Bring in this ad and payment before March 31, 2025 to 111 S. Water St, Wilmington or 271 S. Broadway, Coal City No other discounts allowed

For details call 815/476-7966



Vol. 67, Issue 9

McCubbin said "And the county records

only go back to 1988, so

who knows how long it has

el Wesley Township roads,

you have firsthand experi-

ence in traversing roads in dire need of repair and

The Illinois Dept. of

Transportation

(IDOT) limits the township's budget mainly

because it doesn't generate

enough revenue to justify

seek funding elsewhere.

Big needs, small budget

investment in streets and

ditches needed in Wesley

Township are as follows:

Lakewood Shores: \$554,481

Resthaven: \$384,091

Alma Acres: 70,060

Therefore, the township has been forced to

The estimated total

additional funding.

Meanwhile, if you trav-

Unfortunately, Wesley Township is the least funded township in Will County.

really been.'

improvement.

\$1.00

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FREE PRESS ADVOCATE

WILMINGTON, IL |

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2025

A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER (815) 476-7966

tax increase

April

BY ROSE PANIERI

the Consolidated Election, the

Wesley Township Road District will be asking vot-

ers to approve a referen-

dum for a rate increase for

road and bridge improvements amounting to of

0.5009% of the equalized assessed value of taxable

additional \$83.33 in taxes

per \$100,000 single-family

Commissioner, there hasn't

been a rate increase for Wesley Township Road

District for at least 37 years.

Considering the rise in the

cost of materials and labor,

McCubbin believes the

Shoestring budget

ating on a shoestring budg-

"The township is oper-

township is long overdue.

This translates to an

According to Leonard

Wesley

STAFF WRITER

residence.

McCubbin, Township's

Voters to decide

for better roads



OVER 3,000 PROM DRESSES will be available for just \$5 each during Saturday's Melissa's Closet & Crystal's Jewelry Box event held 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Godley Park District gym. It takes dozens of voluneers to help sort, size and group dressess and accessories in preparation for the big event. Volunteering while having President's Day away from school are Taylor Stickel, Addison Billingsley, Gabby Kluk, Bristol Billingsley, Delany Redwitz and Koreen Liguid.

Fall in love with a \$5 prom dress

BY ROSE PANIERI STAFF WRITER

It's been 15 years since Laurie Becker began coordinating Melissa's Closet & Crystal's Jewelry Box. In that time, 5,180 high school students have been transformed into Cinderella for

Instead of a fairy godmother, the prom-bound princesses have Becker, whose more than happy to play the

Dresses are a mere \$5 each, and shoes, jewelry, and other "sparklies'

are also available. Last Thursday, Becker took a few minutes from her frantic schedule to talk about the event.

'So far, we have over 600 dresses collected," Becker said. "Last year there were 2,872, and we expect to exceed that number (3,000 as on Monday). All 14 collection sites have turned in dresses. We have some beautiful gowns."

This year's event will be held Saturday, March 1 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Godley Park District, 500 S. Kankakee St.

Melissa and Crystal

The prom dress sale honors Melissa Michalowski and Crystal Michalowski worked

Midewin loses 12 staffers, USDA statement

Whitmore Ace Hardware Wilmington. Crystal Carr was her

Tragically, both girls lost their lives in a car accident in 2010. Feeling compelled to honor their memory, Whitmore Ace Hardware came up with a plan. What better way to honor two teen girls than to make a dream come true for high school students longing to attend prom.

Last year, more than 100 volunteers manning 23 dressing rooms, played a vital role in making the event a reality.

"Volunteers are the heart and SEE MELISSA'S CLOSET PAGE 2

et, and we have not had a Rural areas: \$2,457,404 tax increase since prior to Total: \$3,466,036 **SEE WESLEY PAGE 2** Visitors center to

open near Giant Aldermen approve \$1.03 million loan the agreement will continto purchase trucks

Feb. 18 the Wilmington City Council meeting, Mayor Ben Dietz announced the Gemini Giant loan agreement with the Joliet Area Historical Museum (JAHM) has been extended to the year 2045. Both entities agree the landmark should remain in Wilmington.

BY ROSE PANIERI

STAFF WRITER

In addition, JAHM plans to open a visitors center at 110 Park Street.

"The new visitors' center will be called the Landing Pad and is expected to be open for the Red Carpet Corridor weekend," the mayor said.

Red Carpet Corridor is scheduled for May 3 and 4 when the visitors center will be open for business.

The Landing Pad will highlight the history of the Gemini Giant, Wilmington's place in Route 66 history, local attractions, Gemini Giant souvenirs and Route 66 paraphernalia. Expect the Landing

Pad to be open Thursday through Monday to welcome travelers and locals alike," Dietz said. **Heritage Corridor**

Agreement The

approved an agreement between the city and Heritage Corridor

Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). The term of

ue through May 31, 2025 unless terminated. As part of the agreement, the city Wilmington agrees to pay the Heritage Corridor Convention and Visitors Bureau a one-time payment of \$6,000 to cover

for the exhibit. The city must also submit monthly performance reports, including photos of the progress of the project, starting March

project management costs

Facade Improvement

Grant payment The council approved a request from Nick Martinez, owner of 116-118 S. Water Street, for \$5,000 for the complete renovation of the exterior

of two existing properties. Martinez plans on attracting small businesses seeking office space and one retail tenant.

Liquor license granted The council approved Class A Liquor License for The Garage at 116B S. Water Street. The new establishment will be on the mill race side of the

Street Professional Center. Liquor licenses The council approved

newly renovated Water

an ordinance amending Chapter 112 of the Code of **SEE CITY COUNCIL PAGE 2**



places blame on 'Biden administration'

BY ROSE PANIERI STAFF WRITER

In January, the Trump administration announced plans to downsize federal agencies. Though the news was disquieting, believed this small pocket of Will County would be affected.

The very idea that federal downsizing would hit Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie never occur to those who worked there. Thus, it was all the

shocking more when between Feb. 14 and 18 the Sword of Damocles came down on Midewin. By that time, the U.S. Forest Service had fired 3,400 employees. The 12 from Midewin were the latest casualties. The entire educational staff was decimat-

Siobhan Peacy, 61, a U.S. Forest Service inter-



SIOBHAN DOLKOWSKI PEACY lost her position as a U.S. Forest Service interpretive specialist at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie on Feb. 17, one of thousands of probationary employees fired by the federal government. One of Midewin's programs was Mighty Acorns which brought Next Generation Science standards into the Wilmington classroom.

brated her 11-year anniver- which she was let go. sary with Midewin in May.

at the loss of a job she loved, Midewin, would have cele- and the inhumane way in

For Peacy, the bad Instead, she's reeling from news came on Monday,

Feb, 17. It was her day off. "The call came on Monday, and I refused to **SEE MIDEWIN PAGE 2**









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continued from page 1

soul of Melissa's Closet," Becker said. "It's so much fun, and we could never do it without their help.' Scholarship established In 2015, the first \$10,000 scholarship was granted.

Becker's goal is to increase this amount every year through the generosity of donors. Monetary donations may be made by check to the

order of Melissa's closet and mailed to 1105 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481.

Spreading the word

Becker said she's looking forward to March 1, and that she looks forward to seeing the smiles on everyone's face - volunteers as well as the students who score a \$300 dress for \$5. She's proud of the way the event has grown, and feels a great sense of satisfaction in being able to bring joy to the students.

We've put it on Facebook, and the word has spread,' Becker said. "So, we don't limit dresses to students in this area. Any student is welcome. We have plenty thanks to the community."

To learn more about Melissa's Closet and Crystal's Jewelry Box, visit melissascloset.org.

Wesley, continued from page 1 Though McCubbin hesitates to ask for a tax increase,

he has no choice. With Wesley Township not being a priority to IDOT, and little to no grant money available for such projects, he has no other option except to ask voters to chip in.

"Î chase as many grants as I can," McCubbin said. "Mainly the grants that have been available are for storm water-specifically, getting rid of the storm water-not for resurfacing roads.

And resurfacing, as well as vital bridge-work, are what township roads need most. "We've got some roads that are just terrible,"

McCubbin said. "A lot of the country roads stand full of water after bad weather, and that results in deterioration Wesley township has 44 miles of roads, and all need

regular maintenance, and many need repairs to keep "We have no tax base in Wesley Township,

McCubbin said. "The only thing we've got is residential and a little bit of farm. We rely solely upon property

Loss of tax dollars

When the Will County Forest Preserve District purchased land within Wesley Township, the situation became even more dire.

They've been good to work with," McCubbin said of orest preserve district, "We've done a couple projthe forest preserve district, ects under the county servicing entrances to their property, and they've been very cordial as far as chipping in and helping with culverts. The only negative side is the properties they purchased were lost to the tax rolls."

In addition to losing tax revenue, the township has been forced to deal with the increased cost of labor, materials, and equipment. Today's prices are sometimes double what they were 37 years ago.

McCubbin understands the hardship on taxpayers in these difficult times, but he feels road maintenance and repair will benefit residents, keeping them safe and

boosting property values. "For one, investing money in the roads means a better quality road for the people in the township,' McCubbin said. "Roads in good repair will cut down on

McCubbin also vows to use the tax funds responsibly, with all money going toward maintenance and repair.

accidents and insurance claims for damaged cars.

'You know what? We're not looking at buying a brand new truck or a shiny new tractor, that kind of stuff," he

said. "This one is going to straight to the roads." The township will hold an open house to answer any questions on Saturday, March 29 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Wesley Township Hall, 21333 W. Ballou Rd., Wilmington.

Election reminder

Ad space for the Wilmington area election is filling up fast. A reminder that prime positions are sold on a first come, first served basis. Instead of bashing other candidates on social media, control your message by putting it in writing with ad space.

Readers of the Free Press Advocate are the same people who get out and vote! Make them informed by placing an ad in the local newspaper. Call 815-476-7966 for more details.

Attorney Vazquez files

DeLapp estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF

DEATH AND PROBATE NOTICE

DEATH AND PROBATE NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of Lee
Steven DeLapp. Letters of Office were
issued on February 3, 2025, to Nichole
DeGroot, 663 Madere Street, Rio
Vista, CA 94571, as representative.
The estate will be administered
without Court Supervision, unless
under section 28-4 of the Probate Act
of 1975 (755 ILCS 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent
administration at any time by mailing
or delivering a petition to terminate to

or delivering a petition to terminate to

the court clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of Andrea Lynn Chasteen, Circuit Court Clerk, 100 W.

Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois, or with the representative or both on or before

the 19th day of August, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of this notice form the personal representative is required under by Sec. 18.3 of the Probate Act

of 1995, the date state in that notice.

Any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Circuit Court Clerk must

mailed or delivered to the representa-tive and the attorney for the Estate within IO days after it has been filed

With the court clerk.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit http://efile.illinois courts.gov/service providers.htm to learn more and to select a service provider if you peed additional balls or provider if you peed additional balls or provider.

provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit http://www. illnoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Nichole DeGroot

Representative

THE 12TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
NO. 2025 PR 24

Estate of Lee Steven DeLapp,

Attorney Johnson files

Kujawa estate claim

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

Carole Ann Kujawa, Deceased. Case No.: 2025 PR 000020. Notice is given of the death of the above named decedent. Letters of Office were issued on February 5, 2025 to Bryan R. Kujawa, of 4510 Normandy Drive, Lisle, IL 60532, as Independent Executor, whose attorney of record is Richard Johnson of

the Law Office of Rick Johnson, 1260 Iroquois Ave. Suite 202, Naperville, IL 60563. The estate will be administered without court supervision, unless under section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act III. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755,

par. 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of Andrea Lynn

Chasteen, Circuit Court Clerk, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, within for epresentative, or both, within 6 months from the first publication date of this Notice, which is August 19, 2025, and any claim not filed within that period is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed with the Circuit Clerk.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit http://efile.illinois courts.gov/service-providers.htm 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.
Atty. No.: 6306264
Law Office of Rick Johnson

1260 Iroquois Ave. Suite 202 Naperville, IL 60563 (708) 217-0074

Geiger Vazquez LLC 415 Liberty St. Morris, IL 60450 (815) 942-5072

Attorney Staci L. Vazquez (6339790)

with the court clerk.

third to fifth grade students, Peacy and her colleagues conducted nature lessons and stewardship

many children.' In addition to the

Peacy and her colleagues offered summer programs throughout Will County and beyond. From Tinley Park to Yorkville to Joliet and southern Will County, Peacy and her team inspired thousands of children and adults to appreciate nature-to get out-

respect nature," Peacy said. "We gave them an appreciation of pollinators, gardening, ecology, conservation, and how nature works." During the course of

relaying the sad news. Kevin Superintendent Wilmington School 209U District was

informed of the cancellation of the Mighty Acorns program last week in an email from Abbott Hays, another Midewin educator who had been fired.

