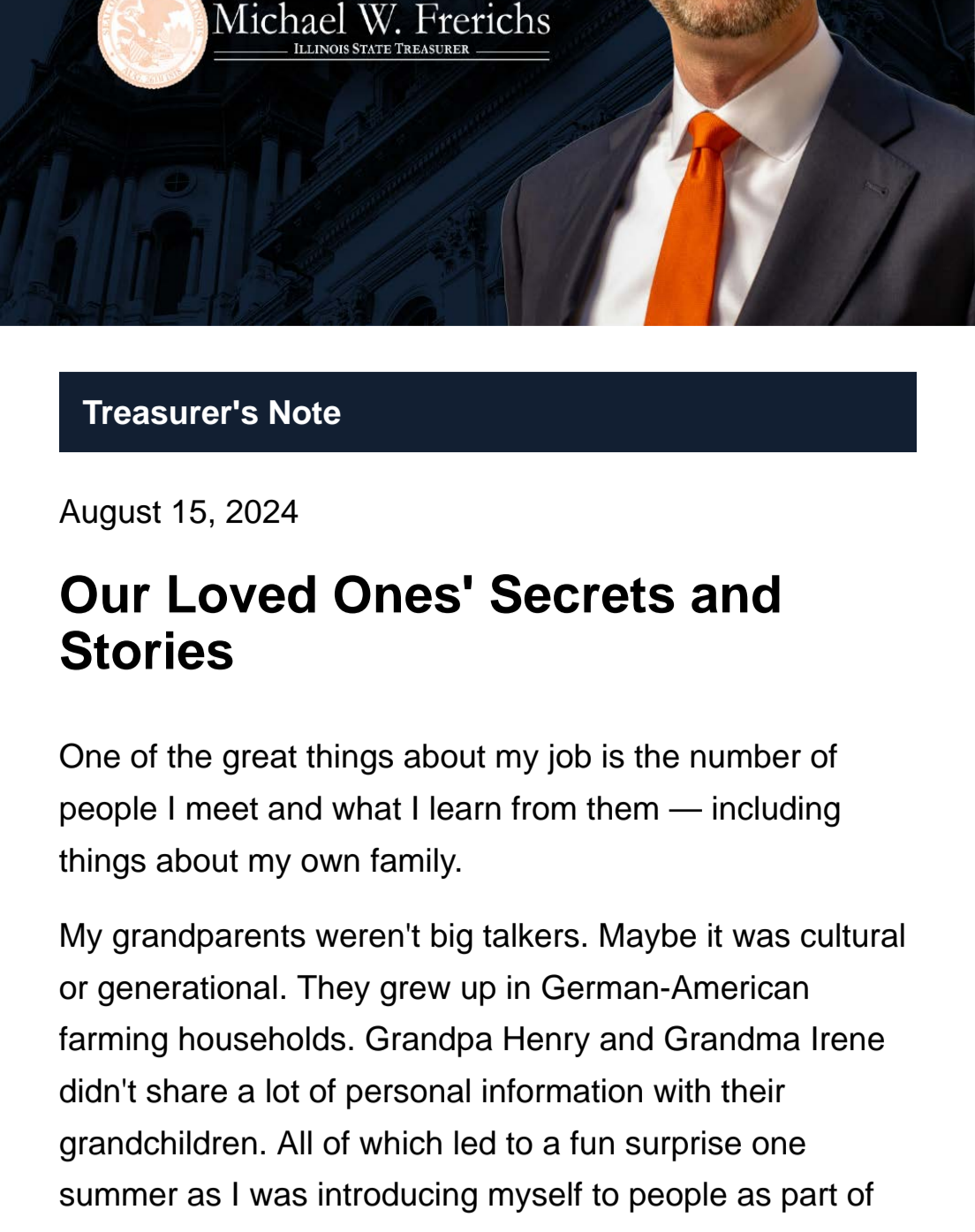


Going once, going twice, and after Saturday, it's gone!

