Hill Homecoming, a festival that generates operating funds for the village.

It put a halt to the high school's prom, pushed graduation back to July, moved dance recitals outdoors and on-line, postponed weddings and birthday celebrations, changed the way we celebrate holidays and for some, left them to mourn the loss of family and friends without the celebration of life services their loved ones deserved.

Again, these have been unprecedented times. As we look back on the last 525,600 minutes there was a great deal more that shaped the year on a local, state and national level.

As a country we held an election with the highest voter turnout in 120 years and a candidate who received the most votes ever cast for a candidate in a U.S. presidential election.

À group of local residents turned out to state, "small town values don't have to be small minded," as they showed support for the Black Lives Movement.

And, in communities across the country citizens like those in Carbon Hill, Coal City, Diamond, Goose Lake and areas in between completed their census forms, the results determining congressional representation and funding for programs ranging from street maintenance to mental health care.

Locally, we've weathered a few storms—the kind with heavy rains and winds strong enough to topple fences and even an outdoor stage.

In 2020, we learned of plans for new business development including a Gas N Wash—gas station, convenience store and car wash—near Interstate 55 in Diamond and the town's addition of a Domino's

SEE 2020, PAGE 2



COAL CITY HIGH School's senior class president Cody Rogers joined fellow classmates for an outdoor ceremony in late July.



A GROUP OF about 25 area residents took to the streets of Coal City in support the Black Lives Matter movement.



THE COAL CITY Public Library, like many others, took programming on-line during the pandemic as a way of keeping the community involved.

Candidates file for local board seats

STAFF REPORT

Individuals interested in serving on local municipal, school, library and township boards have officially declared their intent to seek election in April 2021.

After nearly two months collecting signatures on nominating papers, those individuals filed nominating packets with local election authorities by the Dec. 21

Local townships will be electing supervisors, clerks, trustees, highway commissioners and for some assessor.

Trustees will be elected to the Joliet Junior College Board and the Regional Board of School Trustees.

Voters in Carbon Hill, Coal City and Diamond will be electing members to their village boards and members will be named to serve on the boards of the Coal City Public Library District and Unit 1

School District. The mayoral post is up for election in the villages of Carbon Hill and Diamond.

Diamond Mayor Terry Kernc is seeking another fouryear term and is uncontested for the post she has held since 2009. Victory this April will mark her fourth term in the post and start of her 14th year in municipal government as she started out as the village's streets and alleys commission-

Diamond's four commissioner positions, each a fouryear term, are also up for election this spring. To date, just two individuals have filedincumbent streets commissioner Jeff Kasher and incumbent water and sewer commis-Warner. Dave Incumbents Denise Brown and Mark Adair did not file for re-election.

The seats could be filled in the election should an individual official declare as a write-in candidate or filled post election by appointment by the mayor and elected commissioners.

The village of Carbon Hill finds itself in a similar position, as no one filed for the four available commissioner posts-three four-year terms and one two-year term.

Two individuals did file for the post of mayor, none of them being the town's incumbent mayor Rich Jurzak. Filing to undertake the role of mayor are Adam Lee Johnson and Gary Smith-both currently serve on the town's board.

Voters in the village of Coal City will elect three members to its board, and three individuals—all incumbents have filed re-election. Those members seeking to retain their seats for the next four

SEE CANDIDATES, PAGE 2





EXELON NUCLEAR has announced its intent to close the Dresden Generating Station in November 2021. A statewide effort is underway to advance clean energy legislation that would keep the state's nuclear power plants in operation including Dresden. In the event the measure fail, local officials are working to develop community safeguards.

Unit 1

along with budgets and tax rates from then to now. They've also looked at school district's with comparable enrollments and

"We felt like that was a good starting point for us to begin doing some more detailed work," Bugg said.

School Board vice president Shawn Hamilton and board member Quint Harmon represent the board on the district's budget efficiency committee and have been part of the multiple

meetings called in the past several weeks. Harmon believes starting with the 2006 data is a good place to begin, given the variables that most likely will become the

financial path for the district. Hamilton is on the same page, saying the 2006 data is a good starting point and he knows there will be some difficult

decisions along the way. "I will say there are still some people who don't think this [intended closure] is a reality. Let's cross our fingers and just hope this doesn't happen," said Hamilton.

He knows it will take more than just crossing fingers to keep the generating station open. He also knows the board and district need to crunch the numbers so that no matter what happens in the coming months the district has a financial plan in

'It's going to be all hands on deck. We'd be foolish to not have a plan on the shelf, and hopefully we do a lot of work and have a plan that at the end of the day we do not have to execute,' Hamilton said.

In utilizing the 2006 financial data, Bugg made it very clear it's not a return to that time as far as staffing and programming. This doesn't mean we're automatically cutting everything

that has happened since '06. What we're talking about is budget targets, personnel targets, we're going to look at everything, As the superintendent has stated before, the district can not

simply tax its way out of the reduced revenue, so a plant closure will result in programmatic changes. "I don't want to give the impression we are drawing a line in

the sand at '06 and anything we added since is gone. What we are talking about is more about a general budget, people, personnel target," Bugg said. District officials will seek public input through the planning

process, and outline the changes that will come from a closure of the nuclear plant. That includes an increase in taxes. As the superintendent noted, there will be a tax increase

simply as function of the district's bond and interest rate when the EAV goes down. The district had scheduled its building debt to be paid when the plant's current licensing expires. We have to start gathering feedback from the community

at some point on what their comfort level is. We have to be honwith the public," Bugg said.

With that comes an explanation and discussion on what programs could be eliminated with a reduction in property tax revenue, and the question of what the community is willing to financially support.

Someone told me years ago a school district has to provide the level of education the taxpayers are willing to support, and we've got to figure out what that is," Bugg said.

Morris Hospital earns "A" in patient safety

was awarded its fifth consecutive 'A' on the most recent Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade that was released on December 14. This national distinction recognizes Morris Hospital's achievements in protecting patients from harm and providing

The Leapfrog Group is an independent national watchdog organization committed to health care quality and safety. The Safety Grade assigns an A, B, C, D or F grade to all general hospitals across the country and is updated every six months. The grade is based on a hospital's performance in preventing medical errors, injuries, accidents, infections, and other harm to patients in their care.

Developed under the guidance of a

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers national expert panel, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses up to 27 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to assign grades to more than 2,600 U.S. acute-care hospitals twice per year. The Hospital Safety Grade's methodology is peer-reviewed and fully transparent, and the results are free to the public.

The data used to calculate the Fall 2020 Hospital Safety Grade covers a time period ranging from 2017-2020, depending on the measure. 'Morris Hospital's A grade is a direct

result of our staff's commitment to adhering to best practices in the healthcare industry in order to assure the highest quality patient care," says Cara Marco, Quality Manager at Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers. "Receiving another A

from Leapfrog validates that our team is following all of the practices that we have in place to keep our patients safe during their hospitalization."

Of the 103 Illinois hospitals that were assessed on the fall report, 35 received A's. 27 received B's, 38 received C's, and 1received a Ds, and 2 received F's.

"We are extremely grateful to hospital leadership and health care workers who have remained steadfast in prioritizing patient safety as our nation battles COVID-19," said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "This 'A' is a testament to the care and commitment of those who work for Morris Hospital."

Library offering free E-Book service

Everyone in Illinois now has access to thousands of e-books and more, without the need of a library card.

Public libraries statewide including the Coal City Public Library District (CCPLD), offer free e-books for over 12 million Illinois residents through a partnership between the Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) and BiblioLabs. The e-book service, called BiblioBoard, has nearly 40,000 items available at any time to anyone in the state, and the items are always available.

The BiblioBoard service began in 2017 to help libraries offer additional e-resources to users and to reach the approximately one million Illinois residents who live in areas not served by a public library. The pandemic has increased the demand for e-resources expo-

Whether or not someone has a library card, people are affected when physical library buildings go through periods of limited or no access due to the pandemic, resulting in a bigger need for easy access to digital materials

"Right now the library remains open, however, we know that things are changing on a daily basis with the pandemic," CCPLL Library Director Jolene Franciskovich said.

"We also realize that some people are not comfortable going into public places but they still want to utilize the services CCPLD has to offer. Therefore, CCPLD continues to offer our library cardholders curbside service and porch drops as well as an opportunity to get a temporary library card from our website to be able to use our digital services.

A report published by RAILS, "The Impact of COVID-19 Related Closures on Library E-Content Usage," shows that library e-book usage almost doubled in April 2020 from the average daily usage in the months prior to the start of the pandemic.

Potential users of BiblioBoard have easy access to available content through a link on CCPLD's website at ccpld.org through its Digital Services or by going to illinois.biblioboard.com. Content includes local community histories, self-help resources, cookbooks, classics with beautifully reimagined covers, kids' books, community collections by RAILS libraries, books on equity, diversity, and inclusion, graphic novels, and much

Illinois libraries are much more than buildings. In addition to BiblioBoard, the library offers digital services such as Hoopla with 20 borrows per month, OverDrive OMNI, Chilton Library, Consumer Reports, CreativeBug, Flipster, and Universal Class to name a few. CCPLD also offers several services such as notary public, voter registration, faxing, and copying. Contact the library to find out more about our specific offerings.

The Reaching Across Illinois Library System (RAILS) provides delivery between libraries across a 27,000 square mile area, shared online catalogs, e-book services, continuing education for library staff, and other leadership services and support to academic, public, school, and specialized libraries in northern and western Illinois. More information about RAILS is available at railsli-

Christmas tree recycling available

Trash collection will be delayed one day this week in the village of Coal City for those with a Friday collection Residents Thursday collection, and those in the village of Diamond will have no change in service.

A new service is being made available to Coal City residents. Per the terms of the town's new waste service contract the disposal company will collect live Christmas trees, curbside, through the month of January on the resi dent's regular collection day. All decorations including tinsel, lights, ornaments and tree stands must be removed. Flocked trees cannot be recycled, and trees must not be wrapped with or inside a plastic bag.

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Candidates

years are trustees Sarah Beach, Tim Bradley and Dave Spesia.

Three of seven seats on the Unit 1 Board of Education are up for election and all are four-year terms. Filing were incumbents Shawn Hamilton and Mary Gill and newcomers Dan Englehardt, Steve Rogers and Adam Brncich.

Local voters will also cast ballots this spring for representatives on the Coal Ĉity Public Library District Board of Trustees. There are two six-year terms up for election. Individuals filing petitions for those seats were not available by press

The consolidated election is set for Tuesday, April 6. Individuals interested in

2020

Pizza, along with the completion and opening of the Diamond Indoor Trap Range.

Diamond and Coal City welcomed Morris Hospital and Healthcare Centers to their communities as the new 13,400-square foot medical clinic opened in Diamond on the northwest corner of Division and McGinty streets. The hospital invested \$7.1 million in the new Diamond-Coal City Campus.

McDonalds USA, LLC announced plans last January for significant changes to its local eatery sometime in 2021.

The company purchased and tore down a neighboring property in preparation for the demolition of its current restaurant, It will be replaced with a new, modern 3,800square foot building with a double drive-thru.

Coal City also announced that a national retailer has shown interest in the community, and that plans were in place to expand the village's borders in the coming year to provide more space of industrial development.

Some in Coal City learned that a federal grant designed to help low to moderate income homeowners improve their living conditions had been awarded and in the coming months that would be able to apply for a portion of the Housing \$500,000 Rehabilitation grant to begin improving their properties.

On the topic of improvements, Coal City's South Broadway reconstruction project wrapped up in the fall, and about mid-year, town leaders reported they would like to extend the improvements north. Therefore, they have started the process necessary to seek federal funding for a reconstruction of from Division Broadway Street north to North Street [McArdle Road].

In August, five months after the state's mandated school closure, students were allowed back into schools. The start of a new school year came with a detailed plan to ensure the health and safety of in-person learners, while providing families with options for remote learning and afterschool care.

School activities, at least those allowed by the state, resumed until a resurgence of the coronavirus put a pause on group activities in late November.

That was not the only

pause announced in the later part of the year.

Representatives from the Coaler Community Center, a proposed park district that would serve the same footprint of the Unit 1 School District, announced in August that plans to put the measure on the spring 2021 ballot were being shelved.

The announcement came just days after Exelon Nuclear stated its intent to shutdown Dresden Generating Station in November 2021.

Despite being among the most efficient and reliable units in the company's nuclear fleet, Exelon stated its Dresden and Byron Generating stations, "face revenue shortfalls in the hundreds of millions of dollars because of declining energy prices and market rules that allow fossil fuel plants to underbid clean sources in the PJM capacity auction," which Dresden failed to qualify for in

Furthermore, they say a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ruling, "underminds long standing state clean energy programs and gives an additional competitive advantage to polluting energy sources in the auc-0 n

Without some sort of legislative change the closure of the two plants will move forward—Byron in September

Efforts are underway by supporting an initiative outlined by Climate Jobs Illinois that promotes clean energy in the state and with that comes a call to keep all of the state's nuclear plants in operation.

Days prior to Exelon's announcement, Competitive Power Ventures [CPV] said funding was in place and to construct a natural gas-fueled generating station along Collins Road in Goose Lake Township.

The \$1.3 billion facility will provide enough output to power 1.25 million homes and businesses in northern Illinois.

The ups and downs of the year were marked with mileand memorable moments that included the

running as a write-in candidate must file an original notarized declaration of intent to be a write-in with the county clerk at least 61 days prior to the scheduled election. That deadline is Thursday.



A STRONG STORM system rolled into Coal City on Aug. 10 snapping off trees, toppling fences and even upending a performance stage that had been used the day before for an outdoor dance recital.

official swearing in of James Seerup as chief of the Coal City Fire Protection District, and Karl Wexelberg as deputy chief. And, the Coal City Police Department welcomed Brian Pustz to the force this fall.

