Aldi opens new Niles store
Location replaces shuttered store on Waukegan Road. Page 4

Customers enter the newly opened Niles Aldi location on Touhy shortly after a ribbon-cutting.

Ready for Ravinia?
Ravinia Festival unveils its lineup of pop, rock, classical, jazz and country. Page 34

Rule violation
Niles North boys basketball team forced to forfeit playoff win. Page 52
The Devonshire Teen Performers Present
The 25th Annual
Putnam County Spelling Bee

March 14 & 21 at 7 p.m.
March 15 & 22 at 3 p.m.

at the Devonshire Playhouse
4400 Greenwood St.
SkokieParks.org/devtickets.html

FOOD
A lemon soufflé

Friend's backyard harvest of Meyer lemons is distilled into a sunny curd that lifts the spirits. Page 31

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We want to hear from you! Send your letters to the editor to suburbanletters@tribpub.com. Letters should not exceed 250 words and should include your name, phone number and address (only your name and town will be published).

Tuesday, March 17
Whole Planet Foundation Benefit Wine Tasting Reception

Enjoy a flight of six wines with perfect cheese pairings and tasty small bites.
5:30 - 7:30
Your $15 donation helps provide microcredit loans to women entrepreneurs around the world.
Cash only, please.
Free Parking behind Local Goods.

RSVP online at www.lincolnwoodchamber.org
Jackie 312.961.6591 info@lincolnwoodchamber.org
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AWAKENINGS
PUTTING THE SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL ARTISTS
A Great Night of Country Music Presented by The Genesee

Thurs. April 2, 7:30 PM
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REO SPEEDWAGON

Fri. May 8, 8:00 PM
Retro 50’s Jukebox Hits by the Jersey Boys
UNDER THE STREETLAMP

Sat. April 11, 8:00 PM
Modern Pop A Cappella Group
STRAIGHT NO CHASER

Sat. May 9, 8:00 PM
Legendary Pop Singer
ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK

Sat. May 16, 7:30 PM
'Too Big To Ignore' Comedian
RALPHIE MAY

Sun. May 31, 7:30 PM
Self-Effacing Humorist
CRAIG FERGUSON

Fri. June 5, 8:00 PM
A Night of Comedy
Officer Mike from "MIKE & MOLLY"
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Enjoy 90 minutes of open bar service before the show!
CALL THE GENESEE BOX OFFICE TO ADD THE PASS TO YOUR ORDER. 847-263-6300 (TUE-FRI 12-6 PM, SAT 10 AM-2 PM)
Aldi moves Niles location to Touhy Avenue

BY IGOR STUDENKOV
Pioneer Press

The chilly weather on the morning of March 2 didn't keep curious shoppers away as Aldi officials opened the chain's newest location. In fact, the crowds were so large that the officials decided to cut the ribbon a few minutes early.

Until recently, the discount supermarket chain had its Niles location on Waukegan Road, near Jarvis Avenue. But the location was closed on March 1, and the newly built location at 6250 W. Touhy Ave. opened a day later.

Officials from Aldi's Batavia division and Niles village officials were on hand to mark the opening. After the ceremonies were completed, officials were seen helping customers and pushing carts around, while Trustee Rosemary Palicki took the opportunity to get some shopping done. And while not everybody went away completely pleased, most customers who spoke to the Niles Herald-Spectator said they liked the new location.

The new store is located on a parcel formerly occupied by the Landmark Ford dealership. Costco, which has a store in the area, purchased the lot to redevelop it. It sold a portion of the land to Aldi, using the rest to build new gas pumps. While the pumps have been operating since the fall of 2014, building a new Aldi from scratch took a few months longer.

The move has been in the works for the past few months. Scott Patton, vice president of Aldi's Batavia division, said that the chain wanted to move to a busier, more visible location.

"It's near a stoplight on Touhy, and we got excellent visibility from the road," he said.

The new location has other advantages. It is located within walking distance of the Leaning Tower of Niles and the Leaning Tower YMCA. The store has a larger parking lot and more public transit connections - Pace bus route 290, CTA route 85A and Niles Free Bus routes 411 and 413 stop near the new location.

Patton also said that the new location offered more space.

"We have products [in the new location] that we couldn't carry in the old store," he said. "We didn't have a place to put them, so our customers didn't know what they were missing."

That included the expanded produce section, a larger wine selection and healthier food.

The ribbon-cutting was originally scheduled for 9 a.m. But by 8:45 a.m., the line already stretched along the wall, and the officials decided to do the opening earlier. Ten minutes later, customers kept coming.

Bonnie Davidson, of Niles, was one of the customers waiting in line. She said she'd never been to an Aldi before and was curious to see what the store was like.

"I'm glad to see it open," she said.

Inside, employees handed out samples of products like cheese and chocolates, while kids got balloons. The first 100 customers got $100 store gift cards. All customers were invited to submit their names for a prize drawing that would earn them discounts on produce.

Palicki was the only Village Board member to attend the opening.

"We are delighted to see the store open, and we are delighted to have it on Touhy Avenue," she said.

After the ribbon-cutting was completed, she and her husband, Len Palicki, took the opportunity to do some shopping. The trustee later said she liked the customer service and the selection of products.

But not everybody who came to the store was entirely pleased. Jim Dubrock, of Park Ridge, said he usually shops at an Aldi store farther west, but he decided to check out the new Niles location out of curiosity. As he headed out the door, he said that he'd rather stick to his usual location.

"It was very difficult to navigate," said Dubrock. "I've asked where things are so many times. I'm going back to my usual store."

Igor Studenkov is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Trustee Rosemary Palicki and her husband, Len Palicki, finish their shopping in the new Touhy Avenue Aldi store.
Cause unknown for duplex fire in Maine Township

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON
Pioneer Press

The cause of a fire that broke out inside a duplex in unincorporated Maine Township is under investigation.

Firefighters were called to 9254 Aspen Drive, just north of Church Street, around 10:40 p.m., March 5, after a resident in the adjoining home reported smelling smoke and believed it was coming from next door, said Richard Dobrowski, chief of the North Maine Fire Department.

The fire was discovered on the first floor in a rear room of the two-story residence. It was under control within 12 minutes of the fire department's arrival, Dobrowski said.

No one was inside the residence at the time the fire occurred and there were no injuries, the chief said. The cause remains under investigation, he said.

Fire and smoke damage was reported inside two, first-floor rooms, though no estimates of the damage were available from the fire department.

North Maine firefighters received assistance from the fire departments of Park Ridge, Niles, Des Plaines and Glenview.

State representative, Laura Fine during a meeting at the Wilmette Public Library, Feb. 24, 2015.

Rep. Fine co-sponsors bill to reduce LLC fees

BY TODD SHIELDS
Pioneer Press

State Rep. Laura Fine, D-Glenview, is supporting legislation to lower fees for businesses forming limited liability companies.

She said small and independently owned businesses employ more than 98 percent of Illinois residents, adding businesses needed limited liability company protection.

Limited liability companies are protected against creditors claiming the personal assets of business owners, such as homes or vehicles.

Fine is co-sponsoring House Bill 325 to reduce the fees from $500 to $150.

"This needs to done and Illinois' high LLC fees are just another road block. I've found this quite often in my district," Fine said.

Her 17th District covers Evanston, Glenview, Golf, Morton Grove, Northbrook, Northfield, Skokie and Wilmette.

"Helping business owners establish their own LLC, to better protect themselves and the jobs they create, should be a priority," she said.

"Over the coming months, the Legislature must address the fiscal crisis facing our state," Fine added.

"Improving the business climate is a critical component to reviving Illinois' economy, and this legislation will help make our state friendlier to job creators.

Shalom Klein, founder and chairman of Skokie-based Jewish B2B Networking, is an advocate for lowering LLC fees.

"I would put reducing them at very high on a priority list. The fee here in Illinois puts the state in a clear disadvantage with other states," he said, adding Illinois B2B Networking has 25,000 members in Illinois, mostly in the Chicago area.

The network was formed in 2010.

Klein said LLC fees in Delaware, for example, are only about $90.

"Illinois is a very good place for small business owners because of good transportation, but especially because the people here are very willing to help others," he said. "It's the people in Illinois, but we need to be more competitive."
Police chiefs await legislation on officer body cameras

**By Jennifer Johnson**
Pioneer Press

As some police departments begin eyeing the use of officer body cameras, the chiefs of police of Park Ridge and Niles are a bit more hesitant to fully embrace the new technology immediately.

For Park Ridge Police Chief Frank Kaminski, establishing clear legal guidelines on the use of such cameras must come before any widespread usage occurs.

"I think body cameras will be the equipment officers will have in the future, but I would like to wait to have them installed," Kaminski said. "I believe we need to establish and costs determined.

"It may be a thing of the future, but right now it's not a priority," he said.

McEnery focused on the potential cost of the cameras — particularly related to the storage of what could quickly amount to thousands of hours of video.

"From what I understand, it's quite expensive at this point," he said. "We'd have to review it a little bit more before we make a decision." But both Kaminski and McEnery believe cameras can be beneficial to their respective police departments. Both referenced the current use of squad car dashboard cameras and how they are beneficial when complaints regarding an officer's conduct during traffic stops are made.

"I think this is good for law enforcement," Kaminski said. "With traffic stops, when we get a complaint we go right to that camera and it validates what the officer did 99.9 percent of the time."

The added check and balance to show what the "I'm all for technology to improve accountability for the people working in public safety," he said. "But, I'm very concerned if [body camera] legislation would impose an unfunded mandate on municipalities right now."

Rep. Marty Moylan (D-Des Plaines) said if the bill legislatively body cameras comes up for a vote, he will support it.

"I think it protects both the individual and the police officers against charges that are false," he said. "It also protects the individual because there would be a recording of what was actually happening."

Moylan added that he would like to see the results of the Chicago Police Department's pilot program as well. Chicago police officers are testing out body cameras in some areas of the city. The devices they use are clipped to their vests and can be activated with the click of a button.

Officers are instructed to record just about all their interactions with citizens from start to finish even if the citizen doesn't want to be recorded.

**Contributing:** Jeremy Gorner Chicago Tribune

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**Suburbs try new approach in O'Hare jet noise battle**

**By Jon Hilkevitch**
Tribune reporter

A suburban group that, beginning in the early 1980s, led the fight against new runways at O'Hare International Airport is launching a new, non-confrontational strategy to address jet noise, officials said Friday.

The Suburban O'Hare Commission, consisting of 10 suburbs and DuPage County, has signed two contracts totaling $265,000 to hire nationally recognized aviation experts to explore solutions to reduce the effects of airplane noise on residential areas around O'Hare.

The commission's goal is no longer to fight the City of Chicago on its plans to greatly increase flights at O'Hare, but instead to collect the most accurate technical information available about air traffic routings, airplane operations, noise measurement and noise abatement efforts to make a sound argument to bring about relief in affected communities, officials said.

"We admit we lost the fight against O'Hare expansion," Craig Johnson, commission chairman and Elk Grove mayor, said. "What we are trying to do now is make the airport safer." The consultants hired by the commission include JDA Aviation Technology Solutions and Lockridge Grindal Nauen Aviation, both based in Washington. Experts on the team include former high-level officials in the Federal Aviation Administration and acoustic scientists.

The scope of the work will include studying the impact of airplane noise on residential areas that includes homes outside of the area that the FAA defines as being most affected by jet noise. Under current standards, the FAA averages noise over a 24-hour period. Homes in areas in which the daily average is less than 65 decibels are not eligible for federally funded sound insulation.

The commission's experts will also seek to identify operational changes that might be made at O'Hare to reduce noise without reducing safety, officials said. A common explanation from the airlines and airport officials is that "fly quiet" procedures cannot be used under some wind conditions and when plane takeoff weights exceed certain thresholds.

The experts are expected to submit recommendations to the commission by fall, Johnson said.

"Before we meet with Chicago and the FAA, we need to have a game plan that stands up to scrutiny," he said. "That's when we can sit down on a level playing field and get some true solutions for everybody."

Johnson said he and fellow commission members are not discouraged by the fact that Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago aviation officials have refused to spread out jet noise by using more runways at night or taking other steps to mitigate the problem, even in the face of the record number of noise complaints filed with the city since a new O'Hare runway opened in October 2013.

"I think City Hall won't be able to ignore us if we have a big enough voice," Johnson said.

That voice includes Chicagolans on the northwest side who live under new flight paths and the members of the Suburban O'Hare Commission — Addison, Bensenville, DuPage County, Elk Grove Village, Egon Township, Elmhurst, Hanover Park, Itasca, Roselle, Schiller Park and Wood Dale.

"Rahm got a little wake-up call the other day," he added, referring to the Feb. 24 mayoral election in Chicago.

The team of aviation experts hired by the commission will be introduced at a meeting set for 7 p.m. April 1 at Village Hall, 901 Wellington Ave, Elk Grove Village.
Couple targeted in tax-season scam; police describe warning signs

Pam DeFiglio
Pioneer Press

When a Morton Grove woman answered her phone recently, a caller claiming to be with the IRS tax fraud division began talking about her family’s 2008-2012 tax evasion and tax fraud.

The woman felt something was amiss because her husband had a stroke in 2005 and wasn’t working in 2008-2012. The caller sounded threatening, citing a case number, stating her husband owed $3,000 and making threats about losing their home and being on the hook for nearly $100,000.

Tabor said, “The IRS is never going to call demanding immediate payment and threatening arrest. They always contact you first by a letter in postal mail, and give you an opportunity to appeal the amount.”

While the IRS scam is prevalent now, many types of scammers try to prey on people throughout the year, Tabor said. One of the common hallmarks is that they demand payment in the form of a Green Dot card, which is a type of cash card available at local stores, or a Western Union payment. Some even ask you to give the money to an agent of theirs who will come to your house.

That happened recently to a Niles woman, who lost thousands of dollars. On Feb. 12, she received a phone call from a Polish-speaking man who identified himself as her nephew and asked to borrow $10,000 for his business. She withdrew $7,500 from her bank, even though a teller warned her it might be a scam, and gave it to a messenger who arrived at her home. Only later, when she phoned her nephew in Poland and he told her he had never called to ask for money, did she realize she had been tricked.

“We call that the grandparents’ scam,” Tabor said. “They might call up and say, ‘it’s me,’ or ‘I’m your favorite grandson.’ Then the grandparent asks, ‘Is that you, Jeff?’ or whatever the grandson’s name is. And he answers, ‘Yes, Grandma, it’s Jeff.’ And now he’s got the grandson’s name.”

Almost always, these scammers ask the grandparent to buy a Green Dot card, and they warn the grandparent not to tell their parent, lest they get in trouble.

Tabor also warned of the lottery scam, in which scammers announce you’ve won a great deal of money but have to pay taxes on it before you can claim it — naturally, with a Green Dot card.

“Legitimate contests are never going to ask for money up front,” he said.

Tabor told seniors, especially, to be wary of anyone who comes to their door and pretends to be a village inspector or handyman and tells them they need to show them a problem with their water connection or some other thing in their homes. When the first scammer takes the senior down to the basement to show him or her the “problem,” a second scammer enters through the unlocked door and cases the house for cash, jewelry and electronics.

If an unknown person knocks at your door, talk through a window or through a locked screen door, Tabor advises. You do want to let them know you’re home, but don’t let them in. Do call the police to advise them of the incident, he said.

Tabor and fellow Morton Grove police officer Gina Listz say they have spoken with managers of local stores that sell Green Dot cards and asked them to make their cashiers aware that they are often used in scams.

The officers have put up warnings on the Police Department’s Facebook page and will give a presentation on avoiding scams at 11:45 a.m. April 14 at the Morton Grove Civic Center, 6140 Dempster Street, Morton Grove. They will also discuss how to prevent identity theft.

Tabor said he’s aware that many of the crimes, such as the distraction burglaries, spring from people’s natural inclination to be friendly.

“But you have to be a little bit suspicious these days,” he said.

Tabor can be reached at (847) 663-3804 with questions or for more information.

Pam DeFiglio is freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
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 such a determination.

**DRUG POSSESSION**
- Leonard Ackerman, 60, of the 100 block of Southwind Circle, Schaumburg, was charged with possession of marijuana on Feb. 28 following a traffic stop on the 7000 block of Touhy Avenue. An officer detected an odor of marijuana inside the vehicle and a bag containing 14 grams of suspected marijuana was located, police said. Ackerman has a March 27 court date.

**DECEPTIVE PRACTICE**
- Alisha Sargent, 23, of the 10600 block of South Oglesby, Chicago, was charged with deceptive practice on March 1 after she allegedly used a fraudulent prescription in an attempt to obtain narcotic painkillers from a pharmacy on the 9000 block of Golf Road. According to police, the pharmacist became suspicious because the prescription paper “seemed unusually worn” and that Sargent lived unusually far south side, very far from Niles. When the pharmacist contacted the doctor whose name was on the prescription, the doctor reportedly said he did not know Sargent and did not prescribe her any medication. She has a March 27 court date.

**RETAIL THEFT**
- Alexander Pajak, 42, of the 1800 block of East Wike Avenue, Des Plaines, was charged with felony retail theft on Feb. 27. According to police, Pajak was accused of placing two bottles of vodka in his pants and one up the sleeve of his coat before exiting a store on the 8900 block of Greenwood Avenue. The vodka was valued at $56. He has a March 17 court date.
- Maryanne Javier, 42, of the 0-100 block of Standish Lane, Schaumburg, was charged with felony retail theft on March 3 after she allegedly stole $310 worth of cosmetics from a store inside Golf Mill Shopping Center. She has a March 27 court date.

**DUI**
- Emmanuel Joseph, 45, of the 7900 block of Arcadia Avenue, Morton Grove, was charged with driving under the influence on Feb. 28 following a traffic stop at Milwaukee Avenue and Keeney Street at 8:24 p.m. He has a March 27 court date.

**HARASSMENT**
- A 20-year-old Niles woman told police on March 4 that nude photographs of her had been posted without her permission on a social media site. When a police officer contacted one of the individuals suspected of posting the photos, the woman reportedly swore at the officer and said she was “high and drunk” and could not speak at the moment, as she was driving. When a second suspect was contacted by police, she also allegedly swore at the officer upon answering the phone. When the officer asked her if she would remove the photographs from her social media page, the woman allegedly said she would “try” and hung up.

**CITIZEN ASSIST**
- A man was found asleep, face-down on the floor in front of a toilet inside a store on the 8200 block of Golf Road on March 1. An employee told police that the man had been inside the restroom for two hours, though he had checked on him a few times. When woken, the 32-year-old man reportedly told police that he had fallen asleep or fell down. Police said it appeared the man might have been homeless and he was walked out of the store by officers.

**THEFT**
- A knife set was stolen March 1 from a vehicle parked March 1 in a parking lot on the 9700 block of Greenwood Avenue.
- A man allegedly stole a charging device valued at $39.88 from a store on the 5600 block of Touhy Avenue on March 3.

**PROPERTY DAMAGE**
- A man told police that he suspected three children of throwing rocks at his 2014 BMW as he drove by them on the 7800 block of Caldwell Avenue on the morning of March 1. The three individuals ran across the street and were located in the rear of a parking lot, but the driver declined to pursue any police action, police said. The children's mother was called to pick them up.
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OCC's health center offers realistic training

BY JON DAVIS
Special to the Tribune

The Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center stands out on Oakton Community College's campus, a clear and teal glass rectangle atop a red stone base, taller than its neighbors.

The architectural statement reinforces what the building's namesake says is part of OCC's general commitment to green stewardship - in the edifice and the coursework inside.

The Lee Center hosts classes in biology, chemistry, earth science, medical laboratory technology, nursing, physical therapist assistance, and physics. Science labs offer some of the only undergraduate research training facilities in community colleges nationwide, officials say, and a simulated hospital ward gives nursing students a realistic dose of what's to come.

The center celebrated an official opening last week with between 175 and 200 guests witnessing Lee snip a ceremonial ribbon, but the center has been used by students and faculty since Jan. 20.

"Even as we shape our families at home, even as we shape our communities at work, we are shaped by them in turn," Lee said before citing Winston Churchill's comment, "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.

"I so look forward to this beautiful space shaping many lives and tomorrows," she said.