Midewin, continued from page 1.

"There will likely not be further opportunities at Midewin for youth to engage with the prairie, and the future of Midewin itself is not certain," Hays stated.

Feeney's first reaction to the mass firings was one of disbelief.

dents have participated in the Mighty Acorns project at Midewin for 29 years," Feeney said. "Midewin is a partner provider with the program, working with schools to facilitate field study trips in the fall, winter, and spring. The curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards and is an essential part of our science curriculum."

administration spoke of layoffs, many assumed that the federal government targeted probationary employees because they had less to lose. Though Peacy was an

Midewin, she was placed on a two-year probationary period upon taking on additional responsibilities.

cruel. When staff began receiving emails from the

"The email was really

plaints from those we served."

In fact, Peacy shared there was no rhyme or reason on who was going to be fired other than the reference to probationary employees.

'You have a hydrologist on one hand and an administrative assistant on the other being let go," Peacy said. "In the Forest Service you have one person with 30 years. They transferred to another position, they're in probation for a year, and then they're gone.'

Peacy has attempted to envision the big picture.

"This is all probably a way to save money across the board—just cut everybody," Peacy said. "It's probably also a way to cause chaos and confusion. Maybe they think they can get their hands on the public lands and do what they want with them."

Healing the land

Peacy brought a decade of experience to Midewin. The Plainfield resident had served as a naturalist for Ioliet Park District's Pilcher Park for years before her employment Midewin. Though she was let go, as a naturalist she

still worries about the future of the fragile tallgrass prairie.

Peacy explained that the name "Midewin" is derived from the word for "Grand Medicine Society, tribe healers charged with protecting the land and keeping nature in balance.

"This administration cares nothing about Midewin or all the other public lands either," Peacy said "We're trying to heal the land, and it's going take a lot more than the 29 vears Midewin has been in existence to do that."

USDA chimes in

Following a request for information from the USDA. an unnamed spokesperson justified the firings on Feb. 24, stating: We have a solemn

responsibility to be stewards of the American people's hard-earned taxpayer dollars and ensure that every dollar spent goes to serve the people, not the bureaucracy."

In closing, spokesperson ultimately laid the blame on the Biden administration:

"It's unfortunate that the Biden administration hired thousands of people with no plan in place to pay them long term."

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Edward **Jones**°

Ordinances imposing restrictions on the number of

In other action, the council approved a request by staff to borrow \$1,038,642 from U.S. Bank for the purchase of six pieces of equipment at a rate if 4.76 percent.

Equipment that will be replaced includes a Case backhoe (1996); two 1997 International Plow/Dump trucks and a 2005 Ford F450 Plow/Dump truck.

(\$230,000 each), a backhoe \$154,000, a Ford F550 truck \$125,000, a Ford F450 crane truck \$114,437 and a Ford F250 truck \$75,000.

In addition, staff intends to replace faulty turbidimeters, and implement a SCADA System at the water treatment plant.

The council approved an invoice for tuition, payable to the Macon County Law Enforcement Training Center

in the amount of \$7,550 which includes tuition, lodging, meals, wearables, supplies, and ammunition.

Spring ready

The council approved the Proposal from The Flower Faery to provide seasonal color planter rotation for 2025 at a cost of \$2,800.

Waste water plant

The council approved a quote for \$18,850 from LAI, Ltd. for repairs to the north blower at the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Turbidimeters

Approve the quote from Hach to purchase four turbidimeters with controllers, along with a oneyear warranty agreement, for a total cost not to exceed \$28,925.60.

PERSONAL INJURY Block, Klukas &



M Manzella & Shell, P.C. Attorneys at Law

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Michael D. Block • Elizabeth A. Klukas • Thomas J. Manzella

WORKERS COMPENSATION

EUCHRE Tournament All proceeds go to the 11U Travel Baseball / 2026 Cooperstown Team Saturday, March 1st

20 7:00 PM Tuffy's Lounge Ticket includes entry into tournament and food

\$10 All-you-can-drink beer tickets available at check-in Check In Begins @ 6:00

Rules @ 6:50 Start Time @ 7:00

Award Winner LINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION The Free Press Advocate

USPS No. 307-450

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Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courant Display Advertising: Friday, noon News and Classified Advertising: Monday, noon E-mail: News & News Photos:

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

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Published in the Free Press
Advocate on Feb. 12, 19 and 26, 2025. out of state and March 5, 2025. 26 and March 5, 2025

take on greater responsibility for events, hikes, and youth programs, including "Mighty Acorns," a the hugely popular youth education program. Wilmington District was one of dozens of districts benefiting from the program. Designed for

take it on my day off,"

Peacy said. "I knew what it

was, but I was like, 'Don't

call me on my day off to

with Midewin, Peacy was a

seasonal employee. In

2023, she went full-time.

As such, Peacy agreed to

For most of her years

activities. "So many schools were part of the Mighty Acorns, and now that's just gone," Peacy said. "There was Wilmington, South Wilmington, three schools were in Manteno and two in Joliet. We've reached so

Mighty Acorns program, "We touched their

lives and taught them to

the bombshell firings, Peacy and her colleagues contacted schools with whom they had worked, Feeney,

"Our fourth grade stu-

When the

11-vear veteran

And, being let go was one thing, but the way it was done bordered on

federal government's HR agency following President Trump's inauguration, Peacy began to feel uneasy. From January through February, the tone of the missives became increasingly accusatory, implying low productivity and laziness. The final email made insinuations that staff felt had no basis in reality.

vague and weird in the way they worded it, and implied we were being fired for poor performance, but they wouldn't quite come out and say it," Peacy said. "It said something like 'We find that the agency does not need your continued employment at this time.' It's deliberately vague, but still insulting. I got an award for my efforts, and never heard com-

City Council, from page 1

The city will buy two Kenworth T-480 trucks

The cost of the loan will be \$207,728 per year over five

Police training

Attorney McGrath files Alo-Schaufele estate claim

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
ROSEMARY ALO-SCHAUFELE,

ROSEMAN..
Deceased.
Case No.: 24 PR 789
CLAIM NOTICE Notice is given to creditors, of the death of ROSEMARY ALO-SCHAUFELE, of Huntley, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued January 23, 2025, to Olindo O. Alo, Jr., as Independent Executor whose address is 260 Beauteau, Lake Zurich, IL 60047 whose attorney of record is 60047, 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 (IL. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755 par. 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

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 August 12, 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 represen-

ered 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.

Olindo O. Alo, Jr., Independent Executor of the Independent Executor of the Estate of Rosemary Alo-Schaufele,
Deceased

McGrath Law, P.C. 440 S. State Street

Timothy J. McGrath - 6193170

counties; \$53 other Illinois counties and \$60

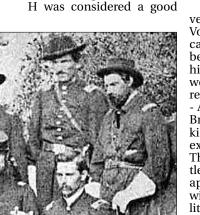
The Civil War vets from Wilmington and Braidwood

The love/hate relationship between Braidwood and Wilmington has been going on a very long time. Wilmington has always felt she had cornered the market on Civil War history. But that's not totally accurate. The War Between the States is not generally considered when we look at the history of Braidwood. It was happened about the same time as Braidwood was just starting to come into exis-However, many returning soldiers moved to Braidwood and vicinity because there were jobs to be had in the mines. So, let's look at the Civil War vets in Braidwood.

Infantry had many men from County among ranks. One of these James Burrill m Plainfield. The regiment

served on the east coast becoming a permanent and was present at the battle of Charleston remembered in the movie Glory.

Burrill held the rank of Lieutenant and was well liked among his comrades. H was considered a good



JAMES BURRILL is seated at the table with his arms on the table, wearing no hat.



Sandy Vasko

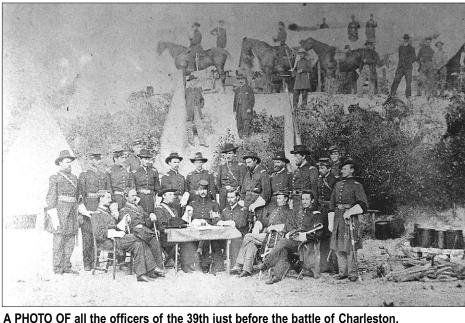
management skills were not appreciated after he mustered out. He ended up mov-Braidwood to become a coal He suc-

ceeded in raising a family and

member of the community, but he was also active in veteran's affairs. He helped found the Phil Kearney Grand Army of the Republic Post in Braidwood.

Henry Kellogg was a veteran of the 100th Voluntary Infantry. came to Braidwood to become a butcher and raise his family. Not everything went well for him as we read in April of 1875, "Killed A son of Henry Kellogg, in Braidwood was instantly killed on Wednesday by express train due north. The train it seems was a little late at that place and approached the station with unusual speed. The little fellow aged perhaps 8 years, attempted to cross the track, but in so doing was caught by the pilot and thrown violently against an adjacent switch, casing his instant death. The accident seems to have been unavoidable on the part of the company."

He was a feisty sort, as we read of an incident in 1880, "Hank Kellogg, the popular butcher, fractured his right shoulder blade on Thursday morning. "You see," said he, " it was like this" I was settling Mrs. Leed's account, and closing



A PHOTO OF all the officers of the 39th just before the battle of Charleston.

the lid of the peddle box in wagon, standing upright, when the horse suddenly started, and the next I knew I was picking myself up from the ground but if I knew who the fellow was that frightened them horses I'll tell you there'd be a funeral before long.'

Another man from the 100th to settle in Braidwood was Capt. S. D. 100th B. Lines. Captain Lines was of the social sort. Before the war he served as commissioner of Highways in Wilmington.

After the Was we find him at Memorial Day, Fourth of July and veterans' events, usually giving a speech. He was active in the Methodist Church and the Republican Party, running for Justice of the Peace in

These three men decided in 1904 that Braidwood was just as patriotic as the next town, i. e. Wilmington, who had hosted veterans' affairs on and off for over fifty years. That year Lines was elected president of the reunion Committee of the 100th and soon announced that the next reunion was to be held in Braidwood.

The reunion was a great success; in fact, it was decided to hold the 1906 reunion in Braidwood as well. But this time S. D. B. Lines would not be there to give a speech. We read on August 24, 1906, "Captain S. D. B. Lines, a veteran of the Civil war, passed away last Sunday night at his home in Braidwood. Mr. Lines had been sick for some time, dropsy having gotten the better of him. During his illness he was visited by many of his old comrades who came to cheer him up in his last hours on earth."

"In the departure of Mr. Lines from this world.

Braidwood loses a good citizen. In October, 1859, he came to this city and in July 1862, he enlisted the national army as a private. Promotion came to him in June 1863, when he was made second Lieutenant, and a little later first Lieutenant Lines was appointed Captain.'

"His company was known as Number One of the 100th of Illinois. He was wounded at Franklin, Tenn. The deceased is survived by his wife and one son, Charles, whose hone is in Joliet."

When the reunion was held the following month, Burrill, Iames Kellogg and S. D. B. Lines were remembered as the entire group sang "Brave Hearts Forever" in their

Submit questions for March 3 Meet the Candidate's night

Wilmington Chamber of Commerce has scheduled a Meet the Candidates night so the public can ask questions of candidates running for the mayor and city aldermen.

Three candidates running for mayor are incumbent Ben Dietz, former Mayor Roy Strong and former building inspector Jayson Walinski. They have been invited to attend the gathering on Monday, March 3, beginning at 6 p.m. at the VFW Post 5422, 557 W. Baltimore St., Wilmington.

The Chamber is invit-

ing questions from the public to be asked of the candidates mayor. The chamber will ask the most pertinent questions first to help voters decide who they want to lead City Hall for the next four years.

Submit your question Wilmington Chamber, 616 Davy Lane, Wilmington, IL 60481 or online through the Chamber's Facebook page by personal message.

Be sure to indicate if a question is directed at a particular candidate.

Opposing races for

alderman include: First ward—incumbent Ryan Jeffries against former alderman and past mayor Marty Orr; Second wardincumbent Ryan Knight vs. Bob E. Thomas; and Fourth ward-incumbent Thomas Smith vs. Jacob Ragan.

