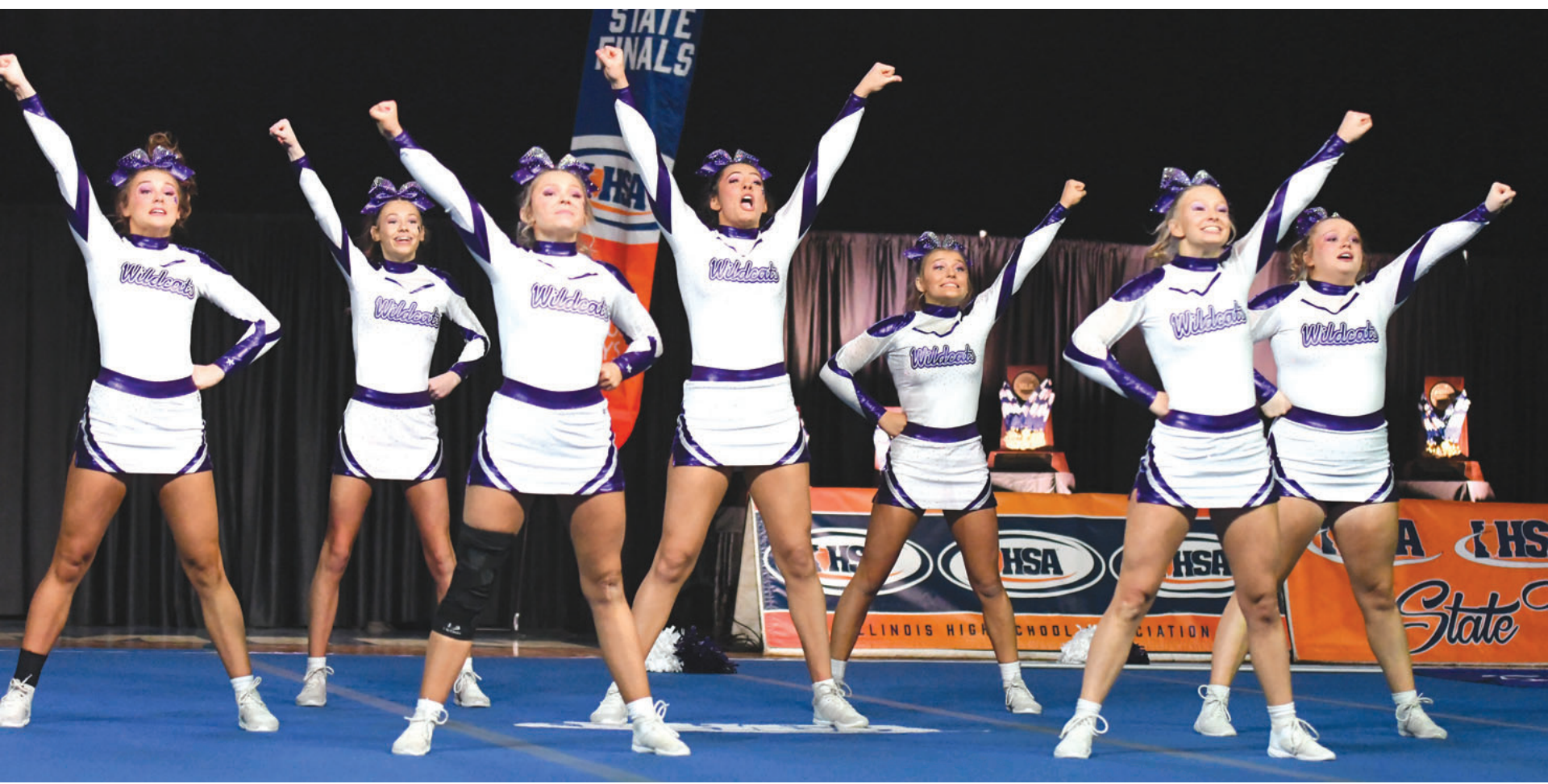


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WILMINGTON, IL | WEDNESDAY, FEB. 12, 2025 | A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER (815) 476-7966



THE WILMINGTON COMPETITIVE CHEER team performs on Friday inside the Gossinger Motors Arena in Bloomington, IL, where they advanced to the Top 10 finals on Saturday. Lady Wildcats starting their routine are (from left) Jessica Matyasec, Madisen Vanduyne, Jamie Cahill, Sara Falcon, Aubree Jandura, Kaylen Hansen and Erica Maynard.

Another state trophy for the Lady 'Cats

BY BROOKLYN FLORES
WHS STUDENT REPORTER

Wilmington High School's competitive cheer team continued its tradition of winning on Saturday, bringing home the third place state trophy in the Small division of the IHSA State finals held in Bloomington.

Of all the sports at WHS, the competitive cheer team has consistently earned state medals and trophies over the years, making state for the 16th consecutive year. They have been a dominant team, having qualified for state 17 out of 20 years IHSA cheer has been a sport.

The competition was held Friday and Saturday. Their performance consists of a three-minute routine packed with cheer, dance, jumps, stunts, and tumbling. The team is scored on the rubric based on both difficulty level and execution.

On the first day the Lady 'Cats competed against 24 other teams. Their Friday performance was scored at 88.36 or 9th in the prelims, advancing them to Saturday's finals which includes the top 10 teams.

On the 2nd day the Wilmington left its

mark on the mat and put on a performance that earned them a score of 90.33 as well as a podium finish.

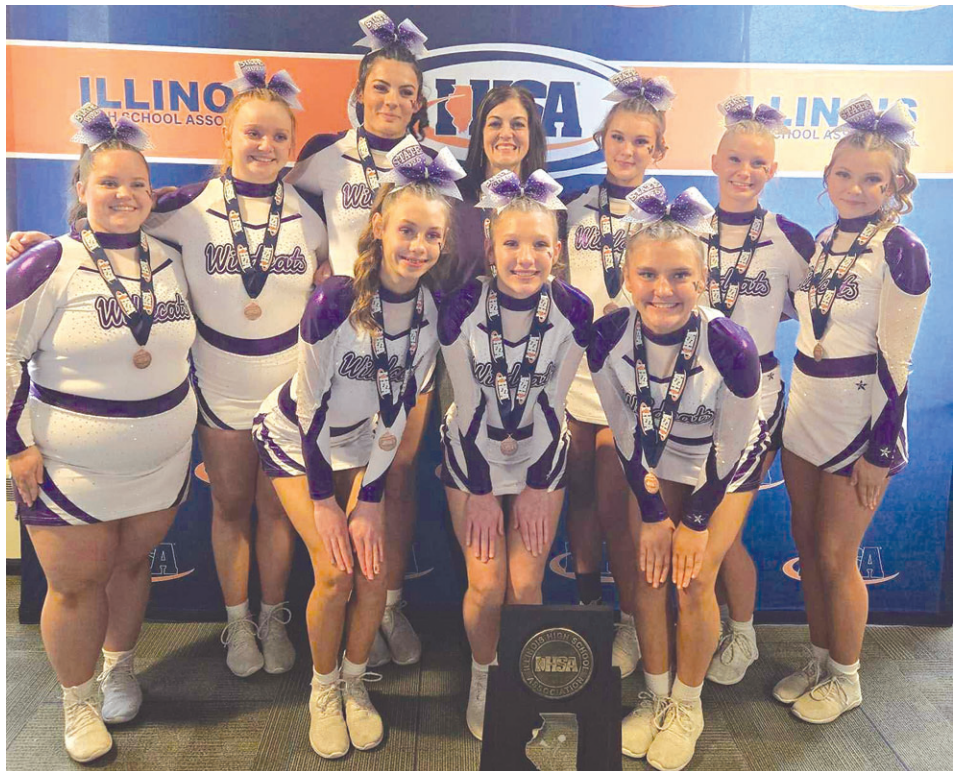
"The team worked diligently this year in executing the routine to maximize the scoresheet," WHS Coach Jeannine Bejlovec said. "I am beyond proud of the grit and effort the team displayed all season. They worked together as a team, held themselves accountable, and encouraged each other all the time. The team was deserving of finish among the top teams in the state."

Climbing from ninth place to third place in the end was an indication of their hard work, dedication, and determination to continue the Wilmington tradition.

The team begins training in the summer, attending camps, clinics and tumbling classes to build skills for the competitive season. This is in addition to the time invested in game day material in preparation for cheering football and basketball games.

Senior member and captain Sara Falcon shared her experience by saying, "Podium has been the goal since freshman year. Although it is a huge accomplishment

SEE STATE TROPHY PAGE 2



THE WILMINGTON COMPETITIVE Cheer team captured third place Saturday during the IHSA state finals held in Bloomington, IL. Members of the squad who brought home the third place state trophy in the Small school division include (front, from left) Madisen Vanduyne, Haylee Osipavicius and Aubree Jandura. Back row: Kylee Knowles, Erica Maynard, Sara Falcon, Coach Jeannine Bejlovec, Jessica Matyasec, Kaylen Hansen and Jamie Cahill.

Acciona withdraws 3,500-acre solar plant

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Though February is for lovers, the romance between Will County and ACCIONA Energia appears to be over. After more than three years of wooing Will County, the conglomerate is withdrawing its application for a 3,500-acre solar farm slated for Custer and Reed townships.

Members of the Will County Board received ACCIONA'S letter on Friday. "AEUG (ACCIONA) Will Solar, LLC is formally withdrawing its application for

zoning case number ZC-24-025 at this time as we further assess interconnection options for this project."

Sudden decision

Kay and Mel Luckey of Custer Park had agreed to lease their 100-acre property to ACCIONA several years ago. Kay believed all was well. In fact, on Jan. 28 she received a letter from ACCIONA that seemed to indicate all was well.

"They said, 'We hope you enjoyed your holiday season,'" Luckey said. "The letter went on to say, 'We are participating in the generator interconnection

process and undergoing a series of interconnection studies with the regional electric grid.' This was meaningless to me, but it seemed like all was well."

As Luckey scrolled through Facebook days later, she learned the truth. "I saw a piece on Facebook from Pat Malcolm whose the head of the opposition in Custer Park," Luckey said. "She put a post on Facebook. That was the first I knew. It completely blindsided me."

The ardent suitor

It was back in Nov. 2021, when ACCIONA first

reached out to Custer and Reed townships with a proposal for a super-size solar farm. The plant would be located between Essex and Zilm roads, and County Line and Smiley roads, and represented an estimated \$300 million in private investment.

Around that same time, ACCIONA began contacting farmers who might be interested in leasing land to the corporation. Among those who agreed to have solar panels and equipment placed on their property were the Luckeys, whose Custer Park address

fell within the area.

"My farm is not a big producing farm. That's why I put it in this project," Kay said. "It seemed like a good deal for sandy soil that is poor-producing."

Luckey said she and her husband liked the idea of benefiting financially, but were even more interested in green energy. The Luckeys were on board with Governor JB Pritzker's goal of making Illinois green. They signed a contract in exchange for \$1,722 per quarter. According to Luckey, payments began soon after they signed a

contract.

On Nov. 18, 2021, residents of Custer Park listened to ACCIONA'S proposal. The corporation, headquartered in Madrid, Spain, promised \$100,000 annually to Custer Township, \$700,000 to Reed-Custer School District and \$60,000 to the Custer Township Fire Protection District as well as \$230,000

SEE SOLAR PROJECT PAGE 2



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Photo by Eric Fisher

TWO BUILDINGS at 116 and 118 S. Water St., Wilmington have undergone extensive renovation to become the new Water Street Professional Center.

