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D'Orazio, Arnie Bauer leaving Wilmington for Braidwood

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The city of Braidwood is expanding inside the business park that sits between Division Street and I-55, with plans to lure two car dealerships from the city of Wilmington to Braidwood's northwest side.

On June 8, the Braidwood City Council held a special meeting to approve a redevelopment agreement with Bauer & D'Orazio, LLC.

The agreement will bring D'Orazio Ford and Arnie Bauer Chevrolet into the subdivision at EZ Street and Division Street, which is located inside the city's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) III district.

The agreement includes a total of 64 acres of land that will be purchased by the City of Braidwood for \$1.8 million, and conveyed to Bauer & D'Orazio, LLC for construction of a new Ford dealership and a new Chevrolet dealership. The D'Orazio Ford dealership is expected to be built on 11.7 acres, while the Arnie Bauer

Chevrolet dealership will take up 8 acres. The new dealerships will sit adjacent to Camping World and Warren's Collision Center.

D'Orazio has been located on Water Street in Wilmington next to City Hall since 2012.

Arnie Bauer, whose flagship dealership is located in Matteson, has been in Wilmington at the former site of Lombardi's on Route 53 since early 2020.

In addition to the land purchase, the city of Braidwood will make "certain infrastructure improvements on the remainder of the property for further commercial and retail development."

Roger D'Orazio said for his dealership, the move is all about finding the right fit.

"We chose Braidwood for the location," he said, noting that the dealership has outgrown its current spot in Wilmington. The commercial property was put on the market for \$3.8 million. The new dealership will be about four times the size of the current

site. "[Braidwood city administrator] Tony Altieri worked so hard to get us here, and that kind of sealed the deal for us," D'Orazio said. "We're hoping to break ground in August. Our building will be 70,000 square feet... We're also hoping to do one or two hotels on the property as well."

D'Orazio said while there is no agreement yet, the intent is to build hotels that are part of national chains.

"Camping World really needs a hotel. We do a lot of work with them," he said. The dealership also anticipates large truck sales and repairs on site.

Arnie Bauer owners also have big plans for their new site.

"We love the location that we're looking at right now, and the people that it will bring from a large circle around us will be drawn to Braidwood," Darrin Bauer said. "It's easy to get to and we're just very excit-

SEE DEALERS, PAGE 2



LOCATION DETERMINED — D'Orazio Ford in Wilmington put their commercial property up for sale and announced plans to move "out near the interstate" last year. The dealership, along with Arnie Bauer Chevrolet, have signed an official agreement to move to the city of Braidwood by 2024.

Photo by Marney Simon

City leaders eye upkeep of derelict properties

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

City leaders in Wilmington are hoping the city's public works crews can help take care of some derelict properties in town, in an effort to keep the city looking tidy.

On June 7, members of the City Council briefly discussed some properties in town where overgrowth was well beyond what is allowable by code. In particular, the property at 103 S. McIntyre St., which has been an eyesore and a thorn in the proverbial paw of city leaders for at least the past four years.

"It's quite a site for everybody coming into our town," Alderman Dennis Vice said. "I'm not saying it's right for us to cut it, but nobody else is cutting it."

According to the Will County Recorder of Deeds, the empty home was transferred by mortgage release to Citifinancial Servicing, LLC back in 2016. The city has cut the grass and cut back overgrowth on the property multiple times, but has had no luck getting in touch with the LLC to pay for the fees related to that service.

Grass that is higher than eight inches tall is in violation of the city's code of ordinances, and subject to classification as "nuisance greenery" a subsequent fines. Removal of nuisance greenery can be completed by the city at cost plus a \$50 administrative fee.

While public works plans to address the issue, the city is unable to create a regular schedule for upkeep for the McIntyre property or other properties in town that have

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 2

Stocked and ready to rock



THE SOUTH ISLAND POND is off limits to fishermen as it has been stocked with catfish for the annual Wilmington Lions Club youth fishing derby. Approximately 200 pounds of catfish have been stocked leading up to the Saturday, June 25 event. The contest is open to boys and girls ages 2 to 12 years who register at the pond from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on June 25. Those ages 2-5 years old can begin fishing at 4:30, the rest at 5 p.m. The fishing will end at 6:30 p.m. with prizes awarded for all age groups. For more information contact John Persic at 815-210-5155.

Forked Creek bridge project moves ahead

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

More than a decade after plans to widen Wilmington's stone bridge on Kankakee Street over Forked Creek were first put into motion, Phase 1 of the project is finally underway.

On June 7, the Wilmington City Council approved two measures related to the project, which originally kicked off in July 2009, when city leaders investigated the costs associated with repairing the aging structure.

In 2011, the city was moving forward with preliminary plans for construction, but in 2012 the state issued a memorandum that all bridges more than 50 years old and slated for replacement or substantial renovations must first undergo evaluation as a potential historical structure.

While additional planning, reports and surveys moved ahead, it was not until 2018 when the state determined the bridge has historical significance, and is therefore subject to protections

under the National Historic Preservation Act.

That designation means that while the bridge can be repaired and widened, it cannot be removed and replaced completely.

The four-span masonry arch bridge dates to the 1840s, according to the state.

The approvals made by the council last week include an agreement for engineering services, and an amendment to the original agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to add a city expenditure of \$47,531 for Phase 1—preliminary engineering—of the project.

City administrator Jeannine Smith said previously, the city was under the assumption that Phase 1 of the project was already complete, however, Phase 1 is not slated for completion until next month. The funds will come from the city's Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) fund.

The net total for Phase 1 is \$237,655.

The work is being completed by the contractor. SEE BRIDGE, PAGE 3

Will County reports 13 overdose deaths in one week period

STAFF REPORT

The Will County coroner has issued a public alert after 13 suspected drug overdose deaths in one week.

The deaths took place between June 6 and June 12.

Will County Coroner Laurie H. Summers indicated that majority of these overdose deaths have been due to cocaine mixed with fentanyl. Summer's office issued an alert on June 8, urging family members and friends of those

with substance abuse disorder to understand that street drugs containing lethal doses of fentanyl are the likely culprit.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) reported that since the start of the month, multiple opioid overdoses, both fatal and non-fatal, have occurred in collar counties surrounding Cook County.

In a statement, the IDPH noted that "Coroner interviews with those knowledge-

able about drug use circumstances suggest those who died thought they had purchased cocaine and were social (not regular) users.

"If taking illicit substances, there are precautions that can be utilized to reduce risk for fatal and non-fatal overdose," the statement continued. "Consider testing the substance for fentanyl using fentanyl test strips. Carry naloxone and do not use substances alone. Also, be aware that more than one dose of

naloxone may be required to reverse an overdose, especially when synthetic opioids are involved."

The Will County Rapid Response Team deploys Naloxone to high-risk communities and helps individuals with a substance use disorder connect to recovery resources. Naloxone, commonly referred to by the brand name Narcan, is a nasal spray that can neutralize the effects of an opioid overdose. The team works closely

with the Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community (WCHC) and the Braidwood Area Healthy Community Coalition (BAHCC) to distribute Narcan and provide information and education on substance abuse disorder locally.

"We're out there. We were

SEE OVERDOSE, PAGE 2



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Dealers

ed about it.”
The new dealership will be about double the size of the current Arnie Bauer location. The Bauers added that being situated by the interstate provides a dealership with better visibility.

“We want to grow, and this will give us the opportunity for growth,” he said. “Between both of us, car dealerships produce a lot of revenue for the city. There aren’t many people who produce more than car dealerships. It’s a win for everybody, it’s a win for us, it’s a win for the city. The land is perfect.”

The owners said the dealership ownership is a tough but rewarding business.

“It’s never easy, it’s a very tough business. And it’s a complicated business. But, it’s a fun business. Once you start, you just get addicted to it, you can’t stop. And everybody who ends up working there just loves it,” D’Orazio said.

The deal includes TIF eligible incentives up to \$4.765 million, including:

- Real Estate Tax Increment — the city will reimburse the developers 100% of the annual net real estate tax increment generated by the dealerships, until the developer has received the TIF eligible project costs. For other development within the 64 acres, the city will reimburse 50% of net real estate tax increment generated by retail or commercial development.
- Municipal Sales Tax —

The city will reimburse the developer 55% of municipal sales tax revenues generated by the dealerships in calendar years 2025 through 2034.

• Construction projects — Those projects to be constructed by the developer that are eligible for TIF reimbursement include site preparation, grading, engineering, architectural services, legal services, planning, infrastructure improvements, utilities extensions, and job training.

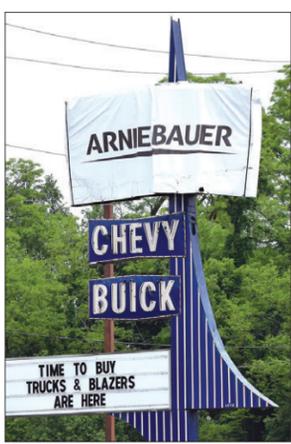
In addition, the city will waive all permit fees and utility tap on fees for the two dealerships. The city will also construct a left turn lane onto north Division Street, which is currently a right in/right out only.

As far as the city’s \$1.8 million property purchase, funds will come from the issuance of debt certificates.

Debt certificates are bonds the city can sell to investors in order to raise funds. The money is deposited into a debt service fund dedicated for the specific appropriation. The investors are paid back those funds plus interest when the bonds mature.

The property to be purchased is currently held by a trust. According to the real estate contract, the seller is Perliita’s Daughters, LLC, which is managed by Karen Relucio of California, Kristin Relucio of Oregon, and Cecily Relucio-Hensler of Chicago.

The city council will hold a special meeting today (Wednesday) in order to designate Mayor Bob Jones and Finance Commissioner Doug



ARNIE BAUER CHEVY-Buick opened on Route 53 in Wilmington at the site of the old Lombardi dealership in 2020. Bauer will move to Braidwood along with D’Orazio Ford by 2024.

Money to execute any necessary documents related to the issuance of those certificates.

The deal to bring the two dealerships to Braidwood took about a year to put together on paper.

A major plus for the city when it comes to the new dealerships is the tax dollars they bring in, not just in sales and income tax, but property tax.

In 2021, D’Orazio Ford produced \$36,647 just in property taxes, with the lion’s share—\$19,472—earmarked for Wilmington School District 209-U. About \$5,100 was paid into the fire protection district and almost \$3,900 to the city.

However, the city of Braidwood and the other taxing districts won’t be collecting those additional tax dollars just yet.

Braidwood’s TIF III district was established in 2011. By law, TIF districts are limited to 23 years, but can be terminated prior to the 23 year mark.

TIF districts work to capture tax dollars within the TIF boundaries. The annual increase in tax payments on each property in the district is held in a special fund rather than being distributed to the taxing districts. Those funds are then used to pay for infrastructure projects and other items to attract growth.

The council approved an ordinance authorizing the TIF redevelopment agreement by a vote of 3-0-1, with Commissioner Warren Wheiting opting to abstain as a business owner in the commercial subdivision.

The council voted 4-0 to approve an ordinance issuing the \$1.8 million in debt certificates as well as an ordinance to execute the real estate contract on the property.

Commissioner Fay Smith did not attend the meeting.

Ground breaking is expected to take place later this summer, and construction is anticipated to take up to 24 months, dependent on supply chain issues and construction costs.

Per the agreement, both dealerships must be completed on or before Dec. 24, 2024.

Dietz comments on plans for dealerships to move

Wilmington Mayor Ben Dietz on Tuesday issued a statement regarding plans for D’Orazio Ford and Arnie Bauer Chevy-Buick to close down shop in Wilmington in order to move to Braidwood. The statement reads in part:

“While we have a great deal of good things happening in and around town, and even more on the horizon, I have some unfortunate news to share. Last Thursday, at a special city council meeting in Braidwood, the Braidwood City Council passed an ordinance to essentially take out a \$1.8-million-dollar loan to help finance a new location for D’Orazio Ford and Arnie Bauer Chevy. Obviously, that is not the outcome we hoped would happen.

“The potential relocation was brought to my attention during my first week as Mayor over a year ago. Even though I was an Alderman for two years prior I was not aware of any intention for them to leave or deals being made on behalf of the city to retain them. Immediately we began to work to find a way to keep

them in town. In that process I also included our city council as they are an integral check on how the city conducts business and authorizes deals. I, along with the full support of the council, rejected D’Orazio’s prior demand which included Wilmington purchasing their existing building with public funds in the amount of \$3.5 million. The demand that the city take out debt with public money to help finance a private business was not something I as a resident, or as the mayor, felt was fiscally responsible.

“...I understand that the lack of information can cause rumors and misinformation to run rampant. To that end I want to be transparent to our residents, and to our other small business owners, that the city council and myself are very dedicated to our community and keeping our business community thriving. With that, I am making all my communication with D’Orazio available for review at City Hall.”

Dietz’s full statement can be found on the city’s Facebook page.

District 209-U seeks proposals for Stevens Intermediate energy improvements

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR REQUEST-FOR-PROPOSALS

Wilmington Community Unit School District 209U hereby gives public notice that it is requesting proposals from interested and qualified energy services companies (ESCO) for the following project: PERFORMANCE CONTRACT FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION & FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

In conjunction with this contract, the District is interested in solutions for the following baseline opportunities:

1. Replacement of the heating and air conditioning systems and associated work at L.J. Stevens Intermediate School, along with any resulting, necessary asbestos abatement or pipe/ceiling replacement.

To be paid from guaranteed annual energy and operation cost savings in accordance with 105 ILCS 5/Article 19b requirements.

The District plans to select the most qualified Contractor for the purpose of negotiating a final contract. A Letter-of-Intent (LOI) will be issued to the selected qualified Contractor.

Copies of the Request-for-Proposal (RFP) are available at the School District Office (209u Wildcat Court; Wilmington, IL 60481) or at the [1] Capital Development Board website: <https://www2.illinois.gov/cdb/procurement/escos/>

All questions about the RFP are required to be sent via e-mail (not phone) to Matt Swick – mswick@209u.net. Potential respondents shall not call or contact any other representative from the District directly.

