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Ice Castle Opens in Lake Geneva

by Charles Herbst

Brent Christensen describes himself as “not a cold weather person.” Yet this serial entrepreneur is the designer and owner of six ice castles located across North America.

Last year, the company built its first Wisconsin ice castle on the shore of Lake Geneva. Blowing sand made that castle difficult to maintain for the winter season. This year, the Wisconsin Ice Castle has been built on the grounds of the Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva. The new location is a bigger and better castle, featuring water fountains, ice thrones, slides, and colored lights, providing guests with a unique, ethereal and uplifting experience.

Lake Geneva also is home to the national snow sculpting competition, which is being held this weekend. Of course, snow sculpting and ice carving are totally different processes and different forms of art than building ice castles.

The ice castle owes its origin to serendipity and the ingenuity of its creator, Brent Christensen.

Christensen grew up in California, and after obtaining his BS in Human Development, moved his family to Utah in 2000. He took a job at a “windowless factory that made windows.” Christensen disliked his job, and was looking for a change. While repairing his lawnmower, at the suggestion of a friend, he decided to start a small engine business.

Although the lawnmower repair business was very successful, it was quite slow in the winter, and Christensen found himself bored. One winter, his neighbors sprayed their yard with water to watch the ice grow. “Sometimes people try to find what beauty they can see in nature,” Christensen explained.

Inspired, Christensen sprayed his own yard with water and built a wooden frame on top. He then sprayed the frame with water and made a 20-foot high form in his yard. This was the first ice castle.

Ever the tinkerer, Christensen experimented with various techniques for building ice castles. He decided that the icicle should be the basic building block for an ice structure. Christensen holds two patents for his ice castle building techniques.

To build an ice castle, you need thousands of icicles. Two methods are used to make them. One way is to spray water over an elevated wire mesh and let the icicles form naturally. The other method is to fill tubes with water. Once the icicles are frozen, the tray of tubes is immersed in 50-degree water. The icicles are released and float to the top of the water. The icicles are removed and put flat on a table. Usable icicles are then placed in cloth icicle bags that the builders use to build the castle. Slush is used as mortar. When slush needs to be made, it is done so in a mulcher.

Before the ice castle is built, a plan is devised for the castle. Wiring for lights and other equipment is first laid down before an ice sheet is created. Then the ice castle is built by hand.

Icicles are placed vertically, just like girders. A simple ball of slush is placed at the base of the icicle to hold it upright. After the slush freezes, a horizontal icicle is attached as a beam at the top of the girder. Again, a ball of slush anchors the icicle beam in place. The process of constructing the beams and girders continues, and the frame is sprayed with water. This causes the solid walls to form. Because of the translucent nature of the ice, light, both natural and artificial, creates interesting patterns in the ice that are often quite beautiful.

It takes about thirty workers to build an ice castle, and Christensen hires mainly on word-of-mouth. He seeks motivated, interested workers who can collaborate. Although artistry is involved, there is no particular experience necessary to help build an ice castle. Water, both solid and liquid, is the main building material. Several miles of poly tubing are used to connect each sprinkler to the water source.

Over the years, the company has perfected its



Ice Castle Entrepreneur Brent Christensen

photos by Ice Castles

techniques. Lighting the castle was originally an afterthought. Although Christensen prefers the white light, his customers like the excitement that colored lights generate. Originally incandescent lights were used, and the heat from the lights had to be dealt with to avoid melting the ice castle. Now with LED lights, this is no longer a problem.

Christensen's company is just over 10 years old and opened the first commercial ice castle in Utah in the winter of 2009. This year, the company has castles in Alberta, Colorado, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Utah and Wisconsin.

Tickets are available to tour the ice castle at Icecastles.com. Although standby tickets are available at the castle, in-person prices are higher and are subject to availability. The best time to tour the castles is at twilight or after dark, and the attraction is available seven days a week.

This year has been a particular challenge for Christensen. He started building the Wisconsin ice castle in November during our frigid temperatures. Then it melted. When temperatures dropped again in mid-December, Christensen started rebuilding. A balmy Christmas season melted the castle once again. With the return of more seasonal weather, Christensen and his crew have worked hard up until the last minute to be ready for their January 31 opening. Their persistence and determination will surely be appreciated by ice castle visitors.

Old man winter threw another iceball at Christensen: Alberta experienced record cold this month, forcing the temporary closure of the ice castle in Edmonton for a whole week.

The earth is a beautiful, yet complex machine, upon which our lives depend. While weather patterns do vary, the havoc that unseasonal weather has played on this business, along with the less-than-ideal conditions Boone County farmers faced last summer, should remind us how sensitive and fragile our climate and environment really are.



