

FREE

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LOCAL NEWS, OPINION & HISTORY
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Friday • February 7, 2020
Vol. 24, Issue 42 • No. 1238



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Beloit International Film Festival Celebrates Fifteen Years

By Charles Herbst

When was the last time you and your spouse went out on a date? Yeah, a date. Dinner and a movie. Maybe a drink or two afterward. The Beloit International Film Festival, popularly known as BIFF, is the perfect occasion to shake off the late-winter blahs and have an incredibly good time watching first-rate, indie films.

This year's festival, the 15th annual, runs in Downtown Beloit from February 21 through March 1.

Out of about 800 films submitted to BIFF, only about 100 make the cut. BIFF has become one of the more respected festivals on the circuit. *The New York Times* called it "an alternative to Sundance." It's an "alternative" that is a half-hour away from home, has free parking, and an affordable price of only \$10 per screening. Beloit is filled with restaurants ranging from fast food to several upscale, fine-dining establishments. BIFF After Hours continues the party at local bars, complete with two special beers commissioned just for the festival. Most of the film venues offer food service with a few offering full liquor service. It is perfectly acceptable to carry a drink, alcoholic or otherwise, into the screening room.

The best way to experience BIFF is to first become familiar with its website, www.beloitfilmfest.org. There you will find a full list of the films on offer, complete with screening times. There is detailed information about the films available and you can book your tickets in advance. This avoids disappointment if the screening sells out. Of course, you can also take your chances and just show up.

Film reviews begin on page two

BIFF has a number of traditions. One is the Silent Film Showcase. This year the film is *Steamboat Bill Jr.* starring Buster Keaton. The Beloit Memorial Jazz Orchestra will provide the musical accompaniment. The screening is at the Beloit Memorial High School Auditorium, 1225 Fourth Street, on Friday, February 28 at 7:30PM. Tickets are \$20.

The BIFF Sing Along film is *The Blues Brothers*. This one will be held at The Castle, 501 Prospect Street, on Saturday, February 22 at 7:30PM. Tickets are \$10.

A Vintage Radio Play, *Sunset Boulevard*, will be performed by Stage One Theatre Company at La Casa Grande, 618 Fourth Street, on Friday, February 21 at 5:30PM. Admission is free.

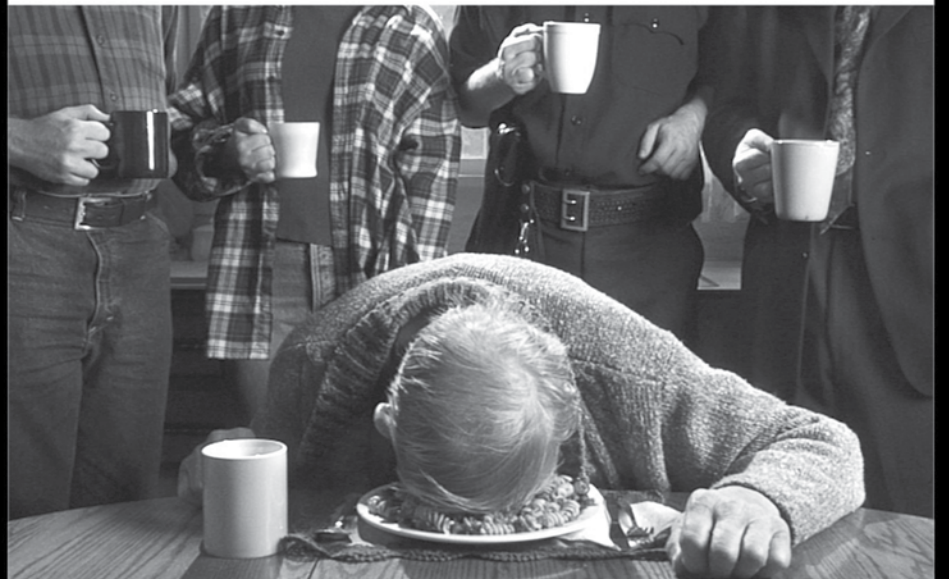
This year's classic film is *The Princess Bride*, at the Eclipse Center (the former Beloit Mall) on Sunday, March 1 at 2:30PM. Admission is free.

This year's Artist in Residence is James Choi, an award-winning filmmaker and professor at DePaul University in Chicago. A free Filmmaker Workshop will be held on Saturday, February 22, at 10AM at Hendricks CareerTek, 625 Third Street. Choi's films have been popular at BIFF, and this year his film, *Sun King*, a comedy about a man who believes he is the reincarnation of Louis XIV, is part of the festival. *Sun King* is being screened on Saturday, February 22 at 5PM at La Casa Grande and Sunday, February 23 at 2:30PM at the Hendricks Arts Center. Reservations are suggested for the Filmmaker Workshop.

This year the 15th anniversary is being celebrated with a special kick-off party, BIFF FestEve 2020, on Thursday, February 20, from 6 to 9PM at IronTek, 635 Third Street. There will be a live performance by The Black Donnellys, featured in the film, *This Is My Home*, a film about a band performing 60 gigs in 50 states in 35 days. *This Is My Home* is being screened on Saturday, February 22 at 7:30PM at La Casa Grande and Sunday, February 23 at 5PM at Bushel & Peck's. Tickets to FestEve are \$30.

For more information, visit the website (beloitfilmfest.org) or contact the BIFF Box Office located this year at 635 Third Street, ph. (608) 466 9693.

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Two Norwegian Mafia families.



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www.lutefiskwars.com

Racketeering Lawsuit Targets Sandoval, Safespeed, Local Officials

Class action suit seeks to void thousands of red light camera citations

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Former state Sen. Martin Sandoval and SafeSpeed LLC, the red light camera company at the center of federal corruption charges against him, are now the targets of a racketeering lawsuit that seeks to void tens of thousands of traffic citations issued through the company's devices.

Lawrence Gress, a Downers Grove resident and lead plaintiff in the case, filed the suit Monday under the federal Racketeering, Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), a law most often used to prosecute organized crime syndicates. But RICO also allows for private civil suits for actions that are part of a criminal enterprise.

The lawsuit alleges SafeSpeed, its officers and employees, paid bribes to Sandoval and several other local government officials to gain approval for placing its red light cameras at various intersections in Chicago-area suburbs.

Sandoval and the other government officials, the lawsuit alleges, were paid as "undisclosed sales agents" or "consultants" based on a percentage of the revenue generated by the cameras.

Sandoval served in the state Senate from 2003 until Jan. 1, when he resigned amid the corruption scandal. Starting in January 2009, he was chairman of the powerful Senate Transportation Committee and was instrumental in securing passage of last year's \$45 billion capital improvements program known as Rebuild Illinois.

He was removed from his chairmanship in October, just weeks after federal agents executed a search warrant on his Statehouse office in Springfield where they seized a number of computers, cellphones and boxes of documents.

