Discovering her father's past
Letter sparks journey of discovery for Lincolnwood native | PAGE 6

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Holocaust survivor had an unlikely friend

BY MIKE ISAACS

Lincolnwood native discovers her late father’s past

Meaningful journeys in life can be literal and take one many miles away or they can be spiritual and change one inwardly forever.

In the case of Dr. Yonit Hoffman and her search for the history of her father, a Holocaust survivor who died when she was not even 3, both are profoundly true.

Hoffman, a clinical psychologist, thought that she knew everything she was going to know about her father, Gershon Hoffman, who was born Gerhardt Hoffmann in Hamburg, Germany in 1923.

"What I knew is that he had been the only survivor of his family," Hoffman said in an informal and intimate recounting sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women — Chicago/North Shore Chapter.

Gershon Hoffman’s family had been deported to the Minsk Ghetto and his parents and his brother were killed there. Gershon had endured many concentration camps before he was liberated by the end of the war.

Much of what his daughter knew about Gershon came from a testimonial book written by a friend in Israel.

Gershon had emigrated to Palestine as a young man right after the war and was a founder there of a kibbutz. Upon his sudden death years later, this friend, whom he originally met in the Minsk Ghetto, memorialized him. It was from this writing that Hoffman learned her father had been on a death march with others toward the end of the war. The guards suddenly ran away leaving the prisoners alone.

"During this period, we passed through the seven gates of hell," wrote Gershon's friend before elaborating on the hunger, illness, extreme cold and "many other troubles" they faced in their fight to survive.

The friends, though, vowed that their spirits would not be broken.

"We will live so we will not give our enemies the chance to prevail," the friend wrote.

Life-changing letter

Hoffman could not have known that a single piece of mail would expand her understanding of her father and change her life.

In her clinical practice, she had worked with people who had suffered trauma, loss and abuse; she was taking time out for family and to become more involved in her community.

Ironically, she had begun researching Holocaust survivor testimonies — interested primarily in "resilience" and "identity" — when correspondence from the Red Cross International Tracing Service arrived.

Someone named Anton had been looking for Gershon Hoffman or his descendants for five or six years. It identified her father as having been in a concentration camp in Flossenburo, Germany and even cited his prisoner number.

"This was shocking, not only to have something like this come out of the blue 65 years later," Hoffman said, "but it was confusing."

For one thing, Anton’s last name didn’t sound Jewish and for another; the description made it sound like he had not been a prisoner.

"How did they have contact and how did they become friends?” she naturally wondered.

Telephone calls to Anton’s family members revealed only little more since they spoke limited English. But Hoffman was invited to Flossenburo to meet Anton and his family and for an annual reunion among survivors.

Hoffman grew up with a family that never bought German products because of the Holocaust; never did she think she would travel there knowing its brutal history.

But following the letter that came in summer, 2010, and after contact with Anton’s family, the Lincolnwood native and her family decided they needed to go.

Trip to Germany

Hoffman recounted her emotional trip back to the country where her father had been born — back to a place where he had been cruelly imprisoned and had somehow managed an unlikely friendship — to a captivated audience of more than 50.

They were packed inside a room of a private Wilmette home, watching as Hoffman shared her deeply felt story using words, photos, historical research and artifacts. She had made this presentation to her own synagogue before, but she was encouraged to share her unforgettable experiences once again.

Traveling to Germany was not easy, Hoffman acknowledged.

Aboard a bus that carried her from Munich to Flossenburo for the first time, she looked outside at a magnificent landscape.

"The hills were breathtaking," she said. "I have to say it was a very surreal experience for me. It was very beautiful, but at the same time, it was hideous. I had a lot of ambivalence about being there."

She met Anton’s family and then Anton, who was then 77. They had erected a American flag to welcome her and her family.

Anton told her she looked like her father, and the two of them cried over such an improbable reunion. Anton’s father was a quarry master who worked in Flossenburo during the war. Gershon worked as a prisoner at a rail station, which is no longer there, and one of his jobs was to unload bodies from trains coming from different places.

When Anton first saw her father, he remembered thinking they looked about the same age —10 or 11. But in reality Gershon was an older teenager who appeared younger because he was small and had been living under brutal conditions.

"Anton and my father must have been watching each other to some degree because my father at some point took the risk of asking Anton his name," his daughter recounted.

And then he took the risk of asking for a piece of bread.

Anton retrieved the bread from his mother. From then on, he would throw a piece of bread to Gershon or hide the bread for him when authorities were not looking.

"It began this kind of unlikely friendship and connection," Hoffman said.

Hoffman weaved this story using a plethora of richly detailed photographs from Flossenburo. She took advantage of a museum that exists there now; she found a photo of the rail station where her father worked, for example.

And her host and his family were always hospitable — not only willing but eager to share the history from her father’s past.

He had never told her mother about Anton. Seventeen years younger, she married and moved with him to the kibbutz in Israel where Hoffman was born. Like many Holocaust survivors, he was guarded about his past.

But when Hoffman saw Anton, one of the first things she relayed was a special thank you from her mother "for taking such good care of him."

As she learned more about her father's previously unknown friendship, Hoffman was learning more about her father.

During their unlikely friendship many years ago, Anton recalled, he came out of his home and into the bitter cold. Gershon asked why he wasn’t wearing a hat. Anton shrugged and Gershon threw him a cap that he must have found in one of the railroad carriages.

"That was a really important story for me to hear," she said.

"Not only had Anton helped my father, but the fact that in the midst of all this horror, my father was able to think about somebody else and give Anton, his friend, something to keep him warm."

Toward the end of Hoffman’s visit to Flossenburo, Anton pulled out a home-made Easter card that her father had made his friend so many years ago. Gershon likely made it in secret while working at an airplane parts factory following his railcar job.

He signed it: "Your friend, Gerhardt Hoffman."

The card was beautifully preserved, and now Anton wanted his friend’s daughter to have it. She declined, saying that it was a gift from her father meant for him — meant to honor their friendship.

But the following morning, Anton’s son approached Hoffman’s husband.

"My father needs Yonit to have this card," he reportedly said. "He says he can’t die peacefully until the daughter of Gerhardt has this card."

Hoffman took the card and carried it around with her for many years. She kept it in secret while working at an airplane parts factory following his railcar job.

"That was a really important story for me to hear," she said.

"I feel I can’t quite let it go yet," she said.
New townhouses start selling near Metra

BY IGOR STUDENIKOV
For Sun-Times Media | @istudenkov

Chicago-based Lexington Homes has started selling units in the Lexington Station Rowhouses, a 311-unit development it plans to start building in the spring of this year in Morton Grove.

The development will be built on a 1.8-acre vacant lot located south of Lincoln Avenue and east of The Woodlands residential development. It's planned to have 31 three-story rowhouses grouped together in clusters of four to six buildings.

The development was approved by the village in December, and Lexington Homes intends to break ground sometime in the spring of this year.

Lexington Homes is no stranger to the site. According to co-principal Jeff Benach, one of Lexington Homes' current owners developed the nearby Trafalgar Square.

“We sold the adjoining properties to another builder, who intended to build two mid-rise condo buildings,” Benach explained through a spokesperson. “He built one, then the recession hit. He had the property rezoned for townhouses, we then reacquired the property, and will come back with 31 more [homes].”

In the press release sent to the Morton Grove Champion, Benach said he thinks there's strong demand for brand-new homes near the village's Metra station.

“In the past 10 years there has been a surge of new-construction in Morton Grove, all within walking distance to the Metra due to buyer demand,” he said. "However, a lot of that product is older. Lexington Station is the newest development with the most flexible floor plans and modern finishes, not to mention very attractive pricing.”

According to Lexington Homes' website, the houses will come in three types. The smaller type, known as the Bristol, will have two bedrooms, and will cost $310,000. The largest type, known as the Conventry, will have three bedrooms, and will cost $340,000. The Warrington is somewhere in between, offering two bedrooms by default, but giving buyers an option to add a third. Those units cost $325,000.

In December, the developer told the Morton Grove appearance commission that it will break ground on the site this spring.

Benach said that's still the plan, and so far, the response to the project has been positive.

“We worked closely with our immediate neighbors to make sure everyone's world was maintained and respected,” Benach said. “They seem happy to be having the last undeveloped piece of ground in this area of all newer construction, finally being developed. And the village has been very receptive, helpful and professional all along. It's absolutely turning out to be a win-win-win.”
Sobering photos of war-torn Afghanistan highlighted at library

BY GAIL SAUNDERS
For Sun-Times Media

Since its renovation last year, the Niles Public Library has evolved into a community gathering space not only where teenagers can hang out after school, but to one where artists and photojournalists can showcase their work.

"Afghanistan," the latest by Chicago photojournalist Andrew Nelles, is but one example of this. The wartime pictorial, which opened Feb. 16 and runs until March 31, features the life of U.S. servicemen and the local police in that area.

One shows a weary Afghan police officer in his office. Others show our military volleying fire in the desert terrain; still others show military service dogs sniffing for bombs and other dangerous substances.

"It was very intense experience in every way you can imagine," said Nelles in a phone interview. "During my time over there, a lot of the units I worked with embedded with the Afghan Army and police. There were a lot of Afghan soldiers working alongside the American that were well-trained and disciplined and some that were not. It was interesting to see the spectrum of that.

"I hope that by viewing the work, I can give the person viewing the work a better insight what the daily life is like for the people involved in this war."

It's one way the library and the community give back to our veterans.

"There's a strong connection to our military and to the veterans of our community," said Sue Wilsey, the library's marketing and publicity supervisor, by phone. "The mayor of Niles has recognized returning veterans and given them a key to the city. Every year the library has a veterans breakfast the week before Veterans Day. The veterans history is a way to keep our history alive."

The display came about after part of the third floor was dedicated for exhibits and displays. They started with a Bertram Francin Celebration seven years ago, and have since showcased the Beatles and other exhibits.

Last fall, they featured retired Chicago Sun-Times Photo Editor, Richard Cahan, who discussed the importance of photojournalism. After that program, they sought out other photojournalists who would display their work at the library.

Other changes have included study rooms and a space for teenagers that is packed with teenagers most days after school.

Like Cahan, Nelles is also a former employee of the Sun-Times.

"One of the things that we did in the renovation is that we have study rooms, an unbelievably gorgeous teen space that would knock your socks off and where the kids come after school and gather," said Wilsey.

The Friends sell used books donated by the community in their store on the first floor, and along with other fundraising techniques, donate the proceeds to the library. Through their efforts, they bought the sturdy and durable hardware for the third-floor exhibits.

"The library has evolved into a gathering space," she said. "This is one of the things that people in the community asked for."
MAINE TOWNSHIP

Committeeman hopeful says PR work was donated

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON
johnson@pioneerlocal.com
@Jen_Pioneer

A candidate for Maine Township Republican committee member has decided to put a volunteer's efforts for her campaign on the books.

Carol Teschky, who's also Maine Township Supervisor, has updated her campaign finance records to show that a township contractor donated his services to her political campaign.

Teschky's campaign disclosure report was amended on Feb. 26 to include an in-kind contribution in the amount of $500 for public relations services provided by Dick Barton. The date of the contribution is listed as Dec. 15.

The addition came just days after the Park Ridge Herald-Advocate reported that Barton, whose public relations firm is paid $42,000 annually by Maine Township to promote township government and events, was also promoting Teschky's election campaign for Maine Township committeeman. Both Teschky, who is Maine Township supervisor, and Barton said the campaign work was done on a voluntary basis.

Under Illinois law, public funds cannot be used for political or campaign purposes. Last month, David Morrison, policy analyst with the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, suggested that if Barton was not being paid for the work he was providing Teschky's campaign, then it should be reflected as an in-kind contribution to the campaign.

Teschky, of Glenview, is facing Park Ridge resident Charlene Foss-Eggemann, president of Park Ridge Republican Women, in the GOP committeeman race on March 18. Early voting takes place through March 15.

A look at each of the candidates' campaign war chests shows that Foss-Eggemann has raised $38,100, while Teschky has raised $22,000 in contributions, according to the most recent quarterly report.

Teschky's contributors included a number of Maine Township employees. Thirteen contributors listed in the quarterly report are employees or paid elected officials, and 12 of them contributed exactly $300 to her campaign. Robert Provenzano, highway commissioner of the township, donated $500.

Teschky said the contributions were made voluntarily.

“They were given the opportunity to do so, but there was no pressure on them to contribute,” she told the Park Ridge Herald-Advocate. “I really appreciate the fact that they decided to voluntarily support me.”

Foss-Eggemann had 13 contributions from a handful of individuals, largely Sweeney. She also collected a large number of her own signatures, her petitions show.

Charlene Foss-Eggemann, township employees also largely circulated nominating petitions to get Teschky's name on the ballot for committeeman. A review of these petitions shows at least 32 employees, two Plan Commission members and six elected officials collected signatures. Some family members of employees also circulated petitions, many of which were notarized by township employees, including Teschky's assistant.

Foss-Eggemann's campaign contributions show financial support from the Republican Women of Park Ridge, as well as the campaigns of Jim Oberweis, Jim O'Donnell and Susan Sweeney. O'Donnell and Sweeney ran unsuccessfully in the state legislature in 2012.

Also contributing to Foss-Eggemann's campaign are at least two locally elected officials: Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 Board member Dathan Paterno and District 207 Board Member Mary Childers. Childers once served on the Maine Township Plan Commission.

Foss-Eggemann received help in circulating petitions from a handful of individuals, largely Sweeney. She also collected a large number of her own signatures, her petitions show.
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

RETAIL THEFT

John Signorile, 39, of 4637 N. Kenneth Ave., Chicago, was charged with felony retail theft on March 1 after he allegedly stole a pair of $85 shoes from a store at Golf Mill Shopping Center. A March 14 court date was assigned.

DUI

Joshua Mathis, 27, 6058 N. Melvina Ave., Chicago, was charged with driving under the influence on March 1 after he allegedly stole a pair of $85 shoes from a store at Golf Mill Shopping Center. A March 14 court date was assigned.

UNDERAGE DRINKING

A 16-year-old Park Ridge girl was charged with underage drinking on March 2. Police said she was a passenger in a vehicle that was involved in an accident at Dee Road and Sibley Avenue at 1:10 a.m. She was released on her own recognizance and assigned an April 8 adjudication hearing date.

DRUG POSSESSION

Dominic Rodriguez-Miller, 19, of the 1400 block of West Hood Avenue, Chicago, was charged with possession of marijuana on March 7 following a traffic stop at Touhy and Oriole avenues at 1:10 a.m. Police said Rodriguez-Miller, who was a passenger in the vehicle, was in possession of a jar containing 16 grams of suspected marijuana. Bond was set at $1,500. He has an April 2 court date.

UNDERAGE DRINKING

A 16-year-old Park Ridge girl was charged with underage drinking on March 2. Police said she was a passenger in a vehicle that was involved in an accident at Dee Road and Sibley Avenue at 1:10 a.m. She was released on her own recognizance and assigned an April 8 adjudication hearing date.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT

Police were called to the bus stop at Golf Mill Shopping Center on the night of March 5 after a man was reported to be displaying his middle finger to passersby. The man, a 25-year-old from Morton Grove, reportedly told police that he was currently homeless and was waiting for a bus to take him to the Jefferson Park CTA Blue Line stop. When police asked why he was showing his middle finger to people in the area, the man allegedly replied, "because my life sucks right about now." An officer transported the man to the Jefferson Park CTA stop.

THEFT

A wallet and phone were stolen March 1 from a locker at XSport Fitness, 9210 N. Milwaukee Avenue. Three ATM withdrawals totaling $500 were reported using a debit card that was inside the wallet, police said. Three cartons of cigarettes were stolen March 3 from a vehicle parked outside a store on the 5700 block of Touhy Avenue. The front passenger side window was shattered to gain entry.

BURGLARY TO VEHICLE

Windows were broken and two vehicles were burglarized in a parking lot on the 8800 block of Golf Road between Feb. 28 and March 1. Loose change was reported stolen one of the vehicles.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

On the morning of March 2, a 25-year-old man was suspected of breaking the screen and glass of a door on an apartment building on the 9000 block of Cumberland Avenue. No charges were immediately filed as the owner of the building stated he would attempt to get restitution, police said.

An employee of a club on the 8500 block of Golf Road told police that three men and a woman became irate on the morning of March 1 after they were allegedly denied entrance into the establishment because they did not have proper identification. The employee told police that one of the men grabbed a tire iron from his vehicle and all four suspects began smashing the rear windows of two vehicles parked in the lot before driving away in their own car.

CRIME BRIEFS

WISNER ST.

Avenue at 2:13 a.m. Murray was also cited for no proof of valid insurance, expired registration and a finding of guilt. Only a court of law can make that determination.

PARK RIDGE

John Signorile, 39, of 4637 N. Kenneth Ave., Chicago, was charged with driving under the influence on March 1 after police stopped his vehicle for allegedly speeding on the 7600 block of Milwaukee Avenue at 12:30 a.m. He has an April 18 court date.

DUI

Dominic Rodriguez-Miller, 19, of the 1400 block of West Hood Avenue, Chicago, was charged with possession of marijuana on March 7 following a traffic stop at Touhy and Oriole avenues at 1:10 a.m. Police said Rodriguez-Miller, who was a passenger in the vehicle, was in possession of a jar containing 16 grams of suspected marijuana. Bond was set at $1,500. He has an April 2 court date.

Andy Lam, 34, of 7925 N. Harlem Ave., Niles, was charged with driving under the influence on March 3 following a traffic stop at Oakton Street and Nordica Avenue at 1:38 a.m.

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A 16-year-old Park Ridge girl was charged with underage drinking on March 2. Police said she was a passenger in a vehicle that was involved in an accident at Dee Road and Sibley Avenue at 1:10 a.m. She was released on her own recognizance and assigned an April 8 adjudication hearing date.

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Maine East launching robot-building club

BY IGOR STUDENKO
For Sun-Times Media | @istudenkov

Maine East High School students will soon get a chance to build their own robots. On March 5, the Maine Township High School Board unanimously approved the creation of the district's first robotics club.

The idea started with a small group of students who found out about robotics clubs at other schools and decided to organize one in the Maine district, with hopes that this small group would grow into a large club once the word got out.

The Maine Township district isn't a complete stranger to robotics. Maine South High School's Engineering Club deals with robotics, along with other subjects. But this is the first time Maine East — or any other district school — will have a club dealing exclusively with robots.

According to Robert Foster, a Maine East biology teacher and the robotics club sponsor, said that the idea for the club started with one student. "One of the students attended a summer camp at Stanford University, where she learned about robotics clubs other schools had been starting," he said. "She brought the idea back to Maine East and proposed it to some of her peers, the administration, and prospective staff sponsors."

