

DAILY NEWS

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COMMUNITY | **A2**

LLC club raises money for GED testing



SPORTS | **B1**

Stage is set for Christmas Classic final

EffinghamDailyNews.com

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2024

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IN MEMORY

• Gerald M. Borries
 Obituaries, **Page A4**
 To submit an obituary, visit obituaries.
 effinghamdailynews.com.

WEATHER



Today: Remaining cloudy and mild. High of 55.

Tomorrow: Remaining cloudy and mild. Periods of rain. High of 50.

Full report, **Page A3**

ONLINE



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SUBMIT NEWS

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- sports@effinghamdailynews.com
- 217-347-7152

INSIDE

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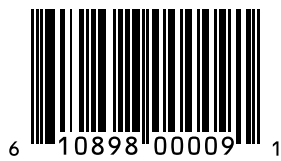
HISTORY

Today is Saturday, Dec. 28, the 363rd day of 2024. There are three days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: 2014, the U.S. war in Afghanistan came to a formal end after 13 years with a quiet flag-lowering ceremony in Kabul that marked the transition of the fighting from U.S.-led combat troops to the country's own security forces.

On this date:

- **In 1895,** the Lumiere brothers, Auguste and Louis, held the first public showing of their films in Paris.
- **In 1945,** Congress officially recognized the Pledge of Allegiance.
- **In 1981,** Elizabeth Jordan Carr, the first American "test-tube" baby, was born in Norfolk, Virginia.
- **In 1991,** nine people died in a crush of people trying to get into a celebrity charity basketball game at City College in New York.



Submitted photos

North Clay eighth graders Ali Boose and Charlee Wendling discuss the assembly manual as Colton Cummins prepares the solar charge controller for wiring.

Lighting the way for learning

North Clay students share solar power with students in Uganda

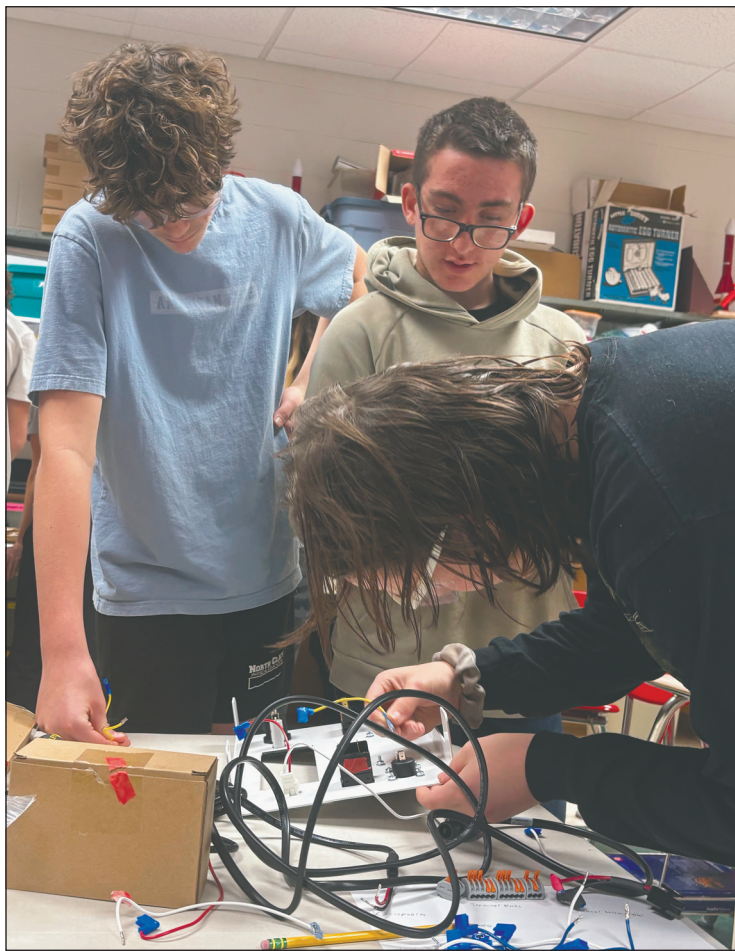
CATHY GRIFFITH
 DAILY NEWS

LOUISVILLE — Junior high students at North Clay School District are helping students in Africa by building a solar suitcase that will light the way for learning.

North Clay is one of 13 schools in the state participating in the We Share Solar program. Launched for the first time in Illinois this year, the program offers a unique science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educational experience that combines solar STEM education with real-world impact to engage and inspire students to become the next generation of "Solar Solutionaries."