The District will host a mandatory pre-proposal meeting June 30, 2022. The meeting will commence at 1:00 p.m. at the District Office, 209u Wildcat Court, Wilmington, IL 60481. After a review of the RFP, attendees will have the option to tour the school building where the heating and air conditioning units are located. No other walk-throughs will be permitted.

Paper copies of all Proposals must be received at the following address by August 4, 2022, 10:00 AM CST, after which time they will no longer be accepted. A public opening of all proposals received shall follow immediately.

Wilmington School District 209U
209u Wildcat Court
Wilmington, IL 60481
Disclosure

An Architectural and Engineering review of the RFP responses will be completed by Healy Bender Patton & Been Architects. The final scope including definition, drawings, specifications, and permits are the sole responsibility of any selected ESCO. The District reserves the right to request changes to the ESCO’s proposed scope of work, drawings, specifications, etc. based upon the results of the architectural and engineering review during the Evaluation and Review of Proposals time period and/or during the contract negotiation period. The District also reserves the right to seek input and guidance from Healy Bender Patton & Been Architects throughout the entirety of the project.

As a part of any submitted RFP response received by 10:00am on August 4, 2022. Contractors will provide the following information to be reviewed by Healy Bender Patton Been Architects and District officials:

- * Schematic drawings
- * Letter detailing the scope of work
- * Specifications and Equipment Submit

NO DUE DATE EXTENSIONS SHALL BE GRANTED.
Matthew W. Swick, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Wilmington School District 209u
815.926.1751
@WilmingtonLearn

As Iron Sharpens Iron
Links: [1] <https://www2.illinois.gov/cdb/procurement/escos/>
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, June 15 and 22, 2022.

Manhattan Fire Protection District hearing on budget

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held on the Tentative Budget of the MANHATTAN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT in the County of Will and State of Illinois for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2022 and ending April 30, 2023 at the Manhattan Fire Station located at 100 Park Road, Manhattan, Illinois on July 18, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

The Tentative Budget for the MANHATTAN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT for said fiscal year ending April 30, 2023 is now posted on the bulletin board of the Manhattan Fire Station, 100 Park Road, Manhattan, Illinois and is conveniently available for public inspection.

Dated: June 15, 2022.
WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Published in the Free Press Advocate on June 15, 2022.

Wilmington Fire Protection District hearing on budget

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held on the Tentative Budget of the WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT in the County of Will and State of Illinois for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 2022 and ending April 30, 2023 at the Wilmington Fire Station located at 501 N. Main Street, Wilmington, Illinois on July 20, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

The Tentative Budget for the WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT for said fiscal year ending on April 30, 2023 is now posted on the bulletin board of the said WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT station and is conveniently available for public inspection.

Dated: June 15, 2022.
WILMINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Published in the Free Press Advocate on June 15, 2022.

Attorney McGrath files Hahn 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 ROBERT GENE HAHN, Deceased.
Case No.: 22 PR318

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given to creditors, of the death of ROBERT GENE HAHN, of New Lenox, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued May 24, 2022, to MISTY CAVANAUGH, as Independent Executor whose address is 813 Hollow Glen, Joliet, IL 60431, whose attorney of record is TIMOTHY J. McGRATH, of 440 S. State Street, Manhattan, IL, 60442. The estate will be administered without court supervision unless under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (IL. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755 par. 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed with the Clerk of the Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois, 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before the date of December 8, 2022, or 3 months from the date of mailing or delivery, whichever is later, and that any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

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

Misty Cavanaugh, Independent Executor of the Estate of Robert Gene Hahn, Deceased.
Timothy J. McGrath - 6193170
McGrath Law, P.C.
440 S. State Street
Manhattan, IL 60442
(815) 478-4020
mcgrath@tmcgrathlaw.com

Attorney McGrath files Esposito 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 ANTHONY T. ESPOSITO, Deceased.
Case No.: 22 PR 326

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given to creditors, of the death of ANTHONY T. ESPOSITO, of Manhattan, Illinois. Letters of Office were issued May 24, 2022, to GINA ESPOSITO, Independent Administrator, whose address is 230 Lee St., Manhattan, IL 60442, whose attorney of record is Timothy J. McGrath, of 440 S. State Street, Manhattan, IL, 60442. The estate will be administered without court supervision unless under Section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act (IL. Compiled Stat. 1992, Ch. 755 par. 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed with the Clerk of the Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois, 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before the date of December 8, 2022, or 3 months from the date of mailing or delivery, whichever is later, and that any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

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

Gina Esposito, Independent Administrator of the Estate of Anthony T. Esposito, Deceased.
Timothy J. McGrath - 6193170
McGrath Law, P.C.
440 S. State Street
Manhattan, IL 60442
(815) 478-4020
mcgrath@tmcgrathlaw.com

Attorney Maloney files Passas Estate Claim

PUBLIC 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 MARGARET M. PASSAS, DECEASED
NO. 2022PR000229

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Margaret M. Passas. Letters of Office as Independent Executor were issued on May 12, 2022 to James Walsh, whose address is 5201 Gardiner Glen Dr., Plainfield, IL 60586-5859. The attorney for the Independent Executor is E. William Maloney, 2093 Rand Road, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016-4727.

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 December 8, 2022, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

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

James Walsh, Independent Executor of the Estate of Margaret M. Passas, Deceased.
E. William Maloney
ARDC 01744305
Maloney & Craven, P.C.
2092 Rand Road,
DesPlaines, IL 60016-4727
(847) 635-1341
Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, June 8, 15, and 22, 2022.

Overdose

in Wilmington all weekend, we were at Canal Days, from Thursday through Sunday we gave out 127 boxes of Narcan and 57 fentanyl test strips,” Connie Dewart from Will County Substance Abuse Initiatives told members of the BAHCC this week.

Earlier this year, Will County allocated \$175,000 in federal funds to the team to help provide resources to the community, including Narcan, assistance for individuals seeking substance use disorders treatment and short-term housing while awaiting admission to care.

“We understand this is a troubling time and want people to know there is help,” said Public Health and Safety Chair Rachel Ventura. “The Will County Rapid Response Team is ready to distribute Narcan and fentanyl testing strips to anyone who wants or needs it. The Rapid Response Team is also available to help individuals who are ready for treatment. Narcan can be found in most micropantries and is frequently restocked in hot spots. Time is of the essence to save lives right now.”

While Narcan is often stocked in those micropantries, exposure to excessive heat

Council

begun the process for accreditation.

“The accreditation process has begun though the Illinois Chiefs of Police, it will be an ongoing process for about a year,” Mitchell said. “It’s a pretty arduous process of getting us fully accredited for best practices, polices and procedures. It will be a good thing for us when we get it done.”

Accreditation is granted to departments that meet the highest standards in administration, operations, personnel and training.

• The council approved the finance accounts payable in the amount of \$310,995. Those payments include \$113,678 in payroll expenses,

(above 104 degrees) can potentially affect the potency of the life saving medicine. Narcan should be kept at room temperature.

Experts also note that some people often require two doses of Narcan to neutralize an overdose.

Local prevention leaders urged the public to stay aware of the problem, after the coroner announced that additional deaths were likely to be reported throughout the week.

“We’ve just got to power through and if we can help one person, we’re doing the right thing. Don’t get discouraged,” BAHCC program director Pete Dell’Aquila said. “This is definitely something to keep eyes on.”

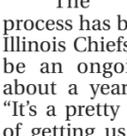
Will County Substance Use Initiatives Director Dr. Kathleen Burke, oversees the Rapid Response Team. Dr. Burke can be reached at 708-205-5782 or kathleenburke@willcountyllinois.com.

Not including the most recent deaths, the coroner’s office reports 44 cases of heroin/fentanyl related deaths in 2022. Those include a 28-year-old male from Wilmington in January, a 54-year-old male from Braidwood in February, and a 29-year-old male from Elwood in February.

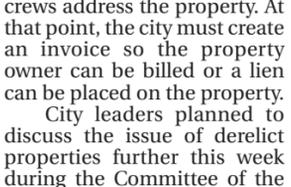
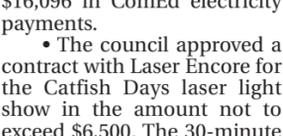
In 2021, there were a total of 111 heroin/fentanyl related deaths in Will County, including two in Wilmington.

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Deadline for The Free Press Advocate, Braidwood Journal and Coal City Courant

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher
Marney Simon, editor

The French Fort, fact or fiction?



TIME WAS...
Sandy Vasko

Today we step away from Wilmington and travel up to New Lenox to look at a controversial structure that teaches historians to dig, dig, and dig to get to the truth.

The French Fort is located on W. Francis Road in New Lenox in Higginbotham woods. Harlow Higginbotham was a self-made millionaire who made his fortune with the Marshall Field family, and who was president of the 1893 Columbian Exposition.

He built a mansion there and used it to showcase his fabulous collections of art, antiques and furniture.

The earth walled structure that is also located there, was known to the local Native Americans and early pioneers,

though no one knew what it really was.

It had been known to local residents as "The French Fort," and of course that might be at reasonable explanation for it. As we know the French traded with the local Indians in the late 1700's and they had built a fort on the Illinois River at Starved Rock.

But the problem was that forts were built on a navigable river in a high, strategic place. The small creek nearest the structure was never navigable. Even Hickory Creek, about 1,500 feet away was not a know trade route for the French voyageurs. Also no French artifacts were ever found anywhere near it.

In addition, no mention is made of it in the archives in Montreal, where every voyage and fort, every exploration was documented by the Jesuit priests. So it remains a mystery why it was known, even early on as the French Fort.

The physical description is as follows. It is roughly rectangular, although not perfectly so. The walls are made of clay that has been scooped up from the hill on which it stands, cre-

ating a trench just outside the walls. Although the walls must have been much higher, they have been eroded down to only several feet.

In 1896 a local archeologist printed an article in the Joliet Weekly Sun trying to dispel the persistent rumor of the French being involved.

He wrote that there were trees growing inside the enclosure that were over seven feet in diameter, meaning it had not been occupied for centuries before the French trade era, therefore it must belong to the Native Americans that occupied the land at that time. Unfortunately no one listened to him, and the structure was still attributed to the French.

Fast forward to late 1960's when Jack Schauer, President of the Will County Historical Society, claimed to have investigated the site and that it was positively made by the French. His explanation for lack of artifacts was that he burned down before it was put into use.

At that point the Society did a serious dig. Along with Mr. Schauer they did a series of digs and pronounced it defi-

nitely of European origin, thus it must be a French Fort.

The artifacts that they supposedly uncovered were later found to be naturally occurring iron concretions found in many places in the county. None the less, they stuck to their guns and convinced many others to believe as they did.

By 1971 the land had been acquired by the Joliet Park District, and they built a "reconstructed fort" according to the plan laid out by Schauer and the Historical Society. However, it was vandalized and had to be demolished less than a decade later.

Finally, in the late 1980's serious work was performed on the site and the results were not startling. The earthwork has many similarities with the effigy mound culture called the Medewinin that worshiped nature.

There were no artifacts found inside the works, indicating that it had never been occupied. All of the artifacts found outside the walls were Native American, mostly chips from arrowhead making.

The conclusion was print-

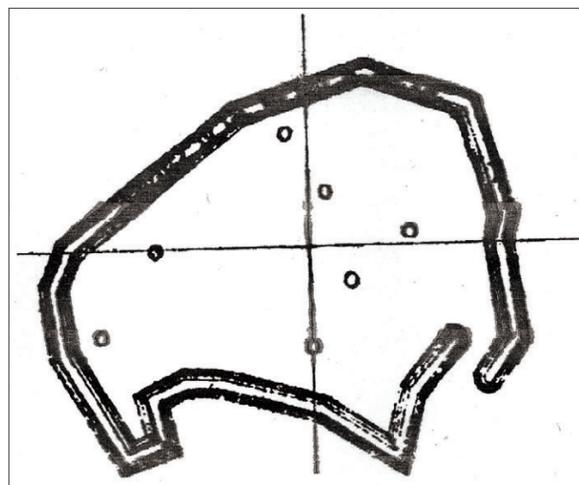


Diagram of earthworks

Fig. 3. First published map of the earthwork surveyed by Adam Comstock in 1894. Hollow circles mark the locations of tree stumps within the enclosure (from Ferriss 1896). Cross-hairs denotes the four points of the compass, with north to the top.

A DRAWING OF the walls of the so-called French Fort. It more resembles an effigy mound than a fort, but that has not stopped people from believing the myth.

ed in the Midcontinental Journal of Archeology in 1994 and the site was given a name - the Comstock Trace. The structure was definitely Native American in origin and could not possibly be a French Fort.

So, this begs the question,

how do we interpret it today? If you drive by there you will see that old ideas die hard. It is still labeled as the old French Fort on the signs near it. But, I suppose it is more romantic or interesting to think of it that way.

Farewell to the Free Press Advocate

BY ELLA COOPER
WHS Student Reporter

By the time you read this know that this is my final article for as the student reporter for the Free Press Newspapers.

This position was given to me based off of happenstance. It wasn't originally on my schedule that I made as a sophomore, but at the start of this year as a high school junior I had a hiccup with one of my classes and my guidance counselor told me general information on being a student reporter.

I figured it was a sign, that this was an open opportunity for a reason, so without knowing much of anything about reporting, I jumped right in.

The first week was very fast paced, I wrote my first article and composed my first senior profiles, with plenty of critiques and help along the way.

Right from the start, I loved it. I have always been an avid reader and found joy in writing stories and essays since I was in middle school.

The only aspect I struggled with was putting

myself out there for the interviews. I was lucky, most of the individuals I approached over the last 10 months were very easy to talk to. But, it took a lot of time to interview people without getting a little anxious.

Teachers and faculty at Wilmington High School were extremely helpful with different story ideas and interviews. Not to mention publisher Eric Fisher, who walked me through formatting, writing, and the interviewing process behind the scenes.