The idea caught on with a small group of students who were interested in robotics and the challenges that come with designing and programming them.

"One of the things that excited the student in pursuing the formation of a robotics club was the sense of achievement one experiences when finding solutions to challenging design problems," said Foster.

The students entering the club wouldn't necessarily need to know anything about robotics. Foster explained learning how to build them and resolving whatever mistakes they may make along the way is a big part of the club experience.

"The students will be exploring solutions to design challenges and learning about related technologies," said Foster. "The core group of students is excited about the opportunity for hands-on robot design and construction. They are looking forward to design challenges and competitions that will provide unique and challenging problem-solving opportunities."

Foster feels that many students who are interested in science, math, engineering and technology fields would be interested in joining the club.

The meeting times and dates haven't been decided yet. Now that the robotics club has been approved, the core group that helped create the club is trying to get the word out. The primary goal right now is to build up membership before the club officially launches with a kick-off event sometime during the fall semester.

Foster sees a bright future for the club. "Once other students become aware of the club, we anticipate interest being strong," he said.

District ready to add air conditioning to Field School

BY NATASHA WASINSKI
For Sun-Times Media | @nwasinsk

Niles-Park Ridge School District 64 is moving forward on a plan to add air conditioning to Field Elementary, despite concerns over heating problems at another Park Ridge school.

The Board of Education on Feb. 24 awarded a $5.33 million contract to Bergen Construction Corporation to upgrade the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system at Field this summer.

The Palatine-based general contractor was one of eight companies that bid on the work. At the same meeting, officials authorized the sale of up to $8.6 million in working cash bonds to fund the capital project.

Preliminary work, including asbestos abatement, would begin in mid-April, with most of the construction occurring over the summer, reported the district's Director of Facility Management Scott Mackall. The project is expected to wrap up by the time the new school year starts in August.

The adoption of the two resolutions represented the board's last step to ensuring Field becomes fully air-conditioned. Field is the last school targeted by the district for AC. Parents have pressed the district for cooler classrooms for the past several years.

Yet before issuing the go-ahead, officials probed staff for an hour about mechanical failures at Carpenter Elementary that has resulted in overheated classrooms.

Since the fall, the school has endured problems with its steam heating system, including a frozen heat exchanger, issues with boilers, and multiple blown compressors. In some instances, students had to be relocated to other parts of the building after classrooms temperatures registered 40 degrees.

Board member Dathan Paterno asked for accountability and assurances that Field would not suffer the same issues.

Mackall said Carpenter's problems are unique to the school, and mostly the result of equipment malfunctions and a poor building envelope.

The school's HVAC system is also "completely different" than the system planned at Field, he said.

Fanning Howey — an architecture, engineering, and design firm with an office in Park Ridge — has been working closely with the district to identify and remedy the problems.

"We don't want to have that same problem [at Field]," Mackall said. "We want it to be bullet proof."
The culture under focus this winter belongs to Korea, but what about next year?

The successful Coming Together in Skokie — now named Coming Together in Skokie and Niles Township — has placed a spotlight on five different cultures since it kicked off with the Asian culture in 2011. The Assyr-Mesopotamian culture in 2012, the Greek culture in 2013, the Indian culture in 2010. That inaugural program was followed by the Filipino culture in 2011, the Assyrian culture in 2013 and the Greek culture in 2013.

And in 2015?

The Coming Together in Skokie and Niles Township Committee is accepting applications for the next culture, which will be announced this spring.

The innovative program takes a literary, enlightening and educational look at one culture from the end of January through early March, offering programs of diverse programs. At the center of each year's program are a few carefully selected books for all ages.

The application for next year's culture can be found at the top of the Coming Together website at www.skokielibrary.org/programs/CommingTogether/index.asp.

"Coming Together in Skokie & Niles Township is a community partnership program developed in Skokie in 2009," the application states. "It has grown over the years and includes Skokie, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove and Niles. The purpose of the project is to promote literacy, cross-cultural awareness and community-building in our diverse villages."

Coming Together in Skokie was created by five female leaders in the Skokie community who lunched together every week and came up with an idea to add to the village's celebration of its expansive ethnic diversity. Susan Van Dusen, one of the five founders, said the goal was to expand upon Skokie's heralded Festival of Cultures, but with a program that was a bit weightier and more educational.

The Coming Together committee works closely with leaders from the selected culture, preparing a robust six weeks of programming that will engage thousands of attendees. How well organized representatives of a culture are figure highly into whether the culture is selected for Coming Together in Skokie and Niles Township.

According to Coming Together leaders, the selected cultural committee will have several responsibilities.

- Project coordinator(s) must attend monthly meetings of the Coming Together coordinating committee, made up of representatives from the participating agencies
- Act as a liaison between the coordinating committee and the cultural community
- Work with the cultural community to develop a cultural kick-off event
- Identify members of the cultural community who will attend every book discussion.

- Assist the coordinating committee in identifying speakers and presenters for programs
- Promote events and programs to the cultural community
- The Coming Together Coordinating Committee will take on other program responsibilities.
- Making selected texts available through the library and schools
- Developing promotional materials including a booklet, short video, website, social media presence and press release
- Coordinating site logistics for events
- Making arrangements for an author visit for the selected texts
- Providing support to the project leaders.

The deadline for applications is March 30.
Niles West students received 2014 Scholastic Writing Awards

Niles West students have received Scholastic Writing Awards by the Chicago Regional Affiliate of the 2014 Scholastic Art and Writing Program.

Alyssa Guzman was awarded a Silver Key for her writing portfolio that featured poetry, humor, journalism and a personal essay. Stephanie Nahhas received three Gold Keys for her poems “East of the Mediterranean,” “Dawn Chorus,” and “Taita.”

The students will be recognized at the Chicago Regional Awards ceremony March 27 at the Theatre Building on the University of Illinois at Chicago campus. The students’ teachers are also invited to attend. Guzman’s teacher is Evelyn Lauer and Nahhas’ teacher is Paul Bellwoar.

A Gold Key is the highest level of achievement on the regional level. Approximately seven to 10 percent of all regional submissions are recognized with Gold Key Awards and are considered for national-level recognition. Approximately 10 to 15 percent of all regional submissions are recognized with Silver Key Awards.

Fifth annual Dance Clinic for kids

The Auroris Dance Company will hold its fifth annual Dance Clinic for kids in grades K-8 from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 5 at Niles North High School, 9800 N. Lawler Ave., Skokie. Dancers can select a hip-hop or jazz dance routine and will be divided by grade level and dance experience. Once they learn the routine, they will perform it on stage, in the Niles North auditorium, along with some other pieces from the Auroris Dance Company show. The cost will be $30 and each participant will receive a snack and T-shirt or water bottle. Respond by Friday, March 14, if your child is interested (have them invite all their friends too!) Email the director, Deanna Sortino at deason@d219.org for registration forms.

Forms can also be downloaded here: https://sites.google.com/site/aurorisdance/auroris-dance-clinic-k-8.

Niles North WYSE Team wins awards at regionals

For the first time in school history, the Niles North Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering (WYSE) team placed first in the regional competition that was held recently at Oakton Community College. In the unlimited division, there were eight schools competing. Here is a listing of the awards won by Niles North: Sacha Weiss, first place in biology and second place in chemistry; Rahim Lalani, first place in engineering graphics; Aidan Perrault, second place in English and third place in math; Matthew Jacob, third place in computer science; Jedong Duan, third place in computer science; and Matthew Shuwal, third place in engineering graphics.

The WYSE sponsors are Tom Chung and Christi Camel.

Niles West Debate Team wins title in Evanston Invitational

The Niles West Debate Team sent 20 teams to compete at the Evanston East Presidents Invitational at Evanston Township High School from Jan. 31 through Feb. 1. There were 74 teams in the Varsity division. Niles West sent 11 teams in Varsity. Nicholas Charles and Rebecca Harbeck had a 4-2 record entering elimination rounds. They beat teams from top schools and earned the championship title in the Varsity division.

Other West teams in the elimination rounds: Janet Ahmed and Breana Brill had a 6-0 record and were the first seed entering the elimination rounds. They lost in the semifinals. Alwin Alex and Tahir Meeks were 4-2 and were locked out against teammates Charles and Harbeck; the coaches advanced the higher seed. Sana Khan and Lizzie Prete were 5-1 and lost in the Octafinals.

Out of 148 debaters, Janat Ahmed was the top speaker, Breana Brill was second speaker, Nicholas Charles was sixth speaker, Sana Khan was seventh speaker and Alex Brown was 11th speaker. Also competing in Varsity: Ali Ali, Alvin Varghese, Eugene Chung, Giovanni Palladinietti, Anwar Khan, Nitin Thomas, Ashley Okezie, Katrina Buckley, Henry Minke, Jackie Reis, Jamie Sub, Amanda Vlamakis, and Miriam Murad.

The Head Coach of Niles West Debate is Eric Oddo and Assistant Coaches are Matt Fahrenheit, Melanie Johnson, Kevin Bancroft, Val McIntosh and Kimberly Pressing.
HELP SQUAD

Would you pay a bill without seeing the bill?

DEAR HELP SQUAD,

On Oct. 8, 2013, I bought a phone at the Sprint Store in Evanston, and the phone was returned on Oct. 17, 2013, a refund credited to my charge card, minus a fee. On Dec. 18, 2013, I received a collection notice for $746.53 from Receivables Performance Management.

I called the manager, Lindsey Bennett, at the Sprint Store and she removed all but $99.48, which she said was for termination fees, "taxes by accident," activation fee proration, proration fees for 10 days and restocking fees. I said I'd already paid a termination fee, and a restocking fee, and she said these fees were in the contract. I said I never got a copy of any contract and she said I would have had to ask for one.

She said that's all she could do and I should call another number, 888-211-4727, to request removal of the last $99.48. The call went to Venezuela and a young man told me he'd refer the matter to the "boys in the back office" and get back to me. When I did not hear from him, I called a few more times, and after explaining the problem, I got hung up on.

On Jan. 29, 2014, I received a "settlement offer" letter from the same collection company for $69.62, though the full amount "due" is still $99.48.

I do not know if Sprint follows these collection practices in other cases, but I would like these charges removed and a written acknowledgment of their removal. Can you help me with this problem with Sprint?

Dianne Waston, Winnetka

DEAR DIANNE,

We are truly sorry that we couldn't help you solve this. Had we been able to get a statement that explained the charges, we probably could have tackled it for you and tried to get you some results.

Surely Sprint executives understand the competitiveness of the cellular phone industry, so we hope they know how many other choices you and millions of others have when it comes to choosing a cellular carrier.

In our opinion, if they couldn't produce an explanation of why you owed $99.48, then they should have removed the charges.

To use their words, maybe Sprint should "Do More."

NEED HELP?

Did a utilities company overcharge you? Did a boutique deny your request for a return? Are you the victim of fraudulent business practices? Is someone just exhibiting bad business behavior?

Let Help Squad make the call for you.

Send your letters, your complaints, your injustices and your story ideas to HelpSquad@pioneerlocal.com and we will be happy to help you.
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EXTRA 20% OR 15% OFF† WHEN YOU USE YOUR MACY'S CARD OR PASS
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Reg. 29.50-99.50. Sale 17.70-
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BOOTS
Orig. ** $39-$199.
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Selections from our
clearance racks.

SALE 8.99-9.99
SCREEN PRINTED TEE
Reg. $12-$13. For girls' 2-16.
& boys' 2-20. Also, shorts
from our Epic Threads®.
Girls' 2-4; boys' 5-7.

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Reg. $42-$69.
Fit & flare, sheathes
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Reg. $12-$13. For girls' 2-1,
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**LETTERS**

**Neighbors already giving each other rides with FISH**

In response to Jack Spatafora’s fantasy [published Feb. 6] of having neighbors help each other through coordinated transportation to doctor appointments — Surprise! Park Ridge area residents receive a thousand rides each year through a 501(c)(3) organization called FISH of Park Ridge. FISH stands for “Friends of Having a Thousand Rides Each Year through a 501(c)(3).”

**Bring back library funding**

This year the Park Ridge City Council has again reduced our library’s allotment in the revenue sharing for the city, making this the fifth year in a row that their budget has been cut. That amounts to about $550,000 less than the 2008 budget.

**School board should have nixed Camp Duncan trip**

Whenever there was potential for an accident, injury or tragedy, Park Ridge/Niles School District 64 always took action. After the murders of students and staff at Sandy Hook School, District 64 took steps to improve security. In response to the ever-increasing numbers of students with food allergies, District 64 modified policies regarding food safety and food allergy management. To minimize injuries during PE and on the playground, wood chips and mats were laid. A committee was formed and many positive changes occurred as a result of recommendations regarding traffic safety issues.

Due to the prior proactive responses to student safety concerns, I was surprised at the School Board’s refusal to act on the recommendation of the administrative team regarding the overnight component of outdoor education. The taxpayers pay these administrators more than a million dollars annually for their knowledge and expertise in all aspects of education. The administrators were hired because they are the best of the best. They all have a finger on the pulse of their individual schools and are the sounding board for concerns of the staff.

Collectively, they recommended the overnight component be dropped and cited student safety, privacy and health concerns as the reasons. And yet the board decided against safety and sided with what is essentially a very large pajama party. What important educational benefit does the overnight component serve in light of Dr. Hinton’s and school leaders’ concerns about the commitment made to parents to keep children safe while they spend the night at Camp Duncan?

After an accident or tragedy occurs, people often ask, “Why weren’t we warned” or “If only we had known.” It seems to me the District 64 School Board has been warned and the concerns have been well described by the people who know the schools and the students best - the Administrators. I urge board members to reconsider the administrative team’s recommendation to eliminate the overnight component of outdoor education.

**LET US HEAR FROM YOU**

Send your letters to the editor to News Editor Ben Meyerson at bmeyerson@pioneerlocal.com or mail to Niles Herald-Spectator, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago, IL 60654. Keep letters to 250 words or fewer. Niles Herald-Spectator reserves the right to edit letters for length, clarity and content. All letters must be signed to be published.

**Modem food feels like a steady diet of nothing**

I love food, which you can probably tell just by looking at me.

It’s a lifelong love affair, yet I didn’t always look this way, which my doctor describes as obese on my chart.

The funny thing is, for the past 20 years, I’ve tried to eat right. No soda or at least diet soda only. No sugar in my coffee, no butter, no fats and so on. I’ve gone from 2 percent milk to 1 percent to skim.

And despite this change in diet over the long term, I am heavier now than I have ever been. What gives?

I am convinced that over the last 40 years, it is food that has changed more than anything.

I’m too lazy to bone up on the issue, so I’m going with my gut, so to speak. My old college roommate is a farmer, and his wife insists that modern food processing and farm factories are killing us.

I like old movies and old TV shows and thanks to YouTube it is easier than ever to watch.

Everyone was a lot smaller and thinner back in the 1960s. Totie Fields was a 1960s comedian who made a living poking fun at her weight. Her jokes don’t sound that funny anymore because she just doesn’t look that fat compared to people today.

So I’m thinking of going back to a 1960s diet. I’ve heard of South Beach and the Paleo diet. So why not the ’60s, when everyone was so much thinner? I drank soda back then, but only in 8-ounce servings. That’s enough, isn’t it?

And I ate plenty of fruits back then, but only in season. Fruits just couldn’t be preserved to be shipped all over the world all year round. Carrots came in bunches, not bags.

Maybe the preservatives they put in foods today are killing us?

Shopping was different, too. A shopping excursion for my mom meant stopping at the butcher, then the fruit and vegetable stand, and then the bakery. Today, everything is available at one convenient place, thanks to food processing and conservatives.

I was at the grocery store yesterday, trying to decide what free range and cage free chickens meant and why they cost so much compared to other chickens, and thinking maybe I should just raise chickens. I turned the corner and saw a new bottled drink billed as filled with antioxidants.

That’s when I hit the brake. We eat one thing and put the poisons in, and take something else to get the poisons out.

That’s when I decided to chuck it. I went to the dairy case and put real butter in my cart and a gallon of whole milk. As soon as I finish this column, I’m going to the bakery.
It's time for truth in food labeling

Not a significant source of fat cal., sat. fat, trans fat, cholesterol, fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron.

What do you mean, "Huh?"

It's obvious that this is part of the information on a can of soda. But the FDA (Federal Drug Administration) doesn't agree. After 20 years, it's going to change some of the rules food manufacturers must follow on nutrition labels.

The FDA believes some information on nutrition labels is confusing and unrealistic.

The most prominent labeling changes will be in more prominent calorie counts and more realistic serving sizes. For instance, a single serving of ice cream is now labeled as half a cup. The new label will have a single serving of ice cream as one cup.

"A major reason for the new labeling regulations is what the federal government calls an obesity epidemic in the United States."

That surely must have been decided by a skinny federal bureaucrat.

Because you and I know a single serving of ice cream is one pint.

But the FDA does have a point about unrealistic serving sizes.

Take Cheetos (I do). The current label states there are 10 servings in a 10-ounce bag. Ridiculous and unrealistic. We all know there are only two servings in a bag of Cheetos. Come on.

The FDA is hoping that labeling calorie counts in larger type and bringing serving sizes into reality will make people think twice before ingesting.

Though, labeling doesn't seem to have worked very well for the last 20 years. A major reason for the new labeling regulations is what the federal government calls an obesity epidemic in the United States.

Perhaps labeling needs to become more stark and scary than it is now.

