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New Holiday Fee Bus makes getting around town a bit jollier | PAGE 6
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CIVIC COMMITTEE
of The Commercial Club of Chicago
Special Niles Free Bus spreads holiday cheer

BY IGOR STUDENKOV
For Sun-Times Media | @istudenkov

As riders get on board the brightly-colored Niles Holiday Bus, the reaction is always the same. They look at the candy-cane colored railings, the sides covered with wrapping paper and the Christmas Tree ornaments hanging off the ceiling and smile. Then, they look to their left, where the Niles Free Bus schedules usually are, to find containers with candy canes and stickers.

"Go ahead — take one," the driver urges. "Take two."

From Black Friday until New Years Eve, the Niles Free Bus system is running a special Holiday Bus once a day. While CTA and Metra riders have been able to enjoy Holiday Trains for years, Niles hasn't seen anything like this since streetcars stopped running down Milwaukee Avenue. The bus was devised as a way to bring holiday cheer to the village residents and bring more attention to the Niles Free Bus system in the process. And if the public response is any indication, the village has succeeded.

According to Niles Communication and Multimedia Coordinator Hayley Garard, launching a Holiday Bus was part of the broader effort to strengthen Niles as a community.

"One of the Village of Niles 2030 Plan's goals was to maintain a positive image and identity for the village that is distinct and reflective of its unique character," she said. "The Holiday Bus helps to reinforce Niles as a family friendly, strong community."

Did the success of CTA's Holiday Train have anything to do with it? "Yes, absolutely," said Garard. "Mayor Przybylo did get the idea from the CTA's popular Holiday Train. And we wanted to promote and highlight our Free Bus."

The Holiday Bus runs once a day. It switches between route Nos. 411 and 412, making all the same stops the regular runs would. The times vary somewhat, but it follows the same basic pattern. On Mondays and Thursdays, it follows route No. 411 in the morning, covering most of the village in a counter-clockwise loop. On Tuesdays and Fridays, it takes the same route clockwise. On Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, it follows route No. 412, running between Golf Mill Mall and other retail destinations near the Golf Road and Milwaukee Avenue intersection. While it runs at different times in the morning on weekdays, it follows the same schedule on weekends, starting at J.C. Penney's Golf Mill Mall location at 11:10 a.m.

While the Holiday Bus doesn't have a Santa on board, any kid who steps inside gets a present — a toy bus.

Niles Herald-Spectator rode the Holiday Bus on Dec. 12, and the riders' response to the bus has been universally positive.

"This is my favorite," he said. "The lights, the inside, the ornaments hanging from the ceiling. It's nice."
**MORTON GROVE**

**Village adding 25 cent per-pack cigarette tax**

BY RICK KAMBIC
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@nckjambic

Morton Grove officials are hoping to generate approximately $25,000 with a newly-approved 25-cent tax on packs of cigarettes.

Trustees unanimously approved the proposal on Dec. 9 after Finance Director Remy Navarrete suggested mimicking Evanston's longstanding tax.

Though there was little discussion during the main meeting, Mayor Dan DiMaria said afterward that Morton Grove is not engaging in a social statement, but simply "keeping with the times."

Morton Grove has mimicked Evanston on numerous policies in recent months, such as parking and zoning strategies.

The ordinance defines a cigarette as, "Any roll for smoking made wholly or in part of tobacco, irrespective of size and shape and whether or not such tobacco is flavored, adulterated or mixed with any other ingredient and the wrapper or cover of which is made of paper or any other substance or material except tobacco."

Morton Grove is home to Argila Hookah Lounge, located at 6322 Dempster St., but Navarrete said the tax only applies to traditional wrapped cigarettes and newly developed e-cigarettes.

Trustee John Thill asked for e-cigarettes to be included when village staff first introduced the ordinance on Nov. 25. Just before the actual vote on Dec. 9, Trustee John Pietron asked for cigars and chewing tobacco to be included in future revisions.

Most smokers in suburban Cook County already pay $4.99 in taxes per pack — $2 to the county, 19 cents to Illinois and $1.01 to the federal government.

Now, cigarettes purchased in Morton Grove will include $5.24 in taxes.

Chicago and Evanston are the two main cities imposing cigarette taxes, both charging nearly 70 cents more per pack.

Steve O'Sullivan, Evanston's licensing and commerce inspector, said revenue from the tax has declined over the years as smoking tendencies have also reportedly changed.

Evanston has taxed cigarette purchases for more than 20 years, O'Sullivan said, but neither Skokie nor Wilmette do.

According to a 2004 Chicago Tribune article, Evanston collected approximately $300,000 from the cigarette tax in 2003.

Morton Grove has no intended use for the expected $25,000 in new revenue, so far, and plans to deposit the money into the general fund — just as Evanston does.

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**NILES**

**Police looking for suspect in charity jar theft**

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON
johnson@pioneerlocal.com
@Jen_Pioneer

Niles police are seeking the public's help in identifying a man suspected of stealing a jar of cash donations intended for a charity.

The theft occurred on the afternoon of Nov. 19 at the customer service desk inside the Golf Mill Shopping Center, near the professional office building. According to police, a man with light-colored, possibly gray hair, took the charity jar off a counter, concealed it under his jacket and left the store around 4:30 p.m.

The jar reportedly contained more than $250 in cash. It was later found nearby, with only $3 remaining inside, police said.

The name of the charity has not been released by police.

Police on Wednesday released a surveillance image of the man suspected in the theft. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Niles Police Department's investigations division at (847) 588-6500.

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**Niles police are looking for this man, suspected of stealing a donation jar containing more than $250 from Golf Mill Shopping Center on Nov. 19.** (Photo courtesy of the Niles Police Department)
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MRMID
**MEDICAL MARIJUANA**

**Niles pot clinic moving to Morton Grove**

BY NATASHA WASINISKI

For Sun-Times Media | @natwaz

A talk-of-the-town sign shaped like a marijuana leaf is no longer in Niles.

Green Bliss Clinic is relocating to Morton Grove, its owner says, and all window advertisements at 7509 N. Milwaukee Ave. for medical marijuana exams have been removed.

According to Joe Dadivas, the clinic’s business manager, the family-owned practice is taking over a larger site at 6022 W. Dempster St. He said the new space provides the clinic with 1,500-square feet and 30 parking spots.

He cited a lack of parking options in Niles as the main reason for moving. Patients were resorting to parking on the other side of Milwaukee, he said, and cars that did get a spot in front of the office often got dinged because of the close quarters.

Family physician J. Rene Dadivas used the site previously as a home health office before focusing exclusively on medical marijuana evaluations.

He and his sons – Jesus R. Dadivas, also a doctor, and Joe Dadivas, who holds an MBA in health care management – opened Green Bliss in anticipation of a new state law allowing people to purchase medical marijuana.

The clinic’s physicians are evaluating people with documented histories of chronic diseases to determine their eligibility for medical marijuana.

More than 1,000 people from across the Chicago area visited Green Bliss since October, Dadivas reported.

Patients with a doctor’s recommendation can apply to the State of Illinois for permission to buy pot from off-site dispensaries.

After learning the doctors planned to obtain the clinic’s zoning status and find it did not meet regulations.

“Green Bliss is one of the first ‘medical marijuana clinics’ to open in Illinois. The need to relocate comes weeks after Niles officials complained about the clinic’s signage, and less than one month before Illinoisans can legally purchase pot for medical use.”

“He said the clinic’s advertising suggests it isn’t ‘focused on screening’ but, rather, ‘caters to those who want marijuana.”

Green Bliss’ business cards, website and Facebook page all prominently display a picture of the plant as part of its logo.

He called on officials to restrict businesses like Green Bliss in the same manner as marijuana cultivation centers and dispensaries.

Otherwise, he warned, “Niles will become a magnet for pot clinics to open shop.”

Mayor Andrew Przybylo noted that restricting attention or offensive sign might be possible. But, he reminded, Green Bliss Clinic is considered a medical practice whether or not marijuana is the owner-physician’s prescription of choice.

As for whether the neon marijuana sign will reappear in Morton Grove, Joe Dadivas said that is to be determined.

“No one, that I believe, appreciated that this opened,” he said. “No one.”

He repeated his previous question of whether or not the village could prohibit medical marijuana-related businesses altogether.

“I said as a general statement we can’t deny them,” Village Attorney Joe Annunzio stated.

Mayor Andrew Przybylo noted that restricting offensive signage might be possible. But, he reminded, Green Bliss Clinic is considered a medical practice whether or not marijuana is the owner-physician’s prescription of choice.

“As long as he’s a medical doctor, anywhere that he’s allowed to locate he can write recommendations for purchasing marijuana,” Przybylo said.

As for whether the neon marijuana sign will reappear in Morton Grove, Joe Dadivas said that is to be determined.

“I’m not sure what we’ll do [about signage],” he said, “but, we’ll have a little more tact.”
Underage servers can deliver booze, BYOB allowed under new rules in Niles

BY NATASHA WASINSKI
For Sun-Times Media | @Natashaw

New regulations in Niles allow diners to bring their own beer and wine to restaurants, and for workers ages 19 and older to serve alcohol.

And starting January 1, liquor license holders will be required to enroll their staff in the state's Beverage Alcohol Sellers and Servers Education and Training program.

The Village Board recently revised and adopted the liquor-related ordinances as recommended by a new general government and information technology committee.

Servers previously had to meet the minimum drinking age in order to handle alcohol at restaurants. Now, 19- and 20-year-olds can deliver drinks to tables at establishments where 50 percent of revenue is food-related.

The restriction doesn't apply to bars, where servers are required to be at least 21. Alcoholic beverages at all food and drink establishments must also be pulled, poured and mixed by workers of legal drinking age.

Officials supporting the changes touted a lowered age requirement for servers and the selling of corkage licenses as being "friendly" to businesses.

"This is the new wave," Trustee John Jekot said of BYOB dining. Restaurant owners will pay $100 up front to license their business, and a $50 annual renewal fee.

According to village documents, 9 out of 10 municipalities near Niles offer corkage licenses. Half the towns also allow wait staff to serve alcohol starting at 18.

But two trustees took issue with allowing underage staff to work around alcohol, and voted against the ordinance change at the late November meeting.

"We're putting people in a position to resist peer pressure," Trustee Rosemary Palicki argued.

She received a letter of opposition to the ordinance change from Teri Collins, executive director of the Maine Youth Assistance Foundation.

Collins had expressed concerns about the availability of alcohol to underage drinkers, and noted that younger wait staff may be unskilled at verifying IDs and identifying customers who consume too much.

Trustees Chris Hanusiak also questioned the village's ability to regulate and monitor businesses without a permanent assistant liquor commissioner.

Village Attorney Joe Annunzio, who has been handling all liquor commissioner hiring, recently appointed a longtime Chicago police detective to serve in a temporary capacity.

Proponents of the law — including the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry — said the age restriction in a different light, noting it would increase the workforce pool and create employment opportunities for younger workers.

During public comments, Tony Riggio, owner of Bigg's, said that underage employees would be highly supervised if hired at his restaurant. He said it would give young adults an "excellent opportunity" to earn money and develop skills to use throughout their careers.

Trustee George Alpoglia, co-owner of Kappy's Restaurant & Pancake House in Morton Grove, said maturity wasn't an issue. If 18-year-olds can vote and serve in the military, they should be allowed to serve alcohol, he said.

"They're not kids; they're adults," Trustee Joe LoVerde added.

Jekot viewed alcohol consumption and binge drinking by youth as problems that begin at home.

"Maybe some of these parents should take lessons from restaurants," he said. "Being a server is not going to cause kids to be alcoholics."

The matter ultimately passed 4-2. As a liquor license holder, Mayor Andrew Przybalo excuses himself from the discussions on ordinances related to alcohol.
POLICE BLOTTER

The following incidents were listed in the official bulletin 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.

NILES

DUI
James Buttkus, 35, of 8309 W. Park Ave., Niles, was charged with driving under the influence on Dec. 8 after his van allegedly struck a parked car on the 8400 block of Oak Avenue at 5 a.m. Buttkus reportedly told police that he was making a right turn onto Oak from Grace Avenue when he reached for some french fries and crashed into the parked car. Court information was not available.

CRIME BRIEFS

BATTERY
An employee of a store on the 5700 block of Touhy Avenue told police that on the night of Dec. 8, a customer attempted to punch him in the face. According to police, the employee reported that he was pushing shopping carts into the store and asked the customer’s wife to move out of the way so he could get by. The woman’s husband reportedly left the employee and asked the question "in a disrespectful manner" and confronted the employee, eventually swinging his fist at him, police said. The employee was able to block the punch and did not want to pursue charges, according to police.

DISPUTE
A 49-year-old man called police to his home on the 6000 block of Ozark Avenue at 3:30 a.m. on Dec. 11 to assist in bringing order to the household after his wife allegedly continued to argue with him over a mouse that was discovered in the house, police said. An officer advised the couple to separate for the night, but the man told police there would be no further problems.

BURGLARY
A home was burglarized between 3:45 and 7:30 p.m., Dec. 17, on the 6500 block of Betty Terrace. No additional details were provided.

BURGLARY TO VEHICLE
Four dollar coins were stolen from vehicles parked on the 7100 block of Oakton Street between 4 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. on Dec. 19.

THEFT
Surveillance video from a store on the 7500 block of Milwaukee Avenue showed a man stealing a carton of cigarettes from a display rack on the afternoon of Nov. 27, police said. An employee contacted police on Dec. 6 after the same man was reportedly seen putting gas into his vehicle, though he left before police arrived.

PROPERTY DAMAGE
A Niles man told police that on Dec. 7, between 12:30 and 6 a.m., someone sprayed white paint around the windows and other parts of his SUV. The vehicle was parked on the 6800 block of Grace Avenue. The windows and other parts of the SUV were damaged, police said.

PARK RIDGE

Two men charged with burglarizing home

By Jennifer Johnson
johnson@pioneerlocal.com | @Jim_Pioneer

Two Chicago men were charged with burglarizing a Park Ridge home after a neighbor reported their suspicious behavior to police.

Jonathon Resto, 21, of the 1100 block of West Lawndale Avenue, and Juan Jose Rea Jr., 35, of the 2100 block of North Lathrop, stood accused of breaking into a home on the 1100 block of Granville Avenue just before 11 a.m., Dec. 11, and running from responding police officers.

Resto was taken into custody about one block away after he allegedly fled through the backyard of the home, while police relied on assistance from a Rosemont Police Department K-9 unit to locate Rea who was reportedly found hiding under a tarp in the backyard of a home on the 1300 block of Bonita Drive.

Deputy Police Chief Lou Jorgmen said the witness called police after seeing two men walking on the property of the Granville Avenue home. The men did enter the home before officers arrived, Jorgmen said.

Both Resto and Rea were charged with one count of felony residential burglary. Rea was also charged with one count of obstruction.

The men are not suspected in any other residential burglaries at this time, Jorgmen said.

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Scholarships help pay way through college for Niles West graduate

BY NATALIE RAYES
For Sun-Times Media | @NatHayReporter

Balancing an intense course load, extracurricular activities and a newfound social life can be overwhelming for any college student—but 2012 Niles West High School alumna Ricki Esses has discovered that a super-busy schedule is the number one key to her college success.

The Lincolnwood native has taken the University of Illinois-Champaign by storm since she entered as a freshman last year, earning eight academic scholarships totaling nearly $100,000 during the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years.

Esses has applied for a handful of scholarships, but most of them have been awarded to her by surprise after school administrators have taken notice of her strong academics and commitment to social service work.

The General Engineering student most recently earned the competitive "Engineering at Illinois Scholarship" for $5,000 this semester.

While maintaining a 3.68 grade point average, Esses somehow finds time to manage 18 credit hours per semester, uphold her duties as a member of the Theta Tau Professional Fraternity, and conduct engineering research on micro-plasma, while still spending time with friends.

After finals week wraps up next week, the 19-year-old will head back to Lincolnwood for a few days to see her family before she embarks on her fifth trip to Israel with her mom.

Esses talks about her future career goals in engineering, and explains how she uses her increasingly busy schedule as a way to stay ahead.

Q: Earning eight scholarships in less than two years is quite an achievement. How do you balance a demanding course load with your social commitments and other aspects of college life?

A: I'm very busy, but I do well with having a lot of stuff going on. I admit I have a pretty decent course load, but I really believe that keeping busy contributes to my success as a student. I'm also a social person so I still find time to hang out with friends.

Q: You were accepted into the ultra-competitive College of Engineering. Outside of your regular academics, how much do you engage in other programs or engineering-related research to further your goals?

A: I'm in a research group where I work with professors on micro-plasma use in water purification. We also study reverse engineering devices for use in developing countries. Last summer, I traveled to Cameroon with an organization called "Engineers without Borders," and also interned at Gewalt Hamilton Associates, a civil engineering and land surveying company. Next summer I will be in Cincinnati interning for Procter and Gamble as a control systems intern.

Q: Engineering is sometimes considered a male-dominated field. Have you encountered any challenges as being part of the minority in that sense?

A: There are definitely more guys in the engineering program, but I don't notice it as much as you'd expect. There are a lot of activities and ways for female engineers to get involved in groups that support other female engineers. In my department, about 25 percent of the students are female, so I don't find it to be a big problem.

Q: Any big plans for next semester?

A: I'm spending the spring semester abroad in Madrid, where I'll be studying in an engineering program.

Q: It's hard to believe you're already almost halfway through college. What do you see yourself doing in the future?

A: I actually never planned on going into engineering. I was into architecture during high school, but after visiting colleges I figured out that I wanted to use more math, science and critical thinking skills so I chose engineering instead. Ultimately, I want to get onto a business engineering path and work in control systems.

Q: What has been the most challenging part of college for you thus far?

A: I think finding the right balance between doing well in classes but still making time for friends, and of course sleep. The balance is much different than it was in high school.
Board members upset about being kept in dark

BY NATASHA WASINSKI
For Sun-Times Media @natwaz

A routine committee update at a recent Niles Village Board meeting resulted in a verbal sparring match between Mayor Andrew Przybylo and two trustees over the recent hiring of two outside contractors.

Officials reported Niles Liquor Commissioner Linda Scham and Board of Ethics Inspector General Chris Cohen accepted letters of engagement with the village following an endorsement by the recently-created general government and IT committee. That committee's members on Dec. 4 agreed Scham should be paid $200 an hour, and that Cohen would collect $175 an hour, reported trustee George Alpogianis, the committee's chairman.

"We recommended at that point that the engagement letter be signed by counsel," he said. But trustees did not see or vote on the contracts before they were signed, prompting Trustee Chris Hanusiak to question the power and role of committees spearheaded by Przybylo at the Dec. 10 board meeting.

"The recommendation should be to the board," he said. "Are committees allowed to tell employees what to do?"

Alpogianis had said, as a reminder, expenses under a certain amount do not require board approval.

Przybylo added that the village attorney has had the longstanding authority to hire outside counsel with his department's discretionary funds to represent Niles in legal matters.

"The fact that this committee has weighed in on it is a plus," Przybylo said. "It didn't even have to go to the committee."

Hanusiak retorted that the two contractor roles in question were unique in that they were appointed. Trustee Rosemary Palicki later joined him in pressing that officials should have had the final say-so on the agreements.

Both trustees have been critical of the manner in which Przybylo's administration sought to fill the inspector general and liquor commissioner positions. The Village Board's lack of involvement in the vetting of candidates and the advertising of the jobs have been points of contention.

Compensation has been an issue as well, especially when trustees learned the liquor commissioner had been paid without a contract or board approval.

Przybylo called the letters a technicality, since the Village Board had previously approved both appointments.

Seeking to move the meeting forward, he said the two dissenting trustees already had the information needed and were "belaboring" the matter as an act of "showmanship."

"You're making mountains out of molehills," Przybylo said. "Move on ... OK?"

"No, it's not OK," Palicki fired back.

As Przybylo deemed the discussion over, Joe LoVerde, the village's senior trustee and finance committee chair, interjected that he, too, would like a copy of the engagement letters as a "courtesy."

"Things like that should be shared with every elected official," he said.
Kohl Children’s Museum in Glenview works to expand facility

BY TODD SHIELDS
tshields@pioneerlocal.com | @tshieldsl9

Kohl Children’s Museum in Glenview has initiated a fundraising gift campaign to build a sizeable addition onto its facility.

The expansion would be about 7,500-square-feet at the building’s northwest corner, while the current museum is 47,500-square-feet.

Sheridan Turner, museum president and CEO, said the project’s purpose was to provide learning programs for older children in the 7-to 8-years-old range.

“We want to create a good environment to engage older ages in particular,” she said, adding some museum programs were competing for space.

“What really hit us was the bulk of our visitors live within 10 miles from the museum. Families were getting older, but not moving away, so their children were outgrowing the museum,” she said.

Sheridan was unsure of what educational programs and exhibits would be offered at the new building, but said the gift campaign was aiming for $12 million.

She hoped construction could begin in spring 2015 with a 2016 opening.

Located at 2100 Patriot Blvd., the museum provides learning experiences for children with interactive exhibits and hands-on programs.

Kohl Children’s Museum also gives training and educational resources to teachers to help them incorporate hands-on experiences in their classrooms.

Turner also said the addition would focus more on educational technology, such as posting quick response bar codes so that visitors can photograph museum exhibits and later locate them on the website for more learning at home.

For the past 18 months, museum staff, board members, an advisory council and focus groups have met to develop a strategic plan for the facility’s future, which included the addition.

A community survey also was sent to 6,000 museum members and 850 responded.

“We wanted feedback on where the museum needed to go next and how can we improve. We were very inclusive in getting information,” Turner said.