New office suites for rent on Water Street

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

Business will soon be booming at 116 and 118 S. Water Street, Wilmington.

On Thursday, property owners and brothers Nick and Zack Martinez were hard at work, putting finishing touches on what soon will be the Water Street Professional Center.

Already, interest in the property is high, with potential renters dropping by with questions several times a week.

“We closed on this property last February, and I want to say it took us roughly three months to go ahead and start the work,” Zack Martinez said. “We had to get all the architectural drawings approved, and as soon as we got the approval, we started right away.”

The Martinez brothers’ purchased the buildings with the objective to offer business offices and suites for rent in Wilmington. Little did they realize just how much effort that would require.

The task was daunting. Martinez described the site as a “hoarding facility,” and the brothers made the difficult decision to demolish and rebuild from scratch.

Nick and Zack work with their father Greg Martinez, at Greg & Sons Construction in Elwood. The business has more than 25 years in carpentry and concrete experience. That gave them an edge in visualizing the finished product and determine what the site would offer.

“The space in the back is, spoken for,” Martinez said “It’s nice to have overhead doors back there with like a 35 or 40 foot wide patio and it goes out. So, there are plans for a sports bar back there. We’re not 100 percent certain, but close.”

The brothers have invested more than \$400,000 in rehabbing the two buildings, and seeing their investment bear fruit gets their creative juices flowing.

After gutting the buildings, the brothers got to work, rehabbing. The epoxied and painted concrete floors give the buildings a gleaming, ultra-modern flair. Designs have been planned, tossed, and planned again to make everything just right.

“Originally, we were like, ‘Hey somebody might want to open a bar on that side,’ Martinez said. “So, we prepped up to pull all the underground lines for keg line, soda lines, that sort of thing.”

Each office has access to water lines. All are neutral, awaiting personalization by those who want to

open a business.

“We made the offices generic to suit just about anyone, but also everything is handcrafted,” Martinez said. “One of my favorite spaces is our kitchen.”

Indeed, the kitchen is modernistic, sleek, and utilitarian, complete with ample counter space, microwave, refrigerator, and a wealth of handmade cabinets. The front office is modernistic but also warm and cozy.

Last Thursday the crew was laying tile and sprucing up the site for a photo op the following day. Martinez shared he can’t wait until he can go back to a normal 12-hour day.

“In spring, we have to come back to do the asphalt,” Martinez said. “We’re going to extend it back all the way to the river.”

Meanwhile, for information on leasing, reach out to Abigail Brown at (815) 514-9062 or email abrowningregandsons.com.

“I’m really happy about how it turned out,” Martinez said. “Seriously? I’m considering renting an office out myself.”



Photo by Rose Panieri

THE MARTINEZ BROTHERS, Nick (left) and Zack closed on 116 and 118 S. Water Street a year ago and have big plans for the site.

Attorney Wysocki files Verchimak estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF ANDREW W. VERCHIMAK
Deceased;
No. 2024 PR 744

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given to creditors of the death of Andrew W. Verchimak. Letters of Office were issued to Andrew D. Verchimak whose address is 115 Oakview Avenue, Joliet, Illinois as Independent Executor, whose attorney of record is Marilyn L. Wysocki, June, Prodehl, Renzi & Lynch, L.L.C., 1861 Black Road, Joliet, Illinois 60435.
Claims against the estate may be filed in the Circuit Clerk’s Office, Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before the 29th day of July, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.
Marilyn L. Wysocki
For the Estate of
Andrew W. Verchimak, Deceased
BY: Marilyn L. Wysocki
1861 Black Road
Joliet, IL 60435
815-725-8000
Atty No.: 06275404
Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, January 29, February 5 and 12, 2025.

Attorney Wysocki files Lee estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF LEONARD D. LEE, Deceased;
No. 2024 PR 753

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given to creditors of the death of Leonard D. Lee. Letters of Office were issued to Jason E. Nedelsky whose address is 1807 Brockway Pond Ct., Joliet, Illinois as Independent Executor, whose attorney of record is Marilyn L. Wysocki, June, Prodehl, Renzi & Lynch, L.L.C., 1861 Black Road, Joliet, Illinois 60435.
Claims against the estate may be filed in the Circuit Clerk’s Office, Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before the 29th day of July, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.
Marilyn L. Wysocki
For the Estate of Leonard D. Lee, Deceased
BY: Marilyn L. Wysocki
1861 Black Road
Joliet, IL 60435
815-725-8000
Atty No.: 06275404
Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, January 29, February 5 and 12, 2025.

Solar project, continued from page 1

to Will County, and a generous smattering of cash to Joliet Junior College, Essex and Braidwood fire districts, and Reed Township Mosquito Abatement District.

Though some residents were bedazzled, others wanted nothing to do with ACCIONA’S solar energy facility proposal. They feared plummeting property values, and didn’t like the idea of being fenced in by solar panels.

Nancy Fitzpatrick of Custer Park was one of these individuals. In 2024, Fitzpatrick wrote to Marguerite Kenny, the Will County Zoning Administrator.

“This project would not come to fruition on its own merit without federal and state incentives, such as Investment Tax Credits, the costs of which are born by the taxpayer...” Fitzpatrick wrote.

Green energy boogie

State and federal governments offered bundles of green to corporations interested in establishing wind turbine and solar energy projects. Illinois was especially quick to rewarding green energy corporations.

In Sept. 2021, Pritzker signed the Climate Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) into law, putting the state on a path toward 100 percent clean energy by 2050.

As can be expected, purveyors of green energy from all corners of the globe flocked to Illinois like hungry starlings.

The state of Illinois offers a variety of subsidies for green energy companies, including grants, tax credits, and rebates. For example, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity provides front-loaded funding of up to \$1 million to support green energy projects, and that’s merely the tip of the iceberg.

Trying to get answers

Katie Deane-Schlottman, Will County Board member for District 1, has been vocal against the proposed solar project. Upon receiving the withdrawal notice from ACCIONA, she wanted answers.

“I reached out and asked them what changed,” she said. “They have not responded. It surprised me, to be honest. They claimed they did not need federal dollars, but I’m very curious if that was actually true.”

True or not, ACCIONA won’t say. Calling ACCIONA’S Chicago office results in an anonymous voice message that doesn’t even state the name of the corporation. There is only the nebulous message: “The person you are trying to reach is currently unavailable. Please leave a message after the tone.”

Kay Luckey provided a cell phone number for

ACCIONA representative, Brian Dunneback, but as of Feb. 10, Dunneback continues to play hard to get.

On Sept. 10, 2024, the Will County Land Use Department rejected ACCIONA’S request for a special use permit for a solar energy facility.

The Will County Board met Sept. 10, 2024 to review the request, which was tabled until Nov. 21, 2024.

On Nov. 21, meeting attendees were given the opportunity to voice their opinion about the solar energy facility. The majority in attendance were not in favor.

“This is all about money—not money for us, but money for a foreign company,” Pat Malcolm, who lives in the area, said. “I am very concerned because my home is 215 feet from the proposed site.”

Those in favor, such as Mike Newbrough, cited being given the choice of what to do with the land.

“If you own a farm and you want to grow bees and have honey, and the neighbor’s kid is allergic to bees, do they have the right to tell you, ‘No, you can’t have honey?’”

Despite dozens of residents demanding a decision from the Will County Board, the issue was once again postponed until Feb. 20, 2025.

Being ghosted

Luckey surmises that residents who spoke out against the solar plant caused or contributed to ACCIONA’S withdrawal from the project. Deane-Schlottmann thinks it’s the money. Without input from ACCIONA, we can’t know

for certain why the project was halted.

ACCIONA Energia, a multi-national player in the game of green energy, does not have a reputation of backing down for any reason. Nor does the corporation shy away from negative opinions or even litigation.

According to news reports in Canada, Germany, Australia and Spain, ACCIONA is involved in a handful of multi-million dollar lawsuits as defendants and plaintiffs.

According to PitchBook, a source that tracks actionable insights and trends of major companies, as of Feb. 7, 2025, ACCIONA’S net worth is \$6.07 billion, a 13.52% decrease from the previous year.

Though Deane-Schlottmann believes the corporation pulled a “Houdini” over funding, subsidies, and tax breaks, it’s not clear what the corporation has or has not received from state and/or federal sources.

Perhaps President Donald Trump’s stance on green energy convinced ACCIONA that a Trump-era solar energy plant is not a wise investment.

According to Reuters, Trump has placed holds on tens of billions in spending for green projects across the country. Trump’s orders have restrained at least tens of billions of dollars of funding for clean energy projects.

It’s clear that Trump has no love for green energy, calling Joe Biden’s climate policy a “Green New Scam—Greatest Scam in History, probably.”

State trophy, continued from page 1

ment even making it to state, it is still hard to sit and watch as the top three teams names are called without hearing yours.

“I think my teammates and I felt every emotion when we heard Wilmington Wildcats be called for 3rd place. All the hard practices, tears, performances that weren’t perfect didn’t matter any more because we accomplished our goal,” Falcon said.

Members of the squad include seniors Jamie Cahill, Sara Falcon, Kaylen Hansen, Kylee Knowles, Jessica Matyasec and Erica Maynard. Also freshmen Aubree Jandura, Haylee Osipavicius and Madisen Van Duyn.

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Diphtheria and the downfall of Wilmington schools

We live in an age when most childhood diseases have been controlled by vaccines. Measles, mumps, whooping cough and diphtheria are no longer child killers. But there was a time when the mere mention of these diseases put people into a panic. That panic changed the very ownership of Wilmington Public School.

The history of Wilmington schools is a long one. The first school was erected in 1838 where Booth School is now. It was a wooden frame structure. By 1849 Wilmington had outgrown it. A new two-story brick structure was erected on the same spot. By 1869 a new building was once again needed. A Board of Inspectors was elected and they procured \$30,000 (about \$561,000 today) to build a three-story structure capable of holding 700 pupils. But due to some legalities, it was ruled that the Board could not legally pay out the money appropriated.

As soon as this was known a deputation hurried off to Springfield where they convinced the State Legislature to pass a special charter giving the City of Wilmington sole control of the Wilmington School.



Sandy Vasko

Unlike all the other schools in the County, they were not accountable to the Will County School District. This system seems to have worked fairly well.

The teachers were ruled by the principal, the principal by the Board of Inspectors, and the Board by the Wilmington City Council.

In 1907, however, the system broke down. At the end of February a case of diphtheria was discovered in Wilmington. Diphtheria is a highly contagious, and then, often fatal disease. The Wilmington City Marshall panicked and immediately ordered the school closed and fumigated. Fumigation, by the way, did little to stop the disease. The school was closed for three weeks. Unfortunately, the Marshall did not consult with the Board of Inspectors first.

When the bills came in for the fumigation the Board of Inspectors simply refused to pay them. They returned them to the City Council with the following letter, "I am herewith returning to you enclosed bills referred to us in a communication received from the City Clerk of date April 8, 1907, and I am further

instructed to inform your Honorable body that we decline to entertain them, for the reason that we as directors of School District No. 9, have never entered into any contract, nor in any way authorized the obligations they represent.

Furthermore, I am instructed to, and do herewith enclose a bill amounting to the sum of \$307.50, the same representing the salaries of teachers and janitor in our public schools for the period between March 1, 1907, and March 18, 1907, during which time they were prevented from carrying out and fulfilling their individual contracts with us by the action of your Honorable body."

