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WILMINGTON, IL | WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024 | A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER (815) 476-7966

County approves solar farm at entrance into Wilmington

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

The Will County Board has approved a special use permit for a commercial solar energy facility in Florence Township in Wilmington. The owners of the property are Gary and Annette Kavanaugh, and the agent is Nikki Miller of Wildcat Solar Three LLC.

Wildcat Solar is a subsidiary of New Energy Equity, headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland. The corporation has completed more than 250 distributed solar projects in the U.S., including the approved Wildcat Solar Energy Farm, that will be constructed on the southeast corner of Route 53 and 216th Ave. just east of Kangley's Curve.

Approximately 18 of the 25-acre parcel will be used to house a 5-Megawatt solar facility for the duration of 35 years. The land will be outfitted with 7,128 solar modules mounted on single access tracking systems, with a 100-foot setback from the nearest residence

Background

A public hearing on the proposed solar energy farm was held on Jan. 16, in Joliet. The notice was published on Dec. 29, 2023 in the Herald-News of Joliet.

There were no objections voiced during the hearing.

However, at the April 9 meeting, Will County board member Katie Deane-



THE WILDCAT SOLAR Energy Farm will be located east of Route 53 and 216th Ave. in Wilmington on farmland that was once planned for a residential subdivision. Wildcat Solar is expected to enter into commercial operation in 2025.

Schlottman, expressed concern that most Wilmington residents were totally unaware of the project.

"I have a brother who lives in Wilmington, so I decided to take some time and go out and spend time with the residents out there and knock on some doors," she said. "No one knew about this project. From what I gather, they were not thrilled about the location of this project and it even being there."

"We were required to send letters," Nikki Miller of Wildcat Solar said. "I guess I don't remember the radius... a mile?"

While Wilmington city officials had been informed of the proposed solar energy farm, little to no information was shared out of city hall as officials felt there was little that could be done to fight it.

In 2021, Illinois Governor, J.B. Pritzker, signed P.A. 102-1123 into law. The law pre-empted county authority to enact local ordinances that prohibit wind and solar projects, leaving local government with little power to influence "green energy" projects.

"The county is aware of our stance, that we are not supportive in general at this location due to the proximity to residential and that it does not conform to the proposed land use plan," City Administrator Jeannine Smith said. "That being said, it is the county's ultimate decision, and we have requested at a minimum, the solar farm be fenced around the

SEE SOLAR FARM PAGE 2



THE WILMINGTON CHAMBER rolled out the red carpet to greet Route 66 travelers on Saturday during the 17th annual Red Carpet Corridor festival held in downtown Wilmington. The two-day event attracts visitors to 14 towns—from Joliet to Bloomington—as they take a self-guided tour along the 100-mile stretch of the Mother Road.

Chamber rolls out the red carpet for Rt 66 travelers

Photo by Eric Fisher

HIS AIM MAY have been off when it came to playing bags but his hat was spot on for two-year-old Jack Schmucker who was having fun during Saturday's Red Carpet Corridor festival.



THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie set up a Smokey the Bear inflatable for youngsters during the Red Carpet Corridor festival on Saturday.



A REMOTE CONTROL race track, sponsored by the Wilmington Chamber, was set up in the downtown parking lot for drivers of all ages during the Red Carpet festival.



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WILMINGTON'S FINEST—Wilmington police officers making the rounds during the Red Carpet Flea Market on North Water Street Saturday include (from left) Deputy Chief Justin Dole, Sgt. Kris Hopper and Ofc. Joshawa Ryan who is new to the force and got to meet business owners and residents.

Solar farm, from page 1

perimeter and landscaping be installed around the property."

Miller did confirm that the solar farm will be fenced, and a double row of trees and vegetation will be planted.

Lack of communication

At the April 9 meeting, Will County board member Joe VanDuyne, a resident of Wilmington, noted dissatisfaction with the lack of communication from Wildcat Solar. He spoke of other corporations with whom he has had a working relationship, noting their willingness to keep officials involved and to provide pertinent information to the public.

"This company (Wildcat Solar) has not," VanDuyne said.

Further, VanDuyne said the county board would have been willing to deny the solar farm, as it had with the proposed facility in Shorewood.

"No one took opposition," Van Duyne said in regards to no one spoken up during the public hearing held in Joliet. "And, we received no letter of opposition from the city of Wilmington."

Construction of the facility will begin as soon as possible, and the facility is expected to enter into commercial operation by 2025.

Wilmington makes annual water report available

PUBLIC NOTICE

Wilmington Water System User:
The Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) for the operating year 2023 is now available. Please go to:
<https://tinyurl.com/4sd9h7x7>

To view your annual water quality report and learn more about your drinking water. This report contains important information about the source and quality of your drinking water during 2023.

Below are more options on how to view this report:

- Visit the City's website at <https://www.wilmington-il.gov/>, on the top banner select resources click Reports & Releases. Under Utilities select the link for the 2023 Drinking Water Quality Report.

- To Obtain a printed copy please call City Hall at (815) 476-2175 or the Wilmington Water Treatment Plant at (815) 476-6732 to request a copy of the report to be mailed directly to you.

If you have any questions regarding the Consumer Confidence Report, please contact Ryan B. Foster at (815) 476-6732.

Thank You,
Ryan B. Foster
City of Wilmington Water Department
Lead Operator, ROINC
rfoster@wilmington-il.com
P: (815) 476-6732

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, May 1 and May 8, 2024.

Attorney Berardi files Carlson estate notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE
STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS -
IN PROBATE

In the Matter of the Estate of
HAROLD E. CARLSON, Deceased.
Case No.: 24PR206

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of Harold E. Carlson. Letters of Office were issued as Independent Executor on April 22, 2024 to Scott H. Carlson whose address is 904 W. Diversey Pkwy, #1E, Chicago, IL 60614; whose attorney is Berardi and Associates, LLC, 14919 Founders Crossing, Homer Glen, IL 60491.

The estate will be administered without court supervision, unless under Section 28-4 of the Probate Act 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 the Clerk of the Court at Will County Court House, 100 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, within 6 months from the first publication date of this Notice, which is on or before November 8, 2024, or if mailing or delivery of this notice from the personal representative is required by Sec.18.3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that Notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered to the representative and to the attorney within 10 days after it has been filed.

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 <https://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider.

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

Scott H. Carlson, Independent Executor for the estate of Harold E. Carlson, Mark M. Berardi, Attorney at Law, Attorney No.: 6305463, 14919 Founders Crossing, Homer Glen, IL 60491. (708) 942-8030

Email: mark@berardilaw.com
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, May 8, 15 and 22, 2024.

Attorney Lynch files Delara 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 ANITA C. DELARA, Deceased;
No. 2024 PR 180

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given to creditors of the death of Anita C. Delara. Letters of Office were issued to Elizabeth and Joseph Yedinak whose address is 1710 Alma Drive, Crest Hill, IL 60403, as Independent Co-Executor whose attorney of record is Jennifer M. Lynch of 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 24th day of October, 2024, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Jennifer M. Lynch
For the Estate of
Anita C. Delara, Deceased
BY: Jennifer M. Lynch
1861 Black Road
Joliet, IL 60435
815-725-8000
Atty No.: 06275404

Published in the Free Press Advocate, Wednesday, April 24, May 1 and May 8, 2024.

Attorney Meents files Earl 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 CARLOS WAYNE EARL,
Deceased; No. 2024PR196

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given of the death of Carlos Wayne Earl, Letters of Office as Independent Executor were issued on April 19, 2024, to David W. Earl, whose address is 238 Woodland Drive, Minooka, Illinois 60447; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before November 4, 2024, 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 to the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/FAQ/gethelp.asp>, or talk with your local circuit clerk's office.

Independent Executor of the Estate of Carlos Wayne Earl, Deceased
Frank J. Meents
Meents Law, P.C.
25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A
Channahon, Illinois 60410
Telephone: (815) 534-9515
Facsimile: (815) 534-9516
Attorney Code: 06298859
E-mail: frank@meentslaw.com

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WMS EIGHTH GRADERS participating in track this year include (front, from left) Sarai Duran, Madi Strong, Jady Sorensen, Sophia Albright, Lailah Beck, Karissa Fritz, Madisen Van Duyne, Madisyn Rossow, Maecyn Rodriguez, Aubree Jandura, McKenna Van Tilburg, Amara Bown and Taryn Gilbert. Back row: Liam Anderson, Evan Cravens, Cole Boersma, Cole Cutter, Hunter Kaitschuck, Zander Van Duyne and Ian Turcany.

WMS 8th grade girls take 1st in quad meet

The Wilmington Middle School track team competed last week in a quad meet with the eighth grade girls coming in first place.

Eighth Grade Girls scores were Wilmington 77 Herscher 59, Dwight 44 and Reed-Custer 15. McKenna started the scoring with a 1st place and a PR! 16.24. Madisen VD took second with a PR 17.54, Aubree 17.94 PRed as well.

100M McKenna took 1st, Taryn G fourth and Amara B PRed with 14.94. 1600M runner Holly H came up to the 8th grade team and took second.

4X1 team took 1st (Madisen, Karissa, Maecyn, Taryn). 4X2 team took 1st (Aubree, Amara, Skylar, McKenna). In the 200M McKenna took 1st with a PR and new school record of 26.84. Aubree J took third and Adelle F got a new PR 32.94. 800m runner Holly H took second with a new PR! 3:15.64.

Shot thrower Sophia A earned 1st and Madi S took fifth. Disc Madi earned points with a third and Sophia A took fourth. Long



GRILL MASTER—J.R. Miller volunteered time at the Lions Club grill on Saturday, serving up burgers, pork on a stick, hot dogs and more. The Red Carpet Festival allows the Lions Club to raise funds for many of its projects by serving Route 66 travelers.

jumper Madisen took second with a new PR 4.30 and Aubree J took third. Taryn earned a new PR 4.02.

In high jump Karissa F took 1st with a new PR of 1.37m and Amara PRed with a second place 1.37.

The seventh grade boys team scores were RC-79 Dwight 53.5 Wil 48.5 Herscher 24 Hurdler Kaelen Kelly took fifth while fellow Hurdler Nathan Cutter took third and had a PR 21.84. In the 100M Aiden Lawson took second and a of PR. 14.24. Jack Grygiel had a PR of 14.74.

In the 200M Aiden L third and Kaelen K PR. of 32.64 and Jack G PR. of 33.34. In the 400 Nathan C took third and Gage Sorensen had a PR of 1:27.94. Our 800M runners Levi Beasley second and PR! of 2:50.54 and Eli Strohmeyer third keep improving. Levi B third and Eli S fourth in the 1600 keep putting up team points. The 4X1 team took 1st (Jackson, Nathan, Levi, Jack)

The 4X2 team took second (Kaelen K, Nathan

C, Jack G, Aiden L) and PR 2:10.44. The 4X4 team took second (Jack, Aiden L, Levi, Nathan) Shot Colby earned 1st with teammate Jackson earned fourth. In Disc Colby threw for third and Jackson S fifth. Long jumper Jackson VD jumped for fifth.

The eighth boys team scores Her 76.5 RC 51 DW 38.5 Wil 35

In hurdles, Hunter K 1st and Zander VD fourth with a new PR of 19.14. In the 100M Hunter K took second and a PR 12.44. Cole C also had a PR 13.74 200M runner Zander PR of 30.54 and Cole C fourth. In the 400M Liam A took second and Eli S fifth.

In shot, Hunter threw for second and Cole C fourth.

In discus, Cole C threw for second. Hunter K took third in high jump.

Seventh grade girls team scores RC 69 Her 45 Wil 44.5 Dwi 37.5 Hurdler Skylar Boersma started the scoring with fifth place and then in the 100M Skylar B took third while

Izzy E had a PR! of 16.84. 200M runners had a great night with Kelsie R earning 1st with a PR of 30.24 and Payton G second and a PR of 30.44 and Lilly G with a PR 30.54.

In the 400M Julia P for fifth with a PR 1:17.44. 800M runner Tracy J took third. In the 1600M Tracy J took 1st and had a PR 6:18.10. 4X2 team took third (Violet, Bristol, Natalie, Adelle).

4X1 team took second (Julia, Kelsie, Lilly G, Payton) and had a PR! 1:00.04 4X4 team took second (Lilly G, Payton G, Kelsie R, Skylar) and had a PR 5:26.34. In Shot Roslyn and Kayedee tied for fourth while Disc thrower Roslyn took third and had a PR! 18.70. Lilly B took fourth. In high jump Kelsie took fifth.

Jack Grygiel running his 100m dash and the second picture is McKenna Van Tilburg celebrating her 200m school record with Coaches Katie Long, Nate Strong and Brenna Noffsinger.

Stamp Out Hunger food drive is Saturday

Letter carriers with the U.S. Postal Service will be collecting food items this Saturday during the annual Stamp Out Hunger food drive held across the U.S.