Continued on page 5

Film Reviews and Screening Times

The 15th Annual Beloit International Film Festival

By Charles Herbst

With over one-hundred films in the festival, you have to be a little bit arbitrary in the ones you choose. Here are eight that I can recommend. If one of your choices sells out, don't worry. The festival will probably schedule an additional screening. While not compulsory, buying tickets online (www.beloitfilmfest.org) avoids the risk of showing up at a sold-out house.

Jhalki

Rated PG-13, Written by Brahmanand S. Singh. India. Drama. Hindi with English Subtitles.

A seven-year old boy, Babu (Goraksha Sakpal) is sold by his father into child labor. Babu is taken to a nearby city, where he is put to work for fourteen hours a day under squalid conditions.

Babu's nine-year old sister Jhalki (Aarti Jha) is unwilling to let this happen and sets off to find and rescue Babu. Jhalki is a persistent and persuasive little girl, who does not take no for an answer.

In the background of the film, the Indian folktale of the Tireless Sparrow is told. The sparrow has dropped a grain that is precious to her inside a piece of bamboo. She appeals to a woodcutter for help, who pays no attention to her. She escalates her grievance to various parties, all of which are unwilling to help. Eventually she finds an elephant who helps her and forces everyone to cooperate and the distraught sparrow recovers her grain.

Jhalki, like the sparrow, sets out in her childlike way and when rebuked by authorities and others, persists until she ultimately finds and rescues her brother.

While fictional, the story is based upon true events and circumstances. The story holds together very well and surprisingly holds the

viewer's interest. It is, of course, not had hard to empathize with Jhalki and the abhorrent way her brother is treated. It will make you think about the clothing that you are wearing and its provenance.

The film has been popular at other festivals and won Best Original Screenplay at the Boston International Film Festival.

Tues, Feb 25, 7:30PM, Hendricks Arts Center
Sat, Feb 29, 12PM, Bushel & Peck's

The Grizzlies

Rated R. Directed by Miranda de Pencier. Canada. Drama.

Based on a true story, Russ Shepherd (Ben Schnetzer) gets his first teaching job, a one-year contract teaching high school in Kugluktuk, on the north shore of Nunavut. Kugluktuk has the highest suicide rate of any place in North America and one of the highest rates of teen suicide in the world.

Alcoholism, abuse, and poverty are widespread, and attending high school is not a priority in a place where young people often have to hunt to feed their families. Miranda (Emerald MacDonald) was the only student in Russ' class who turned in a homework assignment.

To motivate his students, Russ attempts to start a lacrosse team. He explains to his students the history of lacrosse and how it is the national game of Canada, rather than hockey. Initially, he has no takers. Miranda correctly identifies who are the ringleaders that Russ must recruit: Adam (Ricky Marty-Pahtaykan) and Zach (Paul Nutarariaq). Finally, Russ offers one of the players \$20 just to try it.

Gradually, the students discover how to play lacrosse, and Russ organizes them into two competitive teams. Playing lacrosse and attending school cause the students to suffer personal sacrifices and Russ gradually learns and accepts the cultural differences between the Arctic and the South of Canada.

Without authority, Russ enters the school into the Canadian National Lacrosse Championships in Toronto. The players come together and form their team: The Grizzlies. Fundraising to pay for the trip sets off a furor in the town about the village's traditional way of life and the community's future.

Ultimately, the Grizzlies do compete in Toronto, and learn that success isn't necessarily about winning at lacrosse, but a sense of community and personal growth. Russ dreams of being employed at and is offered a position at a prestigious, private academy in Halifax, but instead heremained as a teacher in Kugluktuk for seven years.

The film has a largely Nunavut cast and an authentic flavor. The film goes beyond the usual sports story and gives an accurate account of the life and hardships in the Canadian North. It is entertaining to watch and heartwarming.

The film has won several of awards including Best Narrative Feature at the Palm Springs International Film Festival, and Winner for Outstanding Directorial Achievement by the Directors Guild of Canada.

Sun, Feb 23, 12PM, Domenico's
Fri, Feb 28, 5PM, Bushel & Peck's
Sat, Feb 29, 7:30PM, Domenico's

Sex, Drugs & Bicycles

Rated R. Directed by Jonathan Blank. Documentary.

With a Presidential candidate calling himself a Socialist, maybe it's time to take a closer look at a European Social Democracy.

Jonathan Blank takes us on an often humorous review of the Netherlands. Blank is a self-described fan of Monty Python's Flying Circus, and it is evident in his film. He breaks the film down into ten topics, and deals with them.

Although the film is generally positive about the Netherlands, Blank notes the problem of bicycle theft and that his own bike was stolen twice. Bikes are everywhere in the Netherlands and it seems so are bike thieves.

While there is a discussion of the sex trade in Amsterdam and the very tolerant attitude, there were some surprises. Technically drugs are illegal, although tolerated. The law in Illinois is probably more liberal than over there. Physician assisted suicide is accepted. People complain that paternity leave is not as generous as maternity leave.

The Dutch note that they often complain, but surveys show that they are some of the happiest people on the earth, the tallest, and enjoy one of the longest life expectancies.

While taxes are fairly high, people enjoy double pay for their four weeks of vacation each year. There is no fear of homelessness and there is universal health care, provided by an insurance system in which a monthly insurance payment is made. There are many wealthy people in the Netherlands and some of the world's largest corporations are headquartered there.

Good editing and a fine sense of humor make this film not only informative, but enjoyable to watch.

Tues, Feb 25, 5:30PM, Hendricks Arts Center
Sat, Feb 29, 5PM, Bushel & Peck's

Speed of Life

Rated PG-13. Directed by Liz Manashil. Science Fiction.

After the death of David Bowie in 2016, June (Allison Tolman) is arguing with her boyfriend Edward (Ray Santaigo) when he suddenly disappears from their living room into a wormhole.

Fast-forward to 2040, 24 years later, when in a few days, an older June (Ann Dowd) will be celebrating her 60th birthday. Society now locks up those over 60. June is unwilling to "disappear," and makes plans to run away with a neighbor (Jeff Perry). She still grieves for Edward. At this moment, Edward, still a young man, emerges from the wormhole into the living room.

There are invasive monitors everywhere and constant computer-generated announcements reminiscent of today's personal computer assistants. Most people are convinced that society and the world have become worse, either despite or because of technological advancements. Florida has disappeared and Phoenix now has a beach.

An interesting subplot occurs between Laura (Vella Lovell) and her neighbor, who become acquainted when a bird becomes stuck in a hole between their apartments. Although the bird dies, as they discuss their feelings toward life, the two become romantically involved.

Using science fiction and time travel was an interesting way for the filmmaker to make observations about the various stages of life. There are conversations between Laura, whose hair is thinning, and the older June, who offers a more seasoned perspective. The young become old, and this is demonstrated by showing June at different points of her life. At one point, older June meets younger June, and gives her advice.

It's a thought-provoking film, and one that will leave you thinking.

