MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Owner of 'Art on 66' returns home to find peace

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

It was a long journey home for Rachel Conforti, 47, owner and curator of Art on 66. After 20 years in the west, Conforti and her daughter Siena recently returned to Wilmington.

A pharmacist by trade, Conforti returned to Wilmington from Arizona to heal. You see, her 14-year-old daughter, Sabrina, passed away on Nov. 14, 2021. Exactly one year and one day later, her ex-husband, Joe Conforti, died.

"I lost my daughter Sabrina to cancer," Conforti said. "Then we lost her father, who was my ex-husband. I felt we needed to get back to Wilmington where my parents live. We needed to come back home."

A Wilmington native, Conforti attended St. Rose School, and took the idea of Route 66 for granted. It was merely a tourist trap that meandered through town. Though she loved Wilmington, she longed to travel, to explore the world. Wanderlust drew her heart to the west.

"The past 20 years, I've been living out west, and my daughter and I just moved back here in 2023," Conforti said. "We were in Scottsdale, Arizona for three years. Before that, we were in Nevada for 14 years."

Conforti returned to Arizona briefly before returning to Illinois.

"We moved from Nevada to Phoenix because medical treatment there was better for Sabrina," Conforti said. "She was stable at the time but, we were hoping, God forbid, to have the treatment facilities within 20 minutes if her cancer returned."

Tragically, Sabrina succumbed to cancer. Then, her ex-husband passed. Conforti and her daughter, Siena, left the west on the road she once viewed as a tourist trap but now became her lifeline between Phoenix and Wilmington.

Photo by Eric Fisher

ART ON 66 studio owner Rachel Confort finds comfort in art at her new studio on North Water Street in Wilmington.

Seeking peace

Conforti is manager of a Walmart pharmacy, where she works 25 hours per week. While she had no desire to work 40 hours, she found herself with too much time on her hands to question fate. She needed to find something to do to quiet her mind.

"I thought I'd like to go into business for myself," Conforti said. "The outside of Wilmington downtown has a vibe, and it's a familiar vibe. The antique stores are great. But, I wanted something different."

Meandering down Water Street, Conforti spotted the old Watch Shop. She imagined works of art along the walls. She envisioned herself as curator and shop owner. The old building called to her, and she answered tentatively. Perhaps art would soothe her soul.

"The owners, Cheryl Baron and Pat Baron, decided to rehab it," Conforti said. "The ceiling was falling in. The floor was falling apart. They had to remodel the entire front of it."

When Conforti explained her plans for an art gallery, the owners informed her the "Watch Shop" sign would have to remain. To Conforti, it was a sign.

"I was excited because the sign would be perfect, like historic," Conforti said.

Learning a new trade

Though Conforti had never before owned a shop, she was already in a management and well versed in customer service as manager of a pharmacy.

"I took some online classes and went to a couple like art expos," Conforti said. "It all felt right, and it fell into place."

Once she felt settled and relatively confident, she reached out to local artists. That too, fell into place, as a respectable number of artists responded.

"I host all these artists and they do beautiful work," Conforti said. " And I try to keep it eclectic. It's all modern art. Some pieces are more contemporary."

Art on 66 features original art by Mary N. Carnahan, Rick Decorie, Karyn Denten, Jennifer Diver, Barbara Eberhard, Rebecca Marfise, Warren Miller, Robert Ryan, Lizzie Selle, and Erika Vazzana.

A variety of styles and media are offered, including Americana, with Wilmington's mascot, the Gemini Giant, featured in a number of works.

A miniature Gemini Giant taped to the gallery wall is a nod to Conforti's quirky sense of humor, with a nod to artist Maurizio Cattalon, who auctioned off a banana taped to a wall for $6.24 million at Sotheby's in New York.

"I was like, oh we have to do something like that," Conforti said. "That was great, hilarious. I still can't get enough of it. So, we did our own interpretation."

A commemorative piece by Robert Ryan, featuring the Gemini Giant against the backdrop of a Route 66 road sign sold Nov. 30, the very same day the Gemini Giant returned to town.

"It was such a hit that the artist has decided to do some limited edition prints," Conforti said.

Artist Bill Law focuses on time. He designs abstract clocks. Whether incidentally or purposefully, his work pays tribute to the former watch shop.

Something for everyone

Opening night, Oct. 12, attracted more than 200 people to the gallery, many leaving the shop with original art in hand and a smile on their face.

Featured is a painting of an extroverted fellow capering along the banks of the Kankakee River with a cigar in his mouth.

"This guy is a huge hit," Conforti said. "He's one of my favorites, too. Everyone knows the guy; he is in all of the beach clubs around here. "

Return to the river

Conforti paces the length of her shop, gingerly touching some of the art pieces en route. She opens the back door, and there is the Kankakee River. A frigid wind blows through the shop.

Conforti loves to listen to the perpetual splash of the "waterfall" outside her door and remembers being a child.

"My cousin and I would sit on those boulders by the river,"

SEE ART ON 66 PAGE 2

One step closer to construction of Amazon

BY ROSE PANIERI
STAFF WRITER

The city council approved tax increment financing (TIF) for the Ridgeport Logistics Center Intermodal Facility terminal that will allow for a second giant Amazon warehouse off Lorenzo Road.

The city has spent months modifying its TIF so it can include the new 1.65 million square foot facility that will be built on South Kavanaugh Road.

Benjamin Schuster of Elrod Friedman, LP law firm, representative of Ridgeport/Elion, suggested a change to city aldermen, during their Dec. 17 meeting, in the fourth amendment of the agreement.

He said that should Amazon fail to pay the incremental property taxes generated from that Amazon parcel, that the amount be paid directly to the developer, and then forwarded to the city of Wilmington.

"The bottom line is 'Hey Amazon, you're responsible for the taxes,'" Schuster said. "This does nothing, that would impact the city. It's really just an agreement between the park owner, and Amazon, but it doesn't change obligations to you."

The city authorized a study to further adjusting the boundaries of the Redevelopment Project Area and adopting an amendment to the TIF plan in relation thereto.

Time Line:

August 23, 2024: Announced the availability of the Eligibility Study Amendment and TIF Plan Amendment at a city council meeting.

Sept. 3, 2024: Approved an ordinance calling for a joint review board meeting and public hearing relative to the proposed approval of the Amended Redevelopment Project Area and the TIF Plan Amendment.

Sept. 4, 2024: Mailed notices relative to the availability of the study amendment and TIF plan amendment to residential addresses within 750 feet of the boundaries of the amended project area and all parties registered on the city's TIF interested parties registry via First Class Mail.

Sept. 5, 2024: Mailed copies of ordinance, eligibility study amendment, TIF plan amendment, and notice of the joint review board meeting to all taxing districts, the Illinois Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the public member of the joint review board via certified mail.

Sept. 24, 2024: Joint review board meeting held. **Nov. 20 and 27, 2024:** Published notice of public hearing in newspaper. **Dec. 3, 2024:** A public hearing was held.

Few other actions

The council approved the payment of $5,370.25 to Clennon Electric to replace the sludge holding tank mixing motor starter.

The council tabled the filter turbidity meters and controller quotes for the time being.

The council approved pay request no. 3 for $19,831.25, and pay request no 4, for $27,482.70 to Hoerr Construction for the Kankakee Street Sanitary Sewer Lining Project.

The council approved an invoice from Kankakee Truck and Equipment for $7,020.86, and a quote from Trojan Technologies for $5,906.

Final week to help neighbors in need

A new year will be here before we know it and we will be reflecting on the successes and challenges the Christian Help Association (CHA) faced in 2024. Anytime a new challenge presents itself, CHA focuses on how we can help those affected.

Higher utility bills, gasoline prices and food prices have created an increase of individuals needing hands-on support from the very supportive Wilmington community.

As 2024 is wrapping up, I encourage you to join our mission and to donate to CHA. Monetary donations can be mailed to Christian Help Association, 635 S. Main Street, Wilmington, IL 60481 or dropped into the Chamber of Commerce Elf boxes.

The boxes are in over 50 businesses in the Wilmington area. Look for the brightly painted boxes. The boxes will be picked up later next week. This money will be used to offset expenses from providing Christmas to approximately 300 families in Wilmington.

Please make checks payable to Christian Help Association. For questions, contact Cyndi Ragain, (815) 474-7521. Merry Christmas and God bless.

The famous people we meet may not be so famous afterall

FISH TALES

Eric Fisher

"Papa, have you ever met anyone famous?"

The question came from my granddaughter Layla, a second grader, who has the curiosity of someone twice her age.

"I still remember the day I met my first famous person," I said as I sat next to her to give her the details.

We were standing near the tarmac outside the airport in Burlington, IA. It was early afternoon and a twin turbo-prop aircraft was taxiing to a stop. A sudden rush of air from the prop wash blew the cowboy hat off my head.

My younger sister, Janet, complained to mom about the burning smell of jet fuel. Yet she laughed as I took off running after my hat. I wouldn't look right dressed in a Western shirt, jeans, cowboy boots and a pair of toy pistols holstered on my hips without my cowboy hat.

We waited behind the fence for the door on the plane to open. What seemed like "forever" was probably just a minute or two before people were exiting onto the ramp steps. Among them was Ken Curtis, better known as the American actor/singer Festus Haggen of the long-running Western TV series "Gunsmoke."

At age 5 years old I expected to see Festus dressed like he was on TV. But there he was wearing dress pants and a white shirt. Was I ever disappointed.

Still, he lived up to character as a scruffy old deputy on the TV show as my mother, Janet, introduced herself then my sister and me. He winked and commented how he liked my cowboy duds.

Festus came to Iowa to perform during the three-day Tri-State Rodeo that would take place in Fort Madison, IA.

Little did he know that we were his ride.

Our mother was a volunteer on the Tri-State Rodeo committee. Among her duties was to make sure Festus had ground transportation to his hotel.

It being 1965 in the middle of where the tall corn grows, my guess is the nearest limousine was half the state away. So being the wise mother that she was, the Fisher limo, a big blue Chevy station wagon, would serve just as well. And it came with two youngsters riding in the back.

We had been warned to behave, or else, so for the 20-mile ride back home to Fort Madison, little Janet and I sat in the back while mom drove and Festus rode shotgun. I' don't recall exactly what was said but I do recall me pointing my pistols out the window at cows on the way home.

Layla laughed, "That's funny Papa that you were shooting at cows," she said. Then she asked if I had met anyone else.

I told her about when I was in first grade our family rode a jet to California to visit Disneyland. My father George was publisher of the Evening Democrat, in Fort Madison, owned by McGiffin Company who also had newspapers in California. So we had "connections" when we got there, including a tour of Universal Studios.