For example, the ingredients on that can of soda might have more effect if it read:

Carbonated water, high fructose corn syrup, diabetics, caramel color, phosphoric acid, heart disease, natural flavors, caffeine. Just an idea.
FEATURED HOME

By Aggrego News Service

8310 N. Oriole Ave., Niles
House size: 1,500 square feet
Lot size: 6,307 square feet
Year built: 1942
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
Garage: Three-car detached
Property tax: $6,805.09 (2012)
Exterior: Brick
School districts: Niles Elementary School District 71 and Maine Township High School District 207

$423,900

AGENT Bryan Mercado, RE/MAX Properties Northwest, 847-698-1957

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PROPERTY TRANSFERS
BY AGGREGO NEWS SERVICE

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

Morton Grove
8620 Waukegan Road, #412: Henryk Jaworecki and Edyta Jaworecki to Morandarte Jesha Rea C, Morandarte John Alexis C and Edyta Kaloca for $135,000 on Jan. 21

8300 Cauje Ave, #208: Mohammed A Amlani to Hajra H Galana for $180,000 on Jan. 23

Park Ridge
1911 Manor Lane: Martin Wlroyk and Arlene M Troyk to Panagiota N Fortsas for $370,000 on Jan. 23

Clenview
1015 Burton Terrace: Dee Kang to loan Raicu and Daniela Raicu for $1,342,500 on Jan. 21

4146 Cove Lane, #4146: William J Lipka Jr to Ryszard Kapala for $125,000 on Jan. 23

3147 Bellwood Lane: Nicholas J Adler to Daniel Batrich and Lindsey Batrich for $415,000 on Jan. 24

Skokie
Park Ave: Fifth Third Bank to Pinnacle Capital Park City LLC for $200,000 on Jan. 23

8919 La Crosse Ave, #11n: V&T Investments Corp Chicago to Nancy Anderson and Tim Anderson for $160,000 on Jan. 23

7534 Keeler Ave: 7530 N Keeler LLC to Barry Sorkin and Lisa Sorkin for $675,500 on Jan. 23

719 Hinman Ave, #719a: Aaron J Pijanowski and Rachel Pijanowski to Richard Kuhnke and Lin Berryman for $217,500 on Jan. 24

7937 N Harlem Ave: Francisco Xavier Garcia Trust, Garcia Trust and Marisa Garcia to John F Gonzales for $319,000 on Jan. 21

2107 Wesley Ave: Christopher Austin and Sarah Austin to Jean Free for $420,000 on Jan. 24

2001 Sherman Ave, #506: Mira Shioach and Eric C Brown to Yaya Liu and Kevin Xu for $217,500 on Jan. 23

719 Hinman Ave, #719a: Aaron J Pijanowski and Rachel Pijanowski to Richard Kuhnke and Lin Berryman for $217,500 on Jan. 24

2033 Sherman Ave, #503: Daniel S Kahn Trust and Judy Ext Director to Xin Chen for $120,000 on Jan. 23

Winnetka
1174 Ash St: George W Alexander and Marina Alexander to Seth M Reatherford and Allison C Reatherford for $637,500 on Jan. 23

1212 Oakton St: Jamal J Ayyad and Brook H Ayyad to Anne Gregory and Lauren Schwendimann for $370,000 on Jan. 22

1112 Church St, #1112: Michael R Richmond to Simon E Albo and Peria Rittigstein for $830,000 on Jan. 24

Northfield
1911 Manor Lane: Martin Wlroyk and Arlene M Troyk to Panagiota N Fortsas for $370,000 on Jan. 23

27 Williamsburg Terrace: Nicholas A Salmon and Maria Kay Salmon to Michael J McDermott and Megan McDermott for $373,000 on Jan. 23

Evanston
1212 Oakton St: Jamal J Ayyad and Brook H Ayyad to Anne Gregory and Lauren Schwendimann for $370,000 on Jan. 22

1112 Church St, #1112: Michael R Richmond to Simon E Albo and Peria Rittigstein for $830,000 on Jan. 24

Get up and go
Your guide to the weekend and beyond

LOOKING FOR FUN? CHECK OUT OUR TOP FIVE PICKS FOR THE WEEKEND'S BEST BETS.

Every Thursday
NILES

THURSDAY, MARCH 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. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 773-508-1054.

ESL Club
3 p.m.: New English speakers can join this conversation club to practice speaking English. Meet people from all over the world to share personal stories and discuss current events and other topics chosen by the group. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-6433.

Latest and Greatest in Children's Books
4:30 p.m.: Teachers and interested parents are invited for a discussion of some of the best new titles for preschool through grade, along with extension ideas for the classroom. Session I, for preschool through grade, begins at 4:30 p.m. Session II, for fourth through grade, begins at 5:45 p.m. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

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.

Sunday, March 16

St. Patrick's Day Skate
2:30 p.m.: Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with this Irish-themed skate. $5 admission, $3 rental. IceLand, 8435 Ballard Road, Niles. For more information, call 847-987-6633.

Monday, March 17

Baby Time
11 a.m.: A short program of stories, songs, rhymes and playtime for children 2 and under with a caregiver. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

Anime and 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.

FRI DAY, MARCH 14

Bibliobop Dance Party
10 a.m.: Family and friends are invited to boogie down at the library. DJ Miss Cate will be spinning all the best tunes from the library's music collection. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Happy Birthday, Albert Einstein
4 p.m.: Celebrate Albert Einstein's birthday by reenacting his favorite thought experiments. For students in grades three to eight. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

'Hobbit' After Hours Party
6:30 p.m.: Celebrate the movie release of "Hobbit" with games, trivia, prizes and refreshments. Students are welcome to wear a costume. For ages 13 to 18. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

Hanbok: Korean Fancy Dress
1:30 p.m.: Learn about traditional Korean Hanbok dress, ceremonial bowing and more. For students in grades three to eight. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

Preschool Story Time
10 a.m.: Stories, songs, and action rhymes for children aged 3 to 5. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Be Ready for Spring
1 p.m.: The church will be accepting winter coats and accessories from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. through March 20 for donation to the needy. Call the office at 847-647-9867 for pickup. St. John Lutheran Church, 7429 N. Milwaukee Ave., Niles. Call 847-647-9867.

Introduction to Lynda.com
11 a.m.: Learn how to use the training source available to Niles Library card holders to get instruction on over 2,000 subjects. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Park Board of Commissioners
6 p.m.: Meet on the third Tuesday of the month. Howard Leisure Center, 6676 W. Howard St., Niles.

J ob Seekers: Resume Writing 101
7 p.m.: Learn about today's resume standards and acceptable resume construction with the targeted purpose of meeting job qualifications. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Family Story Time
7 p.m.: Stories, songs and activities for families with children ages 2 to 6. Attendees are welcome to wear pajamas. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Wednesday, March 19

Book Discussion
1 p.m.: The group discusses "Me Before You" by Jojo Moyes. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Big Kids Story Time
3:30 p.m.: Stories, songs, creative dramatics and other fun activities for children ages 4 to 6. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

'Swastika Nation'
7 p.m.: Chicago author and Culver graduate Arnie Kuhn and the rise and fall of the German-American community in 1930s Chicago, with the rise and fall of the German-American Bund. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Friday, March 21

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

HAPPENING NEARBY

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

Thrilling Thursdays: For the Birds
4 p.m.: Learn about birds and decorate a bird house to take home. For students in kindergarten through third grade. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-625-3123.

Healthy Eating: Greens, Grains and Protein
7 p.m.: Certified holistic health coaches Jessica Jacobsen and Gina Griffin-Hill discuss the benefits of adding these foods to a diet, along with other ways to achieve health goals. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-625-3123.

The Law of Attraction: Change Your Life in 17 Seconds
7 p.m.: Local author Seema Chandarana has studied the metaphysical teachings of many experts and puts her learning into practice in her daily life as a teacher and yoga instructor. In her book, The "Irresistible: My Proof for the Law of Attraction," she shares how to create one's own reality and to transform one's life through daily affirmations of positive thinking. For more information or to register, go to calendar.mgpil.org or call 847-929-5101. Morton Grove Public Library, 8140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove.

Town Hall Meeting: A Conversation with Our Teens
7 p.m.: Join members of the MCYF Youth Program, state Rep. Marty Moylan and Park Ridge police Chief Frank Kaminiski to talk about ways parents and adults in the community can support teens in making healthy choices. All community members in Maine Township are encouraged to attend this town hall meeting, which will feature youth-led interactive educational activities, speeches by key stakeholders and a panel discussion. South Park Field House, 833 West Talcott Road, Park Ridge. Call 847-663-1500.

Friday, March 21

Job Seeker Workshop
9:30 a.m.: Volunteers from the Illinois Worknet Center will teach job search techniques, interviewing skills and important points for resumes and cover letters. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-770-3245.

Friday Morning Coffee Club
10 a.m.: The group watches "Troublesome Creek:"
A Midwestern about a family struggling the keep their farm in the family. Stars Bob Blankenship, Dean Els and Marge Harold. 88 minutes. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-625-3123.

Field School 60th Annual Y-Show ‘Queen of Diamonds: A Crowned Caper’ 7 p.m.: By using their observation skills, a Field School student (played by a parent) solves a mystery that even the most famous grown-up detectives can’t begin to crack. Performances are at 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through March 23. Eugene Field Elementary School, 707 Winer St., Park Ridge. Call 312-684-1777. $7. $5 ages 12 and under.

St. Patrick’s Day Party 7 p.m.: Wear your favorite green attire and celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. Enjoy games, prizes and a DJ. Soda and candy available for sale. Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-622-5127. $5.

Teen Dance 7 p.m.: For kids in sixth to eighth grade. Attendees must have Skokie Park District Teen ID, available to both residents and nonresidents at the Weber Leisure Center or the Oakton Community Center. Weber Leisure Center, 9300 Weber Park Pl., Skokie. Call 847-674-1500, ext. 3500. $7-$9.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

Purim Celebration 10 a.m.: Purim celebration consisting of a Purim shpiel (play) starting at 10 a.m. followed by a carnival that begins at 11:15. Carnival includes a moonwalk, basketball and other games, face painting, prizes and lunch. For more information, call 847-676-1566. Temple Judea Mizpah, 8610 Niles Center Rd., Skokie. Call 847-676-1568. $5.

Dinner and Live Auction Noon: The annual meatless dinner will be served, followed by a live auction that includes merchandise, crafts, services, gift certificates, tickets and more. St. Martha Catholic Church, 8523 Georgiana Ave., Morton Grove. Call 847-965-1022.

Trip to the Flower Show Noon: For more information, call 773-775-4790 or email info@npseniorcenter.org. Norwood Crossing, 5018 N. Nina Ave., Chicago.

MONDAY, MARCH 17

Harmonious Horizons 10:20 a.m.: A family music class that includes singling, dancing and playing instruments. For children ages 5 and younger with a caregiver. A second class is available at 11 a.m. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-625-3123.

The Old Things Antique Club of Park Ridge 7:30 p.m.: Meetings will be held the third Monday of the month for those who enjoy or collect antiques. Membership fee is $30 a year. For more information, email OldThingsAntiqueClub@gmail.com. Lannelli Studios Heritage Center, 255 N. Northwest Hwy., Park Ridge. Call 847-692-3718. Free.

TUESDAY, MARCH 18

**BUILDING PERMITS**

By Aggregate News Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permit Type</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Permit Cost</th>
<th>Construction Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fence</td>
<td>7635 N. Nora Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>$56</td>
<td>$3,572</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sign: Electrical/nonelectric</td>
<td>7327 N. Harlem Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>$220</td>
<td>$500</td>
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<td>Plumbing: Misc.</td>
<td>7943 N. Nora Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>$60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roof (commercial and residential)</td>
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<td>Roof (commercial and residential)</td>
<td>6822 W. Oakton Court, Niles</td>
<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single family remodel</td>
<td>8029 N. Odell Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>$362</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single family remodel</td>
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<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>$97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fence</td>
<td>7333 N. Caldwell Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Nov. 25</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driveway</td>
<td>8216 N. Oketo Ave., Niles</td>
<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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City owes cash to schools, District 64 says

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON
jjohnson@pioneeriocaicom | @Jen_Pioneer

The city of Park Ridge and Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 are clashing when it comes to money owed to the district.

District 64 officials are demanding payments owed under the city's 2003 Tax Increment Finance District agreement — payments that are based on the number of new students who have moved into the Uptown TIF District and any new property that is added to the tax rolls.

But the city hasn't paid up. Top city administrators say they're struggling to verify that District 64 is owed what it says it's owed.

According to District 64 Superintendent Philip Bender, the annual payments were due by Dec. 15, 2013, but the district is still waiting to receive them.

City Manager Shawn Hamilton said the city hasn't met its financial obligation because staff have not yet verified the data they received from District 64 regarding new student numbers.

"We had not, in my opinion, received what I thought was good information from them to validate the data," Hamilton told the City Council on March 3.

According to District 64 Business Manager Rebecca Allard, the city of Park Ridge owes District 64 roughly $144,000 in new student payments. Payments for new property totaled $493,441.68 for 2012, the last time this payment was made.

Allard told the Park Ridge Herald-Advocate that city officials have not clarified exactly what they want from District 64.

"I'm still waiting to hear what's wrong with the data we have," she said, explaining that Hamilton and Oliven have questioned the "integrity" of the data District 64 submitted.

"I don't know what that means," Allard said. "If they want data in a different format, I need to know that and I'd be happy to comply with it."

District 64 Board President Anthony Borrelli said last week that the school board has not discussed the matter, but has asked for further information to be shared during a meeting on March 24.

"Up until now, the board has not had any communication with the city of Park Ridge," he said. "The administration has, but not the board."

Hamilton also told elected officials that district administrators had initially declined to meet with him to discuss a strategic plan that was developed by a firm hired to help the city identify ways to reduce the financial loss it is experiencing from the failing Uptown TIF District. One of the recommendations in the report was making changes to the city's financial obligations to District 64, Maine Township High School District 207 and the Park Ridge Park District.

There has been no action taken by any of the governmental bodies to make changes to the TIF agreement.

District 207 reported no new students in the TIF District in 2013, Hamilton said. The city received District 64's calculation of the new student payment on Jan. 9, both the city manager and superintendent agree. But Bender claims that Hamilton first questioned the data on Feb. 26, something Hamilton says is not true.

"Some of our issues with those payments may or may not involve legal matters," he told the City Council. "We don't know. That's part of the investigation we're going through."

But the city's finance director, Kent Oliven, acknowledged that he needs help in calculating the data to make certain it matches up with District 64's numbers.

"New student data is a difficult thing to determine and we're having difficulty in determining it," he said. "There's no amount we are comfortable with right now."

Bender said District 64 remains willing to work with the city "to rectify any issues relating to the information. We believe we have been in compliance all along with all the information they need."

When asked if the district may consider legal action against the city if it is not paid soon, Bender repeated that the district is "still working through things" to reach a resolution with the city.
Good times roll for Avenues to Independence

'MARDI GRAS MASQUERADE LOVE AFFAIR'
Benefiting: Avenues to Independence
Location: Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont
Date: Feb. 15
Attended: 300
Raised: $60,000+

Mardi Gras king Collin Sasser of Chicago and queen Anne Caddell of Park Ridge with Avenues to Independence Executive Director Robert Okazaki

Gaia honoree Fred Sasser (far right) of Park Ridge with family. All photos by Natasha Waskiewicz for Sun-Times Media

Brian and Alice Murphy of River Forest (from left to right), Floyd Kortenhof of Elmwood Park, and Kevin Murphy of Park Ridge

Kevin and Linda Buggy and Sue and Jerry Feldman, all of Park Ridge
**CAUSE & EVENT**

**EPILEPSY FOUNDATION HEROES GALA**
Benefiting: Epilepsy Foundation
Honoring: Susan Axeirod, Jack and Manjula Pfingston
Date: Feb. 21
Location: Museum of Science and Industry
Attended: 350+
Raised: $160,000+
Website: epilepsychicago.org

Howard Zwirn (from left), originally of Buffalo Grove, board member, Philip Gattone of Maryland, president of the Epilepsy Foundation, and Susan Axeirod, formerly of Oak Park, honoree.

Get your event in Trend

Have a philanthropic cause or event, or a party to share? Email Deborah Hoppe at dhoppe@pioneerlocal.com. She can send you guidelines for submitting information for Trend. Or call (312) 321-2794.

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Garden offers lush photo backdrop
Jaime Hejza and Matthew Michelini

BY CAITLIN MULLEN
Contributing writer

One of the highlights of the day Jaime Hejza married Matthew Michelini was taking photos at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe.

"Oh my God, I love that place," Jaime said. "It's just so pretty."

It was important to Jaime to take photos there with her bridal party, surrounded by flowers and lush greenery, because it allowed them to incorporate the beautiful setting into their day without having the event there.

Jaime, a nanny, and Matthew, an analyst for Walgreens in Deerfield, live in Niles, Jaime's hometown. Matthew is from Park Ridge.

The two met in summer 2005 while working at Target. Jaime said hello to Matthew, but he ignored her. They saw each other again a couple of weeks later, went out with co-workers and hit it off. He later told her he was shy.

"I tease him all the time that he didn't say hi to me," Jaime said.

After they had been dating for a year, Matthew asked Jaime whether she would marry him one day. When he officially proposed in October 2011, he asked Jaime whether she remembered when he "proposed" five years earlier.

Matthew surprised her with the ring early in the morning they were leaving to go on a cruise.

"And he can't keep a secret for the life of him," Jaime said with a laugh.

They were married at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge — the church Matthew grew up attending with a reception following at Manzo's Banquets and Catering in Des Plaines.

Jaime and Matthew loved the staff and atmosphere at Manzo's, which had "phenomenal" food, Jaime said.

They went with a pink, black and silver color scheme, choosing pink, yellow and orange flowers and bright pink bridesmaids' dresses.

Both Jaime and Matt are longtime Chicago Blackhawks fans, so Matthew and his groomsmen wore Blackhawks cufflinks, and the couple entered the reception to "Chelsea Dagger," the song played when the Blackhawks scored.

"That was a lot of fun," Jaime said.

Rather than a traditional guestbook, they created a photo book and had guests sign it.

"And it was a nice way to incorporate all of our years together," Jaime said.

Jaime called their June 29 wedding day "magical and unforgettable."

"I loved the whole day," she said.

Contact Renee Lee at rlee@bouquetcatcher.com or 312-651-6613 to share your wedding story. © Facebook.com/BouquetCatcher © Twitter @BouquetCatcher © Pinterest.com/BouquetCatcher
Sarah Troyer & Joseph Prochot

Alan and Linda Prochot of Clarendon Hills are pleased to announce the engagement of their son Joseph to Sarah, daughter of Bob and Diane Troyer of West Lafayette, Ind. Joseph, a 2005 Hinsdale Central graduate, and Sarah live and work in downtown Chicago. Their October 2014 wedding will take place at Purdue University where their story began.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Bouquet Catcher cordially invites you to feature your wedding and engagements in print and online, free of charge.

Happy couples and photographers should contact Renee Lee at 312-651-6613 or rlee@bouquetcatcher.com

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to get out &amp; see a great show!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOS LOBOS: Disconnected 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR</strong></td>
<td>Apr 04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MADELEINE PEYROUX</strong></td>
<td>Apr 05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLINT BLACK Acoustic</strong></td>
<td>Mar 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROBERT RANDOLPH &amp; THE FAMILY BAND</strong></td>
<td>May 09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CLELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S WEEKEND WITH A BLAZING HOT SHOW!**

Famed Irish tenor from Riverdance, Michael Londra created a scorching fast and exciting show with *Celtic Fire* that features live traditional Irish music, dance and song.

Don't miss this amazing country music legend with just his acoustic guitar, harmonica and penchant for great storytelling.

Famed tenor as compared to Billie Holiday's vocal styling, Madeleine Peyroux is known for her intimate interpretations of the early American blues and jazz repertoire.