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Treasurer's Note

August 15, 2024

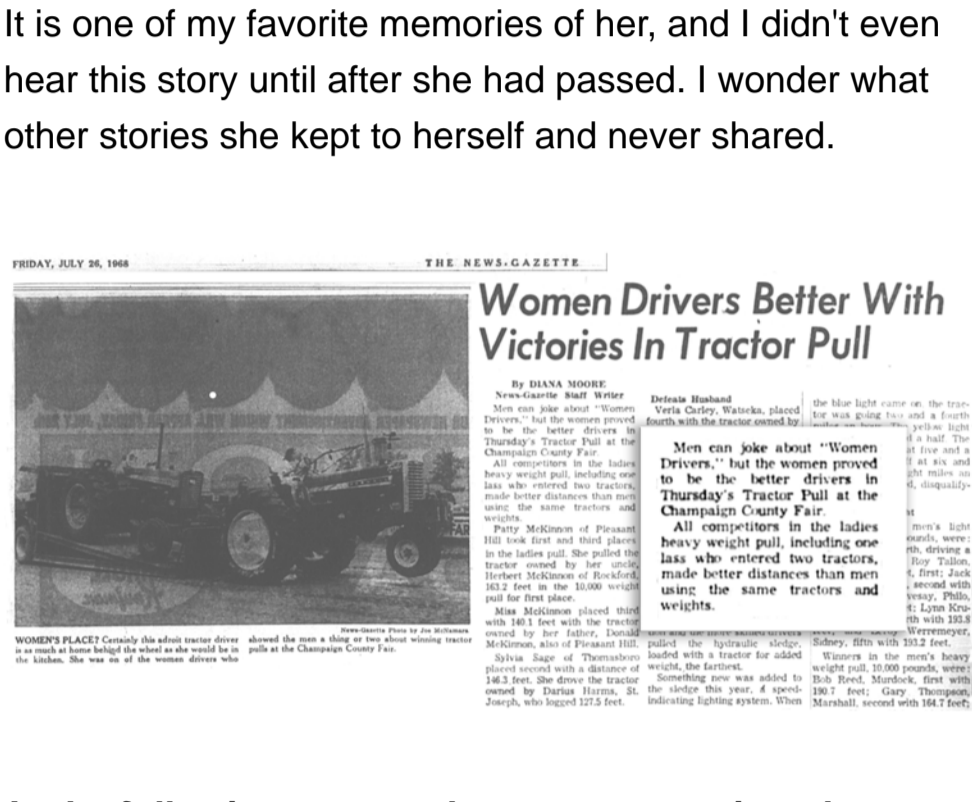
Our Loved Ones' Secrets and Stories

One of the great things about my job is the number of people I meet and what I learn from them — including things about my own family.

My grandparents weren't big talkers. Maybe it was cultural or generational. They grew up in German-American farming households. Grandpa Henry and Grandma Irene didn't share a lot of personal information with their grandchildren. All of which led to a fun surprise one summer as I was introducing myself to people as part of my job.

"I know who you are," one gentleman replied. "I know your grandparents and was friends with them."

We got to talking, and he revealed one story I had never heard before. He told me that my Grandma was the first woman to compete against the men in the Champaign County Fair tractor pull.