Our family of 10 was given an escort to walk the grounds. We got to meet Art Linkletter, the host of the Art Linkletter Show, a popular TV series that started in 1963. He commented that he was impressed that our family got dressed up to go on vacation. We all laughed, as we stood getting our photo taken with Mr. Linkletter. But deep down it made me question why as a youngster from Iowa, I had to where a suit and tie while on vacation.

Little Layla laughed at that too when I told her of our California trip.

"Oh, I forgot. That's when we met the Smoothers Brothers!" I exclaimed.

The Fishers were riding an elevator down the main building at Universal when it stopped short of the lobby and the doors opened. Waiting to get on were The Smothers Brothers, Tom and Dick, hosts of a popular comedy show.

"Whoa are these all yours?" Tommy joked as he made eye contact with our parents. "You've got enough to fill an elevator! That's okay, we'll wait for the next one."

There was another time I met someone famous on an elevator. The year was 1973, I was 12, waiting with sister Janet to get on an elevator at a hotel in South Bend, Ind. We were there to visit brothers Marc and Alan who were attending the University of Notre Dame.

The doors opened, Janet and I stepped in for the ride up, when suddenly we were squished into a corner by an entourage with Lionel Richie. They were a laughing, festive group carrying cocktails and bottles but there was a distinct smell that was a little skunky. We found out later the Commodores had a concert that night at ND.

Speaking of the Irish I can't leave out the time I sipped a vodka tonic in the same room as football coach Lou Holtz the year after Notre Dame won the 1988 national championship. We printed the programs for the Notre Dame Club of Chicago and brother Alan invited me to the VIP reception before their annual banquet.

I explain to Layla that Holtz was probably the most motivational speaker I've ever heard.

I told Layla I also met the Mayor of Chicago, Richard M. Daley in November of 2011. My bride, Janet, and I were invited to the Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago where Daley would accept the grand marshal of the St. Patrick's Day parade. We lined up to have our photograph taken with the mayor. When out turn came we stepped up and Daley asked, "Where you folks from?" "Wilmington," we replied. He knew the town, he said. "That's where they've got that green giant." Evidence the Gemini Giant truly is iconic.

I also told her I got to meet George W. Bush. He was campaigning for president with running mate Dick Cheney, making a train stop in Joliet. I had credentials to join the press corps. Bush passed within an arm's length as he exited the train. So I stuck out my hand. He stopped, shook it and smiled. He ended up getting my vote, becoming the 43rd president of the U.S., dealing later with the terrorists attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

When I finished my list of famous people I looked at Layla who suddenly perked up.

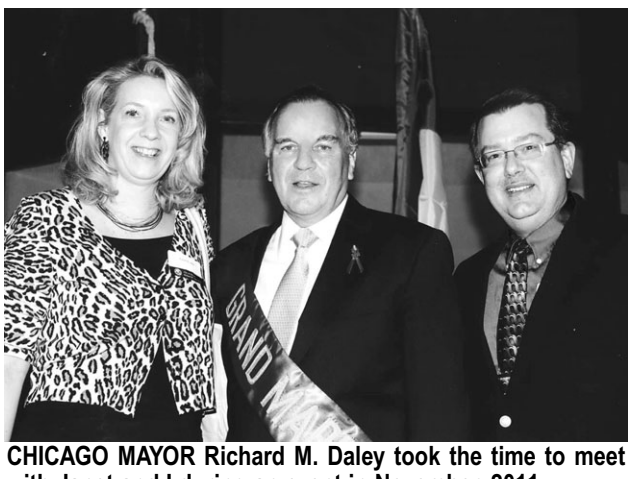
"Papa is that everyone?" she asked. "I don't think any of those people are famous because I've never heard of them. Besides, I've met someone more famous than all of them," she said. "He's known all over the world."

"He is? Who is that?" I asked.

"Yea, it's Santa"

I had just been upstaged by an 8 year old. She had a good point.

Merry Christmas!



CHICAGO MAYOR Richard M. Daley took the time to meet with Janet and I during an event in November, 2011.

A BUTTON promoted "Festus" and Doc" from the TV Western "Gunskoke" as the featured entertainment of the 18th annual Tri-State Rodeo in Fort Madison, IA.

TELEVISION HOST Art Linkletter (third from right) stands with the Fisher family during a tour of Universal Studios in California in 1968. Standing front and center is publisher Eric Fisher, second youngst of eight siblings.

Merry Christmas

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Art on 66, continued from page 1

Conforti said. "He'd hunt for crawdads and I'd just sit and watch the waterfall."

At 47, Conforti is dividing her time between her work as a pharmacist and her sideline as an art curator. Every single moment is filled. Conforti said she likes to stay busy. She smiles tentatively, then a tear escapes before she can blink it back.

"I'm sorry, sometimes that just happens," she said.

Healing and peace

"What I love about this place is nothing is truly an emergency," Conforti said. "There are really no art emergencies like there are pharmacy emergencies... or medical emergencies."

Conforti appears serene seated at her minimalist desk. The floor of the shop has been expoxied, gleaming like a river through a riot of color and texture. The shop is her place of peace.

Her days are filled, and she understands grief is a journey, similar to the one from Arizona to Wilmington via Route 66.

She looks forward to the passage of time. She imagines retiring and spending more time savoring art. She grins and the sadness leaves her eyes.

"Oh my God. I would love to be here full-time when I retire," Conforti said. "I've even looked at jobs like big international art festivals. I love to travel."

Meanwhile, Conforti is relieved to be home, cherishing her 15-year-old daughter, Siena, a sophomore at Wilmington High School. She knows the gray, frigid days of winter will be replaced by balmy breezes of springtime. She can even imagine the tourists descending upon her shop as they journey down the Mother Road. And when they do, she'll send them on their way with original pieces of art.

"Siena tells me that 2025 will be our year," Conforti said. "I'm really looking forward to that."

Visit the Art on 66 shop at 208 N. Water St., Wilmington. Their website is www.arton66.com. Call (815) 374-0499 or email support@arton66.com.

Symerton to hold hearing to consider the proposed vacation of a portion of North Street

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Legal Public Notice of the Village of Symerton, Will County, Illinois

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/11-91-1, that on Monday, January 13, 2024, at 6:45 p.m., at the Village of Symerton Village Hall, 18385 W. Commercial Street, a hearing will be held by the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Symerton to consider the proposed vacation of a portion of North Street, as described below:

THAT PART OF NORTH AND TRAVERSE STREET LYING ADJACENT TO LOTS 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10 IN BLOCK 4 IN SYMERTON IN SECTION 23, TOWNSHIP 33 NORTH, RANGE 10 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS ; DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 5 IN BLOCK 4, THENCE EAST 177.40 FEET MORE OR LESS ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID LOTS 5, 6, 7, 8 AND 9 TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 9; SAID POINT BEING THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE CONTINUING EAST ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID LOTS EXTENDED 24.66 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE CENTER LINE OF SAID TRAVERSE STREET; THENCE NORTH EAST ALONG THE CENTER LINE OF SAID TRAVERSE STREET, SAID CENTER LINE BEING 20.00 FEET SOUTHEASTERLY OF AND PARALLEL TO THE SOUTH EAST LINES OF LOTS 9 AND 10, 234.29 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE NORTH LINE OF SAID NORTH STREET; THENCE WEST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID NORTH STREET 337.17 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE POINT OF INTERSECTION WITH THE WEST LINE OF LOT 5 EXTENDED NORTH; THENCE SOUTH ALONG THE WEST LINE OF LOT 5 EXTENDED 60.00 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE NORTH WEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 5; THENCE EAST ALONG THE NORTH LINE OF SAID LOTS 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 AND 10 269.80 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE NORTH EAST CORNER OF SAID LOT 10; THENCE SOUTH WEST ALONG THE EAST LINES OF SAID LOT 9 AND 10 160.30 FEET MORE OR LESS TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

All interested persons and parties will be heard on the proposed vacation and are invited to appear at the time and place listed above. Interested persons are also encouraged to submit written comments on the proposal to the Village of Symerton by regular mail to 18385 W. Commercial Street, Symerton, Illinois, or via e-mail to villageofsymerton@yahoo.com

Further information regarding the proposed vacation is also available by contacting the office of the Village Clerk, Village Hall, 18385 W. Commercial Street, Symerton, Illinois, or by calling (815) 476-6266, during regular working hours.

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024.

Attorney Meents files Craig estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF GLENNA FRANK CRAIG, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 690

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Glenna Frank Craig, Letters of Office as Independent Executor were issued on December 13, 2024, to Pamela F. Long, whose address is 1230 Chesson Court, Wilmington, Illinois 60481; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before July 3, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

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

Pamela F. Long
Independent Executor of the Estate of Glenna Frank Craig, Deceased
Frank J. Meents
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25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A
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E-mail: Frank@MeentsLaw.com

Published in the Free Press Advocate on Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024, Jan. 1 and 8, 2025.

Attorney Meents files Huffar estate claim

PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF HARRY NEIL HUFFAR, Deceased; No. 2024 PR 677

CLAIM NOTICE

Notice is given of the death of Harry Neil Huffar, Letters of Office as Independent Executor were issued on December 13, 2024, to Joel Neil Huffar, whose address is 1721 S. State Street, Lockport, Illinois 60441; whose attorney is Meents Law, P.C., 25158 W. Eames Street, Unit A, Channahon, Illinois 60410. Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court at the Will County Courthouse, 100 West Jefferson Street, Joliet, Illinois 60432, or with the representative, or both, on or before July 2, 2025, or if mailing or delivery of a notice from the representative is required by Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975, the date stated in that notice. Any claim not filed on or before that date is barred. Copies of a Claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the representative and to the attorney within ten (10) days after it has been filed.

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

Joel Neil Huffar
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Wilmington Township 2025 meeting dates

PUBLIC NOTICE

Calendar Year 2025 Meeting Dates

Wilmington Township, Will County, Illinois, Regular Meetings occur the third Thursday of the Month at 5:00 p.m. at the Wilmington Township Hall, 120 N. Main Street, Wilmington, IL 60481. The following dates are the meetings for the year 2025.

January 16, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
February 20, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
March 20, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
April 8, 2025 - Annual Township Town Meeting 6:01 p.m.
April 17, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
May 15, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
June 19, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
July 17, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
August 21, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
September 18, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
October 16, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
November 20, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.
December 18, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.

Approved December 19, 2024

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Eric D. Fisher, publisher

Christmas 138 years ago, 1886 holiday season

TIME WAS....
Sandy Vasko

In the spirit of the Ghost of Christmas Past, today we hop aboard the way-back machine to 1886 to celebrate the holidays in Wilmington.

