Checking his list

Lily and Ava Manella wave from the lap of Santa as they sit for their photo at Golf Mill Shopping Center in Niles on Nov. 17. | JON LANGHAM-for Sun-Times Media

Read the full story [Page 5]
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Lily and Ava Manella wave from the lap of Santa as they sit for their photo at Golf Mill Shopping Center in Niles on Nov. 17. | JON LANGHAM-for Sun-Times Media

Checking his list

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Cover Story

Santa's sleigh lands at Golf Mill

By Tracy Gruen | Contributor

Niles

As the jolly man with the snow-white beard and bright red suit pulled up on a fire truck, children and adults cheered loudly.

Like an awaited celebrity, Santa Claus arrived at Golf Mill Shopping Center in Niles on Saturday, Nov. 17 during the 3rd annual Festival of Trees that raises money for the Maine Township Food Pantry.

A large group of children wearing elf hats waited anxiously with their families for Santa's big arrival which signaled the unofficial kick-off of the Christmas season.

Desiree and Dominique Nunez couldn't wait for Santa to arrive. "This is a tradition for us," said their father, David Nunez. "It's very important."

Nunez brings his girls, ages 7 and 8, to Golf Mill to meet Santa every holiday season. Desiree is hoping that Santa brings her an iPad and a Rapunzel doll this year, while Dominique would like an iPad and a cotton-candy machine. Both girls also have a new computer on their wish list.

"This is my wife's favorite holiday and one of the kids' favorite holidays, too," said Nunez.

Hanna Rychlicki, 4, and brother Mikolaj, 6, of Des Plaines, were also waiting with their dad patiently for Santa to arrive and talk to them. "I want a carriage for my dolls," said Hanna Rychlicki, a huge smile on her face.

"I want a plane that I can control," Mikolaj Rychlicki said.

Kasia Potoniec brought her sons Jacob, who is in fourth-grade, and Adrian, who is in second-grade, to the mall to see Santa. Jacob was hoping to get a PSP Go video game system and Adrian wanted "a million dollars."

But a visit from Santa wasn't just exciting for the kids.

Adult Bobby Beckley, who came to the event by himself, said he never fails to miss an appearance by Santa at Golf Mill.
I love to see the children,” said Beckley, who helps handicapped children ride horses in his free time.

The large crowd of Santa’s fans followed him inside the mall for the tree-lighting ceremony and a parade to the food court.

“Santa, we welcome you to Niles,” Niles Mayor Robert Callero announced upon Santa’s arrival. The mayor also encouraged the crowd to return to the mall to do their Christmas shopping.

Monika Kalicki, marketing director of Golf Mill Shopping Center, said that last year the mall collected about 3,018 food items for the Maine Township Food Pantry during the Festival of Trees event and she said they hoped to surpass that amount this year.

The 11 organizations and businesses that participated in the tree decorating contest were the Niles Chamber of Commerce, Parents and Teacher Association of Ignacy J. Paderewski Polish School of Niles, Gordon Food Service Market Place, Niles Fire Department, Niles Police Department, Maine Township, the Niles Public Library, Edward Jones, St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, St. John Lutheran Church and Ross Dress for Less.

The kids were given candy canes, goody bags, posters, cookies and refreshments and parents took home booklets with various coupons to stores at Golf Mill.

Santa will be meeting with children through Dec. 24 in Golf Mill’s center court. Hours are 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturdays, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays.
Niles Village Manager George Van Geem sent an e-mail to village officials Nov. 20, announcing that he has submitted his resignation as village manager.

"It gives Niles a fresh start," Van Geem told Pioneer Press this week. Van Geem is headed to Skokie where he will take on the position of finance director for the village. His final day as Niles village manager is Dec. 7. He will begin his new job Dec. 10.

"It's a terrific opportunity to join a village with a great reputation," said Van Geem, noting his friendship with Skokie Village Manager Al Rigoni.

Van Geem's resignation came nearly one year after trustees offered him a buyout to leave his position. Van Geem rejected the offer. At the May Village Board meeting trustees voted 4-2 not to reappoint Van Geem as village manager. Mayor Robert Callero then appointed Van Geem acting village manager and said he would continue to reappoint him to that role as long as he was mayor.

Van Geem has been the village manager of Niles for the past seven years and was the village's finance director prior to that.

"We've accomplished a lot in my 20 years here and I know the village will remain strong and proud long after I'm gone," Van Geem wrote in his resignation e-mail.

Van Geem said that Niles is financially solid and has a good group of employees working for the village.

Trustee Rosemary Palicki said she was surprised by Van Geem's resignation.

"Although the board had recommended not rehiring George last spring, I had no indication that he was looking elsewhere," Palicki said.

She added that a search for a new manager "will give us the opportunity as a board to define the strengths and qualities we envision as beneficial to carry Niles forward."

Trustee Jim Hynes, one of the trustees who had offered Van Geem a buyout, said he believed the village manager had been looking for a new position "for a long time."

"It makes sense given the tension that has been there for so long," Hynes said.

Mayor Callero could not be reached Monday.

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Heart attack survivor reflects on life-saving new treatment

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

NILES

Bob Raminak, 67, says it's a miracle that he is alive today. The long-time Niles resident recently had a heart attack and his heart was defibrillated six times. When he arrived at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge he received total body hypothermia, a new treatment that lowers the body temperature in order to slow down body processes and preserve brain tissue. This new treatment gave the cardiac team more time to perform an emergency cardiac catheterization, saving Raminak's life.

Q: How would you describe the experience that you went through?
A: I had a heart attack while I was at home. I was not feeling well and all of a sudden it came about. I went to a different hospital earlier that day before. I remember driving with my wife to that other hospital, but I don't remember being there for a couple hours. I don't remember coming home. The last thing I remember is when I woke up in the hospital.

Q: Would you refer to your survival as a medical miracle and, if so, why?
A: Without a question. They used a totally different procedure to bring me back. It was a new procedure and it worked. Everybody (from the paramedics to the cardiac team) had to do their job for me to be able to be here today.

Q: How did you feel when you woke up?
A: In light of the fact that I had no knowledge of what was going on before, and just to wake up in the hospital and say, “What am I doing here?” was quite an experience.

Q: How was it being reunited with the people who helped save your life?
A: That was a great experience because I was able to meet and thank all of the people that were involved in my recovery. It was really nice to see all the doctors and nurses and the paramedics and the police officer.

Q: How long did it take you to get back to a normal life?
A: I'm still in rehab. I go three times a week to Lutheran General for cardiac rehab. I'll be doing that for 12 weeks. I feel good. I feel that they accomplished two major things: they brought me back to life and got my heart working and they saved my brain.

Q: Did this experience change your life?
A: My wife just jumped right in and said, “We definitely need to change our eating habits.” We enjoyed eating and eating a lot of the stuff you shouldn't. I haven't had a cup of coffee in two months. I only drink decaffeinated tea, (I eat) lots of fruits and vegetables and no salt.

Q: How long have you lived in Niles?
A: Fifteen years

Q: What is your occupation?
A: I own an accounting firm in Niles. That in itself is therapy, too. You don't want to sit at home and watch TV all the time.

Q: You made a promise to your wife, Halina, a long time ago. Can you talk about that?
A: I love her very much. She's a part of me. She's very important to me. I told her, “I'll always be here for you. Don't worry about that.”
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Investigation continues into fatal Niles fire

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

NILES

It may take another few months to determine the cause of a fire that took the life of a 91-year-old man at a Niles assisted-living facility, according to officials.

Niles Fire Chief Steve Borkowski said private fire investigators are currently working on collecting more information about what started the Nov. 16 fire at The Park at Golf Mill.

Seymour B. Cohen died as a result of injuries from the fire that occurred inside his apartment at 8975 Golf Rd., Niles Police said.

At about 12:33 p.m. the Niles Police and Fire Departments responded to the facility for a call about the fire in room 808.

Police said a witness found Cohen in the kitchen of his apartment with injuries to his arm and leg from the fire, according to the Niles Police Department. The witness reportedly called 911 and tried to put the fire out using a fire extinguisher.

"The building was evacuated until the fire was struck about 20 minutes later," Niles Police said.

Firefighters from the North Maine, Glenview and Des Plaines Police Departments were called to assist. Cohen was taken to Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge and then transferred to the Loyola Medical Center Burn Unit in Maywood where he later died.

Andrea Turner, spokeswoman for Brookdale Senior Living which operates The Park at Golf Mill, said damage from the fire was limited to one apartment.

"There is a lingering smoke smell that still remains, but will dissipate over time," she said last week.

Park Ridge woman charged with animal neglect

BY SUN-TIMES MEDIA

WOODSTOCK

Bond was set at $1,000 for a Park Ridge woman accused of keeping nearly 100 animals inside a home she owned in unincorporated Woodstock.

McHenry County Sheriff's Police announced Nov. 21 that Virginia E. Dinucci, 54, of the 1700 block of Pavilion Way in Park Ridge was charged with multiple counts of animal neglect.

On Oct. 29 Sheriff's Police found 55 birds, 19 dogs, 11 cats and three rabbits inside a home belonging to Dinucci on the 8600 block of Bull Run Trail in unincorporated Woodstock. Deputies also found a dead bird, cat and dog.

Dinucci, who was located at her Park Ridge residence, relinquished the animals to McHenry County Animal Control. They are available for adoption at the McHenry County Animal Control and Adoption Center, a release from the Sheriff's Office said.

Many of the birds have been placed with sanctuaries.

Park Ridge officials removed multiple animals from Dinucci's Park Ridge condominium in 2010. She was not charged with any offenses in that case.
Niles Police warn of new scam aimed at the elderly

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

NILES

There’s a new financial scam in town and, as is often the case, the elderly have become a primary target.

Niles Police Chief Dean Strzelecki is trying to raise awareness about the latest scam in town called the “Green Dot Scam” which involves pre-loaded debit cards.

In this scam the potential victim is contacted over the phone and falsely informed that they won a prize, like a large amount of cash or a vehicle. The caller then tells the person to go to a local retailer and buy a Green Dot Card and pre-load more than $1,000 on the card. The scam artist then tells the victim to provide the ID number of the card—which allows the offender to withdraw the funds from anywhere.

“I think it’s going to be more prevalent,” Strzelecki said of the debit card scam. So far there have been a few cases reported in Niles.

The police chief said that outside of the scam Green Dot Cards do have merit and are an alternative to credit cards. If stolen, a thief can only withdraw the amount of money that is pre-loaded on the card. With a stolen credit card or ATM card, the amount of the theft can be greater.

Strzelecki said the public is becoming more aware that it is not a good idea to give any of their personal financial information to people on the phone, so criminals are trying this new scam.

Strzelecki talked to the business community about this during the Niles mayoral luncheon a few weeks ago. He said the Police Department also educates the public about scams when a crime prevention booth is set up at various community events.

Strzelecki added that another popular scam is when someone calls a potential victim and tells them that their grandchild has been kidnapped and they need to send bond money.

“It’s something that’s been continuing and is a growing problem,” said Niles Police Sgt. Robert Tornabene about financial fraud. “We are pretty active about getting information out as soon as we can (about) the newest scams that are out there.”

Tornabene added that police are also seeing a lot of ATM fraud and are working closely with the banks and organizations that get hit pretty regularly.

This spring the Police Department will be conducting a senior citizen police academy where financial fraud will be discussed. In addition, other segments of the community are also stepping up to educate and protect local seniors.

Earlier this month the Niles Public Library, as a result of receiving a grant, partnered with The Park at Golf Mill, an assisted living facility, to present a program about preventing identity theft.

Dedra Thomas of the University of Illinois Extension gives a presentation about identity theft to seniors at The Park at Golf Mill in Niles on Nov. 8. | CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dedra Thomas, from Consumer and Family Economics at the University of Illinois Extension, talked to the seniors about how to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft by managing their personal information carefully and wisely.

“We’ve had a few residents that have almost become victims of financial fraud,” said Samantha Stagg, program director at The Park at Golf Mill.

The Niles Police Department also gives talks to seniors at the Niles Senior Center to help make them aware of potential scams and how to avoid them.

Strzelecki said the safest way to protect one’s self is to hang up on any suspicious callers.
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Brearton, Katharine Church
96, formerly of Houghton, MI and Park Ridge, IL,
died on November 8, 2012 at Galway Home in
Leawood, KS. She was preceded in death by her
parents; her brother, Nile and her husband, Lone.
She is survived by her daughters, Katie (Paul)
Anderson of Maple City, MI, and Julie (Terrry)
Preston of Leawood, KS; her four grandchildren,
Mary (Richard Schmidt) Anderson, Erik (Sarah)
Anderson, Katie (Wess) Parsons, and Lorna (Tim)
Walker, and her eight great-grandchildren, Paul
and Zachary Kalifatidi, Ruth and June Anderson,
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Walker. Her family was her life.
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Aldermen balk at IG’s request for employees’ time sheets

Chicago aldermen are accusing their handpicked inspector general of overstepping his limited authority - and going fishing - with a demand for time sheets for all full- and part-time City Council employees dating back to November 2010.

The surprise request from Legislative Inspector General Faisal Khan - whose annual budget was recently increased to $354,000 - stunned and infuriated aldermen, some of whom are talking about clipping Khan's wings or eliminating his position altogether.

Khan could not be reached for comment to explain the time-sheet request he made last month.

Over the years, aldermen and committee chairmen have been accused of padding their payrolls with relatives, friends and political allies and of the hiring equivalent of “wife-swapping”: placing each other's spouses and relatives on each other's payrolls.

Some aldermen are so incensed about the time-sheet request that they’ve confronted Khan and demanded an explanation.

Others are going through the motions to comply with his request. Even more have chosen to ignore it and dare Khan to use his subpoena powers if he thinks he has a case to justify a subpoena.

State’s worst-in-the-nation pension burden has grown

Trying again to build support for his stalled pension-reform efforts, Gov. Pat Quinn said the state’s unfunded pension burden has grown recently to $96 billion, up from the previous projection of $86 billion.

Quinn tossed out the revised, worst-in-the-nation figure at a news conference in Chicago to announce the start of what he termed as a grassroots initiative to build public support for changes in the pension system.

The governor said he was seeking to repeat the successes of the populist campaigns he led decades before taking office, when he helped reduce the size of the Illinois House and create the Citizens Utility Board.

Quinn said the newly launched pension push would take a decidedly 21st century approach. The governor’s office has set up a website at www.thesismyillinois.com and will use Twitter, YouTube and Facebook to help educate the public.

“We will get this done,” Quinn said.

Abdon Pallasch, the Quinn administration's assistant budget director, said the official figure for the unfunded pension liability grew because leaders of the largest public pension plan, the Teachers Retirement System, recently decreased the rate of return they expect on its investments.

Health and Human Services details overhaul rules, benefits

The Obama administration has strengthened the prescription drug coverage that will be available to the millions of people who will get insurance through the nation's new health care overhaul starting late next year.

The increase in prescription benefits was part of a long-awaited package of rules to implement the law formally announced by the Health and Human Services Department. The government laid out minimum requirements for health insurance coverage and banned denying coverage to people with pre-existing health problems.

The new rules, once made final, will govern the operation of new health insurance marketplaces, called exchanges, that will debut in 2014.

Having the federal government set minimum standards for what health insurance must cover is a departure from normal practice. The Affordable Care Act requires that Washington establish a baseline for minimum coverage in areas that include inpatient and outpatient care, emergency services, maternity and childhood care, prescription drugs, preventive screenings and lab work.

It must also cover mental health and substance abuse treatment, as well as rehabilitation for physical and cognitive disorders, and dental and vision care for children.
State pension storm

Here's hoping this is the storm before the calm.

The public conversation in Illinois is returning to the state's pension-crisis.

There are two outcomes if the state Legislature fails to act: The retirement systems for teachers, state workers, university employees, legislators and judges will run out of money in the near future.

Or, the state's massive pension bills ($6.8 billion this year out of a roughly $33 billion budget) will crowd out spending on just about everything else.

As usual, this new round of pension conversations started with the hysterics and finger-pointing stage.

This must be followed by the let's-get-to-work phase.

The best window for passing pension reform, politically speaking, is painfully short: during this fall's veto session or in early January during a lame duck session.

A failure to act should trigger a riot. We hardly exaggerate.

Every time I talked to Redd Griffin, a pillar of the Oak Park community who died last week, I came away feeling joyous, inspired and a whole lot smarter.

Redd had a way about him that made you feel like the most important person in the room. And because you were so important, Redd was going to take time out of his busy day to tell you something really important, something mysterious and something that could change your life.

I first met Redd, who was a teacher, a writer, and a lover of learning and literature, when I was volunteering for the Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park, an organization he helped form and kept growing.

He was a big, but gentle man, a conservative dedicated completely to a liberal town, and a thinker unafraid to listen to understand the thoughts of others. He was in many ways a paradox; the way we all should be if we lived our lives openly and honestly.

I enjoyed listening to Redd's stories for he was a thoroughbred of a storyteller. I had asked about his education once and he told me — just building up a lather through Bishop Quarter Military Academy in Oak Park (what was that and who was Bishop Quarter?) then in a full gallop through Shimer College in Waukegan and its focus on the Great Books Program.

One of Redd's favorite stories was about being in Berlin when President John F. Kennedy made his famous speech there in June 1963. Redd would talk about being in the crowd and then move in closer to tell you the really important stuff about Kennedy's impact to the citizens of Berlin.