This entire opportunity has helped me grow so much in many different ways. I have found a much improved writing ability and more confidence in myself.

I take great pride in the articles I have produced, and I will never forget the feeling of seeing my name and my work in print.

I am truly grateful for this once in a lifetime chance to write for our town's paper, and I cannot wait to see what the next student reporter will accomplish.

WHS second semester honor roll

Superior Honors-GPA of 4.3 or higher

Grade 9: Hannah Basinger, Alaina Clark, Cole Drown, Kaylen Hansen, Drew Jackson, Shawn James, Spencer Parrish, Nicole Quigley, Evan Surdey, Joseph Van Duynes and Reid Waldon.

Grade 10: Bryn Bianchetta, Jenna Dabulskis, Paige Eighner, Alyssa Johnston, William Juster, Alexis Liaromatis, Cade McCubbin, Isabella Reyes, Channing Sexton, McKenzie Shields, Clara Smith, Giana Stahulak, Emma Grace Strong, Lily Turcany and Talin Yakima.

Grade 11: Alexa Clark, Ella Cooper, Haley Dempsay, Karissa Esposito, Olivia Hansen, Breanna Horton, Colin James, Kylie Motykowski, Abby Pitts and Veronica Weck.

Grade 12: Jessica Castle, Raelene Desrochers, Cougar Forsythe, Kaden Humphries, Jenna Jackson, Bridget Knowles, Anna Liaromatis, Jacob Mackenzie, Katelyn McCann, Katelyn McLin, Abigail Rampa, Drake Robertson, Neve Van Duynes and Chandler Wuchter.

High Honors-GPA of 3.9 to 4.299

Grade 9: Uriel Aguillon, Alexander Boyer, Jamie Cahill, Nevaeh Cardoza, Camdyn Cieszkiewicz, Ava Coplea, Alexandra Delangel, Sara Falcon, Kyle Farrell, Brycen Feil, Brooklyn Flores, David Freeman, Alexander Hertz, Julie Key, Kylee Knowles, Rylee Lehnert, Maggie Lindsey, Faith Mackenzie, Jonathan McGonagle, Hunter Osipavicius, Lucas Rink, Skylar Rossow, Jessica Schnittger, Delaney Watenpugh and Cameron Willis.

Grade 10: Logan Adermann, Ella Banas, Sara Borik, Alexander Boynton, Aubrey Bryant, Aaron Michael Burkey, Ava Cupples, Andrew Dedo, Keegan Forsythe, Emily G e i s s ,

Brittany Horton, Tanner Kerwin, Avery Kuypers, Claire Lenart, Abigail Mandac, Hannah Melvin, Jonathan Mossell, Berkley Rink, Izabella Rivera, Madison Stocking, McKayla Van Duynes, Aaliyah Van Us, Emilia Williams and Kyle Youngquist.

Grade 11: Gwendolyn Boyer, Grace Burkey, Raena Delangel, Avrie Desrochers, Tristen Doyle, Savannah Gorski, Jacob Hertz, Maxwell Higgins, Kaylan Hughes-Hawkins, Brenna Jewell, Bryce Jewell, Payton Leonard, Kaitlyn Lewsader, Mya McCubbin, Allison Meyers, Carter Rezabek, Aubin Shields and Morgan Stenberg.

Grade 12: Madison Berman, Connor Cieszkiewicz, Matthew Haga, Chase Juster, Andrew Lawrence, Tysen Meents, April Proffitt, Ashton Roge and Madison Sommers.

Honors-GPA of 3.5 to 3.899

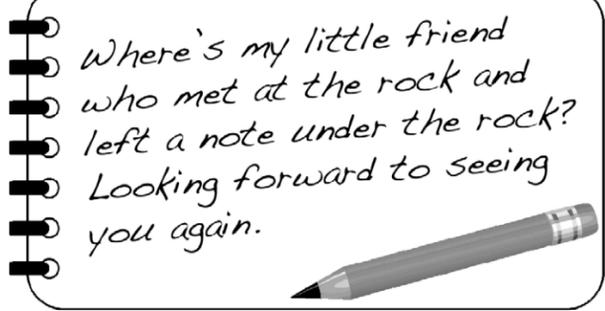
Grade 9: Benjamin Hall, Brooke Marcum, Jessica Matyasec, Erica Maynard, Amanda Miller, Anna Morgan, Ryan Nelson, Reese Van Duynes and Ryan Warthen.

Grade 10: Parker Adams, Blake Adolfini, Michael Archey, Robert Baskerville, Hunter Wayne Catlin, Madilyn Dehoyos, Austin Izzi, Katherine Jackson, Abigail Lafreniere, Gracie Loveland, Cody Prindiville, Yael Rodriguez, Ryan Smith, Collin Tatera and Brianna Utke.

Grade 11: Troy Gill, Joel Greenidge, Aireanna Hinojosa, James Holt, Jaylee Mills, Audrey Mumma, Kaitlyn Odonnell, Myleana Petty, James Quigley, Brandon Stahulak, Drew Walsh and Zachary Willis.

Grade 12: Gabriel Aguillon, Amelia Freis, Natalie Gabriel, Erik Ostheim, Kaleb Patterson, Alyssa Przybylski, Brenna Roberts, Lola Vicat and Alicea Warriner.

IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF HISTORY!
Read Time Was... by Sandy Vasko
EACH WEEK IN THE FREE PRESS ADVOCATE



Bridge

pleted under a surface transportation program (STP) grant through the state. The grant utilizes an 80/20 funding mechanism, meaning the state will pick up 80% of the tab, and the city of Wilmington will pay the remaining 20% under the state's highway bridge replacement and rehabilitation program.

Hamilton Consulting Engineers, Inc., of Joliet is the engineering firm for the project.

"We're at a point now where everybody is on the same page," Smith said. "IDOT believes we should move forward, all of the background work on the historical structure has been completed and they are moving forward with Phase 1."

Phase 1 will include load testing, and is slated for completion by the end of July.

"This is significant for the city because currently, we

have issues with trucks driving over the bridge, residents are concerned about it," Smith said. "We can't put signage up, IDOT is the only entity that can put signage up on this bridge deck, and they need to know what the numbers are from the load testing. So, once that is completed, the report will go to IDOT."

Smith said once that happens, the Wilmington police department can issue citations for overweight vehicles utilizing the bridge, something that cannot be done currently since the bridge does not have a specific load limit.

Once Phase 1 is complete, preparations of documents as part of Phase 2 can begin, with an anticipated completion date of the end of the year. The project would then go to bid in 2023.

"If all goes well, we would have construction starting in 2023 and finished by year end. This has been a long process, but the end is near," Smith said.

The scope of the work will include rehabilitation and widening, with a grand total

estimated at \$1.5 million.

The total cost represents a total increase of around \$300,000 from the original costs, an expected increase due to the amount of time that has passed since the project was first kicked off.

"When you're doing estimates in 2009, 10, 11, and construction isn't taking place until 2022, pricing changes," Smith noted, adding that the city's total estimated participation is currently expected to be \$308,143 for the entire project.

"I'm surprised, I thought it would be a lot more than that," Smith said. "But, that's what they're telling us at this point that the revisions look like. So, our original participation goes up... But still, to get the federal funds, that 80%, that's a good deal for the city to get this accomplished. Bridges all over the state of Illinois are in need of repair. So, at some point and especially with trucks driving over it, you could be looking at a disaster. So, it's good to get this [taken care of] in the next year."

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Hometown Heroes

WILMINGTON—The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce is to be thanked for their project Hometown Heroes. The banners of veterans around town are a special way to honor the military service of Wilmington residents. The work of the Chamber and city workers to make this display is appreciated.

Hit the deck

BRAIDWOOD—Did you hear about the Tulsa doctor that was shot and killed by his patient and the retired judge that was deliberately shot and killed in Wisconsin? This country is on a shooting spree so what do we do about it? If we take the advice of Republicans, don't do anything. Tell teachers, doctors, nurses and judges to arm themselves, but let's not stop there. Let's force everyone to carry, even grandma in the nursing home. Just shoot whenever you feel the need. Road rage. A lover's spat. Fights between siblings. Bullets will be flying everywhere so be ready to hit the deck. The Second Amendment is worth the carnage, don't you know. R. K.

No city support

BRAIDWOOD—Just wanted to clarify: Light House Cove is a 76-townhome community in Braidwood. We are not physically located within the Shadow Lakes property, so we don't benefit by their budget for streets repairs or water/garbage. We each pay a fee to use the amenities in the Shadow Lakes Community, similar to other recreational clubs in the area, though many do not use the amenities on our street. We each pay our own water, sewer, garbage pick up to the city of Braidwood. Why is it that a three-block area of 76 homeowners paying a considerable amount of taxes each year, which goes to the city of Braidwood can't get maintenance on our street and sidewalks? Why have we had a nonfunctioning fire hydrant for almost two years? Why were we given grief about snow plowing? We are not asking for much and the city benefits from our dollars.

Madigan Electric

BRAIDWOOD—Have you people looked at your electric bill? Madigan Electric, known as Commonwealth Edison got a \$200 million fine for corruption. Well, guess who's paying that \$200 million fine. It's not Madigan, it's the people paying for that. Look at your electric bill.

The useless GOP

BRAIDWOOD—While Republicans in Congress say 'ho-hum' because they've already forgotten about the Buffalo and Uvalde massacres, Democrats are making suggestions. Congressman Don Beyer from Virginia is proposing a 1000% tax on AR-15 rifles which would discourage sales and make them virtually unaffordable for 18-year-old teenagers. It's also the same principle as luxury taxes and sin taxes. And because the bill would go through the reconciliation process, it's filibuster-proof and won't need any Republican votes in the Senate. Finally something might get accomplished in Washington because we can avoid the useless and obstructionist Republicans. R. K.

Two words

SHADOW LAKES—My name is Dan Hill. I have two words for people that voted for Biden and Harris. They're Vietnamese, it's called sat cong. Those who served in combat in Vietnam will know what it means.

Insider info

DIAMOND—Fox News host Jesse Watters revealed on his prime time show what appeared to be cases of insider trading by a few members of Congress who invested in energy stock just before Russia invaded Ukraine in February. In late January, according to Watters, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), the former DNC chairwoman, bought up to \$45,000 worth of stock in Patterson-UTI Energy, an oil and gas drilling company. The value shot up soon after she made the purchase. Likewise, Watters reported that Rep. Lois Frankel (D-FL) in early January bought stock in Hess and Diamondback Energy, both of which gained nearly 10% in the two months after she made the purchase. Republican Sen. Tommy Tuberville (AL) got in on the action by grabbing \$15,000 worth of Chevron stock and \$50,000 worth of Duke Energy over a month before the invasion according to the Fox host. We don't know for sure if this was insider trading or not. But it sure does look fishy, and it's more evident that Congress has developed into a swamp of corruption. We have fallen too far from the days when Congress was a citizen legislator, as the Founders intended. We need to pass term limits now.

Congress 21% raise

DIAMOND—At a time when Americans are suffering from the worst inflation in 40 years as well as the lingering effects of COVID lockdowns, Congress members gave their offices a 21% raise in March, hidden within the 2,700-page omnibus bill that funds the federal government while very few Congressional offices have even been open during or after

COVID lockdowns. Americans are feeling the pain in their wallets every time they pay for gas, groceries, utilities and essentially everything else. Yet Congress thought this would be a good time to give itself a hardy pat on the back - funded by the suffering taxpayers, of course. And for what? What has Congress done so well in the past year to justify such a large taxpayer-funded raise? This is yet another reason why we need term limits for Congress, now! Schumer-D, Pelosi-D, McConnell-R, have more than 180 years in Washington. More than enough time to build their family fortunes. Call or visit the district offices of your elected Representatives in person to tell them you support term limits. If you don't have ways to contact district offices call your local library they can tell you.

Why is it?

SHADOW LAKES—Can you imagine if one of Trump's sons or daughter had the information on Hunter Biden's laptop that was exposed and with Hunter Biden's drug problems and him always referring to the big guy. Trump probably would have been impeached ten times but that does not happen to Joe Biden. Why is that? I can only say one thing to the Biden administration and all the Democrats that voted for them. In Vietnamese it's called sat cong.

A deliberate act

WILMINGTON—Sound-Off last week, "God and you." In the event of fetal demise, surgical evacuation is performed it is not an abortion. Abortion is a deliberate termination of life. One percent of abortions are due to rape. Less than 0.5% because of incest. If complications arise that threatens a mother's life, labor can be induced or given a C-section. One may never do evil hoping that good may come of it.

Open up drilling

MORRIS—I just heard a spokesman for our illustrious president Biden saying there is much he can do about the gas prices rising. He blames it all on Putin again. Well Mr. President open up the gas pipeline that you closed down the day after you took office. Start issuing permits to start drilling and off shore drilling. Biden wants to run this country down the tubes. He's an idiot and I'll say it to his face if I see him, he's an idiot.

Listen to us

WILMINGTON—A majority of Americans favor abortion rights. A majority of Americans want background checks and older age for buying assault weapons. Why does Congress not vote to the wishes of the majority?

Hold my Metamucil

SHADOW LAKES—It is said Jimmy Carter was the worst president in modern history. Joe Biden said hold my Metamucil.

Into the circular file

RITCHIE—Why did Rupert Murdoch and son, Lachlan, at FOX broadcasting get their bloomers all in a bunch? They decided to be the only news network not to air the Jan. 6 Select Committee hearing. Perhaps the Murdochs wanted to prevent embarrassment considering that the Select Committee's investigation contradicts what FOX has been pitching for a year and a half. Just imagine. If Trump's coup against our democracy had been successful, Trump may well have struck down the free press by now which he accused multiple times as "the true enemy of the people." Our free speech would be silenced and our letters to the editor would be thrown in the garbage. Jim J.