It was also a year when the Coalers honored hall of fame coaches. Riley Nevin landed the lead role in the allstate theatre production, Daniel lezik earned his second

Award Winner

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wrestling state championship, five high school speech students earned a tip to the annual state tournament, the wrestling team added another state trophy to the case and the high school theatre department got creative on an outdoor stage thanks to director Jack Micetich who received Illinois Theatre Association's 2020 Award of Excellence in Secondary

School Education.

As we enter into a new year there is hope for new opportunities within our communities. We have a chance to build on what was started in the past 52 weeks, a chance to get back a bit of what we've been missing and a chance to use what we've learned in these unprecedented days to enhance and support our communities.

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher Ann Gill, editor



COAL CITY INTERMEDIATE School students are ready for a new year and look forward to what the days and weeks ahead have in store. Before heading off on winter break, a few of the students shared their hopes for the year ahead, and took a moment to join The Coal City Courant in wishing readers a new year filled with health, happiness and hope for better days ahead. Ready to welcome in 2021 are [from left, row one]: Brady Pierson, Colton Bailey, Penny D'Arcy, Nataly Perez, Sophia Holzinger, Ashley Odam, Patrick Tibble and Delaney Doss. In row two: Cayden Winke, Emma Rakes, Grace Sitar, Gavin Ziech

Ready for a brand new year

STAFF REPORT

A new year brings hope for better days ahead.

After a year that found students forced from their classrooms, only to return months later on a shortened schedule with changes that limited

lars, it should come as no surprise kids are ready to welcome 2021.

nation, there is hope among the in 2021 is, "hoping they come up with fourth and fifth graders at Coal City a cure for COVID." Intermediate School that the virus will be eliminated and the world had similar comments.

their interactions and extra-curricu- returns to some normalcy.

Patrick, a fourth grader, is like COVID," Penny said. many of his fellow classmates and cit-Even though the year starts with izens around the world when he says the pandemic still gripping the the thing he's most looking forward to

Fellow students Gavin and Penny

And, Brady added that in the new year he is looking forward to, "getting this mask off for a bit longer."

Students are also looking beyond the current school year, with fifth grade students Emma and Grace sharing their anticipation for moving brand new year.

"I am looking forward to leaving on to the middle school and beginning their sixth grade year.

"I'm looking forward in 2021 to meeting my new teachers."

Whatever one is looking forward to in the coming 365 days, it is with the same hope CCIS students enter a

Belt to serve as associate circuit judge

Seven circuit judges of the 13th Judicial Circuit have appointed Morris attorney Scott Belt to serve as an associate circuit judge. Belt succeeds Judge Sheldon Sobol who has served in that capacity since 2011.

'It is truly an honor to have been selected to serve as an Associate Circuit Judge for the Thirteenth Circuit. Becoming a judge is the highest honor you can have as an

Belt is a lifelong resident of Grundy County and graduated from Morris High School in 1980. He attended Southern Illinois University where he completed a bachelor's of science and associate's of applied science degrees.

Belt then received his Juris Doctor from Western Michigan Schoool of Law in 1990, where he graduated Cum Laude and served as a member of Law Review.

He also clerked for the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan where he handled both civil and criminal matters. He was licensed to practice law in the state of Illinois in 1990 and licensed in the state of Florida in 2016. Belt is also licensed to practice before the U.S. Federal District Court, Northern District of Illinois.

Belt has been in private practice in Grundy County for over 30 years. He has served as Morris city attorney since 2001, and has represented numerous other municipalities, townships, special districts and units of local government, including the Grundy County 911 board.

He has also handled significant injury and wrongful

death cases, probate matters, civil litigation and criminal

"While practicing law, I have always tried to treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect. I have always strived to give back to the community that I grew up in, and this appointment is another way to serve the citizens of this community.'

Prior to becoming an attorney, Belt worked in law enforcement as a police officer.

"I've seen the problems that migrate from the streets into the court system in person. I have no doubt that my experience as a police officer along with my experience as an attorney has provided me with a well-rounded foundation to serve as a judge.

Belt is a founding member and serves as a volunteer on the Grundy County 100 Club which provides financial assistance to the families of police officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel that are killed or seriously injured in the line of duty.

Belt will preside over misdemeanor jury cases, family matters, evictions and other civil matters, as well as traffic

Belt currently lives in Morris with his wife, Cindy, and they are both members of Immaculate Conception Church in Morris. They have four daughters and two grandchil-

Tier 3 mitigations will carryover into 2021

STAFF REPORT

Heading Christmas holiday the state's coronavirus statistics showed continued signs of improve-

Despite trends in the right direction, Gov. JB Pritzker said he has no immediate plans to lift the Tier 3 mitigations that have been in place since Nov.

The challenge that we have is, what we don't want to do is swing back and forth between mitigations and not having mitigations within days or a week or two of one another," Pritzker said during a press briefing last week, noting his concern the state could see an uptick in hospitalizations and cases following the holidays.

As of Monday the state's seven day rolling positivity rate was 7.2 percent, and the most recent data shows the rate at 8.7 percent for Region 2.

The Illinois Department of Public Health [ÎDPH] was reporting on Monday the total case count had reached over 942,000 cases statewide and

3,770 in Grundy County with 40 deaths.

In the past week, IDPH reported four COVID-19 related deaths in the county—one female in her 90s, and one male in his 70s, one in his 80s and another in his 90s.

In her weekly report issued Dec. 24, Michelle Pruim, the county's public health administrator, reported the health department was fol-lowing 266 people who had recently tested positive and are in isolation, and each of their

As reported last week, the first COVID-19 vaccines were administered in the county on Dec. 20 and the vaccines will continue to be administered in accordance with the phases defined by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices [ACIP] and as recommended by IDPH.

The county remains in Phase 1a, which includes healthcare personnel and long-term care facilities. Pruim said it is unknown how long the county will remain in this phase, as it depends on the collection,

each week and the number of interested persons in this

More than 100,000 doses of the vaccine have been administered across the state since the first vaccine was approved for emergency use, more than any other state in

In Grundy County the health department is partnering with local hospital systems, first responding agencies and other medical providers to make available vaccine to all healthcare providers defined by ACIP. Healthcare providers are licensed medical professionals [paid or volun-

Priority given to those providing direct in-person services, especially to vulnerable populations, caring for COVID-19 patients, cleaning areas where patients are admitted, treated and housed, performing procedures with higher risk of aerosolization, invasive dental procedures, invasive specimen administering

quantity of vaccine received COVID-19 vaccine to others and providing death care.

The health department's www.grundyhealth.com—has vaccination information, as well as resources related to data, guidance, symptoms and

throughout through local hospital systems, and protocol at each location is subject to changed based on availability of resources.

Mobile testing units as organized by IDPH are also available throughout the region including daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. [with the exception of New Years Day] at Mission Boulevard Soccer Complex, 640 Mission Blvd Joliet and a mobile unit will be at Saratoga Elementary School, 4040 N. Division St., Morris from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 31.

Tests are administered at no cost and results are available within 4-7 days of specimen collection.

Capitol News Illinois contributed to this report.

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Morris Hospital administers first COVID vaccines

DAWN CLAYBURN, RN, Manager of Critical Care at Morris Hospital, administers the COVID vaccine to Adam Greiff, a registered nurse in the hospital's Emergency Department. An unexpected supply of 100 doses arrived at the hospital on Dec. 19. The first dose was administered to Dr. Lakshmi Anubrolu, a hospitalist physician who has been caring for hospitalized COVID patients since March.

Attorney Black files Martin estate claim notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT

OF THE THIRTEENTH

JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE

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as Independent Administrator were issued

to Deanna Romano, 30W 265 Maple

Court, Warrenville, IL 60555, whose attor-

ney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211,

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

INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATOR

Claims against the estate may be

CLAIM NOTICE

NOTICE is given to creditors of the

No. 2020 P 113

In the Matter of the Estate of

Alfred R. Martin.

Morris, Illinois 60450

LEGAL NOTICE Assumed Name Publication Notice

Top Notch Construction

files as new business

Public Notice is hereby given that on December 29th, 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 trans-acting the business known as Top Notch Construction, located at 180 E. Big Timber Drive, Coal City, IL 60416.

Dated this 29th day of December

A.D. 2020. Kay T Olson, Grundy County Clerk

Published in the Coal City Courant on Dec. 30, 2020 and Jan. 6 and 13, 2021

Attorney Black files

Lutz estate claim notice

PUBLIC NOTICE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT

OF THE THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT **GRUNDY COUNTY - IN PROBATE**

No. 2020 P 121 In the Matter of the Estate of Lavern R. Lutz.

CLAIM NOTICE NOTICE is given to creditors of the death of Lavern R. Lutz. Letters of office as

Independent Co-Executors were issued to Stephen Lutz, 1150 Patterson Dr., Morris IL 60450 and Michael Lutz, 395 Twiligh Dr., Morris, IL 60450, whose attorney is FRANK J. BLACK, BLACK & BLACK, 201 Liberty Street, Suite 211, Morris, Illinois 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.

STEPHEN LUTZ MICHAEL LUTZ INDEPENDENT CO-EXECUTORS

Rlack & Black Lawyers 201 Liberty Street Suite 211 P.O. Box 148 Morris, IL 60450

tendent. The Unit 1 Board of Education has started

The deadline is quickly approaching for residents of Unit 1 School District to provide

input on the search for a new school superin-

discussion on choosing a new superintendent to replace Dr. Kent Bugg upon his retirement effective July 1, 2022. The selection of a new superintendent is probably the most important decision a board of education has to make; therefore, the Board has hired the Illinois Association of School Boards [IASB] to assist in

Last chance for input on superintendent search

The Board of Education is seeking as much input as possible during this process and requests that all staff, parents and community members complete an online survey provided by the IASB. The results will be tallied by the IASB and used by the Board and screening team to assist in the decision-making process.

The survey can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/r/W3YZJ7G

Surveys must be completed by 11:45 p.m.

on Sunday, Jan. 3, 2021.

Coal Bin to dispose of property

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois, a sale or other disposition of property by COAL BIN STORAGE INC will be held online at www.BID13.com, auction ending on January 6, 2021 1:00 PM, to sell or dispose of the personal property of the following person, Lauren Boothby, 2114 Taliesen Ln, Rockford, IL 61107, Unit E29, to enforce a lien for storage pursuant to the self-storage facility act, in the amount of \$305.00, plus attorney

Published in the Coal City Courant

on Dec.23 and 30, 2020

PUBLIC NOTICE

Coal Bin to dispose

of property

Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois, a sale or other disposition of property by COAL BIN STORAGE INC will be held online at www.BID13.com, auction ending on January 6, 2021 1:00 PM, to sell or dispose of the personal property of the following person, Charles Haltom, 302 N. Lennox, Braceville, IL 60407, Unit G10, to enforce a lien for storage pursuant to the self-storage facility act, in the amount of \$430.00, plus attorney fees & costs.

Published in the Coal City Courant on Dec. 23, and 30, 2020.

Notice is hereby given, that pursuant to Section 40 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois, a sale or other disposition of property by COAL BIN STORAGE INC will be held online at www.BID13.com, auction ending on January 6, 2021 1:00 PM, to sell or dispose of the personal property of the following person, Nicholas Grygiel, 797 W. Cermak Rd, Braidwood, IL 60408, Unit A39, to enforce a lien for storage pursuant to the self-storage facility act, in the amount of \$380.00, plus attorney

PUBLIC NOTICE

Published in the Coal City Courant on Dec. 23 and 30, 2020.

Coal Bin to dispose of property

freepressnewspapers.com

6S Development LLC files

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 18th day of January, 2021 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:

the following matter:

To consider: A variance for the

required 30' building setback abutting residential to allow the building to be placed at approx. 16' feet from the property line. A

variance for the required 18' dumpster enclosure setback to allow the enclosure to be placed at approx. 6' from the property

At the following address: 850 and 860 E. Division St., Coal City, IL

Legal description of property:Village of Eileen LTS 11 and 12 BLK 18 SEC 35-33-8 and Village of Eileen LTS 20 and 21 BLK 18 SEC 35-33-8

applied for by: 6S Development LLC
Said Board of Appeals will be at said

port of such matter or any objection thereof. time and place to hear all persons in sup

by agent.

Request for the above appeal was

Persons many appear in person or

Dated this 23rd day of December, Frank J. Black Black & Black Lawyers Published in the Coal City Courant 201 Liberty Street on Dec. 30, 2020.

days after it has been filed.
DEANNA ROMANO

Published in the Coal City Courant on Dec. 23 and 30, 2020 and Jan. 6, 2021

P.O. Box 148 815-942-0594

815-942-0594

on Dec. 23 and 30, 2020 and Jan. 6, 2021.

Published in the Coal City Courant

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To voice your opinion, please go to

www.freepressnewspapers.com, Submit Sound-off or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. If mailing comments please direct them to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL

THE PRESIDENT

SAYS NO PARDON

FOR YOU!

Full of pork projects SHADOW LAKES—Congress just passed a

stimulus bill that's suppose to be for the American citizen, but there is so much pork in this bill that it gives money to foreign nations and some other useless projects like over \$1 million to examine how lizards walk on a treadmill and \$2 million for a headset to track eating habits in humans. Congress cannot seem to pass any type of bill without wasteful spending. This stimulus bill is about 6,000 pages and all that was needed was a stimulus bill with about 20 pages. This 6,000 page bill was put across for a vote in Congress with only six hours for members of Congress to read, which is impossible. Nancy Pelosi was in charge and once again Nancy used her idea that you have to pass a bill to find out what is in the bill. Once again the taxpayers take a back seat to foreign nations and special interest groups and someone should explain how helping foreign countries and special interest groups with their pork projects isn't in anyway helping Americans. The Democrat party strikes again, maybe the Democrat leadership should be put on a treadmill for examination like lizards. Say goodbye to your wallet.

