Niles West military tribute

Students collect more than 5,100 items for care packages for overseas soldiers | PAGE 6
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Niles West students raze hairs, collect 5,100 for care packages for soldiers

IGOR STUDENKOV
For Sun-Times Media / @studenkiv

Niles West High School students have successfully collected more than 5,100 items for care packages that will be shipped off to members of the U.S. military forces serving overseas.

During the Winter Pep Assembly on Dec. 5, Niles West welcomed local servicemen and their families. A number of speakers thanked the students for all the work they’ve done to make the event possible.

Niles West Assistant Principal Mark Rigby, who said he’d shave his head and beard if students collect more than 5,176 items, kept his word in front of the cheering students.

In early November, Niles West students began collecting items for care packages. Bins were placed around the school buildings, and students and staff were able to drop off as many items as they wanted.

Those items included non-perishable foods such as snacks, canned meals, gum and candy. They also collected personal care supplies such as shampoo, conditioners and toothbrushes.

Rigby promised that, if students collect over 2,500 items, the number of students currently enrolled in Niles West, he’d shave his head at the winter assembly. If the students collected double that amount, he’d shave his beard as well. By Nov 14, students had already collected 823 items.

In the run-up to the winter assembly, Niles West invited local servicemen and their families. The school held a reception for them before the assembly. The visitors watched the assembly from the special seating area near the gym entrances.

As with most assemblies, students were encouraged to dress in certain colors, with freshmen encouraged to wear blue, sophomores encouraged to wear white, and juniors encouraged to wear red. But this time, to mark the students’ accomplishments, seniors were encouraged to wear camouflage-themed clothes. A significant number of seniors did that to the point where nearly half of the senior section of the bleachers was cammo-colored.

A large number of students and faculty also wore T-shirts made specifically for the assembly. On the front, they said “Niles West Supports Military Families” in letters that used Niles West school colors in camouflage-like patterns. On the back, the shirts bore a quote from Winston Churchill: “Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owned to so few.”

As the assembly opened, Niles West principal Jason Ness and coach Mitch Stern welcomed the guests to the assembly and thanked the students for their hard work. Stern thanked the military members for their service and the families for their love and support.

Stern introduced all the guests individually. He specifically singled out Connie Foytek, mother of Kraig Foytek, a Niles West alumnus who was killed in action in October 2006 while serving in Iraq.

The introductions were followed by the singing of the National Anthem. To the delight of the crowd, the school got Jim Cornelison, the Chicago Blackhawks’ National Anthem singer for the past seven years, to sing it.

Retired Lt. Gen. Randall Rigby, father of Mark Rigby, spoke before the assembly. He emphasized the importance of service – especially when there’s no reward.

To illustrate his point, Rigby told the students about the sinking of the USAT Dorchester transport ship during World War II.

“In the panic in darkness, four of the ship’s chaplains took off their life vests and gave them to frightened sailors,” he said.

The action caused the chaplains’ deaths. But Rigby said this kind of willingness to put others’ needs above their own is something everyone should strive to emulate.

“You’ll never live a perfect day unless you do something for someone who couldn’t repay you,” he said.

Rigby told students that while care packages may not seem like much, they do make a difference for soldiers serving on the front lines. He encouraged students to continue doing something for the greater good.

“I encourage you to find a purpose to serve in your life, not just a lifestyle to live,” he said.

Next, Mark Rigby stepped out to get his head shaved. He left the gym to get his head shaved, promising to return once it was done.

The assembly ended with the completely clean-shaven Mark Rigby’s return. He told students that as a veteran and son of a veteran, seeing the students collect so many donations was worth losing his hair.

“Because you did your part, I was willing to sacrifice a bit of my hair,” said Rigby.

Chicago Blackhawks singer Jim Cornelison belts out the National Anthem. [KEVIN TANAKA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE MEDIA GROUP]

Niles West students applaud Randall Rigby after relating a story from World War II about four chaplains. [KEVIN TANAKA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE MEDIA GROUP]
Niles spent $37,922 on trustee vacancies referendum

BY IGOR STUDENKOV
For Sun-Times Media | @studenkov

The village of Niles spent a total of $37,922 on expenses related to a referendum that eventually stripped the city’s mayor of the power to fill trustee vacancies, records show.

According to figures provided by village spokeswoman Hayley Gerard, the village spent $10,615 on informational fliers and calls and $21,307 on legal fees in connection with the referendum. In the weeks before the election, there were signs urging residents to vote against the referendum. Ancel Glink gave a presentation explaining how certain votes require a super-majority of trustees, which would be impossible if more than one seat was vacant at the same time.

That argument was summarized on a flyer, the preliminary version of which was shown to trustees, the press and members of the public attending the meeting.

The flyer’s content was controversial, with Trustees Rosemary Palicki and Chris Hanusiak arguing that it was intended to turn voters against the referendum. Ancel Glink attorney Paul Keller argued that the flyer contained factual information.

In response to these concerns, the village gave Makula an opportunity to include his perspective on the referendum, as long as he stuck to facts. The flyer that the village sent out was identical to the original version, save for a link to full text of Karkul’s decision added at the bottom.

According to information provided by Gerard, the village paid Des Plaines-based MSF Graphics $4,269 for printing and processing. Des Plaines-based Cabildo Consulting was paid $1,400 to design the flyer.

The village spent a total of $83,880 on postage to mail the fliers out, according to records. It also spent $636.25 on robocalls about the issue, records show.

On the Election Day, signs were posted near several polling places urging residents to vote against the referendum. The signs were commissioned by the Friends of Mayor Przybylo, a political committee formed to support Przybylo’s candidacy for mayor.

According to documents filed with the Illinois State Board of Elections, Przybylo is its chairman. The most recent quarterly filing indicates that as of Aug. 30, the committee had $3,174.30 in funds.

While state law allows municipal governments to inform residents about a referendum, it prohibits them from advocating either for or against a referendum. Ultimately, the referendum was overwhelmingly passed, with about 77 percent of Niles residents voting in favor of it.
More than 200 people showed up at the dedication of the Yellow Line station at Oakton on Sunday, June 24, 2012 in Skokie. [FILE]

Cook County transportation plan making up for 75 years of business as usual

IRV LEAVITT
ileavitt@pioneerlocal.com | @IrVLeavitt

Maria Choca-Urban might not be the first person you expect to see representing Cook County at a transportation planning event, but there she was Dec. 3 at Northbrook Village Hall, buttonholing municipal engineers and transportation planners.

Two years ago, Choca-Urban was the director of the Transportation & Community Development Program of an activist group, the Center for Neighborhood Technology. She used to lobby the County Highway Department about "sustainable transportation" and get shrugs.

"It was like banging my head against a brick wall," the Wilmette resident said Dec. 3.

Now, she's deputy chief administrative officer of the Cook County Bureau of Administration, and she's charged with co-piloting the new Cook County Long Range Transportation Plan. She was in Northbrook for a regional open house.

Her presence is a sign that the finished plan will likely be a very different plan than others put together in recent years if there were others.

The last time the Cook County Highway Department had a comprehensive transportation plan was 1940.

Things have changed. The department isn't even called that anymore.

"The systems management people say that redundancy is a good thing," Choca-Urban sighed.

The new plan, expected to be done next year, is not just about providing direction for the next 25 years. It's about money.

Cook County now has to go through the Illinois Department of Transportation to get federal transportation funds. With a plan, it can cut out the middleman.

It's part of a pattern in the Preckwinkle administration, which just began its second four years playing catch-up to the rest of the state and country.

The county's years-overdue but now nearly-finished Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan will open the door for Federal Emergency Man-
agement Agency grants for flood control all over the county. The county's Consolidated Plan/Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, now in draft form, will allow grant requests from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

Choca-Urban said she sees the transportation plan at the heart of county leadership to bring governments and agencies together to make decisions that create integrated transportation and that includes rapid transit. While most opportunities for rapid transit extension have been lost in recent years, through political unpopularity and diminished funding possibilities, she sees another way to expand: "infill."

She said Skokie's recent efforts to create a transportation- and business-friendly downtown should be an inspiration elsewhere.

Skokie created incentives that brought more jobs and more dense housing to its downtown, then "took their destiny into their own hands," designing and fighting for the Oakton Avenue stop on the Skokie Swift's Yellow line, she said.

Now, Choca-Urban said, the county is in early talks about creating another infill project: to expand the River Road Chicago Transit Authority Blue Line station in Rosemont. The idea is to expand space for the burgeoned bus lines at the station and add parking, by raising the parking above ground level. Below would be a bigger bus depot and commercial uses, which would go toward paying for the project.

It's not close to happening, however, Choca-Urban said. The village of Rosemont hasn't committed, and the involved agencies haven't, either, she said Dec. 4.

"RTA says, 'We don't have the money, and our station is fine, by the way,' and PACE says 'We need a bigger station but we don't have the money,'" Choca-Urban said.

"It may be a question of whether we can entice private developers to build on the site, and use the increment from the new private development to rebuild the station."

The ground rules for the county planning process encourage cooperation beyond the borders of the county itself, and Bill Baltutis, executive director of the Transportation-Management Association of Lake-Cook, said that suited him Dec. 3.

His business-funded organization teams up with the Pace bus service to run Shuttle Bug buses that serve employees of businesses in north Cook County and south Lake County, and works on other transportation issues. The TMA, he said, could use the County's help in widening the western end of Lake-Cook Road, where some stretches are still two lanes wide.

"And we'd like to see a Route 58 extension," he added.

One of the difficulties in making the Shuttle Bug work for some employees is that it connects to Metra commuter train lines, which are comparatively expensive. And even on routes that connect to the CTA-priced Yellow Line, for some Chicagoans, the trip just takes too long.

Northbrook Village President Sandy Frum said Dec. 3 that some owners of firms in the Sky Harbor business park still complain about finding workers because of difficulties in finding transportation. Frum, current president of the Northwest Municipal Conference, is on the advisory board of the county transportation plan effort.

"We may need to think a little differently," TMA assistant Timothy Grzesiakowski said Dec. 3.

Buses are already getting a boost with "shoulder-riding," which allows public buses to run on widened shoulders on expressways. Shoulder-riding is already speeding Loop-to-Plainfield buses on the Stevenson Expressway, and is on the way to the Jane Addams. There, parking lots along the highway for bus riders, similar to rapid transit lots, are also planned.

A Pace/Illinois Department of Transportation feasibility study is nearing completion for shoulder-riding on the I-55 Expressway.

You can't argue with public transportation, Steve Gutierrez, Northfield's community development director, told Choca-Urban Dec. 3. "It's just like mom and apple pie."

He added, however, that he worried that the plan would concentrate too much on public transit and not enough on worn-out highways.

"When you're sick with a cold, you want to concentrate on getting better," Gutierrez said. "You want to treat the cold before you become a body-builder."

He added, however, that the county has become very receptive to his village's needs in recent years.

To the west, village of Glenview Engineering Services Manager Shane Schneider is looking for future help from the county to relieve traffic congestion. One of the biggest problems involves county-owned Lake Avenue at Waukegan Road, an intersection that remains a bottle-neck and may need widening or re-signalization.

Wagner and Winnetka Roads could use some help, too.

Northbrook resident Ray Persino, an avid bicyclist, dropped by the Dec. 3 meeting, as he had heard that the interests of people like him will be considered in the plan.

"I think transportation in Cook County is great," he said. "But the bicycling isn't quite as good as in the city."

Persino said he uses several area recreational bike trails, which he considers well-managed and safe. But in the suburbs, riding on arterial roads or highways is too dangerous for him.

"You won't catch me on any of the busy streets," he said.
**THEFT**

A 66-year-old man told police his cell phone was stolen Nov. 30 after he left it unattended for several minutes at the Golf Mill Shopping Center charging station located near Entrance B.

A woman told police that jewelry she believes is valued between $25,000 and $30,000 was stolen from her residence on the 7900 block of Nordica Avenue on Nov. 30. The woman told police that a friend had been staying with her in the residence, but she claimed not to know the friend’s name or where she had gone. She also reported that other friends had been in the home, but again told police she did not know their names. Police said there were no signs of forced entry to the residence.

**BURGLARY**

A residence on the 9000 block of Cumberland Avenue was burglarized Nov. 27 between 1 and 7:45 p.m. No additional details were provided.

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**CRIME BRIEFS**

**THEFT**

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

A Chicago man accused of firing a gun at a Niles construction site Saturday morning is facing felony charges.

Burns, who has a valid concealed-carry permit, shot the gun in response to a physical altercation between two other construction workers.

Brown has a Jan. 6 court date.

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**DRUG POSSESSION**

Kenneth Brown, 54, of 10066 Holly Lane, unincorporated Maine Township, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia on Dec. 3 following a traffic stop of a vehicle that had reportedly been parked in a fire lane at 800 Civic Center Drive. According to police, objects commonly used in the smoking of crack fired a round.

Police say William L.Burns, 58, of 5256 S. Paulina Street, was operating a construction vehicle at the site of the former American Midwest Hotel, 6450 Touhy Ave., when he pulled out a 9 mm semi-automatic handgun and

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**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.

**RETAIL THEFT**

Jaminiben Patel, 22, of 5158 N. Lotus Ave., Chicago, was charged with retail theft on Nov. 28 after she allegedly stole $426 worth of jewelry from a store at Golf Mill. She has a Jan. 7 court date.

**RETAIL THEFT**

Carol Price, 43; Natisha Mason, 22; and Donnell Price, 18, all of 8815 Carleah Lane, unincorporated Maine Township, were accused of pushing a shopping cart containing unpaid merchandise out of a store display, put it on and exited the store without paying for it. All three have a Jan. 14 court date.

**RETAIL THEFT**

Lauren Alexander, 20, of 4816 Mulford St., Skokie, was charged with retail theft on Nov. 30 after she allegedly stole $206 worth of items valued at $206 from a store at Golf Mill. She has a Jan. 7 court date.

**RETAIL THEFT**

Barbara Swiderska, 62, of 9340 Hamilton Ct., unincorporated Maine Township, was charged with retail theft on Nov. 30 after she allegedly stole $43 worth of clothing and cutlery from a store on the 8500 block of Golf Road. She has a Jan. 15 court date.

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**DUI**

Kyu Hwang, 36, of 1515 W. White Oak, Arlington Heights, was charged with driving under the influence on Nov. 29 after police reportedly saw him drive his vehicle over a large parking barrier in a lot on the 7300 block of Milwaukee Avenue at 1:15 a.m. According to police, a passenger in Hwang’s vehicle used his cell phone to record the traffic stop and field sobriety tests. The woman was reportedly asked to provide police with a copy of the video, but she did not say if she would. Hwang was assigned a Jan. 7 court date.
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Milk and pancakes for Santa Claus via Boy Scout Troop 922

BY KARIE ANGELL-LUC

What do you get when you have three gallons of maple syrup, 20 gallons of fresh, donated batter and 60 pounds of sausage?

Why, second helpings for sure at the 17th Annual Boy Scout Troop 922 Pancake Breakfast at Chicago Our Lady Mother of the Church (8747 W. Lawrence Ave.).

And if that wasn't enough on Dec. 7, how about bagels and cream cheese plus coffee and milk to go with Santa's cookies?

Let's not forget the sweet table flanking a long row of windows with red velvet cupcakes and coffee cakes and more cookies than Santa could shake his beard at.

It was all you can eat pancakes and sausage, a bargain for adults at $6. Kids three and under were free.

Elly's Pancake House (5050 N. Cumberland Ave) in Norridge was thanked for donating the batter. Generous supporters were included on paper photocopy placements, which helped to corral maple syrup spills.

Yes, Santa Claus made an appearance starting at 9 a.m. into the five-hour event in the Hayes Center.

"It's another opportunity to spend time with my granddaughter," said Rex Wilson of Norridge, who got to witness his granddaughter Cecilia Smith, 2, of Elmhurst sit on Santa's lap.

Cecilia's grandmother Sandra Wilson escorted the toddler to a decorated stage where Santa handed out goodies for all sweet kiddies. Cecilia wore a holiday party dress.

Mary Szczech of Norridge wouldn't miss this holiday treat. "We never hesitate to support the Boy Scouts," she said. "The sausages are the best!"

What is the power of one pancake?

"It's made with love from the Boy Scouts," said Mary's husband Tom Szczech.

"It can send scouts to camp," Mickey Mouse pancakes were popular and Steve Tomzik of Norridge, master flapjack flipper, was happy to accommodate special requests with a boyish smile and Disney garnishment.

"I grew up in Norridge and I grew up in scouts," said Tomzik, who has four children with his wife Peggy.

"We're a big fan of Boy Scouts," Their kids are Mark, 18, Luke, 15, Emily, 18 and Molly, 12.

"My son's an Eagle Scout," said their dad as he poured batter and flipped hotcakes on a griddle.

"My younger son better become an Eagle Scout!"

Mark, his eldest, did a great job rebuilding a garage at this church, said his proud father.

"The garage was a mess, he put in a new service door and new lighting," said Mark's dad.

"He (Mark) did all of the work and got the Scouts to help out."

Keith Kinslow of Norridge has an estimated two decades of service in local scouting leadership.

"I started the troop," Kinslow said, of the home location at Our Lady Mother of the Church.

"I love it," he added of the pancake breakfast, which is a fundraiser done twice a year, once in winter and the other earlier in the year when it's warmer.

"I actually enjoy coming here, doing this," Kinslow said, grateful for pancake fundraisers.

The penny paper bag raffle was popular, also called a white elephant raffle featuring new items. Many of the prizes were Christmas-themed and placed on tables near a tall statue of the Virgin Mary overlooking from a corner.

Karen Geller of Harwood Heights quietly presided over the raffle and serves as troop secretary.

"This is our major fundraiser for campouts and summer camp to keep the costs down for the kids," said Geller, who hoped to raise maybe a couple thousand dollars.

An estimated 200 diners were expected, maybe more at the breakfast with Santa.

"It's hard for the families," added Geller, of the cost of extracurricular expenses for kids wanting to participate.

Being in scouting is "beneficial because I get opportunities to camp out in the wilderness," said Tony Hoskinson, 16, a Niles Notre Dame College Prep sophomore.


Trish Ramirez of Norwood Park volunteered in the kitchen.

"I have two boys who are in Scouts," she said, talking while she cut up and arranged desserts on trays for the sweet table.

"One's on his way to making Eagle Scout," Ramirez said.

"I'm very proud."

Her sons are Austin Ramirez, 16, a Maine South High School junior and Kyle Ramirez, 14, a St. Paul of the Cross School eighth-grader.

Austin, who is studying two ideas for his Eagle Scout project, summed up, during the holiday season, why he joined Boy Scout Troop 922 at Our Lady Mother of the Church.