The blame game

BRAIDWOOD—There are those who object to the hearings of the Jan. 6 committee on the grounds that inflation is more important. Perhaps they should demand that former President Trump tell his buddy, Putin, to stop his butchery and make peace so that the entire world can get back to normal. As it stands now, Russia's energy supplies are boycotted thus causing inflation from shortages, and Putin is blocking the shipment of grain from Ukraine thus creating conditions for famine throughout the world. But Trump hasn't criticized Putin, instead praising him as a genius. This is Trump. This is Putin. One's character is determined by the company one keeps.

Mitch

Trucks are coming

BRAIDWOOD—Regarding the property that has been rezoned to accommodate 250 trucks. I read on Facebook that the Braidwood city administrator told a local resident that the owner of this property threatened to de-annex from Braidwood into the county. He told her that in order to maintain local control the council had to compress multiple lots into one. Apparently Mr. Altiery has no knowledge of how zoning works. A landowner can't just simply decide they want to de-annex. Several steps must take place first. Also, the land must be contiguous to an adjoining lot in the county. Further, the county prefers that zoning like this stay in a city so as to have water, sewer, local police protection, etc. So I doubt the landowner really would have wanted to take his chances with de-annexation. The suggestion to de-annex into the county was merely a threat made by the landowner's attorney and the city administrator fell for it hook, line and sinker. That's what happens when you hire an administrator with absolutely no prior experience in this field. He also tried to sell this resident a tale of woe that the city council "didn't vote to allow them here." That statement is simply untrue. They most certainly did vote to allow them here. Back in 2019 when this administration voted to change the zoning on this property to industrial, they approved all the possibilities that could take place in an industrial zoning. And yet, posted on Facebook is his continuing misrepresentation that the rezoning was not of their



doing. Furthermore, there were several different lots on this property. So as it stood, the landowner couldn't fit as many trucks as he wanted so he asked the council to vacate the road that ran through it. Mr. Altiery told this resident that all we did was "vote to compress the land from a possible 12 industrial lots to one." What he didn't say is that when they did that and vacated the road that went through it, the landowner was then able to accommodate 250 trucks. So thanks to the city administrator and the four members of the city council who voted to approve this, we now will have hundreds of trucks congesting and destroying our local roads.

Still keep your guns

SHADOW LAKES—I have always been intrigued by the human mind, the way that people take a stand on something and get absorbed into it, to the point that they go blind and can't see reality. For example, democrats also buy and keep guns. I have a gun and I want to keep it but that doesn't blind me to the point that I can't see that we have a gun problem in this country. Nobody has ever said that we need to get rid of the Second Amendment, only that changes need to be made. Criminals and mentally sick people should not be able to buy weapons. Teenagers that have no training or knowledge of guns should not be able to walk in to a gun store and walk out with a semiautomatic rifle. If a criminal or a mentally challenged person commits a crime with a gun the person that facilitated the weapon should face criminal charges along with the criminal. All this can be done and people that follow the laws would still be able to keep their guns. If you're going to criticize and complain about the people that are trying to do something about the gun problem in this country, then let's hear your ideas on how to solve it.

\$1 billion mess

WILMINGTON—Vice President Harris wants to gift Central America over \$1 billion in hopes to deal with the poverty there as 60,000 migrants are now marching to our southern borders. Good thinking Kamala, more money for the drug cartels of that area to become richer. What a mess.

They refused help

BRAIDWOOD—Whoever heard of a Congressional hearing orchestrated by a Hollywood producer? Wow, the Dems are so afraid that Trump will win again that they are trying everything in the play book to stop him from running. In her opening statement Liz Cheney said there was intelligence in the form of emails and texts showing there would be trouble at the Capitol on Jan. 6. So if it was known why didn't Pelosi, who is in charge of Capitol security, do something about it? Why? The answer is that the Dems wanted it to happen so they could pin it on Trump. Two days before Trump, knowing there would be a huge crowd at the Capitol, authorized 20,000 National Guard troops to be called up for security at the Capitol. Four individuals witnessed the signing. Will that ever come out at the hearings? Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer and Mayor Bowser all refused. The Capitol Police Chief said he requested the Guard six times and was refused each time. I want to see Pelosi, Schumer, Bowser and the Capitol Police Chief questioned at the hearings. I want Michael Byrd who shot and killed Ashley Babbitt, an unarmed, petite Air Force veteran questioned.

Amazing job

WILMINGTON—A much overdue grateful thank you to the Wilmington Moose Riders for the amazing job you did on cleaning up West River Road. It was wonderful to go up and down that road after you guys put in such and effort. Thanks again. We really appreciate it.

The Norris family, Custer Park residents

Refused to cooperate

WILMINGTON—I hear a lot of Republicans complain that the Jan. 6 committee is only telling one side of the story yet when asked to testify these same Republicans refuse to cooperate and even defied subpoenas. They are just the worst along with the people who vote for them. Penny Lane

To gun guys

WILMINGTON—This is to the gun guys. Nobody is coming to take your guns but we can at least check out the new morons before they get any?

Public dialogue best

BRAIDWOOD—I read in the last issue of the Braidwood Journal that the city's Facebook question and answer site has had little interest from the public. City Administrator Altiery is quoted as saying, "They don't want the facts." Perhaps the public is disinterested because the facts are the last thing they can expect to get from city hall. More likely the answers will be a mix of half truths, no truths, omissions and another dodge that he can use. The answers to

the few submissions on the Facebook page already attest to exactly that. If this administration truly wanted to be transparent, they could do so at the regular council meetings. Bu little, if anything is ever discussed in public. Rather, an individual or commissioner with questions or concerns is told to come in and discuss the issue in private. That way Altiery can more effectively control the dialog and keep the facts hidden.

Protect our justices

BRAIDWOOD—Pelosi would not allow a bill that would provide protection to Supreme Court justices who are now under danger from individuals trying to influence their vote regarding abortion rights. The bill would provide protection for the justices and their families at their homes. A man from California was arrested near the home of Justice Kavanaugh. The man was carrying weapons and stated he wanted to kill Kavanaugh. Protesting in front of a judge's home is a federal crime. No one is allowed to intimidate or use any means to influence a judge's opinion while a case is being considered in court. Why hasn't anyone been arrested? The plan is to take down Supreme Court Justices so Biden can appoint more leftist, Constitution denying justices. Just another way to destroy American institutions — the Marxist plan.

No stability is correct

BRAIDWOOD—The sound-off in last week's paper hit the nail on the head regarding our city administrator why have we now had three commissioners of public property and the last two are indeed puppets and hand-picked? But the administrator has help in filling vacancies by Finance Commissioner Money. Commissioner Cockcream just so happens to be Commissioner Money's neighbor so residents what are you thinking? Why was no mention made about the resignation to the council asking for their recommendations of individuals to fill his vacancy? People resign and days later there's a new individual in the wings waiting to be appointed. There we go again behind the administrator's closed door, decision making with a very select few. That's right, all were probably included except street commissioner Fay Smith as has been the case since this administration took office in 2019. Same thing has happened with the last four city clerks. No advertisement in the paper advising the city is now accepting resumes for the position. All of a sudden we have a new city clerk of which none of them were qualified to fill the position. We've had a secretary to a police chief, two Braidwood Police officers and a bar manager who worked for our mayor. So this administration is on its fifth city clerk since 2019. Commissioner Cockcream's resignation was not on the special meetings agenda nor was it accepted by the city council. So in actuality the city now has two commissioners of public property. How can you make an appointment if the previous appointment hasn't been vacated? Somebody needs to give all of them the book "Roberts Rules of Order" to read. Don't understand why the city attorney is not advising them correctly how to run a meeting or have items on the agenda before making motions to appoint. Discussion on the agenda doesn't mean you can make a motion to appoint or approval of ordinances. Doesn't matter. God has all control.

Take the blame

WILMINGTON—Several months ago we made the \$5 a gallon gas prediction in the Free Press. It's June and it's over \$5 a gallon now. Some states are paying \$8 a gallon today. In a few months we'll be paying \$10 a gallon. Milk is \$4-\$5 a gallon. Restaurant prices will have to increase. It's all about climate change, wind-mills, solar panels, electric cars, etc. Thank you Obama and Biden-Harris political agenda that's where the blame belongs.

Political drama

WILMINGTON—What a waste of time and taxpayers money still investigating Jan. 6. From two year investigation "Here comes the televised hearings." Many are serving time in prison. It's really all about making sure ex-president Trump doesn't run in 2024. It totally is political drama. The moment Democrat House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made the decision to blackball two of the committee members proposed by the GOP leadership by choosing to install two anti-trump Republican rebels, Rep. Liz Cheney (Wyoming) and Adam Kinzinger (Illinois) on the committee the bipartisan committee is nothing more than a kangaroo court. All television stations will carry the drama but Fox News. Have a great summer. Be smart, turn off the television.

Thanks Joe

SHADOW LAKES—Wow, the inflation rate is now 8.6%, Gasoline is now \$6 a gallon, and the largest caravan is now headed toward Mexico. Thank you China Joe, you have my vote. Always, Margot Lane



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14 OZ STEAK **\$14** EA



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8 oz or 14 oz portion

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8 oz or 14 oz portion

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14 OZ STEAK **\$9** EA



USDA Choice
Black Angus Boneless New York Strip Steaks
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USDA Choice Black Angus Whole Beef Brisket **\$3.99** LB



8 OZ STEAK **\$8** EA

14 OZ STEAK **\$15** EA



USDA PRIME
Black Angus Boneless New York Strip Steaks
8 oz or 14 oz portion (sold in 2 pk)

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Two different twists on the classic Gin and Tonic

At some point in life, we have all had to take our medicine. Literally or figuratively, we have had to do it and more than likely it was not enjoyable.

What if that medicine was tonic water? What if we added gin? Things are looking up as we look back to the medicinal origins of one of the most popular cocktails of all time, the Gin and Tonic.

If you were a soldier serving in 19th century British India, you were required to take a daily dose of quinine powder which both treated and prevented malaria. A daily preventative dose of quinine powder literally saved countless lives, but had an extremely bitter taste.

Soldiers began to mix the quinine powder with soda and sugar giving birth to what we know today as tonic water. It didn't take long for a large gathering of young Englishmen to add splashes of gin to their daily "medicine".

This week we are going to turn a good "G&T" into a great "G&T". Spoiler alert: we are going to use more than tonic

water and gin.

It all starts with tonic water. Seriously, as crazy as it may sound the gin is secondary in the Gin and Tonic, and I can prove it. Take a shot of your favorite gin and mix it with a shot or two of your least favorite tonic water. I doubt that you will enjoy the drink as the cocktail is more than 50% tonic water.

Then take any decent London Dry gin around the \$20 price point, say Beedle's or Beefeater, and mix it with a tonic water that you absolutely love (for me, it's Fever Tree).

Squeeze in a lime and you're in business. I have met several folks who claim to not like gin because they had a Gin and Tonic on an airplane once and didn't care for it. Chances are that they had some old, flat, cheap tonic water that utterly destroyed the gin.

Using a quality tonic water, such as one of the new artisanal tonic waters will turn gin doubters into true gin believers. If your only exposure to gin has been the Gin and Tonic and you didn't like the drink, more than likely the tonic water was to blame.

If you haven't shopped for tonic water in the last decade or so, you have some catching up to do. I have already mentioned Fever Tree, I also like



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL
Brian Rung

Fentimans, and Q Tonic. Your local spirits retailer will likely have a recommendation as well. Pick up a small bottle of each and taste each one. Pick your favorite and re-kinde your relationship with a classic cocktail.

The most common garnish for the Gin and Tonic is a lime wedge. Given the perfect pairing of citrus and botanical notes of gin, why stop at limes? All citrus pairs well with gin. Limes and lemons are most common, but have you tried adding orange? Have you tried grapefruit? I know, now it's not a Gin and Tonic. Remember, the "correct" way to make ANY cocktail is the way that YOU like it.

Featured this week are two spins on the classic Gin and Tonic. The first is the "Triple Citrus" version which uses lemon, lime, and orange bitters. The second is more of a sweet cocktail topped with club soda to add bit of a sparkling quality to the drink.

Orange bitters are not as strong as standard Angostura bitters, so 3-4 dashes will not overpower the drink.

I haven't seen this information in a peer-reviewed medical journal, but Winston Churchill once said "The Gin and Tonic has saved more Englishmen's lives, and minds, than all of the doctors in the Empire."

Triple Citrus Gin and Tonic
Fill lowball glass with ice
Add 3-4 dashes orange bitters
Add fresh lemon and lime juice, squeezing in one wedge of each

Add 1.5 oz gin
Add 3 oz tonic water
Garnish with any combination of lemon wedge, lime wedge, or orange peel
Serve with stir stick

Sweet Orange Gin and Tonic
Fill lowball glass with ice
Add 3-4 dashes orange bitters
Add 1.5 oz gin
Add 1.5 oz tonic water
Add teaspoon of simple syrup (1:1 cane sugar/water)
Top with club soda
Garnish with orange peel
Serve with stir stick

Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

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Gas prices remain high while supply running low

Average gasoline prices in Illinois have risen 18.5 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$5.62/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,378 stations in Illinois.

Prices in Illinois are 79.1 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand \$2.35/g higher than a year ago. The price of diesel has fallen 4.0 cents nationally in the past week and stands at \$5.50 per gallon.

"For the first time ever, last week saw the national average reach the \$5 per gallon mark, as nearly every one of the nation's 50 states saw prices jump. For now, the upward momentum may slow down, but prices are still just one potential supply jolt away from heading even higher," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois was priced at \$4.89/g Monday while the most expensive was \$6.79/g.

Gas prices remain high while supply running low

Among area stations those in Coal City were averaging 5.35/g. In Braidwood all three stations were charging \$5.39/g. In Wilmington the price ranged from a low of \$5.28/g at Mohsen at Lorenzo Rd. and I-55 to a high of \$5.59/g at Lorenzo Petro.

The national average price of gasoline is \$5.01/g, up 57.1 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.94/g higher than a year ago.

