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YOUR FREE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 24, 2021



STOCK PHOTO Shopper's Guide

FHN is launching a new vaping prevention effort aimed at high school students in Jo Daviess and Stephenson counties.

FHN launches youth vaping prevention effort

FHN, with the support of the Substance Use Prevention Services grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services, is launching a vaping prevention communication campaign targeting the high school population in Jo Daviess and Stephenson counties.

Every two years, the majority of local high schools participate in the Illinois Youth Survey.

"Although the results of the 2020

survey were limited due to school closures last spring, the results continue to show an increasing trend in the use of e-cigarettes, especially among the 10th-grade population in Jo Daviess County, which is above state average," according to an FHN news release.

To see survey results, go online to www.fhn.org/SUP.

See VAPING, Page 8

Governor outlines \$41.6 billion budget Plan relies heavily on federal funds, corporate tax changes

By Jerry Nowicki and Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Gov. JB Pritzker outlined a \$41.6 billion budget proposal Feb. 17 that would hold most state agencies at flat funding levels but which relies heavily on changes to the state's corporate tax structure that lawmakers have not yet approved.

The budget proposal, which is only the governor's request for lawmakers in the General Assembly, does not call for income tax increases. Over the next four months, lawmakers will

work on an operating budget of their own to send to the governor that may or may not address all of his requests.

It also does not rely on any federal funding increases that have not yet been passed into law, although a federal Medicaid reimbursement rate increase that is already in place does account for a \$638 million reduction to the state's expenditures.

It was Pritzker's third budget message since taking office in 2019. And

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Orangeville boys look to make the most of defense, experience

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The Orangeville boys basketball team and first-year head coach Josh Fahs have found themselves in some tight battles early in the 2021 season.

Fahs' very first game as head coach was a nail biter that went into overtime against Dakota. The Indians went on to win the game by a score of 42-39, handing the Broncos a tough loss in their season opener. Their second game was just one basket away from going into overtime as well. Playing Dakota for the second time, the Broncos were able to keep it close again, but eventually fell by a score of 39-37 as they began their season 0-2.

On Feb. 16, Orangeville was looking to bounce back and get into the win column as they faced off with a familiar Northwest Upstate Illini-North Conference opponent in Aquin. The Bulldogs took control of

things from the start, taking a 15-8 lead into the second quarter. The Broncos were never able to recover from the deficit and found themselves in a 17-point hole to start the fourth quarter, trailing 44-27. Orangeville found some momentum in the fourth quarter, outscoring Aquin 16-12, but it would not be enough to close the gap. Fahs' Broncos would go on to lose their third straight game by a score of 56-43.

There were positives to take away from the loss, however. Orangeville's Bubby Cahoon and Zach Baker were impressive offensively, combining for 26 points as Cahoon led the team with 14 and Baker finished with 12. Still, Fahs and his Broncos' squad knew what they needed to improve on if they wanted to get that first win.

Through three games, the Broncos had found themselves so close to victory on multiple occasions. The reason for that? Defense, experience

and versatility, Fahs said. The team's defense has shut down opposing offenses and has put the team in a position to be able to win in the end.

Unfortunately, according to Fahs, shooting consistency is the team's biggest weakness. If just a couple possessions had gone differently for Orangeville, they could have been sitting at 2-1 as they went into their second meeting with Aquin, instead of 0-3. The Broncos knew they had to bounce back quick, and it would not be easy going against a team they just lost to by double digits.

That would not stop them, however. Fahs' Broncos came out on offense absolutely scorching when they faced off with Aquin for the second time on Feb. 18. Orangeville quickly hopped out to an 18-7 lead in the first quarter, arguably the team's best quarter of the season thus far.

See ORANGEVILLE, Page 9

Le-Win girls stay competitive with mix of experience and youth

By Trenten Scheidegger
CORRESPONDENT

The Lena-Winslow varsity girls basketball squad is off to another good start after going 17-15 and finishing fourth in the Northwest Upstate Illini-North Conference a season ago.

This year, the roster features a balance of experienced upperclassmen and some youthful underclassmen who are expected to make an impact. Constructed of four seniors, two juniors, two sophomores and three freshmen, the Panthers' roster has it all.

Cheyenne Mapes, Sadie Mowery, Ashlyn Almsy and Taylor Dawson lead the team, all of whom are expected to pass their leadership skills on to the younger classes as Le-Win continues to build a winning program.

Some of the underclassmen, like sophomores Camdyn Huttenlocher and Tianna Esser, and freshmen Keidyne Lynch, Molly Amendt and Grace Groezinger, are splitting their time between the varsity and junior varsity levels in order to ensure their playing time with low numbers. It provides a nice balance between get-

ting quality playing time at the JV level and getting to see what it takes to compete at the varsity level.

Looking at the roster on paper, the Panthers should not only have a competitive team this season, but also look to be one of the area's top teams for years to come.

Despite limited practice opportunities and a schedule coming out on short notice, the Lady Panthers hit the court running in 2021. They kicked off their season with an impressive win over Oregon in which

See GIRLS, Page 9

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Theater group plans slate of summer productions

Timber Lake Playhouse professional summer theater of Mount Carroll will open its 60th anniversary season in June with some changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the slower than expected roll-out of the vaccine, officials announced in a recent press release.

"Since the projections don't put us to full vaccination in Illinois until the end of the summer, TLP has had to make some changes in programming to assure our ability to provide entertainment this season," Executive Director Dan Danielowski said in the release.

"With many theaters around the country announcing that they will not open until September and others scheduling concert-style productions prior to that, we had to make some difficult decisions in regards to programming," Paul Stancato, TLP artistic director, said in the release.

Officials at the Mount Carroll theater had to look at shows that could be done with a smaller cast size and less technical and support staff, while considering economic and safety concerns.

"It's very likely Illinois will con-

tinue in Phase 4 throughout the summer," Danielowski said. "That leaves us with reduced audience size due to social distancing in the theater, additional cleaning and sterilizing procedures and some difficult safety protocols we'll have to put into place for our patrons and staff due to the pandemic."

The new lineup for the summer begins with "A Closer Walk with Patsy Cline," followed by "Pippin," "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," "Jesus Christ Superstar," "The Robber Bridegroom" and "Ain't Misbehavin'".

In September, TLP will bring "The Buddy Holly Story" to the stage.

Local auditions scheduled for March 27 and 28 have been canceled. Local auditions will be rescheduled for roles in "What a Wonderful World" sometime in early fall.

"Annie," "Legally Blonde," "Eli, Eli, Lector, Lector, Lector" and "Plaid Tidings" have all been rescheduled for the 2022 season.

Tickets for summer subscriptions and for individual shows are available by going online to timberlakeplayhouse.org.



STOCK PHOTO The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide

Extension commercial agriculture educators are working with industrial hemp growers on the new Midwestern Hemp Database.

Researchers seek data from area hemp farmers

Industrial hemp is one of the fastest growing crops across the Midwest and researchers are recruiting producers to help them learn more, according to a University of Illinois Extension news release.

Extension commercial agriculture educators are working with industrial hemp growers to source field data and provide research through the new Midwestern Hemp Database. Producer applications are now being accepted for the 2021 growing season online at go.illinois.edu/HempDatabase.

Hemp producers submit information about their crop and university staff analyze and share that data with the public. In exchange for their involvement, growers receive discounted cannabinoid testing on samples.

To find a report with summary findings about the 2020 growing

season, go online to <https://go.illinois.edu/mhdfactsheet>.

"As this is a new crop, we simply do not know what is and is not working in the Midwest," Phillip Alberti, local Extension commercial agriculture educator, said in the news release. "This project allows us to learn a lot in a short period of time while allowing growers to conduct their own trials."

"The database is an interactive platform, updated weekly, that helps guide growers," Alberti said. "Together, we're working to understand the performance of production practices and hemp cultivars used in the Midwest."

The database will not only be useful for processors, but also regulators, as data from the Midwestern Hemp Database was used to support rule changes in the USDA final rule.

"This project puts data from around the Midwest into an easily accessible and interactive format," Alberti said. "Growers can feel confident using this database to make informed decisions about their operation."

The database began as a collaborative project among four Midwestern land grant universities (Michigan State, University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Purdue University) and a private laboratory (Rock River Laboratory Inc.). The project will be expanding to include more states (Iowa, Ohio, and Kentucky), land grant institutions and private laboratories (ACT Laboratories) in 2021.

For more information, contact Alberti, who serves Jo Daviess, Stephenson and Winnebago counties, at 815-235-4125.

State Fair group offers scholarships

The Wisconsin State Fair Dairy Promotion Board is offering \$1,000 scholarships for use during the second semester of the 2021-'22 school year. Third- and fourth-year college students pursuing a dairy-related or food science degree at one of Wisconsin's four-year universities are eligible to apply.

Applicants will be evaluated on involvement and leadership in dairy-related activities, scholastic achievement and career objectives. Finalists will be interviewed in April, with the recipients to be recognized at the Wisconsin State Fair.

The application is available by going online to <https://wsfdairypro>

mo.org/scholarships. The application deadline is Friday, March 19. For more information, contact Liz Matzke at programassistant@wsfdairypromo.org.

The Wisconsin State Fair Dairy Promotion Board is made up of individuals passionate about promoting Wisconsin's \$45.6 billion dairy industry during the Wisconsin State Fair. The board provides educational opportunities for fair attendees while also managing the Real Wisconsin Cheese Grill and Blue Ribbon Dairy Products Auction.

For more information, go online to wistatefair.com or follow @WSF-DairyPromoBoard on Facebook.

Basketball roundup

A roundup of high school basketball scores and notes received by The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide (all scores are from varsity games unless noted):

Boys

- Feb. 12, Stockton 40, Galena 56
Caleb Mammoser scored 13 for the Blackhawks, followed by Ian Broshous with 11.
- Feb. 15, Le-Win 32, East Dubuque 48
Evan England led the Panthers with 16 points.
- Feb. 16, Warren 61, Durand 35
Seniors Masyn Neff and Matthew Riedl each scored 16 in the Warren win, followed by junior Brayden Bohnsack with 10 points.
- Feb. 16, Orangeville 43, Aquin 56
Seniors Brayden Cahoon and Zach Baker led in scoring for Orangeville, with 14 and 12 points, respectively.