Led by the virtuosic pedal steel guitarist, Robert Randolph & the Family Band generate soulful funky music that's pure energy and joy.

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Meeting Consumer Expectations

By: Joanne Cleaver

What's in store for health care hiring in 2014? Health care recruiters and hiring managers are about to be challenged with finding a new vein of talent that pivots around the healthcare consumer experience.

Retail Skills Transfer to Healthcare

A year ago, Mike Zipser was a regional executive with Dick's Sporting Goods, making sure that its Chicago-area stores stocked enough balls, bats, mitts and bikes to keep sports enthusiasts playing. As a regional manager with Concentra, a division of Humana that runs more than 300 urgent care centers and employer-based wellness centers around the country, Zipser has made a high-level lateral move into health care.

At first glance, his career move seems like a leap. But walk-in health care has more in common with retail skills than one might think, says Zipser, such as the need for staff to immediately engage with customers and the need for a culture that can convert a low moment in a customer's day into a high point of customer service.

Alan Ayers, vice president of strategy for Concentra, says that the required skills for a multi-site clinical manager is more aligned with experience gained in the retail, hospitality and even restaurant industries, point of customer service.

"We represent a creative viewpoint about the medical experience," says Zipser.

The ability to manage and lead change is becoming a primary skill for health care managers. Employers are not just looking for middle managers who can replicate prior success, but for employees who can prove that they are adaptable and flexible.

An Urgent Need for APRNs

Within health care systems, a new breed of nurse is keeping track of all these changes: Clinical Nurse Leaders (CNL).

To date, only 3,000 clinical nurse leaders have been certified, reports Joan Stanley, Senior Director of Nurse Leaders (CNL) at AHIMA. Yet health care providers can't hire them fast enough, says Stanley, because clinical nurse leaders bridge daily nursing practice with system-wide initiatives such as quality improvement, patient safety, and transitions to home and self-care -- all priorities of the ACA.

"They are the pivot point for outcomes," says Stanley. The position's salary range is $60,000 - $90,000.

Meeting Health Care Expectations In 2014

Inevitably, in 2014 clinical nurse leaders will coordinate with health care information managers as patient information privacy and security comes into sharp focus, says Lou Ann Wiedemann, senior director for health information management practice excellence for the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).

"When paper records existed, you'd never lose 500,000 records at once," says Wiedemann. "But now that everything is in a database, each of those 500,000 records is at risk." This still emerging health care data analyst position will integrate records privacy and security -- in other words, the policy of privacy and the technical accomplishment of security.

In 2014, health care data analysts will control the flow of information, not just internally, but also to doctors' practices and pharmacies. And, thanks to the ACA, they will also impact healthcare navigators and others who are attempting to coach consumers through the process of ACA benefits.

The latest crop of analyst candidates in AHIMA's certification classes included bankers, lawyers, statisticians, and nurses. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the overall amount of record keeping demanded by the ACA is responsible for a projected 21% growth in medical records and health information technical jobs.

Just as in their health care experience, consumers will fully expect that health care practitioners will be up to speed on accessing, protecting, and coordinating their data, says Wiedemann.

And the demand for health care data isn't just from younger consumers. A 2013 survey conducted by consulting giant Accenture found that over 75% of Medicare clients -- those would be senior citizens, by definition -- are online at least daily to use email, social media and to search for information.

About 67% of these Medicare clients reported that they'd like online access to their health care records, too -- an expectation unfathomable even five years ago.

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A Demand for Healthcare Data Analysts
Help Wanted Full-Time

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In the matter of the Estate of

**FLORES, MARY A.**

Estate of Mary A. Flores,

Case Number: 13 CH 17524

The mortgage real estate is:

An interest in a residential real estate in Cook County, Illinois, as more particularly described in the complaint.

The highest bid for cash, as set forth below, is

**PAUL G. BLISH**

Mortgage Balance: $193,472.18

**THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION**

The mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its mortgage, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its mortgage will not be entitled to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale other than to the mortgagee.

The mortgaged real estate is

Located at:

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For information, contact:

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One South Wacker Drive

24th Floor

Chicago, IL 60606

(312) 236-7000

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The mortgaged real estate is

Located at:

6759 North Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60634

**Public Notice**

This Notice of Foreclosure is hereby given pertinent to a Judgment of Foreclosure

Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered on January 8, 2014, Kallen Realty Services, Inc., at 120 West Madison Street, Suite 203, Chicago, Illinois 60602, holds the mortgage and is the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate.

The mortgaged real estate is

Located at:

6759 North Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60634

The real estate is

A residential real estate in Cook County, Illinois, as more particularly described in the complaint.

**MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE**

In the matter of the Estate of

**FLORES, MARY A.**

Estate of Mary A. Flores,

Case Number: 13 CH 17524

The mortgage real estate is:

An interest in a residential real estate in Cook County, Illinois, as more particularly described in the complaint.

The highest bid for cash, as set forth below, is

**PAUL G. BLISH**

Mortgage Balance: $193,472.18

**THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION**

The mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its mortgage, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its mortgage will not be entitled to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale other than to the mortgagee.

The mortgaged real estate is

Located at:

6759 North Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60634

**NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE**

For information, contact:

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION

One South Wacker Drive

24th Floor

Chicago, IL 60606

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Both Pioneer Press and the Doings recommend discretion when responding. Please refer questions and comments directly to ICAN.
BMW X5 delivers mid-size luxury thrills

BY JOHN STEIN
For Sun-Times Media

The mid-size luxury SUV space is filled with outstanding examples of opulent appointments, impressive technology and superb drive characteristics. The handsome 2014 BMW X5 has been a favorite of U.S. consumers, and it has sported a familiar exterior design since 2007.

The 2014 BMW X5 must compete with the likes of Mercedes-Benz, Audi, and Porsche — not to mention the Japanese luxury brands — but in doing so, it manages to sustain the BMW performance abilities and keep in step with all the other mid-size luxury SUVs.

BMW's X5 delivers practical German function amid the trappings of a stylish luxury cabin. The X5 is offered with six-cylinder and V8 power, efficient transmissions and all-wheel drive. My tester featured the turbocharged, inline 3.0-liter unit capable of 302 horsepower, 295 pound-feet of torque and a 6.2-second zero-to-60 miles per hour time.

The eight-speed automatic transmission and full-time all-wheel drive gave my X5 tester a planted feel that never seemed to waver, even with snow blanketing the pavement. BMW does offer a rear-wheel-drive X5 sDrive 35i, which many purists will insist is the only way to go. I get the nod to AWD, but for this heavy SUV, AWD is my choice in the Midwest climates.

The X5 is rated at 18 miles per gallon city and 27 mpg highway. That won't win many votes in the green circles, but it is impressive when you consider the horsepower and weight of the X5.

The X5 drives like a sport sedan with responsive steering, agile cornering and hefty braking on a dime. The X5 is comfortable cruising at highway speeds with little to no external noise to remind you how fast you might be going. On short trips around town and in a pinch while merging on a highway entry ramps, the X5 is eager to jump into action and capable of picking any spot it is pointed, and 'making' room to merge.

The X5 delivers modest interior space in the front and back rows, though the cabin is comprised of exquisite craftsman ship, opulent leather and wood accents, a bit more legroom and rear headroom would be appreciated. An optional third-row is available for seven-passenger seating.

The iDrive rotary knob for the infotainment system has been updated to include a touchpad for easier entry of information. This may have been a sore spot for reviews of X5s in the past, but I managed to get the hang of the new setup immediately.

The X5 may start as low as $56,700, but with some desired options or a larger engine, it is easy to reach the $70,000 range. This SUV will not disappoint, nor will it ever let you down making an aggressive move that may leave you with a wide grin.
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$19,990

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$16,490

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### AutoMatch USA

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<th>YEAR</th>
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|-----------------------------|-------------|---------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
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| 2004 Jaguar XJ8              | #X9306      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2001 Jeep Wrangler Sahara    | #B4029A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2010 Scion tC                | #X3055A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2011 Toyota Camry Sedan      | #X3242      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2006 Nissan Xterra           | #X3331      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2010 Saab 9-3 Sedan          | #C0390A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2011 Ford Fusion SE Sedan    | #B3045A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2005 Nissan Titan SE Crew    | #M4030A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2012 Honda Civic Sedan       | #B4021B     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2005 Nissan 350Z Convertible | #X3304A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2007 Toyota Sequoia Limited  | #X3044A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2011 Chevy Equinox LT        | #X3273      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2012 Buick Verano Sedan      | #X3253      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2003 Volkswagen Jetta Sedan  | #X3343      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2011 Buick Verano Sedan      | #X3253      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2005 Nissan Altima Coupe     | #M3049A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2006 Ford Expedition Limited | #X3059B     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2010 GMC Yukon Denali 4x4    | #M40676C    |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2012 Honda Civic Sedan       | #B4021B     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2005 Nissan 350Z Convertible | #X3304A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2012 Buick Verano Sedan      | #X3253      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2003 Volkswagen Jetta Sedan  | #X3343      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2011 Buick Verano Sedan      | #X3253      |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2005 Nissan Altima Coupe     | #M3049A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2012 Ford FOCUS FUSION      | #M4027A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2012 Buick LACROSSE SEDAN    | #M4032A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2011 CHEV ROVER LTZ SEDAN    | #X3087A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2011 GMC TERRAIN             | #M4027A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
| 2012 BUICK LACROSSE SEDAN    | #M4032A     |         |           |           |                 |                |
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*Plus tax, title & $195.27 doc fee. Dealer will not honor any pricing errors in this advertisement. Pictures are for illustration purposes only. Prices are good 2 days from date of publication. See dealer for details.*
Custom and semi-custom home builders see signs of improving luxury market

BY JOHN ROBERTS
for Sun-Times Media

The housing market has been in slow recovery mode for the past couple of years, but signs that things are getting better are starting to appear. Just ask John Hall Jr., who co-owns John Hall Custom Homes in St. Charles along with his brother, Joshua, and sister, Jessica. Before the downturn in the market in 2007, Hall was building between 10 and 12 custom homes in the Fox Valley region each year. This year, the company could build as many as 15 to 20 new homes, he said.

"When the faucet turned off in 2006 and 2007, I lost a lot of great friends and a lot of competitors," Hall recalled. "The recession did a good flushing of the market, and the cycle went on longer than anticipated." Hall, like most builders, is relieved to see signs of a housing market comeback. One of these, according to Hall, is a Cavalcade of Homes event being planned for this summer in the Plainfield area by the Northern Illinois Home Builders Association. Hall said he hasn't heard about one of those since 2007.

While the days of building "McMansions" have for the most part come and gone, there are still communities where builders buy smaller, older ranch homes on larger lots, tear them down and build big custom homes loaded with amenities from wraparound porches to deluxe kitchens and baths. These new homes can be found in various communities across the Chicago suburbs, from Naperville to Palos Heights.

One area doing well in the luxury custom home market is Henning Estates in Huntley. The Rockport ranch home featured in the subdivision measures 2,353 square feet and is set on a third of an acre with a nature preserve setting.

"With the gradual rebound of the new-home construction industry in 2013, we finally saw economic light at the end of the tunnel," Hall said. "Bricks and sticks are costing about the same that they did at pre-recession levels, but land values have dropped significantly," Hall said. "That gives people the advantage now to build a new home for a lot less money with maybe more amenities or higher-end amenities."

In the Fox Valley region, where Hall's company does most of its building, the trend overall is more about quality rather than quantity.

"People are willing to reduce the size of their homes to stay within their budgets and get more of the amenities that they want," Hall said.

For example, Hall has seen more buyers favoring high-end digitally controlled showers with multiple shower heads, known as vertical spas. Others demand flex space and built-in desks in studies and play rooms. It's no longer just about immediate resale value, but more about owners not being afraid to use a home they way they really want to, Hall said.

For more information about John Hall Custom Homes, call (630) 377-1515 or visit www.johnhallhomes.com.

For more information about Henning Estates, call (847) 338-3821 or visit www.henningestates.com.
LAKE CHAPIN SHORES

Low maintenance and easy lifestyle appeal to boomers

Those born between 1946 and 1964 number more than 81 million — about 26 percent of our nation's population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 survey. Reports indicate that more than one-third of these baby boomers plan to move when they become "empty-nesters.

As they hit 65 and come closer to retirement, boomers in the Midwest are looking for second homes within easy driving distance that can serve not only as a comfortable and fun vacation opportunity for the whole family now, but also as a primary residence when they are ready to downsize or retire. Low maintenance and the opportunity to continue an active life are welcome features of these homes.

Lake Chapin Shores offers second homes built to accommodate a changing family size and active lifestyle. Located just 90 minutes from Chicago in southwest Michigan, the secure community offers scenic views of the 600-acre all-sports lake and plenty of options for outdoor activities and social networking.

The Lake Chapin Shores hideaway features 21 home sites, each with a different elevation, and panoramic views, direct lake access and a heated pool. The homes range from 1,300 to 3,200 square feet of contemporary living space on one to three levels in a variety of floor plan choices with 12 flexible construction design options geared to convenient, hassle-free living. Each model includes open floor plans, with cherry or maple cabinetry, choice of natural granite countertops, energy-efficient appliances, a cozy gas or wood-burning fireplace and terrific views with screened porches and expansive decks. Models are adapted to fit the specific needs of individual owners by Fermer Homes, a certified green builder.

According to Lake Chapin Shores homeowners Carole and Gary, building was a family decision.

"Our kids are grown with families of their own, so we asked them if we build it, will they use it. They do!" Gary said. "We like the feeling when we come up here that we're going away, like a vacation."

Carole said, "I like the proximity. It's not intimidating to drive up here, since it's only an hour and 40 minutes from home, door to door."

Active couples at Lake Chapin Shores have plenty of opportunity for quality time together, including dinners for two at local fine dining spots, a cruise on the lake or a walk along its shore, a dip in the pool, golf at local country clubs or public courses, a tour of the nearby wineries and antique shops or bike riding along tranquil country roads. For children and grandchildren, there is a playground, heated pool, dockside fishing and plenty to do in the surrounding area, including beaches, ice cream parlors, sandwich

Vacation fun: Baby boomers and their families can enjoy activities on the 600-acre all-sports lake at Lake Chapin Shores in southwest Michigan. (SUPPLIED PHOTO)

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21 premier homes on 3 mile long, 600 acre all-sport Lake Chapin. Tour models anytime by appointment.

Contact us today at 888-TO-MICHIGAN (888-866-4244)
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KZF DEVELOPMENT

Luxury floor plan selling rapidly at Meadow Ridge

Only four new 3-bedroom, 2½-bath G luxury home floor plans are still available at the sales office at Meadow Ridge, an upscale community in Northbrook on the North Shore.

The new duplex-style plan features a first-floor master suite, a large great room with vaulted ceiling, dining room, breakfast area and generous "backwards-basement" storage on the second floor.

"The G luxury home plan is a direct result of all the best design ideas, suggestions and personal feedback from prospective buyers," said Joe Giampa of Gibson, Giampa & Partners, Inc., the exclusive marketing agent for KZF Development at Meadow Ridge. "It is so hot we anticipate the remaining four will not last long. Buyers need to act fast."

Residence G features 2,487 to 2,880 square feet of living space. The home showcases more than 1,640 square feet of living space on the first floor alone. Residence G is preconstruction-priced from $625,000.

Upon entering, guests are welcomed by a dining room which opens to both the expansive family room with vaulted ceiling and spacious kitchen with breakfast area.

The 21-by-14½-foot family room is the star feature, with an optional 36-inch wide fireplace and flush hearth.

The spacious kitchen features an optional island and opens to the breakfast area. A door leads from the breakfast room to an outdoor patio.

The impressive first-floor master suite is on the opposite side of the home and features a room-sized walk-in closet and a private master bath with his and hers sinks, a soaking tub and a separate shower with a seat.

A powder room, laundry room and two closets complete the first floor.

Upstairs, there are two more spacious bedrooms with walk-in closets and access to a full bath and linen closet. There is an additional 393-square-foot bonus space that can be finished or it can be used as a "backwards basement" second-floor storage room.

In addition to the new G floor plan, visitors can also tour the popular Residence A model. It features 2,390 square feet of living area that can be expanded to 2,767 square feet. The home includes 3-bedrooms and 2½ baths, a first-floor private den/study, dining room, family room and kitchen with breakfast area. Base priced at $595,000, Residence A is available for immediate occupancy.

Meadow Ridge is a gated 164-unit community of attached townhomes and townhomes. Base prices range from $495,000 to $895,000.

Unique features include lavish landscaping, two man-made lakes and active waterways, and 1.2-mile running/biking path.

"Another attraction of Meadow Ridge is its location in the heart of the North Shore," said Giampa. "The Northbrook Metra train station at 1401 Shermer Road is within 1.6 miles of our community. It is about a 25-minute drive to Chicago's Loop via the Edens Expressway (Interstate 94). Interstate 294 also is nearby."

The Meadow Ridge sales center is located at Waukegan and Founders roads and is open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. or by appointment. For more information, please call (847) 589-9800 or visit www.meadowridgenorthbrook.net.

LAKE CHAPIN | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

and pastry shops, kayaking, bike riding and every type of vacation-time sport, year-round.

To ensure a relaxed lifestyle, a concierge service is available to help with everything from routine chores to special events, including deliveries, catering and cleaning, stocking firewood and security checks. They'll even schedule wine tours and other activities.

Call (888) 866-4244 for an appointment to tour the community, the model home and remaining lakefront, hilltop view and secluded woodland lots. For a look at model home options and a complete list of materials and specifications, visit the website at www.LakeChapinShores.com.

Only four remain: The new 3-bedroom, 2½ bath G floor plan was recently unveiled at Meadow Ridge, a gated 164-unit community of attached townhomes and townhomes. Base prices range from $495,000 to $895,000. 1 SUPPLIED PHOTO
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SPRING FASHION ISSUE

Starring ‘Suits’ siren and Northwestern alum MEGHAN MARKLE
GUIDE TO CLOSET CLEANING

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Things We Love

This Week

Jason Wu Show
Saks Fifth Avenue welcomes the designer to the Art Institute of Chicago's Modern Wing March 12. Stop by to take in Wu's Fall 2014 collection, fresh off last month's New York Fashion Week runway. Tickets start at $150 and benefit A Better Chicago. 6-8 p.m., 159 E. Monroe, RSVP at Abetterchicago.org.