"Gasoline demand, while rising seasonally, is still well below previous records, but remains impressive with prices in all states at record levels. Should the rise in price finally start to slow demand, we could see some breathing room, but for now, it seems like Americans are proving resilient to record highs," DeHaan said.

Garden Club to learn about Midewin

The Wilmington Garden Club will learn about the latest developments going on at the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie in Wilmington during their June meeting.

Guest speaker will be Siobhan Solkowski-Peacy, visitor information assistant at Midewin who will give the talk "Prairie Path to Present," starting at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, June 15.

The garden club meets monthly at the Wilmington Park District, 315 N. Water St. Meetings are open to the public so come along and bring a friend.

72ND ANNUAL CARBON HILL HOMECOMING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22 - SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2022

BINGO

Wed. - Fri., 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Sat. & Sun., 3 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Sign up for **BEAN BAG TOURNAMENT**
Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
Tournament 7:15 p.m.
Contact George Reader
815-953-3110

CARNIVAL OPENS
Wed.-Fri. 6:00 p.m.;
Sat. Noon; Sun. 2:00 p.m.

One-Day Unlimited Ride Armband Ticket
\$20 in advance
\$25 at the Fair

Fireworks
Sunday, 9:30 p.m.

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Shuttle from hall to Bingo stand.
Must have I.D. to park at Village Hall.

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At The Following Locations:
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Midland Bank-Coal City & Diamond
Coal City Village Hall • Carbon Hill Village Hall
Bum's Tavern • Quality Auto Body • Mustachio's

Mark your calendars!
10th Annual Josh Cumming Memorial Softball Tournament
Begins 6 p.m. on June 22
Playoffs to be played on Sunday, June 26 after parade

Join the Fun!

Advanced purchases good for **ONE** armband any day.

Rides • Games • Food • Entertainment

Food Stand
Operated by:
Mustachio's

Bar & Grill

CASH ONLY

Parade Sunday @ 1 p.m.

Craft Show
Saturday
9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Sponsored by Coal City Junior Woman's Club

ENTERTAINMENT

- Fri., June 24 - "BRAT PACK" 8 p.m. - 12 a.m.
- Sat., June 25 - "SUNFALLEN" 8 p.m. - 12 a.m.
- Sun., June 26 - "BOGO" 3:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Live Music!

Carbon Hill Homecoming — Don't Miss It!!! — June 22nd - 26th



WHS Class of 1971 gives back to the high school during reunion weekend

SEVENTY-FIVE class members, former faculty and staff, and guests attended the WHS Class of 1971 50th + 1 Reunion the weekend of June 3-5. The weekend started with a Meet and Greet at the Moose Lodge on Friday evening, followed by a tour of the high school on Saturday morning, a dinner/dance on Saturday night at the Moose Lodge catered by The Whistle Stop Cafe, and a farewell lunch on Sunday at the Rt. 66 Bar and Grill. One of the highlights of the weekend however, was the dedication of a commercial bench, donated to the high school immediately after the tours on Saturday morning. The 1971 classmates contributed the money to purchase the bench so they could give back to the place where the foundation of their lives and careers began. WHS Principal Scott Maupin thanks reunion organizer Becky Robertson while shaking her hand next to the bench.



Ukulele lessons for beginners coming

The Elwood Children's Garden is offering ukulele lessons for complete beginners starting Wednesdays, from July 13 to August 3. The one-hour group class will be held 7-8 p.m. The entire cost for the four-week program is \$25. All money collected goes directly to the Elwood Children's Garden. Signups are at the park or call 815-693-0214. Payment is due by July 6. All ages are welcome. The class meets in the outdoor pavilion. Instructor Stan Ketcik passed along these encouraging words to anyone thinking about signing up for the class, "If you can tie your shoes - you can learn to play the ukulele."

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BEFORE YOU VOTE

COMPARE THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR WILL COUNTY JUDGE

WILL COUNTY - TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
 JOINT POLL WITH THE WILL COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

ILLINOIS STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
 JUNE 28, 2022 PRIMARY ELECTION

	RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED	MEETS REQUIREMENTS OF OFFICE	INTEGRITY	IMPARTIALITY	LEGAL ABILITY	TEMPERAMENT	COURT MANAGEMENT	HEALTH	SENSITIVITY
DONALD DEWILKINS	RECOMMENDED	87.07	92.00	87.42	88.59	91.39	91.22	94.59	91.95
BOB BODACH	NOT RECOMMENDED	60.16	70.34	66.12	73.02	66.94	78.95	85.71	79.13
DAVID CONNELLY HURST	NOT RECOMMENDED	48.57	60.00	60.00	68.57	56.76	73.53	88.24	77.42

Members of the Will County legal community recently rated the three Republican candidates for Will County Judge.

JUDICIAL EXPERIENCE

PROSECUTORIAL EXPERIENCE

LAW ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCE

DONALD DEWILKINS

Will County Judge

Will County Associate Judge; Administrative Law Judge for the City of Lockport for 7 years.

25 years, including as an Assistant State's Attorney in Will County.

Grew up in a family of police officers; endorsed by 6 Will County police chiefs and the Joliet Fraternal Order of Police.

BOB BODACH

Criminal Defense Attorney

Applied to become Associate Judge at least 5 times and never selected.

n/a

n/a

DAVID CONNELLY HURST

Civil Attorney

n/a

n/a

n/a

JUDGE DONALD DEWILKINS

WILL COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

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PAID FOR BY FRIENDS TO ELECT JUDGE DEWILKINS

OBITUARIES

Sally Scheel

MINOOKA—Sally Scheel, 58, of Minooka and formerly of Wilmington, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at her home.

Born June 30, 1963 in Joliet, Sally Ann, affectionately known to many as Bird, was a daughter of Alice (Henkelman) and Vernon "Skip" Scheel. She was raised in Wilmington where she attended Saint Rose Catholic Grade School and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1981. Sally loved to work, starting as a young girl when she would go door to door and business to business selling fundraiser candy. She gained her first job at the age of 14, and continued to work several other jobs, including in the cafeteria at St. Joseph Hospital in Joliet and Jewel Osco in Minooka. Sally also enjoyed playing cards, especially Euchre, and going bowling. She was very fond of animals and loved her pet cat, Whiney, dearly.

Survivors include her mother, Alice Scheel, of Wilmington; seven brothers and sisters: Shane (Madonna) Scheel, Shawn Scheel, Sheri Randles, Scott (Kay) Scheel, Sonja Castillo, Stacy (Adam) Egizio, and Sloan (Jennifer) Scheel, all of Wilmington; nine nieces and nephews: Leya (Jon) Mitchell, Cort (Kayla) Scheel, of Brookfield, WI; Stephanie (Scott) Cherney, Amy Castillo (Jeremy Wells), Emily Castillo, Dallas (Mitch) Bastillo, Kelly (Noah) Kirst, of Alexandria, KY; Madison Scheel (Brad



Aberhalden) and Ava Scheel; 10 great-nieces and great-nephews: Chloe, Nicholas and Anthony Wells; David Castillo-Neese, Ian, Lincoln and Finn Mitchell; Ruby Scheel, and one more expected in November, and Norah and Vivian Cherney; and her dear friend and companion, Fred Ashcraft, of Shadow Lakes.

Sally was preceded in death by her father, Vernon "Skip" Scheel; two brothers-in-law, Jason Randles and David Castillo; and her great-nephew, Noah.

Flameless cremation rites are being accorded, and the family will receive friends for a memorial visitation at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington on Saturday, June 18, 2022 from 10 a.m. until time of memorial service at 12 p.m. Sally will be laid to rest at Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery in Wilmington.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Sally's memory to the Just Animals Shelter in Mazon.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Sally's memorial page online through social media.

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

Phillip Wojtonik

WILMINGTON—Phillip Wojtonik, 83, of Wilmington, formerly Chicago, passed away on Wednesday, June 8, 2022 at his residence with his family by his side.

Born June 15, 1938 in Chicago, he was a son of Joseph Wojtonik and Ann (Bernas) Annerino. He was raised and educated in Chicago, and on July 9, 1960 he married Joan Ennis and together they cherished 58 years until her passing on Feb. 14, 2019. Phillip worked for Sears and Roebuck for over 25 years as a service technician. He was a former member of the Wilmington Moose Lodge 241. Phillip was a distinguished gardener who was known for his prize tomatoes and who loved cooking for his family and friends. He always took the time to tell a funny joke, loved playing horse shoes and was an avid pool shark. His greatest pride in life was being a husband, father and grandfather, whose most cherished memories were taking care of his wife and spending time with his grandchildren. A true jack of all trades, Phillip will always be remembered for his selfless attitude and willing to help anyone in their time of need no matter the task. He was dearly loved and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Survivors include three children: Phillip



(Cathryn) Wojtonik, Nancy (Tom) Bradley and Pamela (LeRoy) Vega; eight grandchildren: Nicole, Thomas, Kylie, P.J., Michael, Richard, Roy, and Lauren; eight great-grandchildren, one brother, Walter (Marlene) Annerino; four sister-in-laws, as well as, numerous nieces and nephews.

Phillip was preceded in death by his parents, wife, Joan; eight brothers and one sister.

Green Flameless Cremation rites have been accorded.

A Memorial Service was held on Sunday, June 12, 2022 at Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington. Rev. Joshua Miller officiated.

Preferred memorials in Phillip's memory may be made as gifts to The Wounded Warrior Project, or by logging onto support.wounded-warriorproject.org

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guestbook, upload photographs and share Phillip's memorial page online through social media.

Memorial services and cremation arrangements were made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington. www.BaskervilleFuneral.com.

Clarence Dawson

DWIGHT—Clarence Renalvin Dawson, 89, of Dwight, and formerly of Wilmington, passed away on Monday, June 13, 2022 at Heritage Health in Dwight.

Born April 26, 1933 in Cunningham, TN, he was the son of Hade and Hattie Dawson. Clarence married Dorothy J. Forsythe, and she preceded him in death on Aug. 19, 2011. He worked as machinist in Joliet for Caterpillar for 25 years. Clarence enjoyed gardening, fishing and camping in his free time.

Survivors include two children, Betty (Ron) Haga, of Dwight and Jenny (John) Hazelwood, of Vermillion, OH; three grandsons: Ronnie Haga, of Dwight; Jay Haga, of Dwight and John Dawson, of Vermillion; four great-grandchildren: Matt, Austin, Cheyenne and Tyler; mother-in-law, Laura Forsythe; several brothers and

sisters-in-laws and numerous nieces and nephews.

Clarence was preceded in death by his parents, wife, Dorothy; father-in-law, Norris Forsythe Sr. and two sisters, Susie (Edward) Walker and Margaret Dougan.

Private graveside services were held in Oakwood Cemetery in Wilmington, where Clarence was laid to rest beside his wife, Dorothy.

Preferred memorials in Clarence's memory may be made to a charity of the donor's choosing.

Funeral arrangements were made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd. in Wilmington. www.baskervillefuneral.com.

Kali Sue Perkins Croy

GARDNER—Kali Sue Perkins Croy, 51, of Gardner, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, June 10, 2022 at SSM Health St. Clare Hospital in Fenton, MO.

Born May 19, 1971 in Joliet, Kali Sue was the daughter of Thomas Andrew and Karen Sue (Anderson) Perkins. Kali attended Eastern Illinois University where she was active in the Alpha Gamma Delta Sorority. For many years she worked at Harrah's Casino and also bartended for various establishments, most recently the The Rustic in Wilmington. Kali was a running enthusiast having completed the Chicago Marathon and qualified for the Boston Marathon. She loved sewing, decorating her house for all holidays, and driving her squared eyed Jeep. Kali loved animals and had many pets throughout her life. She enjoyed vacation's, especially all her trips to the Ozarks. Kali was a devoted mother who placed her kids above all else and was always bragging about how beautiful they were. She loved hanging with her dad at the shop, and her green thumb proved helpful in assisting her mother to tend to her plants and succulents. Kali was dearly loved by so many and her infectious and vivacious spirit will be deeply missed.

Survivors include her parents, Tom and Karen Perkins, of Gardner; five children: Kasteel Croy (Theo Hassim), of Boston; Calvin Croy, of Gardner; Koli Croy, of Springfield, MO and Cade Croy and Cree Croy, both of Gardner; two brothers, Todd Perkins (Mandi Womack-Beasley), of Gardner and Tyler Perkins, of Las Vegas; three aunts: Kay Jensen, Karla Anderson and Pat Weiskop; two uncles, Danny (Janet) Anderson, of Gardner and Jim (Mary) Perkins, of Dwight;



her great-aunt, Joyce Perkins, of Gardner; sister-in-law, Dena (John Pochervina) Croy, of Arizona; special friend, Randy Demierre, of Bourbonnais, as well as, numerous cousins including her special cousin, Gena (Chris) Hillman, of Minnesota, who was like a sister.

Kali was preceded in death by her former husband and father of her children, Matthew Croy; grandparents, Willard "Bud" and Dorothy Perkins and Lester "Chinny" and Hulda Anderson, and one uncle, David Anderson.

The family will receive friends for a visitation on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 between the hours of 4 and 8 p.m. at Reeves Funeral Home, 203 Liberty St. in Gardner. At the request of the family and in spirit of Kali's vibrant personality, attendees are encouraged to not wear black, but rather vibrant colors to the visitation. A private family funeral service will be held with Reverend Jan Chandler officiating. Burial will take place in Braceville-Gardner Cemetery, where Kali will be laid to rest with her grandparents.

Preferred memorials in lieu of flowers may be made as gifts to Kali's family for the continued support of her children.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the guestbook, upload photographs and share Kali's memorial page online through social media and by logging onto www.reevesfuneral.com.

Funeral services and arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Reeves Funeral Home in Gardner.

Deborah Jackson

LARGO, FL—Deborah Lynn Horton Jackson, 62, of Largo, FL and formerly of Wilmington, passed away Sunday, June 12, 2022 at Suncoast Hospice Care Center in Pinellas Park, FL.

