A shrine for Niles heroes

Michael Crisci and Dan Smaczny (front) with Don Kaderabek, Doris Gottschalk, Arlene Twarbowski, Laverne Kozak and Jim Kozak (back) in the new Niles Notable Room. | DAVE KRAUS FOR Sun-Times Media

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'South Pacific' comes to the Marriott [Page 53]

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Retro food goes modern in reinventions [Page 43]

Mommy
Reci-Peeps for those leftover treats [Page 42]
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The contest will be available from Friday, March 1, 2013 to Friday, April 5, 2013. No submissions will be accepted after 5 p.m. on Friday, April 5, 2013. Only submissions made through www.pioneerlocal.com/mothersday will be considered.

The winners will be featured on page 1 of the Mother's Day section that will run in your local Pioneer Press on Thursday, April 25, 2013. Honorable mentions will also be featured on sequential pages.

Visit www.pioneerlocal.com/mothersday for more information.
Election Day coverage

Tuesday is Election Day. Voters will be choosing among candidates for village, library, park district, school and township boards, and, in some cases, village leaders and referendums. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

After voting, check with us for the latest coverage on our website or via Twitter and Facebook. The addresses are all listed below.

The print edition of next week's newspaper will be delivered on Friday, so that we can include all the latest news, reaction and analysis from the election.

Have a story to tell us?

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Local legends on display

A few years ago, Walter Beusse wanted to create a way to recognize Niles residents who have accomplished great things.

The third floor of the Niles Historical Society contains a "Niles Notables" room that is dedicated to people who once resided in Niles and have reached notable goals. The displays contain photographs of the people and background information on them.

"They have gone beyond the boundaries to become somewhat famous," said Beusse. Some of the people featured are Jimmy Les, who attended Notre Dame High School and became a professional basketball player; Annette Rogers Kelly, who won a gold medal in the Olympics for a relay race; and Eddie Olczyk, an Olympic hockey player who went on to play for the Chicago Blackhawks.

Beusse was one of Olczyk's hockey coaches when he was in Niles. Kelly medaled at the Olympic Games held in Berlin during Hitler's reign. Her shoes are displayed at the museum.

"They deserve some recognition," said Beusse. "That was my purpose. To recognize these people who lived in Niles until they were adults and moved on to make a name for themselves."

The room also has a display dedicated to the Tam O'Shanter Golf Course. A series of flags from Tam Golf Course represent the International tournaments held at the golf course where legendary golfer George S. Farley played.

The Leaning Tower YMCA on Touhy Ave. is also a place in Niles that is featured in the "Niles Notables" room. "Just recently I added photographs of Living Legends of Niles on the wall," said Beusse.

Photos of Niles Living Legends adorn the walls of the Niles Historical Society’s new Niles Notable Room. "We were really glad when they reached out to us about doing something like that," said Katie Schneider, executive director of the Niles Chamber of Commerce.

Schneider said that in 2004 the chamber started to give out "Living Legend" awards, which are similar to lifetime achievement awards. In 2006, they changed the name to the "Bob Wordel Living Legend" award. Wordel was one of the founding members of the chamber and was dedicated to the chamber throughout his entire life.

"He embodied what it meant to have a lifetime of service and make a positive impact on a community," said Schneider. Beusse was also a recipient of the Living Legend award.

Beusse said that people who come to visit the Niles Historical Museum are often surprised to see all the former residents of Niles that were Olympians.

Village Trustee Rosemary Palicki said that she is a member of the historical society, but was not familiar with the "Niles Notables" room. Palicki said that she would like to see the schools more involved in the historical society.

"I would love to see the historical society become an established part of our school curriculum in Niles," wrote Palicki, in an email. "A field trip every year for the appropriate grade would be so beneficial for our children to learn about their community."

Although he is retired, Beusse is still dedicated to keeping the memories of Niles alive through the Niles Historical Society.
Residents saving money with new electricity supplier

BY NICK KATZ | nkatz@pioneerlocal.com

Morton Grove homeowners and small business owners should begin seeing significantly lower electricity costs on their September bills after a new supplier replaces Commonwealth Edison.

The village has entered into a contract with FirstEnergy Solutions to supply electricity to Morton Grove users who do not opt to either stay with ComEd or contract individually with a different supplier.

Peter Falcone, assistant to the village administrator, said the rate with FirstEnergy of 4.42 percent per kilowatt-hour is about 48 percent cheaper than what users now pay to ComEd.

Officials expect that rate to kick in about Aug. 8 and show up on September bills, he said.

Letters from ComEd have gone out to customers in Morton Grove alerting them of the change and allowing them to opt out of the program if they prefer to retain ComEd. Otherwise, Falcone said, they will automatically be included in the village program.

The change was authorized by Morton Grove voters in March when they approved an electrical aggregation referendum.

Falcone noted that the village did not join a consortium of communities that included neighboring Skokie and Glenview, which sought bids jointly for a new electrical supplier. As a result, he said, Morton Grove got an even lower rate than the group did.

“We pay for electricity too. We wanted to get the best deal as well,” Falcone said.

Also, Morton Grove chose not to require that electricity come from renewable sources. However, individual residents can require that part or all of their power come from renewable resources, he said.

“It’s a tad more expensive,” Falcone said. “We didn’t want to force that on anyone. We wanted to leave that up to our residents.”

The village contracted with FirstEnergy for just one year. As a result, Falcone said officials will begin the process of getting bids again in May or June of next year.

While the village could have entered into a longer contract, Falcone said officials though they would be able to obtain a better rate by going out for bids again in 2013.

“Greater competition will keep prices low,” he said. “We didn’t want to lock in at a higher rate.”

Even with the new provider ComEd will continue to deliver electricity to customers, maintains the distribution system and handle billing.

Falcone said although ComEd’s record regarding outages has not been good, last year’s major outages in several areas may have prompted the company to make improvements.

“They say they learned their lesson from the outages last year,” Falcone said.

Falcone said customers will continue to contact ComEd if they have any questions about delivery services such as power outages, service requests or billing issues.

Falcone said he is available to answer questions residents may have about the switch. He can be reached at 847-663-3002 or pfalcone@mortongroveil.org.
Term limits, electrical deals up for vote

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

Not only is it a big election for the Village of Niles with a new mayor on the horizon, three referendum questions will also appear on the ballot for the April 9 election.

Two of the questions relate to term limits for village trustees and the mayor.

One of the term limit referendum questions was put on the ballot by the Niles village board. It creates term limits of no more than three full terms for village trustees and no more than two full terms for president; but allows someone to serve three full terms as trustee plus two full terms as president.

The second question related to term limits was put on the ballot by a citizen's group, led by Joe Makula. It asks if term limits should prohibit all people from serving more than 16 years on the village board of trustees, including president and mayor of the village, effective immediately upon approval and passage of the binding referendum.

Makula originally filed a petition on July 27 with more than 1,000 signatures to put the referendum question on the Nov. 6 ballot, but it was rejected by the village. Makula's question was also denied in court in September, but it will appear on the Apr. 9 ballot.

If the citizen's referendum passes, Village Attorney Joe Annunzio said that he is unsure whether Trustee Louella Preston (running for re-election) and Trustee Andrew Przybylo (running for mayor) would be able to serve or not if they are elected, because they have been trustees for longer than 16 years. He said this is being reviewed.

"It should have been left on the November ballot, and then there would be no uncertainty there," said Makula.

The third referendum question, about electrical aggregation, asks if the village shall have the authority to arrange for the supply of electricity for its residential and small commercial retail customers who have not opted out of the program.

If the referendum passes on April 9, the Village of Niles would solicit a bid for the supplier of electricity that may have a more favorable rate than Commonwealth Edison.

"It's really a toss-up on whether or not there's going to be a significant savings," said Acting Village Manager Steve Vineziano.

"As always, the most important thing is for people to vote and express their opinion," said Village Trustee Rosemary Palicki.

Cathy Doczekalski, acting assistant village manager, said that residents can choose to opt out of the program and stay with their current provider.

Doczekalski said there would most likely be a savings for residents if the village had an electrical aggregation program.

"It's a really a toss-up on whether or not there's going to be a significant savings," said Acting Village Manager Steve Vineziano.

"As always, the most important thing is for people to vote and express their opinion," said Village Trustee Rosemary Palicki.

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Wholesale hub selling big ideas

BY IGOR STUDENKOV | Contributor

NILES

At a first glance, the International Wholesale Center has all the hallmarks of a shopping mall - the variety of stores, customers walking around with shopping carts, music blaring from the speakers.

But a closer look reveals something more unusual. The stores are wholesale suppliers, and the shoppers are retailers looking to replenish their stock.

Launched in 2008 by Bee Sales, the Niles-based beauty supplies distributor and manufacturer, the International Wholesale Center brings 17 clothing, jewelry and accessories wholesalers under one roof. According to Bee Sales' Executive Managing Director Steve Ahn, the company was looking to create more affordable version of the Merchandise Mart.

And that's just the first step in the long-term plan. The company intends to expand the center and, eventually, add a hotel and office space - which, as Ahn readily pointed out, would make it even more like Merchandise Mart.

In 2001, Ahn hit upon an idea. While he liked the concept of Merchandise Mart - a large number of merchants sitting under one roof at the "prime location" - he felt that its fees were so prohibitive, even a more established company like Bee Sales would struggle to pay them.

"I was amazed, [it cost] $20,000 just for the show," said Ahn. "That is ridiculous." What Chicagoland needed, he thought, was a place where wholesale merchants would have an opportunity to grow their businesses.

The company acquired a vacant industrial warehouse at 6350 W. Touhy Ave. and retrofitted it. Half of it became the International Wholesale Center. Bee Sales used the other half to set up its own store and distribution hub.

The tenants benefit from being associated with a major wholesale distributor. Bee Sales advertises the tenant stores in its catalogs, exposing them to a much wider clientele than what they would have been able to reach on their own.

The most recent event was held on March 24th. Mohammad Shareet, co-owner of Niles Jewelry, couldn't be more pleased.

"It really helped our business, brought new people in," he said. "We hope there will be another show in three months."

At the moment, only 17 of the Center's 24 store spaces have tenants, but Ahn isn't particularly worried. In fact, he's already planning for an expansion. The long-term plan calls for Bee Sales to move out of the building altogether, allowing the company to create more store spaces.

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Gregory Bublitz's email signature contains a saying by Mahatma Gandhi telling of his personal beliefs: "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members."

Last month, East Maine School District 63 named Bublitz its director of special services. Prior to assuming the administrative role on an interim basis the past summer, he spent 12 years advocating for children with special needs, primarily as a special education facilitator for the elementary district.

Bublitz's career began with an adult literacy program, where he taught students aged 16 and older stunted by significant learning, emotional and economic concerns. A growing interest in how the brain works led him to pursue work in special education.

"I knew I wanted to work in a field where I could help others who had not, for whatever reason, the same luxuries and privileges I have had," he said.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your job?
A: I enjoy the problem solving aspect of my job. There are never two days alike in special education. Something new always comes up and you need to draw on your experience, training and intuition to work as a team to tackle any problems. While the situations can be emotionally draining at times, there is a lot of satisfaction in helping students and families grow.

Q: Has special education changed since you first began working with students? If so, how?
A: Yes, I think so. There is a greater push for inclusion and for accountability. To be honest, before there seemed to be little accountability for data. That is not an option anymore. Educational decisions must be made with valid data, and must consider less restrictive options for the educational environment.

Q: What are your beliefs about serving children with special needs?
A: Every child is an individual with unique needs and strengths. Every child has a right to a quality education and that means making informed decisions tailored to each child's individual needs on a case-by-case basis. There are no boxed solutions applicable to different "types" of learners.

Q: How does District 63 ensure that each student receives the maximum support he or she needs?
A: We are working very hard with our staff to make sure we write appropriate individualized education programs, or IEPs, that address the unique needs of children based on valid data. The IEP is the basis for each child's learning plan. If we write the best IEP possible, we have to support it.

Q: How would you define success in special education teaching?
A: I think understanding that all children can learn helps to ensure that we are helping our children grow and helping them become more independent. If we can continue to move towards learning and independence, we will be successful.
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Niles motel bites the dust

BY IGOR STUDENKOV | Contributor

On border of Niles and Chicago, near the intersection of Touhy and Caldwell avenues, two hotels stand across from each other.

On the Chicago side, a car drives into the Edgebrook Motel as two kids play in the remains of the week-old snow. On the Niles side, the much larger complex last known as America’s Midwest Hotel sits empty, its doors chained shut. The two hotels were built decades ago to take advantage of the thriving manufacturing district that covered much of the surrounding area. But over the last few years, the Midwest Hotel became notorious for bad service and subpar conditions. Approximately five weeks ago, the staff abandoned the hotel and the Village of Niles’ building department sealed it off. Now, one of the neighborhood’s largest lots sits vacant, its future fate uncertain.

The Edgebrook Motel is located near the northwest tip of the eponymous Chicago neighborhood. Aside from the a multi-story condo building immediately west and an apartment building right behind it, most of the nearby buildings are single-family homes.

The Midwest Hotel is a four-building complex largely surrounded by industry. During the last real estate boom, a restaurant and an eye care center opened to the west of the hotel.

lt’s not clear why the two hotels chose to open so close to each other, but Edgebrook Motel manager George Kolasky has a theory: ”[It’s like] in Greektown, they have twenty restaurants next to each other. Everybody wants a piece of the pie. When they see someone doing well, they think ‘I can do it, too.’”

Kolasky said that, as recently as 15 years ago, the area saw a lot of traffic. But as the industrial district shifted from heavy manufacturing to light manufacturing, crafting and wholesale supply, the number of
employees dropped, and the traffic declined.

In spite of that, both hotels still got enough customers to stay afloat. In October 2008, the Midwest Hotel became an America's Best Value Inn franchise. Being part of the national chain brought it respectability and customers.

"They used to have buses dropping people off," recalled Kolasky.

But on September 2010, America's Best Value terminated the contract. Christine Thorne, the company's public relations manager, said that it was due to the owners' behavior.

"It's my understanding that this property had many quality issues that the owners were not willing to address," she said.

Shortly thereafter, the hotel changed owners, becoming part of America's Midwest Hotel, a small Chicago-area chain. The new owners shut down all but the main building. In spite of changing the name, they never took down the old America's Best Value signage.

Thorne indicated said the company was unaware of this, and it's currently considering pursuing legal action to have the sign taken down.

Meanwhile, the quality issues continued to mount. Police had multiple calls to the hotel, particularly towards the end.

"We've had complaints, and we made some arrests," Niles Police Sgt. Robert Tornabene said. "The hotel has been having problems since it stopped being [part of] Best Value Inn."

According to Rich Wlodarsky, Niles' Assistant Director of Community Development, the hotel also had multiple building code violations. But then, something unexpected happened.

"The people who owned the building vacated it around three to four weeks ago," he said in an interview in early March.

By that point, the owners had stopped paying utility bills. That gave the village grounds to seal the building off and declare it unfit for human habitation.

Kolasky felt that was bound to happen sooner or later. "[The owner] ruined it," he said. "They got their business from the Internet. They charged people before they got here, and they didn't care about service - they already had the money."

Other nearby businesses barely noticed. "I didn't even know it was closed," said Michelle Ahn, owner of Bijou jewelry wholesale store located immediately east of the hotel.

But Kolasky thinks that the vacant land will make the rest of the area look desolate and scare the customers away. And Edgewater Motel staff has their own concerns.

"We don't like [having it empty] because it gets too dark at night," said Kolasky.

For now, the fate of the property is uncertain.

"It's bank-owned now," said Wlodarsky. "They may demolish it or sell it, we don't know."

Kolasky is not particularly optimistic about the site's prospects. "It's probably going to be many years before we see anything," he said. "This is a bad time to open a business - any business."
Mayoral candidates face off

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

With the election approaching, Mayoral Candidates Chris Hanusiak and Andrew Przybylo fired back and forth during a debate held at Oasis Fun Center on Milwaukee Ave. Wednesday, March 27.

The candidates answered questions on a wide range of topics, such as transparency, video gaming and what qualities are important in a new village manager.

The debate was led by Niles School District 71 Superintendent Amy Kruppe.

Hanusiak was asked what new program he would like to see implemented within the first six months of becoming the new mayor. Hanusiak said he’d like to see a senior advisory board created, where the seniors would have input and let the village know what their needs are. He mentioned that seniors are often victims of scams. Przybylo agreed that the seniors should be respected and protected.

Przybylo was asked if televising village board meetings was a good idea for the community. He responded that transparency is important, but he shared a few concerns.

"The real problem with televising is very often trustees, and possibly the mayor and people who come to speak, play to the cameras," said Przybylo. "We really should not play to them and use them as a political tool."

Przybylo noted that it will cost "$150,000 a year" to videotape the board meetings and he believes the village should keep an eye on the cost.

"My personal opinion is he doesn’t want the transparency," Hanusiak fired back.

Most of the surrounding villages have cameras in place, he added. Hanusiak said that the $100,000 is just a one-time cost and then it would cost about $50,000 a year to operate.

"We need input from the citizens," Hanusiak said.

Budget meetings are now being recorded so people can know where their money is being spent, he said.

One resident asked Przybylo how he would find time to be the mayor while serving Cook County and also running the White Eagle Banquet Hall.

Przybylo said he would cut back his time at the White Eagle and also be available during some time on the weekends.

"The mayor was never meant to be a full time job," said Przybylo. He stated that Mayor Nicholas Blase was "there too much."

"We have professional people running this village," said Przybylo. "You have to let people do their jobs and provide leadership."

"I'm only a call away," he assured.

"It may take 20 to 30 hours a week," Hanusiak countered.

Chris Hanusiak

Przybylo noted that it will cost He felt it was important for the mayor to dedicate time during the week to the job.

"There has to be oversight," he said.

Hanusiak was asked what qualities he would look for in the new village manager. He said that leadership, a good sense of finance, good sense of organization, and someone the trustees can count on are all important qualities for the new village manager.

Przybylo said that they should hire the best possible search firm and set the village manager up with a way to evaluate employees based on performance management like they do in Cook County and let him lead the village. He said he is against micromanaging.

As for video gaming, Hanusiak said he is definitely against it coming to Niles, because it would change the village’s character. He said studies have shown it is not profitable for the village either. Przybylo said he is also against video gaming, but he would keep an open mind, because things may be different in the future.

Przybylo represents the Niles New Party and Hanusiak represents the Responsible Leadership for Niles Party.

A video of the candidate forum was provided by Eric Pods of the North Shore Voice.
Niles West wins first-place trophy and over 30 awards at IJAS Regionals

Niles West competed at the regional Illinois Junior Academy of Science (IJAS) Regional Fair on March 9 at Niles North High School. Niles West earned first place in the high school division, 30 projects earned gold awards and 36 students qualified for the IJAS State Exposition to be held May 3 and 4 at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Niles West also qualified five students who won awards at the Paper Session held at Niles West on March 6.

Felicia Phan and Patrick Liscio were selected to represent Region 6 at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), the world's largest pre-college celebration of science. The ISEF, which will be held in Phoenix on May 12 through 17, brings together nearly 1,500 students from more than 70 countries to showcase their talent on an international stage. Students will submit their work to judging by doctoral level scientists and have the opportunity to compete for scholarships, tuition grants, internships, scientific field trips and the grand prize of a $50,000 scholarship.

Best in Category plaques were awarded to: Rachel Sison, Zoology; Ryan Cyriac, Health Science; Sebastian Chirayil, Chemistry; and Anne McCarthy and Kristine Park, Biochemistry.


Paper Session state qualifiers: Jorden Shaker, Sana Khan, Sebastian Chirayil, Ariella Halevi and Anne McCarthy.

Special awards went to: Peter Denenberg and Michael Tsang, U.S. Metric Association Award; Taimur Shaikh, American Nuclear Society Award; Lynn Vo and Jessie Amga, American Nuclear Society Award and Navy Academy Award; Bakir Dzanovice, U.S. Army Science Award; Samina Kassam, Public Health Award; Sareena Ali and Estee Cramer, Navy Academy Award; Ryan Cyriac, Navy Academy Award; Cindy Chen, Stockholm Junior Regional Water Award; Anne McCarthy and Kristine Park, U.S. Air Force Award and Iota Sigma Pi Outstanding Young Women in Chemistry Award; Rachel Sion, American Meteorological Award and Kristine Park, Felix Angelov ISEF Award.

Teacher sponsors are Tim Miller, Joe Serpico, Tom Jodelka, Chris Hawker, Brit Czupryna, Andy Klamm and JulieAnn Villa.

Local news 24/7 at pioneerlocal.com
The following incidents were listed in the reports of the Niles Police Department. Readers are reminded that an arrest does not constitute a finding of guilt. Only a court of law can make that determination.

**RETAIL THEFT**

Jimmy Pappas, 22, of 8910 Parkside, Morton Grove, was charged with felony retail theft on March 24 after he was accused of making 10 fraudulent refunds totaling $1,904 while working at a store on the 7200 block of Dempster St. He had an April 1 court date.

Kyle Hilbert, 29, of 3620 Greenleaf, Northbrook, was charged with felony retail theft on March 20 after he allegedly stole three pairs of jeans from a Golf Mill store and returned them for $99 in store credit. He had an April 1 court date.

**BURGLARY**

A townhouse was burglarized on the morning of March 25 on the 7700 block of Nordica.

**THEFT**

Chris Matthiessen, 28, of 9731 Fox Glen, Niles, was charged with driving under the influence on the night of March 26 after he was reportedly involved in a parking lot accident on the 6800 block of Milwaukee Avenue. He has an April 11 court date.

**DUI**

A 72-year-old Niles woman told police that on Feb. 26 she noticed her jewelry box missing from her bedroom jewelry that on March 25 after he grew frustrated waiting to pick up a load from a business on the 7200 block of Oak Park Avenue, police said. No damage was reported, but an employee did not want the man to return to the business, according to police.

**DISORDERLY CONDUCT**

A 43 year old man allegedly kicked a counter on March 25 after he grew frustrated waiting to pick up a load from a business on the 7200 block of Oak Park Avenue, police said. No damage was reported, but an employee did not want the man to return to the business, according to police.

**HARASSMENT**

A Niles woman contacted police on March 24 after receiving numerous unwanted text messages from an ex-boyfriend that were of a sexual nature. Police told the man to stop contacting the woman and he agreed.
Maine Township candidates on the issues

By Ian Fullerton | Contributor

With a ticket of Democrats vying for seats in April’s election, Maine Township’s largely-Republican local government is facing a big challenge this year.

We reached out to candidates on both sides of the ballot to hear their views on some of the issues prevalent in the northwest suburban township.

Do you support municipal annexation of the unincorporated area? Why or why not? If you support it, how can the township encourage Park Ridge, Des Plaines and Niles to incorporate portions of this area?

Gary Warner, Republican incumbent for clerk: I do support the annexation of the unincorporated area, but Park Ridge, Des Plaines and Niles want no part of any of the areas. It would cost too much money to improve the areas and upkeep is another cost they don’t want.

Laura O’Donovan, Democratic candidate for clerk: I support starting the conversation about annexation. I think that a number of functions of township government can be performed more efficiently and cost effectively if done through existing municipal governments or county government. For instance, some functions under the clerk’s office and assessor are duplicate services.

