Taking a look back

2015 proves to be quite an eventful year for Niles. Page 4

Top TV shows

A look at the best TV shows of 2015 from "Fargo" and "Empire" to "The Man in the High Castle." Page 16

Stringing it together

Niles North wrestler wants to work on 'going back-to-back-to-back with moves.' Page 41

LIVING

A stress-free holiday breakfast

Take it easy Christmas morning with this recipe for a make-ahead casserole featuring a trio of cheeses, pesto, Roma tomatoes and salty prosciutto. Just pop it in the oven and retreat back to that cozy armchair by the fireplace. INSIDE
SHOUT OUT

Santa Claus, cookie aficionado

Santa Claus has been stationed at Golf Mill Shopping Center in Niles since Nov. 20 when he arrived courtesy of the Niles Fire Department. He recently took some time out of visiting with local children to answer a few questions for Pioneer Press.

Q: How has your time in Niles been?
A: It's been wonderful. When I arrived, the Niles Fire Department drove me all around in the snow and it was just fantastic. Santa has just been having a great time here.

Q: Have there been a lot of good girls and boys?
A: I've met some children here who have had the true spirit of Christmas. I had a little girl in and she didn't want anything. She just wanted to make sure that the poor kids who didn't have anything got something for Christmas. All she wanted was a jar of Kosher Dill Pickles and some hard salami.

Q: Were there any other memorable children?
A: I don't want to go tattling, but I had one little girl who gave me a jar of Cherries and some hard salami. She wanted something for Christmas. All she had was a jar of Kosher Dill Pickles and some hard salami.

Q: What if they ask for something mom and dad don't want them to have?
A: Santa can't bring anything that was circled and there were five things circled just on the cover. I haven't been able to go through the whole thing but if I got her everything she wanted, it would break my sleigh! Santa only has nine reindeer and so much room.

Q: What if they ask for something mom and dad don't want them to have?
A: Santa can't bring anything that was circled and there were five things circled just on the cover. I haven't been able to go through the whole thing but if I got her everything she wanted, it would break my sleigh! Santa only has nine reindeer and so much room.

Q: What are your favorite cookies?
A: Santa doesn't discriminate when it comes to cookies. Mrs. Claus makes me an oatmeal cookie with dark chocolate and dried cherries that I especially love, but Santa doesn't discriminate. All cookies are good cookies.

Q: How do you get into the houses without chimneys to deliver the presents?
A: I can't tell you that because it's Santa's secret, but Santa has his ways.

— Alicia Ramirez, Pioneer Press

Shout Out is a weekly feature where we get to know and introduce our readers to their fellow community members and local visitors throughout suburban Chicago.

the Y

LEANING TOWER YMCA

BE BOLD
BE STRONG
BELONG

Ring in the New Year with a bold new you. Focus on your health, feel strong and be a part of something bigger.

JOIN THE Y TODAY AND SAVE!

LEANING TOWER YMCA | 6300 W. Touhy Ave. Niles, IL 60714 | 847.410.5108 | leaningtowerymca.org
Thank You for Believing!

Macy’s is donating $2 million to Make-A-Wish®!

Thanks to all who participated in Macy’s Believe campaign and to our partners at Good Morning America on ABC for their support.

To learn more, visit macys.com/believe

Merry Christmas and may all your holiday wishes come true!
2015: A year in review

Niles issues include school investigation, gun range, tax levy

BY NATALIE HAYES
Pioneer Press

Months after being put on leave pending an investigation launched by the District 219 school board, Superintendent Nanciann Gatta and John Heintz, who served as the district's chief legal officer and assistant superintendent of operations, stepped down on Nov. 18.

The results of those investigations haven't been released, but legal documents approved by the school board last month showed Gatta and Heintz concede that neither party "has done anything wrong." Both will be paid for unused time off and were able to keep their current health insurance through late December.

During the investigation, Gatta filed two lawsuits against the school board, the latest a civil rights suit alleging free speech violations and seeking punitive damages and attorney's fees. The terms of the agreement require Gatta to drop both lawsuits. Heintz agreed not to file suit against the district, records show.

Documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act show board members have approved thousands of dollars in payments the district started making back in July to experts hired to review contracts, payroll and electronic correspondence.

Board members have declined to comment on whether the findings played into the separation agreements.

The school board is searching for a new superintendent.

Niles proposed gun shop still in court

A village of Niles-backed proposal for a gun shop and shooting range, planned to open near Skokie's border with Niles - a mile behind Niles West High School - continues to be a point of contention for gun control groups and residents who say a firearms dealer has no place in Niles Township.

Sportsman's Club and Firearms Training Academy was approved for a special-use permit last year to open a facility at 6143 Howard St. in Niles. After being sued by Skokie-based People for a Safer Society, the village of Niles in August extended the special-use permit to allow more time for the court proceedings to play out.

"(The Village Board) extended the special-use due to the fact of it still being in court," said Joseph Annunzio, village attorney. "It's basically saying (the gun
NEWS

NO GUN RANGE NEAR OUR SCHOOLS

In this file photo, protesters against a proposed gun range gather outside Niles Village Hall.

2015, from Previous Page

Denyse Stoneback, president of People for a Safer Society, said the group has opposed the facility from the beginning, fighting against the measure by petitioning for signatures and pressuring nearby towns like Skokie to oppose the planned gun dealer.

"Skokie, Lincolnwood, and Morton Grove are all next door, so it really is an issue that affects all of our municipalities," Stoneback said. "Chicago has stricter rules about gun sales, so people come to the suburbs to get guns."

About 15 people opposing the firearms retailer's plans to open in Niles spoke during the Dec. 7 Skokie Village Board meeting, where the speakers pressured Skokie officials to take a stance against Niles on the gun shop issue.

"If people, or if one person, is killed after the gun shop opens in Niles, we will bring lawsuits," said Elliot Fineman, founder of the National Gun Victim's Action Council.

After a lawsuit filed by People for a Safer Society against Niles was dismissed in June, the group filed a new complaint naming the planned gun shop and range as a defendant along with the village of Niles.

Niles now plans to file a second motion to dismiss the new lawsuit, with a hearing scheduled for Jan. 6 at the Cook County Courthouse, according to Annunziato.

Library board votes to increase tax levy

Following four meetings worth of debate and pushback from community members, the Niles Library District Board of Trustees voted at a recent meeting to increase the district's property tax levy by $800,000.

Board President Linda Ryan said during a public hearing on the levy in November that the increase was necessary because such an increase in tax revenue would be impossible next year under state law, and without the increase, the library risks running a deficit in a few years. She also highlighted the $1.2 million decrease in the levy over the past two years.

Ryan said the $800,000 levy increase would add about $37 to the average resident's annual tax bill.

Board member Carolyn Drblik said, in a previous interview, that she could not justify the increase given a recent audit presentation that indicated the district's cash and investments on hand total $8.9 million. The district's approved budget for fiscal 2016 includes $6.5 million worth of expenditures.

A significant portion of those funds are either already committed to capital projects or specific expenditures, and some of the funds are earmarked for current expenditures, Greg Pritz, business manager for the district, said in a November interview.

He said the library has about $5 million in reserve in the general fund, which is below the target of 100 percent of a full year's worth of expenditures.

During the November public hearing, Ryan also noted the district's plan to embark upon a new strategic planning process. She said the process might call for expanded library services, particularly in the north end of the district, which includes unincorporated areas of Des Plaines and Glenview.

Natalie Hayes is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Freelance reporter Lee V. Gaines contributed.

You love their films. Now discover their stories.

ILINOIS
Holocaust Museum & Education Center
9603 Woods Drive, Skokie | www.ilholocaustmuseum.org
Local children share breakfast with Santa

By Alicia Ramirez
Pioneer Press

The magic of the holidays filled the Howard Leisure Center in Niles Dec. 12 as roughly 450 children got their chance to enjoy breakfast with Santa.

The Niles Park District offered three seatings of the popular event, each with roughly 150 kids ready and excited to get the chance to tell Santa exactly what they wanted for Christmas this year.

"It takes a team to put this event on," Julie Jentel, director of marketing for the Niles Park District, said. "From the decorations to the registrations and the goodie bags, preparation starts months in advance."

Along with their buffet breakfast of pancakes, sausage, eggs, bacon and fruit, the children and their parents got to make a Santa craft, enjoy time together and make a wish from the snow fairy who carried around with her a special, very sparkly, wishing powder.

"Christmas is my favorite time of the year and I love being around the kids because of how excited they get," Brandi Spilvogel, snow fairy for the event, said. "They're at that age where things like this are real and you can see how excited they get and they think I'm a real fairy and it's just so great."

And while the children enjoyed all of the fun activities set up for them in the banquet hall that was overflowing with holiday decor, they all knew what they were waiting for, a moment with the big man himself.

While some cried their way through their visit with Santa as cameras captured the moment, others were in awe, and still more couldn't wait to pull out their wish lists, making sure not to forget a single item, and making sure Santa knew that they were good this year.

"When they were younger, they were obviously scared of him, but now they can't wait to see him," Brad Tokarz, father of two girls, ages 4 and 6, said. "The little one came in today with a note for Santa and she was so excited to give it to him."

"When they were younger, they were obviously scared of him, but now they can't wait to see him," he said. "We come every year and hopefully they believe until they're 21, and we'll keep coming out."

"This morning they woke me up and they were so excited; it's great seeing that," he said. "We come every year and hopefully they believe until they're 21, and we'll keep coming out."

Local children share breakfast with Santa

The Niles Park District

The magic of the holidays filled the Howard Leisure Center in Niles Dec. 12 as roughly 450 children got their chance to enjoy breakfast with Santa.

The Niles Park District offered three seatings of the popular event, each with roughly 150 kids ready and excited to get the chance to tell Santa exactly what they wanted for Christmas this year.

"It takes a team to put this event on," Julie Jentel, director of marketing for the Niles Park District, said. "From the decorations to the registrations and the goodie bags, preparation starts months in advance."

Along with their buffet breakfast of pancakes, sausage, eggs, bacon and fruit, the children and their parents got to make a Santa craft, enjoy time together and make a wish from the snow fairy who carried around with her a special, very sparkly, wishing powder.

"Christmas is my favorite time of the year and I love being around the kids because of how excited they get," Brandi Spilvogel, snow fairy for the event, said. "They're at that age where things like this are real and you can see how excited they get and they think I'm a real fairy and it's just so great."

And while the children enjoyed all of the fun activities set up for them in the banquet hall that was overflowing with holiday decor, they all knew what they were waiting for, a moment with the big man himself.

While some cried their way through their visit with Santa as cameras captured the moment, others were in awe, and still more couldn't wait to pull out their wish lists, making sure not to forget a single item, and making sure Santa knew that they were good this year.

"When they were younger, they were obviously scared of him, but now they can't wait to see him," Brad Tokarz, father of two girls, ages 4 and 6, said. "The little one came in today with a note for Santa and she was so excited to give it to him."

"When they were younger, they were obviously scared of him, but now they can't wait to see him," he said. "We come every year and hopefully they believe until they're 21, and we'll keep coming out."

"This morning they woke me up and they were so excited; it's great seeing that," he said. "We come every year and hopefully they believe until they're 21, and we'll keep coming out."

Alicia Ramirez is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Niles awards local Marine couple key to the city

BY LEE V. GAINES
Pioneer Press

A married couple, both decorated Marine Corps veterans and recent Niles residents, were each awarded a key to the city by the Niles Village Board at a recent meeting in thanks for their service.

Eric and Gabriela Swanson met while studying at the U.S. Naval Academy roughly 10 years ago, Gabriela said. Eric, a major in the Marine Corps who holds a master's of education degree in instructional technology, was deployed to Iraq in 2005. Following the completion of his master's in 2010, he was put in charge of the Education Officer Program at the Marine Corps University, and said he was deployed to Afghanistan two years later. Eric was again deployed to Iraq in 2015 and tasked with constructing a team to advise and assist Iraqi military operations and intelligence given the threat posed by ISIS. Eric currently serves as a reservist with the 3rd Civil Affairs Group at Naval Station Great Lakes.

Gabriela joined the Marine Corps as a second lieutenant and was later selected to become a military police officer at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. She also served as a platoon commander at a base camp in North Carolina. From early 2005 through spring of 2006, Gabriela served in Al Taqaddum, Iraq, where she conducted vehicle security patrols, provided convoy security and personal security for visiting officials. When she returned to the U.S., Gabriela was transferred back to the base in North Carolina where she took charge of several divisions and completed her master's in business and organizational security management. She was honorably discharged in 2009 as a captain.

Two other veterans have received key to the city plaques at recent village meetings. Village Manager Steve Vinezeano, who served in the Gulf War, said the honor is a way for Niles to recognize the sacrifices of its local service members. He said the awards will continue “until they stop sending people overseas.” Joining their parents at the short award ceremony were the couple’s three daughters ages 5, 7 and 8. Gabriela said the family moved to Niles in September to both be close to Chicago and Naval Station Great Lakes. The couple became involved in the local Veterans of Foreign Wars organization and were eventually introduced to Vinezeano, she said.

Gabriela said she’s previously lived in “military towns,” but she’s been impressed with the appreciation the Niles community has shown for veterans and members of the military. “We are really blessed by the outpouring of gratitude and respect,” she said.

Lee V. Gaines is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
POLICE REPORT

The following items were taken from the Niles Police Department reports. An arrest does not constitute a finding of guilt.

BATTERY
- Roman Balabushka, 30, of the 2900 block of Rosemont, Chicago, was charged with battery Dec. 13 following an alleged dispute about valet employees leaving a Mercedes unlocked outside a restaurant on the 6900 block of Milwaukee Avenue. A security guard for the restaurant told police he was attempting to protect two valet drivers from an angry group of patrons when he was punched in the chin by Balabushka. One of the valet employees reported he was shoved to the ground during the dispute and was taken to Resurrection Medical Center for a wrist injury, police said. Balabushka has a Jan. 27 court date.

PROPERTY DAMAGE
- Robert Hegbloom, 54, of Muskegon, Michigan, was charged with criminal damage to property Dec. 10 after police said he kicked a U.S. Post Office vehicle, causing two dents in the rear tailgate door.

The injured man, who police said is related to Petman, was transported to Presence Saint Francis Hospital in Evanston. He was released after being treated for his injuries, police said.

No one else in the home was injured, according to Lt. Randy Rathmell, spokesman for the Lincolnwood Police Department.

Petman appeared at a bond hearing at the Skokie Courthouse Dec. 15 where Cook County Circuit Clerk Judge Marcia Orr set his bond for $600,000, according to the state's attorney's office. Petman has not posted bail and was still in jail as of Dec. 17, Rathmell said.

Petman's next court date is set for Jan. 5 at 10:30 a.m. at the Skokie Courthouse.

Natalie Hayes is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

I CAN SHOW YOU HOW TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS AND DRIVE SALES

Call today for a special advertising program for your business
Valid until the end of the year

Find me at: rebecca@chicagotribune.com
(312) 487-3722

CHICAGO TRIBUNE media group
In wake of 'hate rhetoric,' rally hosted in Evanston

BY LEE V. GAINESS
Pioneer Press

A young Muslim woman from Skokie posed a series of difficult questions to the roughly 200 attendees gathered for the Rally Against Islamophobia in Evanston's Fountain Square on Dec. 15.

Bushra Amiwala, a 17-year-old senior at Niles North High School, wondered aloud why she feels she “would be granted more freedom and more opportunity if I presented myself to society without the hijab,” the traditional Muslim head covering. She wondered, too, who in the United States is entitled to that freedom and opportunity the country has to offer.

“I don't have the answers to the questions I presented, but it's something I want everyone here to think about,” said Amiwala, who recently spoke on the subject of Islamophobia at a forum hosted at her high school.

Lesley Williams, an Evanston resident, said she's spent a lot of time thinking about the deluge of anti-Islamic rhetoric, particularly the comments made by some of those running for the Republican presidential nomination, after the terrorist attacks last month in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif. She said she felt she needed to take action to show support and solidarity with the Muslim community.

Within five days, Williams, an employee of the Evanston Public Library, organized the rally with the help of a number of Chicago and Evanston-based social justice and religious groups.

“I wanted to show people all over the country that you don't need to have a huge amount of resources to do something like this,” she said in a recent interview. “Really, the best thing you can do is some small action that demonstrates to Muslims living in the United States that there are people who support them.”

Members of the Muslim community in the Chicago area have expressed a sense of fear and also disappointment following a recent spike in anti-Muslim rhetoric, including statements from Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who said he believes the U.S. should bar Muslims from entering the country, said Renner Larson, communications coordinator for Chicago's Council on American-Islamic Relations.

“One of the things we've said a lot is that this is the tip of the iceberg,” said Larson, who also spoke at the rally. “Donald Trump is not the cause of the problem; he is a symptom of this problem; this rhetoric has been around for a long time, and he has just brought it into the spotlight in a very effervescent way.”

Larson, who is not a Muslim, said the amount of hate rhetoric he sees every day monitoring CAIR's social media pages is astounding. But he can't keep up with it.

Tahera Ahmad, a chaplain at Northwestern University, who delivered a blessing at the rally, said she was subjected to a barrage of disparaging remarks online. Earlier this year, Ahmad, a Muslim woman who wears a hijab, took to Facebook to share an experience of how she was refused an unopened can of Diet Coke by a crew member on a United Airlines flight operated by Shuttle America who said she might use the item as a weapon. She accused the flight attendant of discriminating against her.

Lee V. Gaines is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Cops with Kids event in Skokie helps ‘deserving’ kids spread holiday cheer

BY KARIE ANGELL LUC
Pioneer Press

Making a list and checking it more than twice was Alex Sainsith, 10, a John Middleton Elementary School of Skokie fourth-grader, who had just finished shopping for his wish list items Dec. 12 at the Wal-Mart in Skokie.

Alex and shopping chaperon Skokie Deputy Chief of Police Brian Baker referred to the list while scoping out aisles of the Wal-Mart in Skokie.

Principal at 12 schools in Skokie provided the Skokie police with 76 names of “deserving” students in the first through fifth grades. The kids are provided with gifts cards.

Deserving could mean good grades, outstanding character, compassion, financial need or whatever else a school administrator might recognize to designate a student.

“This Cops with Kids program helps us connect with the children of Skokie and lets them see us in a different environment,” Bush said.

Each participating child could spend a minimum of $125 each.

“I love it; that’s why I volunteer to come in on my day off,” said Shari Diebold of Antioch and Wal-Mart co-manager.

For Valentina Aburukbah, 11, an MCC Academy of Skokie/Morton Grove fourth-grader and her sister Lena Aburukbah, 9, a fourth-grader at MCC, make-up plus arts and crafts items were at the top of the list.

Both girls shopped with chaperon Skokie Chief of Police Anthony Scarpelli.

“It’s a wonderful experience for the children,” Scarpelli said.

Karie Angell Luc is a freelance reporter.
IT'S OUR BIGGEST
COAT SALE
OF THE SEASON!

IT'S OUR BIGGEST
SWEATER SALE
OF THE SEASON!