In Mayor Kahler's inaugural address he stated that the Council had no money in the budget to pay for the bills, and if the Board did not like it, they could disband the charter and reorganize under the general law for schools of the State of Illinois.

In a letter to the editor the Board responded, "The Board maintains that the use of education funds for extraneous purposes, such as the enforcement of the laws relating to public health and the control of contagious disease, is unwarranted and illegal; if the Council has no fund available for such purposes it is clearly a dereliction of duty upon its part, they

being the only body empowered by law to raise such funds by taxation."

They went on to say that they had tried to reorganize under the General Law and the results were, "A somewhat thorough canvas of public sentiment upon these points has also been tried and names solicited for a petition necessary for this purpose, but no one name could we secure, being invariably met with the observation, "the present system works well, why change it?"

Eventually the bills were paid, but the ruckus that was put up grabbed the notice of others. On October 18, 1907 under orders from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wilmington was ordered to surrender the charter that had been in effect since 1869. Further Will County Superintendent of Schools was ordered not to distribute any state funds to Wilmington Schools until a Board of Education was elected and the school came into compliance with the General Law.

The Board of Inspectors asked for one year to reorganize, claiming that Wilmington was a "special and peculiar case." It was of no use, the State demanded immediate compliance, and so Wilmington did.

WHS Student Council to host March 19 blood drive

The Wilmington High School Student Council will be hosting its annual blood drive on Wednesday, March 19 from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the small gym, 209 Wildcat Court, Wilmington.

Blood donors can sign up in advance through Versiti Blood Center of Illinois at https://donate-blood.versiti.org/donor/schedule/drive_schedule/11604489

Blood donors must be age 17 or older, weigh at least 110 pounds, be in

good health and free from cold or flu symptoms on the day of donation. In Illinois, 16-year-olds may donate with written approval from a parent or guardian.

Donors should bring a photo ID with proof of age. Those planning to donate should eat a healthy meal and drink plenty of water before donating.

Those who donate will be given a hat while supplies last.

Wilmington Library to host seed swap

The Wilmington Public Library District, in collaboration with Proclamation Flowers, is excited to host its annual Seed Swap on Wednesday, March 5, from 5-7 p.m..

This family-friendly, drop-in event is perfect for gardeners of all ages and experience levels. Bring your favorite seeds to exchange with other local enthusiasts or simply come to collect new seeds to kick-start your spring garden-no contribution is necessary to participate.

In addition to the seed swap, attendees can enjoy garden-themed crafts designed for both adults and children. Craft projects

can be completed during the event or taken home (limit one per person).

For those unable to attend, the Seed Library will be open starting Monday, Feb. 17, offering free seeds for patrons to take home. There is no limit, but patrons are encouraged to take only what they need and have room to grow.

The library is grateful to Sow Right Seeds, Hudson Valley Seed Company, and Peaceful Valley Farm for generously donating seeds to support this initiative.

For more information, please contact the Wilmington Public Library District at 815-476-2834.

Amy's Corner observed as special place at WHS

BY BOOKLYN FLORES
WHS STUDENT REPORTER

The library has been celebrating Amy's Corner Week, a special annual event that's held in the Wilmington High School library in the beginning of February.

Amy's Corner Week is like a celebration of life dedicated to Amy Salaba. This year the high school library held the celebration week February 3-7.

Amy Salaba was a 2003 WHS graduate who sadly passed away only a few weeks away from her 20th birthday. Salaba had an immense passion for books and reading, she spent a lot of time in the library during her years at WHS.

She died Jan. 2nd, 2005. At the time of her funeral her family request-

ed memorials be made to the high school library. They also made donations to the library to help share Amy's love of reading with others. Soon a new section of the library was created.

A corner of the library has been dedicated to her as a way of remembering her. The corner is special because it is decorated with a beautiful mural of brightly painted butterflies and other things Amy loved.

What started as a small corner in the library and donations turned into a library that is now flourishing with new books for students to read.

Something extra special about the library is that many of the books purchased and selected by Mrs. Turner, the librarian, are recommendations from the student body. Anyone

can write down a book they wish to see on the library shelves on a notebook dedicated to book recommendations. This ability to have books students want available to them would not be possible without the donations of the Salaba family.

Now every year in the beginning of February, the library holds a week full of games and activities the students can participate in for a chance to win one of many wonderful prizes the librarian has to offer.

The family has donated over \$75,000 in books. The donations Carol Salaba, Amy's mother, has made have truly turned the library into a wonderful place, a place where students can go and feel safe and can experience the same joy of reading that Amy did.

Morris Hospital to offer free youth cardiac screenings at WHS

Morris Hospital is bringing its Rhythm of Our Youth cardiac screening to Wilmington High School. The purpose of the free screening is to identify high school students who have an undiagnosed cardiac abnormality that could result in sudden cardiac death.

The screening will be offered at WHS on Feb. 27.

On the day of the screening, a team of specially trained volunteers from Morris Hospital will be on site at the scheduled high school to perform electrocardiogram (ECG) screenings free of charge to students who have received parental permission to participate.

An electrocardiogram is a non-invasive, painless test that measures the electrical activity of the heart and detects certain heart abnormalities that can lead to sudden cardiac death.

Screenings are typically held during PE class or study hall, depending on student schedules. The test takes about three minutes to complete.

Based on results of the screenings, about 3 percent of students are referred to their physician for additional follow-up. Typically, less than 1 percent are found to have a medical problem that requires cardiac intervention. Results are sent home to the student's parents and are not shared with the school.

Parents must complete an electronic consent form prior to the screening day in order for their student to participate. The form can be found at www.morris-hospital.org/rooy.

Morris Hospital launched Rhythm of Our Youth in 2016 as a result of funding provided by generous donors to the Morris Hospital Auxiliary and Foundation. Since then, over 12,000 area high school students have been screened through the program.

Sudden cardiac death claims more than 2,000 lives of children and adolescents in the United States each year. Most victims of sudden cardiac death have had underlying

heart conditions that could have been detected through a simple ECG.

Happy Birthday Rick

February 12

Another great year spent with my wonderful guy!

XOXOXO

First United Methodist Church to host health screenings

Residents living in and around the Wilmington can learn about their risk for cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and other chronic, serious conditions with affordable screenings by Life Line Screening.

First United Methodist Church, 401 E. Kahler Rd., Wilmington will host this community event on Friday, Feb. 28.

Screenings can check for the level of plaque buildup in your arteries, related to risk for cardio-

vascular disease, stroke and overall vascular health.

HDL and LDL cholesterol levels, diabetes risk, kidney and thyroid function and more screenings are affordable and convenient. Free parking is also available. Consultants will work with you to create a package that is right for you based on your age and risk factors.

Call 1-877-237-1287 or visit our website www.lifelinescreening.com. Pre-registration is required.

Save the date

Save the date for "Our Couture Closet", a family-friendly fashion show/auction to support "Our Caring Closet", on Sunday April 13, at the Wilmington High School. Doors open at 1:30 p.m.

Carthage College dean's list

Congratulations to the students who have been named to the Carthage College Fall 2024 Dean's List in recognition of their outstanding academic achievement.

Dean's List honors are accorded to Carthage students who achieve a minimum 3.5 grade-point average while carrying at least 12 letter-graded credits in a given semester.

Chase Juster, Reid Juster and Cade McCubbin all of Wilmington.

Juster ventures across the globe for January Term

During Carthage College's 2025 J-Term, Chase Juster from Wilmington traveled as part of the course Southern Africa: A Sociocultural Journey.

J-Term, or January Term, is a special month-long period of study in which Juster and other

Carthage students explore subjects outside their majors or minors, discover new interests, and test their creativity through classes held around the world. Nearly 200 Carthage students participated in one of 11 study tours offered in January. Carthage College is located in Kenosha, WI.

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Whatever he wants

SHADOW LAKES—One of the most powerful men in the U.S. government right now is a man that nobody elected to a government office. Running the department that was created out of thin air without Congress' approval, this man which is kind of funny considering the political environment right now in this country, he's a foreigner and he has the power to eliminate government agencies. He's firing federal employees, practically doing whatever he wants. How did Elon Musk get into this position?

Town with vision

COAL CITY—Coal City on the road to nowhere! Diamond is prospering with new business growth while Coal City is losing businesses. Diamond entices new businesses with tax breaks while Coal City discourages. Diamond has vision, Coal City has none. Diamond does all this with less city officials. But one thing Coal City knows how to do is increase taxes. Maybe Diamond can annex Coal City?

It's your problem

WILMINGTON—I wonder what our founding fathers and former leaders would think of the person now in charge of our country. I'm sure George would jump in a boat and row away as fast as he could. Ben would probably take a kite outside hoping for a electrical storm. FDR would say "The only thing we have to fear is the person living at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave." JFK would say "ask what you can do for your country, pray." Tricky Dickie would say "I'm not a crook and I'm definitely not a racist or a bigot." Barack would say "Yes my White Sox are losers but at least because of them people haven't lost medical benefits, jobs, economic security or the respect of an entire nation." And Jimmy being a man of faith would say, "I will put this in God's hands" and God would respond "Don't dump this on me I didn't vote for him it's your problem not mine." Just think about that.

Done before

BRAIDWOOD — The Braidwood Truth Seekers have stated that the city administrator was out placing campaign signs on a Friday, which happens to be his day off. It seems that they have forgotten how during the 2023 election, the city administrator, the former finance commissioner and the former police chief, now mayoral candidate, were out going door to door during city work hours to place election materials on the doors of homes in town. If they feel that it should be unethical now, why didn't they say anything back then?

Erred in haste

WILMINGTON—As the writer of "Ignoring Constitution" in last week's Sound Off, I should re-read the Constitution again as I made an error by mixing up Amendment 1 with Article 1. In my haste to make a point, which I did otherwise, my apologies to the readers who may have caught my mistake.

Making enemies

SHADOW LAKES—I hope you're reading the newspaper in the morning and you are enjoying eggs for breakfast. So my question is, why is the man turning the world against us? The man is fixated with turning the world against us. I wish that he would at least give us an explanation. The Canadiens are booing our national anthem and they are supposed to be our closest allies. The United States has enough enemies already. We sure don't need anymore.

The stench of musk

WILMINGTON—When Elon Musk, who has been neither elected, nor appointed nor vetted, kicked down the door of USAID, it damaged our national

security. We must remind Trump and all his stooges of the beneficial effects of charity which creates friends and allies around the world. In addition to alleviating human suffering, the purpose of USAID is to prevent countries like Russia, China and terrorist groups to befriend desperate peoples throughout the world and make them their allies. In other words, it's simply the right thing to do and moreover giving aid prevents our enemies from radicalizing the disheartened countries that we want as our allies. USAID is worth every penny in its support of democracy abroad since President Kennedy established it during the Cold War. But we can't help but wonder, is this how pious Republicans who claim to be evangelicals express benevolence toward their fellow man? Again as always, Republicans are hypocrites. Irene

What comes later?

BRAIDWOOD—The self idolized Braidwood Truth Seekers have now placed a disclaimer on their posts in an effort to try and separate them from their backed candidates. Did they finally wake up and realize that they may just be doing them more harm than good? By acting the way they do towards residents who are simply asking questions, these residents are making the association that this group of vigilante truth heroes and their demeaning, sarcastic, argumentative and downright rude behavior is a direct reflection of the candidates they back. These candidates have said that they will not be doing any mud slinging during their campaigns. That's simply because they don't have to as those running the so called truth seekers are doing enough of it for them. Who wants to bet that if one of their backed candidates wins, we'll see one of these truth seekers placed into a city job shortly after the election. They may not be receiving a paycheck now for their dirty work, but we shouldn't be surprised if their compensation comes afterwards.