Judith Foster, Democratic candidate for trustee: I do support municipal annexation of the unincorporated areas because the residents need better and more responsive services and one of our main duties should be to protect and provide general assistance to all of Maine Township.

Peter Gialamas, Republican incumbent for trustee: I am always in favor of any measure that may, possibly, save the taxpayers money. However, the 30,000 plus residents in the unincorporated area have come to depend on Maine Township as their town hall and primary source of government. The surrounding municipalities have not expressed much, if any, interest in acquiring the unincorporated areas and are not as familiar with the wants and needs of those residents.

James R. Wozny, Democratic candidate for trustee: Yes, but a lot needs to be done. In the case of Maine Township, it will take a long time to fix the properties to be annexed by the neighboring towns. There has been no movement on making this a reality over the past four years. The new role of the township is to start making the properties more attractive to annex to avoid duplicated services.

Severe flooding has long been a problem in the Robin Drive/Dee Road subdivisions. How should the township address this problem? If elected, what would you do?

Carol Teschky, Republican incumbent for supervisor (unopposed): Severe flooding is the result of over development in the Maine Township area. Many years ago building permits were issued by Cook County without having any input from Maine Township. With the extreme density here, overland flooding has been a problem when a 100 year flood occurs. Flooding is a regional problem that involves the State of Illinois, IDNR, the Metropolitan Water Reclamion District, County of Cook, and the Army Corp of Engineers. It will take millions of dollars and many years to accomplish any results.
Candidates
Continued from page 15

Robert Provenzano, Republican Incumbent for highway commissioner (unopposed): As highway commissioner, I have been an active participant in all studies and attended most meetings regarding bringing a solution to the flooding problems in the unincorporated areas of Maine Township. On March 14, 2013, I attended a meeting regarding the latest proposal presented by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago to improve drainage on Prairie Creek that runs through the unincorporated area of Dee Road.

Walter Kazmierczak, Republican Incumbent for trustee: There have been attempts to curtail flooding along the Prairie Creek flood plain and aside of our bi-annual 100 year floods, there has been some success. The Project 37 pumping station at the end of Prairie Creek and the retention pond on Lutheran General property has helped. The Army Corp of Engineers the State, County and Water Reclamation District as well as Maine Township’s Highway Commissioner meet periodically to discuss solutions to this problem.

Abraham J. Lee, Democratic candidate for trustee: I believe we need to bring in some more federal grants in order to either completely rectify the problem or mitigate the damages caused by flooding, if the former proves to be too difficult. I would like to form a team of civil engineers and flood experts to see if they could come up with the best solution and will work hard to bring in financial resource to materialize their plan.

Are you satisfied with the police protection provided by the Cook County Sheriff’s Police in the unincorporated areas?

Gary Warner: I feel the Cook County Sheriff’s Police are doing a decent job in that area. We have had many problems in the past with gangs, shootings etc., which seems to be under control.

Susan Moylan-Krey, Republican Incumbent for trustee: Under Tom Dart’s direction we have had a great working relationship with the Cook County Sheriff’s Police. They have stepped up to be proactive in our fight against gangs and crime in our community. With strong participation from our Sheriff’s Police along with area commander, Deputy Commander Tony Brzeznik, the township has put together programs that include Maine Township Anti-Gang Education Forums, Maine Township Neighborhood Watch and Maine Township’s National Night Out Against Crime, along with the Sgt. Karen Ladar Memorial Good Citizen’s Award.

Abraham J. Lee: I live in Bay Colony Condominiums, which has more than 800 units, and I currently serve as Phase I Association president. Since our property is located in unincorporated Des Plaines, it has been serviced by the Cook County Sheriff’s Police and our experience with them has been generally positive. Their frequent presence on our property has helped to eliminate crime elements in our area and our homeowners and tenants feel very safe living here. The police officers have been very cooperative and have attended our board meetings to answer questions and give us updates.

Laura Morask, Republican Incumbent for trustee: As a current trustee I think the police protection and support provided by the Cook County Sheriff’s office has been remarkably effective. While gang crimes increase dramatically in the Chicago, ours has declined with ever increasing efforts, vigilance and cooperation of the Sheriff’s police, the board, the township code enforcement officer and the police departments of our neighboring municipalities. Our sheriff’s police have effectively emphasized cooperative efforts to develop township community involvement and relationships with the vulnerable township populations.
Woman's screams scare off intruder in cowboy hat

SUN-TIMES MEDIA WIRE

MAINE TOWNSHIP

A man in a white cowboy hat broke into a woman's northwest suburban bedroom early Sunday, but fled when she began screaming and her roommate called 911.

A man wearing a white cowboy hat entered the bedroom of an apartment in the 9000 block of Kennedy Drive in unincorporated Maine Township about 4:45 a.m. Sunday, according to the Cook County Sheriff's office.

A woman sleeping in the bedroom woke up when she heard a noise and began to scream when she saw the stranger, according to a release from the sheriff's office.

A roommate sleeping in another room woke up to the screams and called 911, the sheriff's office said. No one was injured.

Investigators believe the man entered through an apartment window and fled through the front door when the woman began screaming.

Responding officers searched the area, but were unable to locate the man.

He is described as a 5-foot-10 to 6-foot white man between 30 and 40 years old, according to the sheriff's office. He was clean-shaven and wearing a white cowboy hat, white jacket and white shoes.

Morton Grove firefighters will receive a 2 percent pay hike this year, retroactive to Jan. 1, under an agreement between the village and firefighters union.

The agreement with the Morton Grove Firefighters Association, approved by the village board Monday, extends a contract that has been in place since 2009. Other than salary, provisions of that contract will continue through the end of 2013.

The village's fiscal year also ends Dec. 31.

The local union is part of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Under the agreement a starting firefighter will be paid $62,128 while a starting firefighter/paramedic will be paid $66,764.

The starting salary for a lieutenant ranges from $93,171 to $99,807, depending on responsibilities.

The annual salary for a firefighter tops out at $81,904 after 25 years and at $86,540 for a firefighter/paramedic.
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Beth Sagett-Flores was hired as Golf Elementary District 67's new superintendent last week. A Lincolnwood native, she currently works at Evanston/Skokie Elementary District 65, where she serves as human resources director.

District 67 hires new superintendent

After the last two superintendents of Golf Elementary District 67 resigned, citing the long drive from their homes, the school board Thursday appointed a Lincolnwood resident to the post.

Beth Sagett-Flores will replace Jamie Reilly, the outgoing superintendent who served for the past three years. Sagett-Flores is slated to start July 1.

She comes from Evanston/Skokie Elementary District 65, where she serves as human resources director. Prior to that, she was principal of Lincolnwood Elementary School in District 65 for seven years.

Sagett-Flores also has served as a principal, middle school teacher and special education teacher at Chicago Public Schools.

She holds a doctorate in administration from Illinois State University.

Sagett-Flores was chosen from more than 50 applicants for the superintendent's job. Those applicants were narrowed down to a final six who were interviewed by the school board.

District 67 contracted with the Illinois Association of School Boards to conduct the search.
The board also had input from a committee that included staff, parents and other district residents.

Sagett-Flores will start at an annual salary of $170,000. Reilly currently receives a salary of $163,415 in addition to an annuity totaling $5,000 and some other benefits. Board President Meryl Gale said are not included in Sagett-Flores’ three-year contract.

Sagett-Flores said she was already familiar with District 67 before applying for the job. She grew up in Lincolnwood and graduated from Niles Township High School District 219. Her two sons also graduated from District 219.

“I was looking for a small district. I looked at what’s going on here and it’s terrific,” she said.

Sagett-Flores cited strong student test scores as well as other academic achievements in District 67 schools.

One of her first jobs will be to find a replacement for Golf Middle School Principal Erin Stein, who is leaving after three years in the post to accept the job of principal at East Prairie School in Skokie. The board accepted Stein’s resignation March 21.

“That’s going to be a first priority,” Sagett-Flores said.

Sagett-Flores also will be looking for a permanent replacement for former business manager Jim Fitt, who resigned earlier this year. Currently, Marty McConahay is serving as interim business manager.

“I’m going to need to hire a team of people to work with,” Sagett-Flores said.

Sagett-Flores also comes to District 67 at a time when schools are preparing for major building upgrade projects slated for this summer. Teachers and administrators have been packing and preparing to move everything out at the end of the school year.

The work includes construction of a new gym at Hynes Elementary School, as well as installation of fire sprinklers and heating, cooling and ventilation improvements at both Hynes and Golf Middle School.

The district over the past several years has made program and staff cuts in an effort to reduce spending and balance the budget. Referendums to increase property taxes by about $1.14 million a year have failed three times, most recently in February.

Sagett-Flores noted that District 65 held a failed tax hike referendum last year.

But before she considers anything like that, she said she wants to get to know the staff, community and residents of the district and earn their confidence.

“I spent a day here last week and met some of the staff and the principals. I’ve also scheduled days in April and May,” she said.

“The community has to gain confidence in my leadership,” she added. “That’s a priority. I really want to get out and meet people.”

Sagett-Flores said she is also aware of the large senior citizen population in Morton Grove and the need to gain their support for the schools.

“I realize there are seniors I have to reach out to,” she said.

She said the district also needs to make sure the community knows how successful the schools have been in educating its children.

“The high test scores, the awards, I think that have to be highlighted,” she said. “This district has a lot to offer.”

Reilly resigned in December, citing the long drive to and from her home in Wheaton. Her predecessor, Greg Buchanan, who lived in Woodstock, left after two years and his predecessor, Suellen Girard, was there only seven months.

“I will try to reach out to the community,” Sagett-Flores said. “I want them to get to know me and trust me and know I’m here to stay.”
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Key votes ahead

Congress began its Easter-Passover recess last week and is scheduled to reconvene the week of April 8, 2013.

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What it means to you

TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

CHICAGO

City gets $100M federal loan for project to rival Millennium Park

Former Mayor Richard M. Daley's dream of turning a six-block stretch of the downtown Chicago riverfront into an enticing riverwalk that rivals San Antonio's will finally become a reality, thanks to a $100 million federal loan awarded Thursday.

In one of his final acts as U.S. Transportation secretary, Ray LaHood announced the $100 million loan that Mayor Rahm Emanuel hopes will transform the riverwalk into Chicago's next great public space that will rival Millennium Park.

LaHood described the project as a "done deal" and said he was absolutely confident in the city's plan to retire the $100 million loan.

"The financial stability of this project is solid. It's a matter now of finishing up the paperwork," LaHood said. "This riverwalk will become another economic corridor in downtown Chicago for small business."

Emanuel and his Transportation Commissioner Gabe Klein were sketchy on where the revenues will come from to repay a 35-year loan with no payment schedule until construction that is scheduled to start in 2014 is completed two years later.

"A little over 70 percent of the revenues will come from...the existing tour boat fees, which were re-bid last year. Right there, we've got the bulk of it covered," Klein said. — Chicago Sun-Times

SPRINGFIELD

State legislators face tough pension, casino votes after break

Illinois lawmakers left Springfield March 21 for a two-week vacation before a final two-month push at resolving the state's pressing problems, including the nation's worst pension crisis.

After three months of debate, lawmakers finally showed some progress on tackling state employee pensions, but they have yet to move far a proposal allowing gay marriage, a federal judge's order to permit conceal carry of weapons, and an oil-drilling practice that could create thousands of jobs.

Also looming: Yet another push for an expansion of casinos and the need to approve a spending plan for the fiscal year that starts July 1. Democrat Gov. Pat Quinn laid out what he called "the most difficult budget Illinois has ever faced."

Legislators will intensify efforts to address all of those issues in the eight weeks before their May 31 adjournment. But a possible fix for the state's $100 billion pension systems deficit will remain center stage.

Some lawmakers believe they've at least gained momentum with their votes on pension reform this week.

"I don't feel like the break will hurt us," said Rep. Elaine Nekritz, D-Northbrook, chairwoman of the House Personnel and Pensions Committee. "We've really done the heavy lifting right now." — The Associated Press

WASHINGTON

Congressional inaction could cost many college students

Congressional inaction could end up costing college students an extra $5,000 on their new loans.

The rate for subsidized Stafford loans is set to increase from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1, just as millions of new college students start signing up for fall courses. The difference between the two rates adds up to $6 billion.

Just a year ago, lawmakers faced a similar deadline and dodged the rate increase amid the heated presidential campaign between President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney.

Justin Draeger, president of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, said, "We're advising our members to tell students that the interest rates are going to double on new student loans, to 6.8 percent."

The new rates apply only to those who take new subsidized loans. Students with outstanding subsidized loans are not expected to see their loan rates increase unless they take out a new subsidized Stafford loan. Students' nonsubsidized loans are not expected to change, nor are loans from commercial lenders.

But it translates to real money for incoming college freshmen who could end up paying back $5,000 more for the same maxed-out student loans their older siblings have. — The Associated Press
Pope Francis reminds us what matters

By his words and actions, Pope Francis reminds us all what matters most in human affairs.

Walk with humility. Care for the poor and powerless. Love the sinner. Remember that we are sinners, too.

Did you see Francis gently washing and kissing the feet of 12 detainees in a youth jail in Rome? Two of the young offenders were Muslim. Two were women.

One young inmate asked: Why are you doing this?

To "help me be humble, as a bishop should be," he replied.

This is a pope who prefers walking to riding in limos, who chooses to live for now in a two-bed apartment rather than in the opulent Apostolic Palace, who has declined to wear a gold pectoral cross and an ermine-lined mantle.

Who can say yet whether Francis is up to the job?

But he seems to know where to begin.

Friends are people you spend time with, face to face.
Friends are people you have coffee with in the morning, or cocktails in the evening, with no thought of gaining a new client or landing a job.

You can probably count the number of those friends on one hand.

Friends just listen. They don't tell you what they had for breakfast. They don't brag about their latest trip to Bora Bora. They don't gloat about their latest big deal. They don't just mindlessly hand you pictures of cats every time you see them.

They listen, often with a sympathetic ear. They offer real advice, beyond "hang in there." They support you in whatever you're doing and don't just recite self-motivation quotes like some morning mantra.

They have your best interest at heart.

Don't get me wrong; I enjoy social media, most of the time. When I get annoyed with my so-called friends who constantly pitch their business or mundane links to their causes, I can shut them off.

But in the great feast of human relationships that is offered in this life, I find that social media is just a taste, rather than the banquet. Acquaintances who feel it is their duty to convert me to their cause grow sour very quickly.

I find the tidbits from my friends, the people I have been close to over the years and with whom I have shared common life experiences, but are now separated from me by distance and circumstance more than anything else, are just not enough to satisfy.

I'm grateful to have this digital connection with them. But those brief, fleeting tidbits sometimes leave me longing for more. You can't share knowing silence in the presence of a close friend on Facebook or tweet sweet nothings.

So, until then, I will have to be satisfied with the little blips of joy social media can bring. But lately I'm thinking it would be better to take a road trip.
Everyone gets prescriptions.

You get prescriptions. I get prescriptions. I bet even John Wayne had to get prescriptions. There's no escape. All you can hope for is that your prescriptions are for regular medical problems and not for embarrassing medical problems.

So far — knock on wood — my prescriptions are for the former. Which is lucky, because at my pharmacy they not only hand you your prescription, they open it and show it to you.

"That's the Claptrapamine for joint pain, correct Mr. Sansoney?"

Yes, that's right, I reply, as the people behind me in line look on with little interest.

"Have you taken this before? Do you have any questions?"

I have and I don't.

But this same scenario is ripe for humiliation had my prescription been for something, um, delicate.

"Yes sir, Mr. Wayne. That would be the Viag—"

"Whoa, there, Pilgrim."

"But it has your name on the label."

"That'll be the day. This is the last time I do a favor for Gabby Hayes. It's as plain as the sunrise over Monument Valley that there has been a mix-up. When you straighten it out, I'll be back. Take 'er easy, Pilgrim."

Niles Herald-Spectator Wants to Hear from You

Please send your Letters to the Editor to News Producer Ben Meyerson at bmeyerson@pioneerlocal.com or by mail to Niles Herald-Spectator, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago, IL 60654. Please keep letters to 250 words or fewer. The Herald-Spectator reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity and content. All letters must be signed to be published.
Tax time brings some special considerations for seniors, caregivers

Tax time is fast approaching, and for most of us that requires collecting forms and receipts and heading to our accountant's office.

But for seniors and their families, there may be some other things to consider in preparing for tax season. Family caregivers may be able to claim their senior as a dependent.

"If they are helping out their parents they probably need to see if they can take their parent as a deduction," says Janna Dutton, Partner at Dutton & Casey, an estate planning, probate and elder law firm in Chicago, Arlington Heights, Skokie and Vernon Hills. She says there are a number of thresholds: "The parent has to be a U.S. citizen or a resident; they have to have adjusted gross income of $3800 or less; and you have to provide more than half the total support this year."

Dutton also says that if a family member can claim the senior as a dependent, they may also be able to deduct that senior's medical expenses. However, she recommends keeping very strict documentation and consulting a tax professional. "You write them a check, you deposit in their account and they spend it as opposed to your going to Walgreens and paying for their prescriptions with your credit card."

Seniors may also be able to deduct medical expenses. The IRS allows individuals, or their caregivers, to deduct medical costs if the expenses are in excess of 7.5 percent of their adjusted gross income. A complete list of allowable expenses is available from the IRS, or a tax professional.

"One of the big issues is caregivers. If you are paying for a necessary caregiver for someone who needs caregiving in their home, it could qualify as a medical expense," shares Dutton. Too often she hears of families that are paying cash to a caregiver. "That unfortunately is a very common scenario. Then you've got a problem because you are not paying them as an employee and withholding, so you are not able to claim that as a deductible expense. If you paid the same care through the agency or you set them up appropriately you could."

Dutton reminds seniors and their caregivers that tax time can also be a time to focus on paperwork. "One of the big issues with very elderly parents with limited incomes is that parent may, at some point, need to apply for Medicaid." Dutton explains that Medicaid requires an accounting of how that person has managed their money for the past five years. "You need to be very certain that they keep all of their paperwork. Medicaid is going to expect you to be able to explain any payments or deposits exceeding $500."

Dutton recommends consulting a tax professional who has experience with senior issues.

Lenna Scott is the Director of Marketing at The Wealshire, a short-term rehab, skilled nursing and assisted living community in Lincolnshire. She lives in Buffalo Grove with her husband and two children. Contact her at lscott@wealshire.com.
Education in Focus

Don't trash that sandwich

BY NATALIE HAYES  Contributor

Cafeteria life at Niles Township high schools has undergone a total makeover during the past six weeks, thanks to a zero-waste policy that has students trading garbage for green.

Walking into the cafeteria during any of the five daily lunch periods at Niles North feels more like a scene from a college quad, with students happily chatting and studying before casually tossing their trash into recycling bins and heading off to class.

The chime of the bell, signaling the change in periods, prompts the magic.

Instead of throwing all their leftovers into one big dumpster, students now head to a station in the center of the cafeteria to separate their lunch waste into three different bins, designed to reduce the amount of non-recyclable waste accumulated during lunchtime.

Leftover food is added to a compost bin, and recycled products and non-recyclable waste are separated into a second and third bin.

Since beginning the waste-free initiative, the Niles North community has cut the amount of non-recyclable waste it disposes of every day in half from 200 pounds to 100 pounds, said Keith Robinson, assistant principal of operations at Niles North.

The zero-waste program is part of an overall sustainability initiative adopted by Niles Township District 219 schools last fall that aims to get the schools to “go green” by reducing landfill waste by composting leftover food and using biodegradable or reusable plates and flatware while reducing energy use in school kitchens.

“This has totally changed the dynamics of the cafeteria, where it feels more like a collegiate atmosphere,” Robinson said. “It’s also much healthier for the environment — we’re not perfect yet but we’re almost there.”

As a major component of the zero-waste initiative, in February all the paper plates and plastic flatware previously used throughout the duration of the school’s history were replaced with reusable items, including lunch trays, which are now washed in a recently-added massive high-powered dishwasher.

Niles North senior Giana Civito said she was at first skeptical about the switch to reusable plates because she thought they might not be clean enough, but she was reassured when she asked school staff to see the dishwasher.

“I felt better about it when I saw the dishwasher, because I saw how well it cleaned everything,” Civito said.

Civito said her classmates seem to be adopting well to the new waste reduction policies.

“It’s not hard to walk past the bins and throw your leftovers into a compost pile — it’s something nice we can all do for the environment,” she said.

So far the transition to waste-free seems to have transformed the lunch spot into an eco-friendly place where students and staff have worked together diligently to do their part to live more environmentally-conscious lives — at least during the school day.

The garbage is weighed at the end of each school day on giant scales in the back of the cafeteria and the weights are logged into a record book.

An average of 60 pounds of food is accumulated in the daily compost pile, Robinson said.

The students have been eating greener too, ever since District 219 switched to health-oriented service provider OrganicLife back in 2011.

As part of an agreement with OrganicLife, District 219 has been working with Beyond Green, a food service consulting firm that specializes in environmental sustainability.

Beyond Green helped District 219 outline 60 goals that OrganicLife must reach within the next five years, with one of them aimed at reducing waste through the reuse/recycle initiative.
Five candidates, including three incumbents and two newcomers, are currently running to fill the four (4-year term) seats that make up East Maine's District 63 School Board. Here's what they have to say about the future of the district.

What are the biggest issues facing District 63?

**Board candidate and former Washington School PTO President Alexandra Brook:** Clearly, the unhealthy financial pictures of both the state and federal governments are of great concern for our district as well as the rest of the state and country.

**Walter Gluzkin, who joined the board in 2008:** State & federal budget cuts continue to cause uncertainty in predicting the financial picture for District 63 and all districts across the state. We are also entering bargaining with all four of our unions. We will need to ensure that we are watching our expenses as closely as we have been over the last few years.

**Incumbent Sheila Urban, a school board member since 2009:** In light of continued financial challenges at the state and federal levels, funding for District 63 remains the primary issue. Upcoming negotiations with all four of the district's unions can hopefully be addressed in a financially responsible manner that benefits both the unions and the children of the district.

**Board candidate (and former volunteer coach for the Niles North CEC Club basketball team) Zeev Walny:** The biggest issue facing District 63, along with almost every other district in the country, is money. Expenses continue to rise while income doesn't. There needs to be a better balance between income and expenses whilst ensuring programming remains as is.

**Krystal Zec, appointed to the board in 2012:** I think the biggest issues all relate to the financial outlook of the district. The district needs to find ways to give students and teachers a great learning environment all while funding from the federal and state governments decrease.

Next year, District 63 will switch its Title I programming (which focuses on helping low-income students) from "targeted-assistance" to a school-wide allocation system. What are your thoughts on this spending transition?

**Alexandra Brook:** The benefits of the Title I school-wide allocation system are numerous and include greater flexibility in providing services to all students; increased coordination and integration of student services; and utilization of funds to improve the instructional program of the entire student body.

**Walter Gluzkin:** I believe this is a higher impact way of utilizing the funding we receive. Title I school-wide will provide our schools with greater flexibility in providing services and resources to all students. Funds are utilized to improve the instructional program of the entire school, rather than simply targeting assistance to specified students. There is greater coordination and integration with Title I school-wide.