Attorney Lynch files Lantka 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 JOANNE M. LANTKA, Deceased;
No. 24PR246

CLAIM NOTICE
Notice is given to creditors of the death of Joanne M. Lantka. Letters of Office were issued to Janette M. Sniogowski whose address is 13859 W. Stone Oak Way, Homer Glen, Illinois 60491, as Independent Administrator whose attorney of record is Jennifer M. Lynch of 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 24th day of October, 2024, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the clerk must be mailed or delivered by claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

Jennifer M. Lynch
For the Estate of
Joanne M. Lantka, Deceased
BY: Jennifer M. Lynch
1861 Black Road
Joliet, IL 60435
815-725-8000
Atty No.: 06275404

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PERSONAL INJURY



Attorneys at Law

Michael D. Block • Elizabeth A. Klukas • Thomas J. Manzella
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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

A nice place to visit, the endless summer of 1879

It's been a cool spring, and I for one, am anxious for warm weather. So today we take the way back machine to the summer of 1879, the endless summer.



TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

I call it that because it was in that summer, more than any other, that Wilmington became what we would term, a resort town, where days and nights were filled with fun things to do, and people from all around flocked here for recreation and entertainment.

Spring came early that year, the excursions on the river started in April. By summer there wasn't enough canal boats to haul excursionists up and down. In June alone, the Methodist Episcopal Society, the Presbyterian Sunday School, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the City of Wilmington all held excursions on the river. Some went up to Morris, some down to Rockville, but on every boat, a brass band, refreshments, and games went with.

It wasn't just the locals that were partying either. People from Peoria and Chicago would take an early train to our fair city, and then walk through town, stopping here and there to shop. Some would hire a wagon to take them to the Island where a steam

tug with as many as two barges behind would be waiting. Usually "out-of-towners" would bring their own band, but Wilmington's band was available for a fee. Most brought their own food and drink, but there were many saloons open for a quick cold one.

The summer of 1879 was also known for the musical spectacular, "The Court of Babylon", in which, over fifty local citizens took part, as well as a troupe of professional actors named the Baker Family. The Baker Family did things a little differently than most traveling actors. Rather than put on a play themselves, they came into town with a script, costumes, and music and enlisted the help of local people to fill most of the parts.

Looking in part at the review in the Wilmington Advocate by Ed Conley we read, "This magnificent oratorio was presented at Empire Hall. The piece is a grand spectacular musical rendition, given in gorgeous oriental costumes and rich court paraphernalia, and embraces the scriptural story of Belshazzar's feast and the fall of that mighty ruler. The wonder is how so much music could be committed to memory and

a thousand other things learned in the short space of ten days and performed before an audience without hardly a perceptible mistake. The Bakers may well be proud of their singers, while our citizens will heartily join them. It will be repeated tonight and tomorrow, and we predict that all will have to go early to secure a seat."

That musical ended up running for two weeks, and attracted visitors from all over the area, in the Dwight Star we read, "Last Saturday a company of citizens of Dwight went up to Wilmington to see the 'Court of Babylon.' It is one of the finest things of the kind we have ever seen. Wilmington has many fine singers, particularly among the young ladies." Wilmington now was an established destination for theatergoers.

Every week, entertainment companies got off the train headed for Empire Hall. We read about one of these, "Fanny May's Parisian Folly company (what's in a name, anyway?) played at Empire Hall last night to quite a goodly sized audience. It is said that all the bald-headed men in town were there, and assigned front seats. The performance was of the female minstrel order accompanied with clog dancing and tableaux."

Empire Hall also hosted athletic events such as walking races and shooting matches, pitting one town's champion against

the others. On July 11, 1879 we read, "A glass ball shooting match will take place in this city, July 23rd, at Empire Hall, between Henry T. Stevens of Joliet and William H. Bennett of this place. Fifty balls each, for a purse of \$100, \$50 a side. After the match, Mr. Stevens will give a series of fancy shooting, resting his gun upside down and breaking the balls in several different ways."

In late August it was official, we read, "The Advocate has known for some time that negotiations have been going on between the officials of the Chicago and Alton Railroad and parties in this place considering the feasibility of the establishment of a summer resort in or near this city. It is acknowledged that there is nowhere on the railroad as well adapted to the purpose. Wilmington's natural surrounding, its magnificent river, beautiful groves, pure water, its field for boating, fishing, hunting, etc., all go to make it just what the pleasure seeker most desires. The idea contemplates purchasing an ample tract of land, erecting a commodious hotel, laying out the grounds after the manner of a park, with aquariums and hot-houses."

Yes, then as now, Wilmington was becoming known as a "destination" and tourism was seen as a way for the entire town to prosper, while still keeping our small town way of life.



WHS SENIOR Alyssa Johnston recently signed of letter of intent to play volleyball as a Cavalier at Kankakee Community College.

Johnston will take her volleyball skills to KCC

BY LILY TURCANY
WHS STUDENT REPORTER

WHS senior Alyssa Johnston has recently committed to playing volleyball at Kankakee Community College (KCC).

After eight years of playing volleyball, Johnston is excited to take her athletic career to the next level.

As of right now, Johnston is undecided on a major. But one thing is for sure: Alyssa's passion for volleyball isn't going anywhere. She plays for the Belusa United 18 Hurricanes as a middle hit-

ter. Johnston received the all-academic award at AAU's in Florida. Johnston says that KCC piqued her interest because of the community-like environment and being able to stay close to her family.

"I would like to thank my family for supporting me over everything throughout my years of playing," Johnston said.

She praises her support system. Her parents, Kelley and Al Johnston, are beyond proud of her achievements and commitment. They are especially excited to be able to see her play at the collegiate level.

Meeting the deadline for the WHS yearbook

BY LILY TURCANY
WHS STUDENT REPORTER

Seniors are less than one week away from saying bon voyage to Wilmington High School! As for everyone else, there is less than a month left. As the school year is wrapping up there are a lot of deadlines coming up, including the yearbook.

The theme of the 2023-2024 WHS yearbook is "Around the world!" This year's editors are Keegan Forsythe and Clara Smith, who have been members of yearbook for three years now.

The yearbook members have various responsibilities. Especially the edi-

tors. They experience a lot of pressure to capture the entirety of the school year into one book.

Not only are they responsible for the yearbook, but also many senior traditions. Smith, Forsythe, and teacher Warren Miller gathered pictures of the seniors throughout the years, and compiled them into a video to be presented during the annual senior dinner. They are also responsible for gathering Senior quotes.

Smith, Senior editor, details the importance of editors: "It is very important for us to get good coverage of all the students and activities to include as many memories as possi-

ble!"

Miller and the editors have not had it easy this year. It has been very challenging to create the senior video. Getting pictures in a timely manner was difficult.

Also putting portraits into the format of the book was challenging. Some photos were missing, and others were uncooperative. That being said, Smith and Forsythe have to agree that being an editor comes with far more responsibilities.

Although they have experienced some setbacks, there has also been a great deal of successes. Mr. Miller came up with the design for the cover, and is collaborating with others to

bring the vision to life. Also there will be 40 pages featuring sports this year!

Some of the special features in this year's edition include internships, the mural at the Police station, a Class 2A football State Championship, and teacher-student look alikes. It will detail the interns, the process of the mural, and so much more.

After three years of creativity within the yearbook, Smith and Forsythe are signing out.

"It is so fulfilling to follow through with something to completion. I am extremely proud of the work I've contributed to the yearbook," Forsythe concluded.



Photo by Lily Turcany

YEARBOOK EDITORS Keegan Forsythe and Clara Smith proofread a final page layout on screen with yearbook teacher Warren Miller.



Courtesy photo

BRUNING ELEMENTARY named the Sunshine Awards for second trimester, Preschool students include (from left) Mateo S., Nora F., Wyatt K. and Rylynn S.

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MADILYN DE HOYOS	ANDREW DEDO	LILYAN DENT	LUCAS DONOVAN	LANDON DOOLEY	PAIGE EIGNER	

These merchants congratulate the Wilmington High School Class of 2024

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Wilmington High School Class of 2024

 <p>JAZLYNN ENRIQUEZ</p>	 <p>KEEGAN FORSYTHE</p>	 <p>CARLIE FREIS</p>	 <p>EMILY GEISS</p>	 <p>ALIVIA GEORGE</p>	 <p>NATHAN GORSKI</p>	 <p>SAVANNAH GRIFFIN</p>
 <p>FRANCO GUAJARDO</p>	 <p>ALIZA HANNAN</p>	 <p>EMMA HARRIS</p>	 <p>PORTER HAZZARD</p>	 <p>BRITTANY HORTON</p>	 <p>AUSTIN IZZI</p>	 <p>KATHERINE JACKSON</p>
 <p>AUBREY JIMENEZ</p>	 <p>ALYSSA JOHNSTON</p>	 <p>WILLIAM JUSTER</p>	 <p>TANNER KERWIN</p>	 <p>RYLEE KETTMANN</p>	 <p>AVERY KUYPERS</p>	 <p>ABAGAIL LAFRENIERE</p>
 <p>MCKENNA LANCASTER</p>	 <p>TIMOTHY LATHUS</p>	 <p>CLAIRE LENART</p>	 <p>ALEXIS LIAROMATIS</p>	 <p>GRACIE LOVELAND</p>	 <p>CADE MCCUBBIN</p>	 <p>MEGHAN MCDOWELL</p>
 <p>HANNAH MELVIN</p>	 <p>BRENDAN MORAN</p>	 <p>DARREN MORRIS</p>	 <p>JONATHAN MOSSSELL</p>	 <p>MAURICIO MURILLO-ROJO</p>	 <p>AUSTIN OLSEN</p>	 <p>KEENAN ORR</p>

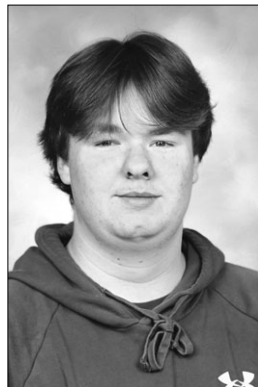
These merchants congratulate the Wilmington High School Class of 2024

 <p>Congratulations Graduates!</p>  <p>Constellation An Exelon Company</p> <p>35100 South Route 53, Braceville, IL www.constellation.com</p>	 <p>D'ORAZIO Ford CUSTOMERS FOR LIFE</p> <p>1135 S. Water St. • Wilmington 815-476-5205 www.dorazioford.com</p>	<p>Congratulations, 2024 Wilmington High School graduates!</p>  <p>Dean A Shepherd, AAMS® Financial Advisor 311 W Baltimore St Wilmington, IL 60481 815-476-6856</p> <p>Member SIPC www.edwardjones.com</p> <p>Edward Jones MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING</p>	<p>CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!</p>  <p>Dr. Garrett B. Smith D.D.S.</p> <p>We Welcome New Patients</p> <p>220 S. Main St., Wilmington 815-476-9715</p>
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Wilmington High School Class of 2024



KARA PARDON

PRISCILLA
PRESCOTTMICHEAL
PRIDEMORECODY
PRINDIVILLE

AVA RABIDEAU



PETER RAMPA



ISABELLA REYES



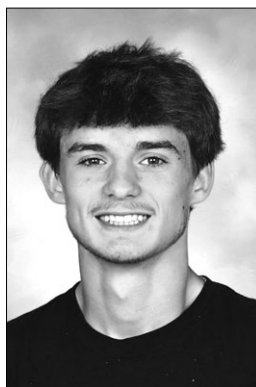
BERKLEY RINK



IZABELLA RIVERA



Yael RODRIGUEZ



CARSON ROGERS



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SEXTONMCKENZIE
SHIELDSDENAYA
SKONETSKI

CLARA SMITH



RYAN SMITH

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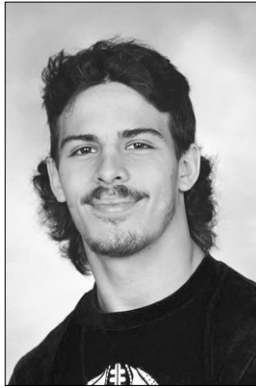
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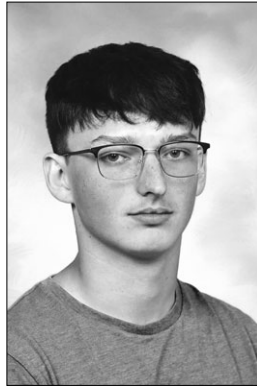
Wilmington High School Class of 2024



EMMA GRACE STRONG



MATTHEW SWISHER



COLLIN TATERA



LILY TURCANY



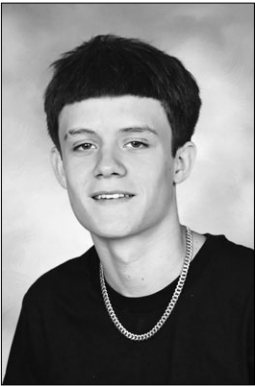
BRIANNA UTKE



MCKAYLA VAN DUYNÉ



AALIYAH VAN US



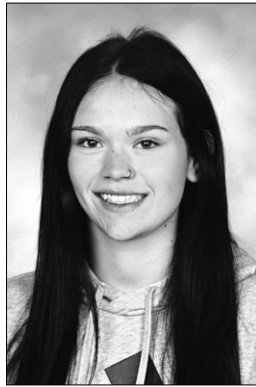
TRISTAN WANDLESS



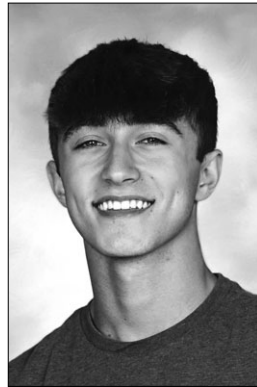
EMILIA WILLIAMS



LANDEN WITVOET



CHLOEY WOLLENZIEN



TALIN YAKIMA



KYLE YOUNGQUIST

Commencement exercises for the Class of 2024 will be Friday, May 17 at 7:00 p.m. in the WHS gymnasium

These merchants congratulate the Wilmington High School Class of 2024

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Ryan Wharrie - Jordan Krelian
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WHS seniors awarded \$113,000 in scholarships

Wilmington High School held its 37th annual Awards Night Ceremony on Wednesday when 69 local organizations, families and businesses presented scholarships to graduates in the Class of 2024. In all, 39 seniors were the recipients of \$113,000 in scholarship funds. Listed below are the organization and recipients.