Third ward alderman Jonathan Mietzner is running unopposed.

Ouestions can be presented at the start of the event, written on a 4x6 index card.

The VFW kitchen will be open from 4 - 7:30 to accept food orders.

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! available. Carry-outs Invite your neighborsbetter yet, pick them up! Free will offering, no set

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 Christian

Save the date

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

Visit local history

The Wilmington Area Historical 114 Main Museum, N. 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.

Polar 'Plungers' halfway to \$140,000 goal

BY ROSE PANIERI STAFF WRITER

With the frigid winter weather, this year's Polar Plunge promises to be chockfull of goosebumps and "plungers" donning thermal undies.

Happily, the polar vortex has not discouraged the big-hearted folks who want to support Special Olympics Illinois.

So far, \$69,800 has been raised. The goal is \$140,000.

To date, the Will County Sheriff's Office has the most plungers with 40 mem-

"While we're getting cold just thinking about it, we're excited to join the thousands of warm-hearted individuals who will also be taking an icy dip this winter—all in support of these incredible athletes," The team's page states.

Romeoville's Subzero Heroes are in first place for fundraising, with a cool \$5,478 committed as of last Thursday.

Plunger Michael Janovyak, Extraordinaire, raised a whopping \$1,650, or 330 percent of his goal, and Michael Caulfield has the most donors, 30 in total

Micro-locally, the Wilmington Police Department's seven members have raised \$1,500 so far.

Top Fuel Saloon and its 12 members will take the plunge on behalf of Olympian Cameron "Hot Wheels" West, who brought home a gold and silver medal in the equestrian competition in Rockford.

The 26 members of the Coal City School District have already raised \$2,465.

The Braidwood Polar Plunge will be held Saturday, March 8 at noon at Braidwood Recreation Club, 33915 Illinois Route 53 in Braidwood.

The Braidwood plunge is part of a statewide effort to support Special Olympics Illinois athletes.

Special Olympics Illinois is a not-forprofit sports organization offering yearround training and competition in 18 sports for more than 55,000 athletes. This includes year-round training and competition, leadership, personal development, and health education opportunities.

There is still time to register to plunge or support a plunger. You must raise a minimum of \$100 to earn a Polar Plunge Sweatshirt and to take the plunge.

register, plungeillinois.com/register. You'll be taken to a page with a list of teams to choose from. The Braidwood Plunge is Region E. Click on "Donate" to support a team or individual plunger.

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The comments stated are the opinions and ideas of the callers and not that of the newspaper. Information may not constitute the actual events or facts of a particular topic.

Submissions by email to: courant@fpnusa.com with "soundoff" in the subject line or visit www.freep

ressnewspapers.com, or call 815-634-0317. Please state the town in which you are calling from or in regards to. Mail comments to Sound-Off, 271 S. Broadway, Coal City, IL 60416 or 111 S. Water St., Wilmington, IL 60481. There can be only one submission of 200 words or less per person during any given week.

OK, THEN, HOW

ABOUT WE FLY SOMEWHERE?

Growth takes planning

BRAIDWOOD-Few Braidwood residents just don't get the common sense concept of growth. You want to enjoy low property taxes but you want all of these high price amenities. You want big community centers, big parks, lots of activities for your kids, a splash pad, top notch water treatment processing, better side-walks all throughout town, nice paved roads, a visually attractive downtown, and more. How are all of these things paid for? By your community leaders bringing in business, commercial real estate and additional rooftops. All of this adds money to the property and sales tax base. So, unless you would be OK with a huge property tax increase, you really need to start seeing growth and commercial development for what it is, a positive necessity. Many of the same people who are complaining that our city is bringing in two dealerships, a gas station, etc. and have declared their position against business and commercial growth, are the same people complaining because the Village of Diamond is bringing in several new businesses just off of Rt. 113. Do you, or don't you want commercial development? Did you know, the nuclear power plant makes up 70% of our school district's budget? Imagine that 70% disappearing with the closure of that power plant in the future. Did you know, the nuclear power plant makes up approximately 80% of your Fire Department's budget? Imagine that 80% disappearing with the closure of that power plant. Even though the City of Braidwood does not receive any property taxes from the nuclear power plant, by them developing and bolstering an addition commercial property tax base, they are helping these other taxing bodies who benefit from the power plant to prepare for these future impacts, which are going to happen. It's not a matter of if it will happen, it's a matter of when it will happen. By burying their heads in the sand and pretending like it will never happen, residents and city leaders are setting our community up for failure in a big way. Without preparing today for the guaranteed impacts of tomorrow, every household in Braidwood will go from paying some of the lowest property taxes in the entire region, to paying some of the highest in the state.

Absent aldermen

WILMINGTON—I'd like to know how many meetings an alderman can miss before being kicked off the city council? Seems we have some who rarely attend and that's not fair to the people who voted for them. It's time this record of attendance is shared with the voters, because if they aren't showing up for meetings then they need to be replaced.

Setting them free

GRUNDY CO—Again the tired policeman puts his life in harm's way to bring in the criminals and make them all pay, but wait what do we all see, the judge comes in and sets them all free. Police are called again and again to serve and protect so they bring them back in. The citizens now unhappy they begin to shout and wail. Put them away, throw them in jail. But low and behold what do they all see the judge comes in and sets them all free.

Why he resigned

BRAIDWOOD—There have been many comments made as to why Jim (Moose) Mikel is running for public health and safety after his resigning from the same position he was elected to n 2023. Jim Mikel started seeing how the administrator and mayor were treating Todd Lyons and what they and other commissioners did to Chris Early/ It got to the point Jim couldn't work with them. It felt it was in the best interest for him and the city to resin his position. They also kept Jim out of the lop on everything especially what they were pulling to get rid of Chief Lyons. Jim was the commissioner over the police department and he was unaware of their plans to get rid of Chief Lyons. The mayor, council members and administrator were leaving Jim out of everything. That's when he decided to resign. Both chief Lyons and Commissioner Mikel worked very well together and were both working on bringing the community together and were doing a great job at it. Let's bring Jim (Moose) Mikel back as commissioner of public health and safety to continue the great work they were

Gouging going on? WILMINGTON—Why are gas prices

in town and nearby surrounding areas so high? In Joliet prices are below \$3 a gallon. Time to drop the price.

Gravel please!!! WILMINGTON—South Island Park is

in need of gravel to be put into the large holes that have developed along the shoulder/easement. Hopefully, this will be done before further erosion occurs. Becoming dormant

COAL CITY—I was just wondering

what the Mayor of Coal City is thinking. Coal City seems to be becoming dormant while everybody else around here's businesses are booming. All we get are stupid solar panels. What's next? Windmills? What happened? Diamond is booming and we are sitting in the Stone Age stage. What's going on? It took us three years to get a parking lot by BP pothole fixed. Wake up and smell the roses people.

Too many officers

BRAIDWOOD—Why does Braidwood Police Department have 16 on their payroll. After researching, I found a comment made by commissioner Ron of Public Health & Safety why we have to have 16

Journal. He said "we need to hire Police Officers because the law requires that we have a certain number of Police Officers, and we've been short awhile." "We've cut back before and we have enough money." Also researched State Law in Illinois and there's no law mandating a specific number of police officers a municipality must have. Instead the decision on how many officers to employ is left up to each individual local government based on their population and crime rates, meaning there is no set "required" number of police officers per capita. So why do we currently have 16 officers on our force? Could you please show us the law that says the city has to have so many officers?

officers in the May 1, 2024 Braidwood

Back to work

SHADOW LAKES— I'm calling about the government employees that have to go back to work. Well that is just too bad. There are people here in Shadow Lakes that worked in Las Vegas and now they have to go back to work at their office not from home. The government has paid for 1,000's of square foot of empty office space and it's time these people go back to work like their suppose to. Dan Hill

Out for himself

SHADOW LAKES—If you think Elon Musk is trying to help the American people, you must be delusional. Musk is the richest man in the world. He's obsessed with money and he has a heart of stone. He knows all the tricks in the book to avoid paying taxes most of his wealth in stocks from companies that he owns when he wants to reimburse money or buy a company he will not sell his stocks so he doesn't have to pay capital gains. Instead he borrows money against his stocks, billionaires can write off up to 5% of their profits if they donate to charity. Musk has figured out a way to keep charity money to himself (look up the Musk foundation, also look up the Trump foundation.) Musk is in favor of eliminating federal taxes. That is the reason why he's cutting programs that actually helped the people. It doesn't make any sense that you are cutting programs to provide assistance to the needy and you're telling people that you're saving money who are you saving the money for if you wanna give it to the needy, why you even cut the programs in the first place? The only reason Elon Musk is interested in current federal spending so that he can get a big tax break for him-

Both sides now

BRAIDWOOD-Once again, people on both sides of the local political spectrum continue to embarrass our community. Braidwood is being ripped apart by people supporting both candidates for Mayor. These supporters are so focused on destroying each other personally that they are dragging the entire community through their personal attacks. Social media has brought out the worst in our community by people on both sides. From several elected or appointed officials to these so-called Truth Seekers and several other residents, the issues are blatantly personal and not about what's best for our community. Local elections in this town have always been plagued by finger pointing, blame throwing, name calling and endless streams of false information from both sides, but this time it has been taken to a whole new level and everyone battling it out over our heads should be ashamed of themselves.

Friends into enemies

SHADOW LAKES-Look up Trump talking about social security, he says social security is corrupted and it needs to be fixed, maybe even eliminated. No doubt in my mind that as time goes on more and more Trump supporters will come to realize that they were wrong. Unfortunately, l can't say that it makes me happy that they're getting what they deserve, because all this things that Trump's administration is doing are going to impact every single American. It doesn't matter if you are a Republican or a Democrat. Trump is making friends with countries that are our sworn enemies and making enemies of countries that have always been our friends. What is wrong with this picture.

Attack on Democracy

WILMINGTON—As an elder, I've lived through many political crises in this country--but I have never seen an attack on our democracy like this. In the past, there was bipartisan opposition to lawlessness. Today, the guardrails are being dismantled before our eyes, and we must sound the alarm. This moment is not politics as usual. Some younger people may not realize just how abnormal this is. Back then, both parties opposed lawlessness whereas today, those in power are enabling it. I reject this administration and envision a different future than the one they are trying to create. Never trust Trump

WILMINGTON—Remember "Trump will fix it" signs before the election at his rallies? Now Trump is president but inflation is as bad as ever and predicted to get worse because Trump doesn't know how to fix inflation or perhaps he is too busy firing federal workers to be bothered with fulfilling his promises. Those who voted for Trump deserve inflation to go sky high but the rest of us who knew better than to trust Trump must suffer unfairly. Of course, Trump is not only destroying America but torching negotiations between Ukraine and Russia. Zelensky should not capitulate to Trump's deal of minerals because no one should ever trust Trump. And because Europe is

in perpetual fear that Russia will attack on

another front, Trump's inflammatory

rhetoric could instigate another war.



WE SHOULD PLAN A NICE VACATION TO A NATIONAL PARK

THIS SUMMER!

Cheating our country

BRAIDWOOD—In regard to the person about 88 indictments. How did he get elected? He got elected because people knew he had those indictments but people decided that was OK we'll go ahead and elect him. Maybe they thought he wouldn't be a cheat anymore. Hmm I wouldn't be a cheat anymore. Himm I wonder. To the person that says Elon is not getting paid. It was on T.V. just recently that Elon is getting paid \$8 million of our money. I guess that's called not getting

Cost of chapstick

ESSEX-I heard the price of chapstick has skyrocketed. Its seems that it is high due to the Republicans in Washington kissing King Trump's rump. Signed, Dipstick

Petty but typical

Mr. Hill, I am the author of "Ignoring Constitution." You said I used democracy three times in a post. No I didn't. That post was not mine. My post came from Wilmington, not Gardner. Here is where we agree. Article 4, Section 4 says states are guaranteed a republican form of government. Nowhere in the Constitution or Declaration of Independence is the word democracy mentioned. My post mentioned all the constitutional violations Trump has committed using mainly the amendments. His latest offense is violating Amendment 1 by refusing the Associated Press access to press conferences because they refuse to accept the Gulf of America as the new name for the Gulf of Mexico. Pretty petty but typical. Congress should Amendment 25 which describes who serves as President when the President is unable to perform his duties. Mental deficiencies would certainly qualify for this. The Constitution was written to prevent a monarchy from being established in the U.S. Yet look who appeared last week wearing a crown for a photo op! Hmmm? Lastly, your comment that I "do not have a clue to anything" is offensive, nasty, and mean. Calling people names is Trump's game. Is it yours, too? Clueless Guy

Beware of fake polls

BRAIDWOOD—Have you seen the town halls in Georgia, Wisconsin and Oregon where angry crowds voice their opinions about Trump and Musk? Even Trump held a town hall and he mentioned that "we," meaning he, has done polls and according to those polls Americans approve of what he has done. Bingo. I have noticed that positive polls on TV on Trump have not been identified and I wondered about the source of those polls. Therefore I looked up 'Ipsos' poll results which revealed that Trump has only a 32% approval on inflation. In other words, don't believe polls unless they are appropriately identified.

