Local talent shines on NBC

Take a look behind the scenes of hot 'Chicago' shows. Page 4

“Chicago Fire” costume designer Susan Kaufmann oversees a fitting with actor Christian Stolte, who plays Mouch on the hit NBC series now in its fourth season. Both are Skokie residents.

Case dismissed

An amended lawsuit filed by a Skokie-based gun control advocacy group against the village of Niles and the owners behind a proposed gun shop and range was dismissed by a Cook County judge. Page 7

Survive and advance

Area wrestlers qualify for state tournament. Page 37

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Christie Robinson, Skokie library rep

Christie Robinson has been the communications and marketing manager of the popular Skokie Public Library for nine years. The Pioneer Press recently asked her a series of questions.

Q: Where did you grow up?
A: Oregon. Born and raised, but not Harney County.

Q: As a kid, what did you want to do when you grew up?
A: Many things. One was a microbiologist. I don't remember why. I thought the microscopes and the slides and tiny little things were pretty cool. I had a lot of ideas. I was going to be a doctor at one point.

Q: When did you come to this area?
A: I moved here right after college. I live in Wilmette now.

Q: A movie you'd recommend?
A: I see so few movies. I saw (the recent) "Star Wars." The last movie I saw in a theater might have been "The English Patient." Well, there was an ice skating movie in between there but I can't remember what it was called.

Q: What book are you reading and what book would you like to read next?
A: "The Rosie Effect" by Graeme Simsion. It's a continuing story about a professor with Asperger's syndrome who goes in search of a wife. That was the first book. Now he has found the wife. Next on my list is "H is for Hawk." People here are saying I must read it but some also say it's overrated. There's a lot of opinions in this library about books.

Q: What is your favorite local restaurant?
A: The Noodle Cafe in Wilmette. Our lunch favorite in Skokie is the Kabul House.

Q: Do you have children?
A: Two girls, 22 and 18.

Q: Words of wisdom?
A: Always save time for something you're passionate about.

Q: You're an empty nester now. What are some of those passionate things you make time for?
A: Right now I'm doing costumes for the Evanston Dance Ensemble's "Alice in Wonderland." I also sing with the Bach Week Festival Chorus.

Q: Interesting factoid about yourself?
A: I was a music major in college and grew up on a farm. My brother is still doing it - fourth generation on the farm.

— Pioneer Press staff report
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On set at 'Chicago Fire'

BY MIKE ISAACS
Pioneer Press

On most days, Christian Stolte — better known as Mouch to millions of TV viewers - drives from Skokie to Chicago to fight fires, and Susan Kaufmann navigates a similar route to make sure he is dressed for the occasion.

The fires may not be real, but they sure are ones people want to see.

Stolte and Kaufmann — actor and costume designer - are among the large cast and crew of "Chicago Fire," the hit TV series now in its fourth season on NBC. The Skokie connection — both before and behind the camera - reflects just how much the series relies on key local talent.

Stolte and Kaufmann share a strong love for what they do and for the "Chicago Fire" family they get to be part of, they said.

When not on location to film one of Firehouse 51's hair-raising emergency calls, "Chicago Fire" uses the sprawling 50-acre campus at Cinespace Chicago Film Studios.

According to the show, the space for the three Dick Wolf-produced NBC series ("Chicago Fire," "Chicago PD" and "Chicago Med") occupies about 400,000 square feet under one roof, half of which belongs to "Chicago Fire."

"The familiar interiors - Firehouse 51's locker room, rows of beds, chief's office, cafeteria - are created here. So, too, is, Molly's Pub and Lt. Casey's living room and kitchen with an "outdoor" patio. A Chicago neighborhood seen from inside the firehouse garage is actually a crystal clear photograph recreated on an enormous sliding curtain of sorts.

On set earlier this month, Stolte appeared with other castmates in the cozy Firehouse 51 cafeteria and lounge. His likable Mouch didn't have dialogue in the scene, but Stolte reacted in multiple takes, and the director repeatedly yelled "cut" so cast and crew can begin all over again. There were two cameras, one of them focusing on a different character each time the scene was filmed.

"Because of the nature of our show, which reflects the nature of the job we're portraying, we're together a lot," Stolte said. "Whether you have lines or physical action to perform, you're probably there. Even more so than the other Dick Wolf shows, we are in the background of each other's scenes."

According to Stolte, it takes about nine days to shoot an episode. If he's lucky, he said, he'll have two days off within that schedule. His working days can be as many as 13 hours, he said.

"I tell people we're commuting in the dark - both in the morning and at night," Stolte said. "When we're filming our incidents on location - our rescues, our fires, all that stuff - we need every second of daylight we can get. We have to get ready so we can start shooting just as the sun comes up."