Community News & Events

The 15 Habits of Highly Fugal Genealogist- The Winnebago & Boone Counties Genealogical Society will hold its regular meeting at Spring Creek United Church of Christ, 4500 Spring Creek Road, Rockford, IL at 1:30 P.M. On Saturday, February 1, 2020. All interested persons are welcome! Refreshments will be served. There is no cost to attend.

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.

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.

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.

U of I Extension, DeKalb County Gardeners Pathway Workshop- The University of Illinois Extension DeKalb County Master Gardeners is once again hosting the 2020 Gardener's Pathway, on Saturday February 22, from 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. At the Kishwaukee College Conference Center. Advance registration is required by February 15. To register for the 2020 Gardener's Pathway, go online to the U of I Extension website <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/bdo>. Please contact 815-758-8194 for any further information.

An Evening of Irish Music Featuring Jimmy Keane and Dave Curley- Sit back and enjoy this musical duo as they share the traditional music and song of Ireland as well as newly penned songs and tunes inspired by the Irish music they cherish. Beverages from the Prairie Street Brewing Company and snacks will be served. The fee to attend is \$25 at the door or advance ticketing can be purchased online at www.irishmarchingsociety.com.

The Poplar Grove Aviation Education Association's 2020 Scholarship Program Applications Now Available- The information letter and application are on the Museum's website under the Education tab. Look for additional information at www.poplargrovetwingsandwheels.com.

The Irish Marching Society's 2020 St. Patrick's Parade Registration Announcement- The Irish Marching Society is announcing that the registration period for the 2020 St. Patrick's Parade will officially open on January 25th. If you have a float or a group of marchers that you would like to register, you may do so by going to www.irishmarchingsociety.com. All parade information and fees are published on the website.

important issues of the day here in Springfield," he added.

One of those is redistricting reform, an issue the House Republican caucus is prioritizing this session and has supported for years. It will "stop" the culture that enabled unscrupulous behavior by some lawmakers over the past year and "devastated the state," Minority Leader Jim Durkin, from Western Springs, said.

Villa Park Democratic Sen. Tom Cullerton was formally accused by a federal grand jury of collecting a salary as well as health and pension benefits from a labor union for work he did not do. He has pleaded not guilty.

Federal officials charged former Rep. Luis Arroyo, a Chicago Democrat, with bribery, charges that led him to relinquish his post.

And former Sen. Martin Sandoval, a Democrat from Chicago, pleaded guilty to federal bribery and tax evasion charges in a federal court in Chicago on Tuesday. He resigned effective Jan. 1.

Changing the method by which political maps are drawn "is probably the most important way we can clean up corruption and the culture that has created this horrible situation in Illinois," Durkin said.

All 44 House GOP members support a constitutional amendment that would remove politicians from deciding the boundaries of districts in favor of an 11-member commission tasked with drawing maps in a "fair, above-board way," Demmer said. It would affect boundaries of districts drawn after the 2020 census.

Obituaries

Hale, Jesse, 79, Poplar Grove, January 18
 Lehman, Carolyn, 76, Cherry Valley, January 13
 Massineo, Marie, 89, Poplar Grove, January 21
 Paulson, Courtney, 43, Belvidere, January 20
 Whittington, Linda, 65, Cherry Valley, Jan. 19
 Wienrank, Jo Ann, 73, Belvidere, January 21



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House Republicans Tie Ethics Reforms to Redistricting Changes

GOP also pushing for greater financial disclosure by lawmakers, property tax reform by Rebecca Anzel Capitol News Illinois

Remodeling how Illinois' political districts are drawn is the key to addressing the "dark cloud" of ethical violations hovering over state government, House Republican leaders said Tuesday.

Communities are grouped "primarily for political advantage," Dixon Republican Rep. Tom Demmer said, restricting residents' ability to hold their legislators accountable.

"These political entrenchments — these situations in which politicians pick their voters instead of voters picking their politicians — had a chilling impact on our ability to debate the

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Sandoval Pleads Guilty to Bribery and Tax Fraud

In plea deal, former state senator agrees to cooperate with ongoing investigations

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Former state Sen. Martin Sandoval entered a plea deal Tuesday in which he admitted to receiving more than \$250,000 in bribes over a three-year period and filing a false tax return.

In exchange for his plea, Sandoval agreed to cooperate with federal investigators in other ongoing investigations and he will not face sentencing until he is finished cooperating. That cooperation includes the possibility of testifying against other defendants who may be charged.

The plea deal was announced jointly Tuesday by John R. Lausch Jr., U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, along with officials from the Chicago office of the FBI, the IRS Criminal Investigation Division and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General.