- Feb. 16, junior varsity, Orangeville 32, Aquin 31
- Feb. 17, Warren 49, West Carroll 54 (overtime)
- Feb. 18, Warren 62, Durand 37
Masyn Neff had 13 points for the Warriors.
- Feb. 18, Le-Win 50, Dakota 37
Luke Benson and Caleb Matz led scoring for the Panthers with 14 and 12 points, respectively.
- Feb. 18, Orangeville 62, Aquin 57
Zach Baker had 21 points for Orangeville.
- Feb. 18, junior varsity, Orangeville 20, Aquin 28
- Feb. 18, Stockton 55, West Carroll 28
Ian Broshous led the Blackhawks with 19 points. Drew Mesendike had nine rebounds.
- Feb. 20, Orangeville 58, Le-Win 41
Zach Baker led Orangeville with 22

points, followed by Nathan Anderson with 17.

For Le-Win, Evan England scored 17 points, followed by Alex Daughenbaugh with 11.

Girls

- Feb. 15, Warren 38, Milledgeville 32
- Feb. 16, Le-Win 44, East Dubuque 36
Cheyenne Mapes had 25 points and Grace Groezinger had six rebounds for the Le-Win Panthers. The girls shot 13 for 24 from the free-throw line.
- Anna Berryman had 18 points for the East Dubuque Warriors, who shot 10 for 19 from the free-throw line.
- Feb. 17, Le-Win 37, Dakota 42
Grace Groezinger had 16 points and five rebounds for Le-Win. Cheyenne Mapes had nine points and three steals.
- Tabytha Toelke led Dakota with 16 points, followed by Mary Zettle with 13 points.
- Feb. 17, Stockton 47, River Ridge/Scales Mound 24
Tiana Timpe led the Blackhawks with 17 points, while Syndey Driscoll led the Wildcats with eight.
- Feb. 18, Warren 17, Galena 41
- Feb. 18, Le-Win 40, Dakota 47
Sadie Mowery had 12 points to lead the Panthers, followed by Grace Groezinger with 11 points.
- For Dakota, Tabytha Toelke had 16 points and Mary Zettle had 12 points.



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Lingering Trump loyalty puts Illinois GOP in a tough spot

Adam Kinzinger, Donald Trump, Big Money, the GOP — a lot to handle in one column. But I can do it, because each is a different-colored thread in a single piece of cloth.

North-central Illinois GOP Congressman Adam Kinzinger has been sharply dismissive of former President Trump, which has caused furious blowback from his constituents.

“Our district offices can barely function,” said one staffer, “as the circuits have been overloaded with irate calls from former supporters.”

In a recent vote of LaSalle County GOP precinct committeemen, 88 percent supported censure of the five-term, 43-year-old congressman.

“Adam went to Washington,” said a friend of mine from his district, “and never came back.”

Indeed, during the 2020 election cycle, when I was on the hustings, I had a beer after the speechifyin’ with LaSalle County GOP Chair Larry Smith. He grumbled then that Kinzinger “hasn’t been in LaSalle County in six years!”

So, Adam has become the darling of suburban Dems and maybe 15 to 20 percent of GOP voters who, like me, agree with his criticism of Trump. Not a recipe for success in a statewide primary for U.S. Senate or governor, unless he stirs up several opponents, and can then win with 30 percent or so of the vote.

Trump loyalists in my rural area appear to be sticking with the ex-president. They believe he speaks their blunt language to the powers that be and represents them more effectively than anyone ever has or ever will.

Their loyalty to him is fierce; to the GOP, their faithfulness is secondary, if at all.

For the near term, Trump needs a big objective, and that has to be the presidency in 2024. He will seek to become the first non-successive, two-term president since Grover Cleveland.

But the Trump Party, post-insurrection, will always be a minority in America, probably 35 percent or so of voters. GOP officials are desperate to make their party more than the Trump Party, but Trump will make that nigh impossible.

Trump is a cult figure, not a party leader. If you’re not for him 100 percent, you’re against him, to his mind. GOP candidates will have to pass the Trump loyalty litmus test, or face his wrath and that of his base.

In downstate Illinois, Trump loyalty from candidates will come easy, and be mostly sincere. It will certainly be required to avoid a primary challenge next spring. I think the loyalty test will be trickier in the vote-rich suburbs. I expect many district-level GOP primary



By **JIM NOWLAN**

contests between pro- and anti-Trump candidates.

Also here in Illinois, Big Money appears to have replaced party organizations as the critical element in election contests. Gov. JB Pritzker and billionaire investor Ken Griffin each put more than \$50 million into the single contest over whether to tax the rich more than others, which Pritzker favored and lost. Without Griffin’s money to blanket the airwaves with trenchant advertising attacks on increased taxation, Pritzker would likely have won.

Pritzker is vulnerable to defeat in a 2022 re-election bid. But who will credibly take on him and his money? (The governor spent \$171 million of his own money in his election win in 2018.) The answer is only someone who can find a Daddy Warbucks funder of the Ken Griffin class.

Not to be cast aside entirely, the Illinois GOP recently narrowly defeated a Trump conservative, and elected as state chair a calm, mainstream Republican lawyer from the remarkably successful Tracy family of western Illinois. Tracy siblings operate and wholly own the 6,000-employee DOT Foods enterprise of tiny Mount Sterling in equally minuscule Brown County.

Don Tracy may not himself be in the Griffin billionaire class (I don’t know), but he sure has the stature to get his phone calls returned from traditional, major GOP donors.

At present, the Illinois GOP holds no state offices and but one-third of legislative and congressional seats. It has no money, and an uncomfortable, at best, relationship with the Trump base; after all, the Tracy forces worked hard to eke out a narrow win over a Trump candidate for party chair.

Illinois needs a competitive two-party political system. I commend Don Tracy for taking on a thankless role, but I worry that the GOP, both nationally and in Illinois, is in for a rough ride until we get past the Trump era.

Trump backer and suburban businessman Gary Rabine has already announced his candidacy for governor in the 2022 GOP primary. Expect more. Will Kinzinger join the fray? Stay tuned.

For many years, Jim Nowlan was a senior fellow and political science professor at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. He has worked for three governors and published a weekly newspaper in central Illinois.



Slices of life

Membership in this club isn't by choice

I woke up this morning to a message no one ever wants to receive.

It was from a dear friend, roommate from college and bridesmaid at my wedding.

Her husband was in a car accident yesterday and died. I cry writing this because it is so close right now.

She wrote looking for help. Looking for advice. Looking for something, anything to make sense out of something that makes no sense. She asked, “How did you do it? How did you get through it?”

I didn’t have the heart to tell her that I didn’t do anything. Still haven’t gotten through it. I’m not sure anyone ever does.

I had tears — lots and lots of tears for her — but no clear-cut advice. There is none.

I’m glad she sought me out. I did the same thing. Unfortunately I have a few friends who have walked this path before me and I turned to them for help, answers, advice, an ear — whatever they could give me.

They were more than gracious; I think because they knew.

I was now a member of their club. It’s a club no one ever wants to



By **JILL PERTLER**

Contributor

that no one should ever know. There are countless other horrible realities out there. I get it. But I’m a member of this particular special club. And it sucks.

It’s a club like the Hotel California: You can check out anytime you like, you just can’t ever leave.

Those of us in this special club can’t leave. Not ever. But we can move forward, on a new path that we probably never considered before our membership was thrust upon us.

It’s hard as heck, though. It’s like a never-ending, scary ride that just keeps running around the track over and over and over even though you are screaming to get off.

I’m not sure any of us will make it. But we’ll try. I know I’m going to try. I am trying.

See SLICES OF LIFE, Page 7

join. Membership is the opposite of coveted, yet some of us find ourselves here, with the label we never, ever thought possible. Members of this elite, prestigious, inane, stupid club.

Widow. Widower. Alone. Filled with sorrow. Heart literally aching. Chest pounding. Not knowing what tomorrow will bring. Afraid to move forward. Terrified to look back.

But we are in this together, whether it’s been five days, five weeks or five years; we all know.

Quite honestly it’s a horrible reality

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Sealants provide one way to prevent tooth decay

A tooth without decay is always going to be stronger and healthier than a tooth with decay and/or a filling. While flossing and brushing with a fluoride toothpaste helps prevent decay, dentistry has an additional way to help your child avoid cavities — the dental sealant.

Ever since their introduction in the 1960s, sealants have been shown to prevent decay in the most common surface of the tooth that it occurs, in the pits, depressions and grooves of the chewing surfaces of the molars (back teeth). The chewing surfaces are prone to decay because their uneven surfaces trap food, and the pits are often so narrow that a toothbrush is unable to reach and remove the food debris and bacteria feeding on it.

A dental sealant is a special coating that is placed on the chewing surfaces of teeth. They harden into a protective coating or shield that prevents tooth decay by blocking food and bacteria from entering the pits and grooves. As children's first molars erupt at age 6, when they do not have the manual dexterity to brush effectively, sealants offer a crucial defense against cavities. They should also be placed on the secondary molars, which erupt around age 12.

Keep in mind, sealants do not take the place of flossing, brushing with a fluoride toothpaste and seeing a dentist regularly. They can, however, reduce



By **DR. STEPHEN PETRAS**
Illinois Licensed
General Dentist

decay in the grinding/biting surfaces by 80%. Seal your child's molars as soon as they erupt to keep them healthy and strong.

Adults who do not have decay in their molars also can benefit from dental sealants. In rare cases, your dentist may also advise placing them on primary or baby teeth. Primary teeth serve the critical role of holding the place where permanent teeth should optimally erupt. If anatomy or health issues put them in jeopardy of early loss, sealants can help to protect them.

While sealants have a long-standing and outstanding record as an effective tool against decay, it is important to reiterate that children do not have the ability to brush effectively until approximately age 8. Therefore, it is critical to adopt a brushing buddy system where they brush first and you brush after. They also will need your assistance flossing until about age 10.

Dr. Stephen Petras is an Illinois-licensed dentist at the Stockton Dental Center.