Mouch is a supporting character regularly seen on the Firehouse 51 couch. But he also has had his share of key narrative moments this season - baby sitting a rescued tortoise, serving as a steady force for others when their beloved college sought for his life, refereeing a Battle of the Badges boxing match. Mouch this season revealed himself as a huge Rush fan, and, maybe most importantly, popped the big question to his girlfriend in his own inimitable way.

A hit TV series like "Chicago Fire" isn't something Stolte or Kaufmann said they expected to land. Both the actor and the costume designer eschewed the Hollywood scene to become part of a local community like Skokie, they said.

Stolte served as grand marshal in last year's Skokie Fourth of July Parade; Kaufmann organized a few Highlandpalooza celebrations at Highland School where her son was a student until he moved on to junior high.

"I can't even say this was on my wish list," Stolte said about the series. "I wanted to get an appearance on a TV show here and there - enough to sustain me, to enjoy the insurance. But I've never been drawn to LA. The times I've been there, it hasn't been appealing to me. I don't like being immersed in the business. I don't like being where everybody else is about the business."

Kaufmann said she also has had opportunities for more Hollywood work. A graduate of Columbia College Chicago, she has served as costume designer on several series, as well as movies, including a few directed by Robert Altman.

The nature of Kaufmann's days vary, she said. They can be eight hours, or 16, and schedules can change last minute. But she is doing just what she loves, she said - bringing characters to life through the wardrobes they wear.

"I can honestly say I've loved every job I've had, and I love this one," she said. "I hope I can retire here."

This is not the first time the same Skokie connection has worked on a TV series. The actor and costume designer were part of the Fox drama "Prison Break," as well.

Late one February afternoon, Stolte made his way to Kaufmann's wardrobe department between takes for a scheduled fitting.

He tried on a tuxedo for a special event on an upcoming episode. Then he donned everyday out-of-uniform clothing for Mouch - an assortment of casual loose-fitting shirts.

It's not likely that the millions of "Chicago Fire" TV viewers will pay special attention to what Mouch wears, but that's just the point, Kaufmann said. The clothes have to instantly feel real and a natural part of the Firehouse 51 veteran's regular wardrobe.

The actor has to feel that, too, he said. "When I put on the right clothes, I know I'm ready to go as Mouch," Stolte said.
NBC’s ‘Chicago’ series offer local talent opportunities

BY MIKE ISAACS
Pioneer Press

Skokie’s contributions to “Chicago Fire” reflect just one piece of the larger pie of local talent connected to the hit NBC TV series filmed in the city.

Regulars like actor Christian Stolte and Costume Designer Susan Kaufmann of Skokie are everyday employees of the series along with many other locals.

The three Dick Wolf-produced series — “Chicago Med” and “Chicago P.D.,” too — employ hundreds before and behind the camera who regularly work at Cinespace Chicago Film Studios on Chicago’s west side when they are not on location elsewhere in the city.

Most of them are from the Chicago area, according to “Chicago Fire.”

The three Dick Wolf “Chicago” shows are filmed entirely in the Windy City, according to NBC, which means new local talent makes its way to these series all the time.

Wolf is intent on this, series representatives say — in part because he wants the city to become a character of sorts in itself.

In next week’s episode, Evanston’s Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Literary and Fine Arts School 2nd-grader Tyler Kaplan makes his debut on “Chicago Fire,” hardly the first time the series has broken in new and young talent.

Kaplan plays “a young boy involved in an accident scene to which Firehouse 51 is called,” according to “Chicago Fire.” “As the episode unfolds, we come to learn that his home life is complicated.”

During just about every episode of the three series, the regulars must help save or treat or apprehend everyday citizens, which provides opportunities for local talent of all ages to take on a prime-time gig. NBC confirmed that a fourth show — “Chicago Law” — is currently in development, which would only increase those opportunities for local actors and behind-the-scenes crew members.

“Chicago Fire” was more than satisfied with Kaplan’s first turn on the small screen.

“I think he is very talented, he has amazing instinctive behavior on screen,” said Reza Tafrizi, director of the episode titled “Two T’s,” which is scheduled to air Feb. 23. “His ability to take notes and actually be able to tweak his performance, considering his age, was impressive.”

According to his family, Kaplan has been acting since age 4 and has already appeared in more than a dozen national television commercials, industrial films, print ads and even a Web series.

Kaplan’s family says he soon will begin shooting a series regular role in an untitled television pilot. As a self-taught reader at age 4, his family said, Kaplan could read scripts and memorize lines early on and always wanted to act.

Wherever his television career takes him, the 2nd-grader will not be the first nor the last actor or actress to get their small screen start on “Chicago Fire” or one of its sister series, according to representatives of Dick Wolf’s popular stable of “Chicago” television offerings.

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Speed dating for dogs

BY NATALIE HAYES
Pioneer Press

Because finding love can be just as difficult for dogs as it is for humans, Morton Grove's Wright-Way Rescue hoped it would be love at first bark for a group of adoptable rescue dogs looking for homes during the shelter's first annual Dog Speed Dating event on Feb. 12.