**Sheila Urban:** A Title I school-wide allocation will bring more resources and services to all the students in the district. All students will benefit from more staff interaction and more instructional equipment. That is our ultimate goal — to continue to improve the educational
**District 63**  
Continued from page 26

experience for all of our children.

Zeev Walny: Title I is extremely important to at-risk children and gives them a chance to excel where they might otherwise be unable to do so. With the school-wide allocation system, the school has a better chance of serving all of its students, especially those who are on the fringe of the “at-risk” definition who may not have been able to be served previously. Going “school-wide” also requires a much greater amount of parental involvement, further assisting the student both at home and in the classroom.

Krystal Zec: I believe this gives the district more flexibility in serving all students. In a targeted assistance program, only specified students are selected and served. With Title I, the district can create a more coherent model of instruction for all students.

According to data from the state’s Board of Education, the district’s Overall Illinois Alternate Assessment Performance scores, which measure performance of the students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, have dropped from the 50th percentile to the 38th percent since 2010. What should be done to reverse this trend?

Alexandra Brook: It is my understanding that the district is currently reviewing the special education curriculum. With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, academic rigor is being raised for all students, including those with disabilities. Furthermore, as many of our students return to their “home” schools for instruction, their individual needs will be better addressed.

Walter Gluzkin: We are in the process of a comprehensive review and realignment of our special education practices. We are raising academic rigor for all students, including those with disabilities. This year, 9 out of the 19 students taking the IAA were in out-of-district placements. As we increase our ability to maintain more of our children within our own classrooms, we can better address their individual needs.

Sheila Urban: This question refers only to a very specific group of students. Those students who experience severe cognitive disabilities are going to experience difficulty taking academic tests. The district has been working with Project Choices, a group aimed at increasing the inclusiveness of all students. By doing so, these students, along with many other sub groups of students, will benefit from more staff interaction and student involvement.

Zeev Walny: While this trend is alarming, there needs to be a better understanding of why the drop occurred. It is nearly impossible for someone to assess what can be done to fix something if the root cause isn’t readily available. Pointing fingers at any individual or group would be unfair and preemptive. Without a deeper knowledge of why there has been such a drop, any suggestions would be mere speculation on anyone’s part.

Krystal Zec: The district is aware this is an issue and is in the process of reviewing and realigning special education practices. The district hopes to better address these issues based on individual needs. With increased use of technology, more inclusion in the general education classrooms and stronger focus on academic learning balanced with the student’s needs and skills are ways the district is focusing on this particular demographic.
For the week of April 10 to April 16

ARIES (March 21 to April 19)
A little woolgathering is OK. But don’t let that dreamy state linger beyond midweek, when you’ll want to be ready to take on new workplace responsibilities.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20)
Love rules the week for single Bovines seeking romance. Attached pairs also find new joy in their relationships. Friday should bring news about a business opportunity.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20)
Home becomes the center of a new social whirl, as you show your talent for hosting great parties. You can expect to impress a lot of people who have never seen this side of you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22)
The Moon Child might have to raise those powers of persuasion a notch to get a still wary colleague to agree to go along. Finding more facts to back up your position helps.
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Submissions for Community Calendar are required two weeks preceding the date of publication. Send to: Darlene Huston, Pioneer Press, 3701 W. Lake Ave., Glenview IL 60026; dhuston@pioneerlocal.com. Information may be faxed to (847) 486-7495.

**CENTER OF CONCERN**

**Schedule**

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**CLASSES**

**Animal assisted therapy**

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Raiden Animal Assisted Therapy Inc. offers "Introduction to Animal Assisted Therapy" dog training classes at various locations, including 6042 W. Oakton St., in Morton Grove. The fee is $60. Contact Dorida King at dhking4@yahoo.com or call (773) 736-2021 for schedules and locations.

**CLUBS**

**United Methodist Women**

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A Ladies Only Spring Luncheon and Fundraiser for local missions will be held at noon April 13 at 1st United Methodist Church of Park Ridge, 418 Touhy Ave., Park Ridge. Ellie Carlson will present "The Rise and Fall of Ladies' Underwear," a humorous look at undergarments through the ages. Tickets cost $20 each. Call (847) 625-3144.

**DAR**

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The Twenty-first Star Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution will meet at 11:30 a.m. April 13 at the Park Ridge Country Club, 636 N. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Noon luncheon, with a meeting and program to follow. Chapter member and DAR Museum Docent Barri Shinn will present "A Step in Time." This program will look at the shoes held in the collection of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington, D.C. Call Dorothy Wilson at (847) 328-6946.

**COMMISSIONSAL Sale/ Vendor Fair**

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A Children's Consignment Sale and Vendor Fair will be held at St. John Lutheran Church, 7429 N. Milwaukee Ave., from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. April 6. Shoppers will find great deals on children's clothes, shoes, toys, equipment, books and just about anything children need. Call (847) 823-0453.

**BIBLIOPHILE Dance**

**Party**

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Bring your family and friends as we crank up the tunes and boogie down from 10 a.m. April 12 in the Niles Library. DJ Miss Cate will be spinning all the best tunes from our terrific music collection.

**Mammals and More**

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With The Flying Fox Conservatory at 2 p.m. April 14. The Flying Fox Conservatory is bringing their animals to educate and entertain with some unique creatures from around the world. For kids ages 5 and up.

**Final Four Party**

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Maine South Parents' Scholarship Club is hosting an NCAA Final Four party from 5:30-11 p.m. April 6 at Fairway Banquets, Niles. This parents-only fundraiser includes big-screen viewing of the games, appetizers, salad, pizza and desserts, silent auction, basketball shoots-out and more. Tickets are $35 per person in advance or $45 at the door. To purchase tickets, send payment to Maine South, 1111 S. Dee Road, Park Ridge IL 60068; mark envelope with "MSPSC." MSPSC is a non-profit 501-c3 organization whose purpose is to award scholarships to qualifying students in the senior class.

**LIBRARY**

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Niles Public Library: 6960 W. Oakton St., (847) 663-1234 or online at www.nileslibrary.org. Registration is required for most programs unless indicated otherwise.

**Teens Programs for Kids:**

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Knights of Niles Chess Club at 3:45 p.m. Fridays, April 5, 12, and 26. Learn chess or improve your skills in this fun after-school activity. Mr. Chris will help participants learn everything from the names of the pieces to winning strategies. For kids in kindergarten through eighth-graders.

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Transform T-shirts to jewelry, 4 p.m. April 5. Bring discarded T-shirts to this workshop; for sixth- to 12th-graders.
Movie: "Argo"

In November 1979, Iranian militants stormed the American embassy in Tehran and captured dozens of American hostages - 2 p.m. April 6.

An overview of what is needed to be known to help prepare family members to successfully deal with the financial, legal, emotional and day-to-day issues faced in advanced old age will be given at 7 p.m. April 9.

Aging Parents

An overview of what is needed to be known

HOCUS FOCUS

Find at least six differences in details between panels

Puzzle Answers

See page 28 for this week's Super Crossword and Sudoku puzzles.

Calendar

pioneerlocal.com

Movie: "Argo"

18 12

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Fun, games and perms

BY TRACY GRUEN | Contributor

Michael Nigro felt thought opening a family fun center next door to his family-run beauty salon was the perfect fit.

Nigro owns the beauty salon that has been serving customers for 10 years at 7403 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Niles, along with his sister, Maria Nigro.

Building on the salon’s success, Michael and his wife, Isabelle, decided to open Kiddie Kingdom a couple years ago—a place where families can play games, go on kiddie rides and enjoy a meal.

Salon M recently received the “Business of the Year” award from the Niles Chamber of Commerce. The salon offers haircuts, highlights, updos, perms and more.

“We also have a spa area where we do facials and waxing and nails,” said Isabelle Nigro, who is a manager and hair stylist at Salon M. “We have a great clientele there, very local customers.”

Salon M was started by Michael and Maria’s parents, who started in the industry when they were 16 years old. Their parents ran a salon at Milwaukee and Bryn Mawr before Salon M opened in Niles. Currently, most of the hair stylists at Salon M are family members.

Isabelle and Michael own the strip mall where the two businesses are located right next door to each other.

“The economy having a little bit of a downfall, we had to figure out what to do with the space next door,” said Isabelle. “We came up with the Kiddie Kingdom idea. They work well together being next to each other.”

Isabelle said they have five children under the age of 6, so they wanted to open something family-oriented next to the salon that kids would enjoy.

Kiddie Kingdom offers a variety of games for kids of all ages and prizes they can redeem with their tickets. There are also various rides for the little ones, such as a teacup ride and carousel.

Guests can sit in the eating area and enjoy items such as pizza, eggplant parmigiana, ribs, pasta, hamburgers, Italian beef sandwiches, soups and salads. There’s also a wide variety of appetizers, such as jalapeno poppers, calamari, buffalo wings and mozzarella sticks.

“We make everything right there,” said Isabelle. “From the dough, to the sauce, everything.”

Kiddie Kingdom offers various birthday packages and fundraisers for local schools are held at the family fun center. They have also done fundraisers for other causes, such as fighting breast cancer.

“This year was our busiest year so far,” said Isabelle, about Kiddie Kingdom. She said that Groupon and Living Social deals helped to boost business.

Isabelle said that their location on Milwaukee has worked out well for Salon M.

“IT’s been a very great journey,” Isabelle said.
Anderson "Youth of the Year"

Melissa Anderson, a junior at Resurrection College Prep High School, will be honored as the "Youth of the Year" on April 27 by the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Melissa was nominated for this award for her service at her parish, St. John Brebeuf, her leadership and service at Resurrection, and for her continued involvement in the Girl Scouts of America.

Service seems to come naturally for Melissa. At St. John Brebeuf she volunteers as a Eucharist Minister, an Altar Server and as a Children's Liturgy of the Word catechist. At Resurrection she is currently a member of the National Honor Society, Vice President of the Junior Class, Vice President of Student Council and Vice President of Recruiting for Student Ambassadors. She was recently asked to attend the Junior Karios retreat where select students are invited to explore the option of being a Karios Leader during their senior year. Melissa is an active member of the Key Club and the Math Club. She is also a Natural Helper, a group of students chosen by their peers to be of assistance to each other.

Outside of school, Melissa also continues to be involved in Girl Scouting and is currently a Girl Scout Ambassador, which is the highest level of Girl Scouts. Melissa is beginning to consider her college options, but already knows her career goal is in the field of veterinary medicine.

"I was so surprised when I heard that I was getting this award," said Melissa after being named "Youth of the Year." "I couldn't stop crying!" But the award was not surprising to anyone who knows Melissa. Along with fellow Resurrection students Gabrielle Carsello and Haley Beierwaltes, Melissa was recently awarded the Archdiocese of Chicago Vicariate II Youth Leadership Award.

Resurrection College Prep High School, located at 7500 W. Talcott Ave., Chicago, is the largest all-girls' Catholic, Christian college preparatory high school for young women on the north side of Chicago. Since its founding in 1922, Resurrection has graduated over 13,500 alumnae.
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A springtime salute

Experience history like never before along the South Shore

One of the deadliest and most famous battles fought on American soil occurred in the small town of Gettysburg, Pa., from July 1 to 3, 1863. Cannons roared, rifle shots rang out and bayonets were drawn as more than 160,000 Confederate and Union soldiers fought relentlessly over three long, hot days.

The battle turned the tide in the Civil War in the Union's favor, but the cost was high. There were more than 50,000 casualties, including Col. John Wheeler, a Crown Point, Ind., resident who died on the second day.

Wheeler is one of hundreds of Civil War veterans buried in cemeteries in Northwest Indiana and one of several whose life will be told during a special event offered by Northwest Indiana's South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority.

The authority is commemorating the 150th anniversary of the war's first year, which included the Battle of Gettysburg, with the South Shore Civil War Memorial Trail Expo running April 5 to May 3.

Photos, artifacts and reproductions of Northwest Indiana Civil War regimental battle flags will be on display from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day during the expo run at the Indiana Welcome Center, 7770 Corinne Drive, Hammond.

Visitors can follow the Civil War Trail, which includes cemeteries in three counties where veterans are buried, or attend one of the live Civil War re-enactments taking place, SSCVA President and CEO Sporos Batistatos said.

Reenactments will take place at the Welcome Center from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 6, 7, 13, 20, 27 and 28 and from 4 to 7:30 p.m. May 1.

"We look at what catches people's interest and historic and educational travel is a very strong component. This event is doing that for us," Batistatos said.

In addition to special exhibits from the Indiana Historical Society, Nicki Mackowski, a spokesperson for the SSCVA, said they are working closely with area historical societies and Noble County, Ind., to obtain photos and artifacts.

Batistatos said the exhibit already has garnered a lot of interest on the Internet, from area legislators and the state tourism director.

In addition to this salute to the Civil War, the South Shore is hosting two additional notable events this spring:

Waterscape Weekend
Garden & Pond Show

"A lot of people are unaware of this great little event held at the Lake County Fairgrounds," Batistatos said of the annual show presented by the Illiana Garden & Pond Society.

The indoor event takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 27 and 28 at the fairgrounds, 669 Court St., Crown Point. Admission is $5.

"This is a great event if you're into the outdoors. Patios, fireplaces, grills, and other ideas to improve your yard are featured," Batistatos said.

Pond, garden and patio displays with the newest designs and products will be featured. Vendors will be selling garden and pond plants and supplies, outdoor lighting, garden decor and pond fish.

Explore the South Shore

Get introduced to some of Northwest Indiana's hottest tourism attractions at this one-day event, taking place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 11 at the Indiana Welcome Center.

"We're bringing together at our building various attractions and things to do during the summer," Batistatos said.

Among the exhibitors will be Albanese Candy in Hobart, where visitors can watch workers make Gummi bears; Fair Oaks Farm in Fair Oaks, one of the largest dairy farms in the country, the RailCats baseball team in Gary, and the famous Pierogi Fest in Whiting.

Mackowski said the first 250 people to arrive will receive a passport filled with coupons and deals to a number of attractions.

To learn more about the South Shore, visit www.alongthesouthshore.com or weekaway.com.

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TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

Savor the season’s bounty — from flora to fresh produce — at Jansen’s Fruit Market.

May 18 and May 19
Voyageur Rendezvous: 18th Century Fur-Trade Era Reenactment at Grand Kankakee Marsh Park, 21630 Rangeline Road, Hebron. Event highlights include opening and closing ceremonies, arrival of Voyageurs by canoe, trade session with Native Americans, storytelling, tomahawk throw, fashion show, sarsaparilla and food. Visit www.alongthesouthshore.com.

May 31 to July 18
Trashion — From Trash to Treasure: For six years the annual Trashion to Treasure exhibition at the Indiana Welcome Center, 7770 Corinne Drive, Hammond, featured art pieces made from recyclables and reused material. Trash to Treasure has branched into a new direction by featuring TRASHION=artistic fashion with an environmental message. Visit www.alongthesouthshore.com.

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May 4 to Oct. 30
Central Park Plaza Market: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesdays and Saturdays at Central Park Plaza in Valparaiso. Visit the market weekly to shop for fresh local produce, handmade products and beautiful plants and flowers. Live lunchtime entertainment on select Tuesdays. Visit www.valparaisoevents.com or call (219) 464-8332.

June 11 to July 30
Summer Outdoor Movies: At dusk on Tuesdays you can watch your favorite movies under the stars at Central Park Plaza in Valparaiso. Bring your lawn chair or blanket. Visit www.valparaisoevents.com or call (219) 464-8332.

July 6 to July 8
Crown Point Antique Steam Show: Travel back in time at the Lake County Fairgrounds, 889 S. Court St., Crown Point. Operational exhibits including antique tractors, steam tractor engines, sawmill and shingle mill, rock crushers, horseshoeing (Saturday and Sunday), garden tractor games (Saturday), corn shucking and more. Other activities include a petting zoo, food vendors, a flea market, kiddie pedal tractor pull (Saturday and Sunday) and kiddie tractor "train" ride. Visit www.alongthesouthshore.com.

July 15
Valparaiso Wine Festival: Wine lovers can enjoy tasting a wide variety of wines at this brand new event in Central Park Plaza in Valparaiso. Tickets go on sale in April. Visit www.valparaisoevents.com or call (219) 464-8332.

July 17 to July 21

July 20
The Grape Escape: Munster Parks and Recreation Department will host the town’s wine festival at Centennial Park, Calumet Avenue, just south of 45th Street, Munster. Sample a selection of wines, enjoy food from around the region, listen to live music, and enjoy an arts fair and ethnic market. Visit www.alongthesouthshore.com.

July 26 to July 28
Pierogi Fest: Visit downtown Whiting for food of all sorts, the Pierogi Parade, games, beer garden, musical entertainment and just plain fun for all ages. Admission is free. Visit www.alongthesouthshore.com.

For more events, visit weekaway.com or www.alongthesouthshore.com.
FEATU RED HOME
By Wrapports News Service

8247 N. Merrill St., Niles
House size: 1,218 square feet
Lot size: 6,700 square feet
Year built: 1947
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 1.5
Garage: Two-car detached
Tax: $4,893.87 (2011)
Architectural style: Colonial
School districts: East Maine School District 63 and Maine Township High School District 207

AGENT Judy Marszalek, Keller Williams, 773-320-6411

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MORTON GROVE
7633 Church St: Timothy R Price and Linda Price to Ramanathan Sundaram and Kanthimathi Chokkalingam for $317,000 on Feb. 15

WILMETTE
2025 Lake Ave: Hensen Sleep Relief Inc to Mark D Paul and Alison H Chang for $370,000 on Feb. 15
831 Westerfield Drive: David A Bueschel and Elizabeth Bueschel to William J Lauck and Jane B McCormack for $525,000 on Feb. 13

GLENVIEW
1230 Canterbury Lane: Timothy P Cofer and Jodi S Cofer to Philip A Borre and Bethany M Harding for $1,120,000 on Feb. 13

NORTHEAST
1300 S Crescent Ave: Eniketa Hysenaj to Christopher J Binz and Toni Binz for $430,000 on Feb. 13

GLENCOE
1091 Beinlich Court: William Diaz, Ewa A Diaz and Ewa A Lukasik to Seth A Rose and Rose Carolyn a Pykosz for $1,375 on Feb. 13

GLENCOE
1091 Beinlich Court: William Diaz, Ewa A Diaz and Ewa A Lukasik to Seth A Rose and Rose Carolyn a Pykosz for $1,375 on Feb. 13

RIVER FOREST
405 Lathrop Ave #405: David James Ruiz, John Ruiz, Janet Huneck, Katie Cihak, Peggy Blake, Michael Ruiz and Mary Ruth Broz to Udo G Wegner Trust No 1 and Lee Hyunsoo Trust No 1 for $38,000 on Feb. 13

KENILWORTH
520 Earlstone Road: Patricia H Pickard to Suzanne C Folland and William A Folland for $900,000 on Feb. 11

MELROSE PARK
1536 N 23rd Ave: Dendorbres LLC to THR Property Illinois LP for $187,000 on Feb. 14
Celebrate spring with reci-Peeps!

Give your ‘peeps’ something to chirp about with these springtime recipes that celebrate the 60-year-old marshmallow confection.

### Hidden Peep Delights

Frozen Peeps taste even better after they are dipped in chocolate and sprinkled with assorted toppings. Not only are they a great dessert, but your kids will love trying to guess which Peep lies beneath the chocolate shell.

**You need:**
- Assorted Peeps Marshmallow Chicks
- 1 bag dark chocolate chips
- 1 bag white chocolate candy melts
- Popsicle sticks
- Assorted toppings (such as toffee bits, nuts, sprinkles, etc.)

**Directions:**
- Attach Popsicle sticks to Peeps and place in freezer for about 8 to 10 hours. In separate bowls, melt white and dark chocolate in microwave for about 1 to 2 minutes. Dip Peeps in chocolate until fully covered and then sprinkle with assorted toppings. Place treats on waxed paper and place in freezer until frozen.

### Chocolate-Dipped Peeps with Bacon Topping

Bacon is everywhere these days, including the tails of these dark chocolate-dipped chicks. The combination is sweet, savory and creamy, offering just the right amount of crunch.

**You need:**
- Assorted Peeps Marshmallow Chicks
- 1 bag dark chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon oil
- Bacon

**Directions:**
- Cook bacon until crisp and then cut into small pieces.
- Melt chocolate in microwave for about 1 to 2 minutes. Add a tablespoon of oil and mix thoroughly.
- Dip the tail of the marshmallow chick in chocolate and sprinkle with bacon. Set aside until chocolate hardens.

### Grape Apple Peep Fizz

At your next brunch, delight your guests with this Peep-topped beverage that is part apple, part grape and a whole lot of fun.

**You need:**
- Assorted Peeps Marshmallow Chicks
- Apple juice
- Grape juice
- Club soda
- Whipped topping

**Directions:**
- In a pitcher or punch bowl, combine equal parts apple juice, grape juice and club soda. Pour drink into wide-rimmed glasses and top with whipped topping. Float chicks on top of whipped topping and serve immediately.

### Peeps Sushi

You don't have to love sushi to love this cute dessert.

**You need:**
- Assorted Peeps Marshmallow Chicks
- Fruit leather
- Crispy rice cereal
- Marshmallows
- Butter

**Directions:**
- Make crispy rice cereal treats according to package and cut into sushi-shaped rectangles and circles.
- To create sushi pieces: Place marshmallow chicks on top of rectangle treats and secure with a band of fruit leather. To create sushi rolls: Place a strip of fruit leather around the circular treats and top with the heads of the marshmallow chicks.

**Warning:** No marshmallows were hurt during this recipe (although a few Peeps lost their heads).

Do you have a favorite reci-Peep? Share with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PioneerPressGo.
Modern takes on retro fare

BY JENNIFER OLVERA | Contributor

Bust out those faded cookbooks and get in the game: Modern versions of retro dishes are popping up all over town.

Whether you appreciate the dose of nostalgia or simply revel in time-honored eats, a payoff awaits.

“There are dishes that evoke a special feeling,” says Greg Ellis, chef/partner at 2 Sparrows in Lincoln Park, where a house-made version of Pop-Tarts elevates the morning mainstay.

At Storefront Company in Wicker Park, chef/partner Bryan Moscatello and pastry chef

2 cups creme fraîche
1/2 cup, plus 1/2 teaspoons, red wine vinegar, divided use
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/4 cup chopped chives
1/4 shallot, minced
1 small clove garlic, minced
Kosher salt
Cracked black pepper
1 cup sliced red onion
1 cup red wine
1/2 cup sugar
1 head iceberg lettuce
2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
1/2 cup (10 slices) thick-cut bacon, chopped and browned

In a medium bowl, combine creme fraîche, 1 1/2 teaspoons red wine vinegar and buttermilk, chives, shallot and garlic. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Cover and refrigerate for up to an hour.

Place onion in a small bowl. Bring remaining 1/2 cup red wine vinegar, red wine, sugar and a pinch of salt to boil over medium-high heat. Allow to simmer for two minutes. Pour over onions, bring to room temperature and refrigerate until ready to use.

Remove core from lettuce and cut lettuce into four wedges. Place a small amount of dressing on each of four salad plates. Top with lettuce wedges, drizzle with additional dressing and sprinkle with chopped bacon and browned onion. Finish with cracked black pepper and serve immediately with a knife and fork.