IT'S OUR BIGGEST
DENIM SALE OF THE SEASON!

AFTER CHRISTMAS PRICES NOW!
TAKE AN EXTRA 20% OR 15% OFF WHEN YOU USE YOUR MACY'S CARD OR PASS

EXCLUSIONS APPLY. SEE PASS.

PLUS, TAKE AN EXTRA 20% OR 15% OFF when you use your Macy's Card or savings
pass during our After Christmas Prices Now Sale. Exclusions apply, see pass.

WOW! PASS
EXTRA SAVINGS ON SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE APPAREL!
(EXCEPT SPECIALS & SUPER BUYS)

EXTRA 20% OFF
SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE APPAREL FOR HIM, HER & KIDS, PLUS FINE & FASHION JEWELRY

EXTRA 15% OFF SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE COATS, SUITS, DRESSES, INTIMATES, SWIM FOR HER;
MEN'S SUIT SEPARATES & SPORTCOATS, SELECT SHOES & HOME ITEMS

MACY'S PROMO CODE: WRAPUP
EXCLUSIONS MAY APPLY ON MACYS.COM

Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

60% OFF
CHARTER CLUB
No credit card required. Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

SELECT FINE JEWELRY
Reg. $45-$68. Final cost $85-$4,760.
Select jewelry. Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

EXTRA 20% OFF
SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE APPAREL FOR HIM, HER & KIDS, PLUS FINE & FASHION JEWELRY

EXTRA 15% OFF
SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE COATS, SUITS, DRESSES, INTIMATES, SWIM FOR HER;
MEN'S SUIT SEPARATES & SPORTCOATS, SELECT SHOES & HOME ITEMS

MACY'S PROMO CODE: WRAPUP
EXCLUSIONS MAY APPLY ON MACYS.COM

Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

50% OFF
SELECT COLD WEATHER BOOTS FOR HIM & HER

50% OFF HANDBAGS
Reg. 60.50-$195. Sale 34.50-$99.
Only at Macy's. Selections from Style & Co. and Giani Bernini.

50% + 15% OFF
SELECT LUGGAGE
From Samsonite, Delsey, Travelpro, and more. Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

FREE SHIPPING ONLINE & FREE RETURNS
FREE SHIPPING WITH $99 PURCHASE. U.S. ONLY. EXCLUSIONS APPLY; SEE MACYS.COM/FREERETURNS

Valid 12/20-12/23/2015

*WebID 2340408)
CLEARANCE pajama sets
Now 14.40-31.60.
Orig.* $36-$79.

CHARTER CLUB
60% OFF
*WebID 2340408.

15% OFF
SELECT FINE JEWELRY
No credit card required. Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

EXTRA 20% OFF
SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE APPAREL FOR HIM, HER & KIDS, PLUS FINE & FASHION JEWELRY

EXTRA 15% OFF
SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE COATS, SUITS, DRESSES, INTIMATES, SWIM FOR HER;
MEN'S SUIT SEPARATES & SPORTCOATS, SELECT SHOES & HOME ITEMS

MACY'S PROMO CODE: WRAPUP
EXCLUSIONS MAY APPLY ON MACYS.COM

Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

60% OFF
CHARTER CLUB

SELECT FINE JEWELRY
Select jewelry. Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.

EXTRA 20% OFF
SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE APPAREL FOR HIM, HER & KIDS, PLUS FINE & FASHION JEWELRY

EXTRA 15% OFF
SELECT SALE & CLEARANCE COATS, SUITS, DRESSES, INTIMATES, SWIM FOR HER;
MEN'S SUIT SEPARATES & SPORTCOATS, SELECT SHOES & HOME ITEMS

MACY'S PROMO CODE: WRAPUP
EXCLUSIONS MAY APPLY ON MACYS.COM

Macy's Card/savings pass doesn't apply to Levi's.
'The Force Awakens' in Harrison Ford's hometown

BY ALEX V. HERNANDEZ
Pioneer Press

Uptown Park Ridge felt a little bit like a place a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away Dec. 17.

As locals dressed like "Star Wars" characters stood outside the Pickwick Theatre waiting for the premiere of the new film "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," a song from a bar on Tattooine filled the air.

The tune was being played on a saxophone by 27-year-old Joe Paolelli, who was dressed up in a homemade alien costume. His brother, 31-year-old Chris Paolelli, was dressed up as Yoda and stood, hunched down, next to him.

"We've been waiting three years for this movie to come out, but we're dreaming about it for decades," said Joe Paolelli.

The debut of "The Force Awakens" at the Pickwick drew around 500 people. The seventh installment of the "Star Wars" saga is expected to be 2016's highest-grossing film, with projected profits exceeding $1 billion.

The first in a new Disney-produced series of films and spinoffs, "The Force Awakens" is also notable as being the first Star Wars film to be produced without the series' original creator George Lucas at the helm.

Set 30 years after "Return of the Jedi," the new film features Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill reprising their iconic characters alongside new characters played by Adam Driver, Daisy Ridley, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac and others.

"I think what makes it so unique is that the original cast is back," said Dino Vlahakis, the Pickwick's owner. "And Harrison Ford, of course, is from Park Ridge."

Ford's original character, Han Solo, was a part of the original "Star Wars" films. Ford, 73, was also the voice of Han Solo in the animated cartoon series "Star Wars: The Clone Wars." Ford will return to the role after a 33-year absence.

The movie also stars Harrison Ford; Carrie Fisher; Mark Hamill; John Boyega; Adam Driver; Daisy Ridley; Oscar Isaac; Gwendoline Christie; and Lupita Nyong'o.

The film is directed by J.J. Abrams and written by Abrams and Lawrence Kasdan. It is produced by Abrams, Kathleen Kennedy and John Schwartzman.

The movie was released in IMAX 3D and 2D formats. The IMAX 3D version is expected to be a hit at the box office, with manyIMAX theaters showing the film in the first two weeks of its release.

"The Force Awakens" is the first in a new Disney-produced series of films and spinoffs, and it is expected to be a major box office hit.

Alex V. Hernandez is a freelance reporter.
Christmas isn't the only time to give

Paul Sassone

At least it wasn’t snowing.

But that dank drizzle just goes right through you.

I wanted to get into the store pronto to do my shopping and get to my dry home.

But I still had presents to buy, and was running late. I was having a hard time whittling down my Christmas present list. And I confess I felt more like Scrooge than Santa.

I rushed through the store’s parking lot toward the entrance, my mind clogged with all the yuletide things I had to do and the lack of time to do them in.

I was only dimly aware of the bell clanging.

“Merry Christmas, sir,” someone said to me. I glanced up and saw the greeting came from a man standing next to a Salvation Army kettle. He stood just out from the store’s overhang, so he was getting wet, even though he wore a light jacket and a cap.

He shook his bell while he sang “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,” in sync with recorded music broadcast by the store.

I kind of mumbled something like “murrychristmas” in his direction, and went in to shop.

A half-hour or so later I rumbled my heavy-laden shopping cart out of the store.

There he was, still ringing his bell and singing between “Merry Christmas, sirs” and “Merry Christmas, ma’ams.” When the occasional shopper would drop some coins into this kettle, the man would say, “Thank you, and God bless you.”

I fumbled in my pocket for some change. “Pretty damp out here,” I said.

“Why don’t you stand inside the doorway. It’s only a few feet away?”

“You can’t ring the bell from inside,” he replied. “I wouldn’t want people to think there’s nobody here and not give money.”

I dropped some change and a dollar bill into the kettle. “See what I mean,” the man smiled. “Somebody’s got to be here.”

Not always. After Christmas, the bells will cease to clang, even though the needy, the hungry and the homeless still will be without food and without shelter. The 2014 U.S. Census estimates 46.7 million Americans live in poverty.

Think of them when it’s not Christmas and help.

Just one place to find out how to help is a website that lists every food pantry, soup kitchen and homeless shelter in Illinois. The website is www.homelessshelterdirectory.org.

Paul Sassone is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.

Christmas preparations shouldn’t be stressful

Randy Blaser

Sometimes I think it might be best to celebrate Christmas the old way, which is to do nothing Christmas-related until the actual day.

That means no twinkling lights adorning the house even before Thanksgiving. That means no lighted garland up the banister and on the mantle, nor a fully decorated house on the weekend after Thanksgiving.

And that means no Christmas tree, either. At least not right away. Now before you put the words “bah humbug” in my mouth, let me explain.

Every year the preparation for Christmas, which begins the Friday after Thanksgiving, is becoming a greater and longer chore. There is just so much to do, and it lasts so long.

At times, preparing for Christmas leaves little time to get anything else done. And then there is all the shopping still to do. The wonder of the Internet makes the binge buying a little easier, but if I don’t buy online early enough, I still might have to fight the crowds at the shopping malls or on State Street.

It’s too much.

And then the big day arrives. You rush to get breakfast, rush to open presents, rush to church, rush to prepare the big meal for the relatives and rush to open more presents and before you know it, the big day is over.

It is almost anticlimactic.

All the days of preparation for so short a reward. Maybe it would be better (and I don’t know if it would be) if you just saved up all that decorating for the actual day. Or save it for at least the day before — Christmas Eve — or the day before the day before — Christmas Eve Eve.

Maybe then, the holiday would have a bigger bang for the buck.

And there might be more incentive to celebrate Christmas longer.

The way we do it now, most of our time is spent preparing for Christmas. If we reverse it, maybe we’ll prepare less and celebrate the meaning of Christmas a bit more.

There are 12 days of Christmas, you know. And each one is a joy, right?

And in the church calendar, the Christmas season doesn’t end until the Epiphany (Jan. 6 this year), or when the Three Wise Men visit the Christ child.

Now, it’s all over on Dec. 26, when everyone is just recovering.

So let’s celebrate this thing called Christmas, the coming into the world of the Savior, just a little bit longer.

He didn’t come to stress us out.

He came to bring peace. Let’s savor it.

Randy Blaser is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
Some good reads to give as gifts this year

SARA CLARKSON
Dateline

The tired Scrooge in me has latched on to this quote from poet W.H. Auden: "Thank God for books as an alternative to conversation.

I would add, too, thank God for books as the most perfect Christmas gift, though my list this year is small.

I really want the novel "A Little Life" by Hanya Yanagihara, which weighs in at more than 700 pages and what a good friend promises is a beautiful book, despite dark themes and exploration of pain and shame as it looks at the friendship of four men over time. Various reviewers have praised it and associated themes with events, weaving together in an engaging way.

Self-published fiction

A lot of committed readers fantasize about being writers and not just writers but published authors. With the technology and tools available today for e-publishing, more serious writers who have written a book can take the next risky step and self-publish. I applaud them there.

But as a reader, I am also skeptical. I am skeptical because I have read books that traditional publishing houses have put out and which have very little literary or even substantive content. I am thinking of a book with the words "Fifty" and "Shades" in the title. With self-published electronic books how are we to discern the worthwhile from the worthless?

This is where our librarians step in, especially those librarians who have an interest in the soon to be Famous Illinois Author Project.

Through Jan. 4, the project is accepting e-books from Illinois authors who have self-published a work of adult fiction. These are the requirements:

- The author is from Illinois; they have already self-published in digital format their work of adult fiction; the author is willing to promote his or her book in at libraries and other locations throughout the state.
- The book has tapped for 15 years. Brian Seibert has praised it and over time. Various reviewers have praised it and associated themes with events, weaving together in an engaging way.

I will give my daughter "What the Eye Hears: A History of Tap Dancing" by Brian Seibert. She praised it and over time. Various reviewers have praised it and associated themes with events, weaving together in an engaging way.

I searched for the total number of officially licensed "Star Wars" products now in our universe, but that's sort of like pinpointing the actual number of licks it does take to get to the center of a Tootsie Roll Tootsie Pop. The world may never know, and those may be the only things that haven't popped up on "Star Wars" marketing radar yet.

Feel free to share your picks for the coolest "Star Wars" souvenirs and I'll make it my mission to awaken The Force with some of your favorites.

Eric Scott is a freelance writer for Pioneer Press.

'Star Wars' marketing reaches light speed

ERIC SCOTT

Are you a Death Star tea infuser-level of Star Wars fans?

If so, are you also getting the Death Star waffle maker and X-Wing knife block to complement your kitchen? Plus, no freezer is complete without the Boba Fett ice cube tray. Just when you think you've found the most remote officially licensed Star Wars product — light years away from any connection to the movies — The Force reveals another on a website far, far away.

My original story idea for the opening week of the newest, long-awaited "Star Wars" film was to go up and down grocery store aisles and list every "Star Wars" branded item I could find. After further review, I didn't want to look like Yoda by the time I'd be done — some time in 2016. What's really catching my attention are the "really out there" officially licensed products that skirt the outer rim of anything having to do with this multibillion dollar galactic franchise.

One estimate pegs officially licensed "Star Wars" products generating as much as $5 billion in revenue in 2016 — and we're not talking about box office ticket sales, just the products and licensing fees.

Right now, in our present day galaxy, there are "Star Wars" gadgets and knickknacks that couldn't be more disconnected to The Rebel Alliance, The Dark Side and all creatures in between.

The first branded product I saw that really made me lean forward for a closer look before thinking, "No way, you've got to be kidding," was the R2-D2-branded plastic jug of Nestle's French Vanilla Coffee-mate. Actually, "java" does sound like something droids might ingest for a morning power boost, but French Vanilla?

So far, my favorite movie tie-in item that I found while looking for lightbulbs at a big box home improvement store is the R2-D2 shower head. Yes, you too can now literally rinse away all your "dark sides" and freshen up before another full day of saving the universe.

The water pressure is strong in this one.
The Top 10 TV shows of 2015

Feuding families, Stetson-topped cops, conflicted spies and twitchy hackers

BY JENNIFER THOMAS
Pioneer Press

Whether intentional or not, this year's crop of TV shows — in particular "Mr. Robot," "The Americans," and "The Man in the High Castle" — really reflected our current times, despite some of them being set in different time periods. That gave these shows a special resonance, but timely themes or not, TV is where it's at these days. Here are the 10 shows that really stuck with me in 2015.

10. "Jessica Jones" (Netflix)
The interesting thing about "Jessica Jones" is that unlike a lot of comic book-based TV shows or movies, "Jones" is actually strongest when it distances itself from its origin story. It doesn't matter why sardonic P.I. Jessica Jones (Krysten Ritter) has super strength, in fact her days of superheroism are mostly behind her. "Jessica Jones" is more in the vein of a "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" meets "Veronica Mars" — although not as good as either — and that's where it plays best, delivering a prickly, reclusive heroine who is also vulnerable, especially because of a creepy backstory where she was under the thrall of a man named Kilgrave (David Tennant), who has the power to verbally make people do his bidding. Ritter has been good in a lot of things, but this is a role that's finally given her due attention.

9. "Empire" (Fox)
One of the most audaciously entertaining shows to land on TV in a long time, "Empire" is a modern soap opera with fast and furiously shifting allegiances in a dysfunctional family whose members are all trying to grab their piece of the empire. The show isn't afraid to be crazy and bold, sometimes coming perilously close to the line of acceptable campiness, but pulling back just in time, and ending up being extremely addictive because of it. And while Terrence Howard is certainly no slouch as callous record label mogul Lucious Lyon, it's Taraji P. Henson, who does more with an eyebrow than some actors do with their whole face, who steals the show as the loud, vivacious and tender-hearted Cookie Lyon.

8. "Orange Is the New Black" (Netflix)
The huge ensemble on "Orange Is the New Black" is one of its biggest strengths. Each season, the show digs a little deeper into the backstories of its inmates and prison guards, turning them from amusing background characters into fully-formed human beings. And this season, they pulled off a miracle by making Pennsatucky (Taryn Manning), previously mostly known for being unstable, cruel and not so bright, into someone worthy of sympathy as her history with sexual abuse came to light. And this season, they pulled off a miracle by making Pennsatucky (Taryn Manning), previously mostly known for being unstable, cruel and not so bright, into someone worthy of sympathy as her history with sexual abuse came to light. This season's focus on the corporate buyout of the prison didn't have the resonance of last year's villainous Vee, but "Orange" continues to deliver its special mixture of irreverent comedy, camaraderie and political commentary.

7. "The Americans" (FX)
"The Americans" can be a little too detached for its own good, but this hardworking show continues upsing the stakes for two Russian spies who are firmly embedded in 1980s America. The big stake this season was Elizabeth and Philip learning that Mother Russia wants them to recruit their unsuspecting teenage daughter (a pretty awful idea) and their differing reactions. Both are taken aback, but she considers it more an honor and a natural evolution while he considers it an attack on innocence. "The Americans" does an admirable job of introducing all sorts of thorny questions such as, is it possible to live in another country, pretending to be one of its citizens, and not be changed? And does a cause come before everything? "The Americans" might be set in the 1980s, but it's eerily timely.

6. "The Man in the High Castle" (Amazon)
The premise is unstoppable — it's the United States 1962, but this is instead under the control of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. In some ways, it's hard to tell the difference, but then reminders pop up of a population under occupation. Based on Philip K. Dick's 1962 novel, the TV show is a little melodramatic in spots and the dialogue can be hokey, but it gathered steam as it went along, turning into one of the year's most suspenseful shows. Especially strong performances come from Rufus Sewell as a high-ranking Nazi party official in America and Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa as a Japanese trade minister who realizes he has to betray his own country to maintain peace. In between are Americans involved in a small underground resistance revolving around mysterious films, some showing a world where the Allies were the victors. "High Castle" is a show that's hard to stop watching once you get started.

5. "Game of Thrones" (HBO)
Sure, Season 5 didn't contain an episode nearly as shocking as in seasons past, but what it did was serve up was very consistent, cohesive and satisfying. Daenerys finally stopped spinning her wheels in Slaver's Bay and her storyline was helped immensely by a reunion with Jorah Mormont and the always delightful Tyrion Lannister. Jon Snow finally became the leader we always knew he could be. Sansa stopped being the lesser of the Stark sisters, the White Walkers made a major move and Cersei came perilously close to being sympathetic. And that's really the trick: "Game of Thrones" pulls off so brilliantly — not just the complicated web of ever-changing political allegiances, but how we change our minds about characters. Consider that Jaime Lannister, who we now think of as a charming cad, once tossed a kid off a ledge.

4. "Mr. Robot" (USA)
"Mr. Robot" pulled off a neat trick — the show started small, seemingly mostly interested in the sphere of existence of hermit-like Elliot Alderson and his attempts to restore justice in his world through hacking. And then things got weirder and weird-
Join Plenti, for free and start earning points today! Plenti is a great way to get rewards at Macy's and lots of other places! Join for free to earn points at one place and use them at another, all with a single rewards card. See a Sales Associate or visit macy.com/plenti to sign up and get more details. Plenti points cannot be earned or used on tests and services or on some purchases, such as at certain food establishments and leased departments within Macy's stores. To be eligible to join Plenti, you must be at least 13 years of age and have a residence in the United States or its territories, or Canada. Plenti is only available in the United States and its territories. For complete terms and conditions, including a complete list of exclusions, see Sales Associate or visit macy.com/plenti.