American Federation of Teachers Scholarship Alexis Liaromatis, Bryn Bianchetta
American Legion Ladies Auxiliary Post 191 Scholarship. Gracie Loveland
Ark Lynn Real Estate, Business/Entrepreneurship Channing Sexton, Alyssa Johnston
Athletic Director's Choice Scholarship Reid Juster
Barbara L. Tryner Trust Scholarship. McKenna Lancaster, Alyssa Johnston
Bessie and John Tryner Memorial Scholarship Logan Adermann
Bonnie & Burnell Southall Family Scholarship Colin Tatera, Bryn Bianchetta
Basil E. Crutchfield Masonic Building Trades Award Matthew Swisher
Birdie's Cafe Scholarship Berkley Rink, Clara Smith, Ryan Smith
C.J. Begler Memorial Scholarship. Colin Tatera
Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Reid Juster, Alexis Liaromatis
Chris McCubbin Memorial Scholarship Cade McCubbin, Bryn Bianchetta
Donald Gresham Memorial Scholarship McKenzie Shields
Clennon Family Scholarship Jonathan Mossell, Ella Banas, Avery Kuypers
Clennon Family Building Trades Scholarship Jake Castle
Curt "Bud" Swick Memorial Scholarship Clara Smith
Daughters of American Revolution Scholarship. McKenzie Shields
Howie Becker Memorial Scholarship Lily Turcany
Dr. and Senator Sue Rezin Scholarship. McKenzie Shields
Educational Pyramid Scholarship Hannah Melvin, Aaliyah Van Us, Emily Geiss, Jenna Dabulskis, Emilia Williams
First Bank of Manhattan Scholarship Isabella Reyes
Fred L. Kempes Memorial Scholarship Colin Tatera, Brittany Horton
Gale Czys Memorial Scholarship Channing Sexton
Helen Francis Boggan Scholarship. Jenna Dabulskis, Emily Geiss
Howie Becker Memorial Scholarship. Cade McCubbin
Jason Forsythe Memorial Scholarship. Keegan Forsythe
Joe Smith Memorial Scholarship McKenna Lancaster
John & Barb Persic Family Scholarship Keegan Forsythe
John and Janet Seibert Scholarship Reid Juster, Giana Stahulak
John and Mary Proffitt Scholarship Brittany Horton
Josten's Scholarship McKenzie Shields
Larry Walsh Memorial Scholarship Berkley Rink
Lester J. Smith American Legion Post 191 Scholarship Gracie Loveland, Emma Grace Strong, McKayla Van Duyne, Alexis Liaromatis, Berley Rink
Linda Suzanne Darabaris Memorial Scholarship Alyssa Johnston
Lions Club Scholarship. Lily Turcany, Sara Borik
Matlock-Allred Family Scholarship
Sponsored by O'Dekirk, Allred & Assoc., LLC Aubrey Bryant

Minner Family Four Year Scholarship Reid Juster, Alexis Liaromatis
Moon Scholarship Alexis Liaromatis
Modern Music Masters Honor Society
Scholarship (Tri-M) Jenna Dabulskis, Emily Geiss
Nutt Family Scholarship Berkley Rink, Brittany Horton, Talin Yakima, Cade McCubbin
Patricia Forsythe Campbell Scholarship. Sara Borik
P.E.O. Scholarship Aaliyah Van Us, Lily Turcany
Plese Scholarship McKenna Lancaster
Richard Rick" Juster Memorial Scholarship. Ryan Smith
Rose O'Brien Scholarship. Alexis Liaromatis, Alyssa Johnston
Smock Family Scholarship Paige Eighner
Stehlik Teachers of Tomorrow Bryn Bianchetta
Student Council Red Cross Scholarship Izabella Rivera
WHS Athletic Boosters Scholarship Reid Juster, Cade McCubbin
WHS Interact Club Scholarship Lily Turcany
Wilco Scholarship Ella Banas
Wildcat Scholarship. Ava Rabideau
Wildcat Self Storage. Bryn Bianchetta, Talin Yakima
William M. Enz Scholarship. Talin Yakima
Will County Farm Bureau Scholarship Alyssa Johnston, Giana Stahulak
Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community Claire Lenart, Lily Turcany
Wilmington 209-U Foundation for Excellence Bryn Bianchetta, Aubrey Bryant, Paige Eighner, Keegan Forsythe, Brittany Horton, Alyssa Johnston, Reid Juster, Rylee Kettman, Avery Kuypers, Claire Lenart, Alexis Liaromatis, Cade McCubbin, Isabella Reyes, Berkley Rink, Izabella Rivera, Clara Smith, Giana Stahulak, Emma Grace Strong, Lily Turcany, Talin Yakima
Wilmington High School NHS Scholarship Paige Eighner, Reid Juster, McKenzie Shields, Clara Smith, Giana Stahulak, Emma Grace Strong, Emilia Williams
Wilmington Masonic Scholarship Claire Lenart, Aubrey Bryant, Cade McCubbin, Alexis Liaromatis
Wilmington Moose Lodge 241 Scholarship Colin Tatera
Wilmington Music Boosters. Emilia Williams, Gracie Loveland
Wilmington Rotary Scholarship Talin Yakima, Rylee Kettman
Women of the Moose Scholarship Aubrey Bryant
Wilmington Historical Society
Roger Mayne Scholarship. Alyssa Johnston
Chloe McCully Memorial Scholarship. Lily Turcany
Wilmington Park District Scholarship Cade McCubbin, Reid Juster
Clifford Cragg Memorial Scholarship Emma Grace Strong
Dell Raridon Memorial Scholarship Logan Adermann
Illinois State Scholars Paige Eigher, Reid Juster, Claire Lenart, McKenzie Shields, Giana Stahulak, Emma Grace Strong, Lily Turcany

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Sale Price **\$1.99/ea**
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Sale Price **\$2.99/ea**
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Digital Coupon **-\$2.00**
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Extra Large Honeydew Melons
99¢ EACH

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LIMIT 2*

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digital coupon
\$7.99 EA
*LIMIT 4 PACKAGES

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USDA Choice Angus Filet Mignon- 5 oz steaks
(Sold in 2 pk for \$9.98)
\$7.99 EA
-\$3.00 EA
digital coupon
\$4.99 EA
*LIMIT 3 PACKAGES

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USDA PRIME Angus Sirloin Filet- 5 oz steaks
(Sold in 2 pk for \$7)
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-\$1.50 EA
digital coupon
\$3.50 EA
*LIMIT 4 PACKAGES

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\$10.99 LB
-\$3.00 LB
digital coupon
\$7.99 LB
*LIMIT 5 LBS
FROZEN

Clip to redeem up to 1 bag

Censea Large Cooked Shrimp 31-40 ct
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-\$2.00 LB
digital coupon
\$7.99 LB
*LIMIT 1 BAG
FROZEN

FULL WEEKLY AD @ BERKOTFOODS.COM

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THE WOMEN that make my motherhood web.

Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund

The power of your motherhood web

ELAINE FISHER-OHLUND
FOOD FOR THE SOUL

I don't think any of us moms realize the complexity of motherhood until we are deep in it. I mean all the hats we wear: chaffuer, maid, tutor, nurse, life coach, a baker and a cook who sometimes gets met with turned up noses.

It can sometimes feel like a thankless job, but at the same time the most meaningful. I would like to add the most important job too, we are raising the next generation.

Such an important job can be heavy. Most of the time, the hardest parts are hidden deep within us, but we put a smile on our face no matter how much worry or pain is stirring within. We do it for them because they are so worth it.

Ups and downs come with the territory of being a mom, especially a special needs mom. However there was a pivotal moment in my special needs mom journey. I had just gotten some hard news about my youngest Layla who has cerebral palsy.

My head was spinning and it felt like I had just been punched in the gut. I ran out back to our river property where I often find peace. Now I grew up going to Catholic schools but drifted away from my faith in hard times. Then I had somewhat of a spiritual awakening after a near death experience. But this time I dropped to my knees and prayed. I realized then it never hurts to have some type of faith.

It had been almost 20 years since I had done that. Of course I started with "dear God, Gaia (the Mother Nature goddess), Buddha, universe, guardian angels and spirit guides (I didn't want to leave any of them out), I'm giving this one to you. I don't know what to do but you do. Please take this one off my shoulders."

After a while I rose to my feet feeling somewhat ridiculous and out of place, but I did feel peace. As I was walking back from the river my phone rang. I didn't recognize the number. When I answered, a woman's voice was on the other end, it was one of the women that work with Layla.

She said, "Hi Elaine, I'm really not suppose to do this (which is why I will not say her name) but I wanted to give you my personal number. My son has cerebral palsy and I know I had so many questions and cried alone a lot. I just want you to know you can call me anytime especially

when you don't want to cry alone."

There is not a doubt in my mind that that was divine intervention. I will forever be grateful for this woman. I am grateful for all the women that make a difference in my kid's lives, especially my Layla.

The therapists, the teachers and principal at Bruning. The women who greet Layla every day at school with a smile. My family of women. My friends that allow me to lean on them in dark times. My cousin-in-law, Charli Fisher, who inspired me to have faith in a higher power again.

I started to make a list and couldn't believe how long it was. I felt so blessed and realized they were such a big part of my motherhood journey. Each one helping me in some way to be a better mom to my children.

The more woman I talk to I realize how many of us are touched by special needs kids and need that support. Whether it be autism (which is at an all time high), a foster child, cerebral palsy, the list goes on. I encourage you to reach out to others and spread your motherhood web. Motherhood is a powerful thing especially when we come together.

So here's to the women that dig down deep to help make a better world for our kids. If you need a friend to be a part of your web contact me at the Free Press and remember diamonds are made under immense pressure. You were meant for this job.

All moms, like diamonds under pressure, Their strength and resilience a priceless treasure. Through challenges and triumphs she never gives in, Her unwavering love is a powerful force within. She celebrates milestones big and small. Cherishing each moment, giving her all. With patience and grace, she guides the way, A beacon of hope, in the darkest of days. She advocates fiercely for what is right, Standing up for all children with all her might. In a world that may not always understand, She's a warrior, leading with a gentle hand Her heart a wellspring of endless love, Watching her children grow and rise above. In the chaos of life, she finds her calm, A mother's love, a soothing song, So here is to the mothers that go above and beyond, You are cherished and admired in every single way, Moms help the world shine bright every single day. Happy Mothers day and thank you dear friends.

Charity Car Show to Benefit Operation Christmas Child

Cruise on over to the First Baptist Church of Coal City's Charity Car Show on Sunday, May 19, from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 pm. The event will take place in the church parking lot at 4470 E. Rt. 113 (1 mile west of Coal City High School).

Prizes will be awarded for Best of Show People's Choice and Best of Show Exhibitor's Choice. There is a \$20 entry fee per car.

The church will also be serving roast beef sandwiches for lunch as well having several wonderful Silent Auction items to bid on, including Dollywood Tickets! There will be a Bake Sale with mouthwatering baked goods and the FBC Praise Team will be providing uplifting music for attendees.

100% of all donations will go towards FBC's mission to send 500 shoe

boxes to children in need across the world through Operation Christmas Child.

If you have questions about the Car Show, contact Sam Payne at 815-263-6677, or through Messenger @ Sam Scott Payne. Questions about Operation Christmas Child or the Silent Auction, contact the church at 815-634-2654. Please leave a message.

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Demand is down, but gas prices still up

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have fallen 6-cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.87/g, according to GasBuddy's

survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 9.5 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 5.9 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has dropped 3.4 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.94 per gallon.