— From Chef Phil Rubino of Royce in Highland Park

Wedge Salad with Pickled Red Onions

Chef Greg Ellis and his Nutella Pop Tarts at 2 Sparrows in Chicago. | RICH HEIN-Sun-Times Media

Kymberli DeLost turn out a luxe version sponge candy. The caramelized, toffee-like chunks join with black currant gel and gelee, jasmine pearl tea mousse and hazelnuts, with a scoop of milk sherbet and frozen milk foam to complete the dish.

If you’re looking to recreate or riff on your favorite, time-honored meals, the pros say the mantra is try, try again. Ellis went through 30-plus variations of his beloved tart dough before getting it right.

“The first one was horrible,” he concedes. “But that’s the thing: if you mess up, just start again.”

“You just need to decide whether you’re going for the same effect as you remember or something different,” says Ben Roche, co-executive chef at Baume & Brix. “Think about texture and flavor combinations you liked, or consider ways to reinvent them.”

“Reinvent” is clearly the case at Baume & Brix, where Roche and fellow executive chef Thomas Elliott Bowman serve the playful, Wendy’s-inspired Frostee & Fries, which teams up potato ice cream, milk chocolate and banana.

“It reminds us of when we dipped fries into Frostees,” Bowman says.

Speaking of potatoes, tater tots are hitting their stride. Ellis turns out a homemade, marshmallow-sized version. Meanwhile, at The Boarding House in River North, the oversized nubs are stuffed with pork for a pot roast-y effect.

Whatever your persuasion, resurrecting throwback-feeling foods can serve a purpose.

“To a degree it’s about tradition,” says Phil Rubino, executive chef at Royce in Highland Park. “The goal is to strike a memory of a person or time.”

“At the same time it can be whimsical and fun,” says Stephanie Mazzone, pastry chef at mk. Enter Mazzone’s “peppermint-rich patty,” a composed finale with milk chocolate peppermint semifreddo, Bailey’s hot chocolate, flourless chocolate cake, peppermint bark and chocolate caramel sauce.

“The thing is, retro foods can be done in a nicer, more grown-up way,” she adds. “You just want to make sure they’re still feeling warm and comforting.”

“Just cook what you like to eat,” suggests Rubino, who serves a mean wedge salad at his North Shore restaurant. “If there’s an old-school dish with ingredients you don’t enjoy, substitute them with something else to make it your own.”

Because, really, at the end of the day, an updated version takes the best of the past and makes it better.
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* An in memoriam or card of thanks may be placed using the same information above.
* The deadline for placing a death notice, in memoriam or card of thanks, is Monday at 5:00 pm. Photos must be submitted by Monday at 2:00pm.

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- Tony Priolo
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THINGS WE LOVE

Mark your calendar for April 3: It's opening day for downtown Chicago's first Madewell. (We've already got outposts at Oakbrook Center and Old Orchard.) In honor of the occasion, the first 150 people to arrive at 10 a.m. will receive a gift card ranging from $10 to $500.

Kerastase's new Initialiste serum tames tresses by using plant cell extracts, which keep strands plump, protected and perfectly smooth. $60, Maxine Salon, 712 N. Rush; Kerastase.com

New River North spot Central Standard honors cuisine of the Central Standard time zone by serving locally sourced fare and craft cocktails, like the Michigan Cherry Collins (pictured), inspired by cities from Fargo, N.D., to New Orleans. $13, 169 W. Kinzie; Centralstandardchicago.com

Be a ballpark VIP thanks to the Chicago Cubs and Starwood. Simply sign up for the Starwood Preferred Guests program at Spg.com to score one-of-a-kind experiences, such as club box tickets and the chance to toss the first pitch at Wrigley Field.

INSIDE THE ARTS & CULTURE ISSUE

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What had you tweeting

Haberdash Men's Shop @Haberdashshop: Get to know @NBCChicagoFire star @DavidEigenberg via @suntimes_splash... Looking great in Haberdash, styled by @EricHime

Nieves Lavi @NievesLavi: Sâm Nieves Velez looking sharp in the @Suntimes_Splash! Check out the feature — Who Wore What Where: Gray Matters

Greg Pappas @GregPappas22: Great coverage via @Suntimes_Splash from @GreekAmerica Foundation's Blue Masque Ball Thx @SusannaNegovan

T Myers @cieloazulITM 24: Israel Idonije @idonije is in today's @Suntimes_Splash "Trending Now" Chicago #Styling

What movie do you never get tired of?

“‘My Best Friend’s Wedding’! It’s so well-written and subverts the traditional rom-com structure. I’ll never tire of Dermot Mulroney’s lip scar and Julia Roberts’ gigantic hair.”

“Office Space.” The open-field destruction of the printer could be one of my favorite scenes ever.”

“Before Sunset. “Somehow a film about two people walking around a city and talking is one of the most suspenseful movies I’ve seen.”

“If Mean Girls is on, I will never change the channel. The characters and the dialogue just kill me. I’ll watch it over and over even though I already know every line by heart.”

Editor Susanna Negovan, susanna@suntimes.com
Managing Editor Molly Ech, meach@suntimes.com
Associate Editor Rachel Handler, handler@suntimes.com
Photographer Ramzi Dreessen, rdreessen@suntimes.com
Editorial Assistants Zak Steiner, zsteiner@suntimes.com Katerina Bizios, kbizios@suntimes.com
Art Director Jessica Sedgwick, jsedgwick@suntimes.com
Director of Events Samantha Saifer Berrngard, sberrngard@suntimes.com
Director of Brand Strategy Liza Sweitzer, liza@suntimes.com
Interns Will Babcock Bianca Betancourt Francine Gutierrez Jennifer Hamilton Nya Jones Sheena Patel

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Founder Michael Ferro

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this week

April 2-May 5
• 'BIG FISH'
Author Daniel Wallace's story about a son's effort to understand his tall-tale-telling father comes to the stage as a new musical, directed and choreographed by Susan Stroman ('The Producers') and starring Norbert Leo Butz ('Dirty Rotten Scoundrels') and Kate Baldwin. The show makes its world premiere here in Chicago.

Place: Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph
Cost: $33-$100. Call (800) 775-2000 or visit Broadwayinchicago.com.

April 5
• 'A LITERARY EVENT WITH CAROLINE KENNEDY'
As part of its 125th anniversary celebrations, the Highland Park Public Library welcomes author, author and witness to history Caroline Kennedy. A political analyst, Kennedy has also demonstrated a love of literature, a passion she picked up from her mother, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. With her latest book — Poems to Learn by Heart — she has gathered verses that capture the pleasures of nature and the joys of family.

Time: 5 p.m.
Place: 494 Laurel, Highland Park
Cost: $175. Call (847) 432-0216 or visit Hplibrary.org.

April 4-7
• FETE CHICAGO
Immerse yourself in Chicago's vibrant artisan scene at this weekend-long festival of food and design. The series kicks off Thursday with a night market, featuring eats from local spots like Trenchermen and Ruxbin and goods from designers such as Elise Bergman and Artfully Dishaveled. Through the rest of the weekend, enjoy events such as artist and chef demos and conversations, studio tours and a food-centric reading at Ina's restaurant, featuring the Breakfast Queen herself, Ina Pinkney. Times, locations and prices vary throughout the weekend. Buy tickets and view the entire schedule at Comefete.com.

April 4-7
• SEQUINS AT BREAKFAST
Lindsay Avner of Bright Pink and Erica Strama of The Shops at North Bridge will lead "glittery girl talk" at this networking breakfast, hosted by publicist Amanda Puck, jewelry designer Dana Gordon of Dana Rebecca Designs and other local style mavens. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Bright Pink, the only national nonprofit focusing on prevention and early detection of breast and ovarian cancer in young women.

Time: 9-11 a.m.
Place: Cru Kitchen & Bar, 25 E. Delaware
Cost: $35. Visit Stayclassy.org/

April 5
• STEPPENWOLF AUXILIARY COUNCIL'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY RED OR WHITE BALL
Theater-loving young professionals come together in support of Steppenwolf's arts education efforts with a night full of cocktails, appetizers, music from DJ Madrid and a silent auction. Splurge on the VIP reception and enjoy small plates from top local chefs and a whiskey tasting.

Time: 8 p.m.
Place: Venue One, 1044 W. Randolph
Cost: $150-$250. Call (312) 654-5623 or visit Steppenwolf.org/rowb.

April 5
• ARCHITECTURAL ARTIFACTS AUCTION
Architectural Artifacts — the largest architectural antiques store in the world — celebrates its 25th year with a three-day auction. Chandeliers and furniture are among the more than 1,500 pieces up on the block.

Time: 10 a.m.
Place: 4325 N. Ravenswood
Cost: Free. Call (773) 348-0622 or visit Architecturalartifacts.com.

next week

April 10-May 19
• 'STILL ALICE'
Insidious and unexpected, Alzheimer's disease disorients not only its victim, but family and friends too. Adapted from the novel by neuroscientist Lisa Genova, this Lookingglass Theatre production tells the story of one woman's struggle to maintain her independence and identity and her family's efforts to adapt.

Place: 821 N. Michigan
Cost: $28-$38 through April 19; $36-$66 after. Call (312) 337-0665 or visit Lookingglasstheatre.org.

April 11
• BRICKS AND IVY BALL
The curse will be the furthest thing from any fan's mind at this bash to benefit Chicago Cubs Charities. Current Cubs Tom Ricketts, Theo Epstein, Dale Sveum, and Hall of Famers Ernie Banks, Fergie Jenkins and Billy Williams will be on hand at this always-popular event, which includes entertainment by DJ Kasper K and his '70s dancers.

Time: 6 p.m.
Place: 600 E. Grand
Cost: $500. Call (773) 404-CUBS or visit Cubs.com/bricksandivy.

April 13
• AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION'S CHICAGO HEART BALL
Since 1982, this black-tie gala has raised more than $13 million to support medical research, education and community programs that fight heart disease and stroke. Enjoy heart-healthy victuals, then get your heart pumping as you shake to the sounds of Lynne Jordan and the Shivers.

Time: 6 p.m.
Place: Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand
Cost: $1,000. Call (312) 476-6632 or visit Heart.org/chicago.
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I hip-hop artist and actor Common’s third annual Common Ground Foundation Awards Gala and Fundraiser was a show-stopping success. The Chicago native played host at the sold-out event, held March 23 at the Four Seasons (120 E. Delaware), and recruited emcees WLS-Ch. 7’s Cheryl Burton and actor Lamman Rucker, and red-carpet host WMAQ-Ch. 5’s Michelle Relerford. They rallied more than 450 attendees to honor Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Quintin and Diane Primo, Tim and Everett Rand and Gabby Douglas for their work in the community, but the most heartwarming moment came when six teens who attended Common’s summer camp spoke of how their lives have been changed through mentorship. Live and silent auctions — including a night on the town package with Magic Johnson that three people bought for $30,000 each — helped raise more than $350,000 for the foundation, which uses the arts to empower young people in Chicago.

The Sun-Times was the media sponsor of this event.
Turn a dress into a work of art by embracing this season’s whimsical prints: soft florals, elegant tie-dyes and modernist collages. Take a cue from these women, who’ve mastered the look by letting the dress take center stage and keeping accessories pared down. When it comes to matching, black is a girl’s best friend — it provides the necessary neutral base and avoids cluttering the outfit. While we’re not against mixing prints, sometimes less can be much more. One thing’s for sure: When it comes to the Chicago party circuit, we’re seeing a pattern.
EAST meets WEST

by Katerina Bizios

It took Conde Nast Traveler’s Editor-at-Large Hanya Yanagihara two months, 12 countries, 26 cities and 30 flights to complete her research for the magazine’s April edition, “The Grand Tour of Asia.” She made an extra stop at the Peninsula Chicago (108 E. Superior) on March 19 to share the details of her 45-day journey with 200 guests. Attendees dined on 1,200 pieces of dim sum and 30 Peking ducks as the Peninsula’s Chief Operating Officer Peter Borer offered opening remarks and Yanagihara gave an overview of her trip, which has helped create the most comprehensive, up-to-the-minute itinerary for the continent available today.

Photos by Ramzi Dreesen

Conde Nast Traveler and The Peninsula Hotel’s ‘The Grand Tour of Asia’ Launch Party
Jewel of the mile

Vintage specialty shop Lulu’s at the Belle Kay (3862 N’Lincoln) expanded its fashionable family March 4 with the launch of its second, jewelry-centric space, Lulu’s on the Avenue, located on the third floor of the 900 Shops (900 N. Michigan). Owner and curator Laurie Davis sparkled as she showed off her collection of stunning pieces to guests such as Rochelle Trotter, Darby Hills and designer Roni Blanshay, whose own jewelry was on display alongside finery from Iradj Moini, Larry Vrba and local handbag line Laudi Vidni. A percentage of the evening’s proceeds was donated to the Service Club of Chicago, which serves the city’s welfare, civic, educational and cultural needs.

BY KATERINA BIZIOS

Whichever team you root for this March Madness make sure you are doing it with a Healthy GREAT SMILE.
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Hi Jenny,

So I have a question (if that wasn’t obvious enough!). I’m 14 and in 9th grade. I really like this girl, she is beautiful and has a great personality, and we talk a lot. But she has a boyfriend. What should I do?

- Connor, Vernon, NJ.

Jenny says: The good news is, just because she has a boyfriend now does not mean she will always have one. So, in the meantime, continue to be friendly, but not too friendly. Girls don’t like clingy guys! I’m assuming she knows you like her, but if she doesn’t, subtly make her aware you’re into her. Once she realizes your intentions, you’ll immediately become interesting to her. Everyone likes to be admired and this girl is no different.

Now, get your game face on because this is when things start to get tricky. Most girls like guys with an edge. That doesn’t mean be a jerk. It means be an awesome guy, but one who is confident and not too available. You already have an advantage — you talk to her a lot, so you know her interests, hobbies and quirks. Now, step back for a while and watch from afar. She will begin to notice that you’re not around so much and — I promise — she will start to look at you, wondering if you are watching her. Once she does this, glance back, keep eye contact for a second, half-smile and then turn away. The ball is now in your court.

Unfortunately, you’re learning early that trying to gain a girl’s interest has a lot to do with strategy. It’s not always fun, but if you do it correctly, you’ll soon be the guy she wants to be dating. If not, move on, because there are plenty of fish in the sea.
SHOW GIRL

'Shameless' star Shanola Hampton spends her day off the set and in the city

BY ZAK STEMER

On Showtime's Chicago-centric hit "Shameless," Shanola Hampton plays Veronica, a delightfully raunchy, spellbinding train wreck who makes the characters on a telenovela seem mundane by comparison. It's a role that's pushed Hampton to uncharted acting territory. "The way they've taken her story is beyond my wildest imagination," Hampton says. "[In this season], Veronica is so desperate to have kids, she's letting her husband and mother sleep together." And that isn't even her raciest plot twist — you'll have to tune in to find out more.

The series' third season is drawing to its epic conclusion April 7, and Hampton teases that we'll see the resolution of some of the craziest plot lines — as well as an unexpected twist in Veronica's current love triangle. The show has been picked up by Showtime for a fourth season, set to air this winter. "We start shooting in September," Hampton says. "I love Chicago in the wintertime. I think it adds something — it's another character. It shows these people who don't have much are surviving in the harshest of circumstances."

Off-screen, Hampton is a down-to-earth, vivacious beauty whose mile-a-minute speech is interrupted only by her infectious laugh. Though she was born in South Carolina, and is currently based in Los Angeles, the actress is adamant that she's a certified Chicagoan: After attending school at the University of Illinois, she came to the city to work as a cocktail girl at Wrigleyville's Goose Island Brewery (3535 N. Clark). "It's my favorite city. I love to eat, and Chicago has the best food. I love the vibe and I love the people. I love everything," she gushes. "And I'm a Cubs fan, but I have to be careful — White Sox fans can be cray-cray!"

Here, Chicago's sexiest neighbor lays out her perfect Sunday in the city.

1 P.M.
She heads down to the river to take an architectural boat tour around the city.

2:30 P.M.
Hampton goes shopping at the Forever 21 flagship (540 N. Michigan) with Emma Kenney, who plays neighbor Debbie Gallagher on the show.

6 P.M.
She returns to the hotel for a quick wardrobe change — you have to get your night clothes on! — before dinner at Rosebud (1500 W. Taylor). "I love their chicken Parmesan. It's huge!" she says.

8 P.M.
Hampton loves to laugh, and there's no better place to let loose than at Second City (1616 N. Wells).

10:30 P.M.
When the cast goes out, they often play pool at Rockit Bar & Grill (22 W. Hubbard). "They are so good to us," Hampton says. "We make it a dance party even though it's not supposed to be a dance party there."

PHOTO BY LESLEY BRYCE
Giuliana Rancic could dole out any words of wisdom to her younger self, it would be these: “You'll never use geometry. So don’t sweat that D, girl.” She laughs, reflecting on her academic career. “I wasn't the best student. Instead, I was being social, having fun, developing a sense of humor,” she says. “And these are all skills that help me every day.”

Of course, teenaged, geometry-challenged Rancic couldn't have known she'd grow up to ply those social skills in front of millions as a TV star. But today, Rancic has become nearly ubiquitous, with a dizzying list of projects: She's the charismatic co-anchor of “E! News,” host of E!’s “Fashion Police” and star of reality show “Giuliana & Bill,” which follows her as she navigates her career, marriage to entrepreneur Bill Rancic and motherhood (the sixth season premieres in June). In 2011, she co-founded a beauty and wellness website, FabFitFun, and last year, she opened River North restaurant RPM Italian alongside husband Bill and restaurateurs RJ, Molly and Jerrod Melman and Doug Psaltis. As if that weren't enough, she's gearing up for the April 9 premiere of her latest show, NBC's “Ready for Love,” which she'll co-host with Bill.

“I have great friendships here, the people are wonderful and it's where we want Duke to go to school,” says Giuliana about Chicago.
Like her other projects, the new show will largely feature Rancic's outsized personality. "It's unlike anything that's ever been on TV," she says of the series, which pairs three men with three women. "These are the first examples of relationships that your child is exposed to," she says. "We're not hiding anything, and we're not sugarcoating anything."

The sixth season of "Giuliana & Bill" debuts in June.

What's next for Giuliana

"Ready for Love": "NBC brought us in and told us the idea and we were sold in five minutes. I think it's gonna be a phenomenon. Bill and I consider ourselves very happily married, and we learned so much from the matchmakers. People will be at home, taking notes."

Her HSN spring collection: "They're fashionable, wearable pieces for spring. I love a good pop of color, which is why I chose bright pinks and vibrant blues. And I really wanted it to be accessible for everyone, so the sizing ranges from XS-XXL. I'm definitely going to be wearing it all around Chicago - there are great blazers that would be perfect for dinner at RPM and flowy maxi skirts that are perfect for a casual walk down Michigan Avenue."

RPM Steak: "We're so excited about the opening of RPM Steak [60 W. Kinzie, opening in the fall]. We're bringing all of the wonderful flavors from RPM Italian but will have more of an emphasis on meat dishes. We are actually going to be doing some tastings for RPM Steak on our next few weekend trips to Chicago and we can't wait."
It's got heartbreak and scandal, sex and violence and centuries-old roots — but for some reason, opera's also got a bad rap. "Unfortunately, there's a pervasive belief that opera is expensive, exclusive and geriatric," says Minka Bosco, president of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Lyric Young Professionals. "But the truth is, opera's funny. It's dramatic; its plotlines are scandalous, and the sets and costumes are wonderful. For me, it's really the best of all art forms brought together."
To help spread that positive gospel — and to bring new faces to the iconic opera house — The Lyric Young Professionals group was founded in 2010 as part of the Renee Fleming Initiative. (Fleming, a world-famous soprano, became a creative consultant for the Lyric that year and quickly implemented goals for expansion and engagement.) The board started with 25 members and now has 80, all in the 21- to 45-year-old age range.

This year, the group has hosted a number of laid-back events, all with the goal of “raising awareness of opera with the younger generation,” says Bosco. “Even if it’s by getting them to come to a fantastic event that’s not an opera.”

Earlier this month, the group threw a pub-style trivia night dubbed “La Thviata,” replete with a DJ, cocktails and snacks from Publican Quality Meats. The bash drew 100 guests, many of whom were new to the Civic Opera House.

“Events like that bring people to this venerable, beautiful landmark building, and they get a first impression that’s anything but old and stuffy,” Bosco says, noting that the board also hosts charitable events and fashion shows.

Of course, the hope is that an enticing taste of the opera house will inspire an interest in opera itself, and Bosco says that’s often the case. “These events make people feel that the opera is more accessible,” she says. “It can be as simple as this: having finally been to the opera house, they know how to get there from work.”

Once they do decide to come see a show, these nascent fans will find plenty to choose from. How’s this for variety? The opera presented Puccini’s “La Boheme” over the winter. The current, sold-out production is “A Streetcar Named Desire,” starring Fleming.

In May, the stage will be decked with painted cornfields as the Lyric presents “Oklahoma!” And in June, “The Second City Guide to Opera” will give audiences a hilarious, musical-revue style look at the renowned art form.

As for that myth that opera’s expensive? The Lyric has a longstanding tradition of affordable ticket options, with some subscriptions offering four operas for $100, discounts for students and more.

The celebrated company also has its sights set on patrons that are far too young for pub nights or study sessions: This past July saw the establishment of Lyric Unlimited, an initiative that hopes to bring kids to the opera.

One of its events, “Popcorn & Pasquale,” took place in December and pulled out all the family friendly stops. Featuring selected scenes from Don Pasquale, the Sunday afternoon affair included stagecraft demos, programs filled with printed games and — of course — popcorn. The event sold out and was well-received by its audience, which included 5- to 10-year-olds. “It excites me to introduce new audiences to the revelatory, life-changing power of live opera,” says General Director Anthony Freud.

It seems the group is well on the way to refreshing the art form’s rusty reputation. And Chicagoans seem to be getting into the opera spirit these days too. Perhaps local Becca Kraft summed it up best on Twitter — and in the vernacular of today’s youth: “Already getting excited for the next season at the LyricOpera! It’s gonna be SOOO GOOD!!! #CannotEvenHandle.”

Buy tickets to the Lyric Opera’s upcoming productions, “Oklahoma!” and “The Second City Guide to Opera” at Lyricopera.org.
Exhibit

Museum of Contemporary Art Curator Naomi Beckwith finds art in her favorite everyday objects

1. L’Artisan Parfumeur: L’Eau D’Ambre Extreme Eau de Parfum, $120, Barneys New York, 15 E. Oak; Barneys.com

“This house works with top master perfumers to introduce the most unusual but delicious scents made with essential oils rather than synthetics.”

2. Jack LaLanne: power juicer express, $99, Bed Bath & Beyond, 530 N. State; Bedbathandbeyond.com

“My mom sent me a Jack LaLanne juicer for my birthday and life has been better since. I get my weekly health boost by making a vegetable juice with this powerful machine.”

3. Burberry: classic trench, $1,495, 633 N. Michigan; Burberry.com

“I often travel to different climates and find that nothing beats a classic trench to get me from one zone to another. A removable wool liner can even keep you warm on wintry Chicago days.”

4. Monserat De Lucca: Bajamar leather tote, $400, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago Store, 220 E. Chicago; Mca architect.org

“A woman needs one good bag for show and a good tote to do all the work. These Bajamar tote bags by Monserat De Lucca are the perfect carry-alls that double as a show bag.”