Born Jan. 3, 1960 in Joliet, Deborah Lynn is a daughter of Robert and Beverly A. (Jackson) Horton. Debi graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1978.

Funeral services are being planned for Saturday, July 2, 2022 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd. in



Wilmington and burial will be in Wesley Cemetery.

A complete obituary with service details will follow. Family and friends are also encouraged to sign the guest book, upload photographs and share Debi's memorial page online through social media.

Funeral services and arrangements are being made under the direction and care of Baskerville Funeral Home in Wilmington. www.BaskervilleFuneral.com

David L. Kramer

COAL CITY—David L. Kramer, 70, of Coal City, passed away at his home on June 11, 2022.

He was born in Joliet, on June 25, 1951 to Raymond C. and Frances A. (nee Galbraith) Kramer. David was a lifelong resident of Coal City and graduated from Coal City High School. He developed a major interest at a young age for cars, trucks and racing. David raced on several area short tracks during the 60's and 70's. He was a talented auto mechanic and worked at various auto shops, including Greenway Motors from which he retired at the age of 42, which was his personal goal. He worked on vehicles for numerous people and could drive anything. At the end of a busy day driving around town in the blue cream puff, David enjoyed relaxing and receiving visitors at his favorite place, "The Kramer Estate."



He is survived by his sister, Margaret Love; his brother, Gerald (Nancy) Kramer; his niece and nephews, Jeff (Heather) Kramer, Dan Kramer, Jerry Love and Sally Ritchey; his great-nieces and nephews, Zakk, Maxx, Ryder and Myla Kramer as well as several cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Raymond and Frances Kramer.

Memorials may be directed to the animal charity of the donor's choice.

As were David's wishes, cremation rites will be accorded and there will be no services.

Family and friends may sign the online guestbook at www.ferrarifuneral.com.

Ferrari Funeral Services of Coal City are entrusted with arrangements.

As food prices soar, habits change

BY CASEY HARPER
THE CENTER SQUARE

Americans are changing their shopping habits because of soaring food prices. And disruptions in the international farming community have some worried about the food supply heading into 2023.

The BMO Real Financial Progress Index, a quarterly survey from BMO and Ipsos, shows that 42% of surveyed adults "are changing how they shop for groceries," including "opting for cheaper items, avoiding brand names and buying only the essentials."

The report found "46% are either dining out less or consciously spending less when dining out."

Record high energy costs and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have been major factors in rising food prices.

Gas prices hit new record highs every day in the past week. According to AAA, the national average gas price rose to \$5.09 on Sunday, with diesel gas prices at their own record of \$5.64 per gallon.

That added cost makes it more expensive for farmers to operate equipment, transport goods to market, and more.

"By the economics textbook, higher costs work themselves up through the supply side of the market and raise prices," said Roger Cryan, chief economist at the American Farm Bureau Federation. "The prices are especially high right now because of the sudden lack of access to Black Sea grain, but if these energy prices stay high in the long run then they will entirely work their way into food prices."

Ukraine is a major food exporter, and it also is an exporter of several key chemi-

cals used to make fertilizer. "Ukraine is one of the largest wheat producers and suppliers, so wheat is definitely under pressure," said Maksym Chepeliev, an agriculture professor at Purdue University and a Research Economist at the Center for Global Trade Analysis.

"Corn as well, because apart from the fact that Ukraine is a large corn producer and supplier that needs to be replaced, there have been issues with some droughts in South America and also the U.S. that kind of reduced the corn supply, and China is demanding more corn ... and that is ... pushing the global corn market."

Fertilizer prices have soared as well, raising the cost for farmers on all kinds of crops, which is then felt by consumers at the grocery store.

"Fertilizer prices are translating into increasing cost inputs because not only Ukraine and Russia and Belarus especially, they are large producers of fertilizers and exporters," Chepeliev said, pointing to supply chain disruptions because of the war as well as the impact of sanctions.

Other issues have added to the increased food prices as well. Florida's yield of oranges this year has been diminished in part due to increased bacteria and disease affecting the crop. Egg prices have soared in part because of avian flu.

Industry insiders predict the trend of rising food prices will continue as inflation remains at 40-year highs, energy costs rise seemingly daily, and the ongoing supply chain issues from the Russian invasion of Ukraine continue.

"The food at home index rose 10.8 percent over the last

12 months, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending November 1980," the Bureau of Labor statistics said in its latest Consumer Price Index data. "The index for meats, poultry, fish, and eggs increased 14.3 percent over the last year, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending May 1979. The other major grocery store food group indexes also rose over the past year, with increases ranging from 7.8 percent (fruits and vegetables) to 11.0 percent (other food at home)."

For now, it remains unclear when prices will come back down.

"To have energy, fertilizer, and grain markets all disrupted like this at the same time ... could be really devastating in 2023," Cryan said. "I think it's important to recognize that here in the U.S. we have resources. We have safety nets. I don't anticipate serious hunger problems in the United States as a result of these things because we always provide, but around the world there are going to be a lot of places where feeding the people is going to be a challenge."

Notary Notebook ETC files as new business

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Dated this 13th day of June, A.D. 2022.
Kay T Olson, Grundy County Clerk
Published in the Coal City Courier on June 15, 22 and 29, 2022.



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Latest poll shows IL GOP leaning far right

The Illinois Republican Party has successfully avoided being dragged into the hard-right camp at the state level for decades. Those days may be over.

With relatively liberal Republicans Jim Thompson, Jim Edgar and then George Ryan as governor, the state never embraced the sweeping policy changes which emerged from the "Reagan Revolution" and defined the national party for decades.

The Illinois AFL-CIO endorsed Thompson's last reelection bid. The National Abortion Rights Action League endorsed Edgar's first gubernatorial run. Ryan campaigned to the left of his 1998 Democratic opponent on guns, abortion and gay rights. They were all from the "governing wing" of the party, eschewing the rabble on the far right and occasionally battling them off like flies.

While Bruce Rauner defined himself by his rabidly anti-union stances, he was pro-choice enough to sign a bill that provided Medicaid funding for abortions. He never supported Donald Trump, even though the two shared several personality traits.

That distance from the far right helped statewide Republicans win general elections in moderate-to-liberal Illinois, particularly after the state leaned harder Democratic when Bill Clinton was elected president in 1992.

But if a recent Sun-Times/WBEZ poll is even close to accurate, those days may finally be behind the party. And, consequently, their statewide fate will likely be sealed without a sea change in Illinois political behavior and demographics.

The new poll has Sen. Darren Bailey trouncing the

establishment's choice Richard Irvin by 15 points, 32-17. Bailey not only leads among Downstate Republicans by 24 points, he's also ahead in the suburbs. Another 27 percent were undecided, with Jesse Sullivan the only other candidate polling in the double digits (11).

This is the second poll in a row showing a Bailey lead. Hard-right activist and radio host Dan Proft released a poll at the beginning of last week showing Bailey with a seven-point margin.

What has happened to Irvin and his \$53 million war chest, most of it supplied by the state's wealthiest resident Ken Griffin?

One huge factor is that Gov. Pritzker, the Democratic Governors Association and Darren Bailey along with his big-money backer Dick Uihlein, have so far managed to turn this race into the same sort of "traditional" GOP primary like other, more conservative states have seen for years and years, but that Illinois has generally avoided. They have reshaped the playing field and it has become untenable for the more moderate Richard Irvin.

After months of Irvin pounding Darren Bailey for being some sort of closet Democrat, the Democrats, Bailey and Dan Proft spent millions to prove without a shadow of a doubt that Bailey was a solid Trumpster. And by deriding Bailey for being "too conservative" for Illinois, the Democrats have also apparently managed to so far convince many rank and file Republicans that they aren't



CAPITOL FACTS
Rich Miller

actually trying to advance Bailey's candidacy (even though the Democrats are clearly doing that very thing).

The Irvin campaign claims that the Democrats are on pace to spend \$32 million against their guy, although their

numbers show that the Dems have "only" spent \$15+ million so far. Uihlein has contributed \$17 million to Bailey and Proft's "People Who Play by the Rules PAC," more than he's ever done here. Uihlein's big spending and the willingness of the Democrats to literally spend whatever it took seems to have caught Irvin's team by surprise.

Another factor could be that voters finally caught on to a big Irvin lie. Darren Bailey is one of the most far-right legislators in the state. Once voters saw through Irvin's game, everything else he said could be disregarded. And Pritzker has come on strong in recent days with two very hard-hitting ads trumpeting some opposition research on Irvin that clearly left deep marks.

Irvin spent \$3.6 million on advertising during the last week of May. By the first week of June, that spending had dropped to less than \$800,000. The Irvin campaign allowed all of its Downstate broadcast TV ads to expire last week. They're now focusing solely on the Chicago media market.

The story from inside is that "regular" Downstate Republicans are already with Irvin, so they want to focus on city, suburban and exurban Republicans with more Illinois-style Republican messaging. But the party has clear-

ly changed. They have only one narrow path out, and it's pretty rocky and steep.

Irvin has taken to repeating a mantra that Pritzker is backing Bailey because he knows Bailey can't win. But by doing so he's essentially making the Democrats' own case that Bailey is "too conservative" for Illinois. And that risks firing up the hardcore base even more.

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

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U.S. lags on the production and sales of electric cars

Dear EarthTalk: Why is the U.S. lagging behind Europe and China on the production and sales of electric cars?

-- James V. Miami, FL
The U.S. lags as a distant third among electric vehicle (EV) sales and production. According to Bloomberg, China claims a whopping 46 percent of global EV sales.

Europe comes in second at 34 percent, while North America accounts for only 15



percent. The U.S. EV fleet continues to expand, growing 28

percent annually from 2015-2020, writes The Guardian. But that same period saw the European fleet increase 41 percent while China's fleet grew 51 percent.

Production rates show similar trends. The International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) establishes China as the market leader, accounting for 44 percent of EV production as of 2020.

Europe again claims second place, with 25 percent market share. And the U.S.: 18 percent of global production, a decrease from 20 percent in 2017.

Policy is the primary hold-up behind the U.S. lag. Both China and the European Union boast supply and demand policies to stimulate EV markets, such as greenhouse gas reductions, quota systems for new vehicle sales, and consumer incentives to reduce purchase price.

"Electric vehicle manufacturing growth happens where there are strong national policies designed to spur the market forward," says Nic Lutsey of ICCT.

"Hundreds of billions of dollars are on the table, and the United States hasn't even bothered to pull up a chair."

During the Trump administration, the U.S. rolled EV policies back. The Environmental Protection Agency under President Biden released new greenhouse gas vehicle standards in December 2021, but some argue the revisions merely reinstated Obama-era policies rather than advance the field.

Charging infrastructure is another missing link; electric charging stations are still scarce on the American landscape.

In daily spins around the city, this dearth may not present a problem, but for long-distance trips, "range anxiety" can be enough to slow sales.

As Alyssa Altman of Publicis Sapient told Wired, "Historically there simply haven't been enough charge points. Potential EV customers are concerned with keeping their vehicle juiced up for long trips, and for some journeys in the U.S., the lack of charging stations makes this impossible."

Statista counts 113,600 charging outlets in the U.S., compared to China's 800,000, with 36 percent in California, thanks to its profusion of EVs and supporting state policies.

Some bright spots are emerging for the U.S. EV mar-



CAN THE U.S. come back from its position as a laggard on production of electric vehicles as Chinese and European automakers blaze ahead?

ket. President Biden is aiming for 50 percent of new car sales to be electric by 2030, although 20 percent may be more realistic.

Congress passed a bill for 500,000 new charge outlets nationwide, but the death of the Build Back Better bill interrupted plans for expanding consumer incentives.

Also, car manufacturers are beginning to step up. GM, Volvo and Audi have announced intentions to go fully electric in 10-15 years.

And, although the number of EV-ready manufacturing

plants still lags behind traditional plants, that number is rising, says ICCT, with seven of 44 manufacturing plants scheduled to be all-electric by 2025. U.S. Department of Energy research shows that, even with higher price tags, less maintenance on EVs decreases lifetime costs compared to traditional cars. The more consumers consider electric, the more the U.S. market grows.

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Smith on dean's list

Zachary Smith has again been recognized for achieving academic distinction at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Smith, of Coal City, was named to the College of Applied Health Sciences dean's list for a sixth consecutive semester having achieved a perfect 4.0 grade point average during both the fall 2021 and spring 2022 semesters. His perfect scores throughout his time at UIC have earned him dean's list recognition.

Smith, who will be a senior this fall, is enrolled in the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition studying kinesiology—the study of human movement.

Iowa State dean's list

Iowa State University students have been recognized for outstanding academic achievement by being named to the spring semester 2022 dean's list. Students named to the dean's list must have earned a grade point average of at least 3.50 on a 4.00 scale while carrying a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded course work.

Local students include: Samantha Hanley, of Braceville, Animal Science; Emma Charles, Psychology and Kit Clayburn, Animal Ecology, both from Coal City; Natalie Pacholski, of Essex, Elementary Education and Ethan Heap, of Morris, Agricultural Systems Technology.

SIUE spring dean's list

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has announced the names of students qualifying for the Spring 2022 Dean's List. To qualify, a student must maintain a grade-point average of 3.5 or better.

Local students include: Colleen Feeney and Koren Frideres, both of Coal City; Abby Beck, of Mazon and Kasey Mitchell, of Wilmington.

Blackburn dean's list

Blackburn College has announced its dean's list for the spring 2022 semester.

Area students include Dade Bradley, of Braidwood; Lexi Snow, of Coal City; Logan Ullrich, of Diamond and Courtney Ohlogge, of Wilmington.

Local students graduate from Elmhurst Univ.

Elmhurst University held its 151st Commencement for the class of 2022 on Saturday, May 21. The following local students earned degrees:

Casey Janik, of Wilmington, graduated

Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Haley Elizabeth Partyka, of Custer Park, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English.



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Holy Rollers Car Show planned for June 18

Immaculate Conception Church will present the Holy Rollers Car Show on Saturday, June 18, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Car show registration (\$10/vehicle) will be held from 9 to 10 a.m., judging from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and awards at 2 p.m. Admission will be free for spectators.