Fri, Feb 28, 7:30PM, Bagels & More
Sat, Feb 29, 7:30PM, Hendricks Arts Center

Decoding the Driftless

Rated PG. Directed by Jonas Stenstrom. Documentary.

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Obituaries

Kirk Douglas, 103, February 5, Beverly Hills, CA



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David Grimm April 1938 - Dec. 2000
Richelle Kingsbury Aug. 1955 - June 2013

THE BOONE COUNTY JOURNAL
419 S. State St • Belvidere, IL 61008
Phone: (815) 544-4430 Fax: 544-4330
www.boonecountyjournal.com
news@boonecountyjournal.com

Each week, the Journal seeks to present a variety of voices.
Letters. Every attempt will be made to print all letters received with the exception of those that are libelous or obscene. Letters should be signed and include an ID or phone number, so that we can contact the author prior to publication to verify authenticity.
Guest columns. Community leaders are encouraged to submit guest columns consistent with our editorial guidelines for possible inclusion in the Journal.
Opinions. The opinions expressed in the Journal are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Boone County Journal management or ownership.

Swedish filmmaker Jonas Stenstrom takes a look at the Driftless Region, the unglaciated area of land stretching from Southeastern Minnesota to Northwestern Illinois.

So often the Midwest is treated as dull, flyover country, and Stenstrom points out that this is a unique area in the world. Stenstrom discusses the mound builders and the contemporary people of the region. He takes us underground and explores some of the vast caves and rivers in the region. The area has few lakes, but is home of the Mississippi waterway, which is one of the world's greatest habitats for migratory and other birds. There are also many species of flora and fauna that are unique to the region or considerably farther north or south of their usual range.

The documentary is beautifully filmed and shows the scenic beauty of the area. Going beyond the superficial, Stenstrom discusses the biology and geology of a complex region in an approachable way. Even those of us who have lived here for many years will probably either learn something new or obtain a fresh perspective on the lands lying just to our west. Stenstrom is a founder of the Untamed Science Movement and has produced a number of nature-oriented documentaries. He tells a story well. It is interesting to hear his global perspective of our local area.

Sat, Feb 22, 5PM, Domenico's
Sun, Feb 23, 2:30PM, Bushel & Peck's

Book Week

Rated R. Directed by Heath Davis. Australia. Comedy.

Nicholas Cutler (Al Dukes) is a middle-aged, frustrated high school English teacher. Author of one successful novel, he receives word that his second novel is about to be published--but with a catch.

His zombies must be changed to vampires. No problem there. But the publisher wants assurances that he has cleaned up his ways. In the past, his antics have gotten in the way of book sales. The publisher says that he is the exception to the saying that "there is no such thing as bad publicity." For the next week he is to cultivate a positive image.

The week turns into a fiasco. Cutler is coach for the basketball team, and his essential star player can't stay out of trouble with the law. An obnoxious, but gifted student, Sarah Steward (Arlie Dodds) wants him to critique her manuscript and won't take no for an answer. His girlfriend, Lee Issen (Susan Prior) informs him that she is pregnant. Finally, his brother desperately needs a kidney, and Cutler is the only possible donor.

Cutler is a man who does not stop at one drink or even two. He rides a bicycle, having lost his license. He is not on good terms with his fellow faculty members. He is assigned a mentee new teacher, who turns out to be the woman he went home with from a bar the night before.

After being fired, and having the offer to publish revoked, Cutler is finally forced to come to grips with life and what is important. But the events of one wild week are entertaining to watch and make for some good laughs.

Mon, Feb 24, 7:30PM, Domenico's
Fri, Feb 28, 7:30PM, Bushel & Peck's

Cerulean Blue

Rated PG-13. Directed by Adrian Ortega. Australia. Drama, Comedy.

Introverted Alex (Jack Michel) drives 850 miles in a dilapidated car from Brisbane to Melbourne, using only back roads. His goal is to see his former girlfriend, Chloe (Danae Vincent) of 10 years ago. Along the way, he reluctantly picks up Lily (Senie Pritii) an extroverted hitchhiker, who ambitiously insists on accompanying him to Melbourne. Lily claims to be an actress, expecting a gig. The reality is that she is running from a broken relationship back in Brisbane.

Gradually the two travelers get to know each other. When Jack finally meets Chloe, she barely remembers him. Lily forces him to reexamine

the relationship realistically. The film contains its share of both funny and heartwarming moments.

Adam Ortega is an Australian filmmaker from Melbourne, and he says that *Cerulean Blue* is autobiographical in nature. Ortega states that making the film helped him overcome the depression and isolation that he felt in his 20s. While unique in presentation, the themes in the film are universal. It raises the question whether we overcome our darkest instincts or simply learn to deal with them.

The film won the El Rey Award at the Barcelona International Film Festival and was well-received at the Melbourne International Film Festival.

Sat, Feb 22, 2:30PM, Bagels and More
Sun, Feb 23, 5PM, Domenico's

The Lutefisk Wars

Rated PG-13. Directed by David E. Hall and Christopher Panneck. Comedy.

Karl Larsen (Stewart Skelton) is a rural frozen food delivery man in North Dakota, who has won many culinary blue ribbons from county fairs and other contests. The story begins when an elderly man presents himself at Larsen's door. He comes in and drops dead, his face falling into a plate of Larsen's hot dish casserole. The elderly man had the lutefisk recipe that is being fought over by two Norwegian Mafia families.

For anyone who doesn't know, lutefisk is a traditional Scandinavian Christmas dish. It is gelatinous in nature and consists of dried and salted whitefish, pickled in lye. Lutefisk translates to "lye fish" in Norwegian.

The film is full of dry, Upper Midwestern humor and is a delight to watch. If you want to watch a film that will make you laugh, this is the one!

This film is an encore in Beloit, rated the best picture at the festival several years ago. It is back by popular demand. It is unusual for the festival to book an encore presentation.

Friday, Feb 28, 7:30PM, La Casa Grande
Sat, Feb 29, 7:30PM, Bushel & Peck's

Film Venues

All of the venues are located in Downtown Beloit.

Bagels and More, 324 State Street
Bushel & Peck's, 320 State Street
Domenico's, 547 East Grand Avenue
Hendricks Arts Center, 409 Pleasant Street

Chicago Auto Show If you go....

The Nation's Largest Auto Show will be held starting this Saturday, February 8 through Monday, February 17 at Chicago's McCormick Place. There will be nearly 1000 cars on display in over 1 million square feet of exhibit space. If you are looking for a car, you couldn't ask for a better display. If you are a car buff, this is heaven.

The Journal will be covering this year's show in our February 14 issue. Meanwhile we have several suggestions for you if you go:

Admission. General admission is \$13. Seniors and children \$8. There are several discount offers floating around, particularly from car dealers.

On Tuesday, February 11, Women are admitted for \$8.

Avoid traffic, tolls and high parking fees at McCormick Place. Parking at McCormick Place is \$25.