I last spoke with Redd because I needed his help in developing an idea I had about man's mythological search for the father. Before long, Redd was racing through his own search, and his spiritual realization that life's quest is bigger than a search for our biological father. It's a spiritual journey to our real father, the heavenly creator of it all.

Redd then told me an incredible story about pain in his arms and shoulder that grew worse until he understood that Christ's suffering on the cross was related to the search and that there is power in redemptive suffering; suffering that leads us to the father.

I can't explain it the same, fascinating way Redd did, but I remember that story and think everyone should be so lucky to have a friend like Redd.

I'll miss him, as all Oak Park will. But I do find comfort in knowing that Redd's quest to return to the father is complete.
Tips for family harmony this holiday season

You've gulped down your turkey dinner on the former Thanksgiving, which now is known as Charcoal-Grey Thursday — the day before Black Friday.

You've done battle with all the other shoppers on Black Friday and emerged victorious with a Buick for $11 and a 104-inch TV for 83 cents. What's left to do to prepare for the holidays?

Others will tell you how to cook, how to wrap, how to exchange. But only here will you find a setting-out of the absolute most important component of holiday enjoyment: How not to wind up at your loved ones' throats.

Submitted for your approval:

1. Respond to invitations, for crying out loud. Not responding is a sure-fire way of creating holiday conflict. See, the way it works is they feed you for free. All you have to do is let them know whether you're coming. I shouldn't have to tell you stuff like this.

2. Like the gift you are given even if you don't. OK, so you wanted the latest A-, E-, I- or U-Pad and you got "The Collected Works of St. Thomas Aquinas" instead. You'll only hurt the giver's feelings if you sulk. And you still won't have the A-, E-, I- or U-Pad.

3. Eat almost to the point of, um, indelicacy. They went to a lot of trouble and expense to cook dinner for you. So, when asked if you want another helping of stuffing — "I found this wonderful stuffing recipe; liver, rye bread, eye of newt" — you say, "Yum!" and pass your plate.

4. Let bygones be bygones. OK, so you were the oldest child and had to take care of your brothers and sisters. OK, so you were the middle child and didn't get the attention the first-born received. OK, so you were the youngest child and had to make do with a hand-me-down bike. Grow up and stop poisoning the present with long-past grievances.

5. Man is mortal. This is most important and the reason for all of the above tips. In 10 years, or five years, or even next year, there may be fewer people at your holiday table. And that will be painful. But even more painful will be if the memory of the absent person is soured by what you now realize were trivial piques and resentments. Regret is not a pleasant holiday companion.

Food and gifts are ephemeral. Family feelings are permanent. Whether those feelings are warm or painful is up to you.

Tip No. 6: make the effort.
At the Niles Public Library we asked, “What is your weather prediction for this coming winter?”

Marilyn Neugebauer
Morton Grove
“I think it’s going to be a tough winter. There will be an awful lot of snow.”

Ryan Warden
Chicago
“Last winter it was warm. I think this winter will be warm. Last year they couldn’t set up an ice rink in Park Ridge.”

Payton Jarzyna
Chicago
“I think it’s going to be cold, but not blizzard-cold, with just a little snow.”

Daniel Parra
Niles
“Lots of snow and cold. Worse than last winter.”

People Poll

LAST WEEK’S QUESTION
“How much do you plan to spend this holiday season?”
RESPONSES
1) Less than $100: 17%
2) Between $101 and $300: 31%
3) More than $300: 52%

THIS WEEK’S QUESTION
“When do you put up your holiday decorations?”
RESPONSES
1) Before Thanksgiving.
2) The first week of December.
3) Mid-December.
4) Don’t put any up.

To respond to this week’s People Poll question, visit niles.suntimes.com.

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Most District 64 students meeting testing standards

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON | jjohnson@pioneerlocal.com

PARK RIDGE
Most students in Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 continue to meet rising benchmarks set by No Child Left Behind, results from the 2012 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) show.

Overall, nearly 95 percent of District 64 students met or exceeded standards in reading and 95.9 percent met or exceeded standards in math, according the 2012 Illinois State Report Card.

The minimum target set by No Child Left Behind was 85 percent.

Each District 64 elementary school met annual yearly progress under NCLB, but the middle schools did not. Lincoln Middle School failed to make AYP because students with disabilities scored low in reading.

Neither school has been identified for school improvement under NCLB.

During a recent Board of Education meeting Lori Hinton, assistant superintendent for student learning in District 64, reported that student performance in reading and math on the ISAT is at its highest level in six years.

The ISAT will eventually be discontinued as the state shifts to the new Common Core State Standards assessment system by 2014-15.

The goal is to better prepare Illinois students for success in college and the workforce in a competitive global economy,” the State Board of Education’s website says.

“This is effectively the last year to look at trend data on student performance gathered with the familiar ISAT,” Hinton said.

District 64 students also take a standardized test known as the MAP test which provides data on reading and math performance. Students in grades 3-7 take the test on a computer twice each year and students in second- and eighth-grade are tested once a year.

“The MAP tests actually adapt the questions each student is asked based on how the previous question was answered, so it can identify what each student knows and needs to learn next,” Hinton said.

Over the last five years the percentage of students performing above the 75th percentile in reading increased in all grades and the number of students scoring above the 75th percentile in math increased in grades 4-8, according to District 64.

The tests also show that more than half of students in grades 3-8 are meeting “growth targets” in reading and math.
District 71 approves $8.6 million levy

BY NATASHA WASINSKI | Contributor

NILES

Niles Elementary School District 71 is bolstering its property-tax revenue base in anticipation of a potential funding gap created by government cutbacks.

The District 71 Board of Education earlier this month approved a 2012 capped levy of $8.6 million, which is $1.1 million more than last year. The actual amount the school district expects to collect from local taxpayers, however, is considerably less.

"Clearly we are not going to get a 14.8 percent increase," Superintendent Amy Kruppe said.

District 71 has traditionally levied high so as to not lose additional funds from increasing home values and new construction. At a minimum, the one-school district expects to receive approximately $224,700 more in local property tax revenue based on the Consumer Price Index of 3 percent.

Most taxes go toward the educational fund to support teacher salaries and benefits. Current staff salaries are projected to rise by at least $147,000, an amount that does not include benefit costs and non-union employee pay.

Going forward, retirement costs are expected to be particularly problematic for District 71 and other local school districts in the likelihood that Illinois legislators shift the responsibility of paying teacher pensions.

District 71 is already grappling with delayed payments and decreased funding from the state and federal government.

"The future of educational funding is unstable," Kruppe said.

Though the school district has the lowest tax rate in the township at 1.49 percent, it relies heavily on local sources for income, she said.

Local revenue accounts for more than 90 percent of the $8.8 million budget for the 2012-13 school year.

"We're very, very fortunate that our local property taxes continue to fund our school district unlike some of the other places downstate," Kruppe said.

No one spoke at the Nov. 13 public hearing on the proposed levy.
District 207 will ‘strongly respond’ to hazing allegations: superintendent

BY JON SEIDEL | jseidel@suntimes.com

PARK RIDGE

Following a new allegation of a hazing incident at Maine West High School in Des Plaines, Maine Township High School District 207 officials are asking anyone with knowledge of similar incidents in the district to report them.

“We have already begun taking steps to re-emphasize within our schools the serious nature of bullying and hazing and to send the clear message that we will act decisively to stop bullying and hazing from reoccurring and to investigate and strongly respond if it occurs,” said District Supt. Ken Wallace in a statement issued by District 207 this week.

Wallace asked that any incidents be reported to him or to Assistant Superintendent Greg Dietz.

The district on Sunday acknowledged that it recently learned of a 2008 hazing incident on the Maine West baseball team led by the coach now accused of sanctioning the sexual assault of a 14-year-old soccer player in a hazing ritual this year.

The incident was reported to officials at Maine West High School in Des Plaines in August 2008, according to the district, and involved players for the freshman team coached by Michael Divincenzo, who is now reassigned with pay from his duties as varsity boys' soccer coach at the school.

At least four freshman baseball players allegedly pulled down a teammate’s pants in the school locker room in spring 2008, according to the district.

When the hazing was reported, district officials said, the students involved were interviewed and disciplined at the school level.

But administration officials at Maine Township High School District 207 said they didn’t learn about the incident until Nov. 16, just days before Chicago lawyer Antonio Romanucci sued the district over the alleged hazing of the 14-year-old soccer player.

That lawsuit accuses Divincenzo and other Maine West soccer coaches of ordering the team to do a “campus run” on Sept. 27. That’s when the lawsuit said the 14-year-old soccer player was grabbed by older members of the team who tore off his underwear, held him down, grabbed his testicles and sodomized him with their fingers and other foreign objects.

The lawsuit alleged it was “part of the soccer team’s culture and has been sanctioned by its coaches for years.”

Des Plaines police have already charged six students as juveniles with misdemeanor battery and hazing, and 10 students have been disciplined.

Maine Township school officials denied earlier this week that the incident is indicative of a larger culture of hazing within the district, but Romanucci said two other students were hazed in a similar way on Sept. 27. He also said last week he knew of one other incident before he filed his lawsuit and he learned of two more since.

Divincenzo couldn’t be reached for comment Sunday. He previously told the Sun-Times he was advised by the school district and his union not to comment.
For the week of December 5 to December 11

ARIES (March 21 to April 19)
Start preparing now to make sure you get the credit you’re due for all that effort you put in to get that project off the ground. A new challenge emerges after the 15th.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20)
You’re still charging full steam ahead on the job — and that’s fine. But take time to share the joy of preparing for the upcoming holidays with folks you love.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20)
A former detractor resists joining your ranks just yet. Give him or her time to learn more about what you’re doing. Meanwhile, devote more time to friends and family.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22)
Be careful not to be goaded into a fight by someone who might be looking for a fight. Remain cool as you make your exit. Be assured that others will rally to your support.

LEO (July 23 to August 22)
Kudos on getting the well-deserved Lion’s share of the rewards for a job well-done. Now you can take a breather from your workday duties and spend time with your family.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22)
You enjoy a quick spurt of renewed energy just in time to meet that upcoming deadline. A potentially romantic situation looms. How it develops will be up to you.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 23)
Watch out for distractions that could cause delays and leave you running twice as fast to finish your work by the 15th. Then go ahead and have fun.

SCORPIO (October 24 to November 21)
A new relationship needs time to develop. Be careful not to let your emotions flood your natural sense of caution. Meanwhile, check out that new job offer.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21)
Avoid rushing full gallop into that volunteer project without knowing what’s expected of you. Take things a step at a time as you begin to find your way.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19)
Good news: You should begin to feel more comfortable expressing your emotions. This will go a long way in helping you with that personal situation.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18)
An old friend gives confusing signals. Best advice: Don’t assume that things will necessarily work themselves out. Ask questions and demand straight answers.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20)
A new relationship needs time to develop. Be careful not to let your emotions flood your natural sense of caution. Meanwhile, check out that new job offer.

BORN THIS WEEK: Your sense of right and wrong sometimes causes you to come into conflict with others. But you invariably come out ahead.

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Submissions for Community Calendar are required 14 days preceding the date of publication. Send to: Niles Managing Editor, Pioneer Press, 3701 W. Lake Ave., Glenview IL 60026. Information may be faxed to (847) 486-7495 or emailed to mbottari@pioneerlocal.com.

**CENTER OF CONCERN**

**Schedule**

**65+**

The Center of Concern 1580 N. Northwest Highway, Suite 310, Park Ridge, (847) 823-0453, calendar of events includes:

- **Thursday, Nov. 29** - Annual Holiday Party, 6:45-8:30 p.m., South Park Field House, Talcott Road and Cumberland Avenue. Festivities will include refreshments (cookies, coffee, and cider), entertainment by the Maine East High School Demonaires, and the chance to honor Center of Concern volunteers. The public is welcome. Bring a non-perishable food item for the Maine Township Food Pantry. Call Belinda at (847) 823-0453, Ext. 1017.

- **Mondays, Dec. 3, 10, and 17** - Employment counseling, by appointment.

- **Monday, Dec. 10** - Alzheimer’s caregivers support group, 10 a.m.

- **Tuesdays, Dec. 4 and 18** - Medicare counseling, by appointment, sponsored by the federally-funded Senior Health Insurance Program.

- **Wednesdays, Dec. 5 and 19** - Grief and loss support group (call first).

- **Saturdays, Dec. 1 and 15** - Legal counseling, by appointment.

- **Note:** The Center of Concern is closed Dec. 24, 25 and Jan. 1; it will be open from 9 a.m.-noon Dec. 31.

**CIVIC**

**Niles Township Clerk**

**618-655**

Niles Township Clerk’s Office is open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays and evenings by appointment on the second and fourth Mondays of each month to accommodate residents with passport applications, voter registrations and temporary handicapped parking placards. To schedule an appointment at Niles Township in Skokie, call (847) 673-9300.

**CLASSES**

**Childbirth lessons**

**18+**

Lutheran General Hospital, 1775 W. Dempster St., Park Ridge, offers a variety of classes for new and expectant parents. Call (800) 323-8622 to register — Bootcamp for New Dads: Teaching important skills, 9 a.m.-noon Dec. 8, Class code BB29.

**CLubs**

**Knights of Columbus**

**180**

North American Martyrs Council Chapter, Niles, provides ways for members to help others in the community while trying to improve their family and spiritual lives. Call Bob Galassi, (847) 965-0920.

**MOMS Club**

Niles, DuPage County, meets at the Village of Niles Hall, 3101 Prairie Blvd., Niles, third Thursday of each month, 6:30 p.m., call (847) 603-1007.

**ARTS AND CRAFTS**

**Victoria’s Boutique**

The Norwood Park Historical Society will host its annual Victoria's Holiday Boutique and Holly Daze Café at Chicago’s oldest home, the Noble-Seymour-Crippen House, 5624 N. Newark Ave., Chicago. More than 30 crafters/vendors will sell handcrafted items. Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Nov. 29 and Dec. 1; 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m. Nov. 30; 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Dec. 2. Admission is $1. On Nov. 30, a Girls Night PJ Shopping Party is featured; from 7-9 p.m., wear PJ’s and earn a gift. The Holly Daze Café will serve homemade soups, sandwiches, desserts and cocoa. Call (773) 631-4633.

**Donations**

**Toys for Dec. 3**

**618-655**

The Women's Physician Group at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital and Advocate Children's Hospital-Park Ridge are hosting a toy drive to benefit the Advocate Children's Hospital Child Life Department. Toys will be accepted from 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Dec. 3 at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital, 1775 Dempster St., Park Ridge, West End Conference Center. Unwrapped, new toys for children of all ages are needed. Toys will be distributed throughout the holiday season and into the coming year. Call (773) 723-8510.

**Holiday Drive**

The Village of Niles and Niles Fire Department have kicked off the annual U.S. Marine Corps Reserve/Toys for Tots Drive and Community Food Drive. Toys for Tots is a charitable program run by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve that provides toys to children in need during the holiday season. The following Niles locations are collecting non-perishable food items benefiting Niles Family Services and new toy donations during regular business hours through Dec. 16: Niles Village Hall, 1000 Civic Center Drive; Niles Fire Department, 8360 W. Dempster St. and 6611 Jarvis Ave.; Niles Police Department, 7000 W. Touhy Ave.; Niles Senior Center, 999 Civic Center
HOCUS FOCUS

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Puzzle Answers

See page 26 for this week's Super Crossword and Sudoku puzzles.

Exercise/Nutrition for Cancer Patients

A variety of exercise and well-being classes for cancer patients is offered at Lutheran General Hospital, 1775 W. Dempster St., Park Ridge. Call (800) 323-8622 to register.

FUNDRAISERS

Annual 'Empty Bowls'

Make a difference in the fight against hunger and get ahead on holiday shopping at Oakton Community College's annual Empty Bowls fundraiser from 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Dec. 1 at the college's Des Plaines campus, 1600 E. Golf Road. The event features hundreds of unique ceramic bowls donated by professional and student potters from the Chicagoland area. For a donation of $14, participants select a distinctive handcrafted bowl that is theirs to keep, and receive a simple meal of soup and bread as a reminder that "someone's bowl is always empty." The event includes a raffle drawing for ceramic art work and a silent auction for select pieces of sculpture and jewelry. All proceeds benefit local food charities. Entertainment will be provided by Patchouli, an acoustic duo whose songs about harmony and healing inspire the human spirit. Contact emptybowls@oakton.edu, or call (847) 635-1699.

Healthbeat lectures

Advocate Lutheran General Hospital is hosting a weekly Community Healthbeat lecture series at 7 p.m. Tuesdays at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital's West End Conference Center, 1775 W. Dempster St., Park Ridge. Free valet parking is available and refreshments will be served. There is no charge; however registration is required. Call 1-800-323-8622 and mention the class code 8G52 or visit www.advo.catehealth.com/luth click on "I need a class code" and type in the class code - Dec. 4: Understanding your family history and genetic risks, Dr. Brad Tinkle, geneticist; Dec. 11: Healthy Holidays: Staying Positive Through the Season, Dr. Laura Segalite, psychiatrist, and Dr. Adriana deJulio, psychiatrist resident.

Whooping Cough Vaccine

All three of the Jewel-Osco Pharmacies in Niles are offering the whooping cough vaccine booster in response to recent whooping cough outbreaks across the state. It is recommended that all individuals ages 11 and older receive the vaccine, called Tdap, which specially-trained and certified pharmacists are available to administer. Consumers can obtain the vaccination at Jewel-Osco Pharmacies seven days a week and no appointment is necessary.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hours for the public

Niles Historical Museum: 8970 N. Milwaukee Ave., is open to the public 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Drop in, make arrangements for a tour, drop off artifacts and collections, or just come to visit. The new magnetic elevator makes the auditorium easily accessible. Call (847) 390-0160.