Prize categories will be pre-1950s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and 1980 to 2022; Best of Show; Best American Bike; and Best Metric Bike. The first 50 entries will receive a dash plaque. There will be food, door prizes, raffles and more. The church is located at 110 S. School St., Braidwood.

Area nuclear stations upgraded just in time summer peak

Over 13,000 workers performed technology upgrades and equipment maintenance during six refueling outages at Constellation nuclear plants this spring, investments that will prepare the plants for the hot summer months ahead. The upgrades and maintenance will ensure Constellation's nuclear fleet, which serves 15 million homes and businesses, will have access to safe, carbon-free electricity this summer to help combat any periods of high heat or humidity. During the refueling outages, workers replaced or refurbished dozens of pumps and motors, performed quality assurance inspections on reactor and fuel components, and completed tens of thousands of other technical tasks to ensure the power plants provide uninterrupted electricity for up to 24 months. "Constellation is helping accelerate this country's transition to a carbon-free future and it begins with our zero emissions nuclear fleet running nonstop through the summer," said Joe Dominguez, CEO of Constellation. "We met our commitment to operational excellence last winter by keeping our plants running throughout the cold months despite challenging weather conditions. Our investments in the plant this spring will help us maintain that level of performance during the upcoming summer months, as the climate crisis continues to produce extremely hot weather." This summer, nuclear reliability could be especially helpful in moderating electricity prices for Illinois consumers. Constellation's nuclear power displaces generation from fossil-fuel plants that may experience further spikes in gas and oil costs. This is in addition to the \$1 billion credit Constellation's nuclear plants are projected to deliver for northern Illinois rate payers as a result of the Climate & Equitable Jobs Act passed last year. The refueling outages would not be possible without support from thousands of skilled electricians, pipefitters, welders,

carpenters, laborers, steamfitters and other trades people on site performing thousands of inspections, tests and maintenance activities that cannot be done while the unit is online. Along with replacing about one-third of the fuel in each reactor, workers completed other major projects during the nuclear outages this spring including at Quad Cities Unit 2 an overhaul and inspection of the turbine on one of the redundant core cooling systems; a full technical inspection of the Byron Station Unit 2 main generator, and a comprehensive inspection of two reactor re-circulation flow control valves at LaSalle County Generating Station. "We carefully schedule these important upgrades, maintenance activities and technical inspections during periods of lower power demand to ensure our carbon-free nuclear units remain online 24/7 through the blistering summer months ahead," said Tim Hanley, chief operating officer at Constellation.

In Loving Memory of
David William Brown
on his Birthday 6-14-2022
Rest in Peace
Love, Mom, Larry, Virginia, Barb, Mike & Trudy



Happy 75th Wedding Anniversary
June 14
Jack & Doris Nicol
Love you both!
The Rink, Welsh and Mahalik Families

Anniversary Wishes can be sent to them at:
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Lance
Lance is looking to be adopted
Meet Lance, he is a 1-year-old shepherd mix and loves people. Best of all, Lance is under 50 pounds and loves to cuddle. He will snuggle all day if you let him. Adoption fee includes his neuter, rabies, distemper, microchip, fecal exam, heartworm test. Please contact Hopeful Tails Animal Rescue if you are interested today at hopefultailsadoptions@outlook.com



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District 209-U seeking bids for Wilmington Middle School foundation wall repairs

PUBLIC NOTICE
DIVISION 0 - BIDDING AND CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS
Notice To Bidders

Sealed bids for the 2022 Foundation Wall Repair, Work Wilmington Middle School For Wilmington Community Unit School District 209-U will be received by the Board of Education, Wilmington Community Unit School District 209-U, at their District Office at 209U Wildcat Court, Wilmington, Will County, Illinois, until 2:00 P.M. prevailing time on the 30th day of June, 2022. Bids will be opened and read aloud at that time.

The work is to be performed in accordance with the proposed Contract Documents as prepared by Healy Bender Patton & Been Architects, 4040 Helene Avenue, Naperville, Illinois. The proposed Contract Documents may be obtained upon request to the office of the Architect at file@healybender.com. Bidders will be required to complete a Registered Plan Holder Record form and a Bidding Documents License Agreement for the Project.

Upon receipt of a completed Registered Plan Holder Record form and a Bidding Documents License Agreement, prospective bidders will be sent bidding documents and will become registered plan holders. During the bidding period, the office of the Architect will send project addenda, clarifications, and other project information to registered plan holders via the email address(es) listed on the Registered Plan Holder Record on file at the Architect's office.

These proposed Contract Documents may be viewed online at Dodge Data & Analytics internet site at www.construction.com. Bids will be received on General Contract Work, including all trades.

BIDDER RESPONSIBILITY

Each Bidder must satisfactorily complete the Bidder Responsibility process described in Section 01 00 00 - Bidder Responsibility Criteria of the Project Manual by providing the required Documents.

In the case of a joint venture or partnership, each joint venturer or partner must independently meet each of the requirements set forth in Paragraphs 1.02, 1.03, 1.04 and 1.05 in Section 01 00 00 - Bidder Responsibility Criteria.

The required Documents must be delivered along with the bidder's sealed bid at the same place and time required for the bid. Contents of each bidder's Responsibility Criteria Documents will be available for public review.

The Bidder Responsibility Documents will be reviewed by the Owner and Architect to determine the lowest responsible Bidder.

Each bid must be accompanied by a Bid Guarantee in the form of a Bid Bond, Certified Check or Bank Draft in an amount equal to not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid and made payable to Wilmington Community Unit School District 209-U, 209U Wildcat Court, Wilmington, Illinois. No bid shall be withdrawn for a period of thirty (30) days after the bids opening date without the consent of the Owner. Checks or drafts of unsuccessful bidders will be returned as soon as practical after opening and checking the bids.

Successful bidder must provide a Performance Bond and a Labor and Material Payment Bond in the full amount of the Contract, acceptable to the Owner. This Contract is subject to the Illinois Prevailing Wage Act (820 ILCS 130/1 et seq.).

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any informalities in bidding.

Contact Jim Habing at 815-514-7859 to make arrangements to visit the site.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
WILMINGTON COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 209-U
WILMINGTON, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, June 15 and 22, 2022.

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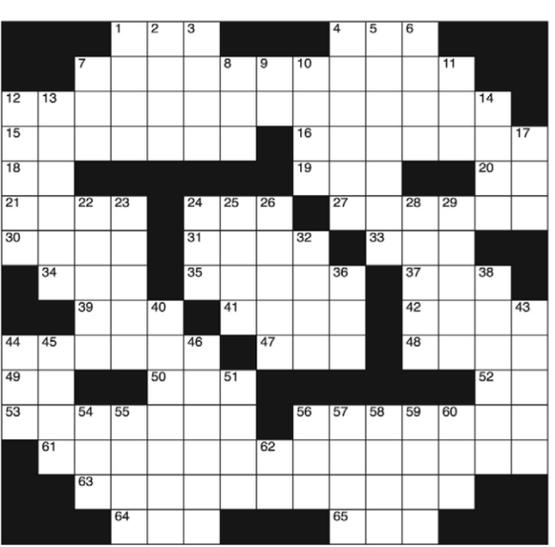
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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Moved quickly
 - Ocean temperature
 - Scholarly book series
 - Irregular
 - Hairstyle
 - Indigestion fixer
 - Special therapy
 - Mock
 - Partner to Pa
 - Strays
 - Swedish currency (abbr.)
 - Desired
 - Soap product
 - Traditional fishing boat
 - No (Scottish)
 - Spy organization
 - Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
 - Married woman
 - Blood relation
 - German river
 - Genus of clams
 - Parts of a movie
 - Residue
 - Ethnic group of Laos and Thailand
 - Atomic #77
 - Where wrestlers work
 - Northeast
 - Type of lettuce
 - Abstain
 - Communication between two
 - One who administers medicine
 - Sun up in New York
 - Having eight

- CLUES DOWN**
- He played "Milton"
 - Elsa's sister
 - Digital wallet
 - About backbone
 - Type of weapon
 - Turner, rock singer
 - Microgram
 - Hair product
 - Health care pro
 - Holy fire
 - Military ID (abbr.)
 - the ante
 - Containing nitrogen
 - Green citrus fruit
 - Male parent
 - Bring up
 - Murdered
 - Soviet Socialist Republic
 - Supreme ruler Genghis
 - Social media hand gesture
 - Semitic Sun god
 - Land
 - Database management system
 - Similar
 - Nice to look at
 - Covered with mud
 - Simple dry fruit
 - Title of respect
 - Type of footwear
 - Most lucid
 - Exam
 - Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand
 - "Rule, Britannia" composer
 - Small Eurasian deer
 - "Within"
 - Insures bank's depositors
 - A pause for relaxation
 - Social insect
 - Expresses acidity

All the Hometown Heroes banners are hanging

A big thank you to the city of Wilmington for the help in hanging a record number of Hometown Heroes banners. Special thanks to James Gretencord, Director of Public Works and to the hard-working city crew in getting them placed on poles along Highways 102 and 53. To the families whose banner was delayed, thank you for your patience as more brackets than anticipated had to be replaced, an unforeseen circumstance. We take pride in organizing this program to recognize local men and women who served our country. We appreciate all the support shown for this worthy cause. Steve Evans, President Wilmington Chamber of Commerce

Come wish

Paul Countryman
a Happy 90th Birthday

Saturday, June 25
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Reed Township Hall
Braidwood

If you wish to mail him a card his address is:
32066 Lawhorn Lane,
Wilmington, IL 60481

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Future Class of 2026 promoted from Wilmington Middle School



NINETY-SIX eighth graders at Wilmington Middle School were promoted to high school during a ceremony marking their graduation. The future Class of 2026 who are now freshmen at Wilmington High School are (from left, front) Kurt Rock, Evan Romano, Walter Gross, Matt Crichton, Nate Cupples, Jack Cutter, Austin Dietz, Caius Drown, Parker Hazzard, Ryker Fell, Tim Shelton, Dierks Geiss, Ryan Kettman and Reagan Jandura. Second row: Evan Kuypers, Trevor McLin, Braydon Mark, Anthony Johnston, Joseph Lewsader, Koren Liguid, Hunter Lewis, Edward Kurze, Nathan Kirchner, Jillian Steffen, Adrianna Reta, James Iwen and Evan Leonard. Third row: Ethan Pape, Samuel Payne, Allen Peace, Robert Phillips, Aiden Poulos, Ava Lenart, Gabrielle Kircher, Amelia Bayuk, Paiton Fritz, Alan Bown, Kailyn Motykowski, Delaney Redwitz and Delilah Hannan. Row 4: Kacey Kennedy, William Workman, Austin Weigel, Chase Warthen, Logan Murphy, Jay Nevels, Matt Parthun, Jason Palmer, Dominick Shankel, Sean Vazquez, and Andrew Boersma. Row 5: Meghan Fisher, Abigail Harding, Olivia Morris, Makenna Adams, Taylor Stefancic, Remington Thomas, Sydney Swann, Melia Hincherrick, Ava Spicer, Molly Southall, Ella Hansen, Grace Jones and Michaela Sanchez. Row 6: Alexis Strohm, Aubrey Strong, Rachel Smith, Peyton Buza, Alyssa Chiappetta, Madeline Pomykala, Jacob Cline, Lucas Vance, Logan Van Duyn, Gavin Williams, Olivia Mosley and Norah Unley. Row 7: Alexander Lawson, William Slayton, Nicholas Simek, Kai Sterkowitz, Mark Gable, William Moore, Jamileth Morales Martinez and Brayden Michaels. Back row: Popplewell Landen, Dominic Guzier, William Friddle, Caleb Rouse, Zachary Ohlund, Brianna Janovsky, Julie Enriquez, Destiny Graham, Emma Crisman, Rianna Swearngen, Grace Gougis and Isabelle O'Halloran.

WILDCAT SPORTS



Photo by Shawn Long

PACKED HOUSE—The Wilmington football program hosted its flag football camp with 82 campers which was the most they've ever had. The campers include: (in no particular order) Tyler Hammett, Jason Guzier, Ian Turcany, Parker Medlin, Ryan Van Duyn, Steven Ortiz, Cole Boersma, Cruz Hincherrick, MJ Pardon, Aidyn Taylor, Ryan Schraeger, Brodie Strong, Colin Van Duyn, Ethan Winker, Cooper Holman, Bly Bianchetta, Declan Moran, Travis Van Duyn, Fynn Bryant, Oakley Rivera, Nash Rink and Dane Van Duyn.

Wildcat flag football camp attracts over 80

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

The popularity of Wilmington football got a lift with the 2021 State Championship as the 'Cats welcomed 82 youth campers to their annual flag football camp that was held this past weekend. There's little doubt that even youngsters love Wilmington football. "We're really happy we got those numbers," said Wilmington coach Jeff Reents. "We appreciate the parents bringing their kids over and we've got to deal with the heat a bit this week but we dodged some weather so it's been good. With the success we've had, the Bobcats have had a lot of success too so the more football we

give our kids the better off we can be and this camp is just part of it and we're really happy with it." The Wildcats' undefeated season last year also might have had something to do with the increase in campers. Reents says it's also because the high school players are getting them interested by their interest. "When you go undefeated that always helps. The key for me has always been, our high school kids are always the coaches and if our high school kids are into it then that means our little kids are into it. So I've been really happy with our coaches coming out and they've done a really good job with it but we try to make sure we're teaching the teamwork concept but the biggest thing is run around and have some fun, and we're teaching

them some football along the way. Coach (Chad) Farrell has done a really good job organizing this. He kicked off this thing five years ago and so that's been really good for us. For an hour and a half a day we've got a lot of kids playing football." The camp continues this all this week from 10-11:30 and the main thing Reents tries to do during camp is to keep it fun. They play flag football games in their groups and rotate until everyone has played each other. "It's pretty simple. We get the kids here and we've got to organize them really quick into teams and then basically we divide them up age-wise for what team they're on and then we just have a tournament per day and our high school kids are coaching them up. They play for approximately seven

to eight minutes per half, give the kids a break, come back and then we just start rotating games. Reents wants them to have fun during these games but to also listen and learn the basics. "I think it's teamwork and we try to teach them fundamentals. Probably the biggest thing is our quarterbacks just throwing on time and not holding the ball too much. That's a big thing and the other thing is to try to teach effort. You always try to teach them you're never out of the play the whole time. I love seeing the kids—they see a breakaway but the kids are still running the whole field after him and we don't want anybody making fun of anybody and we want them to play together as a team."