One option is to take Metra from Woodstock, Crystal Lake or Elgin. Special Auto Show buses will operate between the Ogilvie Transportation Center/Union Station and McCormick Place. These buses will have either "To Auto Show McCormick Place" or "Metra Stations/Via

Downtown" in their destination signs depending on the direction of travel. This bus charges the regular CTA fare, which is \$2.25 each way, exact change required. Generally, outside of the auto show, there is no direct bus from either Ogilvie or Union Station to McCormick Place.

During the weekday, we suggest you use the Park and Ride at I-90 and Randall Road. Parking is free. Round trip to the Chicago Auto Show will cost you \$5 with your Ventra card. If you don't have a Ventra card, you can pay an exact cash fare of \$2.25 on the express bus and buy a Ventra card at the Blue Line for the rest of your trip. The express bus (which has reclining leather seats and free wifi) will take you to an easy transfer to the Blue Line at Rosemont. At Clark and Lake, take the escalators up to the Green Line. Ride the Green Line to the 22nd Street/McCormick Place Station. McCormick place is a short walk. (It's what we are going to do.)

In the evening or on the weekend, we suggest you drive to the CTA Park and Ride at Cumberland Avenue and the Kennedy Expressway. Parking is \$6 for 12 hours. Take the Blue Line to Clark and Lake, where you'll transfer to the Green Line as described above. Round trip fare to McCormick Place from Cumberland is also \$5. Ventra cards can be purchased or fare added at Rosemont, Cumberland or any CTA Rapid Transit station.

Give it a try. There are plenty of CTA personnel at all of the rapid transit stations, who will happily give you directions if you need them. Or you can always call 312 836-7000, or visit transitchicago.com for help.

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State to Release First \$50 Million of Broadband Expansion Funding

Applications for matching grants now being accepted by Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

The state is accepting applications for the first \$50 million in disbursements of a \$420 million grant program aimed at increasing internet access across the state.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced the release of funding Wednesday at Ridgely Elementary School in Springfield, noting that the rights to "health care and education and economic opportunity" are all "tied to digital connectivity" in the 21st century.

"I want to be clear though," he said, "this isn't about a person's ability to go online and just look at their Facebook page. This is about a small business owner having the tools that she needs to reach new customers. This is about an elderly couple's ability to get access to medical experts anywhere in the nation, even if they live in a rural community. This is about giving children like the ones that are here today the ability to research their homework assignments online."

The program, known as Connect Illinois, is part of the \$45 billion capital infrastructure plan that the General Assembly passed last year.

Applications for the first \$50 million can be submitted through Friday, April 3. Applicants can receive up to \$5 million per project as part of the first round of funding, but they must provide at least 50 percent of the project's funding.

Matt Schmit, head of the office of broadband within the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, said he expects applicants to include internet service providers, rural broadband cooperatives and possibly communities looking to invest in broadband.

"We'll have an inclusive process when it comes to applicants," he said. "The point is that you've got to have a strong track record of demonstrating that you can do this kind of work. And so we're going to be very diligent in making sure that any applicant that the state partners with is up to this work, and that we're making sound investments for the long haul."

He said he also expects to see community and provider partnerships in some circumstances.

"And we want to hear ideas, we want to hear from you," Schmit said. "Because this is not a state-driven approach. This is a partnership between our providers, our communities and folks who are interested in getting a better connectivity future for our communities around the state."

Schmit said the \$420 million accounts for "the nation's largest competitive matching grant program" for broadband expansion. He said \$20 million of that funding will go to maintenance of the Illinois Century Network, which is the high-speed state system that serves educational, research, governmental and health care organizations across the state.

"A year ago, our administration made a daring promise to prioritize not just with our words, but with action to bridge the digital divide that hinders so many rural and urban communities," Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton said at the news conference.

She chairs the governor's Rural Affairs Council, and said she has met with rural and agricultural leaders who relayed that a "primary need" was expanding broadband.

"About 10 percent of the population is underserved when it comes to broadband access, and those communities are overwhelmingly people of color or those living in remote parts of our state," she said.

Pritzker likened the need for broadband in rural communities to a period when rural communities lagged behind on electricity. He also noted several neighborhoods in Chicago lack reliable internet access.

"Almost a century ago, rural communities were shut out of the modern economy because they didn't have electricity," he said. "And so government took action to incentivize and accelerate rural electrification. Within two decades, over 90 percent of our nation's farms had electricity. The rural broadband challenge of today is no different."

Grant information can be found here: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/AboutDCEO/GATA/Pages/2366-1333.aspx>.

Winter Weather

by Don Ellingson

I've heard that the longest winter was when snow came in October and lasted until April. I've read about it, but know nothing about it. What I did experience, though, was the worst snow storm in memorable history. That was February 6, 1936.

I remember it distinctly. My brother and I were attending a one room country school. Quail Trap School. It was at the corner of Rt. 76 and Quail Trap Road. It was early afternoon and snowing. Our father came after us with a team of horses and a bobsled. Rt. 76 was already starting to get snow bound. The snow had already started, but it kept on and on. By the next day we had snow drifts 17 feet tall, as tall as the telephone poles.

Then it started growing colder and colder. With the heavy snow and the extreme cold by the next day the volume of snow covered fences and then the cold froze the snow over the fences to the point that farmers with horses and bobsleds could drive over the fences. As far as was known that was the first time in history that anyone with horses and bobsled had ever driven over a fence.

That wasn't the only unusual thing caused by the heavy snow and cold weather. To say the least the roads were impassable. A lady had died in Northern Boone County. They could not get her out and to an undertaker so she could be ready for a funeral. Every township had a caterpillar with a blade on the front to plow snow. They could not open the roads, especially the Beaver Hill. They needed a snow blower. Illinois had one but it could not get to Boone County.

A group of men that were part of the WPA were assigned to the Beaver Hill to open it with snow shovels. The local newspaper, the Belvidere Daily Republican, published a picture of 3 tiers of men with shovels opening the Beaver Hill. They were shoveling the snow Up. Up. Up three tiers, and they finally got the road open.

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Sandoval

continued from page 1

On Tuesday, Jan. 28, Sandoval pleaded guilty to one count each of federal bribery and tax fraud charges as part of a deal with prosecutors in which he agreed to cooperate with their ongoing investigations.

The RICO lawsuit, however, is separate from the criminal case, but it is based largely on the same set of facts to which Sandoval has already pleaded guilty.

It alleges that beginning sometime in 2016 and continuing through October 2019, SafeSpeed operated a corrupt enterprise, known as an “association-in-fact,” by conspiring with the other defendants to pay bribes or kickbacks to public officials who would steer contracts toward the company for operating red light cameras.

Sandoval is accused of using his position in the Senate to serve as the company’s “protector” by ensuring legislation unfavorable to the company, including bills to ban the use of red light cameras, would never pass and to help override objections from the Illinois Department of Transportation about the placement of certain cameras.

In exchange, the lawsuit alleges, SafeSpeed and its employees arranged to pay \$20,000 a year in donations to Sandoval’s campaigns.