The three-story, 93,000-square-foot structure is the centerpiece of OCC's five-year facilities master plan approved in 2010, and the first new building erected at the Des Plaines campus since 2000.

Still pending in that $68.5 million plan is construction of a student meeting center. Already completed are an enrollment center, general classroom upgrades and parking lot work that included installation of drainage bio-swales.

Tours of the center highlighted its green construction, from use of recycled materials and natural lighting to energy-efficient LED fixtures with motion sensors to automatically adjust lighting; water bottle refill stations for students and faculty using their own bottles, low-flush toilets and elevators that don't use oil as a lubricant.

The Lee Center was designed to the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards and qualifies for Gold status, said architect Michael Lundeen, associate director of higher education at Legat Architects.

A programmable dummy patient awaits nursing students in the hospital simulation ward at Oakton Community College's new Margaret Burke Lee Science and Health Careers Center.

An entire simulated hospital suite - replete with beds in common and private rooms - will let nursing and other medical profession students practice with sensory dummies that can be programmed to respond as patients with various illnesses would.

Mary Meyer, RN, manager of nursing professional development and research at Glenbrook Hospital, said the "very realistic" suite will help students get past the inevitable jitters that come with first exposure to an actual hospital environment. Such facilities help students because patient reactions and unexpected developments can be simulated and analyzed before they ever enter the sink-or-swim environment of a hospital, she said.

"They're better prepared when they come to clinical settings," Meyer said. "They're expected to jump right in and practice what they've learned, and this will help them do that."

Lee is retiring in June after 20 years at the helm of OCC (and 10 years as vice president). A search for her replacement is underway.

Naming the building is "in honor of all the things she's done and who she is," said William Stafford, chairman of OCC's board of trustees. "She has left an indelible mark on our facilities."

Blood drive canceled after students miss class time

BY NATALIE HAYES
Pioneer Press

A group of honor students at Niles West High School are crying foul after administrators canceled a bi-annual blood drive planned that helps bring in college scholarship money.

Niles West's National Honor Society planned to host its second in-school blood drive of the school year on Feb. 25, but administrators banned it at the last minute after problems arose during a similar event at Niles North last week.

The blood drive at Niles West was called off after too many students missed class time waiting in long lines to donate during Niles North's blood drive, according to Jim Szczepaniak, community relations director for the school district.

"The schools are all for blood drives, but we don't want to be doing any activity that will take kids out of class," Szczepaniak said. "There were a lot of issues and challenges [at the Niles North blood drive] and one was that a lot of kids spent time waiting in line and never got to donate blood."

Sponsored by student philanthropic group "Dance Marathon" and the school's National Honor Society organizations, the biannual drives have raised about 100 pints of blood per event in years past.

About 90 students volunteered to give blood during the most recent blood drive at Niles West in December - an amount that serves roughly 300 people in need of blood, according to Quinn Nguyen, a Niles West senior who volunteers for the Dance Marathon charity.

Blood bank Lifesource awards schools that organize blood drives with a $1,000 college scholarship each year, and Nguyen said the cancellation of the event will cause the school to miss out on the scholarship offering this year.

Szczepaniak said administrators were open to the possibility of moving the blood drives to weekends or after school, but no plans to reschedule have been made yet.

Natalie Hayes is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Full-day kindergarten earns support from D64 candidates

**BY JENNIFER JOHNSON**
Pioneer Press

It's been a year since parents and community members of Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 were surveyed on the topic of full-day kindergarten and now candidates running for the school board on April 7 are weighing in.

The four men vying for three four-year terms on the board each expressed support for an all-day kindergarten program when responding to a question from the Park Ridge Herald-Advocate. But they differed when it came to implementation, largely due to the financial aspect of such a change.

Athan “Tom” Sotos and Mark Eggemann suggested the district start by offering an optional full-day kindergarten class for those who want it, rather than a mandatory, districtwide program. Both referenced the expense that changing kindergarten will have on the district.

“District 64 already has a fully committed budget and taxpayers are already burdened with additional increases for mandatory spending,” Eggemann said. “To balance the interests of everyone involved, I would suggest we continue the district’s half-day program, but offer an optional full-day program for a fee to those families who may want to take advantage of such an enhanced program.”

Sotos, saying his personal belief was that longer kindergarten would be a benefit to children, called for additional research to be conducted while an optional full-day program is offered. He also said he believed that parents should not pay a fee for it.

“I would like to see some studies of other districts to see if implementing full-day programs actually made a difference academically when students reached third grade and up,” he said. “I think it’s definitely something the district should consider and continue to explore.”

Greg Bublitz, a former special education teacher who currently oversees East Maine School District 63’s special services programs, acknowledged the financial investment of implementing all-day kindergarten, but said he supports the movement toward it.

“Academic research is quite clear that early literacy education, implemented with integrity, increases the later growth of students and their access to reading and math,” he said. “While it is a significant investment, in the long run the return on the investment is high considering less need for remediation in later grades and increased academic growth for all students.”

Anthony Borrelli, who currently serves as president of the District 64 Board of Education, said full-day kindergarten is the norm for the majority of school districts in Illinois.

“We should look forward to having this program in our district,” he said. “However, to implement this program, one has to consider space to hold the classes and money to hire double the current number of kindergarten teachers.”

Borrelli added that the district’s facility master plan, which is currently in the works, must be completed to answer the space needs issue, while the school board itself will be charged with determining how to best pay the additional staffing costs.

Superintendent Laurie Heinz, who joined District 64 last summer, said there have been no recent considerations regarding full-day kindergarten and no recommendations from the current board. The facility master plan and a five-year strategic plan will “be essential before such a large-scale decision can be made within District 64,” Heinz said.

In March 2014, the school board reviewed results of a community survey answered by 1,642 people, 60 percent of them with children in District 64. Respondents were asked about various scenarios regarding full-day kindergarten, with 86 percent of parents with children in preschool expressing support for a free program at their neighborhood school. Of all respondents, 79 percent supported this option.

Support dropped for a scenario in which full-day kindergarten was offered to all children but at only one school building. Forty-one percent of parents of preschool children expressed interest. A tuition option was supported by just 32 percent of all respondents and 35 percent of parents of preschool children.

At the time, the District 64 school board opted not to pursue additional consideration of full-day kindergarten, deciding instead to hold off on a decision until the new superintendent — Heinz — was at the helm.

Some parents last year had spoken up at school board meetings, urging the district to start a full-day kindergarten program so their own children could be a part of it.
Capturing the Holocaust through Soviet Jewish eyes

By Mike Isaacs

The black-and-white photos in the Illinois Holocaust Museum's new traveling exhibition capture frozen, indelible moments of World War II and the Holocaust, but mostly through an unfamiliar set of lenses.

Russian Jewish photographers took these powerful shots, many of them so carefully and impeccably rendered that their impact stands the test of time. The photos graphically illustrate the sheer devastation and brutality of Germany's rabid aggression inside the former Soviet Union along with the liberation of the camps and ultimate triumphant victory - even if they were not widely circulated in America at the time.

"Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust," now on display through Sept. 7 at the museum, is based on an eye-opening, award-winning book of photographs by curator David Shneer.

"Soviet Jewish Eyes" shows us that by looking through the camera lenses of liberator-photographers in the Soviet Union, we see another chilling image of the Holocaust - one made up of prosaic, intimate landscapes and emptiness that genocide leaves behind," Shneer said.

It's difficult to wrap one's mind around the estimate of 26 million Soviet Jews killed during the war. To put this in some statistical perspective, Poland lost an estimated 5.6 million and the United States an estimated 420,000.

But when you see a stark photo of a barren field, the weather-unsparingly brittle and cold, dead Jewish men lying motionless after a massacre, women grieving over or near their lifeless bodies, the solemnity and tragedy of events now seven decades old still take hold; they still feel immediate and palpable.

The works do not necessarily reflect impartial photojournalism; some images had to have been staged, others their compositions altered to heighten their power.

Yet, if some of these photographs are better described as propaganda, that doesn't mean they distort a larger truth. The goal in their collective creation was not only to raise awareness about what could never have been fully comprehensible without them, but also to rally and unite a country fighting for its very survival.

Thoughtfully laid out in the museum's basement exhibition space are more than 60 photographs. They span June 22, 1941, to May 8, 1945, from the days before the brutal war waged between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union to the liberation of the camps in Poland and Victory Day.

Large-scale, dramatic prints in which art and photojournalism mix are seen among intimate-scaled vintage prints. Ancillary encasements of artifacts, including some new from its own permanent collection, only add resonance to the photo display, which winds its way through themed sections. The museum has also selected Russian music, most of it classical, to play softly and somberly during a viewer's journey through "Through Soviet Jewish Eyes."

In his book, Shneer reminds readers that photos documenting the brutality imposed by Nazi Germany did not widely circulate in the United States until several years later. He views this story of the emergence of photography in the Soviet Union - especially during such a critically historical time - as a profoundly Jewish one.

"Soviet Jews were some of the most important builders of the profession of Soviet photography - as avant gardists, state photographers and photojournalists," he writes. "Many Soviet Jews created the visual record of the "building of socialism" under Stalin and then, as liberators, documented and bore witness to its violent destruction during the war and the Holocaust."

The most prolific of the photographers - Evgenii Khaldei, Georgii Zelma and Dmitrii Baltermants - are hardly household names in the United States, still, their skill and value in documenting Germany's violent aggression into the former Soviet Union are undeniable.

"As is their bravery. Some of the photos, ones that clearly have not been staged, are up close with men fighting the war. They manage to freeze forever moments of danger and movement - a few troops hunker down in a crevice as a large tank rolls overhead, for example."

"All these photographs were in the biggest journals and newspapers at the time," said Arielle Weininger, museum chief curator of collections and exhibitions.

They were intended to be seen by many, to stir the populace back home as Russian cities and towns were damaged and destroyed during the vicious German siege.

The dozens of photos in the exhibition offer yet another angle on World War II and Holocaust history.

"These photographers took aesthetically arresting war images and also were the first to document Nazi atrocity sites, three years before better known western photographers such as Margaret Bourke-White and Lee Miller chronicled the liberation of concentration camps in Germany," the opening panel reads.

Although the Illinois Holocaust Museum isn't the first stop for "Soviet Jewish Eyes," it is its first showing in the Midwest, "Through Soviet Jewish Eyes" put on display unforgettable World War II and Holocaust photos from the former Soviet Union, now on display.

Along with historical photographs, the exhibit also has dual identity, but for people of all backgrounds to recognize the efforts and extend gratitude to those who fought so valiantly," said Michael Polsky, presenting sponsor of the exhibition.

Shewing for the first time in the Midwest, "Through Soviet Jewish Eyes" puts on display unforgettable World War II and Holocaust photos from the former Soviet Union, now on display.

"This exhibition, which presents the Soviet Jewish experience of the Holocaust, is a unique opportunity not only for our large Russian speaking Jewish population to explore their
D-207 prepares to adopt transgender student policies

**IGOR STUDENKOV**
Pioneer Press

The Maine Township High School District 207 is expected to adopt a new set of procedures dealing with transgender and gender nonconforming students.

During the March 2 meeting, the district Board of Education held a first reading for the proposed procedure. It would create stronger, more specific language to protect transgender students from discrimination, harassment and bullying. It also set the framework for making accommodations for transgender students.

The board members didn't make many comments during the first reading. It will take a final vote on whether to adopt the new procedures during the next meeting, which is currently scheduled for April 13.

David Beery, the district's director of communications, said that in order to protect students' privacy, D-207 doesn't keep track of how many of its students are transgender and gender nonconforming. The district already has a nondiscrimination policy in place, and transgender students are already included under that. The idea for creating procedures that specifically deal with transgender students came in response to a recommendation from the Illinois Association of School Boards.

"The proposed administrative procedure for transgender or gender nonconforming students is intended to complement and support our nondiscrimination policy, to further ensure that all District 207 students have equal access to a safe and nonhostile learning environment," Beery said. "This has been a point of discussion for a while now among suburban school districts."

The current district policies prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of sexual orientation. The proposed procedures would specifically prohibit bullying and harassment of students based on sexual orientation, gender identity and association with LGBTQ students. The procedure would also extend to bullying and harassment based on perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

The procedure would also require the district to ensure that transgender students get proper accommodations. The exact nature of those accommodations would be determined on case-by-case basis, but the procedure lays out a list of some of the issues to be addressed. It includes ensuring that students are addressed using their preferred names and pronouns, changing school records to reflect their gender identity, ensuring that students would be able to access bathrooms, locker rooms and other gender-segregated areas, addressing any dress code related issues and protecting student confidentiality.

The accommodations would be developed by the principal of the school the student attends, the school's complaint manager and the student's parents or guardians, with input from the students themselves.

The district would allow transgender students to play sports, provided their participation is approved by the Illinois High School Association (IHSA). Under IHSA procedures, the school must present legal and medical documentation showing that the student transitioned, among other legal documents. IHSA would then review the information and consult with medical professionals to determine whether the student would participate.

"Determining appropriate accommodations is difficult because school officials must balance the rights of transgender or gender nonconforming students to freedom from discrimination and freedom of expression with the rights of other students to freedom for religion and expression," the procedure states.

A board attorney will be involved in setting student accommodations, and will be available to advise staff on any issues that might arise when the policy is implemented.

The procedure would call for staff to receive training in regards to dealing with transgender-related issues, the best ways to accommodate transgender students, ways to communicate with parents and other students about any issues that might arise and best strategies for dealing with bullying and harassment of transgender and gender nonconforming students.

Igor Studenkov is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Almost 71 years ago, Leonard Goldstein stormed a Normandy beach during the D-Day invasion. On Saturday, the 100-year-old veteran received the Legion of Honor from the French government for his bravery.

Goldstein, who was born in Chicago and raised his family in Skokie, was one of many soldiers who fought to liberate France during that battle that changed the course of history.

Vincent Floreani, the French consul general in Chicago, pinned the medal to Goldstein's chest after a ceremony at Alden Estates in Barrington where he thanked Goldstein and all the American soldiers who were ready to sacrifice their lives for France and Western Europe during World War II.

"Many did not return, but they are in our hearts and fortunately, Mr. Goldstein, you are among us to help us remember," Floreani said.

The Legion of Honor was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 and is the "highest honor" the French can bestow.

Goldstein thanked his fellow veterans, the audience and the people of France.

"Our country and your country will be friends forever," Goldstein said. "That's my wish."

Goldstein served as a riflemen in the 4th Infantry Division, also known as the Ivy Division or the Iron Horse, Floreani said. While landing at Normandy on June 6, 1944, Goldstein provided cover for disembarking troops. He was injured a few days later, on June 14, during an attack in the middle of the night and was sent to a hospital in England to recover, Floreani said. Goldstein received a Purple Heart.

In England, Goldstein ended his service as a driver, Floreani said. Goldstein's daughter, Janet Noble, said the honor carried deep meaning for him and his family.

"It wasn't until he got older that, with my son, he would sit and talk with him about what took place in the war," Noble said.

"This has been his reason for being here, staying alive, waiting for this," she said. "I know that sounds odd to say that, but he was holding on to receive this. This is the best I've seen him look in weeks. It's great."

Over the years, Goldstein would talk about the war sparingly, mostly to people from the local Veterans of Foreign Wars, she said. He wasn't one to regale others with his war stories, Noble said.

"It wasn't until he got older, that, with my son, he would sit and talk with him about what took place in the war," Noble said.

When Frank Merkendorfer, the 81-year-old Post Commander of VFW #3579, congratulated him on his honor, Goldstein returned the kind words.

"I couldn't think of anything nicer than having you gentlemen represent me," Goldstein said.

Earlier in the day, one veteran asked Goldstein his age and expressed awe when told the answer.

"This is my life. I waited a long time for this honor to be bestowed upon me."

Leonard Goldstein, WWII veteran

"Wow," he said, with a chuckle. "You're 100 years old. I'm only 92. I'm a youngster!"

Longtime neighbors Jeanne Pepper, 79, and her husband, Dean, came to show their support. The Peppers were friends of Goldstein and his wife of more than 60 years, Sylvia, who has passed.

Jeanne Peppers said the Goldsteins were "fun neighbors" who would often go dancing together. Goldstein remained agile into his advanced years, she said, climbing on the roof to get leaves out of the gutter.

As the medal ceremony drew to a close, Goldstein said he was overwhelmed by the honor and couldn't describe his feelings.

"This is my life," he said. "I waited a long time for this honor to be bestowed upon me."

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How Evanston's mayor got her Twitter vibe

BY BOB SEIDENBERG
Pioneer Press

A relative newcomer to the Twitter universe, Evanston Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl is making up ground fast.

The mayor, who acknowledged she has grappled with mastering social media, made a splash when she took to Twitter earlier this week after learning that Evanston had been portrayed for its conservatism on the CBS drama, “The Good Wife.”

The mayor received a phone call from her daughter, Kathy, after Sunday's episode. “You wouldn't believe what they just said about Evanston,” the mayor related her daughter as saying.

Tisdahl then watched the segment that featured a plot line in which robocalls were being sent to Evanston phone numbers to depict an opponent of character Alicia Florrick as pro-gay rights.

The move was engineered to play off the supposed conservatism of Evanston voters and drive them into Florrick's camp. The city which even local Democrats affectionately refer to as the “People's Republic of Evanston” regularly produces boxcar totals for U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky and other candidates carrying the progressive banner.

Tisdahl, a longtime supporter of liberal causes, tweeted out: “Evanston is not the conservative place ref in Sunday episode. We welcome all, even uninformed TV writers. #TheGoodWife”

Tisdahl was asked last week what prompted her to make the tweet. She had just finished hosting a “Twitter Town Meeting,” another foray into the social media world.

“I was genuinely upset they would say that,” she said. “You could accuse me or Evanston of lots of things,” the mayor said. “What was upsetting was “we're such an inclusive, diverse, wonderful community — the idea we would be portrayed as not welcoming people,” she thought had to be answered.

The mayor had made an uphill journey to Sunday's tweet. She has only been using her current Twitter handle @EvanstonMayor for a short time, dating back to after the U.S. Conference of Mayor’s winter meeting in January.

The mayor served on a panel at the conference, at which Evanston was awarded first prize for its Summer Youth Job Employment program, which Tisdahl has championed.

During a panel discussion at the conference, some of the mayor’s comments about the program were retweeted from a Twitter handle, playing off a fake handle like “Lizzy Tizzie,” and probably the work of some fainthearted students.

“I called it to her attention and said perhaps that's not the best thing,” City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz said on Friday when asked about the chain of events.

Meanwhile it made sense to fix up the mayor with a real account, he said.

The city has been waging a lighthearted campaign to finish on top of a social media campaign part of the World Wildlife Fund's “We Love Cities” challenge, where the mayor could naturally play a leading role on Twitter.

On March 5, the mayor was scheduled to convene her first Twitter Town Meeting, responding to 40-plus online questions in Twitter's format of 140 characters or less.

So on March 1, after receiving the call from her daughter about the “The Good Wife” comment, the mayor talked with the city manager, known for his tech savviness, about possible options.

“I said, 'Do you want to write a letter to the producers?' She said, 'No.' I said 'What about a Tweet?' She said, 'Hmm, that's interesting.' She composed it, we put it up, and that got some attention.'

Once the mayor's tweet of displeasure was publicized in the Chicago Tribune, other twitter users began retweeting it — one of the retweets (in Spanish) landing on the Facebook page of a “Good Wife” fan club in Brazil, she discovered.

“I've gone global,” an amused mayor said March 5 about her newborn social media power.

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**School wants parents to rein in St. Pat’s revelers**

I received an e-mail from the University of Illinois today asking for my help in conveying to my student the expectations and proper behavior regarding something called “Unofficial St. Patrick’s Day.”

That’s an event not sanctioned by the school, but one where U of I students apparently drink to excess, damage property, get sick and pass out and other stuff like that.

Never mind that my student graduated in 2012. I still like to get the U of I e-mail alerts so I know when there’s an armed robbery or abduction or something like that on campus.

This is the first e-mail I can recall about “Unofficial St. Patrick’s Day.” Of course I found it interesting that the university is asking us parents for help on this one.

Typically, when we parents ask for help, such as asking to talk to a teacher about student grades, or asking housing about roommate assignments, we’re told basically to get lost. You know: your kid is an adult now, it’s none of your business, etc. “Helicopter parents” they derisively call us.