For an hour that night, about 14 families looking for a new canine companion made their way around a circle in a back room in the shelter, where they spent three minutes with each of the 12 dogs that were chosen for the speed dating event. Participants rated the dogs based on personality, appearance, friendliness, and other factors before tallying up the scores and choosing the dog of their dreams.

While people stopped by the shelter all night to admire the puppies that occupy the cages in the front entrance of the shelter, Feb. 12 was meant as a night for the older dogs to shine. All the dogs in the speed dating circle were chosen because of their older age, which usually makes it harder for them to find homes, according to Alisa Brill, executive director at Wright-Way Rescue.

"Our eligible bachelors and belles are mostly adult dogs that have come from foster homes, and they're ready to go home," Brill said. "We thought this was a cute idea for Valentine's Day, to try to get these dogs into new homes by the end of the night."

Because some families were eyeing the same dogs after the rating cards were submitted, it was a nail-biter as guests waited for the shelter staff to pick the winners by drawing a number.

Arlington Heights residents Megan Boedecker and Brennan Casey came to Dog Speed Dating to find their first dog together as a couple. It was love at first sight when they were introduced to a 3-year-old spaniel named Leilani, but they found themselves on edge at the end of the meet-and-greet when they discovered another family had also chosen her.

"This feels like I'm a bachelorette waiting for a rose on 'The Bachelor,'" Boedecker said while the couple waited to hear whether Leilani would be going home with them. "Adopting is harder than you think because it gets frustrating when you find one you want and someone else adopts him.

It was a happy ending for Boedecker and Casey, however. They ended up being chosen in the drawing and went home with Leilani that night.

Another couple, Mark and Bonnie Roter of Highland Park, also went home happy with a mixed-breed dog named Ozzy.

"We had a fantastic first night with him," Mark Roter said the following day. "We had been looking for a dog we'd connect with for a long time, and speed dating was an amazing idea."

Some families arranged "second dates" to come back the following week with other pets to see how they would interact together.

Six dogs were adopted after the event, Brill said.

The frigid February temperatures may have kept some would-be speed dating attendees home. Out of about 20 families who pre-registered for the event, about 14 showed up, according to Brill. The shelter's goal for the night was to make it as easy as possible for people to adopt. Guests could sign up on Facebook and filled out applications online so they would already be pre-approved if they selected a dog at the event.

Chicago resident Dana Land heard about Dog Speed Dating on Facebook, and drove in from the city with her three friends to meet the adoptable dogs.

"I think this is a great idea — it's a great way to highlight rescues," Land said. "I've been following (Wright-Way) for a while on Facebook, and I think this is a good shelter because the take good care of their animals."

Wright-Way Rescue is one of several no-kill shelters in the state that work to collect animals from overpopulated shelters that euthanize animals when they run out of space to house them. The rescued animals are first brought to the shelter's sister location, Wright-Way Rescue Admissions & Care Center in downstate Murphysboro, Ill., before vans driven by volunteers bring them up to the Morton Grove shelter each week.

The shelter is funded through private donations, adoption fees, and sales from an in-house pet supply store that opened last year, officials said.

Natalie Hayes is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Judge dismisses amended Niles gun shop lawsuit

BY LEE V. GAINES
Pioneer Press

An amended lawsuit filed by a Skokie-based gun control advocacy group against the village of Niles and the owners behind a proposed gun shop and range was dismissed by a Cook County judge Feb. 9.

Circuit Court of Cook County Judge Franklin Ulyses Valderrama in a hearing at the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago granted motions to dismiss the suit filed by attorneys for Niles and 6143 Howard Partners, the company that plans to open a gun shop and range dubbed the Sportsman's Club and Firearms Training at 6143 Howard St., which is located within five miles of several schools.

Valderrama did not issue a written ruling on the case. He said his reasons for dismissing the amended suit did not differ substantially from those he already outlined in writing when he dismissed the group's original complaint last June.

Valderrama said he was swayed by arguments from the defendants' attorneys that the advocacy group behind the lawsuit, People for a Safer Society, did not have proper standing to file the complaint due to the fact that none of its members owns any property adjoining or adjacent to the site of the proposed gun shop and range.

An attorney for People for a Safer Society, Tony Hind, said the suit was dismissed with prejudice, meaning that the group's only recourse would be file an appeal with the state appellate court. "My client does plan to appeal," he said.

Denise Stoneback, founder of People for a Safer Society, expressed her disappointment at the judge's ruling following the Feb. 9 hearing. She confirmed that the group plans to appeal the decision.

"I'm a resident of Niles and I don't want this in my town," said a People for a Safer Society member, Ticia Ashcroft, who attended the hearing. "It's disgusting."

In response to the ruling, Hind said, "There's always room for disagreement when you have a case like this." He described the case as "nuanced" and said he believed the group stood a good chance of convincing the appellate judges of the validity of their suit.

