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WILMINGTON, IL | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020 | A FREE PRESS NEWSPAPER

Man arrested in child abduction case faces federal charges

STAFF REPORT

An Ohio man arrested in 2019 on a fugitive warrant for alleged involvement in a child abduction case in Wilmington is now facing federal charges.

The charges stem from a 2019 case involving a missing 13-year-old Wilmington female.

In September of that year, after the girl was reported missing, fast action by the responding Wilmington police officers and WESCOM telecommunicators resulted in her safe return, after the Ohio State Patrol was able to locate and arrest the offender.

According to police, Andrew F. Boltz, 22, of Kenton, Ohio, was arrested just after he entered Ohio with the victim.

Boltz was subsequently extradited to Will County and charged with one felony count of child abduction/lure of a child under the age of 17.

Wilmington Detective Samantha Sullivan took over the case in January and started working with Special Agents from the FBI on the follow up.

According to the WPD, Sullivan's lengthy investigation included hours and hours of tenaciously sifting through electronic records, and working with other law enforce-

ment agencies in both Illinois and Ohio.

Through that investigation it was determined that Boltz had allegedly victimized at least two other minors since the time of his arrest.

On Dec. 1, Boltz was indicted in Federal Court and charged with sexual exploitation of a child, under Title 18, United States Code, Section 2251(a), a charge that carries a minimum prison sentence of 15 years.

In addition to the Federal charge, Boltz's Will County case for child abduction remains in progress, and he is also facing charges in Huron

County in Ohio for unlawful sexual contact with a minor, disseminating matter harmful to juveniles, and illegal use of a minor in nudity-oriented material or performance, with additional charges still pending.

The Wilmington case was reported to police on Sept. 4, 2019. At the time, the girl was reported to have left her home in Wilmington after babysitting for her younger brothers and was last seen near St. Rose Church on Kankakee Street around 5 p.m.

Police were called by the girl's stepfather just after 6 p.m., and alerted that the juve-



ANDREW BOLTZ

nile had texted family members that she was going to be leaving.

The girl's mother started looking into communication records and officers were able to determine that the girl had been speaking with a person from Ohio, ultimately resulting in Boltz's arrest after he was observed by the Ohio State Patrol traveling eastbound on Route 30 just over the Ohio state line.

The girl was unharmed.
Editor's note - Persons named in police activity reports are innocent of any charges until proven guilty in a court of law.

Chavez to depart from Park District

STAFF REPORT

The Wilmington Park District will begin their search for a new executive director.

Renee Chavez, who currently fills the seat, has resigned from the district after 10 years.

During her time with the district, officials credited Chavez with helping to lead the successful development of a comprehensive system of parks, recreational facilities, and a diversified portfolio of recreation programs for the district.

"For the last 10 years, one of my biggest joys of the position has been watching the next generation grow up," Chavez said. "Watching residents grow through our programs and evolve into next generation leaders... is truly special."

Chavez was hired in 2010 when the Wilmington Park District was still operating out of a garage on South Island Park. At the time, the main tasks of the director were to oversee mowing, keeping the birds fed, and watering plants — a delegation much different than the role of the executive director as it has evolved over the years.

In her tenure, Chavez helped build district programs and open its first public facility in 2014 — the exercise facility and community center on Water Street.

The center today houses Water Street Fitness, district administration offices, and auxiliary rooms for special programs, the before and after school program, birthday parties, and community events.

"When opening the Water Street Community Center, my main hope was that it would serve all demographics of Wilmington. Now, almost seven years later, my hope is that whatever its use — workouts, birthdays, Kids Club, baby showers, etc. — the building is a place to make memories," said Chavez.

Over the past year, despite the pandemic, Chavez oversaw the development and

SEE CHAVEZ, PAGE 2

The giving tree



THE WILMINGTON FORTITUDE CLUB asks students to bring in hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves to donate to people in need during the holiday season. Items can be placed on the Christmas tree in the WHS cafeterium.

Sewer repair cost doubles

Collapse turns planned repair into bigger job

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

Crews spent several days at the corner of Kankakee Street and Kankakee River Driver earlier this month attending to a damaged sewer.

But what was originally slated for repairs totaling around \$20,000 got twice as expensive, as the work proved bigger and deeper for the city.

Members of the water, sewer, streets and alleys committee discussed the repairs during their regular meeting on Dec. 9, which was held remotely over the teleconferencing website Zoom.

Public Works Superintendent Ken Ewenson told the committee that the work was much larger than the original project, which had been awarded to Austin Tyler for just below \$20,000.

"It was 22 feet in the ground, A-shaped, and there were a bunch of bigger rocks pressing down on it that prob-

ably gave way on the first part that caused the big sinkhole," Ewenson explained. "So, we got that fixed, then we had to vac it out with the hydrovac. We ran a camera down there and found out that from where the first break was all the way to the manhole, which ended up being a total of 75 feet... there were just a bunch of holes in it and that was gone, too."

Ewenson said the site had to be fixed from the first leak to the manhole.

Since Austin Tyler was already contracted to work on the line, they added the additional work to the job, now expected to reach a total cost of approximately \$40,000.

Those funds will come from the city's sewer budget. The city still needs to approve the funding for those additional costs.

City Administrator Joie Ziller said the city submitted the claim to the insurance carrier, but added that the city does not expect that to be covered.

Ewenson said that sewer services were not disrupted for any residents.

The project was buttoned by mid-week last week.

City approves benefit plan for municipal employees

BY MARNEY SIMON
EDITOR

The city of Wilmington has agreed on a new contract for health insurance for city workers.

On Dec. 1, Bob Bryce of Infinity Benefits gave a presentation to the City Council regarding renewal of a Blue Cross Blue Shield health program for city employees.

"Blue Cross is not making any plan changes to our policy, other than the premium," Bryce explained, adding that the Blue Cross offers the city "strong benefit for the dollar" options.

The plan for 2021 will cost the city \$45,078 monthly, for an annual total of

\$552,938. That price is a 3.46% increase — a total of \$18,502 — over 2020.

Bryce said Blue Cross provided the city with a 2% decrease in price in 2018, and a 1% decrease in 2019.

And, in line with the rest of 2020, the novel coronavirus pandemic has also played a role in changes to insurance coverage.

"With regard to COVID, with carriers having to pick up the COVID pricing for consumers at no fees, that's added

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 2



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LIMIT 1

The most temperate town in the Northwest

The use of the word "temperate" in this case, does not refer to the temperature, but rather to the amount of alcohol consumed by the populace. In this case the town referred to is Jackson Township and the time is mid-19th century.



TIME WAS...
Sandy Vasko

In George Woodruff's book, *The History of Will County*, he describes the first residents of Jackson Township like this, "From the very first, the inhabitants of this township have manifested more than an ordinary interest in those two reforming and elevating influences - religion and education. Hardly had the early pioneers unloaded their wagons before religious services of a public character were performed."

"As early as 1833, an organization for religious purposes was effected. This consisted of a Methodist class, of

which William Thornburg was appointed First Leader. This little organization was what has since developed into the Elwood M. E. Church."

When the Chicago & Mississippi Railroad came through the township, in 1854, the town of Elwood was established. Named after Nelson Elwood, a president of the railroad and mayor of Joliet, Elwood maintained the temperate attitudes of the township. This religious attitude continued through the decades.

When other towns had celebrations that included a beer garden and dancing, Elwood had Camp Meetings. Some of the most famous clergy men in the county came to Elwood to preach and pray, including Will County's first settler, Rev. Beggs of Plainfield. The first Camp Meeting

was held in 1865, and part of the announcement read, "It is expected there will be such a gathering of old pioneers as was never witnessed in this section before. Good boarding tents will be provided on the ground."

"Persons attending the meeting will leave the train at Wilmington or Elwood. Mr. Hale, the Superintendent of the road, says, "Tickets will be sold at all the stations between Bloomington and Chicago at one fare and one-fifth for the round trip. Clergymen from points south of Bloomington pay full fare up and purchase a return ticket at Elwood, upon presentation of a certificate signed by the Presiding Elder at one-fifth of a fare."

Jackson Township and Elwood were "dry" places by law. In 1870 the editor of the Joliet Signal visited Elwood and commented, "I should judge, from what I see of this place, that the morals are good. They are pretty tight on the temperance matters. If you should visit this place, Messrs. Editors, you would have to

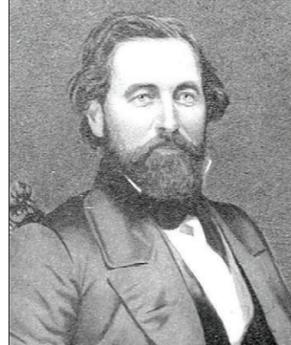
carry your Old Rye with you, if you use the article, although I learn if a person has a lame back, he can get a "nip" at the drug store.

It is my opinion that temperance can be run into the ground, and I should not wonder if it is the case here. Moral persuasion will do more than stringent and severe laws."

The following year, the Fourth of July celebration plans were almost derailed by factions within the two churches. "Our Elwood neighbors, it appears contemplate celebrating the glorious "Fourth."

With that view a meeting was recently held and resolutions adopted to have a "temperance Sunday-school celebration." Upon subsequent deliberation the word "temperance" was struck out, as superfluous, Elwood as matter of course, being well known to be one of the most temperate towns in the northwest."

"After another sober second thought and considering the existence of more than one Sunday school, the words



A PHOTO OF Nelson Elwood. The village of Elwood is named after him.

"Sunday school" were tabled by a vote of about 40 to 41. In short, the house was divided against itself, and each faction proceeded to perfect arrangements. However, peace was declared, and in all probability our neighbors will unite in favor of a good old-fashioned celebration, unalloyed by sectarian, political, or other side issues."

In 1875 however, the tem-

perance climate changed and three men who ran on a platform of "pro-license" were elected to the city council. These men favored issuing liquor licenses to hotels and restaurants in town.

The Elwood correspondent to the Joliet Weekly Sun wrote, "We congratulate ourselves on the possession of an honorable Elwood Board.

They have distinguished their reign by many creditable improvements on streets and walks. President, W. F. Muhlig, the others are R. Spafford, W. Gifford, W. F. Keith, D. C. Weeks, G. E. Cowell - virtually a license board - being most of them elected by small majority on such a ticket.

They have given satisfaction even to those not voting for them, except, of course, in the matter of granting license, and it is justice to say that the three last named voted against the issuing of the second one - the President taking the responsibility of doing it."

Finally, Elwoodites could belly up to the bar legally!

Second graders write letters to Santa

Christmas is only nine days away and we asked the second grade class at Stevens Intermediate School in Wilmington to write letter to Santa.

Take a look at what students sent to Santa:

Dear Santa,
My name is Ben W. Can you please get me a spy robot for Christmas? I would be so grateful for it, because I could use it to spy on my brother, I've been wondering what is your favorite cookie? I hope you have a Merry Christmas.
Your Friend Ben W.

Dear Santa,
My name is Brooke Dickover. Can I have a OMG House for Christmas? I've been good to my family and I will share all of my presents with my family too. I've been thinking, who's your favorite Reindeer?
Love, Brooke Dickover

Dear Santa,
My name is Abigail. Please take my family to Disney World. I will be grateful for more family time. I have been wondering, where do you get all these reindeer (and Rudolph)?
Your friend, Abigail

Dear Santa,
My name is Ian Mitchell. Can I please have a nintendo switch. I would be grateful to get some games for it so, I can with my friends on it. Santa, I have been wondering, how do you get around the world in one night. I hope you have a jolly Christmas.
Someone hopefully on your nice list, IAN

Dear Santa,
My name is Brianna Musick. Can I please have lights for my room. I have been good. I would love it, because I could change the colors of my room. I have been wondering, if the eyes on an elf blink? Ho ho ho, Merry Christmas.
Your Friend, Brianna

Dear Santa,
I've been awesome this year! I wash dishes, I take out the trash. How do you go all over the world in one night?

Thank you for evrything you do. could I have a Nerf gun, puppets, and a feisty pet, the porller bear one please.