Madigan's resignation stirs debate over his power in party, future of Illinois

By Sarah Mansur
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Former House Speaker Michael J. Madigan, 78, announced Feb. 18 he will step down from the state House of Representatives after 50 years in office.

"I leave office at peace with my decision and proud of the many contributions I've made to the state of Illinois, and I do so knowing I've made a difference," Madigan wrote in a lengthy emailed statement.

His initial statement said he plans to retire by the end of the month, but by the end of the day, the letter he submitted to the clerk of the Illinois House said his resignation was effective immediately, a spokesperson confirmed. His current term, which he won in November, would have ended in January 2023.

Madigan, who was the longest serving state House speaker in the country, failed to earn enough support to win another term as speaker, resulting in the election last month of Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch.

Madigan's support within the Democratic caucus began to fracture after federal prosecutors revealed last July that utility giant Commonwealth Edison admitted its executives were bribing associates of Madigan in a yearslong scheme in order to ensure legislation favorable to the company.

Although he has not been charged and he denies wrongdoing, Madigan was forced on the defensive after Republican lawmakers launched a special committee to investigate his involvement in the scheme. That committee ended with a partisan finding that Madigan did not commit conduct unbecoming of a lawmaker.

"It's no secret that I have been the target of vicious attacks by people who sought to diminish my many achievements lifting up the working people of Illinois. The fact is, my motivation for holding elected office has never wavered. I have been resolute in my dedication to public service and integrity, always acting in the interest of the people of Illinois," Madigan said in the statement.

Madigan, who was raised in the Clearing neighborhood on Chicago's southwest side, is a graduate of Notre Dame University and Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

In 1969, just two years after gradu-

ating law school, Madigan was elected the Democratic committeeman for the city's 13th ward, and slated as a delegate to the 1970 constitutional convention. In 1970, he was first elected to represent the 22nd district, which covers a portion of the southwest side of Chicago.

Madigan has served as a partner in his Chicago tax appeal law firm, Madigan & Getzendanner, since he co-founded the firm in 1972.

He was first elected Speaker of the House in 1983 and served, for all but two years, until January 2021. In 1998, he was elected to serve as state Democratic Party chair, a position he continues to hold.

His term as party chair ends in March 2022. A spokesperson for Madigan did not comment on his plans for that role.

As party chairman, Madigan remains in control of the Democratic Party of Illinois' committee fund, which has nearly \$2 million on hand.

Even after he leaves the House, Madigan will also still control two other massive political committee funds: the Friends of Michael J. Madigan, which stands at more than \$13.5 million, and the 13th Ward Democratic Organization, which has more than \$2.6 million.

Kent Redfield, an emeritus professor of political science at the University of Illinois at Springfield, said Madigan can continue to accept contributions to the Friends of Michael J. Madigan and the 13th Ward group and distribute money from those committees to other candidates' committees.

Redfield said Madigan's sources of power came from controlling the legislative process in the House, and "being able to aggregate and distribute money, which gave him huge control over who ran for office, as well as his having an impact on those campaigns."

"That was the key to the power that he had," Redfield said. "Losing the speakership and resigning from the legislature — he's in a significantly weakened position, and it's not clear how much influence he's going to exercise over the (Democratic Party of Illinois)."

Madigan's oversight of an enormous campaign war chest as the Illinois Democratic Party's chair, as well as his unilateral power over the House chamber, led some, especially Republicans, to demonize him as a corrupt

machine boss who, with the support of organized labor and trial lawyers, controlled Illinois' state government.

Former Gov. Bruce Rauner, who campaigned on busting unions in Illinois, regularly ran ads during his single term, which was plagued by a two-year budget impasse, that characterized Madigan as a power-hungry puppet master.

Republican House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, of Western Springs, who initiated the special committee investigation into Madigan, echoed this characterization of Madigan, describing the former speaker's tenure as an "autocratic rule" that "has not made Illinois a more prosperous nor competitive state."

Durkin said in his written statement that Madigan's resignation represents a "new day" in Illinois that he has been looking forward to for many years.

"I urge the Democrats in both chambers and the governor to reflect on how we can use this opportunity to improve Illinois," Durkin said. "Our state is in shambles — financially, structurally and ethically. New ideas and sincere collaboration between the parties is the only pathway forward."

During his five decades in the General Assembly, Madigan has overseen significant legislative achievements that include the passage of a same-sex marriage law and raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2025.

Welch, D-Hillside, said in a written statement that he appreciates Madigan's contributions and wishes him well.

"Under him, we've had strong, sustained Democratic leadership in Springfield. We legalized same-sex marriage, abolished the death penalty and solidified abortion rights. Illinois also became the first state in the Midwest to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. These laws gave underserved populations a new sense of hope," Welch said.

"Now we must build on that with a new generation of leadership focused on racial and gender equity in all dimensions, improving government transparency, and leading with the kind of conviction, compassion and cooperation expected by our constituents."

Gov. JB Pritzker also expressed his gratitude for Madigan's service, and thanked his family too.

"One thing I will say is that when you serve as long, and in as dedicated a

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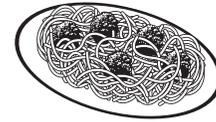
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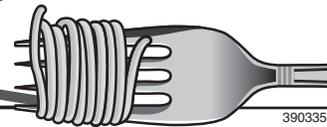


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Panel approves 'culturally responsive' teaching standards

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

A legislative panel last week allowed the Illinois State Board of Education to move forward with new rules that call on colleges and universities in the state to change the way prospective teachers and administrators are trained in order to make them more accommodating to diverse students.

On a party-line vote, the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, or JCAR, declined to block the new "Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards" from going into effect, despite objections by Republicans who argued the rules would ultimately require licensed teachers and administrators to adhere to a particular political ideology.

Specifically, the new standards, which will take effect in 2025, define a culturally responsive educator as, among other things, one who will "critically think about the institutions in which they find themselves, working to reform these institutions whenever and wherever necessary," as well as one who will "assess how their biases and perceptions affect their teaching practice and how they access tools to mitigate their own behavior (racism, sexism, homophobia, unearned privilege, Eurocentrism, etc.)."

"Culturally responsive teachers and leaders understand that there are systems in our society that create and reinforce inequities, thereby creating oppressive conditions," the standards state. "Educators work actively against these systems in their everyday roles in educational institutions."

Rep. Steve Reick, R-Woodstock, opposed the changes.

"So I do believe that what you're doing is you're taking teachers who may object to some of the things that are in this rule, and thus are saying that their inability or unwillingness to abide by this (is) making them, in effect, incompetent," Reick said.

But Amanda Elliott, executive di-

rector of legislative affairs for the state board, said the new rules do not change the way licensed teachers or administrators are evaluated, only the way they are trained in schools of education.

"Again, these are for educator preparation programs, not aimed at school districts," she said. "And it's about not the personally-held beliefs or values of teachers that may be in the classroom, but making sure that they are welcoming to all students, regardless of their background, and also able to adapt material as necessary to meet those needs."

Responding to questions from Democratic Rep. Andre Thapedi, of Chicago, Elliott explained that the process of drafting the standards began in 2017, during former Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner's administration. It started with the state board putting together a leadership team to meet with education officials from other states. Later, the board put together a task force to come up with the actual rules.

Elliott noted that the proposed rules were amended several times in response to public comment as well as questions and comments from legislators.

Thapedi said he had asked for the background behind the rules, "because apparently there's some misinformation out there about what this rule actually does, what the intent of the rule is, and more specifically, more relevant to what JCAR does, the statutory authority for the promulgation of this rule."

But Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris, noted that the task force as a whole appeared to have a liberal tilt.

"I don't want to be political when I talk about this, but in our conversation, and when I did look at the list of members that were on the task force, it seemed that the majority of the task force consisted of members who do believe that teachers should be encouraging progressive viewpoints, and that they should be encouraging

activism by students," Rezin said.

"I can say that we did not ask political affiliation when individuals joined the group," Elliot replied. "I think there's always room for additional perspectives. And we're looking to expand the group as we, hopefully after today, can move forward with implementation."

JCAR is a 12-member committee that is evenly divided between

Republicans and Democrats, and between House and Senate members. Its main purpose is to review proposed rules from administrative agencies to make sure they are consistent with the legislative intent behind the statutes that authorize them.

Reick offered a motion to object to the rules on the basis that they did not clearly spell out how teacher preparation programs are to implement

them. But such a motion requires a two-thirds majority, or eight votes on the committee, and it failed on a party-line vote of 6-5, with one Democrat, Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford, of Maywood, absent.

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PHOTOS SUBMITTED *The Scoop Today/Shopper's Guide*

Top spellers receive recognition

Left, Evan Trone from the Warren School District took second place in the 2021 Regional Spelling Bee. Along with a trophy, he received a Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary for his efforts. Right, Xander Busjahn of the Dakota School District was the winner of the regional bee. He qualifies for the Scripps National Spelling Bee. In addition to a trophy, he also received a 2021 U.S. Mint proof set, a one-year subscription to Britannica Online Premium and a one-year subscription to Merriam Webster Unabridged Online.

Birth

Ella Rose Schlafer

Ella Rose Schlafer is the new daughter to Derrick and Mandy Schlafer of Stockton, Illinois, born on Feb. 15, 2021, at FHN Memorial Hospital in Freeport, Illinois. Ella

joins a brother, Owen, 4. Grandparents are Merle and Marie Bronkema of Pearl City and Judy and Stewart Schlafer of Stockton. Great-grandparents are Pete and Angie Honchalk of Pearl City.