The bribery charge stems largely from Sandoval's relationship with a company that installs and operates red light cameras for local governments in the Chicago area. Those are devices that automatically photograph and issue citations to people who fail to come to a full stop at red lights. Revenue collected from those citations typically is split between the municipality and the camera company.

The plea agreement spells out a list of facts to which Sandoval has admitted. It includes an admission that, beginning in 2016, Sandoval solicited and received \$20,000 in annual campaign contributions from an entity prosecutors referred to as "Company A," but which is widely believed to be SafeSpeed LLC, a company identified in a search warrant that federal agents executed on Sandoval's Statehouse office in September.

The Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun-Times each reported that during Tuesday's hearing in federal court, Sandoval inadvertently identified the company when he said, "I used my office as state senator to help SafeSpeed — er, company A

Continued on Page 4

"The proposal for fair maps has been out there for years, and it's one of the most thoroughly-discussed issues we've seen," he said.

House Republicans are also pushing for legislation reforming lawmaker behavior. Rep. Grant Wehlri, from Naperville, said those "common sense measures" include prohibiting representatives and senators from being lobbyists while in office, preventing them from immediately becoming lobbyists after leaving their post and increasing the economic interest information legislators have to disclose.

"If the Democrats finally wanted to get serious on holding themselves accountable, and do what's right for the people of Illinois, let's move these pieces of legislation," he said.

Durkin appeared to put the success of those changes, and others, on Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker.

"I think as leader of the party, he can get his members in line. That includes the [House] speaker [Chicago Democrat Michael Madigan] and also the president of the Senate [Oak Park Democrat Don Harmon]....," he said.

His caucus is also planning to combat the "skyrocketing cost of property taxes" in Illinois, Rep. Dan Brady, R-Bloomington, said.

Lawmakers To End State-To-State Corporate Poaching

New bill is part of national effort to phase out corporate tax incentives

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Two Democratic lawmakers unveiled legislation Tuesday to form a multi-state compact in which each member state would vow not to use company-specific tax incentives to lure businesses away from another member state.

Rep. Bob Morgan, of Deerfield, and Sen. Ram Villivalam, of Chicago, introduced identical legislation that would establish the "Phase Out Corporate Giveaways Interstate Compact."

"These kinds of tax breaks have historically been justified as a necessary evil," Morgan said during a Statehouse news conference Tuesday. "A necessary expense to bring jobs and business to our state, but in many ways to keep jobs from leaving the state of Illinois as they hold us hostage, because other states are offering them tax incentives."

The proposal is part of a nationwide effort to phase out all tax incentive programs aimed at luring businesses to move across state lines, or to prevent them from moving. Similar legislation has already been introduced this year in New York, Florida, New Hampshire, Hawaii, West Virginia, Iowa and Maryland.

Dan Johnson, a lobbyist for the Coalition to Phase Out Corporate Tax Giveaways, said that so far, Missouri and Kansas are the only states that have formalized such an agreement. However, that deal to end what many people in the region were calling a modern-day "border war" was limited to six counties that make up the Kansas City metropolitan area, which straddles both sides of the state line. The deal does not apply statewide in either state.

Villivalam said economic development tax incentives create an uneven playing field because some businesses get them while others don't.

"Corporate giveaways have grown this business inequality that we see and generate a race to the bottom," he said. "This is because companies have too frequently been given tax credits tax incentives to choose a location that they would have chosen anyway. So instead of creating additional jobs, they deplete the community's tax base."

Senate Bill 2502 and House Bill 4138 would enter Illinois into the Phase Out Corporate Giveaways Interstate Compact. That would involve an agreement not to use tax incentives or grants to lure a specific company away from any other compact member for the purposes of relocating a corporate headquarters, manufacturing facility, office space or other retail development.

That prohibition, however, would not apply to tax incentives that are available generally to all businesses such as workforce development grants. It also would not apply to company-specific incentives offered by local governments or incentives offered to companies already located

in Illinois.

The bills also call for establishing a national board that would make recommendations about how to phase out other kinds of corporate incentives.

Although the initiative is being sponsored by two Democrats, it also has the backing of the conservative group Americans for Prosperity, which was founded in 2004 by the billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch.

"We don't like government picking winners and losers in the economy. Usually when they do, they usually pick wrong," said Brian Costin, deputy state director for AFP's Illinois chapter.

The House bill was assigned Tuesday to the Revenue and Finance Committee. The Senate bill was not yet assigned to a substantive committee Tuesday.



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Sandoval *continued from page 3*

... (and) be its protector in the Illinois senate and influence other officials to roll out the red-light camera program in Illinois.”

In 2017, according to the agreement, Sandoval asked a company official to break up those annual payments into smaller amounts that would show up in different reporting periods.