But now they want us to intervene because our little adults, who we’ve worked to protect all their precious lives, use St. Patrick’s Day to go wild.

Which raises the question: Have we done too much protecting?

That’s a question worth asking in light of another incident in the news last week — the plight of the parents from Maryland who were found responsible for “unsubstantiated” child neglect for letting their two young children walk home alone from a neighborhood park.

The parents say this wasn’t negligence. It was part of their parenting plan to teach their children some degree of independence.

But society says different. Allowing children, in this case a 10-year-old and a 6-year-old, to walk home alone is putting the kids at risk.

I am of two minds on this one. My kids never went anywhere without a parent in tow. I guess that’s why the parks in my neighborhood are empty when there isn’t a Little League game or soccer game going on.

Of course, life was different for me growing up in the era before mandatory seat belts. I left the house to go play and came back in time for dinner or bed. I walked to the park, the candy story, the schoolyard or just around the neighborhood, wherever other kids were.

Statistics say it is safer for kids now than it was then. Probably because we kids who were left alone grew up to become the overprotective but-in-skis who wonder what were our parents thinking?

But I learned a lot about independence and fending for myself as a kid. At 8 years old I could patch a bicycle tire. Today, I have no idea how it’s done.

So if parents try to instill a little freedom, responsibility and independence in their children, so they don’t grow up to become out-of-control St. Patrick’s Day revelers the first chance they get, what’s the harm?

And what’s going too far? When does active parenting become neglect?

A parenting decision could be wrong, but doesn’t seem like the crime of neglect to me. Neglect is being unaware of what a child is doing because you’re too drunk, too high, too spaced-out or too self-involved to know or care about what a child is doing.

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**Bittersweet thoughts on the man behind New Coke**

Donald R. Keough has died.

You didn’t know him? Neither did I. But Donald R. Keough had an impact on my life, on the lives of millions of Americans, on yours, too, maybe.

He was president and chief executive officer of Coca-Cola in 1985 when the company decided to replace the soft drink America loved with something called New Coke.

Like millions of other Americans and people around the world, I had loved Coke since I was able to remember. One of my favorite memories is sitting cross-legged in front of the black-and-white Zenith watching “Science Fiction Theater” while sipping from a not-quite-frozen 16-ounce glass bottle of Coke.

Coke almost was a synonym for America. But after World War II and with the growth of Pepsi, Coke’s market share fell from 60 percent to 24 percent in 1983.

Coke launched a two-year program to see if the taste of Coke could be improved.

The sweeter flavor that resulted pleased many people who took the taste test. Coke called the flavor “smoother, rounder, yet bolder.”

So, in June 1985 New Coke replaced Coke, and sales rose 8 percent. But a backlash was almost immediate. Fans of old Coke, columnists, critics, even bottlers protested. People began hoarding the old Coke.

I used to watch food ads and if a store advertised it still had real Coke, I went there. One guy in Texas, I read, bought $1,000 worth of the old Coke.

When we were down to our last two Cokes, my wife and I bought a pizza from our favorite place and gave Coke a fine send-off. We never expected to taste Coke again.

But on July 11, New Coke was yanked from the shelves and “Classic” Coke returned. New Coke became Coke II and in 2009 disappeared completely.

But conflict over Coke continues. It’s bad for our health, causes diabetes and obesity. And some people maintain Coke hasn’t tasted right since real Coke was brought back in 1985 containing high fructose corn syrup instead of sugar.

To taste real Coke, these people say, you have to buy Mexican Coke, Mexicoke, which uses sugar, comes in glass bottles and, alas, is much more expensive than American Coke.

So, it looks as if Coke always will be controversial. But I confess that with all its faults I love it still. I usually drink a 12-ounce can of Coke a day, in the evening while I relax and watch TV, though sitting cross-legged no longer is possible.

What can I say, except, rest in peace, Mr. Keough.

On balance, did you harm me or help me?

Paul Sassone is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
Niles North, Niles West and three D219 high schools: the districts feed into our three villages. Seven of separate school districts in our three villages. Seven of separate school districts in the system is goodwell, safe and family friendly. The neighborhoods are from Evanston and the lake. The high school, with its excellent faculty, is under the supervision of Superintendent Nanciann Gatta and the respective Board of Education. The BOE is disconnected and consists of people who no longer have children in district. The BOE and the Superintendent have recently come under scrutiny for poor communication with their constituents, a blatant lack of transparency, abrupt and disruptive calendar changes that have negatively affected the quality of life for families with children in multiple districts, nepotism and questionable spending.

The community has an opportunity to vote in the April 7 school board election. Please protect the quality of life for our high school families. Please protect your tax dollars and property values. Please help keep our community an attractive place to live and rear children.

ENDORSED CANDIDATE INFORMATION can be found at progress219.org.

—Elinor Eliasoff, Skokie

Sometimes luck is all in the numbers

I was 24 years old on March 10, 1993, when I boarded the 7:30 a.m. Amtrak train in Chicago's Union Station. At 11:00 a.m., in Comstock Township, Mich., outside Kalamazoo, our train, traveling 62 mph, collided with a liquid propane tanker truck. The trucker did not survive.

Like so many previous trips to Battle Creek, my coworkers and I were scheduled to present advertising plans depicting critics peddling breakfast carbs to kids. Very, very important stuff this was, plus the annoying train always ran late. The moment of impact forever plays in excruciating slow motion.

■ A muffled thump from a distance ahead.
■ An involuntary lurch out of my seat, knocking me to the floor.
■ The expression on my boss's face—a shift from laughter to confusion.
■ "Dan," I say, not at all a question. Perhaps a plea? A final statement?
■ Screams erupt from up ahead.
■ Dan's face, frozen, into a stare.
■ A female voice.
■ The smell of fuel.
■ The realization I am screaming.

There is dead silence, then—though I'm crumpled on the floor—the brief sensation of whispers and free-falls, as if from a height. My clothes and hair lift briefly off my body then whip back against me in an invisible, crushing and sustained blast of heat.

I can still feel the urgent, collective rush toward the doors, adrenaline surging as passengers yied open metal, still hot to the touch. We stumbled onto frozen land, smelling of panic, fuel and fear.

Within minutes, emergency personnel and reporters appeared, breathless with their questions as we were numbed by shock. I zoned out, staring into the rounded, black sponge of a reporter's microphone, unable to describe the moment of impact.

A kind, local soul drove us to our client's headquarters, and we got there just in time for our afternoon meeting. I've never understood why we didn't just go home, but when you've just survived a fatal train accident, you're grateful to be anywhere.

Five years after the accident, I saw the movie "Sliding Doors," depicting two different ways a woman's life plays out, depending on whether she misses—or slides through—the doors of a train. I still love that movie and its evergreen message, that things always happen for a reason.

I am 46 years old, and this year I opened a writers' retreat 46 miles from the crash site. I am one of 46 people who survived the 1993 Wolverine Amtrak crash, thanks to a conductor whose name I never learned.

This column is dedicated to him.
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*Rubies are lead-glass filled. Fine jewelry doorbusters are only at stores that carry fine jewelry. 75% off 2nd bra must be of equal or lesser value than 1st bra; returns must include both bras. * Reg. & Orig. Prices are offering prices and savings may not be based on actual sales. Some orig. Prices not in effect during the past 90 days. One Day Sale Prices in effect 3/13 & 3/14/2015. *Intermediate price reductions may have been taken. All carat weights (ct. t.w.) are approximate; variance may be .05 carat. Jewelry photos may be enlarged or enhanced to show detail. Fine jewelry at select stores; log on to macy's.com for locations. Almost all gemstones have been treated to enhance their beauty & require special care. Log on to macy's.com/jewelry for special care guides. Purchase must be $25 or more, exclusive of tax and delivery fees.
As campaigning for the April 7 election gets into full swing, I was surprised by claims by the Niles Forward Party that the current Niles Village Board is guilty of “grandstanding, negativity” and “in-fighting.”

As a member of the Niles Board of Trustees for the last four years, I have participated in every meeting, asking questions, gathering information, seeking opinions from other board members and considering their opinions before casting my vote.

Six people sit on the Niles Village Board as representatives of the entire community. It should come as no surprise to the NFP that there will be different opinions among those six people. If only one opinion was desired, only one trustee would be needed. There are six trustees, however, and for good reason. The trustees should not be rubber stamps for every idea that comes before them. We are charged with investigating, studying, considering all sides of an issue and making an informed decision. We are also charged with being open and transparent about how we came to a decision. The public deserves to hear both sides of an issue before the Board. That’s one of the reasons we voted to broadcast our meetings, no secrets, everything openly discussed. Everyone gets to see and hear what is going on. I think that is part of being a democracy.

I find it so interesting that the NFP thinks that an opinion different than theirs is negative thinking. I think it’s called expressing ideas and considering all the facts.

As we go forward in this campaign, I’d like to issue a challenge to the other candidates in the race. Let’s agree to refrain from negative campaigning. Let’s discuss and debate the issues facing the Village of Niles. There are many issues we can and should address.

As a current trustee, there are many things I am proud of accomplishing these past four years. I also have a platform that addresses the future of Niles. I know the other candidates do, too. Let’s stick to the issues. I think the public would welcome it with open arms.

—Incumbent Trustee Rosemary R. Palicki, Village of Niles

I’m often asked why we let the homeless use the library. Recent legislation in Illinois specifically states a person experiencing homelessness has “the right to use and move freely in public spaces, including but not limited to public sidewalks, public parks, public transportation, and public buildings, in the same manner as any other person and without discrimination on the basis of his or her housing status.”

That being said, every visitor to the library must abide by the library’s behavior policy which is posted on every floor. We enforce these rules stringently; those who break the rules are banned. We have even gone to court to prosecute individuals who return to the library after they have been banned.

Two years ago, we experienced a spike in attendance, as did libraries across the country, due to the downturn in the economy. In 2013, we had a corresponding spike in behavior problems. Less than a quarter of those violations were by homeless individuals (7 out of 31 incidents). We heard that some people did not feel safe coming to the library. In response, the board authorized hiring security guards from 3 to 7 p.m. The guards provide a presence to help everyone feel safe and secure.

In 2014, we only had 20 behavior incidents (three were by homeless patrons) because of our increased vigilance. In the first two months of 2015, we have had only two incidents to date.

We want everyone to feel welcome, safe and proud of their community library.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Dilger
Library Director

What if the future of kids was a stock you could invest in?

Introducing Better Futures™ — a whole new kind of investment with a greater return than money. When you invest, it helps kids go to college. Because a mind is a terrible thing to waste but a wonderful thing to invest in.

Invest in Better Futures at UNCF.ORG/INVEST
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<td>Jayakarayi Makanacharvakuthu</td>
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<td>Maureen A Barberlo</td>
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<td>Heidi E Demplo</td>
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<td>Thomas E Fletcher</td>
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This list is not intended to be a complete record of all real estate transactions. Data compiled by Record Information Services 630-557-1000 public-record.com
HOFFMAN ESTATES


Address: 4955 Essington Court
Price: $524,900
Schools: Wm Fremd High School
Taxes: $11,412
Agent: Sheryl Allen/Coldwell Banker

LIBERTVILLE


Address: 6601 White Pine Way
Price: $599,900
Schools: Warren Township High School
Taxes: $11,412
Agent: Terril Hunt/RE/MAX Suburban

BUFFALO GROVE

Ready to move in with newer carpet, paint & lighting fixtures. Newer Pella windows except one. Furnace and A/C new in 2011. Light and airy feeling throughout. Exhaust hood vents outside. Open family room to kitchen has wood-burning fireplace with gas starter. Five bedrooms up and 2 1/2 baths. Master bedroom suite has whirlpool and two closets.

Address: 56 Chestnut Terrace
Price: $450,000
Schools: Adlai E Stevenson High School
Taxes: $14,029
Agent: Linda Dlabay/CENTURY 21 Kreuser & Sell

WINNETKA

This arts & crafts style 4-bedroom/1.5-bathroom home is larger than it looks. Sun-filled first floor boasts extra large living room, dining room, eat-in kitchen, large foyer & den with beautiful leaded glass windows throughout. 4 bedrooms upstairs. 2 fireplaces, unfinished basement. Close to town, train, schools, parks.

Address: 747 Walden Road
Price: $550,000
Schools: New Trier Township HS Winnetka
Taxes: $15,100
Agent: Laura Cross Collyer/@Properties

Listings from Homefinder.com
Niles gives Green Business Award another try

IGOR STUDENKOV
Pioneer Press

After the first Niles Green Business Award didn't get any nominations, the village is trying again - this time with a more simplified application.

The Niles Environmental Practices Committee developed the award. Every Niles business was eligible. The businesses were to be judged based on their environmentally friendly practices.

After the Sept. 30 deadline passed, there were no applications. The Environmental Practices Committee went back to the drawing board, approving the final version during its March 4 meeting. The committee members hoped that a new, more streamlined application form will encourage more businesses to apply. The committee also plans to do more to spread the word about the award.

The Green Business Award was originally created to fulfill one of the goals of the Niles Environmental Action Plan, as the Niles Herald-Spectator reported at the time, the plan called for the village to encourage businesses to be more environmentally friendly. The Environmental Practices Committee worked with the Niles Assistant Village Manager Hadley Skeffington-Vos to create it.

Under the rules they developed, each applicant would be considered based on the environmentally friendly practices in several different categories. That included water reduction and recycling, water conservation and stormwater pollution prevention, energy conservation, transportation, public education or innovation.

The applicant would select which of those practices they follow, and they would also have the option to mention something that doesn't fit any of those categories. They would also have the option to explain why they don't follow certain practices.

The new application focuses on two categories - waste reduction and innovation. The former includes ways to reduce waste, as well as ways to improve recycling. The latter includes creative ways to be more environmentally friendly.

Under the new application process, businesses would need to apply for an award in one of the two categories, but not both. To apply, they would need to write an essay no more than 500 words in length explaining what they've done over the past five years to deserve to be considered in that particular category. The applicants would also need to give a description of their business and whether or not they follow environmental laws and regulations for their industry.

Either way, they would have an option of elaborating on their response. The application also gives applicants space to list their environmental certifications, if they have any.

Businesses can start applying on July 15. The application forms will be available on the city's website. Like last year, the applications must be submitted by Sept. 30. A committee made up of the members of the Environmental Practices Committee, the Niles Economic Development Coordinator and a member of the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry will choose the winners. The winners will be announced at the Niles Board of Trustees' October meeting.

If the award is successful, the new procedure will become permanent. One thing that will change every year is the first category. Under the current plans, the first category will be Water Conservation and Stormwater Pollution Prevention in 2016, Energy Conservation in 2017, Public Education and Awareness in 2018 and Transportation in 2019.

During the March 4 meeting, the Environmental Practices Committee also discussed what it could do to help spread the word.

"How about the Niles Library?" suggested committee member Chris Zalinski. "There are a lot of informational fliers there." He also suggested leaving applications at the Village Hall front desk.

"The (Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry) does business after hours events every month," suggested committee chair Rosemary Palicki. "Maybe we could attend that?"

She also asked Skeffington-Vos to see if there were a way to send the information about the award out to the chamber members.

Igor Studenkov is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Rainbow Animal Assisted therapy dog: Sugar Babeegirl

By Pioneer Press Staff

Meet Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy Dog, Sugar Babeegirl. Sugar is a 2.5-year-old Havanese, and has been living with her human family since she was 9 weeks old.

Sugar was born into a home where there were six foster children who were physically challenged. Her new family was so grateful for the care that she was given by them that they decided to return some of that love and kindness back to the community. Sugar now splits her time between Chicago, where she volunteers as a Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy Dog and Florida, where she works with Therapy Dogs of South Florida.

Sugar is very friendly, and thinks that everyone loves her. Her favorite foods are carrots, string beans and popcorn.

The Havanese breed was once known as the Havana Silk Dog, and is the national dog of Cuba. The long coat is silky, and protects the dogs from tropical heat. They are an old breed, and make excellent lap dogs, a wonderful trait for a therapy dog.

Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy, the largest and oldest organization of its type in the Chicago metropolitan area, is a volunteer organization committed to using the capabilities of dogs in therapeutic environments, especially with children. To learn more about Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy visit rainbowaat.org.

Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy, Inc. is located at 6042 W. Oakton St in Morton Grove.

Sugar Babeegirl is a 2.5-year-old Havanese from Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy located in Morton Grove.
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Listings are subject to change. Please call the venue in advance.

Thursday, March 12

Coffee Talk to explore World War II and Des Plaines: Bill Kiddle from the Raupp Museum in Buffalo Grove discusses how Maine Township changed during the war. He tells stories about some local people who worked overseas and on the homefront. 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Des Plaines History Center, 781 Pearson St., Des Plaines, $3 donation suggested, 847-391-5399

“Lone Star” and “Laundry and Bourbon”: Presenting two plays depicting life in a sleepy Texas town. “Lone Star” and “Laundry and Bourbon,” by James McLure, both seem to show us a simpler life and a unique perspective on the world. 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Oll Lamp Theater, 1723 Glenview Road, Glenview, $12.50-$14.37, 847-834-0738.

Much Ado About Mysteries: Discuss Award Winners: The Edgars. Advance registration recommended. 7 p.m. Thursday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

“Build It!” at Kohl Children’s Museum: The museum announces its newly constructed, temporary exhibit “Build It!” which puts a spin on classic building blocks by letting children explore and interact with 10 different varieties of blocks in a single space through May 3, 2015. 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Kohl Children’s Museum, 2100 Patriot Blvd., Glenview, $10-$11, 847-832-6600.

Kohl’s Cares Scholarship Program Nomination Period: Kohl’s rewards more than 2,500 kids nationwide for their volunteer efforts. Kids ages six to 18 who have made a positive impact on their local communities can be awarded scholarships and prizes, ranging from $50 Kohl’s gift cards to $10,000 scholarships. To nominate volunteers visit www.kohlskids.com. Nominations are accepted only through March 13, and the nominators must be 21 years or older. midnight Thursday, Kohl’s Glenview, 2201 Willow Road, Glenview, free.

Senior Adult Spelling Bee Practice: Illinois residents age 50 and over can continue their spelling skills and prepare to compete on March 19. 10 a.m. Thursday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220.

An Evening with the Fab Four: The Beatles in the 70s: Pop culture historian Robert Rodriguez shares rare interviews, concert and promo clips, and film and comedy sketches featuring The Beatles in the 70’s. 7 p.m. Thursday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220.

Save a Star’s Drug Disposal Program: The first program of its kind in the area is for the disposal of medications, (including controlled substances), all over the counter and pet medications, samples, vitamins, liquids and creams. Call 847-579-1300 ext. 146. 9 a.m. every day, Saturday, Morton Grove Police Department, 7000 W. Touhy Ave., Morton Grove, free.

Rooted in Chicago: Mayor Richard J. Daley: Author Barry Bradford shares the stories - both famous and little-known - of these people who lived and worked in Chicago. This week is Richard J. Daley 1 p.m. Thursday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $10 member, $13 non-member, 847-784-6030.

Walking the Talk Series: Nutritional IV Therapy: A monthly guest speaker covers topics that integrate health and wellness into your lifestyle. 7 p.m. Thursday, Chicago Sports Institute, 1847 Oak St., Northfield; free.

Fresh fish and seafood specials: The inn offers an array of fresh fish and seafood specials each Friday. 5 pm. Friday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $10-$11.

Park Ridge Garden Club Meeting: The Park Ridge Garden Club hosts a speaker every week. 7 p.m. every Monday, Waukegan Road, Park Ridge, free, 847-692-3597.

Kohlrabi Thursdays: Enjoy some great pizza and sing a tune or two. 7 p.m. Thursday, Perry’s Pizza and Ribs, 711 Devon Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-823-4422.

John Caparulo: The comedian best known as a regular panelist on ETV’s “Chelsea Lately” and as the host of CMT’s “Mobile Home Disaster” headlines a stand-up showcase. 8 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday, 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Saturday, Zanie’s Rosemont, 5437 Park Place, Rosemont, $25-$30 plus a two-item food-drink minimum, 847-813-0484.

Wilmette Theatre Hosts DOC Fest: See selections from the documentary film fest. See website for film titles and times. 2 p.m. every day, Wilmette Theatre, 1122 Central Ave., Wilmette, $7.50, 847-281-7424.