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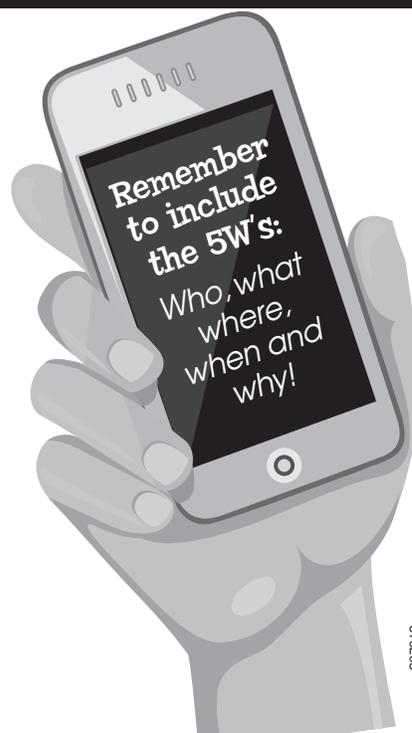
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Obituaries

MARILYN MISKIMON

Marilyn Jane Miskimon, age 91, of Winslow, passed away on Sunday, Feb. 14, 2021, at home. She was born the daughter of Chester and Ida (Feldt) Haman on Sept. 22, 1929, in Monroe. She was a graduate of Juda High School. Marilyn was married to Marvin Bidlingmaier, together they had four sons; she was later united in marriage to Raymond L. Miskimon on Sept. 16, 1970, in Rockton, Illinois.

Marilyn spent her adult life farming in the Winslow area. She played an important role in the family auction business. Marilyn was a hard worker and enjoyed traveling, dancing, playing cards, gambling, flower gardening and especially caring for her family. She was a member of Martintown Community Church, Winslow Women's Club and



Women of the Moose Chapter #599.

Marilyn is survived by her children, Mindy (Craig) McGinnis of Winslow, Jeff (Barb) Bidlingmaier of Brown-

town, Tom (Deb) Bidlingmaier of Browntown and Roger Bidlingmaier of Winslow; 12 grandchildren, Brooks, Hollace and Jaden Julius, Maddox McGinnis, Angie (Mike) Wirth, Amy (Troy) Mahon, Ashley (Chuck) Bredeson, Cory (Kerrie) Bidlingmaier, Chad (Ashley) Bidlingmaier, Carli (Jose) Cabrera, Brock (Tara) Bidlingmaier and Caryl (Barry) Milz; 18 great-grand-

children; brother, Roger (Evelyn) Haman of Milton; sister, Eileen Buttkle of Brodhead; and special family members, TJ and Austin Wand; as well as nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husbands; son, Steven; brother, Hollis; and special family member, Roger Wand.

A visitation and funeral services were held Feb. 20, 2021, at Martintown Community Church with the Rev. Kevin Cernek officiating. Burial was at Rock Lily Cemetery following the service.

Memorials will be given to Martintown Community Church and Serenity Hospice.

Shriner Hager Gohlke Funeral Home is assisting the family. Condolences may be sent to the family at shriner111.com.

DAMIEN GRUBE

Damien Grube, age 34, of Stockton, Illinois, passed away Monday, Feb. 15, 2021, at home. He was born March 2, 1986, in Dubuque, Iowa, to David and Peggy (Giro) Grube. Damien married Casi Pfile on April 22, 2017.

He was a 2004 graduate of River Ridge High School. He loved being outdoors, hunting, fishing and camping. Damien was always listening to music, whether it was heavy metal or country western, he didn't care. He had a passion for taking broken cars and fixing them up. Most of all, Damien loved his family, especially his children and



all the nieces and nephews. He had a heart of gold and would be the first to give a helping hand when needed and would always stick up for the underdogs.

Damien is survived by his wife, Casi Grube; his parents, David and Peggy Grube; his children, Bryce Grube, Brayden Downs and Melody Grube; his brother, Matt (Tarin) Grube; his sisters, Tiffany (Da-

vid Pfile) Hatfield, Paige (Alyssa) Brickl and Katie (William) Longmore; his grandparents, Margaret and Robert Ferrell and William and Mae Ann Hatfield; and his mother-in-law and father-in-law, Christine and Michael Blair. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Meldon and Evelyn Grube.

The memorial service will be held on Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021, at 11 a.m. at the Hermann Funeral Home in Stockton. There will be a visitation beginning at 9 a.m.

A memorial fund has been established. Condolences may be shared at www.hermannfuneralhome.com.

DONALD E. BROGE

Donald E. Broge, 90, of Lena, Illinois, passed away on Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021, at Pleasant View Nursing Home in Monroe, Wisconsin. Donald was born Sept. 27, 1930, to Lester and Margaret (Tieman) Broge in Waddams Grove. Don married Shelby Mau on April 17, 1954, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Lena. They were blessed with one son, Steve (Cheri) Broge of Monroe; granddaughter Stacey (Corey) Steinmann of Monroe; grandson Jeremy (Toni) Broge of Browntown Wisconsin; four grand-grandchildren, Tana Steinmann and Aleta, Alyssa and Alex Broge; brother, Glenn



(Nancy) Broge; sister, Ruth Kleckner; and a very special nephew, Russel Yeager.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Shelby, in 2016; sister, Glenda Yeager;

and brothers-in-law, Herbert Yeager and Richard Kleckner.

Don and Shelby purchased their farm in 1955 and took great pride in farming together for 55 years in the Winslow area until retiring in

2000. Don served his country in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Lena. Don enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, making sure that they were all being taken care of, and always loved looking for the best deal he could find.

Private graveside services will be held at Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens in Freeport, Illinois.

A memorial has been established in his memory.

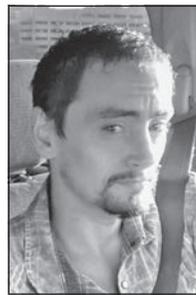
Cremation rites have been accorded.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leanonfh.com.

BRYAN S. WEHE

Bryan S. Wehe, 30, of Warren, Illinois, passed away suddenly at his home on Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021. He was born on April 29, 1990, in Janesville, Wisconsin, to Russell Wehe and Carolyn Huerta-Cordero. Bryan was a dedicated employee to SK Plastics for the past two and half years. He enjoyed trail riding and camping. Bryan was the chef of the cookouts. He was a loving person who loved his family and his dogs.

Bryan is survived by his mother and step-father, Carolyn (Francisco) Huerta-Cordero of Warren; brother, Randy (Marie) Wehe of Warren; Nana Elaine Cole of Warren; nieces and nephews, Annaleigh (10), Koralyn (9), Randy Jr. (7), Ellagra (6), Burrkleah (4), Kaine (3), Camerrah (2) and Wheeler (1) Wehe, all of Warren; aunts, Linda (Rick) Sweedlund-Goedke of Lena and Denise (Sam) Sweedlund of Winslow; un-



cles, Steve (Brandy) Cole of Texas and Marty (Michelle) Cole of Arkansas; several cousins; and his girlfriend, Tammy Chessner-Nedland, and her five children.

Bryan was preceded in death by his grandfather, Marion Cole; and his four dogs, Diesel, Turbo, Sweetie and Harley.

A visitation will be from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021, at the Leamon Funeral Home in Lena, Illinois.

Cremation rites to be accorded. In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established in his name.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leanonfh.com.

ROBERT A. JANSSEN

Robert Allen Janssen (Bob), age 76, of Pearl City, Illinois, passed away Sunday, Feb. 14, 2021, at UW Madison Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. He was born in Freeport, Illinois, on June 14, 1944, to the late Allen and Rose (Kniss) Janssen. Robert married Linda Julius on March 28, 1970, in Altamont, Illinois.

Bob, or BJ to most, graduated from Pearl City High School in 1962. He worked for Shannon Elevator and Ralph Guentner before becoming self-employed. He was a cattle dealer for most of his life and was also known for auto body repair.

In BJ's younger years, he was also known as "Crash." Those who knew him then can tell you why. BJ enjoyed playing basketball and softball, playing in many different leagues until the ripe old age of 60, when he finally retired his cleats.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. His pride and love for his family was evident in everything he did, whether it was attending a sporting event, fixing a car, showing cattle, being at Grandparents' Day or just spending time together. Gramps was always there for his family.

BJ had a lifelong passion for the outdoors. He loved hunting and fishing. A perfect day for him would be spending the day on the water (but definitely not in the water), fishing with family or friends or running his hunting dogs, looking for coyotes with all of his hunting friends. When BJ wasn't hunting,



he enjoyed a good game of cards or watching a classic Western.

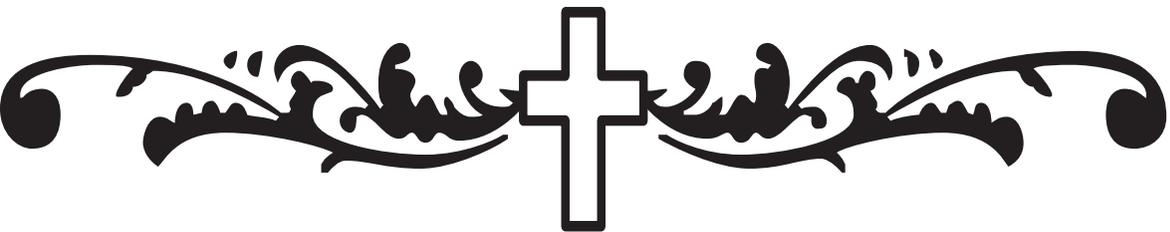
His white hair, bright blue eyes, big smile and his laugh will be remembered with love and

deeply missed.

Bob is survived by the love of his life of over 50 years, Linda Janssen of Pearl City; his daughter, Joanne (Kurt) Snyder of Lena; his sons, Sean Janssen, Brian (Jill) Janssen and Brett Farnsworth; his grandchildren, Jesse (Holly Alber) Snyder, Jacob (Caitlynn Greve) Snyder, Kendra (Tyler) Morgan, Blake Janssen, Reid Janssen, Joseph Janssen, Caleb (Chloe Duncan) Janssen, Nicholas Janssen, Harlee (Kevin) Robinson, David (Sarah) Farnsworth and Abby Farnsworth; his great-grandchildren, Carmen Strohecker, Easton Morgan, Hannah Farnsworth, Rosalie Farnsworth and Wrenly Snyder; his brother, Darius (Linda) Janssen; his niece, Amy (Steve) Dascher and their family and his nephew, Chris (Jody) Janssen and their family. He was preceded in death by his parents, Allen and Rose; and his sister, Ann Janssen.

A visitation and funeral service were held Feb. 20, 2021, at the Hermann Funeral Home in Pearl City.

A memorial fund has been established. Condolences may be shared at www.hermannfuneralhome.com.