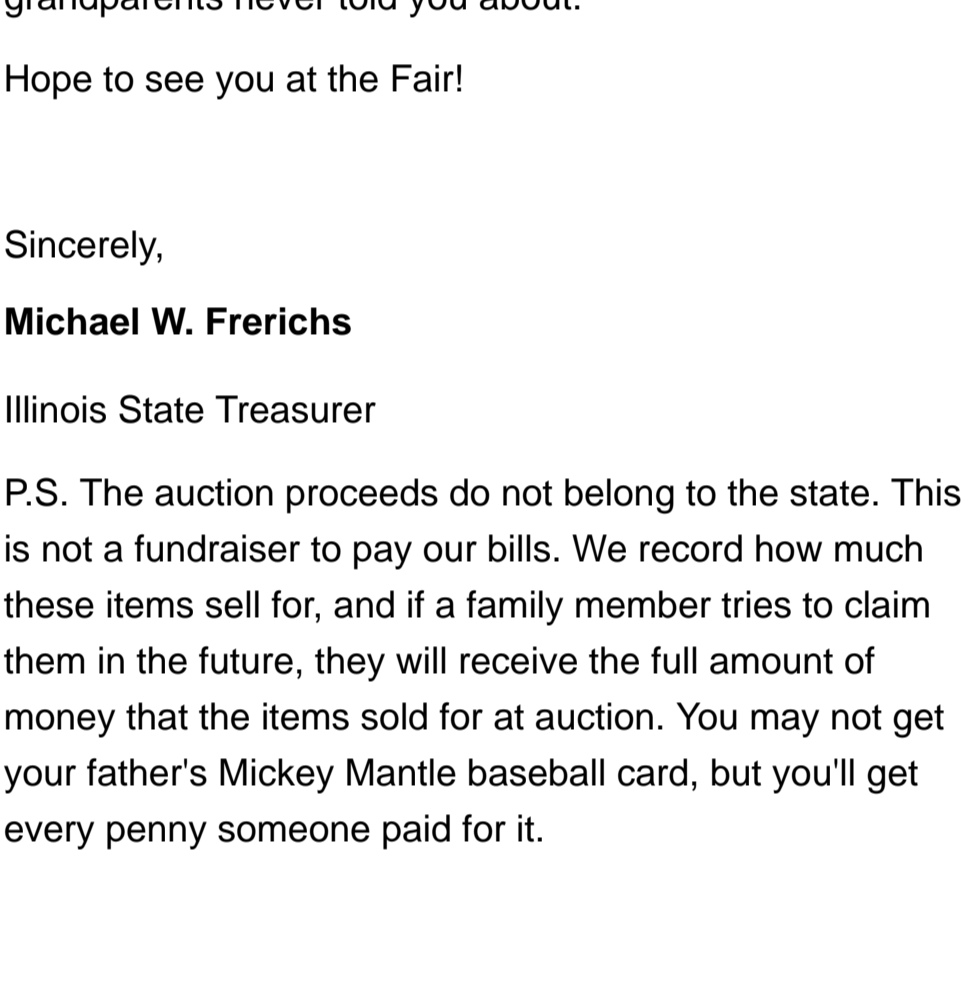
We have lost the picture of Grandma driving the tractor belching smoke, but here is one of Grandpa holding me while he sits next to Grandma. I don't know what was said, but my brother seems pretty happy.

For those of you unfamiliar with a tractor pull, it's a competition where a driver sits behind the wheel of a tractor pulling a metal sled loaded with a bunch of weight. The winner is the one who pulls the sled the farthest. No women had competed with the men at that time.

My Grandpa did most of the work in the fields, but Grandma also would help out. One cold fall, he worked well into the night to get a crop out of the field. When Grandpa couldn't go anymore, he climbed into bed. Grandma got up and took over on the tractor.

Another local farmer, Bud Miles, knew how hard she worked and how good she was on a tractor. One night at a local bar, he insisted that she drive his tractor in the men's competition. The next summer Grandma was sitting on a tractor belching smoke at the County Fair.

It is one of my favorite memories of her, and I didn't even hear this story until after she had passed. I wonder what other stories she kept to herself and never shared.



In the following years, other women continued to show their skills on tractors, competing in a ladies' division. You can see from this article that the way we talk about women has evolved since the 1960s.

Grandma was far from alone in not talking about herself. Many of our parents and grandparents didn't share all of their stories and secrets with us, especially when it came to money and valuables.

Those conversations can be difficult, and many people are private about financial matters. That is why after people have died, so much money is turned over to the State Treasurer's Office where [unclaimed property](#) is kept (you may know it as the I-CASH or the missing money).

Surviving family members just don't know where all of their family property was stored, and we try to return as much of it as possible to them. So far, we've returned a [record-setting \\$2 billion](#) during my time in office.

Our parents and grandparents also leave valuables in bank safe deposit boxes. If they didn't tell their families about them, they often end up getting turned over to my office. We search for the owners or their heirs for about 10 years, but our vaults eventually start to fill up, and we have to make room for new items. We do that by holding auctions, and then we hold the proceeds in a fund should we eventually locate the rightful owners or heirs.

Our next auction will be this Saturday at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield at 11 a.m. on the Lincoln Stage. Among the 250 groups of items up for sale are a woman's 18-karat yellow gold Rolex Oyster watch, Mike Singletary and Troy Aikman football cards, uncut sheets of American currency, and scores of collectible coins, bills, and bars of precious metals. More information is available in our [press release](#), and you can watch a short preview video on our [YouTube channel](#).