People for a Safer Society filed an initial lawsuit against the village in October 2014 that sought to annul a special-use permit for the gun shop and range in addition to barring any other gun-related business from opening up shop at the site.

The Niles Village Board approved a special-use permit for the business in July 2014, and the board voted again last summer to extend the permit by an additional six months.

After the suit was dismissed, the advocacy group filed an amended complaint last July naming the owners behind the gun shop and range as a defendant in the case alongside the village.

An attorney for 6143 Howard Partners, Jim Ar-

Lee V. Gaines is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
The following items were taken from Niles. Police Department reports. An arrest does not constitute a finding of guilt.

**OBSTRUCTION**
- Lucjan Majewski, 66, of the 7900 block of Churchill, Morton Grove, was charged with obstruction on Feb. 6 after he allegedly pointed a power saw at an officer who was taking a driver into custody at the intersection of Washington and Lake streets at 6 p.m. Police said Majewski, who was dressed entirely in black, continued to approach the officer with the saw and refused to put the tool down. He then reported to the police station, where he was arrested. He has a Feb. 26 court date.

**DISORDERLY CONDUCT**
- Batzorig Altangerel, 44, of the 5000 block of Greenwood, Skokie, was charged with disorderly conduct, resisting a police officer and battery on Feb. 7 after police responded to a call of a highly intoxicated man who was swearing at police officers.

**TRESPASS**
- Juan Cornelio-Gutierrez, 28, of the 4300 block of West Palmer, Chicago, was charged with trespassing on Feb. 6. The security at a bar in the 8700 block of Milwaukee Avenue told police Cornelio-Gutierrez had been touching women and whistling at them.

**DRUG POSSESSION**
- Jakub Otfinowski, 20, of the 600 block of Huntington Commons, Mount Prospect, and Daniel Przewoznik, 19, of the 8200 block of Octavia Avenue, Niles, were each charged with possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia on Feb. 9 after police located them inside a car parked in the 7600 block of Main Street just before 7 p.m. Otfinowski was also charged with possession of marijuana with intent to deliver.

**BURGLARY**
- A 16-year-old Glenview boy was charged with felony burglary to a vehicle on Feb. 8 after police said he stole money from a wallet that was left inside an unlocked car parked in the 8500 block of Golf Road. The owner of the wallet followed the boy into the store after he found him sitting inside his car, police said.

**BATTERY**
- A 44-year-old man told police he was inside a bar in the 7300 block of Harlem Avenue around 1:25 a.m., Feb. 8, when another man struck him in the buttocks with a pool cue, according to police. The victim and a witness described the attack as unprovoked, police said.

**RETAIL THEFT**
- Letecia Flores, 43, of the 4900 block of North Bernice, Chicago, was charged with theft on Feb. 4. Police said she stole items from a store in the 8500 block of Golf Road.

**BURGLARY**
- A house in the 6900 block of Seward Street was burglarized between Feb. 1 and 7, police said. Police did not indicate what, if anything, was taken.

**THEFT**
- A carton of cigarettes valued at $84.90 was stolen on the morning of Feb. 10 from a store in the 9000 block of Golf Road.

**FRAUD**
- On Feb. 8, a man reportedly used 13 counterfeit $20 bills to buy two video streaming devices for $250.27 at a store in the 8500 block of Golf Road.

- On Feb. 8, two men allegedly stole eight pre-paid credit cards from a display inside a store in the 8500 block of Golf Road after they attempted to buy several items using credit cards that were declined.

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Chicago scientists part of team that confirmed Einstein’s theory

BY MARWA ELTAGOURI
Chicago Tribune

Hundreds of physicists and students sat still in a University of Chicago auditorium Feb. 11, their eyes wide and necks craned forward, anxious to hear the recorded sound of two black holes colliding 1.3 billion light-years away.

For several seconds, they heard only a muffled rumble. And then, it happened — a fleeting thump. The barely audible noise sparked a ripple of gasps across the room.

"You might not be that excited if you're not in the field," said Daniel Holz, an associate professor of physics at U. of C. "But if you're in the field and you've spent years thinking about this, dreaming about this? When that happens, it's mind-blowing."

He pointed at a couple of graphs that charted the noise's frequency with parabolic waves.

"For those of us that do this, that's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen," he said.

Several local scientists at Chicago institutions, including U. of C., Northwestern University and the Adler Planetarium, are among the team of nearly 1,000 scientists across the world to discover the first, direct evidence of gravitational waves, ripples in space-time that Albert Einstein predicted a century ago.

The noise affirms a paramount aspect of Einstein's theory of relativity: the existence of black holes, bottomless pits whose gravitational pull is so strong that even light can't escape.

The detection was made by the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory, known as LIGO, whose two detectors in Hanford, Wash., and Livingston, La., picked up the gravitational waves and formed a signal together on Sept. 14. In the months since, members of the LIGO group, comprised of a global team of scientists, have worked tirelessly on a study detailing the discovery, which culminates their decades-long search for signs of the phenomenon.