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• Slices of life (Continued from page 3)

Although some days it doesn't feel that way. Some days it feels as though I'm stepping backwards instead of forward. Some days it doesn't feel like anything at all. Some days the feelings are so intense I can hardly breathe. Some days I wake up to a memory that tightens in my chest and takes my breath away and I have to get up and just walk and breathe slow and steady. People tell you to think of happy memories, but sometimes (often times) even the happy memories feel sad and you feel your chest tightening. Some days thoughts of my own mortality creep in and I lose my breath again. Some days I think it's all too

hard, but then I think of my kids and know I have to find a way — some way — for them and for me. Some days I wake up calm and I roll over and give thanks for comfy pillows and a warm bed. Some days I feel a small hint of normal again. People have lots of kind advice about getting through and over grief. About the healing process. I don't think I'll ever be healed; there is no healing this grief. At best, I think, there is learning to live in tandem with it. Learning to laugh again, despite the loss. Learning to be OK with laughing again, despite

the sadness. Learning to be OK with feeling sort of normal again without collapsing in a pool of anxiety because how can you feel normal when your world has collapsed from within? How do you orchestrate such a feat? I'm not sure. Not sure I ever will be sure. But I am trying. I am trying to reconcile these two worlds in which I now live, and I hope and pray that the people I come across will understand and allow me the grace I am aching for. The exact same sentiment goes out to my dear friend who is experiencing her own grief, which is even more

recent than mine. This is for you, Paula. Hugs and love.
Jill Perlter is an award-winning syndicated columnist, published

playwright, author and member of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. Don't miss a slice; follow the Slices of Life page on Facebook.
Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government.

• Resignation (Continued from page 4)

fashion in terms of just the sheer number of hours that the man put into the job, his family can really suffer," Pritzker said in an unrelated public appearance in Belleville on Feb. 18.
"It's a challenge for the spouses and children and grandchildren of somebody who's put that much into public service and I really just want to call

them out today and say, they really deserve kudos for the public service that former Speaker Madigan did because it's the family that often suffers, the fact that he's not home when they would like him to be."

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GO FISH



Restaurants, hotels call for reopening plan

Industry officials warn they can't last another year

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Officials from the hotel, restaurant and convention industries told a state Senate panel Feb. 18 that they need a clear plan for how they will be allowed to reopen as the COVID-19 pandemic wanes, warning that without such a plan, many will go out of business permanently.

"We need to know ... a strategy, we need to know the metrics as we move forward because we cannot, we cannot lose another summer here in the state of Illinois," Sam Toia, president and CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association, told the state Senate's newly formed Tourism and

Hospitality Committee during its first virtual hearing.

The committee was set up this year by Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, because the state's tourism industry has been among the hardest hit by the pandemic.

Currently, all regions of the state are under Phase 4 mitigations, which limits private gatherings to no more than 50 people. But Toia argued that many restaurants are capable of handling larger numbers of people safely, and he said there should be a more specific plan that would allow bars, restaurants and hotels to gradually move out of Phase 4 toward Phase 5, which is full reopening.

"We just want to know when we can go back to having conventions, having parties, private parties, figuring out when we can have some fans in stadiums. This is very, very unclear," he said. "And we just want to

get adjusted of what Phase 5 is going to look like. I don't think we can wait 12 to 18 months."

Michael Jacobson, president and CEO of the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association, agreed, saying that without such a plan, hotels risk losing not just another season, but another year.

"What our industry needs is clarity," he said. "Meeting planners are making their plans right now for events booked this summer and beyond. ... Because of how long these planners book in advance, we cannot take a day-by-day approach to these restrictions. Otherwise, we are putting months and months of future business at risk of leaving our state. And once a meeting leaves Illinois, it becomes so much harder to convince that organizer to come back to our state."

Jacobson said the statewide average occupancy rate for hotels in Illinois in December was only 27 percent, roughly half what it was a year earlier. That compared to a nationwide average occupancy rate of 37 percent.

During a one-week period in January, he said, the occupancy rate

among Chicago hotels was down 84 percent from a comparable week in 2019.

"It has become clear that we will be among the last industries to recover from this disaster. In fact, we don't anticipate a recovery to pre-pandemic levels until 2024 at the earliest," Jacobson said. "And that is assuming that the recovery accelerates here in the next couple of months."

Toia and Jacobson both noted that other states are adopting plans that allow for a more gradual reopening of businesses with larger and larger group limits. Both also argued that workers in those industries should be prioritized for vaccinations.

According to the "Restore Illinois" reopening plan, the state can only move into Phase 5 when "testing, tracing and treatment are widely available throughout the state. Either a vaccine is developed to prevent additional spread of COVID-19, a treatment option is readily available that ensures health care capacity is no longer a concern, or there are no new cases over a sustained period."

Toia and Jacobson argued that with vaccines now in distribution and the spread of the disease great-

ly slowed, it's time for the administration to start making more specific plans for how and when the state can transition to Phase 5. The state's rolling seven-day case positivity rate on Feb. 18 was 2.7 percent, the lowest it's been since early July.

Sen. Terri Bryant, R-Murphysboro, noted that following a Senate Health Committee meeting earlier last week, Republicans sent a letter to Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike asking her to specify what constitutes "widely available" and "a sustained period."

Committee Chairwoman Sara Feigenholtz, D-Chicago, said the committee would review that letter and any response the administration provides.

"Our goal is to meet and construct a safe plan to get tourists into hotels, restaurants and our cultural institutions," Feigenholtz said in a statement after the meeting. "There is a path to do this safely, and Illinois must look at the modeling and metrics of other states in order to kick-start a struggling industry."

Capitol News Illinois is a nonpartisan, nonpartisan news service covering state government.

• Vaping

(Continued from front page)

In 2017, through the support of the Substance Use Prevention Program and the state Strategic Prevention Partnership for Success grants, FHN partnered with the county middle schools for an alcohol prevention campaign that included communication materials and a multi-session youth prevention education program. The 2020 IYS results in Jo Daviess and Stephenson counties showed a decrease in alcohol use by the eighth- and 12th-grade students compared to previous years. These programs are continuing in most of the local schools.

In the fall of 2020, FHN completed an analysis of the Jo Daviess and Stephenson counties' IYS data and conducted a marketing survey of more than 95 high school

students. The various vaping prevention communication campaign materials were designed by the state with youth feedback. The communication campaign consists of a series of posters, newsletters, banners, school announcements and local billboards. The theme of the campaign focuses on the positive "I Don't Vape Because I Need My Lungs to ..." and includes informative facts related to the use of e-cigarettes/vaping. The effectiveness of the campaign will be evaluated by the 2022 and 2024 Illinois Youth Survey.

All six of the Jo Daviess County high schools and Freeport High School have partnered with FHN to support the campaign, which is scheduled to run through December.

Briefs

FFA hosts drive-thru pork chop dinner

The Pearl City FFA and FFA alumni will host their annual Pork Chop Dinner from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 13, at Pearl City High School.

The dinner will be held as a drive-thru, offering pickup meals only in the high school parking lot. Tickets may be purchased at the event.

The dinner will include a pork chop sandwich, chips, a cookie and applesauce for \$7.

Money raised at the dinner will be used to help students attend leadership training, camps, state and national conventions and judging competitions and contests.

Lena library notes new entrance, new books in collection

The new south entrance is now open at the Lena Community District Library. Patrons are welcome to use the book drop and new parking lot; the street entrance remains open as well.

The library also has new books available: "The Price of Valor" by Susan May Warren, "The Four Winds" by Kristin Hannah, "Blink of an Eye" by Iris Johansen and "Serpentine" by Jonathan Kellerman.

National FFA Week • February 20-27, 2021

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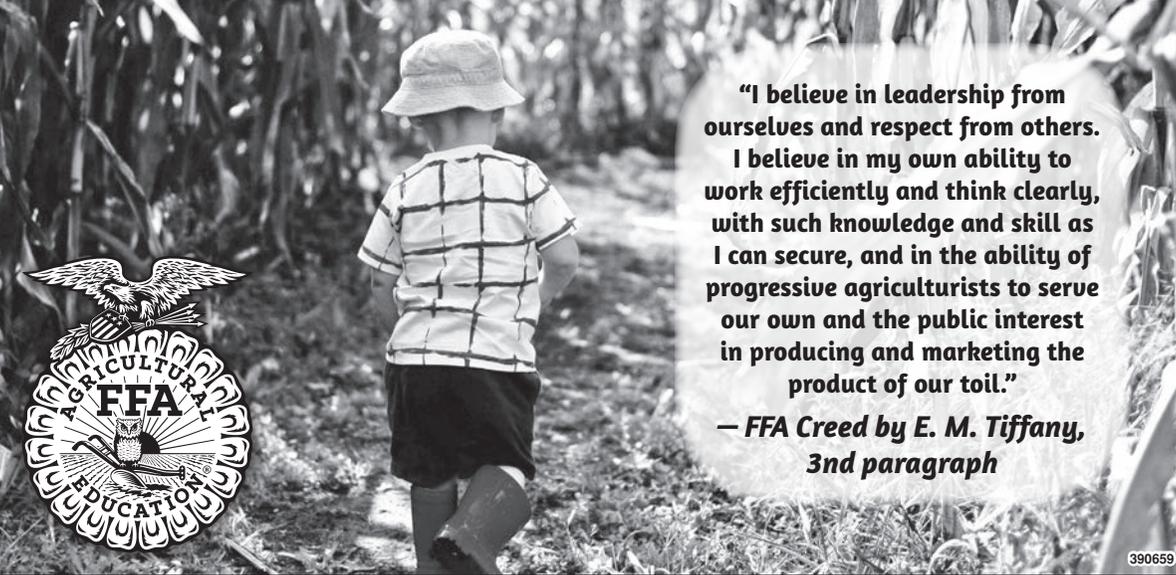
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College news

Local students among dean's list honorees

Two area students are among those named to the fall semester dean's list at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Payden Lingle of Winslow and Marissa Buss of Lena were among those who achieved a minimum 3.5 GPA while carrying at least 14 credit hours during the semester.

Dean's list includes Lena student

Lillian Schierloh of Lena has been named to the fall dean's list at the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio.

To earn this achievement, a student must attain a GPA of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.

• Orangeville

(Continued from front page)

Aquin would climb back, however. The Broncos held a 28-17 lead at the halftime break, but Aquin came out firing in the third quarter to tie the game at 37.