Governor's speech GARDNER—I don't always agree with our Governor, but his speech was spot on the other day. This is just a portion to think about. The government can always do better, but destroying it is not acceptable. This is from his speech. "After we've discriminated against, deported or disparaged all the immigrants and the gay and lesbian and transgender people, the developmentally disabled, the women and the minorities - once we've ostracized our neighbors and betrayed our friends -After that, when the problems we started with are still there staring us in the face what comes next? All the atrocities of human history lurk in the answer to that question. And if we don't want to repeat history - then for God's sake in this moment we better be strong enough to learn from it. My oath is to the Constitution of our state and of our country. We don't have kings in America – and I don't intend to bend the knee to one. I am not speaking up in service to my ambi- but in deference to my obligations. If you think I'm overreacting and sounding the alarm too soon, consider this: It took the Nazis one month, three weeks, two days, eight hours and 40 minutes to dismantle a constitutional republic. All I'm saying is when the five-alarm fire starts to burn, every good person better be ready to man a post with a bucket of water if you want to stop it from raging out of control. Tyranny requires your fear and your silence and your compliance.

Democracy requires your courage. So,

gather your justice and humanity, Illinois,

and do not let the tragic spirit of despair

overcome us when our country needs us

the most." Finally, no one voted for Musk and he has no business in "our" business.

MEDO WITH OUR

TAX REFUND WHEN

WE GET IT?

The king makes mistakes

WILMINGTON—Two cases of fired workers: Nuclear security experts who are needed and had to be called back and couldn't be found; employees who worked on bird flu vaccines and hopefully can be found. Irene

More tax and spend WILMINGTON—Governor Pritzker appeared before a joint session of the House and Senate on Wednesday to deliver his 2025 State of State Address and outline his budget priorities for the coming fiscal year. I wish he would have spent less time on national issues and more time on matters directly affecting the state of Illinois. The state has a budget deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars, but the Governor actually proposed to add another \$2 billion dollars in spending. He proposes to spend more than a hundred million dollars on health benefits for undocumented immigrants. He plans to pay for it all with hundreds of millions in new taxes, transfers and gimmicks. We need to act to reduce property taxes and to reform the estate tax system to save family businesses and family farms. We need to improve our business climate and create jobs. The last few weeks have driven home the need for ethics reform. And we must improve education to create a brighter future for the next generation. All of these are things we should have heard much more about. But the Governor spent his time on national issues, and proposing more taxing and spending.

Copy Cat

BRAIDWOOD—Finding it very amusing that someone has now started a Copy Cat Facebook to the Braidwood Truthseekers. Bet money on it that a city employee is the one behind it. He needs to be next on the list of those who need o be removed from their position. One of their first posts on it is trying to bash Candidate livan for her list of actually created by the residents who interacted with a post she herself had created. It is nice to see a candidate interacting with the residents and coming up with a list for a better Braidwood. There is no need for them to dissect it and tear it

Building permits

BRAIDWOOD—Now it has come to light that there are more underpaid building permit in this town. How did this current city council not look into these? Are you aware this and has been happening how building permits are charged? Why are they not following the building codes for permit fees? Will those who were charged more than \$200 be receiving a refund?

Town hall meeting WILMINGTON—I would like to thank

Mayor Dietz for a great town hall meeting. It was very informative. A lot of questions were asked and they were all answered. It was very enlightening. We have over \$8 million in grants coming. How impressive. He said if anyone missed it he's going to put it on his web page and city page. I'm just glad he put it on social media.

TDS WILMINGTON-A recent caller accused soundoff contributor Irene of suffering with Trump derangement syndrome. In actuality Irene submits some of the most thoughtful fact based soundoffs but what when the right has no facts they resort to derision and projection. If anyone suffers from Trump derangement syndrome it is the people who voted for Trump. You have to be crazy to think he is going to do anything to make your life better. Since he took office the price of eggs and gasoline have gone up. Inflation is going up and unemployment is on the rise due to Trump and President Musk firing federal employees. Since Trump took office airplanes are falling out of the sky and transportation secretary Shawn Duffy has no experience to solve any problems with the FAA. One must remember that Trump's own experience is that of a game show host who liked to fire people. He is a convicted felon and adjudicated sexual predator who is using his office to stay out of jail. Rather than putting the needs of the country first Trump and his MAGA zealots are consumed with owning the Libs. Maybe you Trumpees should pray for yourselves.

Penny Lane

resh

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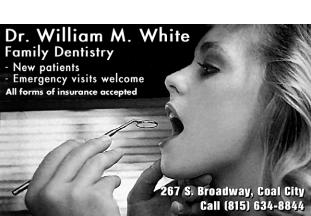
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Ethics reform not a priority in Illinois

House Speaker Chris Welch didn't sound all that e n t h u s e d about passing ethics reforms during an interview last week.

the In wake of for-House

Speaker Michael Madigan's ber of things that we have conviction on 10 felony counts earlier this month, I asked Speaker Welch if he believed Madigan's conviction called out for new

Rich Miller

to listen to what every juror who has spoken said, but they looked at the evidence in that case, and they weighed the evidence in that case. And I think I heard one juror say that he didn't have anything negasay about Springfield per se. But when they looked at the evidence in that case, they came to the verdict that they came to," Welch said. That doesn't sound like

he believes there's a clarion call for change. "Are there things that

can do better in Springfield?" Welch asked rhetorically. "Probably are some things that we can do better. I think we need to talk to our members and find out what they think. I

talk to advocates and hear what advocates think.'

Welch said he was "proud" that nobody in his caucus had been accused of corruption since he took over. "We addressed ethics in my first year as Speaker. There's a num-

done that I think really changed the environment and have helped us get to the point that we're at Madigan said much

"I didn't get a chance the same thing about his caucus Rod after Blagojevich was impeached and removed. It didn't work out so well. Not saying Welch is a problem, but one never knows what individual caucus members are up to.

Gov. JB Pritzker was clearly angry at Speaker Welch during the January lame duck legislative session when the governor's attempt to pass a bill to regulate intoxicating hemp blew up in his face and Welch refused to call the bill, claiming that the governor didn't have 60 Democratic votes.

Pritzker insisted at the time that he did have the votes and also demanded apologies from House yelled administration during a private caucus meeting. Pritzker has since backed off. I asked Welch if things were patched up between them and how that hap-

"First of all, there was nothing to patch up,' Welch declared. "The governor was doing his job, I did my job. The governor and I talk all the time. We talked before lame duck. We've talked since lame duck. The governor is an important partner of mine. We've gotten big things done in the state of Illinois by working together. From time to time we may disagree on something, but know this, my position is always going to be based on what my caucus's position is, and I make that clear with the governor or whoever I'm talking to."

In other words, Welch is gonna stand with his caucus against any outsider, and people, including the governor, need to accept it.

Earlier this month, the House moved three resolutions to the floor that sharply criticized President Trump. The Republicans eventually stormed off the floor in response. My associate Isabel Miller asked Speaker Welch if he might be bringing more such resolutions up for a vote.

"I don't want to talk about our strategy for governing the chamber during

think we need to insults at members of his the 104th," Welch said. "But let me say this: I think that it is extremely important that we give our members space to vocalize what this administration's actions are doing to the people of this state and to the people

around this country. "I think the Président's actions, his administration's actions, are directly impacting the people we serve. And we're going to see as we work to assemble a budget that the administration's actions are diÓrectly impacting our ability to run a responsible state. And so we can't tell you what Donald Trump's going to do, but we're also not going to sit silently while he unilaterally pushes policies that hurt the people that we represent. And if we have to go to the floor and shine a light on those things, we will, because this is not a time to be silent."

Asked if the debates were effective, Welch said, "I think that they have been extremely effective. I think if you talk to our members and what they're hearing from their constituents back home, particularly the members who actually spoke on the floor, they will tell you what they're hearing from their constituents back home."

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

Gas prices stagnant, expected to rise during 'March madness'

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 2.5 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.22/g, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois. Prices in Illinois are 2.8 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 24.9 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has increased 1.6 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.648 per gallon. Wilmington,

Mohsen is charging \$2.99/g - the only area gas station with prices below \$3/g - up to \$3.18/g at Circle K.

all at \$3.19/g, and Coal

In Morris, prices range from \$3.14/g to \$3.29/g at Shell. Bourbonnais prices range from \$3.03/g at Gulf and \$3.19/g at Circle K.

"With the sharp gas price increases on the West Coast now fading, the average has dipped slightly over the event.

past week. While some areas are seeing increases, others are experiencing stability or even slight declines, as the bulk of the seasonal transition has yet significantly impact gasoline prices—certainly good news for motorists," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

"Oil have prices remained steady in the low \$70s, but we continue to monitor key developments, including ongoing talks between the U.S., Russia, and Ukraine on a potential agreement. However, as we inch closer to March, the typical March madness will eventually take hold, so motorists may want to enjoy the slight decline while it lasts. While I don't see an abrupt spike in the national average just yet, we're likely to see upward movement in the weeks ahead.'

The lowest price in the state Monday was \$2.77/g while the highest was \$4.49/g, a difference of

Braidwood stations are at \$3.19/g and Coal state of the s City's offerings are all April 5 at Braidwood church

The Braidwood Presbyterian Women will be holding a Spring Scrap-A-Thon on Saturday, April 5, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church 106 S. Lincoln St. in

For just \$40 you can have a fun filled day of scrap-

ping, door prizes, raffles and food. To reserve a spot call or text Elizabeth Bell at 1-405-

820-5944. Spread the word to friends and family about this

CC Methodist to host blood drive

Coal City United Methodist Church. located at 6805 E. McArdle Rd., Coal City, will host a Community Blood Drive in conjunction with Versiti Blood Center on Tuesday, March 4 from 3 p.m. to

If you would like to donate blood, please contact Karen Hart at 708-217-5808 to schedule your preferred time or you may register online at versiti.org/il.

Walk-ins are also welcome, but appointments are recommended. Please bring a photo ID, eat a good meal, and be sure to drink plenty of water before donating. Please consider giving blood, one pint of blood can save up to 3

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Increased shrub and tree planting efforts contribute to uptick in major wildfires

increased shrub and tree plantings in the eastern U.S. in recent decades partially responsible for the recent uptick in wildfires across the region?

- M. Major, New York, NY

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Wildfires are uncontrolled destructive fires that spread over natural areas, like forests or brush. They can happen for many reasons, natural or manmade. Climate change has made wildfires increasingly more destructive throughout the world. One study from the University of Maryland suggests that current wildfires burn nearly six million more hectares of tree cover per year compared to wild-

fires from 2001. The eastern U.S. is no exception to this devastation, with certain regions' wildfire frequencies having grown tenfold in the last 40 years. There are many



WILDFIRES ARE becoming more and more common in the Eastern U.S., and researchers are still trying to figure out exactly how and why.

explanations for this, but resin being applied to forests by timber compa-

It is also theorized that increased shrub and tree planting efforts across the eastern United States are contributing to this uptick in major wildfires. believe

Researchers

that these factors combine to explain increased wildfire odds. Per a recent study led by University of Florida researcher Victoria Donovan, in the east a one percent increase in woody cover leads to a 3.9 percent increase in odds of a wildfire the next year.

Some recent studies one example is flammable have noted that the planting of invasive species can also increase wildfire frequency. UMass Amherst researchers noted that wildfire occurrences have increased by up to 230 percent because of eight species of nonnative grass.

There are many ways that the average person can help combat wildfires. According to Donovan, reducing fuel usage is the easiest way to prevent wildfires. Supporting climate laws is also vital in achieving environmental justice. Signing the petition led by the Center for Biological Diversity urging FEMA to

declare both extreme heat and wildfire smoke as major disasters will support

Despite research exhibiting a correlation between woody cover and wildfire odds, shrub and tree planting efforts are not in vain. One study published in Geophysical Research Letters noted that the temperature across the east actually dropped by 0.5 degrees F over the last century. "Some vegetation in those really harsh sites might actually facilitate tree establishment by providing shade," reports University of California, Davis researcher Derek Young.