“The need to get 7- and 8-year-olds, their parents and caregivers, we learned, was what led us to build an expansion.”

The surveys and community discussions also produced three goals for the museum, which were:

- Identify and protect current resources and build upon strengths to position Kohl Children’s Museum for the future.
- Establish our expertise in early childhood by driving innovative practices grounded in our core values.
- Communicate the fundamental role of the museum impacting the holistic development of the child.

Turner said science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics were the museum’s core teachings.

“It’s very hard to reverse. The key is that children explore and discover, rather than focus on the product.”
Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow
Then what do you do?

HELP SQUAD

There's nothing more beautiful than waking up in the morning to freshly fallen, powdery snow. At the same time, there's nothing more aggravating! You now have to scramble to somehow get your car out of the driveway and get to work on time or get the kids to school. All this before you've even had your first cup of coffee!

Here are some snow removal options and tips on figuring out what's best for you the next time Mother Nature decides a winter wonderland is in order for Chicago!

1. Snow blowers: Expensive but fast and fun
   Also called snow throwers, these machines aren't cheap, but will make your life a lot easier.
   We spoke with Mel Safstrom, a customer service associate at Lowe's in Orland Park, who explained that there are two different types of snow blowers available: the single-stage and the two-stage. The difference between the two is that the single-stage has curved plastic paddles to move the snow and is light enough to be picked up, whereas the two-stage can handle deeper snow, and the front intake is twice as high.
   Safstrom's Tips when buying using and maintaining a snow blower:
   • Choose your snow blower based on the size of your driveway. If you have a long driveway, or a driveway that is two cars wide, you might want a two-stage.
   • Be safe: If the snow blower gets clogged, always use the shovel that comes with it to get the snow out. Don't ever use your hand. Even if the motor is off, it can still be very dangerous, because when you pull out the snow, the machine could start to run, and could injure your hand or fingers.
   • Change the oil after the first season of using your snow blower, and then change it every two to three years.
   • During summer months, store your snow blower in the garage or in a storage shed. Do not leave it outside for extended periods of time because snow blowers are not designed to get wet constantly.
   • Have fun with it! If you have a really nice snow blower, you will pray for snow. "It becomes like a toy," Safstrom said.
   The snow blowers at Lowe's start at $359 and go up to $1099 for the highest end model.

2. Snow removal services: Convenient but can be costly
   Most landscaping companies offer snow removal services. In other words, when there is a fresh snowfall, someone will show up at your home and remove the snow either with shovels and snow blowers, or with a snowplow.
   Higher end landscapers charge by the hour, meaning you get unlimited visits when there is one inch or more of snowfall. They typically charge $300-400 per service, depending on the size of the home, driveway, front walkway and stairs.
   Services that use snowplows usually charge $30-35 per visit and many companies have a minimum commitment of six visits, when clients pay upfront. Others will come on an as-needed basis.

3. High school kids: cheap but not always reliable
   Help Squad made a few inquiries and asked high school kids in the northern and western suburbs how much they charge to shovel snow. The going rate seems to be anywhere from $20-$25 for a typical snowfall, with a tip for salting!

4. Do it yourself: the least expensive but be careful!
   Grabbing a shovel and doing it yourself is definitely the cheapest form of snow removal. An average snow shovel is $15-20. Plus, you are getting exercise, fresh air, and a sense of accomplishment.
   But be careful. According to researchers at Queen's University, snow shoveling does increase the risk of a heart attack.
   Additionally, there is research that there are tens of thousands of snow shoveling-related injuries that result in emergency room visits every winter.
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Pace delays full switch to Ventra until July

Bus agency cites low adoption, small number of locations to buy cards

BY IGOR STUDENIKOV
For Sun-Times Media I @studenikov

Pace bus riders holding out from Ventra cards will be able to use cash transfers and 10-Ride Plus tickets for a few more months.

While the transit agency had originally planned to fully transition to Ventra by Dec. 15, it decided to delay some fare policy changes. According to Pace spokesman Doug Sullivan, the delay came in response to rider feedback, implementation issues and the fact that, a month before the transition, most riders weren't using Ventra.

Pace hopes that the extension will allow it more time to address those issues. But if the riders who spoke to Pioneer Press are any indication, the agency has work to do.

Pace originally planned to completely transition to Ventra on Dec. 15. As part of the transition, all 10-Ride Plus tickets would no longer be accepted - even if they hadn't expired. And, in the most dramatic change to Pace fare policy, cash-paying riders would no longer be able to get transfers.

But when it came time to approve the changes, the board decided to hold off on some of them. According to Sullivan, it came down to several reasons.

"The board has heard feedback from the public [about the changes] at our public hearings," he said. "We felt that, with Dec. 15 quickly approaching, the customer base as a whole wasn't adopting Ventra at a rate we were comfortable with."

Right now, about 30 percent of Pace riders are using Ventra cards, Sullivan said.

There's also the matter of infrastructure. Over the past few months, Pace has been working to make Ventra cards available for sale in as many retail locations as possible. While it planned to have at least 500 locations by December, progress has been slow.

"We don't have even 300 retail outlets right now," said Sullivan.

CTA's decision to hold off its own switch-over until issues with Ventra cards could be resolved was also a factor, he said.

Under the modified plan adopted at the CTA's November board meeting, cash-paying riders will be able to get transfers until July 1, 2014. After that, they will have to pay $2 per trip, while Ventra users will continue paying $1.75. Pace justified this change as a way to bring its fare policies in line with CTA, which already charges cash-paying bus riders an extra 25 cents.

While Pace already has stopped selling 10-Ride Plus tickets, the modified plan gives riders more time to use up the tickets they already bought, extending the deadline from Dec. 15 to July 1.

Sullivan said that Pace is confident that its customer outreach was working — they just needed more time to make headway. The extended deadline gives them just that.

"We really feel that [our customer outreach] is starting to make a dent in adoption of Ventra by Pace riders," said Sullivan. "The numbers continue to grow each and every day."

Sullivan admitted that, like CTA, Pace had to deal with Ventra card reader malfunctioning. But he insisted it wasn't a serious issue.

"We have had sporadic instances of card readers not functioning," said Sullivan. "But I think the vast majority of customers haven't had any problems."

But Pace riders paint a less optimistic picture. Agnes Cassiere, of Park Ridge, had only used Ventra for a day when she spoke to Pioneer Press, and she wasn't impressed.

"I don't like it," said Cassiere. "It doesn't tell you how much money you have left on your card. The old [magnetic strip] card, you put it in, and it showed you."

Otto Reinisch, of Glenview, hasn't had any problems with Ventra in the month he's been using it. But he remains skeptical.

"I count myself lucky," he said. "I'm not sure what problems they solved with Ventra. My ChicagoCard worked just fine."

Jessica Smith, of Park Ridge, uses cash to pay for Pace, and she often uses transfers. The prospect of switching to Ventra doesn't appeal to her.

"For me, using cash is easier," said Smith. "I don't have to worry about how much money I have on my card. And I don't have to worry about refilling it."
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Shining a light on the excess of the season

"In another time, a trip to the Loop to see the window displays at then Marshall Field's was a special holiday outing. I once spied Gov. Thompson and his family, followed by a couple of plainclothes state troopers, enjoying a late-night look at those holiday windows. Today, it would disappoint some wannabe decorators. But who wants to live next door to the Griswolds or Macy's?"

I swear I just don't know how they do it. I have a hard enough time decorating the family Christmas tree. I never get the lights quite right, there are always crowds of ornaments in some spaces and bare spots in others, and the Lionel train under the tree appears gargantuan in comparison to my little light-up village under the tree.

That's what I get for purchasing most of my holiday decorations on sale the day after Christmas.

So I just can't imagine how some homeowners go all out with their exterior illumination as if they are lighting and art directors. I've even heard that in some towns, including Wilmette, some fed-up neighbors have had enough and are asking officials to set some limits.

To me, a well-decorated home for the holidays would feature lights around the outline of the house, or maybe lights around the windows or even lights on an evergreen tree in the yard.

But more and more, I am seeing that for some suburban homeowners, even Clark Griswold didn't go far enough. Everyone knows Clark Griswold, the Chevy Chase character in the National Lampoon's "Vacation" movies.

My favorite is "Christmas Vacation," where Clark decorated the family home with 250 strands of lights with 100 bulbs per strand for a grand total of 25,000 Italian twinkle lights for the Griswold family Christmas.

That amount of outdoor illumination seemed ridiculously funny back in 1989, when the movie was made. But it pales in comparison with some of today's suburban, modern-day Clark Griswolds.

One Christmas we went to visit a family in quiet little Westchester and had to navigate the traffic jam in front of one homeowner's lavish display, which included a 15-foot lighted bird, I guess it was a dove, which was suspended in mid-air.

One year cars were lined up to pass an outdoor illuminated home in my home town that had the lights twinkle in time with holiday music that could be heard when the car's radio was tuned to a specific channel as you drove by the house.

Another year, friends invited us to their home town in the southwest suburbs to visit a special holiday display that more or less portrayed Santa's village and North Pole workshop. All that was missing was the petting zoo.

In earlier times, it seemed most people, if not all of us, were able to curb our fantasies and indulgences. Decorations were tasteful, if amateurish.

Today, there are no limits. Nothing is ever too much. The adage, "Enough is as good as a feast," belongs to another century. Early 20th century, I would say.

But if nothing is ever too much, then nothing less is special. In another time, a trip to the Loop to see the window displays at then Marshall Field's was a special holiday outing.

I once spied Gov. Thompson and his family, followed by a couple of plainclothes state troopers, enjoying a late-night look at those holiday windows.

Today, it would disappoint some wannabe decorators. But who wants to live next door to the Griswolds or Macy's?
In the old neighborhood, ghosts of Christmas past

It's something I do every year about this time. I visit the neighborhood in which I grew up. I drive around, see how things have changed. Nobody I know lives there any more. My buddies, Eddie and Tom and Jim, moved away a long time ago.

Surprising to me, the houses are pretty much the same. Some have new siding, new paint. And the vacant lots where we would play baseball in the summer and build snow forts in the winter now have houses on them.

But it's still the old neighborhood. I recognize it, even though it no longer recognizes me.

After a while I park in front of the house I grew up in. I just sit and remember Christmas.

You can't tell by looking at it, but this is a house to which Santa brought some neat presents.

Memorably, was a Gilbert chemistry set. Three fold-out metal drawers holding a couple dozen glass bottles of chemicals that could — if properly misused — be mixed, poured into turtle food cans and ignited, making the nastiest of stink bombs.

And there was so much more over the years to delight a child: a medieval castle manned by knights, a garage with an elevator that actually went up and down, a chess set (replacing pieces I had cut out from cardboard), an electric train that puffed smoke, Tinker Toys, Lincoln Logs ... and I remember a rifle that shot ping-pong balls. I think Santa was a little sorry about that one.

At one time or another, these gifts and more were left under our Christmas trees. Even the tree dad had to put up twice because Mike and I knocked it over goofing around. Even the tree that was white and crusty because mom tried to flock it herself.

I remember all this and a lot more as I sit in my car.

Sometimes I consider knocking on the door of my old home and asking the people who now live there if I can come in and look around.

But I am too shy.

And, I ask myself, what if some large stranger came to my door and asked to be let in — for sentimental reasons?

Call the cops, probably. And actually, it's not a good idea, anyway.

I want to see my old home as it was, not as it is. The house now holds somebody else's Christmas, not mine.

So, I sit in my car a little longer... Just a bit longer... Then I drive away.
FEATURED HOME
BY WRAPPORTS NEWS SERVICE

9447 Normandy Ave.,
Morton Grove
House size: 3,165 square feet
Lot size: 14,900 square feet
Year built: 1942
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 3.5
Garage: Two-car attached
Property tax: $12,438.29 (2012)
Exterior: Vinyl siding and brick
School districts: Golf Elementary School
District 67 and Niles Township High School
District 219

AGENT Helen Oliveri, Keller Williams Realty Partners, 847-967-0022

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PROPERTY TRANSFERS

BY WRAPPORTS NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR'S NOTE: Content appears as it is provided in public records.

Niles
7407 W Mulford St: Andre Turi to Giulia Hiles for $255,000 on Oct. 29
6801 N Milwaukee Ave, #409: Charles F Redden and Michael Redden to Israel Pacheco and Ada Pacheco for $325,000 on Oct. 29
8503 N Oleander Ave: Jerzy Stepniak and Maria Stepniak o for $235,000 on Oct. 29
5915 N Lincoln Ave: Firstmerit Bank to Theresa Chang and Deming Zhou for $110,000 on Oct. 29

Niles Grove
8340 Callie Ave, #609: Frank Petersen and Sharon L Petersen to Zaal Sattar for $266,000 on Nov. 1
8907 Odell Ave: John N Poggas and Carrie Heiser-Lyons for $350,000 on Oct. 29
1012 W Crescent Ave: Dennis M Lyons to Jeb Lyons and Karen A Lyons to Jeb Lyons and Nicole Lanahan for $295,000 on Oct. 29

Park Ridge
120 N Clifton Ave, #104: Warren G Sanborn and Beverly Sanborn to Mary M Neary, Kevin M Neary and Kelly A Hinds for $265,000 on Oct. 28
102 W Crescent Ave: Dennis M Lyons and Karen A Lyons to Jeb Lyons and Carrie Heiser-Lyons for $265,000 on Oct. 28
120 W Center Ave: Raymond G Oswald Trust and G Oswald Trust to Piotr MacKiewicz for $348,000 on Oct. 29

Harwood Heights
7241 W Foster Ave: Raymond G Oswald Trust and G Oswald Trust to Anthony Lanahan and Nicole Lanahan for $295,000 on Oct. 29

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This collection of columns highlights some of Telander's best work in his nearly 20 years at the Sun-Times, from his eight-part series on Murray Park, to lighter pieces, such as his column on a Cubs fan who suffered through more than 100 years of futility.
CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

December 24th - 10:00 PM
Service of Carols & Communion with Candlelight

December 25th - 10:00 AM
Sermon with Music of the Season & Festival Holy Communion

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CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, December 24, Christmas Eve
3:00 p.m. - Church and McDonnell Hall
5:00 p.m. - Church and McDonnell Hall
8:00 p.m. - Church
Midnight - Church

Wednesday, December 25, Christmas Day
7:30, 9:30, 11:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. - Church
9:30 and 11:00 a.m. - McDonnell Hall

To learn more about advertising options, such as our Weekly Worship section, contact Penny at 630-978-8277

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Sermon: “Star Child”
with beloved, traditional scripture readings
DECEMBER 24
5:00 p.m. Family Service With Candlelight & Carols
11:00 p.m. Traditional Service With Candlelight & Carols

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Join us for Christmas Worship
Christmas Eve
Tuesday, December 24
4:00 pm Worship/Communion with Children’s Story
9:00 pm Candlelight with Strings
10:30 pm Prelude Concert
11:00 pm Candlelight with Sanctuary Choir & Strings

Christmas Day
Wednesday, December 25
10:00 am Festive Worship with Harp

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HANDICAPPED ACCESS FROM SOUTH PARKING LOT TO CENTER OF SOUTH HALL ACROSS THE PARK FROM THE METRA STATION
WHAT'S YOUR AGENDA?

Brindille is a refuge from frightening surroundings.

Agenda is a new Sun-Times entertainment section that offers the best of the Chicago Reader's coverage of events, restaurants and entertainment, along with critical voices and tips from the Sun-Times.

DISCOVER YOUR AGENDA BY PICKING UP A COPY OF FRIDAY'S PAPER.
Issues in the News
9:30 a.m.: The open discussion group covers a range of topics, from local to global. Niles Senior Center, 999 Civic Center Drive, Niles. Call 847-683-9880.

Senior Coffee Hour: Estee Lauder
10:30 a.m.: Sip on coffee while listening to a presentation on the historical portrayal of Estee Lauder. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Wii Bowling Banquet & Tournament
Noon: The end of the year bowling banquet features lunch and a tournament. Niles Senior Center, 999 Civic Center Drive, Niles. Call 847-588-8420. $8-$13.

CJE SeniorLife Resource Counseling
12:30 p.m.: Make an appointment for a private session with a Resource Specialist from CJE SeniorLife, trained to counsel adults 60 and older, their families, and caregivers. 60-minute sessions are available between 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 773-508-1054.

Niles Songwriters’ Group
7 p.m.: Singers and songwriters share work and give helpful feedback. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. For more information, call 847-663-1234.

FRIDAY, DEC. 20

Rise and Shine Story Time
10 a.m.: A 30-minute story time for children ages 2 to 6 and a caregiver. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. For more information, call 847-663-1234.

Pinocchio Tournament
Noon: The event also includes lunch and prizes. Niles Senior Center, 999 Civic Center Drive, Niles. Call 847-588-8420. $7-$15.

SATURDAY, DEC. 21

Anime & Manga Club
2 p.m.: Watch and discuss anime and manga, then build fandom-inspired treats and crafts. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-6434.

SUNDAY, DEC. 22

Notre Dame Alumni Family Mass
10 a.m.: All alumni are welcome to attend mass in the chapel. Class of 2013 yearbook distribution. Contact Skip Lawson for more information. Notre Dame College Prep, 7655 W. Dempster St., Niles. Call 847-779-8618.

SUBMIT YOUR EVENT
To submit an event for consideration in print, visit www.pioneerlocal.com/submit-content and click the “Events” tab on the left side of the screen. Please submit the event no later than 10 days before the desired publication date.

MOBILE WEBSITE CONTENT

NILES

THURSDAY, DEC. 19

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MAS-ICNA Convention
9 a.m.: The 12th annual convention for Muslim-American families, presented by the Muslim American Society (MAS) and Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Road, Rosemont. For more information, call 877-627-1060. $65-$90.

Al-Anon
9:30 a.m.: St Paul Lutheran Church, 5650 N. Canfield Ave., Chicago. For more information, call 708-867-5044.

Skokie Art Guild
9:30 a.m.: The group offers figure drawing workshops every Saturday. There are live models but no instructor. Devonshire Cultural Center, 4400 Greenwood St., Skokie. Call 847-673-4450. $20 per session; $12 for guild members.

Great Discoveries Beyond Google
10 a.m.: Class teaches attendees about online resources available at the library. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-825-3123.

Get Hooked Craft: Make a Wish Box
10 a.m.: Keep thoughts and wishes in a hand-decorated box that you and your family will treasure forever. Bring an empty cardboard or wooden box, such as a shoe box or smaller, scissors, glue and decorations. There will be additional items to choose from. For more information or to register, go to calendar.mgpl.org or call 847-929-5101.

Grandparents' Holiday Party
10 a.m.: The Kalo Foundation hosts a holiday party for grandparents and grandchildren. The event includes pictures with Santa, cookie decorating, holiday crafts and more. Ianelli Studios Heritage Center, 255 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge. Call 847-291-4595. $10 suggested donation per child.

Blood Pressure/Blood Sugar Testing
10 a.m.: The Center of Concern, 1580 N. Northwest Highway, Suite 310, Park Ridge.

Club Wonder: Young Jungle
10:30 a.m.: Special needs children ages 3 to 7 can join Libby Galin from North Shore Pediatric Therapy for a class that combines yoga, literacy and art. Registration is required. Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St., Skokie. For more information, call 847-324-3149.

Trip to Christkindlmarket Chicago
11 a.m.: Visit one of the largest outdoor Christmas markets outside of Germany and browse items from more than 50 vendors from all over the globe. Registration required. Prairie View Community Center, 6834 Dempster St., Morton Grove. $10-$14.

Monday, Dec. 23
Winter Trips
9 a.m.: Students ages 6 to 22 can enjoy two field trips with the Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation. The group will travel to Rink Side Sports on Dec. 23 to play video games and explore the mall. The group will visit the Discovery Center in Rockford on Dec. 30 to learn the fun of science. Bring a sack lunch. Registration fee includes both field trips. Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation, 6820 W. Dempster St., Morton Grove. Call 847-666-5522. $142-$294.

Teddy Bear Time
9:30 a.m.: Stories, songs and finger plays for children ages 12 to 24 months with an adult. Siblings welcome. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. For more information, call 847-825-3123.

Digital Craft Time: Comic Creation
2:30 p.m.: Comic fans grades 4 to 8 can learn how to use ComicLife software to make comic pages. A second session is scheduled at 3:30 p.m. Registration is limited. Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St., Skokie. For more information, call 847-324-3149.

Park Ridge Toastmasters Guest Night
7:30 p.m.: Guests are invited for an introduction to the Park Ridge Toastmasters Club. First United Methodist Church, 418 W. Touhy Ave., Park Ridge. For more information, call 847-966-5522. $142-$294.

Friday, Dec. 27
Untuned, Unplugged Family Game Day
2 p.m.: The whole family is invited to the library for some competitive gaming. Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St., Skokie. For more information, call 847-324-3149.

Teen Trip: Alpine Valley Skiing and Snowboarding
9 a.m.: Board a bus and head to the slopes. Fee includes transportation, lift ticket, lessons, ski or snowboard rental and supervision. Reduced fee is available if rental isn’t necessary. Bring extra money for lunch and helmet rental ($10). Registration required before Dec. 27. Oakton Community Center, 4701 Oakton St., Skokie. Call 847-674-1500. $90-$145.

Saturday, Dec. 21
Skokie Art Guild
9:30 a.m.: The group offers figure drawing workshops every Saturday. There are live models but no instructor. Devonshire Cultural Center, 4400 Greenwood St., Skokie. Call 847-673-4450. $20 per session; $12 for guild members.