Wilmington stations ranged from \$3.65/g to \$3.95/g. Braidwood is

\$3.95/g across the board, with Coal City at \$3.74/g. Further afield, Morris is \$3.74/g to \$3.79/g, and Bourbonnais ran the gamut from \$3.69/g to \$3.92/g.

"We've seen the national average fade slightly again as oil prices have cooled and our spring peak appears to be more confidently behind us," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at

GasBuddy. "A weaker than expected jobs report is adding to some concerns that gasoline demand could remain weak through the summer driving season."

The cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$3.18/g while the most expensive was \$5.29/g, a difference of \$2.11/g.

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Mobile food pantry coming to So. Wilm.

Catholic Charities' mobile food pantry will be distributing food Monday, May 20, at 4 p.m., at St. Lawrence Church, 135 Rice Rd., South Wilmington in the church parking lot (rain or shine).

Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank have partnered to deliver meat, produce and

nonperishable items to people in need.

Participants are asked to stay in their cars as a "drive thru" method will be used.

Catholic Charities helps people of all faiths and beliefs. For more information about Catholic Charities, please visit catholiccharitiesjoliet.org.

Fossil Ridge Library book sale

Fossil Ridge Library is having a spectacular library book sale starting Monday, May 13 and ending on Friday, May 31 during regular library hours.

Immerse yourself in our vast collection of books, all available at unbeatable prices. Whether you're a dedicated bookworm or a casual reader, this sale offers something special for everyone.

Sale sales prices include: Hardcover books \$1, paperback books 25 cents, CDs and audio-books, 25 cents, DVDs \$1 and mystery-themed bags \$2 a bag.

The Fossil Ridge Public Library is located at 386 W. Kennedy Road, Braidwood.

PEO Chapter GK to meet

PEO Chapter GK will meet on Monday, May 13, at the Wilmington home of Judy Francis at 7 p.m. for social time with meeting starting at 7:30 p.m.

Electronics dropoff event in Wilmington

Will County's free electronics drop-off event will be held Thursday, May 9, from 5-7 p.m. at the Wilmington City Hall parking lot, 1165 S. Water St.

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

Items accepted include: Televisions, monitors, printers, computers (desktops, laptops, notebooks, tablets), electronic keyboards, fax machines, videocassette recorders,

portable digital music players, DVD players, DVD recorders, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, cell phones, computer cable, portable digital assistants (PDAs) and zip drives.

Electronic items contain materials that can be recycled countless times while other materials in items are considered hazardous.

The recycling takes place in Wilmington the second Thursday of each month.

Walk a 'Cicada Symphony' trail at Four Rivers Center

The Forest Preserve District of Will County programs for the weeks of May 13 and May 20. Online registration is available on the Event Calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org.

• Take It Outside Meetup: 5-6 p.m. Thursday, May 16, McKinley Woods - Frederick's Grove, Channahon. Join this program to meet other challenge participants and maybe complete some missions together.

Lake Renwick Migratory Bird Viewing: 8 a.m.-noon Saturday, May

18, Lake Renwick Heron Rookery Nature Preserve Plainfield. The only way to view the rookery's nesting herons, egrets and cormorants at this time of year is to attend a Saturday morning viewing program.

• Four Rivers Story Trail - "Cicada Symphony" 8 a.m. to sunset Thursday May 23-Friday, June 7, Four Rivers Environmental Education Center Channahon. Travel along the Woodland Loop Trail and discover the remarkably unique life cycle of the periodical cicada.

First Baptist Church of Coal City
 2024

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Prizes for Best of Show People's Choice and Best of Show Exhibitor's Choice.
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JOLIET SLAMMERS

The Slammers' 2024 season opens Friday, May 10 against the Evansville Otters and will include Fireworks Night. Gates open 5:35 pm, with first pitch at 6:35 pm. Tickets are on sale now. With 10 nights of fireworks and the returning promotional staples of Princess Night, Super Hero Night, Dog Days, and Star Wars Night, the Slammers are bringing more family fun for everyone in 2024. Walk up tickets available or call 815.722.2287.
 1 Mayor Art Schultz Dr., Joliet, IL www.jolietslammers.com

New tax may be needed to bail out RTA

Governor JB Pritzker unexpectedly moved away last week from his long-standing opposition to taxing services, saying he didn't want to start taking ideas off the table as lawmakers search for ways to fund and reform the Chicago region's mass transit system.



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

A major business group predictably pushed back. As you may know, Chicagoland's mass transit agencies are facing a \$730 million fiscal cliff in 2026. The federal government's COVID-era subsidies will expire that year. Also, ridership has declined as service worsens, operating costs have increased and average fare prices have fallen.

According to a report last year from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), imposing a service tax could be part of the solution. The CMAP report claimed adding a service tax to the state's existing 6.25 percent state tax rate could generate \$1.1 to \$1.9 billion in 2026. Some legislators are proposing a \$1.5 billion annual funding increase for transit, as part of a consolidation effort.

So, my associate Isabel Miller (who contributed to this column) asked Gov. Pritzker during an unrelat-

ed event if he wanted to take any state taxes off the table before the talks heat up, including the service tax.

"I have never been in favor of that before," Pritzker said of the service tax. He has indeed opposed the tax all the way back to his first 2018 gubernatorial campaign, often calling it regressive.

"There may need to be a source of revenue here," Pritzker said, "but that's not something that I have favored in the past."

As far as specifically ruling out a service tax, however, the governor said: "I really don't want to start saying, 'We're not going to do this, we're not going to do that.' At this point, there are just so many pieces of this that we have to look at before we're going to pay for what's necessary here as we come off of support from the federal government and making sure we're restoring transit services."

Some legislative Democrats pushing transit agency consolidation and reform welcomed the news of the governor's new openness to a service tax, which seems to be evidence that the governor is serious about finding a fix.

"I appreciate the governor being open to it, and I appreciate him recognizing this is a complicated matter," Rep. Eva Dina Delgado (D-Chicago) told me. Rep. Delgado introduced legislation (HB5828) last week to provide the systems an annual \$1.5 billion state appropriation once the mass transit system is consolidated.

Rep. Kam Buckner (D-Chicago), whose House Bill 5823 would create a consolidated transit agency, told me he's also opposed a service tax in the past. But Rep. Buckner said he is open to it now and said he appreciates that the governor is keeping an open mind.

Pritzker also reiterated last week that he's not yet endorsing any particular mass transit reform proposal, but insisted that "change is going to have to come."

"We just know that we're going to have to upgrade service, make sure that we're dealing with the transit funding challenge that's coming up," Pritzker said. "I hope to see several proposals so that we can consider what direction to take."

That change in direction will be a complex endeavor, the governor said.

"We've got to look at cuts that need to be made, along with, you know, are there changes in fares for certain types of riders that need to be made," Pritzker said.

A Pritzker spokesperson later explained that when the governor said "cuts," he meant efficiencies to save money, like

consolidating the regional transit system, but not service cuts.

Most transit agencies hotly oppose consolidation, including the Chicago Transit Authority.

A spokesperson for the Illinois Chamber told me the organization holds the governor remains ambivalent about a service tax.

"From our position, taxing Illinois' service businesses - especially our smallest businesses - to close a budget gap is a non-starter. The tax would negatively impact the smallest of businesses: service-based small businesses and startups - especially businesses in counties that border other states as customers can save just by crossing the state line," the Chamber spokesperson said.

One issue with a service tax is that implementing it would take time. Many of the businesses that would be covered are not currently set up to pay sales taxes, for example. The Chamber predicted it could take several years to implement a service tax, so it won't solve short-term gaps.

"As the voice of Illinois business, we would welcome sitting down with the governor's team to discuss pragmatic ways to address the budget gap, but taxing services is not one of them," the Chamber spokesperson said.

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



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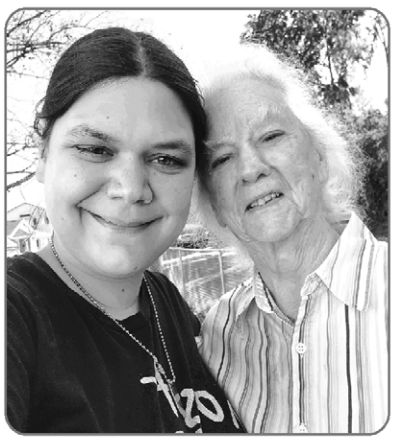
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Severe weather season off to an active start

BY RHIANNON BRANCH
FARMWEEK

Severe weather season made a bold entrance in the Midwest this year and the potential for more dangerous storms lingers.

Frequent rains have delayed planting in some areas. Storms have damaged farm buildings and equipment, and high winds have created challenges for spring herbicide applications.

As of April 24, Illinois had had 42 tornadoes, 127 hail events (greater than 1 inch) and 95 severe wind events, according to the Storm Prediction Center.

Ed Shimon, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Lincoln, told FarmWeek those statistics mostly came from two storms in February, two in March and three so far in April.

"Forty-two tornadoes total in Illinois already is pretty high," he said.

"Over the last 30 years,



STORM CLOUDS move in over central Illinois while a farmer hurries to ready his field for planting. Severe weather, including 42 tornadoes, have so far touched down in Illinois.

the running average in Illinois is about 56 per year."

He said the active pattern is following the path of 2023 when Illinois had 123 tornadoes, the most of any state in the country.

Shimon pointed out the storm systems have been widespread with tornadic activity recorded in the southern, central and northern portions of the state.

"Storms follow the jet

stream and the way the jet stream is buckled in the west and kind of lifting up to the northeast through Illinois on a pretty frequent basis this spring has given us more frequent severe weather," he said.

There was a preliminary count of 68 severe hail reports across the state in March alone, with another 30 to 40 this month, as of April 22, State Climatologist Trent Ford told the RFD Radio Network.

The 10-day outlook is a bit milder but favors warmer than average temperatures and slightly above normal precipitation. There was potential for torrential downpours over the weekend, according to forecasts as of press time.

"When you have a really warm air mass in the April and early May time frame, there is always potential for severe weather when a storm does develop. So people need to be weather aware for sure," Shimon said.

"There is potential for severe weather year-round, but the most reports come in during April, May and June, which is why that period is commonly referred to as severe weather season in the Midwest, he added.

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

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OBITUARIES

Evelyn Chester

JOLIET—Evelyn Josephine Chester, 83, of Joliet, passed away on April 28, 2024. She was a loving wife, mother, cousin, and friend. Evelyn enjoyed spending time with her family and tending to her garden.

She attended Braidwood High School and Governors State University. Evelyn dedicated her career to the United States Department of Energy, working at Argonne National Lab until her retirement in 1995.

She is survived by her children William B. Neeley (Lynn), Thomas Chester, Jr., and Erika Chester; grandchildren Thomas A. Chester and Christianna Neeley; aunts Mary Martha Thompson, Eva Pinnick and Annie Pinnick; and several cousins, including Rita Pinnick Gordon, Pam Humphrey, Janis Love, Edna



Anderson Singleton, and Karen Anderson Baker.

Evelyn was preceded in death by her husband, Thomas Chester, Sr.; father, William M. Pinnick; mother, Gertrude S. Pinnick (Anderson); brother, William 'Buddy' Pinnick; and sisters Patricia Y. Woods and Sandra Takeda, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

A memorial service is planned for Friday, May 10, 2024, visitation 10:00-11:00 a.m. with service at 11:00 a.m. at Mt Ebal Baptist Church, 221 Cameron Avenue, Lockport, IL. A repast will follow at 1:00 p.m. at Merichka's Restaurant in Crest Hill, IL.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to a charity of your choice in memory of Evelyn Chester.

Unetta Jirus

EAST BROOKLYN—Unetta Jirus, 96, of East Brooklyn, IL passed away peacefully on Saturday, May 4, 2024 at The ARC of Dwight.

Born on March 23, 1928, Unetta Marie was a daughter of Richard and Marie (Wood) Golding. She spent her formative years in Reddick, IL and on Sept. 18, 1948, she exchanged vows with Joseph Jirus. Together, they established their first home in Gardner before eventually settling in East Brooklyn where she has resided for the past 73 years.

In her early days, Unetta worked as a waitress at her family's restaurant in Reddick and later had a stint at the Grinchuck Pants Factory in Braidwood. However, her most cherished role was that of a devoted wife and mother. She actively participated in various community organizations such as the South Wilmington United Methodist Church's Woman's Star Club, where she was a member; the Kankakee Moose Lodge and the South Wilmington Senior Citizens group. In addition she and Joe were also Charter Members of the South Wilmington Fireman's Club.

Unetta was known for her love of staying active through walking and exercising. She found joy in maintaining a well-kept home, tending to her garden, preserving her harvests through canning, engaging in ballroom dancing, and showcasing her talent in sewing. A spirited individual who enjoyed shopping excursions and indulging in sweet treats like ice cream and milkshakes; she had an infectious smile coupled with a distinctive laugh that left an imprint on all who knew her. Above all else, Unetta will be fondly remembered for her unwavering love for family. Her heart overflowed with joy at the sight of her grandchildren thriving and witnessing the growth of succeeding generations including her great-grandchildren.