Compared to the whole nation, which actually warmed by 1.2 degrees F over the last century, this compelling evidence suggests that the current planting of trees across the east is a step in the right direction in combating global warming. However, officials also encourage thinning out forests and increasing planting of native vegetation to help prevent more wildfire risk.

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

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State halts poultry sales at meets

Department of Agriculture (IDOA) has issued a 30-day suspension on the exhibition or sale of poultry at swap meets, exhibitions, flea markets, and auction markets in response to the ongoing threat of H5N1 avian flu.

The move is intended to reduce and prevent the spread of the disease, which has been detected in commercial and backyard flocks in Illinois.

"Prevention most effective tool to mitigate the spread of avian flu. By being proactive in biosecurity and limiting poultry movement and exposure, we are protecting the public as well as the poultry industry," said Dr. Mark **IDOA** State Ernst, Veterinarian.

Avian flu is caused by an influenza type A virus which can infect poultry (such as chickens, turkeys, pheasants, quail, domestic ducks, geese, and guinea fowl) and wild birds (especially waterfowl).

Avian flu virus strains are extremely infectious, often fatal to chickens, and can spread rapidly from flock to flock.

Poultry flock owners, managers, and veterinarians should report any unusual findings in domestic poultry, such as increase in mortality, decrease in consumption, decrease in egg production, or respiratory signs, including coughing and sneezing, immediately to IDOA at 217-782-4944 or the United

Department

of

States

Do not handle or attempt to capture wild waterfowl or other birds displaying signs of illness. Due to risk of infection to other animals, dogs, cats and other pets should be kept away from the carcasses of birds that may have died from avian flu.

While avian flu has also been detected in dairy cattle, no cases have been confirmed in Illinois to date. Cattle generally have much lower mortality rates than poultry and usually recover from the disease.

For more information regarding avian flu, visit the USDA site at

aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultrydisease/avian/avian-Agriculture at 866-536- influenza/hpai-detections



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JBITUARIES

GREENDALE, WI-George P. Archibald, 88, of Greendale, WI, passed away Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025 in Greendale. He was a Will County resident for 35 years and was in the Milwaukee area for 54

George was born March 30, 1936 on the Route 66 farm of his grandparents near Elwood to his parents, Ivan Raymond and Alice Ann (nee Lacey) Archibald. He was a

farmer and airplane pilot and was a member of St. Rose of Wilmington, St. Jude of New Lenox and Habitat for Humanity. The expansion of the Joliet arsenal before World War II forced the family to relocate to farms in New Lenox, IL. He farmed fulltime with his father raising Angus cattle, corn and soybeans. He graduated from St. Joseph College of Rennselaer, IN, then from Purdue University of West Lafayette,

Gene Gear of New Lenox turned part of his farm into a grass strip airport, next to the main Archibald cattle farm. George traded engine repairs in exchange for Gene offering flight instruction. George earned his private pilot license and advanced certificates, including his ground school and flight instructor ratings, keeping in touch with former flight students for many years.

In a favorite family story, Jeanette Greenley, wife of retired Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Treasurer Maxmillian Greenley, both of New Lenox matchmaked their niece, the former Julianne Z. Greenley of Wilmette, IL with George and they married four months later. George left full-time farming for a

flight career, flying charter airplanes out of East Troy, WI. On Father's Day 1977, he began flying with the aircraft team for Briggs & Stratton Corp. at Mitchell Field of Milwaukee, WI. He worked fulltime for Briggs & Stratton until age 74 and as a reserve pilot until age 79. He enjoyed visiting family land near Wilmington in retirement. He was a lifelong Bears and

Survivors include his wife, Julianne G. Archibald, of Greendale; three sons: John J. Archibald, of Benton, AR; Michael P. (Ann) Archibald, of Brookfield, WI and David D. (Jennifer) Archibald, of Arlington Heights, IL and two daughters, Karen M. (Peter) Parks, of Brookfield, WI and Katherine "Kate" A. (Matthew) Althoff, of Sioux Falls, SD; one sister, Carol A. (Joe) Deck, of Williamsville, NY; 20 grandchildren; several cousins, nieces, nephews and their fam-

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ivan Raymond and Alice Ann (nee Lacey) Archibald and his sister, Rosemary (Archibald) Goss

Visitation will be Wednesday, Feb. 26, at Rozga Funeral Home, 703 W. Lincoln Ave., Milwaukee, WI. A Mass of the Resurrection will be held Thursday, Feb. 27, at the Basilica of St. Josaphat in Milwaukee. The family will have a private

Memorials to Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity, Basilica of St. Josaphat and Pro-Life Wisconsin would be appreciated.

For more information go to www.rozgafuneral.com.

Beverly Bryant.

MAZON-Beverly Bryant (Nee Swanson), 76, of Mazon, passed away Sunday, Feb. 23, 2025 at the Lightways Hospice Home in Joliet. Born March 8, 1948 in

Streator, IL, Beverly Jean was a daughter of Helmar and Mary Ellen (Girard) Swanson. She was raised on the family farm in rural Kinsman, IL, and graduated from Seneca High School with the class of Beverly worked for over 15 years in

Mazon, both as a hairstylist at Helen's Hair Salon and as a waitress at the Feed Bag Restaurant. She later gained employment with Morris Hospital for 17 years as a friendly face delivering meals to patients in their rooms. Beverly had quite the green thumb, often growing house plants and tomato and green pepper plants, as well as her outdoor flowers she tended for many years. She was an avid Chicago Cubs and Chicago Bears fan and loved a good John Wayne movie. Beverly enjoyed going with her sister to try their luck at the Riverboat Casinos, but with her family is where she was happiest. She raised three children and was blessed with several grandchildren and great-grandchildren who she loved dearly.

Survivors include three sons: Terry (Margo) Oxendine, of Verona; Tony (Shelley) Cryder, of Seneca and Larry Cryder Jr. (Jessica Juracich), of Chicago; eight grandchildren: Justin Cryder (fiancé: Brittany), Mackenzie Cryder, Gage Cryder, Keaton Cryder, Nickole (Derick) Cawley,

Dylan (Tayler) Oxendine, Alex Valentine, and Scott Valentine; six great-grandchildren: Isabella, Lila, Griffin, Tatum, and DeeDee; five nieces and nephews: Deanne Sereno, Darcy Herzog, Todd (Rachael) Babcock, Aaron Swanson, and Rachel Harson; and several cousins. Beverly was preceded in death

by her parents, her husband, Tom Bryant, on April 25, 2002; one brother, Ron Swanson; one sister, Lorraine (Verne) Babcock, and one niece, Dawn Baker.

The family wishes to extend their deepest gratitude to the neighbors and friends that assisted them with Beverly's care, especially Tina Brookman.

Per Beverly's wishes, her body has been donated to science for medical study.

The family will receive friends for a Celebration of Life at Reeves Funeral Home, 408 E. Washington Street, in Morris on Friday, Feb. 28, 2025 between the hours of 4. and 7 p.m.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Beverly's memory to Lightways

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Beverly's memorial page

Memorial services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland, and Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Morris.

Kristine Lopez

WILMINGTON—Kristine Lopez, 72, of Wilmington, and formerly of Burbank, IL, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2025, at her home.

Born Jan. 6, 1953, Chicago, Kristine Catherine was a daughter of Charles and June (King) Swanson. She was raised in Burbank and graduated from Reavis High School.

Kristine dedicated over two decades of her career as a machine operator with BorgWarner before retiring. Outside of work, she found joy in the great outdoors, whether it was racing canoes, casting a fishing line, or simply taking in the beauty of nature. However, nothing brought her more happiness than her beloved grandchildren, who were the light of her life.

Kristine will be remembered for her kind and gentle spirit, her unwavering positivity, and her ability to find goodness in everyone she met. She was a sweet soul who never spoke a harsh word and left a lasting impression on those fortunate enough to know her.

Her memory will live on in the hearts of her family and friends, who will forever cherish the love and warmth she shared.

Survivors include her daughter, Lisa Romano, of Wilmington; four grandsons: Derrick Romano, Anthony Romano, Jacob Romano and Nathaniel Romano; one sister, Bonnie Miller; one brother, Chuck Swanson and nieces and nephews: Shelley, Chris, Kailie and Charlie.

Kristine was preceded in death by her parents; one son, Martin Peterson and one sister, Cyndi Swanson.

Cremation rites have been accorded. The family will receive friends for a memorial visitation and celebration of Kristine's life at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Road in Wilmington on March 22, 2025 between the hours of 1 and

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

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

Kenneth Gill.

BELLWOOD, IL-Kenneth Chris Gill, 68, of Bellwood, IL, passed away Monday, 2025 the at

Developmental Center.

Born on July 13, 1956, in Cullman, AL, Kenneth was the beloved son of Cora Margaret (Grissom) Gill and the late Howard Kenneth Gill. He was raised in Chicago in a loving home and held strong to his Baptist faith. In his leisure time, Kenny found joy in running and music, especially the soothing melodies of LeAnn Rimes. His family, including his parents and grandparents, held a special place in his heart, and he treasured the close bonds

Survivors include his mother, Cora Margaret, of Cullman; three brothers: Johnny Ray Gill, Paul Joseph Gill and Charles Vance Gill; nieces and nephews: Trista Gill, Matthew Gill and Christopher Gill; aunt, Elcia (Gill) Vanness; uncle, Ellis Vanness, and cousins: Sandra Gill, Gerald Gill, Anthony Gill, Barb McKenzie, Bettv Vanness and Donna Vanness.

Kenny was preceded in death by his father and three uncles: Harvey Gill, Ray Gill and Vernon Gill.

Cremation rites have been accorded and a memorial service will be held at Island City Baptist Church, 120 Vine St. in Wilmington on Saturday, March 1, 2025 at 10 a.m. Pastor Jeff Logsdon will officiate.

Kenny will be laid to rest in Cullman,

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

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

_Eugene P. Bianchetta_____

COAL CITY—Eugene P. "Gino" Bianchetta, 83, of Coal City, passed away on Saturday, Feb. at Good Samaritan

Hospital in Downers Grove, due to injuries sustained in a car acci-He was born on May 8, 1941

in Morris to Louis and Pauline (nee

Sikora) Bianchetta. Gino grew up in the Coal City area and graduated from Coal City High School. He served his country honorably for four years in the United States Navy. Gino married Naomi J. Swanson at the Coal City Assumption Church on Nov. 12, 1966. Together they raised their three children. He started his working career as a Coal City mailman, then switched to the better job of working for the Army Corps of Engineers as a lock

and dam operator until his retirement. Gino was a member of the Coal City Restaurant morning coffee crew. He liked to dabble in many activities over the years, including bee keeping and working with antique tractors and steam engines. He was interested in his Italian heritage and enjoyed learning about it through genealogy. He was a member of the American Italian Cultural Society and he loved going up every month to help cook and drink wine on "Spaghetti Day." Gino and Naomi hardly missed a Saturday night going out to eat with Sharon and Jim Aldridge.

They also enjoyed taking trips to Shipshewana with Mike and Linda Ahern. Most of all, Gino was proud of his children and grandchildren and was affectionately known as "Grumpy Grandpa.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Naomi Bianchetta; his children: Gina (Vince) Piatak, Laura (Andrew) Symons and Peter (Jaimie) Bianchetta; his grandchildren: Joseph Piatak, Jacob Piatak, Jason Piatak, Rese Symons, Lila Symons and Madison

Robert (Laurie) Bianchetta. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews. Visitation will be from 2-6 p.m. on Sunday, March 2, 2025 at Ferrari Funeral

Holcomb; his sister, Paula (Dave) Hamm;

his brothers, Donald (Pat) Bianchetta and

Services, 1044 Ferrari Dr., Coal City. Funeral Service will be at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 3, 2025 at the Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 E. McArdle Rd. in Coal City. Rev. Dr. Jay Regennitter will officiate.

Burial will follow at Braceville Gardner Cemetery.

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

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.