5. Carol’s Daughter: Black Vanilla moisturizing leave-in conditioner, $14, Ulta, 114 S. State; Ulta.com

“The Black Vanilla moisturizing leave-in conditioner by Carol’s Daughter gives that extra bit of health and manageability without any synthetic chemicals or oils.”


“No one can match Duro Olowu’s eye for combining popping patterns and colors. And his new collaboration with JCPenney means that everyone can get in on the flair.”

7. Coda: chocolate, $12-$40 for boxes; Coda-chocolate.com

“Coda makes truffles with the subtlest balance of flavors. They’re worth ordering for a special occasion or as a customizable treat for an event.”

8. Duro Olowu: plaid tie-waist sundress, $40, JCPenney, 7601 S. Cicero; Jcpenney.com

“No one can match Duro Olowu’s eye for combining popping patterns and colors. And his new collaboration with JCPenney means that everyone can get in on the flair.”


“Dutch designer Reineke Otten’s World Skin Colors are smartly designed foulards with graphics based on statistics of all the world’s nations.”

10. Cole Haan: Chelsea open-toe slingback, $298, 673 N. Michigan; Colehaan.com

“I can run a mile in any pump by Cole Haan with Nike Air technology and, on days full of meetings that end in dancing at an event, I’m still on my toes with these miracle shoes.”

11. Luïs Clotet: Sarrià basket, $122, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago Store, 220 E. Chicago; Mca architect.org

“You can never go wrong with a well-designed object by Alessi as a gift or to accent your home.”
Peruvian Connection brings the work of South American artisans to Chicago

Peruvian Connection

Annie Hurlbut

early 4,000 miles away from the Andes mountains where her brand's luxurious alpaca fiber is sourced, Peruvian Connection's founder Annie Hurlbut has found a home for her line in Chicago: 925 W. Armitage.

The store, one of seven newly opened in the U.S., gives longtime shoppers of the line — which launched in the late 70s as a catalog business — a place to try on its cozy printed sweaters and velvety pima cotton maxi dresses.

Pima cotton is "our core fiber that we're known for and what we've built our brand on," says Hurlbut of the collection, which includes items ranging from $39 tees to $298 cardigans. "It has a much longer staple than most cottons, which means it's a straighter, smoother fiber with a more natural hand." And it makes up a fraction of the world's cotton production, which is why it's considered a luxury fabric.

While pima is the brand's current calling card, alpaca (made from the fleece of alpacas, which are camelids like llamas and live at high altitudes) is the fiber the company was founded on in 1976. Hurlbut at the time was studying anthropology in the Andes, and was enchanted by the handwoven clothes she found in Peruvian markets. When she came home to Kansas City, Mo., she brought her mother an alpaca sweater as a birthday gift, and their circle of friends was instantly intrigued. Sensing an opportunity, the Hurlbuts began commissioning original designs and importing them to the U.S. To this day alpaca sweaters ($199) and maxi coats ($699) are among the brand's most popular items.

After 35 years of working with small producers and artisans, Hurlbut is still just as taken with Peruvian materials, and three-quarters of Peruvian Connection's merchandise is still sourced and produced there. "Going back thousands of years, Peru is a place where textiles have been the most sophisticated anywhere in the world," she explains. "There's this whole tradition of weaving and spinning."

As for her Chicago store, Hurlbut senses another opportunity: "If the number of North Face knee-length coats is any indication, it's a natural for Peruvian Connection," she jokes. And for summer, she predicts her comfy layering pieces — when paired with the brand's filmy sundresses — will stave off the occasional chilly night.

925 W. Armitage, (773) 975-4088, Peruvianconnection.com

Beauty school

Make Up Forever is hitting the road, holding pop-up makeup schools in 10 major U.S. cities, and it's swinging through Chicago next weekend. Make an appointment via the Make Up Forever Facebook page, then bring your cosmetics bag (filled with products from any brand) to the event, and an expert will teach you to use your products for free. Noon - 8 p.m. April 6 and 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. April 7. Westfield Old Orchard Mall, 4999 Old Orchard Center, Skokie; Make Up Forever

'Crystal' clear

Crystal Simms, owner of Crystal B. Designs and previous designer-in-residence of the Chicago Fashion Incubator, brings her avant-garde sensibility to her new collection, Walk the Line. The cutting-edge looks include a series of androgynous separates, bold dresses and futuristic silhouettes. 2233 S. Throop, (312) 224-1679; Crystalbdesigns.com

Common cause

On April 7, get down for a great cause as BellyQ hosts Fashion Rocks. Listen to tunes from a live DJ while shopping men's boutique Haberdash's spring collection and digging into bites and brews from BellyQ, David Burke's Primehouse, Spiaggia and Carriage House. The bash benefits both Common Threads, chef Art Smith's nonprofit that educated children on different cultures through food and art — and the West Loop Community Organization, which serves as an active voice for West Loop residents. $150 - $500. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m., 1400 W. Randolph. Email Fashionrocks@brownpapertickets.com for tickets.

Over the moon

Spring means new beginnings — and new boutiques. Head to Wicker Park's Moon Voyage to find lingerie, home furnishings and chic pieces from international brands like France's American Retro, the UK's Lazy Oaf and Otis & Maclain, all curated by owner and Chicago native Susie Lee, who brings more than a decade of retail experience to the shop. 2010 W. Pierce, Shopmoonvoyage.com

Crystal B. Designs
Kirstin Kloss and Justin Bentley

Kirstin Kloss and Justin Bentley weren’t thinking marriage in 1999 when they first held hands in the hallways of Mount Prospect’s Prospect High School. College and careers took them in different directions for more than seven years, but the timing was finally right for the duo in 2007: Bentley moved to Chicago from Champaign-Urbana to work at Madison Capital Funding, and found Kloss living in Mount Prospect and teaching fifth grade in Vernon Hills. The two reconnected to celebrate his birthday, and three years later, they were engaged.

The high-school sweethearts made it official last summer in a traditional Catholic ceremony at Holy Family Church (1080 W. Roosevelt) followed by an outdoor reception at Galleria Marchetti (825 W. Erie). Kloss’ uncle, the Rev. Anthony Kioss, officiated the ceremony, wrapping it up with an emotional speech about the couple. “Hearing him talk about us growing up from young teenagers to adults was so special,” says Kloss. “We were hysterically laughing and crying.” They spent the rest of the night tear-free, letting loose on the dance floor alongside their 200 guests. Kloss stayed in her wedding dress until 3 a.m. “I didn’t want to take it off, because I knew that would mean it was over,” she says. “I had an amazing day.”

We’re applauding Chicago Bulls Nazr Mohammed and Carlos Boozer (left) for doing good on and off the court. The players brightened the lives of hospitalized children and their families by visiting them March 25 at the Ronald McDonald House in Streeterville.

Shannon Williams and Justin Jacobson

Platinum Events owner Justin Jacobson throws parties for a living, and this year he’ll be producing his own nuptials. Jacobson popped the question to Shannon Williams, a senior analyst at PFM Group, during a Parisian getaway in mid-March.

Congratulations to Lee and Nicki Eisenstein, who welcomed daughter Avery Reese (right) on March 12. Lee, an asset manager at Ventas REIT Inc., and Nicki, a senior event planner for BCR events, met during their freshman year at the University of Michigan.

Send us your cheers at Splash@suntimes.com.
A royal brunch with Andrew Brochu and Colin Burke

BY JOURDAN FAIRCHILD

"I'm actually not a breakfast person," says Andrew Brochu, the newly minted chef of The Monarch, a Wicker Park gastropub. So why did Brochu and owner Colin Burke recently launch a menu starring pork belly eggs Benedict ($13) and duck confit chilaquiles ($14)? Because despite its imperial name, this eatery is ruled by the people.

"Our customers and friends love brunch," says Brochu, "because it's like when you're a kid and your mom tells you, 'OK, now you can have two more laps in the pool before we leave!' It's your last chance to be carefree all weekend."

Each Sunday, Brochu—a veteran of Graham Elliot, Almea and Pops for Champagne—puts spatula to skillet, dishing out plate upon plate of hearty goodness from the restaurant's open kitchen.

Another sign they don't take themselves too seriously is the cocktail menu (all $8.50), which bears cheeky names such as Vlad the Impaler Bloody Mary and Empress Meisho Mimosa.

Here, the duo shares a few sovereign secrets:

Splash: What's with the story behind the restaurant's name?
Colin: One of the great separators between the United States and Western Europe is that in those countries, you're born into royalty—whether you deserve it or not. In the U.S., anyone who excels at what they do can earn or be given a regal moniker from their peers, the media, whomever. We use this as inspiration.

Splash: So should we expect to be served a royal breakfast today?
Colin: We were actually planning on screwing it up because you're here. We go out of our way to put our worst foot forward for anyone who's coming in here to take notes about us.

Andrew: [Laughs] It's actually really approachable food, using what I've learned over the years. The ultimate goal is to make food that tastes better than if you'd made it at home.

Splash: What's your favorite breakfast memory from childhood?
Andrew: I did grow up in the South. There's the cliche story that my grandmother cooked biscuits and gravy, and then my dad cooked them. But I don't follow any of those exact recipes by any means.

Splash: Are there any Spring ingredients that you're ready to get your hands on?
Andrew: We've all been dealing with braises and root vegetables, which you can still make taste good, but they're boring. Spring is that revival of raw ingredients: mushrooms, fava beans, peas. And ramps—they're one of my favorite things on the planet.

Brunch on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Monarch, 1745 W. North, (773) 252-6053; Monarchchicago.com.
In the 1970s, space- and budget-challenged artists commandeered old factories and warehouses, converting them into work-live spaces. Before long, the open, airy loft style trickled up and out — conventional types in tamer areas began fashioning single-family homes out of old neighborhood stores and small commercial buildings. Some architects and developers even built new houses and buildings with loft-like features and floor plans, though they rarely possessed the appealing authenticity and panache or the high ceilings and huge windows that made the original structures so desirable.

If you’re looking for the real deal, you’ll find it at 1758 W. Barry, a 25-year-old conversion of a workaday neighborhood dairy into a wonderful four-bedroom, two-bathroom single-family home that’s on the market for $925,000. Beautifully updated and maintained with expansive windows, 13-foot-high ceilings, a 50-foot-wide floor plate and a plush master suite, the place "is very rare in such a family-oriented residential area," says Coldwell Banker broker Jill Peet Saponaro (right, call 773-562-4006). The Roscoe Village home is also in the well-respected Burley School district, packs in 2,835 square feet and has enough room on its property to add a parking pad or garage.

Great conversions are hard to find, but right now Lakeview has two. Further east at 745 W. Buckingham, the largest of three units in a former greenhouse and nursery that was converted into residences in the mid-1990s is on the market for $899,999. The 3,100-square-foot home sports "magnificent architectural detailing from the early 20th century, when the structure was built, and open vaulted ceilings that you can only find in these repurposed spaces," says Coldwell Banker broker Nicholas Apostal (call 773-516-0661). Best of all, it’s just a block or so away from Nettelhorst elementary, an award-winning public school.

GREEN THUMB
If your yard looks like a disaster zone, apply for a makeover from Jason Cameron (right), the landscaping maven and host of the DIY Network’s hit series “Desperate Landscapes.” Your garden will go from eyesore to oasis in eight hours. Visit Jaytvnet before April 15 to fill out an application.
Some reality TV shows exist purely for entertainment value and often exploit vulnerable people in the process. But some motivate the contestants toward greatness, and in turn, inspire millions of viewers. I've recently become a fan of "Dancing with the Stars" because two people on the show have touched my heart: Wynonna Judd and her drummer hubby, Cactus Moser.

For those who don't know their story, just over six months ago, Cactus was in a near-fatal motorcycle accident in which he lost a leg, and Wynonna helped nurse him back to health. But recently, when I saw Cactus kicking butt at the gym, he told me that there's been a role reversal in their relationship. Now, he's taking care of her. "She has been really sore from practice," he said. "I've been icing her legs. The two-step is very difficult."

Cactus also said that there's been a slight delay in receiving his prosthetic leg. "I was supposed to have it by now," he said. "But the process has been delayed because I got an infection."

Regardless, Cactus is keeping his chin up by regularly working out at the gym while Wynonna attends her all-day practices. "The amount of support we've received from fans has been tremendous," he said. "The DWTS fans love Wynonna. She's relatable."

The couple has become especially inspiring to me. For several months, I've been recovering from meningitis, which has turned my life upside down. Though I've come a long way, I'm still struggling and have good days and bad days. It was after talking to Cactus that "Dancing with the Stars" stopped being just another trivial reality show for me. It's a platform for showcasing triumph over tragedy. I'm grateful that Wynonna and Cactus are inspiring people to overcome hardships. For that, I say to them: Thank you both so much!

Katy Perry dodges another bullet

Katy Perry and John Mayer are no longer dating, and I say to that: Amen, sista! I hear the real deets on all of our favorite celebrities, and there's little good I've heard about dating John. He may be fun to party with and a good friend, but you don't want to bring him home to mom. Katy may have even been better off getting back with her self-proclaimed sex-addict ex, Russell Brand. Sources tell me that John was pulling his usual stunt with Katy: dating another high-profile musician just to get publicity. "It's no coincidence that he dated Katy as he was trying to promote a new album and a tour," a source said.

Katy is such a nice and genuine person. I would love to see her with a behind-the-scenes Hollywood type, such as Britney Spears' ex, Jason Trawick. Stay away from the bad boys, girl!
Art Institute of Chicago
In 1913, the AIC became the first museum in the country to show Picasso's work; now, it's celebrating its century-long history with the artist, showcasing more than 250 of his works in the current exhibit, "Picasso and Chicago." Through May 12. 111 S. Michigan, (312) 443-3600, Artic.edu

Chicago Architecture Foundation
Travel through time with "Unseen City: Designs for a Future Chicago," in which four local institutions use various mediums to create futuristic visions of what the Windy City might become. Ongoing. 224 S. Michigan, (312) 922-3432, Architecture.org

Chicago Botanic Garden
Art and nature come together in Bryan Nash Gill's rustic, handmade "Woodcut" prints. Gill sands and burns cross-sections of salvaged trees before painting and pressing, making each ring visible in his prints. Through April 14. 1000 Lake Cook, Glencoe, (847) 835-5440, Chicago botanic.org

Elmhurst Art Museum

DePaul Art Museum
Opening this week, "For and Against Modern Art: The Armory Show + 100" brings together some of the post-impressionist, cubist and abstract art that famously shocked viewers at Chicago's Armory Show of 1913. April 4-June 16. 935 W. Fullerton, (773) 325-7506, Museums.depaul.edu

Elmhurst Art Museum
In "Open House: Art About Home," Chief Curator Staci Boris — in her first exhibit since her move from the MCA explores notions of home. Boris says she was inspired by Mies van der Rohe's McCormick House, a midcentury modern abode connected to the museum. Through April 20. 150 S. Cottage Hill, Elmhurst, (630) 834-0202, Elmhurstartmuseum.org

Evanston Art Center
This year's Sculpture on the Grounds installation is Rojek's "Breeze Keeper," a swaying expanse of aluminum prairie images. Over the course of the year, the artist will create additional images based on personal stories told to him by EAC visitors. 2603 Sheridan, Evanston, (847) 475-5300, Evanstonartcenter.org

Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art
William Gropper was a blacklisted artist in the 1950s, but that didn't stop him from creating. Now, graduate fellow John Murphy puts Gropper's 50 shunned lithographs on display in "Blacklisted: William Gropper's Capriccios." April 19 - Aug. 19. Arts Circle, Evanston, (847) 491-4000, Blockmuseum.northwestern.edu

Museum of Contemporary Art
As part of the ongoing BMO Harris Bank "Chicago Works" exhibit, Jason Lazarus showcases both his photography and the repository of Occupy Wall Street signs that he recreated using online and print images. 220 E. Chicago, (312) 280-2660, Mcachicago.org

National Museum of Mexican Art
Chaz Bojórquez embraced his Mexican-American heritage after discovering "cholo" graffiti art. Now, he presents his own work in "From the Streets to the Cloud." 1852 W. 19th, (312) 738-1503, Nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org

Renaissance Society
Chicago-based artist John Neff builds his own digital cameras using antique lenses and a modern-day scanner; the long-exposure images he captures are the star of his first solo exhibition. Through April 14. 5811 S. Ellis, (773) 702-8670, Renaiessancesociety.org

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SUREFIRE STOPPING: NEW HONDA BRAKES REALLY FIT

BY DAN CARNEY
Motor Matters

Anyone who has driven an electric vehicle or a hybrid has noticed the brakes feel weird. Even after some getting used to, the non-linear, unpredictable response from "regenerative brakes" can make experienced drivers look like student drivers, especially at parking lot speeds when the problem seems to be at its worst.

The issue is that the generator is trying to get as much power as it can from the wheels, while the brakes are trying to figure out how much leftover inertia there is for them to arrest. The result is unpredictable, erratic braking that can leave drivers feeling like the car is going to roll into the vehicle ahead when creeping to a stop at traffic lights or parallel parking.

Honda has solved this problem. The upcoming 2014 Honda Accord Plug-in Hybrid and the battery electric 2013 Honda Fit EV both use the automaker's new electro-hydraulic braking system in coordination with the generator to stop the car.

Electro-hydraulic braking (Honda calls it Electric Servo Braking) is brake-by-wire. The brake pedal doesn't send pressurized hydraulic fluid to calipers at each wheel. Instead, it sends an electronic request to a computer that evaluates the pedal pressure and speed of application, matches it against vehicle speed and considers the effect of the regeneration of electricity underway. Then it uses an electric pump to send hydraulic pressure to the brake calipers to stop the car.

The seamless coordination between the brake computer and the generator's computer produces smooth, predictable braking, a situation that has eluded every hybrid and EV until now.

Electro-hydraulic braking has been done before. Mercedes-Benz applied the technology to many of its cars in the early 2000s, but customers hated the erratic response. When it introduced new versions of those cars, they arrived with familiar, comfortable, conventional brakes. At the launch of Mercedes' flagship SLS supercar following a morning of tearing across the countryside, I nearly rear-ended the SLS parked ahead of me when the computerized brakes ignored the gentle pressure I applied while trying to park smoothly. After a brief bit of panic and a slam on the pedal, the SLS stopped, just short of the equally expensive supercar ahead.

Why does Honda's system work better than the one Mercedes used? Honda says it has a new brake pedal sensor that is more accurate at measuring the driver's intent. It also pushes back using a pedal force simulator, like a force-feedback videogame joystick, giving the driver realistic brake feel instead of the disconnected feeling typical of "by-wire" electronic controls.

Together, regenerative braking and electro-hydraulic braking are perfectly suited to one another, thanks to expert matchmaking by the computer and improved communication courtesy of the pedal force simulator.

As electric drive technology becomes commonplace in response to new government Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards, improvements like this will welcome drivers of conventional cars to the world of hybrids and EVs with a familiar driving experience.
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Choice move

Empty-nesters swap old single-family home for new condo

Linda Marcowitz played in a weekly Mah Jongg game with her friends at Lincolnshire Place, a luxury condominium community in Lincolnshire. During those games, her old friends invited her to tour the models and encouraged her to become their new neighbor.

Since she and husband Jeff wanted a new maintenance-free home after 25 years in a single family residence in Buffalo Grove, they considered their options. They liked the idea of new construction, but were not willing to give up the old neighborhood, or their recently renovated custom kitchen.

Since the location was only seven minutes from their old home, they could still frequent the same stores, restaurants, theaters and stay close to family and friends. "I did not want my daily life to change," said Linda.

"But I wanted everything to be built my way," she said. "So when Helen Weiss, vice president of Weiss Development, told me she could duplicate my gorgeous kitchen in the new two-bedroom-plus-den, 2,440-square-foot condo just the way I wanted it, we were sold."

Other important considerations that helped our decision were single-level living in a small quiet development with only 63 units. "Now I have my childhood friend living across the hall, and I bump into people I know in the building all the time. It's a very comfortable feeling." The Marcowitzes fell in love with their open floor plan. A spacious kitchen opens into a comfortable great room and dining room. The master bedroom is twice the size of their old bedroom and is appointed with two walk-in closets. When grown children visit everyone has complete privacy because the guest bedroom with its en suite bath is located on the opposite side of the master bedroom. A large customized laundry room has built-in cabinets over the sink and washer/dryer as well as additional shelving with a bar for hanging laundry.

"Helen allowed us to make many changes. My dream kitchen is very special. We removed a wall so we could double the space and add a long wall of beautiful hickory cabinets and granite countertops. One of the two master bedroom closets was bumped out three feet to accommodate my clothes and shoes. And we selected contemporary light fixtures throughout the house that suited our tastes." "Our carefree lifestyle makes us feel like we're on vacation all the time," said Linda.

Their condominium is larger than their single-family home with a lot less work. "There's nothing to worry about when we leave town on vacation because everything is maintained for us. And fantastic wooded views of beautiful trees from all four windows in the living room, bedroom and den is an added bonus," she said.

Jeff liked the idea of living in an urban condo within a suburban setting. "It's the best of both worlds. The contemporary design and open, spacious rooms feel like a loft apartment in the city. The walk to nearby restaurants like Egg Harbor Cafe, Eddie Merlot's steakhouse and Starbucks and enjoy the biking and walking trails in the forest preserve located across the road. A Fresh Market grocery store is walking distance and Milwaukee Avenue and Interstate 294 take them anywhere they want to go."

At Lincolnshire Place, buyers can choose from seven designs featuring two to three bedrooms, and two to 3½ baths ranging from 1,785 to 3,250 square feet, priced from $379,900. Most homes may be custom finished to suit the buyers taste, but those needing immediate occupancy have several units to choose from.

Weiss Development has incorporated a host of amenities inside the home such as a computer station adjacent to the kitchen, oversized showers, multiple balconies, private entrances, and penthouse rooftop decks.

Owners also enjoy lifestyle amenities such as a fitness room, resident's club, infinity pool terrace and outdoor kitchen featuring a fireplace and barbecue grill. Linda and Jeff look forward to using all the amenities to enhance their lifestyle.

Lincolnshire Place is at 400 and 450 Village Green. To visit, from Milwaukee Avenue, go one block north of Route 52, then one block east of Milwaukee. Several decorated models are open daily 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call (847) 276-2670 or visit LincolnshirePlace.com.
Investing in curb appeal pays off

How to transform a real estate eyesore into a cash cow

It might seem counterintuitive to invest money in a home you're selling. Wouldn't it be better to save that money for improvements on your next home?

Even though the home sale market has improved impressively, buyers still pay more for homes they can move right into without having to do work. This is not to say that buyers won't buy homes that need updating, but they need to be able to see the potential. And the property needs to be priced right for the market, taking into account work that needs to be done.

For example, recently a home was sold in the desirable Crocker Highlands neighborhood in Oakland, Calif. It was owned by one family for more than 50 years. The property had deferred maintenance and a dated décor.

If the listing had been put on the market before it was partially updated, it would have been harder to sell and would have sold for less than it did with the repairs and tasteful upgrades.

Before the sellers ordered a structural pest control ("termite") inspection, they had some obvious defects corrected. This kept the cost of the remaining repairs down. It also improved the appearance of the house. A back porch that was in poor condition was easily visible was rebuilt. A pink vinyl bathroom floor was replaced with a neutral vinyl.