**ONE DAY SALE**

**SHOP SAT, DEC. 26 FROM 7AM-11PM**
**ALSO SHOP SUN, DEC. 27, FROM 9AM-11PM**

**HOURS MAY VARY BY STORE. SEE MACY.COM AND CLICK ON STORES FOR DETAILS**

**SHOP ALL DAY ON CHRISTMAS AT MACYS.COM**

**FREE SHIPPING ONLINE AT $25**
**VALID 12/26-12/27/2015. PLUS, FREE RETURNS. U.S. ONLY. EXCLUSIONS APPLY; SEE MACYS.COM/FREERETURNS**

**DEALS OF THE DAY**

**SPECIALY SELECTED ITEMS PRICED SO LOW YOU DON'T NEED A SAVINGS PASS! AVAILABLE ALL DAY, BOTH DAYS!**

**Deal of the Day**

- **89.99**
  - **Tommy Hilfiger**
  - **Reg. $295**
  - All sport coats and blazers.
  - WebID 1636935.

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **60% off**
  - **Collection Sweaters**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **27.80-$44**
  - In solid colors and patterns.

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **70%-85% off**
  - **When you take an extra 60% off**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **1,209.-29,70.**
  - Was $3,74,25.

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **65% off**
  - **Juniors' Collections**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **10,32-34.65.**
  - Reg./Orig. *$29.50-$99.
  - From XOXO, BCB & more.

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **40%-80% off**
  - **When you take an extra 25% off**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **.85-74.38.**
  - Clearance handbags from designers too famous to mention.

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **75% off**
  - **Clearance**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **9,75-49.75.**
  - Was $19.50-$139.50.

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **60% off**
  - **Select Boots For Her**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **22.99-34.19.**
  - Reg. $79.50-$99.
  - By Madden Girl, Baretraps and our Karen Scott.

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **30% off**
  - **Select Sweaters**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **21.99-341.99.**

- **Deal of the Day**
  - **50% off**
  - **All Fine Jewelry**
  - Deal of the Day
  - **$75-$4,200.**
  - Reg. $200-$8,000.

Fine jewelry Deals of the Day are only available at stores that carry fine jewelry. Bonus item must be of equal or lesser value than purchased item; returns must include the purchased and bonus item. *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. SOME ORIG. PRICES NOT IN EFFECT DURING THE PAST 90 DAYS. ORIG. PRICES IN EFFECT 12/26 & 12/27/2015.*

**MERCHANDISE WILL BE ON SALE AT THESE & OTHER SALE PRICES THROUGH 1/2/16, EXCEPT AS NOTED. *INTERMEDIATE PRICE REDUCTIONS MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN. **DOES NOT INCLUDE WATCHES, DESIGNER COLLECTIONS, FASHION JEWELRY OR DIAMOND ENGAGEMENT RINGS. EXTRA SAVINGS ARE TAKEN OFF SALE PRICES; "DEAL OF THE DAY" PRICES REFLECT EXTRA SAVINGS; DOES NOT APPLY TO EVERYDAY VALUES, SUPER BUYS, DOORBUSTERS/SPECIALS OR TRUNK SHOWS. JEWELRY PHOTOS MAY BE ENLARGED OR ENHANCED TO SHOW DETAIL. FINE JEWELRY AT SELECT STORES; LOG ON TO MACYS.COM FOR LOCATIONS. ALMOST ALL GEMSTONES HAVE BEEN TREATED TO ENHANCE THEIR BEAUTY & REQUIRE SPECIAL CARE, LOG ON TO MACYS.COM/ GEMSTONES OR ASK YOUR SALES PROFESSIONAL. ADVERTISED MERCHANDISE MAY NOT BE CARRIED AT YOUR LOCAL MACY'S & SELECTION MAY VARY BY STORE. PRICES & MERCHANDISE MAY DIFFER AT MACYS.COM. ELECTRIC ITEMS CARRY MFR'S WARRANTIES; TO SEE A MFR'S WARRANTY AT NO CHARGE BEFORE PURCHASING, VISIT A STORE OR WRITE TO: MACY'S WARRANTY DEPT., PO BOX 1026, MARYLAND HEIGHTS, MO 63043, ATT: CONSUMER WARRANTIES. N5110867.
Season after season, for 69+ years, the Beldon Family has been offering the very best in home improvements. Our windows are no exception.

Unbeatable Prices
backed by our *PRICE MATCH GUARANTEE
Energy Efficient
saving you money on your energy bills
Lifetime Warranty
for both frames and glass breakage

LeafGuardGutters.com  (708) 406-6950

TeamWindow
By BELDON HOME SOLUTIONS

75% OFF INSTALLATION
PLUS RECEIVE A
$200 VISA CARD WITH PURCHASE
0% FINANCING OPTIONS AVAILABLE
Free Estimates!
Hurry, Offer Expires
November 30th. Call Now!

12-Month Same-As-Cash Loans provided by Emerald USA (1345 Brickyard Rd. Suite 600), Salt Lake City, UT 84106 on approved credit, for a limited time. Repayment terms vary from 24 to 132 months. Interest waived if repaid in 365 days. 16.84% fixed APR, effective as of March 2015.

TeamWindow.com  (708) 746-0434

Justin Theroux in HBO's "The Leftovers."

TV, from Page 16

er and more complicated as it became clear that Elliot might be seriously delusional and that the story of E Corp wasn't your average tale of corporate corruption. Rami Malek was stunning as Elliott, looking haunted and weary, and "Mr. Robot" was the strangest, most atmospheric show of the year and also the most relevant.

3. "Fargo" Season 2 (FX)
The ability of "Fargo" to create such a specific world is the anthology's biggest joy. Not just the wintry small townishness of locales in Minnesota and South Dakota, but the "hey there, ho there" passive aggressive pleasantness of a group of cops and citizens set against criminal outfits. The accents are impressive enough, but then there's the deadpan humor, the stellar acting and the seamless, and not overly showy, way the show captures the look and feel of 1979. Like last year's installment, the violent eruption of events all starts with an accident and a couple of "innocent" folk who make a mistake, and then make a really big mistake by trying to cover up that mistake.

2. "Justified" (FX)
The final season of a TV show isn't always its best. Tying up loose ends, meeting expectations and servicing old characters and storylines, while also introducing new ones, is a tough trick to pull off. But "Justified" nailed it. Smartly, the majority of the season was spent on the important relationships, in particular that of drawling lawman Raylan Givens (Timothy Olyphant) and loquacious schemer Boyd Crowder (Walton Goggins) — two of TV's finest characters.

Even more amazingly, it introduced new characters (like the one played by the distractingly mustache-free Sam Elliott) who strengthened the season instead of detracting from it.

1. "The Leftovers" (HBO)
I loved "The Leftovers" last season, but this season surpassed it in quality and eliminated some of its flaws. I was skeptical at first about the whole show packing up and moving to a new location and the focus being split between a new set of characters, but contrary to the show's main message, it turns out you can run away from your problems! "The Leftovers" stayed dark, dark, dark, but also let in a teeny bit more hope. And the show offered a new avenue into the "departure" of 2 percent of the world's population by going to a town where no one departed. There simply was no other show this year that made me feel as emotional or invested.
Drop the ball: Entertaining options for New Year's Eve

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
Pioneer Press

Sure, you could sit home watching the ball drop in Times Square on TV but there are so many more interesting ways to celebrate New Year's Eve. And while there are plenty of party options from bars to ballrooms, here are a few that go beyond the usual.

Be a First-Nighter

There are over 30 entertainment options in downtown Evanston during First Night Evanston. Starting at 7 p.m., choices include Corley Siegel and Chamber Blues, Stew Figa’s Fifty Shades of Yiddish, Second City Improv All-Stars, Battle of the Teenage Bands and Marc Smith Poetry Slam. Adult admission is $25 until Dec. 25, $30 until Dec. 31 and $35 event day. Teens pay $15 and little kids are free with a paying adult. For tickets, visit www.firstnightevanston.net.

Enjoy “Broad” humor

Old acquaintances won’t be “forgot” at “Funny Old Broads,” 8:30 p.m. at the Skokie Theatre, 7924 Lincoln Ave., Skokie. Getting older is a laughing matter for comedian Caryn Bark and musical satirists Pam Peterson and Jan Slavin, known as the Boomer Babes. Tickets are $42. Call 847-674-1500 or visit www.skokietheatre.com.

Dazed but not confused

The Second City ends its run of “Holidazed! at Metropolis Performing Arts Centre, 111 W. Campbell St, Arlington Heights, with performances at 7 and 10 p.m. The production promises to burst the monotony of the season with humorous reflections on everything from frosty snowmen to Black Friday bargains and those darn relatives. Tickets are $50, $60 for stage tables. For reservations, call 847-577-2121 or visit www.metropolisarts.com.

Variety is key

You’ll hear everything from jazz to pop, blues and show tunes at New Year’s Eve with E. Faye Butler, 8 p.m. at Northlight Theatre, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie. The versatile singer and actor has performed in several sold out New Year’s Eve concerts. For reservations, call 847-673-6300 or visit www.northshorecenter.org.

Take your tots

The magic hour will be 12—noon, that is, at the Exploratorium’s Itty Bitty New Year at Oakton Community Center, 6701 Oakton St., Skokie. There will be a balloon drop and nonalcoholic toast. The event starts at 10 a.m. with a balloon artist, family entertainment and craft projects for the younger set and their families. The cost is $10 for resident children, $13 for nonresident children and $2 for ages 16 and older. For details, call 847-674-1500 or visit www.skokieparks.org/exploratorium.

Fantastic family fun

A great evening for the younger set and their families. The cost is $10 for resident children, $13 for nonresident children and $2 for ages 16 and older. For details, call 847-674-1500 or visit www.skokieparks.org/exploratorium.

First Night Evanston offers more than 30 entertainment options on New Year’s Eve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E. Faye Butler</td>
<td>Northlight Theatre, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
<td>New Year’s Eve with E. Faye Butler. For reservations, call 847-673-6300 or visit <a href="http://www.northshorecenter.org">www.northshorecenter.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itty Bitty New Year at Oakton Community Center</td>
<td>Exploratorium's Itty Bitty New Year at Oakton Community Center, 6701 Oakton St., Skokie</td>
<td>10 a.m.</td>
<td>The event will feature a balloon drop and nonalcoholic toast. For details, call 847-674-1500 or visit <a href="http://www.skokieparks.org/exploratorium">www.skokieparks.org/exploratorium</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Year’s Eve Concert</td>
<td>Northside Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
<td>Varieties of music from jazz to pop, blues and show tunes. For reservations, call 847-673-6300 or visit <a href="http://www.northshorecenter.org">www.northshorecenter.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To advertise in the Chicagoland Theatre Directory, please call 312-222-4070.
NEW YEAR'S EVE PERFORMANCE

Enjoy a free glass of champagne

The Heir Apparent

written by David Ives
adapted from a folktale
written by Jean-Francois Regnard

directed by John Rando

SPECIAL
NEW YEAR'S EASY PERFORMANCE

Fun and balloons welcome 2016 at the Exploritorium

Double feature

You and your kids can journey to Neverland twice on Dec. 30 at Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St. From 3-4:30 p.m., they will screen "Peter Pan," and from 5-6:45 p.m. "Finding Neverland." A snack will be served at each screening.

For details, call 847-673-1234 or go to nileslibrary.org.

Tricks and toast

Magician Dennis DeBondt will amaze families with his humorous, interactive show at a New Year's Eve Magic Extravaganza, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Dec. 31 at Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St. His performance will be followed by a noon countdown complete with noisemakers and mock champagne (sparkling grape juice). Register for this all-ages event.

For details, call 847-448-8254 or go to cityofevanston.org.

Meaningful music

The celebration continues at A Kwanzaa to Remember, noon Dec. 26 at Fleetwood-Jourdain Center, 1655 Foster St., Evanston. Skits, songs and poetry related to the seven principles of Kwanzaa will be performed by a multicultural cast of Evanston children. Admission is free.

For details, go to cityofevanston.org.
‘Fur Ball’ raises record $1.6 million for PAWS Chicago

Event: 14th annual Fur Ball
Benefiting: PAWS Chicago lifesaving programs for homeless pets
Location: Drake Hotel, Chicago
Co-chairs: Melissa and Michael Canning of Inverness and Corey and JP Marchetti of Kenilworth
Honorary chairs: Nancy and Michael Timmers
Date: Nov. 13
Attended: 700
Raised: $1.6 million, a record amount
Website: pawschicago.org

Kali Kordewick of Niles, from left, Susan Hope Engel and Jonathan Shuman, both of Evanston, were among more than 250 supporters at the Center for Independent Futures’ 12th “Something’s Cooking Benefit,” held at Prairie Moon, Evanston, on Oct. 25. The event raised $30,000 to help provide individuals with disabilities the opportunities of a full life. More information at independentfutures.com.

(Front row, from left) Niles Township Clerk Charles Levy, Village of Niles Township Supervisor Marilyn D. Glazer, Rose Hankes, Roblyn Antenor, Dave Hoffman, volunteers, (back row, from left) Niles Township Assessor Scott Bagnall, Niles Township Trustees Donald Gelfund, Mark Collins and Tony Lundin at the Niles Township Board’s recent presentation of awards to Hankes, Antenor and Hoffman, for their work with the Niles Township Food Pantry. Hankes and Antenor, both high school students, donated weekend hours collecting leftover food from the Skokie Farmers Market. Hoffman, of Morton Grove, along with Trustee Collins, transported the food by truck to the pantry.

We want to publish your photos. To submit, visit http://community.chicagotribune.com or email community@pioneerlocal.com.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADDRESS</th>
<th>BUYER</th>
<th>SELLER</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PRICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2214 S. Groebbert Rd., #177, Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Mariusz Drwal &amp; Teresa Drwal</td>
<td>Sandy Stempolski</td>
<td>11-24-15</td>
<td>$98,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322 W. Miner St., #3A, Arlington Heights</td>
<td>John Dupeuh</td>
<td>Joseph Ray</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1221 S. Wilke Rd., #1201, Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Lillana T. Sobotta</td>
<td>Fannie Mae</td>
<td>11-19-15</td>
<td>$119,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1352 W. Evergreen Ave, Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Kevin C. Wier &amp; Monika Dobrowskis</td>
<td>Thomas Okroj</td>
<td>11-24-15</td>
<td>$275,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>319 S. Grove St, Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Gregory Tilt &amp; Kelly Tiltz</td>
<td>Danielle Burgert</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601 S. Appletree Ln., Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Brendan Smith &amp; Christina Smith</td>
<td>Peter L. Fishers</td>
<td>11-20-15</td>
<td>$373,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340 S. Windor Dr., Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Jeremy Czorski &amp; Alexis Llakatos</td>
<td>Carl W. Maves Estate</td>
<td>11-18-15</td>
<td>$460,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1106 N. Harvard Ave, Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Martha M. Delli</td>
<td>Thomas Lauraman</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290 N. Pheen Ave, Arlington Heights</td>
<td>Cecylla Mizerka &amp; Thomas Yulikis</td>
<td>Mark G. Gallant</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$728,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 Old Oak Dr., #311, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Boris Kolo &amp; Victoria Kolo</td>
<td>Gerda Speiss</td>
<td>11-17-15</td>
<td>$115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1038 Albemarle Ln, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Yue Peng</td>
<td>Keith C. Berheim</td>
<td>11-17-15</td>
<td>$168,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1127 Rollingwood Ln, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Carlos E. Vegas &amp; Katherine K. Lobo</td>
<td>Thomas N. Rukenes &amp; Katherine Lobo</td>
<td>11-18-15</td>
<td>$180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1050 Willow Cir, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Marti C. Swenson</td>
<td>Timothy S. Brady</td>
<td>11-13-15</td>
<td>$192,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>441 Forestview Dr., Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Brett M. Anderson &amp; Kimberly M. Anderson</td>
<td>Paul A. Sehler</td>
<td>11-17-15</td>
<td>$182,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650 Aspen Dr, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Deborah A. Keanen &amp; Daniel J. Keenan</td>
<td>Craig M. Storin</td>
<td>11-17-15</td>
<td>$267,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126 Selwyn Ln, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Oleg Goland</td>
<td>Fannie Mae</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$281,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1406 Caren Ct., Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Scott Renson &amp; Ann Lesley Rosen</td>
<td>Stanley Talbots</td>
<td>11-18-15</td>
<td>$358,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>465 Thordale Dr., Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Richard A. Lambert &amp; Alanna G. Lambert</td>
<td>Harri H.</td>
<td>11-16-15</td>
<td>$405,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1115 Holiday Ln, #10, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Mildred Lopez</td>
<td>Louis J. Bierwirth</td>
<td>11-20-15</td>
<td>$72,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6226 Windfield Rd., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Ofidio Moshe</td>
<td>Stavros Tsipas</td>
<td>11-20-15</td>
<td>$67,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8812 Brier Ct., #10, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Zaneta Zolotowicz</td>
<td>PNC Bank</td>
<td>11-17-15</td>
<td>$109,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5976 Woodland Ave, #6D, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Kamielski J. Desai &amp; Prabhakar K. Desai</td>
<td>Fannie Mae</td>
<td>11-16-15</td>
<td>$116,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>825 Pearson St., #20G, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Edward Bietli &amp; Daniel Bietli</td>
<td>Ashish R. Wankhade</td>
<td>11-16-15</td>
<td>$116,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440 Northwest Hwy, #H, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Christine D. Kreutz</td>
<td>Sherwin Yellen</td>
<td>11-28-15</td>
<td>$187,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100 Greenview Ave., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Chaojung Kuo</td>
<td>Fannie Mae</td>
<td>11-24-15</td>
<td>$135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4321 Bay Colony Dr., #1W, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Kathleen Sifo</td>
<td>Nessin Yahia</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9440 Meadow Ln., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Lgbjan Kardobuck &amp; Oxana Burjakowska</td>
<td>Samir Babirov</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$133,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>711 S. River Rd., #117, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Solomon S. Toledo</td>
<td>Tilton Trust Co.</td>
<td>11-18-15</td>
<td>$147,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254 W. 8th Ave., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Andrew Goelina</td>
<td>Fannie Mae</td>
<td>11-17-15</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48, Westfield Ln., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Jadwiga Bednarska &amp; Malgorzata Kazikowski</td>
<td>Sheila R. Magnus</td>
<td>11-17-15</td>
<td>$171,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>305 Country Ln., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Allen Tom &amp; Rosemarie Tom</td>
<td>Alan G. Gelfo</td>
<td>11-21-15</td>
<td>$184,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>775 S. 5th Ave., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Xavier Rivera &amp; Faye Rivera</td>
<td>James L. Romano</td>
<td>11-16-15</td>
<td>$185,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1433 Perry St., #29B, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Mona Kuma</td>
<td>Marta Szopa</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$181,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9342 Home Ct., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Girgashum J. Rana &amp; Ranjanbin G. Rana</td>
<td>Emmanuel M. Chalasalk</td>
<td>11-22-15</td>
<td>$204,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1249 Campbell Ave., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Nour Masri</td>
<td>Kay J. Zawiski</td>
<td>11-20-15</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1371 Hammill Ave., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Richard Dawood &amp; Gabborta Dawood</td>
<td>Haiman Youshakh</td>
<td>11-19-15</td>
<td>$205,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871 Morse Ave., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Lukasz Rybak &amp; Nattia Lach Rybak</td>
<td>Fannie Mae</td>
<td>11-19-15</td>
<td>$226,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>445 Lance Dr., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Edward Grissanti &amp; Frances Grissanti</td>
<td>Catherine A. Leppert</td>
<td>11-24-15</td>
<td>$223,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 Lance Dr., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Anamaria Ulimapam</td>
<td>Mariguri S. Semielak</td>
<td>11-14-15</td>
<td>$249,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172 N. River Rd., #117, Des Plaines</td>
<td>David Vo &amp; Stephanie Vo</td>
<td>Renee M. Kryder</td>
<td>11-23-15</td>
<td>$249,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2590 Locust St., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Marko Koncic &amp; Danijela Koncic</td>
<td>Celine M.</td>
<td>11-18-15</td>
<td>$260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1414 S. 4th Ave., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Anthony E. Mazza &amp; Pamela A. Mazza</td>
<td>Kevin J. Jones</td>
<td>11-19-15</td>
<td>$281,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>630 Devonshire Dr., Des Plaines</td>
<td>Betty Koprekzy &amp; Robert W. Ryd</td>
<td>Vilma Papalek</td>
<td>11-18-15</td>
<td>$347,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>495 Josephine Cir, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Felipe Calabria &amp; Joyce Calabria</td>
<td>Yanod Trust</td>
<td>11-20-15</td>
<td>$350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1036 Michigan Ave., #22, Evanston</td>
<td>Peter C. Nelson &amp; Caleb Nelson</td>
<td>Jeffrey L. Hieck</td>
<td>11-18-15</td>
<td>$308,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834 Ridge Ave., #117, Evanston</td>
<td>Uli N. Langen</td>
<td>Kalana G. Patel</td>
<td>11-19-15</td>
<td>$360,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512 Mulford St., #201, Evanston</td>
<td>Stephen A. Klaas &amp; Dewi Klaas</td>
<td>Jenny Lo</td>
<td>11-20-15</td>
<td>$310,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introvert’s New Year’s Eve survival guide

There are strategies to make parties not only manageable but also enjoyable for introverts. Page 14
This family makes Christmas pierogi together

By Judy Buchenot
The Beacon-News

Making cookies together is a familiar holiday activity, but the Hoffman family also makes pierogi together.