MA תנש Convention
9 a.m.: The 12th annual convention for Muslim-American families, presented by the Muslim American Society (MAS) and Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Road, Rosemont. For more information, call 877-627-1060. $65-$90.

Al-Anon
9:30 a.m.: St Paul Lutheran Church, 5650 N. Canfield Ave., Chicago. For more information, call 708-867-5044.

Skokie Art Guild
9:30 a.m.: The group offers figure drawing workshops every Saturday. There are live models but no instructor. Devonshire Cultural Center, 4400 Greenwood St., Skokie. Call 847-673-4450. $20 per session; $12 for guild members.

Great Discoveries Beyond Google
10 a.m.: Class teaches attendees about online resources available at the library. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-825-3123.

Got Hooked Craft: Make a Wish Box
10 a.m.: Keep thoughts and wishes in a hand-decorated box that you and your family will treasure forever. Bring an empty cardboard or wooden box, such as a shoe box or smaller, scissors, glue and decorations. There will be additional items to choose from. For more information or to register, go to calendar.mgpl.org or call 847-929-5101.

Grandparents' Holiday Party
10 a.m.: The Kalo Foundation hosts a holiday party for grandparents and grandchildren. The event includes pictures with Santa, cookie decorating, holiday crafts and more. Ianelli Studios Heritage Center, 255 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge. Call 847-291-4595. $10 suggested donation per child.

Blood Pressure/Blood Sugar Testing
10 a.m.: The Center of Concern, 1580 N. Northwest Highway, Suite 310, Park Ridge.

Club Wonder: Young Jungle
10:30 a.m.: Special needs children ages 3 to 7 can join Libby Galin from North Shore Pediatric Therapy for a class that combines yoga, literacy and art. Registration is required. Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St., Skokie. For more information, call 847-324-3149.

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Maine Township Honored with Statewide Recognition

Maine Township recently brought home awards from the 2013 annual conference of Township Officials of Illinois (TOI). The Township was acknowledged in multiple categories for its many outstanding services that enhance the lives of all residents.

"Thanks in great part to the dedication of our elected officials and township staff our work is regularly recognized by our peers around the state for being innovative and of high quality."

— Carol A. Teschky, Maine Township Supervisor

Trustee Laura Morask also received the 2013 Association of Illinois Township Committees on Youth (AITCOY) Friend of Youth Award in recognition for her outstanding dedication to helping our youth including her creation of innovative programs at no cost to the community.

Ed Beauvais and Carol Teschky accepted the award for the Best Photo of the Year. Beauvais' photo captured a fishing victory shared by a young boy and a senior citizen at the summer day camp for disadvantaged youth. Funding for the camp comes from proceeds of a Township garage sale in which Beauvais participates.

Editor’s Note: Content appears as it is provided in public records. To see all Niles building permits, visit niles suntimes.com.

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**BUILDING PERMITS**

BY WRAPPORTE NEWS SERVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Issue date</th>
<th>Permit cost</th>
<th>Construction cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flood control</td>
<td>7608 N. Nora Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Sept. 5</td>
<td>$160</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fence</td>
<td>7646 N. Nora Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>$121</td>
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<td>Driveway</td>
<td>7412 N. Milwaukee Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>$112</td>
<td>$9,200</td>
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<td>Service walk</td>
<td>7747 N. Oconto Ave., Niles</td>
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<td>$2,800</td>
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<td>Demolition</td>
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<td>$76</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Organic food has been trendy for a couple of years, but now a Morton Grove businesswoman is leading the way in offering newly-developed organic hair and skin products.

Lori Goldstein grew up in Morton Grove and began a 12-year career in a Skokie salon, first as a stylist and then six years as a co-owner. However, Goldstein's business partner wanted to focus on being a mother and the shop closed.

Knowing she was good at her job, Goldstein still gave it up and went back to college to search her soul. After earning a degree in political science from Loyola, Goldstein spent a few years working on federal and state campaigns.

"Politics is for the young," Goldstein said. "You have to be able to travel anywhere in the country and sleep on a stranger's floor for six months at a time. I like my own bed."

Goldstein returned to the suburbs and became a manager at her father's downtown financial services firm. But throughout the last seven years, Goldstein kept bumping into former customers - some of whom talked her into making house calls.

"This is what I like to do, and I have some loyal customers who appreciate how personable I am," Goldstein said.

Women in particular are invested in their hair and they put a lot of trust in whomever does work on it.

Once she decided it was time for a return, she took some of the advice her father's firm gives out and decided to think about how she could be unique.

"Some of the products I used to buy would make my nostrils burn and my eyes water," Goldstein said. "The end result was great, but getting there was not pleasant."

Making a sale while choking back tears was not something Goldstein looked forward to, so she looked into the Organic Salon Systems - an East Coast distributor that promises customers a product free of animal cruelty and at low risk to the environment.

"Whole Foods is really busy, and I think people these days are looking around at other more natural products for their lifestyles," Goldstein said.

Now a certified member of the Organic Salon Systems, Goldstein will soon open a salon called Upstairs Hair Affair and be a leader in the industry she once abandoned.

Among the products she'll use and sell are shampoos, conditioners, hair coloring, perm solutions and keratin treatments.

"There are no harsh chemicals," Goldstein said. "They work just as good, if not better, than the regular stuff."

Being part of the Organic Salon Systems means Goldstein gets training and access to new products at a reduced price.

Goldstein has data to support her investment in organic products as more than just a fad. She was recently invited to join the local advisory board for famed school and studio Mario Tricoci - which is also investing in similar products.

Earlier this year, Mario Tricoci partnered with a company called Scientific Organics to sell organic facials.

"We include active concentrations of natural fruit acids, cutting-edge, cosmeceutical organic grape stem cells, food grade seaweed and spirulina and the super-antioxidant astaxanthin - one of the most powerful antioxidants available," said founder Ian Lirenman, in a statement from Scientific Organics. "The results of this new facial will speak for themselves."

A spokesperson for Mario Tricoci confirmed that customer feedback supported the decision to get organic products, though the company is waiting to introduce hair-based products until after current sales figures can be analyzed.

Goldstein expects to open by Jan. 2. The salon is located on the second floor of an office building on Dempster Street near Austin Avenue.
Corks for a Cure supports fight against brain tumors

‘CORKS FOR A CURE WINE TASTING’
IN MEMORY OF CHRIS DIEZ
Benefiting: American Brain Tumor Association
Date: Oct. 18
Location: Park Ridge Country Club, Park Ridge
Attended: 180
Raised: $11,500
Website: corksforacure.org

1. John Sagat of Park Ridge
2. Jean Gust (from left), Kelly Scannell, Kim Seifer and Caroline Vengazy, all of Park Ridge, Wendy Diez of Chicago, Erika Cassidy and Janet Petersen, both of Park Ridge
3. Jennifer Svanascini (left) and Leisa Forowycz, both of Park Ridge
4. Nancy and Paul Swanson of Park Ridge
5. Vir Guiang of Skokie

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRIS STROBEL, ACTION FOCUS PHOTO
MEET & GREET

ICAE MEET & GREET POTLUCK DINNER
Benefiting: Inter-Tribal Council of AT&T Employees
Date: Nov. 5
Location: Trickster Art Gallery, Schaumburg

Attended: 30
Raised: $103

Mike Larks of Lisle, Dawn Williams of Elmwood Park and Anne Winters of Bartlett

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Allyson D'Alba and Joshua Rieger

BY CAITLIN MULLEN
Contributing writer

Allyson D'Alba and Joshua Rieger had both been disappointed by past experiences with Internet dating.

But when Allyson, from Northbrook, and Joshua, from Long Island, New York, initially connected in December 2011 and then met in person, something clicked, and they had a lot to talk about.

"I wouldn't say it was love at first sight, but it was definitely strong-like at first sight," Allyson said.

They moved in together four months after meeting, and Joshua proposed in September 2012, while they were visiting her family in Northbrook.

They were married Sept. 1, with both the ceremony and reception at Rosewood Restaurant in Rosemont.

Allyson, a social worker, and Joshua, an attorney, live in New York City.

Allyson said she found it tough to plan the wedding from several states away, but credited her mom with vetting potential venues so Allyson could be more productive while in town. Rosewood was able to accommodate their large celebration with 220 guests.

Incorporating family into their special day was important to Allyson and Joshua. Prayer shawls, called a tallis, from Allyson's and Josh's grandfathers were used to construct the chuppah.

Allyson wore her grandmother's diamond necklace and Josh wore his grandfather's cufflinks. Allyson also wore a bracelet that belonged to Josh's sister, Stefanie, who died four years ago.

Allyson said it was special for his family to have a reason to celebrate.

Because Joshua is a big Pearl Jam fan, the band's last song was "Yellow Ledbetter," a song Pearl Jam often closes concerts with. Friends sang along and formed a circle on the dance floor, Allyson said, making for a memorable end to the night.

Following the wedding, they honeymooned in Greece, Turkey and Italy. Besides the delicious food they tasted in the three countries, Allyson said they were wowed by the mosques in Istanbul and the picturesque scenery of Santorini, a Greek island 120 miles off the mainland.

"It's like what you see on postcards," Allyson said.

Allyson said she didn't particularly enjoy wedding planning, but was relieved that all of the things she stressed over worked out.

"We had a great wedding. I'm very happy to be married," she said.
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Recruiting: Reignite your Recruiters’ Spark
By: The Recruiting Training Corner

A plaintive theme can be heard across cubicles all over North America of late: deadlines are too tight, there are too few people to do the work, the economy is uncertain and employee motivation is in the basement. All of which can lead to workplace morale issues that undermine the quality of the work across your organization.

So how does one stem this tide?

Start your recruiters. They are often the first person that a candidate encounters. Rekindle their passion for the job is essential to maintaining a high-performing workplace. Let’s explore six factors you should consider to help you achieve this goal.

Enrich Positions. When was the last time you took inventory of your recruiters’ strengths and weaknesses and tailored tasks for them based on those qualities?

While it may seem like a monumental task, understanding what makes a recruiter tick will go a long way to creating more job satisfaction. And more job satisfaction will ultimately lead to a recruitment team that has more passion for what they do.

Track Metrics. You need to accurately measure metrics in order to clearly measure recruiters’ successes.

Does your organization have these systems in place today? If so, are you actively looking at those numbers and trying to understand the results?

Make it a point to start reviewing your metrics, understanding your benchmarks, and most importantly, making changes based on the data. If analyzed properly, these numbers can be powerful tools to manage your recruiters effectively and give them a true understanding of how they can be successful in your organization.

Maintain your Level of Excitement. As manager, are you maintaining your own level of excitement for the job? Are you taking the time to empower employees, enthusiastically sell your services (if that applies to your situation) and finding the time to make happiness a ritual?

If not, it might not be realistic to expect the same from your team. Remember that positive communications in the workplace set a tone. Be aware of this, even on bad days.

Meetings Matter. As part of your team leadership, start every week with a team meeting to motivate employees. Have everyone outline their goals for the week, discuss potential challenges they see, asking others in the group to weigh in. Make sure to clearly communicate successes that the group has had. This will create an atmosphere of teamwork. Additionally, make time for one-on-ones.

Ask status questions about their requisitions and truly listen to their answers. Always make sure they know that you understand what’s happening with their jobs, care about what they feel, and are there to support them and their success.

Make Time for Fun. This may seem obvious, but taking your group out to a restaurant and having fun outside the office is extremely important to morale. And if that’s difficult to do due to commitments outside of work, how about trying to incorporate it within the work day? Don’t make it a requirement, but invite the team to participate in Coffee Tuesdays or potluck lunches.

Teams who get to know each other beyond the superficial will be more likely to enjoy work and want to help each other.

Use the Right Products. Although your organization is probably doing more with less, try to solicit ideas from your recruiters about the tools they’re using.

Do they feel like you have the right mix of products? Are you missing something? What does your competition currently have? Understanding what your competition is doing will ultimately help to successfully recruit qualified candidates to your organization.

Ultimately, it’s about your team’s development so that they feel empowered in the process. To gain a deeper understanding of your team’s current level of motivation, consider using an employee satisfaction survey.

Making a concerted effort to motivate your recruiters should be at the top of your list of priorities every year as HR manager, regardless of the state of the economy or the state of your current organization.
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If you meet the necessary requirements, complete a job posting application form and submit to Diane Mitchell.

E-mail: dmitchell@nwea.com

**Human Resource Department**

Please submit resume to: 11W Engineered Fasteners

**Positinn Summary**

**Manufacturing**

**Shipping Warehouse Clerk**

- North American Plastic Fasteners
- Monday – Friday (9:30AM-5:30PM)

ITW NA-Plastic Fasteners serves all the major OEMs and their tier suppliers with plastic fasteners totaling approximately $200 million in revenues. Units include: Tefco in Franklin, IL; Exempted Fasteners in Chippewa Falls, WI, and our Commercial Sales and Engineering in Troy, MI.

Position Summary: The Shipping Warehouse Clerk reports to the Shipping Supervisor. Position location: Tefco in Franklin, IL.

Responsibilities:
- Miscellaneous shipping duties as assigned in the Shipping Office
- Pull full product and prepare shipments
- Data Entry – Order and User
- Scanning of product
- Preparing BOLs of Loading
- Interaction with customers – air shipments and coordinating shipments with freight companies
- Help with physical inventory and tagging
- Promptly identify all non-ITW personnel, i.e., truck drivers, vendors

Qualifications:
- Must be able to work with little or no supervision
- Ability to keep accurate records
- Ability to lift 55 lbs
- Previous shipping and/or computer experience preferred

If you meet the necessary requirements, complete a job posting application form and submit to Diane Mitchell.

E-mail: dmitchell@nwea.com
William D. Githens, (his atty), 33-26597, 33-26597

If this property is sold, the proceeds will be divided as follows:

1. To the plaintiff and any lienholders on the property.
2. To the mortgagee or any lienholders on the property.
3. To the owner of the property.
4. To the state of Illinois.

If this property is sold, the proceeds will be divided as follows:

1. To the plaintiff and any lienholders on the property.
2. To the mortgagee or any lienholders on the property.
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The Illinois Classified Advertising Network (ICAN) provides Pioneer Press and the Doings with advertising of a national appeal. To advertise in this section, please call ICAN directly at (217) 241-1700. Both Pioneer Press and the Doings recommend discretion when responding. Please refer questions and comments directly to ICAN.
NOTE: Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause on June 20, 2013, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation will on Monday, January 21, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. Absolute Public Sale to the highest bidder for cash, as more fully described in Section 37 of the Illinois mortgage law. The property is located in the real estate whose rights are concerned. The property will be sold absolute for $300, and all costs of the sale will be paid to The Judicial Sales Corporation. The property is subject to a judgment of foreclosure, and the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Title and a deed to the property in fee simple absolute. The successful bidder will be required to pay the balance in full of the amount bid, the successful bidder will receive a Certificate of Title and a deed to the property in fee simple absolute. The purchaser will receive a Certificate of Title and a deed to the property in fee simple absolute. The successful bidder will receive a Certificate of Title and a deed to the property in fee simple absolute.

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The real estate is improved with a
mortgage, judgment, credit, of
$367,412.94 paid by the mortgagee acquiring the
sale on December 3, 2013, for
The purchaser of the unit other than
a mortgagee shall pay the
amount was $285,266.58.

The mortgage on the unit other than
a mortgagee shall pay the as-
amount was $367,412.94.

The mortgage real estate is im-
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The mortgage on the unit other than
a mortgagee shall pay the as-
amount was $367,412.94.
The Judicial Sales Corporation at West Wacker Drive - 24th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60606, at 10:30 AM on January 27, 2014, will hold a public sale to sell the real estate described below, pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the property free and clear of all liens and encumbrances, and subject to all applicable laws, other than liens, taxes, special assessments, or special benefit assessments.

The sale is subject to confirmation by the court. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court. Bidding instructions and a copy of the Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale are available at www.tjsc.com for 7 days prior to the sale.

The purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee, shall pay to the highest bidder for cash, at the close of the sale, the down payment required by law and/or the provisions of section 505 of the Illinois Public Utilities Act, a sales commission to The Judicial Sales Corporation, a sales commission to the Mortgagee, and a sales tax, if any, charged by any governmental body. The balance of the bid price shall be paid by certified funds at the close of the sale. The purchaser of the unit shall have 10 days after the sale to complete the purchase or the property will be re-offered for sale. The purchaser of the unit shall have 10 days after the sale to complete the purchase or the property will be re-offered for sale. Any bid submitted at the sale will be subject to confirmation by the court.

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Compact luxury sedans are a relatively new segment that is growing very rapidly. The clientele wants to be pampered, flash a logo or hood ornament, and stand out as having achieved a level of success with upscale sheet metal.

The 2014 Lexus IS 350 F SPORT offers one of the most attractive designs in the segment.

The striking design features a new dynamic signature spindle grille flanked by separated LED Daytime Running Lights. Overall the nose borrows elements from Lexus' LFA super car. Along the sides a slick upsweep ahead of the rear wheels adds a flared performance look, with F Sport wheels that would look at home on a sports car. In the rear, the taillights do a dramatic sweep forward from the tail panel almost to the rear wheel wells.

The IS 350 is the bigger brother to the IS 250 and as such gets a 3.5-liter V6 with D4-S direct and port fuel injection. Paddle shifters hint at the sporting intentions and the G-force Artificial Intelligence (G-AI) system cements the impression by automatically selecting the optimum gear and downshift pattern in response to G force. This system really provides a performance-drive experience.

The available AWD system is perfect for year-round traction issues, like the recent inclement weather. Lexus' AWD system provides traction and grip under all driving conditions (especially ice and snow) by automatically varying front-to-rear torque balance from 50:50 to as much as 30:70. The system is imperceptible, as I never felt the transition of torque split. It just dug in and I kept going.

The bold styling is draped over a wheelbase that is nearly three inches longer. This stretch provides big benefits for rear passenger legroom, rigidity and more cargo space. It also delivers a more dynamic driving experience with enhanced stability and body control when driving aggressively through a corner. A new Drive Mode Select system features up to five driving modes. My test car came with the optional F SPORT package with the Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS) that features ECO, NORMAL and SPORT modes for everyday driving comfort, and SPORT or SPORT S+ mode for opu-
mixed body control and agility. The IS models employ Vehicle Dynamics Integrated Management system, which integrates Anti-Lock Brakes, Electronic Brake-force Distribution, Traction Control and Vehicle Stability Control active safety systems with the Variable Gear Ratio Steering from the F Sport package.

The interior is almost as bold as the exterior. Lexus' LFA super car provided the inspiration for the driver-focused Lexus IS cockpit. My F SPORT featured the high-tech TFT instrumentation with moving center ring from the LFA. I really felt like I had so much information jumping out at me.

Behind the wheel I felt like I was driving an exotic performance car. The seats were race inspired and the cockpit design very driver-focused.

The 2014 Lexus IS 350 F-Sport is a mini-super car packed with high-tech and sport-drive options that you won't find on other cars in the segment.
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08 ACURA RDX LOADED, LEATHER, SUNROOF, WHITE DIAMOND PEARL, #H77209 $16,966 *
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08 VOLKSWAGEN R-32 AWD COME DOWN TO GROSSINGER’S USED CAR SUPERSTORE! #H40057 $18,988 *
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11 CHEVY CAMARO R/S LEATHER, MOONROOF, HEADS UP DISPLAY, ONLY 9K MILES! #H31975 $21,966 *
12 VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT TURBO LEATHER, SUNROOF, NAVIGATION, WON’T LAST! #H32195 $24,988 *
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Customize your vacation home at Lake Chapin Shores

There are lots of issues to consider when deciding whether to purchase a second or vacation home. Certainly location is always a primary consideration. But just as critical is making sure that the home you purchase has all the features you want and you meet the need to maximize both the investment value and your family's enjoyment of your customized getaway.

Robert Taylor, a residential architect, suggests in his Zillow Blog that there are four key features buyers are looking for in a second or vacation home:

- Smaller square footage, with many wanting houses under 3,000 square feet, but also with a maximized floor plan.
- Lots of light and windows, as a more casual architectural design that interacts with the environment.
- Zero wasted space, with multipurpose rooms favored over single-use rooms.
- Energy efficiency as more Americans are seeking to save money and leave a smaller footprint on the environment.

At Lake Chapin Shores in southwest Michigan, with help from a certified "green" builder, homeowners are finding unique ways to combine new home construction with magnificent views of lake and woods on all sides. Homeowners create their homes with the features that accommodate their lifestyles and interests. Each of the offered 12 models includes options for custom designed open floor plans with windows that optimize the views of Lake Chapin and the surrounding woodland from every room.

Lake Chapin Shores is a quiet country paradise. This second-home community, just 90 minutes from Chicago, is easy to get to through gently rolling countryside and two-lane roads shared with the occasional farm vehicle, cyclist or horseback rider. The backdrop of 600-acre all-sports Lake Chapin offers incomparable sightlines from 10 lakefront properties plus 5 hilltop sites and 6 more locations tucked more privately into the woods.

The heated swimming pool, docks and roadways, and landscaped common areas are well maintained. There is a children's playground, and a concierge option is available to help prepare the home and/or boat for each visit.

Homes are designed to meet the needs of any size family, and range from 1,800 to 3,200 square feet of comfortable living space (not including decks and porches). Greg Pennor of Pennor Homes works closely with each buyer to create the construction details of a living space that meets family lifestyle requirements for getaway comfort and home-like convenience through all seasons. Standard options include a cozy gas or wood-burning fireplace, cherry or maple cabinetry, natural granite countertops, tempered glass outdoor deck railings and energy efficient appliances.