The most dramatic change was achieved by removing the heavy dark draperies, dark furnishings and the dark flocked wallpaper in the foyer. The draperies were left off to expose the beautiful wood windows. The house was transformed from a dark, outdated home to a light-filled home with a lot of potential.

After all the personal property was out of the house, the shag carpet was removed to expose the hardwood floors that were then refinished.

The interior was completely painted, and the house was professionally staged with furniture, art work and accessories.

The house showed beautifully, even though the kitchen and bathrooms were old. The listing sold in one week with multiple offers for well over the asking price.

House hunting tip

Improving curb appeal, i.e., the way a house looks from the street, usually pays off. For some buyers, curb appeal is so important that they won't even look at a listing that lacks good street presence.

Enhancing curb appeal can often be done inexpensively. Trim overgrown plants to a size that allows buyers to see the architectural detail of the house. If the landscaping has been unkempt for years, remove dead plants and add colorful plants before the house goes on the market. A new lawn adds to the allure of a property.

Kitchens and bathrooms are important to today's homebuyers. However, it wouldn't be prudent to do a complete remodel just before you put your home on the market.

You usually can't recoup the investment. Generally, fix-up-for-sale projects should be limited to cost-effective improvements like new paint, replacing outdated light fixtures and replacing worn floor coverings.

In the listing described above, the old bathrooms were given cosmetic upgrades. Toilets and pedestal sinks were replaced inexpensively. The original tub in this 1920s home was reglazed to look like new. Reglazing was also applied to the unattractive brown tile walls and shower in another bathroom. It turned an eyesore into a bathroom that buyers could live with until they remodeled.

You can improve the look of a dated kitchen with new stainless steel appliances, paint, updated light fixtures and a new floor, if necessary.

It's sad but true that most homes never look as good as when they're for sale. Resolve to keep your next home in good shape to increase your enjoyment.

The closing point: It will be a lot easier to get ready for sale.

Dian Hymer, a real estate broker with more than 30 years' experience, is a nationally syndicated real estate columnist and author of "House Hunting: The Take-Along Workbook for Home Buyers" and "Starting Out, The Complete Home Buyer's Guide." Copyright 2013 Dian Hymer. Distributed by TNS.
Today's empty-nesters are searching for a new upscale lifestyle

With the kids grown and off to college, the fun is just beginning for active adults in the prime of life searching for new housing and an easy lifestyle.

In the suburbs, many empty-nesters are seeking an upscale housing opportunity without maintenance headaches in a gated community. In the city, the lure may be the excitement of downtown living with all the entertainment attractions only a stroll away. Here are some samples.

North Shore luxury

One suburban choice is Meadow Ridge, a gated 184-unit community of attached single-family townhomes and duplexes sequestered on 40 quiet acres at Waukegan and Founders roads Northbrook's exclusive Techny neighborhood.

"Meadow Ridge is a private community targeted to people moving from large single-family homes on the North Shore," said Suzy Friedman, president of KZF Development, the developer. "Our buyers are looking for a specific maintenance-free lifestyle as well as the opportunity to live in a private gated community.'" Unique features include lavish landscaping, two man-made lakes and active waterways, and a 1.2-mile running/biking path around the community.

The Meadow Ridge residences are being built in two-story duplex and four-unit townhome buildings in the upscale community, which features a guard house, landscaped berms, and outdoor seating areas. Every home includes an oversized attached two-car garage. Base prices range from $485,000 to $895,000.

The two-story duplexes have three bedrooms, 2½ baths and 2,334 to 3,700 square feet of living space.

The two-story townhomes are available with two or three bedrooms including a first-floor master suite, 2½ baths and 2,336 to 2,920 square feet of living space.

For more information, call (847) 599-8800, or visit www.meadowridgenorthbrook.net.

Downtown excitement

One of the hottest selling condominiums in downtown Chicago is 200 North Dearborn, a 47-story condominium conversion in the Loop. Eighty-three residences were closed in 2012 at the 309-unit tower and many of the buyers were empty-nesters seeking the excitement of the city, according to American Invesco, the developer.

"200 North Dearborn offers an incredible location in the exciting Loop Theatre District," said Karen Howard, the sales manager. "Our amenities, fabulous finishes, and savings have attracted buyers from Chicagoland and around the globe."

"In-town residences at 200 North Dearborn offer an exciting lifestyle that's close to shopping, entertainment and restaurants as well as world-class cultural attractions," Howard said.

Attractive price discounts now are being offered on the remaining four closeout-condo units at 200 North Dearborn. Cash buyers receive a 10-percent discount, Howard said. Savings on four remaining luxury residences at 200 North Dearborn range from $78,834 to $400,000 off the original pricing for cash purchases," said Howard.

Here is information on the remaining units: one is a one-bedroom, one-bath home, while two others are two-bedrooms with two baths. A fourth home is a one-of-a-kind top-floor penthouse, showcasing 2,875 square feet of raw space with 15-feet high ceilings and spectacular downtown views. It is now priced at $1.7 million for a buyer who pays cash.

Call (312) 558-1200 or visit: www.200ndearborn.com.

Don DeBat's weekly real estate column is syndicated by DeBat Media Services. For more home-buying information visit his Website at www.dondebat.net.
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'South Pacific' promises raw realism in paradise

BY MYRNA PETLICKI | Contributor

Some musicals never grow old. "South Pacific" is one of them.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's score is as thrilling today as it must have been during the original 1949 Broadway production which earned 10 Tony Awards. The two love stories at the core of the show are also timeless.

Sadly, the problems that beset the characters — war and prejudice — are still facts of life.

Director David H. Bell has assembled an impressive cast for his April 10-June 2 Marriott Theatre staging of the classic musical set during World War II.

Stephen R. Buntrock plays Emile de Becque, a wealthy plantation owner who falls in love with Nellie Forbush (Elizabeth Lanza), a naive Navy nurse from Little Rock, Arkansas.

Emile is "a very, very proud man who has a very mysterious past," Buntrock said. "He's a man of passion. He's a man that absolutely loves life. He's a father and loves his children. He's absolutely blown over by anyone who has any drop of prejudiced blood in them. He doesn't see the world that way at all. That's the thunderstruck moment in the show when he realizes that there is prejudice all around the world and it's found him yet again."

Being in this show is especially meaningful to Buntrock because he made his professional debut 23 years ago in another production of "South Pacific" at the Marriott, playing the role of the other love-struck character, Lt. Cable.

"I'm coming full circle," the actor declared, adding, "I love Emile because he is a man that absolutely leads with his heart."

Emile gives that heart to Nellie in the song "Some Enchanted Evening."

"Nellie is a young girl who is far away from home," Lanza said. "I love her because she is seeking adventure and she wants to challenge herself and to grow. When she meets Emile, this is everything that she's wanted. It's so far away from everything she's ever known. She has to decide how far she wants to take this growth. She has to ask the question, 'Who do I want to be?'"

"I love that about her," Lanza continued. "She's honest and she's real and she's joyful. She's one of those characters that has spunk and has reality to her. That's my favorite character to play."

Lanza's favorite song is "I'm in Love with a Wonderful Guy."

Bethany Thomas plays Bloody Mary, the ever-scheming islander who sings the lush ballad, "Bali Hai." She plans to profit in more ways than one from the presence of military men in the South Pacific.

"Ever since the U.S. has come in she has been figuring out what they're all about, what they want and how she can give it to them," Thomas said. "It's not all about making money from selling shrunken heads and such. She's looking for somebody to take her daughter away to help her get a better life," Thomas said.

Bloody Mary thinks she has found that person for her daughter Liat (Emily Morales) when handsome Lt. Joe Cable (Ben Jacoby) arrives at the military base. But prejudice runs deep, as Cable sings in "You've Got to be Carefully Taught."

Even though she has never seen "South Pacific," Thomas believes that she can relate to Bloody Mary's situation because, "I come from a mixed race marriage. I know what kind of challenges there are but I also know that love can get you through some of those challenges."

"It's an important story to be told," Thomas concluded, adding that director Bell "is definitely going for the realism."

"He is a true realist," Buntrock concurred. "He wants real raw emotions, especially with this piece. I think it's just as raw today as it was in 1949 when it appeared on Broadway."

Lanza reported that, during the first rehearsal, director Bell said, "Every time the show is done it can be reinvented as those themes are present still."
Actor finds visionary in showman

BY MYRNA PETLICKI | Contributor

Gene Weygandt didn't realize when he decided to audition for the title role in "Barnum" at Mercury Theater Chicago that he would be doing circus stunts.

But the Park Ridge actor is a real trouper. Not only is he rising to the challenge, but Weygandt declared that one of the most enjoyable aspects of this role has been "learning some of the circus skills that we employ in the show."

The actor jokingly added, "We have yet to decide which of my vast array of circus skills we'll actually use."

That list includes balancing on a ball, spinning on a rope that is hanging from the ceiling, standing on another man's shoulders as he walks across the stage, juggling three balls and juggling clubs.

There's a lot more to the role than doing circus stunts, however. It's about telling the story of the colorful nineteenth century showman.

"I would describe P. T. Barnum as a dreamer in the absolute best sense of the word," Weygandt said. "He was a visionary — a man with a wonderful vision of humanity because he didn't look at the unique people in his show or his museum as some sort of second-class citizens because they were somehow out of the norm. He saw them as genuinely special people."

"Someone like Tom Thumb, a person 25 inches tall at his full growth, would have been a social outcast," Weygandt explained. "Barnum gave him a life where he traveled Europe, he met the crowned heads of states everywhere in the world. I kind of admire the guy."

That admiration extends to the impresario's progressive beliefs. "He was a strong advocate of women's rights and universal suffrage," Weygandt related.

Weygandt has played a diverse variety of roles in his career but he sees a pattern. "It's really been a treat to play so many cultural icons and iconic roles of the theater — P. T. Barnum being one of them," he said.

One reward in "Barnum" is playing a character who Weygandt said, "Never ever had the intention of doing anything but bringing some joy to people. As he phrases it in our show, 'adding a little extra color to their lives.'"

Brenda Didier of Libertyville, Lincolnshire native, founder and artistic director of Lincolnshire Academy of Dance, has a long list of professional choreographic credits for numerous Chicago theaters, as well as Cirque Shanghai, which played at Navy Pier. She is very enthusiastic about working on this show.

"'Barnum' has been on my list forever," Didier declared.

"No one does the show. I've always loved the music. And I love working with Walter (director L. Walter Stearns) and Eugene (musical director Eugene Dizon)."

In terms of choreography, it's a "huge show," Didier said. "There's so much and there's so many different styles that it takes a group effort." That includes a cakewalk, blues, marching band, circus tricks and clowning. Those tricks are designed by circus director Sylvia Hernandez-Distasi of the Actors Gymnasium but Didier and Waters have to smoothly work the stunts into dance numbers.

"You have to coordinate it so that it all times with the music and builds to a crescendo," Didier explained. She said that working on Cirque Shanghai helped her do that.

Didier loves choreographing "Barnum."

"You can't go wrong with the music and the story," she said. "Everybody, no matter how old you are, has some memory of being in the circus for the first time and what they were drawn to. There's something magical about it."
Managing Editor Jennifer Thomas' entertainment picks for this week

'The Odd Couple' (female version) will be on stage 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, April 5-June 1 at Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre. See gorillatango.com.

Park Ridge Chorale presents 'Songs of the Civil War' at 7 p.m. April 6 at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge. Call (847) 823-3958 or (847) 825-2216.

Northwest Symphony Orchestra performs 'Midsummer Night's Dream' at 3:30 p.m. April 7 at Maine West High School in Des Plaines. See northwestsymphony.org.

'Front Stairs, Back Stairs: The Lives of the Dawes House Domestic Staff' tours are 7 p.m. April 10, 17 and 24 in Evanston. Register at evanstonhistorycenter.org.

'Plastic World' runs to May 5 at Northwestern's Dittmar Gallery. Mary Ellen Croteau's art is made from discarded lids and bottle caps. Dittmar.northwestern.edu.
Get ready to rock — at the opera

BY DOROTHY ANDRIES | Contributor

Tenor Bradley Schuller, artistic director of Verismo Opera Theater, believes that the gypsy dance from Bizet's "Carmen" and the Overture to Rossini's "William Tell" are as rousing as anything that rock 'n' roll can offer.

And he intends to prove it with the presentation of "Opera Rocks" Sunday evening at Monastero's Ristorante.

The program for the gala event looks like a guide to opera's greatest hits, especially those by Puccini. His works include the composer's beloved "O mio Babbino caro" from "Gianni Schicchi," "Musetta's Waltz" and the Act IV duet from "La Bohème." "Nessun dorma" from "Turandot," and "Un Bel Di" from "Madama Butterfly" will also be sung.

Schuller and guest artist David Adam Moore will present the famous duet from Bizet's "The Pearl Fishers." Other show selections will include Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Don Giovanni."

Moore is making his debut at Lyric Opera of Chicago this spring, covering the role of Stanley Kowalski in all four performances of Andre Previn's "A Streetcar Named Desire," and singing that central role in the student night production. "I visited New Orleans to see the places where the opera is set," he said, "but I absolutely am not going to try to channel Marlon Brando."

Schuller and Moore met when they were in the young artists program at Central City Opera in Colorado. "We were roommates for two summers there," he explained. "I live in New York, but I happen to be in Chicago at the same time as Brad's gala, so I'm going to be in the show. We've always enjoyed singing together."

In addition to Schuller and Moore, the concert includes baritone Aaron Wardell.

Mezzo soprano Katherine Dahn is managing director of the Oak Park-based Verismo Opera Theater, as well as a singer in the gala. She was executive director of Elgin Opera and has

Katherine Dahn

Bradley Schuller
been a chorister with Dupage Opera Theatre of Glen Ellyn and the Florentine Opera Company in Milwaukee. Soprano Sarah McIntyre has been a medalist in a number of vocal competitions, who appears regularly with VOX 3 Collective in Chicago.

Soprano Marisa Buchheit, who is producing the gala, is a vocal program director at Josephinum Academy and substitute teacher at the Merit School of Music. Last fall she founded and hosted a benefit for Merit titled “Fashion of the Era” at the Hotel InterContinental in Chicago. Members of the America Chamber Opera presented a program wearing clothing by a variety of designers, including edgy styles by Chicagoan Rachel Frank. Frank is going to dress the singers for Verismo’s “Opera Rocks.” “It will be pretty crazy,” said the ebullient designer, a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

“I'm very much into fantasy clothing and costume design,” she continued. “Kat [Dalin] is wearing a huge collar I made of peacock feathers. Another costume has an off-white collar in textured leather. And everyone is going to have interesting gloves that I've made by hand.”

The gala marks the revival of Verismo Opera Theater. Verismo was founded in 2010, but suspended operations the following year, after presenting a semi-staged version of Puccini’s “La Boheme” at Pilgrim Church in Oak Park and an antic interpretation of Mozart’s “The Magic Flute” for families in the theater at the Hemingway Museum. That performance filled all 700 seats, but disappointing sales for their upcoming “Madama Butterfly” led to the demise of the company.

“We have completely restructured now,” said Schuller. “We have a new seven-member board of directors and a lot of enthusiasm for the coming year.”

Managing director Dalin sees bright days ahead. “There is a need for small opera companies,” she said. “Every town in Europe had a small opera house where operas were presented in an intimate setting. “It is great to be close to the performers,” she continued. “It helps to bring the art form to life, and that’s what Verismo Opera Theater can do.”
Live longer, eat Greek-ish at My Big Fat Greek Restaurant, the chain eatery out of Arizona slowly making its way east.

That's the newest food choice to debut in Rosemont's entertainment district, and its motto urges everyone to "Eat Greek, live longer, eat better."

No argument on the encouragement to eat better and live longer, but as far as eating Greek, here we may be speaking figuratively. Let's not call My Big Fat Greek Restaurant's menu exactly Greek; let's call it "Greek lite." Perhaps that's not that surprising for a restaurant named after the pseudo-realistic, 2002 silver screen spoof on Greek culture, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding."

"We like to say the movie got the name from the restaurant, not the other way around," joked Steve Tselonis, general manager of the 18th in the chain that debuted in Rosemont last month.

Chicago is home to a Greektown lauded for its authenticity. So hoping to attract customers away from there, founders added a twist to the Rosemont menu.

"Each restaurant has some unique features of their community," explained Tselonis. Thus the Southwestern chain features bacon and Swiss cheese sandwiches on its Colorado Springs, Co., menu, and buffalo wings at its Farmington, N.M., store.

"Greeek cuisine is very competitive here in Chicago, so the (franchise) tried to bring something different," he said. Chicago's "something different" is the addition of French and Italian influences which means options like calzones, Fettucine Alfredo and pizzas for those not so much into traditional Greek favorites.

Meanwhile, service and ambiance aim for a certain Greek-ness. To that end, every hour on the hour the staff does a Greek dance, similar to the traditional Greek sirtaki, around the restaurant.

And on Friday and Saturday nights, during late "club" hours — 11 p.m. - 4 a.m. — there are belly dancers. Yes, "Greek belly dancers," assured Tselonis.

And if guests are still stumped on what to talk about, they need only to look up to the ceiling to find conversation starters.

"They're just random feel-good sayings," explained Tselonis. "Some of them might tend not to make sense much but they'll get you thinking."

No (Americanized) Greek restaurant would be complete without the ubiquitous shouts of "Opa!" which accompany the flambeing of the saganaki melted cheese appetizer ($9). Tselonis is the only one allowed to pour the combustible blend of 60 percent brandy, 35 percent ouzo and 5 percent Bacardi 151 used to douse the cheese and fuel the flame.

He did offer a word of caution. "There have been times when I overdid it and the flames have gone as high as the ceiling!" Tselonis recalled.

Greeks will be glad to see the staple 'horiatiki' village salad on the menu. Though the olives are Italian, at least there is no lettuce but only the traditional mix of cucumber, tomato, green pepper, onions and feta cheese ($9). And the blackened Ahi tuna is meaned for broad appeal. Served with steamed vegetables, the softened carrot strips add color to the pesto risotto ($21).

"We like to have an option for everybody. Opa!" said Tselonis. 

Follow Table Hopping on Facebook.
Spotlight: People to watch

BY MYRNA PETLICKI | Contributor

Ubique redo: Theo Ubique's production of "Smokey Joe's Cafe - The Songs of Leiber and Stoller" was such a big hit that it's being restaged at the Royal George Cabaret Theatre in Chicago through May 26. That's great news for Britt-Marie Sivertsen of Park Ridge and her eight fellow cast members because they have all been invited back for the encore performances. Working behind the scenes are Lincolnshire native and Libertyville resident Brenda Didier, who directs and choreographs, associate director Steve Hiltebrand, a Lake Forest native, and managing director Gitta K. Jacobs, formerly of Glencoe. For tickets, call (312) 988-9000.

Something to sing about: Sarah Gruendler will have $500 to devote to her vocal studies. The Walther Lutheran High School senior, who is a member of the youth and adult choirs at Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, has won the Heritage Chorale Mentoring/Scholarship Program for 2012-13. Gruendler will attend Valparaiso University in the fall. The award will be presented at a Chorale concert later this month.

Babler no dabbler: Two archival pigment prints, "Mother Earth" and "Seventh Day" by Libertyville artist Marcia Babler, have been selected for the 47th Annual Galex National Exhibition and Competition at the Galesburg Civic Art Center, through April 13.

Royal reading: Heroic tales from ancient Persia are retold in Lake Forest College professor Ahmad Sadri's new book, "Shahnameh: The Epic of Persian Kings." Sadri, joined by illustrator Hamid Rahmanian, will present a reading and discussion of the book on Friday, April 19 at 4 p.m. in Mohr Student Center on the college's middle campus, followed by a reception. The event is free and open to the public. For details, call (847) 735-5019.

Noteworthy additions: Two celebrated musicians have joined the faculty of the Music Institute of Chicago's academy program for gifted pre-college musicians. Cellist Richard Hirsch has played with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1989 and is on the faculty of the Chicago Conservatory for the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. Violinist Ilya Kaler, a professor of violin at DePaul University has won gold medals at three of the world's most prestigious competitions. 
A book club fit for the Bard

BY MARISSA CURNUTTE | Contributor

Four centuries later, William Shakespeare's prose is still revered and performed on stages across the globe.

And for Muse of Fire Theatre Company's Shakespearean Book Club, the Bard is the star. The class for adults will examine four of Shakespeare's plays: a comedy, tragedy, history and "problem play," on four Saturdays between April 13 and May 4 at the Noyes Cultural Arts Center in Evanston.

"We all recognize that Shakespeare's poetry, and his use of language, his grasp of the English language and even his creation of it — because he certainly added a lot to it — is beautiful and moving," said Jemma Alix Levy, Muse of Fire artistic director and moderator of the class.

Levy believes Shakespeare stands out as one of the greatest writers in history because he truly understood human nature. While crafting his myriad of stories, Shakespeare tackled what made someone human, and how that affected behavior, she said.

"His writing is so unbelievably universal," Levy said. "I'm not a fairy in any way, shape or form, but I can relate to the fairies in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' There's something in the way Shakespeare writes these characters, and their reactions to the situations he puts them in, that makes us relate to them, even when they are fantastical."

Levy has been teaching a Shakespeare class focused around theatre for a year. She noticed some people were nervous about the acting portion and decided to open up the class to more than just actors. Reformatted as more of a discussion, participants will read one play a week outside of class, then come in and review it with the group.

"I'm not intending to lecture. It's really there for the students to have their own conversations about the plays and let that conversation take them wherever they'd like," Levy said.

The fresh format lends itself to an in-depth textual and literary analysis of the evolution Shakespeare caused in play writing. The class is a chance for Shakespeare buffs to start over and see his work in a whole new way, or for novices who want an excuse to read his plays.

"Nobody should feel like they don't understand or know Shakespeare," Levy said. "There are no wrong thoughts or ideas, there is no test, and you aren't getting graded. It's just an enjoyable look at his work."

Even those who have read every Shakespearean play multiple times will learn something different from a room full of people sharing opinions they haven't heard before. Levy said Shakespeare's plays haven't aged because each reader breathes new life into the words as he or she first experiences them.

"There are so many ways to interpret his works. We would have gotten bored with 'Romeo and Juliet' a year after it opened, and yet we continued to produce that play and be interested in that play 400 years later," Levy said. "It simply wouldn't work if there were only one way to see and do it. That's the beauty of it."
Mothers and sons can have a ball at Brunswick Zone

BY MYRNA PETLICKI | Contributor

Moms and their boys can share some spare time — and maybe even some strike time — at Mother-Son Bowling, noon to 2 p.m. April 13 at Brunswick Zone, 7333 Milwaukee Ave., Niles.

"Each mom and son will bowl two games," said Mary Grear, events supervisor for the Skokie Park District which is running the event. "We have pizza and drinks and there will be a free raffle. It will be a nice time for moms and sons to spend quality time together."

There will also be door prizes that boys will enjoy, such as bouncy balls and candy.

The cost is $25 per couple for Skokie residents, $30 for nonresidents, $10 and $12 per additional child. Registration is requested by April 5.

"Any age is more than welcome to register for the event," Grear said. "But we ask that you keep in mind that it is bowling so it might not be the best for a 2-year-old."