"I want to stay close to God and help other people," Austin said.

Interested in supporting or joining Boy Scout Troop 922? Please email oldguy922@gmail.com.

Steve Tomzik of Norridge is a flapjack master. KARIE ANGELL-LUC FOR CHICAGO TRIBUNE MEDIA GROUP
Concussion suit could spell end of football at some high schools: IHSA

BY BY JOHN KEILMAN
Chicago Tribune

High school football could cease to exist in some towns if a concussion lawsuit filed against the Illinois High School Association succeeds, officials with the organization said Friday.

IHSA Executive Director Marty Hickman said some schools would not be able to afford on-call doctors for practices, computer-based concussion screening and other changes sought by the former prep quarterback who is suing the group.

"If this lawsuit is successful, it will present challenges to high school football programs that are...so far-reaching for many schools, they will undoubtedly adversely affect high school programs, and could eliminate some programs in Illinois," he said at a news conference.

The IHSA's public push-back comes less than a week after Daniel Bukal, who played in the early 2000s at Notre Dame College Prep in Niles, filed suit in Cook County Circuit Court, alleging the organization doesn't do enough to stem the potential damage from concussions.

Bukal claims in the suit that he sustained multiple concussions during games and practices, and that he still suffers from lightheadedness, memory loss and migraines related to the injuries.

Hickman, though, pointed to numerous new safety rules the IHSA and state lawmakers have put into place in recent years, including mandatory concussion education for coaches and the cessation of hitting during summer practice.

Some of the measures sought by the lawsuit are already being done at many schools, he said. But because the IHSA is an organization run by its members, he said the group cannot make broad changes to its safety policies without their consent.

Court-imposed changes, he said, could create a two-tier system of high school sports in Illinois, where wealthier districts can afford new safety mandates and higher insurance costs, and poorer districts are forced to drop football.

"That's one of the risks of this lawsuit," he said. "That it's one of the reasons why we don't want to go."
Niles blesses completion of stormwater basins

BY IGOR STUDENKOV
For Sun-Times Media | istudenkov

Niles officials past and present poured glasses of water into the new stormwater basin at the Our Lady of Ransom Church on Dec. 5, marking the completion of a project that promises to make the surrounding areas significantly less flood-prone.

The new stormwater basins at Our Lady of Ransom and Maryhill Cemetery are part of the first stage of the village-wide flood mitigation project. The basins are intended to collect stormwater before it overwhelms sewers and then gradually release it.

Flooding has been an ongoing issue in many parts of Niles for decades, but it wasn't until 2008 that the village set out to address it in a significant way.

With the first phase completed, Niles is gearing up for the next phase. The Cleveland Relief Sewer project will address flooding issues in the area further east. It is expected to go out for bid in the spring of 2015.

When it rains, the water drains into the sewers. But when there's more water than the sewers can handle, the water doesn't drain, which leads to flooding.

The stormwater basins are designed to give the excess water somewhere to go. Each basin is essentially a large pond. The sewer system pours excess water into the basins. The basins then release some of the water into the sewers, but they do it at a slower rate, so that the system doesn't become overwhelmed.

The first phase of the Niles flood mitigation project called for the creation of two basins: one on the vacant land on the north side of the Our Lady of Ransom parish grounds and one at Maryhill Cemetery. The Our Lady of Ransom basin will collect excess water from land along Normal Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Bruce Drive and Greenwood Avenue. The Maryhill Cemetery basin will collect water along Milwaukee Avenue and Main Street.

In a statement to the press, the village indicated that, together, the two basins will be able to hold 15 acre-feet of stormwater, or enough water to fill eight Olympic-size swimming pools.

The project began six years ago, when then-mayor Robert Callero created the Stormwater Commission.

"In September 2008, there was a huge flood," Callero recalled. "I said, we haven't done a whole lot with our infrastructure since the 1970s."

The commission devised a plan that called for several stormwater relief projects. Work on each project started once funding became available. For the basins, the village worked together with Chicago Catholic Archdioceses to make the project happen.

On Dec 4, village and church officials assembled inside the Our Lady of Ransom basin to mark the project's completion. Mayor Andrew Przybylo, members of the Stormwater Commission, Trustees Joe LoVerde, Chris Hanusiak and Rosemary Palicki, and Fire Department chief Steve Borkowski attended. Callero and former Trustee Louella Preston attended as well.

The Rev. Christopher Gustafson, the pastor of Our Lady of Ransom, made the opening speech. He launched the project as an example of different parties working together toward a common good.

"We're proud of this," said Gustafson. "We ask God to bless this endeavor."

Gustafson then blessed the basin.

"When needed, may it work well for the benefit of all the retaining water that falls from the heaven," he prayed. "May it drain quickly and successfully so that it may function as a place of beauty and recreation."

Przybylo, who lives near the project site, told the crowd he watched the basin being built and was impressed with what he saw.

"I had a good vantage point at the balcony over there," said Przybylo. "I was amazed at all those trucks coming in and out. This took a lot of labor, a lot of great engineering."

He touted the project as the first step toward addressing Niles' flooding problems.

"This is going to be the first great step in the village's attempt to mitigate flooding," said Przybylo. "Those 100-year floods they are not 100-year floods anymore. Hopefully, living conditions in Niles, despite Mother Nature's best effort to put us under water, will be good."

While he noted that the basin won't fix all the problems, he hoped it would improve the situation significantly.

"You can sleep easier, you can go on vacation, you can do normal things," said Przybylo. "With [Gustafson's] blessing and good engineering, this will take care of a lot of people's frustrations."

LoVerde, who chairs the Stormwater Commission, praised his fellow committee members for all the work they've done to make the project possible.

"It took tremendous amount of planning, commitment and courage," he said. "Six years, hundreds of hours of meeting - what a great reward it is to participate in the ceremony today."

The officials then went over to the edge of the basin and poured a little water in to mark the project's completion.

In the aftermath of the ceremony, Callero said he was impressed with how the project turned out and all the people whose hard work made it happen.

"This is good," said Callero. "This is a beautiful thing to see."
Food Pantry serves record number at Thanksgiving

BY IGOR STUDENKOV
For Sun-Times Media | @studenkoy

The Niles Township Food Pantry served 4,600 individuals during its annual Thanksgiving food distribution, a record number that is putting the organization under strain.

The Food Pantry provides food and personal care supplies to Niles Township residents in need. The township includes the villages of Skokie, Lincolnwood and Golf, as well as parts of Morton Grove, Niles and Glenview.

Every year, the Niles Township Food Pantry holds holiday food distributions in the run-up to Thanksgiving and December holidays. This year, the Thanksgiving food distribution was held on Nov 17-18. The Winter Holidays food distribution will be held on Dec 15-16.

Tony Araque, manager of the Niles Township Food Pantry, said the pantry is expected to see a similar number of clients at the Winter Holidays distribution as it did during the Thanksgiving distribution. In an official statement to the press, the pantry indicated that the increased number of clients has put a strain on the resources of the Niles Township Food Pantry Foundation, the not-for-profit corporation that buys the food it distributes. As the result, the foundation is soliciting financial contributions. The contributions can be dropped off at or mailed to their offices, which are located in Skokie, at 5255 Main St.

The pantry also accepts food donations. It's looking for non-perishable items such as canned tuna, canned fruit and boxed rice dishes, as well as fresher items such as turkeys and hams. The pantry is also looking for personal care items such as soaps, toilet paper, toothbrushes and diapers.

The Niles Township Food Pantry served a record number of clients during its Thanksgiving food distribution.
Notice of Proposed Tax Increase for the Morton Grove Park District

I. A public hearing to approve a proposed property tax levy increase for the Morton Grove Park District for 2014 will be held on December 17, 2014 at 6:00 pm at 6834 Dempster St., Morton Grove, IL 60053.

Any person desiring to appear at the public hearing and present testimony to the taxing district may contact Tracey Anderson, Executive Director, at 6834 Dempster St., Morton Grove, IL 60053 at 847-965-1200.

II. The corporate and special purpose property taxes extended or abated for 2013 were $2,365,790.00. The proposed corporate and special purpose property taxes to be levied for 2014 are $2,483,500.00. This represents a 4.98% increase over the previous year.

III. The property taxes extended for the debt service and public building commission leases for 2013 were $807,912.00. The estimated property taxes to be levied for debt service and public building commission leases for 2014 are $815,000.00. This represents a 0.9% increase over the previous year.

IV. The total property taxes extended or abated for 2013 were $3,173,702.00. The estimated property taxes to be levied for 2014 are $3,298,500. This represents a 3.93% increase over the previous year.

Obituaries

Albert Wohlers remembered for philanthropy in Park Ridge

JENNIFER JOHNSON
johnson@pioneernl.com
@jen_pioneer

A Park Ridge businessman known for his philanthropy — particularly the financial support of two prominent nonprofit organizations in the city — has died.

Albert Wohlers, a longtime Park Ridge resident who most recently resided in Florida, passed away Nov. 11. He was 97.

Wohlers was the founder and owner of the Park Ridge-based insurance brokerage and consulting firm Albert H. Wohlers and Co., located on Northwest Highway.

Wohlers and his late wife, Jane, were known as benefactors of several causes, and two buildings in the city bear their name: Wohlers Hall, the former administration building at the Park Ridge Youth Campus, and the Busse Highway headquarters of Avenues to Independence, which was renamed the Jane and Albert Wohlers Center in 2005.

"For many years they lived across the street from [the building that would become] Wohlers Hall, and in 1998 they left a generous contribution to the Youth Campus to renovate the building," said Paul Adal, president of the Park Ridge Historical Society.

The Park Ridge Park District, which currently owns the building, plans to use it for administrative offices after the campus is developed for recreational activities.

After years of making annual contributions to Avenues to Independence, which serves adults with developmental disabilities, the Wohlers nine years ago provided the organization with a $1 million donation that allowed the new headquarters to be purchased.

"It was the single largest gift the organization has received," said Robert Okazaki, executive director of Avenues. He recalled how Albert and Jane Wohlers were especially supportive of how Avenues helps find employment for developmentally disabled adults.

The organization also established the Jane and Albert Wohlers Visionary Award in the couple's honor. It is an award presented annually to an individual, family, business or organization that "envisions the possibilities and positively impacts the Avenues to Independence community."

The Wohlers were also contributors to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (where a building was also named in their honor), the Mayo Clinic and the Western Golf Association.

Jane Wohlers died in 2010. Funeral services for Albert Wohlers were private. Memorials to Avenues to Independence are being accepted.
Opinion

Letters

I call on LoVerde, Matyas to wake Niles, tell the people

PRINCE ANDLET OF ILES

Act 1: The fiefdom has just passed a law the prince clearly hates. The fiefdom's elders are plotting a crisis. (Remember, no crisis should go to waste.) Government will have to come to the rescue.

Act 2: In time the duke of parks and recreation has a hearing problem and decides to retire to the kingdom of Flores. Shortly thereafter, Duke Merrynchi gets the court to order the Princess of Books to choose between here love of books and service to the prince. She chooses books and a crisis occurs in the fiefdom.

Act 3: The royal purser comes forward with big, unexpected need for funds for drains and cesspools; the crisis thickens. Can the prince from the House of Eagles have the courage to solve this problem on his own or have his people, whom he has recently frightened with signs, robocalls, and scary letters, overthrow the law the prince clearly hates?

Act 4: The prince's appointed jurist comes with a law to save the fiefdom. The bourgeois and peasants support the law. The prince has come to the rescue of his fiefdom; the crisis has passed. Fin.

To run or not to run, that is the question. Whether "tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them."

We're running into friends and acquaintances of a similar age who began complaining about bad backs and weakened and aching knees.

"How did you hurt yourself?" I'd ask.

Inevitably they would answer, "Football." If they had played in the NFL, I surely would have heard about it long before the complaint of aching knees. Guys who played pro football, even for a minute, have a knack for working it into a conversation early in a friendship.

"Yeah, that reminds me of a guy on the taxi squad when I played football," they'd say over a beer. "No big deal. I spent a year on the bench with Cleveland."

"Oh, where did you play?" is the polite follow-up question.

"No big deal. I spent a year on the bench with Cleveland."

My imagination has offended anyone, I apologize. I'm looking out for the citizens of Niles, where I have lived since 1971. Joe Makula Niles

Can high school football survive a legal hit?

"It has been reported that nine deaths have occurred this year from football injuries. Schools are changing rules for less contact in practice as a preventative measure. But it begs the question: If head contact is dangerous, why are you letting kids do it at all?"

"Nope, high school," was almost always the answer.

Old high school football injuries haunting relatively young men seemed a high price to pay. Turns out, there may be an even higher price.

Last week it was reported that a former high school football player has filed suit against the state organization that regulates high school sports, the Illinois High School Association, claiming it didn't do enough to protect athletes from potential concussions.

The former athlete played football at Notre Dame College Prep in Niles in the early 2000s. He claims he suffers from lightheadedness, memory loss and migraines related to multiple concussions he apparently suffered while playing high school football.

If such a suit goes forward, and this is a class action suit, what does it mean for the future of high school football and youth football? We've already seen hundreds of former NFL players sue the NFL because of the brain injuries they claim to have suffered. Former college players have also sued.

Now we have a suit from a high school player. If my anecdotal evidence is any indication, there's got to be a lot more former high school football players who may have suffered brain injuries. If they start suing, can high school football survive?

It has been reported that nine deaths have occurred this year from football injuries. Schools are changing rules for less contact in practice as a preventative measure. But it begs the question: If head contact is dangerous, why are you letting kids do it at all?

An insurance industry journal earlier this month reported a study of high school football players indicated that a single season of football hits, even with no concussion, led to multiple concussions he apparently suffered while playing high school football.

If such a suit goes forward, and this is a class action suit, what does it mean for the future of high school football and youth football? More studies and more research need to be done. But at what point does the potential risk outweigh the perceived benefits of teenagers playing football?
Savoring the leftovers of the After-Thanksgiving holiday

The After-Thanksgiving holiday. OK, it's not an actual holiday, but almost. After-Thanksgiving is the day, or days, immediately following Thanksgiving. They are special and holiday-like because they are the days we get to savor and devour Thanksgiving leftovers.

Our after-dinner vow on Thanksgiving never to eat again dissolves the day after into an irresistible craving to heat up the remaining turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, rolls. ... And if we are lucky, for a day or two after that there may be enough left for turkey sandwiches on toast.

Ahhhh, After-Thanksgiving.

Alas, though, the joys of the After-Thanksgiving holiday are denied to me, my family and to thousands of otherwise worthy Americans. We are the ones who — for a variety of reasons — eat out on Thanksgiving.

My family ate at a Thanksgiving buffet this year. The food was plentiful and delicious. As did those of you who dined at home, we ate until we were so full we too vowed to never eat again.

Predictably, on the day after Thanksgiving we also had an irresistible craving to heat up the turkey, et al. But what we heated up was a box of frozen macaroni and cheese. We had no leftovers.

Those who dine out on Thanksgiving forgo one of that holiday's great pleasures — the After-Thanksgiving feast(s).

Something should be done to rectify this situation. We Thanksgiving diner-outers are not bad people, just victims of circumstance.

I have a couple of suggestions, based on the single premise that restaurants that serve Thanksgiving buffets must have leftovers.

Here are two possible solutions:

1. For an additional fee to the Thanksgiving dinner, provide diners with the opportunity (and a box) to take home leftovers. Like a doggie bag. But in this case a Turkey Bag.

2. Restaurants could heat up their leftovers on the day after Thanksgiving and serve them to diners at lesser charge than on Thanksgiving Day. Lots of folks are off the day after Thanksgiving. And having a second nice turkey dinner with the family certainly beats battling bargain-berserk shoppers over a 55-inch TV for $1.38.
Ask any single woman over 40 if it's hard to meet a man and you're sure to get an earful. In particular, she'll tell you that there are so few good guys available over the age of 40, and that even if you weed out the losers and the ones with heavy baggage, the normal, nice ones don't want HER, they want a woman in her 20s or 30s.

Well, guess what? That is just not true. Many men prefer sophisticated, smart, sexy older women to younger women who haven't really lived yet, and I have proof! I reached out to five different men between the ages of 42 and 55, and combined, they gave me 15 reasons they prefer to be with a woman who is around their same age:

1. Women over 40 know who they are and are generally comfortable in their own skin.
2. What women in their 40s have over their younger counterparts is that they are perfectly — miraculously — well calibrated to men their own age. They share maturity, life experience and even pop culture references, they often have similar-aged kids, parents and even gym habits, and most importantly, similar life goals and horizons.
3. It's effortless to talk. There are no awkward pauses trying desperately to think of something to say.
4. If I'm with a young woman and I mention something about Pink Floyd or REO Speedwagon, chances are she won't have a clue what I'm talking about.
5. You can really be yourself. It's OK if you are getting gray or getting a spare tire, or prefer a quiet night at home over a loud club.
6. My kids are older and I have a lot more time and more freedom. So if I'm dating an older woman, her kids are most likely older and like me, she has time and freedom.
7. The next morning (if there is one) is not about someone taking “the walk of shame” or rushing to get out. You can go to breakfast, maybe do a crossword puzzle together or laugh about the night before.
8. There is no paranoia. Often when you date a younger woman you feel like she is kissing you with one eye open and looking for other, better opportunities. For the most part, women over 40 are looking for true love and will give you undivided attention.
9. Going out with your friends is not awkward because they are her age as well.
10. What do you talk about with someone who is 25 years younger? You can't relate to them on any real level.
11. Then there's the creep factor. My son is 23. I have no interest in dating someone his age.
12. We've had similar life experiences because we grew up in the same era. That emotional bond and level of maturity is priceless.
13. Dating someone younger may be fun for the short term, but without an emotional bond, it won't last long.
14. They've traveled, they've had a career, they've had children, and they've probably experienced tragedy. They are so much more interesting.
15. There has to be chemistry, but I am much more attracted to someone who is older if the emotional chemistry is there. In other words, it's not always about the best body or a wrinkle-free face.

I chose to keep all of these men anonymous, but I want to share that 2 of the 5 guys are currently in a serious relationship, both with women over 40.

So, next time you are feeling hopeless, thinking that Mr. Forty-something Right doesn't exist, think again. Not only is he out there, but he wants YOU!
Do you feel **IGNORED, RIPPED OFF** or taken advantage of?

Have you been **BURNED** by poor customer service?

Caught in red tape and **LOST** in a phone tree?

**THE HELP SQUAD IS STANDING BY.**

This weekly column is geared up to provide consumer tips and stories that help readers solve issues with businesses.