KIDS

Breakfast with Santa

The Resurrection College Prep High School Alumnae Association presents Breakfast with Santa from 9-11:30 a.m. Dec. 8 at the school, 7500 W. Talcott Ave., Chicago. The event will also include face-painting, a theater production by Resurrection drama students and Christmas arts and crafts. Children and families can have their photos taken with Santa and each child will receive a special gift from Santa. Tickets are $8 per child and $6 per
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Available on the App Store
Niles Vitamin Shoppe sells daily dose of nutrition

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

NILLES

Kim Menes has always been interested in the body and nutrition.

So when an opportunity came up to become the manager at the Vitamin Shoppe in Niles, it was a natural fit.

The store, located at 8600 W. Golf Rd, is stocked with various multivitamins, individual vitamins, minerals and supplements such as antioxidants, amino acids, fish oil and more.

The Niles Vitamin Shoppe, which has been located in Niles for 10 years, also offers a variety of herbs that support the heart, the immune system, joints and more.

The store also provides homeopathic remedies for health issues such as allergies, colds and flu, stress and anxiety, women’s health issues and men’s health issues.

“ать have always had a love for anything to do with the body and how it works and nutrition,” said Menes, who attended nursing school and has been a manager at the Niles Vitamin Shoppe for three years.

Menes feels a growing number of people are realizing the importance of taking multivitamins and natural products to stay healthy.

According to Menes, the shop is busy all year round, but business tends to pick up during the cold and flu season and after the first of the year when people make New Year’s resolutions to lead healthier lifestyles.

The store carries various scents of essential oils, such as lavender, peppermint, orange and rosemary. Customers can also purchase personal-care products and products for children and pets at the Vitamin Shoppe.

“The essential oils are a big thing this year,” shared Menes, explaining that they are used for therapeutic massage, in saunas and in a diffuser.

Menes said customers can also stop in and grab a protein drink or protein bar and then head over to the gym to work out. The store also offers various food items, such as meal replacement bars, low-carb bars, and protein shakes.

When new customers step in the door, they are given a tour around the store. There is also a customer education section with chairs and computers so that customers can look up information about a certain product or possible interactions with other drugs and supplements.

Menes said the computers in the store are very convenient for the elderly or those without access to the Internet at their homes.

Customers are all strongly encouraged to talk with their physicians about any supplements or other products prior to taking new products, Menes said.
Shoppers make big Black Friday hauls in Niles

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

NILES

Black Friday was more like Black Thursday for various stores this year, and Golf Mill Shopping Center in Niles was even more packed than last year.

"I came here at 9 a.m.," said Faisal Bilal, of Des Plaines, who was waiting anxiously near the front of a long line outside the Best Buy store in Niles at about 7:30 p.m. on Thanksgiving evening.

The store across from Golf Mill did not open until midnight, but patient customers were waiting in line for hours at a time in order to get Black Friday deals.

Bilal said he participated in Black Friday this year to get a $400 television for $200, a computer and a laptop.

"Last year, it was really cold," Bilal said, noting this year's warmer temperatures.

"It's fun," said Emily Hoffman, of Chicago, who was a few places behind Bilal in line at Best Buy.

Hoffman said the Black Friday madness has been a tradition for her family for the past seven years.

"We're getting everything," Hoffman said with a smile.

Some stores at Golf Mill opened for Black Friday shopping during the wee hours of the morning, though Sears was taking customers at 8 p.m. on Thanksgiving.

"There are just lines at every store," said Golf Mill Shopping Center Marketing Director Monika Kalicki at about 2 p.m. on Friday.

She added: "It's crowded every Black Friday, but I definitely see a higher traffic number this year."

John Gonzalez, of Prospect Heights, said he was one of the first to start waiting in the electronics department.

Gonzalez said it was his second time participating in Black Friday and he was nervous that the store would sell out of the Tablets by the time he got to the front of the line in the electronics department.

Billy Roumas, of Park Ridge, said that he comes to Sears at Golf Mill every Black Friday to get his favorite pillows that are more than half off.

"It's unbelievable," Roumas said about the sale on his pillows. Roumas avoids waiting in the long lines by arriving shortly after Sears opens every Black Friday.

Kalicki said that Golf Mill increases mail security on Black Friday due to the rise in mall traffic, but she said they had not had any incidents this year.

Shoppers whose combined receipts totaled $200 or more also received a free digital desk clock from Golf Mill.

Shoppers whose combined receipts totaled $200 or more also received a free digital desk clock from Golf Mill.

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Garifuna Flava
2518 W. 63rd St. | 773-776-7440
This holiday season, Garifuna Flava will have events celebrating culture and the new year. It will host an exhibit featuring work of renowned artist Greg Palacio. There also will be an evening featuring Garifuna drumming and dancing and a preview of “Yurumein Garifuna Homeland,” a documentary by local filmmaker Andrea 

Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
6500 S. Pulaski Rd. | 773-582-6500
The primary way Lithuanians decorate their Christmas trees is with straw ornaments. Straw compositions are a separate branch of folk art. Traditionally, straw ornaments come in shapes of stars, suns, snowflakes, angels and lanterns. Each year before Christmas, folk artist, Mary Krauchunas decorates Christmas trees with traditional straw ornaments at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, O’Hare and Midway airports, the Cook County Treasurer’s office and Navy Pier. This year the museum will participate in Winter Celebrations Exhibit at the Trickster Gallery in Schaumburg. There also will be a traditionally decorated tree and you can learn about the Christmas Eve celebration.

Southwest Chicago getting jazzed up with holiday spirit
During the upcoming holiday season, music groups and street performers will entertain the 63rd Street commercial district’s shoppers and businesses. Each year, residents, shoppers and visitors come out and interact with musicians and street performers during the exciting events. Jazz artists, saxophone players, pianists and well-known vocalists will all team up to spread the spirit of the holidays and entertain the southwest Chicago community between Nov. 23 and Dec. 22. Spread the word and come out to join the art movement that brings the holiday season into the neighborhood.

Of course, Santa would not miss these events so don’t forget to bring your camera and your family to capture a photo with him. Your support and excitement will help make this year’s holiday season the biggest and best ever.
Southwest Chicago events

Now through Jan. 4
“Works on Paper: Paintings and Drawings by Mary Muskus Graham”
Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
Mary Muskus’ Graham’s abstract realistic work is inspired by nature, her Lithuanian ancestry and a recent trip to the country.

6 p.m., Dec. 1
Annual Museum Gala: Honoring the excellence of Jurate Kazickas
Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
Journalist, author and philanthropist Jurate Kazickas is to receive an award for her dedication to education and working with war-displaced refugees.

7 p.m., Dec. 14
Book Club: Julija Sukys
Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture
Montreal-based author will read and discuss excerpts from her latest book, “Epistolophilia: Writing the Life of Ona Simait.” The book follows a revolutionary Lithuanian librarian through her personal letters and journals of how she helped save people in a German-occupied Jewish ghetto in Lithuania.

10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Dec. 19 & 22
Holiday Trolley Tour
Follow 12-year resident and guide Alvin James on a three-hour tour through southwest Chicago. It's presented by the 63rd Street Growth Commission. Take in the sights, grab lunch and do some shopping. Fee of $10 includes lunch. Pay online or send cash or check to 2601 W. 63rd St., Chicago, IL 60629. Make checks out to Greater Southwest Development Corp. 773-362-3391, http://holidaytour.eventbrite.com

Itacate
3141 W. 63rd St. | 773-471-9000
Cuisine straight from the south of Mexico is a staple at Itacate in southwest Chicago. Known for its homemade dishes cooked on the flat iron or the grill, Itacate features Mexican dishes that are sure to warm the soul in the chilly months to come. If you are interested in catering for the holidays, Itacate offers their entire menu and is able to provide any quantities necessary. The owner of Itacate, the Rosales’, have spent many years in the hotel business, so they know the importance of large quantities of food necessary at banquets.

Elegant Beauty Salon
2438 W. 63rd St. | 773-434-1500
This holiday season, Elegant Salon not only offers its signature services but also holiday events and specials. On Dec. 8 and 15, it will take part in the 63rd Street Commissions holiday festivities. From noon to 3 p.m., patrons can enjoy holiday music, Christmas characters and a visit from Santa. On both dates, the salon will offer a free photo of the family/child with Santa as well as 50 percent off any service for the parents who bring their child in to be photographed or 50 percent off a child styling before the sitting. Sew in styles are not included in this offer. Children who want their hair styled before the photo should come in before noon. There also will be a raffle of one “girl” toy and one “boy” toy.
Experience the magic - Elkhart Lake style

Elkhart Lake, Wis., is an enchanting place any time of year, but December is filled with magical moments that you won't want to miss. The holidays have already kicked off and the magic continues all season long.

For a unique shopping experience, The Osthoff Resort invites you to join the warmth and merriment of Old World Christmas Market from Nov. 30 to Dec. 9. Reminiscent of the German Christkindlesmarkt, timber booths are adorned with boughs of fresh greens and filled with authentic European gifts, toys, ornaments and apparel. Shop amid twinkling lights, festive German music and the sweet aroma of delectable treats. Package it with beautiful lakeside accommodations for a cherished holiday tradition.

Bring the entire family. Everyone will enjoy holiday hayrides, workshops and time with Santa and St. Nicholas. Cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus is always a favorite holiday activity. After a busy day of shopping and playing, lounge poolside, relax with a soothing spa treatment or snuggle into your spacious accommodations. Elkhart Lake's natural beauty and world-class amenities are only a 2 1/2-hour drive from Chicago.

A Christmas Day buffet and New Year's Eve celebration crown the festivities with style! Enjoy the feast and finery of the season in the company of family and friends at The Osthoff Resort's sumptuous holiday buffet, which includes prime rib and eggnog crème brulee. Or enjoy mushroom bisque and pan-seared Atlantic salmon at Otto's Restaurant on Christmas Day. New Year's Eve at Lola's on the Lake will offer special fare, live entertainment and a gala champagne toast at midnight. Welcome 2013 at Victorian Village Resort with lively polka music and a brat fry on New Year's Day. The Barefoot Tiki Bar tradition begins at 11:30 a.m.

Elkhart Lake also is a perfect place to get away, relax and enjoy a slower pace. Winter is beautiful and peaceful. Snuggle into the plush accommodations and take time to unwind after the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Relax - and treat yourself to the world-class spa and award-winning restaurants.

Celebrate the holiday in Elkhart Lake where family and friends have made it a tradition for generations. For more information, visit elkhartlake.com.
ELKHART LAKE, WIS.

THE OSTHOFF RESORT
101 Osthoff Ave.
866-534-9817
osstoff.com

The AAA Four Diamond resort offers spacious suites, lake-side dining, Aspira spa, a cooking school, indoor and outdoor pools, whirlpools, saunas, fitness centers, game room, water sports and many other premier amenities.

VICTORIAN VILLAGE RESORT
276 Victorian Village Drive
877-686-9888
vicvill.com

Awarded Three Diamonds by AAA, the Victorian Village Resort offers condominium suites and hotel rooms on 500 feet of sandy beachfront with water sports, lake-side dining and tiki bar with live music on weekends all summer long.

SIEBKENS RESORT
284 S. Lake St.
920-876-2600
siebkens.com

A landmark, turn-of-the-century resort with newly constructed condominium hotel building and additional guest rooms, Siebkens offers dining and live music at famous Stop Inn Tavern.

ROAD AMERICA
N7390 Highway 67, Plymouth, Wis.
800-365-7723
roadamerica.com

America's National Park of Speed! Offers year-round motorsports in a gorgeous natural setting. World-class racing on its legendary 4-mile road circuit and Short-track Motorplex for karting and super-moto.

QUIT QUI OC GOLF COURSE
500 Quit Qui Oc Lane
920-876-2833
quitquioc.com

Family owned and operated for more than 50 years, the 27-hole course is in rolling terrain of Kettle Moraine. It offers a learning and practicing facility, lessons, Pro shop, dining, friendly service, spectacular views and fun for all ages.

LAKE STREET CAFE
21 S. Lake St.
920-876-2142
lakestreetcafe.com

Serving California bistro-style fare and wood-fired pizzas complemented by a wide variety of specialty beers and wines from an extensive list. Received Wine Spectator Award of Excellence from 2003 to 2012.

PADDOCK CLUB
61 Lake St.
920-876-3288
paddockclubelkhartlake.com

Enjoy handmade pastas, fresh fish, steaks, chops and unique desserts using seasonal ingredients and European culinary tradition. Open Tuesday through Saturday from October through April.

LOLA'S ON THE LAKE
Osthoff Resort
at Lake and East streets
920-876-5840, osthoff.com

An award-winning culinary team offers regional cuisine and an eclectic menu at the restaurant and lounge with extensive wine choices. The resort's natural beauty and ambiance creates an exceptional dining experience.

ASPIRA SPA
Osthoff Resort
at Lake and East streets
920-876-5843, osthoff.com

Embrace an organic holistic approach to the spa experience with treatments that embody the ancient healing wisdom of indigenous people the world over. With 22 treatment rooms, it offers massage, hydrotherapy, chromatherapy, balneotherapy, facials, manicures, pedicures and salon services and exclusive SpaSuite™ Experiences. Provides an ultimate experience in relaxation and rejuvenation for a few hours or the whole day.

CHAMBER VACATION RENTALS
41 E. Rhine St.
877-355-3554
elkhartlake.com/elkhart-lake-chamber-of-commerce/accommodationscampgrounds

Various comfy accommodations are offered for an individual, family or race team. For detailed information about a variety of vacation and race date rentals including homes, condos, cottages or rooms, contact the Elkhart Lake Area Chamber of Commerce.
NILES
7649 N Oleander Ave: Daniel Baranski to Michael J Karl for $640,000 on Oct. 10
7727 N Orlole Ave: Maria Dzakovich Trust to Abdelkarim Fares for $182,000 on Oct. 11
7057 W Madison St: Dionelle Schultz Trust to Peter J Dessoye for $235,000 on Oct. 11
8001 W Lyons St: Allauddin A Jaffer to Feras Dajani for $390,000 on Oct. 12 on Oct. 11

LINCOLNWOOD
7150 N Karlov Ave: Elizabeth Waldner to Damien Kardaras for $160,000 on Oct. 12

NORRIDGE
5153 N Moreland Ave: Chicago Title Land Trust to Klara Danko for $195,000 on Oct. 11
4855 N Pontiac Ave: Joseph Urban to Joanne M Evola for $245,000 on Oct. 10
4901 N Delphia Ave: Lenka Mrhalkova to Janusz Plecha Trust for $180,000 on Oct. 10
7761 W Windsor Ave: Annette L Clairy Trust to John Wlodkowski for $236,000 on Oct. 11
7346 W Pensacola Ave: Maria Sasiadek to Anthony M Kasa for $160,000 on Oct. 10

DES PLAINES
2250 Ballard Road: Garrett E Swierenga Trust to Designer Direct Inc for $55,000 on Oct. 12
9305 Knight Ave: Krzysztof Kmiec to Jozef R Mika for $235,000 on Oct. 11
9335 Landings Lane Unit 502: Edelina A Jurado to Abdur Lasker for $77,000 on Oct. 11
8824 Jody Lane Unit 513: Krystyna Miterka to Tomy Nella for $60,500 on Oct. 10
1844 Lincoln Ave: Douglas Fanueljez to Alex Kasioflski for $208,500 on Oct. 5

MORTON GROVE
8932 Marmora Ave: Robert Ferris to Christopher D Spellberg for $310,000 on Oct. 11
7334 Palma Lane: Helen S Manusig to Samuel G Delacruz for $160,000 on Oct. 9
9031 Parkside Ave: Alan Berliant to unpublished for $141,500 on Oct. 12
8630 Wauegan Road Unit 513: Jadwiga Badzinska-Marek to Arman

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7346 W Pensacola Ave: Maria Sasiadek to Anthony M Kasa for $160,000 on Oct. 10

PARK RIDGE
5511 N Washington St: constance D Dahm Trust to Gary Duvall for $332,000 on Oct. 12
1114 Canfield Road: John P Healy Trust to Scott Richter for $200,000 on Oct. 12
715 Busse Highway Unit A2: Chicago Title Land Trust to Nina Taluc for $53,000 on Oct. 12
1400 Crain St: Michael Cienkla Trust to Spiridion Memnos for $290,000 on Oct. 10
What can I get for $600K-$650K?

Suburban Chicago is a desirable place to live. The region is a network of communities that offers access to a world-class city. However, choosing a community from the dozens of towns and villages that surround the city can be challenging for homebuyers.

When it comes to real estate, there is no limit to the choices in the suburbs. Each week, What's In My Price Range? will feature six homes from throughout the area that fall within a certain price range. See just how much your money gets you in the suburbs.

OAK BROOK
410 Ascot Lane, $649,000
House size: 4,691 square feet
Lot size: 26,830 square feet
Year built: 1985
Bedrooms: 6 Baths: 3.5
Garage: Three-car attached
Most recent available tax: $11,116 (2010)
Agent: Diana Ivas, Prudential Rubloff, 630-325-5555

HOUSE FOR SALE? For details to get a home listed on the Price Range page, contact Jes Spivak at jspivak@suntimes.com or 312-300-7987. Information for listings that aren't submitted is received from the local county assessor's offices.
5 things learned from raising chickens

As morning light peeks through our bedroom windows, I slip from slumber and into a pair of boots. Once outside, I fumble with the latch on the chicken run, a 10' x 10' repurposed dog kennel.