Friday, March 13

Friday Night Fish Fry at White Pines: The fish fry events feature an all-you-can-eat lake fresh lake perch dinner. Specialty wines and beer are offered, and a full bar is available. Reservations are recommended. 5 p.m. Friday, White Pines Golf Club, 500 W. Jefferson St., Bensenville, $14.99, 630-766-0304.

Game Night: Teens ages 13-18 can play with the Library’s game systems and collections on big screens over pizza. 5 p.m. Friday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

A Citizen Soldier’s Heart: Vietnam and Des Plaines: Bill Kiddie from the Raupp Museum in Buffalo Grove discusses how Maine Township changed during the war. He tells stories about some local people who worked overseas and on the homefront. 847-556-1778 or rockwell@carecenter.org.

Save A Star’s Drug Disposal Program: The first program of its kind in the area is for the disposal of medications, (including controlled substances), all over the counter and pet medications, samples, vitamins, liquids and creams. Call 847-579-1300 ext. 146. 9 a.m. every day, Saturday, Morton Grove Police Department, 7000 W. Touhy Ave., Morton Grove, free.

Walking the Talk Series: Nutritional IV Therapy: A monthly guest speaker covers topics that integrate health and wellness into your lifestyle. 7 p.m. Thursday, Chicago Sports Institute, 1847 Oak St., Northfield; free.

Fresh fish and seafood specials: The inn offers an array of fresh fish and seafood specials each Friday. 5 pm. Friday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $10-$11.

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Dinosaur 13: The documentary chronicles the discovery of a dinosaur and battle over the Chicago Field Museum’s Sue, the largest Tyrannosaurus Rex fossil ever found. 2 p.m. Saturday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220.

The Two Hour Cup: Try three different premium loose leaf teas and take home info cards with descriptions and tasting notes. 2 p.m. Saturday, Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-823-5852.

Pajama Party Pubic Skate: Skate to the music from future and past Idol stars. Everyone in attendance entered in a drawing for two tickets to a Chicago Wolves hockey game at 8 p.m. Saturday, Oakton Ice Arena, 2800 W. Oakton St., Park Ridge, $4.50, 888-832-5852.

Regrettin’ Mr. Wright: See Ellie Carl-..son as Mamah Borthwick Cheney, an associate of Frank Lloyd Wright. Turn to Calendar, Next Page
Take time to be a dad today.

CALENDAR

Luncheon will be served. Proceeds will benefit the mission projects of the United Methodist Women at the local, national and international levels. noon Saturday, First United Methodist Church of Park Ridge, 418 W. Touhy Ave., Park Ridge, $25, 847-825-3144

The Edisto Experience: A celebration of the culture, food and music for South Carolina's low country features an auction and live music from James Jamison and the Funk Brothers. Proceeds benefit the church's youth mission trip to Edisto Island. 6:30 p.m. Saturday, First Congregational Church of Wilmette, 1125 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, $25, 847-920-9723

Sunday, March 15

Concert for Peace: Fallen Heroes: A musical exploration of those who have died to advance peace. Free-will donation to benefit Hands of Peace. Plenty of free onsite parking. 3 p.m. Sunday, Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St., Glenview, Free-will donation, 847-724-2210

Jigs, Reels & A Little Bit of Rowdy: Life's too short not to be Irish: Pat Gaughan and L.J. Slavin perform Irish music. 2p.m. Sunday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

"Take Up the Cross & Follow Me; What Does This Mean Today?": Lenten presentation and discussion in a series on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. Fr. Keith Muccino, SJ, Professor of Medicine at Loyola University. noon Sunday, St. Catherine Laboure, 3535 Thornwood Ave., Glenview, free, 847-826-4704

Third Sunday String Band: 2 p.m. Sunday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Monday, March 16

Baby and Me Time: Parents and their children up to 12 months can come in for this opportunity to socialize and share parenting advice. An Advocate Lutheran General Hospital nurse representative is on hand for any childhood development questions. 9:30 a.m. Monday, Kohl Children's Museum, 2100 Patriot Blvd., Glenview, free, 847-832-6600

MGPL Kids: Monday Morning Playgroup: Drop-in playtime for preschoolers with a parent or caregiver to introduce young children to the library in a low-key, unstructured session. Call 847-929-5102 or visit www.mgpl.org for more information. 10:30 a.m. Monday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Money Matters Discussion: The group meets on the first and third Monday of each month. 10 a.m. Monday, Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge, free. 847-692-3597

Tuesday, March 17

St. Patrick's Day Bash: Enjoy a delicious corned beef buffet and craft beers. Reservations recommended. 5 p.m. Tuesday, White Pines Golf Club, 500 W. Jefferson St., Bensenville, $59.95, 630-766-0304

Northern Lights: Winter Homework Help Center: High school volunteers help kids in grades 1-8 with their home-
Wednesday, March 18

**WWII graphic novel to be discussed at Des Plaines History Center:** The year 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, and the Des Plaines History Center’s book group plans to read war-related titles throughout the year. Maus by Art Spiegelman is now available at the readers services desk at the Des Plaines Public Library, 1501 Ellinwood Ave. Maus, which is published in a comic-book format, relates the chilling story of how the author’s father survived the Holocaust. For more information, call the History Center or visit the website. 6 p.m. Wednesday, Des Plaines History Center, 781 Pearson St., Des Plaines, free, 847-391-5399

**Circle time swap for preschool teachers:** Hear what your colleagues are doing and see how they do it. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

**All Things Spanish:** Soak up and enjoy Spanish/Latino culture in all forms, from literature and language to music, film, and food. A meeting may include a Spanish short story reading, a Spanish film, or a discussion of hot topics. The meetings are conducted primarily in Spanish. For more information or to sign up for group updates, contact Carolyn Ramirez at cramirez@glenviewpl.org. Meets monthly. Just drop in. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

**Spring Book Wreath:** Shari Pontillo of Twisted Fiber Studio teaches this class to make a wreath from the pages of a book. All the supplies are included. For ages 18 and up. Contact the Park Ridge Senior Center. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Park Ridge Park District - Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge, $25 Members/$30 Guests, 847-692-3597

**Park Ridge Civic Orchestra:** 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Pickwick Theatre, 5 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, $25, 847-692-7726

**Andy Woodhull:** The Chicago comedian - as seen on Comedy’s Central’s “Live at Gotham” - performs stand-up. 8 p.m. Wednesday, Zanies Rosemont, 5437 Park Place, Rosemont, $22 plus a two-item food/drink minimum, 847-813-0484.

Have an event to submit? Go to chicagotribune.com/calendar
Community ‘Stars’ shine at Park Ridge Chamber gala

10th annual ‘Night of Stars’

Sponsored by:
Park Ridge Chamber of Commerce

Honors:
For exceptional contributions to local volunteer organizations and the community’s overall quality of life, awards presented to Jessica Altman, Youth Award; Scott Chovanec, Dr. Perry Fisher, Julie Gemualdi, Kim Garber Lifton, Robert Szkwarek, Whole Foods Market; Lifetime Achievement to John “Jack” Owens

Date:
Feb. 21, 2015

Location:
Chicago Marriott O’Hare, 8535 W. Higgins Road, Chicago

Attended:
About 200 people

Website:
parkridgechamber.org

Bradley, Michael, Youth Award winner Jessica, Scott and Cindy Altman of Park Ridge

Christel and Lifetime Achievement Award winner John “Jack” Owens

Park Ridge Chamber Board members Joe Campagna, Susan Scatchell, Anna Wasylw and Dr. Ross Rubino, all of Park Ridge
CAUSE & EVENT

Fun and games raise $2,500 for Kohl Children's Museum

Grown Up Play Date
Benefiting:
Kohl Children's Museum, Glenview
Attended:
140
Raised:
$2,500
Date:
Feb. 6
Website:
kohlchildrensmuseum.org

Monica Daly and Athena Perez, both of Chicago
Kathy Pagano and Cathy Schultz, both of Glenview
Stephanie Baldwin of Winnetka, Richard Norris, Sam Magura and Josh Smith-Cohen, all of Evanston

Want to see your event in Trend? Debbie Hoppe, Trend editorial assistant, will send you guidelines. Email her at shoppe@pioneerlocal.com.
Couples typically seek marriage counseling as a way to improve or even solve relationship issues, including those that have to do with romance and sex. The sessions are very private, with the therapist knowing their deepest secrets and innermost thoughts and feelings.

But now, a new TV show is offering counseling in a bizarre and very public way. It’s called Sex Box, and it premiered last Friday night on WeTV. I watched it, and I’m pretty sure my jaw was on the ground for the entire 60 minutes.

Here is the format: Contestant couples discuss their problems before a panel of three experts—a sex therapist, a pastor, and a relationship psychotherapist. After the issues are uncovered (in about three minutes), the couple retreats to “The Sex Box,” which is a soundproof room where they are supposed to have sex in front of a live audience. When finished, couples proceed with a follow-up therapy session with the panel. What?! The theory behind the extremely controversial show is that during sex, couples proceed with a follow-up therapy session with the panel. What?! The theory behind the extremely controversial show is that during sex, couples proceed with a follow-up therapy session with the panel. What?! The theory behind the extremely controversial show is that during sex, couples proceed with a follow-up therapy session with the panel. What?!

The theory behind the extremely controversial show is that during sex, a chemical is released which causes couples to become vulnerable. In retrospect, they will be the most honest and open to discuss their relationship at that moment.

Aside from the fact that I think America has hit an all-time low in TV programming with this show, (as the level of sleaze is just downright pitiful), I have two main issues that dispute Sex Box’s theory.

The first is this. Having personally experienced marriage counseling several years ago, I can tell you firsthand that it takes a lot more time than six minutes to solve your relationship issues. Just like it takes more than a few dates to fall in love, contrary to the theory of The Bachelor. Aren’t most of the couples who “got engaged” on the Bachelor and The Bachelorette already broken up? How shocking.

They figured out that six weeks is not enough time to commit to spending the rest of their lives together. The same applies to marriage counseling. Although the three experts are credible and give very solid advice, they (or anyone else on the planet) are equipped to save a marriage in a matter of minutes.

I think the show belittles marriage therapy, and I hope it doesn’t cause people to have false hopes if they choose to try it. My therapy failed, as I am now divorced, but I truly believe in the value of marriage therapy and the wonderful things it can do for couples. That said, a couple has to be willing to invest several weeks, maybe even months or years for it to be effective. My other issue with Sex Box is that I disagree that after sex people are open and honest and able to talk about their relationship with a clearer head. I think sex clouds judgment. Often times, couples have sex and it makes them fall in love. That’s not a bad thing, but in my opinion, relationship problems immediately after sex don’t seem so important or urgent. So, after sex is probably the worst time to discuss your relationship issues, because you’re happy and everything is temporarily perfect.

Sex Box is an extremely controversial show with lots of criticism from both the public, as well as parenting organizations that include The Parents Television Council, an advocacy group that started an online petition to urge WeTV executives to take it off the air.

In closing, I don’t see Sex Box providing any real value, other than hearing relationship problems from other couples, and listening to what I think is pretty good advice. What I’m saying is, ironically, Sex Box might actually be a big hit without the sex box.

Jackie Pilossoph is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.

Twitter: @loveessentially

Couples discuss sex life on new TV show

Do you know about these tax facts?

As everyone knows only too well, April 15 is rapidly approaching. In preparation for tax day, Help Squad reached out to two CPAs for some professional advice on your behalf: Julie Martin, a Glenview-based CPA, and Curtis Webley of Webley’s Accounting Services, P.C. in Evanston.

Julie’s Tips

Affordable Care Act Rules — The biggest change for most taxpayers is that the ACA requires individuals to check a box on their federal income tax form to show they had health insurance in 2014 or pay a penalty. The penalty – the greater of 1 percent of modified adjusted gross income or $95 per person, $475 per child under age 18, up to a maximum of $285 per family – applies to individuals who did not have minimum essential coverage in 2014. While the IRS can’t issue a lien against you to collect, it can withhold money from your refund. There are hardship exemptions to mandatory coverage, but if claiming one, you must file Form 8965.

Go to http://www.irs.gov/instructions/i8965/ch01.html#0083 for a complete list of 2014 coverage exemptions.

An additional twist for those who purchased health insurance through the ACA Marketplace is that many received subsidies that were paid to their insurance companies and applied directly to their premiums. In many cases these subsidies were based on 2012 household size and income. The enrollment period began Oct. 1, 2013, before taxpayers filed 2013 returns. If income or household size changed in 2014, you could be liable for additional subsidy payments (meaning you owe the government money) or you could be owed a refund as a result of overpayment.

Mass Transit and Parking Deductions — Commuters who used mass transit in 2014 can exclude from income up to $250 per month in transit benefits paid by their employers, such as monthly rail or subway passes. The same is true of employer-provided parking benefits — up to $250. In 2015, however, pre-tax benefits for mass transit drop to $210 per month; parking benefits remain $250.

Mortgage Debt Exclusions — Typically, forgiven debt is considered taxable income in the eyes of the IRS; however, there is a tax provision (which expired at the end of 2014) that allows homeowners whose homes were foreclosed on or subjected to short sale after

Curtis’s Tips

Taking a Loss — Taxpayers who own or invest in a subchapter S corporation or limited liability company with the expectation that the company will generate losses to reduce personal income taxes may be in for a surprise. Though your K-1 form may indicate a total loss deduction, you might not be entitled to deduct it on your personal income tax return if you do not have basis in the corporation (your initial investment increased or decreased by income, capital contributions and/or losses). If no basis exists – because company performance has reduced the value – the losses are suspended and cannot be deducted until the basis increases. This is especially important for small business owners who continue to show losses year after year.

Charitable Donations — Monetary gifts given to legitimate charitable organizations are generally deductible. However, if you receive a benefit from your contribution, that portion of the gift is not deductible. For example, if you purchase tickets for $500 to attend a fund-raiser, and dinner and entertainment costs $300, the deductible portion of your donation is $200, the difference between your contribution and the benefit you received.

Uncollectable Non-business Loans — A taxpayer who lends money to a friend and is unable to collect on the loan can take a deduction on his/her income tax return as a non-business bad debt expense. The expense can be deducted as a short-term capital loss, provided the entire loan amount is uncollectible. (There is no deduction for partial amounts.) You must show the loan was not deductible. (There is no deduction for partial amounts.) You must show the loan was not deductible. (There is no deduction for partial amounts.) You must show the loan was not deductible.
Knowing the "insider details" of good estate planning could mean....

Saving Thousands of Dollars for You and Your Family and Giving You Real Peace of Mind

There's so much confusion today on what is good estate planning. Our firm is dedicated to helping people understand the many myths about estate planning, learn their options, and make decisions that are right for them.

Most people already know what probate is...the legal process that your family has to go through when you die if you use a will to plan your estate. What they do in probate court is decide if your will is valid, handle disputes, distribute the assets and tie up any loose ends. The problem with it is that it can be incredibly expensive, time consuming and an unwelcome invasion of privacy.

The first thing that happens when your case enters probate court, is make it public record. Every curious neighbor, disgruntled relative, and con artist around is welcome to examine every detail of your finances and what you left to whom. Then, there's the paperwork, and bureaucratic hassle involved that causes the average case to take nine months to two years, and many take several years.

When your beneficiaries finally get the property that's rightfully theirs, they then have to pay their lawyer's fees.

The reason many probate lawyers are so concerned is because an increasing number of people are managing to pass their entire estates—even millions of dollars—to their loved ones with no probate whatsoever. And it's totally legal!

How are they able to avoid probate? Most of them are using a document that's been around for centuries...it's a Revocable Inter-Vivos or Living Trust.

Here's How It Works

When you set up your living trust, you transfer the title of all your assets (stocks, bonds, real estate, etc.) from your name to the name of the trust. You then name yourself as the trustee and beneficiary. That gives you, and you alone, total and complete control of all your assets.

You can buy, sell, trade, do whatever you want—just like you do now.

Here's the difference, and the beauty of it. When you die, there will be no assets left in your name and therefore, no probate for your family to endure. Whomever you name as your successor trustee will immediately gain control of your assets to distribute them according to your exact instructions...with no waiting, no public record, and no lawyer's fees!

A Fate Perhaps Worse Than Death

However, there's another, maybe even more important reason to have a living trust. More and more, the biggest problem you face as you grow older, is not so much what happens when you die, but what happens when you can't take care of yourself. An increasing number of Americans each year are suffering accidents, strokes, and afflictions such as Alzheimer's disease that are forcing them out of control of their lives and finances.

Attend one of these seminars and you'll be eligible for a free, private consultation to answer questions you have about your estate plan. Seating is Limited. Register now at 1-800-63-TRUST (1-800-638-7878) or www.PlanOurEstate.com
Don’t Think it Can’t Happen to You!

In such a situation, before you or your family could even touch any of your assets—to take care of you or support themselves—someone would have to be appointed your legal guardian. This is done through a legal process called guardianship which, like probate, can be extremely costly, time-consuming, and upsetting to all involved. And after it’s done, scrupulously accurate financial reports must be filed for the rest of your life. The good news is, also like probate, you can completely eliminate the chance of this ever happening to your family by setting up a living trust.

Living trusts are also, by far, the most flexible and powerful estate planning tools known anywhere. Here are a few of the things they can enable you to do: set up stipulations or age requirements for children to receive any money, provide for major expenses as they come up, such as medical bills and tuition, pay the income of the trust to someone to live on indefinitely, pay the expenses of a disabled person for whom you may be providing, protect grandchildren from a previous marriage (who are often squeezed out of wills), and more! Also, since your living trust is “revocable” you can add to it, delete it, alter it, or terminate it any time you wish.

Planning for Nursing Home Costs

Sadly, more and more families are learning the harsh reality of what nursing homes cost. During our seminar we will cover the various ways to pay nursing home costs. Accurate knowledge and planning are key in this area. Many families of veterans are unaware of Aid and Attendance benefits that are available for certain qualifying veterans. These benefits may be available to pay not only nursing home costs, but family members who care for the veteran and/or the veteran’s spouse.

Other Estate Planning Techniques

Sometimes individuals try to plan their estates by using Joint Tenancy...thinking that this is a way to avoid probate. But this technique can backfire and cause many serious, unforeseen problems, especially in a time of high divorce rates, bankruptcies, and litigation. “Do-It-Yourself”, one-size-fits-all trusts can also allow a novice to make costly mistakes in their estate plans. These techniques and other popular estate planning techniques will be covered in this free seminar.

Experience Matters! Not all Law Firms are the Same

Because living trusts are becoming more popular, many lawyers—and even non-lawyers with no experience—are trying to exploit their benefits. Don’t be fooled! Just because people are lawyers doesn’t mean they have the experience in preparing quality estate plans. The law firm of Chester M. Przybylo and Associates has the experience that matters. The firm has prepared thousands of trusts for their clients over the years. This wealth of experience allows them to give their clients the highest quality of legal work, along with a personal touch. The attorneys take a minimum of 36 hours of special training annually to keep them up-to-date on the latest laws and planning techniques. In addition, firm paralegals are trained in trusts, probate and trust administration.

The firm belongs to the prestigious American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys, a national organization of estate planning attorneys that has been highlighted by Money Magazine, Consumer Reports Money Adviser and the Suze Orman book The 9 Steps to Financial Freedom. Mr. Przybylo was also a founding member of the National Network of Estate Planning Attorneys.

After the seminar, you’ll have the information you need to make an informed and intelligent decision on these extremely important matters for yourself and for your family. Then you’ll have the peace of mind to concentrate on life.
MEET OUR ATTORNEYS:

Chester M. Przybylo

founded Chester M. Przybylo and Associates with the goal of providing superb estate planning services with a personal touch. In over 40 years he has helped thousands of individuals and their families achieve peace of mind in planning for the future...preserving assets, avoiding probate and reducing taxes.

Noted for his ability to reduce complex legal and financial issues to understandable terms, Mr. Przybylo is called upon frequently for his creative and effective planning recommendations. He was one of the very first attorneys to offer estate planning seminars to educate the general public on estate planning options. He is a sought after speaker, presenting seminars to both public and private groups, at colleges and professional organizations on a wide range of estate planning topics.