"My maiden names is Kuzlik," said St. Charles resident Kathy Hoffman. "Each year we go to my cousin's house with my other cousins and we make between 400 and 500 pierogi."

The cousins come from a long line of "amazing cooks," said Hoffman, 50. "We are the fourth generation to be making these. We do it in sort of an assembly line style."

The people who make the dough are dubbed "the doughboys," she said. The group who rolls the dough into thin sheets are called "the rollers." The "stuffers" then take over and fill the pierogi with three different fillings.

The final step is performed by the "putter in the potter." This role requires great concentration as well as multiple timers. The cousin serving as the putter in the potter watches over several pots of boiling water. As each batch of pierogi is dropped into the boiling water, one of the multiple timers clipped to the potter's apron is set. As the timers go off, pierogi are removed and cooled.

There is also a lone electric frying pan set up on the counter. "If a pierogi breaks - which they sometimes do - we fry it up and eat it right away. It's quality control that provides a delicious treat," said Hoffman. Only the perfect pierogi are packaged up to go into the freezer. The day's activities usually require 50 pounds of flour and "plenty of beer. Beer is an important part of getting through the day," notes Hoffman with a playful grin.

Hoffman's 10-year-old son, Chase, has already earned a place as a reputable stuffer on the assembly line.

"But my husband is an expert stuffer. I think it is because he is a carpenter and has a good eye for measurements," Hoffman's husband, Scott, owns Team Hoffman Construction, a company that does both small and large home remodeling projects throughout the area.

Although there are many varieties of pierogi, the cousins usually make only three filling varieties - potato, potato and cheese and kapusta, which is a sauerkraut filling. The cheese used in the filling is a dry curd cottage cheese which can be a challenge to find.

"Woodman's Market in North Aurora carries it during the holidays so I get it there," Hoffman said.

Each cousin takes home a shopping bag of pierogi at the end of the day. On Christmas, the family gathers again to enjoy some of the pierogi fried in generous amounts of butter in three electric skillets, one for each variety. The rest of the meal includes ham, beef tenderloin roast, green beans and Hoffman's favorite Brussels sprouts.

"People who think they don't like Brussels sprouts like these Brussels sprouts," said Hoffman. She begins by slicing the Brussels sprouts. She then fries four strips of thick sliced bacon.

"It has to be thick sliced bacon because regular bacon will burn," she said. When most of the fat is rendered from the bacon, the sliced Brussels sprouts are added. After about 12 minutes of sauteing, Hoffman seasons the dish with salt and pepper and serves it.

"Polish cooking is very filling," Hoffman said, "but very delicious. We use a lot of vinegar, a lot of onion, a lot butter, a lot of cabbage, a lot of potatoes and lots of meat." Another one of her favorite Polish side dishes is potato pancakes.

"Red potatoes work the best. Just peel and grate the potatoes and some onions. Squeeze out all of the water, add some eggs and salt and pepper and make pancakes out of the mix. Fry in oil and serve then. They are delicious with applesauce and sour cream."

Hoffman shares her pierogi recipe for others to try at their holiday table.

Judy Buchenot is a freelance writer.

Find more suburban cooks on Page 4.
Enjoy a cozy Christmas morning with easy casserole

The other day I asked my 15-year-old son, Finn, what he loves best about Christmas. "I don't know if I love any one specific thing," he answered casually, "but I really love how Christmas doesn't feel like any other day of the year." He's right. When that genuine Christmas feeling is in the air, time seems to slow down, the house feels cozy and folks always seem to linger a little longer by the fireside. Christmas has always been a sacred time in my house.

The days of the 5 a.m. wake-up call on Christmas morning have long passed in my house. The footie-sleeper clad, naughty list averse, Santa-worshiping kiddos of the past have grown into patient, appreciative and mature holiday lovers. Even though they are well beyond clamoring for a break-of-dawn candy cane, our kids still climb into bed with us every Christmas morning.

We chat and laugh and let the anticipation of our Christmas morning gift-opening build. After we find our slippers and grab a few blankets, the four of us head downstairs to see what treats Santa left behind. In the later morning we open a few gifts we've picked for each other and watch the kitty enjoy her annual dose of catnip. We sip many cups of coffee and savor an easy breakfast. We lounge the morning away and stay in our pajamas until it's nearly time to start preparing the Christmas dinner we share annually with friends.

I always remember that bask- ing in the coziness of Christmas morning with my family means not being pulled away from the festivities. Tossing a savory breakfast dish together on Christmas Eve ensures that serving up a hearty Christmas breakfast is as easy as opening the refrigerator and turning on the oven.

This holiday casserole honors the hues of the holiday season in the form of green pesto and red tomatoes while salty prosciutto and a trio of cheeses ensure this breakfast is elegant and decadent despite its make-ahead convenience.

No matter what your holiday traditions entail, I hope you enjoy a cozy Christmas morning.

Cozy Christmas Morning Casserole

Feel free to use whatever meats and cheeses you have on hand to make this overnight breakfast dish. A cup of diced ham or 8 ounces of cooked bacon or sausage work just as well in this easy recipe. Makes 12 servings.

1/4 cup butter softened
6 cups cubed French bread
2 cups shredded mozzarella
2 cups shredded sharp provolone
1/4 pound thinly sliced prosciutto, torn
2 1/4-inch thick slices sweet capicola, diced
1 7-ounce package of refrigerated pesto
2 Roma tomatoes, thinly sliced
10 eggs
1/2 cup milk
1 teaspoon dried mustard
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 cup grated Parmesan

Fresh basil leaves for garnish

1. Spread the butter in the bottom and up the sides of a 9x13 glass baking dish. Toss half of the bread cubes into the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle half of the mozzarella and half the provolone over the bread. Top the cheese with half of the torn prosciutto and half the diced capicola. Using a teaspoon, dollop half of the pesto sporadically over the meats and cheeses. Cover the pesto with the remaining half of the bread cubes.

2. Whisk the eggs, milk, dried mustard, salt and pepper together in a large bowl. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the casserole and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Cover the casserole with plastic wrap and store in the refrigerator overnight.

3. On Christmas morning, preheat the oven to 350 degrees and bake the casserole, uncovered, for 50-60 minutes until puffed, golden brown and set. Allow casserole to cool for 15 minutes before cutting into squares and serving as family members open gifts.
There is no question where home is on Christmas for the Anderson family. The family has been gathering at the same house on Loomis Street in Naperville since 1892. The home has always been occupied by a family member with the most current owners being Jean and Bob Anderson.

Family member WW. Wickel opened a pharmacy in Naperville in 1875 that continues to operate today as Oswald’s Pharmacy. The business has been serving Naperville residents for 140 years. The family also opened Paperback Paradise in 1964. The business expanded and grew in Anderson’s Bookshops. The family’s strong ties to Naperville include many Christmas traditions.

“Christmas is my wife’s favorite holiday,” said Bob Anderson, 84, standing near a refrigerator, stove and sink. “It’s a Swedish tradition to make lots of cookies,” said Bob. “And then we give them all away!”

He reported that one variety is finished and packed into tins. The dough for two more varieties has been mixed and is chilling in the refrigerator ready to be baked. There are plans to make several more varieties in the days ahead.

Becky Anderson Wilkins, 57, Bob and Jean’s daughter and Naperville city council member, approves of the cookie making tradition. “All of us,” she said, including her siblings and their families, “bring over cookie tins and fill them up with cookies.” One of Becky’s favorites are the Swedish ginger cookies, which are simple, not-too-sweet cookies. She also enjoys the date cookies. She also enjoys the date pudding made with suet, which is basically fat, but it was served with a hard sauce and a warm brandy sauce. I have tried making it but I can’t make it like she did. It was all in the way she made it.”

After spending so many years in the pharmacy basement and it took me that together?” he said. “I put it together in a container with them.”

Bob breaks out in a grin at the memory. “Do you know how long it took me to put that together?” he said. “I put it together in the pharmacy basement and it took me about a week.”

As the family grows older, there is no such urgency to open gifts in the wee morning hours, so about 10 years ago, they changed to sharing brunch together instead of dinner. “We are not in such a hurry to be up early now so we get together and have a Tom and Jerry,” said Bob, referring to the classic holiday cocktail featuring whipped eggs that is served steaming hot in a mug. The breakfast spread for the family usually requires three dozen eggs and three pounds of bacon.

There have been some dishes served at family events that have disappeared. “My great-aunt Ann made a suet pudding that was the best,” Becky said. “It was a steamed pudding made with suet, which is basically fat, but it was served with a hard sauce and a warm brandy sauce. I have tried making it but I can’t make it like she did. It was all in the way she made it.”

After spending so many years in the same home, Becky and Bob have many memories. They recall annual Christmas parties with the Bentons, a longtime neighbor. “They served Fish House Punch, which was so good,” said Becky. “I have started making it for business Christmas parties and everyone loves it.”

“It kind of sneaks up on you though,” Bob warned. “It goes down easy. Two cups is the limit on that one. After a cup of punch, Harold Cromer and his wife would play duets on the piano. We are so lucky to have had so many friends and family. We have so many memories.”

To help everyone create their own memories, Bob and Becky have shared a few favorite family recipes for others to try.

Judy Buchenot is a freelance writer.
Dear Help Squad,

My parents booked a trip with Movers & Shakers Inc. — based in Morton Grove and owned by Cheryl McCoy — to Meskwaki Casino in Tama, Iowa, July 29-31. They paid $308 by check. The trip was canceled on the date of departure while they waited for the bus to pick them up. They were told the bus had a mechanical failure. Shortly after the canceled trip, my father suffered a minor stroke. He called Cheryl McCoy for weeks requesting a refund. Cheryl did not return his calls. He asked me to help so I started calling Cheryl. She did not return my calls. She finally returned a call to me on Sept. 8, leaving a message promising to send a check. She did not. After I left several more messages, I spoke with her on Sept. 18. Cheryl told me a check was sent on Sept. 15. The check was never received.

I issued a complaint with the Better Business Bureau. I believe she lied by telling the BBB she mailed a check in October. The BBB has closed the case as unresolved. Cheryl told me a check was sent on Sept. 15. She did not. After leaving a message promising to send a check She did not. After calling Cheryl. She did not return my calls. She finally returned a call to me on Sept 8, leaving a message promising to send a check. She did not. After I left several more messages, I spoke with her on Sept 18. Cheryl told me a check was sent on Sept 15. The check was never received.

I issued a complaint with the Better Business Bureau. I believe she lied by telling the BBB she mailed a check in October. The BBB has closed the case as unresolved. Cheryl told me a check was sent on Sept. 15. She did not. After leaving a message promising to send a check She did not. After calling Cheryl. She did not return my calls. She finally returned a call to me on Sept 8, leaving a message promising to send a check. She did not. After I left several more messages, I spoke with her on Sept 18. Cheryl told me a check was sent on Sept 15. The check was never received.

Cheryl did not respond to my messages. I spoke with her on Sept 18. Cheryl said she sent me the check but got the address mixed up.

Before delving into the details of my contact with Cheryl McCoy of Movers & Shakers, here is some background — much of it provided by McCoy herself — on how her business operates. Movers & Shakers mails paper fliers to potential customers composed primarily of senior citizens. On its flier, the company does not provide a website, an email address or a street address; just a phone number. Upon calling, a PO Box is given for sending payment. And in McCoy's own words: "Probably 90 percent of the people (on our trips) use checks because a lot of seniors don't use credit like younger people do. We take (credit cards)...but I don't know if we really need to anymore. We take mostly personal checks." The details of this business model raised more than a few red flags. McCoy was initially quite responsive to my calls, saying things like, "I thought this was taken care of already. I had some help because...I had a concussion and I was having difficulty working. I'm going to get a cashiers check today and overnight it to them. I'm sorry this happened." And sure enough, Michelle's parents did receive their refund the very next day.

Then Robert called. Robert is a friend of Michelle's father. He and his wife were also旅了 the address mixed up.

Then Robert called. Robert is a friend of Michelle's father. He and his wife were also scheduled to be on the fateful Meskwaki Casino bus trip.

"The reason I'm calling you is a friend of mine just received a check from Cheryl McCoy. I was on that trip and never received my refund either. You've been successful getting the check for (Michelle's father); I hope you can do the same for me." When I returned Robert's call, he said, "I called Cheryl four or five times. One time she gave me the excuse she does her bookkeeping at the end of the month, the next time she said she sent me the check but got the address mixed up."

Over the next two weeks, I left McCoy five messages. She called back once to say, "I was not aware of this. Obviously (Robert) doesn't have (his refund), so I'm going to get it out to him right away." But no check arrived.

Then, three days after Robert filed a Better Business Bureau complaint and I informed McCoy that Help Squad was going to press, Robert finally received his $308 refund from Movers & Shakers.

Send your questions and complaints to HelpSquad@pioneerlocal.com.

Cathy Cunningham is a freelance columnist.
Artist creates mural devoted to birds

Finished work to measure 3,000 square feet

By William Hageman
Chicago Tribune

For the last 16 months, artist Jane Kim has filled her days filling an enormous space — 40 feet high, more than 3,000 square feet — with images of birds.

Her canvas is one entire wall of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology visitor center in Ithaca, NY. The mural, titled “From So Simple a Beginning,” includes one species from each of the 243 bird families on a map of the world. It also traces the evolution of birds, depicting extinct birds and dinosaurs.

All the creatures are life-size, ranging from tiny hummingbirds to a 10-foot Wandering Albatross. On this day, she was hoping to do three small birds once she climbed aboard the lift that she uses.

"It's not so bad," she said. "My palette isn't ridiculously heavy."

The 2 1/2-year project is a joint effort between the Cornell Lab and Ink Dwell studio in California, of which Kim is co-founder.

"I just station myself here, then go back to California for visits, which are sparse," said the 34-year-old artist who grew up in Mount Prospect. "So I'm here pretty much full time."

She said she has done large-scale murals before but never had to be on-site this long.

"Other projects, different techniques allowed me to create off-site and then install. But this being completely hand-painted directly on the wall requires me to be here full time."

Kim trained at the Rhode Island School of Design and received a certificate in science illustration from California State University at Monterey Bay. She came to the Cornell Lab as a science illustration intern in 2011. Around the same time, she won a National Geographic competition for her "Migrating Mural," chosen "best ocean saving idea." Her project involved the annual migration of the blue whale.

John Fitzpatrick, executive director of the Cornell Lab, had always envisioned a mural in the visitor center, Kim said. Combining both their ideas, "From So Simple a Beginning" was born.

"When John first introduced the idea, he had wanted an evolution of birds mural," Kim said. "I proposed a concept design that was heavy on prehistoric evolution and only (showed) the order of birds. There were only 20-something at that point that various species fell under."

The idea then evolved into a showcase of one member of each family, 231 species, now increased to 243.

The project got the green light in 2013, and she spent a year in San Francisco doing preliminary work before coming to Ithaca in 2014.

She spends eight to 14 hours a day on the detailed paintings, she said. More of her time is spent on the research involved.

"I had to figure out pretty precisely how long it would take me. Once a bird is blocked out on the wall, it's an average of about eight hours per bird. That's the least time-consuming part. Functionally, research, preliminary work, the final polished drawing, scanning and scaling the bird, that altogether plus the final execution is 24 hours."

There have been challenges along the way, she said. Some species have taken longer to paint than she anticipated, throwing off her schedule. Others didn't take as long as expected. And all had a period of time when she felt like a distance runner hitting the wall.

"Every bird has an ugly phase, like you're just pushing paint around," she said. "But then you put one stroke of paint down, and you say, yes, that's it."

The project is just about wrapped up, with the dinosaurs and prehistoric species sections to be finished in early December. For those who can't make it to the visitor center, the Cornell Lab is creating an interactive mural feature as part of its All About Bird Biology project. Viewers will be able to find high-resolution images of the mural, learn about each of the bird families and explore collections of some of the most unusual birds in the world.

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Latte. She is a 2-year-old spayed female brown and white tabby that was rescued from a high kill shelter in Southern Illinois. She is calm and enjoys being petted. For more information, visit www.nawsus.org.

chicagotribune.com/pets

Visit us daily for the latest pet and animal news from the suburbs, city and beyond, plus:

- Our adoptable animals blog featuring photos and descriptions of Chicagoland pets in need of homes.
- Our suburban and city pet events calendar
- Photo galleries, videos, more
LOVE ESSENTIALLY

Advice for picking out gifts for spouses

I bet most people would say holiday shopping for their kids is really easy. Why? Because all year long, our sweet little children are telling us about the latest toys, electronics and other cool gadgets they want. For parents of children of a certain age, how many times have you heard the word "Swegway" in the last three months?