Stick to the issues

BRAIDWOOD—According to last week's sound off, somebody will be hosting a Meet the Candidates event locally. Hopefully it is much better run than the last one. Participants should be required to submit their questions ahead of time before the event begins. After it starts, no more questions being randomly collected from the audience. And, the biggest issue of all, there must be hosted by an impartial organization and an impartial moderator. Someone who has absolutely no ties or preferences to any candidate or the community in general. The last Meet then Candidates night was an a joke. People were just throwing in random questions meant for personal attack throughout the entire event while not staying focused on productive dialogue. Stick to issues in general, have an impartial host and moderator, and no personal attack questions. That will make it a successful event.

With more respect

COAL CITY—This is for the Coal City Area Club. I don't know what this board or who they think they are but I think they all need to go and get a lesson on how to talk to people and treat people. The members of this club need to step up and take care of things differently or we're gonna lose this club because of them.

Hold him accountable

WILMINGTON—Trump campaigned on bringing down food and gas prices on day one. Now he says that it is too hard. In fact his tariffs will, as he says, cause pain. Trump campaigned on ending all wars on day one and now he wants to go to war with Canada, Greenland, Denmark, Panama, and Gaza. He campaigned on not knowing anything about project 2025 and now he is hiring it's authors and implementing their policies to remake



"FOR SOMEONE WHO'S SO AGAINST UNWELCOME FOREIGNERS, YOU SEEM PRETTY INTENT ON BEING ONE YOURSELF!"

America. That's only three of his thousands of lies and there are more to come. Trump won't listen to Liberals so it's up to you to hold him accountable. Please do so.

Community oriented

BRAIDWOOD—I want to say thank you to mayorial candidate Todd Lyons for delivering his sign to my yard. I'm elderly and there is no way I could have put the sign out myself. He took the time to drop it off personally, put it in my yard and even took a moment to discuss his run. Good luck Mr. Lyons you can count on my vote.

Another lie

WILMINGTON—Here is another Trump lie. He claims 38,000 Americans lost their lives building the Panama Canal. It is closer to 6,000.

Wasteful spending

SHADOW LAKES—The clowns in Springfield have decided to change the state flag which would cost millions of tax dollars to make and put up each new flag. The politicians in Springfield do not care about wasting taxpayers funds in order to help big business and friends make money, while the American citizens go deeper into poverty. What country would be making these flags? Elected public servants live off the taxpayers funds and they will raise taxes to satisfy their own greed and comfort and will not listen to any American citizen when they complain about their wasteful spending. If you like being abused keep putting the same political party in office.

Voters deserve to know

BRAIDWOOD—Before Braidwood residents head to the polls in April, we need to know the answer from our two mayoral candidates to probably the most important question. Who will you be appointing to the positions of City Administrator, City Clerk, and Chief of Police? This, for many voters, will be a make or break decision. For the past 20 years, the people who have held the City Administrator's position has always been the primary source of problems and turmoil for the City of Braidwood. From Mr. Benson, Mr. Galatte, Mr. Girot and Mr. Labriola to now Mr. Altiery. Every single one of them had come with their own set of turmoil to our community. Both Mayoral candidates need to be up front with this issue and announce their decisions publicly before voters head to the polls.

Free speech for all

BRAIDWOOD—In response to last week's sound off about how police officers should not be able to have a freedom of speech. Why should you as a resident, a taxpayer and a U.S. citizen be able to enjoy your freedom of speech, but public servants can't? Just because someone is an elected or appointed official, or a public servant, shouldn't mean that they can't voice their own opinions on their own time. They are residents, taxpayers and citizens too with the same rights as everyone else. Absolutely nobody, regardless of who they are, should be forced to stand quite and just take it on the chin while others bash, harass, or slander their names, their family or their friends. Freedom of speech isn't a one-way street. That's just one of the reasons that people like President Trump. He doesn't hold his tongue regardless of what thin skinned, temper tantrum, foot stomping, fit throwing Democrat or millennial he offends.

Leave out politics

COAL CITY—I just read the soundoffs and they are horrible. No one cares about Trump or Biden and you shut the heck up about politics. Talk about good stuff that is only relevant to the area not the country's politics. I know the people who talk about politics on here go and rant and have a bunch of crap on Facebook. Stick to that. No one cares about your politics if you won't even write your name in the paper and remain anonymous.

Great again?

BRAIDWOOD—Only a few short weeks have passed and the byline which Trump used to get elected has been the greatest source of fear and terror that Americans have experienced since the Civil War. The cold war of 75 years ago was chilling and the hot wars in the past 35 years have been grievous but nothing like what's happening here on our own soil. Besides being the biggest bully abroad, here at home Trump's dreadful henchmen are terrifying the citizenry. The voters said they wanted prices to come down and

Trump replied with higher prices instead. As the stock market fluctuates like a yo-yo, Trump says the "pain" will be worth it. And that creepy sidekick, Elon Musk, now is sticking his fingers into \$6 trillion of our treasury information with nobody quite sure what permissions he has with it. What a mess. And Republicans stand around looking at the ground because if they speak up, Trump will slap them on the wrist and primary them. After Trump's horrific first presidency and his traitorous storming of the Capitol, you would think Americans would realize that this quasi dictator, pathological liar and convicted felon on 34 counts is not to be trusted. He should have been sent to jail already and if he continues like this hopefully that's where will be end up.

Less privacy

DIAMOND—AT&T is planning on dropping all residential land lines and replacing it with something called AT&T phone advance, which is suppose to be better for all their customers. This new system will make it easier for the government to violate more of your legal rights under the privacy act and nothing in your life will be sacred. This new computer system could destroy some lives.

It's no surprise

DIAMOND—It's no surprise that Pam Bondi's, Attorney General swearing in ceremony took place in the Oval Office sending the signal that she will be scratching Trump's back and vice versa despite the tradition that the President and Attorney General are never to consult with each other. And despite Bondi's promise during the confirmation hearings to never use the DOJ as a tool against Trump's political enemies, Bondi has already circulated a memo entitled "Weaponization Working Group" to investigate if anything occurred during the previous administration worthy of retribution. It didn't take long. It seems that after one day on the job, Bondi is not functioning as the people's Attorney General but as Trump's personal lawyer and Trump remarked that he was glad she will be going to bat for him, illegal though it may be.

Know to vote

BRAIDWOOD—After reading Soundoff and social media for the last three or four weeks there is always something about three or four people complaining about the city administrator. Well let's get the truth out there. On April 25 of 2023, 640 people voted to fire the city administrator. So Braidwood, let's vote to bring our town and its citizens back together. The person who will do this has done it with our police department. Our police department under his leadership was engaged with the city and its citizens like never before. The proof is in the pudding. So vote on April 1, 2025 for honesty and transparency.

No response

BRAIDWOOD—There is a car care business in Wilmington I hadn't been to in about a year because I had been doing this myself, except tire balancing. I decided to get my oil changed and have the tires rotated and balanced, and replace my air filter. When they called my name saying my vehicle was done, I went up to the counter and was told "Service today is \$207". I said "Excuse me?" He said it again, I paid the bill and left. I was charged \$128 for 7 quarts of oil. A year ago, I paid \$90 for the same service without an air filter. I have tried contacting them to discuss the bill, and it seems nobody wants to message me back from that business. I have no dispute about the rest of the bill, just the oil. For anyone who knows the price of oil, Wal-Mart sells the same exact oil and 7 quarts there is \$40 for full synthetic just like I purchased. I buy two five quart jugs and the price breakdown is \$5.69 a quart. Making money for a business is understandable, but this is unacceptable. Lesson learned—ask pricing first before you get your oil changed.

Costing us million\$

WILMINGTON—I want to help President Musk cut out wasteful spending in our government. I want to cut out frivolous trips from Washington D.C. to Mar-A-Lago and back for golf trips that costs taxpayers millions of dollars. I want to investigate the cost of traveling to New Orleans for the Super Bowl from Mar-A-Lago for a photo-op for Trump and his children. And I want to explore how much revenue could be raised if rich people and corporations didn't have loopholes and actually paid their fair share of taxes.



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Register now for CPR training course

Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers is offering CPR AED & First Aid Training course for the general public on Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 4-8 p.m. at Shabbona School, 725 School St., Morris.

Participants will learn the skills needed to perform high quality CPR, proper use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), relief of foreign-

body airway obstruction, and basic first aid. The cost is \$110 and includes American Heart Association materials.

In 2025, Morris Hospital will be offering the Heartsaver CPR, AED and First aid class on May 19, Aug. 19, and Nov. 18.

Register online at www.morrishospital.org/ev ents. For more information, call 815-705-7360.

Pritzker may be stuck having to raise taxes

Gov. JB Pritzker has "revised" his remarks about not raising taxes to balance the budget.

"It's very important that we live within our means in this state, and that we not resort to tax increases as a way to, you know, to balance the budget," Pritzker said on Jan. 30th.



Rich Miller

Last year's state revenue bill had a very rough time passing the House when several, mainly White moderate Democrats refused to vote for it.

That has been taken by some to mean that tax hikes could be out of the question this spring.

But a longtime Statehouse type made a good point. It's not that those Democrats were against tax hikes, he said, it's that they believed they didn't get anything to speak of out of in last year's budget.

"If they believed they were getting something, a Democrat will go (pantomimes voting for a bill), 'Can I vote again?'"

To sell any tax hike back home, they must show how their districts benefit. However, events could overtake them.

The Department of Healthcare and Family Services' list of Medicaid recipients by House and Senate districts has been urgently circulated among legislators for the past several days, mainly because of congressional threats made to reduce or eliminate federal funding for the Medicaid expansion program.

Medicaid expansion covered all adults under

the age of 65 who earn less than 133 percent of the federal poverty level. It has drastically decreased mortality rates for middle-aged people and has generally been seen as a success.

Forty states plus the District of Columbia have opted into the program, which reimburses states for 90 percent of their costs.

That large federal share is why several national Republicans are pushing to either end the program or significantly reduce the reimbursement rate.

Healthcare and Family Services says 772,233 Illinoisans were enrolled in the expansion program at the end of Fiscal Year 2024. Illinois spent about \$815 million on the Medicaid expansion program during the last fiscal year, HFS says.

The feds paid out \$7.34 billion because, as noted above, they pick up 90 percent of the total tab, which is far more than the 50 percent match Illinois receives for "regular" Medicaid.

The point here is that Illinois has a trigger law which requires the state to withdraw from the expansion program three months after federal reimbursement falls below 90 percent.

So, if the feds had dropped its reimbursement rate to 50 percent last fiscal year, Illinois would've had to shell out \$4.1 billion — about a \$3.3 billion increase just to keep pace. That's money the state doesn't have.

Hence, the trigger law.

The House districts with the most Medicaid expansion recipients in FY24, according to HFS, were Rep. Bob Rita's 28th (15,557); Rep. Sonya Harper's 6th (15,118); Rep. Nick Smith's 34th (14,631); Rep. Sue Scherer's 96th (14,103); and Rep. Lillian Jiménez's 4th (14,055).