North Clay science teacher Adam Frederick learned the program was seeking applicants and applied last year. The school was then chosen to build one of many portable 12-volt DC solar suitcases that will bring electricity to people at Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement in northwestern Uganda — the second largest refugee settlement in the world. The settlement has 270,000 South Sudanese refugees and no electricity in its 40 schools. Once assembled, the suitcases are powerful enough to illuminate two to three classrooms and charge devices such as mobile phones or tablets.

It is the first time the school has participated in such a project,



North Clay eighth graders Bryson Frost, Jerry Flemming and Max Tinsley follow a diagram to wire the We Share Solar Suitcase.

according to Frederick, who is trying to build out science and STEM projects at the school. Frederick said he jumped at the opportunity because it has a global impact on a lot of people.

"It shows our students real-life skills and things they can apply,

and what they're doing in the classroom can affect people outside the classroom," he said.

After Thanksgiving, the school received six training cases and one to be sent to Uganda. Frederick said

See **LEARNING** on A4

Officials seek to boost renewables, energy storage

ANDREW ADAMS
 CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

When you flip the switch, the lights come on.

But in Illinois, after years of sweeping reforms to the energy industry and growing demand for electricity, that premise is coming into question.

Several experts — including those involved in crafting the state's energy reform, current and former regulators, and those in the renewable energy industry — are warning that prices will spike this summer and rolling blackouts could become necessary in the coming years. That is, unless the state takes action to make sure enough electricity is available — in the right place and at the right times of day.

"If we don't continue finding other ways of energy — making sure we can store it in some way — we're going to see that supply and demand kind of thing," Rep. Barbara Hernandez, an Aurora Democrat and sponsor of a bill to incentivize energy storage, told Capitol News Illinois. "We'll see a lot of demand, but the supply will not be there and it's going to create a lot of blackouts in our communities. But also, our families are going to be paying the price and we're going to see an increase in utilities."

Several factors contribute to the concern over the grid's future. A growing number of data centers in the U.S. and in Illinois are demanding massive amounts of energy. The state's fossil fuel industry is — by design — in decline. And backlogs at regional grid operators have delayed renewable electricity generation from coming online.

The state also isn't bringing renewable energy online quickly enough, according to a lead sponsor of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act — Gov. JB Pritzker's marquee climate legislation that seeks to decarbonize the state's electric grid by 2045.

"We in Illinois are behind on our goals for renewable generation," Sen. Bill Cunningham, D-Chicago, told Capitol News Illinois.

Lawmakers, meanwhile, are hurriedly working to find solutions that could be rolled out quickly to keep electricity reliable and affordable.

A short lame duck legislative session tentatively planned for Jan. 4-7 could become an energy policy battleground with long-term consequences. But the tight timeline could cause the legislative process to drag into Springfield's regular session as a new General Assembly is sworn in on Jan. 8.

See **ENERGY** on A3



Andrew Adams | Capitol News Illinois

Sen. Bill Cunningham, D-Chicago, listens during a legislative committee hearing last year.

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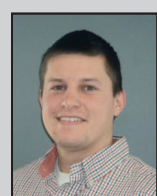
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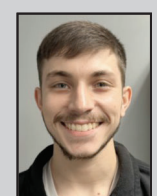
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RECORDS

Warren Upton, the oldest living survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor, dies at 105

AUDREY MCAVOY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONOLULU — Warren Upton, the oldest living survivor of the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the last remaining survivor of the USS Utah, has died. He was 105.

Upton died Wednesday at a hospital in Los Gatos, California, after suffering a bout of pneumonia, said Kathleen Farley, the California state chair of the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors.

The Utah, a battleship, was moored at Pearl Harbor when Japanese planes began bombing the Hawaii naval base in the early hours of Dec. 7, 1941, in an attack that propelled the U.S. into World War II.

Upton told The Associated



Shae Hammond | Associated Press

Warren Upton sits for a portrait with his daughter Barbara Upton at his home in San Jose, Calif., on Friday, Nov. 26, 2021.

Press in 2020 that he had been getting ready to shave when he felt the first torpedo

hit the Utah. He recalled that no one on board knew what made the ship shake. Then,

the second torpedo hit and the ship began to list and capsiz.

The then-22-year-old swam ashore to Ford Island, where he jumped in a trench to avoid Japanese planes strafing the area. He stayed for about 30 minutes until a truck came and took him to safety.