"Our designs have open floor plans with plenty of interactive and entertaining space so homeowners have the opportunity to create rooms to fit their lifestyle," said Jeff Posselt, developer and area homeowner. "When my wife and I built our home, not far from Lake Chapin Shores, we were able to customize a warm but spacious open floor plan to accommodate family gatherings and holidays with friends and family. At Lake Chapin Shores, we offer that opportunity to each new buyer ... to work with the builder to realize their dream for a family haven in the country."

"Even though we offer 12 different home designs, every homeowner in the community to date has worked with our builder to make changes to floor plans and customize their home," said Paul Goldenberg, one of the principal developers and also a homeowner at Lake Chapin Shores. "Our builder is an expert at understanding the needs and wants of the buyer because he spends time with them. He helps our homeowners visualize and realize the options they've selected."

Quaint surrounding towns, first rate restaurants nearby unique local shops and boutiques, artist and antique galleries and easy access to Michigan's renowned wineries make the Lake Chapin Shores community a family haven with options for all ages, any time of the year.

Plan a day trip to Lake Chapin Shores. Call 888-TO-MICHIGAN (888-866-4244) for an appointment to tour the community and see a model home. Visit the Website at www.LakeChapinShores.com for a look at each of 12 model home options, photos and video of Lake Chapin Shores living and a complete list of materials and specifications. Be sure to check out the new drone fly-over video on the home page.

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December 17

**ATELIER AZZA TRUNK SHOW**

Shop the Chicago-based line — full of rich fabrics and eye-catching embellishments — for a cause, as proceeds from this stylish event, hosted by Splash's own Susanna Ne-govan, benefit the Chicago Children's Choir. Guests will receive discounts on Azza goods, a gift with purchase and a first look at a new mini-collection that will benefit the Choir year-round. Can't make it out? The event also kicks off the line's sample and holiday sale, featuring pieces at up to 80 percent off.

*Time: 6:30 p.m.*

*Place: 900 N. Michigan, 5th floor*

*Cost: Free. RSVP to Emily Hallock at Ehallock@ccchoir.org.*

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December 19-20

**DO-IT-YOURSELF 'MESSIAH'**

Hightail it over to the Harris Theater to raise your voice in the International Music Foundation's annual sing-a-long rendition of the Handel masterpiece, accompanied by a full orchestra and professional soloists.

*Time: 7 p.m.*

*Place: 205 E. Randolph*

*Cost: $15. For tickets, visit imfchicago.org.*

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December 20

**LATE-ER NIGHT IN ANDERSONVILLE**

Sure, holiday shopping days are dwindling. But there's still time to buy — and have fun while doing it. Head to this North Side enclave and scoop up discounted gifts from local boutiques, pose with Santa at the Swedish American Museum and enjoy the music at Marguerite Gardens.

*Time: 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.*

*Place: Clark from Winnemac to Hollywood*

*Cost: Free. For more information, visit Andersonville.org.*

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December 20

- HOLIDAY BRASS AND CHORAL
Conductor Paul Agnew leads the Music of the Baroque Chorus and Orchestra in a stirring program of holiday delights, from solemn chants to ancient carols. Can't make the city edition? There are also concerts Dec. 19 and 21 in River Forest and Northbrook.

Time: 8 p.m.
Place: St. Michael's Church, 1633 N. Cleveland
Cost: $27-$75. For tickets, visit Baroque.org.

- NAUGHTY AND NICE HOLIDAY BASH
Enjoy passed appetizers and an open bar at “The View” cohost and Splash columnist Jenny McCarthy’s holiday fête, held to benefit Generation Rescue, her charity that aids families affected by autism.

Time: 8 p.m.
Place: Parliament, 324 W. Chicago
Cost: $75. For tickets, visit Generationrescue.org.

December 21-22

- TSUKASA TAIKO
The inimitable, all-enveloping sound of Japanese drums — along with classical Japanese dance and the unique performance mode known as butoh — enliven the Museum of Contemporary Art stage, offering audiences a dynamically soulful experience.

Time: 3 p.m.
Place: Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago
Cost: $15 MCA members; $18 non-members; students $10. For tickets, call (312) 397-4010 or visit Mcachicago.org.

December 23

- WELCOME YULE!
Warm your heart with holiday cheer as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus fill Symphony Center with sweet sounds of the season. There’ll be traditional tunes, several surprises and even a few rollicking sing-a-longs — so don’t forget to warm up those vocal chords.

Time: 3 p.m.
Place: 220 S. Michigan
Cost: $38-$90. For tickets, call (312) 294-3000 or visit Cso.org.

December 23

- HOT CHOCOLATE WITH MRS. CLAUS
Santa’s better half holds court at this Chicago Botanic Garden event, much to the delight of youngsters. Ticket price includes hot chocolate and cookies, a visit with Mrs. Claus and access to the Wonderland Express exhibit.

Time: 1 p.m.
Place: 1000 Lake Cook, Glencoe

December 23-January 5

- MARY WILSON’S HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR
One of the original members of the “Supremes,” Wilson brings her high-energy holiday entertainment to the Harris Theater. The show, which features special guests The Four Tops, ranges from classic Motown sounds to soulfully rendered holiday favorites.

Place: 205 E. Randolph
Cost: $59.99-$119.99. For tickets, call (312) 334-7777 or visit Harristheaterchicago.org.

December 28

- THE MAGIC OF BILL BLAGG
Dubbed “the best kept secret in magic” by Entertainment Weekly, the Zion native brings his family-friendly show of stunning illusions, comedy and audience participation to Aurora’s historic Paramount Theatre.

Time: 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Place: 23 E. Galena, Aurora
Cost: Adults $35, children 12 and under $25. For tickets, call (630) 896-6666 or visit Paramountaurora.com.

December 29

- KID SISTER
With a resume that includes appearances at festivals such as Coachella and Pitchfork, a BET Award nomination and a killer single with fellow Chicagoan Kanye West (“Pro Nails”), the local rapper’s career continues its ascent. This week, she touches down in her hometown for a show at Berlin.

Time: 10 p.m.
Place: 954 W. Belmont
Cost: $5. For tickets, call (773) 348-4975 or visit Berlinchicago.com.

December 30

- THE MAGIC OF BILL BLAGG
A second showing of the show advertised earlier this week.

Time: 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Place: 23 E. Galena, Aurora
Cost: Adults $35, children 12 and under $25. For tickets, call (630) 896-6666 or visit Paramountaurora.com.

December 31

- MARY WILSON’S HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR
Another performance of the show advertised earlier this week.

Time: 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Place: 205 E. Randolph
Cost: $59.99-$119.99. For tickets, call (312) 334-7777 or visit Harristheaterchicago.org.

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SHOPPING FOR LOVE


Crescent and Victor LaGroom

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plash kicked holiday shopping into high gear Dec. 4 at the second bi-annual Shopping for Love event. More than 200 guests filled the Wit Hotel's (201 N. State) ballroom, perusing clothing and accessories by local boutiques like Monica + Andy, Two Penny Blue and Sara Jane and taking in style advice from Topshop's personal shoppers. Throughout the evening, revelers donated to the American Heart Association and sipped Santa Margherita provided by Terlato Wines International, festive vanilla cinnamon blends by Baileys and Ciroc Amaretto cocktails provided by Diageo. After Spa at the Wit, Dr. Stacie McClane, Amazing Cosmetics and PrettyQuick provided complimentary spa treatments, the party moved to the rooftop, where DJ Miranda Wright spun pop hits. Guests left the bash — decorated by Event Creative — with a goody bag, stuffed with a pair of M2F Brand Denim jeans, giftcards to The Denim Lounge and Hada Labo skincare samples.
Chicago's most stylish partygoers have struck fashion gold — or should we say silver? — with this shining trend. From gunmetal to sterling, silver hues perfectly capture the essence of holiday style: festive, feminine and totally fabulous. Match silver with black for a high-contrast look or pair it with pearls for vintage-inspired glam. Limit baubles and bling — remember, you’ve got to let the dress shine — and instead, choose a glittery clutch for your accessory. The final lesson here? Silver is worth its weight in gold.
To support the more than 600 children and adults living with developmental disabilities at Misericordia’s community home (6300 N. Ridge), the Misericordia Women’s Board welcomed nearly 700 guests to the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel Chicago (221 N. Columbus) Nov. 15 for the Heart of Mercy Ball. After dinner and live and silent auctions, Gerald and Maureen Corcoran received the Heart of Mercy Award, while William Choslovsky and Scott Mendel were honored with the Sister Rosemary Connelly Service Medalion for their dedication to the organization. The evening netted $500,000 to benefit the Misericordia home.

PHOTOS BY ROBERT KUSEL
Season’s eatings

Approaching the holidays, the Walnut Room pays homage to its century-old roots  

BY DAVID HAMMOND

Times change, but the Walnut Room is still the Walnut Room,” says Steve Mellinger, head chef at the classic restaurant. It seems Chicagoans would agree: Since it opened inside Marshall Field’s in 1905, the grand dining room has remained a must-visit for Christmas shoppers, who often stop to lunch beneath its dramatic Austrian chandeliers and enormous tree.

Though much has changed since the Walnut Room’s inception, this holiday season diners can get a glimpse at what it may have looked like back in the day: The famous Circassian walnut that lines the restaurant’s walls and inspired its name has just been restored to its original luster. Combined with the space’s consistently homey yet elegant vibe, the restoration is more than a little nostalgia-inducing, making the Walnut Room one of the best places to dine when the holiday spirit is in the air. “It’s crazy-busy around Christmas,” confirms server Frances Howell. “But when you see Grandma surrounded by her grandchildren, that makes it worth it. I’ve been here for 35 years. I still love it.”

Here’s why the Walnut Room is still a perennial favorite:

A dose of history: The Walnut Room came to life after Mrs. Hering, a clerk in Marshall Field’s millinery department, began bringing in home-baked chicken potpies so clients wouldn’t leave the sales floor for lunch. It was the first restaurant in the United States to open inside a department store (now Macy’s).

Must-haves dishes: “I balance new dishes with traditional ones,” Mellinger says. Although there’s now a separate gluten-free menu, the standards endure: Mrs. Hering’s Original 1890 Chicken Pot Pie ($10.95) remains on the menu, and the stew that serves as filling is mostly unchanged. Now, however, it’s topped with pie crust instead of puff pastry, meaning it may be less fattening — but who’s counting calories during the holidays?

- Peach Nest ($10.95), one of the more lightweight options, scatters chicken salad and fruit atop fried potato threads.
- Frango Mint chocolate ice cream pie ($5.95) is the Walnut Room’s most traditional dish, containing mints once prepared in huge melting pots on Marshall Field’s 13th floor.

Drinks: Though the atmosphere is family-friendly, a slew of cocktails are on hand for those of age. Try the Walnutini ($7.50), made of walnut milk, liqueurs and vodka and served in a walnut- and salt-rimmed glass. The Walnut Room also pours signature white and red wines ($7.95 per glass).

Early birds: As the holidays are the busiest time for the Walnut Room, reservations aren’t available until January. But according to Mellinger, “If you walk in on most weeknights, you’ll be seated within 15 minutes.” If there’s a long line, you can leave your name at the desk and take a buzzer that will alert you when your table is ready, and through Christmas, you can also stop by between 7 and 10 a.m. for a special breakfast buffet.

A touch of whimsy: During the holiday season, fairy princesses have been known to waltz about restaurant, waving their wands and dispensing wishes. “I came here when I was a kid. All I wanted was to be a fairy princess,” says current princess Suzee Belles. “Now I am.”

111 N State, 7th floor, (312) 781-3125, Macysrestaurants.com
Jon Kelley is quite literally a man on the move. Two weeks into his latest gig as the host of WFLD-Channel 32's "Good Day Chicago," Kelley is still finishing his relocation from San Francisco, meaning his day is divided between furniture shopping, waiting on the cable guy and hosting five hours of live television each morning. But logistics aside, Kelley couldn't be more thrilled to return to the place where he cut his teeth. "I started here in 1991 and fell in love with the city back then," recalls the father of two, who left Chicago in 2001 for a gig as the host of entertainment news program "Extra." "When this opportunity came along, I thought 'First of all, I would love to go back to Chicago. Second, it's a great place to raise kids.'"

Back in the '90s, Kelley was one of the city's most beloved newscasters, interviewing stars like Dennis Rodman and Jay Leno, and covering sports right as the Bulls hit their stride — he was lucky enough to narrate six world championships. Since leaving "Good Day Chicago," he's hosted it all. "Extra," the reality series "The Mole" and most recently, the morning news in San Francisco. "I've been blessed to do a lot of different things," Kelley, 48, explains. "It's been a hell of a journey. I feel fortunate that [at 'Good Day Chicago'] I get to grab a little of everything I've done and unleash different facets."

Kelley is already starting to shake things up at "Good Day Chicago," highlighting the ensemble nature of the show with cohosts Natalie Bomke, Melody Mendez and Corey McPherrin along with daily contributor Splash's Susanna Negovan. "It's exciting! [We can] wipe the slate clean and make something new," he says. "It's live, it's spontaneous. It's a chance to create an atmosphere that people in morning want to be a part of. We want to push the envelope."

While Kelley remains mum about the surprises up his sleeve, he teases, "We're finding a way to take this to the next level...you never know what's going to happen." In the meantime, Kelley admits that despite his pro status, he's still getting used to being back in the host chair. "Right now, I'm the new guy in the mix," he says. "I'm trying to get acclimated and take my game to the level it needs to be, instead of just trying to figure out where the water fountain is."

Here, the morning host spends a day in the city he can once again call home.

Watch Kelley on WFLD-Channel 32's "Good Day Chicago," mornings from 4:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.
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How Rachel and Lauren Besser went from Chicago girls-about-town to global fashion inspirations

BY ZAK STEMER
PHOTOS BY KIRSTEN MICCOLI

On Rachel (left):
Moschino: top $700, dress $2,905
Chanel: hat, $2,100

On Lauren:
Frank & Eileen: top, $215
Alexander McQueen: skirt, $1,075
All available at Ikram, 15 E. Huron; ikram.com

Opposite page:
On Rachel:
Alaia: velvet dress, $4,930, Ikram, 15 E. Huron; ikram.com
Christian Louboutin: pointed slingback pump, $995, Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan; neimanmarcus.com

On Lauren:
J. Mendel: burgundy leather dress, $2,950, Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan; neimanmarcus.com
Alaia: booties, $2,065, Ikram, 15 E. Huron; ikram.com
Meet sisters Rachel and Lauren Besser, daughters of a particularly innovative Chicago family. Their father, Charlie, is the founder of entertainment marketing company Intersport (among his achievements, he trademarked the term “March Madness”). His wife Rebecca (Rachel's mom and Lauren's stepmom) is a local philanthropist and one of the city's most gorgeous women. So it's not surprising that the sisters, both living in New York, would pursue creative fields — Rachel, 22, is a fashion assistant for style blog Refinery29 and Lauren, 33, is a thriving freelance writer. Now they've catapulted from stylish siblings to the accidental muses of an iconic brand: Their visages will be stamped across skirts, dresses, coats and bags in the spring 2014 collection of global fashion house Prada.

While the collection will hit stores this spring, the sisters' path to Prada — which doubles as a love story — began four years ago.

At the time Lauren was just leaving Chicago, bound for New York. As a hobby, she enjoyed traveling the world and photographing street art, a global creative medium (usually unsanctioned) that's done in a public location. Once done on the sly, it's been brought into the mainstream by artists like Banksy and Os Gemeos. In pursuit of great pieces, Lauren had gone to Spain, Russia, Morocco, Mexico, as well as all over the US. "I did it all the time. I couldn't leave my house without a camera," she remembers. "In New York, the apartment I found was in Bed-Stuy [Brooklyn] and there was this hand-painted, life-size portrait of a man with a shipping cart full of bottles and cans around the corner. It was one of the most beautiful pieces I'd ever seen in my five years of documenting street art around the world. I was like, 'This is unbelievable! I'll sign the lease. Perfect.'"

A week later she received an email from a blog advertising a talk with the artist who had painted that mural. "I thought, 'I've got to go tell this person that I moved into my apartment because of this piece.'" When Lauren arrived, she immediately noticed a tall, red-haired man. She had no idea he was Gabriel Specter, the creator of her mural and the artist leading the talk. What started as admiration quickly became attraction. The two became a couple, and he began using her image in his work. A year later, she recalls, he told her to walk around the corner from her apartment to see a piece she'd want to photograph. It was a six-foot-by-six-foot poster saying "Lauren Besser, I love you. "He's very romantic about big gestures," she says.

Today, Specter, 35, is a bona fide player in the street art world (Complex magazine named him one of the "50 Greatest Street Artists Right Now") and he has jumped at another chance to put his love on display. Miuccia Prada, the head designer behind the famed brand, decided that for her Spring/Summer 2014 runway presentation, she wanted to create a colorful street art wonderland. She selected six artists for the project: two from France, one from Colombia, one from Spain and two from the US — including Specter. Incidentally, Miuccia had become aware of him in 2010 when he debuted his "From Russia with Love" collection, a series of works he put up illegally around St. Petersburg, several of which featured Lauren.

Prada's collection was designed to be a colorful expression of feminism, and each artist was instructed to create works featuring strong women that would serve as the background for the fashion show. Unsurprisingly, Specter chose Lauren and her sister Rachel as his subjects. "I don't think it would be the same if I said, 'Here's a strong woman because she's successful or she's famous,'" explains Specter. "I think what made it so powerful for Prada — and for everyone — is that these are everyday examples of normal people. I'm interpreting the power inside of all women and channeling it through people I know and people I'm close to."

The work inspired Prada: Miuccia decided to license and use the art she commissioned from the six muralists as designs on her clothes — but the brand kept it under wraps until her Milan fashion show Sept. 19. "It really just appeared, we didn't know what was happening," says Specter.

Rachel and Lauren were equally surprised to see themselves on the clothes. Rachel remembers walking down the street in Brooklyn, live streaming the show, while her sister was on speakerphone. "It was so funny, people on the street could hear us screaming. We knew we were going to be on the mural, but had no idea about the clothes," she says. "Then Lauren's image was on the last look and we freaked out. I called her screaming, 'Final look! Final look!'" Later, Googling the collection, Rachel realized her own face was also on a dress.

The collection features the faces of the sisters, as well as the women used by the five other artists, stylistically outlined and color-blocked. The outfits are paired with tube socks, slicked hair and graffiti-covered eyelids, capturing the urban nature of the murals.

The thrill of inspiring an entire collection for a massive fashion brand hasn't quite set in yet for the sisters. "A lot of people have freaked out more than we have," admits Rachel. "We were excited, obviously, but they were like 'Oh my god!'" Still, Lauren recognizes the honor. "From what I've seen written about the spring/summer line, Prada was going for this post-feminist celebration. If I'm going to be part of a fashion line, that's the kind I want to be part of."

And Lauren couldn't be prouder of Specter. "It's exciting!" she says. "It's just such a vastly different form to showcase the work and to do a collaboration with someone who is so deeply respected." As for Specter, who typically shies away from anything commercial, he knows he's transcended some boundaries. "I only do work when I get to do what I want," he says. "With Prada, it was definitely this huge brand, which I usually don't associate myself with, but I always respected them and what they do and how they support art. It didn't feel commercial. Prada is much more like art."

Though Specter's venues might constantly change, his inspiration continues to come from "the women in his life: Lauren, Rachel and other members of the Besser family, who have all been included in his works. According to Specter, "They're just perfect."

Look for the collection this spring at Prada, 30 E. Oak; Prada.com.
The best Coast

THANKS TO LONG-STANDING STAPLES AND NEW STORES ON THE BLOCK, THE GOLD COAST IS STILL CHICAGO'S MUST-SHOP NEIGHBORHOOD  

BY KEVIN AEH

It's one of the busiest shopping times of the year, and one of the most bustling shopping districts in the city is, of course, the Magnificent Mile. Some locals might opt to avoid the scene, citing traffic, crowds and too many tourists — but we embrace it. Thanks to an influx of new stores combined with a wealth of fashion institutions, there's no better time for a visit. From the festive displays to the gifts you'll only find in this 'hood, here are our top reasons to include the Gold Coast on your holiday shopping agenda.

Top of the lines

This shopping street has always been a hub for high-end designer lines (hello, Prada and Hermes), but a few big names recently moved into the 'hood: Tom Ford (66 E. Oak) and Carolina Herrera (70 E. Oak) opened their doors in the legendary Esquire Theater space this past fall, and Saint Laurent set up shop in a stunning new boutique around the corner on Rush Street. Up next? Dolce & Gabbana will bow with a new Oak Street store next year, as will French lines Sandro, Maje and Zadig & Voltaire.

Winter wardrobe

On the Gold Coast, you'll find clothing items for any type of weather, but the offerings for winter are especially abundant. (Makes sense, since winter lasts so very long.) In the past few seasons we've seen Moncler (33 E. Oak) bring its shiny down coats to Oak Street, Columbia Sportswear (830 N. Michigan) expand on Michigan Avenue and classic cashmere sweaters abound at Vince (106 E. Oak). Need winter boots? Head to The Frye Company (1007 N. Rush), which opened over the summer and features durable leather boots for men and women. Another new store, Icebreaker (44 E. Walton), hawks fleece fashions made from merino wool from the southern alps of New Zealand, while Barbour (54 E. Walton) stocks its iconic wax jacket, made for centuries in northwest England, alongside other clothing and accessories for men, women and children.