The lawsuit was filed as a proposed class action on behalf of an estimated 100,000 or more individuals who were fined between \$100 and \$200 for each ticket issued by a red light camera that was “corruptly and improperly installed, over repeated objections from IDOT, as a direct and proximate result of bribes paid.”

While the claim of each individual member of the class is relatively small, the lawsuit argues, combined they add up to millions of dollars.

Other defendants named in the suit are SafeSpeed co-founders and employees Nikki Zollar, Chris Lai, Khalid “Cliff” Maani and his son Omar Maani; Oakbrook Terrace Mayor Tony Ragucci; the city of Oakbrook Terrace; Cook County Commissioner and McCook Village President Jeff Tobolski; Tobolski’s chief of staff, Patrick Doherty; former Chicago Deputy Aviation Commissioner Bill Helm; former Village of Justice Police Chief Robert Gedville; Worth Township Supervisor and Democratic committeeman John O’Sullivan; Summit Mayor Sergio Rodriguez; Alsip Mayor John Ryan; former state Rep. Michael Carberry, of Oak Lawn; Summit Police Chief John Kosmowski; and Summit Public Works Chief Bill Mundy.

It is the second RICO case that Gress, the lead plaintiff, has filed that involves Sandoval. Another pending case was originally filed in 2017 after Gress was passed over for a job as community relations representative for the Pace Suburban Bus Company in favor of Sandoval’s son, Martin Sandoval II.

That suit refers to Sandoval as “the kingpin at the center of the wide-ranging and longstanding conspiracy” alleged in the case.

— OP ED —

Our fiscal situation in Illinois is so fraught and fragile that it is difficult to know where to begin to discuss the problem. This newspaper, however, in a recent commentary on property taxes provides an opportunity.

The property tax is the primary source of revenue for most local governments, in Illinois and all around the country. Look at your property tax bill. Although multiple taxing bodies rely on property taxes, it is striking just how much revenue is allocated to funding our schools. With so much revenue devoted to schools multiple questions arise. Let us focus on two. First, to what degree does the quality of our schools affect the entire community? Second, if the quality of education impacts all of us significantly, should we not all be willing to pay--even those of us who do not currently have students in those schools? The second question is a fundamental question of equity.

Let us examine these questions dispassionately, as we do in our classes that analyze public policy. No sentimentality allowed. What are the benefits of a good school system, and who should be willing to pay for them?

First, there are direct economic benefits. A well educated citizenry tends to experience less unemployment. Skilled workers find good jobs, which they tend to keep. Instead of having unemployed fellow citizens drawing unemployment compensation, we would have employed citizens paying taxes. We all pay for bad schools. We all benefit from good schools.

Another direct economic benefit of good schools involves economic development. Most cities have a community economic development department. Many cities also have private sector agencies that perform the same functions. Both perform twin tasks. The first is to attract new firms. The second is to retain those firms.

These tasks become immensely more difficult with inferior schools. The relocation decision is influenced heavily by the quality of local schools. When a firm relocates it relocates families. No employer will condemn its families to poor schools. We all pay for bad schools. We all benefit from good schools.

Remember also that a diversified economy is a high priority for any community. Economists warn against a “one crop” economy. They warn also against a one industry economy. It is vital to attract additional, and different, firms to reduce vulnerability to the vicissitudes of the business cycle. The goal, however elusive, would be to make our communities recession proof. We all pay for bad schools. We all benefit from good schools.

Economists cite yet another, additional benefit that accrues from good schools that attract new businesses. When a firm relocates with a \$1 million payroll, the additional economic activity generated will ultimately be much greater. New firms do not just bring jobs; they create additional new jobs. Economists call this ripple effect a “multiplier”. Regrettably, it works also in reverse when bad schools drive firms away. Imagine a balloon collapsing as the air escapes. We all pay for bad schools. We all benefit from good schools.

In addition to direct economic benefits economists identify indirect social benefits conferred by good schools. A well educated citizenry tends to suffer less from certain crimes, and social problems such as domestic abuse and substance abuse. To some extent, then, higher taxes for schools just might be offset partially by lower taxes for law enforcement and social services. We all pay for bad schools. We benefit from good schools.

Finally, there are indirect cultural benefits provided by good schools. A well educated, prosperous citizenry tends to support cultural and leisure opportunities provided by museums, parks, the arts, and adult education.

Naturally, economists have a fancy technical explanation for this phenomenon. These activities are available to all, including citizens without children in school. We all pay for bad schools. We all benefit from good schools.

The conclusion emerges that all citizens, even those with no students in school, benefit from a good educational system. We all benefit whether or not we participate. Economists term these “external benefits”, benefits that are conferred on people who are external to the activity in question.

So what do we conclude from our brief exercise in public policy analysis? Good schools funded through property taxes benefit literally everyone, regardless of whether they have students in school. Should we not all pay for benefits we all enjoy? This a fundamental question of equity.

Bob Evans
Rockford University

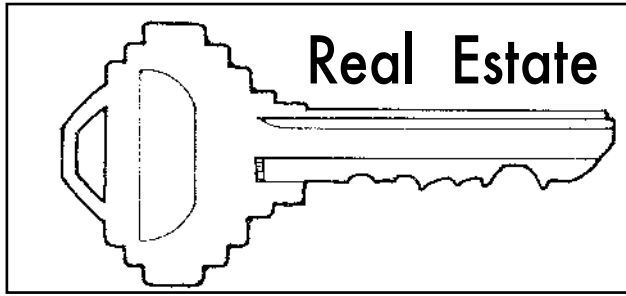


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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Plaintiff, -v- 2019 CH 92 JEANNE D. BURHITE et al Defendant NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on September 24, 2019, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on March 6, 2020, at the NLT Title L.L.C., 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 610 W MENOMONIE ST, BELVIDERE, IL 61008

Property Index No. 05-26-331-007

The real estate is improved with a residence.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100 BURR RIDGE IL, 60527 630-794-5300

E-Mail: pleadings@ilcslegal.com Attorney File No. 14-19-06560 Attorney ARDC No. 00468002 Case Number: 2019 CH 92 TJSC#: 39-6259

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

13143803 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 31; Feb 7, 14, 2020.

IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. Commonly known as 610 W MENOMONIE ST, BELVIDERE, IL 61008

Property Index No. 05-26-331-007

The real estate is improved with a residence.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100 BURR RIDGE IL, 60527 630-794-5300

E-Mail: pleadings@ilcslegal.com Attorney File No. 14-19-06560 Attorney ARDC No. 00468002 Case Number: 2019 CH 92 TJSC#: 39-6259

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

13143803 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 31; Feb 7, 14, 2020.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY - BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS

BMO Harris Bank N.A. f/k/a Harris N.A. PLAINTIFF Vs. 2019CH149

Chicago Title Land Trust Company as Trustee u/t/a dated January 14, 2011 a/k/a Trust No. 8002356422; Barbara Kleckner; Candlewick Lake Association, Inc.; Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants DEFENDANTS

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

NOTICE IS GIVEN TO YOU:

Unknown Owners and Nonrecord Claimants That this case has been commenced in this Court against you and other defendants, praying for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to-wit:

COMMONLY KNOWN AS: 410 Talladega Dr Southwest Poplar Grove, IL 61065 and which said Mortgage was made by: Barbara Kleckner

the Mortgagor(s), to Harris N.A., as Mortgagee, and recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds of Boone County, Illinois, as Document No. 2009R08888; and for other relief; that summons was duly issued out of said Court against you as provided by law and that the said suit is now pending.