Professional Experience

Mr. Przybylo was a founding member of the prestigious national organization, the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys. He had the privilege of serving for four years on their Board of Governors. The Academy requires that its members complete 36 hours of estate planning courses annually...above and beyond what is required by states of their attorneys. Mr. Przybylo is a member of the American Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association and is admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court, U.S. District Court, U.S. Court of Claims, Tax Court of the U.S. and all courts in the state of Illinois. He has co-authored some seven, popular books on estate planning.

Education

Mr. Przybylo graduated from Georgetown University with a bachelor’s in economics and earned his M.B.A. in Finance from the University of Chicago. He received his Juris Doctorate from IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law.

Michael A. Otte

Michael A. Otte joined our team five years ago with a passion for our firm’s commitment to superior client service. He has demonstrated abilities in estate planning, elder law, Medicaid planning, living trusts, guardianship, Veteran’s Benefits, probate and trust administration. He enjoys giving seminars on his areas of expertise in order to educate the public on important estate planning concepts. Mr. Otte has taught courses in Elder Law at the John Marshall Law School and currently leads a paralegal course in Elder Law at the College of Du Page. His memberships include the Chicago Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association and the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys.

Education

Mr. Otte received his B.A. in Economics at the University of Iowa, spending almost a year in their overseas program at Goethe Universitat, Frankfurt, Germany. He received his law degree from Loyola University Chicago School of Law, serving as associate editor of the Consumer Law Review.

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5339 N.
Milwaukee Ave.
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Are You Ready for This?
We explore these and other topics of interest:
- How to keep your estate out of an expensive Probate (Wills guarantee probate)
- What is Guardianship, and how can you avoid it?
- The real danger of “Do-It-Yourself” Trusts
- Can you avoid losing everything you worked for if you enter a nursing home?
- How can you protect your children from creditors, ex-spouses and themselves?
- How Veteran’s Benefits can be used to pay family members for caregiving
- Why your parents’ estate plan won’t work for you

A Living Trust done properly, is a magnificent estate planning tool. If you have a Living Trust now (especially if you have had it for some time) come in and find out why your trust provisions may be obsolete or inadequate for your needs.

Many Veteran’s Benefits Left Unclaimed by Unknowing Vets
Many Vets and their spouses are unaware of Veteran’s Benefits that could pay monthly up to $1,788 for a single veteran or $2,120 for a veteran and spouse. Learn more at this seminar!

MAKE RESERVATIONS TODAY—SEATING IS LIMITED
Call 1-800-63-TRUST (1-800-638-7878) or register at www.PlanOurEstate.com

NORRIDGE
Wednesday, March 18, 2015
10:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.
Continental Breakfast Refreshments
Basilico Restaurante
4701 N. Cumberland Ave.
Norridge, IL 60706

NILES
Thursday, March 19, 2015
7:00 p.m. Refreshments
While Eagle Banquet Halls
6837 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Niles, IL 60714

DES PLAINES
Saturday, March 21, 2015
10:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
Hilton Garden Inn O’Hare
2930 South River Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018


The firm will offer you a free private consultation to answer any questions you have about your own estate plan and what will happen if you do not make any changes. There is no obligation to you.

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2 Cups Ken's Ranch Dressing
1/2 Cup Salsa, Mild
1 tsp Cilantro, Rough Chop

Santa Fe Ranch Dressing & Dip
2 Cups Ken's Ranch Dressing
2 Tbsp. Taco Spice
1 Tbsp. Scallion, Small Dice

Avocado Ranch Dressing & Dip
2 Cups Ken's Ranch Dressing
1 Cup Avocado, Mashed

Try the ideas above with:
Taco Salads / Grilled Steak, Chicken, or Seafood Tacos / Grilled Corn on the cob / Chips, Tortillas, Potato and other / Fresh Veggies / Burgers and Chicken Sandwiches

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Quote-Acrostic

1. Define clues, writing in Words column over numbered dashes.
2. Transfer letters to numbered squares in diagram.
3. When pattern is completed, quotation can be read left to right. The first letters of the filled-in words reading down form an acrostic yielding the speaker’s name and the topic of the quotation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>Words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. English-only speaker</td>
<td>166 133 146 38 62 67 4 105</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Relieved</td>
<td>154 81 56 120 134 145 98 30 106</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Facilitate</td>
<td>159 11 139 113 104 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Beef and chicken sauces</td>
<td>35 45 100 82 138 153 115</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. Improper</td>
<td>8 21 143 121 70 46 107 36</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Barber of Seville babe</td>
<td>86 44 1 157 53 125</td>
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<td>G. Reduction: hyph.</td>
<td>10 119 43 85 69 137 101</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. Art medium: 2 wds.</td>
<td>75 141 6 96 64 112 32 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>I. Daring</td>
<td>122 147 51 76 33 99 183 19 131</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Very big help</td>
<td>94 25 65 57 160 88 117 15 135</td>
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<td>K. Group faction member</td>
<td>91 47 7 60 31 156 127 123 78</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. You can’t be serious!: 2 wds.</td>
<td>40 24 161 63 126 103 95 111 80</td>
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<td>M. Alberta deposits: 2 wds.</td>
<td>165 108 39 14 50 130 27 73</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Durocher nickname: 3 wds.</td>
<td>59 97 144 156 124 87 26 13 71</td>
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<tr>
<td>O. Like size XXL</td>
<td>116 90 166 49 74 129 9 151 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. Bolivia and Mongolia, e.g.</td>
<td>162 12 142 109 58 41 23 92 77 48</td>
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<td>Q. Full House pair</td>
<td>5 68 150 83 61 164</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. Wacko</td>
<td>132 93 55 3 72 22 149</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. Careful</td>
<td>167 89 145 102 79 118 140</td>
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<td>T. One who hides nothing?</td>
<td>158 18 42 136 114 54</td>
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<tr>
<td>U. Charmer</td>
<td>152 37 128 2 52 28 66 17 84</td>
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Batter Up

BY CHARLES PRESTON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>1 Tallest of the hickories</td>
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<td>5 Off kilter</td>
<td>2 Pay for</td>
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<td>9 Limited</td>
<td>3 It reaches apheion</td>
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<td>14 Wellington's alma mater</td>
<td>4 Squeaky clean</td>
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<td>15 Flushing place</td>
<td>5 Buzzing</td>
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<td>16 Pressed</td>
<td>6 Sea creature</td>
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<td>17 Lake or Perry</td>
<td>7 Bona fide</td>
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<td>18 Break away</td>
<td>8 Yin's counterpart</td>
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<td>19 Bumps into</td>
<td>9 Type of squash</td>
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<td>20 Changed situation</td>
<td>10 Pill</td>
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<td>23 Computer-user's hook-up</td>
<td>11 Get up there</td>
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<td>24 Fix chuckholes</td>
<td>12 Gain</td>
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<td>28 Ho's follower</td>
<td>13 RE's quest</td>
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<td>29 Pokey</td>
<td>21 Swing holder</td>
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<td>31 Jones predecessor</td>
<td>22 The little mermaid</td>
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<td>32 Former secretary of state</td>
<td>25 Decorate</td>
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<td>34 Lotion potion</td>
<td>26 One of the Collinses</td>
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<td>35 Body of laws</td>
<td>27 Merino mom</td>
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<td>36 Pretty close</td>
<td>29 Assuage</td>
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<td>39 Outer limit</td>
<td>30 Enamelware</td>
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<td>40 Durham university</td>
<td>31 Pitcher Nomo</td>
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<td>41 Peak in Sicily</td>
<td>32 Inflame</td>
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<td>42 Light-horse Harry</td>
<td>33 End at</td>
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<td>43 Snack</td>
<td>34 Screech</td>
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<td>44 Exist</td>
<td>35 Minneapolis suburb</td>
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<td>45 Fancy fabric</td>
<td>36 Reason for a red flag</td>
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<td>47 Tack item</td>
<td>37 Tree</td>
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<td>51 Cooperate</td>
<td>38 Ball girls?</td>
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<td>54 Biblical musician</td>
<td>39 It's about time!</td>
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<td>57 __ da capo</td>
<td>40 Solar-year excess</td>
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<td>58 Cinema pooch</td>
<td>41 Steppe antelope</td>
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<td>59 Settled, slangily?</td>
<td>42 Like thyme</td>
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<td>60 Louis XV wore them</td>
<td>43 Out-and-out</td>
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<td>61 Geetars' kin</td>
<td>44 Terrible twos, e.g.</td>
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<td>62 Schoolbooks</td>
<td>45 Hang open</td>
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<td>63 Cool</td>
<td>53 White cheese</td>
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<td>64 Hermes' invention</td>
<td>54 Smidgen</td>
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<td>65 Silk</td>
<td>55 French one</td>
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<td>66 Peanut</td>
<td>56 Beiderbecke, of jazz</td>
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<td>67 Ballet dancer</td>
<td>57 Durocher</td>
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<td>68 Type of squash</td>
<td>58 Durocher nicknamed</td>
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<td>71 Nigeria</td>
<td>61 Scandinavian</td>
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<td>72 Dubai</td>
<td>62 Dizzy</td>
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For the 1 in 5 kids with learning and attention issues, every day can be a challenge. Explore Understood.org, a free online resource designed to help you help your child thrive in school and in life.

Brought to you by 15 nonprofit partners.

understood.org
We were showing you Chicago before you could search “Chicago”

Reintroducing Chicago’s original entertainment guide

Experience the new Metromix.com, now on all of your devices. With entertainment listings that cover the city and the suburbs, we’re your go-to source so you can spend less time planning, and more time doing.
Caffeine in night cream blamed for poor sleep

BY JOE GRAEDON
AND TERESA GRAEDON
King Features Syndicate

Q: As an active, fit woman in my 50s, I found it increasingly hard to sleep at night. I would go to bed exhausted and finally fall asleep, only to awaken one hour later, unable to get back to sleep. I was taking an over-the-counter sleep aid and melatonin, to no avail.

Whenshopping for cosmetics at a department store, I told the salesperson about my sleep dilemma and that it almost seemed my nighttime ritual could be the problem. She told me it most likely was.

She is a retired chemist from Eli Lilly. She showed me the very small print indicating that caffeine is added to moisturizers and eye creams to reduce wrinkles. I was shocked. Now I read the fine print and only buy products from caffeine. My night’s sleep is much improved.

A: We were surprised to learn that moisturizers, eye creams and many other cosmetics may contain caffeine. There is no question that caffeine is absorbed through the skin, but we don’t know how much caffeine beauty products contain. Manufacturers are not required to provide that information.

It is not clear whether facial creams and body lotions would supply enough caffeine to cause wakefulness. You might be especially sensitive to the stimulating effect of this compound.

We appreciate your alerting our readers to check their nighttime lotions. Caffeine is sometimes added to eye creams to reduce puffiness, but the appearance of your eyes at night may be less important than being able to get a good night’s sleep.

Q: I was diagnosed with uterine and ovarian cancer last year. After a complete hysterectomy and months of chemo, I talked to my GYN/oncologist about vaginal dryness.

He prescribed Premarin cream. He said it’s very low-dose estrogen and not absorbed into the bloodstream, unlike estrogen pills that are not advised for someone like me who has had a hormonal cancer.

He told me that the risk of developing breast cancer from this cream is incredibly small. He’s the head of the department and a GYN/oncologist for more than 25 years, so he should know.

A: The makers of Premarin Vaginal Cream specifically warn that it should not be used if you have had breast or uterine cancer, a stroke or heart attack, blood clots or liver problems.

During a current TV commercial, the voice-over says, “Estrogens may increase your chances of getting cancer of the uterus, strokes, blood clots or dementia.” This suggests that estrogen is absorbed from the vagina. You will find other ideas about easing vaginal dryness in our Guide to Menopause.

Anyone who would like a copy, please send $5 in check or money order with a long (No. 10), stamped (70 cents), self-addressed envelope to: Graedons’ People's Pharmacy, No. W-50, P.O. Box 52027, Durham, NC 27717-2027. It also can be downloaded for free from our website: peoplespharmacy.com.

Q: A friend told me that Swedish bitters were used historically for digestion. For the past couple of months I’ve been using the bitters to relieve my indigestion.

Do you know about Swedish bitters? Is there any research on this product?

A: Swedish bitters is a traditional herbal preparation that has been used to treat digestive distress for centuries. There is some research supporting its effectiveness (Alimentary Pharmacology and Therapeutics, October 2002). Bartenders also use bitters to impart a distinctive flavor to certain mixed drinks.

In their column, Joe and Teresa Graedon answer questions to them via peoplespharmacy.com.

TETRA IMAGES

When kids develop kidney stones, diet may be culprit

BY JOE SMYDO
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

PITTSBURGH — The first time the reddish color appeared in Bella’s urine, Loren Carroto blamed the ice pops her daughter had eaten at a birthday party. But the discoloration returned intermittently. It turned out to be blood, not food coloring, and the diagnosis was one affecting a growing number of children: kidney stones.

Five years later, Bella, now 9, remains on a low-salt diet, which helps prevent new kidney stones from forming but keeps her mother, who,enforces the dietary restrictions.

Comprehensive studies have not been done, so estimates of the number of U.S. pediatric kidney stone cases are unavailable. But doctors say they are seeing more children with the ailment, and some hospitals, including Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, have established special programs to diagnose and treat it.

In the last year, Children's saw about 100 patients who had kidney stones, said Michael Moritz, clinical director of pediatric nephrology. Kidney stones are tiny mineral deposits that form in some people’s kidneys. If they remain there, they cause no pain, and a person would be unaware of them.

Trouble comes when a stone leaves the kidneys and travels through or gets stuck in the narrow urinary tract. Blood is one symptom; intense pain is another.

“It’s extremely, extremely painful,” Moritz said, noting that some women have described kidney stones as being as painful as childbirth.

Kidney stones are roughly the same size in children and adults, but children’s organs are smaller, so they may have a more difficult time passing them, Moritz said. If stones do not pass out of the body, they may have to be surgically removed.

Because pediatric kidney stones remain an emerging trend, medical professionals may not be quick to suspect them, said Gregory Tasian, a pediatric urologist at The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

In Bella’s case, neither a pediatrician nor emergency room doctor could pinpoint her problem. Then Loren Carroto and her husband, Chad, took her to Moritz, who diagnosed the kidney stones with the help of an ultrasound.

Marian Riggins said her daughter, Taylor, 7, began experiencing bloody urine in December 2013. Although doctors insisted Taylor had a urinary tract infection, the problem persisted, and Riggins challenged that diagnosis.

“I wanted somebody to listen to me because I knew something was wrong,” she said.

Riggins took her to The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, where Tasian diagnosed kidney stones.

In a year, Tasian said, his program treats about 500 patients, about 100 of them newly diagnosed.

Because they’ve been studied less than the adult condition, pediatric kidney stones are something of a mystery. According to an August 2011 article in the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology, children’s stones occur more frequently in girls than boys, even though most adult cases affect men.

Tasian said prevalence has increased so quickly over the last 25 years that environmental factors are more likely to blame than genetic causes. “Diets are a strong risk factor,” he said.

He and Moritz said children don’t drink enough water, which flushes stone-forming minerals from the body. Nor, Moritz said, do children eat enough fruits and vegetables, which have alkaline properties that counter stone production. On the other hand, kids eat too many fatty, salty foods and drink dark colas, which contain an acid that some doctors believe to be a factor in stone formation.

Tasian said treatment at Children’s in Pittsburgh includes a metabolic analysis of the patient’s urine and a “targeted dietary approach,” while Tasian said his program’s comprehensive approach includes a metabolic assessment.
Pre-pregnancy weight loss best for all

Fewer problems for baby, mother, doctors report

BY LESLIE MANN
Special to Tribune Newspapers

Before she got pregnant in 2014, Lizzy King, 28, of East Lansing, Mich., gave herself a "lifestyle overhaul." She started running and lost 50 pounds. She switched processed food and ate her first banana.

King became "hyper-aware of the effects of too much weight gain before and during pregnancy," she said. "That was fuel to keep exercising and turn down that extra bowl of ice cream."

The result: King's pregnancy and childbirth were smooth sailing, her baby is healthy, and she quickly returned to her pre-pregnancy clothes.

"Obesity can adversely affect fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum recovery and the baby," said Dr. Raul Artal of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Just getting pregnant can be thwarted by obesity. A common fertility enemy for obese women is polycystic ovary syndrome, which can disrupt ovulation.

After a woman becomes pregnant, obesity increases her chances of gestational diabetes, hypertension, pre-eclampsia, long labor, labor interventions, miscarriage and ultrasound test difficulties.

Obesity can cause macrosomia, having too large a baby, which in turn ups a woman's chances of having a cesarean delivery or C-section.

An obese mom's fetus is "bathed in the hormones leptin and insulin, which control weight," Neff said. "His brain is programmed for obesity by having different hormones (hungry or full)."

"These babies have gene mutations that will affect generations to come," Artal added.

The first trimester is especially crucial, according to a 2014 study of 3,000 women by the University of Southampton in England.

In addition to a propensity for obesity, the obese mom's baby is more likely to have a neural tube or heart defect, be stillborn or suffer birth injuries.

The baby is more likely to be premature, too, according to the Seattle Children's Hospital's Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth. Prematurity increases the baby's chances of becoming obese, so a vicious cycle begins.

Obesity in pregnancy is part of a greater societal problem, said Gerald Celente, publisher of the Kingston, N.Y.-based Trends Journal.

"There used to be one fat kid in the class, and, yes, we said, 'fat,' he said. "Now we have a generation of fat people who have grown up on junk food, with sedentary lifestyles."

Obesity is part of the "I don't care" trend, Celente said. "The loss of pride and self-respect is endemic."

The blame has shifted from "personal responsibility" to "a community problem," according to a 2014 study of 58,625 adults and 3,518 health care professionals, said co-author Diana Thomas, director of the Center for Quantitative Obesity Research in Montclair, N.J.

Preceding the shift, Thomas noted, was the American Medical Association's classification of obesity as a "disease" in 2013.

Fortunately, intervention helps. Obese pregnant women who participate in intensive nutritional diets and exercise in their first trimesters are less likely to gain excess weight or have macrosomia, C-sections, pre-eclampsia or hypertension than peas with standard prenatal care, according to a 2014 study by the Capital Medical University in Beijing.

It's all about education — not just for pregnant women but also for the medical community, Neff said.

The obese woman should view pregnancy as "a great window of opportunity to learn from her doctor and make changes," said Michael Goran, director of the University of Southern California's Childhood Obesity Research Center.

Consider these tips:

■ First, achieve mental health. Lisa Vismanos, 36, of Los Angeles, worked with a trainer to get "in shape physically, mentally and spiritually" pre-pregnancy, she said.

During pregnancy, she "gained weight gracefully. Afterward I lost it because I had gone from the crazy cardio exerciser to calm."

■ Consult the scale. A normal-weight woman, for example, should gain 25 to 35 pounds during pregnancy, depending on her height, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Obese women should gain 11 to 20 pounds.

■ Listen to your body. Just as you stay away from alcohol and sushi, stay away from sugary beverages too," Goran said.

Pregnancy is not a time to indulge, according to Artal. "Just continue to exercise and eat well," he said.

■ Include your partner in your exercise-and-diet team.

Ignore websites that urge you to dismiss doctors' warnings, King said. "It's fine to be 'bold and beautiful' if it's just you, but it's not fair to the baby," she said.

■ Use an activity device that reminds you to "keep active all day," Neff said. "Take the stairs, get off the bus a stop early, park in a farther spot."

■ Take an online exercise class from an instructor who has been there, done that, like Kelly Coffey, 35, of Northampton, Mass. (strongcoffey.com), who became a personal trainer after having gastric-bypass surgery then having children.

Bottom line, we have only begun to understand the effects of obesity on pregnancy, the doctors said.

It's no longer just about losing your post-prego baby bump. "It's about taking charge of your health for the sake of your baby," Coffey tells her students. "Lose the weight now, before you get pregnant, or I'm going to tell you to do it before you have another baby."
THE VEGGIE COOK

Aromatic spices come alive in lentil-bulgur dish

By Kay Stepkin
Special to Tribune Newspapers

It's not just happenstance that so many vegetarian dishes come from India. Jon Gregerson, in his book "Vegetarianism: A History," tells us that the teachings of India's three primary religions — Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism — include a focus on practicing compassion toward our fellow animals, which has led many Indians to adopt a vegetarian diet.