A guy thing

Stylish Chicago guys are no strangers to Oak Street, and the destination keeps giving dudes reasons to return. From casual options and quirky accessories at Jack Spade (47 E. Oak) to classic suit-and-tie chic at Paul Stuart (107 E. Oak), men have plenty to choose from here. Other standout spots in the district: Affordable, great fitting suits at SuitSupply (945 N. Rush), stylish brand names at Scoop NYC (1009 N. Rush) and classic, made-in-the-USA accessories at Independence (47 E. Oak).

Fashionable food

Designer goods are usually the first thing that comes to mind when you
think of the Gold Coast, but the area is also becoming a foodie paradise. You already know about the classic steak restaurants in the area (think Gibson’s and Del Frisco’s). But there’s also upscale Italian cuisine at buzzed-about Nico Osteria (1015 N. Rush), the newest spot from One Off Hospitality, located in the Thompson Hotel; inventive takes on lobster rolls at Da Lobta (12 E. Cedar); healthy options at the new Doc B’s Fresh Kitchen (100 E. Walton); and, of course, Sprinkles’ famous cupcake ATM (50 E. Walton) for a quick pick-me-up. Coming to Oak Street next year: Fig & Olive, a restaurant that features the best olive oils from the coastal regions of Spain and Italy.

Pop-up culture
’Tis the season for pop-ups, and a few notable ones can be found in the 900 Shops, holding court with the mall’s wide array of stores. The Purely app has come to life with a temporary shop that stocks looks from Chicago native Samantha Sleeper, local denim line Henry & Belle and more, open through Christmas Eve. The 900 Shops also houses the Chic Holiday Suite every weekend until Christmas, a swanky space designed by event guru Debi Lilly. The pop-up features a DIY gift-wrap station, gratis coat check and a comfy lounge area — just in case you need a shopping break.

Shopping shortcuts
Shopping downtown can be an equal mix of magic (the festive window displays) and madness (the traffic!). But it gets a little bit easier on Oak Street — especially on Tuesdays. That’s the day there’s free valet parking from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 57 E. Oak through Christmas Eve. And to keep shopping stamina high, on Saturdays you’ll find free espresso at that same spot.

Join us for the sparkle of more than 50 trees decorated to reflect holiday traditions from around the world in MSI’s annual Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light displays. The tradition continues from November 14, 2013 – January 5, 2014. After you stroll through the trees, celebrate with some Disney magic in our new temporary exhibit, Treasures of the Walt Disney Archives, presented by D23: The Official Disney Fan Club.

Wrap your gifts — or just rest those tired feet — at the Chic Holiday Suite pop-up lounge inside the 900 Shops.
Lindsay Abeles & Patrick McFarlane

BY KATINA BENIARIS

Most fathers of the bride toast their newlywed daughters with Champagne, but not Randy Abeles. At his daughter Lindsay’s Nov. 3 nuptials, Randy instead raised a Shamrock Shake. The playful gesture stemmed from a family joke that Abeles would be married inside a Rock ‘n’ Roll McDonald’s, and according to the couple, it brought down the house. “My dad and I planned it together and Pat had no idea. It was one of his favorite parts of the evening,” says Abeles. In reality, Abeles, the public relations coordinator at Neiman Marcus Michigan Avenue, married college sweetheart Patrick McFarlane, a regional sales manager at Maple Leaf Foods, Inc., inside the InterContinental Chicago O’Hare Hotel (5300 N. River, Rosemont). The pair were wed in a traditional Jewish ceremony in front of 300 friends and family members. A glamorous reception followed, replete with acrylic silver and rhinestone details and snack stations stocked with lobster and mushroom-topped mac and cheese, followed by cake balls by Gotta Sweet Tooth. At the beginning of the evening, Abeles and McFarlane enjoyed a special dance to Matt Nathanson’s “Wedding Dress,” performed by the Larry King Orchestra on a white patent leather dance floor monogrammed with the happy couple’s initials. “We were in our own little world,” says Abeles. “We didn’t feel like there were 300 other people in the room watching us. It was an amazing moment.”
According to an old real estate adage, spring is the only time to buy or sell a home. But that's hardly the case these days. Midwest Real Estate Data reported that 11,718 homes went under contract in June. In October, 10,900 homes went under contract. The difference between the spring and fall months appears much less significant than the myth implies, and as we move into winter, the market shows no signs of a nosedive.

Baird & Warner broker Rebecca Cleal (right) partly attributes strong sales in the offseason to an uptick in buyers purchasing based on need. "They want something move-in ready," Cleal says. "For those types, there's no reason to wait until spring."

For this kind of buyer — perhaps looking to relocate due to a job transfer or a new baby — Cleal points to her listing at 3819 N. Newcastle (above), a four-bedroom single-family home listed for $345,000 (call 773-467-3329). The 1,420-square-foot Dunning bungalow with second-floor addition features a rehabbed kitchen with stainless steel appliances, custom cabinets and granite countertops. Other recent updates, such as fresh paint and Elfa-loaded closets, minimize requisite work from a would-be buyer.

Bottom line for this year's not-so-slow season: "Really and truly, if it's priced well, it'll move," Cleal says.

"Tis the season
As temps drop, the market becomes unusually hot

BY MADELINE NUSSER

Home for the holidays
Selling during the holidays has its own set of demands, says Coldwell Banker broker Alice Chin. She recommends creating warmth during the darkest month. Exhibit A: The cozy $599,900 five-bedroom at 6816 Greene in Woodridge (call 630-369-9000), which glows with candles and festive greenery thanks to Chris Deboo from Simply-Tagging. "Buyers looking now are transfers," Chin says. "Staging during the holidays helps them feel even more at home."

LIGHT HOUSE
Brighten up chilly evenings with charming beaded candlesticks from French collective Ya Pas Le Feu Au Lac. Small ($60) and large ($75) versions are available at Unison Home’s pop-up shop, open through Dec. 29. 1911 W. Division; Unisonhome.com

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LIVE THEATER Guide

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Take to art

The Art Institute of Chicago offers both creative connoisseurs and the merely curious a way to make the season bright. By Thomas Connors

Between shopping lists, jolly gatherings and rounding up the kids for a visit to Santa, squeezing in a trip to the Art Institute might seem like a challenge. But just beyond those wreath-decked lions you'll find a peaceful oasis of art, history and creativity, all given a festive spin for the season. In other words, the museum's holiday offerings might be the ideal antidote to this month's madness.

Though it's always a treat to revisit such key works as Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks" or Van Gogh's "Bedroom at Arles," the current must-see is the museum's newly acquired 18th-century Neapolitan crèche. Far more elaborate and narrative-rich than the nativity scenes with which one is most familiar, this exquisite, rendered and dynamic tableau, featuring more than 200 figurines, is an astounding convergence of fine art and folk craftsmanship. "It has a level of detail and sophistication that makes it absolutely unique," says curator Sylvain Bellenger. "Viewers are transported, as if by magic, to the streets of Naples in the 18th century — and they immediately understand the emotional character and style of baroque art."

Visual delights of a more secular nature abound in the ever-popular Thorne Miniature Rooms. The museum has long given these tiny interiors the holiday treatment, and this year, the 1930s French Library joins the celebration, as it's covered with art deco holiday decor. And there are other touches as well: A period-perfect ball gown has been added to the 19th-century Louisiana bedroom, a wassail bowl (based on a vessel in the Victoria and Albert Museum) sits on a table in the late Tudor period Great Room and a Christmas tree adorns the Victorian drawing room. Like every item in these rooms, the holiday details are true to the era represented in each interior. "The Christmas tree replicates the famous Christmas tree that was shown in the London Illustrated News, with Prince Albert and Queen Victoria and the rest of the royal family standing around it," says curator Lindsay Morgan.

And after the goose has been cooked and the presents have been unwrapped — but the kids are still off from school — bring the family out to the museum's Holly Days program in the Ryan Education Center (Dec. 27-30), which features drop-in arts and crafts for children age 3-5 and guided museum tours for 6- to 12-year-olds. No matter where your eyes come to rest amid the museum's treasures, its wonders can play a memorable role in the season.

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Karmic injustice

How to adopt a new outlook on life after a near-tragedy

Dear Jenny,
I survived a life-threatening injury and the multiple complications that followed. Doctors tell me that few people could have survived what I’ve been through. Now, I look perfectly normal on the outside, but I have irreversible damage to my lungs and circulatory system. I can’t do all the things I used to do, like rock climbing, hiking, weight lifting and, most importantly, my job as a firefighter. I find myself wondering why this happened to me — since the accident, I feel that life has come crashing down. It ruined my marriage and my career, and I feel as though I have no family or friends who are supportive. I try to meet a partner, but when I tell them about my injury, and why I am retired, they seem to leave. I can’t help but wonder what karmic force I upset to deserve this. I feel like I am running out of time, that I survived only to see what I didn’t have or may never have. Can you help?
— Hanging by a Moment

Jenny says: First things first. How do you know this was meant to happen? Because it did. And how do you know you were meant to be here now? Because you are!

The truth is (and I know this sounds cliché and is much easier said than done) that life is what you make of it. If you own the story that you are a victim and nobody will accept you as you are now, that is exactly how you will be and how people will see you. Truthfully, most people do not want to be with those who feel sorry for themselves.

That’s the bad news. Now here’s the good news. ... You can turn this around.

The first step is to stop feeling sorry for yourself. Rather than be a victim, be a proud survivor. Not many people could endure what you did. Be proud of that! Cherish the gift you have of still being here. Trust me when I tell you that if you start to think positively, you will attract the type of people you want to attract — those who are loving and supportive. People are drawn to positive energy rather than the negative energy you are currently putting out there.

Positive people typically love themselves more, are far more likely to stick by someone and have the confidence and strength to love someone no matter what. But it all starts with you! You have to love yourself first. Stop looking at the things that don’t work right and focus on the things that do work: your mind, your heart and your spirit. Be proud of you, love yourself again and others will too!

Send questions to AstJenny@suntimes.com
Lauren Ash still remembers her very first acting gig. “There’s a home video of me as a 7-year-old doing a Robin Leach impression,” says the “Super Fun Night” star. The Canadian actress, who honed her improv chops at Second City’s Toronto and Chicago outposts, says she knew from a young age that she wanted to make people laugh for a living. “My earliest memory is watching Clue with Madeline Kahn - I didn’t realize how funny women could be. I said, ‘I want to do what she does.’ That was a huge moment for me.”

Now, Ash is living out that childhood dream, starring alongside Rebel Wilson on the ABC comedy. “The cast is amazing,” says Ash, who plays Marika, one of three single women who get together every Friday evening to have - what else? - a super fun night. “We’re all friends and I can’t wait to get to work in the morning. What we’re doing is truly funny and heartfelt.”

But according to Ash, what’s most exciting about the gig is that it allows her to reach young women in the same way she was once reached by Kahn. “Girls that don’t think they’re cool enough make them laugh, and that’s important to me,” she says. “They write me letters and say I’ve inspired them, that they don’t feel so lost or alone.”

Cast party: “The [three women] try to do things they wouldn’t normally do, like karaoke. They’re trying to figure out who they are. It’s an underdog story. A lot of people can relate to these people. I have an ability to roll with the punches and improvise. It’s a dream job.”

Role call: “A friend of mine sent me the script and said, ‘Your character is in here,’ [one] I’d played when I was at Second City. It was a dream come true for me. Marika is a complete jock - she’s a tennis coach. I compare her to a puppy dog because she’s insanely loyal. She’ll do anything for anyone she loves.”

Chicago connection: “Chicago is one of my favorite cities in the world. I try to go back every six months. I’m itching to go back there for Christmas shopping - it’s so magical on Michigan Avenue this time of year. Anytime I go back, I have to go to the Art Institute; they have these sculptures of monkeys, and I always say ‘I have to see my monkeys.’ Last time I went they started selling replicas of the monkeys — now I have them in my condo in Toronto.”

Watch “Super Fun Night” Wednesdays at 8:30 p.m. on ABC.
Beauty & the blazer

Marie Whitney, founder & creative director of philanthropic fashion line Two Penny Blue, shares how she stays stylish

“I love the newly launched product line from The Everygirl, featuring beautiful prints and phone cases with inspiring quotes.”

“Start your day off right with a cup of coffee in one of these gorgeous gold-monomogrammed mugs.”

“Clink, pop and fizz your way to the perfect fête with this guide for mixing an incomparable cocktail.”

“This winter weather has me dreaming of summer days ahead. This is the ideal way to explore the city on a beautiful day.”

“Every girl needs a little leopard in her life. These Fendi heels are the quintessential investment piece.”

“This gloss has a devoted celebrity following — and for good reason. It’s the best gloss for getting that perfect pout.”

“A Sweet Delivery’s charming candy gift boxes are the sweetest gift to brighten someone’s day.”

“The Parker blazer is an updated classic that combines a flattering, feminine silhouette with leather detailing for a modern twist. And best of all, with the purchase of this blazer, a school uniform is donated to a girl in need in Africa.”

1. The Everygirl: prints and phone cases, starting at $12, Two Penny Blue, 3738 N. Southport; Theeverygirl.com
2. Dalsy: limited-edition bike, $1,850, Heritage Bicycles, 2959 N. Lincoln; Heritagebicycles.com
4. Fendi: Anne leopard print pony hair pumps, $697, Nordstrom, 55 E. Grand; Nordstrom.com
5. Anthropologie: gold monogram cup, $10, 111 E. Chicago; Anthropologie.com
6. Jax and Bones: custom dog beds, starting at $109, Citizen Stone, 1440 N. Dayton unit 302; Citizenstone.com
7. Two Penny Blue: Voluspa Crisp Champagne candle, $16, 3738 N. Southport; Twopennyblue.com
10. Two Penny Blue: Parker blazer, $395, 3738 N. Southport; Splashshop.suntimes.com
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Dr. Courtney R. Villari & Matthew A. Hennis

Kris and Robert Villari of Oak Park announce the engagement of their daughter Courtney to Matthew, son of the Rev. Alan Hennis and Linda Hennis of Oak Park. Both Courtney and Matthew are 2001 graduates of Oak Park River Forest High School. She is the owner of Ovation Dental in River Forest and has a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from University of Illinois in Chicago. Matthew is the operations manager of Ovation Dental. The couple plan to marry in August 2014 in Door County, Wis. They will reside in Elmwood Park.

PHOTO PROVIDED

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Get up and go

Your guide to the weekend and beyond

Every Thursday

Use the Stage section to learn about local theater productions.
SANIBEL AND CAPTIVA ISLANDS:
From pirate spot to top vacation destination

By Caroline Rideout

If you are seeking a beautiful destination for your next vacation, you might want to consider a trip to Sanibel and Captiva Islands. These gorgeous islands are located just off the southwest Florida coast. They offer a tropical experience that is sure to rejuvenate and relax you. These unique islands are steeped in rich history and tradition. Here is a look back at the history of Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

Early origins
According to some scholars, the Sanibel and Captiva Islands originally formed about 6,000 years ago as a single island. Eventually, the forces of the sea caused the islands to split. The first human settlers were the Calusa Indians, who occupied the islands as far back as 2,500 years ago.

Discovery
In 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon discovered Sanibel Island. In the centuries that followed, Spain was unable to set up a permanent settlement on the island, and the area became a popular destination for pirates.

Early settlement
By the late 1800s, pioneers had begun to settle on Sanibel Island. In 1884, the iconic Sanibel Lighthouse was constructed. In the decades that followed, the islands became popular vacation spot.

When you are planning a trip to Sanibel and Captiva, Royal Shell will provide you with the ultimate vacation experience. This island resort provides beautiful vacation rental homes and condos, and it also can host your holiday or wedding event. To learn more about the fantastic accommodations Royal Shell has to offer, call 1-800-656-9111.

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Aspira Spa was rated the No. 3 spa in America by the readers of Conde Nast Traveler.

Find serenity and rejuvenation at the award-winning Aspira Spa

By Anne Thompson

A weekend at the spa is the ultimate relaxation destination, and Aspira Spa in Elkhart Lake, Wis., can offer you the most exquisite spa treatments in the Midwest. Aspira creates an atmosphere that not only promotes relaxation but also embraces spirituality with the healing wisdom of the lake's indigenous people.

Awards

Aspira Spa has won numerous awards and accolades from nationwide polls and publications, including Frommer's, SpaFinder Magazine and travelandleisure.com. Most recently, Aspira was voted No. 3 in Conde Nast Traveler Magazine's readers' poll and recognized as No. 3 in the Top 100 Spas in America.

Services

In addition to a menu of traditional spa and salon services — including massages, facials, saunas and whirlpools — Aspira offers unique healing experiences to awaken your spirit and calm your mind. These services include Reiki, dynamic Yoga courses, Mind Body & Spirit Alignment and Craniosacral. Vinyasa Yoga classes also are available in group or private settings to help you find strength and balance. For a complete day at the spa that caters to all of your needs, you can book a SpaSuite Experience for couples, families or friends seeking an intimately private spa day.

Accommodations

The Aspira Spa is located at the Osthoff Resort, where you will find luxurious accommodations to make you feel right at home on the lake. Huge suites — complete with fireplaces, private balconies and kitchens — provide you with ultimate comfort throughout your stay. For accommodations, call 800-876-3399.

If you are planning a relaxing getaway just two hours away from Chicago, contact Elkhart Lake Tourism at 877-355-4278 for general information. Along with the Aspira Spa, you can enjoy world-class golf, recreation on the water and fine dining reflecting the excellent local flavor of the region.

WANT MORE? Subscribe to the WeekAway E-newsletter to get features on Midwest travel, seasonal festivals and weekend getaway inspiration.

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Weekends by WeekAway

Looking for a little weekend road trip? Check out one of these events within driving distance from Chicago.

Hammond, Ind.
A Fabulous '50s Christmas at Towle Theater
Through Dec. 22
www.towletheater.org

Hobart, Ind.
Family-friendly New Year's Eve Celebration at Deep River Waterpark
Dec. 31
deepriverwaterpark.com

Belleville, Ill.
Way of Lights
Through Jan. 3
www.wayoflights.org

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Table talk: Chefs name the best meal they had this year

BY VERONICA HINKE
For Sun-Times Media

Ever wonder what your favorite chef's go-to spot is when they eat out? Well, we did, too. It was a tough call for many of them, but here's what some of the most beloved chefs narrowed down as the best meal they ate in Chicago in 2013. (Part 2 of the series, with more chefs sharing their favorites, runs Dec. 26.)

Gale Gand — Founding Partner, Tru in Chicago

Best meal: Rotisserie Lamb Sandwich and Porchetta Sandwich

Restaurant: Eataly, 43 E. Ohio St., Chicago; www.Eataly.com/eataly-Chicago

The skinny: "This sandwich is life changing! Moist pork, heady with garlic and herbs, that's been wrapped in skin-on pork belly and roasted on a spit for hours, then sliced hot, sprinkled with coarse salt and then piled into a split crusty freshly baked loaf of Italian bread. The outer layer of fat gets crispy while the interior stays juicy. Make sure you have two to three napkins to catch the juice that unavoidably runs down your arms as you eat it."

Art Smith — Executive Chef and Owner, Table Fifty-Two in Chicago

Best Meal: Pulled Chicken Chilaquiles

Restaurant: Indy Cafe, 5654 Indianapolis Blvd., East Chicago, Ind.

The skinny: "You know, I spent my life cooking for billionaires and have eaten in the best restaurants in the world, but there are no better restaurants than Chicago and its surrounding area family-owned restaurants. These lovely people are cooking their hearts out and Chef Hector Guerrero's dish tasted amazing. A lot of places make chilaquiles but this one was absolutely incredible with the pulled chicken, savory but spicy. Guajillo sauce with just enough Chihuahua cheese, and extra special homemade queso fresco. Don't miss the homemade croissants (he uses only French butter) and homemade bagels. Every bite is worth the hike!"

Dobra Bielinski — Founding Partner, Delightful Pastries in Chicago

Best Meal: Housemade Pate, Filet Mignon with Wild Mushrooms, Skate with Truffled Tater Tots


The skinny: "It was dinner out with friends. The in-house pate was just finger-licking good. We had numerous desserts but the one that stood out had a chocolate custard with cherries and cookies in between. All the plates were licked clean much to our embarrassment."

Tony Mantuano — Executive Chef and Owner, Spiaggia, Cafe Spiaggia, Bar Toma and Terzo Piano in Chicago

Best Meal: Lamb Pinxtos, Pork Belly Pinxtos, Croquetas, Baccala Fritters and Caldo Verde

Restaurant: Autre Monde Cafe & Spirits, 6727 W. Roosevelt Road, Berwyn; www.AutreMondeCafe.net

The skinny: "Even though the name of this restaurant is French, we had an unforgettable Spanish/Portuguese feast. They have an incredibly affordable wine list with unknown but world-class Croatian and Slovenian wines."

Phillip Foss — Chef and Owner, EL Ideas in Chicago

Best Meal: Floris and Fauna tasting menus.

Flora Menu: Matsutake, Beet, Pink Porcelain Squash, Sweet Potato, Burgundy Truffle, Maitake, Raspberry, Fig and Young Coconut. Fauna menu: Chawanmushi, Fall Vegetables, Brandade, Duck, Lamb, Miyazaki Beef, Buddha's Hand, Pear, Chocolate.

Restaurant: Grace, 652 W. Randolph St., Chicago; www.Grace-Restaurant.com

The skinny: "Although my first experience at Katsu is a very close second, first place has
to go to Grace. I first met and befriended Curtis Duffy shortly after I arrived in Chicago, and I was sincerely humbled after several meals at Avenues. Since meeting, there have been several aspects of our lives and careers that have paralleled, and I feel lucky to have watched Grace evolve from empty box to where it is now. Despite the high aspirations, it did not disappoint in the least. Every detail is well considered: from cuisine, to decor, amenities and the service.