Leghorn
Bird is the word in Ukrainian Village, as the socially conscious, BYOB chicken shack from Element Collective has opened up shop. Drop by for chicken sandwiches, chicken-fried fries, hush puppies and other creations from chefs Jared Van Camp and Sieger Bayer. It's money well spent, as two percent of the restaurant's profits will benefit LGBTQ-friendly organizations: 959 N. Western, (773) 782-3936; Leghornchicken.com

Laura Mercier Lip Glacé
Glossy girls, rejoice: The cosmetics line is launching 13 new shades of lip gloss. Available in long-lasting hues like Azalea, Black Cherry and Tulip (shown at left), all in the line's signature high shine, a stand-out pout has never been easier. $25, Nordstrom, 55 E. Grand; Lauramercier.com

Cleanse Culture
Reboot your body with a juice cleanse from the new Des Plaines-based company, founded by Nicole Kasal. With nationwide delivery and six cleanse options, including a Chakra Cleanse designed to rebalance your body's natural energies, getting healthy is definitely worth the squeeze. Cleanses start at $65; Cleanseculture.com

AT THE SHOOT

Fresh off an appearance at her alma mater Northwestern University, Meghan Markle joined the Splash team at the Lincoln Park Conservatory (2391 N. Stockton) for a day of high fashion. Despite the chill outside, the conservatory's tropical temps let Markle show off her stems in floral dresses and leather skirts.

Cover Credits
Photographer: Maria Ponce
Stylist: Favia, Ford Artists
Hair: Daniel Rubin for Dennis Bartolomei Salon, Goldwell US
Makeup: Shannon O'Brien
Shoot Coordinator: Katerina Bizios
ON MEGHAN
Clothing
Alexander Wang: jacket, similar styles $150
Rebecca Taylor: yellow skirt. $325
Alexander Wang: leather skirt, similar styles $495

Accessories
Christian Dior: shoes, $610
Saks Fifth Avenue, 700 N. Michigan; Saksfifthavenue.com
Fendi: clutch, $850, Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan; Neimanmarcus.com
A. Marek: necklace, price upon request, 3021 Butterfield, Oak Brook, Amarekfineljewelry.com
Oscar Heyman: bracelet, price upon request, A. Marek, 3021 Butterfield, Oak Brook, Amarekfineljewelry.com

All available at Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan; Neimanmarcus.com

Spring Fling:
Our spring fashion photo shoot stylist Michael Favia shares how to add the hottest spring trends to your wardrobe. Page 22
this week

**March 14**

**EVENING IN BLOOM**

The Chicago Flower & Garden Show (March 15-23) is more welcome than ever after this brutal winter. Celebrate its arrival — and the soon-to-follow spring — at this fête, co-chaired by Bob and Nina Mariano and benefiting several local organizations, including Chicago Gateway Green and Urban Alliance. With its magnificent displays, landscaped scenes and countless blooms, the show is a perennial hit, offering home gardeners great ideas — but you don’t have to have a green thumb to get delightfully lost amid the beauty of it all.

*Time:* 6 p.m.
*Place:* Navy Pier’s Festival Hall, 600 E. Grand
*Cost:* $125. For tickets, visit Chicagoflower.com.

**March 14**

**RUSH ASSOCIATES BOARD CASINO NIGHT**

Join 400 fellow Chicagoleans and gamble for a good cause at this seventh annual benefit, supporting Rush’s Renée Schine Crown Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Rush Children’s Hospital, the Robert R. McCormick Foundation Center for Advanced Emergency Response and school-based health centers. Enjoy dinner, cocktails, live music and casino games.

*Time:* 6:30 p.m.
*Place:* Café Brauer, 2021 N. Stockton
*Cost:* $200 in advance, $225 at the door. For tickets, visit Rush.convio.net/rabcasinonight.

**March 14**

**NIGHT OF FLIGHT**

Halcyon Theatre hosts its annual gala and honors playwright/actor Nambl E. Kelley; Goodman Theatre’s director of community engagement Willa Taylor; and Estelle Walgreen, founder and director of Hispanic-Latin Speaking News for their outstanding commitment to connecting Chicago’s communities and the arts.

*Time:* 7 p.m.
*Place:* Architectural Artifacts, 4325 N. Ravenswood
*Cost:* $75. For tickets, visit Halcyontheatre.org.

**March 15**

**59TH ANNUAL ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE**

Post up on the Michigan Avenue bridge, the Columbus Drive bridge or along the riverwalk to watch the dying of the Chicago River (10 a.m.), then venture east for one of the city’s biggest celebrations Chicago Blackhawks President John F. McDonough serves as Grand Marshal, while Rev. Gavin Quinl, chaplain of the Chicago and Cook County Building Trades, is this year’s guest of honor.

*Time:* Noon
*Place:* Balbo and Colum-
Next Week

March 19

- Lincoln Leadership Prize
  Award-winning director Steven Spielberg garners yet another honor, as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation bestows the Lincoln Leadership Prize on the influential Hollywood powerhouse, presented by Academy Award-winning actress Sally Field. The evening supports the organization's educational and cultural programming.
  
  Time: 6 p.m.
  Place: Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan
  Cost: $500. For tickets, call (312) 553-2000 or visit Lincolnleadershipprize.com.

March 19

- Molly Ringwald at City Winery
  The '80s icon left her "Pretty in Pink" persona behind years ago, and in recent years, she has successfully fashioned a new career as a songstress. Ringwald and her band appear at City Winery, offering fresh takes on jazz standards and tunes from the great American Songbook.
  
  Time: 8 p.m.
  Place: 1200 W. Randolph
  Cost: $40, $45 and $55. For tickets, call (312) 773-9463 or visit Citywinery.com.

March 20

- The Illinois Holocaust Museum's Humanitarian Awards Dinner
  The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center honors Splash parent company Wrapports investor John A. Canning Jr., co-founder and chairman of Madison Dearborn Partners LLC, and Thomas S. Ricketts, chairman of the Chicago Cubs and Incapital LLC, with Humanitarian Awards, while Richard S. Hirschhaut, founding executive director of the Illinois Holocaust Museum, will receive the Distinguished Community Leadership Award. Former Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger is the keynote speaker.
  
  Time: 5:30 p.m.
  Place: Hyatt Regency Chicago, 151 E. Wacker
  Cost: $400. For tickets, visit Humanitarianawardsdinner.org.

March 22

- Boundless Readers Gala
  Devoted to promoting literacy and learning, Boundless Readers marks its 25th anniversary with this fundraiser, chaired by Kristin and Brian Chmiel and honoring Dorothy Giroux, clinical assistant professor of reading and teacher preparation at Loyola University of Chicago, with the Rochelle Lee Tribute Award. Steve Wolk, professor of teacher education at northeastern Illinois University, gives the keynote address.
  
  Time: 2 p.m.
  Place: Civic Opera House, 20 N. Wacker
  Cost: Kids $10, $15 and $20, adults $20, $30 and $40. For tickets, call (312) 332-2244 or visit Lyricopera.org/familybarber.
While Hollywood royalty took the stage at the 86th annual Academy Awards March 2, local filmmakers were lauded at Gene Siskel Film Center's (164 N. State) Hollywood on State: A Red Carpet Celebration. XA PR exec Amanda Puck and RL Restaurant GM Rich Varnes presided over the red carpet, where guests posed for pictures and enjoyed bites by Pure Kitchen Catering and cocktails by Naked Grape, Barefoot Bubbly and Baileys. Movie lovers then stocked up on popcorn and sweets by Magnolia Bakery and Eli's Cheesecake and headed into the Film Center's two theaters to take in the awards show. Later, all eyes were on honorees Maria Finitzo, Stephen Cone, Ky Dickens and Pamela Sherrod Anderson, local filmmakers who were recognized for their work. With the help of a live auction - which included Robert Downey Jr.'s autographed 'Iron Man' helmet - the evening raised more than $53,000 to benefit the Film Center. - Katerina Bizios

The Sun-Times was the media sponsor of this event.
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TICKLED PINK FOR BRIGHT PINK

THINK PINK

Nearly a decade ago, Jodi Fyfe — principal of local event and catering service Paramount Events — launched Tickled Pink Chicago to honor her cousin Carrie, who lost her battle with breast cancer at 35. On Feb. 28, Fyfe paid tribute to Carrie alongside more than 1,000 supporters at the ninth annual Tickled Pink event. Dozens of local personalities, including Anthony Ponce and Andrea Metcalf, turned out to Block 37 (108 N. State) to sell raffle tickets and mingle with the crowd while sampling fare from Chicago's top restaurants. More than $65,000 was raised for Tickled Pink's event partner Bright Pink, the only national nonprofit that focuses on prevention and early detection of breast and ovarian cancer.

The Sun-Times was the media sponsor of this event.

GILDA'S CLUB: UNCORKED

More than 200 guests stepped out of the cold and into the UBS Tower Conference Center (1 N. Wacker) to warm up over Argentinian wines and Goose Island craft beers at Gilda's Club Chicago's Uncorked: The Tasting Event Feb. 27. Supporters spent the evening indulging in gourmet bites and libations before heading home with raffle prizes, including autographed Blackhawks memorabilia and a Lake Michigan cruise. The event raised $15,000 for Gilda's Club, which provides more than 350 free activities each month for people living with cancer.

The Sun-Times was the media sponsor of this event.

STORIES BY KATERINA BIZIOS
For proof that opposites attract, look no further than this must-have spring trend. A popular look for fall and winter, black and white has serious staying power, though warm-weather iterations come with shorter hems, flitier cuts (think bell and shift dresses) and interesting patterns like checks or graphic prints. Need proof? Turn to the runways, where designers like 10 Crosby Derek Lam and David Koma used the dual hues in everything from high-contrast pantsuits to ultras-modern crop tops and skirts. Stay sleek with pulled-back hair and minimal accessories, as color is the enemy of this stark style. Welcome to the monochrome movement.
Lightning in a bottle

When dreaming up a new restaurant, some chefs are inspired by regional cuisines, while others are inspired by unique ingredients.

But when creating Bottlefork, chef Kevin Hickey found inspiration in the giant, 40-foot bar that spans almost the length of the room. “My vision was that the bar and the kitchen are seamless — the bartenders and cooks work together, putting food into the drinks and drinks into the food,” he says. “It evolved from there.”

The restaurant, housed in the former Dragon Ranch Moonshine & BBQ space, marks a new chapter for Hickey — after an 18-year stint with The Four Seasons, he’s teaming up with Rockit Ranch Productions for his first restaurant concept.

Those familiar with Hickey’s food will be happy to know that the Bottlefork menu embodies the playfulness he brought to Seasons and Allium, but to help execute the other half of his vision, he tapped Brandon Phillips, formerly of the Drawing Room, as bar manager. “I was able to work really closely with Brandon to create cocktails that went with the food, had elements of the cooking implements that were using — smokers, grills, dehydrators,” Hickey says. “I wanted to put as much focus on the beverages as I did on the food.”

Here’s what else you’ll find at Bottlefork:

The vibe: Intimate dining room meets bustling kitchen, with a large expanse of banquettes and shelves stacked with plates and glassware. “From the décor and ambiance to music and lighting, we wanted it to be a cocktail party,” Hickey says. “And every cocktail party I ever have, or ever go to, always winds up in the kitchen.”

Must-try dish: Don’t miss the lush Rich Man Po’Boy, a lobster roll/po’boy combo with foie gras, lobster and fried oysters on thick, buttery bread ($21), or the crisps and egg — potato chips served in a brown bag, topped tableside with a 62-degree poached egg and then shaken ($4).

Slow and steady: “We wanted the food to be very approachable but complex in its preparation,” Hickey says. Take the ham butt steak ($23), for example. “We wet-brine it for six days, we smoke it for seven hours, we chill it down and then slice it. But when someone orders it, we throw it on the grill and it’s done.”

Drink up: The Bill Brasky, named for the audacious “Saturday Night Live” character, packs a serious punch, blending rye, moonshine, bourbon, scotch, vermouth and bitters. It’s served in a large hurricane glass with a giant piece of ice ($35). And in a Brasky-esque move, inside each block of ice, you’ll spy a 1960s vintage playing card boasting a scantily clad woman.

Get smoked: The Smoke of the Day cocktail ($14) uses the kitchen smoker’s leftover fat in a process called fat-washing — infusing the flavors without the texture or meat products. Bartenders blend the liquefied fat with a spirit such as bourbon, let it absorb for a few hours, freeze it so the fat separates and then run the liquid through cheesecloth to strain. The result is a smooth, rich, lightly smoked cocktail. “If any drink sings the concept of Bottlefork, it’s this one,” Phillips says.

For reservations and more information, visit Bottlefork.com.

Chef Kevin Hickey (from left), the Bill Brasky cocktail and braised beef cheek poutine
SPRING

THE BEST DRESSES, BAGS, JEWELRY, SHOES AND MAKEUP

SOFT PASTELS, ROMANTIC FLORALS AND DEWY SKIN ARE IN FULL BLOOM THIS SEASON. FOR A FIRST LOOK AT FOUR CAN'T-MISS TRENDS, TURN THE PAGE.

On Meghan Markle:

Beauty
MAC: face and body foundation in C6, $27.40 E. Oak; Maccosmetics.com
Amazing Cosmetics: concealer in Tan Golden, 133 E. Cook, Libertyville; Splashshop.suntimes.com
Nars: blush/bronzer duo in Orgasm/Laguna, Bloomingdale's, 900 N. Michigan; Bloomingdales.com
Urban Decay: 24/7 Glide

On eye pencil in Perversion, $20, Ulta locations citywide; Urbandecay.com
Saint Laurent: Rouge Volupté lipstick in Sensual Silk, $35, 11 E. Walton; Ysl.com

Jewelry
Goshwara: earrings, $4,400; ring, $3,000
A. Marek: necklace, price upon request
Available at A. Marek, 3021 Butterfield, Oak Brook; Amarekinypejewelry.com
'Suits' star and Northwestern grad MEGHAN MARKLE dons the season's top trends and talks high fashion, high stakes and starting her career with a simple 'hi'

BY ZAK STEMER
PHOTOS BY MARIA PONCE
Florals come back in style every spring, but this year they're radiating soft pastel hues rather than the in-your-face bouquets of the past. Pair the blooming patterns, like this embroidered Oscar de la Renta dress, with plaids and breathable summertime wools. Choose accessories in complementary hues for an expertly paired ensemble.

Clothing
Jill Sander: sweater, $1,360
Oscar de la Renta: dress, $6,490
Available at Saks Fifth Avenue, 700 N. Michigan; Saksfifthavenue.com

Accessories
Manolo Blahnik: shoes, $595, Saks Fifth Avenue, 700 N. Michigan; Saksfifthavenue.com
Buccellati: earrings, $21,200, ring, $9,100
A. Marek: cuff, $26,500
Available at A. Marek, 3021 Butterfield, Oak Brook; Amarekline-jewelry.com

Jewelry

Fendi: clutch, $1,750, Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan, Neimanmarcus.com

o say Meghan Markle's intro to Hollywood was a little unorthodox would be an understatement. In 2005, the Northwestern grad was auditioning for "Hot Girl No. 1" in the movie "A Lot Like Love." "That was one of my very first auditions, and the role was just for a girl that says 'Hi,'" Markle remembers. "I went in and was with the director, producers and casting and they asked, 'Can you say 'Hi'?' I said, 'I can, but I also read the script and really respond to this other character.'" The director, impressed by her forthcoming attitude, had more lines written into the script for Markle. "The moxie I had going into that was insane when I think about it now," she admits.

Eight years after that audition, her star is quickly on the rise, thanks to that confidence and her role on USA's hit legal drama "Suits." The show, set in a high-profile New York City law firm, centers around brilliant lawyers Harvey Specter and Mike Ross. But here's the twist: Ross is a fraud — he never went to law school. Markle plays Rachel Zane, Ross' love interest and a clever paralegal with aspirations of becoming a full-fledged attorney. "The stakes are a lot higher for everybody at the firm, and for Rachel especially," Markle says of the current season. "It doesn't just mean that Mike could get caught. It would mean that it could affect their entire future."

But Markle's character isn't just a pretty face, and according to the actress, she'll soon be playing with the heavy hitters. "Rachel becomes the chick we met in the first episode of the series who was all about business and ambition. There are lots of moments where she goes head-to-head with Harvey and [managing partner] Jessica, which is amazing."

On the surface, it's easy to draw parallels between Rachel Zane's down-to-business drive and Markle's backbone. But there's more to the 32-year-old LA-born beauty than a knack for dramatic legal dialogue. She's about to showcase her comedic chops in a Hallmark romantic comedy called "Oh Say Can You See." "I grew up loving all those Jennifer Aniston movies like 'Picture Perfect.' That's the trajectory I would love to be on," Markle says. "I'd love to be on a show and then be able to do this amazing project where you get to play. To be echoing that is fun and kind of apropos, because people call Mike and Rachel the new Ross and Rachel from 'Friends.' If I'm going to follow that lineage, it feels a little serendipitous."

Though her character is typically confined to figure-hugging pencil skirts, Markle says her own style is in a state of flux. As a fairly new star, she's just now being inundated with a surge of stylish swag from major luxury houses. "I had my first fashion 'aha moment' a few weeks ago," she remembers. "I went to a fitting at Miu Miu and it was my first time realizing that clothes can be so transformative. Putting on this outfit was like drinking a glass of Champagne, I was so giddy and excited." As for her everyday sense of style, it's safe to say it's evolved since her days on the Northwestern campus. "Talk about dichotomy," she laughs. "I was looking at some of my old yearbook photos yesterday and the amount of makeup I had on trying to be put together for class was so silly. And the highlights in my hair? Those were just a shame."

But Markle more than made up for her collegiate fashion faux pas with a string of red carpet wins during New York Fashion Week in February. She even counts co-founder of The Coveteur Jake Rosenberg and Elle magazine Creative Director Joe Zee as her close friends. "Obviously my style has gotten a lot more refined. I understand the value of great tailoring."

Now well on her way to becoming a fashion pro, TV's chic paralegal shows off spring's hottest trends.
YOU MAKE ME BLUSH

Arguably one of spring’s biggest trends, soft blush radiates femininity. Juxtapose a sleek, modern cut, like Meghan’s daring Stella McCartney blazer, with a statement necklace for a powerful fashion punch. When it comes to makeup, strong, smoky eyes add serious drama to the delicate shade.

Clothing
Stella McCartney: blazer, $1,700
Alexander McQueen: pants, $1,640
Available at Saks Fifth Avenue, 700 N. Michigan; Saksfifthavenue.com

Accessories
Victoria Beckham: purse, $1,850,
Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan;
Neimanmarcus.com

Jewelry
Goshwara: necklace, $10,700, A.
Marek, 3021 Butterfield, Oak Brook;
Amarekfinejewelry.com

For more photos of Meghan, plus a behind-the-scenes video of our shoot, go to Chicagosplash.com.
A CLEAN SLATE

When designers unveiled this season's collections, it looked like they had done some major spring cleaning: Embellished dresses and complex silhouettes were replaced with sharp, chic whites. Crisp white shirts, buttoned to the top, were paired with miniskirts; ivory shift dresses complemented black stilettos to create a stark, simple look. Add impact with subtle detailing and interesting accessories, like Meghan does with the Jimmy Choo clutch.