The first Vegetarian Society, however, was not formed in India, according to Tristram Stuart in "The Bloodless Revolution," but in England in 1847. English colonization having brought Western influences to India, and Indian influences to England. In the case of vegetarianism, it was the colonists who learned from the colonized.

One of the earliest of cultivated legumes, lentils have long been an important crop worldwide and are a staple of Indian cuisine. Here they're served with a whole grain and oil made aromatic with spices.

**Tips**
- Unrefined, roasted peanut oil has a wonderful flavor. Use it or substitute the oil of your choice.
- Use any small lentil in this recipe except red lentils, which would break down too much.

**East Indian lentils and bulgur**

Prep: 35 minutes  Cook: 1 hour  Makes: 6 servings

1 cup green lentils, sorted, rinsed 1 cup bulgur 1 teaspoon sea salt 2 tablespoons peanut oil 1 large onion, chopped 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger 2 cloves garlic, minced 2 serrano peppers, seeded, minced 1/2 teaspoon each: cumin seed, mustard seed, celery seed, ground allspice 2 large onions, halved, thinly sliced 1/2 cup tightly packed chopped fresh cilantro

- Combine 3 cups water and the lentils in a medium saucepan; cover. Heat to a boil over medium-high heat. Lower the heat; simmer until almost tender, about 20 minutes. Stir in bulgur and 1/2 teaspoon salt; cover; remove from heat. Let sit until legumes and grains are tender and water is absorbed, about 20 minutes.

- Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add chopped onion, ginger, garlic, serrano, cumin, mustard, celery, allspice and 1/2 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion turns translucent, about 10 minutes. Stir in the lentil and bulgur mixture. Cover; remove from heat.

- Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add sliced onions; season with remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until beginning to soften, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low; cook until onions are golden brown, about 20 minutes. Place the lentil/bulgur mixture on a large platter; garnish with the caramelized onions and cilantro.

**Nutrition Information per serving:** 263 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 44 g carbohydrates, 12 g protein, 477 mg sodium, 12 g fiber
When I ponder pairing wine and food, looking for the right match of liquid and larder, I picture myself standing in an elevator lobby of a very large, rather tall building.

All the food in the world is in that building, all the many bases of different animal or aquatic protein, all the globe's vegetables and starches, and all the various preparations that cooks work with: Asian salt and heat, American char and bies and starches, and all the various or aquatic protein, all the globe's vegetables and starches, and all the various preparations that cooks work with: Asian salt and heat, American char and bies and starches, and all the various 

On the first floor of the building are eats such as unadorned tofu or chicken tenders poached in water. On the top floor, whichever the number (it doesn't matter), is live bear. All else is in between.

What I want to do is taste and enjoy as many of the world's foods and their preparations as many different kinds of wines as would marry them well. So I look for the sweep of the elevator's controls, as in those old-fashioned arrow pointers that fanned over the floor numbers as the car went up or down.

The best wines for me to choose are those that can handle a ride to as many floors as possible. The least useful are those that niche themselves onto only one or two floors. For the first floor, a lot of Italian pinot grigio works. For the live bear, a head-banging 17 percent alcohol California red will do.

Either wine fits with only a few foods; they work well there, but there only.

To speak about just red wines here, the more flexible are what we can call "the lighter reds," those easy of tannin, moderate of alcohol, medium-weight in body and less extracted of fruit and phenol.

Such red wines taste delicious with white, pink and many red meats, with mild and spicy foods, with vegetable-based preparations and a raft of cheeses.

Well-made pinot noir is such a wine, whether from its kingdom of Burgundy or as it appears in most all winemaking countries. The 2013 Friedrich Becker Family Pinot Noir, Pfalz, Germany ($19), comes to mind, with its softly rendered cherrylike fruit; so does the 2013 Erath Winery Pinot Noir, Oregon ($17), light on the tongue but headily scented.

Wines like Elena Walch Schiava, Erath Pinot Noir and Colazzi Chianti Classico have a lighter profile, making them great companions for food.

From Trentino in northern Italy, the 2014 Cantina Terlan Blauburgunder (pinot noir's name up there) brings aromas of burnt hay and char to pinot's red fruit base and is but a delicious $15 to boot. And the spicy, nervy 2010 Clos des Fous Pinot Noir Latuffa, Traiguen, Chile ($35), well captures the wet black rock aromas to which its name alludes. It's terrific South American pinot.

But there is a world of lighter red beyond pinot noir too. Try good cru Beaujolais for example, such as the lively 2012 Daniel Boulud Chiroubles, Burgundy, France ($27), made from organic grapes in the low yield, old school method to capture the juicy fruit of its gamay grapes. From Italy's central region of Tuscany, a river of medium-bodied, refreshing Chianti Classico flows, such as the 2012 Collazzi Chianti Classico I Bastioni, Tuscany, Italy ($19), like drinking cool well water flavored with Bing cherry.

In northern Spain, they make one of the world's great lighter reds from the tempranillo grape (sometimes with ancillary grapes of mazuelo and graciano for flavor and texture notes) in the Rioja district. One such is the 2008 Beronia Rioja Tinto Reserva, Rioja, Spain ($20), bringing to the table its many layers of flavor and aroma, and its elegant texture on the tongue.

Notice something going on with these wines? They are, by and large, from cooler climates that do not ripen red grapes into sporting boorish fruit, thick tannins and potentially high alcohol. So, back to northern Italy for the 2013 Kellerei Kaltern Veronata/Sciala Camperan, Trentino-Alto Adige ($20), and the 2012 Elena Walch Schiava, Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy ($33), both intensively fruity and snappily acidric (the dual name on the Kellerei Kaltern is its moniker in both German and Italian, the two languages of Trentino).

Or have a go in a lighter textured red with the 2012 Brea de San Lorenzo Dolcetto d'Alba, Piedmont, Italy ($24), and its plush, plumy body, highly scented red fruit and zippy finish. Experiment with some of the newer ways with Emilia-Romagna's great light red in the NV Cleto Chiarli Lambrusco di Sorbara Vecchia Modena, Emilia-Romagna, Italy ($15-$17), and its flavors of strawberry and red cherry even so slightly sweet and lightly fizzes.

The 2013 J. Lohr Valdigui Wildflower, Monterey, California ($12), approaches the Lambrusco's lifted fruit, but is drier, not at all bubbly and chin-dripping juicy. Valdigui is an obscure red grape that J. Lohr has revived as a red wine, and gets some applause for doing so.

It's the globe's lighter reds that will stand your palate in good stead with as wide a range of foods as you wish to tolerate and enjoy.

If your wine store does not carry these, ask for wines similar in style and price.

Bill St. John has been writing and teaching about wine for more than 40 years.

bsjtrib@gmail.com

Gluten-free burritos

Our big burrito appetite prompted Udi's Gluten Free to introduce frozen gluten-free burritos (four breakfast, four lunch/dinner). The a.m. versions (half use whole eggs; two use whites) combine meats (sausages, bacon), cheese and veggies. Lunch/dinner options have similar cheese and meat (steak, chicken) or veggie/bean match-ups. Microwaved, the tasty uncured bacon, egg and cheddar, plumped with potatoes and peppers, is an easy day starter. The version with rice, black beans, chicken and cheese makes a flavorful light lunch. A 5-ounce burrito: $3.99. Store locator: udisglutenfree.com.

Spreading almond love

The nut butter world beyond peanuts is a busy place. Butters from hazelnuts, pecans, walnuts, cashews and almonds crowd store shelves. The Barney Butter folks have added a few new flavors to their line of almond butters, including honey-flax, raw-chia and cocoa-coconut. Our favorite: the vanilla bean- espresso with its barely crunchy coffee bean bits. A 10-ounce jar: $8.99. For a store locator or to buy: barneybutter.com.
Play it again, Ravinia Festival

BY JOHN VON RHEIN, GREG KOT AND HOWARD REICH
Tribune critics

A new Ravinia Festival season brings powerhouse pop and a noteworthy jazz lineup. On the classical side, crowd-pleasing symphonic fare and movie nights will dominate the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's six-week residency at the Ravinia Festival this summer, as the festival looks to build on last year's uptick in attendance for classical events.

Altogether there will be more than 120 classical, pop, rock, jazz, dance and family-oriented programs during the season, which will run June 16-Sept. 10 on the tree-shaded festival grounds in Highland Park, Ravinia announced March 5.

Classical

James Conlon will conclude his 11-year tenure as music director of the CSO's summer residency weeks with a concert performance of an opera new to the Ravinia repertory: Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman," starring singers Amber Wagner and Greer Grimsley.

Other soloists appearing with Conlon and the CSO include pianists Garrick Ohlsson, Lise de la Salle and Jorge Federico Osorio. Conlon also will direct the gala benefit evening, an all-Tchaikovsky program with Maxim Vengerov as violin soloist.

Whom will Ravinia hire to replace Conlon? Clues may lurk in the summer's guest conductor roster.

A world premiere by Chicago pianist Ramsey Lewis, a two-night run by Tony Bennett with Lady Gaga and a farewell appearance by the Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club will grace the jazz calendar this summer at the Ravinia Festival in Highland Park.

Lewis, who serves as director of jazz at Ravinia, will celebrate his 80th birthday with the world premiere of his Piano Concerto, which will perform with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 8 in the pavilion.

Bobby McFerrin will conduct the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in "The Best of the Gershwins' Porgy and Bess," with soprano Nicole Cabell, baritone Brian Stokes Mitchell and a choir assembled by Josephine Lee, at 8 p.m. July 8 in the pavilion. And David Alan Miller will lead the CSO — joined by pianist-vocalist Kevin Cole and singer Sylvia McNair — in "Play It Again, Marvin! A Marvin Hamlisch Celebration" at 5 p.m. July 26 in the pavilion.

Pop, Rock And Country

Country star Alan Jackson (Aug. 31), matchbox2 singer Rob Thomas (July 18) and Lady Gaga (paired with Ravinia perennial Tony Bennett (June 26-27) are among the pop and country artists making their debuts at Ravinia this summer.

If not quite as adventurous as Gaga and Bennett, pairings dominate the lineup: the Tedeschi Trucks Band and soul singer Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings (June 21), David Gray with Amos Lee (June 28), Beach Boys founder Brian Wilson and Oscar-winning "Sugar Man" singer Rodriguez (July 6), Brandi Carlile and Old Crow Medicine Show (July 31), Bush and 3 Doors Down (Aug. 17), ZZ Top and Blackberry Smoke (Aug. 27), and Little Big Town with David Nail (Aug. 28).

Also, pianist Cyrus Chestnut and the Turtle Island Quartet will perform "Jelly, Rags and Monk" at 6 p.m. Aug. 29 in Bennett Gordon Hall. Diana Krall will play her "Wallflower World Tour" at 7 p.m. Aug. 9 in the pavilion.

- Howard Reich

FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Lady Gaga and Tony Bennett.

Multi-act bills include Switchfoot with Dwight Holcomb & the Neighbors and Colony House (Aug. 19) and Sugar Ray, Better Than Ezra, Eve 6 and Uncle Kracker (Aug. 18).

Also notable: Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion" on June 20, Aretha Franklin singing "The Great Diva Classics" on July 11, the Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club's "Adios Tour" on Aug. 12, Umphrey's McGee on Aug. 14, Santana on Aug. 29-30, and Jackson Browne on Sept. 5.

For information, call 847-266-5100 or visit Ravinia.org.
Comedian/actor/author Paul Reiser hasn't been out of the spotlight, given his appearances in the cable TV series “Married” and “Red Oaks” and a featured role in the Oscar-nominated film “Whiplash,” but his standup career has been on prolonged hold.

That's changing, however, with Reiser's new national standup comedy tour, which brings him March 14 to the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie.

We caught up with him for a quick chat about doing comedy in his 50s, keeping his material honest and why he's decided to get back on the road after so many years.

Q: You've been very busy recently with TV and movies.

A: Yeah, I've been on a couple of fun shows the last couple of years, like “Married” for FX and “Red Oaks” for Amazon. And I'm especially happy about the way “Whiplash” turned out. It's a fun little movie. I had very little to do in it, just a couple of days work, but it was obvious it was going to be a great project.

Q: Why did you decide to start touring again?

A: About two or three years ago I started doing standup again for no real reason other than I missed it. I wasn't planning on working. I just thought I'd get up on stage at local clubs. But it was so fun. It felt exactly the way it did when I started. There's something wonderfully pure about standup. It's just you and your ideas. You don't have to pitch a concept to a studio, you don't have to raise money, you just find a club and go.

Q: Do you adopt a different persona when you're doing standup?

A: I find that when I'm closer to my truths, when I'm being honest as myself, that's when it works best. So, when I'm talking about whatever is going on in my head, about life in general or my kids or my wife or getting older, whatever it is that's amusing me I always try to have it come from a very honest place.

Q: Do you find that your perspective has changed since your younger years?

A: I probably have the same point of view I've always had, but when you get older, you have more life experience and more opinions. When I was talking about marriage on “Mad about You” it was about life as newlyweds. But now, after 25 years of marriage, I have a different perspective.

Q: Does performing live make you feel more closely connected to your fans?

A: Oh yeah. You know, I usually do a meet-and-greet after the show in case anyone wants to come over and say hi. And, almost invariably, people will want to share some personal connection about something I've done, whether it's a “Mad about You” episode or a joke that they loved. And that makes me laugh.

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Local cabaret artists celebrate Elaine Stritch

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
Pioneer Press

Broadway legend Elaine Stritch died last July, but cabaret artist Daryl Nitz thought she still deserved a 90th birthday celebration. On Feb. 2, her actual birthday, Nitz produced “Here’s to the Lady: Elaine Stritch at 90” at Davenport’s Piano Bar and Cabaret in Chicago. It was a sellout.

Nitz is bringing that show to the Skokie Theatre on Friday, March 20 with its cast intact. The music director is Johnny Rodgers. The cast includes seven acclaimed cabaret artists, Cynthia Clarey, Joan Curto, Laura Freeman, K.T. McCammond, Ann McGregor, Suzanne Petri and Judy Rossignuolo-Rice.

“Elaine Stritch is one of the performers I’ve been inspired by,” Nitz said. “Not just because of her singing, but her acting and her honesty. She had the ability to find the tragic in the comedy or the comedy in the tragic. I’ve kept songs of hers in my repertoire.”

Nitz wanted to bring the show to Skokie because he’s confident that Stritch had many fans in this area, and she is buried in Skokie.

“In putting the show together, I wanted to cover her career from her first show, ‘Angel in the Wings,’ to her final show, ‘A Little Night Music,’” Nitz said. “But I wanted to make sure that I included personal songs like ‘He was Good to Me.’ A couple of sources said that was her favorite song.”

“She’s an icon. There’s no doubt about it,” Curto said.

Curto will perform selections from “Call Me Madam,” a show for which Stritch understudied Ethel Merman. “Ethel Merman never missed a show,” Curto said. “So Elaine Stritch didn’t go on for Ethel Merman when she was on Broadway, except for vacations, but she did play the part in the tour.”

Selections include, “The Hostess with the Mostest” and “Money, Money, Money.” Curto will also sing “You’re Just in Love” with Johnny Rodgers.

Petri is particularly excited about performing “Liaisons” from “A Little Night Music.”

“I am playing Madame Armfeldt. It was her last role. She was 85,” Petri said. “It’s a song I’ve always wanted to sing. It tells this wonderful story of this woman who’s been there, done that. What a life she’s led, which is so much like Elaine.”

Petri will also sing, “I’ve Been to a Marvelous Party.”

“I’ve done a little bit of rewriting,” she said. “Depending on who’s in the audience, I may mention a few people.”

All seven women join forces for another popular Stritch number, “The Ladies Who Lunch.”

Petri said her fellow performers are “all great cabaret artists, but they’re all so unique and they bring something special to each song.”
A spell of improv for young Devonshire actors

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
Pioneer Press

The competition will be intense at "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," 7 p.m. Saturdays and 3 p.m. Sundays, March 14-22, at Devonshire Playhouse, 4400 Greenwood St., Skokie. "It's a funny show," said Jessica Sawyer, director of the Devonshire Playhouse Teen Performers' production.

The musical is about six adolescent spelling bee competitors being judged by three rather unusual adults.

Sawyer thinks it's a great show for the teen cast. "One of my goals is to give teens an opportunity to play kids," she explained. "So many times we have them playing animals and adults. Plus there's a lot of room for improv and for them to add their uniqueness to it."

Some audience members will be invited onstage, and the teens need to learn how to interact with these unscripted individuals. "They're really excited about the opportunity to not have everything completely set in stone," Sawyer reported.

Tickets are $12 for adults, $10 for ages 3-17 and seniors.
For details, call (847) 929-7420 or go to skokie-parks.org.

He's all ears

The Easter Bunny wants to hear what kids have to say. He will also pose with them for photos during the Bunny Photo Experience, noon-8 p.m. Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturdays and noon-6 p.m. Sundays, March 20-April 4, in the Center Court at Lincolnwood Town Center, 3333 W. Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood.

For details, call (847) 676-2230 or go to barnes-noble.com.

Catch this train

Your family won't need passports to explore Brazil. Just buy a ticket to "The Little Train of the Caipira," 10 a.m. Saturday, March 14, at Nichols Concert Hall, 1400 Chicago Ave., Evanston. The program is part of the Music Institute of Chicago's Family Concert Series. Starting at 9 a.m., children can visit an Instrument Petting Zoo. Tickets are $5.
For details, call (847) 905-1500, ext. 108 or go to musicinst.org.

Feel the beat

...of those Moving Feet, 2:30-4 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, March 17-26, at Kohl Children's Museum of Greater Chicago, 2100 Patriot Blvd., Glenview. Your youngsters will march, step and stomp their way through a maze with giant foot stompers. Activity is free with museum admission.
For details, call (847) 832-6600 or go to kohlcollectionsmuseum.org.
**A pint and a pie**

“But it is dark in there,” muttered my grandma skeptically as my mom opened the door to Durty Nelly’s pub in Bunratty, Ireland 20 years ago. My grandma, mom and I, had traipsed across the Emerald Isle for nearly two weeks before we darkened the doorway of one of Ireland’s landmark pubs.

We had learned all about thatched roofs, Waterford crystal and sheep shearing. We’d kissed the Blarney stone, tasted the peat fire and savored both while chatting with a few locals sitting by the hearth to Durty Nelly’s on that fateful day.

Grandma much preferred an afternoon castle tour to bellying up to the bar and after returning to the hotel my mom reluctantly agreed to take her to see a few more crumbling turrets. Despite the fact I’d never been one to enjoy hanging out in a bar alone, I knew this was likely to be my first and only chance to visit an honest-to-goodness Irish pub on our vacation.

With my grandma and mom safely on their way to play princess, I walked the streets of the quaint Irish village before heading into a random pub on a street corner. I ordered my pint and pie and savored both while chatting with a few locals sitting by the fire. It was a cozy, filling and unforgettable meal.

The shepherd’s pie was brimming with tender lamb and carrot coins. Crowned with golden brown mashed potatoes, the pie was enhanced by the complex bitterness of my pint of Guinness. The dish tasted like it had been cooking for days.

My solo Irish pub dinner remains as one of my favorite memory meals to this very day; I still giggle knowing I made it back to the hotel just before my grandma walked in toting a bag full of brand new Irish lace doilies.

**St. Patrick’s Day**

### Shepherds Pie with Colcannon Potatoes

(10 generous servings)
Both the stew and the potatoes can be prepared two days ahead and refrigerated before assembling the pie for baking.

**FOR THE FILLING:**
- 2 pounds beef or lamb stew meat (I used a combination)
- Kosher salt and coarse black pepper
- 2–4 Tablespoons canola oil
- 5 medium carrots, peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch thick coins
- 2 medium sweet onions, diced
- 5 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 1 cup red wine
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 small head cabbage, quartered
- Kosher salt and coarse black pepper

**FOR THE TOPPING:**
- 4 pounds Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 4 garlic cloves
- Kosher salt
- 1 small head cabbage, quartered
- 6 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 cup chopped Italian parsley
- 4 scallions, sliced
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan
- 2 egg yolks

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Transfer the seared meat to a deep bottomed stock pot until deeply colored on all sides. Add the remaining meat in batches, adding 1 Tablespoon of oil to the pot before each addition.