Rep. Rita Mayfield's district had 8,714 expansion recipients last fiscal year. The Gurnee Democrat told my associate Isabel Miller, "I do believe that we shouldn't drop not one person. I think that we need to find the money one way or another," suggesting that "reasonable cuts" be made to state agencies. "I think that if we held everybody at FY24 levels, we would have enough money to at least fill in some of these gaps," she said.

Sen. Dale Fowler (R-Harrisburg) said, "If changes in federal funding occur, I am committed to working with my colleagues to explore all options for preserving essential healthcare services and protecting our most vulnerable residents."

Fowler represents 18,174 Medicaid expansion recipients.

I doubt they'll have the cash to do much of anything without new revenues.

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

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Gas prices creeping up again

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 0.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.21/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 1.5 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 13.7 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has decreased 0.2 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.624 per gallon.

The rise in gas prices is also reflected locally, with gas at \$3.10/g at Mohsen,

and \$3.24/g at Mobil in Wilmington.

In Braidwood, expect to pay from \$3.21/g at Casey's, up to \$3.29/g at Marathon. In Coal City, gas runs \$3.08/g at Shell and \$3.11/g at BP.

Further afield, you can buy gas at \$3.09/g at Pilot and \$3.29/g at Circle K in Morris. Gas is cheapest in Bourbonnais, with Gulf charging \$3.01/g up to \$3.19/g at Road Ranger.

"While some states have seen gas prices inching up, much of the country continues to see mostly

stable prices. States that experience price cycling have seen increases, while many others have only experienced minor fluctuations," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"With tariffs on Mexico and Canada currently on pause, trade policy has yet to directly impact fuel prices. However, refinery issues are creating localized disruptions. Volatility and seasonal trends continue to drive normal fluctuations. For now, the overall direction of gas prices remains typical for this time of year, but we remain on watch for potential policy changes that could impact fuel prices."

The lowest price in the state on Monday was \$2.57/g while the highest was \$4.49/g, a difference of \$1.92/g.

Annual FUMC Men's Club spaghetti dinner March 1

The Men's Club of the First United Methodist Church of Wilmington will be hosting its 39th annual spaghetti dinner on Saturday, March 1, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the church located at 401 E. Kahler Road, Wilmington.

Come for the spaghetti, stay for the desserts! Carry-outs available. Invite your neighbors—better yet, pick them up! Free will offering, no set price.

Proceeds from this event are used to support local missions such as bikes for Wilmington Sharefest 2025, Kuzma Care Cottage, Our Caring Closet, Lamb's Fold and the Christian Help Association.

Trinity Christian's dean's list

In recognition of outstanding academic achievement, Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, IL, released the college's Dean's List for Fall 2024.

The Dean's List is Trinity Christian College's highest academic honor for achieving a GPA of 3.5 or better.

Local students include: Halie LaGrange of Essex, also Alexa Clark and Paige Eighner of Wilmington.

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A test of adulthood and a great pizza recipe

ELAINE FISHER-OHLUND
FOOD FOR THE SOUL

My son Zachary turned 17 this week which made me realize he's one year away from being considered an adult. The thought of that makes my mind spiral. "Is he really ready to be considered an adult and have I done my job on raising him?" I am sure every mother asks themselves that question at one time or another.

My step-daughter Alyssa, 21, is not my biological child but I have raised her since she was 4 years old. I love her as my own and she had an easy transition from child to adulthood. I suspect it helped that she was confident, neat, responsible, always organized and had a clean room. If I told her to do something, she always strived for perfection. She made motherhood easy.

And then there is "boy wonder" who's always on the go and seems to forget half his equipment when rushing out the door for his next game. I shake my head and ask myself how can someone forget his shoes for a basketball game. Still, I hopped in the car and rushed them over just before the bus was leaving for an away game.

I'm uncertain why, but I find myself holding my breath every time I step into his room. It doesn't really stink. But there's this odd aroma of sweaty clothes, dirty socks, woody boots, Cheetohs and cologne.

His room includes baseball bats in one corner, golf club set in the other, football gear poking out from under his unmade bed and a mountain of clothes in the middle. On random days, when he's down to his last pair of clean underwear, that mountain of clothes miraculously reappears in the laundry room next to the washer, never in it.

I nearly broke my neck while tripping over his bat bag after opening the front door. It then dawned on me, clearly I have not done my job and I have 365 days to do so.

So I made a list of key points for surviving as an adult. The first point that



ZACHARY OHLUND (left) and his sous chef Layla prep a sourdough focaccia pizza for Sunday dinner.

came to mind was feeding oneself. That's when I decided I was going to put him to the test and have him cook us dinner.

When I told him his chore was to cook Sunday family dinner his response was, "well if I'm cooking then I decide what we are eating."

"Fine, send me a few recipes you have in mind." My phone started dingling with Tik Tok reels of unhealthy recipes that to me just didn't look appetizing. He did send me a sourdough focaccia pizza recipe. He understands the way to my heart is sourdough.

I started a sourdough journey about 3 months ago and I consider my starter the gift that keeps on giving. Not to mention it's great for the gut microbiome. So if you ever have the opportunity to learn or need starter, I will gladly share my insight.

After going back and forth with him about Sunday's menu, we agreed that the pizza recipe was the one. I told him I would help prep the dough and the rest was up to him.

That morning we prepped dough and later in the day, I sent him off to the store for the rest of ingredients. It took, one hour, two store runs and multiple phone calls asking where things were.

After the fourth phone call I answered, "I don't know, figure it out," and

quickly hung up before he could respond. Sure enough he figured it out arriving home minutes later, bags in hand.

If he was overwhelmed and frustrated by the Berkot's adventure, it didn't show. He put on his music and started laying out the ingredients.

I enjoyed his obnoxiously singing while he spread the sauce on the pizza. Looking for help he encouraged Layla, his little sister, to be his sous chef.

Even though the kitchen looked like a tornado had made it's way through, it was a beautiful moment for me. Usually all I see is his father in him. But when it comes to food, finding fulfillment in cooking for the family and his heart, he is a little of me too.

Thirty minutes later, after he removed his pizza from the oven and presented it like it was best slice of pizza on earth, I realized he is going to be just fine because he makes a darn good pizza. Happy Birthday son, you might drive me crazy sometimes but you sure do make me a proud mom.

Ingredients

- 500 grams (4 cups + 3 tablespoons) bread flour
- 450 grams (1 3/4 cups + 2 tablespoons) warm water
- 100 grams (1/2 cup) sourdough starter discard
- 10 grams (2 1/2 teaspoons) kosher salt

- 5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
 - 1 cup pizza sauce
 - 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
 - Toppings of choice optional
- Directions**
- Step 1: Mix the dough. In a large mixing bowl, combine the bread flour, warm water, sourdough starter, and kosher salt until well mixed. The dough will have a batter-like consistency. Cover and let it rest for 15 minutes

Step 2: Stretch and fold. Wet your hand and grab one edge of the dough. Pull it up and over itself. Rotate the bowl 90 degrees and repeat up to 16 times around the bowl. Cover and rest for 15 minutes. Repeat this process two more times every 15 minutes. Alternatively, use a stand mixer with a dough hook for faster kneading.

Step 3: Bulk fermentation. Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil to a clean bowl. Transfer the dough to the oiled bowl, ensuring it's coated with oil and not sticking to the sides. Brush some oil on top of the dough. Cover and let it rise at room temperature until doubled, about 4 hours.

Step 4: Transfer dough to 9x13 baking pan. Line the bottom of your baking pan(s) with parchment paper and oil it with 2 more tablespoons of olive oil. Transfer the dough to the prepared pan. Use your fingers to gently spread it out. If it springs back, let it rest for 10 minutes and try again.

Step 5: Proof. Cover the dough and let it proof until noticeably puffy, about 2 hours.

Step 6: Poke the dough. About 20 minutes before baking, preheat the oven to 375°F and adjust the rack to the middle position. Lightly oil your hands and use your fingertips to poke the dough all over to redistribute air bubbles.

Step 7: Add toppings. Drizzle the top of the focaccia with the remaining

tablespoon of olive oil. Top with pizza sauce, shredded mozzarella cheese, and toppings of your choice.

Step 7: Bake. Bake in the preheated oven for 25-30 minutes until golden brown on top. If the cheese starts browning too much

before the focaccia is done baking, loosely cover the pan with foil for the last 5-10 minutes of baking.

Step 8: Cool and serve. Allow the focaccia pizza to cool in the pan for 10 minutes before removing. Cut and serve warm.

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OBITUARIES

Rosemary A. West

MEXICO, MISSOURI—Rosemary A. West, 84, of Mexico, Missouri, passed away Feb. 4, 2025 at Monroe Manor in Paris, MO.

Rosemary was born Nov. 24, 1940 in Worcester, Massachusetts to Joseph and Tiss Lively.

She was a loving mother of three boys and a devoted housewife, she could be heard as the boys' biggest fan at wrestling meets. She enjoyed line dancing, playing cards, gardening flowers and gathering with friends. Rosemary adored her grandchildren and always provided support and love for her family. She was also a member of St. Brendan Catholic Church.

Survivors include her husband, Fred West of Mexico; three sons, Paul (Chie) West of Japan, Tony West (Renee Cavanaugh) of Plainfield, IL, and Philip (Natalie) West of Coal City, IL; 14 grandchildren, Dylan West, Dalton West, Rebecca Flatt, Brittney West, Jonathan West, Rachel Cavanaugh, Reagen



Cavanaugh, Ritchie Cavanaugh, Natalie West, Kelsey Buithuis, Jacob Porterfield, Cailyn Ziegler, Colin West, and Cameron West; nine great-grandchildren, Gavin, Sophia, Noah, Max, Elijah, Raelynn, Myla, Annie, and Waylon; and one brother, John (Ellen) Lively of Falmouth, Massachusetts.

Rosemary was preceded in death by: two brothers, Mark Lively and Tommy Lively.

A Memorial Mass will be held later this summer at St. Brendan Catholic Church in Mexico, MO.

Memorial donations may be made to the Mexico Senior Center, 606 E. Park Street, Mexico, MO 65265 or St. Brendan Catholic Church, 615 S. Washington Street, Mexico, MO 65265.

Arnold Funeral Home in Mexico, Missouri, is serving the family. Online condolences may be left at www.arnoldfh.com

Robert J. Fonck

MINOOKA—Robert J. Fonck, 87, of Minooka, IL, passed away peacefully at Lightways Hospice on Feb. 7, 2025.

Robert was born on June 18, 1937 to John & Lucille (Govoni) Fonck in Joliet, IL and went on to marry Rochelle C. Stricklin on Feb. 9, 1957. They resided in Joliet before building a house in Minooka where they spent the majority of their marriage.

Bob honorably served for eight years in the U.S. Naval Reserves, exemplifying his lifelong commitment to service. A graduate of DeVry Institute of Technology, his passion for electronics shaped his career, leading him to various roles, including owning and operating Bob's Electronics before joining Motorola, from where he retired at the age of 62.

A man of many interests, Bob found solace and joy in nature—gardening, hunting, and collecting arrowheads. However, he will be most fondly remembered as an avid HAM radio operator, spending countless hours building and perfecting radios. His dedication to the craft was evident in his involvement with the Joliet Amateur Radio Society (JARS), where he found camaraderie and shared his wealth of knowledge.