I find the absolutely most popular thing to do during the holiday season in the 1880's was to get married. The Wilmington Advocate of December 3, 1886 was full of news about marriages. Miss Cora Camp and Mr. John McDonald were married in Wilmington and honeymooned in Chicago. But it was a small occasion compared to the wedding of Mr. Fred Loudon and Miss Annie Ackerman of Wesley. And as was the custom of the time, all the wedding presents were listed in the paper, and who gave them. Amid the many sets of dishes and silver, it must have embarrassed Nora Marshall to have it put in the paper that she gave a "clothes pin apron." This couple honeymooned in Chicago as well.

The following week, the Supervisor of Wesley Township, John Corlett gave his daughter in marriage. Unfortunately, the article did not mention whom she married. Ed Conley of the Advocate attended and said this of the party afterwards, "If the denizens of the great metropolis of Wilmington, who are unacquainted with the free and easy going Wesleyites, will spend a winter among them, we will guarantee they will learn how to get as much fun into a given space of time - minus the formalities and conventionalisms of city life - as any rural town in Will County." Oh, those wild Wesley people!

The 1880's also saw the rise of Christmas commercialism. There were twice the holiday advertisements as there were in the 1870's. The largest ad in the paper belonged to our old friend Ike Cracraft. Ike had started out in the restaurant business, bought a bookstore, then a shoe store, and by 1886 he was the proud owner of a men's furnishings store. There he sold everything a gentleman needed to be in the latest fashion.

Other holiday goods for sale were imported wax dolls, cigar and cigarette cases, music rolls for the newly invented player piano, velocipedes (bicycles), silk scarves, sealskin hats, and of course skates and sleds.

While today we see ads for cars as gifts during the holiday season, then there were ads for horse drawn conveyances. We read, "Dorsey & Stewart have just received this week two car loads of cutters and bob sleighs, which they have bought at a very low figure, and are prepared to offer them to the public so that everybody can afford to have one. Call and see them and get their prices."

Two new businesses opened in downtown Wilmington opened that season. "Obed Hollister has opened a confectionary store and oyster parlor in the Campbell building, 59 Water Street, and desires the public to call and inspect his new quarters. He has a fine line of confectionery, fruits, nuts, cigars, and tobacco, while he is also prepared to serve oysters in every known style in the rooms over his store, which are elegantly fitted up. Supplying families with oysters made a specialty."

"James Galloway has opened a shooting gallery in the Hart building, third door north of Dr. Willard's drug store."

The Catholic community was looking forward to Christmas of 1886. Their new building was ready, and on Christmas Day of 1886 at 5 a.m. the first high mass ever to be celebrated in the church was attended by a record number of worshippers.

Of course, the beautiful new stone building on Kankakee Street was wonderful, but that little old frame building on Water Street had been home to the congregation for 50 years.

We read, "The last high mass celebrated in the old Catholic church here was on Sunday last, the Rev. Father McGrath officiating. In the course of his sermon he awakened many emotions in reverting to the old building and scenes within its venerable walls. Here many came in their baptismal robes, in wedding garments, and in the silent shrouds of death; here many a burdened soul poured out its afflictions and went away purer and lighter of heart. Time cannot efface such recollections while the parishioners cling to life."

"On to-morrow morning the new Catholic church - St. Rose's - will be for the first time thrown open to its congregation, and a happy Christmas day it will be for the parish."

"New altars and rail, new pews, the best cathedral stained glass in all of the windows, unexceeded fresco work, steam-heating coils, fine gallery and organ loft - these are some of the characteristics of the new church. It is Gothic in style throughout, and immediately over the main altar are fine life-size paintings on glass of St. Patrick and of St. Rose of Lima, the capital of Peru, South America."

Christmas morning dawned bright and crisp and clear. At 5:30 a.m. the new bells rang Christmas in with a joyous spirit.

SKYLAR ROSSOW

NEVAEH CARDOZA

WHS seniors of the week

BY BROOKLYN FLORES
WHS STUDENT REPORTER

Each week the Free Press Advocate features members from the Wilmington High School class of 2025. This week we're featuring Skylar Rossow and Nevaeh Cardoza who completed our questionnaire.

SKYLAR ROSSOW

What do you plan to pursue upon graduation? Pediatric ICU Nurse

What is one thing most people don't know about you? I will read the end of a movie before starting it.

What teacher or staff member has influenced you the most? Why? Ms. Keane, I was lucky enough to have had her for 3 of my 4 years of English and we have been able to get close over the years. She has always given me such great advice, helped me through hard mental times and always took time out of her day to listen to me ramble.

What has been your favorite extracurricular that you've participated in? Volleyball, it has given me so many amazing memories and the best friends that I get to be closer with. It has taught me hard work, dedication, patience and selflessness.

What's your favorite thing on the lunch menu? Cheese tortellini with green beans and garlic bread.

One thing you refuse to eat? Raising Canes

Famous person dead or alive you would like to meet and why? I want to meet Ellen Pompeo because she is my favorite character from Grey's Anatomy.

Advice you would give to underclassmen? Say yes. The 4 years of high school go by faster than you can ever imagine and you don't want to graduate with regrets of not going out and having fun with any chance you get. Everyone says they can't wait to graduate till it's actually time for them to say good-bye.

NEVAEH CARDOZA

What do you plan to pursue upon graduation? Go to Mississippi State University for four years.

What one thing most people don't know about you? I have watched "Suits" twice

What teacher or staff member has influenced you the most? Why? Ms. Keane, I had her for three years and enjoyed all of them. Her side stories were pretty funny too.

What has been your favorite extracurricular that you've participated in? Math Team, it's a fun activity and the environment all around is enjoyable.

What's your favorite thing on the lunch menu? Meatball sub

One thing you refuse to eat? Brussel sprouts

Famous person dead or alive you would like to meet and why? Drake

Advice you would give to underclassmen? Do NOT procrastinate, whatever you do. But even if you do, it's okay. I have a 4.3 GPA, and procrastinated almost all four years.

WHS November students of the month

WHS SENIORS who were nominated as students of the month for November are Ben Hall and Ryan Warthen.

WHS SOPHOMORES who were named students of the month for November are Dakota Kutina and Ian Fruge.

JUNIOR REPRESENTATIVES for Wilmington's students of the month for November are Delilah Hannan and Parker Hazzard (not pictured).

WILMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL teachers and staff nominate two students from each class every month for leadership skills or random acts of kindness. Freshmen students of the month are Lyla Tollard and Kayla Lopez.

Giant Fund Me given to the city

Photo by Rose Panieri

RYAN JANDURA (left) presents a check for $28,330 toward the maintenance and upkeep of the Gemini Giant that now proudly stands at the entrance to the South Island park. The funds were collected by Jandura and the Wilmington VFW through a Go Fund Me effort to bid on the giant when it went up for auction last March. Wilmington mayor Ben Dietz (center) thanked Jandura for his efforts in keeping the 30-foot tall statue in town. Accompanying Jandura in a Gemini Giant costume is Mike Kelly. The presentation was made during the Dec. 17 city council meeting.

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Ticket those trucks

BRAIDWOOD—First, why is there a issue with giving tickets to semi-trucks that are on roads that they are not suppose to be on in Braidwood? I personally see at least 10 semi-trucks a day on Division St. This is a state highway and Braidwood is not responsible to repair a road that they are tearing up. But each city council meetings only three to four tickets for the month are issued to semi's. Second, on 12/10/24 city council meeting commissioner Walsh thinks the current members of the city council should retain their jobs. Sorry Mr. Walsh, but with any job, if you don't do a good job you're out and hopefully the next person will do a better job. Why would we keep people who only look to line their own pockets and give citizens a hard time with any issues they have. Unbelievable you would waste time pleading to keep your jobs at a council meeting.

Do your job

WILMINGTON—Currently the total amount of unpaid bills by the state of Illinois is $2,305,889,386. This figure changes daily. Last year at this time the state had $1.8 billion in bills awaiting payment. This only includes bills submitted to the Comptroller for payment, not unfunded debts like the state's pension liability, which is well over $100 billion. What in the world are our Illinois leaders doing? How can they keep spending more each year and then not pay the bills? If J.B. Pritzker's wife gave him a check book with billions in it and said to him here is what you can spend, he would probably not write checks beyond his limit. But when it comes to the public's money, Pritzker and his minions feel it's OK to spend beyond the limit and then build up past due bills. Is this what they were elected to do? Absolutely not. With the billions we pay in taxes the least they could do is see that the bills are paid.

Time to give

BRAIDWOOD—I enjoy reading the Sound-off and appreciate the opportunity people are given to express their freedom of speech without possibly consequences from living in a small town. I challenge some of the people who call the Sound-off to complain about the silly things Trump said or has done and turn your anger into something positive. If you have to urge to complain about Trump, get out your check book instead. Sit down and right a check to the local food pantry in your town. Do it once and do it now. This is the one time of the year they need your help and you'll feel much more rewarded by making a donation than calling into the Sound-off. Maybe during the holiday season you could try a positive and then go back to complaining once Trump gets in office if you have too.

Anyone ask?

LAKEWOOD SHORES—We're new here and we were surprised to learn that our house is not in the city limits, yet less than a block away our neighbor says he is. Why isn't Lakewood Shores part of the city? We pay for city water already and we're already in the fire district and school district. It would be nice if we could annex. Has anyone ever talked about this? P.S. We like having a local newspaper. The town we left lost their newspaper and we missed getting the local news.

On a fixed income

MORRIS—Why does someone from Saratoga School district in Morris get to drive a red van home every night? Isn't that a taxpayers' vehicle and they are using the gas to drive home when they live 10 miles from the school going back and forth. I am going to vote no for the Morris high school tax increase to redo the high school. Taxes are already high. I am a senior citizen on a fixed income and these politicians and school superintendents and teachers always get their 4-6% pay raise every year to make up the difference for tax increase but they don't consider senior citizens. Why don't the state representatives, state senators get together and increase tax reduction for senior citizens. This country is going down the tubes.

Cut fed office space

WILMINGTON—Instant U.S. savings. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) co-heads Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy have said the federal workforce should be cut 33% to 75% to save money. However, a U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) survey points to an overlooked source of savings: The 50% of unused federal government office space. Many assume this would only impact Washington, DC, but the federal government owns and operates hundreds of millions of square feet of office space nationwide. If let go, these office spaces in California, Texas, and other states could be converted into community centers, affordable housing, or business incubators, creating value for local economies while saving federal dollars.