Vote them out

BRAIDWOOD— Braidwood faces a 2 million dollar deficit. Well how about cutting the police chief's salary? And the city administrator's salary? No administrator in this town has ever been paid as much as what is being paid now. Two banks have left town and did you do anything to stop it? Now we have no bank whatsoever. Are you doing anything to bring a bank into town? You need to rid the city of your code enforcement because they do nothing except harass people. They allow you, Mr. city administrator, to run a construction business out of your home with the unsightly construction equipment lining your driveway. The peo-ple of Braidwood need to wake up and vote these morons out of office. All they do is suck money out of the town and do nothing for you and I don't know when you're going to wake up. You need to vote next time instead of putting these people back in. Thank You.

No more war

WILMINGTON—Can someone tell me what happened to the war on Christmas?

Something to hide?

GARDNER—I have a question. Why don't these Democrat-controlled states in the swing states turn over the voting machines to Rudy Giuliani? After all they claim they were honest. So if they were honest why don't they turn them over to be investigated? My name is Walter.

Wonderful recognition

WILMINGTON—Sports reporter Shawn Long has been writing some fine articles about Dream Teams in various sports for Coal City, Reed-Custer, and Wilmington. As a retired teacher, current coach, and Wilmington High School alumnus, my favorite article that he has written so far is about the Wilmington High School girls basketball team and Coach Eric Dillon. The girls team was awarded first place in the entire state in academics for Class 3A. Not wins and losses but academics. What a wonderful recognition! Administration and teachers assisted in this award but it was the students and their parents who made it happen. I have always believed that student-athletes should be recognized in that order: Student first and athlete second. I applaud these extraordinary student-athletes and wish them well in their future endeavors. Wilmington School District and the town of Wilmington should be very proud of these girls! Todd A Lockwood, Wilmington

Start counting

Since you left-wing liberals had a lie count for President Trump, there is no reason we can't start counting the lies from Biden and Harris and they have already started. Kamala Harris stated during an interview a couple months ago that she would never take a vaccine that Trump had anything to do with because she didn't trust anything he did. Well, I see she already has her sleeve rolled up and can't wait to get the vaccine that, without the leadership of President Trump, we would still be years away from getting if you liberals had been in charge. I can only image the regulations you

liberals would have put in place that would have brought the process to a crawl instead of achieve. Will Kamala apologize for her comment? NEVER! Liberals don't apologize when they are dead wrong, they just take credit for whatever whey were wrong about. So let the count begin: The lie-o-meter is at one for Kamala and the inauguration hasn't even happened yet. Can't wait to start counting the lies coming out of Biden's mouth. I'm not sure the lie-o-meter can go that high.

Collateral damage

Republicans so much that they'll do as much as possible to cause the Republican party trouble and heartache. But they are also causing the same problem for U.S. citizens. They don't care as long as they can destroy the Republican party while the taxpayers can be labeled as collateral damage. The one thing they do like about the Republican American citizens is their tax money so they can fill their wallets and aid foreign nations while they live a life of luxury and disregard any plea to help taxpayers. All Democrat politicians want is power, even to the point they will try to totally destroy the USA to achieve their goals of being dictators like the communist countries. We should thank all the people who voted for all the free stuff that is going to foreign countries and special interests groups and not the American citizen. Sap does not only spill out from trees.

Christmas spirit bright WILMINGTON—The hubby and I took a

drive Christmas eve to see the lights around town. In all the years we have done this never before have we enjoys all the decorations so much. It seems more people put up Christmas displays this year and it lift our hearts. May God Bless our town, it's the reason we love living in

Respect, respect

SHADOW LAKES—The other day on The View, Whoopi Goldberg, was chirping about some man who did not call Jill Biden, Doctor. She went on and on about how we should have respect for her title, and for being the First Lady. The same day I was changing channels, and low and behold there was Jimmy Kimmel. He showed a clip of our First Lady, Melania and she was reading a book to some small children. He cut the clip short and criticized her speech, her accent. His comment was, "what were the words she said?" Where was the respect for our First Lady? After this, you want me to respect the left? I think not.

Always, Margot Lane

School heroes

WILMINGTON-I would like to say thank you to district 209U staff from administration to bus drivers, but especially to our wonderful teachers. You all have gone above and beyond to give our kids as normal of a life as possible. Other school districts have been out of the classroom since last March, but you all went back into the classrooms for our kids, giving them the opportunity to get a good education. I want to say a special thanks to Mrs. Swisher and Mrs. Utz. I am beyond grateful to you both. May God bless each and everyone of our

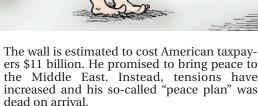
Trump's lies

BRAIDWOOD—He said coronavirus would "go away without a vaccine." You bought it, but it didn't. While other countries got the pandemic under control and avoided large numbers of fatalities, the virus has killed more than 330,000 Americans, and that number is still climbing. He said he won't have time to play golf if elected president. But he has made more than 250 visits to his golf clubs since he took office - a record for any president, including more trips during the pandemic than meetings with Dr. Fauci. The total financial cost to America? More than \$136 million. He said he would repeal the Affordable Care Act, and replace it with something "beautiful." It didn't happen. Instead, 7 million Americans have lost their health insurance since he took office. He has asked the Supreme Court to strike down the law in the middle of a global pandemic with no plan to replace it. He said he'd cut your taxes, and that the super-rich like him would pay more. He did the opposite. By 2027, the

richest 1 percent will have received 83 percent

of the Trump tax cut and the richest 0.1 percent, 60 percent of it. But more than half of all Americans will pay more in taxes. He said corporations would use their tax cuts to invest in American workers. They didn't. Corporations spent more of their tax savings buying back shares of their own stock than increasing workers' wages. He said he would boost economic growth by 4 percent a year. Nope. The economy stalled and unemployment has soared to the highest levels since the Great Depression. Just over half of working-age Americans are employed, the worst ratio in 70 years. He said he wouldn't "cut Social Security like every other Republican and I'm not going to cut Medicare or Medicaid." His latest budget includes billions in cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. He promised to be "the voice" of American workers. He hasn't. His administration has stripped workers of their rights, repealed overtime protections, rolled back workplace safety rules, and turned a blind eye to employers who steal their workers' wages. He promised that the average American family would see a \$4,000 pay raise because of his tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. But nothing trickled down. Wages for most Americans have barely kept up with inflation. He promised that anyone who wants a test for Covid will get one. But countless Americans still can't get a test. He said hydroxychloroquine protects against coronavirus. No way. The FDA revoked its emergency authorization due to the drug's potentially lethal side effects. He promised to eliminate the federal deficit. He has increased the federal deficit by more than 60 percent. He said he would hire "only the best people." He has fired a record number of his own cabinet and White House picks, and then called them "whackos," "dumb as a rock," and "not mentally qualified." Six of them have been charged with crimes. He promised to bring down the price of prescription drugs and said drug companies are "getting away with mur-They still are. Drug prices have soared, and a company that got federal funds to develop a drug to treat coronavirus is charging \$3,000 a pop. He promised to revive the struggling coal industry and bring back lost coal mining jobs. The coal industry has continued He promised to help American workers during the pandemic. But 80% of the tax benefits in the coronavirus stimulus package have gone to millionaires and billionaires. And at least 21 million Americans have lost extra unemployment benefits, with no new stimulus check to fall back on. He said he'd drain the swamp. Instead, he's brought into his administration more billionaires, CEOs, and Wall Street moguls than in any administration in history, and he's filled departments and agencies with former lobbyists, lawyers and consultants who are crafting new policies for the same industries they used to work for. He promised to protect Americans with pre-existing conditions. His Justice Department is trying to repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, including protections for people with preexisting conditions.

He said Mexico would pay for his border wall.



Paid to riot

SHADOW LAKES—Regarding the person who wrote into the sound-off column wonder ing why there were so many riots after Trump was elected, and since Biden has supposedly been elected there haven't been any. Well, you must be a total idiot because George Soros has funded the majority of these riots and sent people in who don't even live in those cities or states because he opposes Trump. He paid for it. He's a multi-billionare so why do you think the riots haven't happened with Biden being supposedly elected?

Double standard

WILMINGTON—I totally agree with the sound-off comments in the Dec. 23 issue. There is another gas station in town that does not adhere to the masks. The assistant manager never has a mask on and probably 98% of the customers who go in and out don't wear masks even though it is posted on the door that no entry is allowed without one. They also have a sign up stating a person could be fined for not wearing a mask. Why put up all these signs if nothing is going to be done? It's confusing why the mayor feels it's OK for the businesses to ignore the rules and not enforce the masks but yet city hall is shut down to the public. To me that's a double standard like you can take your germs all over town but don't bring them to city

Good riddance

I will be so glad when "President Cartman" is out of the White House.

Republicans hide

—WILMINGTON—After reading last week's sound-off column I am totally convinced the Russians have infiltrated certain people and they are spewing Russian propaganda all over the place. So semis came during the night with suitcases filled with ballots which are removed from the suitcases and put through voting machines over and over again. The Supreme Court justices are against Trump. Really? Trump didn't sign the stimulus package leaving millions of Americans without help when they needed it the most. At the last minute Trump says \$2,000 and Nancy Pelosi says yes, we will vote on it. Where are the Republicans? Oh I know, they are too busy having Christmas parties and out playing golf. So Trump plays golf while millions of people are hurting and thousands of people every day are dying from Covid. Now that's the truth so believe that.

Strips should go

COAL CITY—Now that the I-55 construction is done from Reed Road north how about coming back and removing these annoying white strips across the Interstate? They need to be removed. They make a lot of racket.

Commentary

State politicos had it pretty good during 2020

PUBLISHER

I wonder if 2020 was as effortless for Illinois lawmakers as it looks? Best I can tell, they met in session just 17

days during the year. The Democrats in charge canceled most of the spring legislative session and all of the Fall Veto session under threat of the coronavirus. Thus, our State Reps. and Senators each got their \$69,464 base pay (which included a \$1,628 pay increase in 2019), for

How glorious it must be to get a full salary for just 17 days of work. If only the rest of us in Illinois could have had such a year.

spending 75% less time in Springfield.

Instead, we've been masking up and heading to work knowing that if we don't show up we won't get paid. At least that's the case for those who haven't lost their job due to Gov. J.B. Pritzker's orders to close the doors on

restaurants and other non-essential Business owners are being forced into furloughing good employees and

taking cuts in pay. It's simple: No a judge.

work, no pay but that doesn't apply to Illinois lawmakers. During this year of pandemic, we've learned that no matter what, a lawmaker's salary is guaranteed.

What's even more frustrating is knowing that lawmakers in Illinois are the fifth-highest paid in the nation and the highest-paid among those not considered full-time, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). NCSL classifies Illinois state law-

makers as "full-time lite," meaning they serve smaller districts and work shorter sessions (70-day average) than full-time lawmakers, but are highly paid, employ large staffs and spend at least 80% of their job on leg-Along with a \$69,464 base,

Illinois lawmakers are paid \$10,000 stipends if they chair a committee. For example Senator Sue Rezin (38th, Morris) serves on a handful of committees and is paid \$83,100. House Rep. David Welter (75th, Morris) is being paid \$73,400, Senator Patrick

Joyce \$63,700, same for House Rep

Lindsay Parkhurst who left to become

On top of that, each is given per diems, mileage reimbursements and other perks.

States where lawmakers make more than Illinois include California, York, Pennsylvania Michigan. Those are states with fulltime legislators.

The Illinois Policy Institute recently pointed out that Illinois lawmakers' salaries exceed the state's median household income of \$61,229, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That just doesn't seem fair for 17 days in session.

Consider too that the national average for state lawmakers is \$38,434. Neighboring states like Indiana and Iowa get a real bargain paying their lawmakers a base of \$26,490 and \$25,000, respectively. On average Iowa lawmakers meet 100 days, that's a whole month longer

than they do in Illinois. No wonder Iowa and Indiana are unlike Illinois in owing \$5.2 billion in unpaid bills. If only we could get more productive days out of our lawmakers

they might settle issues like the coro-

navirus spending, a \$4.8 billion budg-

et deficit, the spike in property taxes,

debt, term limits, unfair tax increases, the list is endless.

You would think during a time of crisis state lawmakers would double the need to hash out our troubles. Before they adjourned in late May they met while social distancing. They could have done that during the fall veto session too but leading Democrats called off the session blaming it on the threat of COVID.

It seems as though the Democrats, with a super majority trifecta in Springfield, have left all the decision-making up to Gov. Pritzker. I'm not certain that's a good idea for a second-year rookie during a time of

pandemic. I suppose if things go wrong they can just blame him. The Illinois Policy Institute recently wrote about the General Assembly Retirement System, and how it is costing taxpayers millions in annual bailouts. According to the IPI, it contains less than 15 cents for every dollar needed to pay future benefits. When taking those costs into

account, Illinois taxpayers already

once for their salaries and then the

pay their lawmakers 2.5 times over-

fair mapping, \$203 billion in pension equivalent of 1.5 times salary for lawmakers' pensions.

> In total, lawmaker compensation costs Illinois taxpayers more than \$32 million a year, the Policy Institute

> Seems like a heavy price to pay for 177 state lawmakers who met for just 17 days.

> I'm not picking on state lawmakers, I wouldn't want their job (maybe I would for just 17 days). I suspect every one of them would argue their job requires a full-time commitment. That's what happens when things are so screwed up in Springfield you can't receive a FOID card for months or speak with anyone about receiving

> unemployment benefits. I say it's time lawmakers roll up their sleeves, get vaccinated and get down to work. Draft legislation allowing for sessions to be held remotely. If grade school students can learn remotely then lawmakers should be able to work that way too. At least then we'd feel like we were getting our money's worth.