Unetta Jirus will forever hold a special



place in the hearts of those who were lucky enough to be touched by her presence.

Survivors include her two children, Robert Jirus, of Gardner and Helen (Larry) Elliott, of South Wilmington; three grandchildren: Brian (Heather) Jirus and Kelley (Al) Johnston, both of Wilmington and Christina (Kyle) Veronda, of Lebanon, IN; four great-grandchildren: Alyssa Johnston, Anthony Johnston, Hunter Veronda and Brooklyn Veronda, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Unetta was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Joseph (1993); daughter-in-law, Janice Jirus (2023); three sisters: Waunetta Golding, Garnetta (Dominic) Ferrari and Juanetta Patti, and two brothers, Richard Jr. (Evelyn) Golding and John (Ardes) Golding.

Funeral services were held at Reeves Funeral Home in Gardner on Wednesday, May 8, 2024.

Burial followed in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery, where Unetta will be laid to rest with her late husband, Joseph.

Pallbearers were Brian Jirus, Anthony Johnston, Al Johnston, Kyle Veronda, Richard Ciluffo and Charles Harvey. Honorary Pallbearers were Hunter Veronda and Rick Yatuni.

A heartfelt thank you is extended to the dedicated and caring staff at The ARC of Dwight, as well as with UpliftedCare Hospice for the care and support shown to Unetta and the family. Your kindness will always be remembered.

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

Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Homes, Ltd. in Gardner.

Uplifted Care to host free workshop and grief support services

All veterans are invited to the UpliftedCare Community Grief Center to attend the Vet-To-Vet Café from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Wednesday, May 15.

Veterans will have the opportunity to meet other veterans, share stories, access resources and make new connections. Coffee and light snacks are provided. For more information or to register, please call UpliftedCare at 815.939.4141.

The Honoring Mothers Workshop is being

held on Saturday, May 18, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This free workshop is a safe space for anyone who has lost their mother to join others who have experienced a similar loss.

Through activities and discussion, attendees will have the opportunity to connect with others to realize you are not alone on your grief journey and learn powerful coping tools to deal with the difficult emotions that often accompany grieving a parent. Everyone will create a

keepsake to take home to remember mom.

This workshop is open to individuals and families with children ages 5 and up. The workshop will be held at the Uplifted Community Grief Center, 3115 N. 1000 West Road, Bourbonnais. All workshop materials and light refreshments will be provided.

To register for this free grief workshop or for grief support services, call 815.939.4141.

Elections bill's hurried passage

BY JERRY NOWICKI
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

This week saw major muscle flex from Illinois' majority party in the final month of session. Democrats introduced a major elections bill Wednesday morning, clearing it through both chambers and sending it to the governor for his signature, all within 48 hours. The governor signed it Friday.

Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea, introduced Senate Bill 2412 making several changes to state election laws—most notably including a measure to protect incumbents. That change bars political parties from appointing a candidate to a legislative general election race if no candidate ran for the seat in the primary election.

Pritzker on Thursday described the measure as “actually an ethics bill,” while Republicans accused Democrats of ethical failings for moving the measure with little time for substantive debate or public input.

Republicans in both chambers voted “present” on the bill in protest, while a handful of Democrats voted against it or skipped voting altogether.

House Minority Leader Tony McCombie, R-Savanna, noted at a news conference Wednesday that the GOP has grown accustomed to legislation moving with little public notice—but it usually happens closer to the General Assembly's end-of-May adjournment.

“But we don't understand the sense of urgency right now, unless the goal is to stifle the democratic process through the changes on slating candidates,” she said.

The GOP contended the measure was specifically designed to block one candidate, former Edwardsville police chief Jay Keeven, from challenging Rep. Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville, in November in the 112th House district.

Keeven filed his nominating petitions to the State Board of Elections on Thursday afternoon. Another candidate, Daniel Behr of Northbrook, filed petitions to run in the 57th House District, a race that Democrat Tracy Katz Muhl was otherwise slated to face uncontested. Behr's petitions were filed six minutes after Pritzker's signature was recorded on the bill.

The state GOP noted in a news release at least one other candidate, a challenger to Democratic Sen. Mary Edly-Allen of Libertyville, had intended to seek ballot access under the now disallowed method as well.

The measure would also put three nonbinding referendum questions on the November ballot, crowding out citizen-led questions by hitting the statutory limit of three for a single election.

Those questions would ask voters if they favor civil penalties for candidates who interfere with election workers' jobs, whether health insurance plans that cover pregnancy benefits should be required to cover in vitro fertilization, and whether the state should adopt an additional 3 percent tax on income over \$1 million to fund property tax relief.

The measure also moves back petition gathering and filing deadlines for the 2026 election cycle by 28 days, among other changes.

Bob Soukup Sr.



COAL CITY—Bob Soukup Sr., 95, of Coal City, formerly of Chicago, passed away Tuesday, April 30, 2024 at his home.

Born Sept. 28, 1928 in Chicago, Robert Joseph was a son of Joseph and Mary Soukup. He was raised and educated in Chicago, and at the age of 17 he enlisted in the United States Navy where he served honorably between 1945 to 1947. Bob married his wife, the late Dorothy Ann Swartz, and together they made their home and raised their family in Chicago.

He was a firefighter for 35 years with the Chicago Fire Department, stationed with Engine 34 and was a member of the Chicago Fire Fighters Union. Upon retirement, Bob would eventually settle in Coal City where he was able to enjoy nature and wildlife. He loved to cook and watch movies, as well as listening to music and singing. Bob understood the meaning of putting in a hard day's work, always working on something around the house well in to his 80s. And above all else, he always tried to make sure that those he loved were taken care of.

Survivors include his three grandchildren: Cassandra and Krystalene Anculis,



both of Coal City and Nicolette (fiancé Daniel) Anculis of Florida; one brother, Edward (the late Alice) Soukup of Tinley Park, IL and numerous nieces and nephews.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Joseph and Mary, and his wife, Dorothy Soukup; as well as his brothers and sisters: Marie (John) Miglin, Bernice (Frank) Konfrst, Arlene (John) Morgucz, Anna (Henry) Dusak, Alice (Frank) Dudzik, Betty (Tony) Bogden, Grace (Robert) Sutherland, Lorraine (Raymond) Del Lango and George (Lorraine) Soukup.

Per Bob's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded.

Private memorial services will be held, and Bob will be laid to rest at Bohemian National Cemetery in Braidwood with his wife, Dorothy.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book at www.ReevesFuneral.com, upload photographs, and share Bob's memorial page via social media.

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

John Wandless

WILMINGTON—John M. Wandless, 63, of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Monday, April 29, 2024 in Wilmington.

Born Aug. 3, 1960 in Joliet, John was a son of Kenneth Wandless and Deanna (Forsythe) Casteel. He was raised and educated in Wilmington and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1978. John worked for Precision Components Inc. in Wilmington for several years before gaining employment with Caterpillar Tractor Company for 25 years as a machinist. Upon retirement from Caterpillar, he continued to stay busy by working for Advanced Auto Parts in Diamond where he was currently employed.

John was an avid Chicago Bears fan and NASCAR enthusiast. He also enjoyed being in bowling leagues at Riverfront Lanes in Wilmington. John also took great pleasure in being out on the open road, especially riding on his Harley Davidson. Nothing brought him more pleasure than being with his family. John was a great father and excellent grandfather who cared deeply about those whom he loved.

Survivors include two children, Brian (Ashley) Wandless, of Wilmington and



Steven (Michele) Wandless, of Nashville, TN; three grandchildren: Tristan, Brayden and Easton Wandless; one brother and two sisters: Kenneth (Linda) Wandless, of Akin, SC; Karen (Richard) Blackwell, of Jacksonville, FL and Lisa (Hank) Buczkiewicz, of Bull Shoals, AR and four nephews: Daniel Wandless, Nicholas (Andrea) Wandless, Scott (Brooke) Wandless, and Brian Casteel.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Kenneth Wandless and Deanna (Jim) Casteel; and his maternal grandparents, John and Madeline Forsythe.

Funeral services were held at Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington on Monday, May 6, 2024. Burial followed at Mt. Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wilmington.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book at www.ReevesFuneral.com, upload photographs, and share John's memorial page via social media.

Funeral services and arrangements were made under the direction and care of Reeves & Baskerville Funeral Homes and Crematory in Wilmington

Rezin says ‘no’ to changing the name of Starved Rock State Park

In light of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) public confirmation that the Department may be open to a possible name change of the famous Starved Rock State Park, Illinois Senate Deputy Republican Leader Sue Rezin (R-Morris) has filed a resolution in support of keeping the park's current name.

“While I recognize desires to create open dialogue on issues such as naming parks and places after Indigenous peoples and their legends, I believe that this well-intended but misguided proposal will result in more harm than good,” said Sen. Rezin. “The Starved Rock name has become a treasured part of the local community's identity and brand. There are far too many people who rely on the park's nationally recognized name for their livelihoods.”

Senate Resolution 956 advocates for the preservation of the state park's historic name. It notes the importance

that the Starved Rock name has on the local community and acknowledges the concerns of residents and businesses regarding the potential renaming of the state park. Finally, it encourages open dialogue with relevant stakeholders, including Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, to address concerns and explore ways to honor the park's heritage while respecting diverse perspectives.

“It is vital that we honor the important history of Starved Rock State Park,” said Sen. Rezin. “I truly believe that there is a path to accomplish that goal in a way that preserves the park's iconic name while respecting the heritage of Indigenous people.”

The Resolution was filed in the Illinois Senate on April 30 and is currently awaiting assignment.

Will County hosting textiles, working home goods recycling

Have a small appliance that still works but you don't want to throw away? Then this is your week to take it to a collection event where it will continue its usefulness with a new owner.

Will County is hosting is annual Textile and Small Home Goods Collection Event at the Will County Office Building, 302 N. Chicago St., through Friday, May 10.

A wide range of items will be collected for reuse and recycling during the week, including coats, shirts, pants, neckties, hats, sneakers, towels, bedding,

boots and shoes. Items with mold, mud or other dirt will not be accepted and all small home goods must be in working condition. Items will be accepted in the building parking lot between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. daily, with extended drop-off hours from 5:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 12.

“This event offers an opportunity for residents to responsibly dispose of old clothes and home items during their Spring cleaning,” said Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant. “Donated items will be repurposed, reused,

or recycled, instead of being sent to the landfill.”

The collection event is hosted by the Will County Land Use Department's Resource Recovery and Energy Division. The event is free and open to all County residents.

The County is partnering with Helping Hands, which distributes usable textiles, second-hand clothing and small goods to thrift stores. Their efforts keep millions of pounds from being sent to landfills.

For additional information, including a list of accepted items, visit www.willcountygreen.com

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Migrants are vital

SHADOW LAKES—The undocumented immigrants problem won't be solved anytime soon mainly because they are vital for the economy. There are anywhere between 18-20 million undocumented people in this country and these people are doing jobs that most Americans will not do. Who are these people working on 100-degree temperatures on their hands and knees, picking the vegetables that we eat? Mostly undocumented migrants that's who. They are mopping the floors, vacuuming the carpets and cleaning the washrooms toilets in the hotels and restaurants. They are washing dishes, working on factory assembly lines, landscaping and more. I know that I didn't work my butt off to put my kids through college so they could go work in a factory or so they could be landscapers. When Ronald Reagan was president, one of the biggest immigration reforms was passed in this country, hundreds of thousands maybe even millions of documented people were able to legalize the status at the same time there was some new laws putting in place to discourage illegal immigration. There are also penalties in place for companies that hire undocumented workers. But the companies that hire these people don't care because the penalties are not enforce by the government. The reason the government does not enforce the penalties because undocumented workers contribute to the economy. Most of the workers when they apply for a job, they present false documents. Social Security numbers don't exist. The Social Security administration receives billions of dollars from undocumented workers each year. Same thing with federal taxes, state taxes. Fear mongers will tell you that these people don't pay taxes. Nothing could be further from the truth, not only do these people pay taxes, most of them will never benefit from the money they pay. They will not be able to collect Social Security or Medicare. So yeah, you could say oh there was some undocumented workers in New York were fighting with the police. You can say they're bringing drugs into this country, which by the way is not true. The drug cartels that are bringing drugs into this country are not undocumented immigrants. As painful as it might be for some people to admit it undocumented immigrants are vital for this country.

Dishonest Donnie

WILMINGTON—Trump and his buddies better come up with better nicknames for Biden. "Crooked Joe"? There has been zero evidence that Biden did anything criminal, unlike 91 felonies associated with Donald. "Dishonest Donnie"? "Sleepy Joe seems out of place since Trump snoozed in court multiple days of his New York trial. "Dozing Donnie"? And lastly, tell us Trump, what evidence do you have that Biden is behind your criminal trial cases. "Delusional Donnie?"