Upton said he didn't mind talking about what happened during the attack. Instead, what upset him was that he kept losing shipmates over the years. By 2020, there were only three crew members of the Utah still alive, including himself.

There were an estimated 87,000 military personnel on Oahu on the day of the attack, according to military historian J. Michael Wenger. After Upton's death, there are only 15 still alive.

OBITUARIES

Gerald M. Borries Teutopolis

Gerald M. Borries, 75 of Teutopolis, passed away Wednesday, December 25, 2024 at Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana.

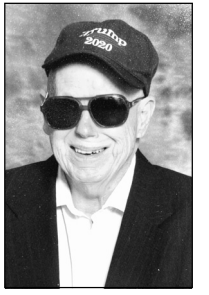
A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 9:00 am Tuesday, December 31, 2024 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Teutopolis with burial in St. Francis Cemetery. Visitation will be held from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Monday at Bauer Funeral Home in Effingham. Memorial donations may be given to the Family Life Center.

Gerald was born July 7, 1949 in Teutopolis, the son of Joseph E. "Specs" and Harriet C. "Sis" (Pruemer) Borries. He married Mary L. Roberts on July 6, 1985. Gerald was a member of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Teutopolis and the St. Francis Men's Sodality. He was a strong supporter of the Right to Life movement and of President Donald J. Trump.

Gerald's passion for tractors led to a large collection. Despite his blindness, it did not stop him from working on the family's farm, seed corn business, and tractors.

Gerald is survived by his wife, Mary; daughter, Lisa (Josh) Hutson; grandchildren, Remington and Isabella; brothers, Thomas and Leonard, all of Teutopolis; uncle, Gerald Pruemer of Effingham and special cousin, Tanner Pruemer.

Gerald was preceded in death by his parents.



Bill aims to reduce state requirements for name changes

ATMIKA IYER
MEDILL ILLINOIS
NEWS BUREAU

FOR CAPITOL
NEWS ILLINOIS

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois lawmakers in early January could consider easing requirements for residents to change their names, a move proponents say will reduce risks for victims of domestic abuse, transgender residents and others.

The measure must clear the full Senate in the first week of January to reach Gov. JB Pritzker's desk, otherwise it must go through the entire legislative process again after a new General Assembly convenes Jan. 8.

The bill, House Bill 5164, would eliminate an existing requirement to publish name changes with a local newspaper. It would also reduce the state residency requirement of people wanting to change their name from six months to three months.

"There are residents in our state who do not feel safe when they are an adoptee; they're transgender; they're an immigrant; they're a survivor of domestic violence, survivor of sexual exploitation and human trafficking," Sen. Ram Villivalam, the bill's sponsor and a Chicago Democrat, said in an interview. "So they would like to change their name, and in doing so, we need to remove as many bar-

riers as we can to ensure their health and safety."

The goal of the bill is to decrease threats to people who have endured domestic abuse, discrimination and other threats to their safety. Villivalam said 24 states have already eased this requirement. Planned Parenthood, Equality Illinois and Brave Space Alliance are pushing for the change.

But the Senate's top Republican, Sen. John Curran, R-Downers Grove, pushed back against the bill. He argued that impounding the records, meaning restricting access to them, should have a higher threshold.

Individuals are allowed to petition the court to impound records if they believe public disclosure would put them in harm's way. That process allows individuals to self-attest to hardships and says they may — but are not required to — submit documentation.

"Why make it permissive, rather than a requirement, to attach relevant documents to the petition," Curran said during a November committee meeting.

But Mike Ziri, the director of public policy at Equality Illinois, said impounded records don't disappear from court records and are not sealed, but rather are selectively available to the involved parties.

"So it's not a complete sealing. There will still be access to parties and by the clerk,

as well," Ziri said. "In my experience, working with communities, folks who say they've experiencing hardship and heartache, they're not making that up, and they want protection for very good reasons."

The Republicans who hold a minority in the state senate questioned whether noncitizens with a criminal record could change their names to evade legal consequences as a result of the lowered requirements for a name change.

"Is this creating a loophole for people who are here, who are criminals and part of things involved in the trafficking, involved in all of these nefarious activities that we've been reading about?" Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris, said.

Ziri said that the self-attestation was for impounding the court records of name changes, not to get the name change itself. Illinois law states that people on the sex offender registry, arsonists and violent offender against youth list are barred from seeking name changes. The exceptions are marriage, religious reasons, human trafficking or gender identity. He also said a name change still requires the signature of a judge, and the process can take months.