Midewin reveals lineup of 2021 sessions

In celebration of 25 years of restoration of grassland habitat and service to people, the USDA Forest Service's Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie will host a variety of free public programs. A fascinating array of natural resources topics will be featured, including highlights that have helped shape Midewin NTP since 1996. Celebrate milestones like the first spotting of nesting bald eagles and more. National

Forest Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Mary Mitsos will be master of ceremonies in a virtual celebration with keynote speaker Bill Kurtis on Feb. 10 at 6 p.m. National "Midewin

Tallgrass Prairie has been a priority for the National Forest Foundation since 2012, and we are delighted to be a part of the celebrations around Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie's 25th anniversary," Mitsos said. Activities and events will announced throughout

2021. The following is the schedule of webinars planned from January through May. SESSION 1: Midewin NTP: A Haven for Grassland Birds

January 5, 6 p.m. On National Bird Day, we will

focus on how a dream is being realized to increase sustainable habitat for native Illinois grassland birds and more. SESSION 2: Happy

Aniversary Midewin NTP February 10, 6 p.m.



BALD EAGLES NEST at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. A series of special edition Silver Anniversary webinars will feature milestones in grassland habitat restoration that have been experienced in the past 25 years, including the first sight of a pair of bald

Iournalist and prairie restora- ceremonies. tion advocate Bill Kurtis will give a keynote speech in a https://us02web.zoom.us/me Silver Anniversary celebration eting/register/tZEtdisrjsvHN3j program sponsored by the 8 djKo2SIqX_UVrRHhbi9. . National Forest Foundation. Two-time James Beard Awardwinning Executive Chef Sarah Serving People. Stegner of Prairie Grass Café will demonstrate wellness Wildlife Day: A special focus on cooking with prairie ingredi- some of the USDA Forest

here: Register

SESSION 3: Midewin NTP: Caring for the Land and

March 3, 6 p.m. World ents. NFF President and CEO Service subject matter experts Mary Mitsos will be master of who have made a difference

over the past 25 years.

SESSION 4: Midewin NTP: 25 Years of Volunteers and

April 22, 6 p.m. Earth Day: A close look at essential pieces in the restoration puzzle: Volunteers and Partners.

SESSION 5: Pollinating America's Prairie: We've Only Just Begun Looking Back and Planning Ahead for the Next 25

May 20, 6 p.m. World Bee Day and American Wetlands Month: A special focus on "pollinating" prairie restoration now and in the future with a look at the roles of NFF and USDA FS Youth Conservation Corps programs and more.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie was established on February 10, 1996 by the Illinois Land Conservation Act. Over time, land where the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant was instrumental during WWII, the Korean War and more, has been transferred from the U.S. Army to the USDA Forest Service.

Approximately 18,500 acres of land have been transferred so far. Four key objectives for management of the land are identified in the ILCA legislation, including: (1) Restoration; (2) Recreation; (3) Agriculture; and (4) Research and Education.

"This is a long-term prairie and grassland restoration process," said Midewin Prairie Supervisor Wade Spang. "All along, people of all ages and interests, plus the reliance educational and interpretive of the land to provide plant activities planned throughout and animal habitat, have been 2021." what has made Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie a treasured landscape. This prairie is special, and I hope please send us an email: that you can join the celebra- SM.FS.Midewin_RSVP@usda.g tions by participating in the ovor call: (815) 423-6370.

To register for all sessions except for the Feb. 10 program,



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Pritzker orders more than \$700 million in spending cuts

BY PETER HANCOCK CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD - Gov. JB Pritzker announced more than \$700 million in spending cuts, calling it a "first step" in closing a \$3.9 billion revenue shortfall in the current fiscal year's budget.

As part of those cuts, Pritzker said his office is negotiating with employee labor unions to identify \$75 million in personnel cost reductions, which could include furloughs, and that he is establishing a work group to identify possible closures of Department of Corrections facilities due to lower inmate populations.

"These cuts reflect the first phase of our path forward, doing what is within my powers, unilaterally and without the legislature," Pritzker said during a news conference in Chicago. "This is going to be tough. And as my ongoing con-Assembly leaders would indicate, there is a great deal of work the legislature must do when it convenes next month."

The plan includes hiring freezes at several state agencies as well as reductions or freezes in several grant programs at the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Natural Resources. It also includes a freeze on school maintenance capital grants, which are funded from casino gaming rev-

enues. It also calls for delaying a scheduled rate increase for home health aids who provide in-home and communitybased services to the elderly through the state's Community Care Program.

In addition to the spending cuts announced Tuesday, Pritzker earlier announced a plan to borrow \$2 billion through the Federal Reserve's Municipal Liquidity Facility, a program launched earlier this year to help state and local governments close budget gaps that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

But that still leaves more than \$1 billion in savings that will have to be identified, unless Congress authorizes a relief package that includes aid to state and local governsomething ments, Republican leaders Congress strongly oppose.

Pritzker said about \$2 billion of this year's shortfall is due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has drastically cut into state revenues. The rest, he said, is part of an ongoing "structural" deficit in the state budget, one that he had hoped to fill with passage of his proposed graduated income tax amendment, and he lashed out at Republicans in Illinois who worked to defeat that pro-

posal on the Nov. 3 ballot. "It's been two years since Republicans announced their wholesale opposition to the

'Fair Tax,' and it's been 40 days since the election, and they have yet to produce any viable answer for balancing the budget," Pritzker said. "They worked and spent endlessly to defeat the best option Democrats put on the table. And after all their bluster, it turns out that Republicans

But GOP leaders in the General Assembly responded quickly, arguing that the budget shortfall is the result of Democrats being unwilling to state.' cut spending earlier.

have no plan at all, to put the

state on a firm fiscal founda-

others all he wants for the state's financial mess, but the fact of the matter is this is a bed of his own making, Senate Minority Leader-elect Dan McConchie, of Hawthorn Woods, said in a statement. demands that unfairly target "Voters fundamentally reject- state employees." ed his graduated tax proposal state government, which stems action is urgently needed. from years of Springfield However, it is grossly unjust to increasing taxes and ignoring the reforms that Republicans have put on the table time and time again."

House Minority Leader Durkin, of Western Springs, said the deficit was built in to the budget that the Democratic-controlled General Assembly passed in May, which was predicated on passage of the tax amendment and the state receiving about need for state services and the \$5 billion in federal aid that so far has not materialized.

"Governor (Senate) President (Don) Harmon and (House Speaker) Mike Madigan were repeatedly warned about the dire shortfalls in the fantasy budget that relied upon the passage of the graduated tax and a 'fingers crossed' hope for a federal bailout," Durkin said in a statement. "Instead of living within our means, they attempted to trick voters into raising taxes, and were sorely rejected by Democrat, Republican and Independent voters across the

The state's largest public The Governor can blame employee labor union pushed back on the cuts. Roberta Lynch, executive director of AFSCME Council 31, issued a statement saying the union "is firmly opposed to any

"Undoubtedly our state because of their lack of trust in faces a severe fiscal crisis and suggest that frontline state employees who have already sacrificed so much in our current public health crisis should bear an outsized share of the burden of fixing the state's fiscal crisis as well," she said in the statement. "Moreover, it is counterproductive in the extreme to target these employees at a time when the demands on state government are greater than ever."





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Cindy@loribonarekrealty.com



Kim Engelhardt

Jeff Bonarek

815.401.6008



Amy Foley

amyfoley@loribonarekrealty.com

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How to find affordable housing for seniors

Dear Savvy Senior,

Are there any resources to help seniors find and pay for senior apartments? My aunt, who's 75 years old, needs to find a new place to live but has very little money. What can you tell

Searching Sarah

Finding affordable senior housing options can be difficult depending on where your aunt lives. Senior apartments for some retirees are a good option, and you'll be happy to know that there are a number of government programs that



Start with HUD There are several different government programs available today that can help indi-

viduals who qualify

to locate and pay for housing, including:

* Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8): This program allows you to find the housing you want. The government provides the amount allowed by your voucher to the landlord each month. * Privately owned subsi-

dized housing: HUD helps some apartment owners offer reduced rents to low-income

* Public Housing: These communities are generally apartment buildings or com-

plexes that are overseen by a city or county public housing agency, and are available families, the elderly and those with disabilities. Income Housing Tax Credit: This

Jim Miller

program provides housing to low income families and includes rents that don't exceed a fixed amount.

low-income

Low-

* Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly: This initiative helps seniors and the disabled. It offers housing for individuals who are able to live mostly on their own but need

assistance with certain daily

tasks like cleaning and cook-

For more information about these programs and to locate apartments in your aunt's area that may offer them, visit the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development rental

assistance HUD.gov/topics/rental_assistance. You can also search for

low-income housing at senior living sites like After55.com and SeniorHousingNet.com.

If you or your aunt don't have internet access or have troubling maneuvering the internet, you can also locate nearby affordable housing options by calling your local housing authority call 800-955-2232 to get your local number. If your aunt lives in a location that spans multiple counties, check with the housing authority in each one to

How to Choose

If you or your aunt find several apartment choices that fall within her budget, she should consider what's important to her. She may want housing that's close to family, religious organizations, senior centers, or places she visits regularly, like grocery stores, parks or gyms.

Or, if she has a disabling condition, it may be especially

Francis (USF) congratulates

the following students who

have been named to the

dean's list for the fall 2020

semester. Students who have

attained a grade point average

of 3.5 or higher at the end of a

semester in which they have

taken at least 12 credit hours

include Kathryn Gutzman, of

Braceville; Kira Gleason, Bobbi

Herrera, Vanessa McLean and

Thomas Sforza, of Braidwood;

Mackenzie Christensen, Avery

Hannig, Julie Sander, Abbey

Spesia and Victoria Sztapka, of

Coal City; Peyton Garrelts and Wilmington.

Area students on the list

are named to the dean's list.

USF fall deans list

The University of St. Brittany Housman, of Custer

Diamond.

McKenna

at critical for her to find a living space that has easy access to important services like senior transportation and health care

In your housing search, you may also come across some red flags that indicate a retirement community wouldn't be a good fit for your aunt. Keep an eye out for extra fees that may be applied to everyday items or perks you normally wouldn't think about like laundry service, parking or

You should also make sure the apartment is in good condition and then scout out the neighborhood. Ask yourself if the community is clean and well maintained and if there is any debris or messy landscaping. If you notice anything out of the ordinary, follow up with questions before your aunt signs a rental contract.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

Park and Savannah Jacobs, of

Rachel Hunter, David Paul and

Tara Tindall, of Elwood;

Bazzarone, Hannah Berdahl,

Daniel Black, Kristine Cumba,

Cassidy Flatness, Mitchell

Hayworth, Jessika Kodat,

Matthew Lopez, Kaitlin Smith

and Meagan Warzynski, of

Morris and Brad Abderhalden,

Kassidy Andrews, Leah Hiles,

Cameron Holman, Richard

Mroz, Kendall Peatross and

Quigley,

Sabrina Baftiri,

Also, Clarissa Del Rio,

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Brittany Hollis has joined Lori Bonarek Realty as a Realtor in its Coal City office.

Hollis has been an active Realtor since 2017. With a bachelor's degree in interior design, Hollis has served as a design consultant with industry leading companies for the last 10 years. She grew up in the surrounding area and currently lives in Coal City with her husband and two boys.

market knowledge and is comfortable selling homes in and around the Grundy County area. As a Realtor with Lori Bonarek Realty, Hollis now conveys her passion for real estate with her love of design to both buyers and sellers throughout each transaction. She knows just how important it is to make a house a home and her clients' wants and needs always come

interior design. We are thrilled that she brings those traits to



Lori Bonarek Realty," boasted James Ludes, designated managing broker.

Broker/owner Bonarek added, "We are so happy that Brittany joined the Lori Bonarek Realty family. We look forward to working with her and we're excited to have another local agent who loves the community as much as we do and know she will be a great addition."

Lori Bonarek Realty

Brittany has a wide range

"Brittany has a track

record of great customer service and accomplished work in **BRITTANY HOLLIS**

Illinois leads nation in population loss

since last census BY GREG BISHOP

continues to see population declines year after year.

New census data analyzed Illinois Policy Institute Economist Orphe Divounguy show the state shrank by nearly 80,000 people in the year ending July 2020, the second largest population loss among U.S. states over the year, and nearly 22,000 more than was lost the year before.

Illinois led the nation in population loss over the decade with 253,000 fewer residents. That's the size of Naperville and Peoria com-

This year's population decline isn't the worst in state history, but it's close. In 1945, the state's population declined by 118,000 residents.

The effects of the population declines are wide-ranging for Illinois' economy, and Illinois' taxpayers.

You have fewer people here in our labor market so there's less quantity of workers, fewer workers, you have a lower quality of worker as well," Divounguy said. "Our housing market is also lagging other states. So we have less opportunity for those who stay

Divounguy said the population decline means fewer people are available to pay for There's plenty of room at increased government debt, the inn in Illinois, as the state like public sector pensions which take around a quarter of every tax dollar the state cap-

> "So instead of stimulating the economy, you continue to take valuable resources and put them into this pension debt hole, you're not going to get a recovery," Divounguy said. "You're going to see continued population losses."

> He advocated for constitutional pension reform, something that's been elusive at the Illinois statehouse. He also said lawmakers need to stop advancing bad economic policies, like increasing the minimum wage during an

> economic crisis. "We're doing things in reverse," Divounguy said. "We're doing the opposite of what's supposed to happen in a period like this."

> States with growing populations such as Iowa, Indiana Texas and Florida have progrowth policies that attract job creators and workers, he said.

> "People are going to places where labor markets are performing, where there is opportunity and they can thrive," Divounguy said.