But holiday shopping for your spouse or significant other is a completely different story. It can be challenging and stressful for many reasons, which include:

- He or she has everything.
- He or she is very picky and so whatever you buy ends up sitting in the closet or returned.
- Deciding what to spend. While price shouldn't matter, it could get uncomfortable or awkward if the other person spends significantly more or less on your gift.
- You want your love to be happy and excited about the gift.

Dr. Anne Brennan Malec is a Chicago-based therapist who specializes in relationship counseling. Malec said when it comes to gift giving, she is a huge supporter of gifts that create memories, such as a trip or tickets to a sporting event or concert.

"If you give in this way, you are sending the message to your spouse that says, 'I want to be with you,'" said Malec, who holds a doctorate of clinical psychology and said she has been practicing since 2003. "Instead of buying a cashmere sweater that might sit in the closet, you are saying, 'This is a gift I'm not just giving to my partner, but to my marriage. This is time for us to spend together and to create a romantic memory.'"

Malec said giving these kinds of gifts helps sustain warmth in a relationship, keep it on track, and even help improve things during a tough time.

"Just by your selection of a gift — any gift, it tells the receiver, 'I am thinking about you. I am attuned to you.'"

Dr. Anne Brennan Malec, therapist

Any one of these 12 things would make someone feel like a million bucks, simply because they take effort, crafting, imagination, creativity, thoughtfulness and of course, time. Gifts like these make people feel important, treasured and truly loved.

The thing about giving is, even if the giver gets no gift in return, he or she receives something amazing: pure joy.

"The idea that we can delight, that we can bring a smile to a face, make someone happy or meet a need they have makes us feel incredibly happy," Malec said.

Happy ... what better word is there than that when it comes to Christmas?

Jackie Pilossoph is a freelance columnist for Chicago Tribune Media Group.
**Roundup | Children's Books**

**Dewey Bob**

By Judy Schachner, Dial Children's Books, $17.99, ages 5-8

When Dewey Bob Crockett gets too big for his britches, that's a problem, because a ragtag pair of britches hanging from a tree just happens to be home sweet home for the Crockett clan. Dewey, a half-grown raccoon, all pointy nose, chubby cheeks and fluffy tale in Schachner's adorably off-kilter watercolor rendering, bids a tender good-bye to a tearful Ma Crockett, scoops up his beloved button collection and heads off into a world even more wondrous than the one he left behind.

The down-home details, from the narrator's country drawl to Dewey's impromptu poetry, are charming. The illustrations — bursting with color, found objects and flea market style — draw you in. Dewey, who collects moonlight, fireflies and friends with the same infectious enthusiasm, is a genuinely lovable little guy, who fishes for treasure in the junk yard and releases his fireflies with a song: "Tiny things with dark green wings and starlight in yer tummies. Don't you miss yer glowin' homes and yer sparkly mummies?"

But the best thing here is the storytelling. Schachner in effect tells three stories: Dewey leaves home, Dewey builds a thrift shop wonder of a new home, Dewey goes out looking for a friend. By the time Dewey sets off on one of the most memorable friend-gathering missions in recent memory — "Run fer yer lives!" yells a squirrel, "He's got crazy ey-ey-eyes!" — you'll be a fan too. A down-home delight.

**Bug in a Vacuum**

By Melanie Watt, Tundra Books, $21.99, ages 5-9

"Bug in a Vacuum" by the supremely funny author of "Scaredy Squirrel," is that rare picture book that works equally well as a wild ride for the kids and a smart and sophisticated fable for the grown-ups. A fly with bulging yellow eyes and a taste for adventure flies into a keenly observed suburban home, circa 1965, all padded pink toilet seat covers, patterned wallpapers and handsomely packaged consumer goods. Our hero weaves through the bathroom, makes a brief stop on the apple pie in the kitchen, and lands in the living room, where a little silver spaceship of a vacuum cleaner — an Electrolux, perhaps? — swallows him up and his adventure begins. Trapped inside, our hero goes through Elizabeth Kübler-Ross' five stages of grief, each introduced by an imaginary consumer product: "Denial" is an efficient-looking spray can, with the legend "Fine and Dandy" dancing across the top and the guarantee "Wipes Out the Ugly Truth" below. ("Contains: An ounce of doubt and gallons of disbelief.") We see this first stage of grief play out within the vacuum cleaner, where our hero waltzes through the dust particles and debris, wondering, "Could this be a surprise party?"

As Watt fans will expect, the illustrations are beautiful and inventive, the dialogue is deeply funny and the ending is at once satisfying and bittersweet. Watts knows how to tell an epic tale — and yes, this trapped insect story is epic, in both scope and substance.

**Chicagoland Best-Sellers**


2. "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Spiegel & Grau, $24).


4. "The Guilty" by David Baldacci (Grand Central, $28).

5. "The Martian" by Andy Weir (Broadway, $15).

Participating bookstores: Barbara's Bookstores (Chicago), The Book Cellar (Chicago), Seminary Co-op Bookstore and 57th Street Books (Chicago), Anderson's Bookshop (Naperville), The Book Stall at Chestnut Court (Winnetka), Women & Children First Bookstore (Chicago), The Book Table (Oak Park), The Bookstore (Glen Ellyn), The Book Bin (Northbrook).

**New in Paperback**

**Special Deluxe: A Memoir of Life & Cars**

By Neil Young, Plume, 384 pages, $18

The iconic rocker reflects on his life and music career, his Canadian youth, family, the rock 'n' roll lifestyle and his greatest love: cars. Each chapter is told through the prism of vehicles Young has collected and driven while noting the irony of his hobby's negative environmental impact.

**The Deluge**

By Adam Tooze, Penguin, 645 pages, $20

Tooze investigates the global impact of World War I from the conflict's closing years up to the Great Depression. Tooze looks at the century-long violent impact of partitioning in Europe and the Middle East, how the post-war period created a climate leading to the rise of totalitarian regimes and how the U.S. emerged as a global superpower.

**Hostage: A Novel**

By Kristina Ohlsson, translated by Marlaine Delargy, Emily Bestler, 391 pages, $16

Investigative analyst Fredrika Bergman has just a few hours to save a New York-bound plane from Stockholm from a bomb threat. With demands made to both the Swedish and U.S. governments and the discovery of an intricate terror plot, Bergman must find a way to save the passengers before the plane runs out of fuel.

**Play at Work**

By Adam L. Penenberg, Portfolio, 344 pages, $17

Penenberg explores the concept of "Gamification" — the process of creating workplace games designed to increase efficiency and employee engagement time — undertaken by a diverse range of traditional and contemporary companies. Penenberg looks at how successful games such as "Angry Birds" and crossword puzzles capture attention and examines the neuroscience behind it.

**Hack: An F.X. Shepherd Novel**

By Kieran Crowley, Titan, 333 pages, $12.95

On his second day as a tabloid columnist, F.X. Shepherd accidentally finds himself trailing a celebrity-targeting serial killer dubbed The Hacker. As bodies begin piling up, Shepherd finds himself in the crosshairs of office politics, the NYPD and an attractive-but-ruthless rival reporter when he is contacted directly by The Hacker — making Shepherd wonder if he is next on the hit list.

— Jeremy Mikula
Presents of Mind: Some related gift suggestions

BY MATTHEW SEWELL | EDITED BY STANLEY NEWMAN

ACROSS
1 Things to learn first
5 Appraiser's map
9 Herring known for its roe
13 Sippy-cup inserts
19 Scale (down)
20 Olden days
21 Shock with a stun gun
22 Hard to hum, perhaps
23 Well-traveled Nickelodeon toon
24 Door busters
25 Give _ (care)
26 Person at a mortgage signing
27 FOR A DISPIRITED FARMER
31 Matteen, e.g.
32 Smear on, as paint
33 Great amounts
34 Arabian Nights flier
37 Triangular peninsula
40 War of the Worlds invader
43 Land on the Gulf of California
44 Personal ad abbr.
47 FOR AN ADVANCED SLEEP-AWAY CAMPER
50 Domestic workers
52 Sharer's opposite
53 Actor Davis
54 2015 big-league returnee
55 Farming medium
57 Far from abundant
60 Occupational specialty
64 Tips off
67 US Open tennis stadium

DOWN
1 Venemous snake
2 Ecological community
3 Cocoa substitute
4 Tablet computer ancestors
5 Prefix for "fire"
6 Cash advance
7 Plated mammal
8 Electric Roadster maker
9 Cowboys quarterback great Dwell (on)
10 "On the double!"
11 Silt, for instance
12 Rock guitarist
13 Carlos
14 Sunroof alternatives
15 Roasted, on French menus
16 "Vicar's themes" and "Christmas Eve"
17 Belligerent state
18 Underhanded
19 Fibber's confession
20 Monetary amounts
21 Enjoy, as benefits
22 Resort near Santa Barbara
23 Wholesale quantity
24 "Don't think so"
25 Rather long time
26 Pal of Tigger
27 Yanks
28 Dishonors
29 Send electronically, as funds
30 Unsubstantial
31 Grand tales
32 Publisher Pulitzer
33 Actress Falco
34 Guitar forerunner
35 Offer from Fido
36 Whole Sargasso Sea author
37 "Anything else?"
38 Feline sign
39 Gandhi associate
40 The Music Man setting
41 Ingredient in a dragon roll
42 Farm structure
43 Mother of the Titans
44 Differentiates
45 Sworn promise
46 deGrasse Tyson
47 Star at
48 Poppycock
49 Picnic invader
50 Big boss, briefly
51 Big boss, briefly
52 Fountain near the Pantheon
53 Spoils, as a picnic
54 Prefix meaning "wine"
55 Honeymooners surname
56 Big boss, briefly
57 Imperfection
58 Big boss, briefly
59 "Let's move it!"
60 Mormonism
61 Saskatchewan speed-limit letters
62 Off the mark
63 Sax player's buy
64 Ingredient in a dragon roll
65 Farm structure
66 Mother of the Titans
67 Differentiates
68 Sworn promise
69 deGrasse Tyson
70 Star at
71 Poppycock
72 Picnic invader
73 Big boss, briefly
74 Gandhi associate
75 Big boss, briefly
76 Fountain near the Pantheon
77 Spoils, as a picnic
78 Prefix meaning "wine"
79 Honeymooners surname
80 Big boss, briefly
81 Imperfection
82 Big boss, briefly
83 Mormonism
84 Saskatchewan speed-limit letters
85 "Let's move it!"
86 Big boss, briefly
87 Imperfection
88 Big boss, briefly
89 Mormonism
90 Saskatchewan speed-limit letters
91 "Let's move it!"
92 Imperfection
93 Big boss, briefly
94 Fountain near the Pantheon
95 Spoils, as a picnic
96 Prefix meaning "wine"
97 Honeymooners surname
98 Big boss, briefly
99 Imperfection
100 Big boss, briefly
101 Imperfection
102 Big boss, briefly
103 Imperfection
104 Big boss, briefly
105 Imperfection
106 Big boss, briefly
107 Imperfection
108 Big boss, briefly
109 Imperfection
110 Big boss, briefly
111 Imperfection
112 Imperfection
113 Imperfection
114 Imperfection
115 Imperfection
116 Imperfection
117 Imperfection
118 Imperfection
119 Imperfection
120 Imperfection

Last week's answers appear on the last page of Puzzle Island © 2015 Creators Syndicate. All rights reserved.
## 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.

### Clues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Literary Papa</td>
<td>G. Exhaust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Africa, e.g.</td>
<td>L. Authorize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Irritable</td>
<td>N. Without remorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Coburn plays</td>
<td>P. Man of many words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Queen of American folk music</td>
<td>R. Twaddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Unified whole</td>
<td>T. Hog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Reserved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## License Game

**BY CHARLES PRESTON**

### Across

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Second</td>
<td>54. Josip Broz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stockings</td>
<td>55. A Gardner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 17th C. stringed instruments</td>
<td>56. Arkansas' tag motto, once: Land of___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Expose</td>
<td>62. Symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Men's org.</td>
<td>64. Poke about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Roast boss</td>
<td>65. Andy's radio partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Londoner, for short</td>
<td>66. Coeur d'ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mud specialties</td>
<td>67. Hebrew month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Use a credit card</td>
<td>68. Stare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. New Mexico's tag motto: Land of____</td>
<td>69. Snooped about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Devoured</td>
<td>70. Party spread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Breadwinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Part of a skyline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Confounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Also</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Move furtively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Pay for drinks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. _vera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Fills up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Wash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Perch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Certain gin fizz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Type of shirt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Wild ass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Kind of shirt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Without another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Down

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Down</th>
<th>Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Rural dance</td>
<td>22. Buntline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Writer Ambler</td>
<td>26. Stagger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scope</td>
<td>27. Asterisk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Svengali's forte</td>
<td>28. Explorer from old Venice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Skips</td>
<td>29. Minnesota plate phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Noah's son</td>
<td>30. Sacrificial site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Let up</td>
<td>31. Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Chaste women, in Nero's time</td>
<td>32. Venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Urchin</td>
<td>34. Venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Rhode Island plate inscription</td>
<td>36. Iris layer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Slow, in Salerno</td>
<td>37. Looksearchingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Passover meal</td>
<td>39. Serf, of old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. _vera</td>
<td>41. &quot;So much to do, ___ time&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Uchin</td>
<td>44. Like an eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. In ___ set</td>
<td>46. Cheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Youthful period</td>
<td>49. Cheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Old Scratch</td>
<td>51. Youthful period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Convex molding</td>
<td>52. Old Scratch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Angler's prey</td>
<td>53. Convex molding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Certain school, for short</td>
<td>54. Convex molding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Alley Oop's girl</td>
<td>55. Mosque prayer leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Pith helmet</td>
<td>56. Mosque prayer leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. French river important in WWI</td>
<td>57. Mosque prayer leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Compass pt.</td>
<td>58. Alley Oop's girl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Last week’s answers appear on the last page of Puzzle Island © 2015 Creators News Service.
DIY gifts: Do’s, don’ts when giving from heart

By Richard Asa

If you want to make holiday gifts this year, and your skills are well past the ice-pop stick reindeer stage, you know that it requires some forethought and good materials.

But for crafty newbies, it pays to remember that although do-it-yourself gifts can make delightful presents, there are some do’s and don’ts to consider before you wrap a hand-knit scarf or photo collage in lieu of a gift card or a store-bought present that comes with a receipt.

First and foremost, consider the person who will be receiving the gift, says Stefanie O'Connell, a New York actress and author who chronicles her classy frugality in "The Broke and Beautiful Life."

"You think that a keychain made out of candy wrappers is adorable, but remember that giving isn’t about you. It is about them," O'Connell says. "What do they like, appreciate or need?"

In other words, don't give brownies to a relative who's on the Paleo diet or a huge expressionist lamp to someone who lives in a studio apartment.

To ensure that the recipient actually likes the gift, keep it practical, O'Connell adds. If the gift isn't something that can be used or consumed, it will take up space "and be accommodated until the recipient no longer feels guilty about throwing it away," she says.

Capture someone's personality: Serial crafter Stefanie Johnson, of Concord, Calif., also advises thoughtfulness before you start: Identify someone's hobbies or "obsessions," or focus on a positive characteristic each person exudes that you appreciate and want to capture.

"Once I find an idea that I feel fits the person, I start by shopping online for craft supplies, then at a local dollar store," Johnson says. As you dig around websites and stores looking for materials, you'll get other ideas. Johnson's gift examples include handmade T-shirts for kids with wording on each that pertains to personal qualities, like "nurturing" or "comedian" or "sassy pants." "I want the kids in my life to know their traits are awesome and unique," she says.

For one occasion, she made sweatshirts for all the adults in her family that had a printed family photo and the words "dysfunctional but lovable." Johnson says that was 10 years ago, and her mom still treasures and wears it.

She also suggests memory boxes that can have collages of photos on the outside or mosaic patterns.

Holiday heirlooms:

Interior designer Jennifer Adams embellishes glass ball ornaments for a DIY personalized gift. "Who doesn't love a holiday ornament for a gift?" Adams asks. "It's a keepsake that can last for generations."

She suggests hitting garage sales and thrift stores for solid color glass or plastic ornaments, and personalizing them with glitter pens, paint and/or silver and gold Sharpie markers to make designs. You can also stuff clear ornaments with beads, feathers or glitter.

They'll drink to this: Los Angeles–based cookbook author Julie Morris, author of "Superfood Smoothies: 100 Delicious, Energizing and Nutrient-Dense Recipes" (Sterling), makes a personalized smoothie mix that provides 10 to 12 powdered servings per gift. She pours the powdered ingredients in a decorated Mason jar, then completes the gift with directions that detail what's needed to finish, such as "just add a banana and a cup of almond milk and blend."

Another of Morris' ideas would appeal to anyone with a culinary bent: Fill a basket with live herb plants such as parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme.

O'Connell adds just a few words of caution. "Remember, you're an adult now. The leaf you picked up and stuck to a candle isn't cute anymore. It's a fire hazard."

Richard Asa is a freelance reporter.
The holiday season can be hard on introverts, but there are strategies to make parties not only manageable but also enjoyable.

Tips include bathroom being their ‘best friend’

By Nara Schoenberg
Chicago Tribune

It’s the most extroverted time of the year.
Holiday season can be hard on introverts, who recharge during quiet down time, not loud parties, and prefer in-depth conversations with old friends to small-talk with new acquaintances. It’s enough to make a dyed-in-the-wool introvert dive under the blankets and hide until January.

We can’t make the noisemakers and chitchat go away, but we can offer some ideas for surviving, and maybe even enjoying, a night of champagne and “Auld Lang Syne.”

“Remember that it’s a celebration; it’s not a time to perform,” says Beth L. Buelow, author of “The Introvert Entrepreneur: Amplify Your Strengths and Create Success on Your Own Terms” (Perigee). “You’re not being graded. It’s not a test. Just show up, stay as long as it serves you and then leave when you’re ready.”

Among the tips offered by Buelow and writer and entrepreneur Michaela Chung, who blogs at Introvert Spring:

Store up some solitude. Introverts get their energy from alone time and find group socializing draining. So Chung suggests you “store up some solitude” in the days before the party. You might meditate, if that’s helpful for you, or take additional time away from the noise and mental clutter of electronics.

Give yourself a time limit. How much party time can you handle without getting stressed and exhausted: 30 minutes, one hour, maybe two hours? Be honest with yourself about what your limit is, and give yourself permission to leave when you reach it, Chung says. You can give your host or hostess a head’s up ahead of time: “Hey, I can only stay an hour.”

Get psyched. The social psychologist Amy Cuddy did a popular Ted Talk about how an assertive physical stance can affect hormone levels in your brain. “She talks about a power pose — and the easiest way to visualize that is a Wonder Woman pose,” says Buelow. “You put your feet shoulder-width apart, and you put your hands on your hips and you put your shoulders back and your head up and take deep breaths. Cuddy talks about how if you do this for two minutes, it will raise your testosterone and lower your cortisol. So it raises the hormone that is associated with energy. And it lowers the cortisol, which is the stress hormone.”