William C. Griffith

WILMINGTON—William Griffith, 84, of Wilmington, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025 in New Lenox. Born on May 2, 1940, in

Harvey, IL, William Clancy was a son of Clancy William Griffith and Elizabeth (nee Doogan) Workman. A proud retired teamster,

William spent a significant portion of his life working hard to support his family and build a bright future for them. He resided in Wilmington for 18 years and was a member of Will County Sportsmans Club, Lake Will, where he found immense joy in boating and embracing the lake life.

Survivors include five children; five

grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Cremation rites have been accorded, and a celebration of William's life will be held at a later date.

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

Cremation services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in

Patricia McLuckie_

COAL CITY—Patricia McLuckie, 83, of Coal City, passed away peacefully on Saturday, Feb. 22, 2025 at Ascension Mercy Medical Center in Aurora with her daughter by her side. Born Oct. 21, 1941, in

Chicago, Patricia Irene was the daughter of Robert Henry and Jewell Beatrice (Austin) Igel. She was raised in Chicago, where she completed her education and graduated from high school. Patricia built a dedicated career in secretarial services and retired from Diageo North America, formerly Gordon Spirits.

A woman of Catholic faith, Pat found joy in reading and was known for her warm and gentle nature. Never one to speak ill of others, she had an incredible gift for seeing the good in everyone she met. Patricia's kindness, compassion, and unwavering positivity will be dearly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Above all, family and her grandchildren were such a cherished part of Pat's life. She leaves behind a legacy of grace, love, and quiet strength that will be cherished forever by all her family and friends.

Survivors include her husband, John who she married May 21, 1991; daughter,

Cheryl (Mark) Johnson of Charles, IL; step-son, John M. (Lisa) McLuckie, of Wilmington; grandchildren: Ashley (Ben), Kayla (Ethan), Kristen (Tyler), Sierra, Logan, John James "J.J. and Adam; two great-grandchildren: Hudson and Leo; her sister Michelle "Mike" Lundberg, and one brother-in-law, Dale (Shirley)

Pat was preceded in death by her

A memorial visitation will be held at Reeves Funeral Home, 75 N. Broadway, one block north of Illinois Route 113 in Coal City on Thursday, Feb. 27, 2025 from 9 a.m. until time of memorial service, 11

Pat will be privately laid to rest in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery at a later

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

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

Patricia Wise.

WILMINGTON—Patricia Ann Wise, 80, of Wilmington, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025 following surgery at Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL. Born on Jan. 29, 1945, in Oak

Ridge, TN, Patricia was the daughter of William and Hilda (Hayes) Nunley. She spent her early years in Tennessee before

moving with her family to Illinois, where she continued her education and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1963. Shortly thereafter, Pat started her 38 years of service with the Federal Government working at the Joliet Army Ammunition Plant and as a claims representative for the Social Security Administration.

Pat was known for her impeccable style and love of shopping, always carrying herself with grace and care. She found joy in tending to her garden, getting lost in a good book, and spending time splitting a meal with her husband. She valued the bonds of friendship, cherishing time spent with lifelong friends from school and work. A woman of faith, Pat was a devoted member of the First United Methodist Church of Wilmington, where she and her husband attended regularly.

Above all, Pat's greatest love was her family. Her grandchildren were the light of her life, and she treasured every moment with them. Her beloved puppy, Katy, was a constant companion, bringing her joy and comfort. Pat's warmth, kindness, and unwavering devotion to those she loved will be deeply missed but forever cherished by those who had the privilege of

knowing her. She is survived and greatly missed by her loving husband, Ken, whom she married June 16, 2001; two children, Tracey Brownlee and Mickey (Sheri) Hannum; step-children: Sarah (Ed) Armbruster, Amy Wise, Paul Morris, and Mark Morris: grandchildren: Brian Emily Hannum, Joey Hannum, Adam Brownlee, Taylor Cook, Jarrett Cook, Samantha Armbruster, Henry Tahlier; great-grandchildren: Tyler Brown, Serena Carey; one sister, Faye (the late Rayburn); one brother, Leslie (Sandra) Nunley; one sister-in-law, Lindy

Nunley; several cousins, and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as many special life-long friends, former co-workers, and neighbors both in Illinois and Pat was preceded in death by her par-

ents; brother, William Robert Nunley; sister, Felicia (Tom) Alberico; sister, Marie Strickland and grandson, Justin Hannum, The family will receive friends for a

visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Road in Wilmington, on March 1, 2025 from 9:30 a.m. until the time of funeral service at 12 p.m. Rev. Harriette Cross from the First United Methodist Church in Wilmington will officiate. Those wishing to participate in the services virtually are welcome to join the live-stream or watch ondemand through the link available on Pat's memorial page

Burial will be in Oakwood, Cemetery, Wilmington, where Pat will be laid to rest near her sister, Felicia.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Pat's memory to the First United Methodist Church, or the American Stroke

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

Funeral services and arrangements Funeral Homes and Crematory.

have been made under the direction and care of Reeves, Fruland and Baskerville Tammy (Brian) Cook, Mary (John) Tahlier,

JJC backs Pritzker's plan for 4-year degrees WHS Student Council to

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker introduced a plan during the annual State of the State address last week that would allow community colleges in Illinois to baccalaureate degrees.

initiativeaddresses Illinois' growing workforce needs and would continue Joliet Junior College's mission of innovation and workforce development.

'JJC is proud to support a more unified education system in Illinois one that keeps students learning, working and building their futures right here in our state," said Dr. Clyne Namuo, JJC president.

"By expanding access to bachelor's degrees through CCB programs, we are not only bridging critical education gaps but also strengthening our workforce and communities. When students can earn their degrees close to home, they are more likely to stay, contribute and drive Illinois forward.

Namuo has played a pivotal role in advancing the community college baccalaureate (CCB) initiative, serving as the lead for the Illinois Council of College Community

Baccalaureate Taskforce. Namuo previously contributed to the successful implementation of CCB degrees in Arizona.

A survey of Illinois community college students was conducted -200 of whom were JJC students — and their support was overwhelming, with many citing their ability to continue their educational pursuits without interrupting their existing daily lives and commitments.

"Community college bachelor's programs would remove big obstacles like high costs, traditional scheduling and distance from home," said one surveyed JJC student. "It would be easier for me to continue my education if I could stay at JJC."

CCB programs complement, rather than compete with, existing fouryear institutions by serving a distinct student population - working adults, place-bound students and those facing financial barriers who might not otherwise pursue a bachelor's degree.

CCB programs fill a critical gap by offering flexworkforce-aligned pathways that make bachelor's degrees accessible to those with career and family obligations. Together, these two higher education models will work toward a greater goal: increasing degree attainment and developing a more skilled and educated workforce that strengthens Illinois' economy and communi-

If passed, the legislation would align Illinois with 24 other states that have successfully implemented Community College Baccalaureate pro-

There are 45 community colleges in Illinois, the nation's third-largest system and the state's leading public workforce trainer.

Gov. Pritzker's pro-posed fiscal year 2026 budget includes a higher education budget of \$2.73 billion, emphasizing college affordability and a \$10 million increase for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) and a \$46 million, or 3 percent, increase to operational funds for public universities (\$37 million) and community colleges (\$9 million).

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 signup in advance through Versiti Blood Center of Illinois at https://donateblood.versiti.org/donor/sc hedules/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 sup-

How good is your trivia? Test it March 2

City 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

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

The registration fee is

United \$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-

Table participants are encouraged to dress in costume and/or to have a theme. A prize will be awarded to the best theme

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



(708) 465-3198

Seated yoga, seasonal sights offered March 9

The Forest Preserve a 30- to 35-minute all-lev-District of Will County will will be hosting Seated Yoga and Seasonal Sights on Sunday, March 9, from 11 a.m.-noon at the at Three Rivers Enviromental Education Center

els seated voga session and 25- to 30-minute natural world exploration. Both sessions will take place in the Grand Hall. Bring water wear comfortable clothing. Free, ages 12 or This program includes older. Register by March 8.

Baby Valentine contest winners

annual Baby Valentine Contest sponsored by the GFWC-IL Coal City Junior Woman's Club is excited to announce winners for Baby Valentine

The first place winner is Kora Powell, daughter of Brittany Cernak and Koltin Powell, of Coal City. There was a tie for second place between Cooper Giblin, son of Courtney and Matt Giblin, of Coal City and Adeline (AJ) Burt, daughter of Kiersten and Jay Burt, of Coal City. The third place winner is River Rabbinate, son of Alyssa Sharwarko, of Diamond.

The winners received a gift certificate from the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce. All participants of the contest received a certificate of participation.

LIFE'S BETTER WHEN You could save on home & auto when you also purchase life insurance from American Family Life Insurance Company. Get your personalized quote today. Gerald Gresham, Agent



Hemp production in U.S. valued at \$291 million

The USDA's National Agricultural Service estimated the total value of industrial hemp grown in 2023 in the United

Euchre tourney to support So. Wilm school

Parents Club The South Wilmington Grade School Parents Člub is hosting a Euchre tournament on Saturday, March 8, in South Rury's

Registration begins at 5 p.m., with play starting at 6 p.m. The entry fee is \$25 per person, and participants will have plenty of chances to win with raffle baskets, a 50/50 drawing, a

Liquor Pull, and more. Come enjoy a fun night of cards while supporting a great cause. For more information, contact Wilmington the South

Grade School.

States at \$291 million, up 18 percent from 2022.

Hemp production in the open was valued \$258 million, while hemp grown under protection was valued at \$32.9 million. Acres of hemp grown in the open were estimated at 27,680 planted and 21,079 har-

Hemp grown under protection was estimated at 3.24 million square feet. These and other statistics can befound in the 2023 National Hemp Report.

As defined in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill), the term "hemp" means the plant species Cannabis sativa L. and any part of that plant such as the seeds, all derivatives, and extracts with a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than

0.3% on a dry weight basis. The Domestic Hemp Production Program established in the 2018 Farm Bill allows for the cultivation of hemp under certain condi-



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BY TAMMIE SLOUP **FARMWEEK**

During the past two decades, Illinois corn and soybean farmer Rodney Weinzierl's conservation practices led to fewer crop insurance payments to his family and lower loss

The third-generation farmer from Stanford said he believes practices such as no-till and cover crops have reduced risk on farms, specifically by making soil more resilient to drought and excess rain-

program, insurance

Pull Tabs

Doors Open 4:00pm

8

2

3

43

CLUES ACROSS

5. Small amount

8. Plav a role

taste

east

32. Fights

41. Locks 43. Old

16. Fleece

22. Conceits

25. Slowed down

30. Nourishment

33. Comedienne Tyler

1. Greek mythological figure

13. Water in the solid state

14. Ancient Greek sophist

17. Writer/actress Dunham

20. Comedienne Gastever

18. Behave in a way that belittles

21. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire

31. Midway between east and south-

38. Standing operating procedure

45. Song sung to one's lover

55. Large musical instrument

47. Whale ship captain

50. Volcanic craters

57. Ethiopian town

59. Not closed

gregation

64. Sleep

62. Disfigure

49. Moved quickly on foot

56. Liquefied natural gas

60. A team's best pitcher

63. Prefix denoting "in a"

61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish con-

11. River in Georgia and Alabama

15. Having a strong sharp smell or

56

60

63

1

Bingo

QUEEN of HEARTS

Every TUESDAY at 553 W. Kennedy Rd. Braidwood

You must play BINGO to participate.

Doors open at 4pm. Drawing is held at

intermission. Pot is \$24,300.00.

Tuesday Night Flash Max Bingo

6:30pm

Home of the "Big Guy"

Commander Bill Kiley

815-216-2570

1

8

9

4

6

61

CLUES DOWN

4. Continent

7. Argues

8. Assists

14. Winas

19. Not odd

29. Owner

34. I (German)

37. Sign language

44. Texas ballplayer

45. Type of sword

46. Abba

California

51. Swiss river

39. Coincide

1. S. American plant

5. Albania's capital

Poisonous plant

9. Town in Galilee

10. Russian leader

24. Conceptualize

12. Promotional materials

23. Expression of creativity

26. Pevton's little brother

28. Difference in potential

36. The world of the dead

40. Religious observance

41. Confined condition (abbr.)

42. Polite interruption sound

52. Hebrew calendar month

53. Easily swindled person

58. Small island (British)

54. One point south of southwest

. Israeli politician

47. Basic unit of a chemical element 48. Native American people in

25. A digital tape recording of sound

27. Cost, insurance and freight (abbr.)

35. Chinese conception of poetry

2. Soul and calypso song

3. Fruit of the service tree

Braidwood Post 039

6:30pm Hot Food, Snacks & Beverages

553 Kennedy Road

Braidwood, IL 60408

4

8

Weinzierl said, is designed to operate at a loss ratio of 1.0, meaning for every dollar premium paid in, \$1 is paid out as an indemnity payment.