Love, your friend Krystoffer

Dear Santa,
I've been very good this year because I cleaned my room. Thank you for not giving me coal last year. on my wish list is a phone and headphones.
Love, Noah

Dear Santa,
I have been really good this year. What is your favorite cookie? can I have a headset, a garbage truck, some clothes, and new shoes?
Merry christmas!
Loves cruz

Dear Santa Claus,
I've been doing my homework. Thank you for delivering gifts. I want an animal tracking device, a hamster, a Santa cam ornament, a new pair of binolulars, a diving mask, a book with all the dinosaurs, a clock, a blank book, a animal voice mask, and six more Who Would Win books.
Love, Conner

Dear santa,
I've been pretty good this year! I've taken care of my brother Ducan that is a dog. I have a question does my elf build my presents for Christmas? Thank you for all my presents from last year. and thank you for sending my elves. On my Christmas list I want Inquisitor Master plushie Light and Charlie plushie Please get my class a elf. I have a nother question are you watching the santa cam right now?
Love Maeve

Dear Santa,
How are you doing? How was ytour day at the North pole? I have been good this year and would like a hoverboard, a dog, and a new blanket. I want a hoverboard. I like riding them. I want a dog. A dog is cute. I want a new blanket. My blanket is to small. I hope you like by cookies and have a safe trip to Wilmington.
Your friend, Nolan VanDuyne

P.S. Nochio is doing good!

Dear Santa,
How are you doing? How was your day at the North Pole? I have been good this year and I would like a polariod camera, mini brans, and nail polish, I want a polariod camera. I want a polarid camera because I want to take cool pictures I want mini brans because I love little toys. I want nail polish. I want nail polish because I want to make my nails pretty. I hope you like my cookies and hope you have a safe trip to Wilmington.
Your friend, Grace Keane

Dear Sant,
How is Mrs. Claus doing? What are the elves making? I have been good this year and would like a RC car, Pokemon cards, and a Hiper rar card. I want a BC card. The are cool. I want Pokemon cards. I like them. I want a Hiper rare card. They are hard to find. I hope you like my cookies and have a safe trip to Wilmington.
your friend, Liam Sukley

Dear Santa,
How are you doing? How was your day? I have been good this year and would like Pokemon cards, Nintendo Switch and an x box. I would like pokeman cards. I can battle people. I want a Nintintendo switch I can play games. I would like an x box. I do not have one and it would be fun. I hop you like my cookies and have a safe trip to Wilmington.
your friend, Caleb Machalek

Dear Santa,
How are your elves? Hou are your reindeer? I have been good this year and would like an RC car, WWE cards and a trip to Flortia. I want a RC car. I want a RC car because they are cool. I want WWE cards. I want WWE cards to I can get the card of the Rock. I want a trip to Florida. I want a trip to Florita so I can see the ocean. Have a safe trip to Wilmington.
your friend, Ryan Sulkey

Dear santa
Please bring me a tranformer, a lego set, it doesn't matter what type I will leave a

treat for you. p.s. what do your riende eat?

Love Sawyer Cravens

Dear santa
what I want for Christmas is a iphone 12 please and can I have a tablet please one more thing can I have a new pair of high heels please I have a question for you how do you deliver all of those presents in one night I will be leaving you cookies and milk and carrots ok.
Love, Rilee Boers

Dear Santa,
Santa, may I please have dominoes? May I have a Hotwheel set. I would also like a remote control plane I will be leaving you cookies and millk.
Love, Declan Crutchfield

Dear Santa,
Santa, may I please have a kitten plush? May I have gift cards? I would also like a iphone 12. How do you send all the gifts on time? I will be leaving yummy cookies and milk.
Love, Audrey Woodard

Dear Santa,
Santa, may I have poke-mon cards? May I also have toy cars? May I have a drone? Can I also have a ipad? How do you get a elf on the shelf? I will be leaving you cookies and milk.
Love, Aiden Dumycz

Letter to the editor

You can make a difference this Christmas

Ten days until Christmas!!!
The Christian Help Association is putting the final touches on holiday food bags, toiletries, gifts and toys for over 250 families in the Wilmington area. The donations have been amazing.

We continued to be blessed by the tremendous support of the community, businesses and local organizations. Please take a moment to consider a monetary donation to help offset the expenses for the item purchased by Christian Help.
Any size donation will

be very appreciated. Donations of winter clothing non-perishable food and monetary donations can be dropped off at Kuzma Care Cottage, 635 S. Main Street, local churches, participating retailers or contact me (815-474-7521) to make arrangements.

So many families have struggled this year. Any size donation will help make a difference. In a world that has had so much sadness and darkness, help bring a bright smile to someone.
Cyndi Ragain
CHA volunteer

Lunch this week at 209U schools

Wed., Dec. 16: early dismissal, no lunch
Thurs., Dec. 17: hot ham & cheese on bun, au gratin potatoes, apricots and choice of milk
Fri., Dec. 18: pizza, corn, peaches in Jell-o and choice of milk
Daily milk choices are fat free milk and 1% white milk.

Breakfast at 209U schools

Wed., Dec. 16: Froot Loops, honey grahams, grape juice and choice of milk.
Thurs., Dec. 17: mini cinni, orange juice and choice of milk

Fri., Dec. 18: Lucky Charms, goldfish grahams, fruit punch and choice of milk
Daily milk choices are fat free chocolate or 1% white milk.

We've tripled our giving!

Join Oak Knoll in supporting families less fortunate!

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between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31, 2020

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Double standard

BRAIDWOOD—During the December 8th meeting of the Braidwood City Council a resident spoke up in regards to his dissatisfaction of the Mayor and his performance. The comments resulted in a heated back and forth exchange of words between the resident and the Mayor at which time the Mayor banged his gavel to restore order and enforce the 3 minute time limit allowed during public comment. What's funny is that when another outspoken critic of two other city council members went on the attack of these commissioners over several meetings, not once did he try to restore order, enforce the time limit or bang his gavel. It's nice to see that our Mayor has an obvious double standard.

Blocked by ILGOP

WESLEY TWP— After constantly hearing how social media has been blocking conservative voices, I felt that it was important to illustrate the conservative hypocrisy behind free speech. After asking several folks on The ILGOP Forum, the official page of the Illinois Republican Party has blocked me from asking questions in response to their search for a new ILGOP leader now that Schneider has stepped down. As of now, my comments are still there for everyone to see - they do not violate their published guidelines, there was no personal attacks, just basic questions of what are the GOP's Plans for the future of our state. If the ILGOP is going to block inquiries regarding their plans for our future of IL, is it safe to assume that they have no plans?

Still waiting

WILMINGTON—Do children not say thank you anymore? The times, they are a changing. I did when I was growing up under my parents' roof after receiving gifts for birthdays, graduations etc. Still haven't heard anything from nieces that got gifts this year. There is another old saying from the past, "Wait till next year." Uncle Frank

Follow procedure

BRAIDWOOD—A Braidwood resident recently questioned a Commissioner during a public meeting if he had received the FOIA requests that she had sent directly to him via email and asked why he had not fulfilled them yet. Why on earth would anyone submit a FOIA request to the incorrect person and expect them to complete it? Everyone knows that the City Clerk is the designated FOIA officer for the city and that all FOIA requests get submitted to her. As someone who has submitted multiple FOIA requests in the past, you would think that they would be well aware of the correct procedure. Sounds like a fishy setup to me and a poor excuse to create something to complain about.

It's their right

WILMINGTON—If anyone hasn't noticed there are some people who won't shut down some restaurants and bars since they can't afford to stay shut down. Some politicians are having them arrested. But what people really don't understand is that these small business owners have become political prisoners because they are standing up against some politicians who have overstepped their authority by allowing big business to operate freely and not allowing small businesses from operating so they can gain control over the lives of the Americans. Welcome to Communism part

What's coming next?

COAL CITY—We happen to have some schools throughout the U.S. that decided to stop children from reading certain books like "To Kill a Mockingbird" and "Of Mice and Men." This is just one more form of control of the lives of citizens. Next will be "Fahrenheit 451" which is a movie about burning books, the temperature of which paper burns. And to go back prior to World War II when the dictator of Germany banned books, controlled the news and arrested people who objected to any of these things and even indoctrinated children to think only one way. They also removed radios and weapons from all the citizens and today some of these same things are happening in America by the Democratic party which is party of the left and so is Communism the party of the left.

Voter fraud

Vote early, vote often! Living in the Chicagoland area, we have all heard that saying. Finding out it may be true, is disheartening. Every legally registered voter should be angry at the possibility that there may have been widespread voter fraud in our elections. Nationwide, no matter what politician you choose, you should feel confident that your vote will not be nullified by an illegal ballot. Before we call Biden our president, everyone should want to make sure he won by an election that was fair and legal. Without legal elections, our democracy will be destroyed. We need to demand voter reform and require ID's to vote! Andrea Grant

One great, other not

WILMINGTON—The greatest and most humble Republican President of the United States was Abraham Lincoln who ended the Civil War. The worst and most arrogant Republican President of the United States is Donald Trump who wants to start a Civil War!

At warp speed

SHADOW LAKES—Next week the virus vaccine comes out thanks to Donald Trump's Warp Speed. If Joe Biden had been president he would have been more worried about the race and gender of the makers.

Attendance is important

REED TOWNSHIP—The Reed Township Republic Caucus has put together a slate of candidates for the April election but how many of them have ever attended a single township meeting? You would think that in order to know what's going on or what you're going to be changing as stated publicly on social media, you would have been attending these meetings all along. Attending a city council meeting is entirely different than attending a township meeting and the way the two bodies of government operate is completely different. So don't think you're going to run it like a municipal form of government, because you can't.

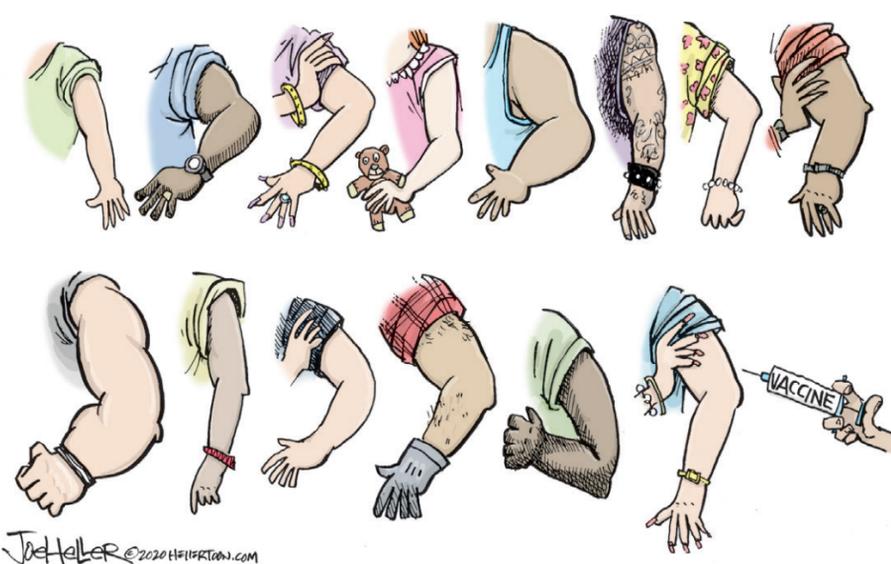
Will never forget

COAL CITY—I still miss the big beautiful white house on Broadway with the white Christmas tree in the window. Thanks Lindy, it was suppose to be the Lindy house but it burnt down instead. What a beautiful house.

Tornado tax

COAL CITY—In regards to the Coal City tornado tax. Maybe the village would have

A CALL TO ARMS



more money to go to that if the people that we have trusted to our money would quit spending it as if the money were coming out of their own pocket. Spend it more carefully.