Accept the small talk. Small talk may not be your thing, but that’s what’s probably going to happen at a party, so you might as well be prepared, says Buelow. Come with a few questions: “Do you make New Year’s resolutions?” “What are you looking forward to next year?” Small talk tends to be a little more reflective during the holidays, so you may actually enjoy it.

Be yourself. You don’t have to be a back-slapping extrovert or the life of the party. “Introverts tend to be good listeners,” says Buelow — and that’s great. “A party doesn’t have to equal talking, talking, talking. It can be chatting and then doing a lot of listening.” You can circulate and listen, or sit on the couch and listen. “I’ve known introverts who say, ‘My strategy is to just go and sit by myself, and inevitably somebody — probably an extrovert — will see me and come over and start chatting with me,'” Buelow says.

Volunteer to help. Many introverts feel more comfortable when they have a purpose, so consider asking the host or hostess if you can help, says Buelow. Taking photos, greeting people at the door or passing out drinks are great ways to join in the festivities.

Take breaks. “The bathroom is the introvert’s best friend,” Buelow says. “It’s like your little isolation booth.” Going outside for some fresh air works well too.
Why you should book your flight early for travel in 2016

If you're making travel plans for 2016, or even just thinking about taking a trip next year, it may be a good idea to book your airfare sooner rather than later.

Fare sales are expected to ramp up during December after a record number of airline deals in the fall, according to Hopper, an app that tracks airfare trends and predicts when to get the best price on a plane ticket.

"September was by far the strongest we've seen for sales," said Patrick Surty, chief data scientist at Hopper. "In October, the number of sales was up about 50 percent from the same period last year, and December could be another good month."

"To take advantage of the discounts, here's what you need to know.

**Book for winter or spring travel.** According to Hopper's Consumer Airfare Index, the average round-trip domestic airline ticket booked in December for travel during off-peak times - generally from January until just before the start of the summer travel season in May or June - is expected to cost $205. Last year, the average was $245.

The index measures the "good deal" price a consumer would typically pay for domestic travel (and so excludes last-minute ticket purchases for business travel that usually are far more expensive). Surty said one reason for the greater frequency of sales has to do with the sharp decline in oil prices. "Fuel costs have gone down a lot, so airlines have a little more room to fight each other on prices," he said.

In addition, most flights for holiday travel are booked by the start of December. With consumers focused on completing their holiday shopping at the mall, rather than buying plane tickets, airlines start cutting fares.

**Be flexible.** Fare sales don't last long, often ending the same day that they started. And the biggest discounts will be snatched by travelers who can be flexible about their travel dates and times.

"Our advice is to keep an eye on destinations that you might be interested in," Surty said. "If you see a deal, act quickly!"

**Search midweek.** This year, fare sales are expected to ramp up during the three weeks following Thanksgiving, and you're likely to find the best flash sales on Wednesdays and Thursdays. A flash sale is a fare drop of 20 percent or more below prevailing ticket prices.

"Sales are driven by people at the airlines," Surty said. "As the workweek starts, they'll decide if they need to run a sale in order to fill more seats." As a result, Surty said, sales usually finish as the workweek wraps up and are all but nonexistent during holidays and weekends, when airline executives are not in the office.

**Pick a popular destination.** The best deals will be found if you depart from a city that is served by more than a couple of competing airlines. Those cities include Atlanta, Chicago, Denver and Philadelphia.

"The same is true if you travel to popular destinations in the U.S., such as Las Vegas and Orlando, Fla., and for overseas trips to cities such as Cancun, Mexico; London; and San Jose, Costa Rica."

"You tend to find the best sales at airports that have multiple carriers," Surty said. "So Boston, which is served by a lot of airlines, will have a lot more competitive price movement than a place like Detroit will."

**New online tools help you manage retirement money**

Thinking about downsizing to a lower-cost area in retirement? A feature expected in the first quarter of 2016 from advisory firm Personal Capital will let users model such a move to see how it will affect their overall retirement success rate, said Jim Del Favero, chief product officer for the company, which offers a blend of live and online financial advice.

"It lets you model future events and see how an existing portfolio will survive through retirement," Del Favero said.

The company will also add to its site a feature currently available for iPhone that alerts users when they reach preset spending limits, he said. Similar to weight-loss programs that give dieters a certain amount of calories per day or week to "spend," the feature will alert users when they are exceeding targets.

"The alerts help you see in June if you're on track to go over budget by the end of the year, so there is time to correct," he said.

**Personal Capital.**

The company also added a feature that automatically links customers' Social Security data to the site, said Alex Benke, director of advice products for Betterment. In addition, if you're beginning to calculate a strategy for collecting Social Security benefits, be sure the software you use has updated its outdated rules. The Social Security Administration had not yet issued guidance on the new rules, but some data providers are updating their software to adjust retirement income projections based on the changes.

Share your journey or pose a question at journey@janetkiddstewart.com.
Once-a-week sex rings the happiness meter

Study finds frequency boosts couples' well-being

By Randy Dotinga
HealthDay

An active sex life is important to couples' happiness, and they don't have to go at it like rabbits. Those who make love once a week are happiest, a new study suggests.

More frequent sex isn't a buzzkill for a relationship. It just doesn't pack the same punch, Canadian researchers reported in the Nov. 18 journal Social Psychological and Personality Science.

"Our research suggests that couples do not need to aim to engage in sex as frequently as possible but instead aim to maintain a connection with their partner," said study lead author Amy Muise, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Toronto Mississauga.

The findings are based on three studies involving more than 30,000 people in all.

At issue: How does sexual frequency affect well-being?

Not surprisingly, the research showed that sex is good and more sex is better, Muise said. Regularly having sex emerged as even more important to a happy relationship than money was.

But researchers haven't understood whether there's a point where more sex stops translating to more happiness, she said.

To gain insight, Muise and her colleagues first looked at results from a survey conducted in the United States every other year between 1989 and 2012. They focused on responses from more than 25,000 people, ages 18 to 89.

Among other things, participants answered questions about sexual frequency (from not at all to four or more times a week) and their perceptions of their happiness.

In a second study, researchers surveyed 335 people online, most of whom were heterosexual. Finally, they analyzed findings from a third study, a 14-year survey of U.S. married heterosexual couples.

Among couples, those who had more sex were happier to a point. The boosts in well-being "leveled off once couples reached a frequency of about once a week," Muise said. "It wasn't bad to engage in sex more frequently than once a week. It just wasn't associated with greater well-being on average."

The researchers saw no differences in the findings based on gender, age or length of relationship.

The findings, however, didn't prove that frequency of sex affects happiness, because the research wasn't designed to prove cause and effect.

For single people outside committed relationships, however, the results were very different. For them, Muise said, more frequent sex didn't significantly translate to more happiness.

Perhaps any link between sex and happiness for singles depends on the relationship context or how comfortable people are with sex outside of a relationship, the researchers said.

The study also found that lovemaking once a week was the average frequency among couples.

"Perhaps this is the average since it seems to maximize the benefits for well-being," Muise said. "It is likely that weekly sex is enough for the average couple to maintain their intimate connection and to feel like they have an active sex life, and this is why we see this as the leveling-off point."

Russell Smyth, a professor of economics at Australia's Monash University who studies sexuality, said frequency of sex isn't the only factor that affects well-being.

His own research has provided evidence to support assumptions that may seem obvious: Couples are happier when sex is better, he said, and "men are more likely to get happiness from the more physical aspects of sex, while women's happiness is more attached to the emotional aspects."

Even if that's all true, why wouldn't more be better?

"It is like having an ice cream," Smyth said. "You enjoy your first ice cream. You also enjoy your second ice cream but by not as much. You might also get some enjoyment from your third one but even less because you are fuller, concerned about calories and so on."

Low-dose calcium supplement reduces risk from higher dose

Dear Doctor K: I'm a 65-year-old woman. My doctor says my bones are strong, and he wants to keep them that way. So, for years I've been taking a daily 1,200 milligram calcium supplement. Now I hear that might be too much. How much calcium do I really need?

Dear Reader: I've gotten this question from so many patients. As I assume is true for you, their bones have normal amounts of calcium. That is, they do not have osteoporosis (or "thin bones"). To prevent osteoporosis, they have been taking the recommended amount of calcium - 1,000 milligrams (mg) a day for women ages 50 and younger and 1,200 mg for women over 50 - in an effort to preserve their bones.

It is true that the majority of studies show that a combination of calcium and vitamin D supplements reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis. So far, so good.

But the main reason to prevent osteoporosis is to reduce the risk of bone fractures. And most studies find that calcium supplements (or even calcium plus vitamin D) do not reduce that risk. Worse, calcium supplements may even increase other health risks.

One study involved postmenopausal women enrolled in the Women's Health Initiative trial. Some 18,000 women were randomly assigned to take 1,000 mg of calcium and 400 international units (IU) of vitamin D each day. (Vitamin D works with calcium to build healthy bones.) Another 18,000 women got placebo pills. After seven years, women who took calcium and vitamin D were no less likely to break their hips than the women who took a placebo pill.

Another study analyzed the results of more than a dozen studies. It found that women (and men) who had a high calcium intake - from food or pills - did not have a lower hip fracture risk.

The studies also revealed that high-dose calcium supplements can lead to an increased risk of kidney stones and heart attack. Calcium from food did not have the same risks.

What to do? My colleague Dr. Walter Willett, chair of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, recommends less calcium and more vitamin D than the guidelines suggest. He suggests 500 to 700 mg a day of calcium and 800 to 1,000 IU of vitamin D. Current guidelines recommend 600 IU of vitamin D between ages 19 and 70 years, and 800 IU after age 70.

While not everyone agrees with him, I regard Dr. Willett as one of the world's most knowledgeable experts in this area. I've seen him proven right a lot more often than wrong.

At Dr. Willett's suggested amount, you can probably get all or most of your calcium from food. Dairy products are a great source. kale, collard greens and salmon are good non-dairy calcium sources. (I've put a table listing more calcium-containing foods on my website, AskDoctorK.com.) You can take a low-dose calcium supplement to make up what you don't get from food. Keeping your calcium supplement dose lower should help you avoid the possible risks of higher-dose supplements.
Custom-built Glencoe estate on circular drive: $2.6M

ADDRESS: 777 Greenleaf Ave. in Glencoe
ASKING PRICE: $2,600,000
Listed on Oct. 13, 2015
Custom built in 2003, this approximately 13,000 square foot, 6-bedroom, 7.2 bath, grand estate in New Trier high school district is located just a few blocks from the train, the beach and downtown Glencoe. The entrance features a circular drive, rose garden, slate stoop and mahogany double front doors. The interior includes seven fireplaces, a second-floor balcony, chef's kitchen with two eating areas, sunroom, finished basement and more. Perfect for multigenerational or large family living.
Agent: Diana Peterson of AuctionWorks, 312-756-7333
At press time this home was still for sale.

chicagotribune.com/homes Visit us online for exclusive Home of the Day photo galleries, plus views of other featured homes and real estate stories.
The goods

Students at Berea College learn to master the physically demanding discipline of making traditional corn brooms by hand. The 52-inch-high Streamliner is one of the college's best-sellers and can be used for all routine household chores. Students create a number of types of brooms from organic broomcorn, an upright grass similar to sugar cane. A typical full-size kitchen-broom contains 30 to 50 broomcorn plants. Handles are made from reclaimed waste wood from the U.S. furniture industry. The college educates talented and economically challenged men and women, mostly from the Appalachian region, with a no-tuition promise. $38; multicolor, $40, www.berea collegecrafts.com

Better brooms make a clean sweep

By Debbie Carlson
Tribune Newspapers

Cleaning isn't called a chore for nothing. But good tools make the work go faster. Below are five brooms that look good and perform well; they may almost make cleaning fun. Almost.

Pet fur, begone! The natural rubber broom head on the FURemover helps to remove pet fur from tile, hardwood, vinyl and carpet floors. In addition to attracting fur, the broom also removes dirt, dust and garden leaves. The handle telescopes, and the broom measures 60 inches high, which helps it get hard-to-reach areas. FURemover comes with a built-in squeegee that also allows users to wet it to clean cars or use it dry to clean windows. $16.63, www.amazon.com

Frustrated after breaking one too many push brooms, the founder of FlexSweep decided to create an indestructible push broom. To demonstrate that FlexSweep's Big Mama push broom is unbreakable, the company has video of a tractor running over the broom. Both the aluminum handle and the patented handle connector — made of engineered elastomers, a type of polymer — allow the broom handle to flex on impact and absorb repetitive shock. The 58-inch handle is guaranteed to never break, and broom heads can be replaced. Big Mama is one of several brooms available. $49.98. www.flexsweep.com

Inspired by her mother's fondness for traditional Sri Lankan ekel brooms for sweeping outdoors, the founder of The Original Garden Broom brought the tradition to North America. Ekel brooms are made of the midrib of the fallen coconut leaves and are bound by a twine from the husk of the coconut shell. The wood handle is made from Forest Stewardship Council-certified poplar, and each broom is handmade and ethically traded. Aside from its good looks, the broom has the density and flexibility of a cornbroom and the stiffness of a rake, and can sweep leaves, lawns and pine needles, spread mulch and remove weeds in between crevices and sidewalks. Despite being made in the tropics, the brooms can remove light snow, and the material stays stiff even when wet. $14.99, Menards
We know your favorite spot better than your spouse

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.
PARK VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT!

GORGEOUS TOTALLY REMODELED HOME!
Morton Grove... Must see to appreciate the fine finishes & quality construction! New/finished hardwood firs throughout. All interior painted w/all new baseboards. 4 brs-2½ baths. Brand new gourmet kitchen w/42” white cabinets, Granite counters, glass & metal mosaic backsplash + high end SS appliances. Family rm off kit w/stone FP, 15x15 den adjacent to family rm. Master suite w/euro style bath & 9x7 walk-in closet. 2nd bath w/double sink, new vanity & tub. Large finished rec rm. New: furnace & A/C, hot water heater, windows, deck & electric. Garage $449,900

NATURE LOVER’S DREAM!
Morton Grove... One in a million opportunity! See & believe!! Super 7 room Ranch located on a quiet dead end street abutting Forest Preserves. Oak floors, 20' granite kitchen with stainless steel appliances + breakfast room overlooking picture perfect & serene wooded opens lands. Recently remodeled bath with 36” Corian vanity. 3 season glass enclosed porch opens to a raised 15’ x 14’ Lannon stone patio and natural stone landscaped yard adjacent to Forest Preserves, running/biking/bridle trails. Full finished basement & bar. New furnace $249,500

ONE OF OUR FINEST OFFERINGS!
Glenview... Impeccably maintained 9 room Split-level with sub-basement on huge corner lot! Cathedral ceilings in living room/dining room. Hardwood floors. 4 bedrooms & 3 full baths. Updated eat-in kitchen. Formal dining room with sliding doors to brick paver patio. Master Bedroom with bath. Lower level family room, bedroom & bath plus bonus rec room in finished sub basement. 2 car detached garage + 1 car attached garage. Beautifully landscaped corner lot. Newer appliances, furnace & central air. Call for appointment to view today!! $389,500
**MUNDELEIN**

Home is on about 200 feet of lake frontage on southern tip of Diamond Lake. Swim, ski or jet ski right in the backyard. Recent remodel offers majestic views from master and living areas. An open floor plan with window walls offer relaxation and fun. Plenty of room for guests and family with a guest suite on the lower level. Walk-in closets, dual zone air and walk-up attic from garage.

**Address:** 19526 Taylor Lake Court  
**Price:** $575,000  
**Schools:** Mundelein High School  
**Taxes:** $11,883  
**Agent:** Rita O'Connor/Re/Max Unlimited Northwest

---

**PALATINE**

New construction. Four bedroom, 3.5 bath house is two stories with bonus room and added fireplace. Deep basement. Extras like French doors, coffer ceiling in master, gourmet kitchen with stainless appliances. Three-car tandem garage. Open living and dining room. Landscaping is done, plus deck, and there is a fire suppressant system.

**Address:** 57A E. Illinois Ave.  
**Price:** $649,900  
**Schools:** Fremd High School  
**Taxes:** N/A  
**Agent:** Beverly Caliendo/Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Schaumburg

---

**GLENVIEW**

Four bedroom, 2.5 bath home has attached 2.5 car garage and circular drive, plus a front porch. Updates throughout. Kitchen is current with Mission style cabinets, quartz counters and bamboo floors. Open concept design. Four bedrooms upstairs with hall bath plus master suite and spa bath. Basement is finished and offers bedroom/office and cedar closet. Fully fenced backyard with pool.

**Address:** 3220 Sandy Lane  
**Price:** $635,000  
**Schools:** Glenbrook South High School  
**Taxes:** $9,021  
**Agent:** Cindy Fine/Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Glenview

---

**EVANSTON**

Five bedroom home has gracious living room with gas fireplace. Formal dining room. Large family room overlooking backyard. Kitchen features cherry cabinets, Corian countertops and newer white appliances. Third floor has two rooms and full bath. Vintage details. Most mechanicals new within last five years. Walk to Metra and CTA, plus more.