Too bad

BRAIDWOOD—Why doesn't the person that keeps bashing Braidwood sign their name? You actually want a slip-n-slide station? You can't even find anything in your downtown to stay in business. A slip-n-slide, really? You can slip and slide with a hose. Couldn't be the used cars across the street from the motel calling in all the time about Braidwood, could it? Are they jealous Arnie Bauer got money they didn't. Awww, too bad. Sue

Warms the heart

WILMINGTON—I just wanted to say that I felt the warmth and love of the holidays Friday during the food packing for the Christian Help Association. It is such a rewarding experience to know that there are people in our community who care so much to help other families in need. Wilmington takes care of it's own and we can all be proud of that. God bless all and I wish you a Merry Christmas.

Give it back

DIAMOND— There was an article in the Braidwood Journal on Dec. 18, by Rich Miller. He said there was $250,000,000 just sitting in Springfield and our governor and house speaker don't know what to do with the money. So why doesn't someone tell them it is the tax payers' money and should be used to help the homeless. But don't worry, our governor and Springfield will probably use the money for their pork projects or migrants since they do not care one bit about us taxpayers or how they spend money as long as they get praised by their friends by giving them the money. That money does not belong to the elected public servants to do with as they please, so stop raising taxes and use the money for the good of citizens and no one else. But that is not how Dictators work or operate.

Who's cooking?

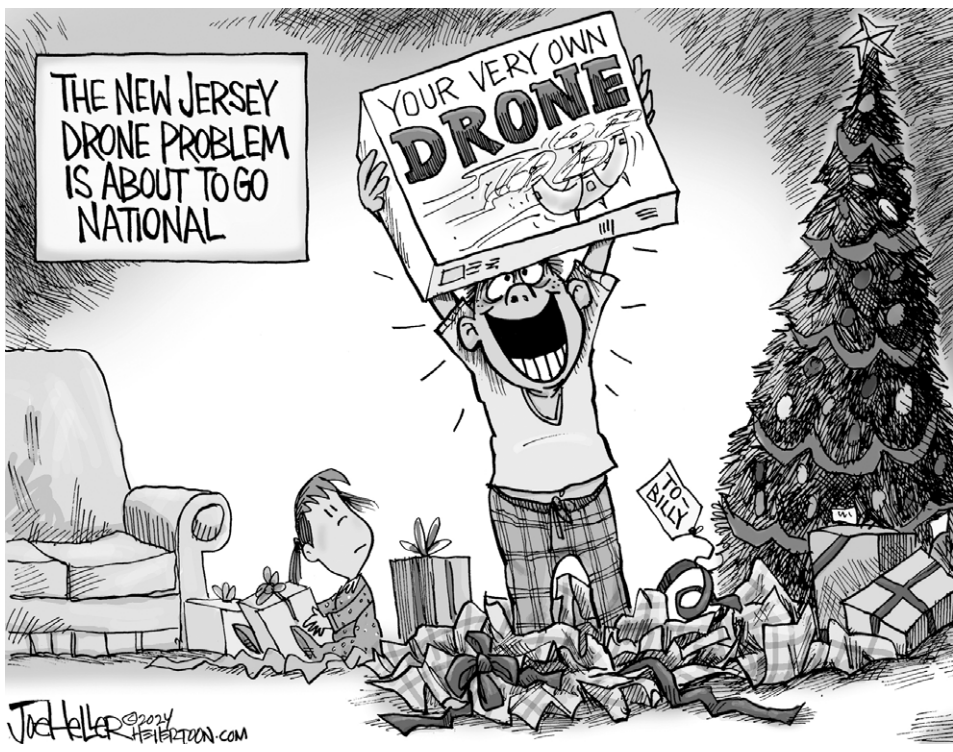
BRAIDWOOD—Too many cooks spoil the pot and a watched pot never boils.

Work from home

DIAMOND—Public servants voting themselves the right to work from home for the next five years. Which means the public servants that are suppose to work for the American citizens are dictating where they are allowed to work since they believe they are special because they collect taxpayers' funds. Their belief is they can do as they please since there is no accountability for anything they do. All they want to do is sit at home and get paid to do less. Merry Christmas to them.

Mystery Santa thanks

Thank you to the mystery Santa for helping my family at this Christmas time when things are rough. The warmest and most sincerest thank you and God bless you.



Chaos rules

WILMINGTON—What a mess. A bipartisan agreement was reached last week to avoid a government shutdown until Musk and Trump stuck their noses in and blew it all up. As much as Trump brags about his deals, they have neither been good deals nor fair deals. Remember 2018 when Trump was president and we had the longest shutdown in U.S. history? So it's no surprise that a week ago Musk and Trump inserted themselves when Trump isn't officially president yet and Musk is no more than an arrogant oligarch whom the people never elected. The two of them wanted a deal beneficial for billionaires while ordinary folks suffer. For example, Trump wanted to remove funding for research into children's cancer. And Musk told people that they will have to tighten their belts. Tighten their belts? Trump made everyone believe that prices would go down. And since the election, Musk has doubled his net worth and Trump is behaving like a dictator after taking us to the brink of a shutdown. What's wrong with this picture? After the dust settled Biden resumed his presidential duties and it didn't take long for a shutdown to be averted. And that's because Biden knows his way around the chambers and passed so many beneficial bills whereas Trump can't find his way out of a paper bag. But of course if Biden had failed, Trump would have been happy to blame Biden despite the mess Trump himself had made. In other words the outcome of the recent election has resulted in destructive parasites on the backs of taxpayers. Irene

To stay warm

BRAIDWOOD—It's winter time which means that many residents in Braidwood and all other small towns across the country are using their fireplaces and wood burning stoves for supplemental heat in their homes and garages. This is 100% legal and a way of life in small towns like this. So if you don't like it, move to a bigger city because this is how we live down here.

An open mind

WILMINGTON—Several Sound-off submissions each week continue with their anti-Trump comments. All the votes have been counted across the country and Donald J. Trump won both the electoral vote and the popular vote. All after he survived two assassination attempts and all the lawsuits against him, the Democrats ask for unity, but, of course, they mean unity with their liberal or left views only. Please keep an open mind during the next four years while our country moves forward.

On your own time

BRAIDWOOD—After viewing the last city council meeting I have a couple of questions. When did Commissioner Walsh's history lesson on Braidwood's city government turnover become a campaign speech? Though he did not actually use the people's names it was quite clear what he was doing. Is this allowed? Now that they have scheduled three town halls before the election are they going to be used as campaign platforms also? In my opinion, while sitting in the council chambers, as a member of the council you should not be campaigning. It should be done on your time. The citizens are paying you to do your job, not campaign.

They're all liars

DIAMOND—Get over it people, Trump is our next president. Do you know why he is president? Because the Biden administration was such a disaster the voters of this country had no other choice as no one wants four more years of these high prices and invasion into our country. The high prices still may happen under Trump as time will tell. Although, the high prices are a guarantee under Kamala as she stated she would change nothing that Biden destroyed. Trump did not win the election because he is anything great, he won because Biden was the worst thing since president Carter and people need a change. Also, you say Trump is a liar? Yes, he is one of the biggest liars out there! That is what all politicians at that level do! It is how they hypnotize people and get them to drink their kool-aid. Biden said he would not pardon his son for his crimes but he did. He said that when he thought he was going to be president again to get people to drink his kool-aid. After his own Democratic Party told him to step down and go home then it didn't matter to him anymore. At that level of government they lie Irene. Maybe you like kool-aid but I despise it. As far as another person submitted about having billionaires running government, I can agree with that. I would much rather have Joe or Jill the local person running the show. Although, that person that wrote that submission probably voted for Pritzker and helped him get in. What did Pritzker immediately do? Raise taxes and fees. He has no clue how we live. Oh yeah, at the same time he was pulling toilets out of his mansion to avoid property taxes. They are all the same. We would be much better off with one of our small town mayors as president. Your friendly neighborhood independent, John.

Who in Illinois will run again? Polling begins

CAPITOL FACTS

Rich Miller

We're less than nine months from when candidates can begin circulating petitions for the 2026 election, so we're rapidly approaching the time when major figures will need to decide whether to run or not.

Because of that, a lot of people are polling.

The state's two big dogs, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin and Gov. JB Pritzker, are still not saying what they plan to do, although Durbin has said he'll make his plans known after the start of the new year.

Pritzker has been polling, although his campaign wouldn't comment. A friend who was polled said the questions varied from migrant and immigration policy, to a possible constitutional amendment to protect abortion rights, to crime response and whether he should stand up to President-elect Donald Trump if he tries to violate the rights of Illinois residents or whether he should find a way to work with the Trump administration to benefit Illinois.

There were the usual right direction vs. wrong direction questions, and questions rating the governor's performance on things like fiscal management and taxes, and where they believed Pritzker stood on the political ideological spectrum.

Pritzker's poll tested the statewide popularity of people like Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson and US Reps. Lauren Underwood and Raja Krishnamoorthi. The governor also tested Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton's popularity.

Lt. Gov. Stratton is also polling. A source with knowledge of the poll and the thinking behind it said Stratton is "keeping her options open" as a decision by Pritzker looms. However, the person stressed that Stratton has "no plans of not keeping her day job."

Stratton has been actively fundraising since the summer of 2023 and has also become more visible, appearing with the governor at many of his governmental and campaign stops and doing several of her own events.

Stratton's poll tested Sen. Durbin's popularity, which is standard in these sorts of things, but that's an office she could seek. Also, if Pritzker decides not to run again, the decision will likely create a down-ticket cascade as people attempt to move up the ladder.

Like Pritzker, Stratton tested the popularity of several other elected officials.

Stratton's poll tested various background messages with potential voters, which is also common. For instance, a question tested how her relationship to Pritzker plays with voters: "Juliana Stratton has worked with JB Pritzker since day one to get big things done for Illinois. JB calls her his partner in governing.

Together, they turned the Illinois economy around and along with accomplishments like raising the minimum wage, making historic investments in infrastructure, and giving $1.8 billion in tax relief to working families in Illinois."

Voters were then asked to rate her favorability between one and ten.

Another test question notes that Stratton "is the first Black Lieutenant Governor and first Black woman constitutional officer in Illinois ever," and after talking about her life on the city's South Side, closes with, "As a descendant of enslaved people, she understands the systemic barriers facing marginalized communities. She works every day across Illinois to rebuild neglected communities."

The poll talks about her time as the "primary caregiver" to her mother, who had Alzheimer's and lived with Stratton for three years before passing away. "She says it was both the honor of her life as well as incredibly difficult. Stratton was also raising three daughters at the same time, sandwiched between two generations and caring for everyone. Stratton managed it all and knows how hard Illinois families have it."

The poll touts her experience as a mediation attorney.

"That means her whole job was to get opposing sides to compromise, see things from the other's point of view, and get both sides to agree to a solution. And Stratton had a very high percent success rate. Who better to lead us when everyone is so divided? Stratton has the skills and the know how to help bring both sides together to get things done."