As for Curtis, it is truly awesome watching his career blossomed right now.

Jimmy Bannos, Sr. — Co-Founder, Heaven on Seven, The Purple Pig in Chicago
Best Meal: Shrimp, Tomatoes and Feta Special
Restaurant: Boston Fish Market, 1225 Forest Ave., Des Plaines; www.BostonFishMarket.com
The skinny: "I loved the freshness of the brown shrimp sourced from the Galveston, Texas area along the Gulf of Mexico, along with the sweetness of the tomato and the balancing spice and rich feta cheese. The whole dish was off the charts."

Sarah Stegner — Co-Chef and Co-owner, Prairie Grass Café in Northbrook
Best Meal: Rib of Prime Beef, Potato Tart Tatin, Tomme de Savoie and Sweet Garlic, Bone Marrow, Burgundy and Thyme
Restaurant: Brindille, 534 N. Clark St., Chicago; www.Brindille-Chicago.com
The skinny: "Well done, beautifully presented, rich and so delicious."

Dave Raymond — Co-founder, Sweet Baby Ray's and Owner of Sweet Baby Ray's in Wood Dale
Best Meal: Corned Beef Sandwich
Restaurant: Manny's Cafeteria and Delicatessen, 1141 5. Jefferson St., Chicago; www.MannysDeli.com
The skinny: "I'm a simple man and know what I like. Manny's corned beef sandwich is my go-to sandwich and I have a great time every time I'm there."

Didier Durand — Chef and Proprietor, Cyrano's Farm Kitchen, The Barrel Room and Cyrano's Cafe on the River Walk
Best Meal: Molcageteada — Skirt Steak, Chicken Breast Stuffed with house chorizo, caraíba cheese, nopalitos, peppers and onions and served with refried beans and Mexican rice
Restaurant: Co-Si-Na Grill, 1706 W. Foster Ave., Chicago; www.co-si-na.com
The skinny: "On Sunday night, the place I might head up to would be Co-Si-Na Grill. I love the Tortilla Soup, but my favorite is the Molcageteada; it is juicy, tangy and authentic at $19! Much less than a plane ticket to Mexico!"

Chef Didier Durand, chef and owner of Cyrano's Farm Kitchen, The Barrel Room and Cyrano's Cafe on the River Walk, named Co-Si-Na as the spot where he ate his best meal of the year.

Ina Pinkney — Chef and Owner, Ina's in Chicago
Best Meal: Papaya Salad, Grilled Octopus, Mussels in Coconut Broth, Garlic Chicken, Grilled Quail, Tamarind Ribs, Fried Rice, Asparagus, Green Beans, Exotic Fruits, Roasted Pineapple and Macha Cream Puffs
Restaurant: Embeya, 564 W. Randolph St., Chicago; www.Embeya.com
The skinny: "My favorite meal of 2013 was, hands down, my 70th birthday dinner at Embeya. Chef Thai Dang prepared an array of dishes that are so memorable, I can still taste them all! It was my favorite meal because I was surrounded by my family of choice and because chef prepared the food with his loving heart and talent. It was a magical night."

Ryan McCaskey — Chef and Proprietor, Acadia in Chicago
Best Meal: Fauna Tasting Menu
Restaurant: Grace, 652 W. Randolph St., Chicago; www.Grace-Restaurant.com
The skinny: "Great balance and elegance; it was high-end dining, but not overly stuffy. For my Chicago dining experiences, it felt the most like a three-star Michelin experience."

Shoba Havalad — Chef and Instructor, Shoba's Indian Cooking in Glenview
Best Meal: Meso Sea Bass and Spicy Cumin Lamb
Restaurant: Lao 18, 18 W. Hubbard St., Chicago; www.Lao18.com
The skinny: "We were celebrating my son and daughter-in-law's wedding anniversary. I love the food there because Asian fusion is my favorite."

Gabriel Viti — Owner, Miramar in Highwood
Best Meal: Tasting Menu: Oysters, Foie Gras, Lobster, Rabbit, Caviar and Dover Sole
Restaurant: Brindille, 534 N. Clark St., Chicago; www.Brindille-Chicago.com
The skinny: "I loved the freshness of the brown shrimp sourced from the Galveston, Texas area along the Gulf of Mexico, along with the sweetness of the tomato and the balancing spice and rich feta cheese. The whole dish was off the charts."

Sarah Stegner — Co-Chef and Co-owner, Prairie Grass Café in Northbrook
Best Meal: Rib of Prime Beef, Potato Tart Tatin, Tomme de Savoie and Sweet Garlic, Bone Marrow, Burgundy and Thyme
Restaurant: Brindille, 534 N. Clark St., Chicago; www.Brindille-Chicago.com
The skinny: "Well done, beautifully presented, rich and so delicious."

Dave Raymond — Co-founder, Sweet Baby Ray's and Owner of Sweet Baby Ray's in Wood Dale
Best Meal: Corned Beef Sandwich
Restaurant: Manny's Cafeteria and Delicatessen, 1141 5. Jefferson St., Chicago; www.MannysDeli.com
The skinny: "I'm a simple man and know what I like. Manny's corned beef sandwich is my go-to sandwich and I have a great time every time I'm there."

Didier Durand — Chef and Proprietor, Cyrano's Farm Kitchen, The Barrel Room and Cyrano's Cafe on the River Walk
Best Meal: Molcageteada — Skirt Steak, Chicken Breast Stuffed with house chorizo, caraíba cheese, nopalitos, peppers and onions and served with refried beans and Mexican rice
Restaurant: Co-Si-Na Grill, 1706 W. Foster Ave., Chicago; www.co-si-na.com
The skinny: "On Sunday night, the place I might head up to would be Co-Si-Na Grill. I love the Tortilla Soup, but my favorite is the Molcageteada; it is juicy, tangy and authentic at $19! Much less than a plane ticket to Mexico!"

Chef Didier Durand, chef and owner of Cyrano's Farm Kitchen, The Barrel Room and Cyrano's Cafe on the River Walk, named Co-Si-Na as the spot where he ate his best meal of the year.
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Order online LightOperaWorks.com

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

CHEFS

Restaurant: Brindille, 534 N. Clark St., Chicago; www.Brindille-Chicago.com
The skinny: "Heaven. I love [Chef Carrie Nahabedian's] approach to French cuisine. I just love French cooking. The first time I went to France I went for three weeks and stayed six years. There are so few restaurants serving high-end French these days."

Paul Virant — Executive Chef and Partner, Vie in Western Springs and Perennial Virant in Chicago
Best Meal: Chicken Parm Sandwich
The skinny: "Breaded and pan-fried chicken with tomato sauce, tons of Parm served on some crazy griddled buttered bread! Wow!"

Jared Wentworth — Executive Chef, Longman and Eagle in Chicago
Best Meal: Matsutaki Chawanmushi
Restaurant: Katsu, 2651 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago; (773) 784-3383
The skinny: "My favorite meal this year was an absolutely amazing experience at the sushi restaurant Katsu. We ate the tasting menu and just had a great experience with some of the best raw product in the Midwest. The dish that stood out to me was the chef's Matsutaki chawanmushi: steamed custard flavored with Matsutaki mushrooms in their own broth. Ethereal and light, pungent and my favorite mushroom of the fall season — this dish was perfect."

Mark Grosz — Executive Chef and Owner, Oceanique in Evanston
Best Meal: Special Spanish Pata Negra Dinner + BYOB
Restaurant: Place EL Ideas, 2419 W. 14th St., Chicago; www.ELIdeas.com
The skinny: "It was three-year-aged Pata Negra ham from Spain — so rich and delicious it sweated fat as they sliced it by hand. They let us slice it too. All guests enjoyed that. Also, they encourage guests to wander into the kitchen and talk to the chefs. The cuisine, the wines and the company I was with was truly an exceptional and memorable experience for the ages. Then on the way home we stopped at Tommy's on Higgins in Chicago and had some very tasty chicken wings. Maybe those were the best bites of the night."

Bo Fowler — Executive Chef and Owner, Owen & Engine in Chicago, enjoys a meal at Nightwood, what she calls "the perfect neighborhood restaurant."

Restaurant: Nightwood, 2119 S. Halsted St., Chicago; www.NightwoodRestaurant.com
The skinny: "It was truly simple and lovely. Nightwood is the perfect neighborhood restaurant. I always get great service and simple, great food."

Rene Lorenzano — Executive Chef, Crepérie Saint Germain in Evanston
Best Meal: Ravioli alla Pomodoro con Mozzarella
Restaurant: Mia Figlia, 5304 W. Devon Ave., Chicago; www.MiaFigliaRestaurant.com
The skinny: "This is one of the best from-scratch pastas I have had in a long time. The texture and flavor is spot on. It's also very simple, served with a simple tomato basil sauce and homemade mozzarella cheese."

Alpana Singli — Owner, The Boarding House in Chicago
Best Meal: Chicken for Two
Restaurant: The Peninsula, 108 E. Superior St., Chicago; www.Peninsula.com/Chicago
The skinny: "It's truly heaven on a plate. Chicken is such a ubiquitous dish, but when it is done well, nothing can compare to this comfort food classic. Chef Wolen stuffs the underside of the skin with buttery brioche and the outside is basted to a perfect golden brown. The chicken is served in two rounds: the breast meat is complemented by a seasonal garnish (I had morel mushrooms and green garlic) and then the thigh meat is tossed with buttered mushrooms. I have sent dozens of my friends to the Peninsula just to try this chicken."
Nontraditional holiday fare: Raven’s production of ‘Christmas Goose’

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
For Sun-Times Media

You wouldn’t expect a show based on an Arthur Conan Doyle story to begin with eight performers playing musical instruments and singing Christmas carols. But there are many surprises in John Weagly and Michael Menendian’s “Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Christmas Goose” for Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St., Chicago.

The plot, which revolves around a stolen jewel, a lost hat and the aforementioned goose, is based on “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle,” but the co-authors injected a lot of humor into the tale, which runs a fast-paced 50 minutes and is recommended for ages 10 and up.

Families will love the sound effects and catch much of the humor. There’s even a carol sing-along at the end, making the show a great holiday alternative for families.

Performances are 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, and 3 p.m. Sundays, through Dec. 29. Tickets are $20, $15 students and seniors.

For details, call (773) 338-2177 or go to www.raventheatre.com.

CANDY IS DANDY

That why kids are thrilled to earn a golden ticket to the source in “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.” School District 69 presents this tale of candy-loving kids and Oompa-Loompas at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20 at Gorilla Tango’s Skokie Theatre, 7924 Lincoln Ave. Tickets are $10.

For details, call (847) 677-7761 or go to www.gorillatango.com.

NOT TOO LATE TO CELEBRATE

The Christmas spirit doesn’t have to end for your family on Dec. 25. You can still take a virtual trip to Santa’s home via the “Polar Express.” Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., will show that popular holiday film at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 27.

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

IT’S A TOSS UP

For a completely different way to recover from all the holiday activities, you can bring your kids to a Juggling Jam, 2-3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 27 at Morton Grove Public Library 6140 Lincoln Ave. Mike Vondruska will juggle to music, ride a unicycle and involve the audience.

For details, call (847) 965-4220 or go to www.mgpl.org.

A CROOD AWAKENING

Relocation is the only option for a prehistoric family after their cave is destroyed in “The Croods.” The 2013 PG-rated animated film will be shown at 1 p.m. Monday, Dec. 23 at Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St.

For details, call (847) 324-3149 or go to www.skokielibrary.info.
Day trips with international flair

MOMMY ON A ::::: SHOESTRING
BY BETH ENGELMAN

It's winter vacation and for many parents that means two weeks of uninterrupted time with our kids. Although having so much family time can be a blessing, it can also be a challenge as parents scramble for new ways to keep their kids occupied, happy and engaged.

And, if we can expose our kids to new cultures and historical events? Even better! So fasten your seatbelts and get ready for our guide to international travel without getting on a plane.

Go Dutch in Holland

"Holland, Michigan, is famous for its Dutch flavor in its food, festivals, flowers and its grand 12-story-high DeZwaan windmill," says Elisa Drake, author of Day Trips From Chicago (Globe Pequot Press, see elisadrake.com; Drake's updated edition hits bookstores in February). Holland is about 150 miles northeast of Chicago, perfect for a day trip or a weekend getaway.

The town of Holland is charming, with stores, restaurants and inns reminiscent of an Old Dutch town. Antique buffs will love the Wooden Shoe Antique Mall housed in a defunct wooden shoe factory, and Drake says the Holland Clock Company is a "must-see" for German novelty clocks.

For a look back at the history of Dutch life in Michigan, visit the Holland Museum (hollandmuseum.org), which showcases paintings, Dutch artifacts, and costumes from days gone by. Drake also recommends taking your children to The Settlers House, which re-creates the hardships early Holland immigrants endured. For more information about Holland, visit holland.org.

Unplug in Amish country

"Amish country is the perfect place to take a break from technology," says Drake. Scattered throughout seven northern Indiana communities, it's the third-largest Amish settlement in North America.

Holland, Mich., is famous for its spring tulip displays. PHOTO BY SARA SIMMONS

Each of the many outstanding stores, restaurants and inns in Amish country showcases the simple beauty of Amish life. To get a feel for the area, Drake recommends taking the Heritage Trail Driving Tour. Pick up a copy of the self-guided tour of the 90-mile loop at the Elkhart County Visitor Center, or download the PDF file at amishcountry.org.

Families interested in spending a few days in Amish country might consider staying at the Eisenhaus Inn & Conference Center, which offers warm cozy rooms, an indoor pool and complimentary hot cocoa and cookies in the lobby. The property also boasts village shops, an Amish bakery and a family-style restaurant that serves homemade meals with over 30 kinds of pies.

Bonneyville Mill is another highlight of Amish country. The mill, Indiana's oldest, continuously operating grist mill, still grinds corn, wheat, rye, and buckwheat (all available for purchase in the mill store).

In the Elkhart County parks around the mill, you can hike, cross-country ski and sled. For more information, visit elkhartcountyparks.org.
**GO CALENDAR**

**THURSDAY, DEC. 19**

**Wii Bowling Banquet & Tournament**

Noon: The end of the year bowling tournament features lunch and a tournament. Niles Senior Center, 999 Civic Center Drive, Niles. Call 847-568-6240. $18.

**New Release Movie: 'Mud'**

2 p.m.: Two boys find a mysterious man named Mud hiding from the law on a deserted island in the Mississippi. Starring Matthew McConaughey, Tye Sheridan, Jacob Lofland and more. 90 minutes. Niles Public Library District, 6890 W. Oakton St., Niles. For more information, call 847-663-1234.

**Film: 'Before Midnight'**

2 p.m.: It has been nine years since Jesse and Celine, the French-American couple who once met in Vienna. The pair returns to Chicago for one last chance to connect before the changes in their lives separate them for good. 130 minutes. Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St., Skokie. Call 847-677-7770. $5.

**Science Saturdays**

11 a.m.: A science project for families. Evanston Public Library-Chicago Avenue Branch, 900 Chicago Ave., Evanston. Call 847-446-8600.

**Salvation Army Brass Band**

3 p.m.: Guests of Lincolnwood Town Center are welcome to take a break from the shopping to enjoy holiday carols, courtesy of the Salvation Army Brass Band. Lincolnwood Town Center Mall, 3333 W. Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood. For more information, please call 847-674-9220.

**Toys for Tots Holiday Concert**

7 p.m.: Enjoy a performance by the Glenview Concert Band. Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St., Glenview.

**Second City Brass Christmas Concert**

7:30 p.m.: A concert of Christmas and seasonal brass music. The program will feature traditional favorites and a singalong. Free and open to the public. Saint Paul of the Cross Church, 320 S. Washington St., Park Ridge. For more information, please call 847-825-7605.

**SUNDAY, DEC. 22**

**Film: 'The Deflowing of Eva Van End'**

2 p.m.: In this perfect blend of satire and sincerity, a dysfunctional family gets turned on its head when the "perfect" exchange student moves in. 100 minutes. Call 847-929-5101 or visit www.mgpl.org to learn more. Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove.

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**Submit Your Event**

To submit an event for consideration in print, visit www.pioneerlocal.com/sub-cont.html and click the "Events" tab on the left side of the screen. Please submit the event no later than 10 days before the desired publication date.

**The Midnight Swinger**

8 p.m.: The comedian, who recently broke the Guinness World Record for the longest stand-up comedy show by an individual at 40 hours and 9 minutes, performs. Additional performances Friday at 10:30 p.m. and Saturday at 9:30 p.m. $22 and a minimum of two food or drink purchases. Zanies Comedy Night Club Rosemont, 5437 Park Place, Rosemont. Call 847-913-0844.

**Funny Old Broads**

**By Year Holidays**

8:30 p.m.: The show will feature some of the Funny Old Broads most popular pieces as well as new holiday-themed material. Stars stand-up comic Caryn Bark, sit-down comic Robin Riebman and musical comics The Boomer Babes (Pam Peterson and Jan Slavin). Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 19, 8 p.m. Dec. 21, 24 and 31, and 2 p.m. Dec. 22. Gorilla Tango Skokie, 7324 Lincoln Ave., Skokie. Call 847-677-7701. $22; $36 for New Year’s Eve performance (includes champagne).

**Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**

8 p.m.: Join Charlie Bucket in his adventures. The show features the iconic pair performing holiday favorites for the whole family. Allstate Arena, 6800 Male Mannheim Road, Rosemont. Call 847-677-7761. $10.

**Do the Downton**

2 p.m.: The library is showing “Downton Abbey,” episode six and seven of the third season. 96 minutes total. Niles Public Library District, 6890 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

**YA Last Minute Gifts**

4 p.m.: Students grades six to 12 can make last-minute gifts for friends and family. Supplies provided. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. For more information, call 847-825-3123.

**Merry Scary: Des Plaines Christmas**

10 a.m.: Children and their families are invited to create holiday gifts alongside Frosty’s helpers, participate in a storytime and enjoy holiday snacks. Registration suggested. Times are separated by age. Mason Park, Mason Park, Evanston. Call 847-448-4311.

**Trip to Christkindlmarket Chicago**

11 a.m.: A visit of one of the largest outdoor Christmas markets outside of Germany and browse items from more than 50 vendors from all over the globe. Registration required. Prairie View Community Center, 6834 Dempster St., Morton Grove. $10-$14.

**Merry Scary: Des Plaines Christmas**

9 a.m.: The 12th annual convention for Muslim-American families, presented by the Muslim American Society (MAS) and Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Road, Rosemont. Call 877-627-1060. $65-$90.

**MAS-ICNA Convention**

9 a.m.: The 12th annual convention for Muslim-American families, presented by the Muslim American Society (MAS) and Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 N. River Road, Rosemont. Call 877-627-1060. $65-$90.

**TBA Art and Science Saturday**

2 p.m.: Robin Meier provides a hands-on science project for families. Evanston Public Library-Chicago Avenue Branch, 900 Chicago Ave., Evanston. Call 847-446-8600.

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For more information, please call 847-674-3450. $20 per family. Christmas Cookies 10 a.m.: Participants can learn how to make Christmas-themed cookies. Elmwood Park Public Library, 1 W. Comly Parkway, Elmwood Park. Call 708-355-1237.

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**Traditional Irish Session**

4 p.m.: Larry Nugent leads the city’s longest running traditional Irish session. Abbey Pub, 3420 W. Grace St., Chicago.
Holiday Break Stay in Shape
6 p.m.: This holiday workout class is available Mondays and Thursdays through Jan. 2. Norridge Park District, 4631 N. Overhill Ave., Norridge. For more information, call 708-457-1244. $10-$14 per class.

Tap Battles
8 p.m.: The Tapmen perform contemporary tap dance choreography to live music and original video. Gorilla Tango Skokie, 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie. For more information, please call 847-677-7761. $20.

Monday, Dec. 23
Holiday Break Camp
9 a.m.: Students in kindergarten through sixth grade can spend the holiday break at camp. Activities include open gym, arts and crafts, sports, cooking, video games, movies and more. Camp is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 23, Dec. 26, Dec. 27, Dec. 30, Jan. 2 and Jan. 3. Admission is $22-$25 per day or $120-$135 for all six days. Children must be signed in and out by a guardian. Children must bring a lunch with their name on it. Norridge Park, 4631 N. Overhill Ave., Norridge. For more information, call 708-457-1244.

Tuesday, Dec. 24
The Tuesday Ten' Showcase
8 p.m.: A mix of ten headliners, including rising stars and surprise guests, perform stand-up. $10 and the purchase of at least two food or drink items. Zanies Comedy Night Club Rosemont, 5437 Park Place, Rosemont. Call 847-913-0484.

Comedy Sportz
7:30 p.m.: Two teams battle for laughs and points as they make up scenes, games and songs on the spot. The audience votes for the winners and a referee calls the fouls. Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 29-30 and Dec. 26-29. Gorilla Tango Skokie, 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie. For more information, call 847-677-7761. $25.

Taylor Manson
8 p.m.: The musical ventriloquist performs a stand-up routine. Additional performances Friday at 10:30 p.m. and Saturday at 9:30 p.m. $22 and a minimum of two food or drink purchases.

Thursday, Dec. 26
Classic Film Series: 'Gun Crazy'
1 p.m.: A screening and discussion of the 1950 crime drama about a man who discovers how dangerous his wife is when they go on a robbery spree together. 86 minutes. Eisenhower Public Library, 4613 N. Oketo Ave., Harwood Heights.

Comedy Sportz
7:30 p.m.: Two teams compete for the most laughs through the improvisation of scenes, songs and games. Gorilla Tango Skokie, 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie. For more information, call 847-677-7761. $25.