**Address:** 2759 Broadway Ave.  
**Price:** $625,000  
**Schools:** Evanston Township High School  
**Taxes:** $10,503.37  
**Agent:** Jackie Mack/Jameson Sotheby's International Realty

---

**GREAT STORY-TELLER?**

Build some character: start a blog

chicagonow.com/pitch

**CHICAGO NOW**
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Thursday, Dec. 24

Des Plaines Art Guild Show: Take some time out of your busy schedule to immerse yourself in the beauty of the paint strokes and the soul of a photographer. Featured artists include Beverly Beckman, Dolores Kenney, Stan Kotecki, Kathy Passi, Liz Pawlik, Rhonda Popko, Dee Schuster, Thelma Spain, Willard Strassburger, John Taylor and Elaine Tejcek. 10 a.m. Thursday-Friday, 1 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m. Monday-Wednesday; Des Plaines History Center, 781 Pearson St., Des Plaines, free, 847-391-5399

Valli Produce Evanston Holiday Food Drive: The first annual food drive is being done in partnership with WLS-FM and local schools. Donations of non-perishable items can be made at Valli Produce Evanston in the name of Willard Strassburger, John Taylor and Elaine Tejcek. 7a.m. Daily through Jan. 3. Valli Produce, 1910 W. Dempster St., Evanston, free, 847-866-6100

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. Daily, Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, 3001 Central St., Evanston, free, 847-475-1030

Material View Art Cloth exhibit and opening reception: Showcasing work by members of the Art Cloth Network, a nationwide organization of professional textile artists. 10 a.m. Daily, Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, free, 847-571-1385

Sights of Evanston art exhibition: Enjoy a visual art exhibition featuring works by 16 local artists. 3 p.m. Daily, Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, free, 847-448-8260

Wonderland Express: The annual festive event features 750,000 outdoor lights and an indoor exhibition where garden-scale trains wind past miniature replicas of more than 60 Chicago area landmarks, nestled among evergreens, poinsettias and many other holiday-themed plants. 10 a.m. Daily, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe. Admission is $12 for adults, and $10 for children ages 3 to 12 and seniors ages 62 and older, 847-881-9316

Christmas Day Service: Reflective Rite 1 spoken celebration of the Holy Eucharist. 10:15 a.m. Friday, St. Giles Episcopal Church, 3025 Walters Ave., Northbrook, free, 847-272-6622

Park Ridge Fly Tying Club Meetings: Demonstrations of fly tying are performed by an experienced demonstrator. The members have the opportunity to tie the same pattern using tools and materials provided by the club. 7 p.m. Thursday, Park Ridge Community Church, 100 S. Courtland Ave., Park Ridge. Free, 847-823-3164

Food Drive in Skokie: Requesting donations of canned goods and dry food products to fill the shelves of the Niles Township Food Pantry. These foods will be given to the hungry in the community. All foods can be dropped off at Walgreens. For further information, call Ezra-Habonim, the Niles Township Jewish Congregation. Daily, Walgreens, 3945 W. Dempster St., Skokie, 847-663-1234

Sunday, Dec. 27

Home for the Holidays: Enjoy an evening of holiday favorites with family and friends. Opening in a USO-styled review, the evening features classic holiday songs, expertly sung and with lavish costumes that warm your hearts for the season. A great way to end the year. 3 p.m. Sunday, 8 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Leela Arts Center, 620 Lee St., Des Plaines, $15-25, 847-220-2919
Cafe Conversation - Apero: Meet fellow Francophones for relaxed, mid-evening conversation. In French. Order wine, charcuterie and/or cheese plate, coffee, tea, or fresh pastries and then meet in the main seating area. Listening in French is encouraged; all levels are welcome. 7 p.m. Monday, Glenview Grind, 989 Waukegan Road, Glenview, free, 847-328-9516

MGPL Kids: Monday Morning Playgroup: Drop-in playtime for preschoolers with a parent or caregiver. 10:30 a.m. Monday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Winter Break DIY Kids' Crafts: For a fun and educational experience this Winter Break, families can visit the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian to make a Native American-inspired craft. While the kids are out of school, the museum has expanded its weekend craft program to every day, all day long during the weekdays the museum is open. In addition to regular weekend crafts, on Dec. 29 and 30, the entire family can make and take home simple home decorations of traditional Native American items. 10 a.m. daily, Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, 3001 Central St., Evanston, $5 adults; $3 kids, 847-475-1030

Irish music session: Enjoy Irish music every Tuesday night. 7 p.m. Tuesday, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Tuesday Morning Music: Garden visitors can enjoy free hour-long musical performances on Tuesday mornings in the McGlinchey Pavilion overlooking Evening Island. Music varies from string quartets to Native American flute players and is focused towards an older crowd. After the concert, visitors can board a 25-minute narrated tour on the Bright Encounters Tour. 10 a.m. Tuesday, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, free, 847-835-5440

LEGO Free Play, All Day (grades K-6): Stop by throughout the day to play with the Library's LEGO collection. Don't worry, we've hidden all the Krage. Just drop in. Noon Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 130 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Preschool Story Time: Stories and songs for children ages 3-5 and a caregiver. 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave., Evanston, free, 847-448-8610

Interactive Movie: "Mary Poppins": Join us for a night of supercalifragilisticexpialidocious fun as we sing, play, and "step in time" through this family favorite. Bring a blanket or beach towel and covered drinks. Suffrage in costume, please leave all kites and flags out of the library. Please call to register. 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Glenview Public Library, 130 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Turn to Calendar, Next Page
Christmas Mass Schedule

**Thursday, December 24**
- Early Evening Masses at 3:00 and 5:00 p.m.
- 11:00 p.m. Solemn Mass of Christmas (Preceded by a special program at 10:30 p.m.)

**Friday, December 25**
- 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.
- No 7 p.m. today

**Friday, January 1**
- Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
- Thursday, Vigil Mass at 5 p.m.
- Friday Masses 9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

For unto us a Child is born
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP CATHOLIC CHURCH
1775 Grove Street - Glenview, IL 60025 - 847.729.1525 - olphglenview.org

Christmas Mass Schedule

**Christmas Eve**
- Thursday, December 24
- 3:00 p.m. in the Gym
- Family Mass with Children's Pageant & Choir
- 5:00 p.m. in Church
- Music by Teens and Young Adults
- 5:00 p.m. in Church
- Midnight in Church
- Festival Choir will sing

**Christmas Day**
- Friday, December 25
- 7:30, 9:30, 11:00 a.m. in Church
- Family Mass with Children's Pageant & Choir
- 11:00 a.m. in McDonnell Hall
- 12:30 p.m. in Church*
- *Additional Overflow Masses in McDonnell Hall

Like our journalism? You’ll love our books.
- included with your digitalPLUS account

GREAT STORY-TELLER?
Build some character: start a blog
chicagonow.com/pitch
We remember when you partied like it was 1999

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.
New Year’s Eve Bash at Kohl Children’s Museum: Kohl Children’s Museum is ringing in the New Year with Times Square-inspired “midnight” celebrations at 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. To kick-off 2016, the Museum transforms an entire wing into a huge New Year’s Eve celebration, complete with giant confetti drops at “midnight” and festive activities designed specifically for younger attendees throughout the day. Tickets are required for adults and children over 12 months. 8:30 a.m. Dec. 31, Kohl Children’s Museum, 2100 Patriot Blvd., Glenview, $17-$27, 847-832-6600

Funky Old Broads New Year’s Eve celebration: End the year by poking fun at growing older every year. The Funky Old Broads bring their off-beat comedy and music parodies to The Skokie Theatre for a special celebration. 8:30 p.m. Dec. 31, Skokie Theatre, 7924 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie, $42, 847-677-7761

Friday, Jan. 1

New Noon Year Celebration for Families: This celebration for children ages 12 years and under offers a free kid’s sundae, games, music, crafts and more, with a countdown and balloon drop at noon. RSVP is requested at ILMarketing@eataddy’s.com. 11 a.m. Jan. 1, Andy’s Frozen Custard, 719 Church St., Evanston, free, 815-545-0582

Gentle Yoga: Due to high demand, two yoga sessions are offered. Space in each session is limited to the first 50 people. Yoga instructor Olga Rudnik leads a series of yoga sessions for improved physical strength, relaxation and mental clarity. Exercises are done in a chair or standing, not on the floor. 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Jan. 1, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Share The Warmth: Volunteers wanted to join a group of warm, friendly, supportive women (men welcome) to prepare one-of-a-kind fleece blankets for chemo patients. A basic crochet stitch can be taught if needed. Bring lunch. Attendees often gather until 2 or 3 p.m. Donations are welcome. 9 a.m. Jan. 1, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, free, 847-239-6757

Duplicate Bridge: The senior center offers a friendly bridge game every Friday morning. 9 a.m. Jan. 1, Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave, Park Ridge, free, 847-692-5127

Saturday, Jan. 2

Polygols Toastmasters meeting: Polygols is one of the Toastmasters International Club in the United States that conducts its meetings in German. If you speak German or want to keep it fresh or improve it, visit this club. The website at www.polygols toastmasters.org. 9:30 a.m. Jan. 2, Des Plaines Public Library, 1501 Elinwood St., Des Plaines, free, 847-827-5551

Workshop: Creativity, Flexibility and the Corde Lisse: Explore traditional tricks with a focus on how to add intensive flexibility to the shape, additionally, students will learn how to control their knowledge leading in and/ or out of specific means and drop sets to provide options for greater transitional movements. 11 a.m. Jan. 2, Actors Gymnasium, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, $40 per session, 847-328-2795

Monday, Jan. 4

Josh A. Dawson: Featuring Britton Smith, Kirk Thurmond and Brent DiRoma. 7:30 p.m. Jan. 4, SPACE, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $12-$22, 847-492-8860

Tech Talk: Join this Internet user discussion group - a monthly Q&A for exploring websites, social media, online searching and the library's electronic resources. Topics vary monthly and new members are welcome, so just drop in. 7 p.m. Jan. 4, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

New Release: “The Age of Adaline” After miraculously remaining 29 years old for almost eight decades, Adaline has lived a solitary existence. But a chance encounter with a philanthropist reignites her passion for life and romance. 2 p.m. Jan. 2, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234
Drama Club: Join in every first Monday of the month to imagine, play and create. This is for those in third through eighth grades. 4:30 p.m. Jan. 4, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Money Matters Discussion: The group meets on the first Monday of each month at the Park Ridge Senior Center. 10 a.m. Jan. 4, Park Ridge Senior Center, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-692-3597

Alliance Francaise du North Shore Cafe-Conversation du Matin: Meet fellow Francophones for relaxed, mid-morning conversations in French on first Mondays. After purchasing beverages or foods, the group of 12 to 20 gather at tables in the main dining area. Listening in French is encouraged. For further info, visit the website or contact alliancefn@yahoo.com. 10 a.m. Jan. 4, Panera Bread, 1199 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-328-9516

Exploring Grief: 7 p.m. Jan. 4, Kenilworth Union Church, 211 Kenilworth Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-251-4272

Let's Talk @ Lunch: At this drop-in program, participants can talk through the issue of racism and practice honest conversation skills by looking at our own experiences in light of what we're learning about how racism affects us all. 1:30 p.m. Jan. 5, Yo Fresh Yogurt Cafe, 635 Chicago Ave., Evanston, free, 847-864-8445

Movies, Munchies, and More: Film: “Paper Towns”: Quentin’s life-long crush, Margo, disappears, leaving behind clues that Quentin and his friends follow on the journey of a lifetime. The cast includes: Nat Wolff and Cara Delevingne. 11:30 a.m. Jan. 5, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Preschool and Child Care Fair: Just drop in to explore local child care options. There are directors, teachers and providers passing out literature and answering questions. A snow date of Monday, Jan. 11, 6-7:30 p.m., is planned if needed. 6 p.m. Jan. 6, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

In Our Own Voice: In Our Own Voice is a public education program developed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) in which two trained individual speakers share compelling personal stories about living with mental illness and achieving recovery. 7 p.m. Jan. 6, Lincolnwood Public Library, 4000 W. Pratt Ave., Lincolnwood, free, 847-677-5277

Job counseling: Meet with a career services volunteer to get help with your resume, your LinkedIn profile or to practice interviewing skills. To set up your 30-minute session, call 847-663-6603 or stop by the Reference Desk on the third floor. Limited to Niles Library cardholders only. 7 p.m. Jan. 6, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free

MGPL Writers Workshop: This workshop is for writers of any level or professional aspiration to share their works in progress. Come support other writers in drafting, revising and finishing manuscripts, essays, poems or any other type of writing. Contact Chad at ccomello@mgpl.org with questions. 7 p.m. Jan. 6, Morton Grove American Legion Civic Center, 6140 Dempster St., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Studio B: Open Maker Lab: Create your own projects using the 3D Printer, Laser Cutter and Silhouette Vinyl Cutter. 3 p.m. Jan. 6, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

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

**Creed** ★★★½
PG-13, 2:12, drama
Nobody went to the first "Rocky" in 1976 for the finesse of the filmmaking. They went for the underdog rooting, for Rocky and Adrian, for the unexpected sweetness, for the redemption angle, for the reconstituted boxing movie cliches that tasted not new but newish. It was simply time for "Rocky," written by and starring Sylvester Stallone. So "Creed," a seventh "Rocky" movie? Apollo Creed, Rocky's old nemesis-turned-best friend, has a son who grows up a scrappy fighter in the Los Angeles foster care system? Moves to Philly, connects with Rocky, who's tending the restaurant and still wearing that hat? Rocky trains him for a big fight? That's how it goes, yes. And "Creed" is easily the best "Rocky" movie since "Rocky." — Michael Phillips

**The Good Dinosaur** ★★
P-G, 1:40, animation
Work by multiple writers was cobbled together for this story of a world where the meteor that hit the Earth and wiped out all dinosaurs actually missed. The dinosaurs have evolved to the point where they live in houses, plant crops and herd bison. For some reason, humans have only progressed slightly more than canines. Production was halted early in the process of making "The Good Dinosaur" because it had some dinosaur-sized problems. Peter Sohn was brought in as the new director, and he started the process over two years ago. The second attempt ends up so flat it would have been smart to scrap it and try a third time. — Rick Bentley

**The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2** ★★★½
PG-13, 2:17, sci-fi
"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2" brings the four-film saga of Katniss Everdeen and her revolutionary war to a dutiful, fairly satisfying if undeniably attenuated conclusion. In the first and best "Hunger Games" film four years ago, Jennifer Lawrence was like Peggy Sawyer, the Allentown, Pa., hoofer in "42nd Street." With bow, arrow and hawklike gaze of destiny, she went out there a youngster, but she had to come back a star, and she did. Put another way, Lawrence brought home the bacon and fried it up in a pan. In "Mockingjay 2," it's more a case of her saving the movie's bacon, period. — MP

**In the Heart of the Sea** ★★
PG-13, 2:02, drama
"In the Heart of the Sea" isn't a disaster nor is it an actual success. Director Ron Howard goes at this dutiful adaptation of the Nathaniel Philbrick nonfiction best-seller like a filmmaker assigned, not obsessed. Chris Hemsworth is top-billed as the hardy first mate Owen Chase, who must put up with the deadly decision-making of Capt. George Pollard (a miscast Benjamin Walker). The ocean-going sequences rely on what we've come to expect, or endure, in so many modern epics: digital effects that never quit, plus a frantic, luminous editing rhythm that never establishes a pleasing pace. It's fair to say this of Howard's film: You won't believe your eyes. That's the problem. It's halfway to the realm of being a digitally animated feature. — MP

**Krampus** ★★
PG-13, 1:38, horror
He sees you when you're sleeping. He knows when you're awake. He's got horns, hooves and an army of sinister elves, and his name sounds like a bad case of abdominal bloating. He is Krampus, the evil, twisted "shadow" of Santa Claus, and he has plenty of pain and destruction to rain down on one unlucky family that's lost the Christmas spirit in this divertingly spooky lump of cinematic coal.
— Justin Chang
We know your favorite spot better than your spouse

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.
Help those in need this holiday season...
Donate today to
Chicago Tribune Charities Holiday Giving

With your support we can...
- Help at-risk kids succeed in school and graduate
- Empower the unemployed with new job skills
- Improve reading skills for kids and adults
- Provide safe havens from domestic abuse

All donations help those in need 100%
Every dollar donated is matched 50%
Taken for campaign expenses $0

Give Now. Here's How.
CLICK chicagotribune.com/holidaygiving
CALL 800.217.3190
MAIL Return the coupon
#WeMatchHalf

Make a difference. Please give today.

Name
Address
City State ZIP
Telephone E-mail
Enclosed is my donation for: $25 $50 $75 $100 Other $
One-time gift Monthly gift (credit card only)

Payment Options:
- My check is enclosed, payable to: Chicago Tribune Charities
- Please charge my credit card: Visa MasterCard American Express Discover Card
- Card # Expiration Date Signature

Your name and donation may be listed in future publications or online. Donor names for gifts of $100 or more received before 12/31/15 will be published in the Chicago Tribune. To be included, check Yes below.
- Yes, publish my name as:
- No, I would like to remain anonymous.

Mail to: Chicago Tribune Charities, 38971 Eagle Way, Chicago, IL 60678-1389
TO ADVERTISE

PLEASE CALL

312-283-7023
NEW YEAR'S DAY AUCTION!
AUCTION IS FRIDAY
JANUARY 1, 2016 at 11:00 A.M.
Preview December 31st
11:00 to 5:00pm
We have set aside our best items for this special event. We will be selling gold and silver jewelry, sterling silver serving pieces, coins including 1921 silver dollars, Royston French bronzes, Powder boxes, perfume bottles, B&H door stops and book ends, clocks, Black Forest Match safes, singing birds, Regina music boxes, compasses, Oriental art glass sets, gold and diamond scale collection, Lustre, 4th Century terra cotta Bell-Kratzer Greek urn, slot machine, Roseville Rockwood Newcomb pottery, 17th century brass horn, folk art steam engine, leaded glass figural lamp, Deco figural planter, bankers lamps, Bowley's Root Beer mugs, Oriental porcelain and stoneware, Japanese kimonos, Melch beer steins, Tiffany letter box, bronze candle holders, Bradley Hubbard lamp, Handel Lilly lamp base, Hurdy Gurdy, harmonica, floor model Deco fish tank, French clock, tin signs, Oriental parlor set, salesman's advertising travel trunk, oak doll dresser, toy trucks, Lalique tray, silver plate serving sets, mid-century Dorrie Teaque server and side board, inlaid French end tables, Oriental fretwork display cases, Tiffany clock, Empire tables, Rumi Weber bedroom set, oak sideboards and bookcases, carved love seat, wardrobe, wall phones, watercolors, oils, prints, collection Barbie dolls and toys, cigar case, oak bar, store counter, mission oak china cabinet, Swarovski crystal fixture, wine press, Russian samovars, and gas light fixture.
MORE TO COME—WEB SITE UPDATED REGULARLY
Please bring boxes and packing material. Please pay for all purchases on the day of the sale. Visa, MC and Checks (with guarantee) accepted. Absentee bids with credit card. A Photo ID Required for registration 9%. Sales Tax applied to all sales. 15% Buyers Premium cash or check and 17.5% with credit card payment. Online bidding offered. IL 441000285 QUALITY Consignments Accepted. Photos also available on paceantiquesandauction.com.
Estate liquidation specializing in any kind of collections
PACE AUCTIONS
794 Lee St. Des Plaines, IL (847) 296-0773
To Place An Ad Online go to:
312-283-7008
To ADVERTISE CALL
COUNTRY FINANCIAL

PRESENTS:

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE
OF THE MONTH

Find out more:
CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM/ATHLETES
Reporter Robert Duffer goes hands-free as he test-drives a software-updated Tesla Model S P90D, which brings the car closer to being self-driving.

The semi started to roll half of its 18 wheels over the line into our lane. Normally, I might’ve sped up, slowed down, changed lanes, honked or cursed. This time, I did nothing but watch.

I watched the steering wheel turn on its own, watched the Model S P90D veer to the edge of our lane, watched as the truck went back to its lane and watched as the autopilot feature righted the Model S. During it all, I kept my hands in my lap and my feet on the floor.

As with parenting, I didn't think I was ready for self-driving cars until it happened. And, though Tesla's autopilot is an advanced driver's-assistance feature more than a fully autonomous car, the technology is life changing, exciting and scary. Like parenting.

As much as I'd like to gush about the 0-60 mph time of 2.8 seconds, the breathtaking, gut-dropping shriek-inducing linear acceleration of 713 pound-feet of torque (and 762 horsepower), I'm here to address a software update.

Version 7.0, to be exact.

The latest update from the tech company that makes cars consists of four features: auto steer, auto lane change, auto park and side collision avoidance.

These features, working in concert with adaptive cruise control, enable the most sophisticated form of semi-autonomous driving on the market.

Adaptive cruise control should be familiar to people who upgraded a technology package on their recent new-car purchase. The driver sets the cruise to the desired speed, then the system senses the distance it should stay behind the lead car, ranging from one car length to five. When the lead car slows down, adaptive cruise automatically slows down by the same speed. When the lead car moves out of your lane or speeds back up, adaptive cruise moves back up to the set speed without the driver ever needing to press the brake or accelerator.