Inside the run, I check the food and water levels and layer chaff — the light, fluffy shell of roasted coffee beans — across the ground to soak up moisture. Upon opening the coop, Frances Farmer hits the ground in one heroic leap while Marigold saunters down the plank with Mrs. Butterworth timidly behind. The hens enthusiastically search for bugs, chase squirrels and will soon nap under our remaining Swiss chard.

My husband Jimmy and I live in Chicago and raise chickens in our front yard. My parents joke that I moved to Chicago to start a farm. As I was raised in a small, rural town in central Illinois, our journey to urban homesteading grew quite organically. We have aspired to simple living since moving to our house in 2009. Rain barrels, raised bed gardens, compost bins and urban chickens dot our micro-farm.

For more than two years, we explored the ins and outs of keeping small flocks. We read books like Ashley English's *Raising Chickens* and absorbed information from the Chicago Chicken Enthusiasts, Angelic Organics Learning Center, and chicken keepers around the area who likewise are interested in self-sufficiency, of shortening the journey from farm to table.

Over the past year we’ve gained insight in poultry keeping, decried numerous myths, and met a myriad of neighbors in the process. We can recite Chicago’s ordinances verbatim (no selling and no saughtering) and explain the cycle of poultry ovulation on request (they don’t need a rooster to lay eggs). Our hens have introduced us to the majority of folks in the neighborhood and a preschool down the street whose students now greet the hens by name.

Today, as communities around the area consider legalizing (or banning) chickens, I’d like to share five bits of wisdom we’ve gained as chicken owners.

1. **Chickens are not loud.** Hens joyfully celebrate egg laying or release an alarm squawk if something’s amiss yet are rarely audible from inside our home. Their standard clucking rarely reaches a decibel louder than normal conversation and never louder than a barking dog.

2. **Chickens are cleaner than dogs.** Diligent attention given to bedding will eliminate smells and organic bedding such as coffee chaff, pine shavings and straw, are compostable.

3. **Chickens eliminate pests.** Voracious omnivores, they eat insects, grubs, slugs and can also eat mice and small snakes as well as chase off squirrels.

4. **Chickens can be an attraction.** Our neighbors’ house sold this spring, due in part to our hens. The new family cited the flock as a selling point in that they had grown up raising chickens and wanted similar experiences for their children.

5. **Chickens build community.** Our neighbors have become invested in our flock. The 11-year-old across the alley watches them while we’re away, one neighbor once called in the middle of the night about a prowling opossum, and the 75-year-old couple next door love telling friends about “their girls.”

Passers-by regale us with tales from Poland to Guatemala, of grandfathers who raised chickens and mothers who cooked them. We all share a deeply seeded desire to connect to our food, to the earth and to produce what we can. One August afternoon, an elderly woman in an ankle-length coat paused at our fence. As her pearls clanked against the chain link and perfume wafted across the summer air, she grasped my hands in hers. “Beautiful,” she said. “Thank you. Thank you for sharing them with me.”
HOLIDAY TREATS
Making and baking at different times

BY AMANDA GOLD | Contributor

There is something to be said about having the ability to serve warm, home-baked treats to guests without so much as dirtying the mixer.

The answer? The freezer. With the upcoming holiday onslaught, it's not a bad idea to get ahead of the game by freezing doughs, cake batter and even fully formed pies before putting them in the oven. There's no shorting the quality, freshly baked treats are ready as needed, and with the aroma of baking in the air, your guests will be none the wiser.

The whole freezer-to-table thing has other benefits, too.

Take a fruit pie, for example. The biggest challenge when baking this fresh is keeping the bottom crust from getting soggy, which happens when the juicy filling soaks the base before it cooks. With the pie already frozen, however, the bottom crust starts to bake before the filling has a chance to penetrate it, resulting in flaky, bronzed dough.

Though some fillings won't work quite as well — custard pies and those with meringue toppings don't hold up well in the freezer — most nuts, berries, juicy stone fruits, apples and pears will do just fine.

Freezing a pie once it's already baked doesn't have quite the same effect. The crust will lose the flaky appeal that's the hallmark of this dessert.

Baked cakes do slightly better, but the crumbs will begin to dry out soon after landing in the freezer. Better to stop at the batter stage, once it's in the baking pan and ready to go.

Whether it's for a last-minute breakfast, holiday brunch or dessert, a dense sour cream coffee cake will do particularly well straight out of the freezer — crumb topping and all.

Both of these desserts require extra time in the oven to bake from frozen, and in the case of the pie, a different baking method to get the bottom crust cooking. Then of course there is frozen cookie dough. If life is feeling too hectic, I at least try to have a bag in the freezer filled with pre-shaped chocolate chip cookies.

Once the dough is made, use a small ice cream scoop to dig out balls of the dough. Line them up side by side on a cookie sheet, and stick the whole thing in the freezer for 30 minutes tops. Then peel them off and freeze the cookies in a container or self-sealing plastic freezer bag. Pull out just as many as you need, and they'll be ready — and warm, and gooey — in less than 15 minutes.

 Slice-and-bake cookies are also perfect for freezing. Dough can be frozen in logs, which will last up to a month in the freezer, and sliced just before going into the oven.

---

**Toasted Almond and Vanilla Bean Sables**

2 vanilla beans, split and scraped, pods discarded or reserved for another use

1/2 cup granulated sugar

2 sticks (8 ounces) unsalted butter, room temperature

1/4 cup powdered sugar

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon vanilla bean extract

2 large egg yolks

1/3 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted and coarsely crushed plus more if desired

In a small bowl, rub the vanilla bean seeds and sugar together until the seeds are distributed and aren't sticking together in clumps.

In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream the butter, vanilla sugar, powdered sugar and salt until smooth, about 1-2 minutes.

Add the almond extract and the egg yolks and beat until combined.

Add the flour and sliced almonds and beat until combined.

If freezing the dough, roll the logs in plenty of plastic wrap and place gently on a flat surface in the freezer. These will last up to a month.

If you want to bake these soon after making the dough, refrigerate the logs for at least two to three hours, or up to two days.

To bake: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. If the log is frozen, let soften slightly. Slice the dough into rounds about 1/4 inch thick. Place on parchment-lined baking sheets about 2 inches apart.

Bake about 13 to 15 minutes (it will be on the longer side if baking from frozen), until lightly golden around the edges.
CHICAGO
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Holy Communion 3rd & 5th Sunday
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Sunday School - 10:35 am
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Rev. Robert Johnson, Pastor

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847-676-1300
www.StTimothySkokie.org
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www.tbiskokie.org

SKOKIE

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<td>Sunroof, AM/FM/CD, Clean! #227104B</td>
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<td>Loaded With Navigation &amp; All The Toys! #94498A</td>
<td>$22,900</td>
<td>312-321-3146</td>
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<td>Rare Black Roof Car New! #21156</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Scan these codes with any QR Code Reader to find out more information.
The weekend go and do planner

Cover Story
Check out the holiday event guide to help plan which concerts, plays, musicals and ballets to see this season.

Top Five
Our picks for the week's best entertainment.

Family Friendly
Children have three opportunities to eat with Santa.

What to Do
Your calendar for this week and beyond.

Film Clips
What's opening in theaters and what's still playing.

Stage
Piccolo Theatre tackles Charles Dickens, but does it through pantomime.

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A guide to area holiday shows and events

BY HEATHER LESZCZEWICZ | hleszczewicz@pioneerlocal.com

Want to see Sugar Plum Fairy float across stage or Scrooge have his change of heart?

Or are you looking forward to hearing all your favorite Christmas carols sung? Here's our guide to holiday entertainment.

CONCERTS

Chicago a cappella performs Mexican Christmas music, including Renaissance and Baroque masterpieces and traditional Christmas songs, during "Navidad en México" at 8 p.m. Dec. 1 at Nichols Concert Hall, 1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston. Tickets cost $28-$35; $22 seniors; $12 students; additional $2 each for tickets purchased at the door. For more information, call (773) 281-7820 or go www.chicagoacappella.org.

New Tradition Chorus will present its 32nd annual holiday show 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Dec. 1 and 2 at Glenbrook South High School, 4000 Lake Ave., Glenview. Tickets cost $16-$20, children younger than 12 are $9. For more information, call 800-746-9246 or go to www.newtradition.org.

"Home for the Holidays" presented by the Northbrook Community Choir, Northbrook Symphony Orchestra and several area choirs will perform at 4 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Divine Word Chapel, 2001 Waukegan Road, Techny. Tickets are $15-$37. For more information, call (847) 291-2367 or go to www.northbrooktheatre.org.

Judith Owen & Harry Shearer's Holiday Sing-A-Long will be 7:30 p.m. Dec. 4 at Evanston S.P.A.C.E., 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston. Tickets cost $22-$36. For more information, call (847) 492-8860 or go to www.evanstonspace.com.

The Empire Brass and vocalist Elisabeth von Trapp perform a Christmas concert 8 p.m. Dec. 6 in Ravinia Festival's Bennett Gordon Hall, 201 St. Johns Ave., Highland Park. Tickets cost $10. For more information, call (847) 266-5100 or go to www.ravinia.org.

The Park Ridge Chorale presents "Candles and Carols" will be 7 p.m., Dec. 9 at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, 50 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. Tickets cost $12; $6 students.

The Apollo Chorus of Chicago will perform Handel's Messiah at 7 p.m. Dec. 8 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. Tickets cost $45; $55. For more information, call (847) 673-6300 or go to www.northshorecenter.org.

The Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra and University Chorale presents its 73rd annual Holiday Concert at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 8 and 3 p.m. Dec. 9 at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, 50 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. Tickets cost $35; $25 for young adults ages 18-30; $10 for students. For more information, call (847) 467-4000 or go to www.pick-staiger.org.

"Holiday Delights" presented by a cappella choral ensemble Bella Voce at 4 p.m. Dec. 9 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 939 Hinman Ave., Evanston. Tickets cost $30-$38; $15 students. For more information, call (877) 755-6277 or go to http://bellavoce.tix.com.

"Music Institute of Chicago's family (up to six people). For more information, call (877) 755-6277 or go to www.musicinst.org.

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"Polish Carols, Song & Dance" presented by the Lira Ensemble at 3 p.m. Dec. 9 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. Tickets are $35-$55. For more information, call (847) 673-6300 or go to www.northshorecenter.org.

The Rembrandt Chamber Players presents "Holiday Treats" at 3 p.m. Dec. 9 at Northwestern University's Alice Millar Chapel, 1870 Sheridan Road, Evanston. Tickets cost $35; $25 for young adults ages 18-30; $10 for students. For more information, call (312) 360-3145 or go to
KIA UNLEASHES ITS HEROES
Fleet of comic book character-inspired cars to roll out at auto shows

BY HERB SCHULDINER
Motor Matters

It’s no joke: Kia is teaming up with the largest comic book publisher in the world for a 10-month promotion to create a fleet of cars decorated with comic book heroes, like Batman and Superman, to reach out to potential Kia customers.

The comic book-inspired artistry is the latest venture in which Kia uses pop art to reach car buyers for one of America’s fastest growing vehicle brands.

Scott McKee, a Kia spokesman, said that the Batman-themed vehicle launches Kia’s fourth pop culture venture with comic books. Previously Kia’s pop culture ventures included sponsorship of NBA basketball and other sports events, music performances and social media technology.

The latest campaign is a partnership with DC Entertainment’s iconic comic book characters who make up the Justice League: Superman, Green Lantern, Wonder Woman, the Flash, Aquaman, Cyborg and Batman.

McKee said there will be eight Justice League-inspired vehicles. The Batman Optima is the first. Other characters will adorn other models in the Kia product portfolio that will be unveiled at auto shows around the country.

An eighth vehicle will be decorated with all seven Justice League characters and will debut at the New York International Auto Show next spring. The last vehicle will be auctioned with the proceeds going to battle hunger in the Horn of Africa. McKee could not predict how much that vehicle will fetch at auction.

The Batman-inspired Optima was unveiled at a ceremony at Time Warner Center in New York’s Columbus Circle, headquarters of the company that owns DC Entertainment.

The comic book heroes will adorn We Can Be Heroes license plates, signs and other items to raise awareness for the campaign. The cars will be unveiled at auto shows over the next 10 months, as well as at the New York Comic-Con and San Diego Comic-Con, plus the Specialty Equipment Market Association Show in Las Vegas.

The Optima, which is built at Kia’s U.S. plant in West Point, Ga., is the brand’s best-selling model. Overall, Kia sales are up 35 percent through Sept. 30, McKee said.

“Using comic book characters is not so much a play for younger buyers,” McKee said, noting that the median age of Kia buyers is about 49. “It speaks to people who might have read comic books 30, or even 40, years ago.”

The comic book characters still appeal to those potential Kia customers who might have fond memories of the heroes of their childhoods.

One of the venues for displaying the initial car in the comic book character fleet is the SEMA Show in Las Vegas.

“The SEMA Show is the epicenter for vehicle cus-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Year</th>
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* Add tax, title license and $161.39 doc fee. **Finance on approved credit score with no money down. Subject to vehicle insurance and availability. Lease on approved credit score. Lease, 10k miles per year, 15 cents after. Lease is for excess wear and early termination of lease. Option to purchase: Imp $11,200, For $13,033, Legacy $12,217, Outback $13,845. Gas mileage is EPA estimates. Based on New Subaru retail sales from S&D in Illinois, for all of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011. All offers and in 90 days, unless noted.
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Beating the price hike

Millbrook Pointe offers special incentives, financing for those who purchase before year’s end

Now is the time to take advantage of the lowest home prices in years because prices are expected to increase during the spring market, according to Gary Levitas, Northfield Group president.

To encourage sales at Millbrook Pointe, an upscale townhome community in Wheeling, he is offering a winning combination: Anyone who purchases a rowhome or townhome in 2012 will receive $10,000 in incentives and 2.75 percent special financing. Buyers can choose upgrades such as a finished basement, hardwood floors, high-end appliances and elegant kitchen cabinets, and more.

For those who are not quite ready to make the move but want to lock in low prices at today’s interest rates, Levitas said they can select the home of their choice and reserve it with a $5,000 deposit. The new home will then be completed in 2014.

At the end of a successful year, Northfield Group reports 15 sales and several deposits.

"By merging well-designed three- to four-bedroom townhomes affordably priced from $289,900 in a premier Wheeling location, we have created a desirable community that people want to call home."

"Interest in our homes continues to be strong," he said. With the opening of Phase II, construction activity is under way on four buildings, providing customers with
Spruce up before the holiday

looking for simple and quick ways to spruce up your home for the holiday season?

Get your home looking its best before the guests arrive with some easy home improvement projects and seasonal inspirations. By making a few simple updates and adding new design pieces to your home, you can deter some of those winter blues while preparing for more time spent indoors.

Painting is the easiest way to make a dramatic and instant impact on a room. With guests arriving soon, consider areas of your home that will get the most notice, like your dining room, kitchen, guest bath, foyer and even guest bedrooms. If you’re interested in a quick project, consider painting one wall of a room as an accent wall. You’ll create a new focal point for the room that can be easily achieved by going a shade darker, brighter or complementing the existing wall color.

To quickly accent neutral- or solid-colored furniture, add colorful patterned throws and pillows. The additional throws will provide warmth on extra chilly days and bright pillows will increase the personality of any room. Add festive, seasonal table runners, cloth napkins and placemats to dining and other tables for additional seasonal cheer.

Instead of just fresh flowers in a vase, use small branches or twigs and decorate with items that tie into the season, like acorns and leaves or candy canes and small ornaments. Use branches of varying heights and fullness to give the vase a balanced appearance. Another festive twist is to glue various sized pinecones onto the branches. Consider painting the branches silver or gold for a timeless and elegant appeal.

The winter months mean shorter days; consider updating your current light fixtures or bulbs to brighter ones to increase the lighting in your home, both inside and out. Adding ambient, candlelight will also make your home feel cozier for guests, helping them to relax and unwind after a long day. Candles don’t have to be limited to sitting on table tops or in hurricanes. Install wall sconces and decorative wall art pieces containing tea light candles for additional style. For added safety and mobility, choose battery-operated lighting options for homes with children and pets. These not only work great during power-failures and storms, but also illuminate dark areas such as closets that may not have electrical lines for installation.

If you’re like many people and have a lingering project or two that still needs to be completed, give yourself a deadline and stick to it. If you realize the project is too much work or you’re in over your head, consider asking for help from a friend or family member or hiring a professional to complete it before guests arrive.

By taking the proper steps to prep your home for the holidays, you’ll find more time to enjoy yourself, your guests and your home this season.

— Brandpoint

MILLBROOK POINTE | FROM PAGE 1

an abundance of choices in home style and location.
Not only are Millbrook Pointe customers impressed by the innovative floor plans, but are expressing excitement regarding all the new features and improvements to existing townhome designs. Premium lots are available and construction can be completed in as little as four months, giving buyers enough time to make their finish selections and customize their homes to their personal preferences.

Customers are taking advantage of total customization within the footprint of their floor plan. Owners have redesigned a floor plan layout, modified their kitchen, revamped a bathroom, enlarged a bedroom, plus made a host of other changes.