Speak for themselves

COAL CITY—It's a darn shame how Coal City runs the sports programs. Playing to people please at the high school level is out of control. Parents do game

changer and won't give the "red carpet" children errors so they can pad their stats. Grow up parents. These kids should be fighting for their spots based on talent not on who you know. Or how many emails you send a coach or AD to complain. These kids are 15 years old or older. They need to speak for themselves. Coaches don't cave to the pressure.

Weak-knee president

WILMINGTON—When America needs leadership we have always had that person, the leader that could pull America together. Unfortunately we have Joe Biden, a weak-knee president that is a windsock. If he can't blame Trump he has nothing. I think we should be blaming Biden for how bad things are. He's an empty vessel. He can't even read a teleprompter any more. The Obama crew is running the White House. You can tell because everything always ends up about race, you're a racist if you disagree about anything. It worked for Obama for eight years so why not?

I don't understand

BRAIDWOOD—Here in Altiery-wood, I just love how things are done however the city council members want them to be done, and does not take in consideration what the townspeople want. We have many gaming facilities and here we are adding another. Not to mention two dollar stores, but no bank or laundrymat. Then they wonder why no one wants to spend money in this town. Now we are quoted in the newspaper to say that "Mastodon Travel Center planned for Division Street and Coal City Road has paperwork nearly completed." Funny no zoning meeting has been had for months and I am positive that the people of Braidwood do not want this. I think the zoning board better have many chairs available at that meeting, because it will be packed. I just don't understand how you can you be a contractor, Realtor and city administrator all in same town? Sounds like triple dipping to me. Different rules for different people happen constantly in this town. No transparency and you hear nothing from the puppet mayor. Everything is said by the city administrator. But in Altiery-wood, what he wants he gets. Wake up. People need to start coming to city council meetings and zoning meetings before it's all too late.

Back in the day

SHADOW LAKES—I remember back in the days when I started learning about the United States Constitution, and how the United States government works. I remember when I registered to vote and how proud I was to be part of a democracy or people's rights and freedom protected by the United States Constitution. I have never missed an election ever since then local or countrywide. I always vote because I know how important my vote is. I always thought that it was impossible for this country to ever be ruled. I am monarchy or dictator till now. We now have a fascist party that's being led by a man that doesn't even hold a political office. These people are using scare fear mongering tactics to get people vote for them. The worst part of it is that these people are



dividing the country. They don't care that they are turning Americans against each other. Their tactic is to appeal to their largest race of people in this country and making them believe that everybody else is inferior or unfit to be an American. The so-called MAGA group are going as far as obstructing government proceedings so that the current president doesn't get credit for new laws, they will benefit the country and all Americans the worst. Worst thing that could happen is for this fascist to take control of the Supreme Court which actually they're pretty close to doing. There are already three Supreme Court justices. They were appointed by their fascist leader and three more that tend to side with them. I believe that if these people could take control of the country, they're gonna start changing the constitution in the loss to suppress those who don't agree with them, and some people in this country are going to start being singled out. Start with a few, but eventually it will grow. It might start with your nationality your race, the color of your hair your eyes. There's no telling how far these lunatics will go. And just like history has shown, extreme fascists like that will eventually destroy the country.

Far from it

WILMINGTON—There seems to be some misunderstanding about our three branches of government. The Legislative branch refers to the Senate and the House of Representatives which create bills before becoming law. The Executive branch is made up of the President and his cabinet. The President decides to sign any bills. If signed, they become law. The Judicial branch is made up of the court system and includes the Supreme Court whose duty is to interpret the laws as either constitutional or unconstitutional. Since Joe Biden has been president, he has signed 77 executive orders which are listed in a few places on the internet. One of these orders was to open the border to let

in millions of illegals and another was to stop drilling of oil when we were energy independent before he took office. These are only two examples. Please do not say the President is powerless--far from it.

Overwhelmed by taxes

WILMINGTON—I just got my property tax bill for a 1932 house in downtown Wilmington. It went up \$500 from last year. Our home needs new siding, new windows, new roof, etc. I honestly don't mind paying taxes, because Wilmington is a wonderful town to live in. I am just starting to feel very defeated. This government is corrupt and there's literally nothing we can do about it which frustrates me. I'm not blaming the city of Wilmington because they're doing a phenomenal job. I just don't know what to do about this in general and it's so frustrating and it's making it hard for people to live on a day-to-day basis. Our car insurance went up \$700 for six months, our property taxes went up \$500, our house insurance doubled over a span of four years. No claims, great credit score, no accidents. etc. and we're just getting hit big time. My husband and I have the money to absorb the increase but not for long. The money is going to run out if they keep gouging us like this. What I'm really worried about are those people that live paycheck to paycheck. And with the rent and mortgage rates and utilities so high, how are people going to be able to afford to live in a home let alone rent an apartment? Not to mention the price of everything else. I feel helpless, because as a Christian woman and a citizen of the United States we are supposed to have a voice. Our voice does nothing these days. I'm not blaming Wilmington for my high property taxes which are now \$5,400 a year for a house that needs a ton of work. I'm posting anonymously because I don't know what to do about it. Hoping that perhaps we can come together as a town and fight this like we fought to save the Gemini Giant.

Commentary

More states giving parents control over education funds. Why not Illinois?

BY HANNAH SCHMID

There are 18 private school choice programs called "education savings accounts" in 16 states and growing. But Illinois leaders refuse to let parents decide how their taxes are used to educate their children.

Around 20 million students nationwide are eligible for a private-school choice program, with 16 states offering "education savings accounts" that give parents greater control

over how taxes will be used to educate their children.

Three of those states started their programs in 2024, and many states started or expanded private school choice programs in 2023. Not Illinois. Lawmakers in 2023 killed the state's only private school choice program, the Invest in Kids tax-credit scholarship program, under pressure from Illinois' powerful teachers unions.

Education savings accounts are an increas-

ingly popular private-school choice program for families in other states. Here's what you should know and why they should be an option in Illinois.

Education savings accounts are a form of private-school choice program that provides families with publicly-funded, government-authorized savings accounts to use for specified educational expenses. Each program has its own regulations for approved expenses that vary between states, but they generally give parents choices about how taxes to educate their child will be spent – sometimes with savings that can be put towards college.

Approved educational expenses can include school tuition, tutoring, therapies for special education students, educational products and services and more.

Research by EdChoice found two-thirds of families use their education savings account funds to pay for private school tuition, while nearly one-third spent their funds on multiple learning resources, such as tutoring or online learning, among other services.

Nearly 330,000 students are using education savings accounts in 2024, up from over 130,000 in 2023.

There are currently 18 programs across 16 states: Alabama, Arizona,

Arkansas, two in Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, two in Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming.

So far in 2024, three of those states have enacted legislation to create new programs: Alabama, Georgia and Wyoming.

How is student eligibility determined for education savings account funds?

Each program differs in how it determines eligibility of students. Some programs offer 100% eligibility to students in the state, sometimes with tiered priorities. Other programs have restricted eligibility based on income or disabilities of students.

Two programs currently enable 100% of students statewide to be eligible. Three additional programs in Alabama, Arkansas and Iowa are set to increase to 100% eligibility in the coming years.

Five programs have income restrictions regulating which students are eligible to receive an education savings account.

Eligibility based on disability

Six programs have disability restrictions designating which students are eligible to receive an account. For example, Montana's Special Needs Equal Opportunity Savings

Account Program is given to students who have an individualized education plan and are identified as a "child with disabilities" under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Tennessee all have programs to help those with special needs.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed the state's Promise Scholarship program into law on April 23, establishing a program that offers education savings account funds to students in low-performing public schools. Students who attend a Georgia public school that ranks in the bottom 25% of schools in terms of academic performance will be eligible for the program.

Illinois is an educational outlier

Education savings accounts aren't the only type of school choice program. In all, 31 states have some form of private school choice program and school choice is steadily advancing across the country. Unfortunately, the advancements are missing in Illinois because teachers unions and state lawmakers have decided to deny families these educational opportunities or any real choice in their children's educations.

Lawmakers ignored the needs of more than 15,000 disadvantaged students and overwhelm-

ing public support for Illinois' Invest in Kids tax-credit scholarship program. Instead, they kowtowed to the wants of teachers unions, who put significant dollars behind their attack on the program.

Teachers unions have invested over \$21.5 million in sitting state lawmakers between 2010 and the end of October 2023. Nearly \$1.5 million of that was in the five months leading up to the General Assembly's fall session when lawmakers let the program die, Illinois State Board of Elections records show.

Union bosses proved they were more concerned with protecting their monopoly on education than in supporting the needs of Illinois' students. They aren't against private schools, making that choice for their own children thanks to generous union salaries. They just want low-income children and families denied an option.

If union bosses and state lawmakers really prioritized students' interests, they would follow the national wave and support programs which expand educational options for students, even if that means some students choose private schools.

Hannah Schmid is an policy analyst with the Illinois Policy Institute

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GARAGE SALES

1655 E. Clark St., Diamond. Friday, May 10 & Saturday, May 11, 9am-4pm. Misc. tools, power tools, compound miter saw w/stand, ext. ladder, grill like new, Misc. home decor inside & out, seasonal/holiday decor, mixer, coffee pot, crock pot, insta pot, cook books, bird feeders, bedding, gnomes, women's clothing S/XL, lg. assortment of women's shoes, too much to list. Sale will be held May 17/18 if rain.

Multi-Family Sale, Diamond - 2502 E. Border Street. Thursday, May 9, 8am-6pm, Friday, May 10, 8am-5pm. Home Decor, purses, plus size clothing, games, toys, legos, books, some kitchen items, something for everyone! cc19

GARAGE SALES

Lake Shannon Annual Multi-Family Garage Sales
 Saturday, May 18, 2024. 8:00am to 4:00pm. 18530 W 3000N Rd, Reddick. cc19-20

MULTI-FAMILY GARAGE SALE
 525 E Campbell Dr, Coal City Thurs. & Fri., May 9 & 10 from 8AM-4PM and Sat., May 11 from 8AM-Noon. Houseware, house decor, Christmas, lots of shoes of all sizes, dresses, DVDs, books, brand new pool floats. Name Brand CLOTHES — ladies / juniors-size 0-18, mens-size S-4XL. Newborn-24 mths baby boy clothes. Collectors Christmas dish set, Sorel sandals. Many Brand New items, all priced to sell. cc18-19

GARAGE SALES

Coal City - 385 E.Short Dr. (Meadow Estates Sub. behind Ace) Fri. & Sat. May 10-11. 8am-4pm. Multi family, Girls 7-10, boys 6-14, boys 0-12 months, shoes, juniors + Ladies S-XL, Womens 1X, young men, baby toys, high chair, baby jumper, house hold items and much misc. ca19

Mazon - Garage /Estate Sale. 407 8th St. Sat. & Sun., May 11 & 12, 8am-2pm. Hummels. Collectible plates, Jewel Tea, Emmitt Kelly, China plates, China bowls. Watch for more sale dates. Tons still in boxes. ca19

GARAGE SALES

15th ANNUAL WILMINGTON ALL-TOWN GARAGE SALE
Thurs., June 6 (8 am-5 pm); Fri., June 7 (8 am-5 pm); Sat., June 8 (8 am - 2 pm) Sponsored by First United Methodist Church, 401 E. Kahler, Wilmington. Everyone is welcome to come out and explore all the great sales at the church and throughout the whole town. Stop by for lunch at the church on Friday from 11:30-1:00. Listing Maps will be available for pick up at the church beginning at 8 am on June 6 and throughout the sale dates. For more information, call: 815-476-5474. ch19-21

CHECK OUT THESE GARAGE SALES!

15th ANNUAL WILMINGTON ALL-TOWN GARAGE SALE

Thurs., June 6 ~ Fri., June 7 ~ Sat., June 8

The 15th Annual All-Town Garage Sale will be sponsored by the First United Methodist Church. We will be producing MAPS of listings throughout the town. All of the advertising will be done for you and bargain hunters will be out all over town. You may sign up for one or all days, and specify your hours. We may have sellers inside the church and vendors/crafters can have a space in our parking lot for an additional \$10 (for all 3 days). MAPS can be picked up at the church on Thursday, June 6th beginning at 8 a.m. through the entirety of the sale. Please fill out the form below by May 28 with a \$10.00 donation to have your information in our Map Listing (60481 RESIDENTS ONLY). These forms are also available at Wilmington City Hall, Wilmington Library, FUMC church, or download from our website at: www.fumcwilm.org. Make your check payable to First United Methodist Church and you may drop off or mail your check to FUMC, All-Town Garage Sale, 401 E. Kahler Road, Wilmington, IL 60481. Call our church office at 815-476-5474 with any questions. (The First United Methodist Church of Wilmington is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items. All unsold items and trash must be removed after the sale.)