Manipulating America

SHADOW LAKES—For years there's been the opinion that all Americans had some form of basic intelligence. But after seeing all the people that want Communism to control their lives, there is now the belief that U.S. citizens do not even have the intelligence to understand that they have been played like balloons filled with hot air. They are being manipulated like puppets on a string by people who only want to control their lives and do not care if they live as long as the millionaires and the career politicians are able to take all the money from them and destroy our country. Understand that right now there are two political parties, the Republican party and the party of crime and corruption with dictatorship policies known as the Democratic party.

Life lesson response

WILMINGTON—I was driving through town when my young son asked "Daddy, what does Pritzker sucks mean?" I told him it means a sad, angry, possible violent person lives there and to be safe avoid any house that has that sign. And that goes double for confederate flags.

Call and complain

SHADOW LAKES—Do you want service? There sure doesn't seem to be too much service at US Bank. First, we close the branch, next we cut personnel and last they went paperless. Everything they have done is for the benefit of them and not the customer. With the paperless deposit, if you don't have a cell-phone you must print your own deposit slips. The only thing I can recommend to the patrons of the bank is to call corporate in Minnesota and complain. I could walk to the branch before, now I must drive five miles. Margot Lane

Mayhem in America

COAL CITY—Armed protesters recently threatened Michigan's Secretary of State and her young child outside their home and the children of a health official in Idaho were likewise endangered by mobs. A month ago 13 conspirators plotted to kidnap and kill the Michigan governor and Wichita's mayor was nearly kidnapped for enforcing masks. In May the state of Michigan shut down its state capitol because men with rifles threatened the legislative body. Yes, right-wingers are jeopardizing American streets as Trump overturns our democracy. Instead of challenging the tweeter-in-chief, the Republican Party allows law-and-order to be abandoned. Sasha M.

Works both ways

SHADOW LAKES— To Ralph D: Just read your commentary, and for a second, I thought you were talking about the Biden family, Always, Margot Lane

License to kill

WILMINGTON—Small businesses and millions of unemployed Americans are hanging by their fingernails trying to survive the pandemic. But Republicans don't care and refuse to budge on relief legislation to help mom and pop companies. Not only that, Senate Leader McConnell is pushing legislation to allow billion dollar corporations to abuse their workers. McConnell insists that fat cats should be able to deny employees protective equipment and safety practices and legally get away with it. McConnell is truly living up to his nickname, the Grim Reaper. How much more abuse must Americans take from the GOP? Kate L.

Few are listening

BRAIDWOOD—Braidwood's self proclaimed truth seeking FOIA vigilante is costing the taxpayers quite a bit of money. Why doesn't the city administrator tell the public just how much time and money it is costing the taxpayers for this cheerleader's pursuit of information. This person is all about trying to dig up the truth with their FOIA shovel and then flaunting their findings about like they just did the residents a favor and found the lost city of Atlantis. Their intentions might be somewhat

Wilmington Chamber discounts membership

The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce is offering a \$25 discount off memberships before Dec. 31. The incentive lowers the cost of membership to \$100 for the year 2021 as long as payment is postmarked by Dec. 31. The Wilmington Chamber currently includes over 90 businesses who benefit from the Chamber gift certificate program, business networking, promoting Wilmington with its web page and social media, the representative voice for small business when it comes to local, county and state government and more. Among the accomplishments for 2020 the Chamber started a Hometown Heroes program - had 28 banners installed through town; started a tourism & beautification program; raised funds for the Christian Help Association; launched a campaign to bring benches and flower pots to the downtown district and more. For more information and to complete a chamber application to join visit www.wilmingtonchamber.org or call 815-476-5991.

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FAMILY



Bruce and Deanna (Dede) Trotter

Trotters to celebrate 50th Anniversary

Bruce and Deanna (Dede) Trotter will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18, 2020. Bruce and the former Dede Savage were married on Dec. 18, 1970 at Hope Presbyterian Church in Gardner. The couple has one son, Michael (Cathy) and two granddaughters, Morgan and Lauryn.

ALDI joins Illinois grocers now accepting SNAP buying online

Illinois residents have a new retail option for using Electronic Benefit Transfer and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (EBT SNAP) online through Instacart.

The Illinois Department of Human Services announced Monday that ALDI will accept EBT SNAP via Instacart, allowing recipients access to more fresh foods with same-day delivery and pick-up services.

"The health and wellness of Illinois families is a top priority of my administration and I am pleased to announce this partnership which offers increased options for SNAP recipients to acquire groceries via online pickup or delivery," said Governor JB Pritzker.

"Especially amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important that all Illinois families have access to healthy, nutritious options, regardless of their background."

As part of this new program, EBT SNAP participants will be able to shop from ALDI via the Instacart online site and mobile app. To begin, eligible SNAP customers can visit www.DHS.Illinois.gov/OnlineSNAP.

Once an Instacart customer profile is created, customers can enter their EBT food card information as a form of payment in their profile. Customers will need a secondary form of payment for non-food items such as taxes, tips, and fees for delivery, per federal guidelines.

Customers can shop and select items from ALDI's EBT SNAP-eligible products. After filling their online shopping carts, customers can choose grocery delivery or pickup for their order and determine how much of their SNAP benefit they would like to allocate to the order.

Illinois' initial Online SNAP EBT option launched in June 2020 including Amazon and Walmart. The Illinois Department of Human Services will continue working to encourage even more Illinois retailers to participate.

Currently, any SNAP-Authorized Retailer can allow for customers to complete orders online and pay at the store when they pick up. The Online EBT capability allows the customer to complete the entire transaction online and avoid completing the purchase at the retailer location.

Coloring contest underway for those ages 3-6

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

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

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

Deadline to enter is Jan. 15, 2021. For more details call Kathy at 815-823-4324 or 815-926-2651.



Volunteers needed to lay wreaths at veterans cemetery

The laying of wreaths at the markers of U.S. soldiers will take place Saturday, Dec. 19 at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood.

Volunteers of all ages are needed to place wreaths following a brief ceremony at 11 a.m. Volunteers should dress for the cold and show up.

New jobless claims surge in Illinois

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — More than 107,000 Illinois workers filed first-time unemployment claims last week, a 45% increase over the week before as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to wreak havoc on the state and national economies.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security reported that there were 107,616 new claims filed during the week that ended Saturday, Dec. 5, up from 75,536 the previous week. That compares to 14,798 initial claims filed during the same period last year.

That increase was part of a nationwide trend as the entire country has experienced record numbers of new cases and hospitalizations due to the pandemic. But the increase in new jobless claims in Illinois was sharper than it was nationally.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, new unemployment claims nationwide rose 32% over the prior week, to 947,504.

The number of people receiving continuing unemployment benefits has also

risen. In Illinois, that number went up 14.5%, to 340,919, while nationally it rose 10%, to just under 5.8 million.

During his daily COVID-19 briefing on Thursday, Dec. 10, Gov. JB Pritzker declined to say whether the state's increase was due in any part to the stricter Tier 3 mitigations that went into effect Nov. 20. Those include closing bars and restaurants to indoor service, closing casinos, video gaming facilities, theaters and indoor recreation centers, and limiting the size of both indoor and outdoor public gatherings.

941-HELP filling Crisis Line gap

With the closing of Crisis Line of Will & Grundy counties, the Community Foundation of Grundy County has edited 941-HELP (4357).

"The phone line for 941-HELP used to ring at Crisis Line during evenings and weekends. We have edited it to instead answer with a greeting where the caller can choose to be transferred immediately to the National Suicide Hotline," reported Julie Buck, executive director of the Community Foundation of Grundy County.

In addition to the option to transfer to the National Suicide Hotline, callers needing assistance with groceries, rent, utilities and other resources can "Press 2" to leave a voicemail for staff, who will return the call during the next business day.

For those wanting to browse all of the services available throughout Grundy County, residents can use their computers, tablets, or smartphones to research services at 815941HELP.com

"815941HELP.com was created over 15

years ago through the Foundation's Workforce Development Committee of our Communityworks project. At the time, the Committee felt that Grundy County doesn't have enough resources. Come to find out, Grundy has resources, but residents didn't know how to find them when they need them," explained Buck. "The resulting 941-HELP project started with card racks and kiosks, in addition to the phone and website, but with evolving technology and the popularity of smartphones and tablets, the card racks and kiosks faded away. Now everyone can look for resources 24/7 either by phoning 815-941-4357 (HELP) or by scrolling through 815941help.com."

If your nonprofit or government agency services are not listed on 815941HELP.com, please add a new listing by clicking the green button at the bottom of the 815941HELP.com page. Service providers can also call or e-mail the Community Foundation of Grundy County at 941-0852 or julie@cfgrundycounty.com

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Democrats vote to end investigation of Madigan

Committee adjourns after 3 meetings in 4 months

BY SARAH MANSUR
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — After just three hearings in four months, Democrats on the special committee probing House Speaker Michael Madigan's alleged misconduct and role in a bribery scheme involving Commonwealth Edison voted Monday to end their investigation.

Throughout the combative three-hour hearing, the three House Republicans and three Democrats clashed repeatedly over the rules of procedure, disagreed about the facts contained in the federal court documents and levied accusations of political stunts and a "kangaroo court."

The House Democratic members — Representatives Chris Welch, of Hillside, Natalie Manley, of Joliet, and Elizabeth Hernandez, of Cicero — voted no on a motion, presented by Manley, that Madigan engaged in conduct unbecoming of legislator.

With a deadlocked vote along party lines, the motion failed to pass.

Madigan issued a statement on Monday that criticized his Republican counterpart, Minority Leader Representative Jim Durkin of Western Springs, who filed the petition creating the committee.

"Jim Durkin insisted on initiating this political theater, and through this process we've come to learn that he was involved in the very conduct he claims to be so offended by — recommending people for various jobs.

If Jim Durkin actually believes it is conduct unbecoming of a legislator to recommend people for jobs or help constituents, he might want to review his own hypocritical behavior. Rather than finger pointing, I suggest we focus on the important work that lies ahead of us," Madigan said in the statement.

The Special Investigating Committee was formed in late August after the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago charged ComEd in a deferred prosecution agreement that alleged ComEd officials conspired with Madigan's associates to secure no-work jobs and contracts for Madigan's friends in exchange for favorable legislation in the Illinois General Assembly.

The committee was tasked with investigating whether there was evidence to find Madigan's conduct was unbecoming of a legislator and whether Madigan should face disciplinary proceedings.

Under the deferred prosecution agreement, ComEd admitted to the bribery scheme and agreed to pay a \$200 million and cooperate with the investigation.

Madigan has not been charged with a crime and he denies wrongdoing. He is mentioned in the deferred prosecution agreement and indictments as "Public Official A."

In September, a former ComEd executive, Fidel Marquez, pleaded guilty to a role in the bribery scheme. Last month, federal prosecutors in Chicago indicted four others — Michael McClain, a former ComEd lobbyist and close Madigan confidant, former ComEd CEO Anne Pramaggiore, former ComEd executive John Hooker, and Jay Doherty, a lobbyist who worked on contract for

ComEd — with bribery for allegedly conspiring to influence Madigan with no-work jobs and contracts to his associates.

Last month, Welch released hundreds of pages of documents that the committee had requested from ComEd, including numerous emails between McClain and Marquez, Pramaggiore and others seeking favors for Madigan's associates and individuals from his district.

The Republicans on the investigating committee — Representatives Tom Demmer, of Dixon, Deanne Mazzochi, of Elmhurst, and Grant Werhli, of Naperville — extensively referenced the emails to show McClain was working on behalf of Madigan, and with Madigan's knowledge, to secure jobs, contracts and internships that were meant to curry favor with the Speaker.

"This was not a mere job recommendation, this was a demand," Mazzochi said in reference to an email from McClain instructing ComEd officials to add former CEO of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority Juan Ochoa to the ComEd Board of Directors at the request of Madigan.

Other emails show McClain asking the company to provide work for attorney Victor Reyes and his law firm, Reyes Kurson, again at the request of Madigan, who is referred to as "our Friend."

In one email, McClain wrote, "I am sure you know how valuable [Reyes] is to our Friend," and then went on to write, "I know the drill and so do you. If you do not get involve [sic] and resolve this issue of 850 hours for his law firm per year then he will go to our Friend. Our Friend will call me and then I will call you. Is this

a drill we must go through?"