“We address their expectations and offer many choices to help buyers make their home into a true reflection of their lifestyle,” said Levitas.

Buyers can choose from two upscale townhome plans. One offers four bedrooms and 3½ baths with a first-floor master suite. The other is a three-bedroom, 2½-bath traditional layout. Features include separate living room with a Juliette balcony, two-story great room, kitchen with granite countertops and a center island, vaulted ceilings, outdoor deck, and basement with 8-foot ceiling.

In addition to the townhomes, buyers can opt for a three-story rowhome design featuring two or three bedrooms and 2½ baths. Two plans showcase a family room that can be converted to a guest suite, an open kitchen with island, separate living room and dining room, master bedroom with private balcony, and another large balcony or terrace.

A new floor plan that has garnered attention is a three- or four-bedroom home featuring a kitchen with a breakfast bar, separate dining room and expansive great room. Upstairs, owners can choose a three-bedroom configuration that offers a huge master bedroom with a deluxe bathroom and his and hers walk-in closets, or an elegant four-bedroom plan with a smaller bath.

At Millbrook Pointe, townhomes are crafted to feel like single-family homes. With up to 2,700 square feet of space, they have an abundance of windows that let the outdoors in. Kitchens are roomy and accommodate center islands, while master bedrooms are quite sizeable and are separated from the other bedrooms to give the owner added privacy.

To visit Millbrook Pointe, from Interstate 294 North, exit Lake Cook Road, and go west to 161 N. Milwaukee Ave. The sales office is open daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call (847) 347-8300 or visit millbrookpointe.com.
Homeowners roll on the refinance road to cut debt

Battered by the Great Recession, tens of thousands of American homeowners are working hard to reduce debt via refinance to take advantage of the lowest mortgage interest rates in more than 60 years.

That's the encouraging housing trend revealed by Freddie Mac's third-quarter refinance analysis, which proves that homeowners nationwide are strengthening their fiscal house.

"Eighty-three percent of homeowners who refinanced their first-lien home mortgage in the third quarter of 2012 either maintained about the same loan amount, and 29 percent of refinancing homeowners reduced their principal balance, Nothaft said.

"On average, borrowers who refinanced reduced their interest rate by about 1.7 percentage points," Nothaft said. This savings of about 31 percent in interest rate is the largest percent reduction recorded in the 27 years of Freddie Mac's economic analysis, he said.

"Our Mortgage Survey found that 82 percent of loan applications during the third quarter were for refinance, matching the record share of the fourth quarter of 2010," Nothaft said.

Freddie Mac also found that most frugal American homeowners continued to shy away from adding to their debt. The net dollars of home equity converted to cash as part of a refinance, adjusted for consumer-price inflation, remained at a low volume in the third quarter.

An estimated $7.7 billion in net home equity was cashed out in the third quarter through the refinance of conventional prime-credit home mortgages, up from an estimated $5.9 billion in the second quarter, but substantially less than during the peak cash-out refinance volume of $84 billion during the second quarter of 2006.

The refinance wave also showed that many American homes financed with conventional loan are holding on to resale value. Among the refinanced loans in Freddie Mac's analysis, the median depreciation of the collateral property was 10 percent over the median prior-loan life of 4.8 years.

However, property-value change, loan age, and rate reduction differed between refinancings under Uncle Sam's the Home Affordable Refinance Program (HARP) and other refinances.

For loans refinanced during the third quarter through HARP, the median depreciation in property value was 31 percent, the prior loan had a median age of about 5.6 years, and the HARP borrower had an average interest-rate reduction of 2 percentage points.

To be eligible for HARP, the prior loan had to be originated before June 1, 2009.

Don DeBat's weekly real estate column is syndicated by DeBat Media Services. For more home buying information, visit his Web site at www.dondebat.net.
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WilliamRyanHomes.com

Vacation at home: Each of the homesites at Lake Chapin Shores features its own elevation and panoramic views, as well as direct lake access and community features like a heated swimming pool. SUPPLIED PHOTO

Empty nest, full life

Lake Chapin Shores offers retirement living, full lifestyle

The growing population of those who are 55 and older want more with less. They are fit, active and have an empty nest. They want more opportunity to enjoy a full active life and they want less maintenance and hassle to get in the way.

Recent studies indicate that a large and growing number of Baby Boomers are choosing to move to communities that can meet their changing needs. More than 10 percent of folks from 55 to 64 said they planned to buy a different home within the next three years, and the studies show that those who move as part of a retirement plan are happier than those who stay put, and those who made a short-distance move, staying near family and friends, were the happiest of all.

Lake Chapin Shores is an excellent example of the type of lifestyle destination Baby Boomers are looking for. The lakefront community located on 600-acre Lake Chapin, just 90 miles from downtown Chicago. Homeowners enjoy privacy with spectacular views, boating, water sports, and great fishing, as well as the convenience of community services including year-round maintenance of the heated pool, docks and roadways, common area landscaping and concierge options to prepare the home and/or boat for a family reunion, holiday party, or other special event.

"The Lake Chapin Shores community is phenomenal. We've made so many new friends here and we've strengthened our relationship with existing friends because we've been able to invite them to visit and enjoy the area together," said homebuyers Barb and Ken.

In addition to the abundant lake and community activities, owners who enjoy an active lifestyle find plenty of area activities to keep them entertained. Scenic vineyards and world-class wineries, fine-dining restaurants, public and country club golf courses, scenic hiking and biking trails, casinos, unique antique shops, and markets are all nearby. Local towns host a variety of festivals, art shows, and celebrations all summer long.

Homes at Lake Chapin Shores range from 1,300 to 3,200 square feet of contemporary living space (not including decks and porches), with cherry, oak, or maple cabinetry, choice of natural granite countertops and energy efficient appliances. Each of the 12 home models includes open floor plans, with a cozy gas or wood-burning fireplace, screened porches, and expansive decks.

Materials and equipment are high quality, selected for quiet efficiency, durability and the need for little or no maintenance. Low-maintenance decking, for example, never needs staining like wooden decks. Landmark Architectural roofing shingles deliver the cottage style, weathered wood look, yet carry a 30-year warranty.

Pella windows are energy efficient. Natural cedar, pre-stained siding in the owner's choice of colors and finish requires little maintenance. Natural stone driveways and pathways complement the relaxed surroundings.

"When we priced other available homes in the area, we found Lake Chapin Shores' value irresistible, both in terms of quality construction, home-away-from-home comfort, convenience, and reliable support system," said homebuyers Laura and Brett.

Call 888-TO-MICHIGAN (888-866-4244) for an appointment to tour the community, discuss building and financing options and see the model home. Visit the Website at www.LakeChapinShores.com for a look at each of 12 model home options, photos and video of Lake Chapin Shores living and a complete list of materials and specifications.
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'1 Up — A Totally '80s New Musical,' about the World Series of video games, is on stage Nov. 29-Dec. 1 at Evanston's Dempster Street Theatre, 2008 Dempster St. See musicinst.org.

Native Arts Holiday Bazaar takes place 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 1 and noon to 4 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Mitchell Museum, 3009 Central St., Evanston. See mitchellmuseum.org.

Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra performs selections from "The Nutcracker" and more at 3 p.m. Dec. 2 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts. See svso.org.

Winter Holiday Tablescaping demonstration by Debi Lilly is from noon to 2 p.m. Dec. 1 at Room & Board, 10071 Skokie Blvd, Skokie. See roomandboard.com/debilillyskokie.

Quentin Tarantino's "Reservoir Dogs" will screen in movie theaters at 7 p.m. Dec. 4 and "Pulp Fiction" (above) at 7 p.m. Dec. 6. For theaters, see FathomEvents.com.
Choir presents "Bach Magnificent Christmas" at 3 p.m. Dec. 9 in the Evanston Township High School auditorium, 1600 Dodge Ave., Evanston. The event features North Shore Choral Society, Evanston Dance Ensemble, Evanston Children's Choir and the ETHS Concert Choir and A Capella Singers. Tickets cost $25-$40; $10-$15 for children younger than 18 and the family package is $70-$100. For more information, go to www.evanstonsymphony.org.

"Starlight, Songs and Candles Bright" presented by Youth Choral Theater of Chicago at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 12 at Pick-Staiger Concert Hall, 50 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. Tickets are $9-$26. For more information, go to www.youthchoraltheater.org.

Chicago Gay Men's Chorus presents "Make the Yuletide Gay" at 8 p.m. Dec. 15 at First Congregational Church of Evanston, 1445 Hinman Ave., Evanston. Tickets cost $15-$35. For more information, go to www.cgmc.org.

The Chicago Chamber Choir presents "Bach Magnificent: Christmas in Germany" at 3 p.m. Dec. 16 at Our Lady of the Brook Parish, 3700 Dundee Road, Northbrook. Tickets are $18 in advance; $20 at the door; $15 for children and students. For more information, go to www.chicagochamberchoir.org.

An Intimate Holiday Evening with Paul Malo will be 7:30 p.m. Dec. 18 at Evanston S.P.A.C.E., 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston. Tickets cost $22-$42. For more information, call (847) 492-8860 or go to www.evanstonspace.com.

Do-It-Yourself Messiah offered Dec. 22 at Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St., Glenview. The free event features the Glenview Community Church Chancel Choir and the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra. Musical scores will be available. For more information, call (847) 724-2210 or go to www.gccucc.com.

Zoolights opened Nov. 23 at Lincoln Park Zoo, 2001 North Clark St., Chicago. The lights will be on nightly 5 to 9 p.m., Fridays-Sundays, Dec. 26. Then Dec. 26-Jan. 6, 2013, the lights will be on every night. For more information, go to www.lpzoo.org.

The Inside Show, a free indoor art festival, will take place Nov. 30-Dec. 2 at the Highland Park Country Club, 1201 Park Ave. For more information, go to www.amdurproductions.com.

Holiday Magic will take place Dec. 1-23 as well as Dec. 26-31 at Brookfield Zoo, 3300 Golf Road, Brookfield. For more information, go to www.brookfieldzoo.org/CZS/magic.

North Shore School of Dance presents its 24th annual production of "The Nutcracker" at 10:30 a.m. and noon Dec. 8 at Gorton Community Center, 400 East Illinois Road, Lake Forest. Tickets are $20 for adults and $15 for students and seniors in advance; $25 at the door. For more information, call (847) 234-6062 or go to www.piccolotheatre.com.

"Bah, Humbug!" presented in Panto by Piccolo Theatre's Nov. 16-Dec. 22 at 600 Main St, Evanston. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays; 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays; and 3 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are $25; $22 seniors; $15 students; $10 children 9 and younger; $65 family (two adults, two children). For more information, call (847) 424-0089 or go to www.piccolotheatre.com.

"It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play," Nov. 23-Dec. 23 at Oil Lamp Theater, 1723 Glenview Road, Glenview. Tickets are $30. For more information, call (847) 834-0738 or go to www.oillamptheater.org.

"Miracle on 34th Street," 7:30 p.m. evening performances and 3 p.m. Sunday matinee, Nov. 30-Dec. 8 at Gorton Community Center, 400 East Illinois Road, Lake Forest. Tickets are $20 for adults and $15 for students and seniors in advance; $25 at the door. For more information, call (847) 234-6062 or go to www.CenterStageLakeForest.org.

"It's Christmas Charlie Brown! The Musical!" at 10 a.m. and noon Dec. 8 and Dec. 15 at Wilmette Theatre, 1122 Central Ave., Wilmette. Tickets cost $15. For more information, call (847) 251-7424 or go to www.wilmette-theatre.com.

For a complete list of area events, go to pioneerlocal.com. If you have a holiday event that should be added to this list, email hleszczewicz@pioneerlocal.com.
Dickens’ ‘Carol’ goes happily off-key in ‘Bah, Humbug!’

BY TOM WITOM | Contributor

The panto is on again.

For the 12th year in a row, Piccolo Theatre is borrowing a British holiday tradition and diverting audiences with a cheery, if offbeat, entertainment known as a panto (short for pantomime).

The latest panto, “Bah, Humbug!” parodies A Christmas Carol,” Charles Dickens’ classic tale of transformation. A playful takeoff, it has all the elements you’d expect in the genre — slapstick, double entendres, sight gags, magic and cross-gender characters. There’s also outlandish music and clever lyrics written by Rich Maisel.

Another attraction — especially for children in the audience — a carte blanche to boo villains and loudly cheer mistreated heroes, adds to the appeal of “Bah, Humbug!” Adults can also enjoy the topical gibes at Facebook, the Tea Party, the Cubs and a certain disgraced U.S. general currently in the news.

Director John Szostek explains in a program note that one of the earmarks of the panto is “to take a well-known story and give it a topsy-turvy treatment.”

On that score, Tina and Robert Bubbidge, the creative authors of “Bah, Humbug!” fully succeed.

The basic framework of Dickens’ story is there, with miserly Scrooge (Nathan Thompson) tormenting his hapless clerk Bob Cratchit (Andrew Huttel). And as in the classic, he rudely rebuffs do-gooders collecting alms for the poor, delightfully represented by Cadgit (Allison Lynn Tyler) and Beggit (Katie McDermott).

Cratchit’s lame son Tiny Tim, traditionally a saintly lad, is here played by a girl (Genese Spridco), and a nasty piece of work.

Scrooge’s late business mentor, Jacob Marley (smartly played by Ben Muller), returns from the netherworld to warn his old associate to change his ways. Unimpressed, Scrooge exclaims: “I’ve seen better ghosts at the Goodman.”

Later, spirited in-fighting breaks out among Scrooge’s three ghostly visitors: Christmas Present (Paige Reilly), Christmas Past (Alyson Grauer) and Christmas Future (Kurt Proepper).

Jason Peck does a fine turn as Belle, who briefly turned the head of young Scrooge. Though he is actually British, no one in the cast is willing to correctly place his accent.

A two-dimensional toy box-like set works well in this production where the actors assume a cartoonish demeanor with the help of bizarre wigs, exaggerated makeup and funky costumes.

If, as Szostek observes, the panto was Dickens’ favorite entertainment, it’s safe to say the author would delight in “Bah, Humbug!”

Piccolo Theatre, 600 Main St., Evanston 7:30 p.m. Fridays, 3 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays; 3 p.m. Sundays, through Dec. 22 $25 adults, $22 seniors and $10 students (847) 424-0089 or www.piccolotheatre.com

Beggit (Katie McDermott), Cratchit’s lame son Tiny Tim, traditionally a saintly lad, is here played by a girl (Genese Spridco), and a nasty piece of work.

Piccolo Theatre, 600 Main St., Evanston 7:30 p.m. Fridays, 3 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays; 3 p.m. Sundays, through Dec. 22 $25 adults, $22 seniors and $10 students (847) 424-0089 or www.piccolotheatre.com

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Must Close December 16!
Celebrating fine art by the inch

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN | Contributor

Big talent comes in small packages through the holidays in Winnetka.

It’s 144 square inches and under to be exact. That’s the size limit for works in the North Shore Art League’s sixth annual “inchworks” Fine Arts Show.

“The ‘inchworks’ show is a lot of fun because it’s all no bigger than 12x12, and it’s just a charming show,” said Grace Kroll of Niles. “Lots and lots of artwork is exhibited. It’s very nice.”

Kroll is one of the artists who has contributed work for the show, which opens Nov. 29 with a wine and cheese reception held in the League’s gallery space in the Winnetka Community House. Guests are welcome to see the exhibit and meet some of the artists.

“It’s an opportunity to find out what everybody is doing and enjoying,” said Kroll. She likes showing her work with the League because “there are many people who come and appreciate it. You spend a lot of time working on these pieces and I think most people do this because they love to do it.”

Approximately 175 works — and still counting — will be in the show. They’ll range from paintings and drawings to prints, photographs and mixed media pieces. Not only will visitors be able to look at the work, they’ll be able to purchase pieces. Prices range from $50 to $500. Revenue from the show will fund North Shore Art League operations and its annual scholarship programs, which recognize local high school art students’ achievements.

“I always like ‘inchworks’ because it includes such a variety of pieces from both members and non-members,” said Linda Nelson, executive director of the League. “The sizes are easy for people to include in their home or office collections … and offer quality artwork at affordable prices.”

This year will be Kroll’s second year participating in “inchworks.” She’ll show two of her prints, one titled “Winter,” which depicts birch trees in a snow scene and the other, “Chicago River Bridges,” illustrating the Kinzie Street Bridge. The works feature the Chicago River in different settings.

“On State Street,” by Grace Kroll of Niles

“Pomegranate Dream,” by Avis Lee Neiman of Chicago | PHOTO BY JAN LOEW

“It’s a landscape and a cityscape,” said Kroll. “I’ve lived in Chicago all my life and I’m really fascinated with the architecture and the bridges that are iconic to Chicago because the river runs right through downtown and there’s a bridge at every cross street. It’s appealing to me. I don’t know if it’s appealing to everybody else but if you’ve lived in Chicago you recognize all these things.”

Nelson expresses pride in this annual holiday show and sale, and the opportunity it gives artists to exhibit and possibly to sell their work.