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Yes, _____ I want a CHURCH PARKING LOT SPACE for my own table (June 6: 8-5; June 7: 8-5; June 8: 8-2)

MAP LISTING INFORMATION:

Dates/Times of your sale: _____

Address of participating sale: _____

Subdivision/Neighborhood: _____

Items to be sold: _____

BOATS

1972 Quachita Chief Flat Bottom John Boat for sale. Excellent condition. Comes with trailer, motor, canopy top. \$1,200 cash. Call 779-279-5945. cc19-21

HELP WANTED

Hot Shotz, 725 S. Broadway in Coal City. Bartender needed for afternoons & evenings. Please call 815-685-2919 and leave message.

Lifeguards needed at local sportsmen's club in Wilmington. Must be certified or able to become certified. Please send inquiries to wcsc1946@gmail.com or call the office at 815-476-6561. cc17

Spectrum Nurses, Inc. is looking for Director of Nursing for Home Health. Experience preferred. Please call 630-771-9069 or 630-330-4590. ch8-19

Will County Sportsmen's Club is looking for a reliable Maintenance Worker. Must be able to operate the Skidsteer, Backhoe and other equipment. Please call the office at 815-476-6561 or email: wcsc1946@gmail.com cc17-22

Will County Sportsmen's Club is looking for a full-time office employee. Must have experience with Microsoft Office, POS systems, and phone etiquette. Please send inquiries to wcsc1946@gmail.com or call the office at 815-476-6561. cc17-

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Have you found a lost pet or lost a pet in Will County? Please call Will County Animal Control. We may have your pet. We want to reunite your family, 815-462-5633. fr/tfn

MISCELLANEOUS

Hall Rental - Available for parties, showers & meetings. Seats 100 people, full kitchen available. If interested call New Hope Presbyterian Church in Coal City, 815-634-8332. ch 27a-tfn

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REAL ESTATE

SHERIFF'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE OF 37150 S MACKS ROAD, CUSTER PARK, IL 60481 (Not applicable). On the 30th day of May, 2024 to be held at 12:00 noon, at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Room 904, Joliet, IL 60432, under Case Title: **LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING LLC Plaintiff V. MARK R. RAMSEY AKA MARK RAMSEY; MIDLAND CREDIT MANAGEMENT, INC.; LARRY LIBERSHER; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS**, Defendant. Case No. 22 FC 0819 in the Cir-cuit Court of the Twelfth Judicial 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 mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. All payments shall be made in cash or certified funds payable to the Sheriff of Will County. In the event the property is a condominium, in accordance with 735 ILCS 5/15-1507(c)(1)(H-1) and (H-2), 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(5), and 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1), you are hereby notified that the purchaser of the unit, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 and the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Illinois Condominium Property Act. Pursuant to Local Court Rule 11.03 (J) if there is a surplus following

application of the proceeds of sale, then the plaintiff shall send written notice pursuant to 735 ILCS 5/15-1512(d) to all parties to the proceeding advising them of the amount of the surplus and that the surplus will be held until a party obtains a court order for its distribution or, in the absence of an order, until the surplus is forfeited to the State. For Information Please Contact: **ANSELMO LINDBERG OLIVER LLC**, 1771 W. Diehl Rd. Suite 120, NAPERVILLE, IL 60563 P: 630-453-6960 F: 630-428-4620 PURSUANT TO THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT YOU ARE ADVISED THAT THIS LAW FIRM IS DEEMED TO BE A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Published in the Free Press Newspapers on Wed., May 8, 15 & 22, 2024.

OPEN HOUSE IN DIAMOND

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Contact: (815) 216-1568 or (815) 212-1929

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Deadline to apply is May 14

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Starting Salary: \$65,911
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The Wilmington Police Department is proud to announce that they are now certified by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs for the Police Officer on-the-job Training Program. Please visit http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/onthejob_apprenticeship.asp

All applicants must meet the following minimum requirements established by the City of Wilmington:

- U.S. citizenship;
- No felony convictions;
- Possess a valid state-issued driver's license with good driving record;
- Must be a minimum of 21 years of age and UNDER 35 years of age at the time of application unless otherwise exempt by State Statute 65 ILCS 5/10-2.1-6;
- Possess a high school diploma or G.E.D. equivalent;
- Possess a valid NIPSTA card — OR — equivalent criteria as per the State standard, **issued within 12 months of the written exam date (May 23, 2024):**
 - POWER Test Cards issued by NIPSTA, Triton College or Joliet Junior College will be accepted.
 - Applicants must present the POWER Test card **NO LATER than the written exam date (May 23, 2024).**
- Any applicant who would like to schedule a ride along with a Wilmington police officer may call 815-476-2813.
- Successfully pass a written examination with a minimum overall passing score of 70%;
- Successfully complete an oral interview with the Board of Police Commission;
- Successfully complete a background investigation, polygraph, and psychological testing;
- Successfully complete a medical physical, to include drug and alcohol screening;
- There is no application processing fee.
- Applications must be submitted prior to May 14, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.

To apply for this position or obtain additional information, please visit the following website: <http://www.applytoserve.com>
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Algae has potential as a renewable source

Dear EarthTalk: We used to hear a lot about algae's potential as a renewable source of biofuels. Is it still being cultivated and processed accordingly?

EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

— PK., Richmond, VA

In recent years, algae has emerged as a potential renewable and less pollutive energy resource. Some species have high levels of fat, carbohydrates and proteins that can produce up to 30 times more energy than other biofuels.

And algae, unlike corn and soy-based biofuels, can thrive well in a variety of environments (including otherwise unusable waste or brackish water). Combined, the high-energy content and abundance of algae make it a promising alternative to current fuel sources.

Some companies, including the low-carbon energy research organization, Decerna, experimented with algae, hoping it could be produced at an industrial level. They cultivated it in artificial light, feeding it a mixture of glycerol, yeast and various chemicals.

They then extracted



A RESEARCHER HOLDS up laminaria saccharina sugar kelp algae in Southeast Alaska.

the functional fats and converted them into biodiesel. The researchers calculated the energy required during each stage of the process and the carbon emissions produced from burning the resulting biodiesel.

They concluded that the production process required more energy than the final product generates, and that total emissions produced during the production and combustion phases of the algae surpassed those of traditional petroleum diesel.

It was also learned that the extraction of the algae's biomolecules may involve the use of harsh chemicals or solvent, and that the growth of algae may also require chemicals like fertilizers and pesticides, which can have adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems if they get into surrounding water bodies through runoff, or if they accumulate in the algae biomass.

Mechanical procedures require fewer chemicals but are less effective at separating the diverse array of materials within the algae. Also, cultivation of algae on a large scale uses large amounts of electricity as it often relies on artificial lighting to ensure optimal and controlled growth conditions.

Moreover, the space required to grow and process algae on a commercial scale can also be a significant environmental concern. Large-scale algae cultivation facilities often occupy substantial land areas or require dedicated infrastructure such as ponds, bioreactors or photobioreactors.

Despite the promise that algae holds, there is a clear need for technological advancements across the entire supply chain. Techniques for seaweed cultivation, harvesting and transportation must be made more efficient.

Several laboratories, such as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and the Los Alamos National Laboratory, have been cultivating and manipulating particular strains of algae to genetically maximize the production of fuel biomolecules and other bioproducts. Additionally, improvements in pre-treatment methods, co-digestion processes, and the development of eco-friendly extraction techniques are essential.

Furthermore, advancements in fuel conversion technologies are necessary to ensure that the algae is economically viable and able to be implemented into the current infrastructure. With these changes, perhaps we will see the rise of algae-based biofuels in the future.

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

Grundy County seeking bids for public transit scheduling software

PUBLIC NOTICE

Advertisement for bids

Grundy County is inviting sealed proposals from responsible and responsive vendors for the procurement, implementation, and integration of a web-based dispatching and scheduling solution. Sealed proposals must be submitted in an envelope and clearly marked on the exterior "Scheduling Software" and contain four (4) copies of the complete proposal with one (1) original packet with an original signature. No responsibility or liability will be attached to any County official, employee or agent for the premature opening or failure to open any proposal not marked according to this instruction.

Grundy Transit Service (as referred GTS) is seeking competitive proposals from interested, qualified and experienced contractors to provide dispatch and scheduling software solution to manage its ADA complementary demand responsive service as well as several ancillary paratransit services. These transportation services are summarized within this RFP document. The intent of this Request for Proposal (RFP) and the ensuing process is to provide companies with the information, requirements, and specifications necessary for the preparation of a professional and comprehensive proposal. Specific terms and conditions are outlined.

If the Participant will not be selling directly to the County, it is the Participant's responsibility to choose one reseller with whom they will partner on this project.

Sealed proposals will be accepted until 3:00 pm (cst.) June 13th, 2024 at the Grundy County Finance Department, 1320 Union St., Morris, IL 60450. At 3:00pm (cst.) June 13th, 2024; sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read aloud. Fax and electronic submissions will not be accepted.

The proposed project will require full compliance with all Federal, state, and local regulations. You are invited to submit a proposal that includes your qualifications and a work plan for completion of the stated project.

Proposal documents are available at the Office of the Grundy County Finance Department, 1320 Union St., Morris, IL 60450, and for inspection online at www.grundycountyil.gov/proposals-and-rfp/ or Demandstar www.demandstar.com. The proposer remains responsible for obtaining all addenda, which will be posted at the same website.

The County of Grundy reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive technical errors or informalities in proposal.

Chris Balkema
County Board Chairman

Published in the Coal City Courant on May 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024.

City Council to hold hearing for outdoor storage at 211 N. First St.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, IL

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, on June 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., a public hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Wilmington at City Hall located at 1165 S. Water Street, Wilmington, IL to receive and consider testimony and public comment on the request of the agent of the petitioner, City of Wilmington, acting on behalf of Begler's, Inc., for Annexation, Conditional Use to Allow for Outdoor Storage and Map Amendment to B3-General Commercial of approximately 0.36 acres of property located at 211 N First Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 which property is described as follows:

The property is described as LOT 3 (EX THE W 176.9 FT) & (EX THE N 216 FT) & LOT 4 (EX THE W 176.9 FT) & (EX THE N 4.3 FT OF THE S 225.3 FT OF THE E 11.47 FT OF THE W 188.37 FT) & (EX THE S 221 FT OF THAT PRT OF LOT 4 LYG E OF THE W 188.37 FT) IN THE HEIRS OF SC THOMPSONS SUB OF THE E1/2 OF THE SE1/4 SEC 26 T33N-R9E PIN 03-17-26-405-038-0000

All interested persons are invited to attend the hearing and will have the opportunity to be heard. For additional information on this application, please contact the City of Wilmington Clerk's Office at 1165 S. Water Street, Wilmington, IL (815) 476-2175.

Joie Ziller
Deputy City Clerk
City of Wilmington

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, May 8, 2024.



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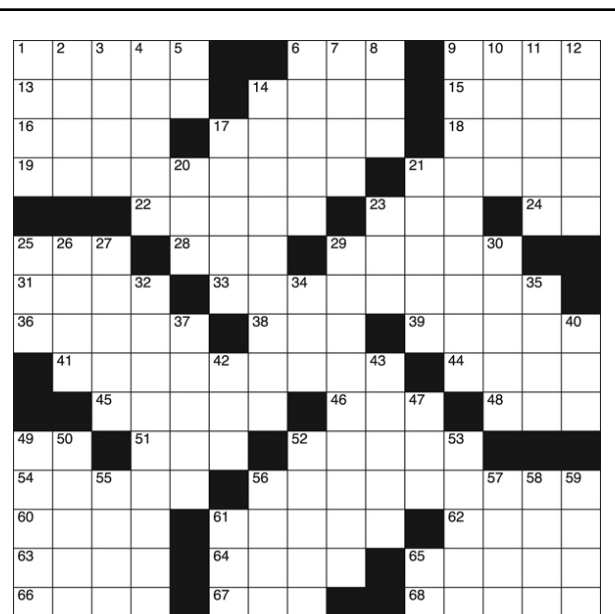
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- Fingers do it
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- The bill in a restaurant
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- Hymn

CLUES DOWN

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- Resembling a wing or wings
- Tears down
- Professional designation
- Noise a sheep made
- Type of poetry
- Speak loudly
- Ties the knot again
- Apron
- Studied intensively
- City in Finland
- One who monitors
- 18-year astronomical period
- Trent Reznor's band
- Takes to the sea
- Split pulses
- Valentine's Day color
- Wyatt
- Type of rail
- One from the Big Apple
- Asteroids
- Made more sugary
- Change in skin pigment
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese
- Koran chapters
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- Young woman ready for society life
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- Indiana town
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- Closes tightly
- It's mined in mountains
- Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
- Monetary unit
- Primordial matter
- TV station
- Rise

Lady 'Cats win 6-2 with regional next

The Wilmington girls soccer team finished the regular season Thursday with a 6-2 victory over Crete-Monee.

The Lady 'Cats were tied 2-2 with the hosts in the first half before breaking away for four scores in the second half to improve to 7-8-1 on the season.