Mazzochi said the exchange was "not a job recommendation. That is an unethical quid pro quo."

"These internal documents certainly confirm that there is no innocent explanation," she said.

The three Republican House members of the committee called for additional witnesses to appear before them, including those named in the federal indictment, but a motion to issue subpoenas failed to pass, with a partisan vote deadlocked at 3-3.

In a news conference after the committee adjourned, Demmer said the Democrats on the House committee shut down their investigation.

"It was our duty to conduct this investigation to support and try to rebuild the integrity and trust of the House of Representatives. But what we saw under the leadership of Chairman Welch was a process that sought not to hear from additional witnesses, sought not to have adequate number of hearings and sought to bring the committee to a conclusion before we had the information necessary to make a qualified judgment," Demmer said.

The committee met twice in September, and has heard testimony from only one witness, David Glockner, the executive vice president of compliance and audit for Exelon Corporation, which is the parent company of ComEd.

Democrats on the committee also used the emails to suggest Durkin improperly sought ComEd jobs for his friends, citing an email from a lobbyist for the Illinois State Medical Society that asked McClain to consider recommending a woman who had been working in Durkin's office.

Hernandez, along with her Democratic colleagues, maintained that McClain's emails simply showed someone making job recommendations.

"Recommending jobs is legal, and Leader Durkin asked for job recommendations too," she said. "In neither case is this illegal or unethical."

Furthermore, Democrats claimed that the committee's motive was a power grab by Durkin in an effort to become the next House Speaker, even though he would need the votes of at least 15 House Democrats to be elected to the position.

"This is a political show that was concocted by Minority Leader Durkin. It was a plain power grab by the minority party, as the Republican members of this committee and petitioner have shown in spite of our attempts to conduct this investigation in a nonpartisan impartial manner," Welch said during a news conference following the committee's adjournment.

In his own statement Monday, Durkin criticized the Democratic members of the committee for protecting Madigan.

"The Democratic Party shows again today there is no limit to the lengths they will go to protect Speaker Madigan. Chairman Welch, Representative Hernandez and Representative Manley have turned the rule of law on its head by refusing to investigate the charges and demand the testimony of Speaker Madigan in this scandal. I call on Governor Pritzker to finally demand Speaker Madigan resign as it is clear he refuses to answer any questions about his corrupt practices," the statement reads.

Renewed calls for gun license reforms amid delays

ISP has seen 167% rise in new FOID applications this year

BY SARAH MANSUR
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Four GOP state House lawmakers on Wednesday, Dec. 9 voiced complaints from their central and southern Illinois constituents who say they have waited months after applying for new or renewed gun ownership licenses without an update from the Illinois State Police amid an unprecedented volume of applications this year.

Representatives Avery Bourne, R-Morrisonville, CD Davidsmeyer, R-Jacksonville, Patrick Windhorst, R-Metropolis and Mike Marron, R-Fithian, repeated their criticisms of the Firearm Ownership Identification card and concealed carry license systems during a virtual news conference.

The group discussed reforms they have suggested in the past which have stalled in the General Assembly.

Bourne said FOID and concealed carry issues and delays have been the top complaint from her constituents, eclipsed only by issues related to unemployment.

"There is no way around it. These people are experiencing lengthy and unreasonable delays, which is an infringement on their constitutional rights," Bourne said.

According to ISP, the current average processing time for new FOID applications is 121 days. For new CCL appli-

cations, the average processing time is 145 days.

ISP, in a release issued Dec. 8, stated the processing times "are unacceptable."

"Our people believe in building a system that makes it hard for the bad guys and simple and safe for the good guys. The Illinois State Police will keep pushing hard, but frankly we will need authority from the legislature to untangle, streamline and integrate the aging patchwork of FOID, concealed carry, firearms transactions, and records checks if we are going to fulfill this mission," ISP Director Brendan Kelly said.

The Illinois State Police Firearms Services Bureau is responsible for issuing FOID cards and concealed carry licenses. Under state law, "no person may acquire or possess any firearm, stun gun, or taser," or ammunition, without having a state-issued FOID card.

ISP has 30 days from the date it receives an application and filing fee to either approve or deny that request. For renewals, state police officials have 60 days.

State law also requires individuals obtain an Illinois Concealed Carry License in order to carry a concealed firearm in Illinois. ISP typically has 90 days from the date it receives an application and fee to approve or deny the license request. If the application does not include a set of the applicant's fingerprints in digital format, ISP has an additional 30 days.

ISP and Kelly are also named in at least two pending federal lawsuits that allege the excessive delays in issuing new and renewed FOID cards ren-

deners the system unconstitutional because it effectively denies Illinoisans their Second Amendment right to possess a gun.

The long delays and significant backlog at the Firearms Services Bureau trace back to the budget impasse under Gov. Bruce Rauner, but these issues were exacerbated in 2020 when the agency saw increased applications for FOID cards and concealed carry licenses, according to the news release.

ISP reported it received 147,862 FOID card applications from March through June, and that figure was more than double the amount received in the prior four-month period.

The agency reported a 167 percent increase in FOID card applications, from 166,649 in 2017 to 445,945 as of November 2020.

There were 144,476 new FOID applications pending as of Dec. 7, 2020, according to ISP, while total new CCL pending applications are at 27,248.

Efforts at ISP to address the backlog and delays include hiring 21 Firearms Eligibility Analysts since March 2020, with 11 more set to start in January 2021, and adding 19 temporary contracted employees to the Firearms Services Bureau, according to the news release.

ISP also issued an emergency rule earlier this year for FOID card and CCL holders whose cards or licenses have expired. The rule allows for the card or license to remain valid during the duration of the state's disaster proclamation and for 18 months following the end of the disaster, as long as the card or license holder

submits a renewal application.

Davidsmeyer said this does not resolve the problem facing his constituents with expired cards because gun stores can decline to sell guns or ammunition to someone with an expired card.

"My constituents are going in during hunting season trying to purchase ammunition or even a new gun to go hunting, and they can't do it because their FOID (card) is expired. Even though the state police have said, we are going to extend this, the retailers are so concerned about the liability they may have if they do sell to the wrong person that they will not sell to anybody. And it's an understandable position to be in," Davidsmeyer said.

Windhorst said he would prefer to eliminate the FOID card requirement, although he conceded such a proposal would not likely pass, given the makeup of the Illinois General Assembly.

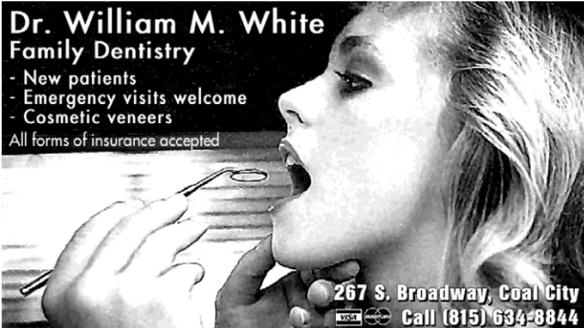
"But, as I continue to push for repeal, I believe we can pass commonsense legislation to ease the burden on law abiding gun owners. These bills are designed to address complaints about delays of the FOID card, concealed carry license and firearm transfer system," Windhorst said.

Those bills include a measure that would eliminate the 72-hour waiting period after purchasing a firearm for certain individuals who possess a valid conceal carry license; and a measure to require the Illinois State Police to automatically renew any concealed carry license holders' FOID card, as long as their concealed carry license is in good standing.



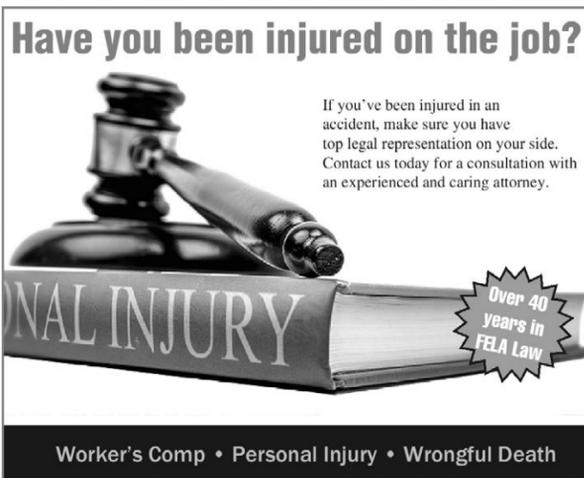
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When possible, use reusable bags and ask children to decorate newspaper with markers or butcher block paper. Never place bows or ribbons in the recycling cart. Consider tying gifts with natural twine that can be composted.



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For questions call the Chamber at 815.476.5991

Escape holiday stress with a tropical drink in December

It's the most wonderful time of the year! For holiday cheer? Decorations? Letters to Santa? All of those things are wonderful, but there is one thing that home tiki bar enthusiasts look forward to each December: the arrival of white grapefruit in local supermarkets.

Some drinks simply must have white grapefruit as opposed to the more popular ruby red variety, and this week we will mix up one of the all-time greats. I'm talking about the curiously strong sweet and sour tiki staple, the Navy Grog. Before we get into the Navy Grog, let's talk white grapefruit. They begin to appear in produce aisles around mid-November and hang around until the end of January if the growers in Florida had a good harvest.

If a recipe is over 50 years old and calls for grapefruit juice, then the recipe calls for white grapefruit juice. Ruby red grapefruit may rule the citrus aisle in modern grocery stores, but white grapefruit was the only option for chefs and bartenders of yesteryear.

Can't we substitute ruby red grapefruit for white grapefruit? No. The flavor profiles are completely different. Ruby Red is tart and very sweet, whereas the sweetness of the white grapefruit is more subdued.

The white grapefruit may have lost the popularity contest to the bright ruby reds, but the less complex sweetness of the white grapefruit makes it more ideal for mixing drinks.

By the way, the European and Asian markets love white grapefruit. Most of the white grapefruit grown domestically is bottled and juiced for international markets.

If you cannot locate fresh white grapefruit, there are a few juice options available, be sure to buy only "100% juice" options without added sweetener.

A few tips and tricks when preparing white grapefruit for your home bar:

First, use a juicer if you have access to one, even an inexpensive juicer will get the job done. When juicing, do not press the fruit so hard that you force the juice out of the pith of the fruit as it will be a tad bitter compared to the juice from the center of the fruit.

I buy a box of white grapefruit every year, which yields nearly a gallon of juice. Another great tip for bar home bar service is to bottle and refrigerate the juice that you will use over the next few days, and freeze the rest.

The best way to freeze white grapefruit juice is to fill ice trays with the grapefruit juice, which yields perfect 1 oz. cubes, ideal portions for mixing future drinks.

Also, white grapefruit juice is an excellent way to lightly sweeten your fruit or vegetable smoothie.

On to the Navy Grog. This is an iconic drink that has been a fan favorite at Polynesian-themed bars and restaurants since it was first served in 1941. There are two main varieties of the Navy Grog, one made famous by Don the Beachcomber and the other made famous by Trader Vic. The recipe below is closer to the Trader Vic version.

The Trader Vic version has



THE SUNDAY COCKTAIL

Brian Rung

had many fans over the years, including former president Richard Nixon. The rival Donn the Beachcomber recipe was one of Frank Sinatra's favorite cocktails, one that he would sip while dining in California. Do you have a favorite version? Let's try the recipe below on for size.

A quick glance at the six-ingredient recipe may be a bit intimidating, knowing what to buy is half the battle. As far as rum goes, this drink is best with two types of dark rum. I like Myer's Original Dark or Appleton 12 for the Jamaican rum and El Dorado 12 for the demerara. You could also get by using Pusser's Navy Rum, which is a blend of Jamaican and demerara rums.

The Navy Grog calls for allspice dram, a pimento liqueur that you may not run across every day. Allspice dram is a complex Jamaican liqueur with notes of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves that you can prepare at home using any number of online recipes.