If you are interested, please stop by. A professional auctioneer will be running the proceedings, but he usually lets me [try my hand](#) auctioning an item or two. We have many interesting treasures for gifts for both collectors and the hard-to-buy-for.

If you can't make our auction, please check out [our website](#) and search for your name and family members' names to see if we have missing money for you to claim. Don't miss out on money that your parents or grandparents never told you about.

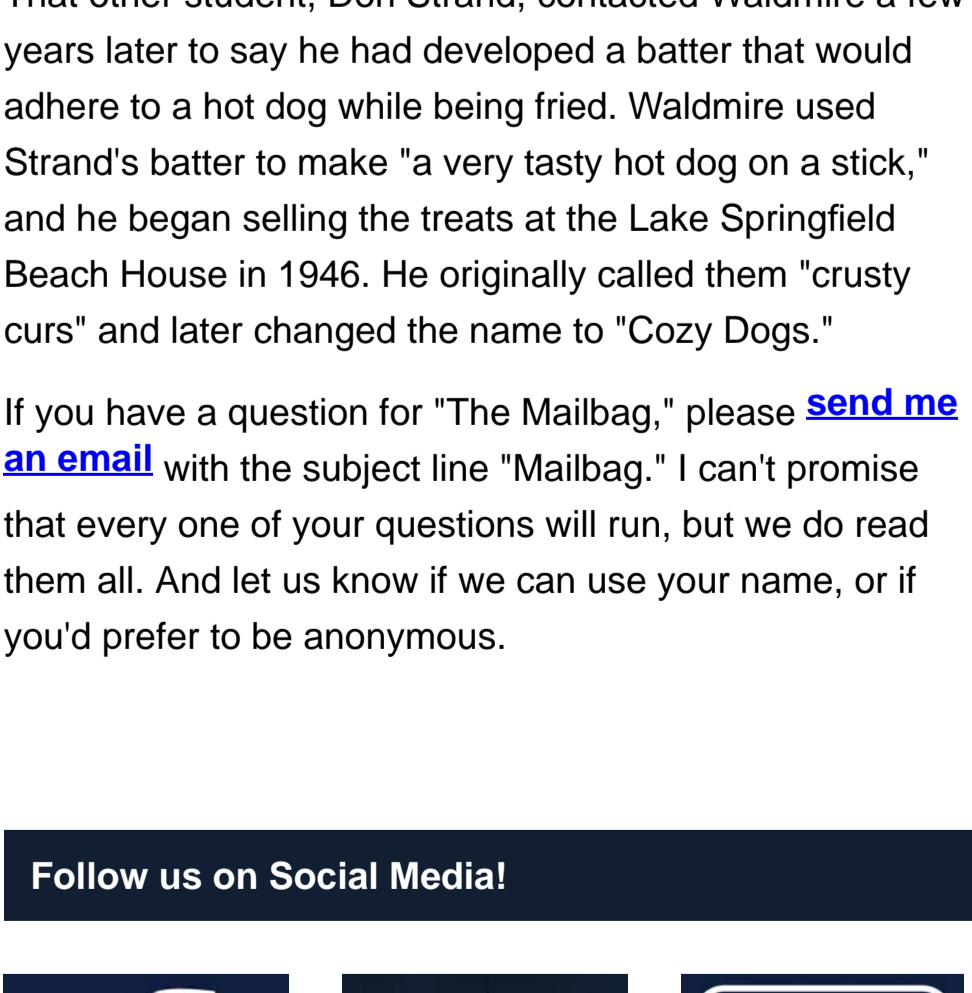
Hope to see you at the Fair!