Robert is survived by his wife,



Rochelle, children, Robert J. (Renee) Fonck II, David N. (Barbara) Fonck, Barbara J. Fonck-Tweet, Raymond E. Fonck (Belinda Grote), June A. (David) Riffel, and Carol L. (David) Musgrave, 16 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren and one more expected in April, 2025, sisters, Mary Lou (Bill) Birsas, Rose Vercellotti, and brother, Leo (Sharon) Fonck.

He was preceded in death by his parents, granddaughter Karen Tweet-Steppe, and sister Agnes Botka.

The family received friends for visitation at Fruland Funeral Home, 121 W. Jefferson Street in Morris, IL on Feb. 11, 2025, from 9 a.m. until time of funeral service, 11 a.m. Burial followed at St. Mary's Cemetery in Minooka.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Robert's memory to Lightways Hospice, 250 Water Stone Circle, Joliet, IL 60431.

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

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland and Baskerville Funeral Homes. (815-942-0070)

Jay Alan Ransom

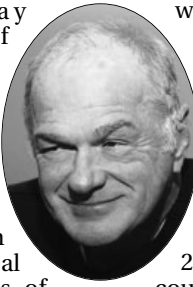


LOCKPORT—Jay Alan Ransom, 66, of Lockport, IL formerly of Coal City, passed away unexpectedly due to a heart attack on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025, at his residence.

He was born on March 15, 1958 in Morris, IL to Lavina (nee Hougas) Ransom. He grew up in the Coal City area, attending Coal City High School with the class of 1976. He served his country with the Military Police (SP4) in the United States Army and was honorably discharged in 1979.

Jay devoted his life to Alcoholics Anonymous. He became involved with the non-for-profit Alano Club of Joliet, serving as the secretary for numerous years. He was instrumental in the writing of their by-laws and also assisted with the financial component of the organization. Most recently, Jay was the President of the Alano Club of Joliet and held the highest recognition as the Area 52 DCM and is survived by hundreds of close friends and associates. Jay was also involved with the non-for-profit organization Cornerstone Services, Inc. of Joliet.

Jay's passion was his work with plays, theatre, commercials and movies. Initially he worked in the photography and set-up department and later in life did some directing. A lover of music, Jay played the bass guitar with friends in a band when he



was in high school. He also enjoyed gardening with his love, Cynthia. Jay was very well read and loved to talk about current events as well as reminisce about the past, especially growing up in Coal City.

He is survived by his sister, Terri Irish; his brother, Jon Ransom; his special companion of 25 years, Cynthia Ross; numerous cousins from the Hougas descendants; special cousins, Vera (Wharrie) Lynch, Rich Wharrie and Larry (Shirley) Wharrie; numerous friends, classmates, colleagues and a special friend, Joe Faletti.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Lavina (Hougas) Ransom in 1967, when Jay was nine years old; special aunt and uncle, Patricia (Hougas) Wharrie and Milton "Mutt" Wharrie, whom he lived with for several years and guardians, Joseph R. Faletti and Alice P. Faletti. He was also preceded by numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Preferred donations to the Alano Club of Joliet, 1807 Plainfield Rd., Crest Hill, IL 60403.

Cremation rites have been accorded. Inurnment with full military honors will be held at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood at a later date.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guestbook at www.ferrari-funeral.com

Retired teachers offering education scholarships

The Illinois Retired Teachers Association (IRTA) awards scholarships throughout the state to students in college who are enrolled in a Teacher Certification Program.

Applicants must have and maintain at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. In 2025, awards can be earned from three scholarships, each with varying requirements.

The IRTA awards six \$2,000 scholarships throughout the state to incoming juniors and seniors in college who are residents of Illinois or are graduates of an Illinois high school. They may attend college in any state as long as the school attended maintains an accredited teacher-training program.

The Helen Kennedy Scholarship awards one \$2,000 scholarship to an incoming sophomore, junior, or senior

enrolled in a recognized college or university. Applicants must be a graduate of an Illinois high school and have declared a major in education.

The Rose Sandstrom Scholarship awards a \$2,000 scholarship to an incoming college senior who is a graduate of an Illinois high school. Applicants must have a declared major in physical education and be enrolled at Monmouth College or Western Illinois University.

All scholarship information and applications are available at www.irtaonline.org under the Foundation tab or by contacting the IRTA office (1-800-728-4782). The application deadline is March 7, 2025.

This notice is provided by the Grundy County Retired Teachers Association.

How good is your trivia? Have fun and test it March 2

Coal City United Methodist Church, located at 6805 E. McArdle Road in Coal City, will hold a Trivia Afternoon on Sunday, March 2, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

They invite you to join them for multiple rounds of trivia. Food and beverages will be provided (no alcohol allowed)

The registration fee is \$160 per table with up to 8 participants per table (\$20 per person for a table of 8). Registration forms are available by contacting the church office at 815-634-8670

Table participants are encouraged to

dress in costume and/or to have a theme. A prize will be awarded to the best theme of the event.

The winning table of the trivia contest will also win a prize. Spectators are welcome for \$5 admission at the door as space allows

Doors open at noon. Trivia begins at 1 p.m. Deadline to register is Feb. 25. Gather your trivia teams and plan to join Coal City United Methodist Church for a fun and entertaining afternoon.

Morris Hospital offering free seminars on nutrition

Morris Hospital and the Morris Hospital YMCA are teaming up to offer a free nutrition seminar, "Managing Heart Disease and Diet," on Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Morris Hospital YMCA, 2200 W. Dupont Avenue, Morris.

During the seminar, a Morris Hospital registered dietitian will explain how to reduce saturated fats, cholesterol, and sodium, while increasing fiber in the

diet. A heart-healthy diet helps reduce blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and lower the risk of heart disease.

Nutrition seminars led by Morris Hospital dietitians are offered monthly at the YMCA to provide the knowledge and tools needed to make lasting, healthy changes in eating habits.

The seminars are free. Additional upcoming topics include "Learn How to Build Muscle or Gain Weight with Protein

Intake" on Wednesday, March 26, from 5:30-6:30 p.m. and "Meal Prepping for People with Parkinson's" on Wednesday, April 23 from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Register for the entire series or choose the topics of interest. Call Morris Hospital's Wellness Manager at 815-705-7358 or go to www.morrishospital.org/events and select the Nutrition category.



NINETEEN PAINTINGS that make up Smokey Bear - The Rudy Wendelin Collection will be on display at four Forest Preserve District of Will County visitor centers through March 2.

Smokey Bear paintings displayed at Will County nature sites

Nineteen paintings depicting Smokey Bear, the immensely popular symbol of the U.S. Forest Service's wildfire prevention campaign, will be on display at four Will County nature sites this winter.

"Smokey Bear: The Rudy Wendelin Collection" exhibit will run through Sunday, March 2. The artworks are reproductions of original Smokey Bear paintings that were created from 1977 to 1995.

The Forest Preserve District of Will County and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie have collaborated

to bring the reproductions to Will County.

The paintings can be viewed at: Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon, Isle a la Cache Museum in Romeoville, Plum Creek Nature Center in Beecher, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

At Sugar Creek Administration Center in Joliet viewing hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday; and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 2.

Each site will have a portion of the 19 paintings

on display. Visitors can take photos and videos, but should not touch the art.

Smokey Bear artist

The artwork was created by Rudolph "Rudy" Andreas Michael Wendelin who began his career with the U.S. Forest Service in 1933. He created 100s of Smokey representations that highlighted natural resources conservation and forest fire prevention.

Under Wendelin's direction, Smokey assumed the human-like characteristics by which he is best known - wearing a solemn expression, dressed in a forest ranger's hat and jeans, and carrying a shovel.

As Smokey became the immensely popular symbol of the Forest Service's wildfire prevention campaign, Wendelin was recognized for his important contributions with many awards. He continued his association with Smokey Bear after retiring from the Forest Service in 1973, producing numerous calendar and book illustrations. He died in 2000 at the age of 90.

The Forest Preserve is offering a Smokey challenge that asks visitors to check out all five visitor centers where the paintings are displayed for a chance to win a Smokey-themed prize basket.

Visit local history

The Wilmington Area Historical Museum, 114 N. Main St., Wilmington, will be open Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for public viewing. Come spend a little time and appreciate local history.

Don't throw away history

The Wilmington Area Historical Society accepts donations of historic items. If you have an item of historic significance that you would like all to see, accepting things from beginning of time to mid 1990s, call for a pickup: John 815-210-5155 or Bill 815-931-9079.

Truth about travel and eco-damage

Dear EarthTalk: Is leisure travel so bad for the planet that we are all better off just staying home?
-- Jackie Smith, Boston, MA



According to the International Air Transport Association, in 2024 global air travel increased by 10.4 percent. Behind this surge in tourism is growing affluence in developing countries, demographic shifts to younger generations, convenience of travel, and increasing awareness through social media. Despite the booming economies traveling creates, there lurks the harsh penalties that each flight, drive and cruise puts on Mother Earth. Tourism accounts for about eight percent of world greenhouse gas emissions.

University of Queensland Associate Professor Ya-Yen Sun conducted a study showing how tourism is the leading producer of greenhouse gases of all global economic sectors. Dr. Sun and his research team anticipate

“annual increases in emissions of three to four percent” from travel alone.

Transportation is the primary contributor of greenhouse gases from travel, almost half of tourism’s carbon footprint. Online emissions calculator, Atmosfair, shows that a single round-trip flight from New York to Los Angeles for a typical family emits 7.1 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO2). This is equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions from approximately 1.7 gasoline-powered vehicles driven in one year.

“Goods” and “Food & Beverage” make up the next largest contributors of greenhouse gases. These categories encompass the souvenirs and shopping experiences of tourism, considering production, manufacturing and shipping. Food production entails growing, processing, transporting, and much more, thus multiplying its carbon footprint.

Visualizing the effects of global warming is difficult, even with these numbers and facts. Rising sea levels and dwindling ice sheets seem hardly connected to one airplane ride. The gradual nature of such changes helps to ease its burden on the mind. But individuals collectively have a rather hefty effect. University of Tennessee



VACATION IS A state of mind, so those watching their carbon footprint might consider just staying at or near home.

Professor John Nolt concluded after calculations that “the average American is responsible, through his/her greenhouse gas emissions, for the suffering and/or deaths of one or two future people.”

The future may appear bleak factoring in these stats and research. Yet, we can and are doing more to combat travel’s eco-damage. Aircraft emissions are being lowered through bio-fuels, electric motors and efficient design. Quitting travel is extreme, but consider the impacts of your next trip. And if the answer to travel or not is yes, decrease your carbon footprint: buy offsets, choose efficient airlines, fly during the day. And remember what Dorothy concluded

after her travels: “There’s no place like home.”

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

Birthdays & Book Bash planned at the library

Join the Wilmington Public Library District for its Birthdays & Books Bash, a fun and creative way to honor iconic authors.

Each month, from February through April, we’ll celebrate literary legends with a short presentation about their lives and works, followed by a hands-on book craft to take home. Enjoy cupcakes and refreshments while connecting with fellow book lovers!

Dates and Times:

• Feb. 26 at 1 p.m.: Honoring John Steinbeck, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and more

• March 26 at 1 p.m.: Celebrating Dr. Seuss, Robert Frost, and others

• April 30 at 1 p.m.: Featuring William Shakespeare, Charlotte Brontë, and more

Space is limited, so register early by contacting the Wilmington Public Library District at 815-476-2834.

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It is the height of the Jazz Age, and social revolution is afoot. This is the age of Prohibition and of bootleggers and gangsters. It will be a night of revelry like many other nights of revelry enjoyed by this group of sophisticated, artists and hoodlums—until things go horribly wrong.