Friday, Dec. 27
Friends Book Sale
2 p.m.: Browse a selection of discounted items, including hardcover books, DVDs and CDs for $1 and paperback books for 50 cents. Eisenhower Public Library, 4613 N. Oketo Ave., Harwood Heights. For more information, please call 708-867-7828.

Family Movie
'Monsters University'
2 p.m.: A look back at Mike and Sulley's relationship when they were students at Monsters University. 104 minutes. Snacks provided. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. For more information, please call 847-663-1234.

Trans-Siberian Orchestra 2013
3 p.m.: A holiday rock performance for a new generation. A second performance begins at 8 p.m. Allstate Arena, 6820 Mannheim Road, Rosemont. For more information, call 800-745-3000. $40-$71.

Saturday, Dec. 28
New Years Eve Zia's Style
5 p.m.: A champagne toast and three-course dinner at 5 and 5:30 p.m. ($33), a champagne toast and four-course dinner at 8:45 and 7:15 p.m. ($55) and a champagne toast, four-course dinner, dancing, party favors and a midnight celebration at 8:45 and 9:45 p.m. ($75). Call 773-775-0808 for reservations. Zia's Trattoria, 6699 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago. Call 773-775-0808.

Bus Trip: Christmas Lights at Lincoln Park Zoo
3 p.m.: Take a trip downtown to see the Zoo Lights display. Eisenhower Public Library, 4613 N. Oketo Ave., Harwood Heights. For more information, call 708-867-7828. $20.

Josh Wolf
7 p.m.: The comedian, who's a regular on "Chelsea Lately" and "My Name is Earl," performs stand-up. Additional performance Saturday at 9:30 p.m. $25 and a minimum of two food or drink purchases. Zanies Comedy Night Club Rosemont, 5437 Park Place, Rosemont. For more information, please call 847-913-0484.

Trans-Siberian Orchestra 2013
3 p.m.: A holiday rock performance for a new generation. A second performance begins at 8 p.m. Allstate Arena, 6920 Mannheim Road, Rosemont. For more information, call 800-745-3000. $40-$71.
The Top 10 movies of the year

BY BRUCE INGRAM
Film Critic

Coming up with titles for a Top 10 Movies list wasn't hard this year. In fact, the difficulty for 2013 was narrowing down which ones made the cut. It's not a bad problem to have since it's a welcome reminder that, movie-wise, you're guaranteed to discover something fabulous eventually. Such as these:

1. "12 Years a Slave" — This harrowing historical drama is an almost unimaginably cruel depiction of slavery in the United States, yet Chiwetel Ejiofor's performance, as an enslaved man resisting despair, is something that simply must be seen.

2. "Captain Phillips" — This powerful true-life story about an American cargo ship hijacked by Somali pirates features fine performances (especially by Tom Hanks) and a balanced depiction of the attackers.

3. "Dallas Buyers Club" — Great performances make this one special, especially Matthew McConaughey as a homophobe redneck struggling to stay alive after contracting AIDS during the late-'80s, and Jared Leto as a transsexual who helps him sell alternative treatments to the gay community.

4. "Fruitvale Station" — The senseless shooting of a 22-year-old black man by San Francisco rapid transit police makes a shocking debut for writer/director Ryan Coogler — largely because of a painfully real performance by Michael B. Jordan as the victim living his last day.

5. "Gravity" — The predicament of astronauts George Clooney and Sandra Bullock adrift in space after a sudden disaster generates extreme suspense, but it's the cutting-edge special effects that make it a dazzler.

6. "Her" — A lonely writer (Joaquin Phoenix) falls for the female-voiced computer operating system designed to meet his every need in Spike Jonze's fascinating meditation on true love.

7. "Mud" — This sensitively written and acted indie features another offbeat performance by Matthew McConaughey. This time as a drifter involving two teenage boys in a dangerous adventure for the sake of romance.

8. "Nebraska" — Matthew McConaughey in "Dallas Buyers Club." This slow-moving yet edgy comedy has a lot to say about families, but it's Bruce Dern's performance, as an alcoholic, near-senile old man chasing an imaginary million-dollar sweepstakes prize, that makes it a must.

9. "Philomena" — Director Stephen Frears ("The Queen"), English comic actor Steve Coogan and Judi Dench do a particularly nice job balancing tragedy and humor with this true tale of an atheistic journalist helping a devout Irish lady find her long-lost illegitimate child.

10. "Wadjda" — There's a lot more going on in this first-ever feature film from Saudi Arabia than the deceptively simple story of a young girl dreaming of buying a forbidden bicycle. Even if it didn't find an innocuous way to address the constraints on women in Saudi society, "Wadjda" would still be a must-see thanks to the talented amateur in the title role.
SHOWTIMES

Movie times are effective Friday, Dec. 20, through Thursday, Dec. 26. Please note that theater schedules are subject to change.

CENTURY 12 EVANSTON/CINEARTS 6 AND XD
1715 Maple Ave.
Evanston
(847) 491-9751
www.cinemark.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

AMC SHOWPLACE NILES 12
301 Golf Mill Center
Niles
(888) AMC-4FUN
www.amctheatres.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

CENTURY 12 EVANSTON/CINEARTS 6 AND XD
1715 Maple Ave.
Evanston
(847) 491-9751
www.cinemark.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

PICKWICK THEATRE
5 S. Prospect Ave.
Park Ridge
(847) 604-2234
www.pickwicktheatre.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

REGAL GARDENS STADIUM 1-6
4999 Old Orchard Center
Skokie
(847) 673-4037
www.regmovies.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

ROSEMONT PREMIER
9701 Bryn Mawr Ave.
Rosemont
(847) 447-1030
www.muvico.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

REGAL GARDENS 7-13
4999 Old Orchard Center
Skokie
(847) 674-0184
www.regmovies.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

AMC SHOWPLACE VILLAGE CROSSING 18
7000 Carpenter Road
Skokie
(888)-AMC-4FUN
www.amctheatres.com
Contact theater for showtimes.

47 Ronin (PG-13)
47 Ronin in 3-D (PG-13)
Crudge Match (PG-13)
Justin Bieber’s Believe (PG)
The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (PG)
American Hustle (R)
Saving Mr. Banks (PG-13)
Walking With Dinosaurs in 3-D (PG)
Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues (PG-13)
Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom (PG-13)
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Whiskey Lounge open Friday and Saturday nights.
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855-927-5483 http://27livelive.com
Soon open for lunch. Sunday brunch starts December 8.

New Year's Eve at Bobby's Deerfield
Great Food - Hand-Crafted Cocktails - And a Celebration Full of Surprises
Join Us to Ring In the New Year!
We'll be offering our regular menu, several specials and hourly giveaways...
From 6:00 - 5:30 p.m.
Each table will receive a complimentary bottle of bubbly to enjoy at home.
The rest of the evening we'll be rolling a great bottle of bubbly to take home every hour & at midnight we'll give away a $100 gift card!!!
*The evening includes park fees and a champagne toast at the court strains 12*
Call 847.607.9104 to reserve your table
Bobby's www.bobbysdeerfield.com

A Special Holiday menu throughout December featuring Holiday Roasted Goose - OPEN 7 days a week - For lunch, dinner and late night fun - Friday, Saturday & Sundays LIVE Entertainment
GREAT FOOD, GREAT SERVICE, GREAT PEOPLE

**Make your NEW YEAR'S EVE reservations today!**
Edelweiss Band
8:30PM - 12:30AM
EDELWEISS Holiday Dinner
A Special Holiday menu throughout December featuring Holiday Roasted Goose

Oceanique.com - VALET PARKING
505 MAIN ST - EVANSTON ~ 847.864.3435

**ALLEGRETTI'S BAKERY**
7717 W. Lawrence, Norridge • 708-453-4412
Fancy Italian & Miniature Pastries
Open Christmas Eve until 5pm.
Serving the finest Italian Baked Goods for more than 4 decades
ORDT YOUR HOLIDAY TREATS TODAY!
Pumpkin Cheese Pie, Delicious Fruit Cakes, Old-World TORRONE Candy

**FLOWER FANTASY**
We are your Flower Fantasy serving the Community for 25 Years!
Shop Local
* Holiday Centerpieces
* Beautiful Bouquets
* Quality Flowers and Gifts for all Occasions*
* First prize in the 10th Annual Arts & Crafts Festival of Handicrafts Benefit of the Evanston Art Center, March 1994*

**FLORAL FANTASY**
www.flowerfantasy.com
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* Beautiful Bouquets
* Quality Flowers and Gifts for all Occasions*
* First prize in the 10th Annual Arts & Crafts Festival of Handicrafts Benefit of the Evanston Art Center, March 1994*

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505 MAIN ST ~ EVANSTON ~ 847.864.3435
Enjoy Chicagoland's Finest Seafood in an Elegant Setting
Newly Remodeled
Join Us for New Year's Eve
CHEF'S FIVE COURSE MENU w/Choices
$99 per person (including tax, gratuity and drinks)

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ORDER YOUR HOLIDAY TREATS TODAY!
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8:30PM - 12:30AM
EDELWEISS Holiday Dinner
A Special Holiday menu throughout December featuring Holiday Roasted Goose

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847-462-5000
www.biagges.com

**THE SHOPS AT DEERFIELD SQUARE**
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www.shopsatdeerfieldsquare.com
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771 Deerfield Rd. (847) 630.1300
www.shopsatdeerfieldsquare.com

**Lupita's**
MEXICAN RESTAURANT
Thanks You on Our 25th Anniversary!
Pay Cash and receive
20% OFF
Total Bill
Not good with other offers. Expires 12-31-13
Gift Certificates
20% OFF
Not good with other offers. Expires 12-31-13
SCHOOLS
20% OFF
Total Bill
Schools participate during lunch hours only.
Not good with other offers. Expires 12-31-13
Kids Eat Free
TUES
Kids under 10 years old eat free Tuesday. Not good with other offers. Expires 12-31-13
Other rules & restrictions may apply, please ask for complete details.
Tues. - Thurs. 11:00AM to 9 PM • Fri. & Sat. 11:00AM - 10 PM • Sun. 5 - 9 PM • Closed Monday
700 Main Street • Evanston • 847-328-2255

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Happy Holidays from Boston Blackies
The Big Rib Fest is Back and Better than EVER!
Comes with Potato and Cole Slaw $14.99
Buy $100 Gift Card, get a $20 Bonus!
405 Lake Cook Rd, Deerfield, IL 60015
847-418-3400 phone • 847-418-3916 fax
1 block west of Waukegan in Lake Cook Plaza
www.bostonblackies.com
Offer a valid only at Deerfield location.
not good with any other discounts. Not required to receive deal. Exp 12-31-13

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Offer a valid only at Deerfield location.
not good with any other discounts. Not required to receive deal. Exp 12-31-13
SKOKIE

Central United Methodist Church
8237 Kenton Ave., Skokie
(847) 673-1311
www.skokiecentralumc.org
Worship: Sundays at 10:30 AM

Devar Emet Messianic Synagogue
7800 Niles Ave., Skokie
847-674-3146
www.devaremets.org
Join us for Shabbat Services at 10am
"A Community of Jews who believe and teach that Yeshua (Jesus) is the Promised Jewish Messiah"

SKOKIE

St. Timothy Campus
9000 Kildare Ave. Skokie
Sunday Worship
9 am: St. Timothy's Lutheran
10:30 am: St. Timothy's Lutheran
Noon: Agape Life Outreach Center
www.StTimothySkokie.org

Evanshire Presbyterian Church
4555 Church Street
www.evanshirepresbyterian.com
Every Sunday at 11 AM

SKOKIE

Carter-Westminster United Presbyterian Church
4950 W. Pratt Ave., Skokie
WE'RE GROWING & MAKING CHANGES!!
9:30 a.m. Praise and Celebration Service with Praise Band
Adult Sunday School
10:30 am Sunday School (All ages)
10:45 am Traditional Service with Choir
(Adult Classes in English & Assyrian)
Fridays 7:00-9:30 pm
Assyrian Fellowship
Tuesday Evenings 7:15-8:45 pm
New Lyfe Youth Group
(for Jr & Sr High Youth)
2nd Saturday
Monthly 7:30-9:30 pm-CW Café with Open Microphone:
Guitar, Singing, Poetry, Comedy
"All Positive Forms of Entertainment"

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Carver-Westminster United Presbyterian Church
4950 W. Pratt Ave., Skokie
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2nd Saturday
Monthly 7:30-9:30 pm-CW Café with Open Microphone:
Guitar, Singing, Poetry, Comedy
"All Positive Forms of Entertainment"

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Ezra-Habonim, the Niles Township Jewish Congregation
Your home for Jewish, Learning, Living and Loving
4500 Dempster St. Skokie, IL 60076
847-675-4117
www.ehnt.org
Weekly Shabbat Services – Fri 8PM, Kotel 7PM & Sat 9:30AM
Minyan Mon-Thurs 7PM;
Sat & Sun 6PM
Monthly Shabbat dinners at 6:30PM
Religious School Tues & Sat;
Rabbi Jeffrey Weil
Cantor Benjamin Warschawski
Rabbi Neil Brief, Emeritus

KEHILLAT SHALOM
An Egalitarian Conservative Congregation
Lay Led Shabbat Service, 9:45AM
8610 Niles Center Rd, Skokie
847-679-6513
www.kehillatshalom.org

W.M. Temple Church of God in Christ, Inc.
5151 Church St., Skokie, IL
(847) 966-1095
www.wmtcogic.org
pastorcranford@gmail.com
Sunday Service: 11:30 AM
Sunday School: 10 AM
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7 PM
Intercessory Prayer: Tuesday & Friday, 12 PM
Dr. Clarence Cranford, Jr., Pastor
Elizabeth W. Cranford, 1st Lady

To showcase your House of Worship here call
630-978-8277 or worship@Pioneerlocal.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHICAGO</th>
<th>GLENVIEW</th>
<th>NORTHFIELD</th>
<th>NORWOOD PARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edison Park Lutheran Church 6626 N. Oliphant Ave. Chicago, IL (Across park from Edison Park Metra) 773.631.9131, <a href="http://www.edisonparkchurch.com">www.edisonparkchurch.com</a> Saturday Worship 4:30 p.m. Sunday Worship 8:00, 9:15 &amp; 10:30 a.m. Rev. Dr. Michael D. Sparby, Sr. Pastor Carole Edwards, Associate in Ministry Matt Haider, Worship Music Michael Lyda, Children/Youth/Family</td>
<td>Rohr Chabad Center of Glenview 701 Harlem Avenue, Glenview Shabbat morning services 9:30 am NO membership required For all your Jewish needs call 847-910-1738 <a href="http://www.ChabadofGlenview.com">www.ChabadofGlenview.com</a></td>
<td>Willow Creek Community Church North Shore Campus 315 Waukegan Road 847-441-6599 Sunday Services: 9 &amp; 11am Promisedland (Infants-Gr5): 9 &amp; 11am Elevate (Grades 6-8): 11am Impact (Grades 9-12): 6pm For more information visit <a href="http://www.WillowNorthShore.org">www.WillowNorthShore.org</a></td>
<td>St. Alban’s Episcopal Church Family-friendly church for every kind of family. Single? Partnered? Spouse and kids? 6240 N. Avondale, near Devon &amp; Harlem Communion every Sunday, 9:30 a.m. stalbanschicago.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John Lutheran Church (LCMS) 7429 N. Milwaukee Ave. 847-847-8667 <a href="http://www.st-john-niles.org">www.st-john-niles.org</a> Preaching Christ crucified for your forgiveness Welcoming traditional worship Sanctuary Handicap accessible Sunday Worship at 9:30 Sunday School &amp; Bible Class 10:45 Rev. Matthew Joseph Gunia, Pastor “For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart ....” 1 John 3:20</td>
<td>Faith Lutheran Church (ELCA) 6201 W Peterson Ave. Chicago, IL (773) 631-0715 Saturday Worship 5:30PM Sunday Worship 10:30AM Holy Communion Weekly Pastors: Barbara Berry-Bailey and Jeffery King</td>
<td>Park Ridge Presbyterian Church 1300 W. Crescent Ave. 847-823-4135 Sunday Service: 10:00 am Children’s programming for pre-k - 7th grade, Nursery service for younger children 8:45 am Confirmation classes for 8th grade 9:00 am High School Adult Education Bible Study Sunday 11:30 am Adult Education Bible Study Thursdays 6:30 pm “Open Forum” Adult Learning First Thursday every month 6:30 pm <a href="http://www.parkridgepresby.org">www.parkridgepresby.org</a> Like us on Facebook Rev. Caryle Atken Wilkie Pastor Mr. Aaron Higashi Dir. of Youth &amp; Family Ministries Mrs. Amy Schaetzlein Sunday School Dir.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwood Park Lutheran Church 5917 N. Nina Ave Chicago, IL P: 773.631.2860 F: 773.631.0142 <a href="http://www.norwoodparklutheran.org">www.norwoodparklutheran.org</a> Worship Services Sundays At 10:00 am</td>
<td>To showcase your House of Worship here call 630-978-8277 or <a href="mailto:Worship@Pioneerlocal.com">Worship@Pioneerlocal.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The family members you've entrusted to us have become part of our family and their care has been our sacred commitment for over 175 years.

Remember to visit the Catholic Cemeteries throughout the Christmas Season.

The Catholic Cemeteries are here for you whenever the need arises. We are open for visitation 365 days a year.

Scott Egozi, Iona H.
70, passed away on Tuesday, November 12, 2013 at her home in Niles. Iona was born on August 20, 1943 in Guyana, South America. She was the granddaughter of R.B. Scott and daughter of Uriah and Rebecca Scott. Iona was the seventh of nine children and is survived by sisters, Esme Darlington, her twin Isola Benjamin; brothers, Neberne and Randolph Scott; and a host of extended family and friends.

Her working career began as an elementary school teacher in Guyana before migrating to Chicago in 1964. She spent more than twenty-five years with Pace until her retirement in 2009. At the time of her death, Iona was an active member of the United Church of Hyde Park where for many years she served in a variety of church positions. She was a part of the Chicago Guyanese community and kept in touch with her roots through friends, cooking and return visits to Guyana. Iona was sister, cousin, auntie and godmother to many persons in her life. Her dedication to the welfare of others was endless and she touched many lives through church, family, friends and work. Iona’s sharp wit and custom for speaking her mind will be remembered by all and she will be greatly missed by those who knew and loved her.

The family asks that memorial contributions in her name be made to the United Church of Hyde Park, 1448 E. 53rd Street, Chicago, IL 60615.
Express Condolences

Sign the online Guest Book

For local community Death Notices visit pioneerlocal.com

Ask about our available Death Notice Emblems.
Call: 847-998-3400 (opt 6)
**Puzzles**

**SUPER CROSSWORD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across</th>
<th>Down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48. African warior</td>
<td>1. Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Using ink as a</td>
<td>51. Cottle, Shafta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really stuck</td>
<td>54. Advanced study group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dewey-eyed</td>
<td>82. Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plate a World War II battleship</td>
<td>84. Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down</td>
<td>89. Pool ball striker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Doing the job</td>
<td>100. File No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sugar type</td>
<td>111. Brutish sort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. One side in the Pro Bowl, Abbr.</td>
<td>112. &quot;Star Wars&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Least large</td>
<td>113. God of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Toxic chem.</td>
<td>115. Willy remark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Willy of &quot;Death of a Salamander&quot;</td>
<td>118. City near Mexico City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Dweller in Muskcat</td>
<td>119. Uses a Nook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. B.</td>
<td>120. &quot;Star Wars&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Decrees</td>
<td>121. Trick-taking character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Potato-filled dumpling</td>
<td>125. &quot;Star Wars&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Perhaps</td>
<td>127. &quot;Star Wars&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PUZZLE ANSWERS**

**HOROSCOPES: DECEMBER 25 — DECEMBER 31**

**ARIES** (March 21 to April 19): You might be busier than you had expected right now. But between the socializing rounds and work tasks, there are opportunities for special moments.

**TAURUS** (April 20 to May 20): Your creative approach leads to a quicker-than-expected solution to a workplace problem. Now you can devote more time to that proposal you hope to introduce.

**GEMINI** (May 21 to June 20): Technological glitches create problems early on. But by midweek, all runs smoothly once again, and you're well on your way to meeting all your deadlines.

**CANCER** (June 21 to July 22): Your energy levels are high, and you feel you can handle everything that comes along. But try to take a break from your hectic pace for some quiet time.

**LEO** (July 23 to August 22): Before you pounce on that shiny new opportunity, take more time to check it out and see how much substance actually lies beneath all that glitter.

**VIRGO** (August 23 to September 22): A personal situation you thought was resolved resurfaces, thanks to possibly well-intentioned move that went awry. Deal with it as soon as possible.

**LIBRA** (September 23 to October 22): That goal you set way back when is finally in sight. Maintain your focus on achieving it, and don't allow yourself to be distracted by unimportant demands.

**SCORPIO** (October 23 to November 21): A temperamental flare-up creates negative feelings that need to be dealt with immediately. But things once again go well after the apologies are made.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 22 to December 21): An early impulsive act causes confusion. But all is smoothed over once explanations are made. Expect someone to ask for your advice.

**CAPRICORN** (December 22 to January 19): You might have to do some juggling of your priorities, as a personal matter appears to require more time and attention. Put your pride aside and accept help.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20 to February 18): Your creative aspect is strong. It will operate negative feelings that need to be dealt with immediately. But things once again go well after the apologies are made.

**PISCES** (February 19 to March 20): Be careful about making major decisions when you're not really committed to them. And resist any pressure to do otherwise.
## Dealer Directory
Scan a QR code to see that dealer's entire used-vehicle inventory.