Sincerely,

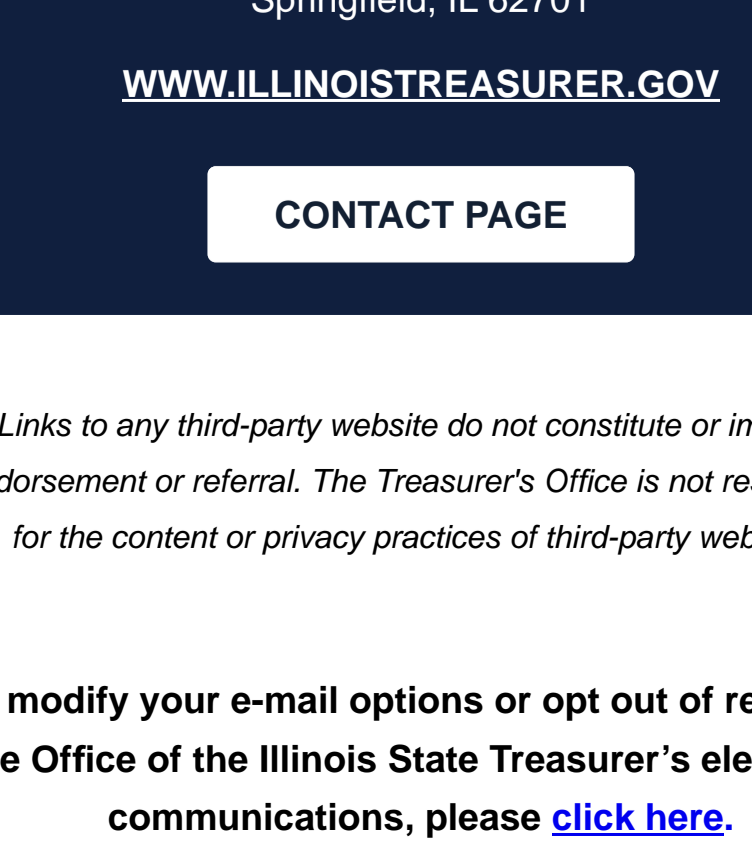
Michael W. Frerichs

Illinois State Treasurer

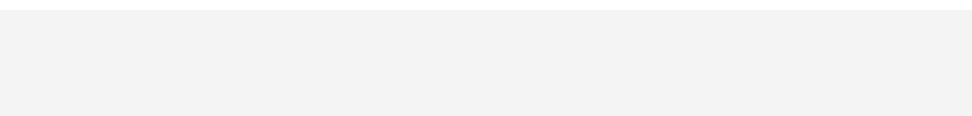
P.S. The auction proceeds do not belong to the state. This is not a fundraiser to pay our bills. We record how much these items sell for, and if a family member tries to claim them in the future, they will receive the full amount of money that the items sold for at auction. You may not get your father's Mickey Mantle baseball card, but you'll get every penny someone paid for it.



Congratulations to our First Place 2024 Cream of the Crop Winners!
Please come see all our winners displayed at our tent during the Illinois State Fair!



"County Fair" by Lily D. of Indianola won first place, ages 11-14.



"Golden Fields" by Chase S. of Forsyth won first place, ages 8-10.

"The Beauty in Planting" by Adan S. of Plano won first place, ages 15-18.

THE MAILBAG

Welcome to "The Mailbag," which is your opportunity to ask me about topics like our programs, other state government functions, or anything else that interests you.

Q: Treasurer, I'm excited to go to the Illinois State Fair. I've heard the corn dog was invented in Springfield. Is that true? —**Anonymous**

A: It's hard to know for sure. But the Cozy Dog Drive-In restaurant in Springfield describes itself as the home of the "original" hot dog on a stick.

According to the restaurant's [website](#), Ed Waldmire Jr. told a fellow Knox College student in 1941 that he'd seen a "corn-dog" sandwich in Muskogee, Oklahoma. It consisted of a hot dog baked in cornbread. "The corn-dog was very good, but took too long to prepare. The problem was how to cover a hot dog with batter and cook it in a short time," Waldmire remembered years later.

That other student, Don Strand, contacted Waldmire a few years later to say he had developed a batter that would adhere to a hot dog while being fried. Waldmire used Strand's batter to make "a very tasty hot dog on a stick," and he began selling the treats at the Lake Springfield Beach House in 1946. He originally called them "crusty curs" and later changed the name to "Cozy Dogs."

If you have a question for "The Mailbag," please [send me an email](#) with the subject line "Mailbag." I can't promise that every one of your questions will run, but we do read them all. And let us know if we can use your name, or if you'd prefer to be anonymous.

Follow us on Social Media!

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[CONTACT PAGE](#)

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