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**Wednesday, December 22, 2004**  
Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication

**P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942** **www.justthefacts.net**

## Police say man shot ailing spouse, then turned gun on self

A Hoopeston man shot his sick wife Tuesday morning, then shot himself.

Dead are 82-year-old Helen Baker and 79-year-old Barthel Baker, both of Hoopeston.

Police were called at 11:05 a.m. Tuesday by a family member. Mr. Baker told the relative he had shot his wife, said Hoopeston police Chief Mark Drollinger.

Police arrived at the home, in the 600 block of West Washington and while knocking and announcing themselves, heard another gunshot. They found the couple in the basement, Mr. Baker "lying at the foot of his deceased wife with the gun at his side," Drollinger said.

Mrs. Baker was pronounced dead at the scene, said Vermilion County Coroner Peggy Johnson.

Drollinger said Mrs. Baker had been shot at

least once. Drollinger declined to reveal the caliber of the weapon pending finalizing the investigation.

Mr. Baker was airlifted to Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana where he died at 3:35 p.m.

Autopsies are scheduled for Wednesday. Inquests will be held at a later date.

Drollinger said Mr. Baker had been upset over his wife's deteriorating health. Police had two contacts with the family in the last week after Mrs. Baker was seen wandering outside in her bedclothes. Mrs. Baker had been set to enter the nursing home, he said.

The couple had been married 48 years, Drollinger said.

The Vermilion County Sheriff's Department also assisted in the investigation.

## Citizens seek assistance in reversing R-A deactivation vote

ROSSVILLE—A group of local citizens want to reactivate Rossville-Alvin High School before it deactivates next July.

Approximately seven Rossville-Alvin residents attended Monday's Rossville Village Board meeting to request that the board's attorney be contacted for

information on how the citizens should proceed in getting a referendum on the April ballot to reactivate the school.

Speaking for the group, Gene Roach said the decision to deactivate will have a "most devastating and long-term economic impact" on the village. "Can we withstand this," he asked. "I don't think so."

According to Roach, many school district residents have said they would change their votes based on "information that has come to light."

Although Roach did not list the information, both he and fellow group member Marilyn Danner said school Superintendent Carl Sartwell and the school board used inflated figures to show the decline of Rossville-Alvin's financial state. Additionally, Danner said, Sartwell, in a letter to the editor to a local publication, cited incorrect information for the projected population of Vermilion

See VOTE on other side

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**Election of 2005**  
**Board and Officers**  
**Wednesday, Dec. 29**  
**7 p.m.**

**Vote** continued from other side

County. Sartwell cited declining numbers while, Danner said, a study of the Rossville-Alvin, Hoopeston Area and Bismarck-Henning districts predict stable or perhaps slight increases in student population.

Also, Roach said, the school survey was done prior to Rossville implementing a Tax Increment Financing district which may provide "even more positive growth."

Danner said the school board rushed in deciding to put deactivation on the Nov. 2 ballot, in April when they could have studied the information until August.

Danner said she spoke Friday with Dr. William Phillips, who conducted the survey of the school districts and he said Rossville-Alvin is in an unusual position because while deactivation passed in the election, a citizens' group might be able to get a reverse referendum on the April ballot.

"We're not asking this board to tackle this issue," Roach said in requesting assistance from the village attorney. However, he said, time is short and the group is working within a two to three week window to get the question on the ballot. "I'll accept defeat on a fair playing field," he said. "That's not what we had."

While some trustees verbally supported the group's efforts, they were hesitant to spend taxpayer dollars on it. "We're elected to provide services but that doesn't include education," said trustee Vic Lackey. "That's using taxpayer money other than how it's supposed to be."

Trustee Mike Clutter said he voted against deactivation and would help the but did not favor using village funds to pay for one. Elected to represent all

village residents, "I don't have all village residents' opinions," he said. "Outside this board, I'll do everything I can to help you."

Mayor Terry Prillaman told the group school law is a specialty and the group might be better served talking to an attorney specializing in the area.

The request to seek guidance from the village attorney received two yes votes, from trustees Mark Catron and Kay Ritter. The remaining members, including Richard Birkey and Robert Merritt, passed.

In unrelated action, trustees unanimously approved raising license application fees. New fees will be \$60 per gaming machine; liquor licenses, class A \$600; B, \$350; C, \$1,750; and D, \$800. The tobacco license was increased to \$300.

In unrelated action, the board:

- set the gas price at 86 cents per therm
- approved the tax levy, expected to generate \$21,562, up about \$1,000 from last year's levy.

## Police News



A 45-year-old Hoopeston man reported Monday that someone broke a window. Police investigated and found the window was broken by a paintball. The damage occurred in the 200 block of North Market.

## Weather



Snow likely today and tonight. High 21, low 7. Tomorrow, partly cloudy. High 16, low 1.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

**Just the Facts**

will not be printed

**Monday, Dec. 27.**

Publication will

resume Tuesday.



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