After testing other candidates' popularity, Stratton's poll also asked whether her support of various issues made respondents more or less likely to approve of her, including raising the minimum wage; enacting a large infrastructure plan; criminal justice reform; balancing the budget, improving pension funding and achieving nine credit upgrades; helping pass a bill to "enshrine reproductive rights into state law"; leading the Council on Rural Affairs and the Council for Women and Girls; and "stood up to the NRA" by helping pass an assault weapons ban.

That should give you an idea of the messaging to expect if Stratton decides to run for a different office.

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

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- FROZEN — $6.99 EACH — Censea **Shrimp Ring**- 10 oz
- FROZEN — $7.99 PER LB — Large Frozen **Snow Crab**- 5/8 size
- FROZEN — $6.99 PER LB — Frozen **Walleye**

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OBITUARIES

Betty Ann Aylward

COAL CITY— Betty Ann Aylward, 74, of Coal City, and formerly of Oak Lawn, IL passed away on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2024, at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago.

Born on Aug. 13, 1950, in Streator, IL, Betty Ann was the daughter of Carl and Anna (Kovach) Webber. She was raised in Carpentersville, IL, and graduated from Barrington High School with the Class of 1968. After high school, Betty worked for Time Life in Chicago before dedicating herself to her home and raising her family. She later went on to own and operate Elite Secretarial Service in Evergreen Park, IL.

Betty Ann was a member of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Parish in Coal City. She enjoyed traveling and cherished visits to the casinos, where she found joy in the simple pleasures of life. Above all, Betty was a loving wife and devoted mother who will be remembered for her kindness, generosity, and sense of humor. Her selfless nature meant she always put others before herself, and she had an innate ability to bring joy to those around her.

Family was Betty's greatest priority, and she held her grandchildren close to her heart. She leaves behind a legacy of love, compassion, and a deep commitment to her family

Survivors include her husband, Bruce M. Aylward, whom she married June 20, 1998; two children: John Bates of Phoenix, AZ and Eileen (Matt) Ahmann of Channahon, IL; two granddaughters: Isabella and Grace; one grandson, Damian; four brothers: Carl (Nancy) Webber of Cave Creek, AZ, Richard (the late Bettie) Webber of Matteson, IL, Robert (Pat) Webber of Winthrop Harbor, IL and Fred (Melodie) Webber of Dundee, IL; her mother-in-law, Jane Aylward and one brother-in-law, William Aylward, both of Posen, IL and numerous nieces and nephews, as well as her cherished canine companion, May May.

Betty was preceded in death by her parents, and her father-in-law, William Aylward.

Funeral services were Monday morning, Dec. 23, 2024 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 600 East Jackson Street in Morris. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated with Reverend Jason Stone presiding and Deacon Paul Jung assisting.

Burial was in Mount Carmel Catholic Cemetery in Morris.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Betty's memory to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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

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

Charlotte Finn

SOUTH WILMINGTON— Charlotte Terese Finn, 92, of South Wilmington, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2024 peacefully at her home. Born on July 30, 1932 in Morris, to Martin and Alice (nee Harney) Eich.

She was an Administrative Assistant for Reed-Custer School District as well as South Wilmington Grade School and Elwood Elementary School. After retirement she volunteered at Morris Hospital. She was a member of the Council of Catholic Women at St. Lawrence Church and a member of the PTO when her children were young. In her later years she also enjoyed many of her grandkid's sporting events. She played the piano and organ for the church for many years and also gave piano lessons to many area youth. Charlotte loved to travel, visiting Ireland and numerous countries in Europe. She enjoyed catering meals for many events. An accomplished seamstress, she loved to make clothes for her granddaughters and always had the latest and greatest embroidery machine. More than anything Charlotte was a devoted mother, grandmother and great-grandmother who will be dearly missed.

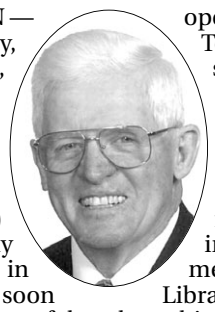
Surviving are her sons: Matthew (Tami) Finn and Mark (Rebecca) Finn both of South Wilmington; grandchildren: Brian (Kelsey) Finn of Towson, MD; Michael Finn of Morris; Mallory (Mitch) Sistek of South Wilmington and Lauren Finn of Bonita Springs, FL; great-grandchildren: Karson, Jaedyn and Mikey Finn and Layla and Grady Sistek; former husband Edward Finn of South Wilmington; dear cousin, Phillipa O'Keefe and numerous dear nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her parents, Martin and Alice Eich; brothers: Wendell "Bud" (Betty) Eich and William Eich.

Visitation was held at the R.W. Patterson Funeral Home & Crematory on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2024. Family and friends will meet at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in South Wilmington on Monday, Dec. 23, 2024 at 10:00 am for a Mass of Christian Burial. Father Stanley Drewniak will officiate. Interment will immediately follow at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Morris. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be directed to South Wilmington Grade School for the music and art programs. For more information and to visit her online guestbook, please log on to www.rwpattersonfuneralhomes.com or find us on Facebook.

R.W. Patterson Funeral Homes & Crematory 401 E. Main St., Braidwood is entrusted with arrangements.

Donald Tulley



WILMINGTON— Donald Edmund Tulley, 92 of Wilmington, passed away on Friday, Dec. 20, 2024, five days before his 93rd birthday.

Born on Dec. 25, 1931, Donald Edmund was a son of Edmund and Florence (nee Scott) Tulley. He was born on the family farm located off Chicago Road in Florence Township, which would soon become the Joliet Arsenal in support of the World War II effort. Don's family relocated for a short time to Symerton, before moving to another family farm on Warriner-Bridge Road in Wilton Township where he was raised. Losing his father at age nine, Don continued to attend school in the one room schoolhouse with the rest of the farm kids. He attended Peotone High School, then started his lifelong love of farming with his brothers Joe and Harold. Don took a short timeout from farming and honorably served in the United States Navy as a Radioman 2 from 1950 to 1954 during the Korean War, and he was "able to see the world." Don would share countless stories of his schoolhouse days and the daily antics. He spoke fondly of the US Navy, shared many stories with his family, and kept in touch with several of his Navy buddies throughout the years.

On Sept. 24, 1955, Don married the love of his life, Joan Haley. They were married in St. Patrick's Church of the 12-mile Grove in Wilton Center. They were blessed with 69 years of marriage and four children. Together, Don and Joan built a successful corn, soybean, and wheat farm business in Florence and Wilton Townships. Over the years, they also raised hogs, cattle, ducks, turkeys, and chickens. Don always had his faithful furry companions by his side, most notably Oscar and Bear, and they spent countless hours with him in the combine, tractor, grain truck, and pickup.

Don had a strong work ethic. He spent over 30 years working for HP Graham Road Construction in the summers. Don operated the grader and chipper and formed lifelong friendships with Pat Graham and his crew. During the winters, he lent his math and organizational skills to Matt and Barb Hickey and assisted them in preparing income tax returns for multiple farmers in the area. In his earlier days, Don used his woodworking skills and spent the winters building cabinets at Tri-Star Cabinets in New Lenox or Brakur Custom Cabinetry in Shorewood. He also found time to be a Florence Township Trustee, served on various boards at St. Patrick's Church, and was the go-to handy man for his children, mom, aunts and uncles. When the snowy weather hit, Don would spend many hours operating the V-plow for Florence Township and opening the snowed-in roads for everyone.

Don retired from farming in 1998, moved into town, and began volunteering at Kuzma Care Cottage. He looked forward to his Saturday mornings sorting food, but most importantly, having coffee and donuts with the men. He frequented the Wilmington Library and read countless books. He kept his lawn in perfect condition and would say "it's not hard farming only 1⁄4 of an acre!"

Don loved everything about life. He loved his wife, his children, his Irish heritage, being Catholic, and being an American. He was a teacher and mentor to his children, and he will be greatly missed.

Survived by his loving wife of 69 years, Joan (nee Haley); loving devoted children: Sharon Prusank, Donna (Robert) Ball, and Stephen (Vanessa) Tulley; 12 grandchildren: Breannen (Ross) Marshall, Melissa (Daniel) Christmann, Erin (Brian) Dowling, Megan (Orlando) Diaz, Matthew (Stacey) Saulters, Garrett (Ashley) Saulters, Kiara Saulters, Rachelle (Wes) DeMoney, Dr. Stephen Tulley (fiancé – Liz Lowe), Kyle Tulley, Katelyn (Tony) Sinchak and Anna Tulley (fiancé – Gerald Marrero), and 15 great-grandchildren, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Don was preceded in death by his parents Edmund Tulley and Florence Carey; daughter, Jacqueline; brothers Joseph (Barbara); Harold (Loretta), Stephen (Susan), and sister: Helen (Roy) Koller.

Visitation will be held at the Baskerville Funeral Home, 700 East Kahler Road in Wilmington on Friday, Dec. 27, 2024, between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Funeral services will follow Saturday, Dec. 28, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in St. Patrick Catholic Church, Wilton Center. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated with Reverend Sebastian Gargol presiding and Deacon Jay Plese assisting. Burial will be in Mount Saint Patrick Cemetery in Wilton Center.

Pallbearers will be Stephen Tulley, Kyle Tulley, Matt Saulters, Garrett Saulters, Ross Marshall, and Dan Christmann.

Preferred memorials may be made as gifts in Don's memory to St. Rose Catholic Church in Wilmington or St. Patrick Catholic Church in Wilton Center.

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

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

Braceville-Gardner Cemetery donations

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

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

In memory of James Payton and Lorraine Hansen, by Kathy and Ray Lissy.

In memory of Matthew Vignocchi, by Mark Small.

In memory of James Payton, by Bonnie and Lane.

In memory of Patricia L. Scubic, by Dale and Pat Scubic Family.

In memory of Edward Novy, by Annamae Novy.

In memory of Lorraine Hansen, by Brian Hansen Family.

In memory of Wilson and Cullick Family, by Mr.and Mrs. John Cullick.

In memory of Nels Olson Family, by Alan Olson.

In memory of Junior W. Zilm and Nancy Coclasure, by John and Lisa Zilm.

In memory of Allison Family, by Scott and Lynn Allison.

In memory of Wallace and Mudd Family, by John and Linda Mudd.

In memory of Albrecht, Crawford, Wills and Farmer Families, by James and Louann Albrecht.

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

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

In memory of Thomas, Sara and Amanda Powell, by Pamela Hume.

In memory of Mae Pogliano, John Tira and Edward Nowman, by Ray and Kathy lissy.

In memory of McLuckies, by David McLuckie.

In memory of Corbin and Bell's, by Rich Corbin.

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

The association appreciates all donations during these trying economic times.