"Changing your name does not allow you to escape the criminal record. That was legislation that was passed two years ago," Ziri said. "That's

on top of the other requirement state police already have to check the criminal records with the name change granted months later."

Villivalam said this bill takes Illinois "another step forward" in ensuring the health and safety of residents.

"Now, more than ever — given the rise in hate and discrimination across the board — people you know feel targeted. So the legislative work that we can do to reassure them on their safety and health is part of our job," Villivalam said in an interview. "As people continue to feel the hate, feel the discrimination, get targeted, we need to continue to take these steps to make sure they feel healthy and safe."

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Most Americans blame insurance profits and denials alongside the killer in UHC CEO death, poll finds

LINLEY SANDERS, TOM MURPHY AND AMELIA THOMSON-DEVEAUX
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Most Americans believe health insurance profits and coverage denials share responsibility for the killing of UnitedHealthcare's CEO — although not as much as the person who pulled the trigger, according to a new poll.

In the survey from NORC at the University of Chicago, about 8 in 10 U.S. adults said the person who committed the killing has "a great deal" or "a moderate amount" of responsibility for the Dec. 4 shooting of Brian Thompson.

Despite that, some have cast Luigi Mangione, the 26-year-old suspect charged with Thompson's murder, as a heroic figure in the aftermath of his arrest, which gave rise to an outpouring of grievances about insurance companies. Police say the words "delay," "deny" and "depose" were scrawled on the ammunition investigators found at the scene, echoing a phrase commonly used to describe insurer tactics to avoid paying claims.

UnitedHealthcare has said Mangione was not a client.

About 7 in 10 adults say that denials for health care coverage by insurance companies, or the profits made by health insurance companies, also bear at least "a moderate amount" of responsibility for Thompson's death. Younger Americans are particularly likely to see the murder as the result of a confluence of forces rather than just one person's action.

While Frederick considers the school's science program "pretty hands-on," he said that very important to them to see that they don't have to wait until they've graduated and had a bunch of training to start applying these things outside the classroom," he said.

"They're taking what we've learned in class and seeing it being applied directly to affect somebody else's life, and I find that very important to them to see that they don't have to wait until they've graduated and had a bunch of training to start applying these things outside the classroom," he said.

Bell likes that the project not only gets kids more involved but also combines learning in both science and language writing.

"Students just learn so much more when we can engage them across the subject line," she said.

She added the students also really enjoyed doing it.

"I saw a lot of kids — not to be cheesy — but light up at getting to create something like this and knowing that they're really putting something out there that's going to help someone else besides them. You see them really grow and learn from that," she said.

Cathy Griffith can be reached at cathy.griffith@effinghamdailynews.com or 618-510-9180.

care said this month that it pays about 90% of medical claims when they are submitted. The insurer has not provided details about how many claims that involves.

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, BLAME IS SPREAD EQUALLY BETWEEN INSURERS AND THE KILLER

Americans under 30 are especially likely to think a mix of factors is to blame for Thompson's death. They say that insurance company denials and profits are about as responsible as Thompson's killer for his death. About 7 in 10 U.S. adults between 18 and 29 say "a great deal" or "a moderate amount" of responsibility falls on profits made by health insurance companies, denials for health care coverage by health insurance companies or the person who committed the killing.

Young people are also the least likely age group to say "a great deal" of responsibility falls on the person who committed the killing. Only about 4 in 10 say that, compared with about 6 in 10 between 30 and 59. Roughly 8 in 10 adults over 60 say that person deserves "a great deal" of responsibility.

About two-thirds of young people place at least a moderate level of blame on wealth or income inequality, in general.

People under 30 are more likely to place blame on the media, with 54% saying that compared with about one-third of older adults.

ABOUT 3 IN 10 STRUGGLED WITH COVERAGE FROM HEALTH INSURANCE IN THE LAST YEAR

Frustrations with health insurers, coverage and the complicated U.S. health care system have been simmering for years among patients.

About 3 in 10 Americans say they have had a problem getting coverage from their health insurer in the last year, whether those involved problems finding a suitable provider in-network, a claim getting denied or issues getting prior authorization or insurer approval before care happens. These struggles are more prevalent among Americans under 60.

UnitedHealthcare says prior authorizations help eliminate waste in the system and let people know whether care will be covered before it is delivered. It says less than 2% of the insurer's customers experience a denial of care from prior authorizations annually.