If you do not have the time or the ingredients to go the DIY route, pick up a bottle of St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram, a high-quality liqueur made in the Jamaican tradition. It doesn't smell or taste like anything else, and less always more when using allspice dram. However, you will not achieve Navy Grog nirvana without it.

If it seems out of season to drink tropical drinks in December, think of it as an escape. Perhaps this is a drink that we would have had on vacation this year had we taken

vacations. Also, if you start working on your Navy Grog now, you will have it perfected by summer. Just in time for the Navy Grog's 80th birthday. Hopefully we can add that to a lengthy "cause for celebration" list in 2021.

The Navy Grog is built in shaker and served in an ice-filled double Old Fashioned glass.

Combine in shaker:
3/4 oz. fresh lime juice



1/2 oz. fresh white grapefruit juice
1 oz. dark Jamaican rum
1 oz. demerara rum
1/2 oz. simple syrup
1/4 oz. St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram
Shake with ice and strain into ice-filled glass
Garnish with lime wheel
Until next week, enjoy responsibly.

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Seven from area make Olivet dean's list

Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais has named seven area residents to its fall 2020 dean's list.

To qualify for inclusion on the dean's list, a student must have been enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student

and must have attained a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 grading scale.

Earning a spot on the list are Faith Vinci, of Custer Park, and Braidwood residents Rachel Barks and McKenna

Snyder.

Also Sean Micetich, of Coal City, and Wilmington residents Matthew Baumeister, Conner Dempsay and Abby Holmes.




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OBITUARIES

Frank A. Mantia Jr.

WILMINGTON—Frank A. Mantia Jr., 67, of Wilmington, passed away suddenly on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020 at Riverside Medical Center in Kankakee.

He was born June 9, 1953 in Joliet, the son of Frank and Edith (Fortey) Mantia. He was a graduate of Wilmington High School and Joliet Junior College. Upon graduation from high school, Frank became a proud member of Ironworkers Union Local #444 in Joliet, retiring in 2016 following 45 years of service.

In his free time, Frank enjoyed boating on Lake Michigan while spending many weekends and holidays at North Port Marina. He also enjoyed Chicago Bears football and had a passion for animal rescue. Frank will continue to enhance lives by his gift of organ and tissue donation through the Gift of Hope Network.

Frank is survived by his loving partner in



life, Cheryl-Ann Koren; sisters, Phyllis Mantia and Gayle (Dennis) VanDuyne of Henderson, NV; brothers, William and Scott Mantia, both of Wilmington.

Frank was also the proud uncle of Evan, Jack and David VanDuyne, of Henderson, NV.

He was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

As it was Frank's request, cremation rites will be accorded. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, service and burial honoring Frank's life will be held at a later date for all family and friends. Details will be forthcoming.

To visit his Memorial Tribute go to www.fredcdames.com to share a favorite memory or leave an online condolence.

Fred C. Dames Funeral home in Joliet is in charge of arrangements.

Leslie Wessman

BRAIDWOOD—Leslie (Sutter) Wessman, 71, a 17 year resident of Braidwood, passed away Dec. 13, 2020 in Temecula, CA.

She was born Aug. 18, 1949 to Lee and Ruth Sutter. She was a member of The Lighthouse Church of Alsip and Wilmington Church of the Nazarene. Leslie loved the Lord and her family with her whole heart. She was always around with a smile, talking to everyone she met, writing in her bible, tending to her garden, dancing with her tambourine and bells on at church, or sitting around the campfire



playing music with her husband, Kurt. Leslie sang to her own beat loud enough for all to hear, spreading joy and love everywhere she went.

She is survived by her husband, Kurt Wessman; sister, Dawn (John) Pecnick; sons: Eventide (Nicole) Wessman, Luke (Ashli) Wessman and Judah (Ashley) Wessman; daughter, Sara Wessman and grandchildren: Celeste, Angelina, Cole and Gwendolyn.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Lee and Ruth Sutter and brothers, Scott and Bradley Sutter.

Michael W. Davies

SOUTH WILMINGTON—Michael Wayne Davies "Miky," 37, of South Wilmington, passed away on Dec. 6, 2020. He was born Nov. 7, 1983.

Michael will be missed by so many, including his mother, Karyn Mitchell, of South Wilmington; his dad, Mark A Page, of Elgin, IL; Auntie's Jo Jo (Robert Dwyer), of Flannigan and Dawn Temke and family, of Kentucky; cousins: Nicole (Mike Corrigan) and family, of Flannigan and Anthony (Megan Dwyer) and family, of Hoffman Estates and



uncle, Robert Davies, of Lansing, IL.

He will be missed by many other family members and friends. Miky could walk into a room knowing no one and walk out with many friends.

Cremation arrangements have been made under the direction and care of Planet Green Cremations, Glenwood, IL.

There will be no memorial or services. Michael will be brought home to his mother where he belongs. Rest in Peace sweet baby, your fight is over.

Ryan S. Ford

RIVERVIEW, FL— Ryan S. Ford, 31, passed away on Friday, Nov. 27, 2020, at home in Riverview, FL after an asthma attack.

Born July 17, 1989 in Joliet, he was the son of devoted mother, Brenda "Kat" Falasca Ford, of Riverview, FL and father, Sean L. Ford, of Wilmington.

Ryan was raised in Coal City. He was a graduate of Coal City Elementary and High School. He attended college at Scottsdale Community College. He was employed at Ford Family Law and worked from home. As a child, he enjoyed Motocross. He also enjoyed riding dirt bikes, fishing, Ultimate Online, visiting his grandparents in Arizona and vacationing in Hayward, WI. He had many



friends in Arizona and Illinois.

Surviving are his mother and father, his brother and best friend, Brandon "Bubba" Ford, of Riverview, FL; siblings: Courtney Simons, Adam and Carly Ford; his maternal grandparents, Jack and Lori Reid, of Falasca, Corpus Christi, TX; his aunt, Linda Falasca Haley, of Chippewa Falls, WI; his paternal grandparents, Lawrence "Cubby" and Joy Watson Ford, of Mesa, AZ; uncles, Shane Ford, of San Francisco, CA and Jason Ford, of Gilbert, AZ and nieces and nephews.

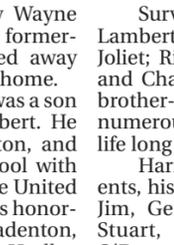
At Ryan's request, cremation rites have been accorded. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Harry Lambert

CUSTER PARK—Harry Wayne Lambert, 69, of Custer Park, formerly of Bradenton, FL, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020 at his home.

Born Dec. 20, 1950 in Joliet, Harry was a son of Elra and Frieda (Krumwiede) Lambert. He was raised and educated in Wilmington, and graduated from Wilmington High School with the class of 1969. Harry enlisted into the United States Army in 1970, and served until his honorable discharge in 1972. He lived in Bradenton, FL for many years and worked for Harlee Packaging Inc. in Palmetto, FL as a foreman until his retirement.

Following his retirement, Harry moved to Custer Park and was a member of the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 241. He found great joy in being outdoors and watching local wildlife. Harry was an avid gardener who loved to tend to his flowers and vegetable garden. He enjoyed cooking and canning, and loved to read. Harry had a great appreciation for animals, especially his feline companion, Pita.



Survivors include his wife, Narcisa (Cleary) Lambert; three siblings: Marilyn Scholari, of Joliet; Richard (Judy) Lambert, of Jordan, MN and Charlene (Bill) Engler, of Hixton, WI; one brother-in-law, Roy Stuart, of Kankakee and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as his life long friend, Marie Calhoun.

Harry was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers: Tommy, Elra, Elwin, Elwood, Jim, Gene and John and his sisters: Janice Stuart, Janet Adamson and Charlotte O'Donnell.

Per Harry's wishes, cremation rites have been accorded and memorial services will be held at a later date.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Harry's memorial page by logging onto: www.BaskervilleFuneral.com

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

Peter Odo

DIAMOND—Peter Odo, 70, of Diamond, passed away Monday, Dec. 14, 2020 at Morris Hospital.

Peter was born Oct. 9, 1950 in Chicago, IL. He was raised and educated in Braidwood, and graduated from Reed-Custer High School with the class of 1968. On Aug. 17, 1970, Peter married Linda L. Endrst in Morris, and together they would raise their family in Diamond.

He served as a police officer in Coal City from 1972 to 1986. Peter then entered the trucking profession and was a proud member of Teamsters Local Union 710 and 736. He was also a member of Assumption Catholic Church in Coal City and the Coal City Area Club. Peter was an avid fisherman and looked forward to any opportunity he had to go fishing, especially his family trips to Cape Faar, MO. More than anything, he was a true family man that devoted himself to being a loving husband and father, and cherished anytime spent with his grandchildren.

Survivors include his wife of 50 years, Linda Odo, of Diamond; four daughters: Kimmy Odo, Tami (Peter) Maland, Shari (Chad) Talkington and Gina (Keith) Wharrie, all of Coal City; seven



grandchildren: Dakota and Carson Collins, Rita, Peter and Charles Maland and Gwen and Thor Wharrie; sister-in-law, Janice "Pinky" (the late Ed "Butch") Olson, of Coal City; brother-in-law, Dave Powell, of Coal City; several nieces and nephews, as well as Tony Maland, who was like family to Peter.

Peter was preceded in death by his mother-in-law and father-in-law, John and Rita (Giro) Endrst, and his sister-in-law, Janet Powell.

Per Peter's wishes, cremation rites are being accorded and he will be laid to rest at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please make any donations in Peter's memory to: St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

Family and friends are encouraged to sign the online guest book, upload photographs, and share Peter's memorial page by logging onto: www.ReevesFuneral.com

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

Raymond T. Briggs Jr.

KYLE, TX—Raymond T. Briggs Jr., 68, passed away peacefully in his home in Kyle, TX on Dec., 5, 2020, after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

Ray was born on May 25, 1952 in Chicago to Raymond T. Briggs Sr. and Joan (Thompson) Briggs. In 1973, Ray married Linda (Recchia) in Chicago. Ray attended Bogan High School before joining the Army. He served our country for 6 years and always made sure to support our veterans. Throughout his life, Ray was most proud to provide for his wife and children, and exceptionally proud that all of his children graduated college.

In his free time, he was an avid Chicago Bears and White Sox fan. He enjoyed vintage cars and loved Chicago style pizza. Nothing made him happier than going to his oldest grandson's baseball games, his granddaughters' dance recitals, and experiencing his youngest grandson's giggles.

He will be most remembered for his generosity and putting everyone else's needs before himself. Everyone knew Ray by his old school mustache, great sense of humor, and we all enjoyed his South Side Chicago accent.

Ray is survived by his wife of 47 years, Linda (Recchia) Briggs; daughter, Michelle; her husband, Scott and grandchildren: Nico, Brixie Sue and Savannah; son, Scott; his wife, Elicia and



step-grandchild, Monyca; son, Jeff; his wife, Natalie and grandchild, Wyatt and son, Steven and his fiancé, Marcela. Ray is also survived by his siblings: Jean Wagner, Jackie Durrant and Mary Porter.

A private family service was held on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020 at Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 E. Kahler Rd., in Wilmington and the virtual service is accessible by logging onto his memorial page.

Raymond was laid to rest with military honors at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood. Due to cemetery limitation of only 10 being able to be in attendance, this virtual service event is also accessible by logging onto his memorial page.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials in Ray's name to the Wounded Warriors Project <https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org> would be appreciated.

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

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

Braceville-Gardner Cemetery donations

As the year comes to a close the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery board would like everyone to think about family, friends and loved ones buried at the cemetery. The board is in great need of financial help to keep the cemetery running. They run strictly on grave sales and burials with no other source of income.

The following donations to the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery are gratefully acknowledged by the Braceville-Gardner Cemetery Association.

In memory of Nels Olson family, by Alan and Beth Olson.

In memory of Delores and Donald Vacca, by John Vacca and family.

In memory of loved ones, by Marvin and Kris Perino.

In memory of Wharrie Family, by Larry and Shirley Wharrie.

In memory of Sam Brancato, by Avis Brancato.