Gravitational waves occur as objects move through space, similar to a boat moving across a lake and sending ripples across the water's surface. But they're so tiny that until now it has been nearly impossible to detect them. To pick up on the signal, scientists have to look for violent events in the universe. In this case, two black holes combined and turned roughly three suns' worth of mass into gravitational waves in a fraction of a second.

"We're used to looking at the sky with our eyes, and now we can hear it," said Shane Larson, one of three Northwestern University professors on the LIGO team. "It's taken us 25 years from the day we funded LIGO to today. I've worked on it my whole career. And finally, to get to that thing — it's a little bit overwhelming."

While it's "up to historians to decide," Larson, also an astronomer at Adler Planetarium, said he believes the detection is among the most important astronomical discoveries in a century. Local scientists agree, saying the signal marked the first time mankind has been able to "hear" the universe.

At the U. of C.'s Eckhardt Research Center on Feb. 11, students sat shoulder to shoulder on the floor of the auditorium, craning their necks to a whir of conference calls with other LIGO members across the nation, all excitedly sharing findings and conclusions. Scientists joked that the discovery seemed "too perfect."

The most stressful part of the process, Holz said, was keeping the discovery a secret for almost half a year.

"In some ways it was awful. You're so absorbed by this, but you can't share it with anyone," he said. "The energy within the LIGO members here was very extreme. People inferred something was up because we were constantly meeting, but we couldn't tell anyone about it."

The work isn't quite over. Holz said. Scientists now understand that pairs of black holes exist in the universe and will try to understand their properties.

"We have this probe," Holz said. "Now, let's use it to learn about the universe.

Natalie Haynes is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
**SNAPSHOT**

**Nothing But Net VEX Tournament**

By Karie Angell Luc
Pioneer Press

It's not every day you hear the sound of squeaky robotic parts sparring in friendly competition.

Buzzers started rounds Feb. 13 at the Niles North Nothing But Net VEX Tournament at Niles North High School in Skokie.

"This is a great opportunity to learn about STEM principles and to apply them in real-life situations," said Robb Barton, event coordinator and a Niles North engineering teacher.

An estimated 150 students from area schools participated in the VEX signature tournament. This was the second VEX robotics competition at Niles North and was open to middle school and high school students.

Feb. 13 was an official Illinois VEX HS/MS state qualifying event. Participating schools included Niles North High School, Niles West High School, Adlai E. Stevenson High School and Glenbrook South High School.

One event required robots to toss balls in a large square. "We shoot into a 4-foot goal from a distance of 17 feet," said Nawfal Memon, 17, of Naperville and a junior from the Naperville-based Neuqua Valley High School. "We're showing our skills of engineering at a young age and how important STEM is for the future."

Memon's teammates shared that sentiment.

"Robotics is a nice way for us to expose ourselves to STEM engineering in a hands-on manner as opposed to the theoretical lessons we have in the classroom," said Neuqua Valley team member Rishi Kalluri, 16, also of Naperville, who wants to become an engineer.

Barton acknowledged supporters and STEM fans during the event.

Karie Angell Luc is a freelance reporter.

**2 CTA workers injured during train derailment**

By Chicago Tribune
Staff report

CTA Yellow Line service was interrupted Feb. 11 when a train derailed near the Dempster Street L terminal, causing minor injuries to two CTA employees.

The derailment, which happened at about 9:30 a.m., caused the CTA to direct passengers to the No. 97/Skokie bus as an alternative, according to CTA spokeswoman Catherine Hosinski.

Two CTA employees requested medical attention for minor, non-life-threatening injuries, Hosinski said.

No passengers were on the train when it derailed at about 9:30 a.m., said Skokie police Cmdr. Terry Shiel.

Shortly before 1 a.m. Feb. 11, workers finished cleaning up the scene following the derailment.

Additional buses were also being put on the route to ease congestion, CTA spokeswoman Catherine Hosinski said.

Check the CTA's website for updated travel information.

CTA officials.
Writers Theatre pays homage to group's past

New complex is dedicated in downtown Glencoe

BY DANIEL I. DORFMAN
Pioneer Press

More than 100 people gathered in Glencoe last week to celebrate the opening of the long-awaited Writers Theatre in a 36,000-square-foot complex that pays homage to the group's past.

The Feb. 12 ribbon-cutting ceremony was the culmination of a process that began about eight years ago.

"We had no idea it would turn into this," Writers general manager Jon Faris said. "We dreamed there would be something really magnificent at the end, but none of us sitting there in 2008 could have envisioned this building looking like this and generating this excitement and interest."

Writers was founded in 1992, holding plays for audiences of as many as 50 in the back of a downtown Glencoe bookstore, and later in a 108-seat theater in the Woman's Library Club building, which was razed to make room for the new theater.