NOW, THEREFORE, UNLESS YOU file your answer or otherwise file your appearance in this case in the Office of the Clerk of this Court, Linda J Anderson Clerk of the Circuit Court 601 North Main Street Belvidere, IL 61008

on or before March 2, 2020, A DEFAULT MAY BE ENTERED AGAINST YOU AT ANY TIME AFTER THAT DAY AND A JUDGMENT MAY BE ENTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRAYER OF SAID COMPLAINT.

CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Attorneys for Plaintiff 15W030 North Frontage Road, Suite 100 Burr Ridge, IL 60527 (630) 794-5300 DuPage # 15170 Winnebago # 531 Our File No. 14-19-01366

NOTE: This law firm is a debt collector. 13144059 Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 31; Feb 7, 14, 2020.

LEGAL NOTICES Public Notices

Public Notice

Early Voting for the March 17, 2020 General Primary Election will begin on Thursday, February 6, 2020 and end March 16, 2020. Early Voting for Boone County residents will be conducted at the Boone County Clerk's Office, 1212 Logan Ave, Suite 103, Belvidere, IL 61008. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30AM to 5:00PM, except holidays. The office will also be open on Saturday, March 14, 2020 from 9:00AM to 12:00PM

For more information about Early Voting please contact the Boone County Clerk's Office at 815-544-3103.

Julie A. Stapler Boone County Clerk & Recorder Published in *The Boone County Journal* From Jan 31 to March 14, 2020

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF BOONE - IN PROBATE

In the Matter of the Estate of FELIX B. ROWINSKI, Deceased. No. 2019-P

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION-WILL AND CLAIMS

NOTICE is given of the death of Felix B. Rowinski. Letters of Office were issued on January 7, 2020, to Ricky J. Rowinski, who is the legal representative of the estate. The attorney for the estate is Attorney Charles G. Popp, P.C., 215 South State Street, Belvidere, Illinois.

Claims against the estate may be filed on or before August 15, 2020, that date being at least six (6) months from the date of first publication, or within three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of Notice to creditors, if mailing or delivery is required by 755 ILCS 5/18-3, whichever date is later. Any claim not filed by the requisite date stated above shall be barred.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the office of the Boone County Circuit Clerk--Probate Division at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main Street, Belvidere Illinois 61008, or with the estate legal representative, or both.

Copies of claims filed with the Circuit Clerk's Office--Probate Division, must be mailed or delivered to the estate legal representative and to his/her attorney within ten days after it has been filed.

Charles G. Popp, P.C. Attorney for Estate

215 South State Street Belvidere, IL 61008

815-544-3130

attorneypoppp@aol.com

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Jan 31; Feb 7, 14, 2020.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

That on March 16, 2020, or at a later date, a sale will be held at Decker 24HR Truck and Trailer Repair, 1010 ECS Way, Belvidere, IL 61008, to sell the following vehicle with the intent to enforce a mechanic's lien pursuant to Chapter 770 ILCS 45.1 et seq. and 90/1 et seq., unless such vehicle is redeemed within thirty days of the publication of this notice.

Diana L. Smith

2013 Kenworth VIN 1XKFD49X6DJ320997

\$1,395.00

Storage continues to accrue at \$75.00 per day.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* 2/7,14,21

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BOONE COUNTY ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the County Board Room, 1212 Logan Ave, Belvidere, IL 61008 upon the following petitions:

The applicant, Boone County, 1212 Logan Avenue Belvidere, IL 61008, is requesting an amendment to the Boone County Zoning Ordinance to include recreational cannabis, pursuant to section 2.10.1 of the Boone County Zoning Ordinance. Further notice is hereby given, that the amendment will be made available on the Boone County Website and hard copies available in the Planning Office located at 1212 Logan Ave. Belvidere, IL 61008 Suite 102.

The applicant, Speedy G Towing, 50 W. Higgins Rd. South Barrington, IL 60010 is requesting a Special Use permit to allow a motor vehicle storage/impound yard in the I-2, Heavy Industrial District, at 9557 US Route 20 Garden Prairie, IL 61038 in unincorporated Bonus Township, Boone County Illinois. (PIN: 06-34-200-008) Legally described as: PT W 1/2 NE-BEG NW COR E 49 ACS S 804. 2 W 285 N 763.8 E TO OB (EXPT FOR RD A S IN 96-374)

All persons interested may appear at the hearing and be heard at the stated time and place.

Tony Savino, Chair, Boone County Zoning Board of Appeals.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* on February 7, 2020.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* 2/7/2020

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY

IN THE MATTER OF Daniel Mel Tassin

Case No.20-MR-32

NOTICE OF FILING PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE

Notice is hereby given, that on April 15, 2020, at 10:00 am, I will present a Petition requesting that the Court change his present name of Daniel Mel Tassin, to the name of Daniel Tassin Schaumburg. The hearing will take place at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* 02/07,14,21

TWO-DAY MILITARY AUCTION - LIVE & ONLINE

Day 1 features the Lifetime Collection of Gary Holen including 140+ guns, 150+ helmets, 150 bayonets, swords, a large collection of ordnance, large groupings of collector ammo and hundreds of miscellaneous military items!

Day 2 in honor of the 75th Anniversary of Iwo Jima, this auction features the documented tunnel relic collection of Brad Hartsell, USMC (Ret). Brad's vast collection of tunnel dug artifacts and his firsthand knowledge of the tunnel system has led to lectures, a traveling exhibit, and consultation on movies such as, "The Great Raid" and "The Pacific".