**To submit a complaint for consideration, email HelpSquad@PioneerLocal.com with as much detail about your complaint as possible.**
III

PROPERTY TRANSFERS

6815 N Milwaukee Ave 505, Niles: Suzanne Viverito sold the property to Harry Ashner for $220,000 on November 9.

6072 W Greenleaf St, Niles: Fannie Mae sold the property to Saquib Saleem for $167,500 on November 25.

7051 W Touhy Ave 510, Niles: Demetres P Nikolopoulos sold the property to Erica Collins for $154,000 on November 18.

7344 W Howard St, Niles: Michael J Guinane sold the property to Lilly Brown & Frank Madonia for $260,000 on November 24.

7549 N Nora Ave, Niles: Lynn Story sold the property to Steven N Kowalisyn for $250,000 on November 20.

7643 N Olcott Ave, Niles: John A Foglia Estate sold the property to Vilma Papaleka for $155,000 on November 19.

8560 W Betty Ter, Niles: Solomon G Apostai sold the property to Hermaz G Hermaz for $270,000 on November 18.

8815 W Golf Rd, Niles: Kitty Markel sold the property to Fata Suljic & Hasim Hairlahovic for $76,500 on November 20.

9103 S Prospect Ave, Park Ridge: Dan McNeill sold the property to Gregory C Weiland & Laura J Weiland for $399,000 on November 24.

10 S Delphi Ave, Park Ridge: Barbara M Low sold the property to William Georgakis & Rachel Georgakis for $370,000 on November 19.

316 N Home Ave, Park Ridge: Peter Maciejewski sold the property to Eugene Suh & Courtney K Suh for $69,000 on November 18.

403 N Washington Ave, Park Ridge: Joseph Ropski sold the property to Jason Cooga & Jason Coogan for $627,000 on November 18.

416 S Dee Rd, Park Ridge: Robert Gano sold the property to Christopher L Rasch for $293,000 on November 21.

417 N Redfield Ct, Park Ridge: Closinshill Club Inc sold the property to Yi Zhang & Xin Dong for $830,000 on November 24.

For auto news and reviews visit Todrive.com
NILES

THURSDAY, DEC. 11

Toddler Time
10 a.m.: Stories, songs and rhymes for children ages 1-3 with a caregiver. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-6625.

BABY TIME
11 a.m.: A short program of stories, songs, rhymes and playtime for children 2 and younger with a caregiver. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-6625.

TUESDAY, DEC. 16

Preschool Story Time
10 a.m.: Stories, songs, and action rhymes for children ages 3-5. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-6625.

Park Board of Commissioners
6 p.m.: Meets on the third Tuesday of the month. Howard Leisure Center, 6670 W. Howard St., Niles.

FRIDAY, DEC. 19

Rise and Shine Story Time
10 a.m.: A 30-minute story time for children ages 2-6 with a caregiver. Niles Public Library District, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles. Call 847-663-6625.

HAPPENING NEARBY

THURSDAY, DEC. 11

Story Time for 2s
9:30 a.m.: Stories and songs for 2-year-olds with an adult. A second session is held at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-625-3123.

Story Time for 3s

Polish Heritage Book Club
3 p.m.: Book discussion group that focuses on literature related to Poland. December's book is The True Story of Hansel and Gretel by Louise Murphy. Eisenhower Public Library, 4613 N. Oketo Ave., Harwood Heights. Call 708-867-7628.

SATURDAY, DEC. 13

Central Park Annual Cookie Walk
9 a.m.: Are you in need of holiday gift ideas for family, friends, neighbors, etc.? Need a break from baking treats? Join us for our most delicious fundraiser. Come for a wide selection of home-made cookies and holiday loaves for everyone on one's shopping list. Central Park Lutheran Church, 4037 N. Oriole Ave., Norridge. Call 708-453-3662.

FUSE: Studio
Noon: Drop in with friends to wire LEDs, compose a ringtone, build an amp, mix chemicals to make gel beads, navigate a robot obstacle course and more. For grades six to 12. Evanston Public Library - Main Branch, 1700 Orrington Ave., Evanston. Call 847-475-2010.

SUBMIT YOUR EVENT
To submit an event for consideration in print, visit www.pioneerlocal.com/submittcontent 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.

Circles and Squares Dance Club
9 a.m.: Join professional dance instructor Nichola Goss each month in learning line and folk dances from around the world. After each lesson, refreshments are offered. No dance experience is necessary. Call 847-470-5223 to register. North Shore Senior Center, 61 Northfield Road, Northfield. $12 for members; $15 for nonmembers.

STEAM Starts
10 a.m.: A self-guided exploration of science, technology, engineering, art, math and reading for kids ages 2-6 with a caregiver. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-825-3123.

Handicrafters
10 a.m.: Held every Friday at 10 a.m. Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge. Call 630-692-5217.

A Laugh A Day
I p.m.: Join certified laughter leader and member of the World Laughter Tour, Kathy Kanter, as she demonstrates how to prevent 'hardening of the attitudes' and gives you tools to incorporate techniques into daily routines. No fee. Call 847-470-5223 to register. North Shore Senior Center, 61 Northfield Road, Northfield. Call 847-470-5223.

Gamers
I p.m.: The group meets every Friday. Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge. Call 630-692-5217.

Healthy Aging
I p.m.: Offered on the second Friday of each month. Topics include shingles, sepsis, pacemakers and more. Registration is not required. Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center, 5645 W. Addison St., Chicago. Call 877-737-4636.

FUSE: Studio
Noon: Drop in with friends to wire LEDs, compose a ringtone, build an amp, mix chemicals to make gel beads, navigate a robot obstacle course and more. For grades six to 12. Evanston Public Library - Main Branch, 1700 Orrington Ave., Evanston. Call 847-475-2010.

Al-Anon
9:30 a.m.: Details at 708-867-5044. St. Paul Lutheran Church, 5650 N. Canfield Ave., Chicago.

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

Crafting for Charity
10 a.m.: Join in knitting or crocheting blankets to provide comfort for ill or traumatized children. Yarn Novices are welcome! Can't make it on Saturday, but want to participate? Email to info@mgpl.org for further information. Morton Grove Public Library, 6410 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove. Call 847-965-4220.

Westminster Place Toastmasters presents Tall Tales Speech Contest and Open House
11 a.m.: Toastmasters, families, friends and community members invited to attend. Westminster Place, Sunroom, One Circle Village, Evanston IL, Evanston. Call 847-442-7348.

Centennial Volunteers LaBagh Woods Restoration Day
Noon: Celebrate the rivers and the 100th anniversary of the Forest Preserve of Cook County by helping to restore sites along the Chicago and Calumet Rivers until 3 p.m. Learn about the diverse wildlife, trees, wildflowers, and wetlands of LaBagh Woods and discover what it takes to restore the Illinois and beautiful ecosystem. Go to the website to sign up. LaBagh Woods, 5275 N. Cicero Ave., Chicago.

SEE CALENDAR, NEXT PAGE
Toys for Tots boxes! Glenview Community Church, gaming session: first come first serve. For grades 4p.m.: Join a Wii and Xbox 360 (with Kinect) Gaming in the Loft 847-448-8600.

CALENDAR

« FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

847-448-8600.

Gaming in the Loft 4 p.m.: Join a Wii and Xbox 360 (with Kinect) gaming session; first come first serve. For grades six to 12. Meet in the third floor loft. Evanston Public Library - Main Branch, 1703 Orrington Ave., Evanston. Call 847-448-8630.

A Toy-ful Celebration! Holiday Concert 7 p.m.: Concert benefits the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots campaign. Enjoy music of the holiday season featuring the Glenview Concert Band, along with the "Toys Choir." In the spirit of giving, consider bringing new unwrapped toys to the concert to donate at the door and help the Marines raise toys for underprivileged children. For those that can't attend — consider dropping off new toys at any of the Glenview Fire Stations Toys for Tots boxes! Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St., Glenview. Call 847-724-2210.

Film Festival 7:30 p.m.: Beth Hillel Congregation Bnai Emunah, is once again presenting its popular Film Festival series. The first of three features the movie "The Jewish Cardinal," the true story of Jean-Marc Lustiger, the son of Polish immigrants, who maintained his cultural identity as Jews and later entering the priesthood. Lively discussion led by congregant Jonathan Lehrer following the movie. Refreshments served. Beth Hillel Congregation, 3220 Big Tree Lane, Wilmette. Call 847-256-1213.

Sunday, Dec. 14

Hanukkah/Family School Party 11 a.m.: Temple Beth Israel's Annual Brotherhood Hanukkah/Family School Party features Magician Dennis Dubont. Lunch includes chicken fingers, noodles, salad and jelly doughnut holes (Israeli styled). Call or visit website to RSVP. Temple Beth Israel, 3601 W. Dempster St., Skokie. Call 847-675-0991. $5.


"Why Chimes Rang" 5 p.m.: For children's Christmas program, "Why Chimes Rang," followed by a reception in the church narthex. Winnetka Covenant Church, 1200 Hibbard Road, Wilmette. Call 847-446-4300.

Writers Group 7 p.m.: Weekly group offers peer reviews in a supportive environment. Newcomers welcome. Wilmette Public Library, 1242 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette. Call 847-256-5025.

Monday, Dec. 15


Career Support Group 9:30 a.m.: Network with others who are looking for work and learn strategies for finding a job. The group meets on the third Monday of each month. Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St., Skokie. Call 847-924-3176.

Money Matters Discussion 10 a.m.: The group meets on the first and third Monday of each month. Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge.

MGPL Kids: Monday Morning Playgroup 10:30 a.m.: Drop-in playtime for preschoolers with a parent or caregiver to introduce young children to the library in a low-key, unstructured session. Call 847-925-3102 or visit www.mgpl.org for more information. Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove. Free.

Park Ridge City Council Meeting 7 p.m.: Park Ridge City Hall, 505 Butler Place, Park Ridge. Call 847-318-5200.

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. Iannelli Studios Heritage Center, 255 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge. Call 847-692-3718. Free.

Story Time 9 a.m.: Every Monday morning in the cafe kids and their parents gather for this snack and story time. Whole Foods Market, 225 W. Touhy Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-292-7100.

Tuesday, Dec. 16


Story Time for 4s and 5s 10:15 a.m.: Drop in for a short story time. No adults or siblings. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-825-3123.

Macy's declares Friday, December 12th National Believe Day

Join us for one special day! Double donations and wishes across America!

Friday, the spirit of giving is twice as nice! On Friday, December 12, drop a stamped letter to Santa in Macy's Santa Mail letterbox, or send one online at macys.com/believe, and Macy's will DOUBLE the $1 donation to Make-A-Wish®, up to $1 million*!

Macy's is joining Make-A-Wish to grant "Wishes Across America"!

On National Believe Day, we'll team up to grant very special wishes to children with life-threatening medical conditions in cities nationwide.

Be part of the magic, visit macysbelievegether.com

MAKE A WISH the magic of giving

*That's in addition to up to $1 million already committed to the letters dropped off in-store and online through December 24th.
2014

New Year's Eve Gala

nye gala package

7:30pm to 1:00am • Butler Passed Hors d'Oeuvres • Decadent Four Course Dinner • Wine Service with Dinner • 5 Hour Open Bar & A Champagne Toast at Midnight • Party Hats & Favors • Non-Stop Dancing and with an Elite DJ from Charisma Entertainment • Deluxe Overnight Accommodations • Full Use of Fitness Center, Indoor Pool, Whirlpool & Sauna • Late Check-Out of 2pm

PACKAGE PRICE $329.95* per couple

additional packages:

- nye dinner package • includes all of the above without Overnight Accommodations • $239.95 per couple
- nye party & room only package • 3 Hour Open Bar, Dancing from 10:00pm - 1:00am • includes Overnight Accommodations • $219.95 per couple.
- nye party only package • 3 Hour Open Bar & Dancing • 10:00pm - 1:00am • $55 per person

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*Taxes and gratuity included. Must be 21 or older to attend.
Payment Policy - Cash, Check or Credit Card payment due at the time of reservation. Cancellation Policy - No refund after December 10, 2014
College costs have soared.
Are you investing correctly?

HELP SQUAD
BY CATHY CUNNINGHAM

There is an expense that many of you may be facing in the near future, and it is one that has increased at a rate of nearly 500 percent since 1988! This outsize bill is college tuition. For those of you with children in or recently graduated from college, you know the impact of this incredible price inflation first-hand. According to InflationData.com, over the past 30 years, college tuition has grown at a rate of nearly 4.5 times that of the overall Consumer Price Index. In fact, in-state tuition for a four year state university now hovers at around $120,000.

So how does one go about saving for such a daunting expenditure? For some suggestions, Help Squad turned to Julie Shechtman, CFP, Financial Planning Specialist, Vice President and Financial Advisor at Morgan Stanley. She discusses three options, below.

529 College Savings Plan
A savings account that allows invested money to grow tax-deferred to fund the education expenses of a child or other family member.

Pros:
- Earnings are exempt from federal income tax. If you deposit $25,000 that grows to $75,000, you don't pay tax on the $50,000 of appreciation. In Illinois, contributions up to $20,000 for married people can be deducted from state income taxes. If used for qualified education expenses, withdrawals are tax-free.
- Plans are available to everyone, regardless of income. Anyone can be named a beneficiary, and the beneficiary can change at any time.
- 529s are considered a parent-owned asset — beneficial for financial aid purposes.
- There are generous contribution limits: up to $350,000 in Illinois. Contributions are excluded from your estate and not subject to estate tax.

Cons:
- Investment options are not infinite like Coverdell or UTMA/UGMA.
- Money cannot be used for K-12 expenses.

Coverdell Education Savings Account
Formerly known as the Education IRA, Coverdell was created to pay for qualified educational expenses.

Pros:
- Unlimited investment options, and considered a parent-owned asset for financial aid.
- Beneficiary can be changed to an eligible family member.
- Money can be used for K-12 expenses.

Cons:
- Contributions are limited to $2000 per year and there are income limits for who can contribute.
- Contributions must end when beneficiary turns 18, and all monies must be used by age 30.
- If money is not spent on qualified education expenses, treated the same as 529 plans.

UTMA/UGMA (Uniform Transfer/Gifts to Minors Act) Account
A custodial account opened specifically for the purpose of transferring money or other assets to a minor.

Pros:
- No limit to contributions and money can be spent on anything as long as it benefits the child.
- No income restrictions on contributions.

Cons:
- Custodianship terminates when minor reaches age of majority (18, 19 or 21, depending on the state), at which point parent loses control of the assets.
- Beneficiary cannot be changed.
- Contributions are irrevocable and non-deductible, and all appreciation is taxable.
- For financial aid purposes, account is considered a student asset, and withdrawals are counted as income.

Editor's Note: Julie Shechtman is a Financial Advisor with the Global Wealth Management Division of Morgan Stanley in Glenview. The information contained in this article is not a solicitation to purchase or sell investments. Any information presented is general in nature and not intended to provide individually tailored investment advice. The strategies and/or investments referenced may not be suitable for all investors as the appropriateness of a particular investment or strategy will depend on an investor’s individual circumstances and objectives. Investing involves risks and there is always the potential of losing money when you invest. The views expressed herein are those of the author and may not necessarily reflect the views of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC, Member SIPC, or its affiliates.
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Pioneer Press
MONSTER

Call 630-978-8229 to place your ad!
MinuteClinic brings quick, convenient care to Niles

BY IGOR STUDENKOV
For Sun-Times Media / @studenkow

The first CVS Pharmacy MinuteClinic opened across the street from Golf Mill Mall at the end of October and it's been getting a good response, officials said.

According to Maylene Beens, the Niles location's nurse practitioner, the clinic is already getting decent foot traffic from Niles and other nearby municipalities.

The chain decided to open a MinuteClinic at the 9640 N Milwaukee Ave store because it's located near the intersection of Golf Road and Milwaukee Avenue one of the busiest intersections in the region, officials said. With Golf Mill Mall on the other side of Golf Road and several other shopping plazas nearby, the intersection already attracts plenty of foot traffic.

The MinuteClinic facility is located toward the back of the store, right past the cash registers. The clinic is open between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. on weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays and 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sundays.

Benes said that one of MinuteClinic's biggest advantages is that it's open at times when doctors' offices are usually closed.

"A lot of [our patients] aren't able to see doctors on weekends," she said. "We got a lot of patients a day before Thanksgiving, when many doctors' offices were closed."

CVS' MinuteClinics are designed to address common medical issues that can be easily treated on site. Each clinic is staffed by one nurse practitioner, and is open seven days a week.

Since 2000, CVS has opened MinuteClinics in 20 locations at Cook County alone, but this was the first MinuteClinic to open in the Niles area. Up until this point, the closest location to Niles was in Evanston.

While patients don't need to make appointments in advance, they do have to sign in using a computer terminal by the clinic entrance. Depending on the volume of patients, they may be asked to wait.

The services MinuteClinic offers have expanded a great deal since the early days, and now include physicals, vaccinations, certain types of screenings, treatments for minor injuries, minor illnesses and skin conditions.

"We treat allergies, bronchitis, cough, ear problems, pink eye," said Benes. "Right now, strep throat is a big one."

She added that a significant number of patients come to get vaccinations and physicals.

There are times when patients come in with something that's more severe than what a MinuteClinic can handle. The clinic has a procedure for that.

"Let's say someone came in and they have a high blood pressure, we refer them to Urgent Care," said Benes.

If there were an emergency that requires immediate hospitalization, she would call the ambulance, she said.

Benes said that the cost of MinuteClinic visits tends to be between $79-$100 each. The prices vary depending on what kind of tests she may need to do. MinuteClinic accepts most insurance plans, as well as Medicaid and Medicare. Benes estimates that about 85 percent of patients have health insurance.

The Niles MinuteClinic has been open for a little over a month, and so far the response has been positive, she said.

"We get a lot of people from this community, and also people from the surrounding communities," said Benes. "They love it. 'Convenience' is what we hear a lot. They also like the affordability."

MinuteClinic was originally known as QuickMedx. CVS launched the program in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area as a way to provide a more affordable alternative to emergency rooms and urgent care centers.

The clinics originally provided treatment for strep throat, mono and flu, as well as bladder, ear and sinus infections. The program also offered pregnancy test. Patients didn't need to make appointments ahead of time, and they could pay in cash.

By 2002, the program proved to be successful enough to extend to other locations. By 2014, CVS had MinuteClinics in 31 states and the District of Columbia.
The event: On the tail end of Domestic Violence Awareness month, Ensemble Español staged the U.S. debut of "Rotas" (broken); a theater and dance production examining issues of domestic violence.

More than 780 attendees saw the Nov. 8 and 9 performances at the Northeastern Illinois University auditorium in Chicago. Rotas explored the difficult but timely subject, employing flamenco music, videography and voice-overs to offer the message that "hope and help are possible and accessible."