Pritzker says it will population decline compound the state's popula-

BY GREG BISHOP

THE CENTER SQUARE

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker says he's focused on reversing the state's continued outbound migration. But a congressman says high unemployment from the governor's COVID-19 orders is likely going to compound that.

The state lost nearly 80,000 people in the year that ended July 2020, according to analysis of U.S. Census data. That's 22,000 more than were lost the year before and the seventh consecutive loss of population in the past 10 vears. Illinois led the nation in population decline for the past decade at 255,000.

U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Taylorville, told WMAY it's likely that means Illinois loses at least one seat in Congress. He said 154,000 new unemployment filers last week will

tion decline.

"And with the unemployment numbers, many of those seeking unemployment are probably going to look at an opportunity elsewhere and it's not going to help," Davis said. Pritzker said he's being a

cheerleader for Illinois to attract business, but it's going to take time. "It takes time to turn a

battleship or a aircraft carrier in the right direction and we've been doing that in the last two years and I will continue to do that," Pritzker said.

The pace of population loss accelerated under the first 18 months of the Pritzker administration.

Davis blamed statehouse Democrats that have been in control of state policy for years, increasing taxes and spending while not addressing structural deficits.

Have you been injured on the job?

If you've been injured in an

accident, make sure you have

BY RAYMON TRONCOSO CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — The state is soliciting computers and related equipment from individuals and companies as part of a new program that will distribute refurbished devices to low-income house-

The Computer Equity Network is a collaboration between the state, the nonprofit PCs for People, municipal governments and private businesses. The program is tied to the ongoing Connect Illinois initiative based out of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity that seeks to expand broadband access in the state.

"One of the largest gaps made even more significant in this pandemic is the digital divide," Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker said. "How can your child learn from home if you don't have internet access? How can you shop for groceries safely online if you don't have a computer? Accessing the digital world has

Illinois solicits computer donations from businesses, cities become essential for students, for small wise governments large and small are business owners, for patient-doctor communications, for job applications. Really there's no realm in which connecting online hasn't become absolutely necessary in the modern era.

DCEO estimates that out of 4.9 million Illinois households, more than 1.1 million currently lack computer access in their home.

According to DCEO Director Erin Guthrie, the Equity Network will host community hand-off events in all 102 Illinois counties to give away the upgraded devices to eligible families. The events will also feature on-site support from DCEO to provide digital literacy courses and options for accessing low-cost internet services.

What's outside of the state's hands, however, are the actual computers.

Illinois companies, when upgrading equipment, can donate their old technology to the Equity Network, where PCs For People will upgrade it and give it to a fam-

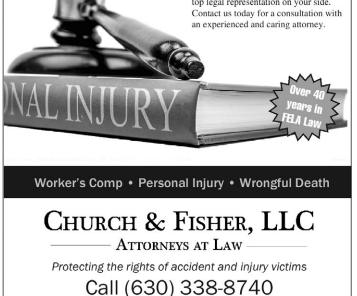
ily in need. Employers large and small, and like-

encouraged to donate equipment. "It can be computers by the hundreds just a couple here and there. It all makes a difference," he said.

Companies and individuals who give computers to the program are eligible for tax reductions under applicable regulations for property donations to charitable organizatīons.

PCs for People CEO Casey Sorensen said the network has currently committed to providing 20,000 computers to lowincome families during the non-profit's first year operating in Illinois. Illinois residents who are eligible for free computers must be below 200 percent of the federal poverty line or enrolled in income-based government assistance programs such as free or reduced school lunch, Medicaid or

Households looking to receive computers, or companies looking to donate their older equipment, can visit Illinois.gov/ComputerEquityNetwork for more information.



Toast to the end of 2020 with a Algonquin Cocktail

Times Square is going to look a bit different on New Year's Eve this year, just as every tourist attraction has in 2020. One thing that remains Midtown historic Algonquin Hotel located at 59 West 44th Street. Little has changed at the landmark hotel since it opened over 100 years

Writers and journalists still congregate there, a cat has free reign of the hotel, and it's the best place in town to enjoy authentic Algonquin

I have a soft spot for cocktails created at and/or named after hotels. This particular cocktail is so intriguing because it combines ingredients that, on paper, looks like would never build a delicious drink. Well, that's why you make the drinks.

The Algonquin starts out as many pre-prohibition cocktails do, whiskey and vermouth in a mixing glass. It is the addition of pineapple juice that sets it apart from nearly everything else in the whiskey world. The drink was created for the hotel in 1902, and supposedly was "discontinued" during prohibition.

Nearly every whiskey distiller has an Algonquin recipe listed on their website, the version in the recipe below is the current version of the cocktail that you would be served at the hotel if you were to order one this evening.

First, a bit more about the Algonquin. There is a reason that writers and journalists have always congregated there: the hotel caters to them. Concessions have always been made to writers, publicists, and journalists, some of which are still in place today.

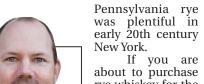
years authors on tour were allowed to stay at the Algonquin for one night in exchange for a signed copy of their latest book. The founders of The New Yorker magazine were among the many literary professionals that frequented the Algonquin, and all hotel guests receive free copies of the magazine to this day.

have free reign of the hotel. The male cats are all named "Hamlet" and the female cats are all named "Matilda". Hamlet VIII is the most recent feline occupant of the hotel, Matilda III died in October 2017. The hotel also holds a feline fashion show each summer to benefit the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals.

On to the cocktail. The origins are cloudy, as is the case with many cocktails predating prohibition. Algonquin is treated as a cocktail platform in many craft cocktail bars, a platform in which a whiskey and vermouth are chosen to mix with the pineapple juice.

Blended scotch and bourbon are often used for that it is delicious, but the gen-Algonquin service, but the hotel uses rye whiskey. Rye was more than likely the whiskey used in many pre-prohibition cocktails created in the Northeast, simply due to the fact that rye was the only

Bourbon was very much a 'southern thing" until the 1950s, and our grandparents ing a crowd, pick up the smallmay have had the option of er 375ml bottles of vermouth



Brian Rung

about to purchase rye whiskey for the first time, you're in luck! Gone are the Old days of Overholt and Jim Beam rye as the two options at your local spirits retailer. It took a few

years to catch up with the bourbon boom, but About the cats. Yes, cats the rye market is strong and quality whiskies at affordable price points can be found in stores from Philadelphia to Los Angeles.

Be prepared to spend about \$20 to \$30 on a bottle of rye depending on state and local taxes, about the same as a quality bourbon. My favorite rye is Rittenhouse, made in the Pennsylvania tradition and named for Philadelphia's famous Rittenhouse Square. Sazerac Rye from Buffalo Trace is a solid rye, as is Michter's.

When it comes to vermouth, the Algonquin has spoken: Noilly Prat Dry Vermouth. Yes, the vermouth is both brand and type specific. Many bars serve the Algonquin with sweet vermouth, and I'm sure uine article on West 44th street uses dry vermouth.

If you pick up a bottle of dry vermouth along with your rye, try your hand at a "dry" Manhattan. If you have a bottle of blended scotch in the cabinet, try your hand at a "dry" Rob Roy.

Unless you plan on servbut as it tends to spoil quickly

upon opening. Be sure to refrigerate vermouth once it has been opened, it should keep in the refrigerator for a few days.

As for the pineapple juice, use Dole unsweetened pineapple juice. I keep the 6 oz. cans in my home bar, shake before

using.

For this and other cocktails prepared in a mixing glass, add your ingredients to the glass before adding ice. This will prevent excess dilution as you measure out your ingredi-I stir Martinis, Manhattans, and other stirred drinks with larger ice cubes 21 times and it seems to yield the ideal amount of dilution.



The classic Algonquin Cocktail is built in a mixing glass and served in a chilled cocktail (Martini) glass.

Combine in mixing glass: 1 1/2rye whiskey

3/4 oz. Noilly Prat Dry

3/4 oz. pineapple juice Stir with ice

Strain into chilled cocktail glass, garnish with lime wheel. Until next week, enjoy respon-



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Critics: Stimulus package full of wasteful spending unrelated to coronavirus

BY BETHANY BLANKLEY THE CENTER SQUARE

The \$2.3 trillion omnibus bill passed by Congress and sent to President Trump who threatened to veto it includes \$900 billion for additional coronavirus relief and is full of wasteful spending of taxpayer money on programs that have nothing to do with the coron-

avirus, numerous critics argue. CATO Institute's Chris Edwards points out that the bill "is an astounding 5,585 pages in length, including 544 pages for coronavirus relief, 1,915 pages for appropriations, and 3,126 pages for extensions and corrections.

"If it were printed at 11 inches per page, that's 61,435 inches or 5,120 feet," Edwards said. "Since there are 5,280 feet in a mile, the bill is almost a mile of paper end to end."

The nonprofit government watchdog OpenThe Books.com said, "Christmas came early for Washington," and listed "just a few examples of taxpayer abuse" in the bill, including:

• \$10 million for "gender programs" in Pakistan

• \$40 million for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

• \$10 billion to loan forgiveness to the United States

sit programs, \$10 billion for state highways, and \$1 billion for Amtrak

• \$15 billion for live entertainment venues, cultural institutions, and independent movie theaters

• \$82 billion to K-12 schools and \$23 billion to colleges and universities.

Open the Books CEO Adam Andrzejewski asks Americans, "Are you OK with your hard-earned tax dollars being spent like this? We are

Americans for Prosperity's Brent Gardner says the bill is "packed with wasteful and unrelated spending provisions," adding, "It may be the season of giving, but that does be giving taxpayer money away recklessly. Americans deserve better.'

One addition tucked in the bill is the Protecting Lawful Streaming Act introduced by Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., which targets "large-scale, criminal, for-profit streaming services, not good faith business disputes or noncommercial activities. Nor does it target individuals who access the pirated knowingly streams, unknowingly,

Technology reports.

Spike Cohen, Vice President, tweeted that by of the radical Left, special

"just robbed you of about ists" and paves the way for \$2,750 each and gave you \$600 of it back, but if you watch a pirated copy of Mandalorian you could end up in prison, unable to ever get a business license, buried in fines for the rest of your life.

"If you stream copyrighted content without permission, you're now a federal felon. punishable by jail time, fines, losing your right to vote or own a firearm, etc. But they gave you \$600 of your own money though.'

The National Association of Broadcasters, which supports the bill, says it was "tailored to deter large-scale copyright piracy while ensuring that legitimate licenses are not not mean lawmakers should subject to potential prosecu-

tion.' U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, voted against the bill, arguing there were "countless pet projects that will escape close scrutiny" because of the

bill's size. "Had this bill been solely focused on re-opening the economy, getting Americans back to work, and jump starting a recovery, it would have had my enthusiastic support,'

he said. The "5,600-page spending package fails to make any retired meaningful spending cuts and Libertarian Party candidate for instead advances the interests

• \$14 billion for mass tran- voting for the bill, Congress interests, and swamp lobby-





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OBITUARIES

_ Marijayne Baudino _____ _

The Free Press Advocate, The Braidwood Journal, The Coal City Courant, Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020, page 8

KINSMAN-Marijayne Baudino, 87, formerly of Kinsman, passed away peacefully, Friday, Dec. 25, 2020 at Park Pointe Healthcare and Rehabilitation Born Aug. 14, 1933 in Morris,

Marijayne was a daughter of Everett and Gertrude (Dearth) Matthews. She was raised in Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School with the class of 1951. On Dec. 30, 1951, Marijayne married Jack Baudino in Assumption Catholic Church in Coal City, and together they made their home and raised their family in rural Kinsman. She was a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Kinsman, where she vas involved with the Altar and Rosary Society. Marijayne worked numerous years at the Hallmark store in Morris, but will most be remembered as an exceptional wife and mother who enjoyed family meals and spending time

together with family on the holidays

Survivors include her four children: David (Barb) Baudino, of Mazon; Duane Baudino, of Frederick, OK; Jim (Mary) Baudino, of Morris and Steve (Michelle) Baudino, of Verona; 7 grandchildren: Lori Baudino, of Morris; Carrie Brent) Sulzberger, of Verona; Nick (Kelly) Baudino, of Verona; Eric (Kelli) Baudino, of Mazon and Brant, Brody and Paige Baudino, all of Verona; 9 great-grandchildren: Shae, Tyler, Zack, Jada, Ava, Colton, Jaxon, Liam and Alli, and one brother-in-law, Joseph T. Phillips, of Carbon Hill, as well as numerous nieces and

Marijayne was preceded in death by her parents, husband Jack on Dec. 13, 2016; grandson, Brad Baudino; sister, Margaret "Pat" Phillips; brother, Nelson (Pat) Matthews and brother-in-law and sisters-in-law, Pete (LaVerne) Baudino, Connie (Bill) Frye and Dorothy (John) Welch.

A private family visitation was held at Reeves Funeral Home in Coal City, and Mass of Christian Burial followed in Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Kinsman. Reverend Stanley Drewniak presided, and Marijayne was laid to rest in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery with her late husband, Jack.

Pallbearers were Marijayne's grandchildren: Lori, Carrie, Nick, Eric, Brant, Brody and Paige
Those wishing to view the funeral services
The recorded Mass of

virtually, may watch the recorded Mass of Christian Burial online after Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020. A link for the event is available on Marijayne's memorial page. Family and friends are encouraged to sign

the guest book, upload photographs and share Marijayne's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Marijayne-

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. In Coal City.

Steven C. Fannin

MORRIS-Steven C. Fannin, 71, of Morris, passed away Dec. 25, 2020 due to complications of kidney disease.