"There is a lot of pride, there is some relief that we made it here to this day in one piece and we are all here to celebrate," Faris said. "But mostly we are just excited to see how we inhabit this building that is our new home."

The $28 million building at 325 Tudor Court is the result of a collaboration between Writers officials, who had been seeking a larger venue, the Woman's Library Club of Glencoe and the village of Glencoe, as well as a $34 million fundraising campaign. Writers officials said Feb. 12 that the campaign has been nearly completed, and will give Writers some money for operations and to place into reserves.

Nationally-known architect Jeanne Gang headed the Studio Gang Architect team in designing the building and its main 250-seat theater, with a design meant to capture the intimacy of the company's previous venues and make the audience feel they're still sitting in the back of the bookstore. Bricks from the Woman's Library Club building are being positioned to enhance acoustics, and a collage of photographs from the group's past are also on display.

A second theater has seating for up to 99 people, and can also be used for workshops, cabarets and educational opportunities. There are walkways as well as an upstairs terrace with views across the village.

"It is inspiring to see all this physical material coming together in such a nice way," Gang said.

She said the harsh winters of the past two years made reaching the construction deadline difficult.

Additional landscaping will be added when the weather improves, she said, including vines and thick ivy to soften the appearance of the theater, located just to the east of Friends Park.

"It will be fitting into the park setting very well," she said.

Caren Thomas, chair of Glencoe's Plan Commission, said the theater complex has personality.

"It is its own character, like a character in a play, and I didn't know it would bring its own personality in this way," Thomas said. "It is a personality that really feels like it is at home in Glencoe."

Village Manager Phil Kiraly said that while the building's impact is yet to be seen, it has received significant positive publicity.

"The national press that Writers has received, and Glencoe has received because of it, is exciting to me, and the opportunities are great because of that perspective," Kiraly said.

He said a crosswalk will be constructed this spring between the commuter parking lots across Green Bay Road and the building. The theater is putting together a signage plan to direct people to the appropriate places to park, but he said theater-goers will be encouraged to take public transportation as Metra and Pace routes are nearby.

The first performance at the Writers Theatre is scheduled for March 16. The atrium will be open for visitors on weekdays.

Daniel I. Dorfman is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Architect Jeanne Gang discusses the Interior design of the Writer's Theatre with Bruce Sagan of Chicago, a Steppenwolf Theatre board member, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Writer's Theatre on Feb. 12.

Officials marked the opening of the new Writer's Theatre with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb. 12.
A North Shore developer has agreed to retrofit a 3-year-old Evanston luxury apartment building to settle a lawsuit over disability access.

The 175-unit building at 1717 N. Ridge Ave. will undergo renovation during the next five years, making everything from bathrooms and kitchens to mailboxes easier for people in wheelchairs to use, according to the agreement.

In addition to the repairs, Northfield-based Focus Development and Booth Hansen, the building's architects, will each pay $87,500 in damages and court costs to Open Communities, the nonprofit fair housing organization that filed the federal discrimination lawsuit in January 2015.

The lawsuit followed a 2014 complaint filed by Open Communities with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development over the eight-story apartment building, which includes studio and one-, two- and three-bedroom rental units, as well as a fitness center, pool and other common areas.

Concerns included high thresholds at patio entrances, insufficient space within bathrooms, and kitchen sinks and ranges not fully usable by people in wheelchairs, all of which will be renovated under the terms of the settlement. Other modifications will include a curb cut on Ridge Avenue and a restriping of the garage to avoid parking obstructions.

Focus and Booth Hansen denied the discrimination allegations but agreed to settle the claim "to avoid the cost and disruption of protracted litigation," according to the settlement.

"We recognized that there were a few items that were noncompliant," said Justin Pelej, director of development at Focus. "We agreed to fix what was ours and move on."

Pelej declined to disclose the estimated cost of repairs.

Focus sold the building for $70 million to Atlanta-based Invesco in September 2013 - five months after it was completed.

In November, Open Communities settled an accessibility lawsuit with Minneapolis-based Ryan Companies, which agreed to make $2.7 million in alterations to more than 900 apartments in 10 housing complexes in Illinois and Iowa.

North Shore developer Focus Development has agreed to retrofit a 3-year-old Evanston luxury apartment building to settle a lawsuit over disability access.
Target adding new carts for kids, adults with disabilities

BY LAUREN ZUMBACH
Chicago Tribune

Target is rolling out a line of new shopping carts designed to make trips to the store easier for people shopping in the retail store with kids and adults with disabilities.

Target's Caroline's Carts look like its traditional red carts, but with a larger, harness-equipped seat. Drew Ann Long, of Alabama, designed the cart after her daughter Caroline, who has a neurological and developmental disorder called Rett syndrome, outgrew the seat in standard shopping carts.

Maneuvering a wheelchair and shopping cart through store aisles is a challenge, and many families don't want to or can't leave a child with special needs at home while shopping, Long said.