“This show is a gem,” she said. “It’s our gift to the community.”
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HEARTWARMING MUSICAL

James Joyce's
"the DEAD"

Book by Richard Nelson
Music by Shaun Davey
Directed by Charles Newell
Music Direction by Doug Pack

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29 2012
5:00 PM
Apollo Chorus of Chicago
In "An American Christmas Carol"
At the Apollo Theater
773.404.7336
Greenhouse Theater Center
www.remybumppe.org

Chick Corea &
Gary Burton w/ Harlem St Qt
Dec 06
NorthShoreCenter.org

Joffrey American's Nutcracker
25 Years of Holiday Magic
DECEMBER 7-27
TICKETS START AT $31
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MERRY CHRISTMAS!
December 8 and 16
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Greenhouse Theater Center
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DECEMBER 7-27
TICKETS START AT $31
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DECEMBER 7-27
"Chicago's Lira Ensemble...gorgeous music and sharply choreographed folk dance." - The Chicago Tribune

The Lira Singers, Lira Dancers & Lira Symphony
North Shore Center for the Performing Arts
9501 Skokie Boulevard, Skokie, IL
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2012 - 3pm
co-sponsored by the Lira Society of the Polish Women's Alliance of America

Guest Artist,
Daniel Szefer
13-year-old piano prodigy, performing music of Frederic Chopin

Performed by
THE LIRA ENSEMBLE
Artist-in-Residence at Loyola University Chicago
Lusyna Migala, Artistic Director and General Manager

Tickets: $35 to $55
Group Discounts Available/Children to age 16 - half price in all price ranges.
Call Lira at 773-508-7040 (także po polsku)
or 1-800-547-LIRA (5472) or North Shore Center
847-673-6300 OR visit www.northshorecenter.org
www.liraensemble.org

Sketch comedy duo Urlakis and Cusick, comedy-musician Matt Griffo and two Evanston favorites Rom-com and the Underage Sugar Addicts (improvisers age 11-18), will appear in "Chicago Loves NY," a benefit fundraiser for victims of Hurricane Sandy at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2 at the Skokie Theatre, 7924 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie. The show is part of an effort to raise $2,500 for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief fund. Tickets are $20 and available at: www.indiegogo.com/chicago-loves-ny, and at the door. PHOTO BY ZACK WHITTINGTON

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - Fun for All Ages!
Skokie Valley Kennel Club - All Breed Dog Show
Saturday, December 8 & Sunday, December 9

- Dog Show Tours
  10 am and 2 pm each day
- Meet the Breeds
  face to face with purebred dogs 175 unique breeds
- Unique Gifts & Accessories for you and your dog
  items not usually found in retail stores

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for more info skokievalleykc.org

Free Puppy calendar to first 75 families $5.00 Adults
$2.00 children
discount coupon available online
Search & Rescue
Dog Demonstration
Will County
SAR K9 Team
Santa will have three breakfasts in Niles

BY MYRNA PETLICKI | Contributor

We figured out why Santa is so “fluffy.” He is coming to all three of the Niles Park District’s Breakfasts with Santa, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., 10 to 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15 at the Howard Leisure Center Banquet Room, 6676 W. Howard St., Niles.

Following a breakfast buffet and a kids’ craft project, Santa will pose for photos with children and take gift requests. He will also give each child a small present.

“There are families that we see for several years in a row,” said Julie Jentel, director of marketing. She thinks that they are drawn to the relaxed atmosphere. “It’s not like the stressful lines waiting at the mall. It’s more casual and family-friendly.”

The event is intended for children in third grade and above. Infants will not be admitted. Artists, prices and programs subject to change.

Welcome Yule!

DECEMBER 14–23

Whether you’re young or old, naughty or nice, Welcome Yule! is just the ticket for heartwarming holiday cheer with a program of new arrangements, cherished carols and some musical surprises. Join members of the CSO and Chicago Symphony Chorus with sing-alongs and rollicking traditional tunes, including “Christmas in Chicago!”

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
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Recommended for children ages 5 and up. Infants will not be admitted. Artists, prices and programs subject to change.

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Early Registration ends Dec 28
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Family
Continued from page 53

Children can visit with Santa and have breakfast Dec. 15 in Niles.

or younger with their parents. The cost is $8 per child for residents, $10 for nonresident children and $8 for all adults. The event fills quickly so early registration is encouraged.

For details, call (847) 967-6633 or go to www.niles-parks.org.

SHAKE WITH THE SHIMMIES

Lindsay & The Shimmies really rock. And they love it when kids and their parents feel the beat and dance along during their concerts. They will be entertaining an energetic crowd 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 at Wilmette Theatre, 1122 Central Ave. Tickets are $10 in advance, $12 at the door.

For details, call (847) 251-7424 or go to www.wilmette-theatre.com.

UPLIFTING EXPERIENCE

There will be levitation, sleight-of-hand magic and lots of audience participation at Sean Masterson's Vaudeville Magic Show, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1 and 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2 at the Actors Gymnasium, 927 Noyes St., Evanston. Tickets are $12.50.

For details, call (847) 328-2795 or go to www.actorsgymnasium.com.

ELFISH BEHAVIOR

A dog and a rat come to the rescue when an elf loses something important in "Ernie the Elf's Holiday Song List." Roz Puppets will present that tale, 2 to 2:45 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2 at Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave. Rufus the Dog will lead a sing-a-long at the special holiday puppet show. Pick up tickets in advance.

For details, call (847) 825-3123 or go to www.parkridgelibrary.org.

ALL ABOARD

Imagination will take kids on a special Christmas journey during a Polar Express Storytime, 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7 at the Village Crossing Shopping Center Barnes & Noble, 5405 Touhy Ave., Skokie. There will also be holiday treats and activities.

For details, call (847) 329-8460 or go to www.barnesandnoble.com.
### Mark your calendar

Your day-by-day guide to the biggest events of December

**02 Sunday**
- New Tradition Chorus' holiday show 2:30 p.m. at Glenbrook South H.S., Glenview. Go to newtradition.org

**03 Monday**
- The String Ensemble performs 8 p.m. at Oakton Community College's Noteworthy Festival. Go to oakton.edu

**04 Tuesday**
- "The Dark Night Rises," "The Odd Life of Timothy Green" and "Hope Springs" to be released on DVD and Blu-ray.

**05 Wednesday**
- "Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical" at Cadillac Palace Theatre. Go to broadwayinchicago.com

**06 Thursday**
- Empire Brass and vocalist Elisabeth von Trapp, 8 p.m., Bennett Gordon Hall, Highland Park. Go to ravinia.org

**07 Friday**
- Chicago a cappella's "Navidad en México," 8 p.m. at Nichols Concert Hall, Evanston. Go to chicagoacappella.org

**08 Saturday**
- Happy Hanukkah!

**09 Sunday**
- Evanston Symphony Christmas, 3 p.m. in the Evanston Township High School. Go to evansontsymphony.org

**10 Monday**
- "The Book of Mormon" opens at Bank of America Theatre, Chicago. Go to broadwayinchicago.com

**11 Tuesday**
- "War Horse" opens at Cadillac Palace Theatre, Chicago. Go to broadwayinchicago.com

**12 Wednesday**
- Whether you like it topped with whipped cream, marshmallows or plain, it's National Cocoa Day. Warm up with a cup today!

**13 Thursday**
- Mindy Smith performs at Evanston S.P.A.C.E. at 7:30 p.m. Go to evanstonspace.com

**14 Friday**
- "It's Christmas Charlie Brown! The Musical!" at 10 am. and noon Wilmette Theatre. Go to wilmette-theatre.com

**15 Saturday**

**16 Sunday**
- "Bach Magnificat: Christmas in Germany" 3 p.m. at Our Lady of the Brook Parish, Northbrook

**17 Monday**
- "War Horse" opens at Cadillac Palace Theatre, Chicago. Go to broadwayinchicago.com

**18 Tuesday**
- "The Book of Mormon" opens at Bank of America Theatre, Chicago. Go to broadwayinchicago.com

**19 Wednesday**
- Whether you like it topped with whipped cream, marshmallows or plain, it's National Cocoa Day. Warm up with a cup today!

**20 Thursday**

**21 Friday**
- "It's Christmas Charlie Brown! The Musical!" at 10 am. and noon Wilmette Theatre. Go to wilmette-theatre.com

**22 Saturday**
- "Oliver!" opens at Light Opera Works, Evanston. Runs to Dec. 31. Go to light-opera-works.org

**23 Sunday**
- Final performance "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play." Oil Lamp Theater, Glenview. Go to oillamptheater.org

**24 Monday**
- Final day of the Daley Plaza Christkindlmarket in Chicago. Go to christkindlmarket.com

**25 Tuesday**
- Merry Christmas!

**26 Wednesday**
- ZooLights at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago will be on nightly through Jan. 6. Go to www.lpzoo.org

**27 Thursday**
- "The Motherf**ker with the Hat" starring Jimmy Smits begins at Steppenwolf. Go to steppenwolf.org

**28 Friday**
- RhythmBone, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Village Tavern, Long Grove. Go to visitlonggrove.com

**29 Saturday**
- "It's Christmas Charlie Brown! The Musical!" at 10 am. and noon Wilmette Theatre. Go to wilmette-theatre.com

**30 Sunday**
- Final performance of "Little Women" at Citadel Theatre, Lake Forest. Go to citadeltheatre.org

**31 Monday**
- Wishing you a safe and happy New Year
**OPENING FRIDAY**

**THE COLLECTION**

**Rated**
R for strong, bloody violence, grisly images, language and brief nudity

**Stars**
Josh Stewart, Emma Fitzpatrick, Christopher McDonald
A man who has escaped from the serial killer known as The Collector is blackmailed into returning to the killer's booby-trapped warehouse to rescue an innocent girl. Marcus Dunstan wrote and directed the horror.

**HILLING THEM SOFTLY**

**★★★★½**
**Rated**
R for violence, sexual references, pervasive language and some drug use

**Stars**
Brad Pitt, James Gandolfini, Richard Jenkins, Ray Liotta
When a couple of small-time crooks hold up a mob-backed card game in Philadelphia, a freelance enforcer (Pitt) is called to town to restore order — with extreme prejudice. Andrew Dominik ("The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford") adapted and directed the crime drama.

**STILL PLAYING**

**LIFE OF PI**

**★★★★½**
**Rated**
PG for emotional thematic content throughout, and some scary actions

**Stars**
Irfan Khan, Gérard Depardieu, Suraj Sharma
Yann Martel's international best seller has been brought to the screen with breathtaking beauty thanks to recent advances in digital special effects. Director Ang Lee's most sumptuous film since "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" tells the story of a spiritually minded Indian teenager named Pi (Sharma) who finds himself adrift on a lifeboat after a shipwreck with only a hungry Bengal tiger for company. On one level, "Life of Pi" functions nicely as a fairly standard of survival at sea. Its larger purpose, though, is to function allegorically as "a story that could make you believe in God," celebrating the wonders of life with grand-scale visual splendor and its most severe challenges with the always threatening presence of the tiger.

**RED DAWN**

**★★**
**Rated**
PG-13 for sequences of intense war violence and action, and for language

**Stars**
Chris Hemsworth, Isabel Lucas, Josh Hutcherson, Josh Peck
If you can get over the fact that it's entirely preposterous and you happen to be in desperate need of a macho fantasy fix, "Red Dawn" might not be a complete drag to sit through. But don't count on it. There are two major problems with this weak remake of director John Milius' 1984 Cold War era hit. First, full-scale armed invasions probably don't rank high any longer on most people's lists of nail-biting anxieties. Second, the producers changed the attacking nation in the new "Red Dawn" from China to North Korea. Iraq vet Hemsworth and his commando squad of high schoolers confront the ambitious North Koreans.

**SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK**

**★★★★½**
**Rated**
R for language and some sexual content/nudity

**Stars**
Bradley Cooper, Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro, Jacki Weaver
Writer/director David O. Russell has returned to the source of his early love-crazy successes with this heavily medicated screwball romance. "Silver Linings Playbook," which does have its funny moments, is swept along by darker currents. After doing time in a mental institution, unnaturally optimistic Pat (Cooper) plots a campaign to regain his life and his wife. He makes the acquaintance of dark, glowing Tiffany (Lawrence). Despite their instant attraction, Pat stays away until Tiffany makes him an offer he can't refuse. Though it's occasionally uncomfortable and never a rosy-cozy depiction of mental illness, "Silver Linings" does work its way toward a fairly conventional, yet still satisfying, romantic-comedy conclusion.

**HITCHCOCK**

**Rated**
PG-13 for some violent images, sexual content and thematic material

**Stars**
Anthony Hopkins, Helen Mirren, Scarlett Johansson
At the height of his success, director Alfred Hitchcock (Hopkins) struggles to win the Civil War and bring an end to slavery. Steven Spielberg directed the drama.

**RISE OF THE GUARDIANS**

**Rated**
PG for thematic elements and some mildly scary action

**Stars**
Hugh Jackman, Alec Baldwin, Isla Fisher, Jude Law
When an evil spirit (Law) attempts to take over the world, guardians including Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and Jack Frost join forces to defeat him. Veteran storyboard artist Peter Ramsey directed the animated adventure for his theatrical feature debut.

**THE TWILIGHT SAGA: BREAKING DAWN - PART 2**

**Rated**
PG-13 for sequences of violence including disturbing images, some sensuality and partial nudity

**Stars**
Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner
When Edward and Bella's child is born, vampire clans gather to protect her from the governing Vulturi. Bill Condon ("Breaking Dawn - Part One," "Kinsey") directed the drama.

**LUCIN**

**★★★★½**
**Rated**
PG-13 for an intense scene of war violence, some images of carnage and brief strong language

**Stars**
Daniel Day-Lewis, Tommy Lee Jones, Sally Field, Joseph Gordon-Levitt
During the last four months of his life, the 16th president (Day-Lewis) struggles to win the Civil War and bring an end to slavery. Steven Spielberg directed the drama.

**SKYFALL**

**Rated**
PG-13 for intense violent sequences throughout, some sexuality, language and smoking

**Stars**
Daniel Craig, Javier Bardem, Naomie Harris, Judi Dench
When M (Dench) is discredited by a secret from her past and the British intelligence service comes under attack, James Bond (Craig) risks everything to track down the source of the threat. Sam Mendes ("American Beauty") directed the action thriller.
Pitt makes a 'Killing' in grim crime drama

BY BRUCE INGRAM | Film Critic

‘Killing Them Softly’

If you thought it was depressing listening to the news during the economic meltdown of 2008, try listening to it as the aural backdrop to this ultra-stylish, ultra-savage, utterly downbeat crime drama.

There have been few happy-go-lucky mob movies, but “Killing Them Softly” goes bigger and bleaker with its wannabe socially significant message. The standard moral that crime doesn’t pay certainly applies, but director Andrew Dominik suggests that nothing else pays either and draws a fairly strained comparison between life in the underworld and America.

Watching an election speech, in which the presidential hopeful states that America is still a land of opportunity, hit man Jackie Cogan (Brad Pitt) says, “In America, you’re on your own; it’s not a country, it’s a business.”

There are times in “Killing” when the amiable yet entirely ruthless Jackie seems almost brilliant, injecting similar bits of philosophy, which certainly constitute a valid point of view. Remember, pretty much everyone else in this film is either a junkie, an ex-con, a brainless thug or an idiot.

“We’re not the only smart guys in the world,” says ex-con Johnny “The Squirrel” Amato (Ray Liotta). It’s generally known that Markie previously robbed his game and got away with it. Amato figures the mob will surely blame Markie if the game is hit again.

It’s not a bad plan except, Frankie and Russell (Scoot McNairy and Ben Mendelsohn), the down-and-outers hired to rob the game, manage to telegraph their involvement. Jackie, who’s been brought in to restore order, has to make a bloody example of Markie, Johnny, Frankie and Russell.

It’s not the old days, Jackie observes. He doesn’t know who the top bosses are in Boston and he takes orders from a suit-and-tie criminal lawyer (Richard Jenkins), who tells him the extra hit man Jackie requested must fly coach. The economic downturn has hit the mob hard as well.

Jackie, played low-key, laid-back, yet as mercilessly efficient as the Ebola virus by Pitt, is the rock-solid centerpiece that anchors all the craziness and stupidity generated by the various supporting lowlifes. In what’s beginning to seem a typically understated, yet weighty performance, he gives the film the dramatic ballast it needs to hang together. Especially when the hit man reveals that he doesn’t enjoy the “touchy feely” aspect of his trade. He doesn’t like to kill guys he knows, justifying his request for an assistant to take care of Markie. He doesn’t like all the emotion it entails.

Director Dominik makes a somewhat self-conscious show of several flashy visual set pieces in the film, in addition to his heavy-handed socio-political commentary. It’s the soft-sell moments that ring truest in “Killing,” whether it’s Pitt quietly going about his business or the irony of a guy who ratted on a friend winding up side by side with him in the morgue.
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Anthony Hopkins plays the legendary director in "Hitchcock."

A comprehensive list of movie times is available online at www.pioneerlocal.com. Choose your publication, and then select the Entertainment and Movies tabs.

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**THIS WEEKEND & BEYOND**

A list of regional events for you to go out and enjoy

**HOLIDAY**

**“Madeline’s Christmas”**


**“A Christmas Carol”**

Chicago actor and musician Frank Babbitt presents a solo performance with musical underscore at 3 p.m. Dec. 9 at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, 205 N. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Free-will donations and canned goods will be accepted for the Maine Township Food Pantry. Visit www.stlukespro.org.

**Moscow Ballet’s Great Russian Nutcracker**

3 p.m. Dec. 2 at Akoo Theatre at Rosemont, 5400 N. River Road, Rosemont. $37.95-$100. Tickets available at www.ticketmaster.com.