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LEGAL NOTICES Foreclosures

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Plaintiff, -v- 2019 CH 92

JEANNE D. BURHITE et al Defendant

NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on September 24, 2019, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on March 6, 2020, at the NLT Title L.L.C., 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

PART OF LOTS ONE (1) AND TEN (10) OF BLOCK ONE (1) OF KONZELMAN'S SUBDIVISION DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF LOT TEN (10) IN BLOCK ONE (1) IN KONZELMAN'S SUBDIVISION TO BELVIDERE; THENCE EASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY LINE OF LOTS TEN (10) AND ONE (1) IN BLOCK ONE (1) OF KONZELMAN'S SUBDIVISION TO BELVIDERE TO A POINT ON THE NORTHERLY LINE OF SAID LOT ONE (1), SAID POINT BEING 24 FEET WEST OF THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT ONE (1); THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY ON THE WESTERLY LINE OF A TRACT OF LAND DEEDED BY ARTHUR J. KOPPEN AND GLADYS E. KOPPEN, HIS WIFE, TO EARL W. SCHAETZLEIN AND DOROTHY M. SCHAETZLEIN, HUSBAND AND WIFE, WHICH DEED IS DATED JANUARY 12, 1946 AND RECORDED IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, IN BOOK 103 OF DEEDS, AT PAGE 409, A DISTANCE OF 65 FEET TO A POINT, THENCE WESTERLY IN A STRAIGHT LINE TO A POINT ON THE WESTERLY LOT LINE OF SAID LOT TEN (10), SAID POINT BEING 104 FEET SOUTH OF THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT TEN (10); THENCE NORTHERLY ALONG SAID WESTERLY LOT LINE OF SAID LOT (10) TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING, IN BLOCK ONE (1) OF KONZELMAN'S SUBDIVISION, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 26, TOWNSHIP 44 NORTH, RANGE 3 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN BOOK 2 OF PLATS, PAGE 14, SITUATED

Community News & Events

United Methodist Men's Blue Ribbon Chili Supper & United Methodist Women's Bake Sale- Saturday, February 8th, 4:30-7 P.M. Located at the First United Methodist Church, 610 Bonus Avenue, Belvidere, IL. Price for admission is \$7 for Adults and \$3 for Children under 10. Carryout will be available.

Sons of Norway Valhall Lodge Meeting- Sunday, February 9, 2020 at Peterson Meadows 6401 Newburg Road, Rockford, Illinois 61108 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. A Norwegian Film "Siblings are Forever" documentary will be shown.

St. Mark Hosts Free Concert Featuring "The Honey Pies" of Madison- The free concert will be on Sunday, February 9th at 3:00 p.m. And is open to the public. A freewill offering will be accepted. The concert will be held at St. Mark Lutheran church located at 675 North Mulford Road in Rockford. For more information, call 815-398-3557, or visit our website www.stmarklc.com.

Learn to Skate or Play Hockey- The Rockford Park District wants to help you learn to ice skate, improve your skating skills, or learn to play hockey! Group sessions are offered year-round for beginner, recreational, and advanced skill levels, and meet at Carlson Ice Arena in Loves Park once a week for 30-50 minutes, with skates and helmets provided; the next sessions begin the week of February 18, 2020. Fees vary according to session type and residency; for details and schedules, visit www.rockfordparkdistrict.org/skating or call 815-969-4069.

Senior Gathering- Come join your neighbors and friends for a free lunch and social time the 3rd Thursday of each month. This month's gathering will be on Thursday, February 20, 2020 from 12 noon to 3 P.M. Located at the Capron Lions Community Building at Capron Lions Park.

U of I Extension, DeKalb County Gardeners Pathway Workshop- Saturday, February 22, from 7:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. at the Kishwaukee College Conference Center. Advanced registration is required by February 15. Workshops have limited seating space and sessions will be filled in the order registrations are received. The workshop fee is \$50.00, and includes morning refreshments, lunch, a welcome bag and selected handouts. In addition to the workshops, there will be a wide variety of vendors. To register, go to <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/bdo>. Search the events tab for the registration page. Call 815-758-8194 for further information.

Four Seasons Gardening Winter Webinar "Colorful Conifers"- This program will be offered via computer on Tuesday, February 25 at 1:30 PM at the Boone County Extension Conference room located at 205 Cadillac Court, Suite 5 in Belvidere. There is no fee to attend this program, but advanced registration is needed. To register to attend Colorful Conifer at the Extension office, call 815-544-3710 or visit our website at <http://extension.illinois.edu/bdo>.

Capron Lions Blood Drive - Thursday, February 27, 2020 from 2:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M. Located at 305 East North Street, Capron, Illinois. The Blood Drive will take place in the Community Room. Please bring a photo ID and drink plenty of fluids before donating. To schedule a time to donate, contact Barb at (815) 289-5279.

Introduction to Industrial Hemp Program- To help give some perspective and provide information on this new crop, University of Illinois Extension will be hosting an "Introduction

to Industrial Hemp" program on Monday, March 2, 2020 from 1 PM-4PM at the Boone County Extension Meeting Room located at 205 Cadillac Court, Suite 5 in Belvidere. This workshop will discuss grain fiber and CBD production and will also focus on the many applications for this new crop. The cost to attend this program is \$10 per person. Registration can be done online at <https://extension.illinois.edu/bdo>. Or by calling Judy Hodge, Program Coordinator with the Boone County Extension office at 815-544-3710

House Bucks Governor to OK Reinstatement of Tax Break on Aircraft Parts

Measure still needs Senate approval to override veto

by **REBECCA ANZEL** Capitol News Illinois

The Illinois House overwhelmingly voted Tuesday to override the governor's veto of legislation restoring and retroactively applying a tax break for aircraft parts.

Democratic Rep. Monica Bristow, of Godfrey, said it would protect more than 3,700 jobs at 14 aviation facilities in 12 communities across the state. She added 36 other states have similar laws on the books.

The chamber "sent a strong, bipartisan message that we value good-paying jobs in our state and will do what it takes to protect them," Bristow said in a statement.

The tax exemption was in place since 2010, but it expired without regulatory or other official bodies taking note, Bristow said. Aviation repair companies consequently did not collect the tax from jet owners during that period.

Without the new law, those companies would need to repay \$50 million in taxes to the state, Governor JB Pritzker said in his veto message, the initiative "is not in line" with improving Illinois' economy.

"Giving private aircraft companies tens of millions of dollars in past due tax forgiveness is not the right fiscal decision for our state as we face billions in debt associated with unpaid bills, a multi-billion-dollar structural deficit, and critical needs in schools and public safety services," Pritzker said in his letter to the General Assembly.

The governor also said passage of the bill would result in a \$10 million tax break for aviation repair companies annually over the next five years.

It would be "absurd" to ask businesses to recover those taxes retroactively in November, said Senate sponsor Rachele Crowe, a Democrat from Glen Carbon, in November when the General Assembly passed the bill initially.

And Bristow said the measure is ultimately protecting jobs.

"While some party leaders may not have wanted me to do this, I overrode the veto of the governor because he chose to misrepresent this issue and play politics with legislation that directly impacted hundreds of local jobs in the Metro East that people depend on to support their families," she said in a statement.

The override of Pritzker's veto of House Bill 3902 was approved in the House with 107 votes in favor and none against. Only two lawmakers — Democrat Jaime Andrade Jr., of Chicago, and Republican Norine Hammond, of Macomb — voted present.

The Senate has 15 days to call the vote for an override. As in the House, a two-thirds vote is required for an override. The bill passed 48-1, with two senators voting "present" and eight not voting on Nov. 14 during the fall veto session.

Senate Deals Pritzker First Veto Override

Bill provides retroactive tax exemption for aircraft parts

by **Peter Hancock** Capitol News Illinois

Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker was dealt his first veto override Wednesday when the state Senate voted overwhelmingly to pass a bill that retroactively extends a sales tax exemption for aircraft parts and equipment.