The fourth quarter was set to be an exciting race to the finish, and it was just that. The teams went back and forth as they seemingly scored on every possession. Once again, the buzzer rang, and the score remained tied at 52-52 after four quarters of play. Fahs had mentioned that one of the team's strengths was their experience, and perhaps they had even more of an advantage in that area thanks to their overtime game against Dakota earlier in the year.

• Girls

(Continued from front page)

they dominated from start to finish. The Panthers took control from the opening tip and held the momentum until the very end, winning 43-25.

Their second game of the season featured a tough non-conference opponent in East Dubuque. The Warriors have struggled to find their way into the win column this season, thanks in part to the Le-Win Panthers handing them their third loss on Feb. 16. The Warriors actually held the lead following the first quarter by a score of 10-8, but it would be all Le-Win for the final three quarters as the Panthers went on to win 44-36.

Unfortunately, the Panthers then found themselves in a tight spot in the schedule where they faced five consecutive days with games scheduled. Following the Feb. 16 victory over East Dubuque, Le-Win had back-to-back days with games against Dakota, and then wrapped up the business week with a conference matchup against Orangeville on Feb. 19. In a season where the team had little time to work on conditioning and getting into game shape, a

Winslow student earns dean's list honor

Jaden Julius of Winslow has been named to the fall semester dean's list at Augustana College in Rock Island.

Julius, an undecided major, qualified for the academic honor by earning a minimum 3.5 GPA during the semester.

Local students earn academic honor

Several area students were named to the fall semester dean's list at the University of Dubuque: Ty Chrisman and Zoe Johnson of Lena, Hope Enck of McConnell and Jenna Bidlingmaier of Winslow.

Students must earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher to be included on the list.

The Broncos knew they could get their first win of the season this time around if they just continued to score on offense and used their exceptional defense to force a couple of key stops.

They were able to do just that as they outscored Aquin 10-5 in the overtime period by playing to their strengths and earning their first win of the season by a score of 62-57.

The Broncos had three scorers reach double digits in what was their best offensive showing of the season. Baker was impressive, leading the team with 21 points, making seven of 12 free throws, and shooting 50 percent from behind the three-point

line. Carson Rote was the team's next leading scorer with 11 points thanks to a pair of three-pointers, and Nate Anderson was right behind him with 10 points of his own. Together, the trio provided a majority of Orangeville's offense as they combined for 42 points on the evening.

The boys netted another victory Feb. 20, with a 58-41 home win over Lena. They were to play Lena again, this time at Lena on Feb. 22 (after this paper's press time).

The Broncos then travel to Durand on Feb. 24 for another conference showdown. They will then turn around to host Durand in their second meeting of the week on Feb. 26.

stretch like this can take a toll on the student-athlete's mind and body.

The Dakota Indians had the upper hand on the Panthers last week. Their first matchup came was close, but the Indians went on to win 42-37. Le-Win was unable to get their revenge when they traveled to Dakota and lost by a score of 47-40 the next day.

This Panthers team leaned on their strength and experience to make sure that losing streak did not go on any longer, however. On Feb. 19, the Panthers traveled to Orangeville to face off with the Lady Broncos, who appear to be much improved from years past.

The Panthers took control from the start, jumping out to an impressive 15-5 lead to end the first quarter. The Broncos would fight their way back in the second quarter, however, outscoring Le-Win 15-9. The teams went into the halftime break with the Panthers leading 24-20 as things appeared to be poised for an exciting finish.

The Broncos caught Le-Win by surprise in the third quarter, dominating the period and outscoring

the Panthers 13-3. The big quarter gave Orangeville their first lead of the night as they went into the fourth quarter with a 33-27 lead over the Panthers.

Just when all of the momentum appeared to be in Orangeville's hands, something woke the Le-Win offense up as they erupted in the fourth quarter. The Panthers racked up a whopping 24 points in the fourth, after being held to just three in the previous quarter. The offensive run was nearly impossible for Orangeville to keep up with as the Panthers worked their way toward a 51-41 victory to earn their third win of the season. Le-win used their strength and experience over the younger Broncos team to take control of the game when they needed it most.

Following their victory over the Broncos, the Panthers fell against a tough Dixon team on Feb. 20.

The girls were scheduled to play at River Ridge on Feb. 22 and at home versus Orangeville on Feb. 23 (after this paper's press time) before traveling to Stockton to face the Black-hawks on Feb. 26.

Pearl City boys fall to Pecatonica

By Trent Wingert
CONTRIBUTOR

The Pecatonica Indians traveled to Pearl City for a Feb. 18 game against the Wolves.

The Pecatonica boys came off the bus running on all cylinders, getting off to an early 10-2 lead.

Pearl City head coach Kevin Koning called a time out at the 3:55 mark. Dylan Hoyer hit a big three-pointer at 3:12 to go in the first quarter, which cut Pecatonica's lead to 13-5. The Wolves would get no closer.

The highlight for the Wolves happened when Ben Bremmer hit an old-fashioned three-point play at the 4:05 mark.

Pecatonica juniors Bo Seaton and Trent Hetland, along with senior Tre'von Stifter, exploded out to a 35-15 lead at halftime. Seaton scored 14 first-half points.

Pearl City was plagued by 15

turnovers in the first half. The Wolves shot a combined 2-16 from the field in the first half.

Pecatonica's Hunter Hoffman, listed at 5 feet tall in the program, played like he was 6'3", with a line of nine points, four rebounds, two steals and two assists.

The third quarter was much of the same with Pecatonica utilizing a "run and jump" press. The quarter ended with Pecatonica holding a 50-20 lead.

Jase Sheffey led the Wolves with five rebounds. The scoring was tied with Nathan Brinkmeier and Ben Bremmer each scoring five points for the game. The Pearl City boys shot 12-15 for the game from the free-throw line.

The final score was Pecatonica 65, Pearl City 22.

The Pearl City freshmen-sophomore team also fell to Pecatonica, 61-47.

Pearl City foundation offers scholarships

The application period is open now for \$15,000 in scholarships available this year through the Pearl City Education Foundation. The scholarships are available to full-time, first-year students, according to a news release.

The required PCEF multiuse scholarship application is available online from the guidance counselor's website or as a hard copy from the high school guidance office. Com-

pleted applications are due by April 1, with no late submissions accepted. Students are advised to allow additional days for the school to complete the administrative signature portion.

In 2020, eight Pearl City graduates received a total of \$10,750 in scholarships to attend a two- or four-year college or vocational school, thanks to the donations of individuals, organizations and businesses, the release said.



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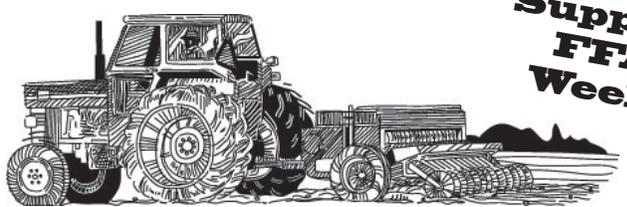
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Budget

(Continued from front page)

Unlike others that were delivered from the House chamber in the Capitol, this year's message was delivered remotely through a pre-recorded video due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The address was recorded at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, which now serves as a COVID-19 vaccination site.

In his speech, Pritzker had harsh rhetoric for "far right" Republicans at all levels of government, describing them as "carnival barkers," for lobbying against federal relief to states and for defying health guidelines. He also once again made note of the two-year budget impasse presided over by Republican former Gov. Bruce Rauner, calling it a "self-inflicted" period of suffering which saw the state's backlog of unpaid bills balloon to over \$16 billion.

He said in the past 20 years, as pension payments have become an increasing burden on state finances, Illinois' number of government employees has shrunk by 30 percent, the Illinois State Police force has shrunk by 40 percent and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency work force shrunk by 60 percent, he said.

"If there is anything the last year should have taught us, it is that we need a reliably well-funded government," he said. "Many on the far right have made their name in politics by touting cuts to unemployment programs and health insurance coverage. They called anyone who sought unemployment benefits 'takers.' They demonize state employees. And they fought unrelentingly to eliminate any state or federal funds designed to make health care more accessible, equitable and fair."

The budget proposed for fiscal year 2022 relies on more than \$900 million in corporate tax changes that will require action from the General Assembly. Those include a reversal of previous General Assembly action to repeal the corporate franchise tax, a cap on net operating losses for the fiscal year that would allow for \$314 million in savings and a cap on a retailer's discount to \$1,000 per month, and other changes.

But Republicans and business groups lambasted the governor's plan as a tax increase on businesses and a betrayal of a bipartisan compromise budget which members of

both parties celebrated in Pritzker's first year.

Republican House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, of Western Springs, accused the governor of seeking "payback" in his effort to repeal some corporate tax incentives passed by lawmakers in 2019, alleging that it was in response to the November failure of the graduated income tax.

Senate Minority Leader Dan McConchie, R-Hawthorn Woods, called the budget an attempt to "move money around" and raise corporate taxes.

While the governor characterized his corporate tax changes of closing "corporate loopholes," Republicans characterized it as an elimination of important incentives aimed at keeping job creators in the state.

Illinois Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Todd Maisch characterized the tax changes as "a massive tax increase."

"We understand that the state has fiscal problems to address, however, the governor's plan will have a long-term negative impact on job creation and tax revenues for the state as it produces an unfair increase on taxpayers after they

resoundingly defeated the graduated income tax," Maisch said in an email statement. "This not only will expand what will get taxed, but will also reduce key tax credits for vital sectors of the economy."

Much of Pritzker's speech was dedicated to demonstrating the toll of the pandemic both on society and state finances.

"I had bolder plans for our state budget than what I am going to present to you today. It would be a lie to suggest otherwise," Pritzker said. "But as all our families have had to make hard choices over the last year, so too does state government."

Senior budget officials, in a briefing before the address was streamed, noted the governor will still seek to decouple the state tax code from changes allowed in the federal Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security, or CARES, Act. That change would keep revenues flat from a year ago by providing that the CARES Act cuts passed last year would not automatically reduce Illinois state tax burdens for businesses.