Now in its 39th season, Ensemble Español partnered for "Rotas" with four local agencies at the forefront of the domestic violence crusade: Mujeres Latinas en Accion, Norwegian American Hospital Foundation, Casa Central and the Women's Studies department at NEIU.

Cause célèbre: "Nobody wants to talk about this because it's not news unless somebody dies," said Leda Santodomingo of Skokie, campaign producer and veteran Telemundo Chicago journalist. Santodomingo galvanized 200 women locally to talk about the subject of domestic abuse. They dressed glamourously in large, concealing sunglasses to, "Call attention to the fact that you don't have to be poor or living in a socially-low class to be a woman that is being beaten."

"In the Latino community," said George Diaz, executive board chairman, "this is an issue that is not discussed openly and it is important that we do that."

Statistics show that each day three women die because of domestic violence. "I'm so glad that we are able to bring this issue to another level of consciousness through a high-caliber production," said Ensemble Español Artistic Director Jorge Perez.

Bottom line: "Rotas" raised more than $10,800. Proceeds go to the partnership agencies to help support victims and their families.
What Interview Questions Reveal about the Interviewer

By: Dona DeZube

Interview preparation most often focuses on the job requirements and the candidates. Equally revealing are the interview questions that you choose to ask during the interview process. These questions often reveal something of your company culture, your management style and your perception of the job.

We asked interview experts to flip the most common interview questions and explain what they say to job seekers.

Consider these two interview questions:

• Tell me about a time in which you helped others to succeed at a project.
• Tell me about a time when you innovated at work.

"The first question lets the applicant know that the company cares about collaboration and teamwork, the second that the company cares about creativity and motivation," says Professor Angelo Kinicki, an expert in organizational culture at Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business.

• Tell me about policies or standards you’ve developed.

This inquiry tells the candidate your company is inclusive and is interested in the value the candidate can add, Barry Drexler of Drexler Coaching, New York, an interview coach who estimates he interviewed 15,000 people during his 30-year career.

• What procedures do you follow in your current position? Tell me about a time when you didn't follow policy. What happened? How structured is your current workplace?

These types of interview questions tell the job candidate that you’re keen on structure, procedures and standards, Drexler says. They say you need someone who can follow instructions and comply with rules.

• At your last employer, what was your biggest accomplishment?

Job seekers hear this interview question all the time. It doesn’t reveal much about your company, but your follow up questions will, says Paul Peterson, national talent resource manager for Grant Thornton LLP, Toronto.

If you ask about profits, rather than people, you’ll come across as a bottom-line driven company. Follow up questions that reference people who helped the applicant achieve their goal shows that you’re a team-oriented organization.

• Tell me about yourself.

Perfunctory interview questions like this signal that you’re screening candidates before they’re passed on to a true decision-maker, says Gina DeLapa, a career counselor and president of Maestro Consulting Group LLC, San Diego.

When you include simple interview questions like this during an interview, you imply that you have the authority to turn a candidate away, but not to hire, she says.

• What’s your vision? Where do you think our company should go in the future? How would you shape this role?

These types of interview questions signal that the job is strategic and likely high-level. "They show your company is interested in organic growth," Drexler says.

By considering your choice of interview questions before you conduct an interview, you’ll be certain that your final list of questions accurately reflects the job opening, your company and your own management style.
Help Wanted Full-Time

Restaurant Manager - Ozkorps OZ Corporation 6000 N Milwaukee Ave. Chicago, IL. Full-time, benefit-eligible position. Opportunities for growth. Requirements: at least 2 years of experience as a Restaurant Manager. Experience must have included ordering supplies, assessing profitability, setting targets, recruiting and training staff in a Polen-style restaurant. Send resume to Stenotopika Restaurant, 11100 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60626. Ref. NW in cover letter.

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Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is looking for top talent for Inside Sales Account Executive positions located in Geneva, Evanston, and Rolling Meadows.

Job Summary: Inside Account Executives are responsible for achieving assigned territory and collaboratively working with Field Account Executives to achieve overall team goals.

Requirements:
- Bachelor's degree - 3-5 years sales experience with proven track record in meeting quarterly and annual sales goals
- Excellent communication and listening skills
- Ability to handle stress and work independently

Explore our employment opportunities at: http://careers.hmhco.com

You're in the driver's seat at ToDrive.com

You can research and search for a new or used vehicle in your neighborhood.
The document is a classified ad listing items available for sale. It includes various categories such as Antiques, Collectibles, Furniture, Electronics, and Real Estate. The ad mentions items like Antq. Onyx Clock w/Egyptian Motif, Steubenville, 255 Singer sewing machine, and New & Used HH. The ad also notes the location 7349 Main St., Skokie, IL 60077 and provides contact information for Estate Sales of Distinction 877-835-2099. The ad promotes a sale with items such as Above Ground Pool, Spincraft tree stand, Spincraft tree stand, Paper, and Liquidations. The ad also mentions a sale on Tuesday, Dec. 16th, 3:00-10:00 PM at 7232 N. Western Ave. Chicago, IL 60657.
The Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, Department 333, 800 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60604.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

10-10-101-001 through 10-10-101-008

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to an Order of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, Department 333, dated October 3, 2013, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60606-5909, will sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash, at or before 12:30 p.m. on December 25, 2013, the following described real estate:

Property Description:

The property is located at 10-10-101-001 through 10-10-101-008, Cook County, Illinois, and is subject to the judgment and order of sale for foreclosure of the mortgage on the property.

Instructions to Bidders:

The property will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder for cash. The auction will be conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations of The Judicial Sales Corporation, One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60606-5909.

Judgment and Order of Sale:

The property is subject to the judgment and order of sale for foreclosure of the mortgage on the property. The property is described as follows:

10-10-101-001 through 10-10-101-008

The property is subject to the condition of the property at the time of the sale, including the presence of any liens or encumbrances.

Provisions for Payment:

The successful bidder shall pay the full amount of the successful bid by certified funds at the time of the sale. The successful bidder shall also pay all taxes, special taxes, special assessments, and any other charges that may be due and owing on the property.

Provisions for Notice:

Notice of the sale is hereby given to the property owner, the mortgagee, and any other lienholders who may have a claim against the property.

Provisions for Sale:

The property will be sold in "as is" condition, without warranty of any kind, including the warranty of merchantability or fitness for any particular purpose.

Provisions for Sale:

The property will be sold to the highest bidder for cash at or before 12:30 p.m. on December 25, 2013, at The Judicial Sales Corporation, One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60606-5909.

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Village of Skokie
Notice to Bidders
The Village of Skokie, Illinois, is consider-
ing sealed BIDS for the demolition of
the Southside Village Apartments and
related improvements.

Bids will be received until 2:00 PM, on
February 11, 2015, at the Village
Building, 1211 North Oakton Street,
Skokie, Illinois 60077.

Bids will be opened publicly and read
at 2:00 PM, on February 11, 2015, at
the Village Building, 1211 North
Oakton Street, Skokie, Illinois 60077.

All interested bidders are invited to
come to the site inspection on
February 4, 2015, at 10:00 AM.

For further information contact the
Project Manager, Martin Luisenko,
at 847-673-0500.

Village of Skokie
Notice to Bidders
The Village of Skokie has scheduled
a special meeting to consider the
public interest in the 5-year
Consolidated Plan and 1-year
Community Development Block
Grants program. The public meeting
will be held at 7:30 PM, on
January 24, 2015, at the Village
Building, 1211 North Oakton Street,
Skokie, Illinois 60077.

The public meeting will be
open for public inspection and
shall include an opportunity for
the public to comment on matters
including, but not limited to, the
funding of the 5-year Consolidated
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Plan and 1-year Community
Development Block Grant
Program.

For further information contact the
Project Manager, Martin Luisenko,
at 847-673-0500.
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE
TO BE HELD AT: THE LOCK UP
SELF STORAGE
750 Busse Hwy.,
Park Ridge, IL 60068
DATE: 12-23-2014
BEGINS AT: 1:30 pm

CONDITIONS: All units will be sold to the highest bidder. Bids taken only for each unit in entirety. Payment must be made by cash, credit card, or cashier's check. No personal checks accepted. All goods must be removed from the unit within 24 hours. Payment due immediately upon acceptance of bid. Unit availability subject to prior settlement of account.

Unit #2108 Tenant Scott Adler
Unit #4102 Tenant Molly McCabe
Unit #4323 Tenant Ron Genovaldi

Thursday, December 11, 2014
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Not just fleet afoot

Chevrolet Impala makes gains in styling, comfort

Auto enthusiasts will have differing memories of the evolution of the Chevrolet Impala. Some memories are fond and loaded with high-powered excitement — others border on bland and linger with little affection.

For the last decade, the Impala has been more likely to be spotted sitting in rental fleet lots as opposed to our neighbors’ driveways. Being the king of the fleet vehicles is not the role any car sets out to achieve. The 2014 Impala needed to erase that stigma, a tough task for designers and engineers.

The large-sedan-segment Impala, which shares its platform with the Buick LaCrosse and Cadillac XTS, has proven to be a viable competitor to sales contenders such as the Ford Fusion, Nissan Maxima and Dodge Charger.

To appeal to a wider audience, the Impala offers three engine choices: two four-cylinder powertrains and a 3.6-liter V-6 engine. The car also receives a new, responsive electric power steering system and enhanced suspension that provide customers with a confident driving experience.

The 2014 Impala comes in three trims: the base-model LS, starting price of $27,550; the LT model, $29,785; and the flagship LTZ, which starts at $34,555. Herein lies the real value to the Impala.

Raising the bar above the previous Impala design was a walk in the park. Sophisticated, contemporary lines and subtle folds gently sweep your eye from front to back.

Inside, an all-new passenger environment offers more front and rear legroom, generous storage and smartphone-influenced connectivity with next-generation MyLink.

My LTZ tester had an extremely quiet cabin. Engineers made the most of every inch of the space to create a leather-coated comfort zone that includes both front and rear seating. Long glass runs the length of the car, and it opens up an already-large-feeling cabin.

Gauges are lovely to look at and easy to read. Fit and finish is very good, and soft-touch surfaces abound. In addition to four-direction alerts, the safety options list offers adaptive cruise control, automatic-collision-avoiding brakes, lane-departure warning and a backup camera. A cabin loaded with 10 airbags is standard.

The second generation of MyLink, with its optional eight-inch touch screen, provides a wealth of features. My tester offered 10-Bluetooth-device capacity and 1,000 contacts; “natural” voice recognition; response to swipe, flick, click and drag input gestures; and static movie-play capability. There is high-resolution 3-D navigation mapping, redundant knobs and steering-wheel buttons for entertainment and climate controls.

Impala will never meet the legend of the former SS, which took its last bow in 1996. However, its 305 horsepower tops the 260 horses of that old Impala’s 5.7-liter V-8.

This large-sedan segment is not about pure speed (21/31 mpg is worth mentioning), but the Impala’s 6.0-second 0-to-60 is among the leaders. I found the six-speed automatic transmission to be quick and aggressive with plenty of smile to be had.

The new Impala’s mission is to rouse the snoozing large-car segment with its combination of stunning exterior style, modern underpinnings and contemporary furnishings while honoring Chevy’s traditional value equation.
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LEASE FOR
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'06 Pontiac G6 GT 15,954

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'13 Mazda 3 10,997
'13 Nissan Altima 2.5 10,325

YOUR CHOICE FOR $14,900

'10 Buick LaCrosse CXL 18,956
'12 Buick Regal 30,104

YOUR CHOICE FOR $15,900

'12 Buick Verano 24,997
'14 Chevy Cruze 2LT 10,460

'13 Chevy Malibu LT 10,487

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MSRP...$38,420  SAVES...$14,757  OFF...$23,663

New 2014 Buick Enclave
MSRP...$48,155  SAVES...$18,200  OFF...$30,430

New 2015 Buick Encore
MSRP...$23,500  SAVES...$5,675  OFF...$17,825

New 2014 Buick Lacrosse
MSRP...$35,020  SAVES...$6,695  OFF...$28,325

New 2014 Buick Lucerne CXL
MSRP...$35,505  SAVES...$6,250  OFF...$29,255

New 2014 Mazda 6
MSRP...$37,450  SAVES...$5,500  OFF...$31,950

New 2014 Nissan Altima 2.5
MSRP...$22,995  SAVES...$4,744  OFF...$18,251

New 2014 Toyota Camry
MSRP...$25,470  SAVES...$3,722  OFF...$21,748

New 2014 Volkswagen Beetle Convertible
MSRP...$26,505  SAVES...$4,950  OFF...$21,555

New 2014 Volkswagen Jetta
MSRP...$17,985  SAVES...$3,475  OFF...$14,510

New 2014 Volkswagen Passat
MSRP...$24,525  SAVES...$3,525  OFF...$21,000

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CUSTOMER ADVANTAGE
SUBARU IMPREZAS
SUBARU FORESTERS
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NEW 2015 SUBARU LEGACY 2.5i
NEW 2015 SUBARU FORESTER 2.5i
NEW 2014 XV CROSSTREK 2.0i
NEW 2015 SUBARU OUTBACK 2.5i

Evanston Subaru
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EvanstonSubaru.com 1-888-858-4089

* Add tax, title license and $164.30 doc fee. **Finance on approved credit score Subject to vehicle insurance and availability. *Lease on approved credit score. Lease, 10k miles per year, 15 cents after. Lessee responsible for excess wear and early termination of lease. Option to Purchase: Imp.$11,385, For.$14,833. Legacy $11,599, Outback $14,604. *Gas mileage is EPA estimates. All offers end in 3 days, unless noted. 
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$169.99* 24 mo|$149.99* 36 mo
$14.99* 36 mo
$13.99* 36 mo

Due at signing: (Sonata, Elantra & Accent $2200, Santa Fe $3458, Tucson $2678). Plus tax, title, lic. & $166.27 doc fee. See dealer for details. 1) M.P.V. on select new models. 2) You may qualify, $129.99 per $1000 financed. Bank or buy down rate. $103.99 per $1000 financed. 3) See dealer for details. Must qualify. $13.88 per $1000 financed. Bank or buy down rate. $129.99 per $1000 financed. 4) You must qualify, $13.88 per $1000 financed. Bank or buy down rate. $129.99 per $1000 financed. 5) See dealer for details. Must qualify. $13.88 per $1000 financed. Bank or buy down rate. $129.99 per $1000 financed. 6) No hassle! No gimmicks! No hassle!
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237.8 Cu. Ft. Cargo Space
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MSRP: $23,440
Our Price: $15,114
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per month for 39 months
NO DOWN PAYMENT
Tax, title, license and doc fees due at lease inception.

NEW 2014 Stk# T24927
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MSRP: $25,450
Our Price: $19,887
Lease for only $2,544
per month for 39 months
NO DOWN PAYMENT
Tax, title, license and doc fees due at lease inception.

NEW 2014 Stk# C24070
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MSRP: $19,530
Our Price: $13,999
Lease for only $1,894
per month for 39 months
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Tax, title, license and doc fees due at lease inception.

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Chevrolet Traverse FWD LS
MSRP: $36,535
Our Price: $28,887
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Tax, title, license and doc fees due at lease inception.

NEW 2014 Stk# C24446, Manual
Chevrolet Sonic IS
MSRP: $14,995
Our Price: $11,499

NEW 2015 Stk# C24441, CVT, Auto
Chevrolet Spark IS
MSRP: $14,405
Our Price: $10,887

NEW 2014 Stk# C24821, Auto
Chevrolet Malibu 1LS
MSRP: $23,440
Our Price: $15,114
Lease for only $1,944
per month for 39 months
NO DOWN PAYMENT
Tax, title, license and doc fees due at lease inception.

MSN: MARK of EXCELLENCE

NO THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2014 | TODRIVE | 9

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New Car Buyers Guide

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SALES EVENT

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AVAILABLE!* See dealer for details

$500 COLLEGE GRADUATE BONUS!* See dealer for details

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Automatic, Stk#H33654
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2014 Honda CR-V LX AWD
Automatic, Stk#H33144
LEASE FOR
$179 for
36 mos*
$149 due at lease signing, plus 1st mo. payment, tax, title, lic. and doc fee.

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Stk#H33796
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November 19 - December 24 | 10am-9pm
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...and everything nice
THINGS WE LOVE
THIS WEEK

Heritage Auctions' Holiday Luxury
Show your Chicago pride with super stylish pieces inspired by our fair city — think Judith Leiber minaudières bedazzled with iconic landmarks — all up for grabs during the auction house’s massive, live yuletide sale. Dec. 8-10, prices vary; Jewelry. haa.com.

Mario Tricoci Wax & Brow Bar
The stylish salon has swung open the doors to its latest beauty bar, offering eyebrow and lip waxes, individual and full-strip eyelash extensions and men’s facial grooming. Services start at $15. 900 N. Michigan. Tricocicom

Barn & Company
The Lincoln Park bar and smokehouse is offering great deals this season: Football fans can enjoy a $15.99 all-you-can-eat buffet during Bears games, and food and drink specials during college games. Or, bring the party to the stadium (or your living room) with the restaurant’s tailgating-to-go kit. Food specials start at $8, drink specials start at $3. 950 W. Wrightwood. Barnandcompany.com

HoliDose Market
On Dec. 14, the local artisanal market decks its halls for the holidays with products from more than 100 Chicago restaurants, designers and artists, including Little Goat and Jill Alberts Jewelry. Admission $8 online, $10 at the door, Venue One, 1034 W. Randolph. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Dosemarket.com

PrettyQuick
Find serenity in a snap with this no-hassle booking app from the local style service, which helps users nab appointments at over 500 of the best spas and salons in Chicago. Plus, pay and tip from your phone and receive rewards points with every purchase. Free on the iTunes App Store; Prettyquick.com

need to know

WHAT’S YOUR HOME ENTERTAINING TIP?

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“Your Sun-Times Free an iOS, which lets you convert Spotify to your computer from your iPhone. That way, your computer can stay hidden, feeling seafaring guests trying to snatch up the music.”

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“Don’t need There’s nothing quite like a mailed invitation to set the tone and build anticipation for a party.”

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ON THE COVER: PHOTO BY CASSIDY TURNER
December 13

- JDRF ONE DREAM GALA
  Classic rock band Foreigner performs at the JDRF's 35th annual event, which also offers dinner, cocktails, live and silent auctions and the chance to donate through the organization's signature "Fund A Cure" program to benefit research for beta cell encapsulation. Proceeds help
  raise awareness and find a cure for Type 1 diabetes.
  Time: 5:30 p.m. silent auction opens, 7 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. gala program begins
  Place: McCormick Place Convention Center and Arie Crown Theater, 2301 S. Lake Shore
  Cost: $425. For tickets, call (312) 447-7953 or visit illinois.jdrf.org/events/gala.