While the stew braises prepare the colcannon. Place the potatoes and garlic cloves in a pot with salted water to cover. Bring to a boil and nestle the cabbage on top of the potatoes. Cover the pot and allow to simmer for 30 minutes. Remove the tender cabbage and allow to cool before chopping (you should have about 2 cups). Check the potatoes for tenderness and drain when they are easily pierced with a fork. Place the potatoes in a large bowl and mash with a potato masher until nearly smooth. Stop mashing and add meat to the pot. Stir the mixture thoroughly and cook until just starting to brown. Gradually whisk in the wine and broth before adding all the meat and accumulated drippings back to the pot. Toss in the bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Seal the pot with aluminum foil and secure the lid. Place the pot in the oven and allow the stew to braise for 2 hours or until the meat is very tender.

Increase the oven temp to 375 degrees. Transfer the stew to a 9x13 Pyrex baking dish; the dish should be about two-thirds full. Drop the potatoes in large clumps over the top of the stew. Use a spatula to smooth the potatoes even over the stew. Place the dish on a rimmed baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes until potatoes are firm and stew is bubbling. Switch on the broiler and broil the shepherd’s pie until potatoes are golden brown and slightly crisp. Garnish each serving with green peas and thyme sprigs if desired.
GO CALENDAR

Listings are subject to change. Please call the venue in advance.

Friday, March 13

Morgan at Fado Irish Pub: 10 p.m. Friday, Fado Irish Pub & Restaurant, 100 W. Grand Ave., Chicago, free, 312-727-5770

“Titus Andronicus”: Babes With Blades Theatre Company will serve up the blood and pie with their upcoming production of William Shakespeare’s most violent play, performed by an all-female cast. 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, City Lit Theater Company, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, $10-$22, 773-281-6880

Sondheim on Sondheim: Porchlight Music Theatre presents an intimate portrait of the famed songwriter in his own words and music featuring new arrangements of more than two-dozen Sondheim tunes. 8 p.m. Friday, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, $38, 773-293-3682

“The Full Monty”: Kokandy Productions assembles a 20-member cast directed by John Glover to kick off Theater Wit’s 2015 season with a musical comedy about some laid-off U.S. steel workers who turn to stripping to make ends meet. Buy tickets by visiting www.kokandyproductions.com, by calling 773-975-8150 or visiting the Theater Wit Box Office. 8 p.m. Friday, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, 8 p.m. Wednesday, Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, $38, 773-975-8150

“The Glass Protege”: Hollywood 1949. In an era of stifling movie production restraints and stars kept under oppressive control, innocent young British actor Patrick Glass, newly arrived in Hollywood, feels the full force of the studios’ brute career-destroying power when he embarks on a scandalous love affair with his famous male co-star. 7:45 p.m. all week, Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, $25-$40, 773-975-8150

Into the Bat Caves of Kenya: Scientists Bruce Patterson and Paul Weabla, accompanied by vlogger Emily Graslie, venture deep into a cave in Kenya’s Mount Suswa to study the varied bats of East Africa. 9 a.m. all week, Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, free, 312-922-9410

Vodou: Sacred Powers of Haiti: This exhibit explores Vodou as a religion and

an expression of the Haitian national experience. 10 a.m. all week, Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, free, 312-922-9410

“Edgar and Annabel”: Sam Holcroft’s play throws us into a world of government surveillance and societal distrust. Against the odds, a young married couple thrives — at least to those who are listening. 4:15 p.m. Friday-Sunday, The Side Project Theatre, 1439 W. Jarvis Ave., Chicago, $15, 773-904-0391

“The Illusionists”: This magic show, originally performed on Broadway, features seven talented magicians performing their acts. 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Tuesday and 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Cadillac Palace Theatre, 151 W. Randolph St., Chicago, prices TBA, 800-775-2000

The Hammer Trinity: The Excelsior King: Sixteen actors bring 54 characters to life in a tale spanning three full-length plays. 7:30 p.m. Friday, Chopin Theatre, 1543 W. Division St., Chicago, $15-$30, 773-769-3832

Chicago Styled: Fashioning the Magnificent Mile: This exhibition uses 20 outfits from the museum’s costume collection to tell the story of a street, in fashion. The exhibit runs Nov. 15 to Aug. 16 and is free with admission. 9:30 a.m. Friday, 9:30 a.m. Saturday, noon Sunday and 9:30 a.m. Monday-Wednesday, Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., Chicago, free, 312-642-4600

“The Royal Tenenbaums”: Watch this oddball film about an estranged family of former child prodigies reuniting for their father’s alleged terminal illness. 11 p.m. Friday, 11 p.m. Saturday and 6 p.m. Sunday, The Logan Theatre, 2646 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, $750, 773-342-5555

Orquideas a la Luz de la Luna”: Written by Carlos Fontes and directed by Sándor Menéndez, this play is described by promotional materials as “a linguistic tour de force by one of the most brilliant writers of the 20th century.” The play is performed in Spanish with English subtitles. 8 p.m. Friday, 8 p.m. Saturday and 6 p.m. Sunday, Agujon Theatre, 2707 N. Laramie Ave., Chicago, $20-$25, 773-637-5899

“Genius”: This play examines the secrets and alliances of two creative couples from different generations who find their lives changed forever one evening after an electric dinner party. 8 p.m. Friday, 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday, Profiles Theatre at The Alley Stage, 4147 N. Broadway, Chicago, $35-$40, 773-549-1815

Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind: The longest-running show in Chicago, it’s a one-hour blitz of 30 extremely brief plays. 11:30 p.m. Friday, 11:30 p.m. Saturday and 7 p.m. Sunday, The Neo-Futurarium, 5153 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, $10 plus the roll of one die ($10-$15) or $20 for advance reservations, 773-275-5255

“The Talking Cure”: This premiere centers on Sabina Spielrein. A brilliant young “hysteric,” she is Carl Jung’s first patient, and eventual colleague, as he seeks to refine the “talking cure” method of treatment proposed by his adopted mentor, Sigmund Freud. 8 p.m. Friday, 8 p.m. Saturday and 8 p.m. Sunday, Rivendell Theater, 5775 N. Ridge Ave., Chicago, $20, 773-340-9438

DJ Ruckus: 10 p.m. Friday, Studio Paris Nightclub, 59 W. Hubbard St., Chicago, $10-$20, 312-377-9944

“Four”: On a lonely Fourth of July in Hartford in 1996, June, a 16-year-old white boy, sneaks out for his first ever tryst with Joe, a closeted, married black man he’s met over the Internet. On the same night, just across town, studious high-schooler Abigail escapes her ailing mother to go out with Dexter, a 20-year-old low-level drug dealer. 8 p.m. Friday, 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday, Broadway Armory Park, 5917 N. Broadway, Chicago, $15-$20, 312-742-7502

“Dividing the Estate”: Horton Foote’s comedy-drama focuses on the members of the Gordon family — a wealthy Texas clan whose fortunes have declined and who are debating whether or not to divide the remainder of the family’s estate while their octogenarian matriarch Stella is still alive. 7:30 p.m. Friday, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark St., Chicago, $22-$36, 773-338-2177

“Blue Planet”: In this play, best friends Hilda and Bgrim live on a planet much like Earth — populated only by children. They live a simple but ideal life. When they meet an adult, the mysterious Jolly-Goody, they are promised a life of greater joy, even more spectacular fun, but at what cost? 7:30 p.m. Friday, 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday, DCA Storefront Theater, 66 E. Randolph St., Chicago, $5-$15.

Turn to Calendar, Next Page
Go Calendar, from Previous Page

800-595-4849

“One Came Home”: Lifeline Theatre presents a world premiere adaptation of Amy Timberlake’s Edgar Award-winning and Newbery Honor book, “One Came Home.” During the great passenger pigeon migration of 1871, throngs of strangers descend upon Placid, Wis., bringing prosperity in their wake. But as the skies clear, tragedy strikes and Georgie Burkhardt’s sister goes missing. When a body is found and the town goes into mourning, Georgie sets out to uncover the truth. 7:30 p.m. Friday, 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago, $20-$40, 773-761-4477

“Jesus Christ Superstar”: This is an intimate re-imagining of the classic rock opera, performed acoustic and unplugged. 8 p.m. Friday, 8 p.m. Saturday and 7:30 p.m. Sunday. Lifeline Theatre, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie, $10-$15, 847-834-0738

“Ordinary Days”: This honest and funny musical is about making real connections in the city that never sleeps. 8 p.m. Friday, 8 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday. BoHo Theatre at Heartland Studio Theatre, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago, $20, 773-791-2393

“Turnpike Troubadours”: 8:30 p.m. Friday. Joe’s Bar, 940 W. Weed St., Chicago, $21-$24, 312-337-3486

McHenry County College presents “columbus”: See the play sparked by the April 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo. It is a meeting of fact and fiction that illuminates the realities of adolescent culture by exploring the events surrounding the shootings. The play weaves together excerpts from discussions with parents, survivors and community leaders in Littleton as well as police evidence to bring to light the dark recesses of American adolescence. A discussion between cast members and the audience will follow each of the Friday performances. Reservations are recommended. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. McHenry County College, 8900 US Hwy 14, Crystal Lake, $10-$15, 815-455-1030

All My Relations: A Seneca History: In collaboration with visual artist and dancer Rosy Simas (Seneca), this exhibit introduces the history of the Seneca culture through milestones in the lives of Simas and her relations. It features traditional and modern Seneca artifacts, which span various generations. 11 a.m. all week, Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, 3001 Central St., Evanston, Free-$5; $10-$12 for talk, 847-475-1030

Native Haute Couture: The year long exhibit celebrates the history of Native American high fashion from pre-contact to today. It features garments that showcase American Indian artistry and expertise in tanning, weaving, embroidery, beadwork and tailoring. 10 a.m. all week. Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, 3001 Central St., Evanston, free, 847-475-1030

“Lone Star” and “Laundry and Bourbon”: Presenting two plays depicting life in a sleepy Texas town. “Lone Star” and “Laundry and Bourbon” by James McLure, both seem to bring to light the dark recesses of American adolescence. A discussion between cast members and the audience will follow each of the Friday performances. Reservations are recommended. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. McHenry County College, 8900 US Hwy 14, Crystal Lake, $10-$15, 815-455-8746

“Little Shop of Horrors”: The Fine Arts Department of Grayslake High School District 127 presents its annual spring musical, “Little Shop of Horrors,” a Broadway and Hollywood sci-fi musical. 7:30 p.m. Friday, 7:30 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday. Grayslake Central High School, 400 North Lake St, Grayslake, $10, 847-986-3100

“The Power 100

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Saturday, March 14

Torche: 9 p.m. Saturday, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western Ave., Chicago, $15, 773-276-3600.

The Magician and His Shadow: This magic show is about more than just magic. Theater Wit describes this production as a “theatrical magic show that combines magical illusions with the story of a magician whose shadow takes on a life of its own.” 1 p.m. Saturday, Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, $14.50 for children, $17.50 for adults, 773-975-8150.

“The Walk Across America for Mother Earth”: Political activism meets bedazzled drag show in this story about two young friends who flee their suburban upbringing in “Real America” to join a ragtag group of activists on a protest march from D.C. to Nevada. 8 p.m. Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday, Step-penwolf Theatre Company, 1650 N. Halsted St., Chicago, $20, 312-335-1650.

Alabama Shakes: 8 p.m. Saturday, The Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State St., Chicago, $39.50, 312-462-6300.

Infected Mushroom: 9 p.m. Saturday, Concord Music Hall, 2047 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, $20.

Incantation: With Cardiac Arrest, "Blood of the Wolf and Abyssine." 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, $15-$18, 773-281-4444.

El Bandolero & Souphonetics: 10 p.m. Saturday, Masada, 2206 N. California Ave., Chicago, free, 773-276-3600.

Crystal City: With The Headspins. 9 p.m. Saturday, Moe's Tavern, 2937 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, free, 773-227-2937.

Fifth Harmony: 7 p.m. Saturday, Vic Theatre/Brew & View, 3145 N. Sheffield Ave., Chicago, $34, 773-472-0449.

“The Greatest Story Never Told”: This event brings families and strangers together to collaborate and create improvised stories on stage. Professional improvisers help coax audience suggestions and invite volunteers to take to the stage. 1:30 p.m. Saturday, iO, 3541 N. Clark St., Chicago, $15, 773-880-0199.

“The Apple Family Plays: That Hokey Changey Thing and Sorry”: Richard Nelson’s series of four plays explore politics, change and family dynamics. The plays are being performed on alternating nights. 8 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday, TimeLine Theatre, 615 W. Wellington Ave., Chicago, $35-$48, 773-281-4633.

Sam Hunt: With Native Run. 9:20 p.m. Saturday and 8:20 p.m. Sunday, Joe’s Bar, 940 W. Weed St., Chicago, $20-$22, 312-337-3486.

11th Annual St. Patrick’s Hooley at The Celtic Knot Public House: Live music with Mad Bread (Folk). 10 p.m. Saturday, The Celtic Knot Public House, 626 Church St., Evanston, free, 847-864-1679.

“The Revelation Tour!” Paul Reiser
Sat, Mar 14 at 8pm
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Jigs Reel’s & A Little Bit of Rowdy: life’s too short not to be Irish: Pat Gaughan and L.J. Slavin perform Irish music. 2 p.m. Sunday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Pilgrim Chamber Players Concert: Pilgrim Chamber Players highlights violinist David Taylor, Assistant Concertmaster, Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Cellist Steven Honigberg of the Washington D.C. Symphony. 3 p.m. Sunday, Highland Park Community House, 1991 Sheridan Road, Highland Park, $20 for Regular, $15 for Seniors and $8 for Students, 847-433-0972

North Suburban Wind Ensemble: The North Suburban Wind Ensemble performs at Libertyville High School. The ensemble is a group of local musicians who play at a professional level. Tickets available at the door. 4 p.m. Sunday, Libertyville High School, 708 W. Park Ave., Libertyville, $5, 847-247-4576

"Mearra: Selkie From the Sea": This multimedia experience features original songs, orchestrations, and video-projected animations to tell the Celtic tale of a young Selkie maiden. 2 p.m. Sunday, Lincolnwood Public Library, 4000 West Pratt Ave., Lincolnwood, free, 847-677-5277

Third Sunday String Band: 2 p.m. Sunday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Monday, March 16

Women's Seder: All women of Bat Mitzvah age and above! Dinner includes: gefilte fish, chopped liver, matzah ball soup, brisket and roasted chicken, kishke, potatoes, vegetables and dessert. Submit the names of those sitting together at a table of eight if requested. RSVP by March 9, by making check payable to: Beth Am Sisterhood 1370 Abbott Court, Buffalo Grove, Illinois 60089. 6:30 p.m. Monday, The Continental Restaurant, 782 Buffalo Grove Road, Buffalo Grove, $25, 847-383-5017

Rotting Out: With Expire, Suburban Scum, Bent Life and Misery. 7 p.m. Monday, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont Ave., Chicago, $13-$15, 773-281-4444

The Mixer at The Playground Theater: This workshop includes top performers and coaches followed by coaches teaching a simple form and everyone working in a long-form show. BYOB. 10 p.m. Monday, The Playground Theater, 3209 N. Halsted St., Chicago, $5, 773-871-3793

Live Bluegrass, Roots and Folk: Every Monday in the pub, The Mudflaps perform. 8 p.m. Monday, The Celtic Knot Public House, 626 Church St., Evanston, free, 847-864-1679

Tuesday, March 17

Saints and Sinners: At this interactive comedy by Vicki Quade, the creator of “Late Nite Catechism” Mother Superior hosts a bingo show to raise money for St. Bruno’s. 8 p.m. Tuesday, Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, 111 W. Campbell St., Arlington Heights, $28, 847-577-2121

Traditional Irish Music Night: 8 p.m. Tuesday, Chief O'Neill’s Pub, 3471 N. Elston Ave., Chicago, free, 773-473-5263

St. Patrick’s Hooley: Enjoy live Irish folk music with Chicago style featuring One of The Girls. 6 p.m. Tuesday, The Celtic Knot Public House, 626 Church St., Evanston, free, 847-864-1679

Wednesday, March 18

Klingande: 9 p.m. Wednesday, Concord Music Hall, 2047 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, $20

"I Saw You": This comedy performance is based on actual local missed-connections postings, personals ads and solicitations for sexual encounters. 8 p.m. Wednesday, Town Hall Pub, 3340 N. Halsted Ave., Chicago, $5, 773-336-2682

Park Ridge Civic Orchestra: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Pickwick Theatre, 5 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, $25, 847-692-7726

Have an event to submit? Go to chicagotribune/calendar.
Now playing

“Focus” ★★
R. T. 1:45, action. In “Focus,” Will Smith plays gentleman thief Nicky Spurgeon, who runs a 30-person team of pickpockets and scam artists. Margot Robbie is the fatale-in-training, Jess Barrett, looking for a mentor and a leg up in the con game. Some will take “Focus” in the intended spirit, that of a casual, eye-candy throwback to older Hollywood. Many found the same creative team’s “Crazy, Stupid, Love” a disarming romantic comedy (me, less so), and clearly the team has a gift for zigzag plotting. But the setup of “Focus” feels hasty and insufficient and quite apart from their respective levels of talent. Even in a lark about con artists working through their trust issues, we need more. — Michael Phillips

“Kingsman: The Secret Service” ★/2
R. 2:09, action. Colin Firth portrays one of the crack gentlemen-spies working for a supersecret agency out to save the world from a crackpot billionaire philanthropist (Samuel L. Jackson). As Firth’s colleagues, Michael Caine and Mark Strong offer unblinking gazes par excellence. And Welsh newcomer Taron Egerton is engaging as Eggsy, recruited by Firth’s Harry Hart to join the Kingsman cadre. Based on the 2012 graphic novel “The Secret Service” by Mark Millar and Dave Gibbons, director Matthew Vaughn’s picture will appeal to anyone who enjoyed Vaughn’s earlier “Kick-Ass.” I didn’t. I find the jocularity of Vaughn’s gamer-style violence a drag. — M.P.

“The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water” ★1/2
PG, 1:32, animation. “SpongeBob SquarePants” made its Nickelodeon TV debut in 1999. The series is the generator behind an $8 billion merchandising revenue stream. The plot of “The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water” honors the series’ key themes. Plankton is still after Mr. Krabs’ secret formula for Krabby Patties. The 2011 University of Virginia study published in the journal Pediatrics points to the TV show and its probable causation of “short-term disruptions in mental function and attention span” among preschool audiences. I experienced similar disruptions watching “Sponge Out of Water” — disruptions I generally enjoy with the right movie, a funnier one than this. — M.P.

“Fifty Shades of Grey” ★★1/2
R. 2:05, drama. Adapted and directed by women of considerably larger talent than novelist E L. James, the film version of “Fifty Shades of Grey” turns out to be an intriguing tussle — not in the sack or in the Red Room of Pain, but in its internal war between the dubious erotica of James’ novel (the first of three) and the far craftier trash offered by the movie. — M.P.

“The Lazarus Effect” ★★1/2
PG-13, 1:22, horror. “The Lazarus Effect” is what happens when hip, smart actors commit themselves — body and soul — to a horror movie. Mark Duplass, a mainstay of indie cinema’s microbudget “mumblecore” movement, and recent convert Olivia Wilde ably play a scientist couple whose work has led to a serum that brings the dead back to life. And with director David Gelb (“Jiro Dreams of Sushi”) in charge, you can be sure this isn’t some brain-munching zombie apocalypse. — Roger Moore
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Don't fear the repo

Everyone loses. Here's an insider's look at what happens and how you can avoid it.

BY STEVEN TOMPOR
Special to Tribune Newspapers

When a deal goes south in the car business and a vehicle is repossessed, there's no winning, just degrees of losing.

It starts with your mobility and credit rating, but it quickly snowballs from there to everyone else who has done business with you.

As a remarketing rep for Capital One Auto Finance, I was responsible for liquidating these rolling cadavers of modern transportation after they went unpaid for months on end.

Now as a dealer who finances cars for a living, I see far more repossession than I did a year ago. The same is true nationwide for subprime buyers, who have registered an astounding 70.2 percent increase in the repossession rate in the second quarter of 2014 versus 2013, according to Experian. As car sales increase, so do repo rates.