The measure failed in the lame duck session as Republicans blasted

it as a more than \$500 million tax increase on businesses, but Democrats at the time said it was a way to prevent revenue loss by maintaining the status quo.

Total revenues for the year represent a 4.1 percent decrease from a year ago, due in large part to \$2 billion in borrowing from the federal Municipal Liquidity Facility program, \$690 million of which is due in fiscal year 2022 but will be repaid in fiscal year 2021, according to budget officials. Another \$1.2 billion in MLF borrowing from June 2020 is also due to be repaid in the current fiscal year.

K-12 education funding from the state will remain flat from a year ago, the second straight year the state would forgo that added \$350 million called for in state law each year as part of an evidence-based funding formula.

The budget proposal also eliminates a 48-month deadline for repaying interfund borrowing, which alleviates \$276 million of pressure in the current fiscal year by allowing the state to repay fund borrowing on an extended deadline.

The budget calls for a full pension payment and increases funding for the Department of Children and Family Services by 7.9 percent. Pritzker also asked lawmakers to pass a standalone bill increasing spending for the Illinois Department of Employment Security by \$60 million in federal funds for the current fiscal year and called for an added \$73 million for the current fiscal year in federal funds.

Higher education would see funding levels maintained and Monetary Award Program grants for college students would increase by \$28 million, per the governor's request.

Pritzker's budget proposal also calls for an 8 percent reduction, or \$638 million, in Medicaid expenses. That's because the federal government has increased its share of Medicaid funding by 6.2 percentage points through the end of 2021 as part of its pandemic response plan.

Local governments also would see a cut in financial assistance they get from the state. The Local Government Distributive Fund, or LGDF, which gives local governments a share of the income tax revenue the state collects, would only be funded at 90 percent, but officials in the governor's office said they expect that cut to be offset by gains they municipalities would realize through the closing of corporate tax loopholes.

Budget officials also claimed the budget shortfall for the current fiscal year has been addressed through the federal borrowing, \$700 million in operational cuts and revenues performing better than projections. The state is now projecting a surplus of \$77 million for the current fiscal year, along with the ability to repay some of the Municipal Liquidity Facility borrowing from the previous fiscal year.

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FROM LENA'S KITCHEN



The not so skinny cook

Maybe by the time you read this column, we will be above zero. It certainly has been a wicked couple of weeks. We have had the Super Bowl and Valentine's Day since I last had a column. We are ending February and beginning March. This week's recipes still have some belly-warming dishes as well as some sweets. Several of them are recipes for two

people because there are some of us out there who don't have a lot of mouths to feed, and we don't want to be eating the same thing for five days in a row.

Broccoli Cheddar Soup

Enjoy this cheese and veggie soup without having to make a big pot. It makes two servings; if you wanted it for four people, double the recipe.

- 1/4 C. chopped onion
 - 1/4 C. butter, cubed
 - 1/4 C. flour
 - 1/4 t. salt
 - 1/4 t. pepper
 - 1 1/2 C. 2% milk
 - 3/4 C. chicken broth
 - 1 C. cooked, chopped fresh or frozen broccoli
 - 1/2 C. shredded cheddar cheese
- In a small saucepan, sauté onion in butter until tender. Stir in flour,

salt and pepper until blended; gradually add chicken broth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened, about two minutes. Add broccoli. Cook and stir until heated through. Remove from the heat; stir in cheese until melted.

Toasted Clubs with Dill Mayo

This bistro sandwich has roast beef and ham with several cheeses. Bibb lettuce is also known as butter or Boston lettuce. It works great in sandwiches and wraps. It is also great to buy and eat as a salad green because there is little waste. It is a great sandwich to serve with the broccoli soup. Again, the recipe is for two sandwiches.

- 2 T. mayonnaise
- 1/4 t. dill weed
- 3/4 t. lemon juice, divided

- 1/8 t. pepper
- 4 slices whole wheat bread, toasted
- 4 thin slices deli roast beef
- 4 thin slices deli ham
- 2 slices provolone cheese
- 2 Bibb lettuce leaves
- 2 slices tomato
- 2 strips of bacon cooked and crumbled
- 4 slices of avocado

In a small bowl, combine the mayo, dill, 1/4 t. lemon juice and pepper; spread over toast. Layer two slices with beef, ham, cheese, lettuce, tomato and bacon. Drizzle avocado with remaining lemon juice; place over tomato. Top with remaining piece of toast. Cut into triangles

Creamed Spinach

Baby spinach comes in many package sizes. This recipe works

well with anywhere from 15 oz. to 18 oz. of baby spinach. The recipe calls for the serving dish to be preheated. This step will keep the spinach warm throughout the meal. Enjoy this elegant and tasty vegetable.

- 2 T. unsalted butter, softened, plus 2 T. unsalted butter, divided
- 1 T. flour
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 lb. baby spinach
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 C. whipping cream
- 1 C. Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 t. pepper
- Pinch ground nutmeg

Preheat oven to 200; place shallow serving bowl in warm oven to warm the bowl. Using a fork, mash 2 T. softened butter and flour together in bowl to form a smooth paste; set

See KITCHEN, Page 14

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•Kitchen (Continued from page 13)

aside. Melt remaining 2 T. of butter in Dutch oven over medium heat. Add shallot and garlic and cook until shallot is translucent, one to two minutes. Add spinach and salt and turn with tongs to coat with butter, shallot and garlic. Cook until just wilted, about four minutes.

Add cream to spinach mixture and bring to simmer. Stir in flour mixture until incorporated. Cook until cream thickens and clings to spinach, about three minutes. Off heat, stir in Parmesan, pepper and nutmeg. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to warm shallow dish and serve.

Chicken Françoise

If you are looking for an easy dinner recipe, this chicken dish is easy and delicious. You can get chicken breasts that have already been cut into quarters or the chicken strips. Serve this with rice or buttered noodles, and you will have a great dish in no time.

- ¾ C. flour plus 2 T. divided
- ½ t. salt
- ¼ t. pepper
- ½ t. paprika
- 2 eggs
- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, quartered and pounded to ½ inch thickness
- ½ C. oil
- 1/3 C. butter
- 1 C. sliced mushrooms
- ½ t. dried thyme
- 1½ C. chicken broth
- ¼ C. lemon juice
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced

4 t. dried parsley
Stir together ¾ C. flour, salt, ¼ t. pepper and paprika in a shallow dish. Lightly beat the eggs in another shallow dish. Dip chicken in flour to coat, shaking off excess. Dip in egg to coat and then dip again in flour.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Working in batches, cook chicken about 2½ minutes per side, until golden brown and an instant read meat thermometer inserted in center registers 165. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate.

Drain oil and carefully wipe skillet with paper towels (pan may be hot). Melt butter with mushrooms over medium heat. Add thyme and remaining 2 T. flour; cook, stirring, two minutes. Add broth, lemon juice and lemon slices; cook, stirring until thickened and bubbly, two to three minutes. Return chicken to skillet and heat through. Sprinkle with additional pepper and parsley.

Mixed Berry Cobbler

We have many berries available in stores even in winter. This tasty cobbler can use fresh berries or a frozen mixed berry combination. It is a fairly quick dessert that is great for company.

- 1 C. flour
- 4 oz. cream cheese, cubed
- ½ C. butter, divided
- 5 C. mixed berries (blueberries, blackberries, raspberries)
- ½ C. sugar
- ¼ C. Minute Tapioca
- ½ t. cinnamon

1½ C. thawed whipped topping
Place the flour in a large bowl and cut in the cream cheese and 6 tablespoons of butter with a pastry blender until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Shape into a ball; wrap tightly. Refrigerate one hour.

Toss berries with sugar, tapioca and cinnamon. Let stand at room temperature until ready to use.

Preheat the oven to 400. Spoon the berry mixture into a 1½ -quart round casserole sprayed with cooking spray; dot with remaining butter. Place pastry on a lightly floured surface; roll into a round 1 inch larger than the top of the casserole dish. Place over the fruit; flute the edge, sealing the pastry to edge of dish. Cut several slits in pastry to permit steam to escape. Bake 40 minutes or until the crust is golden brown. Cool slightly before serving; top with whipped topping.

Ultranutty Pecan Bars

Unlike a lot of pecan bars that are dominated by a gooey mixture, these are packed with nuts that are lightly bound together by an easy topping that is not too sweet. The crust is easy

and doesn't require partially baking before putting the topping on. Just a baking note: You should always put bar cookies in metal pans. Glass dishes retain heat longer, which can lead to over baking. To toast the nuts, spread in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet and toast in a preheated 350 oven until fragrant and slightly darkened, eight to 12 minutes; shake the sheet halfway through toasting to prevent burning. The recipe calls for optional flake sea salt. It is very expensive for just a small jar. I saw how it was harvested and prepared to sell. It takes many hours for just that little jar. If you have it, be sure to use it because it is way too expensive to waste by not using it. It really does give chocolate and nuts a great flavor boost.

Crust

- 1¾ C. flour
- 6 T. sugar
- ½ t. salt
- 8 T. unsalted butter, melted

Topping

- ¾ C. packed brown sugar
- ½ C. light corn syrup
- 7 T. unsalted butter, melted and hot
- 1 t. vanilla
- ½ t. salt

4 C. pecans, toasted
½ t. flaked sea salt (optional)
Crust: Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 350. Make foil sling for a 9-by-13 pan by folding two long sheets of foil, first sheet should be 13 inches wide and second sheet should be 9 inches wide. Lay sheets of foil in pan perpendicular to each other, with extra foil hanging over edges of pan. Push foil into corners and up sides of pan, smoothing foil flush to pan. Lightly spray foil with cooking spray.

Whisk flour, sugar and salt together in medium bowl. Add melted butter and stir with wooden spoon until dough begins to form. Using your hands, continue to combine until no dry flour remains and small portion of dough holds together when squeezed in palm of your hand. Evenly scatter tablespoon size pieces of dough over surface of pan. Using your fingertips and palms of your hand, press and smooth dough into even thickness in bottom of pan.

For the topping: Whisk sugar, corn syrup, melted butter, vanilla and salt in medium bowl until smooth (mixture will look separated at first but will become homogeneous), about 20 seconds. Fold pecans into sugar mixture until evenly coated. Pour topping over crust. Using spatula, spread topping over crust, pushing to edges and corners so there will be no bare patches. Bake until topping is evenly distributed and rapidly bubbling across entire surface, 23 to 25 minutes.