The Bobcat numbers are good at the lower levels and that's feeding great athletes into the high school level and he sees what some of them can do. Reents is pleased with the talent he is seeing come through the system and he knows he's not seeing all of them due to other activities. "We're missing some kids to travel baseball and you know you've always got to share your kids especially in the summer but from what I see out here, I'm really fired up to see what's coming down the pike and seeing the kids and how they've been playing so it's been good and hopefully it will lead to them coming out of the tunnel and playing on Friday nights."

Castle, Del Angel power Illinois Stars to three wins in five games

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

Two Wilmington softball players competed in their first tournament for the Illinois Stars 18U travel team and helped them win three out of five tournament games. The Illinois Chill froze the Stars, no-hitting them in a 10-0 shutout on Sunday. Raena Del Angel and Jess Castle were both hitless in the game. Castle pitched a third of an inning of relief, giving up two runs on two hits while walking one. **Illinois Stars 0 Illinois Impact 4** The Stars were limited at the plate by Illinois Impact 18U on Saturday.

The Stars had four hits as a team while Del Angel and Castle both went hitless. Castle went two scoreless innings to start the game in the circle as she fanned two and walked one before handing it off to the bullpen. **Illinois Stars 4 Midwest Machine 3** The Stars powered down the Midwest Machine in a big win to start the day on Saturday. They had five hits as a team. Castle and Del Angel both managed one of those hits. Del Angel doubled and drove in a run. **Illinois Stars 7 Michiana Repetition 0**

The Stars made quick work of Michiana Repetition Gold in a shutout effort. Both Del Angel and Castle had a hit. Del Angel drove in one of their seven runs and scored a run while Castle walked, and scored. Castle pitched two scoreless innings and fanned two to earn her first win of the summer. **Illinois Stars 8 Texas Glory 1** The Stars began the tournament on Friday by pounding out eight runs on eight hits to beat Texas Glory Blue 18U. Del Angel and Castle both walked while Castle scored a run to lead them to the win.

WILDCAT SPORTS

'Cats top Gardner-South Wilmington for in Braidwood Shootout for starters

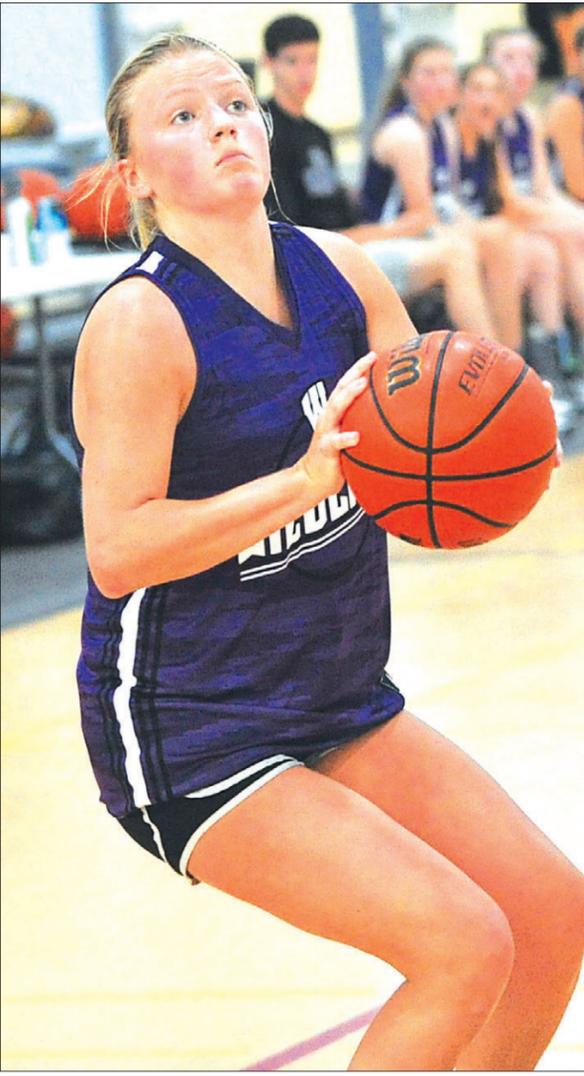


Photo by Shawn Long

LADY 'CAT Breanna Horton lines up a long two-pointer during their game against Seneca in the Reed-Custer Fieldhouse.



Photo by Shawn Long

WILMINGTON'S Kaitlyn O'Donnell takes a shot at three points during Tuesday's 39-36 win over Seneca to start the Braidwood Shootout.



Photo by Shawn Long

CONTESTED TWO—Wilmington's Alexa Clark leaps to make a two-point lay up with pressure from the Seneca defenders during Tuesday's game.

Del Angel plans to put an end to losing at Alverno

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

Wilmington softball standout Raena Del Angel will take her powerful bat elsewhere as she has signed her letter of intent to play softball at Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Del Angel has been playing softball since tee ball at six years old. Even though she played volleyball she knew there would never be a sport like softball.

"I did play volleyball for a little bit," said Del Angel. "But I loved softball so much. I loved the game and I think when I was little, I had really good teammates and coaches which helped a lot. And my parents are very supportive of course. I just really enjoyed playing it more than volleyball."

Del Angel started to see herself gain strength and size enough to hit home runs.

"Right when I started playing travel I knew I could use it as a tool to help me which was 11U. I did have quite a few home runs when I was younger. I loved batting. Batting was my thing and I loved to bat."

Her dad, Ray Del Angel never let her quit the sport she loved and always helped her improve.

"My dad would always make me do 100 swings before I could hang out with my friends or do anything else. My dad is the main reason I love softball today."

She took that love for hitting excelling through travel ball and straight through high school. Del Angel hit .434 with two long balls, two doubles, a triple and 15 runs driven in. That led her to think maybe she could do it at the next level and that's when she started scouting out colleges.

Del Angel found her new home in Alverno College and she tested out Olivet Nazarene University but it wasn't even close to what Alverno was to her.

"I knew I wanted to go to a small school and I just feel like I belonged there," added Del Angel. "Everything I was looking for was in that school, I loved the campus and the people were very welcoming. Its got that Wilmington vibe. It's a small school so the professors will know me and it's a small class and that's what I was looking for because I've grown up in Wilmington."

The Alverno College Inferno have already given Del Angel a roster spot to give her a reassurance that she is one of their top players and she will play a year.

Del Angel is coming in as a

third basemen and will most likely get a lot of reps at the hot corner with senior Natalie Akin set to graduate next spring.

"That would open that spot up for my freshman year. I'm going to be playing at some point during the season. I want to play and do what I can to help them win."

Alverno is not used to winning as they were 0-26 this spring.

The Inferno never have had a winning season years as their best season was a 20-20 in 2015. They won as many games as they lost in one other year so they are not very used to winning as they have 20 straight losing seasons. Del Angel might be able to break the skid.

"I think the most important thing about playing especially in college is you have to have the passion for the sport and some people in high school, travel, college--not everyone loves the sport so I think that's really important because that lifts your teammates, that lifts you and that just helps the program in general so I think my love for the sport is really going to help the team also."

Del Angel is excited and knows the schedule of full-go in college is going to be the toughest thing to adjust to but once she does, she'll be good to

go. Playing for the Wildcats and her travel team have given her experience and the tools to get ready for the college game.

"I think I've seen some different levels of talent, I've seen a lot of different coaching styles, I've seen what works and doesn't work really it's just like learning the game. You can learn good things or bad things."

She's already got the maturity to go back and go step-by-step through an at-bat when she doesn't as well as she wanted to. That's going to help her tremendously in college.

"I think what did I do wrong? How can I fix it? Then, I go and try again instead of dragging the negative part of it onto the field."

Del Angel plans to study Pre-Dental to become a Dental Hygienist when it is all said and done. She knows it's going to be tough to do everything but if she manages her time wisely, she'll be just fine.

While she loves softball she knows real life has to start sooner or later but she plans to play softball as long as she can before starting her career as a Dental Hygienist.

She has the summer left for travel ball and then it's time to get down to business in the fall when she heads to Alverno College.

Talley will be Ms. Reliable at St. Francis

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

Wilmington volleyball standout Leah Talley will be taking her digging skills elsewhere as she recently signed a letter of intent to play at the University of St. Francis in Joliet.

Talley was sold after visiting the campus for the first time. The volleyball girls and class setup really won her over.

"I really like their volleyball program and academics is also really good," said Talley. "They have like smaller classes and I really like that because I'm also a visual learner. I went for a visit there and I got to play with the team and they asked me out to breakfast and everything so that was also very exciting."

Talley loves how warm and inviting the team is to new players.

"I think it has a good vibe," added Talley. "They're all very welcoming. They all do everything together. For Wilmington, it was awesome but we didn't have team bonding or anything. For St. Francis, after practices they all want to be with each other still. They all want to do things

with each other. They don't want to go their separate ways. They have that connection. The whole team does. It's not like two individuals on the team. They all have it so I'm a very team person."

Talley will live on campus to get as much of a team bonding experience as she can handle.

Talley started volleyball when she was in third grade and also played softball from six years old up to her junior year. Even though she played softball longer, volleyball was her sport.

"My mom put me in it super early which I am super thankful for. I didn't have the love for softball like I did volleyball. I honestly thought I was so much better at volleyball than softball so that's where my heart wanted to go."

She started to notice changes in her game when she got into eighth grade. She was starting to become very good on a team that went deep into the playoffs.

"That's when we went to state as well," added Talley. "I communicate a lot and I'm very outgoing on the court so when we do get a point, I feel I get excited and I just loved when we all would get excited.

It just felt like we were all together and everything."

Her mom, Briget Talley, has been motivating her and keeping her in volleyball for as long as she can remember.

"She has taught me pretty much everything I know about volleyball. She's always there for me no matter what. She makes sure that I'm on my toes and I'm doing everything right. She played before and she went to state one year as well but she's very good and athletic. She's taught me the most out of everyone. She started me out so young which I appreciate her for that."

Talley will be stepping into the role of back row specialist at St. Francis, who won 15 games last season. The coach told her she has to try her hardest and the girl who is the best at the spot will start.

"She told me 'you either want to play to win or you don't. If you are the number one person playing the best you are going to play'. She doesn't really care about playing time. I mean I wouldn't either if I was a coach. Whoever is good is good and you've got to step up. I'm super excited for the opportunity."

She's already got the motivation down. She can cheer

her team on and be loud on the court with the best of them. Add in that energy, and natural digging skill and the coach will have a hard decision to make.

"The college game is going to be very challenging. The girls are more athletic and I'm going to have to compete against my teammates. That's going to be really challenging to beat them out as well because they've been there for so long."

Talley wants to be a Ms. Reliable for the head coach Cara Currier. Whatever she needs her to do, she'll do it.

At Wilmington High School, Talley had a lot of digs, earning All-Tournament awards in three tournaments, the only player on her team to received such honors.

Talley is undecided on a major but is leaning more towards the business field or the medical field in radiology. She's going to use the tutoring services and her team to her advantage to help her through her school work.

Talley graduates Saturday from WHS and is eager to move onto the University of St. Francis in the fall.

Summer sports camps offered by WHS

Summer sports camps to be offered by Wilmington High School include:

Grades	Dates/Time	Location	Cost
Grades 9-12	July 5-7, 11-14, 19 & 20 8:45-11 a.m.	Football field	\$50
Grades 1-8	June 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 10-11:30 p.m.	Football field	\$50
Grades K-4	June 20 & 21 Noon-2 p.m.	Volleyball	\$40
Grades 5-8	June 20 & 21 8-11 a.m.	Volleyball	\$40
Grades 9-12	July 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 28 7:30-10:30 a.m.	Main gym	\$50
Grades K-8	June 8, 9, 13, 14, 15 9:30-10:30 a.m.	WHS mat room	\$35
Grades 3-5	June 8-10 8-9:30 a.m.	Girls Basketball	\$40
Grades 6-8	June 7-10 10:30 a.m.-noon	Girls Basketball	\$40
Grades 9-12	June 7-10, 13-17, 20-24 9-11 a.m.	Girls Basketball	\$40
Grades 3-5	June 8, 9 2:30-4 p.m.	Boys Basketball	\$30
Grades 6-8	June 7, 8, 9 4-5:30 p.m.	Boys Basketball	\$30
Grades 9-12	June 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 21, 22, 23 2:30-4 p.m.	Boys Basketball	\$30
Grades K-8	July 19-21 8-10 a.m.	Cheer	\$40
Grades 6-12	June 27-30 9-11 a.m.	Soccer	\$30
Grades K-4	June 20-22 9-10:30 a.m.	Soccer	\$30
Grades 5-8	June 20-22 11-1 p.m.	Soccer	\$30
Grades 3-8	June 10-11 8:30-10:30 a.m.	Softball	\$30
Grades 9-12	June 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24	Golf	\$0
Grades 9	June 13, 14, 15 10:30-12 p.m.	Baseball	\$40
Grades 3-5	June 21, 22, 23 9-10:30 a.m.	Baseball	\$40
Grades 6-8	June 21, 22, 23 10:30-12 p.m.	Baseball	\$40
		WHS baseball field	
		Total	

Athlete's name: _____

Phone: _____ Grade (2019-20 year): _____

Parent/Guardian name: _____

T-shirt size (circle one): Youth: S M L Adult: S M L XL XXL

Return with payment to your school office by Friday, May 17