“Kind of, just kind of not make it obvious,” Sandoval said to the company official, according to the agreement, not knowing that the person was cooperating with investigators.

In March 2018, according to the agreement, Sandoval accepted \$10,000 in cash from the company, “to be used for campaign-related expenses,” in exchange for Sandoval’s promise to block legislation that would have banned red light cameras in Illinois.

And beginning in July 2018, according to the document, he solicited \$5,000 per month in “protection money” for using his position in the General Assembly to protect the company’s interests.

During a July 31, 2018, meeting, Sandoval told the company official that he was aware other people were getting payoffs. The official confirmed that other people received a percentage of revenue that the red light cameras brought in.

“It galls me to know, but because we’ve established such a great relationship, um, ’cause you know I’ll go balls to the walls for anything you ask me. ... It’s hard for me to swallow how [people] make so much off of you. Right? And I gotta do the work,” Sandoval is quoted in the document as saying.

The plea agreement also suggests Sandoval is suspected of corrupt activities that go beyond his relationship with the red light camera company, and that other public officials were involved.

It states that he “also engaged in corrupt activities with other public officials and accepted money from other people in return for using his position as an Illinois state senator to attempt to benefit those people and their business interests. In total, (he) accepted over \$250,000 in bribes as part of criminal activity that involved more than five participants.”

On the charge of tax fraud, the plea agreement states that for tax year 2017, Sandoval reported total income of \$125,905 when in fact he had income that year of “at least \$259,255,” including more than \$10,000 he received in bribes.

Sandoval, 56, of Chicago, resigned his 11th District Senate seat effective Jan. 1. He has since been succeeded by former Rep. Celina Villanueva, also of Chicago.

The plea agreement was announced on the opening day of the Illinois General Assembly’s 2020 session, where calls for significant ethics reforms are expected to be a major issue.

During an unrelated news conference Tuesday at the Capitol, House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, a Western Springs Republican, reacted to Sandoval’s guilty pleas by calling on Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker to lead the charge for ethics reform, starting with putting the job of drawing legislative district maps in the hands of an independent commission.

“That is how you’re going to stop this culture that has, I would say, devastated the state, and we’re seeing it play out right now,” Durkin said. “People in the state of Illinois, I know, are desperate for a change.”

Elections Board Corrects Non-Citizen Voting Numbers

Only 15 who checked ‘no’ on citizenship question voted; 3 turn out to be citizens

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Only 15 people who self-identified as not being U.S. citizens cast ballots in the 2018 and 2019 elections, the Illinois State Board of Elections said in a correction Thursday, three of which actually turned out to be citizens.

Spokesperson Matt Dietrich had initially reported that 16 possible non-citizens had voted. In a clarification Thursday, he said one of the voters had voted in two different elections and was inadvertently counted as two voters.

Those people were able to vote due to a recently-discovered programming error in Illinois’ new automatic voter registration system that automatically signs people up to vote when they apply for or renew their driver’s license. Officials in Secretary of State Jesse White’s office, which manages driver’s licenses, have accepted responsibility for the error and say the problem was immediately fixed.

That system, the result of 2017 legislation that passed both chambers of the General Assembly by unanimous, bipartisan votes, officially launched July 2, 2018. But the programming glitch that failed to filter out people who identified themselves as non-citizens wasn’t discovered until December 2019. By that time, 545 people who identified as being non-citizens were registered to vote.

The elections board has said consistently that some of those individuals may actually be citizens who accidentally checked the wrong box on their driver’s license applications.

“We continue to work with local election authorities to establish the voting eligibility status of the remaining individuals who voted and of all 545 individuals who were mistakenly registered during the AVR process,” Dietrich said in a statement Thursday.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are now calling for legislative hearings to determine how the mistake happened and what is being done to make sure it is not repeated.

Rep. Emanuel “Chris” Welch, a Hillside Democrat who chairs the House Executive Committee, said he will hold hearings next week. Lawmakers will be back in Springfield on Tuesday, Jan. 28, for the start of the 2020 legislative session.

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Senate Bill would Outlaw Live Animal Prizes at Carnivals

Aims to reduce abandoned pet population but could impact the fair experience

by Ben Orner Capitol News Illinois

It is a mainstay of fairs and carnivals around the country: sink a ping pong ball into a fish bowl and win the goldfish swimming inside.

But if a bill in the Illinois Senate becomes law, carnivals would no longer be allowed to award live animals – such as fish, reptiles and hermit crabs – as prizes.

Illinois’ Humane Care for Animals Act already prohibits rabbits, ducklings and baby chicks as carnival prizes, but Senate Bill 2472 would expand the law’s protections to all animals – including the goldfish that winners can take home in a plastic bag.

Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton, a Democrat from Western Springs, introduced the bill with backing from the Humane Society of the United States.

“This isn’t just a ‘goldfish bill,’” she said. “Carnivals across the country give out other animals as prizes, specifically iguanas and other exotic reptiles.”

Glowiak Hilton said these reptiles can grow up to six feet long and become a burden to people who did not consider the specialized care the animals need.

“Many are simply abandoned and wreak havoc on our natural wildlife, or are turned into local animal control centers which are not equipped to handle them,” she said.

Her county, Cook, is one of at least four municipalities in Illinois that have banned live animals being used as prizes. The other three are Kane County, McHenry County and the city of St. Charles.

Illinois would join Iowa, Massachusetts, South Carolina and Vermont as states that outlaw all live animals as prizes, according to Fish Feel, an advocacy organization for the humane treatment of fish.

Glowiak Hilton’s bill applies only to carnivals. She plans to add an amendment to expand it to fairs.

Ken Tyrrell, president of the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs, says SB 2472 could affect the \$170 million the Illinois fair industry contributes yearly to the state economy.

“That’s how these people make their money,” said Tyrrell, whose organization represents Illinois’ 104 county fairs, its two state fairs and hundreds of vendors.

“It affects the people that bring those games to fairs and it affects the fairs if they don’t have that,” he said.

Tyrell also says the bill erases the nostalgia of taking home a small pet from the local carnival.

“I’ve been in the fair business all my life, and people have a tendency to go back and play the same games every year,” he said. “If your small children look forward to going and playing the

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game where you have the possibility of winning a goldfish, they're going to be very disappointed."

Glowiak Hilton included a workaround in her bill, though. Carnivals can offer a coupon or voucher to winners so they can buy the animal from a licensed pet store.

"(SB 2472) will allow prize winners to go into a pet shop and fully understand the animal that they are going to be caring for," she said.

"As far as nostalgia, this bill will create an even better experience for kids who win the coupons," she added. "They will be able to go to a pet store with their parents and pick out exactly which animal they want."

Tyrrell, however, said teaming up with pet stores is unrealistic for carnival workers who are constantly on the road.

"Carnival people travel all over the state and all over the country," he said. "They don't have those local associations to do that. That would be very difficult, time-consuming and expensive."

SB 2472 was assigned to the Senate agriculture committee on Tuesday. If it passes committee, the bill will go to the full Senate for a vote.

Illinois Should Have a National Park; There are Many Possibilities

by Jim Nowlan

There are 61 national parks. California has nine. Illinois has none. In the past couple of years, the Arch in St. Louie and the Dunes in northwestern Indiana have both been designated as national parks. Illinois had better rattle its tin cup out in D.C., as it appears to be "let's get a park" season.

Do you have any nominees? I do.

Illinois has a 280,000-acre national forest across the southern tip of Illinois. There are also National Park Service homes and monuments in Illinois, obviously for Abraham Lincoln, and for other sites of historical significance. But no park, with the federal money and visibility to attract tourists that accompany a national park.

I am confident politics played a part in winning the unusual parks sited recently along the Mississippi and Lake Michigan in our neighboring states. Nothing wrong with that. I define politics for my students, roughly, as who gets what. No squeaky wheel, no park.

Illinois state government doesn't have two nickels to rub together for discretionary projects like beefing up our parks. On the other hand, the federal government prints its own money and obviously doesn't care about going into the red for new projects.

Starved Rock State Park along the Illinois River in central Illinois annually draws 2.5 million visitors, more than many national parks. Starved Rock is bursting at the seams, and trails have been closed because of maintenance issues and inadequate funding.

The Illinois Valley was once the home to the largest concentration of American Indians. Legend has it a number of Illinois indians were starved atop the colossal rock above the river. One of their number had killed Ottawa chieftain Pontiac, and his followers exacted revenge. The park is a great place for hiking, relaxing, staying over, but not if the trails are closed.

I have other candidates: The Garden of the Gods is a wilderness area within the Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois, referred to above. The rock outcroppings and views are spectacular. The Trail of Tears forced march of the cruelly treated Cherokee also passes nearby.

Northwestern Illinois is the southern tip of the Driftless Region, land bypassed by the last glaciers, which crushed everything in its receding path. This created the rich, flat farmlands where I reside. My old legislative district reached up to Mount Carroll and Savanna, from whence the land rolls and pitches

northward through Galena along Old Man River into Wisconsin and Minnesota. Stunning.