December 10

- AN EVENING WITH ROXANE GAY
  The New York Times bestselling author of Bad Feminist and The Untamed State swings through town to talk feminism, inequality, discrimination and other issues facing 21st-century women in a program presented by Women & Children First bookstore and Women Employed, which aims to increase educational and employment opportunities for women.
  Time: 5:15 p.m. doors open, 6 p.m. program
  Place: First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington

December 10

- CHICAGO CHILDREN'S CHOIR AND SPHINX

Eat Drink Shop & BE MERRY at the best party of the season—Randolph Street's Holiday Market—the favorite of concierges, stylists, and gift givers!

December 13-14

Saturday & Sunday 10am-5pm
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VIRTUOSI
In this first-time collaboration, the beloved Chicago Children's Choir - which aims to bridge cultural divides through education, musical expression and excellence - teams up with Sphinx Virtuosi, a chamber orchestra composed of 18 of the nation's top African-American and Latino classical soloists, for a performance of winter-themed works.
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Harris Theater for Music and Dance, 205 E. Randolph
Cost: $20-$40. For tickets, visit HarrisTheaterChicago.org.

December 13-January 4
● "BURNING BLUEBEARD"
If you missed the critically acclaimed theater sensation in 2013, you're in luck — The Ruffians are resurrecting "Burning Bluebeard" with most of the original cast and creative crew. Penned by Jay Torrance and directed by Helena Kays, the play is inspired by the true story of the 1903 Iroquois Theater, as six performers from that fateful night attempt to perform their original routine, this time with a happier ending.
Place: Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont
Cost: $30-$50. For tickets, visit Theaterwit.com.

next week

December 14
● 11TH ANNUAL 'SWEET HOME CHICAGO'
Join co-chairs Anna Bliton and Meghan Norton, plus WINGS board chair Rita Canning and honorary chairs Greg and Anna Brown, for WINGS's (Women In Need Growing Stronger) holiday event. The festive afternoon includes a visit with Santa Claus, gingerbread house decorating, entertainment from Ralph's World, family portraits and the chance to visit with comfort dogs from Lutheran Church Charities. Proceeds help provide resources to families who experience domestic violence.
Time: 10 a.m.
Place: Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, 120 E. Delaware
Cost: Sponsorships start at $5,000. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, call (847) 519-7820 or visit Wingsprogram.com/11th-annual-sweet-home-chicago.

December 16
● CHICAGO ARTISTS CHORALE INAUGURAL CONCERT
Fifty of the city's top artists perform works from Mozart, Britten, Palestrina and more, led by Artistic Director Tom Coveny and Associate Artistic Director Devin DeSantis. The inaugural concert kicks off with a performance by the Chicago Temple Handbell Ensemble.
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple, 77 W. Washington
Cost: $25 in advance, $30 at the door. $10 for students, children and industry. For tickets, visit Brownpapertickets.com/event/917411.

December 13
● YLD BIG EVENT
The Young Leadership Division of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago always brings a big name to headline its annual fundraiser and this year is no different — "Late Night" host and former "SNL" writer Seth Meyers performs a stand-up routine, followed by an afterparty with an open bar, late-night grub and a DJ.
Time: 8:15 p.m.
Place: Sheraton Hotel Chicago, 301 E. North Water
Cost: $85 if you've donated more than $25 to the JUF; $10 if you are a new donor. For tickets, visit Juf.org/yld/bigevent.aspx.

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Valuable lessons

The Academy for Urban School Leadership honored David Vitale, president of the Chicago Board of Education, for his leadership, passion and commitment to the third-largest school district in the country at the AUSL third annual Benefit Dinner Nov. 6. Host Donna Greenberg and the host committee — plus more than 400 esteemed guests — came together at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago (160 E. Pearson) to recognize the achievements of the students and teachers within the AUSL Network, which now serves 18,000 students in 32 public schools. The $800,000 in funds raised will help the nonprofit create schools of excellence through resources and teacher development.

Splash was the media sponsor of this event. The Sun-Times Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust will match every dollar donated to the Academy of Urban School Leadership up to a total of $15,000. Up to $1,000 can be matched per individual donation.

Above: Donna and Jack Greenberg and Mayor Rahm Emanuel
Left: Mike Koldyke, David Vitale and John Cook
PHOTOS BY RICHARD SHAY

PITCH PERFECT

STORIES BY CHIARA MILIOULIS

Vanessa Williams showed off her famous vocals in front of 1,600 guests as the headliner for the Chicago Urban League's 53rd Annual Golden Fellowship Dinner Nov. 15 at the Hilton Chicago (720 S. Michigan). Co-chairs Cheryl Pearson-McNeil and Stephen E. Thomas and host Damon Williams recognized opera legend Jessye Norman and civil rights and fair housing advocate Clyde Ross with the Edwin C. Bill Berry Civil Rights Award for their respective leadership. The nearly $2 million in proceeds raised support the League's collaborations and advocacy work in education, entrepreneurship, housing, human capital and workforce development.
Match point

Local notables faced off in a table tennis tournament for the Jackson Chance Foundation's second annual Playing it Forward Ping Pong Ball event Nov. 6. More than 400 guests turned out to the Hard Rock Hotel Chicago (230 N. Michigan) to watch matches between famed attendees, including Chicago Bears players Jordan Mills and David Bass, Ed Swiderski of “The Bachelorette” and Rockit Ranch CEO/founder Billy Dec, before bidding in a live auction. The event shattered fundraising records, bringing in more than $250,000 in donations to support the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Transportation Program.

Splash was the media sponsor of this event. The Sun-Times Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust will match every dollar donated to the Jackson Chance Foundation up to a total of $5,000. Up to $250 can be matched per individual donation.

Thought leaders

La Rabida Children’s Hospital praised community influencers at its 28th annual gala Nov. 21 at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel (221 N. Columbus). The Friends of La Rabida Awards Dinner honored individuals and organizations that demonstrate a commitment to their communities, and recognized Dr. Donald McNeely and Chicago Tube and Iron with the corporate philanthropy award; Christopher and Sheila Kennedy with the community service award; and Illinois State Sen. Kwame Raoul with the public service award. The celebration, hosted by Bob Arthur and Patricia Brown Holmes and emceed by WLS-Channel 7 anchor Ravi Baichwal, featured dinner, dancing and live and silent auctions. The $800,000 in proceeds raised will benefit La Rabida’s programs and services for children with lifelong medical conditions and complex medical needs.

Splash was the media sponsor of this event. The Sun-Times Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust will match every dollar donated to La Rabida Children’s Hospital up to a total of $10,000. Up to $500 can be matched per individual donation.
Guests dined into a four-course meal inspired by the City of Lights Nov. 11 at the Paris Club Bistro & Bar (59 W. Hubbard). Fall dishes — like pumpkin puree with roasted pork belly and the Gâteau Basque, a classic French dessert — were paired with custom beers from Brewery Ommegang. Proceeds from the Splash-sponsored event will support Share our Strength, an organization dedicated to ending childhood hunger.

Below: Wei Fraser and Laura Weber
PHOTOS BY PAM Z DREHSLER-SPLASH

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DARYL HANNAH HAS MASTERED THE ART OF DISAPPEARING.

As an actress, she vanishes into her characters; as an activist, she's committed herself to the Earth's well-being by living off the grid; as a celebrity — despite a decades-spanning career full of high-profile roles in films like "Splash," "Blade Runner" and "Kill Bill" — she eschews the limelight, rarely allowing the public a glimpse of her.

That ability to evaporate into thin air comes from a deep well of self-awareness — and from a desire to find real connections with the world around her. "I read a quote somewhere that art, for many, is a result of the tension between the deep desire to communicate and the urge to hide," says Hannah, 54. "I think that's true of me. I'm interested in the work — less so in the circus around it."

Her latest project is just as enigmatic as she is. For the past several months, Hannah has been traveling around the world (including her hometown of Chicago) to shoot the much-anticipated "Sense8," a Netflix series created by the Wachowski siblings ("The Matrix" trilogy, "Cloud Atlas") and set to premiere in 2015. Little information is available about the show; according to Deadline, the sci-fi drama co-starring Naveen Andrews ("Lost"), Aml Ameen ("The Maze Runner") and Tuppence Middleton ("Jupiter Ascending"), among others — "follows eight characters around the world who, in the aftermath of a tragic death, find themselves linked to each other mentally and emotionally."

Hannah won't offer much more by way of plot details and provides only an opaque description of her character, Angel. "She has to [make] sacrifices for what she wants to protect," Hannah says. "That is something I believe in deeply, so it was natural to connect with that aspect of her character."

The series allows the actress to plunge deep into an elaborate fantasyland, a skill the Chicago-raised Hannah picked up as a young girl attending Francis W. Parker and Latin School of Chicago. Hannah describes her younger self as "shy and out of it," a quiet and awkward adolescent. But inside her head, thanks to an active imagination, she was free.
I learned to scuba dive when I was really young — we used to grab little pony tanks near my grandparent's house in Lake Geneva, checking out the mud pupples, perch and rainbow trout," she recalls. "I'd practically spend entire days swimming, pretending to be a mermaid."(It was an apropos daydream for Hannah, who'd later rise to fame playing a mermaid opposite Tom Hanks in 1984's "Splash." "I'd pretty much done all my homework for the part because I'd already spent years imagining myself in the role," she says.)

Hannah found similar refuge in acting. "I fell in love with movies," she says. "When I found out how they were made and how you could participate in that process, I knew that's what I wanted to do."

In an uncharacteristically bold move, 11-year-old Hannah looked in the yellow pages under "A" for agent, hopped on a bus after school and "signed myself up," she says. "I wanted to go to the Land of Oz and meet the Cowardly Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow." By 13, she was taking night classes at Goodman Theatre, reading scenes from plays like "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf" and, as she puts it, "transported to another reality." (It was an apropos recollection. "I'd practically spend entire days swimming, pretending to be a mermaid." (It was an apropos daydream for Hannah, who'd later rise to fame playing a mermaid opposite Tom Hanks in 1984's "Splash." "I'd pretty much done all my homework for the part because I'd already spent years imagining myself in the role," she says.)

Seeking a break from the tabloid covers, Hannah purposefully slowed things down in the 1990s and early aughts; while she accepted parts in films like "Dancing at the Blue Iguana" and "Grumpy Old Men," she managed to fly largely under the public's radar.

That ended in 2003, with her turn as one-eyed assassin Elle Driver in Quentin Tarantino's "Kill Bill." "The role reminded the world of Hannah's star power, but she'd merely been drawn to the idea of playing someone vastly different than herself. "I've really always been a character actress," she says. "Sometimes I'm thought of in other ways because I've played a lot of leading roles, but if you think of the roles I've chosen - from the innocent mermaid to the awkward Annelle [in 'Steel Magnolias'] to the wicked Elle - you see that, given the chance, I always try to do something unusual, something I've not done before."

"Sense8" more than fit these criteria. In particular, Hannah was intrigued by the "fantastic, free-flowing creativity coming through on Netflix," the Wachowskis' "complex, layered, profound material" and the fact that the script focused on something she'd been preoccupied with her whole life: the concept of connecting.

Filming the production locally took her everywhere from Chicago hospitals to Cinespace Studios to a burned-out church in Gary, Indiana; she ventured even deeper into the city when she wasn't filming, riding her bike past her old schools, dining at Gene & Georgetti with her mom, Susan Wexler, and friends Dominic DiFrisco, Arthur Nasser and Ray Smith, and attending Lollapalooza — which affected her in a way she didn't expect. "I saw all these kids looking at the stage at a DJ playing pre-recorded music on his computer, and they were sort of dancing by themselves, not with each other — just each alone smashed together looking forward. It made me sad," she says. "I worry this generation is going to be fragmented and disconnected unless some kind of tech pushback happens."

It's why she's decided to live the way she does — on a solar-powered farm built from reclaimed materials in the mountains, surrounded by a "mangy pirate pack" of animals and a car that runs on vegetable oil. When she's not filming, she works on, as she puts it, "solutions to the crisis we're in the midst of. ... In these extreme times, we're facing crises on every level: an extinction crisis, overpopulation crisis, water crisis, climate crisis, ocean acidification, wars, et cetera."

That conviction fuels Hannah's endless activism — over the past decade, she's been arrested for protesting the bulldozing of a forest in LA, a mountain-top removal in West Virginia and the Keystone XL oil pipeline. "I believe in bearing witness, standing in solidarity and using my voice and platform to amplify the unheard voices of those who are suffering," she says. "It's critical we share information and work against the polarization that we are increasingly pushed toward. Our primal nature is to be collaborative, not competitive."

It's a statement that could define Hannah's career, which she's spent forcing herself outside of her comfort zone — on screen and off — so that she might find and facilitate human connections. "The most important contribution I could make in this life is to be of service — to in some way help shed light on life's interconnectedness," she says. "I believe if we embraced that profound truth, we'd make much wiser decisions."

Clockwise from above: Daryl Hannah at the Annual Environmental Media Awards on Oct. 19, 2013 in Los Angeles; in "Kill Bill Vol. 2"; with Jack Lemmon in "Grumpy Old Men"; with Shirley MacLaine in "Steel Magnolias"; and with Tom Hanks in "Splash."
Whether you're decking the halls with boughs of holly and hanging mistletoe, lighting a menorah or getting the streamers ready to ring in 2015, there's no reason you can't throw a party as fabulous as those of the pros. To help you get started, we got the scoop on the Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's Eve traditions of two local chefs and one famous Frenchman - plus accompanying recipes that will totally wow your guests.

Classically-trained pastry chef Leigh Omilinsky owes her baking talents to her Jewish grandmother Bertha. No meal at Grandma's was complete without dessert — even though young Leigh might have to play piano first to earn it, then wait for it to cool off. "My grandma says you aren't allowed to eat warm cookies because they're still alive," Omilinsky says. "But my sister and I would sneak them anyway."

Omilinsky's mother and grandmother had different recipes for rugelach, a Hanukkah family favorite. While Grandma grated a Heath bar into the filling, Mom used cream cheese and whatever else was in the pantry. Apricot jam is Omilinsky's favorite filling, so her recipe uses pecans and house-made jam from Chestnut Provisions, the Sofitel's new artisan food brand that offers cheese and charcuterie along with preserved fruits and vegetables.

The best parties are ones where the host is relaxed, so Omilinsky recommends prepping ahead as much as possible and using paper plates for easy clean-up. "They make super cute and festive ones these days," she says.

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**RUGELACH**

8 ounces cream cheese
1/2 pound butter, room temperature
1/4 cup granulated sugar, plus 9 tablespoons
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups flour, plus more for dusting
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 cup nuts (we used pecans)
1/2 cup apricot preserves, pureed
1 egg, beaten with 1 tablespoon milk for egg wash

Combine the cream cheese and butter in a mixer fitted with paddle until light and completely mixed. Add 1/4 cup of sugar, salt and vanilla until combined. Add the flour and mix until just combined. Dump the dough out and roll it in a ball. Cut the ball into quarters. Wrap each quarter in plastic and refrigerate for an hour.

To make the filling, combine 6 tablespoons of sugar, brown sugar, 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon and nuts. On a well-floured board, roll each ball of dough into a circle. Spread the dough with the jam and sprinkle the filling on top. Press lightly. Cut the circle into wedges or strips. Roll each piece up. (Wedges make crescent-shaped cookies; strips are the ones pictured.) Place the cookies on parchment and chill for 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brush each cookie with egg wash. Combine 3 tablespoons of sugar and 1 teaspoon of cinnamon or raw sugar (whichever you prefer) and sprinkle each cookie.

Bake for 15-20 minutes.

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Leigh Omilinsky
Café Des Architectes (20 E. Chestnut; cafedesarchitectes.com)
For the vinaigrette (yield, 1 quart):
- 2 cups Torontos (sparkling wine)
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons salt

Combine all in a bowl and mix to incorporate.

For the Brussels sprouts leaves:
- Remove outer leaves. Fry in 400-degree fryer until edges are golden brown and crispy. Season with salt and pepper.
- Place shaved Brussels sprouts in a bowl and mix with vinaigrette. Allow to sit for 1-2 minutes.
- Mix in chives and scatter marcona almonds on top. Microplane an even layer of Manchego cheese on top. Cover with freshly ground pepper. Top with fried Brussels sprouts.

Jean-Georges Vongerichten
Pump Room
(1301 N. State; Pumproom.com)

“I never plate anything at home,” says Jean-Georges Vongerichten. “Holidays should be family-style.” With 25 restaurants worldwide, the Alsatian chef is best known for the intricate tasting menus he serves at his namesake New York flagship — so it seems only fair that at home, he takes it easy.

Vongerichten, who just received his American passport this year, celebrates both countries’ holidays with equal enthusiasm. His decades-old tradition is to spend Christmas at his home in St. Barths with his family. There’s a little business involved — Vongerichten operates a restaurant at Eden Rock — but mostly, he spends his time on the beach, enjoying the company of his wife, children and grandkids.

While he doesn’t often cook on Christmas, when he does prepare dinner during the holidays, he makes this Brussels sprout salad, a lighter riff on the traditional Caesar. The easy-to-make salad is perfect for serving family-style at home. “My mother overcooked them, boiled,” Vongerichten says. “So now I like Brussels raw, roasted or fried for more flavor.”

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Ryan McCaskey
Acadia (1639 S. Wabash; Acadia chicago.com)

New Year’s Eve at Ryan McCaskey’s Acadia is anything but traditional — the chef picks a new theme each year, ranging from A Mid-Winter Night’s Dream to Moulin Rouge, allowing the Michelin-starred restaurant to get a little wild. This year, McCaskey is returning to his roots with a Maine-inspired dinner, including grape nut pie and a 20-piece marching band (for tickets, visit Acadiachicago.com). “We’re building a forest in the entire restaurant,” he says. “Floor-to-ceiling birch, pine and spruce trees.”

You don’t have to get as fancy with décor as Acadia does, but McCaskey does recommend throwing a themed party. “You can do something interesting and different in your own home for much less money than people think,” he says. “For a change in lighting, buy a few yards of tapestry, cover your lamps, light a few candles. Or use a constellation laser projection and the whole ceiling lights up like the night sky.” He also suggests throwing a potluck party to minimize prep time — prepare just one standout dish, like McCaskey’s peekytoe crab ravioli, yourself.