Traffic-Aware Cruise Control, in Tesla-ese, is activated by the secondary stalk on the left side of the steering column. The car senses when it can be used and activates a gray cruise control symbol on the left side of the speedometer. When you click the stalk, the symbol turns blue and you can take your hands off the wheel.

Auto lane change is somewhat of a misnomer because you still have to do something; you can’t just will the car to change lanes. Not yet. When autopilot is activated, hold down the primary stalk/touch indicator for a good 5 to 6 clicks, and the steering wheel shifts into the lane indicated. If it senses approaching cars in the blind spot, it won’t execute the move and will command you to take over the wheel.

The system senses that autopilot can be used, meaning that it can clearly read the lines in the road, a gray steering wheel symbol will appear to the right of the speedometer. Double-click the secondary stalk, both symbols are blue, and you can take your hands off the wheel.

Side collision avoidance uses the 12 sensors surrounding the car to decipher not just road lines but surrounding traffic. The car appears in red (our test model color) on the vehicle display in the instrument cluster, and the lead car appears as a blue icon if it is near or gray if it is at a distance. The sensors light up on the display car when it detects a blind spot presence, side presence or any other presence. No obnoxious ding or loud alarms; when the system demands the driver’s attention, it emits a mild ding, not unlike a social media alert on a smart phone.

Everything is activated through the secondary stalk. The display is clear, distinct and uncluttered. You don’t need to access the peerless 17-inch touch screen that is in the center stack.

Using autopilot is all about trust, like letting your kid drive. You’ve got to be ready for it and acclimate to the reality that you’re partially letting go of control. The first night testing it out, in the rain, going 70 mph on a highway where the left lane marking vanished into the cement dividing wall at a curve, I freaked out and took over the wheel. The initial suspicion, the unfamiliarity with the technology, was gone after the first day. Once I understood its strengths and weaknesses, I wanted to show off my boy to other drivers, hands-free, pointing proudly at the wheel, check this kid out.

When I lost confidence, it was not due to technology but to its troublesome partner: humanity. It took overdriving patience to wait and see how the system would respond to the trucker. Other times, approaching on-ramps with a merging car evidently incapable of considering the existence of other cars, I would’ve handled it differently. Approaching stopping traffic, the car brakes a little harder than a human would, because a human knows this traffic isn’t going anywhere ever. If braking is too hard, then the car be set at greater lengths, but then you have to suffer the fools who think weaving in and out of lanes in traffic gives them an advantage. In a construction zone at 45 mph, with new shifting lane patterns and overlapping lane markings at a bridge, I took over.

Tesla wants to make sure people understand that autopilot does not mean the car can drive itself, despite so many reckless driving videos uploaded to YouTube, including but not limited to one driver seated in and filming from the back seat.

“It’s in beta mode” said Alexis Georgeson, spokesperson for Tesla. “We’re supposed to have a rational thinking human being who’s ready to take over at any time.”

Autopilot is only available between 18 mph and 80 mph. It is optimal for highway cruising or highway stop-and-go traffic. It can be used around town, but it has trouble at intersections where there are no lines. Additionally, there has to be a car in front of you because the system cannot read stop signs or stoplights.

Yet, “Each (software) rollout will incrementally make the car more autonomous,” Georgeson said.

Tesla updates its software every three to six months, roughly, using over-the-air updates, same as a smartphone. As long as the car is in park, the driver can update it via a Wi-Fi connection or the car’s LTE data connection. Tesla owners who bought their car in September 2014 or after, when all the hardware for autopilot and subsequent systems was put in place, woke up in October 2015 to find that their car could now somewhat drive itself.

The next software update may include the ability to read stop signs and speed limit signs. In the not-so-distant future, a driver may be able to set a destination from home to work and not have to “drive” at all.

The irony with the ludicrous all-wheel-drive all-electric P90D is that it is the most fun-to-drive car on the road. In stop-and-go traffic, however, it’s more enjoyable to sit back and watch it drive itself.
Volvo's Inscription a safe buy

BY WARREN BROWN
The Washington Post

Traffic-safety advocates have long regarded Volvo as the gold standard of driver and passenger safety in automobiles. The reason can be found in Volvo's guiding mantra: "Cars are driven by people."

That being the case, the corporate thinking goes, it is best to make people as safe as possible within the womb of a Volvo automobile. That mission, a hallmark of the Volvo car company since its inception in 1927, continues under Volvo's current ownership, Zhejiang Geely Holding Group of China.

If anything, Geely seems determined to re-establish Volvo's reputation as the world's safest car, standardizing components such as blind-side safety information and its City Safety low-speed collision-avoidance system.

The latter technology, offered in the extended-wheelbase, front-wheel-drive S60 T5 Inscription sedan driven for this review, is especially helpful in avoiding car-pedestrian collisions in cities where people often walk into flowing traffic. At speeds of about 20 mph, City Safety automatically brakes the S60, sparing pedestrian injury and allowing the driver to complete his day without intervention by emergency medical technicians, law enforcement officials or lawyers.

It shows Volvo remains on track toward the development of autonomous driving vehicles despite its many corporate upheavals and ownership changes in recent years. It also sends the message that Geely has every intention of owning a major share of the global automotive future.

The quest for autonomous driving isn't science fiction. It is a deliberate effort by governments, global car companies and their suppliers to greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the carnage that characterizes so much of driving on the world's roads. It is a long way off, but it's coming.

The S60 T5 Inscription sedan offers many clues as to where we are going: emergency crash notification, rear cross-traffic alert system, active dual xenon headlamps with washers, forward collision monitoring, electronic brake distribution and assistance, automatic parking assistance and more.

And the car remains a joy to drive. The model used for this review came with a turbocharged (forced air), 2.0-liter in-line four-cylinder gasoline engine — 240 horsepower, 258 pound-feet of torque. With an eight-speed automatic transmission, there is plenty of oomph for pleasurable long-distance highway runs.

One noteworthy complaint: Volvo, in an attempt to comply with government mandates for improved fuel economy, has adopted stop-start technology, activated during routine traffic stops, in the S60 T5 Inscription. It works, but not smoothly. Still, there is much to recommend.

The quest for autonomous driving isn't science fiction. It is a deliberate

2016 VOLVO S60 T5 INSRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premium midsize sedan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price as tested:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$44,985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base price: $38,700
MPG: 25 city, 37 highway
Engine: 2.0-liter turbo in-line four-cylinder
Transmission: 8-speed automatic
Parching: The S60 T5 Inscription is a midsize sedan with advanced safety features that showcase the future of cars.

Q: I purchased a Ford Escape new in 2009. Within two years, rust caused the paint to bubble around the rear passenger wheel well. I went to the dealer where I bought the vehicle and was told that I had to go through Ford customer service. Ford said that, unless the rust was "through," it was not a warrantable claim. The rust warranty period is five years. Now in 2015, the rust is "through." Ford now says the vehicle is out of warranty and, regrettably, there is nothing they can do. I filed a claim with the BBB, and they said it was the same thing (out of warranty). What are your thoughts?

Bob Weber
Motormouth

Q: I saw the 2004 Acura problem from A.P. in Brookfield, Ill., and I might have some insight. My 2010 Honda CR-V developed a rumble or stutter at about 50K miles. It felt like driving over rumble strips, but the vibration was in the whole body rather than the steering wheel. This occurred at about 1,500 rpm and only in fifth gear. When I brought it to my Honda dealer and asked if the mechanic needed any additional information to diagnose the problem, he said no and that he was familiar with this problem. He changed the torque converter ($1,700, but covered by the powertrain warranty), and the problem seems to be solved. My guess is that it was the lock-up clutch in the torque converter, but the mechanic indicated the whole converter was replaced, as a unit. I hope this helps!

M.L., Barrington, Ill.

Q: I purchased a Ford Escape new in 2009. Within two years, rust caused the paint to bubble around the rear passenger wheel well. I went to the dealer where I bought the vehicle and was told that I had to go through Ford customer service. Ford said that, unless the rust was "through," it was not a warrantable claim. The rust warranty period is five years. Now in 2015, the rust is "through." Ford now says the vehicle is out of warranty and, regrettably, there is nothing they can do. I filed a claim with the BBB, and they said it was the same thing (out of warranty). What are your thoughts?

Bob Weber
Motormouth

2016 VOLVO S60 T5 INSRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premium midsize sedan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price as tested:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$44,985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base price: $38,700
MPG: 25 city, 37 highway
Engine: 2.0-liter turbo in-line four-cylinder
Transmission: 8-speed automatic
Parching: The S60 T5 Inscription is a midsize sedan with advanced safety features that showcase the future of cars.

Q: I purchased a Ford Escape new in 2009. Within two years, rust caused the paint to bubble around the rear passenger wheel well. I went to the dealer where I bought the vehicle and was told that I had to go through Ford customer service. Ford said that, unless the rust was "through," it was not a warrantable claim. The rust warranty period is five years. Now in 2015, the rust is "through." Ford now says the vehicle is out of warranty and, regrettably, there is nothing they can do. I filed a claim with the BBB, and they said it was the same thing (out of warranty). What are your thoughts?

Bob Weber
Motormouth

2016 VOLVO S60 T5 INSRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premium midsize sedan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price as tested:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$44,985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base price: $38,700
MPG: 25 city, 37 highway
Engine: 2.0-liter turbo in-line four-cylinder
Transmission: 8-speed automatic
Parching: The S60 T5 Inscription is a midsize sedan with advanced safety features that showcase the future of cars.

Q: I purchased a Ford Escape new in 2009. Within two years, rust caused the paint to bubble around the rear passenger wheel well. I went to the dealer where I bought the vehicle and was told that I had to go through Ford customer service. Ford said that, unless the rust was "through," it was not a warrantable claim. The rust warranty period is five years. Now in 2015, the rust is "through." Ford now says the vehicle is out of warranty and, regrettably, there is nothing they can do. I filed a claim with the BBB, and they said it was the same thing (out of warranty). What are your thoughts?

Bob Weber
Motormouth

Rust eats through warranty

A reader's Ford Escape rusted through within six years.

Bob Weber is an ASE-certified master mechanic and freelance writer.

Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Fifth Floor, Chicago IL 60611 or motormouth;trib@verizon.net.
THE YEAR END SALES EVENT
BLOCKBUSTER

0% APR
FINANCING* FOR 75 MONTHS!

BIG SELECTION OF JEEPS! OVER 1000 NEW AND USED VEHICLES!

QUALITY PRE-DRIVEN VEHICLES!

2013 DODGE AVENGER SE
Stk.#156677
$12,793

2012 TOYOTA CAMRY SE
Stk.#6176
$14,393

2012 BUICK ENCLAVE
Stk.#49344 - Leather
$24,393

2010 TOYOTA 4RUNNER V6
Stk.#5054
$24,993

2007 GMC YUKON DENALI
Stk.#1893
$18,993

2014 DODGE RAM 1500
Stk.#3003
$12,493

2010 DODGE EXPRESS HD
Stk.#11678
$26,993

2014 LINCOLN MKZ BASE
Stk.#1509
$27,193

2013 TOYOTA CAMRY SE
Stk.#8816
$14,393

2010 TOYOTA 4RUNNER V6
Stk.#5054
$24,993

2014 CHEVY EXPRESS HD
Stk.#11678
$26,993

2014 DODGE DURANGO LTD
Stk.#1509
$31,993

FINANCING AVAILABLE REGARDLESS OF HISTORY! NO CREDIT - BAD CREDIT - ALL APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED!

200 W. Grand Ave. in Elmhurst
888-912-1333
www.driveroesch.com

Se Habla Español and Mówimy Po Polsku

*With approved credit, $13.33 per $1000 financed on select models. Add tax, le, $168.43 Doc Fee. No prior sales apply. Offer ends 12/31/15.
Nikitas named Midwest Conference Player of the Week

BY NICK BULLOCK
Pioneer Press

Lawrence men’s basketball player Jamie Nikitas is stuffing the stat sheet and was recently named Midwest Conference Player of the Week.

The senior guard from Glenbrook South turned in 34 points in a win against Midwest Conference rival Beloit Dec. 2 in Beloit, Wis. He followed that with a career-high 35 points in a win against Illinois College Dec. 5 in Appleton, Wis.

Nikitas averaged 4.5 rebounds, 3.5 assists and three steals in the two games, while shooting a scorching 59.5 percent.

His production against Illinois College gave him 1,006 career points and moved him into 22nd on Lawrence’s career scoring list.

Through the first seven games, Nikitas led the team in scoring average (27.9), rebounding (6.2) and assists per game (4) and steals per game (3.1).

The Vikings also received help from a number of other local athletes. Junior guard Peter Winslow, an Evanston graduate, averaged 6.2 points and 3.3 rebounds through seven games. Sophomore forward Ben Peterson, a Fenwick alumnus from River Forest, averaged 5.7 points and 3.1 rebounds. Sophomore guard Evan McLaughlin, a Nazareth graduate from La Grange, averaged 3.7 points and 3.6 rebounds. Fellow Glenbrook South graduate George Mavrakis, a freshman guard, saw his first action.

Kreck is all-academic

Fenwick graduate Jim Kreck from La Grange, a junior long snapper for the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute football team, was recently named to the Liberty League Academic All-District team.

The Engineers led the Liberty League in points after touchdowns (31-for-31) and were second in kickoff returns (24.7 yards per game).

Grcic lights it up

Loras men’s basketball star Mirko Grcic, a Lake Zurich graduate, dropped 26 points on Illinois Wesleyan in a 92-81 victory on Dec. 12 in Dubuque, Iowa. The senior forward shot 10-for-15 while also leading the team with nine rebounds.

Junior forward Danny Quinn, a Maine South alumnus, chipped in five points and four rebounds.

Through Loras’ 4-4 start, Grcic led the team in scoring (16.4 points per game), rebounding (9.5 per game) and minutes (32.3 per game). Quinn had played in all eight games, averaging 4.3 points and 3.6 rebounds.

Have a suggestion for the College Roundup? Email Nick Bullock at bullockpioneerpress@gmail.com.

Nick Bullock is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Cichowicz learns from top-tier opponent

BY ERIC VAN DRIL
Pioneer Press

Niles North senior Cameron Cichowicz used his upper-body strength to reach the Russ Erb Tournament's 195-pound final on Dec. 19.

Cichowicz won by fall in the first period of his quarterfinal match against Grant senior Lucas Lenz. In his semifinal, he scored two points against Oswego senior Victor Aguirre on an early takedown. Cichowicz scored another point with a second-period escape, and then went ahead 5-0 soon thereafter. He rode out Aguirre in the third period to win 5-2.

Aguirre, like many of Cichowicz's opponents, simply wasn't strong enough. Cichowicz's upper-body strength was overwhelming.

"I tell [Cichowicz] all the time: I think right now, [with] his technique and his strength, he's capable of beating about 90 percent of the state with what he has," Niles North coach Chris Albandia said. "But...we want him to get to that next level. And I think getting to that next level is going to entail beating that top tier - that top 10 percent."

Cichowicz faced Metea Valley senior Dylan Ervin in the 195-pound final at Glenbrook South. The undefeated Ervin was ranked No. 4 at 195 pounds in Class 3A by www.illinoismatmen.com entering this week.

Ervin proved to be part of the 10 percent. "The last couple years, I've faced kids like him," Cichowicz said after Ervin pinned him at 1:49. "I've been on varsity since I was a sophomore. But they normally aren't quite that strong and tall [as Ervin]. It's usually just a lot of moves, and being very tall."

Ervin started the match with a lightning-quick shot. He grabbed one of Cichowicz's legs, but Cichowicz leaned into Ervin with his upper body and Ervin was not able to take him down for an early lead.

Cichowicz escaped, but Ervin attacked again. He grabbed one of Cichowicz's legs a second time. Cichowicz was forced to hop and hop, while he was seemingly on the verge of being taken down for two points, as Ervin waited to attack. Cichowicz once again avoided getting scored on, however, by using his quickness to get out of bounds.

Undeterred, Ervin attacked Cichowicz once again. He took him down, and then showed why he's one of the state's best 195-pounders.

"The ability to hit move after move in succession - chain them all together - that was something that kid had," Albandia said. "It was great to be up against that level of competition, and see someone that had that because that's something we're trying to emulate."

Cichowicz has had a good deal of success over the last two years. He won more than 20 matches both as a sophomore and a junior. He advanced to sectional tournament at the end of both seasons.

The next step, Cichowicz said, is to advance downstate. He's progressed as a wrestler over the last year, in part because he didn't play football in the fall so he could concentrate on wrestling.

But making the leap to that state-qualifier tier - to Ervin's level - will likely require Cichowicz to improve upon his technique, transitions and chain wrestling. Those will be three of his main areas of focus over the next month, Cichowicz and Albandia said.

"I just have to work on how [Ervin's] style is, going back-to-back-to-back with moves," Cichowicz said. "I can't just wrestle with somebody, and hope to score off of them because [that strategy] burned me."

Cichowicz vowed to work on his technique and transitions over the next month.

"I just have to work on the [transition] moves and making sure I'm not giving my opponent an opening," Cichowicz said. "That's something I think about every match."

Cichowicz said the most important aspect of wrestling all year is showing development.

"I just have to work on hitting move after move after move," Cichowicz said. "That's something I need to improve on."

Cichowicz is happy with his progress so far, but he's hungry for more success.

"I just have to keep working and moving forward," Cichowicz said. "There's no limit to what I can do because I'm one of the best in the state."

Eric Van Dril is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Learning experience

Niles North's Cameron Cichowicz lost to the No. 4 wrestler in the state, but the tough competition could pay dividends.
CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Notre Dame High School senior Tyler Tsagalis who was awarded “HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE OF THE MONTH” for his performance in football.

COUNTRY Financial representative Alan Koszyk presented Tyler with a $250 donation to Notre Dame High School. Congrats to Tyler and his team from COUNTRY Financial!

Find out more about Alan Koszyk at: www.countryfinancial.com/alan.koszyk 847-963-8872  Alan.Koszyk@countrypearl.com

Call today for a special advertising program for your business
Valid until the end of the year
Find me at: rebecca@chicagotribune.com (312) 487-3722

CHICAGO TRIBUNE media group
ULTIMATE DINNER FOR TWO
4PM-10PM
$59.99

~4-COURSE DINNER FEATURING~
  - APPETIZER (FRIED CALAMARI)
  - SOUP OR SALAD

~ENTREE SELECTION INCLUDES~
  - TWIN FILET MIGNON OSCAR
  - BAKED STUFFED SHRIMP
  - FILET MIGNON & LOBSTER TAIL
  - PARMESAN CRUSTED RIB EYE STEAK

~DESSERT~
  APPLE CINNAMON ICE CREAM
  W/CARAMEL DRIZZLE

RESERVATIONS SUGGESTED

DINE-IN - TAKE AWAY - CATERING - FULL SERVICE BAR
8349 W. Lawrence Ave., (@ Cumberland Ave.), Norridge
708-453-5300 - www.theblossomcafe.com