Clothing
Oscar de la Renta: shirt, $1,190
Alexander Wang: skirt, $495

Available at Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan; Neimanmarcus.com

Accessories
Jimmy Choo: clutch, $1,695
Céline: sunglasses, $335

Available at Saks Fifth Avenue, 700 N. Michigan; Saksfifthavenue.com

Jewelry
Vendorafa: cuff, $36,000; necklace, $19,950
Cynthia Bach: ring, $9,550

Available at A. Marek, 3021 Butterfield, Oak Brook; Amarekfinejewelry.com

SPRING THE BLUES

Robin's-egg blue swept Oscars best-dressed lists after Lupita Nyong'o wore a Prada gown in the hue. It's a quintessential spring color, instantly giving any outfit a playful vibe. Accessorize with appropriate colors: Silver adds a contemporary accent to the delicate tone, black creates a dark, romantic mood and sparkles add vibrant energy.

Clothing
Dolce & Gabbana: dress, $3,825, Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan; Neimanmarcus.com

Jewelry
A. Marek earrings, $10,000; bracelet, $47,750
Cynthia Bach: necklace, $26,725
Carrera y Carrera: ring, $12,700
Robert Vogelsang: bangle, $21,250

Available at A. Marek, 3021 Butterfield, Oak Brook; Amarekfinejewelry.com
making a splash

Demi's music faves
- Ed Sheeran (inset): “He's one of my favorite up-and-coming musicians at the moment.”
- Danielle Mason
- Fifth Harmony
- Jhene Aiko

A songbird's snacks
- "I've been trying to eat healthy, so lots of fruits, veggies and almonds. My fridge is filled with fresh juices. I also love Glutino chocolate-covered pretzels, dried mangos and coconut water.”

Demi's makeup bag
- Benefit Erase Paste concealer ($26, 852 W. Armitage; Benefi cosmetics.com)
- Givenchy Noir Couture mascara ($32, Sephora, 108 N. State; Sephora.com)
- Anastasia Beverly Hills brow powder ($23, Ulta, 3015 N. Clark; Ulta.com)
- Unite 7-Second Detangler ($21.95, Ethan James, 1471 W. Grand; Ethanjamesalon.com)

GUIDING LIGHT

Pop star Demi Lovato brings her 'Neon Lights' tour — and personal triumphs — to Chicago BY ZAK STEMER

The Disney Channel has been entertainment down to a science: Over the past decade, it’s churned out stars like Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan, Miley Cyrus and Demi Lovato. But as Lovato learned firsthand, skyrocketing from an unknown Dallas teen to TV star and pop phenom doesn't come without its challenges. In late 2010, in the midst of an international tour with the Jonas Brothers, Lovato spiraled out of control, leading to a three-month rehab stint to treat an eating disorder and drug addiction. But three years later, Lovato is back on top, headlining her first tour — and she’s using her star power to share her story with other young women. “I'm grateful for my struggles,” she says. “I've had the opportunity to be a positive influence for others, and that's something that inspires me every day.”

Lovato, 21, is tapping into her past battles in a number of ways. In October, she released a best-selling book of affirmations titled Staying Strong: 365 Days a Year, and she’s currently penning a memoir in hopes that her experiences will help others overcome their own issues. “[My] personal experiences connect me with my fans. It allows them to relate to me,” she says. That candid, empathetic attitude explains the fierce loyalty Lovato inspires in her many admirers, who stuck by her during her Disney days on “Sonny With a Chance,” her two years as a judge on “The X Factor,” her regular guest spots on “Glee” and, most meaningfully, her darker moments.

With her faithful supporters in mind, Lovato is determined to bring her A-game to her show at the Allstate Arena March 14. “It’s much more personal than any other tour, since I co-wrote most of the songs,” she says. “Neon Lights” is the showstopper.” Lovato hints at high-energy highlights like an interactive laser show, but the singer is most excited to showcase her talents for a Chicago audience. “I've spent a lot of time in Chicago, and it's one of the most energetic cities in the States.

Though she’s proven her mettle as an actress and best-selling author, Lovato maintains her true passion is music. “I started singing when I was 5 years old. My first performance was at a talent show and I remember it like it was yesterday,” she says. “At that moment, I realized I wanted to perform for the rest of my life.” Despite the highly publicized bumps on her road to success, it's likely the rebounding star will do just that. “My plan is to continue to create new music and meet the young lives that tell me I've inspired them,” she says. “It's truly rewarding.”

See Demi March 14 at the Allstate Arena. For tickets, starting at $35, visit Ticketmaster.com.
Shop brands such as Cameo at the Edith Hart pop-up at the Thompson Hotel.

Pamper up
Beverly just got a little more beautiful with the opening of Everything's Relative, a new Aveda Concept Salon. The sibling to the original location in Oak Lawn also offers a wide range of hair, nail and skin services — think cuts, colors, blow outs, facials, mas-

Blown away
Winter just lost the war it's waging on hair: Blowtique Salon is the first blow-dry boutique to stock lush Kérastase products. Celebrate with a complimentary Kérastase cream masque (valued at $20) when you stop in for a regular blowout ($35). March 13, 5-9 p.m., 1 E. Huron. Blowtique.com

Fall fashion
Free your fashion mind at Boris Powell’s Fall/Winter 2014 collection runway show March 14, where the local designer unveils his Freedom line, packed with rich fabrics and new accessories like men's wallets. Tickets start at $40. 8:30 p.m., Block 37, 108 N. State. Borrispowell.com

Shop talk
Bucktown boutique Edith Hart brings its stylish wares downtown with a pop-up in the Thompson Hotel. Browse the latest collections from brands like Cameo, Paper Crown and DL 1961. March 14, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., 21 E. Bellevue, 4th floor. Edithhart.com
In the driver’s seat

Director Gary Griffin steers Sondheim’s ‘Road Show’ onto Navy Pier

BY THOMAS CONNORS

‘Road Show’ is an apt name for the Stephen Sondheim musical, which opens March 13 at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Based on the crazy careers of Wilson and Addison Mizner — 1930s-era siblings always on the make — the piece has traveled a long way since it debuted at the Goodman Theatre in 2003 as ‘Bounce,’ under the direction of Broadway legend Hal Prince. Tweaked and fine-tuned a number of times since then, the show gets another crack at Chicago audiences, this time at the hand of director Gary Griffin.

Sondheim and his “Pacific Overtures” collaborator, writer John Weidman, first presented their concept at New York Theatre Workshop in 1999. Christened “Wise Guys,” it featured Nathan Lane and Victor Garber as the brothers Mizner. Though the duo had a problematic relationship, and their entrepreneurial gumption overwhelmed them, the show’s creators positioned the tale as a lighthearted romp, targeting ticket-buyers’ willingness to delight in the get-ahead, risk-taking determination that led the brothers from prospecting for gold in Alaska to developing palatial homes for A-listers in Florida.

“Road Show” is the third in a trilogy of stories Sondheim created with John Weidman that explore the American character, Griffin says. “They explored American Imperialism in ‘Pacific Overtures,’ and Americans on the outside looking in through ‘Assassins.’ It’s been fascinating to follow the evolution of ‘Road Show.’ I believe the authors distilled what they have learned from the various workshops and productions and arrived at an essential story of two brothers and their pursuit of the American dream.”

Griffin is no stranger to Sondheim’s work. His challenge, as always with Sondheim’s work, is to stay as open and present as is humanly possible, and to create the clearest and most powerful channel for the audience.

FOR TICKETS, CALL (312) 595-5600 OR VISIT CHICAGOSHAKES.COM.

‘ROAD SHOW’
The Chicago native on being inspired by 'Braveheart' and his upcoming movie role

A
der five seasons on "Chuck" and roles in TV series like "Hart of Dixie" and "CSI: Miami," 38-year-old Ryan McPartlin takes his talents to the big screen in "The Right Kind of Wrong."

Road to Hollywood
"In my fourth year [at the University of Illinois], I went to see 'Braveheart' with a football buddy of mine. It sounds totally cliché now, but at the time 'Braveheart' was a really groundbreaking film. All the cheesy things [Mel Gibson's character] says have become such clichés — 'Every man dies but not every man really lives' — but it got me thinking about the time we have on this earth and how we spend it. That's when I decided [to be an actor]. I was afraid of leaving school and going down the traditional path and waking up one day thinking, 'I should have tried that,' and I didn't. That's what took me to L.A."

Lucky break
"When I got [cast on] 'Chuck,' I did a terrible job in the room. I melted down during the audition. I had just had my first kid and it was a sleepless night, I didn't even finish the audition! But they gave me the job anyway — they probably just [took] pity on me."

Role call
"'The Right Kind of Wrong' was a special movie for me because I played Captain Awesome on 'Chuck' for so long that you start wondering if anyone will see you outside of that role. [My character] is pretty complex. He seems perfect on paper and it makes for a tough choice: Sara Canning's character, [choosing] between him and Ryan Kwanten's character. It was nice to be able to play around and hit some layers I didn't get to on 'Chuck.'"

Set stories
"Ryan Kwanten and I had never worked together before 'The Right Kind of Wrong.' 'We got along so well when we first met, and all of a sudden it just turned, and I thought, 'What's going on?'

Hometown love
"To be honest, I do miss the weather. I'm the type of guy that says, 'Alright, let's get some cross-country skies. If we're trapped in this weather, let's at least be outside for a couple of hours. No matter how cold or miserable it is! I know that's easier said than done, but ever since I was a little kid, I've wanted to be outdoors no matter what the weather is. I still have that.'

"'The Right Kind of Wrong' is in theaters March 14."
When Nick Reder was nursing a crush on Emory University classmate Becky Miller in 2008, he knew there was only one way to catch her eye: by offering to help her with her homework. "Nick ended up helping me, but gave me the wrong answers," recalls Miller, laughing. Luckily, that didn't hurt his chances, and shortly thereafter, the grad students began dating. Over the next several years, Reder relocated to Chicago to attend medical school and Miller stayed in Atlanta to pursue her physician assistant degree. But neither time nor distance (three years and 717 miles, to be exact) could keep the couple apart, and in 2012, Reder surprised Miller with a proposal. The duo tied the knot at Bond Chapel (1025 E. 58th) in Hyde Park Jan. 4. Miller admits to "pinning up a storm" in advance on Pinterest, which helped her, along with LK Events Coordinator Nicole Zenner and Pollen Floral Design's Lynn Fosbender, create an intimate, candlelit affair with hints of Parisian elegance. The trio adorned each table with rustic burlap runners, sprigs of evergreen and menus hand-designed by the bride's sister Deborah Lechowit. Inside custom guest books, friends and family members wrote down pieces of marriage advice for the new bride and groom and sealed them in tiny envelopes. And in lieu of cake, the couple fed each other multicolored French macarons. It all added up to a day that Miller will never forget. "When I first saw Nick, I just knew we were in the right moment at the right time," she says. "I just want to remember that moment forever."

**Becky Miller & Nick Reder**

**BY KRISTIN LARSON**

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**IT'S IN THE DETAILS**

\[ | \]

**Gown:** Catherine Deane Onyx gown, BHLDN, 8 E. Walton; Bhldn.com

**Groom's attire:** Bar III 3-piece suit, Kenneth Cole shirt, Michael Kors tie; Macys.com

**Bakery:** Sugar Fixe Patisserie, 119 N. Marion, Oak Park; Sugarfixe.com

**Beauty:** Sine Qua Non Salon; Sinequanonsalon.com

**Food:** La Petite Folie, 1504 E. 55th; Lapetitefolie.com

**Photographer:** Stoffer Photography; Stofferphotography.com

**Photo Booth:** Chicago Casino Suppliers Inc., 2219 W. Grand; Chicagocasinosuppliers.com

**Transportation:** Metropolitan Limousine, 1836 S. Wabash; Metropolitanlimo.com

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**CHEERS!**

- Hats off to local designer Katelyn Pankoke: The "Project Runway" finalist added some Chicago flair to the red carpet at last weekend's Academy Awards & Restaurateurs conference, held at the InterContinental Chicago (505 N. Michigan).

- Happy birthday to Chicago's bubbliest broadcaster, Val Warner, who blew out the candles on her 40th March 7. The WLS-Channel 7 “Windy City Live” co-host threw a bash with friends and family at the Godfrey Hotel to celebrate.

- Former World Bank economist-turned-restaurateur Rohini Dey will serve up a warm Chicago welcome to females in the food industry March 10: The Vermilion owner is delivering the keynote speech at the Women Chefs & Restaurateurs conference, held at the InterContinental Chicago (505 N. Michigan).

SEND US YOUR CHEERS!

If you have good news to share — or if you'd like your wedding featured — send a note to Splashsuntimes.com.
Do you have a recurring dream?

I always love to hear about people’s dreams. I find them to be so fascinating. What is our subconscious trying to tell us? I believe there is so much we can learn about ourselves and each other simply through what our brains show us each night.

Whether you’re someone who doesn’t remember a single dream, or someone who has recurring dreams, I think it’s reflective of your day-to-day life. I know that when I am feeling particularly stressed out, I am due for one of those anxiety dreams where I’m chasing something unattainable, or something is chasing me. When I have a big decision to make, and I have no idea what to do, I have those dreams where I feel like I’m falling and I’ll literally shake myself awake.

So while I may not have one particular recurring dream, I have similar-style dreams based on my current lifestyle. Like last month when I was on a cleanse — all I dreamed about were cheeseburgers and spaghetti.

I loved hearing about all of your dreams too.

Read Jenny’s blog at ChicagoSplash.com.
Barbara Bui: Chambray and leather jacket, $1,535. Helen Y., 1725 N. Damen; Heleny.com

Michael Kors: Chronograph Bailey gold-tone stainless steel bracelet watch, $250. Macy's, 111 N. State; Macy's.com

Saint Laurent: Betty bag in sky blue, $1,550. 11 E. Walton; Ysl.com

Topshop: limited-edition floral placement print tee, $100, 830 N. Michigan; Topshop.com

Nina Ricci: skirt, Ikram, $1,290, 15 E. Huron; Ikram.com

Saint Laurent: Betty bag in sky blue, $1,550. 11 E. Walton; Ysl.com

Dana Rebecca: Jennifer Yamina earrings, $1,980. 676 N. Michigan; Danarebecca.com

Chanel: Le Vernis in Ballerina, $27. Neiman Marcus, 737 N. Michigan; Neimanmarcus.com

Funktional: Timeless shirtdress, $110. Perelope's, 1913 W. Division; Funktionalcollection.com

Rag & Bone: stretch skinny jeans in Distressed Blush, $187. Saks Fifth Avenue, 700 N. Michigan; Saksfifthavenue.com

Max Mara: Nappa sneaker. $395, 900 N. Michigan; Worldmaxmara.com

Moleskine: large white-ruled hard notebook, $19.95. Paper Source, 3543 N. Southport; Paper-source.com

Zara: double-layer top, $49. 700 N. Michigan; Zara.com

"Flowers for spring? Nothing new. Except if you mix floral prints with black-lace trim on a silk skirt. Think outside the box and you're bound to stand out."

"I'm seeing a lot of powder blue for spring. Wear denim-on-denim or accessorize your look with a chic blue bag, like Saint Laurent's Betty."

"Last season, we saw bright colors and neon color-blocking. This year is about a softer, more feminine palette, which is a great way to transition into spring."

"Nothing says summer quite like white. This season, buy white pants, jackets and crop tops and wear them forever. It's both classic and on-trend."

"Take inspiration from our spring fashion shoot with stylist top picks."

"Bright White"
NEW
VANILLA CINNAMON
THE MOST STYLISH SHOT OF THE NIGHT
FASHION ON YOUR PHONE: TEXT CHI TO 75283 (SSAVE) FOR INSIDER ACCESS, EVENT PREVIEWS AND MORE*
WE'VE REMODELED
New Design, New Menu, New Specials
by the Same Friendly Family

WEDNESDAY
$2 Draft Beers | Full Slab of Ribs $14.95

THURSDAY
Half Price Bottles of Wine | $5 Appetizers

SUNDAY
Family Night: Kids Eat Free*
*For every one adult entree at reg. price, one child 12 & under eats free from the children's menu or as part of the family style dinner

MON - WED BUY ONE, GET ONE
$12.95 Buy One Dinner, Take One Home Free. Limited Menu.
Dine-In Only, 4pm - 9pm, M-W. No Substitutions.
Thomas' picks for this week.

TOP5

I. Josh Schonwald, known for his "Joseph and the Amazing Ars Viva Symphony Orches-"Rediscovered" film series celebrates the arrival of the spring sights. Starting March 15, thousands of lovers of all things beautiful will flock to Navy Pier's Festival Hall to adjust their winter eyes on the beauty of lush greenery and vibrant flowers awaiting all of us this spring.

At least we hope spring keeps up her end of the bargain.

Because according to gardening experts, what gardeners across the Chicagoland area discover under all this white stuff might not be so gorgeous after all. In fact, it might take a bit more tender loving care to beautify our yards this year. First, we need to get rid of all this darn snow.

"No matter how much we hated it, snow was actually a good thing for everything living in our soil," explains acclaimed author and gardening expert Melinda Myers, who will speak at the Chicago Flower & Garden Show on "Green and Easy Gardening: Ten Things You Can Do to Make Going Green Easy, Convenient and Affordable."

"The constant snow cover and extreme cold temperatures insulated and protected our plants and flower beds. After a winter like we have had, many gardeners are left to wonder 'did it all die?' It's important not to let your emotions get the best of you. Don't immediately start pruning and removing. Patience is key."

So, take a deep breath, put on your work gloves and proceed with these spring gardening tips.

Assess the damage — "There are going to be many gardeners horrified this year by how much damage the critters under the snow have caused," says Myers.

"Because there has not been much 'green' food around our landscape, rabbits and moles spent the winter tunneling under the snow, chewing on the bark of trees and shrubs."

CHICAGO FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW
March 15-23
Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand Ave., Chicago
ChicagoFlower.com

Rake your lawn — "Snow mold is a fungus disease that may leave a few dead patches on your lawn," explains Jennifer Brennan, horticulture expert at Chalet Landscape, Nursery and Garden Center in Wilmette and a featured speaker at this year's Chicago Flower & Garden Show.

"To cure snow mold, apply the early season fertilizer and with the warming temperatures, the lawn will grow out of the problem on its own."

Check for salt damage — "For areas of the garden that have been exposed to salt runoff or salt spray from streets, apply gypsum, calcium sulfate, and water well," says Brennan. "By doing this, the soil gets cleared out before the new plant growth begins."