For details, call (847) 674-1500, ext. 2700 or go to www.skokieparks.org.

BUNNY IS BACK

Easter’s over but that doesn’t stop the Village Crossing Shopping Center Barnes and Noble staff from featuring bunnies at their storytime, 7 p.m. Friday, April 5 at 5405 Touhy Ave., Skokie. Kids will hear “The Black Rabbit” by author-Illustrator Philippa Leathers and then create a bunny craft.

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

STRING STARS

Violinist Caitlin Adamson and cellist Lucie Ticho will be the featured artists at the Young Steinway Concert, 3 to 4:45 p.m. Sunday, April 7 in the Petty Auditorium at the Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St. Adamson is a senior at North Shore Country Day School in Winnetka. Ticho is a Hinsdale Central High School freshman.

For details, call (847) 673-7774 or go to www.skokielibrary.info.

THAT’S ITALIAN!

Your kids will be immersed in Italian when Language Stars visits the Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., 11 to 11:30 a.m. April 8. The program, taught by a native speaker, is for ages 2-6 with a caregiver. Registration is required.

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

DANCE FEVER

No one will be saying “Shhh!” at the Bibliobop Dance Party, 10 a.m. April 12 at the Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St. Preschoolers and parents will be dancing to the music from the library’s collection spun by DJ Miss Cate. Drop in and enjoy the fun.

For details, call (847) 663-1234 or go to www.nileslibrary.org.
OPENING
THIS WEEK

EVIL DEAD
Rated
R for strong, bloody violence and gore, some sexual content and language
Stars
Jane Levy, Shiloh Fernandez, Lou Taylor Pucci
Five young friends in an isolated cabin in the woods make the mistake of opening an ominous book of spells and conjuring up massive amounts of trouble. Co-writer/director Fede Alvarez makes his feature debut with this remake of Sam Raimi's 1981 horror hit.

JURASSIC PARK 3D
Rated
Rated PG-13 for intense sci-fi action terror
Stars
Sam Neill, Laura Dern, Jeff Goldblum, Richard Attenborough
Steven Spielberg's 1993 smash about genetically cloned dinosaurs running amok in a paleolithic theme park returns—in three-dimensional dimensions.

THE PLACE BEYOND THE PINES
Rated
R for language throughout, some violence, teen drug and alcohol use, and a sexual reference
Stars
Ryan Gosling, Eva Mendes, Bradley Cooper
A daredevil motorcyclist (Gosling) turns to crime to support his lover and their baby and runs into a collision course with an ambitious rookie detective (Cooper). Derek Cianfrance ("Blue Valentine") wrote and directed the drama.

STILL PLAYING

G.I. JOE: RETALIATION
Rated
PG-13 for intense sequences of combat violence and martial arts action throughout, and for brief sensuality and language
Stars
Channing Tatum, Dwayne Johnson, Ray Park
The G.I. Joes are challenged again by their mortal enemy, Cobra, while contending with threats from inside the government. Jon M. Chu ("Step Up 2: The Streets") directed the action adventure.

THE HOST
Rated
PG-13 for some sensuality and violence
Stars
Diane Kruger, Saorise Ronan, William Hurt
A young woman (Ronan) contends with an invasion of aliens who take over the bodies of humans and erase their memories. Andrew Niccol ("Gattaca") co-wrote and directed the sci-fi thriller based on a novel by Stephenie Meyer ("Twilight").

STARBUCK
Rated
R for sexual content, language and some drug material

TYLER PERRY'S TEMPTATION
Rated
PG-13 for some violence, sexuality and drug content
Stars
Jurnee Smollett-Bell, Lance Gross, Vanessa Williams, Kjm Kardashian
An ambitious married woman (Smollett-Bell) begins an affair with a billionaire (Robbie Jones) that threatens to ruin her life. Tyler Perry ("Madea's Witness Protection") wrote and directed the romantic drama.

ADMISSION

★★½
Rated
PG-13 for language and some sexual material
Stars
Tina Fey, Paul Rudd, Michael Sheen, Lily Tomlin, Wallace Shawn
Tina Fey fans are likely to be at least a bit disappointed by the mismatched moods and modest laughs in this so-so romantic dramedy. Fey is likeable as workaholic Princeton admissions officer Portia, who gets blindsided when she meets former college classmate John (Rudd), who's now the founder of a very non-Ivy League alternative high school. John introduces her to Jeremiah, an off-the-charts brilliant autodidact student, and then informs her he's the baby she gave up for adoption and hoping to study at Princeton. Naturally, that dilemma causes tightly wound Portia to unravel as she attempts to pull strings in a way that jeopardizes her career. There's nothing wrong with the way that's handled, but it stands in ongoing awkward contrast to the film's light comic touches and Portia and John'sgenre-mandated, but less than credibly motivated, romance. That doesn't mean "Admission" isn't worth watching. It only means that it doesn't quite live up to its full potential. If it were a prospective college student, it wouldn't be Princeton material.

THE CROODS
★★★
Rated
PG for some scary action
Stars
Nicolas Cage, Ryan Reynolds, Emma Stone
The world's first family road trip yields entertaining, though superficial, results in this prehistoric, animated comedy-adventure. Following in the paw prints of the "Ice Age" franchise, only with proto-people instead of very old-school animals in the leading roles, the action-oriented "The Croods" transplants family sitcom riffs to the Stone Age, though it places less emphasis on verbal humor (and character development) than slapstick. Fortunately, it offers a steady stream of inventive sight gags as a bonus. The central character in "The Croods" is dedicated family man Grug (Cage), the powerful, yet perpetually terrified patriarch of the clan, whose motto is "Fear keeps us alive; never not be afraid." That serves his family well until cataclysmic earthquakes destroy the family cave and force them to follow a wandering Cro-Magnon guy named Guy (Reynolds) to higher ground and his dream of a better place called Tomorrow. The moral? Kids learn to never be afraid and always welcome the new—but to stay far away from flocks of flesh-stripping, carnivorous parakeets.
NEW THIS WEEK

**THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS**

★☆☆½
Stars
Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Michelle Rodriguez
Rated
PG-13 for violence, sexual content and language
Considering the limitations of the material, director Rob Cohen did a nice job with this 2001 update of Roger Corman's 1954 drag-racing cheapie — nice enough to spawn a string of increasingly revved-up sequels including the upcoming "Fast & Furious 6." The first in the series makes its Blu-ray debut. Pretty boy undercover cop Brian (Paul Walker) infiltrates a Los Angeles street-racing team suspected in a series of high-speed truck hijackings and runs smack into the classic dilemma: He starts to like the guy he has to bust. The sex and violence is less graphic than might be expected for a summer movie. Cohen places the emphasis on chases, crashes and elaborate stunts, even throwing in a bit of welcome humor. Best of all, he features Michelle Rodriguez as one of the hard-driving gang instead of wasting her sneering presence as an eye-candy girlfriend.

**THE Sweeney**

★☆½
R for violence and language throughout and some sexual content
Stars
Ray Winstone, Ben Drew, and Hayley Atwell
"The Sweeney" comes with a pedigree, as a reboot of an ultra-popular, ultra-gritty '70s British TV series about an elite Flying Squad of tough cops using Dirty Harry tactics to take down hard-core London criminals. It's hard to imagine anyone being entirely satisfied with this over-long and underwhelming crime drama. Veteran screen tough-guy Winstone takes over as Regan, the aging but still bullet-headed, rules-be-damned leader of the leather-jacketed Sweeneys. Regan's motto is, "You have to act like a criminal to catch a criminal," but he carries his renegade tendencies a bit too far while investigating a robbery/homicide that turns purposeful. There's very little going on here that you haven't seen before. There's just enough drama in the convoluted plot to keep things somewhat interesting in the lulls between outbursts of mayhem.

**ALSO NEW THIS WEEK**

**THAT THING YOU DO**

Tom Hanks made his writing/directing debut and co-starred in this 1996 tale — making its Blu-ray debut — of a veteran music business manager who takes on a young group with an unexpected hit record.

**AMERICAN MASTERS: PHILIP ROTH UNMASKED**

In this PBS documentary, the Pulitzer Prize- and National Book Award-winning novelist discusses his un-literary upbringing in New York, his writing process, the inspiration behind his most famous books and the many controversies he stirred up during his career.

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Ryan Gosling stars in "The Place Beyond the Pines."
**Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre**

7924 Lincoln Ave, Skokie. www.gorillatango.com. April 5-June 1, 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays: "The Odd Couple" (female version). No performances April 27 or May 25. $20.

**Shakespeare Project of Chicago**

Presenting a theatrical reading of "The Reign of King Edward III" at 7 p.m. April 19 at the Niles Public Library, 6960 Oakton St., Niles. Introduction starts at 6:45 p.m. Visit www.nileslibrary.org.

**"Stones in His Pockets"**

Presented by Northlight Theatre through April 14 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. $25-$72; $15 students. Call (847) 673-6300 or visit www.northlight.org.

**"Vigils"**


**"The Wizard of Oz"**


**Classical**

**Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra**

Performing at 3 p.m. April 28 at the North Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. $36-$75, with discounts for seniors and youth. Visit www.arsviva.org.

**Music of the Baroque**

Performing Handel's "Israel in Egypt," 7:30 p.m. April 7 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. $27-$75. Call (312) 551-1414 or visit www.baroque.org.

**Music Institute of Chicago**

Nichols Concert Hall, 1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston. www.musicinst.org. April 7, 3 p.m.: Lincoln String Quartet performs works by Haydn, Smetana and Beethoven. $30; $20 seniors; $10 students.

April 12, 7:30 p.m.: Pianist Abraham Stokman plays works of Bach, Brahms, Ravel and others. $20; $15 seniors; $10 students.

**Park Ridge Civic Orchestra**

"A Journey to Freedom," 2:30 p.m. April 28 at the Pickwick Theatre, 5 S. Prospect, Park Ridge. The program includes Mahler's "Songs of a Wayfarer" and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. $25; $20 students and seniors. Visit www.parkridgecivicorchestra.org or call (847) 692-7726.

**Pick-Staiger Concert Hall**

At Northwestern University, 50 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. www.pickstaiger.org. April 9, 7:30 p.m.: Pianist Jason Vieaux will join mandocello player and accordionist Julien Labro for a program of works by Piazzolla, Albéniz and others. $22; $12 students. April 10, 7:30 p.m.: The Miro Quartet and percussionist Colin Currie will perform contemporary and classical music. $20;
What to Do
Continued from page 65

$10 students. April 13, 7:30 p.m.; Brazilian guitar virtuosos Sergio and Odair Assad join Cuban clarinetist Paquito D’Rivera for a program of tangos, sambas and boleros. $28; $12 students. April 14, 3 p.m.; Bienen Contemporary/Early Vocal Ensemble performs Le Jeune’s “Reflections on the Vanity and Inconstancy of the World.” $6; $4 students.

POP/FOIL/JAZZ

Akoo Theatre at Rosemont
5400 N. River Road, Rosemont. Tickets at www.ticketmaster.com or (800) 745-3000. April 27, 7:30 p.m.: ABBA the Concert, a tribute to ABBA featuring Waterloo the band. $30, $35, $45.

Allstate Arena
6920 N. Mannheim Road, Rosemont. Tickets available at www.ticketmaster.com or (800) 745-3000. April 6: Maroon 5 with special guests Neon Trees and Owl City.

Gopernicus Center
5216 W. Lawrence Ave, Chicago. www.gopernicuscen.org. April 7, 6:30 p.m.; Polish pop rock band De Mono. $40-$50.

Ethical Humanist Society Second Saturday Coffeehouse
7574 N. Lincoln Ave. (at Howard), Skokie. www.ethicalhuman.org/coffeehouse. April 13, 8 p.m.; Poet/activist Kristin Lems. $8.

Gorilla Tango’s Skokie Theatre

Lake Shore Symphony Orchestra
“The Sound of Broadway,” 3:30 p.m. April 7 at Northside College Preparatory High School, 5501 N. Kedzie, Chicago. The program, includes popular Broadway hits and a "Sound of Music" sing-along. $20, $15 students and seniors. www.lssso.org.

Maude Maggart in Concert
Hosted by Northlight Theater at 9 p.m. April 20 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. $45; $100 VIP. Visit www.northlight.org.

North Shore Center for the Performing Arts
9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie. (847) 673-6300. www.northshorecenter.org. April 6, 8 p.m.; Sandy Hackett’s Rat Pack Show. $48, $58, $63. April 16, 7:30 p.m.: "Unpack the Elephant." $18; $10 students.

Park Ridge Chorale
Presenting "Songs of the Civil War" at 7 p.m. April 6 at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church, 205 N. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. $16 in advance, $14 seniors; $18 at the door, $16 seniors. Free admission for children under age 18. Call (847) 823-3958 or (847) 825-2216.

Pick-Staiger Concert Hall
At Northwestern University, 50 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston. www.pick-staiger.org. April 6, 7:30 p.m.; "Chicago Reflections," featuring the Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church Mass Choir, Irish accordionist Jimmy Keane, Grammy-nominated fiddler Liz Carroll, and the Maxwell Street Klezmer Band, accordionist Stanislav "Stas" Venglevski, mandolinist Mirsha Litvin and Sones de Mexico Ensemble. $16; $10 students. April 12, 7:30 p.m.: The Asphalt Orchestra, a 12-member street and marching band, will perform its indoor program, "Unpack the Elephant." $18; $10 students.

S.P.A.C.E.

auditions & opportunities

American Society of Artists
Seeking artists and crafts artists to jury to participate in the Arts & Crafts Adventure show, to be presented May 11 in Hodges Park, Park Ridge. Visit www.americansocietyofartists.org or call (847) 991-4748.

benefits

Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra

Oakton Community College

books & poetry

Barnes & Noble
55 Old Orchard Center, Skokie. (847) 676-2230. www.bn.com. April 10,
7 p.m.: Andy Cohen, host of Bravo's "Watch What Happens," discusses and signs Most Talkative. Special event rules will apply. April 18, 7 p.m.: Curtis Stone discusses and signs What's for Dinner? Special event rules will apply. April 19, 7 p.m.: Tattoo artist Kat Von D signs Go Big or Go Home. Special event rules will apply.

**CHILD'S PLAY**

Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre

FAM

7924 Lincoln Ave, Skokie. www.gorillatango.com. April 7, 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday: "Really Rosie," starring the Nutshell Kids. $14. April 20, 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., and April 21, 1:30 p.m.: "We Are Monsters," produced by Broadway, Our Way. $12.

Room & Board

FAM

10071 Skokie Blvd, Skokie. April 6, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: Children's author Andrea Beaty reads from and signs Iggy Peck, Architect. Recommended for children ages 3-8. RSVP at www.roomandboard.com/iggypeckskokie.

Youth Company Chicago


**DANCE**

**Alice in Wonderland**

FAM


**COMEDY**

Gorilla Tango's Skokie Theatre

FAM


Perla Cafe

18+

1813 Dempster St., Evanston. (847) 424-1354. April 6, 7-8:30 p.m.: "An Evening of Comedy, Music & Spoken Word," presented by author and comedian Debbie Sue Goodman of Skokie and friends. No cover.

Zanies Comedy Club

18+


Lincolnwood Public Library

FAM

4000 W. Pratt Ave. www.lincolnwoodlibrary.org. April 5, 1 p.m.: "Skyfall." April 11, 10:30 a.m.: "Red Dawn." April 11, 1 p.m.: Cinemat ic Classics — "The 39 Steps." April 12, 1 p.m.: "Anna Karenina."

A Night at the Movies

18+

Turning Point Behavioral Health Care Center hosts a screening of the documentary "Of Two Minds," exploring life with bipolar disorder, 6-9 p.m. April 8 at 27 Live, 1012 Church St., Evanston. An hors d'oeuvres reception and conversation with filmmaker Doug Blush, and Carlton Davis, one of the six individuals featured in the film, follows the screening. Tickets are $70. For reservations, call (847) 933-0051.

Niles Public Library

18+

6960 Oakton St., Niles. (847) 663-6405. www.nileslibrary.org. April 6, 2 p.m.: Screening of "Argo."

Northwest Chicago Film Society

18+/13+

Classic Film Series is held at 7:30 p.m.

What to Do [Page 68]
Roundtable, a writing group that provides feedback, inspiration and support.

**ET CETERA**

**“Brush with Nature”**
13 & up
A free plein air painting demonstration will take place 11 a.m.-3 p.m. April 20 at the Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Brummel Ave., Skokie. More than 50 professional artists will set up their easels and paint along the nature center's walking paths. The first 25 visitors will receive a free mini canvas and various art supplies to start their own outdoor plein air paint experience. Open to all ages. Visit www.brushwithnature.org.

**Chicago Photographic Collectors Society**
13 & up
Presenting the Camera & Image Show and Sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. May 5 at the Holiday Inn Chicago North Shore, 5300 W. Touhy Ave., Skokie, featuring more than 50 dealers. Admission is $6; $4 students and children. Visit www.chicagophotographic.org.

**MUSEUMS**

**Iannelli Studios Heritage Center**
13 & up
255 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge. (847) 261-4595. www.kalo-foundation.org. April 14, 1 p.m.: Opening of a new exhibit, “Built Out of a Box: Mail Order Homes in Park Ridge.” Park Ridge researcher Annie Eriksson will give a presentation on Sears and other catalogue houses, followed by a tea reception. A housewalk featuring a select number of Sears homes will be from 2-5 p.m. $15. The exhibit will be on display through June 2.

**Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center**
13 & up
9603 Woods Drive, Skokie. www.ilholocaustmuseum.org. Admission: $12; $8 for students and seniors. Through April 21: “Courage: The Vision to End Segregation, The Guts to Fight for It.” Created by the Levine Museum of the New South, Charlotte, N.C., the exhibit traces the saga of Reverend J.A. De Laine and the citizens of Clarendon County, S.C., who brought a pivotal law suit challenging racial segregation in public schools. April 7, 3 p.m.: Holocaust Remembrance program that commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising will be presented in cooperation with the North Shore Fellowship of Rabbis and Chicago’s Cantors. Free; reservations required. April 14, 2 p.m.: Artifact Talk: Rescue and Renewal — The Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Collection of the Hebrew Theological College. Grace Cohen Grossman will detail the JCR’s task to identify looted, “heirless” Jewish ceremonial objects and books, and to reclaim them for the Jewish people. Free with admission; reservations required.
Prevent our group exercise classes for free!
All classes will run for 20 minutes with a 10 minute break in between.

Saturday, April 13

AEROBICS ROOM SCHEDULE
2p - Turbo Kick
2:30p - Zumba
3p - Strength
3:30p - Pilates
4p - Yoga

SPIN ROOM SCHEDULE
2p - Endurance
2:30p - Strength
3p - Interval
3:30p - Endurance

Win Prizes! There will be a raffle drawing at the end of each class in the aerobics room. New Members that join during event will receive ½ off their initiation fee.

This event is open to all members and non-members.
Classes may reach max capacity, so arrive early for each session.
For more information contact Sarah Natalie at (847) 674-1500, ext. 3510

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— Chris Jones, Chicago Tribune

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— Hedy Weiss, Chicago Sun-Times

"...damn near knocks you out of your seat."
— Anthony J. Mangini, chicagocritic.com

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DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP TODAY!
The Skills Gap: Creative Ways to Manage Talent Acquisition

By: John Rosheim, Monster Senior Contributing Writer

Recruiters at large employers are fine-tuning their talent acquisition efforts for positions with stringent skills requirements that are very hard to fill. It's a wide-spread trend, even in a 2010s labor market better known for its vast oversupply of overqualified candidates.

In functional areas ranging from sales jobs to engineering, IT, accounting and finance, identifying and retaining the right candidate is a steep challenge in an era when business requires that more and more workers to be multi-talented professionals.

Talent Acquisition Heats Up

In this heated talent environment, even the most highly-educated candidate may not be the best match.

"We were looking for new or upcoming graduates with internships or college experience showing that they could write concise and compelling code," says John Caffrey, vice president of human resources at business-to-business weather forecaster WSI Corp., a Weather Channel company in Andover, Mass.

The company was recruiting software engineers and developers and looking for people with C++ and graphics programming skills. "We flew in a person from Texas who had just earned a Ph.D., asked her 'How many bits are there in a byte?' and she didn't know the answer."

Still, major employers utilize savvy recruitment strategies to make thousands of hires each year, meeting the needs of their hiring managers and often generating record profits. How do they overcome the skills gap?

Three corporate powerhouses told us something about their own approaches to talent acquisition and landing the best hard-to-find talent.

Microsoft: "We find out what our employees enjoy here"

It's been a while since MSFT was the sexiest symbol on the ticker, but the software maker is still a marquee employer that must keep stretching to reach the specialized talent needed to compete in its many hiring markets.

"I think that it's the most competitive that it's ever been for software engineers," says Rupert Bader, staffing director for Microsoft Business Solutions in Redmond, Wash. "We have to compete for every single hire that we make." The business-solutions unit is hiring about 250 software development and test engineers this year to work on offerings ranging from ERP and CRM systems to financial-management tools and sales force automation software.

How does Microsoft successfully recruit the hearts and minds of candidates who might also be considering offers from Google, Facebook or that 14-geek startup that nobody's yet heard of?

"We do research studies with candidates throughout the year," says Bader. "We find that what they enjoy here is the work environment. They love it when they get to showcase their work and have it looked at by the most senior people in the company."

PwC: "We look for connections to the people we want to hire"

PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the world's top consulting firms, also must harvest a rich crop of in-demand talent year after year. "It's harder for us to fill high-level positions in Oracle and SAP to find people with deep financial-services expertise, or executives who can use their own networks to build a book of business," says Holly Paul, US recruiting leader for the firm in New York.

TD Bank: "We teach them what they need to know"

TD Bank has taken a different approach to bridging the skills gap, mounting a strategic employee training effort to grow talent from within. Through its TD University, the bank offers more than 5,000 courses to its workers, most online and some in the classroom, in a broad array of functional areas including accounting, finance, sales, marketing and technology.

TD Bank's credit analyst training, for example, is "an intensive 32-week program that provides a thorough overview of the industry, credit analysis, underwriting, cash flows, and write-ups," according to a company document.

TD Bank boosts the skills of its employees at many levels, from new college grads who need basic onboarding to senior executives who need coaching to take their management skills to the next level.

For midlevel positions, for example, "we will sometimes hire a person with 2 to 3 years of experience and teach them whatever else they need to know," says Ted Nouryan, a senior vice president and head of organizational development at TD Bank.
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If you are the owner of a residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate are subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special liens for which you have not paid the amount of taxes due, you may pay to the purchaser at the sale the amount of the taxes due and receive a Certificate of Sale that will be used for that purpose.

If you are the owner of a residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate are subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special liens for which you have not paid the amount of taxes due, you may pay to the purchaser at the sale the amount of the taxes due and receive a Certificate of Sale that will be used for that purpose.

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TJSC#: 33-2310

NOTE: Pursuant to a Judgment of Mortgage Foreclosure, a sale of the property described below is to be held on Saturday, January 26, 2013, at 11:00 am in room 102, 866 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois. The sale is subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the publicly available notice of sale.

The property is located at 2536 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60614. This is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

The sale is to be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Illinois Judicial Sales Act (765 ILCS 605/10-20). The sale may be adjourned or postponed at the discretion of the auctioneer.