PEEKYTOE CRAB RAVIOLI, CAVIAR, TRUFFLES
(yield: 36 raviolis)

Pasta:
8 ounces “OO” flour
1 whole egg
5 egg yolks
1 tablespoon whole milk
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon salt

Make a well with flour. Add salt to outer well. Whisk milk, olive oil and yolks together. Pour into well. Slowly and carefully add flour to well, incorporating into liquid. Knead until dough starts to form. Once formed into a smooth, solid ball, rest for 3 hours in refrigerator. Take out, cut into 2 pieces. Roll each piece through a pasta machine, on every other setting until thin sheets form. Add filling (see below), egg wash in between filling, lay another sheet on top. Using a ring mold, cut around fitting. Press tight around. Cut, and place ravioli onto a tray that has been lightly floured and dusted with semolina.

Crab filling:
2 peakytoe crabs
2 shallots, minced
1 leek, minced
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon chervil, chopped
1/2 tablespoon tarragon, chopped

Sauce:
1 pound butter, plus 1 tablespoon butter
juice of 2 lemons
juice of 1 orange
juice of 1 lime
1 cup heavy cream, plus 1/2 cup heavy cream
1 sprig thyme
1 shallot, minced
1 bay leaf
2 tablespoons cornstarch
salt to taste

Sauté shallot with thyme and butter. Add citrus juice. Reduce by half. Add 1 cup heavy cream. Reduce by 1/2. Whisk together 1/2 cup heavy cream with 2 tablespoons cornstarch. Cook for approximately 2 minutes on medium high or until thick. Whisk in last 1 pound of butter. Strain.

Assembly:
Blanch ravioli. Arrange 3 ravioli on plate. Drizzle sauce around. Place caviar of your choice on each ravioli. Shave truffles over whole dish. Garnish with chervil or parsley leaves.
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Christmas cranks love to give a good poke at beloved holiday traditions. But you don’t have to be a total Grinch to enjoy The Second City’s swing at “A Christmas Carol.” Written by Peter Gwinn and Bobby Mort and directed by Matt Hovde, “Twist Your Dickens, or Scrooge You” makes delicious mincemeat of the sometimes treacly sentiments of the season.

The refreshingly irreverent show debuted in Los Angeles in 2012. Since then, Gwinn and company have tinkered with it, always leaving enough leeway for the production to be tailored to audiences in whichever city it’s performed. What’s more, the Chicago rendition — presented by Goodman Theatre — will feature local celebs in cameo roles at each show. Among those slated to test their comedic chops are:

- Chicago Cubs announcer Len Kasper
- WBBM-TV’s restaurateur and “Top Chef” winner Stephanie Izard,
- best-selling mystery author Sara Paretsky
- Chicago Sun-Times reporter Bill Kurtis
- Author and former Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle
- Gwinn — an Emmy Award-winner for his work as a writer on Comedy Central’s “The Colbert Report” — delights in seeing Christmas through his children’s eyes, and in the fact that the production breathes new life into a classic tale. “My favorite thing about ‘A Christmas Carol’ is that it’s a story that everybody knows, but nobody has read,” he says. “It’s also much more fun to satirize something that so many people know, as you don’t have to do any of the work of educating your audience about your subject.”

Punctuated with improvisation and incorporating “misdeeds” solicited from the audience in the lobby before the show, “Twist Your Dickens” wanders far from 19th-century London, referencing such figures as Little Orphan Annie and the Misfit Toys of the 1964, stop-motion animation classic “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.”

“And there’s also a level of social commentary,” says Gwinn, founder of the improv troupe Baby Wants Toys of the 1964, stop-motion animation classic "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer."

“Scrooge expresses some sentiments in the beginning of the story that are almost identical to sentiments that I have heard expressed recently by certain members of Congress or presidential candidates. I’m not sure if that fact reflects well on the timelessness of Dickens, or reflects poorly on Congress. Either way, it sets up some fun jokes.” And God bless us, everyone!

Second City skewers Scrooge and his crew in the holiday satire ‘Twist Your Dickens’ by Thomas Connors

Robyn Scott, Peter Gwinn and Sayjal Joshi in rehearsal for ‘Twist Your Dickens, or Scrooge You!’


The Second City’s swing at “A Christmas Carol,” written by Peter Gwinn and Bobby Mort and directed by Matt Hovde, “Twist Your Dickens, or Scrooge You” makes delicious mincemeat of the sometimes treacly sentiments of the season.
FIVE MINUTES WITH...

LEE RHODES

The glassybaby founder lights up the world for a good cause  BY ELLE EICHINGER

Former Splash cover stars Pearl Jam turned us on to glassybaby, founded by friend-of-the-band Lee Rhodes. After her third cancer diagnosis in 1995, Rhodes began selling glass-blown candle votives — handmade by American artisans — out of her garage to raise funds that would help fellow cancer patients cover day-to-day costs.

Nearly two decades later, the company has raised more than $22.2 million for the White Light Fund for oncology patients, as well as nonprofits like Conservation International and Pearl Jam’s Vitalogy Foundation. Local glassybaby pop-ups have contributed to such organizations as the Greater Chicago Food Depository and Lurie Children’s Hospital.

What’s in a name

“The very first [votives] were tiny little things; we started them as baby presents. [The name] glassybaby just rolled off the tongue; we loved the way it looks — though everyone asks what our ‘glass babies’ look like.”

Home decor

“Everyone steals them from me. I bring home new ones and then look around and realize people put them in their bags. I have them out everywhere, filled with pencils or my reading glasses. We light some every night. You can’t go wrong; there’s no perfect mix. They all go together — because they’re from nature, they’re all tonally correct.”

Playing favorites

“We have a glassybaby color that was born Sept. 21 called Princess [pictured above], a really light pink. I’m not a pink person — I don’t wear it, I have none [in my] home — but there’s something really calm and renewing about this color, like everything’s going to be OK.”

Shop the votives ($44 and up) at Glassybaby.com.
MARCUS SAMUELSSON embraces the global food movement with a new cookbook

BY MAUREEN JENKINS

On the outside, Marcus Samuelsson is a rock-star chef. The youngest chef ever awarded a three-star rating by the New York Times for his cuisine at Manhattan’s Aquavit, he won the second season of Bravo’s “Top Chef Masters” and Food Network’s “Chopped All Stars Tournament,” and planned and prepared President Barack Obama’s first state dinner at the White House in 2009.

But at heart, the Ethiopian-born, Swedish-raised Samuelsson, 44, is more of a cultural anthropologist, observing and telling stories through food, flavor and taste. In his newest book, Marcus Off Duty: The Recipes I Cook at Home, he invites foodies and amateur cooks alike into his home kitchen, taking them on a delicious globetrotting trip through their taste buds.

“Cooking is a language we all should know,” said Samuelsson when we caught up with him on a recent trip to Chicago, where he spoke at the Chicago Humanities Festival and the Art Institute of Chicago. (It wasn’t his first jaunt in the city — he previously owned C-House, which shuttered in early 2013.)

“What’s in the book is a good combination of what I grew up with and my journey.” Though he cooks for a living, the chef acknowledges that “there are a lot of dishes that don’t work in a restaurant setting,” but says cuisine has become more democratic.

“When I started cooking, the [amateur] chef didn’t have access to the same great ingredients that professionals do.” The Internet, he says, has become the great equalizer. “The average person has traveled more, which means the conversation of food gets really exciting. Food is pop culture, which it wasn’t before.”

According to Samuelsson, taste isn’t the only sense integral to cooking — hearing is also important. Music is key to the recipes in Marcus Off Duty; in each chapter, he suggests seriously diverse “Music to Cook By” lists. “A lot of our music and food, for me, is about originality. Off Duty is a bridge into Americana and diversity,” he says. “There’s a lot of pointing to Asian and Latin flavors, and that’s more a reflection of those populations. It’s also about being curious about the other side of town. Good food doesn’t have borders.”

And he eats as he preaches. While in Chicago, rather than only hitting downtown and North Side hot spots, Samuelsson traveled south for Lem’s Bar-B-Q (311 E. 75th), a carryout-only rib tips and hot links joint, and nearby Original Soul Vegetarian (203 E. 75th). Likewise, in the book’s chapter on “street food,” he introduces readers to recipes like fish burgers with Bajan mayo, Durban curry buns inspired by the markets in South Africa and spicy shrimp falafel inspired by his favorite Manhattan street carts. “My job very often is to take something from cultures and present it [in new ways],” he says.

With “globalized food” now the nation’s norm, Samuelsson argues, “a [traditionally Vietnamese] bánh mi sandwich can become an American staple,” he says. “That great taco can be an American staple.” That said, he adds wryly, “The hot dog doesn’t have to go.”
Jasper Nowell & Shaun Rajah

BY REBECCA TARAS

Despite knowing one another for years, it wasn't until 2011 that Jasper Nowell, then food and beverage manager for PUBLIC Hotel, attempted to hire Shaun Rajah as an events manager. But before they could develop a professional relationship, things got personal between the hospitality gurus. "The timing was unexpected, yet perfect," says Rajah.

After just four months of dating and, later, cohabitating in Lakeview, Rajah, now the senior catering manager at The Drake Hotel (140 E. Wahoo), proposed to Nowell at the Drake's New Year's Eve Gala. "I was completely caught off guard," says Nowell, now the guests relations manager at Fig & Olive (104 E. Oak). "But in that moment of chaos, surrounded by the cacophony of hundreds of celebants, there was a calm connection that we shared — a connection that has been unbroken ever since."

Their Oct. 12 nuptials also took place at the stunning Gold Coast landmark — and marked the hotel's first same-sex wedding since the law was passed June 1. Rajah worked with wedding planner Melissa Phillips of Simply Perfect Events to achieve a fairytale-like celebration. "Jasper and I believe that finding one another in Chicago was a real-life fairytale, so we wanted the most significant day in our lives to represent that," he says. The dynamic duo exchanged their own written vows in the hotel's Versailles-inspired French Room, surrounded by 250 guests and a robust wedding party of 23, then kicked off the reception with a cocktail and cabaret hour in the historic Drake Room (where Frank Sinatra used to perform), complete with signature libations like the Windy City Bromance.

The remainder of the evening incorporated one enchanting surprise after another. A "red-carpet lady" rolled out her billowing dress train at the entrance of the Gold Coast Room to summon guests into the reception. Round and long tables were elegantly dressed with chocolate brown, gold and ivory accents and featured towering floral arrangements and a variety of candles. Ballet dancers from Visceral Dance Center accompanied the couple's first dance to "Somewhere Over The Rainbow," sung by Lynne Jordan and Amy Armstrong. But the fairytale didn't end at midnight for this couple. "Being with Shaun is equivalent to watching your favorite television series," says Nowell. "You can't get enough and can't wait to watch what happens next."
FRANK FONTANANA
AGE: 41. LIVES IN: La Grange. CLAIM TO FAME: TV and radio host and chief contributing editor of Inspired Home, created by the International Houseware Association. EARLY START: I was always creative as a kid. I could draw and paint. When I was 5 years old, I was doing these sketches of dragons and superheroes. From there, I started developing that creative eye. INSIDE STORY: I moved to LA and got into doing parties for celebrities. At one point, I was designing parties for Halle Berry and Dennis Quaid. A lot of times, while transforming home environments for clients, I would be asked to design other rooms in their home, which launched into home interior remodeling. Once you have that eye, you apply it to everything. PROJECT MANAGED: This year, I started my own collection of custom-made blinds and shades with Eddie Z's. At the same time, I launched a radio show. But the IHA has been the biggest thing so far — they launched this new online destination where the consumers can get inspired by exciting products and get to know the manufacturers. FINE FURNISHINGS: Nadeau (4433 N. Ravenswood. Furniturewithasoul.com) has all imported, handmade pieces. When bargain shopping, I go to this place called Fort Pitt Furniture (4920 S. Central; Fortpittfurniture.com), a company that goes across the nation and buys old headboards, chairs and sofas from hotels. They're top-quality pieces out of [places like] the Hilton and the Plaza Hotel in New York. HOLIDAY TIPS: Take leftover décor from Christmas that you're not using, like tulle or ribbon, and create big bows on the back of your [guests'] chairs. COLOR WHEEL: People are afraid of color, and I always tell them, "Don't live in what I call 'taupe-ia.'" Liven up the space, throw colors on an accent wall. We live in this world once — why not make it the most stylish life you can?

For more information on Fontana, visit Frankfontana.net.

The home interior guru gives us the inside scoop on holiday design trends.
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Attending: 225
Raised: $115,000
Website: www.CZS.org

Date: Oct. 18
Attending: 225
Raised: $115,000
Website: www.CZS.org

Wines in the Wild guests greeting Animal Ambassador William wallaby

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.

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Gift-worthy batch: Ten of the year's best cookbooks

BY TOM WITCOM

The new cookbook titles that rolled out in 2014 aimed at feeding the hunger of food lovers of all stripes: armchair chefs, experienced cooks and newcomers to the kitchen.

Topics run the gamut from culinary essentials like baking, food preservation and scratch-made pasta, to ethnic specialties, chocolate, comfort food and gluten-free menus.

While building a cookbook library is a matter of personal taste, here are some noteworthy titles that merit a second look and gift consideration for the foodie in your life.

**The Baking Bible**
*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)*

How to deal with a pie crust that shrinks during baking or a cake that cracks are a few of the problem-solving techniques addressed by Rose Levy Beranbaum in her most recent cookbook. The meticulously researched 560-page volume covers every baking category Beranbaum has an easy-to-follow style, making her recipes within the reach of amateur bakers.

**Done: A Cook’s Guide to Knowing When Food is Perfectly Cooked**
*(Chronicle)*

Determining “doneness” ranks as the Achilles’ heel of many otherwise confident cooks, notes food writer/cooking instructor James Peterson. Using sound, smell, appearance and feel, the author details how to ensure 85 of the most challenging-to-cook foods are done to perfection.

**Downtown Italian**
*(Andrews McMeel)*

Many restaurateur-written cookbooks are more geared towards the coffee table than the home cook’s reference shelf. This one, however, is the exception. The food, drink and pastry recipes are drawn from principals involved with popular Manhattan eateries dell’anima, IiArtusi, IJ Apicio and Anfora.

**Bar Tartine Techniques & Recipes**
*(Chronicle)*

Nick Bola and Courtney Burns, co-chefs at this hotspot San Francisco restaurant, are dedicated locavores whose cooking background draws from cuisines of Central Europe, Japan and Scandinavia. The first half of their book deals with time-honored processes for stocking the larder: fermentation, curing and pickling. The second showcases recipes using those staples (i.e., Black Garlic and Lentil Soup).

**Chocolate**
*(Sterling Epicure)*

Pastry chef, food stylist and cookbook author Elisabeth Johansson shares 90 recipes with chocoholics in mind — from spicy Aztec Pralines and Chocolate Souffle to Vegan Chocolate Mousse and Rye Bread with Cacao. Johansson, who lives in her native Sweden, also describes the steps involved in tempering and working with chocolate.

**Flour + Water**
*(Ten Speed Press)*

During a sojourn in Bologna, Thomas McNaughton learned the time-tested secrets of making delectable, eye-popping artisan pasta from scratch. He took that knowledge back to San Francisco where he has served as chef-partner of the popular restaurant Flour + Water since its opening in 2009. His first cookbook impresses with its clear-cut approach to pasta: from making of the dough to its final shaping and cooking. The Tagliatelle Bolognese recipe is a keeper.

**Café Kitchen**
*(Ryland Peters & Small)*

Dedicated chef and food blogger Shelagh Ryan draws inspiration from her native Australia for what goes on the table at the thriving Kitchen Café she established in 2008. Ryan’s debut cookbook has chapters that go from breakfast and brunch to small bites, larger plates and cakes.

**French Comfort Food**
*(Gibbs Smith)*

The comfort food recipes Hillary Davis gathered while living in France encompass the country’s longstanding love affair with all things culinary. Among them are Alsatian two-crusted meat pie; a Nicoise onion, black olive and anchovy quiche; and Poulet Grand-Mere — appealing dishes that a novice or veteran cook could recreate again and again.

**Mexican Flavors**
*(Andrews McMeel)*

Recipes inspired by Hugh Carpenter's cooking school in San Miguel de Allende near Mexico City give American dishes a contemporary Mexican twist. Readers will find recipes for Banana Salsa, Coconut-Arancho Soup with Mushrooms and Mexican Chili with Lamb and Black Beans.

**Caribbean Potluck**
*(Kyle Books)*

Cooks with adventurous palates will find much to like in this revelatory volume that underscores the diversity of the Caribbean islands. Sisters Suzanne and Michelle Rousseau include more than 100 recipes: classic and regional standards, family favorites and original creations.
Salt Creek Ballet unveils new 'Nutcracker' sets, costumes

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN
For Pioneer Press

Salt Creek Ballet is performing the traditional performance of Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker" with a new look.

"This year we try to make it our own in a really new way," said Executive Director and former company member Christina Salerno. "I think Salt Creek Ballet's audiences are used to and really appreciate the real core of classical ballet and a traditional setting, so those elements are still very much a part of our production and very much part of the timelessness of it."

As Salt Creek Ballet kicks off its 30th anniversary, Clarendon Hills resident Salerno said there is an added opulence as the holiday classic is presented with brand new costumes and sets. "The Nutcracker" is on stage Dec. 13 and 14 at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie.

"It's exciting for people to be wearing some new costumes and new color schemes," Salerno said, explaining the old costumes have been retired after about 28 years. "I'm really excited to walk into a theater and hear an orchestra warming up and hear little segments from Tchaikovsky's score and watch people coming to see the performance look at the musicians and get that anticipation before the curtain even opens."

The pre-professional cast of 100 dancers ages 8-18 includes company members and apprentices and students from the Salt Creek Ballet school. Internationally recognized guest dancers Ilya Kozadayev, Yumelia Garcia, Maria Mosina and Alexei Tyukov join this year's cast on stage.

"[Artistic Director] Sergey [Kozadayev] and I have changed the overall conception to be closer to the classic story of 'The Nutcracker' by E.T.A Hoffmann," said Artistic Director Zhanna Dubrovskaya.

There are many family ties among the cast, staff and volunteers, including La Grange Park's Madelyn Wren and her grandmother Sue Wren. Sue has been with Salt Creek Ballet for over 25 years, previously serving as assistant artistic director and currently as the adult class teacher.

"I am especially looking forward to the new scenery and costumes this year," said Sue Wren. "It was such a big thing when we went from renting to purchasing our own sets and costumes over twenty years ago. How exciting it is to see everything completely new again this year!"

Sue explained it is an added pleasure to see her granddaughter dancing in the performance. This is Madelyn's third year dancing in "The Nutcracker" and she will play a party boy.

"It's great because I already have the normal classes and I don't have to wait for the spring showcase; I get to do something in the winter too," said Madelyn. "Since you get to work with all the older kids you learn a lot from watching them in rehearsals."