He was born in Camp Dix, KY on Feb. 8, 1949, the son of Lennie and Opal (Gilliam) Fannin. Steve graduated from Morris Community High School. He received a football scholarship to attend Culver-Stockton College in Canton, MO, where he pledged the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity. He also received his masters in education from

Illinois State University as well as completed all coursework towards a doctorate in education. He married Mary Sabatini on Dec. 29, 1978 at St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Spring Valley,

Steve began his career as a teacher at Minooka Community High School, where he also coached football. He was then hired at Hall High School in Spring Valley as a science teacher and football and wrestling coach. He then served as principal of Hall High School until 1992, when he was hired as the superintendent of Freeburg Community High School, in Freeburg, IL. In 1997, Steve returned to his alma mater and became the superintendent of Morris Community High School. He successfully and honorably finished his career in education at Morris, retiring in 2007. He was active in the Morris Rotary Club, the American Cancer Society, where he chaired the Relay for Life for multiple years, and numerous other community organizations. He was inducted into the Culver-Stockton College Sports and Education Hall of Fame. In his retirement, he also served as the Wauponsee Township Supervisor.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Mary; three children: Adam, of Morris; Stephen Michael (Misun Kim), of South Korea and Molly (Samuel Alcarez), of Chicago; grandchildren: Lyla, Amelia Benjamin, of South Korea and Maxine, of Chicago. He is also survived by six siblings: Clara Scaman and Dr. Shirley Fannin, of Morris; Gerald Fannin, of

Orlando, FL; Phyllis Wheeler, of Marseilles, IL; Carol Jean Rose, of Plano, TX and Valerie Fannin, of Burbank, CA. Steve was preceded in death by his

parents, Lennie and Opal Fannin, formerly of Morris and his sister, Lynn Less, formerly of Reseda, CA. Funeral services will be held Wednesday.

Dec. 30, 2020 at 12 noon in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 600 E. Jackson St. in Morris. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Jason Stone presiding and Deacon Paul Jung assisting.

Those wishing to participate in Steve's funeral service online are welcome to join the live-streamed service beginning at 12 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020. This virtual service is accessible through a link available on Steve's memorial page. Burial will be in Mount Carmel Catholic

Cemetery in Morris.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Steve's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com/obituary/Steven-

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Morris.

Martha McCutcheon _____

PONTIAC-Martha (Marty) Skonetski McCutcheon, 97, of Pontiac passed away at her residence on Dec. 27, 2020 surrounded by her family. Marty was born in Pontiac on June

18, 1923 to parents, William (Shorty) and Mabel Rose Campbell. She graduated from Pontiac High School in 1941. Marty married Walter Skonetski of Dwight in 1944. They made their living farming in Dwight for many years and later moved to Wilmington. They were mar-

ried for 38 years. During this time Marty kept busy teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School at the Danish Lutheran Church in Dwight and also teaching sewing to girls in the

Marty later married Virgil McCutcheon in 1990. they lived in Pontiac all their married life. They spent a part of their retired life in helping others in the Disaster Relief Program.

Marty was a Christian first and foremost. She loved the Lord. She was either attending church services or helping at one of the church functions. She was famous for her pies. Later in

life she spent much of her time knitting and crocheting hats and scarves to be given away to the less fortunate and helping in the food pantry at the

Surviving are two children, Janice (Ed) Harseim, of Morris and Randy (Annette) Skonetski, of Wilmington; five grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren who she loved to spend time with and especially doing crafts with. She is also survived by

one sister, Dorothy West, of Bossier City, LA. Marty was preceded in death by her two husbands, four sisters: Fay Robotham, Geraldine Ramsey, Mary Etta Augsburger and Patricia Faust and one brother, William Campbell.

. Cremation rites were accorded. The family

will have private services at a later date. Memorials can be made to the First Baptist Church Food Pantry of Pontiac or to the donor's



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_Jacqueline Tulley_____

WILMINGTON—Jacqueline Tulley, Ph.D, 60, of Wilmington, passed away on Dec. 23, 2020 at home, with family by her side, after a two year courageous battle with colon cancer.

Jacqueline was born on Nov. 24, 1960 to Donald E. and Joan T. (nee Haley) Tulley. She was raised on the family farm and was very much a farm girl. She helped her dad driving the tractors, feeding the hogs, walking the beans, taking care of the ponies, family dog, and the unending kittens. She picked apples, pears and cherries for her mom and grandmas, and she always had time to go down and play in the

Jacqueline graduated from St. Rose Parochial Grade School and Wilmington High School with the class of 1978. She earned her bachelor of science degree in nursing from Lewis University. From there she embarked on her lifelong learning in the career of nursing. She was a Trauma Nurse Specialist in the emergency department for over 20 years at Loyola University Hospital in Maywood. During that time, she earned her master of science in nursing and her Acute Care Nurse Practitioner -Board Certified license, specializing in cardiology, both from Loyola University. Jacqueline enjoyed her career in cardiology with Advocate Health, but always made time to go back and work shifts as a trauma nurse at Loyola. It was there, combined with her knowledge and years of experience, that she began teaching and coaching new nurses. Jacqueline became interested in pursuing nursing education and became an adjunct professor at St. Xavier University for the School of Nursing and Health Sciences. From there, she became an Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Nursing teaching nurses that were pursuing their master's degree. She continued her own studies at Loyola University and earned her doctoral degree in nursing. Jacqueline dedicated her entire career caring, healing, and

Jacqueline enjoyed the outdoors. In her free time, she was an avid jogger, biker and

swimmer. Jacqueline liked a good book, a good movie, a nice glass of wine, and watching the Chicago Bears. She loved baking her chocolate chip cookies and taking countless dozens of them to the nurses on the oncology unit of Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Jacqueline cherished nothing more than her three children. Whether it was watching them in sports or listening to them sing, she worshiped every minute. She took great pleasure watching them blossom into young adults and pursing their own successful careers. She often said, "I love my kids, they are so amaz-

Surviving are her beloved children: Matthew Saulters, of Wilmington; Garrett (Ashley) Saulters, of Virginia and Kiara Saulters, of Los Angeles, CA; parents, Donald and Joan Tulley, of Wilmington; sisters, Sharon Prusank, of Yorkville; Donna (Robert) Ball, of Lakeland, FL and brother, Stephen (Vanessa) Tulley, of Plainfield, as well as numerous nieces and

Funeral services were held Monday, Dec. 2020 in St. Rose Catholic Church in Wilmington. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated with Reverend Sebastian Gargol offici-

Burial was in Mount Saint Patrick Cemetery in Wilton Center.

Pallbearers were: Ross Marshal, Dan Christmann, Stephen Tulley, Kyle Tulley, Steve Liaromatis and Ty Anderson. Preferred memorials may be made as gifts

in Jacqueline's memory to the American Cancer Society for Colorectal Cancer Research at www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer Family and friends are encouraged to sign

the guest book, upload photographs and share Jacqueline's memorial page online through social media by logging onto: www.BaskervilleFH.com/obituary/Jacqu eline-Tulley

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

Lester Heberer____

BRAIDWOOD—Lester "Les" Heberer, 76, of Braidwood, passed away suddenly Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2020 at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee. Born Feb. 1, 1944 in Belleville, IL,

he was the son of Walter and Gertrude (nee Range) Heberer. He was a graduate of Freeburg High School in 1962. He was a member of the Immaculate Conception Church in Braidwood, where he was proud to teach eighth grade religious education for numerous years. He was also a fourth degree knight with the Knights of Columbus. Les came to Braidwood as an expansion to the Peabody Coal Company and stayed on to become a dragline operator, later becoming an agent for Country Companies.

At the age of 40, he went back to college and received an associate's degree in computer systems management and began working for AT&T Bell Labs, Rush Presbyterian St. Lukes Hospital, and then eventually retired from Riverside Medical Center in 2006. Les was in the second class of the State of Illinois paramedic training program and was the Braidwood Fire Department's first group of paramedics. He served the community for over 50 years as a member of the Braidwood Fire Department, lastly becoming the President of the board of trustees. For years, he was known in many communities for his faithful role of Santa, eventually hanging up his Santa hat in 2017. Les maintained a life of faith, work and volunteering, but one thing he enjoyed most, was sitting down and reading a good book.

Surviving are his beloved wife of 55 years, Kathleen "Kay" (nee Nahas) Heberer, who he married Aug. 7, 1965 at the Immaculate

Conception Church; two sons, Matthew (Melanie) Heberer, of Morton, IL and Phillip (Pamela) Heberer, of St. Augustine, FL; seven grandchildren: Luke, Brett, Jake, Hutch, James, Jeremy, and Lindy Heberer; two brothers, Edward (the late Gina) Heberer, of New Port Richey, FL and (Leone) Heberer. Braidwood; numerous nieces, nephews, and their families; sister-in-law, Anita

(the late William) Scheer, of Braidwood and brother-in-law, Fred (Betty) Nahas, of Plainfield, IL.

Preceding him in death were his parents and sister-in-law, Betty Jo (Robert) Weigt.

Visitation for Les will be at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home and Crematory, Braidwood, Friday, Jan. 1, 2021 from 3-7 p.m. All attendees are required to wear face coverings, follow social distancing guidelines, and due to the capacity requirements, please be brief with your condolences to allow other guests to pay their final respects.

Private Mass of Christian Burial will be held for the immediate family at the Immaculate Conception in Braidwood. Interment will follow at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Braidwood.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in his name to the Immaculate Conception Church or the Braidwood Fire Department would be appreciated.

For more information and to visit his online guestbook, log on to www.rwpatterson-funeralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

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

_ Jacqueline Andreina

HERSCHER—Jacqueline Marie Andreina, 75, of Herscher, formerly of Altorf, reunited with her husband Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020. She was born March 5, 1945 in Geneva, NY, the daughter of Francis and Darlene (Benoit) Mason. Jackie married Ernest 'Pooch" Andreina on June 10. 1966 in Kankakee. He preceded her in death on Oct. 24, 2004.

great-grandfather, Jackie's Damause Benoit Sr. and great-grandfather, Damause Benoit Jr. helped settle the area and were instrumental in starting Maternity B.V.M. Catholic Church in Bourbonnais. She was a volunteer at Harbor House. Jackie was an avid reader, enjoyed playing Scrabble with her sisters, and loved going on winter trips to Florida. Anyone that knew her knew she had a one-of-akind personality. Jackie was a parishioner of Maternity B.V.M. Catholic Church in

Surviving are four children: Rob (Nancy) Andreina, of Cadiz, KY, formerly of Braidwood; Sherri Andreina-Kane, of Bourbonnais; Darren Andreina, of Herscher and Mitch (Sarah) Andreina. of Herscher; 10 doting grandchildren: Caryn, Rachel, Rene, Robert Jr., Emily, Tonia, CJ, Jeno, Isaac, and Elliot; five great-grandchildren, six sisters: Barbara Lee, Pat Rivera, Cynthia Thorne, Ruth Shokley, Sue Rogers and Frances Ferrera and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

In addition to her husband, Ernest "Pooch" Andreina, Jackie is preceded in death by her parents, one granddaughter, Carla Mae DeBoard and one sister, Mary Rogers. Private family services will be held.

Burial will be at All Saints Cemetery in Bourbonnais.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the family wishes. Family and friends can sign her guestbook

at www.clancygernon.com.

Arrangements were made by Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais.

Marguerite Siron

(nee Faletti), 65, of Goose Lake, passed away Saturday, Dec. 26, 2020 at the Joliet Area Community Hospice Home in Joliet.

Born June 19, 1955 in Morris, she was the daughter of Dominic and Levita (nee Schultz) Faletti. Peggy enjoyed many things in life, such as watching Chicago Bears games, cooking, baking, and she had a love for all animals. She welcomed all walks of life and enjoyed spending time with her family and friends. Peggy was especially excited awaiting on the birth of her first grandchild that will be arriving soon.

Surviving are her husband of 22 years, Ronald Siron, who she married July 1998 in Morris; one son, Matthew (Heather Hill), of

GOOSE LAKE—Marguerite "Peggy" Siron Ottawa, IL; step-daughters, Sandy (Robert e Faletti), 65, of Goose Lake, passed away Bennett), of Plainfield, IL and Vickie Siron, of Tinley Park, IL and one brother, Rocky (Pat) Faletti, of Goose Lake.

She was preceded in death by her parents. Cremation rites have been accorded and private inurnment will be in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Braidwood.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the family would be appreciated.

For more information and to visit her online guestbook, log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find them on Facebook.

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

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How to eat organic goods without spending too much

Dear EarthTalk: My New Year's resolution is to eat healthier. Which fruits and vegetables are worth spending extra money on for organic varieties? Likewise, is it worth it from the standpoint of health to also pay a premium for organic meat, cheese and eggs? P. McAdams, via email

It is indeed difficult to figure out which foods are worth spending more money on for organic varieties. Sure, you can just buy only organic in every category, but you'd end up spending upwards of 20 percent more every time you shopped. And certain "conventional" (i.e., non-organic) foods contain lots of pesticides and chemicals while others do

Knowing where to draw the line in the grocery aisle is increasingly difficult given the profusion of organic choices these days. But luckily if you are armed with a few facts, you can eat healthier without



breaking the bank.

As for produce, many conventionally grown fruits and vegetables don't contain or pass along significant amounts of pesticides or other noxious plant, asparagus, cauliflower, cantaloupe, broccoli, mushof pesticides or other noxious

non-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) suggests only buying organic for their so-called the U.S. Department of dirty dozen" list of common Agriculture (USDA) "Organic" produce items that do tend to harbor larger amounts of strawberries, spinach, nectarines, apples, peaches, pears, cherries, grapes, celery, tomatoes, sweet bell peppers and potatoes.

Going for organic varieties

is one of the most affordable ways to eat healthier because the price premium on organic produce is in many cases negligible given more consumer demand driving increased production and supply.

On the flip side, EWG also produces the "Green Fifteen" list of produce that tends to be contaminant-free even when not organic: avocado, pineapple, onion, papaya, frozen sweet peas, sweet corn, eggrooms, cabbage, kiwi and honeydew melon.