### BMW
- **Bill Jacobs BMW**  
  2495 Aurora Ave.  
  Naperville, IL 60540  
  855-264-1078

### CHEVROLET
- **Webb Chevrolet**  
  9440 S. Cicero Ave.  
  Oak Lawn, IL 60453  
  855-837-4041

- **Carrie Chevy**  
  8401 W. Roosevelt Road  
  Forest Park, IL 60130  
  888-450-6865

- **Webb Chevrolet Plainfield**  
  16140 S. Lincoln Highway  
  Plainfield, IL 60586  
  888-927-3761

### CHRYSLER
- **Feeny Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram**  
  1010 East Chicago St.  
  Elgin, IL 60120  
  888-928-1180

### FORD
- **Art Hill Ford**  
  901 W. Lincoln Highway  
  Merrillville, IN 46410  
  855-247-9481

- **Carrie Ford Frankfort**  
  9423 W. Lincoln Highway  
  Frankfort, IL 60423  
  888-928-1146

- **Highland Park Ford**  
  339 Park Avenue West  
  Highland Park, IL 60035  
  888-638-5096

- **Rizza Ford Lincoln**  
  8100 W. 159th St.  
  Orland Park, IL 60462  
  877-766-8864

- **Ron Tirabassi Ford**  
  4358 W. Jefferson St.  
  Shorewood, IL 60435  
  888-928-1142

### INDEPENDENT
- **Frankie's Auto Sales**  
  629 Joliet St.  
  Dyer, IN 46311  
  888-684-5385

### KIA
- **Southlake Kia**  
  491 E. Lincoln Highway  
  Merrillville, IN 46410  
  855-282-6798

### LAND ROVER
- **Bill Jacobs Land Rover**  
  16140 S. Lincoln Highway  
  Plainfield, IL 60586  
  888-927-3761

### MITSUBISHI
- **Max Madsen Aurora**  
  3930 Ogden Ave.  
  Aurora, IL 60504  
  855-289-1448

### SUBARU
- **Bill Jacobs Subaru**  
  2525 W. Jefferson St.  
  Joliet, IL 60435  
  855-250-4119

- **Nielsen Subaru**  
  U.S. 6  
  Portage, IN 46368  
  855-856-5827

### TOYOTA
- **Lombard Toyota**  
  725 W. Roosevelt Road  
  Lombard, IL 60148  
  877-870-3816

### VOLKSWAGEN
- **Bill Jacobs Volkswagen**  
  211 Aurora Ave.  
  Naperville, IL 60540  
  855-685-3348

## Car Story
> We want to tell your car story. Email it to kevin.bargnes@wrapports.com.

### Bernard Escamilla's 1976 AMC Hornet X

By ToDrive Editors

I was only 22 years old when I factory-ordered this 1976 AMC Hornet X. This was the first car I ever bought myself. The real reason why I bought my AMC Hornet X was everybody was buying Chevys and Fords. I wanted to be different.

I still have this AMC Hornet X. The car has 38,000 miles on it. The engine is a 258 six-cylinder.

I wanted something that was good on gas at the time. In the early 1970s, there was an oil embargo, which caused long lines at the gas pump.

I will always keep the Hornet in the family. I will forever be in the world of AMCs, Pacers, Gremlins and Hornets. Some might call these the nerd cars of the '70s, but as the old saying goes, "Gone but not forgotten."
Mercedes-Benz top luxury brand

TODRIVE.COM NEWS SERVICE

In the month of September, Mercedes-Benz was the most popular luxury auto brand purchased by Niles residents. Mercedes-Benz topped the luxury sales chart with 12 sales of the 42 total sales of luxury cars to Niles residents. A total of six new Mercedes-Benz vehicles and six used Mercedes-Benz vehicles made up the 12 overall Mercedes-Benz sales in the month.

Lexus, which accounted for nine sales, was the second most popular luxury brand sold to Niles residents in September. Of the nine total Lexus purchases in September, seven were used vehicles and two were new vehicles. BMW took third place on the list of most popular auto brands, totaling seven sales — six used and one new.

Mercedes-Benz was the most popular luxury auto brand bought new (six purchases), while Lexus was the most popular luxury brand bought used (seven). In September, 76 percent of luxury car purchases by Niles residents came through a local dealer, while 24 percent came via private party transactions. Private party transactions accounted for 10 of the 42 total luxury car sales to Niles residents in September, while local dealer transactions accounted for 32 luxury auto sales. Fletcher Jones of Chicago was the top dealer of luxury cars to Niles residents in September with three overall sales.

Other popular dealerships selling luxury vehicles to Niles residents in the month included Loeb Motors (three sales), Lexus of Highland Park (two) and Fields Imports (two).

Taking all auto sales into account (not just luxury sales), Niles residents bought 251 vehicles in September. Of the 251 total auto purchases, 142 were used vehicles and 109 were new vehicles. This means that used cars accounted for 57 percent of overall sales in the month.
Volkswagen 2008 Jetta Sedan
Sunroof, Leather & More Great On Gas! #5317B
$11,400 866-960-7980

Ford 2003 Thunderbird Premium
Powerful Crew Cab, V6, Ready For Anything! #56435
$19,300 866-960-7980

Nissan 2007 Titan LE 4WD
Low Miles, Bluetooth, Back Up Camera & Much More! #53513A
$34,000 866-960-7980

Volkswagen 2009 Routan SEL
Sunroof, 3rd Row, Leather & More! Perfect For The Family!
#53513A $13,495 866-960-7980

Ford 2011 F-150 XLI 4WD
Super Cab, V8, Nothing Can Stop You In This Truck! #14235A
$22,995 888-698-0893

Chevy 2011 Traverse LS
Satellite Ready, 3rd Row Acoustical Package, A Great Deal!
#10681 $18,795 888-698-0893

Jeep 2009 Wrangler Unlimited X
On/Off Road Tires, V6, CD/MP3, Sleek (file photo) #10680
$22,395 866-960-7980

Ford 2005 Mustang Premium
Super Low Miles, CD Changer, Automatic, Turn Heads In This Yellow Beauty!
#35245 $19,995 888-638-5096

Mercedes-Benz 2006 E-Class 3.5L
Navigation, Sunroof & More! This Will Sell Fast! #1046A
$11,900 866-960-7980

Toyota 2011 FJ Cruiser 4WD
Low Miles, CD/MP3, Great MPG's! This Won't Last! #34822
$12,495 888-638-5096

Land Rover 2008 Range Rover Sport
Low Miles, Navigation, DVD & More! All The Toys! #34632
$29,995 888-638-5096

To drive.com
To Drive North

Volkswagen 2010 Passat Sedan
Low Miles, Sunroof, Heated Seats. What A Value! #34201
$11,900 866-960-7980

Ford 2003 Thunderbird Premium
Powerful Crew Cab, V6, Ready For Anything! #56435
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Texas Rangers utility infielder and former Hawks standout volunteered to speak at area baseball forum

BY ERIC VAN DRIL
For Sun-Times Media, @VanOnlSports

NILES — The thing that arguably stands out the most when watching Adam Rosales play baseball is the speed and intensity with which he runs the bases.

Rosales, a Park Ridge native, never jogs. The Texas Rangers utility infielder sprints to first after taking a walk, and not even a home run keeps him from hustling. He's one of the few professional players whose home run trot is a sprint.

Rosales used to approach the offseason with a similar all-out, all-the-time mentality. The 30-year-old's approach to the offseason has undergone a couple changes since he was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in 2005, however. It shifted from trying to bulk up as much as possible early on, to playing as much as he could in the offseason around 2008 and 2009. Rosales said he's now focused on maintaining his body and trying to better prepare for the grueling 162-game regular season.

"As I got older, I started playing winter ball more," said Rosales, who signed a one-year, $750,000 contract with the Rangers in November. "I played in the Arizona Fall League, I played in Mexico, I played in Puerto Rico ... But now, as I'm past that stage of my career, I'm working out now with a personal trainer. I'm not trying to max out anymore. I'm making sure my body is moving properly, that I'm lifting properly and I can function properly and I can endure the season ... a lot better."

Rosales was forced to change the way he prepares in the offseason because his body broke down. The 2001 Maine South graduate went from a full season with the Reds in 2009 right into playing winter ball in Mexico until January. Then, after resting, he transitioned into 2010 spring training with the Athletics. However, he developed a stress fracture in the navicular bone in his right foot during the season. The injury required surgery and he said it took 10 months to heel.

Rosales has spent this offseason working out and trying to get away from the pressures of the major leagues by spending time with his wife and family in Park Ridge. Even after such a hectic campaign a year ago — Rosales was designated for assignment four times in a span of 34 days, three times by the A's and once by the Rangers, before finishing the year with Texas — his passion for the sport remains.

"Once the season ends, I just kind of sit down for about a week and then I get the itch again," Rosales said. "I want to hit off the tee, start honing my skills a little more. ... I don't like taking too much time off — I'll just look to get back into it and stay active, not only baseball-wise, but keeping my mind fresh."

Rosales was the de facto keynote speaker at the Playing College and Professional Baseball forum at Notre Dame on Dec. 11. Rosales discussed his work ethic and how the four C's — being coachable, committed, confident and consistent — helped him make it to the major leagues. His willingness to talk in front of a captive audience of about 150 people was the primary reason why Paul Tokarz put the event together.

"This year, Adam reached out to me via email and said he was in town, and asked if we were still doing the event," said Tokarz, who had organized the forum two previous times. "Whenever a major league baseball player contacts you about doing something for the community and the kids, it's something you don't turn away from. ... Adam's one of the hardest working baseball players we've been around, and he's a great example for all these kids."
Baseball smarts

Academics stressed at forum about pro, college baseball

BY ERIC VAN DRIL
For Sun-Times Media, @VanDrilSports

NILES — Of the 12 former Division I college players who spoke at the Playing College and Professional Baseball forum held at Notre Dame, two men stood out.

The obvious outlier was Adam Rosales, a Maine South graduate who currently plays for the Texas Rangers. The utility infielder was the only panelist at the Dec. 11 forum who made it to the majors.

Nelson Gord, the baseball coach at Notre Dame, also was different from the rest.

Several people spoke about playing college baseball before Gord, and a few, including Maine South graduate Mark Ori, said they were able to use baseball as a stepping stone to get into a college they probably wouldn't have been able to get into on their academics alone.

After playing at Northwestern, Ori was drafted by the Houston Astros and advanced as high as Double-A, playing 125 games with Corpus Christi in 2009.

Before the panel moved onto the next topic, Gord underlined the importance of baseball players focusing on academics throughout high school by telling his story.

"I can sit up here and say that I was probably the least-recruited person here," said Gord, who went to Illinois-Chicago and earned a scholarship as a sophomore. "I walked on somewhere, and gave myself an opportunity. I had a 30 ACT; I had a 4.8 out of 5 GPA. How baseball opened doors for their academics, my academics opened doors for my baseball. We're not all as talented as a Mark Ori. ... We're not. I'm not. But you make the most of what you have and you navigate your own path.

The 90-minute event was broken into eight segments that stretched from keys to development before high school all the way to what it's like to play in the majors.

Rosales spoke about his experience of playing major league baseball near the end of the event, yet most of the night was dedicated to providing tips and sharing experiences with young players and their parents.

The point was made to always play as if somebody is watching you early on in the event, and Paul Tokarz applied that principle to telling those in attendance to take the same approach on social media.

Tokarz, a Notre Dame graduate, played at Bradley.

There was also copious baseball-specific advice.

It included the importance of keeping up one's arm strength while playing other sports, and that a willingness to invest time into improving always trumps expensive equipment and private lessons.

Touring a few players and their families at Notre Dame on Dec. II, | TOM CONNELLYSUBMITTED PHOTO

Rosales was the last speaker before the Q&A session, and he provided simple, practical insight as to how he made it to the major leagues.

"It's just the four Cs," Rosales said. "The first one that I always make sure I did was always be coachable. Always be willing to make adjustments that coaches want you to make. ... The second C is you've got to be committed. ... It's good to play different sports — I did, and it's great to do that — but you have to be 100 percent committed to the game."

Rosales added: "The third C is you've got to be confident. If you don't believe in yourself, nobody else will. ... The fourth C is you've got to be consistent, and that might be the toughest one because [it's hard] to repeat a task over and over again consistently. But if you stick to a routine that works — you show up every day — that's how you're going to be more consistent."
Ammar Becar's attendance at a May 30, 2012, soccer match at Soldier Field between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Mexico helped launch his international basketball career.

Becar, now a 6-foot-6, 230-pound sophomore on the Notre Dame boys basketball team, went straight to Soldier Field following an AAU basketball game.

After the soccer match, his father, who was an elite soccer player in his native Bosnia, had the opportunity to take his family to meet some of the players.

One of the soccer players needed only one look at Becar to recommend that he and his family talk to someone with the Bosnian basketball federation, who was in Chicago with the soccer team. The encounter led to a steady dialogue that culminated this summer when Becar was offered the chance to play with Bosnia's U-16 National Team.

Becar traveled to Sarajevo and spent two months training with the U-16 team.

"The basketball was a big transition," said Becar, who is averaging 10 points and five rebounds per game for the Dons. "Here you have stronger, bigger guys; there, it's about being tall, [mobile] and fast paced. They set a lot of screens and everyone can shoot."

In addition to developing as a basketball player, Becar enjoyed a reunion with his extended family. It was his first trip to Bosnia in seven years.

"My dad's dad has always wanted to see me play," Becar said. "When they heard I was coming, they broke out in tears."

His cousin, sophomore Elvin Husejnovic, a top reserve for the Dons, also made the trip.

"I can only imagine what a great feeling it was to put on that jersey," Husejnovic said. "Last season when he was on varsity, I would go to games and bring the Bosnian flag. I would go insane when he scored and the kids would laugh at me but it was just a great feeling to cheer for someone who I consider to be a brother."

As a freshman, Becar made the varsity but saw limited playing time. In practice, he improved by going up each day against older, more experienced players. The Dons (2-6) won 27 games and a regional title a season ago.

"I had never sat on the bench before but overall it helped me realize what playing at the varsity level is about," Becar said. "I learned from players like Matt Mooney and the way they mentally prepared for games and reacted in [crucial] situations."

Becar is able to blend his physical strength with finesse.

"He's very strong and he also has a good feel for the game," Notre Dame coach Tom Les said. "When Becar receives the ball in the post, he is adept at finding an open teammate when the defense collapses."

"He's an impressive big man," junior guard Joe Mooney said. "He's very unselfish and can find the open shooter. He has a lot of European [moves], pump fakes and reverse pivots in the post. He's extremely strong and when he grabs a rebound no one can take it away from him."
NILES WEST

Curry is just one spice in Williams' Hall of Fame mix

BY DAN SHALIN
For Sun-Times Media, @danshalin

Any summary of Niles West boys basketball coach Bob Williams' accomplishments invariably begins with the events of March 17, 2001.

That evening in Peoria, Williams masterminded one of the biggest upsets in IHSA state championship history when his Schaumburg Saxons defeated all-American Eddy Curry and Thornwood 66-54 in the Class AA title game. Curry was playing for the Chicago Bulls seven months later.

In 2008, that Schaumburg team was inducted into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

In 23 seasons, Williams' career has been filled with plenty of highlights: He took two other Schaumburg teams downstate, has received state, regional and national coaching honors and reached the 400-win mark last season.

Earlier this month, the IBCA announced that Williams would be part of its 2014 Hall of Fame class, and he will be formally inducted at an April 26 ceremony at Illinois State University in Normal.

"It's very humbling when you look at the quality of the people in the Hall of Fame," Williams said. "For me, I never look at my career and think 'You can be this and you can be that.' I don't think I'll reflect on what I've accomplished until I'm done coaching. But this honor just makes me think about the great people I've worked with, the coaches, the kids, they share a part of this. It's a reflection of a great number of people."

Longtime Conant coach Tom McCormack, an IBCA Hall of Fame inductee in 2010, said the honor was overdue for his former Mid-Suburban League West adversary. Williams spent 18 years at Schaumburg.

"He had a direction where he wanted Schaumburg to be, and it was interesting to see him build the program over the years," McCormack said. "Their pressure, man-to-man defense, they probably did that better than anybody I've seen in the MSL or might ever see. It was second-to-none, sometimes impossible to play against."

Though much of the state was shocked when Schaumburg defeated Thornwood in 2001, McCormack said he and other coaches familiar with Williams and the Saxons did not even view the victory as an upset.

That game was an example of how Williams can get the most out of his talent, and Williams has a reputation for being quite demanding of his players.

"Coach Williams forced us to get out of our comfort zones, and doing that was why his players improved so much," said Mark Pancratz, the top player on the 2001 team who went on to play at Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

At 31 years old, I have so much more appreciation for that approach than if he had allowed us to work at a certain [slower] pace. If there hadn't been so many tough days, I'm positive I would not be the man I am today, or been the player I became."

Pancratz, who works as a financial planner in Knoxville, Tenn., said Williams always was the toughest on his best players.

Williams' coaching methods didn't always sit well with everyone, and in 2009 he resigned from Schaumburg after a principal decided Williams' demanding style was not to his liking.

But Williams, hired shortly thereafter at Niles West, said he was not about to change the way he operated.

"I respect [the principal's] right to his ideas," Williams said. "I still don't know what he took exception to; it never was clearly explained to me. But the things we stand for, none of those things have changed. Those things are non-negotiable and they help kids to be successful and learn characteristics that will help them not just in basketball, but later in life."

"I want to try and follow in his footsteps," Cook said. "I see what it takes to be a leader. Talking on the court. Letting people know where to be in position. Helping out off the court."}

NILES NORTH

Fast-learning Cook brings versatility

BY MARK PERLMAN
For Sun-Times Media, @markdperlmans

SKOKIE — He's just a sophomore, but there's not much Crishawn Cook can do on the basketball court for Niles North.

Cook did a little something of everything in the Vikings' 47-45 loss to Deerfield on Friday in Skokie.

Cook scored eight points to go along with five steals and four blocked shots.

"He's a pretty good player," said Deerfield guard Eric Porter, who led all scorers with 14 points. "A high IQ player. I was impressed."

Cook did his best to rally Niles North (5-2) from a 13-point deficit heading into the fourth quarter. Cook was behind the Vikings' 7-0 run to start the final frame: He registered a steal and assisted on a basket, hit a 3-point shot and then scored a basket.

He demonstrated ability to wreak havoc on the defensive end with a first-quarter steal. Cook then forced turnovers on two straight trips down the court early in the second half.

"He's got great hands. Got a great base defensively," Niles North coach Glenn Olson said. "He can guard Division I players."

"I'm always working on my defense," the shy, unassuming Cook said. "I spent the whole summer trying to improve my defensive positioning. I'm still working on it."

Cook began his high school basketball career on the varsity team last season, but he then moved to the sophomore team to get more playing time.

"We realized how good he was, how talented he was last year," Olson said. "No doubt about it, where he is this year compared to last year is tremendous."

"He can do it all," Niles North guard JJ Myles said about Cook. "He can shoot, drive, pass, everything. During summer training he'd stand out. I'm glad to have him."

One thing Cook admits he doesn't do yet is lead the team.

"I want to try and follow in someone like JJ's footsteps," Cook said. "I see what it takes to be a leader. Talking on the court. Letting people know where to be in position. Helping out off the court. When I'm a senior I want to be a leader."

Cook is pushing himself to be on the court no matter what.

"He's hurt right now," Olson said. "He got ankle and foot issues. A lot of kids wouldn't play. You've got to respect him for that."

Already, Cook is showing he can be a leader.
All football fans know about the 12th Man, because that's them—the fans, the 12th man on the field giving the home team an advantage. But if you're any team besides Texas A&M, you'd better be prepared to negotiate, as the Seattle Seahawks found out. A&M originated the 12th Man back in the 1920s and actually trademarked the phrase in 1990. The Seahawks had to pay A&M and publicly acknowledge ownership of the phrase before hoisting a giant sign at their stadium that reads, "Seattle: Home of the 12th Man."

Need more evidence that the NFL has become a pass-first league? Almost halfway through the 2013 season, players had posted games of at least 100 yards rushing only 29 times, projecting to 77 such performances for the season. In 2012, there were 123 games in which a back gained at least 100 yards. More evidence? On 3rd-and-2 or 4th-and-2 or less, teams now run the ball only slightly more than half the time, the lowest rate on record, and the success rate running in those situations is less than 60%, also a low mark.

Contrary to popular belief, the jock strap isn't so named because it's worn by jocks. When the bicycle was invented in the mid-19th Century, it was called the boneshaker because, with wooden wheels and seats, it was brutal for men to ride on cobblestone streets. In 1874 a man named Charles F Bennett invented what he called the "bike web" to provide padding for what were then known as "bicycle jockeys." The Bike Web jockey strap was a hit among all athletes, and quickly became known as the jock strap for short.

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Get up and go

Your guide to the weekend and beyond

Every Thursday
The Texas Rangers' Adam Rosales slides in with the game-winning run during the ninth inning of an Aug. 21 game against the Houston Astros in Arlington, Texas. The Rangers won 5-4. (JIM COWERT/AP)
High School Cube News, Sun-Times Media's new high school sports website, launched this week. It's the latest evolution in Chicago area prep sports coverage. High School Cube News will integrate all the highlights and live games from HighSchoolCube.com with the comprehensive coverage formerly provided by Season Pass.

High School Cube News features school and team pages for every area high school, with live game coverage and highlights from participating schools. Now, all 32 Pioneer Press weekly publications have their very own High School Cube News sites with a hyper-local focus on your favorite teams.

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