Natalie Sprovieri, 17, who will dance the role of the Arabian describes the choreography as "just very classic, very old-fashioned. There's nothing too fancy, not full of tricks, but just enough where it complements the body well."

The upcoming performance is Sprovieri's seventh "Nutcracker" and she has been dancing with Salt Creek for 14 years. Loving the tradition and how it brings people together, she describes the annual show as a challenge for dancers as they strive to keep the classic alive.

"It's such a great time because it's so fulfilling for yourself to achieve such new heights every year doing the exact same thing, which you would think would be impossible, but it's possible every single time and it helps you grow so much," Sprovieri said.
Mark Toland will perform his magic on kids of all ages

BY MYRNA PETLICK
For Pioneer Press

Kids will get a rare treat at the Mark Toland Magic performance at the Second Sunday Family Program, 2-2:45 p.m. Dec. 14 at Niles Public Library, 6960 Oakton St.

"Typically, I make my living as a mind reader so I do mostly adult shows," Toland said. "I love working with kids even though I don't do that as much anymore as I used to back in university days. The kids keep you on your toes."

A former mainstay at Disney theme parks, Toland is accustomed to astonishing young people.

He said that the Niles show will include "mostly comedic magic, maybe a little mind reading. It's all about bringing the youth up and letting them become the stars of the show. They bring as much energy as I hope to. Because of that, we have this happy accident."

Pick up free tickets in KidSpace starting at 1:30 p.m. on show day.

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

SEE THE LIGHT

The triumph of light over darkness will be celebrated at the Grand Chanukah Menorah Lighting, 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18 at Fountain Square, 1600 Orrington Ave., Evanston. There will be musical entertainment and free refreshments all hosted by Tannenbaum Chabad House.

For details, call (847) 866-2914 or go to www.cityofevanston.org.

COME TO CLAUS CABARET

Daniel Johnson looks a little like Mr. Claus so families should be fascinated by "Santa Songs: A Christmas Cabaret," 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18 at Grand Piano Haus, 3640 W. Dempster St., Skokie. Tickets are $20, $10 for kids 12-18. Proceeds benefit the Chicago Food Depository and West Suburban PADS.

For details, call (800) 888-3006 or go to www.brownpapertickets.com/event/888292.

SEE SHOW FOR PEANUTS

Families have got to love a musical that features favorite holiday songs and Snoopy. There are two performances left for ATC Repertory Company's "It's Christmas, Charlie Brown," 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 13 and Sunday, Dec. 14 at Wilmette Theatre, 1122 Central Ave. Tickets are $18.

For details, call (847) 251-7424 or go to www.wilmettetheatre.com.
Suspense and sadness in excellent 'Imitation Game'

BY BRUCE INGRAM
Film Critic

When was the last time you said to yourself, “I think I’ll go out and catch a good movie about a certified scientific genius?”

Maybe you might feel that way every week but, if so, you’re out of luck most of the time, aren’t you? Now though, you have two to choose from: the Stephen Hawking biopic “The Theory of Everything” and “The Imitation Game,” a highly enjoyable intellectual thriller about English mathematician Alan Turing, who cracked a Nazi code that shortened World War II by years. And contributed much to the development of today’s computer age in the process.

Ensemble Español Spanish Dance Theater & a Children's Chorus.

Enjoy this opportunity, because unless one of them earns a billion dollars worldwide there won’t be this much IQ on display at your neighborhood multiplex again for a long time. That’s a pity, though, since these movies prove that smart and entertaining aren’t mutually exclusive. Especially the sadder, darker, more intellectually exciting “Imitation Game,” where lives are at stake in addition to world-changing ideas.

“Imitation Game” is sad, in part, because casual human interactions constitute an unbreakable code for Turing, and partly because of his homosexuality — and English laws that force him to remain closeted. The film opens in 1952 after his arrest for “gross indecency” — a persecution that led to his suicide two years later.

Debut screenwriter Graham Moore’s intelligent script begins with Turing (Benedict Cumberbatch) saying “Pay close attention, I will not pause, I will not repeat myself,” to an unsuspecting detective before flashing back to his top-secret work during the war. Most of the film takes place in England’s Government Code & Cypher School, where Turing worked with a small team to decipher Germany’s indecipherable Enigma Code. Seemingly indecipherable, in any case, since it involved millions upon millions of possible solutions, which were all reset every 18 hours. While the rest of the team wracked their brains, Turing set about creating a machine that would run through all those calculations in seconds.

Uniformly strong performances are key to the enjoyment of “Imitation Game.” Cumberbatch, in particular, is at his best, and Keira Knightley is also excellent as Joan Clarke, the only woman on the team and his only real friend.

It also helps that director Morten Tyldum (“Headhunters”) has imbued “The Imitation Game” with considerable suspense. Every day for two years, the team works on Enigma solutions up to the 18th hour as the Allies lose battles and valuable cargo — and every night a bell rings at deadline, meaning they have to begin anew the next day. Meanwhile, Turing labors away on a machine that no one understands or has faith in.

Then, when he finally perfects the device, he has to face an even more tense problem: how often the Allies can act on their secret knowledge without making the Germans suspicious — in effect allowing them to decide who lives and who dies during the war. But that’s another story.
Take a Mulled Wine moment between deck the halls

PEAR: GOAT CHEESE AND ASIAGO GALETTE
(Makes 8 servings)

For the crust:
2 cups flour
1/2 cup cornmeal
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon chopped rosemary
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
8 Tablespoons cold unsalted butter, divided
1/4-1/2 cup ice water

For the topping:
2 large pears, peeled, cored and sliced
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest
1/2 cups shredded Asiago cheese
1/2 cup crumbled goat cheese
1 teaspoon thyme leaves
1/2 teaspoon coarse black pepper

Combine the flour, cornmeal, sugar, rosemary, salt and pepper in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse the mixture to combine. Dice 8 Tablespoons of the cold butter and add to the processor. Pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Drizzle in just enough water to allow the dough to come together. Press the dough into a disk, wrap tightly in plastic and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment and sprinkle with cornmeal. Remove the dough from the refrigerator, unwrap and roll out into a circle on a floured surface to 1/4-inch thickness. Toss the sliced pears with the lemon juice and lemon zest. Sprinkle the 1 cup of the Asiago cheese in the center of the rolled dough leaving a 2-inch edge uncovered. Sprinkle with half of the thyme leaves and arrange the pears on top of the cheese. Leave the 2-inch edge uncovered. Sprinkle the remaining Asiago, all of the goat cheese, the remaining thyme and pepper. Fold the edges of the crust up over the filling and pinch to form rustic crust.

Transfer the galette to the baking sheet using a large spatula or a pizza peel. Bake the galette in the lower 1/3 of the oven for about 40 minutes (begin checking at 30 minutes), or until goat cheese is beginning to brown and crust is golden and firm. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 10-15 minutes before cutting into wedges. Serve at once.

ROSEMARY-SCENTED MULLED WINE
(makes 4 servings)

Pour the sugar into a 4-quart saucepan. Add the lemon zest, cinnamon stick, allspice berries and star anise. Pour the pear nectar over the sugar. Heat the sugar mixture to a boil and turn off the heat. Add the clementine slices, clove and star anise. Let the spices steep for about 10 minutes. Pour the wine into the pot and stir to combine. Reduce heat to low. Pour the wine into a 4-cup pitcher garnished with clementine slices and cinnamon sticks. Serve warm.

By Melissa Elsmo
Out of Mel's Kitchen

Sometimes it feels like the hectic holiday season provides few opportunities for merry elves to take a break, let alone enjoy a quiet moment sipping cider by the fire.

Hokey made-for-TV movies make it seem like stringing lights, wrapping gifts and hanging wreaths magically happen overnight, but savvy decorators know all about the real work involved in setting the stage for a divine holiday. Sweeping rogue pine needles, hammering countless nails and carefully stowing all of the ugliest ornaments on the back of the tree is a time-consuming task. And just when the 8-foot ladder is tucked safely back in the garage, the real entertaining begins.

Tradition compels holiday cooks to churn out dozens of bakery-quality cookies, pounds of perfect potluck appetizers and a Norman Rockwell-worthy Christmas roast. Washing dishes and soothing occasional burns comes with the territory when you are busy creating a sense of wonder and awe in others. While December can be a daunting and busy month, the effort to bring out the spirit of the season is well worth it.

Being an elf is magical work and taking a brief moment to appreciate the holiday feeling you’ve created should be an essential gift you give yourself every year. As a rule I take one evening for myself during this festive time of year. I simmer a batch of spicy mulled wine and whip up a rustic tart brimming with sweet pears and savory cheese. Knowing every bauble is in place, I happily put my feet up and enjoy the glow from my Christmas tree while savoring a holiday treat made just for me.

Happy holidays!
Bailey Dee’s Late Night Bait
7 p.m.: Bailey Dee and her band will charm with their wide song catalog reaching into the Great American Songbook of R&B, jazz, rock & roll and swing. Eisenhower Public Library, 4619 N. Oketo Ave., Harwood Heights. Call 708-967-7829.

Wilmette Community Band Holiday Concert
7:30 p.m.: The Wilmette Community Band (www.wilmettemiand.org) presents its Annual Holiday Concert at Trinity Lutheran Church. The event is open to all. Musical selections will be selected from: In the Bleak Midwinter, Russian Christmas Music, and of course Santa! Free access to all. The capacity per train is approximately 60 passengers, so make sure to make reservations early. Bensenville Metra Station, 1500 N. Mannheim Road, Franklin Park. For tickets or more information, call 847-256-1213. $15 nonresidents.

Handicrafters
10 a.m.: Held every Friday at 10 a.m. Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge. Call 847-692-5127.

Acacia Park Annual Cookie Walk
9 a.m.: Acacia Park Lutheran Church, 4307 N. Oriole Ave., Norridge. Call 847-453-3682.

Experience Holidays at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio
9 a.m.: Youth volunteers lead tours and guide visitors through the home, decorated as it was when the Wright family lived there during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Hear stories of the Wright children pulling taffy in the kitchen and playing on the floor while they readied gifts around the tree. A 12-foot tree decorated with Victorian-style ornaments is a highlight of the 30-minute tour. Freebel blocks – the same toys Wright played with as a child to learn about shapes and design – are available in the architect’s Drafting Room for children to enjoy. Free hot chocolate served outside in the Home and Studio courtyard. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, 951 Chicago Ave., Oak Park. Call 708-848-1876.

It’s Christmas Charlie Brown!
The Musical
10 a.m.: Join Charlie Brown and the Peanuts gang as they prepare for the upcoming holiday season. Filled with holiday cheer, this special Actors Training Center (ATC) Repertory Company’s production warms the hearts of audience-goers and includes a sing-a-long at the end of the show, in which the cast goes into the audience and invites the little kids onto the stage and sings Christmas Carols with them.

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 at least 10 days before the desired publication date.

Claire Bigley is musical director and Jeff Award winner Janet Louer, Musical Theatre director of ATC’s Repertory Company, directs the production. Cast includes: Charlie Brown: Caleb Fietsam (Lake Bluff) and Seth Steinberg (Evaston) Lucy: Colleen Dougherty (Evaston), and Julia Mates (Evaston) Sally Brown: Megan Delaney (Western Springs) and Emma Flannery (Wilmette) Linus: Jacob Simon (Deerfield) Frieda: Jordan Pritsker (Glencoe) and Elizabeth Baker (Evaston) Snoopy: Phoebe Rudnick (Winnemka) and Lilly Piekos (Wilmette). Tickets now on sale. For tickets or more information, visit: www.wilmettemiand.com or call: at 847-259-7424. $12 group rate for 10 or more and can be purchased at Acacia Park Theatre, 1122 Central Ave., Wilmette. $10.

The Legend of St. Nicholas
10 a.m.: Actor Terry Lynch plays Father Christmas as he shares the traditions, symbols, and legends about St. Nicholas from all over the world. No secrets revealed...and bring your camera! Register at glenviewwiI.org/register, 847-251-7070, or the Youth Services Desk. Glenview Public Library, 1900 Glenview Road, Glenview.

United Lutheran Cookie Walk
10 a.m.: Shopper’s select own assortment of homemade cookies. New trays set out every 15 minutes. Also a sale of fair trade items and beautiful raffle prizes. Proceeds benefit charities. United Lutheran Church, 409 Greenfield St., Oak Park. Call 708-388-1576. $15 a box.

Stories with Santa
10 a.m.: Birth to 10 years to visit with Santa. Enjoy crafts and face painting, sing-a-long, cookies and cocoa. Gifts and craft displays for holiday shopping. $6 for family of four, $3/each additional person. No reservation required. Nineteenth Century Charitable Association, 178 Forest Ave., Oak Park. Call 708-366-2729.

Cookies and Cocoa with Santa
10:30 a.m.: Bring your camera for a visit with Santa, enjoy crafts and face painting, sing-a-long, cookies and cocoa. And of course Santa! Free access to all. River Forest Public Library, 735 Lathrop Ave., River Forest. Call 708-366-5205.

Santa Train Ride
11 a.m.: The trip to the North Pole (Elgin) begins at the Bensenville Train Station. Santa’s helpers read the story of “The Polar Express,” play games, sing carols, and Santa visits with all the boys and girls individually. Each child receives special gift from Santa that reminds them of their trip on the Santa Train Ride. The capacity per train is 135 passengers, so make sure to make reservations early. Bensenville Metra Train Station, 100 W. Main St. Bensenville. Call 630-766-7015. $12 residents; $15 nonresidents.

Holiday fun and pictures with Santa
1 p.m.: For one picture postcard of one’s child taken with Santa, a coloring contest, holiday craft, kidde games, pinaclas, hot chocolate, candy canes and of course Santa! Fre access to all games, contest and activities. Goody bags and gifts available to all 96 kids. Don’t forget to bring your camera! Leyden Township Community Center, 2620 N. Mannheim Road, Franklin Park. Call 847-451-6144. $8 per child.

Chicago Artoy
2 p.m.: Artists give free workshops. Center on Halsted, 3658 N. Halsted St., Chicago. Call 773-472-6469.

Polar Express
2:30 p.m.: This December, experience the magic of Christmas on a holiday train to the North Pole. Enjoy Christmas caroling, cookies, milk and an interactive holiday story as the group makes its way to the North Pole, staged at the Elgin Train Station. Santa boards the train and greets each child with a special treat as they make their way back to Franklin Park. The Park District provides chocolate milk and a cookie to everyone. Registration required. Franklin Park Community Center, 9500 Franklin Ave., Franklin Park. Call 847-359-2893. $10-$25.

A Toy-Ful Celebration! Holiday Concert
7 p.m.: Concert benefits the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots campaign. Enjoy music of the holiday season featuring the Glenview Concert Band, along with the “Toys Choir!” In the spirit of giving, consider bringing new unwrapped toys to the concert to donate at the door and help the Marines raise toys for underprivileged children. For those that can’t attend — consider dropping off new toys at any of the Glenview Fire Stations Toys for Tots boxes! Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St, Glenview. Call 847-724-2210.

Film Festival
7:30 p.m.: Beth Hilleg Congregation Bnai Emanuah, is once again presenting its popular Film Festival series. The first of three features the movie "The Jewish Cardinal," the true story of Jean-Marie Lustiger, the son of Polish immigrants, who maintained his cultural identity as a Jew even after converting to Catholicism at a young age and later entering the priesthood. Lively discussion led by congregant Jonathan Lehrer following the movie. Refreshments served. Beth Hilleg Congregation, 3220 Big Tree Lane, Wilmette. Call 847-256-1293. $10.

Second Saturday Coffeehouse: Bittersweet Christmas Band
8 p.m.: Popular Second Saturday Coffeehouse is hosted by Vicki Elberfeld. Featured once again is the Bittersweet Christmas Band. On guitar, drum, dulcimer, and penny whistle, musicians Cooper, Nelson, and Early, join songwriters Susan Urban with many perspectives on the holiday season, from the reverent to the ridiculous. Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago, 7574 North Lincoln Ave., Skokie. Call 847-677-3334. $5 donation.

Holy Bouncing Boobies!: A Batman Burlesque
11:45 p.m.: Ages 18 and up only. Approximately 60 minutes. Gorilla Tango Theatre, 1919 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago. Call 773-598-4654. $25.
Lessons and Carols
9 a.m.: The congregation is led in singing traditional Christmas music by the combined Kenilworth Union music ensembles and special guest instrumentalists. Kenilworth Union Church, 211 Kenilworth Ave., Kenilworth. Call 847-251-4272.

Intergenerational Christmas Pageant & Brunch
10 a.m.: This pageant, presented by an acting troupe that includes all ages—children, teens, and adults. “A Star Is Moving Through the Sky” tells the Nativity story using costumes and props. There will be angels, sheep, donkeys, shepherds, and magi as well as beloved puppets from past productions, including life-size camels! An Advent brunch will follow the worship service. First Congregational Church of Wilmette, 1125 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette. Call 847-251-6660.

Annual Winter Festival
10:30 a.m.: Tom Hoepfner and Katherine Ross lead in traditional celebration of the winter solstice. Enjoy a candle-lighting ceremony, decoration of a “mitten tree,” group singing, and musical and dramatic performances by children. Donations of new winter clothing and non-perishable food items adorn the tree and are sent to those in need. Coffee begins at 10 a.m., and following the Festival enjoy hot chocolate and homemade cookies. All are welcome to Sunday programs. Childcare is available. For more information, please visit ethicalhuman.org. Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago, 7574 North Lincoln Ave., Skokie. Call 847-577-3334.

Lessons and Carols
10:30 a.m.: The congregation is led in singing traditional Christmas music by the combined Kenilworth Union music ensembles and special guest instrumentalists. Kenilworth Union Church, 211 Kenilworth Ave., Kenilworth. Call 847-251-4272.

The Making of Gone With the Wind
2 p.m.: On its 75th anniversary, Leslie Goddard uses photographs and short film clips to explore the making of Gone With the Wind. Learn about the casting, the special effects, the incredible public reaction, and the classic film’s remarkably enduring popularity. Eisenhower Public Library, 4613 N. Oketo Ave., Harwood Heights. Call 708-867-7828.

Lincoln Hall Choirs & Bebop Daddys’ Holiday Jazz
2 p.m.: Get in the holiday spirit with an afternoon of seasonal tunes performed by Lincoln Hall Swing & Honor Choirs followed by Bebop Daddys’ Holiday Jazz. Lincolnwood Public Library, 4000 W. Pratt Ave., Lincolnwood. Call 847-677-5277 x 232.

In Concert! The History Singers present: Carols of Old England
2 p.m.: From anonymous folk tunes to classical compositions, the caroling tradition is moving at this time of year. Kathryn Atwood’s rich vocals, accompanied by her husband John’s guitar, fill the Community Room with warm holiday cheer. Their impeccable research on the history of caroling sheds a whole new light on the music of the season. Register at glenviewpl.org/register, 847-729-7500 x 7600, or the Reader Services Desk. Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview.