House Bill 3902 passed the General Assembly during the 2019 fall veto session. It reinstates a tax break that was in place starting in 2010, but which was allowed to expire in 2015 without state tax officials or other public bodies taking note.

From 2015 through last year, many manufacturers in Illinois continued selling their products without collecting the tax, resulting in an estimated \$50 million in unpaid taxes owed to the state, according to one aviation industry estimate.

The bill reinstates that tax break through Dec. 31, 2024. It also provides that the tax exemption applies "continuously" from Jan. 1, 2010, through 2024, including the years during which it had actually lapsed. It does not, however, allow any manufacturer who charged the tax during that time to claim a tax credit or refund.

The tax exemption applies to the sale of "materials, parts, equipment, components, and furnishings incorporated into or upon an aircraft as part of the modification, refurbishment, completion, replacement, repair, or maintenance of the aircraft."

"This exemption was designed to create jobs and bring industry to the state of Illinois by putting Illinois on a level playing field with other tax-exempt states, and it worked," Sen. Rachele Crowe, a Glen Carbon Democrat, said on the Senate floor.

She noted there are 14 facilities in 10 communities in Illinois that host aircraft parts manufacturing. Those facilities employ an estimated 3,700 individuals.

The Senate action came one day after the House voted 107-0 to override the veto, with two House members voting "present." The Senate vote was 54-1, with recently-appointed Democrat Patrick Joyce, of Essex, voting against.

In his veto message Nov. 25, Pritzker argued the state was not in a position to offer retroactive tax breaks. And in an email Wednesday, his press secretary, Jordan Abudayyeh, said that is still the governor's position.

"The governor still believes giving private aircraft companies tens of millions of dollars in past due tax forgiveness is not the right fiscal decision for our state as we face billions in debt associated with unpaid bills, a multi-billion-dollar structural deficit, and critical needs in schools and public safety services," she said. "He looks forward to working with the General Assembly to move forward and build on the progress that's been made to put the state on firm fiscal footing and support and create good jobs throughout the state."

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Illinois AG Sues to Add Equal Rights Amendment to Constitution

Kwame Raoul joined by Virginia, Nevada attorneys general to secure 28th Amendment

By Ben Orner Capitol News Illinois

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and two other state attorneys general filed a lawsuit in federal court Thursday to ensure the Equal Rights Amendment officially becomes the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

"Americans have long agreed that discrimination based on sex is unacceptable," Raoul said. "But by enshrining that shared value in our Constitution, we have made a commitment never to go back."

The states filing suit – Illinois, Virginia and Nevada – were the final three states to ratify the ERA. Nevada signed on in 2017, Illinois in 2018 and Virginia two weeks ago, allowing the amendment to meet the 38-state threshold to be added to the Constitution.

However, making the ERA binding is not as simple.

In the complaint, the attorneys general are asking a court to direct U.S. National Archivist David Ferriero to officially write the ERA into the Constitution, as per his duty. The U.S. Department of Justice, however, effectively ordered Ferriero not to do so because the ratification deadline imposed by Congress expired in 1979.

Additionally, five states want their ratifications rescinded: Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee and South Dakota. The latter joined Alabama and Louisiana in a federal lawsuit last month that aims to block Ferriero from adding the ERA to the Constitution.

Experts have said it is likely the final decision will have to be made by a court.

The three AGs hinge much of their argument on Article V of the Constitution, which governs how amendments are ratified.

"The power to decide when to ratify is not limited in any way by Article V," Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring said. "Nowhere does it provide for rescission."

A proposed Constitutional amendment becomes "valid" once it is "ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths" of the states, Article V reads.

Also, the lawsuit argues, the 27th Amendment was added to the Constitution in 1992 by the then-Archivist Don Wilson "shortly after" the final state ratified it.

As an Illinois state senator in 2018, Raoul voted for the resolution that made Illinois the 37th state to ratify the ERA.

"It was one of my very last acts as a member of the Legislature," he said. "And to have been elected attorney general and to be able to contribute to making certain that we recognize the 28th Amendment, it means a lot to me."

Raoul added that he has a 19-year-old daughter in college who aspires to go to law school.

"She will promise to support a Constitution that will equally support her," he said.

A 2016 poll commissioned by the ERA Coalition found 77 percent of Americans "strongly agree" with a Constitutional amendment that guarantees equal rights to both men and women. Another 17 percent "somewhat agree."

"We have waited too long already for equal rights, and it is shameful that there are those who would have us wait even a moment longer," said Carol Jenkins, co-president and CEO of the coalition, which is comprised of more than 100 organizations supporting women's equality.

Jenkins says securing the ERA "is a life-or-death issue" because it will give women a legal

basis to take on issues of gender inequality, including pay differences and violent crimes.

"Women in the home and workplace continue to fear sexual and physical assault with no recourse to federal courts, because without the ERA there is no basis for such jurisdiction," she said.

The Equal Rights Amendment is 24 words long and reads, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Tax Amnesty Program Nets Over \$60 Million More than Expected

Budget bill allowed taxpayers to pay liabilities without penalty

by Jerry Nowicki Capitol News Illinois

A tax amnesty program created during the passage of last year's state operating budget has brought in nearly \$240 million — approximately \$60 million more than was expected — the Illinois Department of Revenue announced Tuesday.

The Illinois Tax Amnesty Program, proposed by Gov. JB Pritzker and passed as part of Senate Bill 689, allowed qualified taxpayers to pay off any outstanding state tax liability and have corresponding penalties and interest forgiven.

IDOR said in a news release that 63,006 taxpayers have taken advantage of the program, which brought in a verified \$237 million as of Jan. 31.

More than \$60 million of that money will go to local governments and approximately \$7.5 million will go to the city of Chicago, according to a news release. The program ran from October to mid-November, and before its launch, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget estimated it would recover \$175 million in outstanding liabilities.

"The Tax Amnesty program proved to be successful, and we are pleased so many taxpayers took the opportunity to come into compliance and

earn a clean slate with the state of Illinois," Acting IDOR Director David Harris said in a news release.

The department will continue to process and certify tax amnesty payments over the next several months to "ensure that the payments comply with the provisions of the program," according to the release. The department expects to verify "tens of millions more toward unpaid liabilities" despite the program's November end date.

"Our mission at the department is to ensure all taxpayers are treated fairly. By encouraging taxpayers with liabilities to pay what they owe, we build trust in the system while raising revenues the state can use to invest in our future," Harris said.

Taxpayers eligible for the amnesty program would have incurred a tax liability after June 30, 2011, and before July 1, 2018, according to IDOR. Those participating had to fully pay their tax liability and submit original returns for any unfiled periods and amended returns for periods being adjusted.

More than 90 percent of the money brought in by the program came from payments for liabilities related to the business income tax, the sales tax and the individual income tax, according to the release.

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