All correspondence should be mailed to Braceville Gardner Cemetery, P.O. Box 246, Braceville, IL 60407.

Board of Directors
Braceville-Gardner
Cemetery Association

Local churches offering meals or pickup free food at pantries

CLA Food Pantry. Christian Life Assembly, 2960 E Division St Diamond IL. 815-578-5441. Available Tuesday 9:00-2:30 am and Friday 3:30 to 6 p.m.

Braidwood Food Pantry at Community Care Center. Open Tuesdays 8 to 11:45 a.m. 112 S. Center Street, Braidwood. Information: 815-325-0779

Ignite Christian Church, 1180 W 1st St. Braidwood. Micro-pantry open 24 hours front of church Info: (815)-390-5040

Top Fuel Saloon Food Pantry. Open Fridays from 3 to 4 p.m. 275 S. Hickory St., Braidwood.

Secret Pantry, for hours and location see: The Original Secret Pantry Facebook page

Coal City Food Pantry at Coal City United Methodist Church. (Use south entrance)Closed all federal holidays. Open Mondays 9-11 a.m. and Thursdays 1-3 p.m. 6805 E. McArdle Road, Coal City. Information: 815-216-3288.

We Care of Grundy County Food Pantry. Office Hours: Mon.-Wed. and Fri.: 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m. Pantry Hours: Monday-Friday 1:00-3:00 by appointment. Please call to schedule your time to come 815-942-6389. 530 Bedford Rd., Morris. Information: 815-942-6389

Kuzma Care Cottage, food pantry. 635 S. Main Street, Wilmington. Hours: M-F 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. and the 2nd Saturday of each month, 8-11 a.m. 815-476-2030

Local Meals:

St. Vincent Table hot meals are offered at various locations throughout the year. Here are the months and locations for 2025. Hours for pick-up for shut ins 4-4:30 p.m. Eat in start 4:30 until 5:30 p.m.

Dec. 2024 and January-February 2025: CC First Baptist Church, 4470 E Rt 113 Mazon.

March-April 2025: Assumption of the BVM, 180 S Kankakee St., Coal City.

May-July 2025: New Hope Presbyterian Church, 80 N. Garfield St Coal City.

Aug.-Oct. 2025: Immaculate Conception Church, 110 S School St Braidwood.

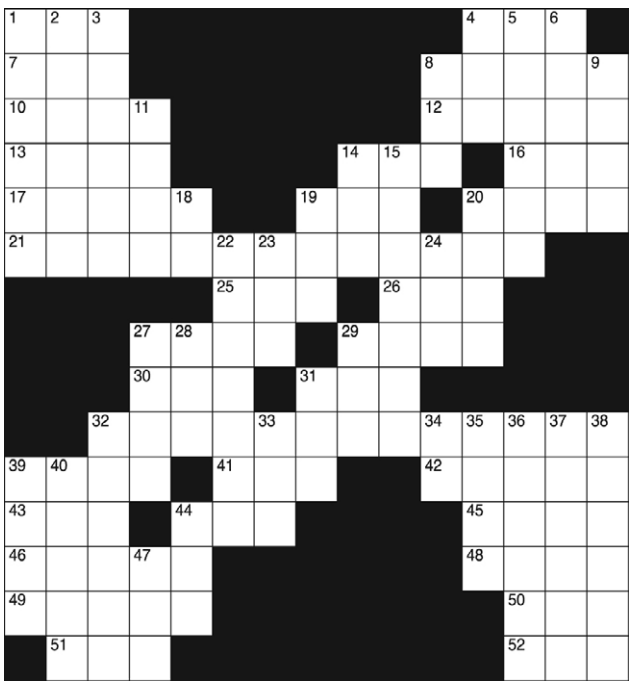
Nov. 2025: Assumption of the BVM, 180 S Kankakee St Coal City.

December 2025: CC First Baptist Church, 4470 E Rt 113 Mazon.

A coffee mug clears the driveway

With a few light flurries behind us and a possible mild winter on the horizon, WillCountyGreen.com wants everyone to understand how to salt driveways and walking areas without harming fish and wildlfe.

Salt will wash across lawns and into storm drains. Keep in mind that a coffee mug (12 ounces) is enough to clear 500 sq ft. Once temps drop below 15 degrees Fahrenheit, salt becomes ineffective and can harm wildlife.



CLUES ACROSS
1. Central processing unit
4. Taxi
7. Body part
8. Papal court
10. Young women making their public debuts
12. Metal shackles
13. Joseph's wife
14. Licensed professional
16. Partner to cheese
17. Mild fruits
19. File format
20. Province of Indonesia
21. Beloved grilled foods
25. Bar bill
26. Don't know when yet
27. Whale ship captain
29. Touches softly
30. Mock
31. Red-brown Pacific sea bream
32. Summer entertainment options
39. Protective crust
41. Cool!
42. Behave in a way that belittles
43. Denial
44. A place to sleep
45. Electronic counter-countermeasures
46. Intestinal pouches
48. SE Asia family of languages
49. Sound
50. Select
51. Give the impression of dishonesty
52. Witness

CLUES DOWN
1. Of cadmium
2. Deliver a sermon
3. Inner regions of a shadow
4. Aggressive dog
5. Smells
6. Twofold
8. Former OSS
9. Computer language
11. Indian groom
14. Automobile
15. Hairstyle
18. Atomic #76
19. Guy (slang)
20. Ladies' undergarments
22. Furniture with open shelves
23. Back-arc basin
24. Partner to flow
27. A type of horse
28. Possesses
29. Split pulses
31. Small amount
32. Flat-bottomed riverboat
33. Not good
34. Atomic #31
35. Assist in committing a crime
36. Chauvinists
37. Get away
38. One of a people who speaks a Semitic language
39. Civil rights college organization
40. Combustible dark rocks
44. Grocery container
47. Central nervous system

	6	5				9		
3		7		5				
8				6				2
		9						
	2				1	4		
7	1			2			3	
				1			8	
		8	5		7		6	
					3	7	1	4

SUDOKU - Here's how it works:
Soduko 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.

Share-A-Shot with the Giant

TWO-YEAR-OLD Hagen Crater, grandson of Kurt Crater, hangs out with the Gemini Giant at the concession stand, enjoying a cup of hot chocolate and marshmallows on the North Island park Christmas light walk. The Craters were grateful for the Wilmington Lions Club volunteers who turn the park into a Winter wonderland with thousands of lights and hundreds of Christmas decorations. Kurt said little Hagen had a blast and thought it was great to meet the Gemini Giant (costume worn by volunteer Mike Kelly). The Christmas display lights up 6-9 p.m. nightly through Jan. 1. If you'd like to submit a Share-A-Shot photo of something of local interest email it to news@fpnusa.com.

Imagination Library coming to Will County

Will County is partnering with The Dollywood Foundation to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Will County.

The partnership kicks off a county-wide fundraising campaign to fully launch the book-gifting program in Will County, which mails free, high-quality and age-appropriate books to children from birth to age five.

Since launching in 1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has become the preeminent early childhood book-gifting program in the world. The flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation has gifted over 250 million free books in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and The Republic of Ireland.

"The power of books is undeniable," said County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant. "The earlier we get them into our children's hands the more opportunities we provide for our earliest learners. We have a unique opportunity, with the help of the State of Illinois, to develop emergent readers and create a foundation for the love of books."

The Imagination Library of Will County is supported by the statewide expansion of the program launched by Governor JB Pritzker in December 2023.

The state program matches every dollar raised locally, improving the ability of county-wide programs to raise funds and register children. With the state match, every $16 raised locally will sponsor one child to receive a full year of high-quality, age-appropriate books.

Research has shown that the first five years of life are critical for young children, with around 90% of brain development occurring during those years. Daily readings by parents or caregivers provide the greatest opportunity to prepare their child for school, and literacy is a long-term major social determinant of health and economic impact.

Children receiving books through the Imagination Library see increased readiness for kindergarten and higher academic achievement.

To fully launch the program and begin registering local children, a fundraising goal of $150,000 has been established to sustain operations for the first two years.

In partnership with the Rialto Square Theatre, a kick-off fundraising event will be held on Jan. 30 in celebration of Imagination Library and Dolly Parton's January birthday. The "Imagination Celebration - A Dolly Parton Birthday Book Bash" will feature a celebratory reception and a showing of the 1980 classic "9 to 5", starring Dolly Parton.

All proceeds from the event will support the Imagination Library of Will County. The reception will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 30 at the Rialto Square Theatre in Joliet, with the movie starting at 7 p.m.

Tickets are $20 and available for purchase at the Rialto Box Office (102 N. Chicago Street, Joliet, IL - Mon.-Fri. - 12 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.).

To donate directly to the Imagination Library of Will County, including sponsoring a child to receive one year of free books for $16, visit https://will countyimaginationlibrary.org.

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$3.00 OFF
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Private Room
COME TRY YOUR LUCK!
Must be 21 yrs or Older
Andre Champagne
All Flavors
$2.00 OFF
750ml
Cruzan Rum
All Flavors
$2.00 OFF
750 ml
Josh Wine
All Flavors
$2.00 OFF
750 ml
Jim Beam Bourbon
$2.00 OFF
750ml
$3.00 OFF
1.75L
Offers good through Dec. 31, 2024
1099 S. Water St., Wilmington • 815-476-2764

Come enjoy a bowl of homemade soup

Coal City United Methodist Church, 6805 McArdle Rd., Coal City, invites the community to join them for a Soup Supper on Saturday, Jan. 4, from 4 p.m. to 6:30 pm.

They will serve their delicious homemade vegetable beef and chicken & rice soups. Each meal includes your choice of soup, a sandwich, crackers, a beverage, ice cream & dessert.

Carry-outs will be available. The cost is $15 for ages 13 & older; $5 for children ages 3 - 12; and children age 2 & under eat free. All proceeds will go to the church's building fund. Tickets will be sold at the door.

Wellness workshop offered

The Forest Preserve District of Will County will be offering a Wellness Workshop – Access to the Outdoors: 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 7, at the Sugar Creek Administration Center, off Laraway Road in Joliet.

January's workshop in this series will feature presentations by staff on the benefits of the Forest Preserve's work to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources. Free, all ages. Register by Jan. 7.

Online registration is available on the Event Calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org.

Courtesy photo by Forest Preserve

Look for creatures that feature special adaptations to survive the cold months during a Winter Waterfowl hike 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 12 at the Forest Preserve District of Will County's Four Rivers Environmental Education Center in Channahon. Join a naturalist and fellow birders on the chilly trails at Four Rivers. Free, all ages. Register by Jan. 10. under the Event Calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org.