In memory of loved ones, by D Construction family.

In memory of John, Elizabeth, Nell and Gary Jr., by Gary Lissy.

In memory of Kathy Kratochvil, by Lynn Kratochvil.

In memory of Mable and Jim Morris and Gordie Allison, by Wayne and Joyce Morris and family.

In memory of Allison family, by Allison Family Farm.

In memory of Herman and Mary Cullick, by Bernie and Debra Burla.

In memory of family and friends, by Scott Benson.

In memory of loved ones, by Shirley Simpson.

In memory of loved ones, by Shirley and John Lardi.

In memory of Junior W. Zilm, by Bettie Zilm.

In memory of Iona Rabe, and Smith family, by Ray and Bonnie Hill.

In memory of Edwin and Ann Crompt, by Marla Crompt.

In memory of John McLuckie, by Tessler family.

In memory of Isaac and Russell Bull, by Betty Bull.

In memory of Ida and Jeff Grant, by Bernard Grant.

In memory of Gary Lissy Jr., Audrey Endrst and Keith Wills, by Raymond and Kathy Lissy and Bonnie and Steve Raulerson.

In memory of David Allen Sinnott, by Ernadine Sinnott.

In memory of David Allen Sinnott, by Scott and Lynn Allison.

In memory of loved ones, by Beverly Grant.

In memory of Audrey Endrst, by Guy and Marilyn Huston family.

In memory of Cobb family, by Gretchen Marks and Terri Bailey.

In memory of Audrey Endrst, by Robert Barre.

In memory of Vidmar family, by Vidmar family.

In memory of loved ones, by John and Shirley Lardi.

Donations can be sent to Braceville/Gardner Cemetery, 7295 W. Braceville Rd., PO Box 246, Braceville, IL 60407. The association appreciates all donations during these trying economic times.

Board of Directors
Braceville-Gardner Cemetery Association

More than one-in-three small businesses closed since January

Illinois businesses see 39.2 percent drop in revenue

BY GREG BISHOP
THE CENTER SQUARE

Illinois has lost more than a third of its small businesses since the beginning of the year, according to TrackTheRecovery.org.

A small business association said it is heartbreaking.

The data compiled by Harvard and Brown universities and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation shows as of Nov. 16, the number of small businesses open decreased by 35.4 percent compared to January of this year.

The national average businesses not open compared to January is 28.9 percent fewer. Washington D.C. had the worst loss at 47.1 percent fewer small businesses. Nebraska and North Carolina had the best showing at 20.5 percent fewer.

Small business revenues have also taken a hit nationwide. The national average is a

decrease of 32.1 percent in small business revenue since January. Washington D.C. had the worst loss in the nation at 61.6 percent. Oregon small businesses lost 16.3 percent. Illinois small businesses saw 39.2 percent decline in revenue since January.

National Federation of Independent Business Illinois State Director Mark Grant said Illinois isn't the worst in the nation.

"But that's no consolation for somebody who has had to close their business and it's really, really difficult to see this," Grant said.

He said Illinois was a tough place to run a business before the pandemic with higher costs like property taxes and workers' comp, among other policies.

"Just make it tougher for the business owner and the pandemic and of course all the closures, the reduced hours, and reduced amount of traffic, have just exacerbated that tremendously," Grant said.

While many businesses have thrown in the towel or decided to retire early, he sees many young entrepreneurs

determined to keep going as a hopeful sign.

"It's really heartening to see that generation, some of our younger folks, who are just really working hard to get through this, because there is a light at the end of the tunnel," Grant said.

But part of the challenge is the uncertainty of the governor's executive orders, which have changed month-to-month and seem open-ended pending a vaccine. He also worried about where the state could look to make up lost tax revenue.

"It will probably be targeted towards the business community and so there are concerns about that," Grant said. "I know there have always been concerns about taxes on services."

Besides the flat income tax, Illinois also taxes goods, but does not tax services.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has said he will focus on cuts before tax increases to balance the budget, but last week he announced \$2 billion of additional borrowing from the federal government to cover short term spending.



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Noticing Memory Problems? What to Do Next

Dear Savvy Senior,
My mom, who's 76, has become more forgetful lately and is worried she may be getting Alzheimer's disease. What resources can you recommend to help us get a handle on this?
Oldest Daughter

Dear Oldest,
Many seniors worry about memory lapses as they get older, fearing it may be the first signs of Alzheimer's disease or some other type of dementia. To get some insight on the seriousness of your mom's problem, here are some key warning signs to be vigilant of and some resources you can turn to for help.

Warning Signs
As we grow older, some memory difficulties such as

trouble remembering names of people or places or forgetting where you put your glasses or car keys are associated with normal aging. But the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease are much more than simple memory lapses.

Knowing the early warning signs is a good first step in recognizing the difference between typical age-related memory loss and a more serious problem. To help you evaluate your mom's condition, here's a checklist of some common early symptoms to watch for:

- Asking the same questions repeatedly.
- Getting lost in familiar areas.
- Failing to recognize familiar people.

- Having difficulty following directions.
- Misplaces items in inappropriate places, for example putting her keys in the microwave.
- Having difficulty completing familiar tasks like cooking a meal or paying a bill.
- Having trouble remembering common words when speaking or mixing up words.

For more information, see the Alzheimer's Association list of 10 early signs and symptoms at 10signs.org.

Another good tool to help you evaluate your mom is the Self-Administered



SAVVY SENIOR
Jim Miller

Gerocognitive Exam (SAGE test) that was developed at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. This free test helps identify mild cognitive impairment and early dementia and can be taken at home in about 10 to 15 minutes. The SAGE test can be taken online at BrainTest.com.

Get Help

If you would rather have professional assistance in evaluating your mom, the Alzheimer's Foundation of America (see alzfdn.org) is

another good resource you can turn to.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday they provide free, confidential virtual memory screenings done via video chat in real time. Your mother will need a phone, tablet or computer with a webcam and internet capability to complete the screening.

The screenings are given by healthcare professionals and take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Once the screening is complete, the screener will review the results with her and let her know if she should see a doctor for further evaluation. To set up a memory screening for your mom call 866-232-8484 and make an appointment.

If you find that your mom does need further evaluation, make an appointment with her primary care doctor for a cognitive checkup and medical

examination. Depending on what's found, she may be referred to a geriatrician or neurologist who specializes in diagnosing and treating memory loss or Alzheimer's disease.

Keep in mind that even if your mom is experiencing some memory problems, it doesn't necessarily mean she has early-stage Alzheimer's. Many memory problems are brought on by other factors like stress, depression, thyroid disease, side effects of medications, sleep disorders, vitamin deficiencies and other medical conditions. And by treating these conditions she can reduce or eliminate the problem.

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

Winning opossum pic brings joy to ER tech during pandemic

A cuddly-looking baby opossum nestled in the woods won November's portion of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Preserve the Moment photo contest.

The picture was taken by Teresa Wisnieski at Lower Rock Run - I&M Canal Access in Joliet.

Wisnieski, of Joliet, who is an emergency room technician at Edward Hospital in Naperville, said her hikes in the preserve and her wildlife viewing and photography have all helped with the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic at work.

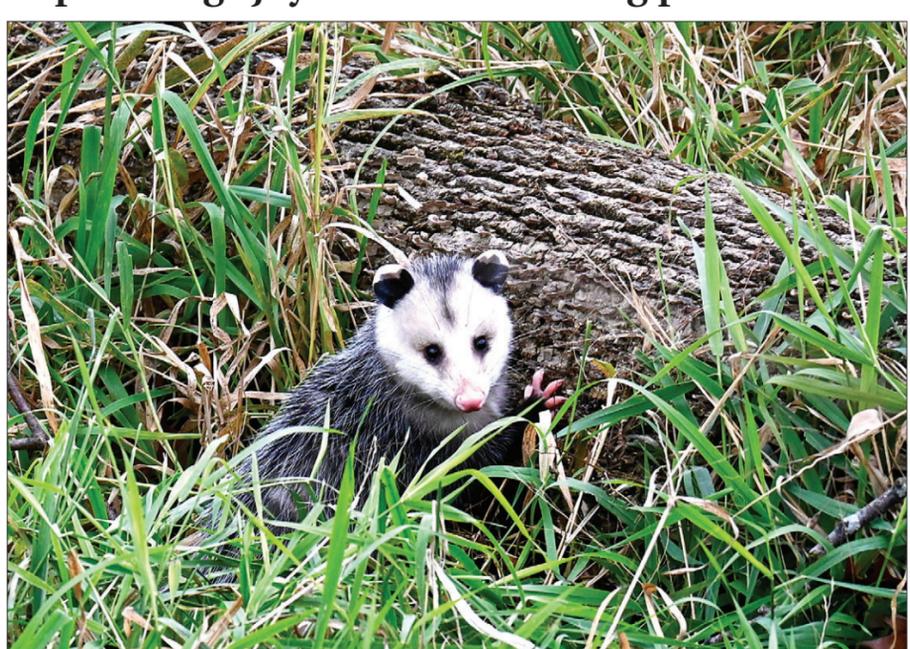
"It has been a great source of happiness during the pandemic," she said. "It is such a good stress reliever to get outside and be in nature. It's a great source of relaxation. That preserve is so full of wildlife and nature and it's ever changing."

On a recent hike, she heard some rustling in the woods and looked down and saw a large opossum foraging for food. She watched it for a while until she noticed a baby opossum waiting for the larger opossum, which appeared to be the baby's mother. So Wisnieski quickly snapped some photos of the pink-nosed baby, with its pink paw resting on a fallen tree, and then left it alone so as not to disturb the creatures.

"It made me smile because it's such a cute little opossum," she said of the marsupial in her winning photo. "So I thought I would share it (to the contest) because it brought me some joy."

Wisnieski also has begun sharing her photos to the Forest Preserve's Will County Wildlife Facebook group.

"I look forward to contin-



Courtesy photo by Teresa Wisnieski

JOLIET RESIDENT Teresa Wisnieski, who works as an ER tech at Edward Hospital in Naperville, won November's portion of the Forest Preserve District of Will County's photo contest with this photo of a baby opossum.

ued walks in the preserves and sharing my photos with others online," she said. "Thanks to those behind the scenes who give us nature lovers a place to go to share photos and also stories to read that help us learn more about the nature and preserves in Will County."

Honorable mentions for November were awarded to: Matt Serafini, of Lockport, for a photo of a camouflaged deer in tall grass at Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve in Lockport Township; Tyler Paul, of Wilmington, for a photo of a great horned owl roosting in a

tree at Forked Creek Preserve in Wilmington; Michael Masallis, of Naperville, for a photo of oil beetles "snuggling" at Braidwood Dunes and Savanna Nature Preserve in Reed Township and Caitlin Satalic, of Plainfield, for a photo of a colorful cecropia caterpillar at Lockport Prairie Nature Preserve.

Wisnieski is the seventh monthly winner in the 2020 photo contest. Only one more monthly winner will be chosen by a panel of judges before the contest concludes Dec. 31. In January, all eight monthly win-

ners will vie for top honors via public voting on the District's Facebook page.

Monthly photo contest winners receive \$75 gift cards. Overall winners chosen in January will receive MasterCard gift cards worth \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place and \$150 for third place. The photo contest is sponsored by The Nature Foundation of Will County.

For more details on the contest, including how to enter and the rules, visit www.reconnectwithnature.org.

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- DECEMBER EVENTS -

DECEMBER 2, 9, 16, AND 23 WEDNESDAY TACOS
5:00-7:30 p.m.

Fri., Dec. 4	5-7:30 p.m.	Fish Fry
Sat., Dec. 12	5-7:30 p.m.	Steak Fry
Fri., Dec. 18	5-7:30 p.m.	Fish Fry
Sun., Dec. 20	9-11:30 a.m.	Moose Riders

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Wish your customers a Merry Christmas

We have children from area schools drawing Christmas art to be featured in our Dec. 21 & Dec. 23 issues.

Your business can sponsor a child's drawing to send out a season's greetings message to your customers.