There are many other gems hidden in plain sight in Illinois. In 1830, plans were initiated to build a canal from the Illinois River to the Mississippi at the Quad Cities. By the time this 70-mile canal was finished in 1905 or so, it was obsolete, surpassed by the Iron Horse. Several decades ago, the canal became a property of the state Department of Natural Resources. Now there is an unbroken path for walkers 70 miles across, with 30 miles of a feeder canal from Sterling-Rock Falls. The canal is filled with water (unusual for abandoned canals, I'm told), which offers excellent fishing.


There are some delightful canal segments that I walk, near Wyanet and Tiskilwa in Bureau County. Last winter, I walked right under — right under — 12 bald eagles that were roosting, if that's what you call it, in two stately trees along the canal. Grudgingly, they lifted off, six-foot wingspans flapping majestically, circling 'round me before settling in trees down the canal. Breathtaking.

A long pencil-thin park like the canal probably wouldn't make the cut for a national park, yet the Gateway Arch did; impressive as it is, I don't think of the Arch as a park.

I wax on about the Hennepin Canal to note for readers that Illinois has many largely undiscovered sites of great natural beauty. I also do so because I need to fill some space here in my column, as I have said my piece in fewer words than typical, which I'm sure you appreciate.

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 unindicted governors and published a weekly newspaper in central Illinois.

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1st Circle field on aerial photo map you want in CRP.
2nd Take map & copy of deed to FSA.
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OGLE COUNTY LAND AUCTION - 339.321 ACRES
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MULTI-PARCEL LAND AUCTION... Parcel 1: 8.316 acre homesite with cattle feeding set-up, 3 silos, loafing shed and a 1900 Sq Ft Story and 1/2 home, very well kept. Parcel 2: 236.005, without any improvements, and a P# 125 Parcel 3: 20.657 Acre recreational site with Creek, some tillable land, and access from Holcomb Rd. Parcel 4 - 39.624 Acres with access on the North edge across Tract 5 onto Stillman Blacktop. This parcel is located West of parcel 5 and has a P# 135 Parcel 5 34.719 Acres with access on Stillman Blacktop. This parcel is located East of parcel 4 and has a P# 134. Owner: John & Jennifer Kruse



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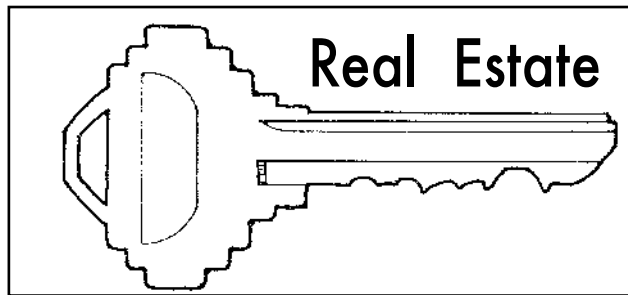
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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF BOONE - BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS
PNC BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION;
Plaintiff,
vs. 18 CH 100
CYNTHIA SUTHERIN, AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ROBERT M. FOTH; JAMES FOTH; PETER FOTH; WILLIAM FOTH; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES OF ROBERT M. FOTH; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS; Defendants,
NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercounty Judicial Sales Corporation will on Thursday, February 27, 2020, at the hour of 12:15 p.m. inside the front entrance of the Boone County Courthouse, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:

P.I.N. 05-26-333-011.
Commonly known as 510 Franklin St., Belvidere, IL 61008.
The improvement on the property consists of a single family residence. If the subject mortgaged real estate is a unit of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Condominium Property Act.

Sale terms: 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. For information call Ms. Kimberly S. Reid at Plaintiff's Attorney, Marinosci Law Group, PC, 134 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602. (312) 940-8580.
13142843
Published in The Boone County Journal Jan 17, 24, 31

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/or 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

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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.

LEGAL NOTICES

Foreclosures

MANLEY, DEAS, KOCHALSKI LLC
One East Wacker - Suite 1250
Chicago, IL 60601
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, MIDFIRST BANK., Plaintiff, v. SHANE M. KOVACH; KAYLYNNE KOVACH; THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS; MILESTONE MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS, INC.; MORTGAGE ELECTRONIC REGISTRATION SYSTEMS, INC.; ITS SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS, Defendants, Case No. 2019CH150

The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you, Kaylynn Kovach, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, that the said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit, Boone County, Illinois by the said plaintiff against you and other defendants, praying for the foreclosure of a certain Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to-wit:

Lot Six (6) in Block Two (2) of A.H. Allen's Re-Survey of the city of Belvidere, as platted and recorded in the Recorder's Office of Boone County, Illinois, situated in Boone County, State of Illinois.
1035 Maple Avenue, Belvidere, IL 61008
05-35-276-016

Now, therefore, unless you, Kaylynn Kovach, Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants, and the said above named defendants, file your answer to the complaint in said suit or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the office of the Clerk of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit, Boone County, Illinois, on or before February 18, 2020, default may be entered against you at any time after that day and a Judgment entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.