"Over the past 26 years, my farm has only received 20% of what I should have received at a loss ratio of 1.0, and most farms in Illinois are in similar predicaments," said Weinzierl, who testified during the U.S. House Ag Committee's hearing on the farm economy Feb. 11.

Weinzierl, who is executive director of the IL Corn Growers Association and IL Corn Marketing Board, added if crop insurance rates were re-evaluated, particularly in the Midwest, "we could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in savings. I would encourage those savings to be used to improve crop insurance and support other farm bill titles.

Many of the hearing's themes -- trade, timely reauthorization of a farm bill, tariffs, labor and market access -- were similar to the previous week's Senate Ag Committee ag economy hearing.

With a witness panel

comprised of Weinzierl; Ryan Talley, a specialty crop farmer from California; Alisha Schwertner, a cotton and cattle farmer from Texas; and John Newton, executive head of Terrain, the asks from farm country haven't veered much from last year, although with the trade deficit widening and tariffs being announced, uncertainty looms for farmers.

Access to new markets, labor reform, a Proposition 12 fix and quick reauthorization of a farm bill with Title One enhancements continue to be top priorities for farm-

"I think it's important for folks to understand that with crop insurance, farmhave very large deductibles that they take, oftentimes in excess of a 15 or 20% deductible on crop insurance.'

Newton said. "So, at times, farmers are taking very, very deep losses before crop insurance ever triggers an indemnity to the grower. And so, Title One programs have always laid on top of crop insurance and offered a cushion in the event of a low price or low revenue environment like we find ourselves in today.

"I think it's important for farmers to have options for risk management tools; the more tools in the toolbox, they can customize the risk management strategies that they need."

Committee member Mary Miller, an Illinois Republican from Oakland, asked Weinzierl what Congress can do to ensure the Risk Management Agency is able to balance the calls from producers to make crop insurance cheaper while still maintaining enough premium in the risk pool to help cover losses from cata-

"All we're asking is, if we're making these practices, if we're becoming less risky, somehow reflecting that in the rates that we answered. he Weinzierl also said that he does not utilize any federal funding to implement conservation practices.

Committee member Eric Sorensen, an Illinois Democrat from Moline, said he's heard from many farmers who have said the federal crop insurance program needs adjust-

"My focus remains the same. We must move quickly to pass a five-year bipartisan farm bill that supports fair premiums for our farmers, prioritizes smart farming practices, protects SNAP, opens up new global markets and expands and boosts our

members tussled over the impacts of potential retaliatory tariffs and a pause in some Inflation Reduction Act funding, including for climate-smart and energy

member Angie Craig, D-Minnesota, said additional uncertainty has been injected into the farm economy conversation the past three weeks: Consider grant dollars to farmers appropriated by Congress and already under contract with USDA have been frozen. Trade wars with our largest trading partners and largest export markets have been threatened. Food grown in America is rotting at a

warehouse in Texas. We all know, just like before that trade wars will inevitably lead to retaliatory tariffs on American farmers. We know that cutting off foreign food assistance programs also cuts off a major market and farm income."

Committee member Mike Bost, an Illinois Republican from Murphysboro, later countered the challenges that exist in agriculture didn't develop during the new

administration. "It's based on the fact that one, we need to get a farm bill passed," Bost said, adding trade policy the past four years has hurt

farmers. "And our worst-case scenario, if you really study this issue, has been China, who actually plays games with the industry."

Committee Chairman

Glenn "GT" Thompson, R-Pennsylvania, added he'll be keeping a "vigilant watch" over the adminis-tration's actions with tariffs, which he believes will give President Donald Trump leverage to negotiate with foreign nations on

"And where U.S. agriculture gets caught in a crossfire, I'll be the first to speak up on behalf of our

This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeek

Donate blood for a chance at Hawaiian trip One lucky blood donor rg and click on the "Donate

will score a trip to Hawaii.

The city of Braidwood will team up with Versiti Blood Centers to host a blood drive.

The blood drive will take place from 2 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26 in the council meeting room at Braidwood City Hall, 141 W. Main St. register

www.donateblood.versiti.o

Now" link. You may also contact Josh Bolatto at (815) 458-2342 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. While pre-registration

is desirable, walks-ins are also welcome. Every donor will be

entered into a raffle for a chance to win a trip to

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 repres 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 cate, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 19 and 26, 2025.

WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

Freedom Mortgage Corporation, Plaintiff.

or bidders the following-described real estate:

Toni M. Henderson; et. al. Defendant.

STATE OF ILLINOIS

No. 23 FC 0304

Tudisco estate claim

Attorney Wysocki files

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF ROCCO TUDISCO Deceased;

No. 2025PR61 CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given to creditors of the death of Rocco Tudisco. Letters of Office were issued to Anna R. Martin whose address is 1061 San Mateo Dr., Romeoville, 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 26th day of August, 2025 if mailing or delivery of a notice from repr 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

Rocco Tudisco, Deceased BY: Marilyn I Wysocki 1861 Black Road Joliet, IL 60435 815-725-8000

Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, Feb. 26, Mar. 5 and 12, 2025.

Vercelli estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE

Attorney Meents files

TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE
OF SHARON LOUISE VERCELLI, No. 2025 PR 45 CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Sharon Louise Vercelli. Letters of Office as Independent Executor were issued on February 6, 2025, to Emil Issued on February 6, 2025, to Emil Paul Vercelli, Jr., whose address is 940 East John Street, 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. Circuit Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before August 27, 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

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.illi noiscourts.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. Emil Paul Vercelli, Jr.

mailed or delivered by the claimant to

the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been

Independent Executor of the Estate of Sharon Louise Vercelli, Deceased Frank J. Meents
Meents Law, P.C.
25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A 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. 19, 26 and March 5, 2025.

Attorney Meents files Goad 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 LARRY RAY GOAD, Deceased; No. 2025 PR 46 CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of LARRY RAY GOAD. Letters of Office

as Independent Administrator were issued on February 6, 2025, to Stacey Legg, whose address is 640 Berta Road, Diamond, Illinois 60416; whose attorney is Frank J. Meents, 25158 West Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before August 27, 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 imited exemptions. To e-ine, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit http://efile.illi noiscourts.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. Stacey Legg Independent Administrator of the Estate of Larry Ray Goad,

Frank J. Meents 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A Channahon, Illinois 60410 Telephone: (815) 534-9515 Facsimile: (815) 534-9516 Attorney Code: 06298859

E-mail: Frank@MeentsLaw.com
Published in the Free Press
Advocate on Wednesday, Feb. 19, 26 and March 5, 2025.

Elwood School District seeking bids for 2025 Media lab furniture project

PUBLIC NOTICE
SECTION 001113 ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

1.1 BID INFORMATION

A. Sealed bids will be received by the Board of Education, Elwood Community Consolidated School District 203, on March 5, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. prevailing time for the 2025 Media Lab Furniture project. Bids will be opened at the District Office, 409 North Chicago Avenue, Elwood, Illinois 60421.

B. A Non-Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held on February 26, 2025, 3:30 p.m. at the District Office, 409 North Chicago Avenue, Elwood, Illinois 60421. All bidders are encouraged to attend and sign in at the meeting which will also be attended by the Owner, Architect and Engineer. C. Anticipated Award of Contract date: March 11, 2025 D. Anticipated Start of Construction: August 8, 2025

E. Anticipated Substantial Completion date: August 15, 2025
F. Lump sum bid proposals will be received for this project at the sched-

uled time of receipt bids and will be publicly opened at that time.

G. Bid security in the form of a bid bond, certified check or cash in an amount equal to 10 percent of the base bid amount shall be submitted with the

bid. Should a bid bond be submitted, the bid bond shall be payable to the Board of Education, Elwood Community Consolidated School District 203.

H. Bids shall be submitted on or before the specified closing time in an

opaque sealed envelope addressed to: Mr. Tim Page, Superintendent.

I. The District reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, or waive any irregularities or informalities, and to make the award in the best interest of the District

J. All bidders must comply with applicable Illinois Law requiring the payment of prevailing wages by all Contractors working on public works. Bidder must comply with the Illinois Statutory requirements regarding labor, including Equal Employment Opportunity Laws.

K. Bidding documents are on file and may be obtained upon receipt of deposit in the amount of \$100 for 1 set of the bidding documents consisting of 2 sets of plans, 2 Project Manuals, 1 Compact Disc containing PDF files of draw-

ings and project manual, and 1 set of bid forms from: Gill Reprographics, Inc. (GRI), 17W735 Butterfield Road, Suite A, Oak Brook Terrace, IL 60181, (630) (630) 652-0800, www.gillrepro.com. If only digital files of bidding documents are requested, a one-time non-refundable fee of \$15.00 (payable to Gill Reprographics, Inc.) can be paid. Login information to download digital files will be provided by Gill Reprographics, Inc.

L. The Architect for the above referenced project is TRIA Architecture, Inc., (630) 455-4500.

Elwood, Illinois 60421

gagee, 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 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

Sheriff's sale of 916 Laurel Dr., Unit B

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

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

Public notice is hereby given that pursuant to a judgment entered in the above cause on the 13th day of September, 2023, MIKE KELLEY, Sheriff of Will County, Illinois, will on Thursday, the 13th day of March, 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

THE SOUTHERN 42.50 FEET OF LOT 23 IN MEADOWBROOK, 2ND ADDITION, A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE NORTH HALF OF SECTION 20, TOWNSHIP 34 NORTH, RANGE 10 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED MAY 23, 1997 AS

DOCUMENT NO. R97-43158, IN WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as: 916 Laurel Dr Unit B, Elwood, IL 60421

Description of Improvements: Single Family Home

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 mort-

10-11-20-202-014-0000

(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 FOR INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Codilis & Associates, P.C.
15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100
Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527
P: 630-794-5300

F: 630-794-9090

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

Plaintiff's Attorney

Sheriff of Will County

MIKE KELLEY

The Board of Education
Elwood Community Consolidated School District 203
409 North Chicago Avenue

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2025.

crop insurance," he said. House Ag Committee programs through USDA. Committee ranking

producers," he said.

The big problem with ultra-processed foods

Around half of what Americans eat is considered ultra-processed food - think pre-packaged and fast-foods. These products are often filled with unhealthy ingredients, leading to an array of health prob-

lems.
"These foods are giving you an excessive amount of sodium, fat and sugar, and not enough nutrition," says Jeanna Rich, an oncology registered dietitian with OSF Cancer Support Services. Rich says the longer the ingredient list, especially words you've never heard of before, the more processed the foods are.

"If it has a ton of ingredients that include additives, coloring agents or words you just don't know are true foods, it's definitely ultra-processed," Rich says. Health risks of ultra-processed foods

While the saying "too much of a good thing is a bad thing," may be true, too much of a bad thing is far worse.

"A lot of ultra-processed foods will have a large amount of saturated fat, also known as the 'bad fat.' That fat is linked to higher risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and other health issues," Rich says. "The additives, food dyes, sugar and fat combined can put us at an increased risk for developing cancer and other diseases as well.'

The link between diabetes and ultraprocessed foods: a surplus of added sug-

"What we're seeing right now, is chil-

dren developing Type 2 diabetes earlier and earlier," Rich says. "Extra added sugar is not good for blood sugar management or your immune function." Rich adds that diets high in ultra-processed foods have also been linked to obesity.

Eating foods high in sodium can lead to blood pressure issues and heart disease. There's no nutritional benefit to ultra-processed foods, Rich says, particularly when it comes to getting more fiber in our diet, which helps lower blood pressure, helps us lose weight and lessens inflammation.

Preserving, drying, heating and curing foods is where they can become detrimental to our health. This is when preservatives get added into the foods that have no health benefits and may even have health harms in them. Many items at fast food restaurants are known to be ultraprocessed because they can last a long time in their packaging. Hyperpalatable foods

Many foods are meant to seem appealing, and even rewarding, to eat. These are called hyperpalatable foods, and they have addictive qualities to them. Meat, ice cream, snacks and sodas headline this list. But some frozen meals and even vegetables cooked with things like cheese sauce can be added to the list

"A lot of the products in these foods can act as an addictive behavior. They can

release brain chemicals that make us feel good, then bring us back down," Rich says. "A lot of these foods can cause people to want to keep eating them, and it worsens their health overall.