Parents, grandparents, and children comb through the ads looking at all the businesses who supported these community pages.

Make sure your business isn't left out by scheduling TODAY.

Deadline is Dec. 17

Call 815-476-7966 to be included

email: efisher@fpnusa.com or fpnpatti@comcast.net

Parent, grandparents and children love this!

Merry Christmas

Artist Name - School
Business Name • Address • Phone #

Tips for making Christmas less wasteful

Dear EarthTalk: The holidays are so wasteful given all the consumerism and decorations. Do you have any tips for making this year's celebration less wasteful?
-- Shelly R., New York, NY



The holidays are indeed a hugely wasteful time of the year, but there are many ways we can reduce our impact and still enjoy this special season.

Gift wrap is a great place to start. Much of the wrap we buy in stores can't be recycled because of its mixture of paper with glitter, plastic, dyes, laminate and other materials, so it goes straight to the landfill after we use it once.

Wrapping gifts in brown grocery bags or parcel paper makes use of an everyday item that you may already have in your home while keeping your wrapping recyclable. Cut open paper bags from the grocery store, wrap up your present like you would with any other kind of paper, and tie it up using recyclable twine, paper ribbon or a shoelace (you can even put it back in the shoe later).

To decorate your gifts, use

stamps and leafy embellishments to make for a cute or sophisticated look. Go out into your neighborhood to forage for flowers or shoots of leaves to slip under your ribbon or twine. Another alternative to wrapping with brown paper is wrapping your gift with a scarf (two presents in one)!

The debate over which kind of Christmas tree (real or artificial) is better for the environment has been raging for a long time, but the real right answer is a live tree that you can plant in the ground outside after the holidays. If you decide to get a cut tree, look for one that's grown sustainably and pesticide-free.

Going to the closest tree farm lowers the carbon footprint of buying a tree that was

imported. If you want to get an artificial tree, most experts agree that you would need to reuse it for about 18 years to keep the environmental impact lower than that of a real tree.

There are plenty of ways to decorate your home festively for the holiday seasons without being wasteful. First of all, if you already have decorations, use them! If you don't, try DIYing your decorations this year.

You can use recycled paper or salt dough to make ornaments for your tree, and collect branches, holly, and leaves outside to create a wreath to hang on your door. Additionally, if you enjoy advent calendars for the month of December, try investing in a reusable wooden one this year so that you can fill it up with your own favorite treats, toys, or surprises for years to come.

It's also important to be conscious consumers while we shop for holiday gifts. Be sure to think (and think again) before buying something this season. Try to buy long-lasting gifts and shop at small, sustainable and/or local businesses to make your shopping greener.

Etsy is a great place to find small businesses that sell ethical and sustainable products. Finally, if you enjoy unwrapping your creative side over the holidays, making your own gifts (upcycling thrifted clothes, jams or chutneys, knitting, painting, pickling or whatever you want to do) is another way to reduce waste. Cheers for the holidays, and have a crafty one!

EarthTalk® is produced a 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. Send questions to: question@earth-talk.org.



WRAPPING GIFTS IN brown grocery bags or parcel paper makes use of an everyday item that you may already have in your home while keeping your wrapping recyclable.

			7									
	8				6		4					
				3			6	5				
							2					
9	7			8	4							
		4	5	9								
5												
6	4	2			7							
		3	9	5								

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14			15					16				
17			18					19				
20		21				22						
23				24	25					26	27	
	28			29			30					
31	32			33	34	35	36			37		
38			39	40					41			
42			43				44	45				
46	47	48		49			50					
51			52	53	54			55		56	57	
	58					59						
60	61				62	63				64		
65					66					67		
68					69					70		

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Popular pickup truck
 - Profoundly wise men
 - Camera company
 - Folk singer DiFranco
 - Passerine birds
 - Plum-shaped fruit used for preserves
 - Popular kids channel
 - Dodgers' skipper
 - Removes
 - The Atlantic is one
 - Badgerlike mammal
 - Foulness
 - Luke's mentor --Wan
 - Commercial
 - A type of gin
 - Tempress
 - Shuts in an enclosed space
 - Milligram
 - Actress Adams
 - Strive to equal or match
 - Health insurance
 - A detective's source
 - Small American rails
 - Alfred __, Brit. poet
 - Crest of a hill
 - Atomic #52
 - __ Caesar, comedian
 - Breaks apart
 - Register formally (Brit. sp.)
 - Worker
 - Chemical compound
 - Disgraced newsman
 - Born of
 - Chemical substance
 - Supernatural powers
 - Clothes
 - Indy footballers
 - Moves forward
 - Midway between south and southeast
 - Edible lily bulbs
 - Quarterbacks take them
 - Organic compound
 - Tears down (Brit.)
 - Beloved Hollywood alien
 - Unconscious
 - Missouri
 - Firemen use them
 - Pig noise
 - Greatly dismay
 - Imitator
 - Moves by turning over
 - Boxing's GOAT
 - Swarms with
 - Margarines
 - Feudal superior
 - As fast as can be done
 - Reciprocal of a sine
 - Chinese city
 - Tell on
 - United
- CLUES DOWN**
- Driver
 - Bone cavities
 - Menacing
 - Where coaches patrol
 - Greek mythological figure
 - War-based board game
 - Midway between northeast and east
 - 18-year period in astronomy
 - Mid-century term used to describe Japanese-Americans
 - Large bodies of water
 - Eurasian rye grass
 - Perform on stage
 - Greek island
 - 10th month of the year (abbr.)
 - One point east of southeast
 - Belgian city
 - Praise excessively
 - River in France

First health care workers vaccinated

Ezike lauds vaccination as 'beginning of the end' of pandemic

BY PETER HANCOCK
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD – Five health care workers at a hospital in Peoria became the first people in Illinois to receive a COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday, Dec. 15 marking what Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike called “the beginning of the end” of the pandemic.

The vaccine, developed by the drug companies Pfizer and BioNTech, was granted Emergency Use Authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration last week and is now being shipped throughout the United States. Early studies have shown that after two doses that are given 21 days apart, the vaccine is 95 percent effective in preventing the disease.

The FDA is also expected to approve a second vaccine from the drug company Moderna, possibly before the end of the week.

But Ezike said even as more vaccines become available, it will take several months to reach everyone in Illinois.

“I think most of 2021 will be spent in this effort,” Ezike said at the event at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria. “But I’m excited for the engagement and for the support of the community to get this done as rapidly as possible.”

Guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the state’s own vaccination plan calls for health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities to be the first in line for the vaccine.

“People getting vaccinated, particularly our health care workers, is an exciting moment,” Gov. JB Pritzker said. “I hope that everybody will take note that you were part of this and witnessed this. These health care workers have been working all throughout this pandemic, taking care of people on the front lines. These are our heroes.”



CHEMICA JONES, 41, a certified nursing assistant, receives one of the first COVID-19 vaccines administered in Illinois during an event Tuesday at OSF St. Francis Medical Center in Peoria.

In addition to the supply of vaccines going to the state, the federal government is also shipping vaccines directly to Cook, Lake, Madison and St. Clair counties.

Pritzker said he expects roughly 85,000 people in Illinois will receive their first dose of the vaccine this week. Those doses are being shipped to 96 hospitals in 50 counties that have had the highest death rates from the disease. The release of the vaccine in Illinois came on a day when the state recorded another 117 virus-related deaths, bringing the total number of fatalities since the pandemic began to 14,509.

⊙ * ✎ ☼ ☽ ☾ ☿ ♀ ♁ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓ ♀ ☾ ☽ ☿ ♀ ♁ ♃ ♄ ♅ ♆ ♇ ♈ ♉ ♊ ♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to hygiene. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 3 = A)

A. 8 3 9 19
Clue: Clean up

B. 9 3 2 22 10 22 16 12
Clue: Make clean and hygienic

C. 5 25 12 3 2
Clue: Opposite of dirty

D. 19 12 3 25 10 19 1
Clue: Not diseased

Answers: A. wash B. sanitize C. clean D. healthy

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to hygiene.

F C E U T A

Answer: Faucet

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in Missouri on December 15, 1949. I had my first acting role in a stage production in 1969. I am best known for a TV gig in the 1980s that followed Florida police detectives.

Answer: Don Johnson

HAND HYGIENE WORD SEARCH

M Y V Z S O D S R R Z O S E I S I G C G
 U T I M P T T A M H W E E I E R N A P K
 A P R S R O I T E T V D T T L I U C C P
 H O U Z P R I N I O R U A I H T P C I G
 W L S S E M S E L O D N T C I B H N T M
 F I T T M C U G H Z I V U O U G E S P I
 N O C Y O V V R V M A O N R S B D A E C
 H A U U I D D E A A T A C R O I W N S R
 B D I E K R C T K E L S S S S B Y I I O
 S O I L E D N E L C C E B I C T H T T O
 O F M B S O P D O O C P N H R K C I N R
 A M N R C I H N F A H F D I K I M Z A G
 P N C E R R T A F R E O D L B G O E H A
 Y O D C D A R R K C G S C R I V K R P N
 Z H I H C D U N T O H E E L Z F S N B I
 C B E T Z S I I N G C T R O A P O A Y S
 L P M Y S S O L K R A R Y M F N O G R M
 Z Y M B W N B N W W D K B N S I I K U S
 C D M T D D W O F Y S V N E E K E I D U
 A V A N G N I H S A W D N A H H P E F D

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

ALCOHOL
 ANTISEPTIC
 BACTERIA
 CAUTION
 CONTACT
 DECONTAMINATE
 DETERGENT
 DIRTY
 DISINFECTION
 GERMS
 GLOVES
 HANDWASHING
 HOT SPOTS
 MICROORGANISMS
 NAILS
 SANITIZER
 SCRUB
 SINK
 SOAPY
 SOILED
 SURFACES
 TOUCHING
 VIRUS
 WATER

Madigan still the fixer king who gets things done

Outsiders may not get it, but it makes some sense that the majority of House Democrats still back House Speaker Michael Madigan's reelection.

He's been a genius at getting things done for his caucus. He is loyal to his people and has infinitely more institutional memory and can pull more strings and push more buttons than anyone alive.

In his nearly 50 years in office, Madigan has been heav-

ily involved with four legislative remap processes and has been in the House for five of them.

Madigan has played a decisive role in every income tax increase (temporary and permanent) since the tax was established in 1969 - and he was a delegate to the constitutional convention which created it.

He has also negotiated dozens of budgets since he became House Speaker in

1983.

His campaign operation meticulously tracks the number of knocked doors in contested races and every contact made, and he reviews that data each week and calls candidates to provide his feedback. He knows how to win.

And at this moment in history, with redistricting coming up, a huge revenue shortfall, horrific budget problems, a massively destructive pandemic causing rampant suffering and, in less than two years, a midterm election under a Democratic president (with a new map), most of his members are rightly worried sick.

For these and many other reasons, this is exactly the moment when his members would need Madigan the most, and he most certainly knows this and is deftly playing on that angst as 19 of his members are in open revolt.

But the sweeping and aggressive federal investigation is this/close to Madigan now. Despite all of his protests of innocence and some reasonable arguments that he did nothing illegal, the G is obviously after Madigan's head.

Gov. JB Pritzker has taken loads of heat for not pushing Madigan out of office, even though he couldn't do it if he tried. Pritzker is up for reelection in 2022 and a Madigan reelection would certainly mean big trouble. Yes, Pritzker won by 16 points two years ago, but that was during an unpopular Republican president's midterm against a super-weak incumbent. He's going to have to hustle to win.

A gubernatorial confrontation with a reelected Madigan is inevitable.



CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

Pritzker pledged during the campaign and ever since taking office that he will veto a legislative redistricting plan that isn't "fair" which was defined (by me) in March of 2018 as any proposal "that is in any way drafted or created by legislators, political party leaders and/or their staffs or allies."

So, when Madigan told the House Black Caucus during a recent private meeting that he is the best person to draw the new map, he guaranteed that Pritzker had to veto it. There will be no finessing Pritzker's pledge. And overriding a veto will be hugely difficult because suburbanites who ran as good government types in swing districts and true-blue progressives are gonna be in a major quandary. It's pretty difficult to see how this fight gets as far as an override showdown.