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> to learn more and to select a service provider. If you need additional help or have trouble e-filing, visit <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/faq/gethelp.asp> or contact the Clerk of this Court.

Alan S. Kaufman (6289893)
MANLEY DEAS KOCHALSKI LLC
Attorneys for Plaintiff
One East Wacker, Suite 1250, Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: 312-651-6700; Fax: 614-220-5613
Email: sef-askaufman@manleydeas.com
FILE NUMBER 19-036040
One of Plaintiff's Attorneys
Published in The Boone County Journal Jan 17, 24, 31

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF BOONE - BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS
PNC BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION;
Plaintiff,
vs. 18 CH 100

CYNTHIA SUTHERIN, AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR ROBERT M. FOTH; JAMES FOTH; PETER FOTH; WILLIAM FOTH; UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES OF ROBERT M. FOTH; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS; Defendants,
NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercounty Judicial Sales Corporation will on Thursday, February 27, 2020, at the hour of 12:15 p.m. inside the front entrance of the Boone County Courthouse, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:

PARCEL 1: THE SOUTH SEVENTY-FIVE (75) FEET OF LOT ONE (1) IN BLOCK THREE (3) IN MATILDA WHITMAN'S SECOND ADDITION TO BELVIDERE, AS PLATTED AND RECORDED IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND STATE OF ILLINOIS. PARCEL 2: THE SOUTH SEVENTY-FIVE (75) FEET OF LOT THREE (3) IN MATILDA WHITMAN'S SECOND ADDITION TO THE TOWN OF BELVIDERE, AS PLATTED AND RECORDED IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND STATE OF ILLINOIS.

P.I.N. 05-26-333-011.
Commonly known as 510 Franklin St., Belvidere, IL 61008.
The improvement on the property consists of a single family residence. If the subject mortgaged real estate is a unit of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Condominium Property Act.

Sale terms: 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection.

For information call Ms. Kimberly S. Reid at Plaintiff's Attorney, Marinosci Law Group, PC, 134 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602. (312) 940-8580.
13142843
Published in The Boone County Journal Jan 17, 24, 31

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. SCHAEZLEIN AND DOROTHY M. SCHAEZLEIN, 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 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/or 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.

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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

STATE OF ILLINOIS IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY
IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF Brooklyn Marie Martinez
Case No.2020-MR-12

NOTICE OF FILING PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE
Notice is hereby given, that on March 10, 2020, at 10:00 am, I will present a Petition requesting that the Court change her present name of Brooklyn Marie Martinez, to the name of Liam Phoenix Martinez. The hearing will take place at the Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, IL 61008 Courtroom #3
Published in the Boone County Journal 01/17, 24, 31

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 Count 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
attorneypopp@aol.com

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

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A Public Notice is an important tool in assuring an informed citizenry; a conduit of information from the government to the public. Notices are mandated by legislatures to make sure there is a public window into the activities of governments, officers of the court and others holding a public trust. Among the most common types of public notices are: hearings, government budgets, notices of contract bids, foreclosures, probate notices, adoptions, and dissolution of marriages, name changes and assumed business names. There are four key elements to a public notice:

Independent: A public notice is published in a forum independent of the government, typically in a local newspaper.

Archivable: A public notice is archived in a secure and publicly available format.

Accessible: A public notice is capable of being accessed by all segments of society.

Verifiable: The public and the source of the notice can verify the notice was published, usually by an affidavit provided by the publisher.

Enabling an informed citizenry through newspaper public notices helped America to develop participatory democracy where it counts: where money is spent, policy is made and futures charted. Public notices by government and private parties are so tightly woven into the American fabric that many citizens may take them for granted. Located in easily found sections of the newspapers, public notices reach out to interested readers, leading them to opportunities. Voices are expressed on taxation, communities are formed around planned public improvements, and assets are saved from loss to unworthy creditors – all as a result of public notices.

Public Notice Network

Pritzker Signs Bill Capping Insulin Costs

Patients to pay no more than \$100 for 30-day supply under state-regulated insurance plans

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

Democratic Gov. JB Pritzker signed a bill into law Friday capping the out-of-pocket cost of prescription insulin for many people in Illinois.

Senate Bill 667, sponsored by Sen. Andy Manar, a Bunker Hill Democrat, caps the cost at \$100 for a 30-day supply, a significant reduction for many diabetes patients currently paying hundreds of dollars per month for the life-saving medication.