"I figured if I needed it, other moms needed it, as well," said Long, who founded a company called Parent Solution Group to market the carts.

Target has been testing the carts in some stores since February 2015 and announced last week that all stores will have at least one Caroline's Cart by March 19, except for its smallest stores that don't have full-sized carts. They're already at two Target stores in Chicago's Chatham and Near West Side neighborhoods in addition to suburban locations in Schaumburg, Niles and Crystal Lake, according to a Target spokesperson.

"Caroline's Cart can be a game-changer for families, and we're excited to offer this for our guests across the country," said Juan Galarraga, senior vice president of store operations, in a statement. "Target is always looking for new ways to make guests feel welcome in our stores and give them a more comfortable shopping experience."

Target is the largest retailer to bring Caroline's Cart to all its stores, Long said. Illinois has 54 stores that currently have at least one cart, according to Caroline's Cart, including several Fresh Thyme Farmers Market, Kroger, Mariano's and Jewel-Osco stores. Kroger has endorsed the carts, but it's up to individual store owners to decide whether to purchase them, Long said.

The carts are made by Technibilt, a North Carolina shopping cart manufacturer.

"If a retailer is going to provide a variety of carts, it's an accommodation they should provide," Long said. "Families of children with disabilities should be able to have the same experience as a typical family."
From pit to script: Two pals become filmmakers

CBOE friends combine forces to make 'Jim Shoe' in north suburbs

BY RONNIE WACHTER
Pioneer Press

American Airlines does not get any product shots in the film "Jim Shoe," but writer/director Peter Sutton said he should "give props" to their generous frequent-flier-mile discounts.

The airline agreed to make the flight from Los Angeles to Chicago - which usually costs 12,500 miles one-way - for only 10,000 miles, which allowed Sutton and producer David Hoelscher to bring their actors in from California with the 100,000 frequent-flier miles they had to work with.

Savings like that kept "Jim Shoe" around the pair's $200,000 budget, which made its scheduled premiere on Feb. 10 at the Pickwick Theatre in Park Ridge possible.

Sutton said he and Hoelscher met while working in a trading pit at the Chicago Board Options Exchange, and found a common love of movies. Sutton was the first to make the jump - in 1996, he moved to California and has been working in casting ever since - but the two remained close.

"I gotta poop or get off the pot, and I went out there," is how Sutton described his decision-making process.

While casting for both films and television shows, he worked on his own script at night. When he believed it was ready, he contacted Hoelscher again.

"He saw this as his bucket list," Sutton, 55, said of his filmmaking partner, a Park Ridge resident. "He wanted to be a producer of a movie, and I wanted to be a writer-director."

So the pair made "Jim Shoe," which Sutton called a "dramedy" about the titular character - played by Mike Erwin - an attorney at a prestigious Chicago law firm that is searching its top lawyers for who will be its next partner. Jim Shoe's "eccentric, Machiavellian" boss sets up bizarre pro bono work for the candidates to perform. Out of a hat, Jim draws a card that sends him down a construction-plagued Interstate 290 to Chicago's Lawndale neighborhood, to mentor a juvenile delinquent there played by Denzel Armon.

Sutton and his cast and crew filmed most of "Jim Shoe" in the fall of 2014, and came back last summer for a few re-shoots. Working the magic of movies on a gym-shoe-string budget, Sutton and Hoelscher turned Buffalo Grove, Northbrook, Skokie, Evanston and Winnetka into Chicago's West Side, and varying suburbs.

The character Jim Shoe is a New Trier Township High School graduate, but Sutton said homes in Buffalo Grove pose for Winnetka - and real-life Winnetka poses for other spots in the film.

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ALWAYS GIVING ADVICE?

Here's a tip: start a blog

chicagonow.com/pitch
Orchids on display at Valentine’s Day show

Visitors can see up to 10,000 flowers

BY KARIE ANGELL LUC
Pioneer Press

When it comes to Valentine’s Day flowers, it is hard to beat the annual orchid show at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe.

“I am so in love with this show,” said Jodi Zombolo, 2016 project manager for The Orchid Show. “On Valentine’s Day, what a great time to bring your special someone out of the cold and into a tropical oasis. Flowers are the language of love, and orchids are at the highest level of that language.”

The third annual orchid show opened Feb. 13 and runs through March 13. This year’s theme is “A Study in Contrasts,” which features different aspects of orchids.

Guests can expect to see at least 24 types of orchids, including lesser-known and smaller species.

In total, visitors might see displays of up to 10,000 blooming orchids.

“The strangler fig columns, they’re gorgeous and rare,” Wunderle said.

Native to warm climates, the strangler fig, which wraps around trees, provided a natural space to place orchids from ground level to the ceiling.

“The colors and variety are all exquisite,” Zombolo said. “Orchids are one of the most unique flowers, and we have put together a great event to celebrate that uniqueness.”