Begin the pruning process—"Look for damaged, broken or diseased wood first," says Brennan. "Cross- ing branches should be pruned out because they can cause damage when they rub together during wind. This opens up wounds that are entry points for disease or insects." Prep the soil — "Popular garden items such as tomatoes and peppers and eggplants need warm soil before we put them out, so it is important to prep the soil," concludes Myers. "You can even plant them up to a month early by covering the area with plastic harvest guard."

Once the items on the above list are complete, it's time for the enjoyable part — planting!

Brennan suggests five of the newest flowers Chicago gardeners should seriously consider planting this spring, most of which have only been introduced to gardeners during the last two years.

Panicum virgatum "Northwind" — a 5- to 6-foot-tall, wonderful rigidly upright vertical clumping grass with unique flower panicles.

Hibiscus "Midnight Marvel" — a hardy 4-foot hibiscus that combines deep wine purple and scarlet reds.

Salvia nemorosa "New Dimension Blue" — perennial salvias have deep blue-violet flowers on deep purple stems and grow to 14 to 18 inches tall when mature.

Carex siderosticha "Snow Cap" — a bright, white accent for part shade to shade that forms a dense, spreading clump of deciduous foliage.

Baptisia "Solar Flare" Prairieblues — a 3- to 4-foot-tall vigorous, shrub like plant with blue-green foliage that likes full to part sunny locations.

BY TRICIA DESPREZ
for Sun-Times Media

FLORAL & GARDEN SHOW plants the seed for spring

Photos courtesy of Chicago Flower and Garden Show
For its spring program, the respected a cappella ensemble Bella Voce will not rely completely on the human voice. Artistic director Andrew Lewis has added a one-per-part chamber ensemble, which will play occasional concerts during the ensemble's coming seasons.

"By adding instrumentalists we can expand our programming," Lewis said. "Bella Voce has great, talented singers and this will enable us to do more with what we have."

The director, who has been at the helm of Bella Voce since 2006, did not make the decision lightly. "This dream has been swimming around in my head for some time now," he admitted, and added that the number on the upcoming program which finally prompted the addition was the "Little Match Girl Passion," a piece for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor and bass-baritone, each playing a percussion instrument.

The work won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize after it premiered in Carnegie Hall, where it was performed by Paul Hillier and his Theatre of Voices. Bella Voce performers include soprano Kirsten Hedegaard, playing the brake drum. "It's a round rusty-looking piece," said Hedegaard, who is married to Lewis, "but I think I have the easiest instrument to play." Mezzo-soprano Lindsey Adams, is playing the crotales, which are little round resonant chimes; tenor Patrick Muehleise plays the glockenspiel, and bass-baritone Eric Miranda plays tubular bells and the bass drum.

The composer has combined two elements, Bach's St. Matthew Passion and the Hans Christian Andersen story about a poor child who freezes to death on the street trying to sell matches on New Year's Eve. It was performed at the Ravinia Festival in the Martin Theatre last August.

"We had planned since last season to perform 'Little Match Girl Passion' this spring," said Hedegaard. "We thought ours would be the first in the area and when we heard Ravinia was doing it, we were a little disappointed. But now we think that our performance will benefit from second-form FR, because it is such an unusual piece of music. I've never heard anything like it."

In contrast with the 21st-century work, the program also includes "Membra Jesu Nostri," (The Limbs of our Jesus), a cycle of seven cantatas, composed in 1680 by Dieterich Buxtehude, of which Bella Voce will do several. It is scored for instruments and five voices, four of them who had performed the "Match Girl."

"The other soprano is Laura Lynch," Hedegaard explained. Instrumentalists will be organized by Jason Moy, Jerry Fuller playing baroque violsone, Craig Trumpeter playing the gambe, and violinists Marty David and Eme Tanabe. "The addition of our Camerata is a new path for Bella Voce," Lewis concluded, "but we will continue to give regular concerts with our full ensemble. We're not taking anything away."
Meet and greet some truly 'Amazing Animals'

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
For Sun-Times Media

Kids will learn about some fascinating creatures at "Amazing Animals," 11 a.m. Saturday, March 15 in the Exploritorium, 4701 Oakton St., Skokie.

Jessica Reedy, co-founder of Animal Quest, and her husband Steve will bring a variety of animals to the event, including a coatimundi, an albino Burmese python, a hedgehog, a tortoise, a ferret and a giant rabbit that weighs over 20 pounds.

"It's an entertaining, also educational, show," Jessica said. The animals will be taken out one at a time and Steve will talk about them.

"While he's telling them really cool things, I walk it around so (the audience) can see it up close. Some of the animals can be touched," Jessica said.

Admission is $5 per person for residents, $7 for nonresidents, which includes playing in the Exploritorium before and after the show.

For details, call (847) 692-3359 or go to www.prparks.org.

A DATE TO O’SKATE
You and your kids can skate to Irish music at the St. Patrick’s Day Skate, 2:30-4 p.m. Sunday, March 16 at IceLand Skate Complex, 8435 Ballard Road, Niles. Admission is $5 and skate rental is $3.

For details, call (847) 297-8010 or go to www.niles-parks.org.

COME IN COSTUME
The littlest kids can enjoy a free Mini Purim Carnival, 10 a.m. Sunday, March 16 at Temple Beth Israel, 3601 W. Dempster St., Skokie. That will be followed by a free Purim Carnival at 11 a.m., featuring games, prizes, balloons and more. Lunches will be sold.

For details, call (847) 675-0951 or go to www.tbiskokie.org.

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS
Violinist Karisa Chiu and pianist Whitney Jin will perform at a Young Steinway Concert, 3 p.m. Sunday, March 16 at Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St. This is the 32nd season for the series, which features talented young musicians.

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

‘Budapest Hotel’ is Wes Anderson at his grandest

BY BRUCE INGRAM
Film Critic

Those who find the films of Wes Anderson off-puttingly mannered and artificial aren't likely to be converted by “The Grand Budapest Hotel,” which plays out, even more than usual, in a peculiar world of its own.

If you admire Anderson (“Rushmore,” “The Royal Tenenbaums,” “Fantastic Mr. Fox,” “Moonrise Kingdom”) at his best, though, there's a good chance you'll be delighted by this masterfully executed, highly stylized, occasionally perverse farce. Which takes his own personal brand of artifice to inspired new heights.

Set in the fictional former republic of Zubrowka, “The Grand Budapest” is related by a now-deceased legendary author (Tom Wilkinson), who flashes back to 1968 when his younger self (Jude Law) listens to the life story of the mysterious multi-millionaire Zero Moustafa (E. M. Murray Abraham) in the declining grand hotel. Moustafa, now the hotel's owner, casts back even further, to 1932, during the hotel's glory days, when he was a lobby boy and the Budapest was run by his mentor, the legendary concierge Gustave H. (Ralph Fiennes).

That's how he becomes involved with the Countess D. (an unrecognizably decrepit Tilda Swinton), whose murder propels him and the young Zero (Tony Revolori) into a battle for her immense fortune. An increasingly complicated struggle involves her evil son (Adrien Brody) and his homicidal henchman (Willem Dafoe), a priceless stolen painting, several more murders, a prison break and a frantic, climactic cross-country chase.

It's very strange to think of Anderson as a crowd-pleaser. He has always followed his own eccentric path as a filmmaker and earned a sizable following as a result. But he comes as close as he's likely to get with “The Grand Budapest Hotel,” which is not only a murder mystery at its core but more of a full-tilt comedy than his typically melancholy, quirk-driven musings.

And it's packed with stellar cameos from Owen Wilson, Bill Murray and Jason Schwartzman (Anderson regulars), Jeff Goldblum, Harvey Keitel, Lea Seydoux and Ed Norton.

That's not to say that Anderson is selling out with “Grand Budapest.” He is every bit as obsessed with visual composition as before, meaning every frame is a treat for the eyes. The actors' performances are typically offbeat and affectless, as well. And there's a distinct strain of sadness throughout the proceedings, particularly in the way an unspecified, Nazi-like fascist army appears and threatens Gustave's way of life.

It’s quintessential Anderson, in other words, but also an unabashed entertainment. And that’s something to see.
Refrigerator search salad:
Turning scraps into supper

BY MELISSA ELSMO
OUT OF MEL’S KITCHEN

Last week, while I was fretting about what to throw together for dinner, I found myself staring down at nothing more than a forgotten head of cauliflower, a pint of slightly shriveled tomatoes, an orphaned orange and a waning bouquet of cilantro. Turning my quartet of disparate produce items into a hearty weeknight main dish was surely going to require more than a little kitchen creativity, so I turned to my pantry. After a few minutes of searching, I unearthed a handful of cashews and a can of chickpeas before grabbing a bag of farro — the perfect ingredient to round out my makeshift meal.

Wholesome farro tastes like it’s good for you, but not in that cardboard box kind of way. The nutrient-dense whole grain is often compared to barley and prized for its toothsome texture and nutty flavor. The miniature bullet-shaped grain packs some powerful heat in the form of B vitamins and is a fine source for antioxidants. The grain appeals to health conscious cooks, but farro lends itself to a variety of dishes and cooking methods making it attractive to gourmands as well.

When selecting farro I rely on reputable Italian markets to carry quality grains and carefully follow the cooking instructions on the packages; farro comes in whole grain, pearled and semi-pearled varieties and each one has unique cooking times. Look for properly cooked farro to be firm to the bite or “al dente.”

The first time I enjoyed farro it was incorporated into a robust entree salad brimming with roasted squash, hazelnuts and savory ricotta cheese. Looking back at that Italian restaurant lunch inspired my Refrigerator Search Farro Salad.

Roasting the cauliflower and tomatoes deepened their flavor and helped them stand up to a healthy portion of sturdy farro. Using the cilantro and cashews to create a quick pesto served as a healthy alternative to high-calorie salad dressings, and pan-roasted chickpeas gave my vegetarian meal a powerful protein punch.

In the end, I presented my family with a thoughtfully composed, nutritious, meatless meal that came from little more than a few scraps from my refrigerator and farro, an ancient grain that should be a pantry staple for every creative home cook.

For the Beans:
1 15-ounce can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 Tablespoon of olive oil
1/4 teaspoon of red pepper flakes

Heat the olive oil in a large, high-sided skillet over high heat. Add the chickpeas and pepper flakes and toss to coat with the oil and spices. Allow the chickpeas to cook until lightly golden and crispy. Transfer the chickpeas to a large mixing bowl.

For the Grain:
I cup of farro
2 teaspoons of olive oil
Salt and pepper
2 cups of water

Add the olive oil to the same skillet used for cooking the beans and heat over medium-high heat. Add the salt and water to the pan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, for 35 minutes. Drain and rinse the cooked farro and add to the bowl holding the chickpeas.

For the Cauliflower:
I head of cauliflower, separated into florets
1 teaspoon of cumin
Salt and pepper

While the cauliflower and tomatoes are roasting, place the cilantro, cashews and garlic into a bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Pulse to coarsely chop the mixture. With the machine running add the olive oil in a slow stream until combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste. You should have about I cup of pesto. Fold half of the pesto mixture into the salad and stir to combine. Add more pesto according to your personal taste. (I used about 3/4 cup.)

For the Tomatoes:
I pint of grape tomatoes, halved
2 teaspoons of honey
2 teaspoons of olive oil
Salt and pepper

Place the grape tomatoes, cut side up in a pie plate and drizzle with the honey and olive oil. Season the tomatoes with salt and pepper and roast in the same oven with the cauliflower for 20 minutes. Allow to cool slightly before adding the tomatoes to the mixing bowl holding the farro mixture.

For the Pesto Dressing:
I bunch of cilantro
1/2 cup of cashews
3 garlic cloves
1/3 cup of olive oil

While the cauliflower and tomatoes are roasting, place the cilantro, cashews and garlic into a bowl of a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Pulse to coarsely chop the mixture. With the machine running add the olive oil in a slow stream until combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste. You should have about I cup of pesto. Fold half of the pesto mixture into the salad and stir to combine. Add more pesto according to your personal taste. (I used about 3/4 cup.)

For Finishing:
2-3 Tablespoons of high quality balsamic vinegar
I orange, peeled and cut up
Sliced scallions
Crumbled Feta
Additional cashews for garnish

Stir the balsamic vinegar into the finished salad, adjust the seasoning and garnish with orange, scallions and cashews.

This entree salad combines refrigerator and pantry staples — cauliflower, chickpeas, tomatoes and cashews — along with farro, a versatile whole grain. PHOTO BY MELISSA ELSMO
FRIYDAY, MARCH 14

Friday Morning Coffee Club 10 a.m.: The group watches "Troublesome Creek: A Midwest" about a family struggling to keep their farm in the family. Stars Bob Blankenship, Dean Elts and Marge Harold. 58 minutes. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-829-3122.

Bibliobop Dance Party 10 a.m.: Family and friends are invited to boogie down at the library. DJ Miss Cate will be spinning all the best tunes from the library's music collection. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-1234.

Dinner Theater: St. Patrick's Day Celebration 4 p.m.: Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Irish tunes by The Nippersink Rogues. Dinner Theater St. Patrick's Day will provide appetizers, desserts, a Middle Eastern tea bar, wine and much more. Bring a dish to share. Temple Beth Israel, 3610 W. Dempster St., Skokie. Call 847-675-0951. $30.

SURREALIST GAMES Noon: Artist Jenny Urbanek shares her professional projects and studio ideas with the group. This month's theme is Surrealist Games. Mather's, 7134 W. Higgins Ave., Chicago. Call 847-455-6016.

DIY Instagram Photo Strips 11 a.m.: Make a photo booth strip out of Instagram pictures. For ages 13-17. Franklin Park Public Library, 10311 Grand Blvd., Franklin Park. Call 847-455-6016.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST AND OPEN HOUSE 8 a.m.: Join in for a meal and learn more about the services offered by the church. Restoration Lutheran Church, 9920 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park. Call 847-455-7031. $5 ages 12 and over, $2.50 children under 12, free for preschool age children.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

Pancake Breakfast and Open House 8 a.m.: Join in for a meal and learn more about the services offered by the church. Restoration Lutheran Church, 9920 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park. Call 847-455-7031. $5 ages 12 and over, $2.50 children under 12, free for preschool age children.

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SURREALIST GAMES Noon: Artist Jenny Urbanek shares her professional projects and studio ideas with the group. This month's theme is Surrealist Games. Mather's, 7134 W. Higgins Ave., Chicago. Call 847-455-6016.
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CO CALENDAR

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Moroccan stuffed dates. Mather's,
1 p.m.: Shirley shares jokes, riddles
and funny stories with the group.

Mysterious Morocco
I p.m.: Join professor Joe Cunniff for
a film and creative commentary with
Moroccan stuffed dates. Mather's,
734 W. Higgins Ave., Chicago. Call
773-723-7071. $5.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Mysterious Morocco
I p.m.: Join professor Joe Cunniff for
a film and creative commentary with
Moroccan stuffed dates. Mather's,
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773-723-7071. $5.

Women in Motion Wine Tasting
6 p.m.: Join the Lincolnwood, Sau-
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of Commerce for the Lincolnwood's
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ganash will provide wines, cheeses
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SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Critics' Choice Cinema: 'The
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2 p.m.: When American basketball
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**THE GRAND BUDAPEST HOTEL**

★★★★

Rated R for language, some sexual content and violence

Stars: Ralph Fiennes, F. Murray Abraham, Bill Murray, Willem Dafoe, Adrien Brody

If you admire director Wes Anderson at his best ("Rushmore," "The Royal Tenenbaums," "Fantastic Mr. Fox," 2012's "Moonrise Kingdom"), there's a good chance you'll be delighted by this masterfully executed, highly stylized, occasionally perverse farce. "Grand Budapest Hotel" is the story of Gustav H (Fiennes in a rare comic role), legendary concierge of the hotel in its 1930s glory days. He's embroiled in an increasingly complicated struggle involving murder, a priceless stolen painting, young love, an evil aristocrat with a homicidal henchman (Brody and Dafoe), more murders, a prison break and a climactic cross-country chase. It's strange to think of Anderson turning out a crowd pleaser given his eccentric work (on display here), but this may be as close as he gets.

**NEED FOR SPEED**

★★★ 1/2

Rated PG-13 for sequences of reckless street racing, disturbing crash scenes, nudity and crude language

Stars: Aaron Paul, Dominic Cooper, Imogen Poots, Dakota Johnson, Michael Keaton

Based on the mega-selling video-game series, "Need for Speed" is the story of a teen private eye, Veronica (Bell) returns home to help an old flame (Dohring) accused of murder. Rob Thomas wrote and directed the return to his hit TV series.

**VERONICA MARS**

★★★ 1/2

Rated PG for thematic material and smoking

Stars: Nia Long, Amy Smart, Wendi McLendon-Covey

After an incident at their children's school, a group of single mothers from various walks of life form a support group. Tyler Perry ("A Madea Christmas") wrote and directed the comedy.

**THE SINGLE MOMS CLUB**

Rated PG-13 for some sexual material and thematic elements

Stars: Nia Long, Amy Smart, Wendi McLendon-Covey

One thing we learn from this modern, yet old-fashioned romance from India, is that sometimes the wrong train gets you to the right station. If you have the courage to board. The always-welcome Khan (the adult Pi in "Life of Pi") plays Saajan, a soon-to-retire widower who begins receiving a special lunches of neglected housewife Ila (Kaur) — a literal one-in-a-million error in Mumbai's impossibly accurate lunch delivery service. A correspondence begins that gradually turns into something akin to courtship — with one last big step still to be taken.
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Son of God (PG-13)
Fri-Sun 2-5; Mon-Thu 5-8
The Lego Movie (PG)
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Muppets Most Wanted (PG)
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Divergent (PG-13) Thu 8 p.m.

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SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) Ignore distractions! to accomplish your goal by the deadline you agreed to. Keep the finish line in sight and you will be able to cross it easily.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Your creative self continues to dominate through much of the week. That recent romantic connection seems to be thriving.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) As curious as you might be, it's best to avoid trying to learn a colleague's secret. That sort of knowledge could drag you into a difficult situation.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Instead of spending time floundering around wondering if you can meet your deadline, you need to spend more time actually working toward reaching it.
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Chicago Auto Show: Toyota i-Road
By Mary Daly • mary.daly@wrapports.com

Toyota's i-Road is an electric vehicle that's somewhat of a cross between a motorcycle and small car. The three-wheeler seats two people in tandem in a fully enclosed body. A computer manages the degree of lean of each front wheel to keep the vehicle steady. On one charge, the lithium-ion battery is good for a driving range of about 30 miles, according to Toyota.
In the month of November, Ford was the most popular auto brand purchased by Niles residents. Ford accounted for 37 sales out of the 216 total sales (all car brands) to residents of Niles. The breakdown of the 37 total Ford sales was 21 new and 16 used over the course of the month.