Join the Immaculate Conception Church on Saturday, March 1 at 6 p.m.

for a night of fun! You will be assigned a role as a guest or staff of The Cat’s Meow and will play the character for the evening. You are encouraged to come dressed as your character!

There will be great food...laughs...suspense...and mystery solving! Spaces are limited so sign up fast! Must be at least 21 years old to participate.

Advance sign up is required as each person is important in the mystery and to ensure we have enough food and beverages.

Character assignments will be sent out by Feb. 17.

The mystery night will take place at Fr. White Hall, 110 S. School Street, Braidwood. Cost is \$30/person (includes dinner/drinks). Register no later than Friday, Feb. 14.

Make check payable to: Immaculate Conception Church (110 S. School St., Braidwood, IL 60408) Feb. 14. Contact: Sara Wollgast, (815) 341-5946, for details.

Aurora University dean’s list

Aurora University has named the following students to the Dean’s List for the fall 2024 semester. The Dean’s List recognizes full-time undergraduate students who have earned a 3.6 grade-point average or higher.

Local students include: Hannah Coster of Braidwood, Andrea Shimp of Coal City and Mia Costillo of Godley.

Olivet Nazarene University Fall 2024 Dean’s list

Olivet Nazarene University announces fall 2024 dean’s list. To qualify for inclusion on the dean’s list, a student must have been enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student and must have attained a semester grade point average of 3.50 or higher on a 4.00 grading scale.

Local students include: Jaina Dubbert, Landon Jankus and Jaxon Snyder all of Braidwood. Julie Appleton and Elena VanKuren of Coal City. Julia McCully, Jacob Prescott, Drake Robertson and Peter Runions all of Wilmington.

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SUDOKU - Here's how it works:
Sudoku 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.

1	2	3					4	5	6	7
8		9					10			
11							12			
13				14			15			
16							17			
18				19	20					
				21			22			
				23			24			
				25			26			
				27			28			
				29	30	31	32	33		
				34			35			
36							37			
38							39			
40							41			
42							43			

CLUES ACROSS

- Racquet sport group (abbr.)
- Norse god of thunder
- Russian industrial city
- What's good for the ____
- Round-ish shape
- Baltimore MLBer
- French modernist painter
- Burned with water
- Intestinal issue
- Take the lead
- Prove oneself worthy
- None
- Tax collector
- Swiss river
- Gymnast Raisman
- Baby's dining accessory
- Canadian beer distributor
- Iconic American tourist destination
- More expansive
- Alert
- Popular boots Doc ____
- Showings
- Conclusion
- Share a common boundary
- Shooting sport
- Popular side dish
- Global energy firm
- Chronicles (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- Type of bomb
- Polynesian island country
- Heavenly body
- Hard workers
- Covered
- Johns Hopkins Hospital founder
- Plant of the grass family
- Island person of the Bering Sea
- Storehouse
- Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
- A pituitary hormone
- Female sibling
- Monetary unit of Afghanistan
- Empowering
- Space station
- Disorder
- State of fuss
- Footwear for babies
- Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
- Droves
- Affirmative
- Male parent
- Utter obscenities
- Type of verse
- Unpleasant person
- One who settles down
- Founder of source-based history
- A way to snarl

Scrap metal now being accepted during monthly electronics drop-offs

Don't throw that old frying pan. Take it and other scrap metal items to a Will County electronics waste recycling drop-off held the second Thursday of the month in the parking lot of the city hall, 1165 S. Water St., Wilmington.

The Will County Electronics Collections is now accepting small scrap metal items including cookie sheets, pots and pans, car jacks, chains, keys, copper pipe and fittings, nuts, bolts, screws, hand tools like screw drivers and pry bars, metal door knobs, silverware, tool boxes, watches, wire hangers, wire screens and more.

Will County's next free electronics drop-off event will be Thursday, Feb. 13, from 5-7 p.m.

Participants are reminded to remain in their vehicles at all times, show ID by holding it to the window for staff to see and then allow staff to remove items without assistance from each vehicle.

All electronic items are accepted (broken or obsolete) and when possible remove batteries before dropping off items.

Electronics include:

Televisions (limit 2), computers and monitors including desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets, e-readers), printers, electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players (iPods, MP3s), CD/DVD/Blu-ray players, DVD players/recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, computer cable, computer speakers, portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

Also tollway transponders, air fryers, all types of telephones, calculators, camcorders, cell phones, CB radio/CB scanners, digital/SLR cameras, digital photo frames, digital projectors, electric lawn mowers, electric scooters, fans, GPS devices, hands-free phone headsets, Insta-pot, microwaves, power tools, radar detectors, radios, rice cooker, shredders, stereo receivers, string lights, toasters and toaster ovens, UPS/battery backup devices and vacuums (stick, robot, canister).

Attorney Wysocki files Clennon estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARY ANN CLENNON
Deceased; No. 2024PR785

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given to creditors of the death of MARY ANN CLENNON. Letters of Office were issued to Maureen E. Clennon whose address is 1610 Arden Place, Joliet, Illinois as Independent Executor, whose attorney of record is Marilyn L. Wysocki, June, Prodehl, Renzi & Lynch, L.L.C., 1861 Black Road, Joliet, Illinois 60435.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Circuit Clerk's Office, Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before the 12th day of August, 2025 if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Marilyn L. Wysocki
For the Estate of Mary Ann Clennon
Deceased

BY: Marilyn L. Wysocki
1861 Black Road
Joliet, IL 60435
815-725-8000

Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 19 and 26, 2025.

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF ROSE M. MCCOWAN
Deceased; No. 2024 PR 786

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given to creditors of the death of ROSE M. MCCOWAN. Letters of Office were issued to Scott M. McCowan whose address is 1305 Corrie Lane, New Lenox, Illinois as Independent Executor, whose attorney of record is Marilyn L. Wysocki, June, Prodehl, Renzi & Lynch, L.L.C., 1861 Black Road, Joliet, Illinois 60435.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Circuit Clerk's Office, Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before the 5th day of August, 2025 if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Marilyn L. Wysocki
For the Estate of
Rose M. McCowan, Deceased

BY: Marilyn L. Wysocki
1861 Black Road
Joliet, IL 60435
815-725-8000

Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, Feb. 5, 12 and 19, 2025.

Village of Elwood to hold hearing on 2025-2026 fiscal year budget

PUBLIC NOTICE

VILLAGE OF ELWOOD, ILLINOIS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED ANNUAL FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 BUDGET OF THE VILLAGE OF ELWOOD

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 8-2.9.9 of the Illinois Municipal Code (65 ILCS 5/8-2.9.9) that a public hearing will be held in consideration of a proposed Annual Budget for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2025, and ending April 30, 2026 for the Village of Elwood, Will County, Illinois at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, in the Elwood Council Chambers, located at 401 E. Mississippi Avenue, Elwood, Illinois 60421 before the Village President and Board of Trustees to receive written and oral comments from the public and to ask questions concerning the proposed budget.

The tentative Annual Budget is available for public inspection, on the Village of Elwood's website at www.villageofelwood.com. You may also contact the Village at 815-423-5011 to set up an appointment for public inspection of the proposed budget. Elwood Village Hall, 401 E. Mississippi Avenue, Elwood, Illinois 60421. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Published February 12, 2025 by Order of the Village of Elwood.

Julie Friebele, Village Clerk

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025.

Sheriff's sale of 1222 Park Dr.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

STATE OF ILLINOIS }
COUNTY OF WILL } SS.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Lakeview Loan Servicing LLC, Plaintiff,
vs.
Jacqueline Hambrick; O'Dekirk, Allred and Associates, LLC; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, Defendant.

No. 22 FC 0293

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

Public notice is hereby given that pursuant to a judgment entered in the above cause on the **20th day of April, 2023, MIKE KELLEY**, Sheriff of Will County, Illinois, will on Thursday, the **27th day of February, 2025**, commencing at 12:00 o'clock noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, sell at public auction to the highest and best bidder or bidders the following-described real estate:

LOT 52 IN LAVITA SHORES, UNIT NO. 1, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF A PART OF THE EAST 1/2 OF THE WEST 1/2 OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 33 NORTH, RANGE 9 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED JULY 25, 1958, IN PLAT BOOK 31, PAGE 13, AS DOCUMENT NO. 853526, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as: 1222 Park Dr, Wilmington, IL 60481

Description of Improvements: N/A

P.I.N.: 03-17-36-303-025-0000

Terms of Sale: ten percent (10%) at the time of sale and the balance within twenty-four (24) hours. No judicial sale fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County.

In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act.

Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State.

FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
ROBERTSON, ANSCHUTZ, SCHNEID, CRANE & PARTNERS, PLLC
10700 ABBOTT'S BRIDGE RD SUITE 170
DULUTH, GA 30097
P: 708-668-4410 X 52109
Plaintiff's Attorney

Mike Kelley
Sheriff of Will County

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Feb. 5, 22 and 19, 2025.

Attorney Meents files Boward estate claim

Attorney Harrop files Henke estate notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JANALYN SUE BOWARD,
Deceased; No. 2024 PR 620

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Janalyn Sue Boward, Letters of Office as Supervised Executor were issued on January 16, 2025, to Thea L. Coplea, whose address is 20849 West Walton Road, Wilmington, Illinois 60481; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before August 6, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org.

Thea L. Coplea
Supervised Executor of the Estate of Janalyn Sue Boward, Deceased
Frank J. Meents
Meents Law, P.C.
25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Telephone: (815) 534-9515
Facsimile: (815) 534-9516
Attorney Code: 06298859
E-mail: Frank@MeentsLaw.com

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Feb. 5, 12 and 19, 2025.

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF THOMAS H. NELSON, Deceased.
Case No.: 25 PR 6

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given to creditors of the death of THOMAS H. NELSON, of Joliet, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued January 27, 2025, to LAWRENCE HAYWOOD, as Independent Executor whose address is 2426 Daniel Lewis Dr., New Lenox, IL 60451, whose attorney of record is TIMOTHY J. MCGRATH, of 440 S. State Street, Manhattan, IL, 60442. The estate will be administered without court supervision unless under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (ILCS 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed with the Clerk of the Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois, 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before the August 5, 2025, or 3 months from the date of mailing or delivery, whichever is later, and that any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org.

Lawrence Haywood,
Independent Executor of the Estate of Thomas H. Nelson, Deceased.
Timothy J. McGrath - 6193170
McGrath Law, P.C.
440 S. State Street
Manhattan, IL 60442
(815) 478-4020
mcgrath@tmcgrathlaw.com

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Feb. 5, 12 and 19, 2025.

Attorney McGrath files notice to legatees and heirs of Nelson estate

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF THOMAS H. NELSON, Deceased.
Case No.: 25 PR 6

NOTICE TO HEIRS AND LEGATEES

Notice is given to Francisco Lopez-Arau, who is an heir or legatee in the above proceeding to probate a will and whose name and address is not stated in the Petition to Admit the Will to Probate, that an order was entered by the court on January 27, 2025, admitting the will to probate.

Within 42 days after the effective date of the original order of admission you may file a petition with the court to require proof of the will by testimony of the witnesses to the will in open court or other evidence, as provided in section 6-21 of the Probate Act of 1975 (755 ILCS 5/6-21).