Don't judge a food box by its cover Rich says the front of product boxes can be misleading. Words like "natural," "organic," or "healthy" get thrown around a lot. She recommends you really take a good look at the ingredients list and nutrition label.

If a product begins with the ingredient corn syrup, followed by long words you've never heard of before, these are unnatural ingredients you should stay away from. They also include seed oils and synthetic dyes. Healthier options will have ingredi-

ents like pureed fruits, vitamins and minerals. The color will also come from natural ingredients like carrots, cabbage and/or vegetable juices, not synthetic dyes which originate from petroleum. Processed vs. Ultra-processed

Any food taken from its original form is considered processed food. "If you're not picking an apple from a

tree, or drinking milk straight from a cow, we are technically processing our food," Rich says.

The jury's still out on the exact definition of an ultra-processed food. Ultraprocessed foods will typically have thickeners in them, like modified starches,

sugar substitutes, synthetic food dyes, artificial flavors - mostly anything that you wouldn't ever find in your kitchen.

Peanut butter

Many peanut butters are ultraprocessed and have trans-fat in them. Key words to look out for: hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated. The label may say zero grams trans-fat, but if the ingredient says hydrogenated on it, it will still contain small traces of trans-fat in the product, Rich says.

Healthier peanut butter options will have different nuts and seeds as the main ingredients, making it a more wholesome

Sugary cereals

Sugary cereals can often be ultraprocessed foods. Kellogg's Mini Wheats has brown rice syrup, corn syrup, and "other natural flavors and coloring" in it. "These are things we want to avoid, especially when we have healthier alternatives," Rich adds.

So, what do we do?

You may be surrounded by fast food restaurants on your drive home, and the grocery store aisles are filled with ultraprocessed foods, but healthier options are out there. Creating recipes with lean meats, seafood, vegetables, fruits and whole grains is a great start.

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED DEADLINES

Deadlines Classified Display Fridays - 5 p.m. Classified Word Ads Mondays - noon

incorrect insertion, and its liabilities shall be limited to the price on one insertion. The Free Press Newspapers reserves the right to classify correctly, edit, reject or cancel any advertisement at any time in accordance with its policy. All ads must be checked for errors the first week of publication by the advertiser. Phone (815) 476-7966 or (815) 634-0315

for details.

The Free Press Newspapers will be responsible for the first

(20¢ for each word over 30) 1 wk.- \$17; 2 wks.- \$21; 3 wks.- \$25; 4 wks.-\$29* \$1.00 Extra per line for bold or caps on classified

Cost

Line Ads are up to 30 words

The Braidwood Journal — The Coal City Courant — The Free Press Advocate

HELP WANTED

Come work with an industry leader. Several positions available. Seeking easy going people who love to multi-task. Bilinguals and Veterans are welcome to apply. Full or Part time with flexible hours. Will train in all job aspects. Morris Trailer Sales Inc. 815-941-2800 to set up an appointment for an interview. cc8-11

Experienced barber needed for open chair at The Hair Care Barbershop, 206 N. Water Street, Wilmington. Apply in person Mon. through Sat., 9am-6pm

Seeking a housecleaner to clean a 2 level house twice per

month. 815-341-9318.

Victorian 14x70, 980 sq ft. 2 bedroom located in Diamond. Handy man special. Partially remodeled, new and like new extras. Can be moved. \$3500. OBO 815-325-4461. cc8-11

PETS

Large Selection of Dog and Cat Food, treats, accessories, aids, clothing, Birthday treats, wall art, jewelry, gifts, greeting cards and Home of Fritters for Critters Pet Treats. New! Brew and Chew Dog Treats. Trinity Barkery 240 W. Balti-Wilmington., II 815-476-5104 more slewis@trinityservices.

MOBILE HOMES SHERIFF'S SALE

Elwood, IL 60421 (Single Family Home). On the 13th day of March, 2025 to be held at 12:00 noon, the Will Courthouse, Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: Freedom Mortgage Corporation
Plaintiff V. Toni M. Henderson; et. al. Defen dant. Case No. 23 FC 0304 in the Circuit Court of Twelfth Judicial County, Circuit, Will County, Illinois. 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 mort-gagee 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 dential real estate arose ments shall be made in cash or certified funds ayable 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 in accordance 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

REAL ESTATE of 916 Laurel Dr Unit B,

REAL ESTATE fees required by sub-divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the as-sessments 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 proof sale, then 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 tion or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: Codilis Associates, P.C. 15W030 N. Frontage Road Suite 100 Burr Ridge, IL 60527 P: 630-794-5300 F: 630-794-9090

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLEC-TION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS COLLECTOR ATTEMPT-ING TO COLLECT A
DEBT AND ANY INFOR-MATION OBTA WILL BE USED THAT PURPOSE. OBTAINED Published in the Free

Press Newspapers on Wed., February 19, 26 & March 5, 2025.

application of the pro-

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 distribu-

tion or, in the absence of

an order, until the surplus

is forfeited to the State.

For Information Please Contact:

GEIGER VAZQUEZ

MORRIS, IL 60450 P: 815-942-5072 F: 815-942-5073

415 LIBERTY STREET

PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLEC-

PURPOSE.

REAL ESTATE Elmo Court, Godley, IL 60407 (Single family residence, 1 Story, 3 bedrooms and 2 baths). On the 6th day of March, 2025 to be held at 12:00 Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 1001, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **Grundy** Bank Plaintiff V. Daniel Dietrich, Tarya Dietrich, Illinois Housing Development Authority, Non-Record Claimants Defendant. Case No. 22 FC 1371 in the Circuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial Circuit, 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

TION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPT-ING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFOR-MATION OBTAINED
WILL BE USED FOR lienor acquiring the resi-dential real estate whose Published in the Free Press Newspaper on Wed., February 12, 19 rights in and to the residential real estate arose & 26, 2025. prior to the sale. All pay ments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of SERVICE & REPAIRS Will County. In the event the property is a condoin 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 mort-gagee, shall pay the assessments and legal

fees required by sub-divisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the as-

sessments required by

Section 18.5 of the Illinois

Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following

of

Property

subsection

Condominium

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Photography 385 N. Second Ave. Coal City

Mandy Eaton 815-791-2913

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- Must be comfortable with driving at least 3500 miles per week and be able to stay 2-3 weeks over the road then 2-3 days home.
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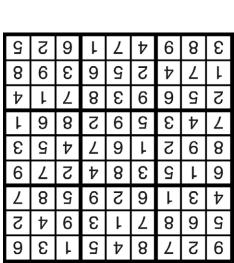


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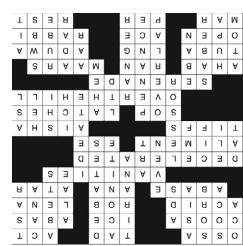
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WILDCAT SPORTS



LADYCAT Skylar Rossow fights off two JCA opponents to get a shot up during Tuesday's game. The Ladycats record overall is 20-10 and they are the first Wilmington basketball team fo have 20 win season.

Lady 'Cats fall to JCA in regional

The Lady Wildcats didn't shoot like their regular selves on Tuesday, losing in the first round of the regional to Joliet Catholic Academy, 36-33.

Wilmington was slow to score in the early going and had to play catch up most of the game. Still they grabbed 28 rebounds and made seven steals but hurt themselves with turnovers.

Sami Liaromatis led the charge with 14 points and five rebounds. She was followed by Melia Hincherick and Skylar Rossow with five points each. Scoring three points was Anna Morgan while Alaina Clark, Nina Egizio and Nikki Quigley chipped in with two points each.

The loss was a tough one after finishing third in the ICE conference with a 9-5 record and become the first WHS girls basketball team to end with a 20-win season (20-10 overall).

JCA went on to the regional championship game on Thursday which they lost to Reed-Custer



WILMINGTON'S MELIA HINCHERICK puts up a basket during Tuesday's game against JCA. Hincherick had a total of five points.

Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund

GOING UP for a shot is Wilmington's Hunter Osipaicius during Tuesday's game against Streator. Wilmington heads JCA tonight (Wednesday) for their first regional game.

Nelson's bomb gives 'Cats an upset victory

Wilmington's Ryan Nelson had the shot of the season last Tuesday when he crossed halfcourt and launched a bomb as time ran out against Streator.

The ball hit the backboard and dropped in, giving the Wildcats a three-pointer and a 51-50 upset over the Bulldogs who won the ICE conference title.

The Wildcat bench erupted, running after Nelson who couldn't believe it went in. It was a mental victory more than anything as Wilmington is 19-10 overall as they head to Wednesday's regional tourney at Joliet Catholic Academy.

Nelson finished the game with 20 points total while Kyle Farrell chipped in with 11 points and Meents eight. Řyan Kettman and Lucas Rink chipped in with five points each. Reegan Bolin was credited with

two points. On Thursday the 'Cats lost a 46-38 nonconference contest to

Beecher. The hosting Bobcats went on a 16-9 run just before the half to go up 27-16. Wilmington tried to rally in the second half but came up short.

Leading the 'Cats was Rink with 11 points. Nelson contributed seven points while Farrell and Meents had six points each. Kettman finished with five points while Zach Ohlund drained a three-pointer.

On Friday the 'Cats made a long trek to Indian Creek where they won 54-36.

Wilmington jumped in front 14-6 in the first quarter and was up 25-13 at the half. After a 17-11 run in the third they coasted the rest of the way.

Up next is the JCA regional tonight (Wednesday) at 7:30 p.m. The #4-seeded Wildcats will play #8 Chicago seeded Christian. If they will they will return to JCA Friday at 7 p.m. for the regional championship against either JCA (#1) or Westmont (#9).



WILDCAT LUCAS RINK drains a three-pointer during Tuesday's game against the Streator Bulldogs. The Cats are ranked third in conference and have an overall record of 18-

Wilmington's Logan VanDuyne battles during IHSA state finals

VanDuyne Wilmington's lone representative during the IHSA Class 1A Individual State Finals, held Thursday through Saturday at the



Photo by Kelly Van Duyne

STATE QUALIFIER Logan Van Duyne (190) went up against last year's state champion in the first round of the IHSA state tournament on Thursday and lost by one point (5-4). He then had two wins before losing 4-2 to Cade Poyner from Coal City.

was State Farm Center in Champaign, IL.

The Wildcat put together a strong showing in the consolation bracket before being eliminated just short of a state

He opened the tournament with a tough 5-4 decision loss to Hunter Eastin (Tolono Unity) the defending state champion back from a year ago.

However, the Wildcat junior and all around nice guy bounced back in the wrestle-backs with two impressive victo-

- A 14-4 major decision over Casen Lyons (Springfield Sacred Heart-Griffin) in his first consolation match.
- A 4-0 decision over Sami Marrero (Chicago Horizon/Southwest Chicago) in the second round.

In the third round of wrestle-backs, VanDuyne's tournament run came to an end against a familiar foe, Cade Poyner from Coal City.

Van Duyne knew he could beat him, like he did during the ICE conference and regional tournaments. But this time it wasn't going to happen as Poyner went up 4-2 and held on for the win. Van Duyne finishes his season with an impressive 40-8 record, capping off a strong junior season

Although he fell just short of the podi-VanDuyne represented Wilmington on the state's biggest stage. His resilience and competitive spirit were evident in his two victories, and he vows to

return next year.

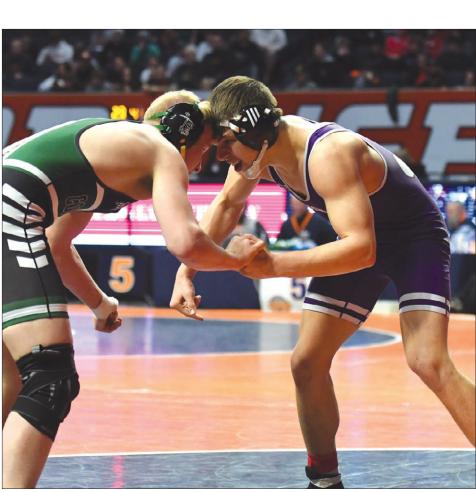


Photo by Kelly Van Duyne

FAMILIAR FOES—Wilmington junior Logan Van Duyne (190) competed at state for the second year in a row. On Saturday morning he went head-to-head with Cade Poyner of Coal City in round three of the wrestlebacks. The friendly rivals have battled each other all season with Van Duyne winning during the ICE tourney and regional. Poyner, also a junior, won this time 4-2 to go on to place 5th overall.