Toyota, which accounted for a total of 28 sales, was the second most popular car brand sold to Niles residents in November. A total of 20 pre-owned vehicles and eight new vehicles comprised the overall total of 28 Toyota purchases in November. Nissan took third place on the list of most popular auto brands, totaling 19 sales — seven used and 12 new.

All told, Niles residents bought 216 cars and trucks in the month of November (all brands) — 102 new vehicles and 114 used vehicles. Ford was the most popular brand bought new (21 purchases) by residents. Nissan and Chevrolet also made a good showing in the new car sales category, with 12 and 11 sales, respectively.

In the used sales category, Toyota topped the list with a total of 20 sales in the month. Ford and Mercedes-Benz came in second and third, respectively, on the used car sales list, with 16 and eight sales.

Over the course of the month, local dealers accounted for 73 percent of overall car sales to Niles residents, while private parties accounted for 27 percent of auto sales. Golf Mill Ford was the top dealer to Niles residents in November with 18 total sales. Other popular dealerships for Niles residents in the month included Star Nissan, Grossinger Autoplex and Bredemann Chevrolet.
MAINE EAST
Making progress

BY MATT HARNESS
mharness@pioneerlocal.com, @harnesspreps

Ezeka Omeke is well aware of the recent evolution of the Maine East boys basketball team.

A starter since his freshman year, the six-foot-four junior forward has been part of a program that has improved each year he’s been on the team. The Blue Demons experienced their biggest jump this season, finishing 10-17 overall. That’s twice as many victories as they had during the 2012-13 campaign.

Maine East’s season came to an end March 4 with a 51-44 loss to Notre Dame in the Class 4A Maine East Regional semifinals. Omeke finished with 15 points.

Omeke has one more chance to help deliver the Blue Demons that elusive regional title, and he said he believes the team is close to reaching that goal. Maine East has won only four regional championships in program history, with the last coming in 2008.

“The first two years we really didn’t have that much skill or talent,” said Omeke, who was the Blue Demons’ lone player selected to the all-CSL North team and the first in four seasons. “We just went, played and tried our best. Now, we have a lot more skill and talent. We had sophomores and juniors who stepped up.”

Omeke was one of three juniors in the starting lineup for the playoff game, and he figures to be the centerpiece for next season’s squad.

Maine East coach Dave Genis said Omeke started to realize his potential midway through the season. A weekend performance in early February might have provided a glimpse of the future.

Omeke totaled 35 points and 30 rebounds in back-to-back games against Highland Park and Hoffman Estates. The Blue Demons beat the Giants 48-45 on the road Feb. 7 before losing to the Hawks 64-62 at home the next day. Highland Park won a regional title Friday.

“That’s something we’ve been waiting for from him,” Genis said. “If I’m coaching against Maine East, he’s the guy I prepare for. He’s a monster.”

“He’s a great rebounder, and he’s gotten better at finishing around the basket, like a true post.”

“That weekend is when everything came to a head for him. It was like the light bulb went off.”

Omeke is expected to be paired again next season with junior guard Abby George and junior forward Nick Kanjou. Genis said George, who scored 16 in the playoff loss, is an all-conference-caliber player. The coach said Kanjou, who transferred from Niles West in the fall, is someone who will benefit from a full year with the team.

“It’s exciting to think about our potential, but there is work to be done,” Genis said.

NORTHRIDGE
Zone nearly causes a sectional upset
Providence-St. Mel’s Lilly struggles to get open looks against 1-3-1

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

RIVER GROVE — By almost every measure, the Northridge boys basketball team seemed to have little chance against Providence-St. Mel entering their Class 2A Guerin Sectional semifinal.

Providence-St. Mel has been one of the best teams in Class 2A over the past three seasons. Providence-St. Mel had advantages in size, speed, athleticism, talent and postseason pedigree against Northridge, but it needed a 3-pointer to escape with a 38-36 victory on March 5.

Northridge almost pulled off an upset behind a game-high 16 points from junior point guard Dylan Haig, an integral piece of the team this year. His combination of quickness and ball-handling is rare at the Class 2A level, and Providence-St. Mel's swarming defense didn't faze him. Haig turned the ball over only twice.

Defensively, Northridge's 1-3-1 zone nullified some of Providence-St. Mel's strengths.

"I think it can be [a great equalizer], yeah," said Northridge coach Will Rey, whose teams have played a zone throughout his 10 years at the program’s helm. "It was tonight, for sure. We were able to cut their [penetration] angles down and make them try to score over the top of us.”

One reason why Northridge's zone was effective against Providence-St. Mel, which went on to beat Clark 62-33 for its third straight sectional title, was its personnel. Haig is quick at the top, ready to intercept any lazy passes. Junior Charles Newell played in the middle of the zone for much of the game, and he did a good job of sliding over when Providence-St. Mel penetrated the zone.

The wings of Northridge's zone helped contain Providence-St. Mel's perimeter shooting. Senior forward Steve Lenzer and junior center Matt Brown, both long and athletic, were rarely out of position against Providence-St. Mel.

Those two, along with sophomore guard Patrick Hunt, limited Providence-St. Mel's ability to generate open looks against senior Bernard Lilly Jr., who hit the game-winning 3-pointer.

"They were able to close out on our shooters," Lilly said. "When teams play us in a zone, I'm usually open. Those [3-pointers] are usually easy shots for me, but they did an excellent job of closing out.”

The 1-3-1 was also effective because of Northridge's comfort with the defense. Rey's squad works on it every day, going over strategies specific to the team it's preparing for — against Providence-St. Mel, Rey emphasized keeping point guard Tevin King in front of them and staying close to Lilly — as well as communicating on the court. Communication was vital in tracking Lilly.

Despite the last-second defeat, Northridge has developed a strong defensive mentality.
Notre Dame
Mooney and Becar lead the way on offense for young squad

BY MATT HARNESS
mharness@pioneerlocal.com, @harnesspreps

PARK RIDGE — Joe Mooney and Ammar Becar were on Notre Dame's varsity boys basketball team last season, but neither one got many minutes for the Dons, who won a regional championship.

This season was much different for the pair of second-year players.

Mooney, a junior guard, and Becar, a sophomore forward, were Notre Dame's two best players, and they were expected to be leaders on a team that started only one senior, guard Pat Dillon.

"It was a huge learning year for me and for most of our team," said Mooney, whose older brother, Matt Mooney, starred on the Dons last season as a senior. "It forced me into a leadership role. I had to learn to be a scorer, to be more vocal."

In Friday's 52-45 loss to Evanston in the Class 4A Maine East Regional final, Joe Mooney showed he was capable of being the go-to guy.

After an Evanston basket with 4 minutes, 31 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter put the Wildkits in front 43-32, the 6-foot-2 Joe Mooney converted two 3-point plays in a matter of 26 seconds after strong drives to the basket. The second 3-point play left the score 45-38 at the 3:29 mark. Those plays gave the Dons a chance to win down the stretch.

"I've had that kind of confidence all year," Joe Mooney said. "We needed to be aggressive and make some plays, or we didn't have a chance."

Becar came up big early Friday. The 6-6 post scored 10 of his game-best 20 points in the first quarter to put the Dons ahead 12-10 after eight minutes.

"Last season was a great experience for us," Becar said. "We got to see those seniors win a regional title, and what it took to do that. We had our ups and downs this year, but we were a young team. Guys like me, Joe and Pat helped the younger guys as much as we could."

The Dons suffered through a six-game losing streak before beating Lincoln Park 64-50 to end the regular season. Notre Dame then earned its sixth straight trip to a regional final with its 61-44 win over Maine East on March 4.

"We knew we had to get some momentum going into the playoffs, and coach [Tom] Les talked to me and Ammar about that," Joe Mooney said. "To play for a regional final was big for us, even though we lost. We know we can be good next year with all the players we return, but we have to put in the work this offseason."
Maine East seniors Maria Protic and Medina Husejnovic will be the team's top offensive threats and senior Isabelle Trier will anchor its defense. Trier, a goalkeeper, was an All-CSL selection as a sophomore in 2013, and limiting his effectiveness was a focal point for opposing defenses when they played the Hawks during his junior campaign.

DeNeve-Arnam was often defended by the opposing team's best player, and he even saw double teams at times. With the graduation of 2013 all-conference selections Kyle Christie and Ryan Pattullo, DeNeve-Arnam will likely continue to receive substantial defensive attention during this his senior year.

That might be a good thing for players like junior Phil Wachowski and senior Jimmy Gardiner because it should provide them with more opportunities to score.

"What we want the kids to do is if Makai's not open, take initiative," Maine South coach Chris Deger said. "Makai's obviously a very important character on the team, but the fact is that sometimes he might be important just by taking out people so that the other guys can step in and do something."

The Ramblers' offense was high powered a year ago. The team tallied 411 goals, with Swenson and Condinsie combining to score 247, according to Loyola coach Rich Schici.

"It was really kind of a two-person offensive strategy last year," Schici said. "This year, it's going to be more of a team focused. Instead of having two significant scorers, we're probably going to have one in Marta and then three or four girls who are scoring between 40-50 goals each."

Schici said he expects senior Emily Barr, junior Julia Sajaj and sophomore Claire Voss to complement Considine, a senior who was an All-American last season and committed to play water polo for Bucknell last month.

"We just have tremendous chemistry," Hengelmann said. "It's a team-first, not me-first mentality. We just care about how many goals Loyola has."

A few years ago, Loyola boys water polo coach Dan Hengelmann began withholding stats from his team.

That decision helped the Ramblers build and sustain a stronger bond in the pool, Hengelmann said.

"We just have tremendous chemistry," Hengelmann said. "It's a team-first, not me-first mentality. We just care about how many goals Loyola has."

Cameron Shewchuck, George Finn and Jack Nickele don't figure to know their goal totals as their senior campaigns unfold, but those numbers will likely be high by the end of the year. The trio combined to score 143 goals as juniors for the Ramblers, who are the defending champions in the Catholic League and began the season ranked No. 5 in the state by illpolo.com.
Titans asked to choose between prom and state

BY KATE HEDLIN
For Sun-Times Media, @SportsLoisLane

Playing in the difficult CSL, Glenbrook South knows the fight it's up against as it heads into the badminton season. Another thing coach Terri Kimura is facing this year is prom.

With prom falling on the same weekend as state, Kimura is asking players to decide whether they want to go to state or prom. For the seniors, it'll be a difficult choice.

"It's a tough call," Kimura said. "That's why I'm asking them now."

It could be especially tough for the team's two captains, seniors Colleen Lynch and Maureen Andersen. Lynch went to state last season and Kimura hopes Lynch and some of her teammates can qualify this year.

Having already experienced the jitters that come with competing in the state tournament, Lynch could make a bigger impact this season, Kimura said.

"It's hard to go to state your first time and do anything," Kimura said. "All the pomp and circumstance and nerves makes it difficult."

Maine South

The Hawks graduated 10 players from last season's team, including a pair of state qualifiers, but coach Eve Muir-Wilson isn't lacking in talent.

The Hawks return four players from last year's varsity roster, with seniors Maddy Petersen, Bonnie Schultz and Maggie Schmit having the most experience. Sophomore Jana Duerkop will be one of two underclassmen on the roster. Duerkop spent time on varsity last season and Muir-Wilson is excited to see what she can do this year.

"She went to a lot of summer camps and really improved," Muir-Wilson said. "Very strong, powerful hits and good form and technique. She just needs to learn strategy better, but she's got a good foundation."

Sophomore Kristyn Tarpey is a new addition to the varsity roster, but she remains sidelined by a concussion suffered during the volleyball season.

New Trier

The Trevians' four-year reign atop the CSL in badminton came to an end last season when Deerfield edged the Trevians for the conference title.

New Trier coach Deborah Ofkey expects another battle for conference supremacy this year.

While her job could be considered more difficult because of the graduation of top players, Ofkey is optimistic that the talent is there to fill the spots left by state qualifiers Audrey Mang, Jill Lurie and Lexie Smolyar as well as Emily Rutherford, who also graduated.

Ofkey said she is looking for senior Tristan Peters, Smolyar's doubles partner at state last season, and Junior Ceci Bishop to step up this season. Ofkey said she is leaning toward pairing the two at No. 1 doubles this year.

"Our singles spots are going to be up for grabs," Ofkey said. "Our seniors didn't have as much playing time last season as in years past, but those that are back, we're hoping that the experience will make them strong leaders and they can carry the momentum."

Glenbrook North

The Spartans didn't qualify anyone for state last year, but coach Tiffany Kim, who is entering her second year running the program, doesn't see that as evidence of an unsuccessful season.

"Last season was about molding the team," she said. "Last season, we started off with a record that wasn't so impressive; however, at the end of the season, we all grew ... and we were beating teams we lost to at the start of the season."

Juniors Heather Shin, Jenny Marten and Caroline Minn are back from last season. Kim has high hopes for freshmen Jiayi Huang and Christina Li.

"They both played previously in competitive training camps," Kim said. "They have the skills and the footwork. They have a real promising future with our program."

Evanston

The Wildkits finished fourth at the Deerfield Sectional last year. They have to replace two state qualifiers in Esther John and Anna Cable.

Maine East

The Blue Demons didn't have a state qualifier last year and finished seventh at conference.

Maine South

The Blue Demons graduated 10 players from last season's team, including a pair of state qualifiers in Esther John and Anna Cable.

Maine North

The Hawks graduated 10 players from last season's team, including a pair of state qualifiers in Esther John and Anna Cable.

Maine West

The Blue Demons graduated 10 players from last season's team, including a pair of state qualifiers in Esther John and Anna Cable.

Maine North

The Hawks graduated 10 players from last season's team, including a pair of state qualifiers in Esther John and Anna Cable.
Wolves alumnus Mendenhall retiring from NFL

Running back Rashard Mendenhall is retiring from the NFL at the age of 26.

Mendenhall, a Niles West alumnus, had decided to end his playing career after six NFL seasons, all but one of them with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Mendenhall announced his retirement Sunday in an article he wrote for Huffington Post Sports.

"I feel like I've done it all," he wrote. "I've been to two Super Bowls; made a bunch of money; had a lot of success; traveled all over the country and overseas; met some really cool people; made lasting relationships; had the opportunity to give back to causes close to my heart; and have been able to share my experiences and wisdom with friends, family and people all over the world.

"Not to mention all the fun I had goofing around at work day after day with my teammates! I'm thankful that I can walk away at this time and smile over my six years in the NFL, and 17 total seasons of football — dating back to when I started pee-wee ball at Niles West in 1997, when I was 10."

Mendenhall, the Steelers' first-round draft pick and 23rd overall selection out of Illinois in 2008, gained 4,326 career yards, averaging 3.9 yards per carry.

After signing a free-agent contract with Arizona, he was hampered by a toe injury much of last season and was most effective down the stretch. Mendenhall finished with a team-high 687 yards in 217 carries.

Mendenhall had consecutive 1,000-yard rushing seasons for the Steelers in 2009 and 2010. A knee injury limited him to six games with Pittsburgh in 2012.

Young Wolves looking to take charge of team

Rios, Hines, Mackic plan to be more vocal, help foster team chemistry

SKOKIE — There was a moment when it seemed like the Niles West boys basketball team could upset Maine South in the Class 4A Niles North Regional semifinals.

The 15th-seeded Wolves trailed by double digits but brought the score within four with three minutes left in the third on March 4. Niles West roared back into the game by creating turnovers and attacking the Maine South zone with jumpers off the dribble and kick-outs for 3-pointers.

Second-seeded Maine South clamped down on both ends, though, and ended the game on a 37-5 run, winning by a final of 69-33. The Hawks forced steals, corralled rebounds and worked the undersized Wolves for points in the paint. The Wolves finished the season 8-18.

"We were right where we wanted to be," Niles West coach Bob Williams said. "We had things going on. That's what we need to look at for next year: We need to become more disciplined."

Guard Ahmad Gibson and forward Romeo Magloire are both seniors and won't be back, but a young trio is willing to step up and lead the team next year.

Sophomore guard Jojo Rios has a nifty Euro-step dribbling move and a strong mid-range game. Evan Hines, a sophomore forward, is an excellent outside shooter and scorer. Mirsad Mackic, a freshman guard, is a good on-ball defender who can create his own shot and haul in a rebound on offense. They combined for 23 points in the playoff loss.

Rios said the season's final game was a sad ending but that it will push the team.

"Next year we'll work 10 times harder," Rios said. "Work on our flaws from this year and just bring it next year."

Rios and Hines plan on being more assertive leaders while Mackic said he will be more vocal as well. To them, the team needs a better sense of familiarity, and they'll work on improving that very soon. Open gym starts at the end of March and summer leagues begin soon after.

"We're going to try to play every day, get that chemistry going for next year," Mackic said.

When things get rough or monotonous this summer, Rios, Hines and Mackic all said that the playoff loss will serve as motivation. Maine South knocked Niles West out of the postseason two years in a row. The Hawks also topped the Wolves in the 2013 regional title game.

Hines said that in the next Hawks-Wolves game, his team will be tougher physically and won't make as many errors on the court.

"It's definitely not going to be pretty," Hines said of the anticipated physical matchup between the two schools.
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You might not have heard about him, but if you see him you’ll never forget him. His name is Mamadou Ndiaye, a freshman during the 2013-14 basketball season at Cal State Fullerton. The Titans won’t be participating in March Madness this year, but that’s not Ndiaye’s fault. He’s 7’6” tall and weighs 300 pounds, with a wing span of – get this – 99 inches. That’s more than eight feet. He’s by far the biggest player in college basketball, so it’s only appropriate that his team plays in the Big West Conference.

***

Most professional sports teams have retired at least one or two numbers in recognition of their most legendary players, but who was the first athlete in any sport ever to be so honored? Here’s a hint - he’s a baseball player, and the youngest ever to be elected to the Hall of Fame at age 36. The answer, of course, is Lou Gehrig, number 4 for the New York Yankees, who died in 1939 from the disease that now carries his name.

***

Most people know about the Iditarod, the days-long dogsled race across Alaska that tests the mettle of every participant. But it’s a walk in the park compared to the other Iditarod, which you probably don’t know about. The Iditarod Trail Invitational runs 1,000 miles from Anchorage to Nome, but with no dogs and no sled. Participants can use a bike, skis, or their own two feet – that’s it. This race is so tough that from 2000 through 2013, only 42 people actually finished. Along the way, racers burn about 10,000 calories each day. Oh, and the prize for winning - a waived entrance fee for the next year’s race.

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