The law takes effect Jan. 1, 2021. Each year after that, insurers are allowed to raise the out-of-pocket cost by the rate of health care inflation.

“Diabetes affects people from all walks of life. It doesn’t discriminate between those who can afford medication and unconscionable costs and those who cannot,” Pritzker said during a bill-signing ceremony at a public health clinic in Springfield.

Megan Blair, a diabetes patient from Harristown, said she has frequently been forced to ration her insulin supply because she couldn’t afford the \$1,800 per month she was being charged.

“I’ve been in and out of the hospital, close to being in a diabetic coma more than once due to not taking my medication like I should – not because I wanted to, but because I had no choice but to ration the insulin I did have,” she said.

Diabetes affects more than 30 million people in the United States, including an estimated 1.3 million in Illinois. According to the American Diabetes Association, it’s a condition in which the body does not properly regulate its blood sugar level, either because it doesn’t produce its own insulin, known as Type 1 diabetes, or because the body doesn’t use insulin properly, which is Type 2 diabetes.

All patients with Type 1 diabetes, and many with Type 2, rely on regular insulin injections. Without them, they can suffer severe health consequences, and even death. But the price of insulin has been skyrocketing in recent years, nearly tripling between 2002 and 2013, according to the ADA.

With the signing of SB 667, Illinois became only the third state to cap out-of-pocket insulin prices. The law applies to people who are covered by health plans subject to state regulation. That includes most kinds of private insurance, the state Medicaid plan and the state employees’ health plan.

It does not, however, apply to self-insured plans, which many large companies with thousands of employees offer. Those plans are regulated under federal law.

The law also does not limit what prices insulin manufacturers are allowed to charge for the medication. It controls only how much of an out-of-pocket cost insurers can require patients to pay, essentially shifting a greater share of the cost onto insurance companies.

“I think one thing that we’ve all recognized in this process is there are an awful lot of middlemen that have caused a spike in the price and they need to work out among themselves how they’re going to deal with that change,” Pritzker said.

The law also calls on the Illinois Department of Insurance and the Department of Human Services to conduct a study of insulin pricing practices and the variables that contribute to the pricing of health insurance plans. The agencies are supposed to submit a report on that study by Nov. 1, along with other policy recommendations to control the cost of prescription insulin.

Comptroller, Treasurer Talk State’s Fiscal State

Fiscal officers, budgeteer stress importance of balanced budget

by Rebecca Anzel Capitol News Illinois

Illinois’ top fiscal and investment officers touted some of the economic policy initiatives laid out by Gov. JB Pritzker in his State of the State speech Wednesday and stressed the importance of continuing to balance the budget.

The credit ratings agencies’ view that Illinois has better financial stability than it did a year ago means “more dollars are going into our roads and bridges and our schools than into Wall Street bankers’ pockets,” Treasurer Michael Frerichs said.

Ethics reforms will ensure state officials are “always looking for the opportunity to stand up for taxpayers and to be an advocate for them,” Comptroller Susana Mendoza said. Her office is backing measures to address the current “corrupt” red light camera system and eliminate the “exit bonus” some lawmakers get when they leave office.

And while it is “good to see a governor talking about positive aspects of our state,” Frerichs said, “it’s clear we have financial issues that will need to be addressed.”

He said his office is “doing what we can to help out.” It increased the amount of interest money

Illinois’ investment accounts generated from \$49 million when he took office to \$340 million last year. It also instituted programs designed to help residents save for college and retirement.

Mendoza said the implementation of the Debt Transparency Act, which the General Assembly approved in 2017 on a bipartisan basis, “helped open up the books” and “tackle the financial crisis” caused when Illinois ran more than two years without a budget. With the information state agencies were mandated to send her office, it was able to address outstanding bills.

“The more we know about our condition, good news

and bad news, the easier it is going to be for us to actually collectively work together to move the ball forward for Illinoisans,” she said.

Frerichs said the next step is hearing whether Pritzker has “a plan to make sure we continue to have a balanced budget and we’re able to pay down our backlog of bills.”

Mahomet Republican Sen. Chapin Rose, who is one of the Senate GOP’s top budgeteers, agreed with that sentiment. Still, Rose said despite the “rosy view” of Illinois’ financial footing described by the governor, he thinks “we’re in a pause in the crisis, if you will, a sort of calm before the storm.”

Based on Pritzker’s five-year projected financial plan, Rose said he expects the upcoming budget to have a \$1.8 billion gap.

“I think that the first stop in fiscal restraint is stop digging the hole. Any new spending should be paused for the next fiscal year,” he said. “We won’t know what, if anything, the governor is proposing to do until (his budget address), although he’s hinted and he certainly made promises on some of those.”



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