PUBLIC NOTICES
Because it's your right to know

Artwork for these ads were drawn by School students from the area

Season s Greetings from these merchants

Aidehla

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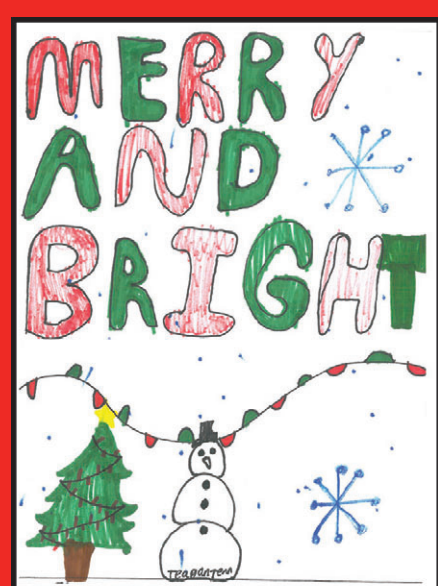
teamgresham@amfam.com • Email: ggresham@amfam.com

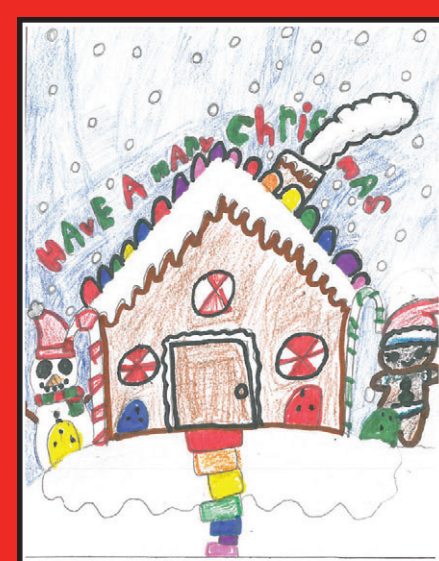
Sadie Jayne

BANDERSON TAX SERVICES
509 W. Kennedy Rd., Braidwood
(815) 458-0212



Teagan Tenn

ARNIE BAUER
Chevrolet / GMC
901 E. Baltimore St., Wilmington
815.476.3300
arniebauer66.com

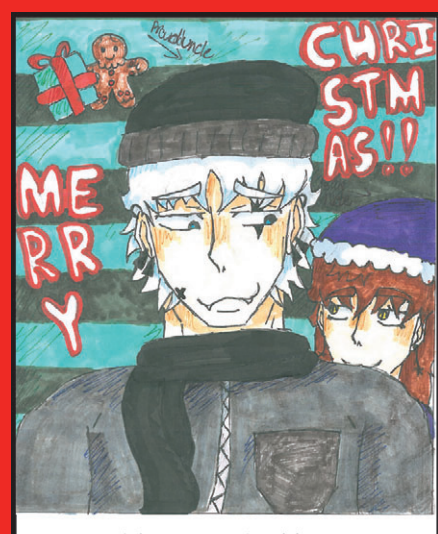


Hadley

BACKYARD POOLS & SPAS
DesRochers
815-476-2975
550 Davy Lane • Wilmington

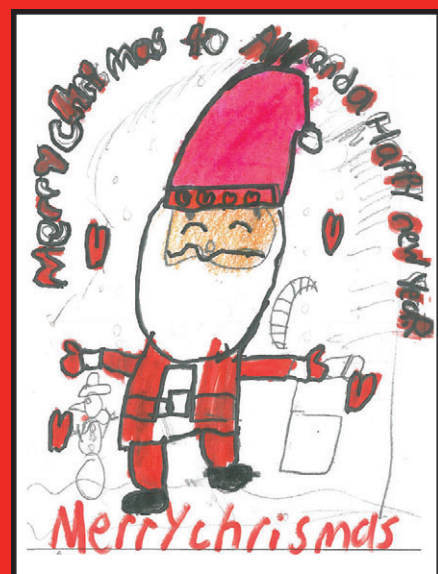
Grace

BERKOT'S SUPER FOODS
Braidwood • 815-458-2114
Coal City • 815-634-4224
Wilmington • 815-476-7144



Alyson Shelton

BIG STORAGE SOLUTIONS
460 North 5th Avenue, Coal City
815-201-2232

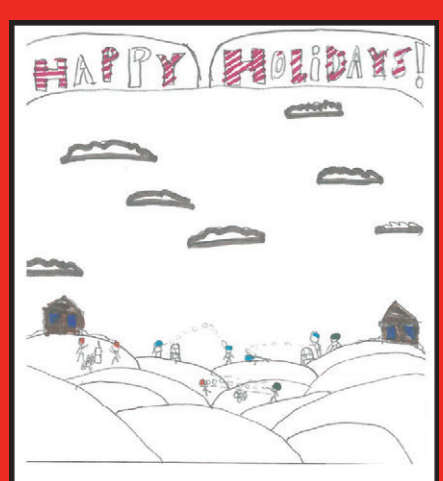


Connor

BOB'S ADVANCED AUTO & TIRE, INC.
60 E. Chestnut, Coal City • 815-634-0004
Complete Auto & Truck Repairs

Amelia

200 E. Baltimore St., Wilmington
(815) 476-7744



Jackson Dvorak

CARDINAL TRANSPORT, INC.
CR TRANSPORT
7180 E. Reed Road, Coal City
815-634-4443

Sarabella

CLENNON ELECTRIC
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Luke Sharum

CLUBB CONSTRUCTION
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815-634-2544

Kennedy

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Jayleigh

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1044 Ferrari Drive, Coal City
(815) 634-4040

Oliver

FISHER-GENTRY EYE CARE
501 S. Locust St. (Rt. 50), Manteno
815-468-2015

Artwork for these ads were drawn by School students from the area

Season s Greetings from these merchants

Certified in Foot and Ankle Surgery by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery®
FOX FOOT AND ANKLE.COM
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COAL CITY 810 E. Division 815-634-2324
MINOOKA 2081 S. Ridge Rd. 815-521-9347
OSWEGO 3963 Route 34 630-551-3338
Find us at www.fox-feet.com

Bo

Geo's PIZZA
715 S. Broadway, Coal City
815-634-8858

Bobbie

GRUNDY BANK
120 S. Main St., Wilmington
815-942-0130
www.grundy.bank
Member FDIC

Paisley

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STRATEGIES
INDEPENDENT AGENCIES
(815) 476-2105
craig@oakknollinsurance.com

Dylan T.

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O'DEKIRK, ALLRED & RHODES, LLC
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815.740.1700
1095 S. WATER ST., SUITE B, WILMINGTON, IL
(WINCHESTER GREEN SHOPPING CENTER)
JOLIET, MANTENO, MORRIS AND PLANO

Kenzie

PRO PROFESSIONAL REAL ESTATE
506 S. Water St., Wilmington
815-476-7916
Pro-homes.net

Noah

QUALITY AUTO BODY
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SALES & SERVICE

Thank YOU from St. Vincent's Table

St. Vincent's Table makes 100+ meals every Monday night for anyone in need of a hot nutritious meal. We also deliver to our homebound in the area. The participating churches in this ministry-New Hope Presbyterian, Coal City First Baptist, Coal City Assumption and Braidwood Immaculate Conception Catholic Churches-would not be able to make this possible without the help of our 80+ volunteers, as well as the many private donors, food pantries, and local businesses who share their time, talent, and treasures with us. These include:

The Whistle Stop
Operation Firm Handshake
Lions Club
CC Little League
Top Fuel Saloon
Jewel Osco
Rosati's Pizza
Milano Bread
Kaluzny Brothers
Knights of Columbus

Meals are served on Monday nights from 4:30-5:30. For more information or if you are homebound and would like to get on our delivery list, please contact Cindi Grove at 815-735-1432, Laura Marizza at 815-325-8605 or any of the local churches listed above.

Thank you again and God's Blessings to all this Christmas season!

Wilmington Public Library to host senior lunches

The Wilmington Public Library invites seniors to kick off the New Year with a warm and welcoming new program, the Souper Senior Lunch Series. This three-part event is designed to provide a cozy and social atmosphere while enjoying hearty, homemade soup and fresh bread.

The lunches will take place Mondays, Jan. 6, Feb. 3 and March 3 at 12:30 p.m.

Each session will feature a live cooking demonstration of the month's soup, offering attendees the opportunity to learn how to prepare a delicious and healthy meal at home. Along with a tasty lunch, participants can look forward to mingling with friends, making new connections and enjoying a fun, friendly environment.

This event is free to attend, but registration is required. Interested participants can reserve their spot by calling the Wilmington Public Library at 815-476-2834.

Bird flu detected in waterfowl migrating through Illinois

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is monitoring a large event of waterfowl mortality at numerous locations throughout Illinois.

Test results received so far indicate highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) is the cause.

The public is reminded to not handle or attempt to capture waterfowl or other wild birds displaying signs of illness. IDNR will continue to monitor for HPAI mortality events throughout the state during the seasonal bird migration.

Members of the public are encouraged to report concentrations of five or more deceased birds found at one location to IDNR district wildlife biologists by going online.

Due to risk of infection to other animals, dogs and other pets should be kept away from the carcasses of birds that may have died from HPAI. If carcasses need to be disposed of, IDNR recommends following guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health. IDNR is unable to assist with carcass removal from non-IDNR properties in most situations.

Local animal control agencies should also take similar precautions and follow the guidelines in disposing of dead birds. In addition, IDPH recommends:

• Do not send dying or dead birds to veterinarians, wildlife refuges, etc., for testing. Instead, notify your local health department or alert IDNR wildlife biologists in cases of five or more deceased birds found in one location.

• People can get on antiviral medications after exposures to prevent illness.

• If the public develops any symptoms of the "flu" – fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, body aches, headaches, eye redness, vomiting or diarrhea – after exposure to sick or dead birds, please notify the local health department immediately. Upon seeking medical attention, please let any health care facility know of your exposure.

• Treatment must be started within two days of illness for it to be most effective, so the public is urged to not delay seeking care.

"While avian influenza generally poses a low risk to the population, it is essential to take the necessary steps to avoid exposure, and to seek treatment quickly if you are exposed," said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. "We encourage all Illinoisans to follow the advice of the experts at IDNR in order to avoid contact with sick birds, and to take any potential exposure seriously. These commonsense steps can help reduce the likelihood of spreading this illness."

IDNR recommends that wildlife rehabilitators not accept waterfowl and other aquatic birds because of the elevated risk of infection by HPAI at this time. Caution should also be taken when accepting raptors, scavengers, and other birds displaying signs of illness due to risk of exposure to HPAI.

Waterfowl hunters should take precautions and thoroughly cook game meat to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. Avoid handling sick or dead waterfowl found in the field.