Every repo has one thing in common: They all lose money.

Banks lose thousands of dollars on every vehicle that gets repossessed. Most banks and finance companies net only about 30 percent on a financed dollar when they sell a repo at a wholesale auction.

That 2011 Ford Focus you bought for $18,000? Three years later, it's worth only about $8,000. If that, the bank also has to pay off a lot of middlemen: the repo firm that took the car, the impound yard that stored the car, and the company that took the vehicle from the impound yard to the wholesale auction.

These three steps cost about $600 to $800, and that's before the bank has a chance to touch your former auto.

Once the vehicle arrives, it needs to be cleaned up for the auction block. Old mail. Old fast-food containers. Old soiled diapers. It's amazing what some people leave in their cars and what it costs to get all those substances and smells out.

The car then has to become "frontline ready." Repairs are often done so the car can be sold at auction under a "green light," meaning the car has a "ride and drive" guarantee for the engine and transmission.

Not having one means the repo sells "as is," also known as a "red light," which translates into a final bid that is thousands of dollars less than a "green light" car.

All these costs average an extra $500 to $600. And there's more. There is a "sell fee" at the auction. There also are administrative costs that come with sending the title work and state-mandated paperwork. And, finally, there's paying an inspector to go to the auction to check the vehicle before it sells.

The whole thing stinks for everyone. Repossessions are big money losers. The bank has to spend money to lose money and you're left with nothing in the end.

So how do you avoid a repo? First, by becoming the easiest person to deal with over the phone.

If you have a problem paying, call before the payment is overdue. The word "before" can't be emphasized enough. A lender wants to know about issues beforehand from someone who intends to make things right.

People who contact their lenders early on about a payment issue get more time than those who intentionally avoid contact. The creditor makes a lot more money when you make good on your loan. Banks are in the business of lending money, not selling cars.

Second, give a reasonable promise to pay. Let them know when you will be able to make a payment, even if it's two weeks or two months later. Many will waive late fees if they get advance notice.

I'm a small-time operator, and I tell folks, "I'll accept everything, even chickens and tomatoes." I've had cars detailed, vehicles transported, and, yes, I've been paid in chickens and tomatoes, though there were plenty of squash, green beans and zucchini thrown in there too.

Finally, don't take out long-term loans and always read the contract. Your job won't be there forever, and seven-year loans have become the financial meth of the car business.

Most long-term jobs last slightly less than 4 1/2 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If you must finance a car, make it no more than a five-year loan and buy one that is well within your means.

Lenders want their customers to become full owners instead of debtors.

When a note is paid on time and eventually paid off, that payment record makes it easier for a bank or finance company to access new funds for auto loans.

A low default rate also helps them get a better selling price for that note on the asset-backed securities market, which in turn, allows them to offer car dealers like me more money whenever we sell a car to a customer.

Avoid the debt trap of car ownership and learn to be a keeper. Nine times out of 10, the best car you can invest in is the one you already own.

Steven Lang is a freelance writer who works in automotive financing.

Long-term car loans popular but pricey in long run

BY SUSAN TOMPOR
Detroit Free Press

Looking to get your finances back on the road in 2015? The savvy money says it's wise to turn away from a trend toward dragging out car loans for 72 months or 84 months.

Consider: A three-year, $28,000 new car loan at 4.5 percent would cost $832.91 a month. That payment drops by nearly half to $444.47 a month on a six-year loan, according to a calculator at Bankrate.com.

Add up all the interest payments and the overall cost of the car skyrockets with a longer-term loan. The total interest payments would be around $4,000 on that six-year new car loan with a rate of 4.5 percent — compared with nearly $2,000 on that three-year loan.

More likely, the interest rate a consumer would get on a longer-term car loan would be higher than a shorter-term rate, as well, driving up overall costs.

That's because there is an elevated risk of default the longer the loan term, according to Greg McBride, chief financial analyst for Bankrate.com.

"Longer terms are always a temptation for consumers. So many people fixate on the monthly payment," said Phillip Reed, senior consumer advice editor for Edmunds.com.

But the longer you take out a car loan, the more chances you're taking with your finances.

"It brings a lot of unnecessary risk into the equation," said Alec Gutierrez, a senior market analyst for Kelley Blue Book.

To be sure, consumers who opt for a longer-term car loan enjoy smaller monthly payments and may be able to drive away with a more elegantly designed vehicle with new technology.

The longer the car loan, the longer it takes to build equity in the car.

If you have no equity, you cannot sell the car and pay off the car loan with the proceeds. Buyers pay what they think the car is worth at the time, not what you owe on the vehicle. You'd be on the hook for the rest of the loan.

For those reasons, some drivers and car experts do not recommend going more than four years or five years on a new car loan.
The Niles West girls soccer team broke three significant school records a year ago, including most wins in a season (14). Nearly everybody is back from the 2014 squad. Among the returning players are junior midfielder Emela Mehicic, junior forward Nichole Lopatin, junior defender Kaylie Dyer and junior midfielder Mercedes Bajric. Lopatin set the Wolves' single-season scoring record (19 goals) last year.

It's unknown if senior forward Vicki Tirovolas will be back. Tirovolas, who became the program's all-time leading goal scorer a year ago, tore the ACL and meniscus in her left knee in a game later in the 2014 season and she is still trying to get back to full strength. "The hope is she'll be back by the end of [the season], but that's just going to depend on her drive with the rehab," Niles West coach Brett Clish said. "We're hoping with the rehab," Niles West coach Kenneth Anderson said. "I still have to have these girls pushing up from the [midfield] and [defense] so we can get some pressure up front."

The Hawks' top returning players are seniors Jackie Viola, Gabby Pinto and Camille Papolera and junior defender Taylor Barzowski. Freshman Aly Kilburg is expected to have an impact in the midfield, too.

Maine East

Coach Guy Anderson is in the first year of a rebuilding project at Maine East, which won one game a year ago. The two biggest things he will try to establish during this season are pride and accountability, he said. "They have to have a sense of accomplishment that they came out, they did something they bled, they sweated, they gave up their off hours and it means something to be on this team," Anderson said. "Our first meeting, prior to the beginning of the season, I pretty much laid out that this is how it's going to be - that the old Maine East no longer exists."

Anderson added: "They're definitely going to enjoy this season more, even though they're going to be working harder than they've ever worked. Because they will see the reward of their hard work."

Anderson's first Maine East team will be led by senior defender Jackie Contreras and senior midfielder Esther Okedina, who were both all-CSL North selections in 2014. Seniors Xiitali Viveros and Arianna Cruz also figure to have prominent roles this year.

By Eric Van Dril

In this April 5, 2014, photo, Niles West's Emela Mehicic shoots and scores during a game against Ridgewood. Trail. That is by design: The hope is that games against top competition results in the Rebels feeling prepared when postseason play begins.

"When we're playing bigger schools, typically they have better teams and it forces us to play our best," Ridgewood coach Kenneth Caslin said. "On the flip side, I feel like it could discourage some players if we continue to lose games. But I think they realize, especially through my reinforcement - that we're playing these big teams and a 1-0 loss, a 2-1 loss is not that bad when we're playing against higher competition."

Ridgewood returns sophomore Gabriella Nardulli, senior Justyna Golab and juniors Kristin Kelly and Gabi Wala from last year's squad. Caslin is also hopeful that Brisilda Xhambazi - a junior transfer from Albania, who has an excellent left-footed shot - will have a big impact at forward.

Maine South

The Hawks lost nine seniors from last year's team, and most of them started. That group included all-state goalkeeper Emily O'Grady, who now plays at Iowa State.

Senior Claire Vinopal will replace O'Grady this season, Maine South coach J.J. Crawford said, and she plays the position differently than O'Grady. Vinopal is more aggressive coming off of her line than O'Grady, who the Hawks called Spider-Woman at times because of her diving, acrobatic saves. Vinopal wants to own the box, Crawford said, and will punch the ball away more often than her predecessor did.

Even though the Hawks will be without a proven, all-state goalkeeper, Crawford said the team will still try to be aggressive in its attempt to score goals.

"We struggled to score last year and until the girls prove me wrong, I see that could be another issue," Crawford said. "I still have to have these girls pushing up from the [midfield] and [defense] so we can get some pressure up front."

The Hawks' top returning players are seniors Jackie Viola, Gabby Pinto and Camille Papelera and junior defender Taylor Barzowski. Freshman Aly Kilburg is expected to have an impact in the midfield, too.
Niles resident earns Blackhawks coaching award

BY MATTHEW PARAS
Pioneer Press

When 16-year-old Nicolette Zangara sat on the couch in her Niles home watching the Chicago Blackhawks game with her family -- a normal custom in the Zangara household an advertisement from the team caught her attention. The ad asked viewers to nominate friends or family for the BMO Harris Bank's Coach of the Month.

So Nicolette Zangara wrote a letter to the Blackhawks to nominate her father.

"I was thinking about how my dad is really into coaching and how he loves hockey," she said. "He's been really supportive of my brother's team. He just devotes his entire time off of work to coach. He really is a great family guy, spends time with us and loves hockey."

The letter and the story of a single father of three's passion for his family and coaching caught the Blackhawks' attention. On Jan. 20, Phil Zangara was honored at the United Center with an on-ice ceremony as BMO Harris Bank's Coach of the Month.

Even better, it caught Zangara by surprise.

"I received a call from a girl at the Blackhawks, and I thought it was a buddy of mine playing a trick, you know what I mean?" Zangara said. "She said 'No, open your email. Your daughter wrote a letter, and out of 52 nominations, you won.' Obviously, I got very emotional at that point."

Zangara, an assistant coach with the Maulers Travel Hockey organization in Gurnee, spends four nights a week with his 11-year-old son and the rest of his players.

Zangara, who got into coaching five years ago, said it's a time where he gets to help teach kids about respect not only for the game but also for opponents and referees. He stresses learning how to play the game the right way.

The additional time with his son is an added bonus.

"It's something that I wanted to spend quality time with my son, and it's paying off," Zangara said. "The bond is amazing. He's my best friend and he's only 11. It's a very rewarding time for me in my life."

Zangara has built close relationships in his community, mentoring both boys and girls. Since the Maulers are a traveling team, he considers them a hockey family.

Craig Bewick, president of the Maulers, said he's proud Zangara received the award.

"Having known Phil for the last four or five years, I have nothing but good things to say about him," Bewick said. "Obviously, we're proud that he was up there representing our organization."

At the United Center, Zangara and his three children were able to roam the hallways to see where the players practiced. The Blackhawks also invited Zangara and his family to watch practice on March 2, meet Blackhawks players and attend the March 2 game against the Florida Panthers.

"It's such a great way to build memories for your kids," Zangara said. "It was just a tremendous feeling and a tremendous honor."

Matthew Paras is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Maine East looks forward to 2015-16

BY JON KERR
Pioneer Press

LINCOLNSHIRE - For a short stretch of time in its Class 4A boys basketball regional semifinal game against Stevenson, Maine East out played the mighty Patriots.

Over the span of three minutes during the second quarter on March 3, the Blue Demons trimmed a 28-13 deficit to nine. Maine East guards fed the ball to senior post Ezeka Omeke inside. When Omeke made 1-of-2 free throws with 3:20 left in the first half, the score was 30-21 Patriots.

"I was [using] a pump fake, get them off their feet and try and get a foul," Omeke said. "We got it [the deficit] to nine and that's pretty good."

But nine was as close as the Blue Demons got. Stevenson closed the half on a 14-3 run and at the break, Maine East trailed 44-24. In the second half, the Patriots put an extra defender on Omeke and the Blue Demons were not able to stop Stevenson star guards Jalen Brunson and Connor Cashaw, who combined to score 44 points.

The 78-39 final score ended Maine East's season but it did not dampen enthusiasm for how the Blue Demons finished the year and for what lies ahead.

"[Stevenson] is one of the top teams in the nation and they play a schedule that reflects that. What are you going to say?" Maine East coach Dave Genis said. "My message to our guys was that we want to go out and compete and no knockout punches right away. Take it as long into the 15th round as we can and I thought we did that."

Junior guard Milan Grover added: "This year we have 12 [wins] and we won a regional game. It felt good to get a regional playoff win."

In order to play Stevenson, the Blue Demons had to beat Niles West in the regional quarterfinals on March 2. They did, winning 63-52. It was the first time since 2009 that Maine East won a postseason game. Not many would have predicted a playoff win when the Blue Demons dropped seven of their first eight games. But a 3-1 record at the Luther North Holiday Tournament sparked an in-season revival.

Before the Stevenson loss, Maine East won seven of its last 10. The spell of wins began with a 56-53 win over Niles North on Jan. 23.

"As soon as we beat [Niles North] we went on a streak. I think the atmosphere in the locker room [was], 'We can do this, we can get a high ranking in the sectional,'" Grover said.

In the regional tournament, Maine East dressed 17 players. Only five were seniors (Omeke, David Opalka, Devang Patel, Robinson Michel and Nick Kanjou). Grover, the team's 5-foot-9 point guard, should combine with 6-3 Ashoor Doushow, 6-5 Calvin Jean-Louis and 6-1 Wilson Noriega to form an experienced senior class in 2015-16.

"It's nice to have a group that is coming back and carrying forward and pass it down to the younger guys," Genis said.

Jon Kerr is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Twitter: @prep_pioneer
Niles North has to forfeit postseason win

**Vikings player violated IHSA’s residence by-laws**

BY STAFF REPORT

The Niles North boys basketball team had to forfeit its victory in the Class 4A Stevenson Regional semifinals because one of its players violated the IHSA’s residence by-laws, according to a statement from the league on March 5.

The eighth-seeded Vikings defeated ninth-seeded Zion-Benton 73-68 on March 4, Niles North was scheduled to play Stevenson, the top seed, in the regional final.

Instead, Zion-Benton played Stevenson on Friday and lost 84-60.

The violation means that one of Niles North’s players did not meet the residency requirements to play for the school.

“We commend Niles North for its response to this situation,” IHSA associate executive director Kurt Gibson said in a statement.

“The IHSA relies on self-governance by our membership, a model that can only work when a school has the integrity to uphold the rules. Niles North made the difficult, but correct decision to forfeit the regional semifinal after discovering this violation.”

Gibson also said that the violation could result in Niles North’s forfeiture of more games from this season.

Niles North coach Glenn Olson said via text message that he is “not allowed to comment at this time.”

Karl Costello, the Niles North athletic director, also declined to comment.

Matt Renne contributed to this report.

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**Sectional final loss can’t dim Northridge’s achievements**

BY ROB VALENTIN

Northridge wasn’t the least bit intimidated by Uplift’s lofty ranking — the Titans were ranked No. 16 by the Chicago Tribune — as the Knights prepared for the Class 2A Northridge Sectional championship.

A boisterous home crowd fired up the Knights early, but it wasn’t enough to carry them to victory as Uplift prevailed 46-34 on Friday in Niles.

“I thought we came out of the starting blocks with good poise and really good focus on getting done what we needed to get done,” Northridge coach Will Rey said. “In the second quarter we rushed and got a little antsy with the ball.”

The Knights held a 13-8 lead after one quarter but trailed 23-17 at halftime and 35-23 after three quarters. Still, Northridge was able to put a run together, pulling within four points late in the fourth quarter. But with time winding down the Knights had to foul and the Titans made their free throws to secure the win.

“They made a really smart decision to hold the ball to start the fourth and they took so much time off the clock,” said senior Dylan Haig, who is from Morton Grove. “I think if we had four more minutes we could have pulled it out.”

While Haig and his teammates were disappointed to see their season come to an end, the Knights achieved a lot in 2014-15.

Northridge finished with a 23-7 record, winning 17 of its final 20 games and capturing a regional title for the second year in a row. The 23 wins tied a school record set in 2009 and repeated in 2013.

“It was a great season and it shows that hard work and dedication pays off,” Haig said. “It’s something I’ll remember for the rest of my life.”

Another solid year by the Knights shouldn’t be a surprise. Rey has had only one losing season (14-15 in 2009-10) in 11 years while accumulating a 206-108 record. But there’s no doubting that this was a special season.

“We’re a Class 2A school and before the Uplift game we had only lost to one 2A team this season,” Rey said.

“We’re proud of our kids and how well they played all season.”

Northridge will have some work to do to reach another sectional final next season. Haig was one of the team’s top scorers at 14 points per game and he is one of four senior starters — along with Charlie Newell, Matt Brown and Tomislav Cuvalo — the Knights will have to replace.

The good news is that Northridge usually used an eight-man rotation and four of those players will come back.

Junior Pat Hunt, who scored 21 points against Uplift, was the starting point guard and averaged 14 points. He will get help from juniors Pablo Esparza and Joe Eck and sophomore Kiko Maso. The varsity also will be buoyed by a sophomore team that went 23-3.

“I have total confidence in the younger guys,” said Hunt, a Libertyville resident. “It’s just up to everyone to put in the work during the summer and it’s my job to make sure we have that team chemistry because that’s a massive part of our program.”

Rey is optimistic about the future, as long as next year’s team puts in as much effort as the 2014-15 squad.

“We have plenty of guys coming back and it will just depend on how hard they work and how committed they are in the offseason,” Rey said. “You can’t just pick up the ball in November and expect to be good in March. Basketball is a year-round sport and that’s what it takes to sustain the kind of success we’ve had.”

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Notre Dame slips past Deerfield, wins regional title

BY NICK AMATANGELO AND ERIC VAN DRIL
Pioneer Press

NILES — The game came down to the final seconds, and the Notre Dame boys basketball team held off Deerfield 49-47 in the Class 4A Notre Dame Regional final. The Dons were led by junior post Ammar Becar, who scored a game-high 20 points.

With the win on Friday, fourth-seeded Notre Dame advanced to the Waukegan Sectional semifinals. The Dons were scheduled to play top-seeded Stevenson on Tuesday. Stevenson is the Chicago Tribune's No. 2-ranked team. Visit chicagotribune.com/suburbs/niles/sports/ for full coverage of the game.

After a back-and-forth first quarter, the sixth-seeded Warriors built an eight-point lead early in the second quarter thanks to six points from senior guard Joey Lane. Deerfield was up six going into halftime.

Notre Dame coach Tom Les was adamant that his team needed to play better defense in the second half.

"I thought we lost [Deerfield] a couple times, and they made us pay," Les said. "So what we talked about at halftime was picking up the defense a little bit more."

The halftime adjustments worked for the Dons. Throughout the third quarter, Notre Dame chipped away at the Warriors' lead, and with less than a minute to go in the quarter, the Dons emerged with a three-point lead.

The final quarter was neck-and-neck, with neither team building a big lead. With 54 seconds left, Notre Dame senior guard Joe Mooney made his second field goal of the night to give his team a two-point advantage. Deerfield missed its chance to tie the game, and Notre Dame junior Anthony D'Avanzo iced the game at the foul line.

Strong third quarter

The Notre Dame basketball team had a scary moment in the second quarter of its Class 4A Notre Dame Regional semifinal game against Libertyville when juniors D'Avanzo and Becar collided as they went up for a rebound.

Becar, a first team all-East Suburban Catholic selection this year, fell backward and hit his head. He lay on the court, holding his head and neck, for at least 90 seconds. Becar said he felt really dizzy when he got up and he slowly walked off the court near the midway point of the second quarter in a game the Dons won 67-54 on March 3.

The Wildcats only trailed 29-26 at the half.

"The assistant came in and I asked him what was the lead," Becar said. "We were up three. After I heard that I was like, 'The team needs me. Joe [Mooney] needs me. People are counting on me.' I just wanted to get the [concussion] test out of the way so I could come back and help my team."

Becar said he passed the concussion test and he returned to help the Dons pull away in the second half.

Becar scored five of his 18 points in the third quarter. Mooney (18 points, seven rebounds, five steals) scored six points during the third. The Dons led 44-34 at the end of the third and they never lost control of the game after that.

D'Avanzo finished with 14 points and four blocks.

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Notre Dame's Anthony D'Avanzo drives to the basket during the March 3 game against Libertyville in the Class 4A Notre Dame Regional semifinals.
A Niles North player violated the IHSA residence by-laws, forcing the Vikings to forfeit their playoff win.
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