**Niles Public Library**


**Hanukkah Tales for Tots**

Performed by Salt Creek Ballet at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Dec. 15 and 2 p.m. Dec. 16 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. $31.50, $39.50. www.northshorecenter.org.

Corn husk dolls, dichroic glass jewelry and beadwork by Patricia Gardner are among items available at the Native American Arts & Crafts Holiday Bazaar, held 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Dec. 1 and noon-4 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, 3009 Central Street building in Evanston. Native American artists from around the Upper Midwest will offer authentic, handmade, traditional and contemporary art and craft items. Admission to the bazaar is $5, which includes admission to the museum, free for ages 12 and younger. Call (847) 475-1030 or visit www.mitchellmuseum.org.

**The Radio City Christmas Spectacular**


**Holiday House Tour**

The Norwood Park Historical Society’s 29th annual tour will showcase five local homes decorated for the holidays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Dec. 1, starting at the Norwood Park Senior Center, 5801 N. Natoma Ave. $20 in advance; $25 at the door. Free shuttle bus available. Visit www.norwoodparkhistoricalsociety.org.

**“Tis The Season”**

The Lakeside Singers perform at 8 p.m. Nov.

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**Santa’s Breakfast**

Dec. 8, 9-11 a.m., at Maggiano’s Old Orchard, 4999 Old Orchard Center, Skokie. Featuring music by the Niles North High School Choir, face painting, and breakfast buffet. $14.95 per person inclusive. For reservations, call (847) 933-9572.

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**“Tis The Season”**

The Lakeside Singers perform at 8 p.m. Nov.

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**Icon Key**

- **Toddler** 0-3
- **Family**
- **Teens** 13+
- **Adults** 18+
- **Seniors** 65+

**Submissions**

You Want in? Here’s How.

Submit GO events one week prior to the date of publication

Entries must be typed. GO listings are free. Include brief descriptions of the event, date, address, price and phone number.

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**What to do [Page 61]**
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What to do
Continued from page 59

Mannheim Steamroller: Christmas
7:30 p.m. Dec. 1 at Akoo Theatre at Rosemont, 5400 N. River Road, Rosemont. $40-$92.30.


Bittersweet Christmas Band
Performing at 8 p.m. Dec. 8 at the Ethical Humanist Society Coffeehouse, 7574 N. Lincoln, Skokie. $8. Visit www.ethicalhuman.org/coffeeshouse.

“The Lost Christmas Eve”
Performed by the Trans-Siberian Orchestra at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Dec. 8 at Allstate Arena, 6920 N. Mannheim Road, Rosemont. $30, $39, $49, $59, $69. www.ticketmaster.com.

Holiday concert
Second City Brass performs at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 22 at St. Paul of the Cross Church, 320 S. Washington St., Park Ridge. Free-will donations. Call (847) 825-7605.

“Making a List: The Secular Songs of Christmas”

Overnight Mystery Train to Milwaukee
- Murder Mystery
- Audience Participation
- Open Bar & Prime Rib Dinner
- Music & Dancing
- Midnight champagne toast
- Overnight Hotel Accommodations
- Breakfast

Ask about our NYE Country Club Party!


Overnight Mystery Train to Milwaukee
- Murder Mystery
- Audience Participation
- Open Bar & Prime Rib Dinner
- Music & Dancing
- Midnight champagne toast
- Overnight Hotel Accommodations
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Ask about our NYE Country Club Party!


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- Midnight champagne toast
- Overnight Hotel Accommodations
- Breakfast

Ask about our NYE Country Club Party!

What to Do
Continued from page 61
(773) 598-4549.

"12 Gifts of Christmas"

Screened at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 11 at Niles 12, 301 Golf Mill Center, Niles, and Randhurst Village 12, 200 Randhurst Village Drive, Mount Prospect, featuring storytellers, musicians and an illusionist. www.FathomEvents.com.

Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre

"The Odd Couple"

"Up"
The dramatic comedy will be presented through Dec. 9 in Studio One at Oakton Community College, 1600 E. Golf Road, Des Plaines, at 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday; 2 p.m. Sundays. $10 for general admission; $8 students and seniors. Call (847) 635-1900.

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62 | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2012 | NIL
**CLASSICAL**

**Chicago Chamber Musicians**

Presenting "Russian Heartbreak," 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2 at Nichols Concert Hall, 1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston. $35-$45; free for college students. [www.chicagochambermusic.org](http://www.chicagochambermusic.org).

**Lutkin Hall**

At Northwestern University, 700 University Place, Evanston. (847) 467-4000. Nov. 29, 7:30 p.m.: Chicago Wind Quintet, $8; $5 students. Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m.: Northwestern University’s Women’s Chorus, $6; $4 students. Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m.: Bienen Contemporary/Early Vocal Ensemble, “At Winter’s Edge.” $6; $4 students. Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m.: Bienen Contemporary Ensemble, "Vasily Kalinnikov and Bizet," performed by Bienen School of Music piano students. $6; $4 students.

**Music Institute of Chicago**


**The Orion Ensemble**

Presents "A Night at the Opera," featuring works by Wagner and Verdi, at 3 p.m. Dec. 2 at Nichols Hall, 1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston. $26; $23 seniors; $10 students; free children 12 and younger. Visit [www.orionensemble.org](http://www.orionensemble.org).

**Pick-Staiger Concert Hall**

At Northwestern University, 50 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. (847) 467-4000. www.pickstaiger.org. Dec. 2, 3 p.m.: Concert Band performs band standards. $6; $4 students. Dec. 2, 7:30 p.m.: Philharmonia performs music of Vasily Kalinnikov and Bizet. $6; $4 students. Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m.: Bienen Contemporary/Early Vocal Ensemble, “At Winter’s Edge.” $6; $4 students. Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m.: Bienen Contemporary Music Ensemble. $6; $4 students. Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.: Northwestern University Chamber Orchestra performs works by Mozart, Glazunov and Hindemith. $6; $4 students.

**POP/FOLK/JAZZ**

**Akoo Theatre at Rosemont**

5400 N. River Road, Rosemont. Tickets available at www.ticketmaster.com or (800) 745-3000. Dec. 7, 8 p.m.: Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy. $57.45-$180.45. Dec. 8, 8 p.m.: Johnny Mathis. $77.95-$108.70. Dec. 9, 7 p.m.: Multi-platinum rock bands Daughtry and 3 Doors Down, with P.O.D. $40, $50, $60.

**Allstate Arena**


**InterContinental Chicago O’Hare Hotel**

Montrose Room, 5300 N. River Road, Rosemont. [www.montroseroom.com](http://www.montroseroom.com). Nov. 30, 8:30 p.m.: The Neverly Brothers (rockabilly, R&B). $10. Dec. 7, 8:30 p.m.: Coco Montoya. $10; $15 VIP. Dec. 8, 8:30 p.m.: Sam Llanas, formerly of the BoDeans. $18; $25 VIP.

**North Shore Center for the Performing Arts**

9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. [www.northshorecenter.org](http://www.northshorecenter.org). Dec. 6, 8 p.m.: Jazz artists Chick Corea (piano) and Gary Burton (vibraphone) are joined by the Harlem String Quartet. $60-$80.
What to do
Continued from page 63


Holding auditions for “Little Women” 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Dec. 1 at Pilgrim Lutheran Church and School, 4300 N. Winchester, Chicago. Submit headshot and resume to coreyl.mills@yahoo.com.

James Downing Theatre

Saturday, December 8 at 7:00 pm
North Shore Center for the Performing Arts
9501 Skokie Boulevard, Skokie
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Sunday, December 16 at 3:00 pm
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Tickets available through Apollo at 312-427-5620 or www.apollochorus.org and also from venue box offices. Ticket prices for both venues: $55 & $45.
3 p.m. Dec. 2 at Prairie Moon Restaurant, 1502 Sherman Ave., Evanston. $30-$50. Call (847) 905-1500.

BOOKS & POETRY

Lincolnwood Public Library


CHILD'S PLAY

“Annie”

At 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Dec. 8, 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Dec. 9, 7 p.m. Dec. 14 and 1 p.m. 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Dec. 15 at the Youth Company Chicago Studios, 5340 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago (Jefferson Park). Visit www.youthcompanychicago.org.

COMEDY

Allstate Arena

6920 N. Mannheim Road, Rosemont. Tickets at www.ticketmaster.com or (800) 745-3000. Dec. 27, 7:30 p.m.: Standup comedian Jeff Dunham — “Disorderly Conduct” World Tour. $46.50.

Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre


Zanies Comedy Club

What to Do
Continued from page 65


DANCE

"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"

Presented by Evanston Dance Ensemble at 7 p.m. Nov. 30 and 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Dec. 1-2 at Northwestern University's Josephine Louis Theatre, 20 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. $22; $15 children, students and seniors. Call (847) 491-7282 or visit www.tic.northwestern.edu.

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BLACK ENSEMBLE THEATER YOU IN?
Many job seekers are tempted to slow down the search (or pause it altogether) during the winter holiday season. But career experts say that taking a break from your job search during the holidays is a mistake—because hiring doesn’t stop.

At the end of the year, some companies rush to fill job openings that might otherwise be removed from next year’s budget. Still other companies will be looking ahead. “Jobs that might have been on hold until budgets are in place will become available in January,” says career expert Kimberly Bishop, author of Get Down to Business and You’ll Get the Job.

Roy Cohen, an executive coach and author of The Wall Street Professional’s Survival Guide, agrees. “There’s a belief that recruiting shuts down during the holidays,” he says. “That’s a myth—so when other people take off from their job searching during the holidays, you’re at an advantage should an opportunity surface. It’s all about numbers and odds.”

In fact, the holidays provide some distinct advantages and opportunities for job seekers. Here’s how to make the most of your holiday-season job search:

Be Flexible
Judi Perkins of FindthePerfectJob.com says, “When I was a recruiter, the holidays were one of my busiest times, and I was often on the phone either side of Christmas day.” This means that you should be prepared to interview at unusual times, to allow for a recruiter’s or hiring manager’s busy holiday schedule.

Do Volunteer Work
All sorts of philanthropic organizations ramp up activities during the holidays—and volunteering can be a great way to network, gain skills and fill the gap that unemployment might otherwise leave on your resume.

“Your job is to meet other volunteers—great people who, by nature, will want to help,” Cohen advises. “You’ll feel good, too.”

Look Into Temporary Positions
Many companies have end-of-year crunches—at the same time that many workers want to take time off—so they look to staffing agencies to fill gaps. A temporary job can be a great way to get your foot in the door at a new company.

Seek Seasonal Jobs
“The most obvious opportunities are in retail sales or retail-related positions,” Bishop says. “There are a variety of part-time and temporary jobs that range from sales and customer service to merchandising, stocking, greeting, gift-wrapping and playing a role in special in-store events. The hospitality industry also offers opportunities. “Hotels, restaurants and caterers have more events and parties, so they need to staff up,” she says.

Use Holiday Social Events to Network
You don’t want to make every conversation about your job search—but letting people know how they can help you is crucial. “Have your pitch—who you are, what you want and why—ready and perfect,” Cohen advises.

And try to keep things positive. For instance, when you tell people you’re looking for work, also tell them how you’ve been productive with your time off.

Reach Out to Your Contacts
The holidays are a great reason to reach out to friends and acquaintances as well as to reconnect with people you may have fallen out of contact with. “Send out a holiday greeting, but add a little extra in your message,” Cohen suggests. “Email or snail mail the card to everyone in your job search universe. It should be upbeat—that you continue and are committed to search for a great job and know that it is only a matter of time and timing.” And be sure to express your gratitude to all those who have reached out to you during your search, he adds.

(If you don’t know which holidays a contact celebrates, “Happy New Year” is a safe sentiment.)

And remember that the holidays are a time for giving. Find ways to help the people in your network, and they’ll be likelier to help you in the future.

Recommit to Your Job Search
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**Legal Notice**

**Notice of Sale**

**State of Illinois**

Notice is hereby given that on Monday, December 17, 2012, at 10:00 a.m., the State of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources, will sell by public auction the following property located in Lake County, Illinois: 740 W. Liberty Street, Libertyville, Illinois 60048.

The property consists of 0.03 acres, more or less, and is subject to the following conditions:

1. The property is being sold for the purpose of extinguishing a lien imposed by the State of Illinois on said property.
2. The property is subject to any other liens or encumbrances.
3. The property is subject to any environmental or health hazards.
4. The property is subject to any restrictions or covenants.

The property is subject to the jurisdiction of the Village of Libertyville and the courts of law.

The interested parties are invited to attend the sale and to make their offer of purchase.

The sale will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Illinois Publicity Act, 65 ILCS 5/13-112.

For further information, please contact: John S. McPherson, Director, Department of Natural Resources, 740 W. Liberty Street, Libertyville, Illinois 60048, Telephone: (847) 947-3700, or email: john.s.mcpheerson@state.il.us.

Dated: November 2, 2012

John S. McPherson
Director, Department of Natural Resources
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When the 2012 NFL season began, which individual player and which team were the leaders in total sales of officially licensed merchandise? Peyton Manning’s new Denver Broncos jersey was number one among all players, while the Pittsburgh Steelers were tops among all teams. The Steelers not only led in overall merchandise (the Super Bowl champion New York Giants were second), but in all sales to men, all sales to women and all sales to kids.

Take a wild guess at the total gross annual revenues of all four major North American team sports combined, as of 2012. Hold on to your helmets - the grand total each year is more than $25 billion. Here’s the breakdown. Leading the way, at approximately $9.5 billion in annual revenue, is the NFL. Next, at about $7.7 billion, is Major League Baseball. Third, at more than $4.3 billion, is the NBA. Finally, at a feeble $3.3 billion, is the NHL. From all of us fans - you’re welcome.

Loyola’s Albano reaches milestone

BY NICK BULLOCK | Contributor | @Pioneer_Press

Trinity alumna Monica Albano, a senior guard on the Loyola women’s basketball team, became the 19th player in Loyola history to score 1,000 points during the Ramblers’ 82-73 win against Southern Illinois on Nov. 17 in Chicago.

The Park Ridge native has averaged 8.6 points per game through five games this season.

Maine South alumnus Matt Palucki finished with 14 points and eight rebounds for the Washington University in St. Louis men’s basketball team in its 94-63 win against Austin on Friday in Lincoln, Neb. The sophomore forward is averaging 10 points and 7.3 rebounds per game while helping the Bears to a 4-0 start.

Nick Marinkovich, a Hinsdale Central graduate and junior guard for the Central College men’s basketball team, led the Dutch with 23 points in their 74-71 win against Cornell College on Nov. 20 in Mount Vernon, Iowa. Marinkovich shot 8-for-17 from the field, including 4-for-12 from beyond the arc.

The Clarendon Hills native now sits second on the team in scoring at 19 points per game through three games.

Lake Forest alumna Nicole Lipp helped her Duke women’s soccer team defeat Miami (Ohio) on Nov. 16 in Charlottesville, Va., and advance to the third round of the NCAA Tournament. The senior midfielder recorded an assist on a free kick from 35 yards out that a teammate headed in for the Blue Devils’ first goal of the day. Duke went on to win 4-1.

The Blue Devils’ season came to an end Friday when they lost 1-0 to Penn State in the quarterfinals. Lipp, who started 20 out of a possible 23 games, finished the season with three assists.

The Northwestern men's soccer team made it to the third round of the NCAA Tournament with the help of four area natives: Joey Calistri, Chris Ritter, Scott Lakin and Connor Holloway.

The Wildcats’ run ended with a 2-1 loss at No. 10 Louisville on Sunday. Northwestern finished the season with a 13-6-4 record, including a 3-1-2 mark in the Big Ten.

Calistri, a freshman forward from Deerfield, led the Wildcats in scoring with 20 points (nine goals, two assists). Ritter, a senior midfielder from New Trier, finished the season second on the team in points with 15 (five goals, five assists).

Lakin, a junior midfielder also from Deerfield, was near the team lead in minutes played and finished the season with one assist. Holloway is a junior midfielder/defender also from Deerfield.
Protic's growth spurt provides interior depth

By Eric Van Dril | Contributor | @EricVanDril

Maine East junior Marko Protic grew four inches this summer, giving the Maine East boys basketball program something it desperately desired.

Protic played small forward on Maine East's sophomore team last year, but he grew to 6-foot-5. Protic's growth spurt made him the team's tallest player and resulted in a move into the post. It also provided Blue Demons coach Dave Genis with the backup post player for which he was searching.

"He's coming along. He's a very credible backup to Ezeke (Omeke) now," Genis said. "He's sprouted and he's put on a lot of muscle, compared to what he was. He's done a lot of work in the offseason with us. If you would have seen him last year as a sophomore ... it's like a completely different kid."

Protic said he worked on his strength, post moves and finishing around the rim this summer.

Protic is now somebody who can challenge Omeke, a 6-4 sophomore, in practice and give the offense a different dimension.

While Omeke is better suited to bang with opposing posts down low, Protic can step away from the basket — opening the lane for Maine East's slashers — and knock down jump shots.

He did just that in the team's 60-44 win over Guerin on Friday. Protic scored seven points and snared a team-high five rebounds. Protic also showed that he still possesses some of the skills he developed as a perimeter player.

The junior made a jump shot from the free-throw line in the first half. He also went 3-for-3 on his free throws, draining all three opportunities with a smooth stroke.

The Maine East coaching staff has been trying to accelerate the junior's development in the paint. He's constantly working with Omeke in practice.

"Without (Omeke), I don't know if I would be where I am now because he really pushes me to be the best I can," Protic said. "And I try to push him to be the best he can be."