Roughly 3 in 10 in the poll say immediate family or close friends have experienced problems getting coverage from their health insurer in the last year. Americans under 30 are among the most likely to say they don't have health insurance.

LEARNING

CONTINUED FROM A1

it took about a week to build the solar cases; three days were spent assembling them. Students spent the rest of the time on projects that included taking voltage and amperage readings. The students completed the solar suitcases just before winter break.

Frederick said the students had some knowledge going into the project, having already studied circuitry and wiring, but with the project, they learned about solar power and how solar cells generate electricity. They also learned about teamwork, as the project required each student to perform a task within each group.

Eighth grader Jailyn Gaddy's job was builder.

"They would hand me tools, and I would have to put all the little pieces together for it," she said.

She found getting all the different wires in the right places challenging.

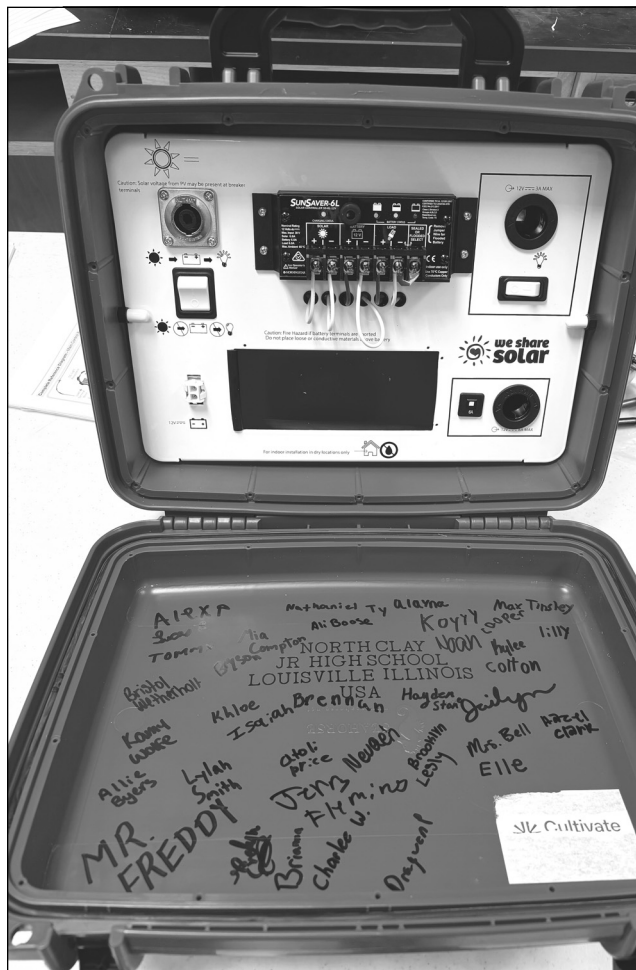
"If you didn't put it in the right little place, then it (light) wouldn't turn on," she said.

Eighth grader Charlee Wendling loves wiring. She served as project manager. Her task was reading the manual and instructing the other members of her group on how to build it.

Aside from learning how to build a solar suitcase, the two learned something else.

Gaddy figured some places in the world didn't have as much electricity as she is accustomed to, but to learn they had none surprised her.

"I was excited because I was learning that we were going to get to share light with kids that don't have any light at their school. We're very fortunate here to have so much light in most of our buildings," she said.



Submitted photo

North Clay junior high students signed this solar suitcase they are sending to Uganda to provide electricity to students in a refugee settlement.

As part of the project, the students wrote letters and created personalized artwork to send with the solar suitcase.

"The art really kind of showcases some beautiful things about what they learned about the students in Uganda and how that blends with our community as well," said English teacher Jessica Bell.

The artwork included agriculture that represented Illinois such as corn and pumpkins.

"We learned in Uganda they have different types of ag over there too and that we're, in a lot of cases, very similar," said

Bell.

The students also learned about refugee camps.

"My favorite part was probably learning about the refugee camps because I didn't really realize a lot of that stuff 'til I actually got taught about it," said Gaddy.

Gaddy also realized through the project the disparity that exists in different parts of the world.

"How some places can have more than others even though we're in the same world," she said.

The We Share Solar Suitcase will arrive in Uganda some-

time next year with others. The class will receive updates on where it goes and possibly responses from the students benefiting from it.

The school will continue with the program for the next three years. The program is funded through Cultivate Power, which manages solar farms in the state.

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