The property is currently subject to a mortgage held by ABN AMRO MORTGAGE GROUP, INC., 3375 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610. The mortgagee, or the mortgagee's authorized agent, shall have the right to redeem the property up until the time of the sale.

The sale is subject to all liens, encumbrances, and charges against the property. The property is sold "as is, where is" with no warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose.

The purchaser of the property shall be entitled to a title and proceeds of sale as set forth in the deed of sale. The property shall be delivered to the purchaser free and clear of all liens, charges, encumbrances, and other interests.

The sale is subject to confirmation by the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. The Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois District 5, Division A, will hold an examination of the property on Thursday, March 21, 2013, at 1:00 pm in room 102, 866 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

No third party checks will be accepted for the purchase money. The purchase money must be paid in cash, certified funds, or a certified check payable to the order of the Auctioneer at the time of the sale.

The property is sold subject to the terms and conditions set forth in the notice of sale. The sale is subject to all laws, rules, and regulations governing sales of real property.

The sale is subject to confirmation by the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. The Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois District 5, Division A, will hold an examination of the property on Thursday, March 21, 2013, at 1:00 pm in room 102, 866 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

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IN THE COURT OF PROBATE, COUNTY OF ILLINOIS, STATE OF ILLINOIS

Notice of hearing

Notice is hereby given to all persons interested in the estate of George A. Wolfski, late of 7200 Forest Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, who has deceased, that the probate division of the circuit court of Cook county shall hear the case at 10:30 A.M. on the 2nd day of June, 2013. Any person interested may appear at said hearing and present cause why said estate should not be closed. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear for the hearing of said estate.

IN THE COURT OF PROBATE, COUNTY OF ILLINOIS, STATE OF ILLINOIS

Notice of hearing

Notice is hereby given to all persons interested in the estate of John H. Johnson, late of 211 S. Willard Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois, who has deceased, that the probate division of the circuit court of Cook county shall hear the case at 10:30 A.M. on the 2nd day of June, 2013. Any person interested may appear at said hearing and present cause why said estate should not be closed. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear for the hearing of said estate.

PROBATE

STATE OF ILLINOIS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

 актуальный

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

 актуальный

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF PROBATE DIVISION

IN THE CASE OF George A. Wolfski

IN THE CASE OF John H. Johnson

Case No. 2013 P 00662

Case No. 2013 P 00524

IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

 актуальный

IN THE CASE OF John H. Johnson

IN THE CASE OF George A. Wolfski

Case No. 2013 P 00524

Case No. 2013 P 00662

IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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What are the chances that some college basketball fan picked every game right in the NCAA tournament known as March Madness? Well, consider this: There are more than nine quintillion possible routes from 64 teams down to one winner. The actual number is $9,223,372,036,854,775,808$. By the way, the most watched college basketball game of all time is still the 1979 NCAA championship won by Magic Johnson and Michigan State over Larry Bird and Indiana State— a whopping Nielsen rating of 24.1.

More March Madness moments and memories: Can you name the only man voted the tournament's Most Outstanding Player three times? How about the only player to start in four Final Fours? He also holds the mark for most tournament points (407) and games played (23). The three-time MOP was UCLA's Lew Alcindor in '67, '68 and '69, who then changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. The four-time Final Four starter - Duke's Christian Laettner, from 1989-92. Remember, freshmen weren't allowed to play on the varsity back in the '60s.

Entering the 2013 Major League Baseball season, at long last the New York Yankees no longer sported the game's biggest player payroll. That dubious distinction belonged to the Los Angeles Dodgers at approximately $213 million. And get this: 10 Dodgers on the opening day roster boasted eight-figure salaries. For those of us who can't even count that high, we're talking about at least $10 million apiece.
Loyola grad Mullen lands on all-tournament team

BY NICK BULLOCK | Contributor | @Pioneer_Press

Loyola alumna Maggie Mullen, a junior softball player for Washington University in St. Louis, was recently named to the 2013 University Athletic Association Championship All-Tournament team. She was one of four Washington players to make the team.

This was Mullen's third consecutive year making the all-tournament team. The Winnetka native hit .423 (11-for-26) with three doubles, three home runs and six RBI in the eight-game tournament. She also hit safely in each of the nine tournament games, which extended her hitting streak to 12 games.

Fenwick graduate Audrey Kiefer, a sophomore tennis player for St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Ind., helped secure a 5-4 home victory against St. Francis on March 22 at the Eck Tennis Pavilion. After she and her No. 2 doubles partner, Jackie Kjolhede, lost 8-5, Kiefer bounced back to take her No. 6 singles point with a commanding 6-0, 6-1 win.

Lake Forest alumna

Chelsea Nusslock and her doubles partner, Hinsdale native Mary Doten, made it to the finals of the American Platform Tennis Association Women's National Championships March 7-10 in Franklin Lakes, N.J. The tandem eventually fell to the Viktoria Stoklasova and Ana Brzova 7-5, 6-2.

It was an impressive run for the Illinois duo, however, as they defeated the No. 1-seeded team of Cynthia Dardis and Amy Shay to reach the championship.

Ridgewood alumnus Andy Mazurczak was recently named Great Lakes Valley Conference East Co-Freshman of the Year. The Norridge native is only the second Wisconsin-Parkside player to win Freshman of the Year honors.

Mazurczak, a former Ridgewood Athlete of the Year, finished the season with averages of 7.7 points, 3.2 rebounds, 3.1 assists and 1.3 steals per game. He led his team in assists and steals while starting 28 of the team's 29 games. He also shot 58.2 percent from the field and 87 percent from the free-throw line.

Lake Forest alumna Carolina Carmichael, a freshman on the Memphis women's track and field team, took first place in the pole vault at the Louisiana Classics meet hosted by Louisiana-Lafayette on March 16 in Lafayette, La. The Mundelein native cleared the bar at 3.75 meters to win the event. Carmichael was one of four Memphis athletes to place in the top 10 in the pole vault at the meet, which was the Tigers' first outdoor competition of the season.

Have a suggestion for the College Roundup? Email Nick Bullock at bullockpioneerpress@gmail.com.
Area's distance runners among state’s best

By Matt Harness | mharness@pioneerlocal.com | @harnesspreps

At the 2009 Class 3A state track and field meet, only one girl from the CSL competed in the finals in the three distance events.

Maine South's Kristen Zilimer, a junior at the time and now a standout runner at Illinois State, finished eighth in the 800 meters.

That all changed the following season.

Led by the Class of 2013, the North Shore became a pipeline to O'Brien Stadium in Charleston and started producing a steady stream of state finalists.

Last season, eight girls from the conference earned trips to the finals in the 800, 1,600 and 3,200.

"What you are seeing in the CSL is a microcosm of the whole state," New Trier distance coach John Burnside said. "This senior class is so strong all across the state. Everybody's had to raise their games. You have to be great if you want to compete in this state now, and it continues to get better and better."

In 2009, the CSL had zero runners in the 33-runner field for the 3,200. Last season, the conference had five in the top 30 for a total of 12 finalists in the last three state meets.

What's more, at least one CSL runner has placed in the 800 and 1,600 races for the past three seasons.

Courtney Ackerman, a fixture at the state meet during her first three seasons, agreed that distance running — in the area and beyond — has gotten better throughout her time in high school.

"It's the depth," said the Illinois-bound Ackerman, who still is recovering from a stress fracture in her left shin suffered during the fall. "It's so much more competitive."

In the Class 3A 1,600 last year, eight runners broke 5 minutes, including Ackerman, who ran a 4:54.45 to place second. In the same race in 2009, four girls eclipsed 5 minutes.

"It's so much more difficult to get downstate now," said Maine South distance coach Jeff Downing, who tutored Zilimer. "Obviously, the twins have been two of the best, and that's who you try to run up against around here. New Trier distance is now like what Evanston is to sprinting."

Also at New Trier are senior Jessica Ackerman, who plans to run at Princeton, and sophomore standout Mimi Smith. Jessica Ackerman recently broke a long-standing indoor record at New Trier by running a 2:17.00 in the 800 at the CSL South Indoor Invite last month.

At Maine South, the Hawks have two stars in senior Megan Lemersal and junior Emily Leonard, who was 16th in the 3,200 as a freshman and 30th last season.

Lemersal, who struggled with a back injury during the indoor season, has been a mainstay on distance relay teams for the Hawks.

Over at Glenbrook North, senior Valerie Bobart has twice been a finalist in the 3,200, taking 26th as a junior and 28th as a freshman.

"The kids who were once the best in the CSL and area, now are part of the conversation as the best in the state," Burnside said.
Luke Pilliod took a chance late last season by changing the way he ran hurdles.

The move proved to be beneficial as he captured the sectional championship in the 300-meter intermediate hurdles to qualify for the Class 3A state meet for the first time.

This season, the Glenbrook South junior is employing the alternate lead leg technique much earlier, and he hopes more success is in store for him next month when the state series starts.

"It turned out to be huge for me," Pilliod said of the switch. "I had been using only my right leg as my lead leg. I think my technique will be better this year."

Coach Kurt Hasenstein said Pilliod already is one of the program's best hurdlers, his times ranking in the top 10 for both indoor and outdoor events.

At the CSL South's indoor meet last month at Evanston, Pilliod finished first in both the 55 highs (7.8 seconds) and 55 lows (7.5). In fact, Pilliod, despite dealing with minor groin and hamstring pain, didn't lose a race during the indoor season, and his best time of 7.7 in the 55 highs is third-best in team history.

"He's developed amazingly well," Hasenstein said. "He's matured a lot and understands the event better. He's gone from a natural athlete to being more of a student of the event."

"We are expecting big things out of him this year," Pilliod strictly was a soccer player before high school. A chance encounter with Hasenstein during a P.E. class his freshman year turned him on to track and field.

"I wasn't too sure about it," said Pilliod, who trains with senior Marques Thompson and sophomore Peter Wasmann. "I talked it over with my parents, and I ended up joining the team. I'm very happy I decided to do it."

In addition to Pilliod's improving technique and race management, Hasenstein said perhaps what pushes Pilliod the most is his hatred to losing.

"That's hard to teach," Hasenstein said. "I've coached a lot of good athletes, and his competitive instincts are what set him apart. He's a different animal when he's in a meet than when he's in practice. He has a will to win."

Pilliod also runs relays for the Titans, and he was the anchor leg for the 4x400 relay that finished seventh in the state. Seniors Austin Dickholtz and Malcolm Engel both are back from last year's foursome, and Hasenstein said Pilliod will split time between hurdles and relays, given that the Titans are a contender for a state medal in the mile relay.

But next season likely will be all about Pilliod, Hasenstein said. The coach sees Pilliod as someone who can win a state title, as John Strickland did as a senior in 1990.

"My freshman and sophomore year I was able to make it through the hurdles with my speed," Pilliod said. "Now I am starting to feel more flexible and more confident in my hurdling technique. I think I have a lot more room to improve."
Don't Miss

Dave perseveres through back injury

BY ERIC VAN DRIL | Contributor | @EricVanDril

PARK RIDGE

Greg Davis' fractured back isn't going away.

Davis’ stress fracture in his lower back — an injury which forced him to miss the vast majority of his junior season — will never fully heal, according to Davis.

Knowing that, Davis said he lifted weights, regularly stretched his back and did physical therapy in an attempt to strengthen his lower back during the offseason. Now, in the early stages of his senior season, Davis has taken a vital role on the Maine East baseball team despite being “about 80 to 85 percent’ healthy by his own estimation.

“I have to deal with it now, no matter how much pain there is,” Davis said.

Davis, who is an outfielder and one of Maine East's two best pitchers this season, first started experiencing pain in his lower back during the 2012 pre-season. At first, the injury was thought to be a pulled muscle. Davis played through the pain until it became unbearable. He was diagnosed with a stress fracture soon thereafter.

“The doctor told me he couldn't believe I actually played through pain for that long,” Davis said.

Davis was shut down immediately after that. He sat out the rest of the season and didn't play baseball at any point during the summer.

“He’d take two steps forward, one step back or one step forward and two steps back with his progress,” Maine East coach Ron Clark said. “He finally gave it enough rest that it healed up, thankfully. In the fall, he was able to go. He worked hard on hitting. He'd come out here and he did all kinds of stuff. He did everything we asked him to do in the offseason. I'm so proud of him, and to see him have a great start is huge.”

Clark gave Davis the ball in the Blue Demons’ season-opening win on Friday, and the Robert Morris recruit allowed just two runs in six innings.

The stress fracture in Davis’ lower back initially made him hesitant to pitch again because it puts so much strain on his lower back. But Clark encouraged Davis to try it in the offseason, and he was effective against Northside in the opener largely because he was able to throw his changeup accurately.

Davis’ performance in the team’s 3-2 win against Northside was particularly significant because it was a moment he had been working toward for almost an entire year.

“I feel like he’s more motivated this year,” Maine East senior catcher Phil Papaioannou said. “He’s getting after it. This year, he just has a new mentality and (he’s) trying to make it worth it in his senior year.”
Moy's game shows rapid growth

By Dan Shalin | Contributor | @danshalin

When Niles West junior setter Jordan Moy talks to newcomers in the volleyball program, he tells them not to get discouraged if they didn't make the school's Freshman A team.

"(I tell them) it doesn't matter what team you're on, you're still going to play volleyball and who knows how much better you're going to get in the next few years," he said.

Moy certainly knows this as well as anyone.

After spending his first year at Niles West as the setter for the Freshman B team, Moy elevated his game so much that he saw action as the varsity setter as a sophomore.

A year later, Moy has become the No. 1 setter and co-captain for a 2013 Niles West team that opened the campaign with a 6-1 record.

"Our offense runs through him," Niles West coach Drew Roche said. "(Moy) still has a lot to work on, but he doesn't shy away from a challenge. We've seen how hard he works and how determined he is, and there is no indication of that changing."

Assigning Moy to the B team two years ago wasn't quite the slight it might seem. Niles West coaches saw some potential and decided it would be more beneficial for the younger to get the majority of the reps with the Bs, rather than splitting time with the As.

But Moy was determined to improve his game. He joined the Chicago-based DI Volleyball Club and trained heavily between his freshman and sophomore seasons.

"I really decided I was going to do volleyball and put all my effort into that," said Moy, whose older sisters Karissa (swimming) and Nicole (volleyball, basketball, soccer) were athletes at Niles West. "I worked hard to see how much better I could get for sophomore year."

Moy added: "I think I mostly improved on where to set the ball, my experience, court sense and IQ, stuff like that. It was just getting more reps and more experience. I think most of the coaches were surprised at my improvement in the offseason."

As a sophomore, Moy played behind then-senior Alvin Lee.

"I've always been pretty quiet," said the player who shares captain's duties with senior libero Chris Tomuta. "But I'm trying to get louder, pumping up the team and being a leader on the court."

With Moy's track record of making swift improvements, one can expect him to be a vocal leader before long.
Don't Miss

Baseball: Von Steuben at Niles North doubleheader, 11 a.m.
The Vikings got off to an earlier start than most this year, beating Northside 4-2 on March 16. They then defeated Schurz 10-0 on March 23. Niles North continues its Chicago-centric non-conference schedule this weekend when it hosts Von Steuben — a team which lost 13-3 to Maine South on March 28 — in a doubleheader.

Two years ago, Niles North's Scott Wong followed some friends into an off-season gymnastics workout.

Wong, then a freshman, had never participated in the sport.

But Wong was intrigued by what he saw and soon joined the Niles North team. Coaches quickly realized they had a gymnast brimming with potential.

Now a junior, Wong has become one of the stars of the Vikings squad. He was one of two Niles North state qualifiers last season, reaching the big meet on pommel horse, where he tied teammate Dhwal Gheewala for 38th.

Niles North coach Rick Meyer said he expects to see Wong finish even higher at this season's state meet, which takes place in early May. By next year, Meyer said, Wong could be among the elite pommel horse gymnasts in the state.

The key, Meyer explained, is to get Wong to understand just how good he can be.

"(The coaches) are focusing on helping him realize the kind of potential he has," Meyer said. "We're starting to see the benefits of that. He's taking it more seriously. His work ethic has improved. It's not that it was poor, he just has so much talent and ability, I think he didn't know how to harness it, how to deal with it. It's something we're coaching."

Wong, who is 5-4 and 95 pounds, said the journey to last year's state meet, and his participation at that event, were turning points in his career.

"I didn't see that potential. Now I do," Wong said. "I went to state and thought 'I can actually do this!'"

Wong indicated he has been boosting his training and working on his mental approach to the sport.

"I'm more focused and basically practicing more, doing more routines," he said. "When I go to sleep I visualize the routine. I write down my goals in a book. I'm just kind of thinking about it more, practicing harder."

The results have been impressive. Wong scored a career-best 7.8 on horse and won the event in a triangular with Maine East and Maine South on March 12.

He then won horse with a 6.9 in a meet with Highland Park/Deerfield on March 20.

Wong, who also competes on parallel bars, rings and floor exercise, would like to get to state in a second event, likely the parallel bars. However, his main focus is the pommel horse.

"This year, the goal is to go back to state (on horse) and hopefully get top 25," he said.

Niles North has a 'horse' in Wong
Stephens intends to leave Notre Dame

BY DAN SHALIN | Contributor | @danshalin

Notre Dame junior guard Duante Stephens confirmed the rumors on Friday that he plans to leave the Niles school at the end of the academic year.

The highly-rated 6-foot-3, 200-pounder said he's considering Niles North, his local public school, and Loyola. As of press time, the Niles resident had not announced his decision. Visit niles.suntimes.com/sports for the latest news on Stephens' choice.

Either school's basketball program figures to benefit from the addition of Stephens. He said he already has a scholarship offer from Miami (Ohio) and is being tracked by DePaul, Iowa, Creighton, Wichita State and Detroit.

Stephens said he informed Dons coach Tom Les of his decision to leave after the season. The Dons went 22-7 in 2012-13, were ranked in the Chicagoland area for most of the winter and lost 59-58 to New Trier in the Glenbrook North Sectional semifinal.

The lefty Stephens came off the bench for the Dons, though Les repeatedly said his team really had six starters. Stephens said he averaged 14 points and 3 rebounds per game as a junior.

However, Stephens said he did not feel he was reaching his maximum potential, partially because he was not getting to showcase the perimeter skills college coaches wanted to see him display.

"At my size, I was sort of playing big," he said. "But all the colleges want me to handle the ball. I feel like I have the ability, but I was limited how much I was handling the ball. (At the other schools) I feel like I have the opportunity to go and be the go-to guy.

They'll let me handle the ball, create for others and help others. (Showing those skills) is a big part of my college recruitment, and at the other schools, I feel I'll have a better chance (to do that) with what they run."

Once he announced his intention to leave Notre Dame, Stephens said current and former players at several schools went into recruiting mode. He also heard from people affiliated with programs at Evanston, St. Viator and even Simeon, a school Stephens had once considered attending as an eighth-grader living on Chicago's South Side.

Even with Stephens as the team's leader, Notre Dame figured to be in a bit of a rebuilding phase next winter because all five starters are set to graduate this spring.

Loyola, however, is scheduled to return four starters, including sharp-shooter Jack Morrissey, from a team that went 22-6 and won 15 straight games before losing to Niles North in the regional final.

Niles North, meanwhile, will lose senior star Malachi Nix and BJ Beckford, but the Vikings have won three straight regionals under coach Glenn Olson.

Stephens said the chance to play in big games as a senior also influenced his decision.

"I wouldn't mind taking a big load (of the scoring at Notre Dame)," he said. "But senior year, I want to play with a more experienced group, which gives you a better shot at a state run. I really want to win senior year."

Stephens said he didn't foresee any problems getting into Loyola, nor does he expect to miss any significant time because of IHSA transfer regulations.

Wherever Stephens ends up, younger brother Freddy Edwards will follow. Edwards, whom Stephens said is a talented player in his own right, was a freshman this season at Notre Dame, but he sat out the basketball season with an injury.

This summer, Stephens said he plans to play AAU ball for D-Rose All-Stars, a team run by Reggie Rose, brother of Bulls guard Derrick Rose. The team will feature several top Chicago prospects, including Curie's nationally-rated center Cliff Alexander.

Previously, Stephens played his AAU ball for Mac Irvin Fire, and its coach Mike Irvin told the Pioneer Press last summer there was much to like about Stephens.

"(Stephens) is an athletic kid, who can score in bunches," Irvin said. "He knocks down jump shots and gets into the lane. He's an above-average rebounder for his position. He has the college body and is strong. He can take bumps. He's a good kid and has his head on straight."
Hyde playing months after cancer diagnosis

BY KATE HEDLIN | Contributor | @SportsLoisLane

Don't Miss

NILES
Danny Hyde admitted there were times he wondered if he'd play baseball again.

Instead, just months after being diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma, the Notre Dame senior found himself back on the field.

Hyde's journey started when he hurt his shoulder while playing in a fall baseball league. After the injury didn't seem to be healing quickly, he went to get it checked out.

Doctors, concerned about a potential tear in his labrum, wanted him to undergo an MRI.

Instead, they found a mass in his left shoulder. A biopsy in September resulted in a diagnosis that Hyde said never even entered his mind.

Cancer.

"It really took 48 hours to set in," Hyde said. "I didn't know much about it or if I'd..."
ever play baseball again. It was a hard concept to accept."

Just as difficult was telling his teammates and Notre Dame coach Nelson Gord.

"I didn't know how to bring it up," Hyde said. "But when I did, everyone was so supportive. Baseball wasn't even in their minds. They just were worried about me."

"He's just an amazing kid," Gord said. "Part of my job as coach is to get the guys through tough stuff - troubles in school, girlfriend problems - but something like cancer, that's tough to explain to a bunch of 17-year-olds. ... I think it put things into perspective. You can't take life for granted."

Within days of starting chemotherapy, Hyde began losing his hair. That's when teammates and friends came over to Hyde's home and together they shaved their heads.

Gord later did the same as part of an event for St. Baldrick's Foundation, which funds research to benefit those that suffer from childhood cancers.

"It just meant the world to me," Hyde said of the efforts by his team.

After undergoing five rounds of chemotherapy, Hyde was declared in remission and allowed to resume activities on Feb. 6.

"I had been waiting for this moment for so long," Hyde said. "It was one of the greatest moments of my life walking out of the hospital."

It didn't take long for Hyde, a center fielder and pitcher, to start making an impact on the field again for the Dons. In his first at-bat against Elk Grove on March 27, Hyde reached on an error and then came around to score.

"It was an incredible moment," Gord said. "Seeing him on base was just so exciting and to have him score was surreal. I was just grinning ear to ear. Win, lose or draw, the outcome was secondary in that moment."

Hyde recorded his first hit Saturday in the opener of a doubleheader against Fremd. (Fremd took both games, winning 14-4 and 5-2.)

While he said his speed and footwork are not at 100 percent, Hyde expressed confidence his game will eventually return to the level it was once at.

"I think all of this has just taught me the importance of life," Hyde said. "Cancer was the last thing I thought would happen to me. I learned you have to enjoy everything, because it can be taken away from you."
Big bump

Moy goes from Freshman B team to varsity in year's time thanks to hard work

In this March 22, 2012, photo, Niles West's Jordan Moy (13) sets the ball during the match against Loyola in Wilmette. | MICHAEL JARECKI

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