Transfer pan to wire rack and lightly sprinkle with flake sea salt. Let bars cool completely in pan on rack about 1½ hours. Using foil overhang, lift bars out of pan and transfer to a cutting board. Cut into 24 bars. Bars can be stored at room temperature in a tightly closed container for five days.

Final thoughts

One thing about not being able to drive during this cold weather is that I didn't really miss much. My house had all the blinds and drapes shut to keep out the cold. I made things in the oven to warm up the kitchen. Several of my friends called, and we all agreed that the only thing that we could do was eat good things and wrap up in blankets. I don't even want to think about how much weight I've added due to COVID and cold weather. I did get signed up for the first COVID vaccine shot the first week in May. I hope they have the vaccine and will not be calling to cancel.

I still have some trouble seeing, so this column has been an adventure. I apologize for any errors I have made; hopefully my eyes will continue to get better. Stay warm and stay safe.

If you have found any winter soup and sandwich recipes you think we would like or have any favorite Irish recipes, contact us in person, by mail at From Lena's Kitchens, Shopper's Guide, 240 W. Main St., Lena, IL 61048 or email us at scoopshopper@rvpublishing.com.

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 15TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT STEPHENSON COUNTY - 15 North Galena Avenue, FREEPORT, ILLINOIS ESTATE OF Zacharias Thottuvelil, DECEASED.

21 P 9

Notice is given to creditors of the death of the above named decedent. Letters of office were issued to Minu Vyas, 1729 Woodside Court, Freeport, Illinois 61032, as Independent Administrator, whose attorney of record is Jessica Duhig, Handler Thayer, LLP, 191 North Wacker Drive, Suite 2300, Chicago, Illinois 60606.

The estate will be administered without court supervision, unless under section 5/28-4 of the Probate Act III. Compiled (Stat. 1992, Ch. 755, par. 5/28-4) any interested person terminates independent administration at any time by mailing or delivering a petition to terminate to the clerk.

Claims against the estate may be filed with the clerk or with the representative, or both, on or before August 10, 2021, or, if mailing or delivery of a notice

from the representative is required by section 5/18-3 of the Probate Act, 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 10 days after it has been filed.

E-filing is now mandatory for documents in civil cases with limited exemptions. To e-file, you must first create an account with an e-filing service provider. Visit <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>.

Jessica Duhig
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Feb. 10, 17 & 24, 2021)

389844

Nature foundation puts out call for student essays

The Eagle Nature Foundation in Apple River is sponsoring a bald eagle essay contest as part of its 60th Anniversary Celebration, which will be in September.

The contest will consist of two divisions — a senior high school division and a junior high school division. The winners in each division will receive \$100 for first place, \$50 for second place, \$25 for third place and \$10 for fourth place. The school with the first-place winner in each division will receive a trophy and a check for \$50.

The contest is open to all students.

The essays must be 500 words or less and titled "What the Bald Eagle Means to Me." The essays must be postmarked before Aug. 20. Each school may only send in four entries, so each school will be responsible for prejudging their essays.

For the final judging, the student writers must read their essays at 11 a.m. Sept. 11 during the 60th anniversary celebration. An independent panel of judges will deliberate and choose the placements of the entries in each division.

"Eagle Nature Foundation is making this announcement now, so teachers can get their students' essays written this spring before summer vacation," according to a news release from the foundation.

Rules and entry forms can be received by writing Eagle Nature Foundation, 300 E. Hickory St., Apple River, IL 61001 or calling 815-594-2306.

For more information, contact Terrence N. Ingram, foundation executive director, at 815-594-2306.

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What Illinois can learn from the Texas energy crisis

By Grace Barbic
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

When parts of Texas' independent power grid went offline last week due to unusually extreme cold weather in the south, the amount of expected energy production lost was equivalent to the amount of electricity used to keep the lights on in the entire state of Illinois.

During the winter weather months, Illinois uses about 20 gigawatts to produce the energy needed at peak times of the day, Andrew Barbeau, president of Midwest-based consulting firm the Accelerate Group and spokesperson for the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition said in an interview.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, or ERCOT, manages the flow of electric power for the vast majority of Texas. According to the Dallas Morning News, by Feb. 17, ERCOT reported 45 gigawatts total were offline, with 28 gigawatts from coal, gas and nuclear plants and 18 gigawatts from renewable sources such as wind and solar.

In a Feb. 15 interview with

Bloomberg News, Dan Woodfin, a senior director for ERCOT, said wind shutdowns accounted for 3.6 to 4.5 gigawatts, or less than 13 percent, of the 30-35 gigawatts of total outages. Only 25 percent of the state's energy capacity is wind energy, while more than half is natural gas.

The extreme colds caused the energy infrastructure for a variety of sources to freeze.

Rep. Ann Williams, D-Chicago, chief sponsor of the Clean Energy Jobs Act, or CEJA, which aims to overhaul the state's energy landscape, said claims that renewable energy sources are not reliable have been discredited. The renewable energy sources in Texas were not equipped for extreme cold, but neither were the thermal sources.

"The issue isn't with wind turbines, it's with the state of Texas, and its failure to plan and make investments in the event of an extreme weather emergency," Williams said.

Williams said that energy efficiency should be at the foundation of the conversation as Illinois prepares

its grid to face increasingly extreme weather situations as a result of climate change.

But the way energy operates in Texas is also vastly different from Illinois. ERCOT is not federally regulated because its energy does not travel in or out of the state.

In Illinois, the energy grid is part of a multistate transmission entity. Northern Illinois is part of PJM Interconnection, a regional transmission organization, and the rest of the state is part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, or MISO.

Those organizations procure energy and capacity, which means that the power generators are paid in advance to ensure that the energy capacity will be available when it's needed at peak usage times for years in advance.

In the event of a crisis, Illinois can rely on other states for power, while Texas is on its own.

Nuclear power is also a much larger contributor to Illinois' grid than it is to the one in Texas. The state's generators are also largely more equipped for the cold.

Reactions differ to governor's proposed corporate tax changes

By Sarah Mansur
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Gov. JB Pritzker's proposed \$41.6 billion spending plan for the coming fiscal year relies, in part, on ending nine tax incentives for businesses in an effort to preserve an estimated \$932 million in state revenues.

However, Pritzker's proposal to end what he called "unaffordable corporate loopholes" would require action by the Illinois General Assembly.

"This will be one of the most challenging budgets this government has ever had to craft, but I know there are willing partners in the General Assembly," Pritzker said during his prerecorded budget address Feb. 17, adding that General Assembly members incorporated their ideas, "like cutting corporate loopholes that force the middle class to pay more."

Republican lawmakers decried the proposal as a "tax increase," and business interest groups criticized the plan as unfairly targeting retailers.

"At a time when businesses across the state are grasping at straws to stay afloat, after being shuttered due to executive orders, Gov. Pritzker is now proposing a tax increase on all of them, saying they are just loopholes," said Republican House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, from Western Springs.

Two of the tax deductions eliminated in Pritzker's plan were passed under the federal Tax Cut and Jobs Act in 2017, including the bonus depreciation deduction for certain property, according to senior budget officials who gave a background briefing before the address.

The governor's budget plan calls for rolling back this bonus depreciation that would have allowed business owners of certain depreciable properties to claim up to 100 percent of the depreciation as a tax deduction.

This rollback would preserve \$214 million of the total \$932 million proposed by Pritzker's tax deduction closures.

The second so-called "corporate loophole" created under the TCJA that Pritzker proposed cutting is a deduction for dividends, or shareholder profits, by multinational corporations with foreign subsidiaries.

Pritzker's budget officials said this change under TCJA allows large multinational corporations with foreign subsidiaries to deduct the dividends that their foreign subsidiary pays to a parent company at a lower tax rate than dividends paid to a domestic subsidiary.

Pritzker's proposed budget would end the lower tax rates for the foreign source dividends, and make them equivalent to the rates for domestic source dividends, preserving \$107 million in revenue.

Durkin also condemned Pritzker for including the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program — a scholarship program for low-income students who attend private or parochial schools — in his list of proposed cuts to tax credits.

"(Pritzker) is now calling a program that provides scholarships to 3,800 low-income students in Illinois and families that are struggling to get by, with an average of \$35,000 of household income, to help them get an education, to help them find a school if they want their child to succeed. Basically, what the governor is doing with his budget address today is shutting down that program," Durkin said in a news conference after Pritzker's address.

Pritzker's plan would decrease the tax credit, from 75 percent to 40 percent, those individuals and businesses receive for donating to the Invest in Kids program.

Pritzker's plan would also cap deductions that businesses can claim as net operating losses at \$100,000 per year for the next three years, and it would place a \$1,000 per-month cap on the state's retailer's discount, which allows retail businesses to be reimbursed monthly for 1.75 percent of the sales tax they collect.

The net operating loss cap would preserve about \$314 million, while capping the retailer's discount would preserve \$73 million.

Rob Karr, president and CEO of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, also slammed Pritzker's proposal as damaging to the state's small retail businesses.

"While the governor claims he is focused on rebuilding the state's economy, it is counterintuitive that his first step is to raise costs on businesses by eliminating the retail discount, which only partially reimburses store owners for administering and collecting sales tax on behalf of the state," Karr said in a news release.

But Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza, in an interview, said the elimination of tax credits and tax deductions for businesses was one option among a number of bad options for balancing the budget.

"There's no such thing as a painless cut. Republicans are going to have to make a choice as to whether they want to continue tax credits, or to inflict devastating damage on communities of the vulnerable people in Illinois who are already just hanging on by a thread. So, you know, neither option is a good one," she said.

Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, said in a news conference after the address that an examination of some the state's tax incentive programs is overdue, adding it's worthwhile for the state to "see what works and get rid of what doesn't."

"Our first priority with any tax incentive needs to be jobs for hardworking Illinoisans. So I think it's a fair question to ask, 'What are the hard working taxpayers of Illinois getting in return for these corporate tax breaks?'" Harmon said.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit, nonpartisan news service covering state government.

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