Maine East junior Marco Protic (center) goes up for a basket against Guerin junior Gavin Byrne (right) while Gators junior Anthony Marra (left) looks on during the Battle at the Ridge basketball tournament at Northridge in Niles on Friday. Visit parkridge.suntimes.com/sports to view a photo gallery from the game.

| Ryan PageLow | Sun-Times Media |
Mooney took long road to Air Force

BY DAN SHALIN | Contributor | @danshalin

Notre Dame senior Matt Mooney said he never thought the military would be part of his future.

Then, the 6-foot-2, 190-pound guard caught the eye of Air Force Academy associate head coach Steve Snell at an AAU tournament in Milwaukee this past summer. Falcons coaches watched Mooney again at a tournament in Orlando a few weeks later, and they offered him a scholarship.

Mooney visited the Colorado Springs campus in September and signed a National Letter of Intent in November to play for head coach Dave Pilipovich.

With a number of Division II offers on the table and some interest from low-major Division I schools, Air Force represented Mooney's highest-profile scholarship opportunity ahead of the early signing period.

Mooney, a combo guard who averaged a team-high 10 points per game as a junior, has long fantasized about playing college basketball. The Falcons compete in the Mountain West Conference, which currently features tradition-rich programs like UNLV and New Mexico.

"It's big-time," Mooney said. "The coaching staff is awesome; they know basketball. I like the players. Air Force (was) 5-0 (to start this season).

"You play against future NBA players (in the Mountain West) and in front of 10,000 to 15,000 in many arenas, usually in a great environment."

Off the court, of course, the Air Force Academy is unlike most universities. Cadets are required to wear formal uniforms, must take part in military activities and are subjected to a rigorous academic curriculum, all designed to prepare them for a military career. There is a
Notre Dame's Donte Stephenson lays in a shot while Evanston defender Pete Winslow (30) watches on during their Nov. 20 game at the Lane Tournament in Chicago. Stephenson scored 14 points, including 12 in the second half, to lead the Dons in scoring. Notre Dame won 48-29. PATRICK GLEASON-For Sun-Times Media

mandatory five-year military service commitment upon graduation, though studying for a master's degree does count toward that commitment. "It's a great opportunity," said Mooney, who said he believes his chances of ever seeing military combat are slim. "I will get paid right out of college, and maybe get my master's for free. I will develop as a person."

Mooney, a straight-A student, has not decided what he will study, though he is interested in engineering. The Air Force experience will be demanding, but Mooney already has made sacrifices to achieve his basketball dreams.

A resident of Wauconda, located 25 miles northwest of Notre Dame, Mooney seemed destined to attend Carmel Catholic in Mundelein, just 10 minutes from his house. His brother Daniel, who is two years older, went to the school.

However, the summer before high school, Mooney attended a few open gyms at Notre Dame, got to know the players and coach Tom Les and decided the Niles school gave him the best opportunity to reach his athletic goals.

But, unlike Carmel, the school is not co-ed. Plus, getting to school before he had a driver's license required a lengthy journey that included: getting a ride to the Barrington train station, taking Metra's Union Pacific-Northwest Line to Des Plaines and then hopping on the No. 250 Pace Bus for several miles down Dempster Street.

"He felt the basketball program at Notre Dame was a good fit for him and made that decision (to attend ND)," Les said. "Coming from Wauconda, he travels a long way. That was a huge commitment for him. It was a huge commitment on the part of his family, as far as traveling to our games. The majority of our road games are even further south. They are doing a lot of traveling to and from for basketball."

Mooney admitted he sometimes questioned his choice of high schools while waiting in the cold for the train or bus. But those thoughts have long since left his mind:

"My friends went to Carmel and a lot of people wondered why I would go (to Notre Dame)," he said. "I think they now know why I went. It has paid off."

Last season, Mooney was a key component on a Notre Dame team that went 20-9 before losing narrowly to Evanston in the regional final. With Mooney, talented junior guard/forward Duante Stephens and South Elgin transfer Jake Maestranzi, a senior point guard, the Dons won't be sneaking up on many teams this winter.

"It's fun playing with (Mooney)," Stephens said. "He can handle the ball, can spot up and shoot or shoot off the dribble. He's a good passer and a great competitor. (Commuting from up north) shows he really cares about basketball, about this school and this team. I respect him for that."
Karime Assaf is back on the court, but her road to recovery has been long.

The Niles North senior tore the ACL in her right knee in practice just after Christmas in 2011 and has undergone nearly eight months of rehabilitation. "It was devastating," Niles North coach Dan Paxson said. "She's a tough kid, but to hear her scream, you know something bad happened."

Assaf's rehab continues via physical therapy each week.

"I just came down wrong, and it popped," said Assaf, adding, "I really worked hard to get to the point where I'm able to play again."

Her teammates are thrilled to have the energetic center back.

"It's definitely inspiring," senior guard Rachel Matthies said. "You can ask anyone. Coaches, players, fans, anyone about what she did to come back after an injury like that."

Paxson added: "I thought she might be discouraged, maybe even afraid to come back. But almost immediately after the surgery, she said, 'Coach, I want to come back.' She was real excited to play again."

Conditioning has been slow for Assaf, a starter for the Vikings (0-5) who is substituted after 4-minute spurts.

"Hopefully my conditioning will improve," Assaf said. "I'm working real hard. With determination and passion, I can get there."

She is averaging just under 3 points per game.

In a 53-33 loss to Wheeling on Saturday at the Niles North Somebody's Hero Girls Thanksgiving tournament, Assaf had a team-high eight rebounds.

"My responsibilities are screening, rebounding and playing defense," said Assaf, who is a middle blocker on the Vikings volleyball team and a goaltender in soccer. "I have to work on my offense, though."

Assaf's coach is confident she will keep improving.

"She's getting there," Paxson said. "I don't have any doubt that in the next couple of weeks, she's going to be there."
Niles West junior Romeo Magloire knew there were two facets of his game he had to improve as he prepared for his first season of varsity basketball. The first was his fitness. Magloire needed to slim down to get faster and be able to run the court effectively. Second, the Niles West coaching staff told the 6-foot-1 junior he needed to improve the mental aspect of his game, specifically knowing where to be on the court.

Magloire diligently worked on improving both aspects by working out and playing a lot of basketball this summer, and it's quickly paid off. Magloire, who slimmed down in the off-season, scored 20 points in Niles West's 60-46 win over Glenbrook North on Nov. 21 largely because he was in the right place on fast breaks. "My teammates were finding me on the court," Magloire said. "I was moving and I was able to get open — they were finding me — and I was getting the easy buckets. ... After rebounds, I was getting on the fast break and then Ahmad (Gibson) was finding me; David (McCoy), Joey (Younan), they were finding me on the fast breaks and I was getting layups."

Magloire's big game against Glenbrook North wasn't an aberration. The junior has scored in double figures in three of Niles West's four games this season, taking advantage of increased playing time with senior center Mohammed Qureshi temporarily out of the lineup. Magloire said he expects Qureshi to be back for Saturday's game against Niles North.

Days removed from the Wolves' 4-0 start to the season, Niles West coach Bob Williams said one of the biggest things that's impressed him about Magloire's first four games on varsity has been his on-court intelligence. "He's a very smart player," Williams said. "He's not going to overpower you with his athleticism, his shooting ability or anything. He's just a smart player; he gets himself where he's supposed to be when he's supposed to be there.

"What I like about this team is that they're totally and completely unselfish. If a guy's doing the things he's supposed to do and working hard, then he's going to get rewarded. That's what happened with Romeo. ... It seems to be a theme with him."

In this Feb. 28 photo, Niles West’s Ahmad Gibson passes to a teammate in between New Trier defenders during their regional semifinal at Niles West. Gibson and teammate Romeo Magloire helped the Wolves start this season 4-0. | CURTIS LEHMKUHL-Sun-Times Media
Pioneer Press Girls Golf All-Area Team

Stephanie Miller

She won nearly every time she teed it up, posting 12 rounds under par in her final 13 matches, including her 1-under 71 at Hickory Point to capture the Class AA championship. Prior to that, Miller won her fourth regional title in her career by carding her second 67 of the season. Miller, who plans to play at Illinois next year, also won her third North Suburban Conference championship in four years.

Golf isn’t the only thing that consumes Miller’s time. Sometime during her freshman year, she got into designer fingernails and now friends ask for her services.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED WITH FINGER NAILS? “My (stepsisiter) was doing that kind of stuff, so I played around with it. Now I love it, and I can’t get enough of it.”

ANY SPECIAL DESIGNS YOU INCORPORATE DURING THE GOLF SEASON? “Not really. Anything that looks cool. How long I have it depends on how well I’m doing on the course. I usually kept the same design for about a week.”

ANY INTEREST IN GOING PRO — IN NAILS? “No. But my friends ask me all the time to do their nails. I did one girl’s nails for homecoming. She wanted a french manicure, but I didn’t have time after school because of golf. So I brought my stuff to school and we did it during lunch.

“I guess if I need money in college I know how to get it, but I’m keeping that under the radar for now.”

—Matt Harness

GOLFER OF THE YEAR

SEASON PASS
seasonpass.suntimes.com/pioneer
A winner of five tournaments this fall, the Glenbrook North junior finished tied for ninth after shooting 75 at the Class 3A tournament. Hardy, the CSL North champion, broke par in four of his 12 full rounds and finished with a stroke average of 72, which was highlighted by a 68 in a tri-meet at Sportsman's Country Club.

McCall capped his career with an individual state championship at Prairie Vista and helped North Shore Country Day win its second team Class 1A title in a row.

McCall proved he was one of the area's best players, regardless of classification, at New Trier's invitational, where he shot a 1-under 71 and tied for second place.

A three-time tournament champion this season, the Lyons senior tied for 14th at the Class 3A tournament at The Den at Fox Creek with a 76. The Michigan State recruit and Western Suburban Conference champion finished with a 73.07 stroke average this year and was the team's low scorer in 10 of its 16 events.

Captain for Class 3A team champion Hinsdale Central and the only senior in the state lineup, Whinery tied for ninth place with a 75 in his final prep tournament at The Den at Fox Creek Course. He also won both the regional tournament and Batavia's tournament. Whinery's 74 stroke average led the Red Devils.

CO-GOLFERS OF THE YEAR

A varsity rookie, Junge ultimately became one of the best players in the state. The New Trier sophomore tied Kelsey for the Class 3A championship by making birdies on four of the final six holes. Both shot 1-under 71s at The Den at Fox Creek in Bloomington. Also a sectional champion, Junge carried a 75.5 stroke average and posted 10 rounds in the 70s in 12 of his tournaments.

After nearly ending his season at the regional tournament — he snatched the final individual berth in the sectional by shooting an 85 — Kelsey made the most of his second chance by taking second at sectionals before tying for the Class 3A championship. The Deerfield junior, who was the runner-up in the CSL North to Nick Hardy and a tournament champion at his team's own invitational, averaged a 74 for 18-hole meets.

Once the golf season is over, Junge and Kelsey turn their attention toward other interests. Junge plays goalie for the New Trier Green hockey team, while Kelsey renews his interest in all things University of Michigan.

WHAT'S YOUR CONNECTION TO THE WOLVERINES? “My dad went there and both of his parents went there. We usually go to one football game every year. My grandma has had season tickets for football and basketball for something like 50 years.”

IS MICHIGAN A COLLEGE YOU'RE CONSIDERING? “I'm not sure. All I know is I definitely want to play (golf) in college. That's my biggest priority in picking a school right now.”
## Pioneer Press Girls Volleyball All-Area Team

### Player of the Year

**Taylor Tashima**

Behind the setting of the 6-foot junior, New Trier reached the state championship for the first time since winning the state's first title as New Trier East in 1974.

Tashima was already named the best setter at the NORCECA Youth Continental Championships in August while leading the United States to the gold in Tijuana, Mexico. With the USA Youth National team, she also placed fourth at the European Global Challenge in Croatia in July.

The Northwestern-bound Tashima finished the season with 172 kills, 688 assists and a team-leading 76 aces.

**WHAT CHURCH DO YOU ATTEND AND WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT SINGING IN ITS CHOIR?**

“I go to Kenilworth Union Church. What I love most about singing in the choir provides a balance in my life.”

School and volleyball can get very intense, and the choir is like a second family to me. The choir director, Lisa Bond, is an amazingly talented, kind, considerate, hard-working woman. She’s made it possible for Haley and me to continue singing despite our numerous weekend volleyball commitments, and she’s been unswervingly supportive of my life both in the church and outside of it. She even came to watch our New Trier team win supersectionals this year.

School and volleyball can get very intense, and singing in the choir provides a balance in my life.”

**WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES OF MAKING THE YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM FOR THE THAILAND TOURNAMENT (FIVB YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP) NEXT SEASON?**

“Nothing is a given. Next year’s tryouts are constantly at the forefront of my mind, motivating me to push myself on a daily basis to become a stronger and smarter player. Being the setter on next year’s U.S. Youth National Team and having the opportunity to compete for the world championship is a big goal of mine.”

**WHAT IS THE NAME AND PURPOSE OF THE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION YOU ARE INVOLVED WITH?**

“I’m a member of the junior board of the Hospice & Palliative Care Center, which is a program that tries to maximize the quality of life for people who are sick and in the last phase of their lives. The job of my board is to raise money for the hospice organization, so they can take care of their patients and their families.”

— George M. Wilcox

### All-Area First Team

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Taylor Tashima</strong></td>
<td>New Trier</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Setter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily Milligan</td>
<td>North Dakota State</td>
<td>JR</td>
<td>Libero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Britanni Steinberg</td>
<td>Nazareth</td>
<td>SR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Layne Self</td>
<td>The CSL</td>
<td>JR</td>
<td>Setter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristin Webb</td>
<td>Libertyville</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Setter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy Zhou</td>
<td>The Michigan</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Setter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Brezyn</td>
<td>the North Carolina-Greensboro</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Libero</td>
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**Second Team**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khail Donaldson</td>
<td>Stevenson</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Setter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Emhert</td>
<td>Glenbrook North</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Libero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maley Fauntleroy</td>
<td>New Trier</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Libero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nannan Julie</td>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Setter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Lopez</td>
<td>Niles North</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Libero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan McDowell</td>
<td>Hinsdale Central</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Libero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Pflugradt</td>
<td>Beaverton</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Libero</td>
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**OH**

Next, but led the Roadrunners (23-12) to a regional title and was named all-tournament at Champions Centennial and Bradley-Bourbonnais.

She had 347 digs for an average of 4.6 per set and led her team in serving percentage.

The CSL South Player of the Year helped New Trier to a state runner-up finish. The Yale-bound 5-foot-11 senior helped the Trevians return to their first state final since 1974 with a match-high 15 kills in the semifinals against Mother McAuley. She led the Trevians in kills (273) and was second in blocks (34).

Her 464 kills were a Lake Zurich record for a single season, which is remarkable for a middle hitter. Her 28 kills against Libertyville were a school record. She added 81 blocks, 149 digs and 75 aces. The 6-1 senior and Rhode Island recruit holds the school record for career aces (163) and finished second in kills (996).

Laying fourth in 2007, but the senior libero did not go down without a fight against Mother McAuley with 20 digs in the third-place match. Webb ended the season with 773 digs and was credited with 45 aces in one match this season.

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**Showdown.**

The Pepsi championship match of the unbeaten Morton in win over previously to give Lyons a 1-0 for Lyons. He scored goals and five assists for Lyons. He scored his Epiphone acoustic guitar, and the popular video game FIFA soccer.

**First Team**

**Goalkeeper**

**Left Back**

**Center Back**

**Center Back**

**Defender**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Plays the Year Q & A.**

*What is enjoyable about the guitar?* "It's just a hobby — with soccer, it's hard to make time for it. But if everything's soccer, soccer, you can get burned out mentally. In free time, if I need to get away from the game, I play guitar. I played piano when I was really, really young, and that was the foundation for other instruments. So my parents said, "Why not guitar?" When I was younger, I loved '80s music — Metallica, Guns 'n Roses, AC/DC — and as bad as it sounds, I really haven't changed. It is what is is — something to do on the side as a hobby."

— Ken Keenan

**Second Team**

**Goalkeeper**

**Defender**

**Defender**

**Defender**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Midfielder**

**Forward**

**Forward**

**Forward**

**Forward**

**Forward**

**Forward**

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**Season Pass**

**Pioneer Press Boys Soccer All-Area Team**

**Player of the Year**

Few opposing players were able to get the ball past Quentin Low this year. Stevenson's senior goalkeeper allowed just 12 goals during the regular season, earning Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association all-state honors. Low finished with a 0.40 goals-against average, and he piled up 18 shutouts. His play helped the Patriots (19-5-1 overall) place a program-best fourth in the Class 3A state tournament. Low also enjoys playing his Epiphone acoustic guitar, and the popular video game FIFA soccer.

**What attracts you to the FIFA soccer video game series?** "Before all of our big games, we have pasta parties — team dinners — and the team break off into pairs, and a big FIFA tournament. It's not very realistic, more like a fantasy game. Everything that happens in real soccer is 10-times crazier in the video game. Outside of the game, it's fun to be with the guys. Our team was real close this year — we're still hanging out — and it's a pride thing to beat your buddies. Plus, getting to know the other guys on the team, you learn how they respond to different situations. Some guys need encouragement, some don't."

**What is enjoyable about the guitar?** "It's just a hobby — with soccer, it's hard to make
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