It was a stellar night for senior Ella Banas who got the hat trick three goals and 10 steals. Freshman Addison VanDuyne hustled for two goals while junior Alaina Clark kicked

in one goal and delivered two assists while leading with 12 steals.

Wilmington's Aubrey Bryant and Remi Thomas were credited with three saves each.

The Lady 'Cats lost their senior night contest to Streator last Tuesday, 6-1. VanDuyne scored the lone goal for Wilmington while Thomas finished with six saves.

The Lady 'Cats enjoyed a 5-3 victory over Manteno breaking a 1-1 first-half tie with four goals

in the second.

Clark tallied four of Wilmington goals while VanDuyne added the other during eight shot attempts. Banas was in on three assists.

The Lady 'Cats enter the Manteno Regional on Friday as the #7 seed. They will play #2 seeded Beecher at 4:30 p.m. A victory would advance them to the May 14 title match at 5 p.m. against either Coal City or Manteno.



Photo by Eric Fisher

SQUARING UP FOR a bunt is WHS sophomore Ryan Kettman during Tuesday's game against Lisle.

'Cats get a lock on conference title

The baseball Wildcats stayed undefeated in the conference Monday, edging Streator 1-0 to assure themselves of the conference championship.

Wilmington (20-1) was to play at Streator last night but with a 12-0 conference record, there was room for at least one loss to stay in front of Coal City (10-2) who the 'Cats beat twice.

It was junior ace Lucas Rink who deserves credit for Monday's victory, striking out nine batters and walking only one over seven innings. Rink got the shutout despite four hits for the visiting Bulldogs, proof again that the Wildcats have the best defense in the conference.

It was Rink who scored the lone run in the bottom of the third inning, ending up with a double and a single. Farrell singled and walked for one RBI. Ryan Kettman and Cade McCubbin also had hits.

Wilmington 16, Shepard 5

On Saturday the 'Cats traveled to Palos Heights to lead the entire way, even though the Astros rallied from a 7-0 deficit to make it 7-5 in the fifth. The 'Cats left no doubt in the seventh when they scored eight runs off 11 hits.

McCubbin went 3-for-4 for three RBIs. Zach Ohlund hit a home run and singled to knock in four runs. Kettman had two hits, scored four times and had one RBI. Rink knocked in two runs with a hit while Jake Castle, Dierks Geiss

and Farrell each had a hit.

Drew Jackson started on the mound, going two innings with not hits, no runs, four walks and one strike out. Geiss threw one inning, giving up no runs, no hits while fanning two. Ryan Smith pitched two innings, tagged for five runs off three hits and four walks with two strikeouts. Rink closed the final two innings with no-hit pitching and six strikeouts.

Three digger day

On Friday at Dwight the Trojans made the mistake of throwing strikes Zach Ohlund who ended up with three home runs and a single in five at-bats for six RBIs.

In all the Wildcats ended up with 16 hits to beat the Trojans 13-3 over seven innings.

Rink hit two doubles for one RBI while Kettman had a double and two singles in five trips to the plate. Farrell had a pair of hits.

Castle hurled five innings, getting tagged for three runs off five hits while walking five and striking out five. Smith came on in the sixth to get past six batters.

Down the Panthers

On Thursday, Wilmington enjoyed a nine run second inning to take a 10-0 lead after two and never looked back.

Jackson, Kettman and Castle took turns on the mound for the win. In all they gave up two runs off

eight hits while walking six and striking out four.

Highlights included 3-for-5 hitting from Rink including a triple and two RBIs. Farrell, Ohlund and Castle contributed RBI singles while Geiss smacked a double for an RBI

Sweep the Blue Devils

Peotone couldn't score a run against Wilmington in with game played Tuesday and Wednesday of last week. The Cats finished with a 5-0 shutout Wednesday, 11-0 on Tuesday.

Reid Juster hit a triple and a single to lead the 'Cats on Wednesday. On Tuesday it was Brendan Moran who had three hits including a home run in three trips to the plate, while Juster finished with a double and two singles.

Rink pitched the five-inning affair on Tuesday, striking out 10 while giving up one hit.

The Cats will host Manteno on Thursday and Morris on Monday.

They will enter the Reed-Custer Regional on May 15 as they #1 seed. They will play either Peotone (11) or the Comets (9) at 4:30 p.m. If they win they will advance to the regional championship game on May 18 at 11 a.m. against the winner of a Coal City (4) vs Beecher (7) contest.



Photo by Elaine Fisher-Ohlund

SAFE AT FIRST is Wilmington's Dierks Geiss during Monday's game against Lisle. The Wildcats won 11-4.



Photo by Eric Fisher

ANOTHER SAVE—Wilmington goalie Remi Thomas prevents a goal while battling Streator at home. Nearby to assist is Aubrey Bryant.

Lady 'Cats rally to beat Streator, climb up in ICE

The Wilmington softball team moved up to second in the conference on Monday with a little help from first place Manteno.

The Panthers edged Coal City, who was second, 2-1 while the Lady Wildcats were rallying to beat Streator 4-3.

The visiting Bulldogs were up 3-1 in the top of the second until Wilmington scored one run in the third to close to within 3-2. The score remained unchanged until the bottom of the sixth when the Lady 'Cats scored a tying and go-ahead runs to end up winning by one.

Wilmington (15-4 overall, 10-3 in the ICE) out-hit Streator nine to five, led by Taylor Stefancic who went 3-for-4 with a double and two RBIs. Molly Southall had a pair of hits in three at-bats finishing with a walk and one RBI. Nina Egizio doubled and singled in a run while Sami Liaromatis also doubled and singled.

Lexi Strohm pitched four innings, giving up three runs off two hits while striking out six and walking three. Ally Allgood finished with three strikeouts over 2,2 innings while getting tagged for three hits.

Morris 8, Wilmington 3

In a non-conference game on Friday, the hosting Lady 'Cats saw their 2-1 lead vanish in the top of the sixth when Morris plated four runs and then added three more in the seventh.

Wilmington ended up with 11 hits but two costly errors hurt. Three Lady Cats,

each with a double, ended with two hits each. They were Giana Stahulak, Stefancic, and Liaromatis. Alyssa Johnston also hit a double.

Keeley Walsh, Alea Delangel, Addison Billingsley and Egizio also contributed hits. Sophomore slugger Southall was walked three times to avoid adding to her team leading 11 home runs.

Wilmington 12, Peotone 0

The hosting Blue Devils were silenced on Tuesday after it took 13 innings the night before to beat them 2-1.

The time the Lady 'Cats came out swinging, scoring three runs in the first, two runs in the second and third innings, four in the fourth and one in the fifth to end it by mercy rule.

Strohm hurled three innings of shutout ball, giving up two hits while fanning two. Allgood pitched two innings with four strikeouts and two hits while keeping them scoreless.

Southall had one hit and was walked three times. Egizio, Stahulak, Billingsley and Liaromatis turned in two hits each.

Next up

The Lady 'Cats (#5 seed) have two regular season games left, both at home, St. Anne on Thursday and Beecher on Friday.

Then they enter a tough regional at Joliet Catholic Academy (#3), facing the host team on May 15 at 4:30 p.m. If they beat JCA, they likely will face Beecher (#1) for the title on May 17 at 4:30 p.m.

'Cats place 6th at Herscher Invite

The Wilmington High School track and field travelled to Herscher to compete in the Herscher Invite on Monday, May 6. The boys finished in sixth place in the 11-team field and the girls finished 6th, as well.

Junior Sara Falcon had the best night for the girls, placing in all of her events and setting personal records in the triple jump and 300 hurdles. Top performance for the boys was sophomore Billy Moore who won the long jump and placed in the 100 and triple jump, as well as anchoring the 4th place 4X400 relay. The girls and boys set 4 new personal records on the night, bringing their season total to 81. Girl performances were:

Ava Cupples - SR - 19'08 - 9th, discus - 82'02 - 5th
Brooklyn Flores - JR - 3200 - 12:24.42 - 1ST
Sara Falcon - JR - 300 hurdles - 57.94 (PR) - 4th, high jump - 4'01 - 5th, long jump - 12'11 - 4th, triple jump - 30'01 (PR) - 2nd
Jessica Schnittger - JR - shot - 27'09 -

4th
Boy performances were:
Cody Prindiville - SR - 800 - 2:17.95 - 9th
Reid Waldon - JR - high jump - 5'02 - 4th, shot - 34'01 - 8th
Andrew Boersma - SO - discus - 64'11 - 15th
Alex Lawson - SO - 200 - 26.08 - 13th
Billy Moore - SO - 100 - 11.97 - 5th, triple jump - 37'01 - 2nd, long jump - 18'07 - 1ST
Sam Payne - SO - shot - 28'09 - 12th
Sean Vasquez - SO - 200 - 26.83 - 17th, 400 - 56.09 (PR) - 6th
Jimmy Lewsader - FR - 400 - 58.42 (PR) - 8th
4X400 relay - 3:43.51 - 4th - Waldon, Lewsader, Prindiville, Moore

The Lady Wildcats returned to action when they travelled to Seneca on Thursday, May 9, to compete in the IHSA Seneca Sectional Meet in hopes of qualifying for the state finals in Charleston on May 16-18. The boys sectional is Wednesday, May 15, in Seneca.

Flores, relay team lead WHS tracksters

The Wilmington High School track and field travelled to Manteno to compete the ICE conference meet at Manteno on Thursday, May 2. Junior Brooklyn Flores had the best night for the girls, winning the 1600, 3200, and placing second in the 800. Top performance for the boys was the 4X400 relay team of Reid Waldon, Jimmy Lewsader, Cody Prindiville, and Billy Moore, which won the race with a personal record (PR) time of 3:40.77. The girls and boys set five new personal records on the night, bringing their season total to 77. Girl performances were:

Ava Cupples - SR - discus - 86'11 - 3rd, shot - 25'00 (PR) - 7th
Brooklyn Flores - JR - 1600 - 5:34.08 - 1ST, 3200 - 12:43.71 - 1ST, 800 - 2:31.17 - 2nd
Sara Falcon - JR - triple jump - 28'03 (PR) - 7th, 200 - 30.74 - 9th
Jessica Schnittger - JR - shot - 29'07 - 3rd, discus

- 79'07 - 8th
Boy performances were:
Cody Prindiville - SR - 800 - 2:14.58 - 6th
Reid Waldon - JR - high jump - 5'05 - 7th, 800 - 2:21.55 - 10th
Andrew Boersma - SO - discus - 75'01 - 12th, shot - 32'06 - 11th
Will Friddle - SO - 200 - 27.93 - 13th
Dom Guzier - SO - 100 - 12.96 - 10th, discus - 75'00 - 13th
Alex Lawson - SO - 200 - 26.68 - 12th
Billy Moore - SO - triple jump - 37'00 - 4th, long jump - 17'08 - 3rd
Sam Payne - SO - shot - 31'09 - 13th
Sean Vasquez - SO - 400 - 57.95 (PR) - 6th
Jimmy Lewsader - FR - 400 - 1:00.48 - 10th
4X100 relay - 49.81 (PR) - 5th - Guzier, Lewsader, Friddle, Alex Boyer
4X200 relay - 1:48.01 - 5th - Boyer, Lawson, Friddle, Aiden Poulos
4X400 relay - 3:40.77 (PR) - 1ST - Waldon,

Lewsader, Prindiville, Moore
The Wildcats returned to action when they travelled to Herscher on Monday, May 6, for the Herscher Invitational. The girls compete Thursday, May 9, in the IHSA Seneca Sectional Meet in hopes of qualifying for the state finals in Charleston on May 16-18.
The Wilmington High School track and field travelled to Braidwood to compete in a triangular meet with two Comet teams, the host Reed-Custer and Clifton Central, on Tuesday, April 30.
Sophomore Sean Vasquez had the best night, setting two personal records (PR's). The girls and boys each set 3 new personal records on the night, bringing their season total to 72. Girl performances were:
Ava Cupples - SR - discus - 98'09 (PR) - 1ST, 200 - 31.87
Brooklyn Flores - JR - 1600 - 5:32.68 (PR) - 1ST

Sara Falcon - JR - high jump - 4'02 - 3rd, 200 - 30.60 (PR) - 2nd
Boy performances were:
Cody Prindiville - SR - 800 - 2:19.83 - 2nd
Alex Boyer - JR - 100 - 13.41, 200 - 27.24
Reid Waldon - JR - high jump - 5'04 - 100 - 12.77 - 3rd
Andrew Boersma - SO - discus - 73'07
Will Friddle - SO - 200 - 27.78 - 8th
Dom Guzier - SO - discus - 76'06 - 8th
Alex Lawson - SO - 100 - 13.38 - 8th, 200 - 26.62 - 6th
Billy Moore - SO - 100 - 12.25 - 1ST
Aiden Poulos - SO - 100 - 13.13 - 6th
Sean Vasquez - SO - 100 - 13.04 (PR) - 4th, discus - 69'10 (PR) - 10th
Jimmy Lewsader - FR - 100 - 13.16 (PR) - 7th, 200 - 26.53 - 5th