As for animal products, organic varieties can only bear the U.S. Department of stamp if they are "raised in living conditions accommodating their natural behaviors (like the ability to graze on pasture), fed 100% organic feed and forage, and not administered antibiotics or hormeat is better for your health, don't bet on it. A 2015 Spanish study found that consumption of organic meat does not diminish-and in fact might slightly increase-the risk of getting cancer. That said, other research has shown that organic meat contains more healthy Omega-3 unsaturated fats-this results from the animals eating grass not grain.

Another good reason to go organic if you eat meat is ethics: Conventionally raised livestock are subject to confinement and overcrowding while being dosed with antibiotics to prevent the spread of bacterial infection in their midst. The same calculus applies to organic versus conventional dairy products: organic milk and cheese may contain more Omega-3s but otherwise the health differences are negligible. It certainly is a balancing

act today to shop with your it's easier than any time in the question family's health and your own last 75 years to avoid chemicals talk.org.

TOMATOES ARE ONE of the produce aisle items on Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen" list of fruits and vegetables that are worth spending extra on for organic varieties to spare yourself exposure to pesticide residues.

conscience in mind while not in your food if that's the way breaking the bank. The bright you want to roll. side of this conundrum is that

EarthTalk® is a 501(c)3 we do have so many healthier nonprofit EarthTalk. See more choices overall these days, and at https://emagazine.com. Send questions to: question@earth-

Forest Preserve's show features rookery, turtles and bird feeding tips

Take a virtual journey to the islands of Lake Renwick Preserve, view Blanding's turtles up close and learn some winter bird feeding tips during the December episode of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's nature show, "The

The show will air live on the District's Facebook page at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30. During the program, host

Suzy Lyttle, a Forest Preserve program coordinator, will take viewers on a journey starting with a kayak trip to view the nesting structures on the islands at Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve in Plainfield.

The islands are off-limits to humans year-round to let birds nest and raise their young, so this is a unique chance to see the wooden nesting structures built by the Forest Preserve up close. Lyttle will describe the work that went into erecting the structures while she explores the island and the site's old nests.

Next up, Lyttle will head over to view the District's batch of baby Blanding's tur-



DURING THE DECEMBER episode of "The Buzz," Suzy Lyttle, a program coordinator for the Forest Preserve District of Will County, will take viewers on a virtual kayak trip to view the nesting structures on the islands at Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve in Plainfield. The show airs at 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 30, on the District's Facebook page, Facebook.com/WillCoForests.

part of a regional effort to help this state-endangered species.

Forest Preserve program coordinator Jen Guest will describe what it takes to raise the turtles so they can be released into the wild next year, and viewers can watch as

Finally, Lyttle will tour the District's largest bird feeding ReconnectWithNature.org.

tles, which are being raised as station and Bob Bryerton, a Forest Preserve program coordinator, will share his tips on what works best to attract birds in the winter. Now that temperatures have dropped, feeding birds can provide countless hours of fun birdwatching activities from the warmth of your home.

For more information visit

New minimum wage rates set to take effect on New Year's Day

New Year with an additional increase in the minimum wage to \$11 an hour, and the Illinois Department of Labor is encouraging employees to watch their paychecks to ensure that time worked in 2021 is paid at the new rate.

Governor JB Pritzker signed legislation into law in 2019 providing a path to a \$15 minimum wage by 2025.
Minimum wage earners
received two increases in 2020 to \$9.25 an hour on Jan. 1 followed by an increase to \$10 an hour on July 1. The minimum wage will continue to increase an additional \$1 an hour each Ian. 1 until it reaches \$15 an hour in 2025.

"We want to make sure that workers earning minimum wage are aware that the \$1 increase should be reflected in their pay checks for any time they work after the first of the year," said Michael Kleinik, director of the Illinois Department of Labor. "While we fully expect employers will pay the new wage, we also

the change.

Prior to the 2020 increasthe last time Illinois increased its minimum wage was more than a decade ago in 2010 when it was raised to \$8.25. Cook County has a higher minimum wage than the state, currently \$13 an hour. The current city of Chicago minimum wage is \$13.50 an hour for small employers (4 to 20 employees) and \$14 an hour for large employers (21 or more employees).

A recent study by the Illinois Economic Policy Institute at the University of Illinois indicated that more than 1.4 million adult hourly workers in Illinois make less than \$15 per hour.

The new law maintains provisions for employers to count gratuities to offset wages for workers such as food servers who regularly earn tips. Tipped employees may be paid 60 percent of the hourly minimum wage. These workers must still earn the minimum wage after receiving tips or the \$15.

Illinoisans will ring in the want workers to be aware of employer must make up the difference.

Workers who are under 18 years old and work fewer than 650 hours in a year will earn a minimum wage of \$8.50 per hour beginning Jan. 1. The youth minimum wage rate will gradually rise to \$13 an hour by

All Illinois employers are required to post the "Your Under Rights Employment Laws" in a conspicuous location on the premises of the employer where notices to employees are customarily posted. The color poster, which also covers other Illinois labor laws, can be found at https://www2.illinois.gov/idol/Employers/Page s/posters.aspx.

Employees with problems regarding the minimum wage can file a complaint with IDOL

New minimum wage rates beginning on Jan. 1 of every year are 2021-\$11, 2022-\$12,2023-\$13, 2024-\$14, 2025-

the new year right

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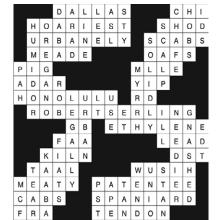
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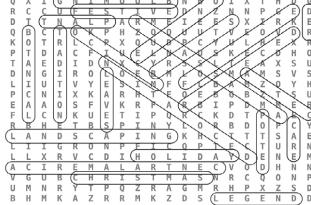
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6 5 8





Coloring contest underway for those ages 3-6

Wilmington VFW Post 5422 Auxiliary is sponsoring a patriotic coloring contest for boys and girls ages 3 through 6.

Entry forms to be colored by youngsters from Wilmington and Braidwood can be picked up at the VFW, 557 W. Baltimore St., Wilmington.

Winners of the local contest will be entered into a District competition. The name, age and address of child must be written on the back of each entry. Deadline to enter is Jan.

15, 2021. For more details call Kathy at 815-823-4324 or 815-926-2651.

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SITUATIONS WANTED

Stories about local people, organizations and events. If you know a neighbor with an interesting hobby, collection or cause, give the editor a call at 1-815-634-0315 or 1-815-476-7966. tfn/47b

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Soduko puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle

APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Braidwood, Upstairs, 2BR apartment, newly remodeled, \$725 mo. \$1,000 security deposit. Laundry on sight, referand lease, No ences pets. 815-365-2829 leave message. cc51b-2a

PROMOTIONAL OF-FER - take \$75 off 1st month rent. Coal City, ground level, 2BR 1BA, living room, dining room, laundry room hookup w/washer-dryer Lots of in your apt. closet space, outdoor shed. storage small deck & patio. 1 year lease, \$795/mo. Call 815-634-2294. cc51a-1b

FARM EQUIPMENT

For sale by sealed bid. 1990? Case International 885 tractor with TA 26 loader. 5,255 Can be seen at Maine Township build-Gorman and Braceville RD. Bids will be taken until Jan. 8, and will 2021 opened Jan. 11, 2021. The board has the right to reject any bid. Send bids to: J. Jackman 4100 S. Gorman Rd., Gardner, 60424 ch51b-1a

HELP WANTED

Positions

Wilmington Kelly Services Open currently seeking Packaging Technicians and Forklift Operators Wilmington IL. Pay: \$15.75 - \$16.75 de-Pay: pending on shift and position. Please call or text 786-266-2489. cc51b-2a

HELP WANTED

ACCOUNTANT NEEDED

Vanfab, Inc and Van Voorst Lumber Company are currently looking for an Accountant to ensure the accuracy of financial documents, as well as their compliance with local laws and regulations, prepare tax returns and ensure that taxes are paid properly and on time, and oversee the Accounts Pavable and Accounts Receivable Department. This job will require a strong background in accounting, preferably a CPA, although candidates that possess the required skills and experience will be considered. The ideal candidate will have strong numerical proficiency, great organization. problem-solvina abilities, and excellent use of logic. If you, or someone you know is qualified and interested in this position, please send your resume to rachel@vanfab.com your resume to mail

Van Duyne Motel Part-time housekeeper needed 2 or 3 days a week. Part-time maintenance person needed 10 plus hours a week. 815-476-2801. ca52a-2b

Vanfab, Inc 1 Center Street, Union Hill, IL

60969 or call Rachel at

815-426-2180. cc52a-53b

Executive Director of Wilmington Park District. Head Administrator that oversees the Wilmanagement of Wil-mington Park District Agency. For a complete job description and how visit apply, jobs.ilipra.org ch52b-1a

HELP WANTED MISCELLANEOUS

CONTROLLER NEEDED

Vanfab, Inc and Van Voorst Lumber Company are currently looking for a Controller to oversee the accounting operations as well as produce, maintain and accounting/fimanage nancial reports. This job will require a strong background in accounting, preferably a CPA, although candidates that possess the required skills and experience will be considered. The ideal candiwill have strong date proficiency, organization problem-solving abilities, and excellent use logic. If you, or someone you know is qualified and interested in this position, please send your resume to rachel@vanfab.com mail your resume to Vanfab, Inc 1 Center Street, Union Hill, IL 60969 or call Rachel at 815-426-2180. cc52a-53b

HOMES FOR RENT

3 bedroom, 2 bath, 2 car garage rental property available February 1st. 145 N. Street in \$1,300/mo Coal City. 815-768-0681 rent. cc53b-3a

MISCELLANOUS

Price Reduced: 8 foot Western Ultra Mount Snow Plow, good shape, currently on 2500 HD. \$1,800, obo; Rigid RP340 Pro-Press Kit, 1/2" to 2" Jaws, brand new, \$1,600. Call evenings and ask for John 815-955-0800.

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READERS

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to poinsettias.

Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 11 = 0) 23 11 11 14

Clue: Vibrant

16 3 1 20 В.

Clue: December holiday

14 13 **15 18**

Clue: Parts of plants

D. 21 13 16 11 1 15 17 4 11 25 20

Clue: Home adornments

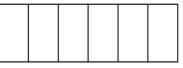
Ζ

R R М

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to poinsettias.

SBTRAC



Answer: Bracts

Guess Who?

I am a singer born in England on December 30, 1986. I discovered electronic music while in college. Rihanna is one of my influences and I sang a cover of her song "Only Girl In the World." My debut album reached #1 on the UK charts.

Answer: Ellie Goulding

CLUES ACROSS

1. Home of the Cowboys 7. "Hawaii Five-O" actor McBride

51

- 10. Most aged
- 12. Fitted with a shoe 13. Courteously
- 14. They form over cuts 15. Western Alaskan river
- 16. Aggressive men
- 17. Farm animal 18. Young woman (French)
- 19. Sixth month of Hebrew calendar
- 21. Short cry 22. State capital
- 27. Rural delivery

- 28. "Twilight Zone" creator

1. Chinese mountain range

44. Fleshy 45. Inventor

33. Gigabyte

principal role

39. Fall back

41. Chinese city

- 48. Taxis 49. A citizen of Spain
- 50. Important age for aging

34. Flammable hydrocarbon

40. Afrikaans word for language

36. Supervises flying

37. An actor who plays a

38. Furnace for pottery

workers (abbr.) 51. Body part

CLUES DOWN

- Romanian city
- 3. Fishermen cast it 4. Shelter from wind
- 5. Sign language 6. Pigpen
- 7. Make sore 8. Flat metal shelves
- 9. Forms that say who you are 10. Cigar lovers' necessity
- 11. Popular cooking ingredient 12. Skin covering the head

23. In accordance with the law

- 14. Unshakable 17. Exclamation meaning
- "Finally!" 18. One of the wise men's gifts 20. Take away from
- 25. NY Giants legend
- 26. Utilize
- 29. Beloved Hollywood alien
- 30. Unwell
- 31. More destitute
- 35. Sun up in New York
- 41. Go in a specified direction 42. Freshwater mussel genus
- 44. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)

В

М

- 46. Mimic
- 24. Nicole Kidman's husband
- 32. Grinded together
- 36. Italian-made cars 38. Most sacred site in Islam 40. Rip apart
- 43. " the Man" Musical
- 45. West coast time zone
- 47. You can get one in summer

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The days of voters not caring about Madigan are over

House Democrats who could be considered politically vulnerable in 2022 to ask them how they plan to vote on Speaker Michael Madigan's reelection in January.

With one exception, I didn't make much headway. Much has been made

about the number of Democratic women who have said they will not vote to reelect the longtime House Speaker. That's true, but it isn't yet a universal opinion.

Democratic Representative-Elect Suzanne Ness (D-Crystal Lake) may have breezed past GOP Rep. Allen Skillicorn by almost 2,300 votes last month, but her district leans Republican, a remap may not help her all that much (particularly if it's a "Fair Map" and therefore not drawn with partisan intent) and 2022 will be the first midterm election of a Democratic president.

Ness ran as a reformer and raised over a million dollars from Madigan's network. Skillicorn, for whatever weird reasons, barely campaigned and spent almost nothing. She likely won't get a pass in two years. That January Madigan vote, therefore, looms large.

I reached out to several at this time regarding the election for House Speaker," Ness told me the other day.

House Republican polling showed 76 percent of her district has an unfavorable view of Madigan, with 65 percent hav-"very unfavorable" opinion and only 12 percent with a favorable opinion, according to the Dec. 16 Ogden & Fry poll of 716 respondents.

Yang-Rohr Ianet Naperville) defeated GOP Rep. Grant Wehrli by a couple of thousand votes. Her district leans slightly Democratic at the top, but the uncertainties of the coming remap mean that nothing is guaranteed. Yang-Rohr didn't respond to multiple attempts to reach her about the speaker's election.