Holiday recycling breakdown

Do recycle: Plain greeting cards and envelopes but do not include those with foil liners, glitter or electronic devices

Do recycle: Wrapping papers and torn gift bags. No metallic papers or foil liners or bows

Do recycle: Cardboard and chipboard boxes with no plastic affixed

Do recycle: Empty beverage bottles and cans but with no food or beverage inside

Do REUSE gift bags, bows, ribbons, boxes.

Breakfast with the birds event

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is offering Breakfast With the Birds: 8-9:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 8, at the Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, Channahon.

View the resident birds and winter visitors from inside. Enjoy provided warm beverages and muffins or bring your own breakfast. A naturalist will talk about the birds at the feeder. Free all ages. Register by Jan. 6.

Online registration is available on the Event Calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org.

Best Wishes for a Safe, Healthy, and Happy Holiday!

Braidwood Lions to collect used Christmas lights

The Braidwood Lions Club is collecting used/non-working strands of Christmas lights thru Jan. 31.

Collection bins will be located inside Whitmore Ace Hardware in Braidwood and Coal City. The Lions will also accept them during the club's Christmas Tree sale fundraiser during hours of operation.

All proceeds from the recycling will benefit the Braidwood Lions Club's sight and sound services for the visually and hearing impaired residing in the Braidwood, Godley and Shadow Lakes communities.

Please place all strands of lights into plastic bags before placing them into the collection bins.

For more information please call (815)791-8093 or visit www.braidwoodlions club.org.

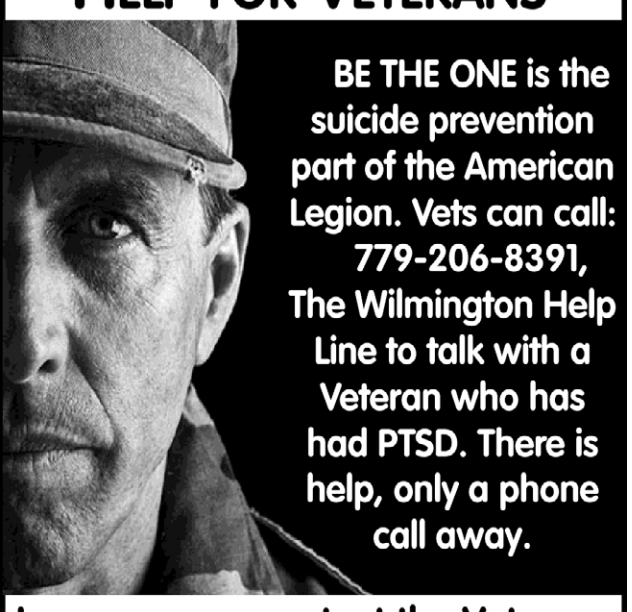
Chill out with Dec. 28 hike for women

The Forest Preserve District of Will County is offering a Stress-free Hike for Women: 9:30-11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 28, at the Four Rivers Environmental Education Center, Channahon.

This women-only, naturalist-led hike will be a way to get outside for a quick fitness walk after the holiday season. Let the cool air and a mindful walk lead you to calmness and tranquility.

After the hike, take a moment to sip on hot beverages and enjoy the views of the Des Plaines River. Free, women ages 16 or older. Register online at the event calendar at ReconnectWithNature.org. by Dec. 26.

HELP FOR VETERANS



BE THE ONE is the suicide prevention part of the American Legion. Vets can call: 779-206-8391, The Wilmington Help Line to talk with a Veteran who has had PTSD. There is help, only a phone call away.

In an emergency text the Veterans CRISIS LINE 988 THEN PRESS 1

Final deer harvest during firearm season increases

Hunters in Illinois took a preliminary total of 82,496 deer during the seven-day 2024 Illinois firearm deer season that concluded Dec. 8.

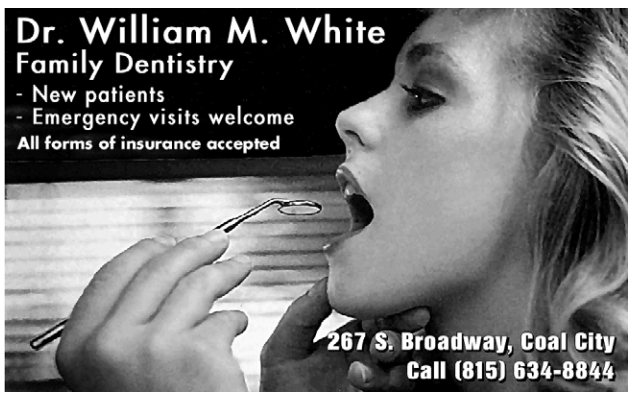
Comparatively, hunters harvested 76,494 deer during the 2023 firearm season.

The preliminary harvest for the second segment of the 2024 firearm season Dec. 5-8 was 27,835 compared with 22,883 deer harvested during the second part of the 2023 season.The preliminary harvest for the first segment of this year's firearm season Nov. 22-24 was 54,661 deer.

Hunters bagged more deer this year than last in Grundy (320 to 285) and Kankakee (203 to 190) counties. Will County hunters took fewer deer (226) compared to a year ago (231).

Remaining 2024-2025 deer hunting opportunities in Illinois include Late-winter antlerless-only and chronic wasting disease (CWD) season, in designated counties only, Dec. 26-29 and Jan. 17-19.

Archery deer season continues through Jan. 19.



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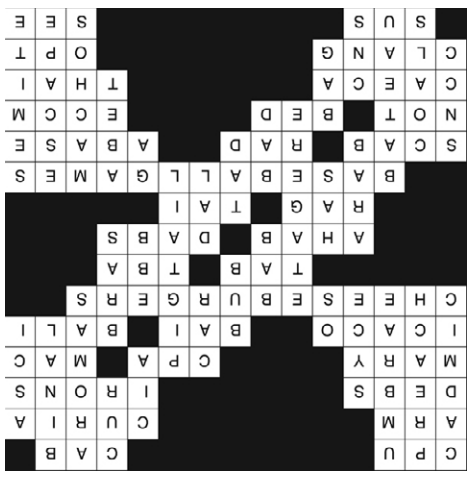

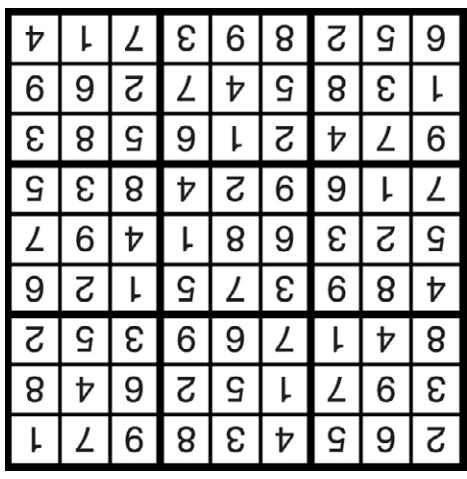

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WILDCAT SPORTS

Photo by Amy Walker

RUNNING THE OFFENSE for the Wildcats against Coal City is Brysen Meents.

Photo by Amy Walker

OPPOSITE DIRECTION—Wilmington senior Lucas Rink passes off the ball near the top of the key to avoid a Coal City defender.

Kettman back in the lineup to help defeat the Lions

The Wildcat boys basketball team used a balanced attack to defeat Lisle on Friday, winning 55-48.

The win improves Wilmington's record to 5-2 overall and 2-3 in the conference.

The contest marked the first start for Ryan Kettman who was recuperating from a football injury and the junior let his presence be known with 11 points, six rebounds, four assists and five steals.

Everyone hustled against the Lions with Lucas Rink taking charge with 17 points, two rebounds and two steals. Brysen Meents chipped in with nine points, three rebounds and four assists. Ryan Nelson finished with eight points and 10 rebounds while Declan Moran tallied seven points and eight rebounds.

The Wildcats enter the Shipyard Showdown tournament at Seneca starting Thursday when they take on Dwight at 7:30 p.m.

Cold 'Cats

Tuesday on the road it wasn't much of a contest with Wilmington scoring only 1 point in the opening quarter and just two points in the fourth as Coal City manhandled Wilmington, 52-29.

The Coalers were consistent throughout, jumping to a 16-1 lead before going up 25-11 at half-time.

Coal City had only two wins out of the prior nine meetings with Wilmington until last week. The Wildcats just couldn't find the basket in the beginning and ending frames.

Lucas Rink paced the 'Cats with 13 points to finish as the only player with double figures. Brysen Meents chipped in with five points, Drew Jackson scored four, Ryan Nelson three and two for Declan Moran and Hunter Osipavicius.

Photo by Amy Walker

PULLING UP for a quick shot over a Coal City defender last week is Wilmington's Ryan Nelson.

Lady 'Cats trap the Lions

The Lady Wildcats used a full court trap Thursday to help defeat the visiting Lisle Lions 37-31. The victory improved Wilmington's overall record to 11-4, 3-2 in the ICE conference.

Wilmington built an early lead in the first and applied the defense in the second to go up 17-14 at the intermission.

The Lady 'Cats kept feeding the ball underneath to Melia Hincherick who finished with 13 points and five rebounds. She stepped to the line for 5-of-10 free throws to lead the team.

Sami Liaromatis contributed 12 points while grabbing six rebounds and five steals. Skylar Rossow chipped in with five points while pulling down 13 rebounds. Taylor Stefancic scored four points, Alaina Clark two and Nikki Quigley one.

It was the second win in three games for the Lady 'Cats. On Wednesday they defeated Peotone, 41-30.

Liaromatis was on fire, scoring 19 points and 11 rebounds to lead all scorers. Quigley had one of her better games with eight points while Keeley Walsh come off the bench to score four points.

Scoring two points each were Rossow, Clark and Stefancic while Hincherick put in three and Lexi Strohm, one. Clark and Liaromatis had five steals each.

Wilmington suffered a 41-34 loss to Herscher last Monday after scoring only six points during each of the first three periods. The Lady 'Cats went on a 16-7 in the final quarter but the damage was already done.

Liaromatis, a sophomore, led with 12 points and seven rebounds while Rossow, a senior, contributed eight points and five rebounds. Hincherick recorded four points and four rebounds while Stefancic finished with three points, two each for Nina Egizio, Clark and Walsh.

The Lady Cats will host Peotone Jan. 9.

Photo by Eric Fisher

BREAKAWAY BASKET —Wilmington's Sami Liaromatis makes an easy two points against Lisle on Thursday.

Photo by Eric Fisher

THE WILMINGTON GIRLS basketball team improved to 11-4 on Thursday thanks, in part, to a determined Taylor Stefancic who muscled up four points total.

Photo by Eric Fisher

SHOOTING FOR TWO of her 13 points scored Thursday is Wilmington Melia Hincherick.