Evanston Children’s Choir Holiday Concert 2014
3 p.m.: Join Directors Gary Geiger and Monica Blacconeri as they lead the entire Evanston Children’s Choir in their most popular concert of the year, celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa in typical ECC style! Alice Millar Chapel, 1870 Sheridan Road, Evanston. Call 847-733-0814. Free.

Sunday Dinner At Nonna’s
4 p.m.: Meet Lisa Caponigri author of the bestselling cookbook, ‘Whatever Happened To Sunday Dinner” Ristorante Agostino Gustofino, 2817 N. Harlem, Chicago. Call 312-587-7587. $72.

Holiday Choral Concerts
4 p.m.: The program includes Christmas classics arranged in the English tradition, along with contemporary a cappella arrangements of carols from around the world. In addition to traditional holiday fare, original works by Peter Warlock, Kenneth Leighton, Steven Stucky, and others will be performed. Also featured will be the premiere of a new carol by Robert Applebaum. St. Luke’s Episcopal, 939 Hinman Ave., Evanston. Call 847-869-6884. $20.

“Why Chimes Rang”
5 p.m.: For children’s Christmas program, “Why Chimes Rang”, followed by a reception in the church narthex. Winnetka Covenant Church, 1200 Hibbard Road, Wilmette. Call 847-446-4300.

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**BY BRUCE INGRAM**
Film Critic

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**EXODUS: GODS AND KINGS**

*** 1/2

Rated PG-13 for violence including battle sequences and intense images
Stars: Christian Bale, Joel Edgerton, Ben Kingsley

If you’re in it for the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea, this spectacle-driven retelling of the story of Moses will probably satisfy. Just don’t expect the dramatic content of this holiday blockbuster to make an equally strong impression. Bale as Moses and Edgerton (of “Zero Dark Thirty”) as the pharaoh Ramses both give strong performances as former adoptive brothers at odds over the liberation of Egypt’s Hebrew slaves. But there’s not enough character development to turn their conflict into more than a plot device, resulting in dramatic slowdowns between infusions of Old Testament thrills.

**THE IMITATION GAME**

*** 1/2

Rated PG-13 for some sexual references, mature thematic material and historical smoking
Stars: Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley, Matthew Goode, Charles Dance

If “The Theory of Everything” whetted your appetite for genius drama, check out the sadder, darker, yet more intellectually exciting “Imitation Game,” where lives are at stake in addition to world-changing ideas. This highly enjoyable intellectual thriller features Cumberbatch at his best as English mathematician Alan Turing, who cracked an uncrackable Nazi code that shortened World War II by years and saved countless lives. He also contributed much to the development of today’s computer age in the process. Ten years later, Turing took his own life following his prosecution for the “gross indecency” of being a homosexual.

**INHERENT VICE**

*** 1/2

Rated R for drug use throughout, sexual content, graphic nudity, language and some violence
Stars: Joaquin Phoenix, Reese Witherspoon, Josh Brolin, Jena Malone

In drug-fueled 1970s Los Angeles, a private detective (Phoenix) becomes involved in a possible kidnapping plot involving the billionaire beau of an ex-girlfriend.

**TOP FIVE**

Rated R for strong sexual content, nudity, crude humor, language throughout and some drug use
Stars: Chris Rock, Gabrielle Union, Adam Sandler, Rosario Dawson

Just as he’s planning his serious acting debut, a comedian (Rock) is asked by his girlfriend to turn their wedding into a reality TV show. Rock makes his writing/directing debut with the comedy.

**THE PYRAMID**

Rated R for some horror violence and bloody images
Stars: Garsha Arristos, Joseph Beddelem, Ashley Hinshaw, James Buckley

A team of archeologists runs into a very unfriendly supernatural resident while exploring the secrets of a lost pyramid. Screenwriter Gregory Levasseur (“High Tension”) makes his directing debut with the horror.

**WILD**

*** 1/2

Rated R for sexual content, nudity, drug use and language
Stars: Reese Witherspoon, Michiel Huisman, Laura Dern

Reese Witherspoon won an Oscar for her performance in “Walk the Line” nine years ago, but that journey was relatively uneventful compared to the epic trek she takes in “Wild.” After the early death of her mother (Laura Dern, marvelous), aspiring writer Cheryl Strayed (whose memoir became an international bestseller) goes on a self-destructive binge of drugs and sex that destroys her marriage — and then attempts to get her life back on track by hiking 1,100 grueling miles of the Pacific Crest Trail. Despite her complete lack of experience, Director Jean-Marc Vallée (“Dallas Buyers’ Club”) delivers a simple, yet thoroughly satisfying tale of perseverance and reinvention.

**THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY - PART I**

*** 1/2

Rated PG-13 for intense sequences of violence and action, some disturbing images and thematic material
Stars: Jennifer Lawrence, Josh Hutcherson, Woody Harrelson, Julianne Moore

The titular Games have been upgraded to all-out, honest-to-goodness war in “Mockingjay - Part I,” making this installment the darkest and most dramatically engrossing of the series so far. Young Katniss (Oscar-winner Lawrence, still digging deep into the emotional grimness of the story) finds herself forced to serve, reluctantly, as the symbol of the revolution as the people of Panem rise up against the oppressive Capitol, though her personality-free boyfriend Peta (Hutcherson) is still a prisoner there. The action is spectacular (Katniss knows how to get maximum thrill value from an explosive arrow), and Woody Harrelson and Elizabeth Banks provide much-needed comic relief.
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The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1 (PG-13)
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The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (PG-13)
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The Hobbit Marathon in 3-D (PG-13)
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The Hobbit Marathon in IMAX 3-D (PG-13)
Mon 12:30 p.m.
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• The deadline for placing a death notice, in memoriam or card of thanks, is Monday at 5:00 pm. Photos must be submitted by Monday at 2:00pm.
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It's anybody's guess which team will win the NFC South division of the NFL in 2014, and not just because all four teams—New Orleans, Atlanta, Carolina and Tampa Bay—were playing mediocre football at best this season. Imagine the odds against this kind of parity: In the previous 12 seasons from 2002 through 2013, each of the four teams in the division finished in top three times, yet none won the division crown in consecutive years.

One final note on the 2014 baseball season and the champion San Francisco Giants, who captured the crown for the third time in five years: The Giants played a total of 10 post-season series to win those three championships, and they were the betting underdog in every single one of them. What's more, the Giants faced elimination in eight games during their three runs to the top, and their record, of course, was 8-0, while outscoring their opponents 47-11 in those games.

Even before Peyton Manning set the career mark for touchdown passes in 2014, it was little surprise that he and brother Eli held the record for most total TD passes by a brother combo in the NFL at more than 750 and counting. Any guesses which brothers are second? It's the Hasselbecks, Tim and Matt, at a little more than 200. Obviously, Peyton and father Archie hold the mark for father-son combos, followed by Eli and Archie, but who's third on the list? It's father Bob Griese and son Brian, but look out for the Lucks, father Oliver and son Andrew.
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1.290F-6(c)(3)(i1), Income tax Reg. Sec.1274-6T(a) and Revenue Ruling 96-97, and contact your tax advisor for details. Consult your tax advisor
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Hawks look for swimmers who can add depth

Royzen making his dives more difficult, learning new ones

BY MATT HARNESS

Coach Don Kura's challenge at Maine South this season will be to find swimmers who can score points behind seniors Jonathan Ramoska and Philip Wachowski.

At least right now, the Hawks aren't as deep as they were last season when they took third at the Niles North Sectional and fourth in the always-competitive Central Suburban South. The big loss was the graduation of sprinter Makai Deneve-Arnam.

Ramoska and Wachowski both swam on the 200- and 400-yard freestyle relays at state last season. In addition to the freestyle events, both also swim the backstroke, although freestyle races will be the main focus for each, according to Kura.

"They are our two most accomplished guys," Kura said. "There's a decent drop-off after that. We will see who will step up, but it will be a significant step up for some of the younger guys."

One senior Kura said he's excited about is freestyler Sam Frey, who's in the program for his fourth season.

"He's improved steadily," Kura said. "I'm curious to see where he's at in meets, though. You never really know until they swim meets, but we hope he can contribute to some of our relays."

Niles North

The only returning state qualifier for the Vikings doesn't swim. Diver Maxim Royzen placed 10th at the state meet last season, becoming the first Niles North diver to make the finals since Arsen Sarkisian took third as a senior in 2010.

"Max is a focused guy, and he definitely wants to take that next step," Niles North coach Seth Orlove said. "He's picking up right where he left off."

A year-round diver, Royzen is learning some new dives as well as adding difficulty to his existing ones, according to Orlove.

"He's really honed his craft, and he's only getting better," Orlove said.

Royzen, a sophomore, is part of a talented group of underclassmen, which includes returning sophomore swimmers Ethan Lee and Patrick Cox. Lee is a sprinter, while Cox swims the individual medley and butterfly.

Maine East

At 6-4, Mateo Kozomara always intrigued Maine East coach Peter Przekota.

Until now, Przekota said the senior hadn't really tapped into his potential.

"He came into high school without a lot of swimming experience, but he's put in the time during the off-seasons and really improved," Przekota said.

Kozomara, a backstroker, already is faster than he was at the end of last season. Przekota said he hopes Kozomara can swim the 100-yard backstroke in 57 seconds by February.

"He's much more efficient in the water," Przekota said. "He's definitely more of a swimmer now. He's thinking more about what he's doing, rather than just racing."

Kozomara will share the team spotlight with senior breaststroker Tyler Vonderheide.

"It's been fun to see Mateo and Tyler work," Przekota said. "They set great examples for our kids. They are positive influences and good reflections of Maine East wherever they go."

Notre Dame

The Dons must replace a strong group of senior leaders from last season's small squad, according to second-year coach Maureen Targosz.

But she said she believes senior Kevin Kukla and junior Travis Martin are up to the task of leading Notre Dame. Kukla is a breaststroker and Martin's main event is the IM.

Junior freestyler Thomas Wrenn is someone who Targosz said is ready to have a strong season.

Niles West

Senior Matt Lefler, senior Kohler Mohr and sophomore Freddy Orbello all are back for coach Dan Vander Jeugdt, whose Wolves were fifth in the CSL South last season.

Sophomore Jacob Bobiles is expected to contribute in his first varsity season, according to Vander Jeugdt.
AAU experience pays off for Alba Garner

Junior guard stronger, more confident after playing for Midwest Elite

BY ROB VALENTIN
Special to the Tribune, @chicagolandprep

Evanston — Maine East junior guard Janelle Alba Garner gave AAU basketball a shot when she was in fifth grade but didn’t enjoy the experience. She felt out of place and simply didn’t have much fun.

But when five seniors graduated from Maine East — leaving a team that went 20-7 last season and won the Central Suburban North championship — Alba Garner decided to give AAU ball another shot.

Hoping to improve her skills for this year, Alba Garner tried out for Midwest Elite and made a U-15 team coached by Randy Weibel.

"Playing with them was a completely different experience," Alba Garner said.

"There’s been nothing like it. I would have to guard [Fremd’s] Haley Gorecki in practice and she’s going to Duke. It’s made me so much better and adjusting to that level has helped me bring it back to Maine East."

Since Alba Garner was playing with Midwest Elite, she missed the start of Maine East’s summer league. When she returned, Blue Demons coach Karol Hanusiak noticed an immediate difference.

"We play 10 league games in the summer and when she came back for the fifth game I was like ‘Wow, look at her physical strength and confidence level,’ “ Hanusiak said. "She’s a lot stronger and a lot more decisive. She’s making better decisions and she’s attacking more."

Alba Garner is ready to show off her new skills this season and is averaging around 12 points per game.

"I do like to drive a lot but I shoot only if I’m open," she said. "I’m a pass-first guard and look to get my teammates involved before I do anything else."

Maine East, however, is off to a slow start without the arsenal it had last year. The Blue Demons dropped to 2-4 after a 65-29 loss on Dec. 2 to Evanston in a CSL crossover.

Alba Garner, who had 12 points in the loss, is trying to find the perfect balance of getting her teammates involved and taking over a game so Maine East can rack up some wins.

"You have to regulate that when you’re in the game," she said. "So I’ll start by making sure everything is working smoothly as a team. If it’s not working then we’ll change the plan. Maybe I’ll drive in more or if driving is not working I’ll kick it out to someone else. I want to integrate everyone into it but if no one is making a shot, then I’ll definitely try to take over more. If I take over the defense will step on me and I’ll get more opportunities for other people."

Teammate Maddie McTague said she is grateful for everything that Alba Garner has brought to the table.

"She’s given us a lot of knowledge that she learned from basketball camps and that’s helped a lot of the younger girls coming up," McTague said. "She’s stepping up a lot as a leader and she’s a very good basketball player. She can rebound, shoot outside and drive inside. She can do pretty much everything."

Maine East’s Janelle Alba Garner described herself as "a pass-first guard" who tries to get her teammates involved before creating opportunities for herself. ROB VALENTIN FOR CHICAGO TRIBUNE MEDIA GROUP.
Valpo’s Ehrlich leads elite O-line

BY NICK BULLOCK
Special to the Tribune, @Pioneer_Press

Anchored by Tom Ehrlich, a fifth-year senior from Niles North, the Valparaiso football team’s offensive line allowed the fewest sacks in the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision this season. Opposing defenses took down Valparaiso quarterbacks behind the line of scrimmage only five times all season. Only five other teams allowed fewer than 10.

Ehrlich and his teammates committed the sixth-fewest penalties per game (4.67) and tied for the most fourth-down conversions (21) in all the FCS.

Valparaiso struggled to a 4-8 record this season, but it finished 3-3 at home and improved on the 2013 team’s 1-10 record.

Freshman defender Ginny McGowan received some playing time for the Notre Dame women’s soccer team during its run to the third round of the 2014 NCAA Championship. The Lake Forest graduate played in the team’s 2-1 second-round victory against Texas on Nov. 21 in College Station, Texas.

The Irish fell 2-1 to Texas A&M on Nov. 23 in College Station and finished the season with a 14-6-2 record. Notre Dame was 7-2-1 in the Atlantic Coast Conference and reached the semifinal round of the ACC tournament.

McGowan played in 11 games this season and started one. She recorded five shots and one shot on goal.

Natalia Skiba, a senior from Hinsdale Central, has finished a distinguished career for the Northeastern women’s volleyball team. Her 655 digs this season were 407 more than her next closest teammate. She led the Huskies in serving aces as well, with 26. She also ranked third on the team in assists with 87.

Skiba’s 655 digs this season rank as the second most in a season in school history, behind only her own mark of 684 set last season. She holds the Northeastern all-time digs record with 2,382.

Freshman teammate Kristen Walding, from Lake Zurich, turned in a solid season for the Huskies. A setter, Walding played in all 30 of the team’s games, starting in 19. Her 878 assists led the team by a margin of 606. She also finished third on the team in digs with 200. She even took home Colonial Athletic Association Rookie of the Week honors in October.

Have a suggestion for the College Roundup? Email Nick Bullock at bullockpioneerpress@gmail.com.
Strong third quarter lifts Wolves over the Vikings

BY ZACK PEARSON
Special to the Tribune, @Zack_Pearson

SKOKIE — In the days after its loss to Highland Park, the Niles West boys basketball team talked all about its upcoming matchup at Niles North.

"We have been practicing and working hard for this game," Wolves junior guard Jojo Rios said. "We've been focused on this game and drilling it into our heads that we had to beat them."

The Wolves used a third-quarter surge on offense to pull ahead of the Vikings and earn the 74-71 win Saturday, as well as the Crosstown Classic trophy. More importantly, it helped the Wolves gain some confidence in the young season.

"We need some confidence moving forward," Niles West sophomore Octavius Parker II said. "We needed this win against a good team especially after losing to a good team like Highland Park. We have the momentum that we needed."

Rios, who scored a game-high 17 points, was one of four Wolves starters who finished with double-digit points. Parker, a transfer from Gordon Tech, finished with 16 points.

Niles North got an early spark from senior guard Danny Kim. He scored six quick points off the bench to help give the Vikings a 16-14 lead after the first quarter. Much like the first quarter, the second quarter was fast-paced with both teams going up and down the floor matching each other's pace. The Wolves grabbed a 31-30 halftime lead before starting to pull away in the third.

Senior captain Odi Audisho scored eight of his 15 points in the third quarter and he contributed to a 15-5 run that gave the Wolves a 46-35 lead with 4:27 left in the quarter. But back came the Vikings with a 7-0 run to pull within four at 48-44 with 2:11 left in the quarter.

The Vikings were led by junior guard Diandre Williams, who finished with a team-high 15 points, including eight in the third quarter. Malik Dupree and Abby George both added 14 points for the Vikings.

Junior forward Evan Hines scored 16 points for Niles West, which sealed the victory with free throws.

"They [Niles North] did a good job of pressuring, that wore us down a little bit," Wolves coach Bob Williams said. "We made a couple of mistakes at the end from their pressure. But we held on."
NILES NORTH, NILES WEST

Vikes beat rival Wolves in OT

Jones, Schaps come up big for Niles North

BY ZACK PEARSON
Special to the Tribune, @Zack_Pearson

SKOKIE — Led by Kienya Jones, the Niles North girls basketball team earned a 57-52 overtime victory over rival Niles West.

Jones finished with 16 points, including four in overtime, on Saturday at Niles North.

Despite a sloppy second half by the Vikings, they led 47-46 late in regulation after an Olivia Schaps 3-pointer. But it didn't last long as a layup from Katherine De Lara with 12.1 seconds left gave Niles West a 48-47 lead.

Schaps, a junior point guard, then split a pair of free throws to send the game into overtime.

"I thought it was one of our better finishes this year," Niles North coach Daniel Paxson said. "We talk about finishing games and I think we did a nice job of keeping our composure down the stretch and making plays."

Jaylnn Estrada finished with a team-high 15 points for the Wolves and Julia Easter added 12 points.

ABOVE: Kienya Jones shoots a free throw during Saturday's game at Niles North. Jones scored 16 points and the Vikings beat Niles West 57-52 in overtime.

TOP LEFT: Huma Mededovic goes up for a layup in Saturday's game at Niles North.

TOP RIGHT: Jaylnn Estrada attacks the basket while guarded by Alyssa Brand on Saturday.

LEFT: Alyssa Brand drives to the basket during Saturday's game against Niles West in Skokie.

Photos by NIC SUMMERS
For Chicago Tribune Media Group
Niles North girls basketball team holds on to defeat Niles West in overtime | PAGE 53
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