You also have the right under Section 8-1 of the Probate Act of 1975 (755 ILCS 5/8-1) to contest the validity of the Will by filing a petition with the court within 6 months after admission of the Will to Probate.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. Timothy J. McGrath - 6193170
McGrath Law, P.C.
440 S. State Street
Manhattan, IL 60442
(815) 478-4020
mcgrath@tmcgrathlaw.com

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Feb. 5, 12 and 19, 2025.

Notice of Foreclosure of 417 Healy Ave.

PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT FOR WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS - CHANCERY DIVISION
CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC, Plaintiff,
vs.
JOHN E. SHERROD II; SARINA M. ALES; SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS. Defendants.
Case No. 2025FC000067
Property Address:
417 Healy Ave., Romeoville, IL 60446

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS defendants, that this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, asking for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to wit: LOT 18 IN BLOCK 6, IN HAMPTON PARK SUBDIVISION NO. 12, A SUBDIVISION OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 4 AND THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 3, IN TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH AND IN RANGE 10 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED MAY 3, 1968 AS DOCUMENT NO. R68-6759, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as: 417 Healy Ave, Romeoville, IL 60446
Names of the titleholders of record: JOHN E. SHERROD II and SARINA M. ALES.

Date of the Mortgage: October 28, 2022.
Name or names of the mortgagors: JOHN E. SHERROD II and SARINA M. ALES.

Name of the mortgagee: Guaranteed Rate, Inc.
Date and place of recording: November 4, 2022; Office of the Recorder of the Deeds of Will County, Illinois.
Identification of recording: Document No. R2022079837.

NOW THEREFORE, unless you answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case, on or before February 28, 2025, A JUDGMENT OR DECREE BY DEFAULT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED IN THE COMPLAINT.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exceptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://illinoiscourts.gov/self-help> or talk with your local circuit clerk's office. If you cannot e-file, you may be able to get an exemption that allows you to file in-person or by mail. Ask your circuit clerk for more information or visit www.illinoislegalaid.org. For information about defending yourself in a court case (including filing an appearance or fee waiver), or to apply for free legal help, go to www.illinoislegalaid.org. You can also ask your local circuit clerk's office for a fee waiver application.

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT, THE PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Lender Legal PLLC
1800 Pembroke Drive, Suite 250
Orlando, Florida 32810
Tel: (407) 730-4644
Service Emails:
mjdiaz@lenderlegal.com
EService@LenderLegal.com
LLS13827-IL - SHERROD
-s/ Meaghan J. Diaz de Villegas, Esq. -
Meaghan J. Diaz de Villegas, Esq.
Counsel of Record for Plaintiff
ARDC # 6340688

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Jan. 29, Feb. 5 and 12, 2025.

WILDCAT SPORTS



Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund
WHS JUNIOR Zachary Ohlund looks for an open teammate against Coal City during Tuesday's game. The Cats play at Gardner South Wilmington Friday.

'Cats upset the Coalers

The Wildcat boys basketball team pulled an upset against Coal City last week that knocked the Coalers from second to third in the ICE conference.

The hosting Wildcats jumped in front 14-9 in the first quarter before going on a 19-3 run in the second stanza to put the win out of reach for the Coalers.

The fired-up Wildcats had four players reach double figures, including senior Lucas Rink who led the charge with 14 points, including four three-pointers, and five rebounds.

Senior Ryan Nelson crashed the offensive boards for five rebounds to end up with 12 points and total of nine rebounds. Ryan Kettman and Brysen Meents also contributed 12 points each to help the 'Cats close out the final frame with an 18-9 run for the 56-39 win.

Chipping in with two

points each were Walter Gross, Declan Moran and Hunter Osipavicius. The 'Cats helped themselves with nine steals while dishing out 17 assists, most of them coming during Coal City's trap defense which Wilmington handled without panic.

On Friday Wilmington continued their winning ways by outscoring the visiting Lisle Lions in every frame to win 69-54.

The 'Cats were in front 18-13 after one quarter and 29-21 at the half. A balanced attack in the fourth, outscoring Lisle 23-18, resulted in the win.

Wilmington improves to 17-8, 7-5 in the conference with a road game at Indian Creek today (Wednesday) and at Peotone Friday. On Tuesday they host Streator, the ICE conference leaders, and would like nothing more than to get another upset.



Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund
WILMINGTON'S BRYSEN MEENTS bounces passes to his teammate for a shot from down low during Tuesday's game against Coal City. The Wildcats won 56-39.

Lady Wildcats ready for regional action



Photo by Eric Fisher
FAST BREAK—Sami Liarmatis makes an easy layup for the Lady 'Cats. The sophomore leads the team with an 11.7 points per game average.

With the regular season winding down, the Wilmington girls basketball team is looking to make a good run during the regional which will be held in Coal City.

The Lady Coalers are the top seed in a five-team bracket that includes, Peotone, Reed-Custer, Wilmington and Joliet Catholic. Coal City has beaten all four, but also suffered a loss to Wilmington 42-38, early in the season.

The Blue Devils (10) will play at RC (7) on Saturday at 3 p.m. The winner of that game faces Coal City on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 6 p.m., followed by JCA (4) vs. Wilmington (5) at 7:30 p.m. in Coal City.

The championship game will be played Thursday, Feb. 20 in Coal City at 7 p.m. with the winner advancing to the Herscher Sectional Feb. 25 at 6 p.m.

With Coal City beating JCA 53-48 three weeks ago and Wilmington beating Coal City once, the Lady 'Cats have a shot at getting past the Hilltoppers.

Plus just last week the Lady 'Cats beat Peotone 37-24, leading them through all four quarters.

Thursday's victory against the Blue Devils may not have been overwhelming but they did jump to an early lead and never looked back.

The Lady 'Cats were 19-8 overall, 8-5 in the conference before hosting Streator on Monday and Dwight yesterday.



Courtesy photo
REGIONAL CHAMPION! Wilmington junior Logan Van Duyne won the regional championship at 190 pounds in Herscher. He is one of two Wildcats to qualify for the sectional tournament this weekend in Coal City.

Wildcats qualify two for wrestling sectional

The Wildcat wrestlers have struggled all season to fill all 14 weight classes during dual team events but they managed to send 10 members to the Herscher Regional on Saturday, finishing in a respectable sixth place.

Coal City finished with an impressive 10 regional champions, two seconds and two thirds to rack up 313.5 points, far surpassing second place Reed-Custer with 149.5 points. Seneca came in third with 137 points, followed by Clifton Central (130.5), Bishop McNamara (92.5) and Wilmington (74.5) Other teams behind the 'Cats were Herscher, Peotone, Dwight and Manteno.

Wilmington battled through a tough regional on Saturday, with two wrestlers advancing to the Coal City sectional, including regional champion Logan Van Duyne and second place Will Wilson.

VanDuyne (190) dominated his weight class, claiming 1st place by pinning all three of his opponents, including Coal City's Cade Poyner in the championship match (5:43), to improve his record to an impressive 36-4.

It's was second match in a row that the Wildcat junior upended his nemesis, Poyner, to decide a tournament championship. These two muscle each other out until the end before getting the win. It will likely play out again on Saturday during the sectional, and possibly the following weekend at state.

Sophomore Will Wilson (175) earned 2nd place and improved to 24-9 overall. Wilson secured two pins, including one in the semifinals against Reed-Custer's Nathan Vogler, ending his season, before falling to Coal City defending state champion Landin Benson in the finals (1:22).

Oakley Rivera (132) placed 4th but does not advance. Rivera showcased grit in

the consolation rounds, earning a technical fall (21-1) and a pin against Seneca's Ryker Terry before falling in the third-place match. The Wildcat sophomore ends the season with a 22-13 record.

Junior Memphis Iwen (215) also placed 4th, bouncing back in the consolation rounds with two pins, including one over Seneca's Colton Angeloff, before being pinned in the third-place match by Clifton Central's Brody O'Connor. He finishes with an 11-11 record.

Although some Wilmington wrestlers didn't place, they showed determination throughout the tournament:

Freshman Devin Findlay (106) received a bye in the consolation bracket but fell to Coal City's Jason Piatak in the semifinal to fall to 8-17 for the season.

At 138, Hunter Johnson (6-20) competed in two matches, receiving a bye in the consolation bracket, but was unable to secure a win. He is just a sophomore.

Aiden Morenberg (144) earned a consolation pin over Seneca's Parker Jones (0:52) before being pinned by Peotone's Dalton Sala in the consolation semifinal. The Wildcat sophomore's record is 4-8.

Sophomore Tyler Nelson (150) pinned Reed-Custer's Brock Billingsley in the consolation round (5:47) but was later pinned by Coal City's Noah Houston to end with an 11-24 record.

Tim Powlick (165) wrestled two matches but was pinned in both to fall to 3-17 overall.

James Zeigler (285), the only Wildcat senior, competed in two matches but was pinned in both to end with a 5-6 record.

VanDuyne and Wilson will represent the Wildcats at the Coal City Sectional on Friday and Saturday, aiming for a top-four finish to qualify for the State Tournament in Champaign Feb. 20-23.

WMS volleyball teams stopped by Saratoga

The middle school Lady Cats faced another round of hard teams in volleyball for the week of Feb. 3, losing to both Saratoga and Minooka.

The 8th grade lost 16-25, 15-25 to Saratoga and 6-25, 12-25 to Minooka.

Against Saratoga Nadine Liguind led with 13 digs and an ace while Aby Winker added another 7 digs and 2 kills. Lilly Govero had 3 digs, 2 aces, a kill and a block. Against Minooka Liguind had 10 digs while Izzy Edgeworth had 6 to go with her 3 assists and an ace. Chesnee Geiss stepped into the middle position to help her team with 2 blocks and a kill.

Seventh Grade also lost both games to Saratoga (13-25, 20-25) and Minooka (2-

25, 6-25). Aubrey Ptacek had 6 digs for the week. Holly Holm and Tessa Biskupski both added another 4 digs. Lilly Bailey had 2 blocks, 1 kill and an ace.

The 6th grade only played Saratoga this week, winning in the A game 23-25, 25-22, 25-23 but losing a close B game 24-26, 20-25. Brooke Dickover ended the evening with 8 digs, 4 aces and a kill. Emily Van Duyne had 7 aces, 6 digs and a kill.

Grace Keane had 2 kills and Brie Talley had 3 aces. For the second match of the evening, KJ Skole had 11 digs and 4 aces. Madison Smith had 7 digs, 2 kills and an ace. Aleah Sanchez and Keely Henke both had 6 digs while Sutton Proctor was right behind them with 5.

Mighty 'Cat wrestlers do well at tourney

Wilmington Wrestling Club had some winners again on Sunday when they competed in the Ted Harvey Memorial.

Tots & Bantam

1st place: Lucas Tworek, Jenna Alsbury, Jacob Deane, JJ Dziuban, Kolby Duffy, Maddux Morgan, Aiden Wilking and Gio Laud.

2nd Place: Brantlee Daniels, Nixon Bushur, Silas Nash, Scarlett Kaniewski and Wyatt Witvoet.

3rd Place: Wyatt DiDomenico, Lane Vanderhyden, Duke McGreehin, Gannon

Lundberg, Kyler Murphy and Vince Allen.

Intermediate & Novice

1st Place: Lodi Morgan.

2nd Place: Laura Allen, Brooklyn McGreehin, Ivy Pedigo, Declan Wilking and Norah Minuth.

3rd Place: Carson Alsbury.

4th Place: Lane Rossi

5th Place: Nathan Talley and Leonard Morgan.

6th Place: Chase Combes and Jack McGreehin.