Democrats' only real and consistent bright spot in the area of the Metro East which has been trending Republican. Stuart defeated a Republican incumbent in 2016, but has fended off two attempts to unseat her since then.

Still, 2022 could be problematic, particularly if mapmakers can't deliberately pack her district with Democrats me the other day. who are stuck in soon-to-be-

Stuart also did not respond inquiry about her inten-January

Others who did not respond include d Representative-Elect Dave Vella (D-Rockford), who barely squeaked by Rep.

John Cabello and Representative-Elect Avelar (D-Bolingbrook). Rep. Joyce Mason's Senator is the crusading reformer Melinda Bush and Mason (D-Gurnee) shares that district with Rep. Sam Yingling, who has said he will not vote to reelect Rep. Katie Stuart (D- Madigan Rep. Mason has not Edwardsville) has been the responded to numerous attempts to ask for whom she's

> Representative-Elect Denise Wang Stoneback (D-Skokie) lives in a liberal Democratic stronghold, so she could face a primary opponent if she votes to reelect Madigan. "Right now I have no comment on this," Stoneback wrote to



Rich Miller

I got the disleast some of these folks (and plenty of others in that caucus) are hoping everything will work itself out by

albeit less liberal

Democratic dis-

have a comment at

the moment," she

Dee the second Wednesday in January, which would spare them from making such a momentous decision.

told me.

As mentioned above, I found one exception.

Rep. Mark Walker (D-Arlington Heights) was recently asked by the Daily Herald how he was voting for House Speaker. "We'll see," was his initial response. Rep. Walker then report-

edly praised Madigan for his organizational skills, but the Daily Herald also claimed he said that public servants must be held to a higher standard.

'I don't believe he'll be a viable candidate by January,' Walker then said of Madigan.

The article had no expla-Representative-Elect nation for why Walker said that "I do not have a statement former Rep. Monica Bristow's Maura Ĥirschauer (D-Batavia) about Madigan's viability. So, I

called him. Walker said his ceed as a caucus because the comment was deliberately designed to send a message to trict. "I do not the House Democratic caucus and the sub-caucuses within it, including the Black Caucus.

"Your guy's not gonna win, come up with an alternatinct feeling that at tive," is what Walker said he meant.

To Walker's mind, anyway, the 19 public Madigan opponents in the House Democratic caucus are not going to budge. "I think the caucus ought to decide," Walker said, adding he doesn't want to see this matter go to the House floor for endless votes. "I want us to sucstate absolutely needs it," he

Walker also believes that the days of voters not caring about Madigan are over. "I'm afraid that ship has sailed," he

At least somebody said something.

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

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Crude oil prices nearing pre-Covid high continue to follow the rising may continue their ascent, but Illinois gas prices have

risen 4.0 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.35/g according GasBuddy's daily survey of

4,378 stations. Gas prices in Illinois are 20.6 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 23.9 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois is priced at \$2.05/g Monday while the most expensive is \$2.89/g, a difference of 84.0 cents per gal-

The price at the pump in Wilmington was \$2.39/g on Monday compared to Coal City price of \$2.29/g.

The national average price

of gasoline has risen 0.7 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.25/g. The nationgallon from a month ago and stands 32.6 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

"Average gasoline prices most areas as retail gas prices price of crude oil which remains near the highest level since COVID-19 began in March," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

'Seasonal factors have sat in the backseat compared to a al average is up 13.8 cents per modest recovery in demand and a healthy dose of optimism that a COVID-19 vaccine will bring normal demand levels in the coming year. For now, continue to move higher in it's not the best news for motorists as I expect gas prices

while it won't last forever, its likely a sign of what's to come in 2021- higher prices.

"The year ahead will be likely marked by recovery in the pandemic and rising demand, and for motorists interested in what's coming to the pump GasBuddy will be releasing our 2021 Fuel Price Outlook in the days ahead, which will hopefully give motorists some idea of what to plan for in terms of pain at the

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COALER SPORTS

Coalers still successful in 2020 despite being locked down

BY SHAWN LONG SPORTS WRITER

Sports in 2020 at Coal City High School were unforeseeable for most of the year with athletes wondering if they would even get to play their

The year started well as the Coalers were able to finish winter sports seasons on a high note, including having the boys basketball team earn a regional championship and the wrestling team capturing second at state.

Regional champions

The Coal City boys basketball team was impressive under first-year coach Glen Pacek. They advanced to the regional championship after beating Wilmington by 14 in the regional semifinal.

In the regional championship, Coal City's Austin Pullara poured in 25 points to lead the Coalers in a 70-68 win over Pontiac, securing the first regional title in seven years with a record of 20-12. They made it to the sectional semifinal but fell short to Bismarck Henning Rossville Alvin, 58-48, finishing off their best season

Pullara and senior teammate Jarod Garrelts earned Illinois Central Eight All-Conference. Pullara was recognized for his team-leading 18.9 points per game while Garrelts collected 183 rebounds, scor-

Two peat champ, second in state

Coal City wrestler Daniel Jezik won a state title the year before and returned in February to make his senior

Jezik was on a perfect string of 21 matches without a loss before meeting up with the two-time state champion at 195 from Prarie Central Brandon Hoselton, topped Jezik 3-2 in six overtime periods

Jezik did not lose a match after that, powering his way through 195 to face Hoselton again and this time, it was the same score but a different result as Jezik toppled Hoselton 3-2 to capture his second straight state champi-

Coal City also had David Papach (160) place second and Gage Leake (220) earned fourth place in individual state. The following week the Coalers earned second place at dual team state. In May, Jezik was named an All-American wrestler, ranking 100th on the FloWrestling rankings

After the season, Jezik (54-1), Papach (34-6) and Leake (41-4) earned All-State and All-

Lane Kutemeier (29-21), Connor Huston (35-8), Ashton Mataeo (30-10),Blessing (36-21), Zach Finch (36-14), Logan Miller (33-16), Dane Dearth (29-17) and Joey Breneman (20-10) were also named All-Conference. The year 2020 was starting off on the right foot.

Lady Warriors stopped at regional championship

The Coal City Middle School volleyball team was having one of the best seasons in recent history as they had just claimed victory over Forest Prairie Central 26-24, 26-17 during the regional semifinals and made it all the way to the regional championship against Bourbonnais Upper Grade School but the match was can-



COAL CITY'S Brock Finch swings the bat in a home game this past fall during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Warrior baseball players were able to get their full season in with no delays.

celed due to the coronavirus.

fantastic season, finishing with meaning they would all get a 19-1-1 record.

COVID-19 ends spring sports season

The coronavirus became a household name in early March, just about the time spring sports was starting. Illinois Gov. Pritzker put a stop on all sports hoping to slow the spread of the virus.

Leading up shutdown Thursday, March 10, Major League Soccer was the first professional sport to postpone their season for 30 days.

The National Basketball Association followed their example, suspending the remainder of their games after there had been two confirmed cases of the coronavirus within the sport.

Major League Baseball did the same, placing their their season on hold for another two weeks past opening day on March 26, giving them a window to play on April 9.

Then, it got to the middle and the high school levels as Illinois Elementary Association was forced to cancel their state wrestling tournament on Friday, March 11. The Coal City Middle School wrestling team was already on its way to DeKalb to defend their state title when the tour-

nament was scratched. Later that day, the National Collegiate Athletic Association followed suit, canceling all the remaining winter sports championships as well as the rest of the spring sports seasons as well. That same day the NCCA announced they would grant all-student ath-

The Warriors still had a spring sports eligibility relief, that year of eligibility back.

Pritzker announced he was limiting the amount of people allowed at an event to 250 which forced Reed-Custer athletic director Chuck Anderson to cancel the school's annual Comet Invitational track meet which was set to take place that coming Saturday.

On Sunday, March 13, the governor announced statewide shutdown starting Tuesday, March 17 until March 30. That forced all high schools After revaluation, the gov-

ernor extended the shutdown to a stay at home order through April 7th.

The Illinois High School Association was hanging back and did not cancel anything just yet but they announced on Wednesday, March 25 after a board meeting that they might be a need to extend the spring sports season once the students got back in classes on

That extension led to another extension through the end of April so the IHSA had no choice but to cancel everything, remaining optimistic for a spring sports season.

For spring sports to have a chance, the IHSA said schools needed to be back in session by May 1. But on April 17, Gov. Pritzker and the Illinois State Education announced that all Illinois high schools would complete the rest of the 2019-20 term

from home via e-learning.
That forced the IHSA to cancel the rest of the spring sports season and summer

letes that participated in contact days on April 21. This canceled the day of the first turned sidelined seniors who never got their last chance.

Graduation canceled

Not only did the 2020 seniors not get to play, they lost out on a traditional gradua-

It was far from a normal school year.

Some hope for fall season On May 27th the National Federation of State High

School Associations released return-to-play guidelines for high school sports. Approval from the Illinois Department of Public Health was all that was needed,

On June 17, the IHSA approved the Return to Play Guidelines, giving high school athletes the go-ahead for summer conditioning.
It was a week later on June

22 that the IHSA sent Stage 2 of the guidelines to the Illinois Department of Health for

players a chance to begin sum- could hit the links and mer camps under precaution. It would give volleyball players and all other fall sport athletes the go-ahead to start summer contact drills.

Girls wrestling state

That same week during the IHSA's board meeting, they also approved a state girls wrestling series for the 2021-22. That would give the girls the right to compete in a state sanctioned event like the boys. Stage 2 approved

It took the IDPH until Friday, July 3 to get back to the IHSA but the Stage 2 Return to Guidelines approved.

Teams with up to 50 players and coaches could begin meeting for 20 contact days from that point through Aug. Face coverings were required for volunteers and coaches but for players, it was optional for outside sports. Major setback

Just when fans thinking fall sports would get the go, a week later there was a report of a coronavirus out-break at Lake Zurich High School where 10 football players tested positive.

That led to the governor placing new restrictions on sports where he mandated masks for indoor sports and forbid contact, meaning foot-7-on-7's, volleyball, wrestling, basketball or soccer scrimmages could not take place.

A questionable move

Everything went downhill when the IHSA, who had a lawsuit against them, handed decision-making over to the state health agencies and the governor's office.

The IESA decided to follow suit with the governor's ruling and canceled fall middle school seasons as a precautionary measure on July 24th. The sports included in the cancellation were base-ball, softball, boys and girls golf and cross country. The ironic thing for Coal City was the middle school season was

MS fall sports saved, youth football canned

softball camp.

Coal City Middle School received some good news as the state released its All Sports Guidance document that categorized baseball and softball as low risk sports. That gave the IESA clearance to reinstate fall

keeping with the theme of 2020, good news was followed with bad news all year as the Bobcats, Jr. Comets and Miners youth football teams were forced to cancel their fall season with football being categorized as a high risk sport. High risk sports moved,

golf, tennis to start

That same week high school football, volleyball and soccer seasons were categorized as high risk sports and were moved to the spring.

Golf and tennis were approved so Aug. 20, under Stage 2 would give football certain restrictions, players School outbreak

closes school

The seasons were going

well for golf and tennis until five Coal City High School students tested positive for the virus. The high school closed its doors and all athletic contests were postponed until Sept. 30. The tennis Coalers missed two matches while the golf team missed the Illinois Central Conference tournament. They were allowed back on the golf course on Oct. 1, meaning the golf regional was still in play.

Johnson earns All-Conference

Even though the Coaler golfers were unable to com-

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pete in the ICE tournament, they still had something good come out of it as Tyler Johnson earned All-Conference, keeping his score in the 40's all fall. The golfers got back on the course and competed in the golf regional at Lisle but were unable to advance, placing

Tennis close to state After a pretty great season

the Lady Coalers tennis team placed fourth as a team against Ottawa, Lasalle Peru and Morris with 12 points in the Ottawa Sectional.

After the doubles team of Kylie Jackson-Emma Hir were eliminated, Skyler Wickiser-Abby Stiles picked up the first win. Their success stopped there as they ran in Marta Johnson-Rebekah Felty from Ottawa, who sent them pack-In singles, Molly Stiles and

Trinidy Barrus each went 1-1 closing the book on the day for the Lady Coalers at sectionals. Hope for basketball The IHSA SMAC was asked

about the basketball season on Oct. 10 and if the players would have to wear mask to which the SMAC replied, 'it's a possibility that they might have to wear them to have a season. Coaler coach Glenn Pacek

said he wouldn't be surprised if there was one. The athletes were still in compliance as a lot of them were quoted saying, 'a season with masks is better than no season at all' A back-and-forth battle

On Oct. 28, a day after the governor upgraded basketball to high risk, the IHSA approved a winter sports season, putting their foot down. Executive

IHSA The Director Craig Anderson said they weren't budging.

To that, the governor fired back, threatening to take legal action against any school who defies the state health department. That didn't stop the IHSA from issuing winter sports guidelines later that day.

No insurance no play On Thursday, Oct. 29, the

governor held a press conference, stating schools could face legal consequences if illness or injury results from playing in defiance of the state's guidance. Only 34 schools came

forth saying they'd play. Coal Reed-Custer Wilmington were not one of them. They all announced they weren't going to be playing the basketball season until the IDPH and the governor's office gives the go-ahead.

IESA Go Fund Me The IESA has felt the

impact of the pandemic so much so that they created a Go Fund Me to keep their doors open after the lack of state tournaments nearly drained them dry of their funds to con-

As of Monday, Dec. 21, they were nowhere near their goal of \$500,000 needed by April. If they don't get their funds by then, they'll be forced to close.

Indefinite Pause

After the Gov. Pritzker's

Tier 3 Mitigations were put in place on Friday, Nov. 20, the IHSA had no choice but to put the winter sports season on hold and that's where it has been for the last month to end Their

next meeting regarding the rest of the 2020-21 school year will take place in

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