Speaker Madigan also said during the meeting that he was prepared to pass another income tax increase if the governor requests it. Like with his remap pledge, his statement likely killed the already very slim prospects for a tax hike.

Just imagine the governor (or any vulnerable Democrat) running in 2022 with Madigan still in office, a Madigan-drawn district map in place and a Madigan tax hike. Maybe the Democrats will get lucky and the Republicans will nominate unelectable far-right candidates, but basing your plan on your opponent collapsing is never a wise idea.

So, it's just difficult to see how Speaker Madigan can keep all the reelection campaign promises he's making.

If he wants to avoid the risk of a new district map being possibly drawn by the

Republicans after a losing veto fight, he'll likely have to submit to a new process which won't be nearly as advantageous to his members.

A Madigan-backed tax hike is pretty much out of the question. Same goes for a gimmicky Madigan budget. And while he's been the patronage and fixer king for decades, how much can he actually accomplish for his members when he's under this horribly dark cloud?

No matter what, Madigan still has his unmatched campaign prowess going for him.

But if he somehow manages to flip enough votes to get reelected in the first place and the feds don't take him out, the reality going forward will be much different than he's making it out to be.

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

Illinois gas prices cool down from last week's spike

Illinois gas prices have fallen 1 cent per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.16/g Monday, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,378 stations. Gas prices in Illinois are unchanged versus a month ago and stand 40.7 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Illinois is priced at \$1.11/g Monday while the most expensive is \$2.81/g, a difference of \$1.70/g. The lowest price in the state is \$1.11/g while the highest is \$2.81/g, a difference of \$1.70/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 0.7 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.14/g Monday. The national average is up 1.4 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 41.4 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices: Peoria-\$2.24/g, down 2.1 cents per gallon from last week's

\$2.26/g. St. Louis- \$1.91/g, down 0.3 cents per gallon from last week's \$1.91/g. Champaign- \$2.13/g, unchanged from last week's \$2.13/g.

"After gas prices spiked last week in their biggest weekly rise since August, we've seen them cool back down for the time being. With COVID-19 cases continuing to rise and restrictions weighing on gasoline demand, we're likely to see optimism over vaccinations offset by lower current demand for the most part," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"In the weeks ahead as that balance shifts and millions get the vaccination, if things look much improved, I would expect for a longer upward move in gas prices. For now, however, the holidays will be marked by the lowest seasonal prices in years."

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REAL ESTATE

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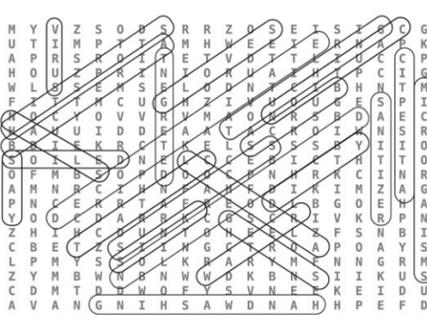
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8	1	3	9	5	2	4	7	6				

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WILDCAT SPORTS



THE WILDCATS claimed their second regional title in school history four years ago. Members of the team include: (Front, from left) Joey Orr, Joe Siriano, Keagen Hitz, Andrew White, Ian Bastian and Mike Kengis. (Back row) assistant coach Travis Ivanoff, Dawson Swarengen, Spencer Olson, Isaiah Johnson, Mike McCann, Peter Runions, Dylan Swarengen, Alex Hatten, Kile Thompson, Storm Weilding and head coach David Blackburn.

Soccer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

ionship for the kicking 'Cats was in the 2011-12 season where they came into the Hinckley Big Rock Sectional as the one seed and topped Coal City, 1-0 in the regional championship to make it to the sectional semifinal match that they eventually lost but it was the farthest they made it in school history. That championship was under head coach Jody Young, who only coached for a year.

The reason that team was

successful was because it had some good strikers in Eric Runions, Landen Swarengen and Dan Kulpa, who led them to a 7-15 finish. All those players are deserving of a spot on the dream team.

Kulpa was one of their leading scorers, scoring the only goal in a 4-1 loss to Earlville during the sectional semifinal game. The game before that Kulpa hit the clutch, penalty kick to send them to the sectionals. That's what he did. He would make the shots when they needed them most.

Kulpa also scored in a

regional shutout of Reed-Custer as did Eric Runions, who actually scored twice.

Runions was another one of their top scorers, who had good footwork and could get the goals when they needed them. He and Kulpa would switch off on who was going to have a big night. Runions had a hat trick against Reed-Custer earlier in the year.

Landon was a new incoming freshman that actually scored his first goal in his first ever kick at the varsity level.

In goal, Sean Tonnesson played damage control with 8-

10 saves a game. He was filling in for Wilmington's starting goalie Chase Watson who was out for the year with an injury and he did a bang up job. Chase Watson was actually a very good goalie himself but was very injury prone.

Another really good underclassmen on that team was Justin Kulpa, Dan's brother, who actually ended up going to Concordia University for soccer. Justin was a very good soccer player, who scored at will from the outside.

The senior led the 'Cats to a 9-11-1 record under head coach Julio Lara, scoring nine goals in 2013. That was around the time the Swarengen brothers were all into high school so they had a hand in that nine win season.

One of the best records

In 2004, the 'Cats put up their best record since the program started under coach Marty Felesena, who coached

for four years at Wilmington High School.

Wilmington was 8-13-1 and there were five big reasons: Pat Sweeney, Dallas Castillo, Jeremy Hnat, Chris Hatten and Kyle Eilers.

Sweeney was one of their leading scorers and captains while Hnat was a very good defensive player who was good at getting the ball back to the offense.

Castillo was very good at setting the strikers and other goal scorers up, leading the team in assists.

Chris Hatten, who was a top scorer on the 2004 team, was just a sophomore that would go on to score 52 career goals, including 26 during his senior season two years later.

Even though Eilers started out slow in goal, splitting time with Nick Flannery in 2004, he finished strong and is the save leader at Wilmington, stopping 334 would-be goals.

Jake Van Duyne and Jeremy Martyka were also rec-

ognized as dream team members.

Jake was a striker and a very good one as he connected on the fifth most goals with 26 from 2006-09.

Martyka was another good goalie, who would be slotted right behind Eilers in the depth chart. Martyka had the most saves in one season, corraling 161 shots in 2008.

Nick Cox is also deserving of a spot on the dream team. He would actually lead the team as the top defender. He is by far one of the better defenders Wilmington High School has had as he was one of the reasons the 'Cats made it all the way to the Sweet 16 in 2007. That season, the 'Cats

bettered their previous mark with a 10-9-3 record. Also on that team deserving of a mention was Tony Runions, who was a good midfielder, helping the team capture eight shutouts.



File Photo

WILMINGTON'S TONY RUNIONS was selected to be on the Wildcat soccer dream team. Runions had a big role on the 2007 team that made it to the Sweet 16.



File Photo

WILMINGTON'S DALLAS CASTILLO was selected to be a defender on the soccer dream team. Castillo is one of the leaders in all-time assists at WHS.

Coach picks dream team featuring best Wildcat kickers

BY SHAWN LONG
SPORTS WRITER

The Wilmington High School soccer team has won two regional championships since 2000 making it fitting that players from those two squads would anchor what is being called a Wildcat dream team.

Four players from the 2013 regional championship team were first pick for coach David Blackburn who spent six years at the helm.

Starting five

The first players he mentioned were members of that 2016 regional championship team that were 12-8, capturing the championship in a 3-1 win over Manteno. On top of that, they were brothers who were some of the best players at Wilmington.

His favorite memory was when they won the regional championship game.

"We were close every year," said Blackburn. "But that year we were finally able to push through and beat a good Manteno team in that regional championship game. It was one of those you knew what was coming, it was just a matter of when."

He also noted Alex Hatten

ended up making the game winning goal.

"That game I know Alex Hatten had a big goal for us during that game. It was off a corner kick and he was all over the line for us. He hit a diving header into the goal. He did a lot of scrappy work for us."

Dylan, Dawson and Landon Swearengen were brothers who changed the dynamic of Wilmington soccer.

As reported before, both brothers were scoring leaders in the school record book.

Dawson has the second most goals in school history, knocking through 42 goals, only 10 behind the leader.

His brother, Dylan is third on the school list with 37 goals and leads WHS with 23 career assists.

Dawson assisted 17 goals but 12 in a season which was the most.

"They know the game so well," said Blackburn. "They're very fluid so wherever the ball is at, they know how to put themselves in the best position for any outcome."

Peter Runions was another player apart of that core group that was always prepared for the game.

"Pete knows the game very well. He knows exactly how to

beat a player. He knows how to beat them and is three steps ahead of them."

Landon Swearengen was another piece the core group. He was Dylan and Dawson's older brother, who had 25 career goals.

"His vision on the field was amazing," commented Blackburn. "He always knew where everyone was. He was always taking three steps ahead so after he made a pass, it was 'where am I going and how am I directing traffic for other players?'"

Alex Hatten was another really good player on that team.

"I had a core group of four or five guys that I could rely on game in and game out," added Blackburn. "He was a part of that group as well and he made big time plays when we needed it."

Blackburn notes one could not find better leaders than this group of athletes.

"The leadership qualities these guys had were great," said Blackburn. "I remember Peter as a freshman was helping lead...we were doing runs and I remember him helping the last place guy in runs. Their senior year our mentality was play like everyone was weaker and at on point in time, I looked around the field at one point in time and both Dylan, Dawson and Peter had a freshman and they were talking to them about drills and how to improve their game."

Hunter Watson

Hunter was in goal for Blackburn in 2015 and he turned into a completely different person when he was in goal. His lifetime 247 saves back that statement up too.

"He was probably the one that was able to flip a switch for me the most often," commented Blackburn.

He saved 150 would-be goals for the 'Cats in 2015 and he was one of those players who would surprise Blackburn as a coach.

"Looking at him, you wouldn't expect much. He was a bigger guy and he kind of had his ups and downs but I don't



File Photo

PAT SWEENEY was picked to be on the Wilmington soccer dream team. Sweeney was a team captain and a leader in 2004.



File Photo

WILMINGTON'S 2017 GRADUATE Alex Hatten was selected to play a forward on the soccer dream team.

know what happened to him but he flipped a switch and when he wanted to, he was like a big bear in there. When he was going good, he was going good."

Remember that?

Also deserving of a mention was Wilmington's 1976 all girls soccer team that started the program under Peg

Schleker.

The school disbanded the girls soccer program in 1977 until the early 2000's even after a 6-3-4 season.

The 1977 'Cats included former Free Press Advocate editor Pam Monson, Janet Rodawold Seibert, Ellen Geiss Bryant, Laurie Hunt Van Duyne, Beth Boyd Rader,

Marcia Siebring Mandac, Sheila Van Duyne, Shirlee Novak and others that had played on that team. They called themselves 'Schleker's Wreckers.'

First regional championship

The first regional champ-

SEE SOCCER, PAGE 13



File Photo

FORMER MIDFIELDER Nick Cox was selected to play defense on the soccer dream team.

Holiday Greetings
from the Wilmington Lions,

We are sending out big Thank Yous for assisting the Lions with our Cocoa at the Campfire with Santa held Sunday, Dec. 13 (rain date).

Our Campfire Starter and Tender 440 Scout Master Eric Roge for his expertise in a wonderful campfire. He was instrumental in bringing the lantern to light for Santa to read by. THANK YOU.

To the Wilmington Library Staff especially Amanda Roge for being our Youth liaison for this event, also the Library for providing coloring books and tasty candy canes for all to enjoy.

Thank you to Santa for a lively reading of his favorite Christmas Story.

The Lions would like to graciously thank the Free Press Advocate for helping us get the word out swiftly with our Island happenings.

We are so glad the community continues to support The Island Christmas, as we all social distance.

Merry Christmas to All!
The Wilmington Lions Club