Orchids are one of the most unique flowers, and we have put together a great event to celebrate that uniqueness.

— Jodi Zombolo, orchid show project manager

Salina Wunderle, an assistant horticulturist at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe, completes final rounds of greenhouse plantings.

“They love it,” Nejman said. “I give them a lot of love, I nurture them. I water them every day. On Valentine’s Day, I think you can’t ever have too many flowers.”

The Orchid Show is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is $10 for adults ($8 for members) and $8 for seniors and children 3 to 12 ($6 for members).

Kari Angell Luc is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Sharon Nejman, a senior horticulturist, spent part of her day watering orchids with a spray hose in the greenhouse.

KARIE ANGELL LUC/PIONEER PRESS PHOTOS

Jodi Zombolo, said she appreciates how many orchids at the 2016 Orchid Show are placed at adult eye level.
**Opinion**

Why Cam Newton deserves the criticism

**Randy Blaser**

One of the major reasons to watch the Super Bowl every year is because it always teaches us something about ourselves.

Whether it happens during the game, after the halftime or during the commercials, we discover something new every year. The lesson to be learned about this year’s Super Bowl came at the end, when Newton attended the post-game interview. It was bad.

Newton’s team lost the game 24-10. And Newton, who had just been crowned the league’s MVP, didn’t play very well. He fumbled the press conference, too. He appeared to pout. He gave one-word answers. He mumbled his way through before getting up and leaving.

It was not a winning performance.

Someone has to lose. And Newton could easily have gotten away from the post-game interview looking magnanimous by saying things like: “They had a tough defense.” “I didn’t play well.” “I’m disappointed in my performance.” Etc., etc., etc.

The next day, Newton explained why he responded the way he did. He’s a self-proclaimed sore loser. “Who likes to lose?” Newton said. “You show me a good loser and I’m going to show you a loser.”

OK. That kind of reminds me of Gen. George S. Patton’s famous speech to the Third Army. Everyone has heard it. It’s the opening scene in the movie “Patton,” where the general explains: “Americans love a winner. Americans will not tolerate a loser. Americans despise cowards. Americans play to win all of the time. I wouldn’t give a hoot in hell for a man who lost and laughed.”

We didn’t ask Newton to lose and laugh. He was just asked to talk about what just happened on the field. No one was trying to define him as a loser because he came up short in the big game. He was just supposed to talk about it.

Newton said he didn’t want to talk to the press at that time.

Too bad. That’s his job. As one of the biggest players in the biggest game watched by nearly the entire country, you talk about what happened. That’s what adults do.

There are always two contests going on in the sports world. One is how the athlete performs on the field. The other is how he handles the outcome in front of the world.

Newton’s a sore loser. OK we got that. But he forgot the rest of what Patton said.

Americans will not tolerate a loser and play to win all the time.

Newton forgot the “all the time” part. Like it or not, the post-game interview part is of the game. According to the Patton rules, Americans will not tolerate a loser.

What makes a loser? Not the outcome of one game, that’s for sure. But how you handle it when the game, or life, goes south.

Randy Blaser is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.

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Private toll lanes a sign of government’s failure

**Paul Sassone**

Maybe it’s a good idea. But it seems like just another admission of failure.

Gov. Bruce Rauner is proposing creation of at least one toll lane in each direction along a 25-mile section of the Stevenson Expressway (I-55) between the Dan Ryan Expressway and Interstate 355. Drivers would have the option of crawling along in the regular lanes or paying to zip along in the toll lanes.

Reducing congestion would be a boon. The Illinois Department of Transportation estimates more than 170,000 drivers use the Stevenson each day. That’s a whole lot of people stuck in traffic.

The new wrinkle in all this is that a private business would pay the state for the right to collect tolls and keep the tolls collected. The company would vary what it charges drivers depending on how congested traffic is on a given day. The term for this is “dynamic pricing.”

Construction of these lanes — paid for by the yet-to-be-selected firm — would start in 2017. By law, such a “public-private partnership” as the governor calls it, needs the approval of the Illinois General Assembly.

With the governor and the legislature continually at each other’s throats, who can say whether the plan will get the required approval. Though from what I’ve read, there’s support for the proposal even among some Democrats.

Supporters say this public-private partnership is necessary because federal and state funding for highway infrastructure keeps shrinking. This is the same argument that has driven the growth of charter schools, the privatizing of federal tax collection and other, hitherto, government functions.

Government can no longer pay for government. So, the argument goes, private business must take over the services government used to provide.

And that’s an admission of failure. When our democracy can no longer provide public education and other basic services, then we have failed.

And what do these public-private partnerships offer? The “private” gets money. What does the “public” get? I don’t know. But the first duty of a business is to make a profit. The first duty of government is to serve the public. I’m not comfortable with this shift in priorities.

If this latest public-private enterprise comes to be, I only hope it works out better that the Chicago parking meter public-private partnership.

Paul Sassone is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
When to worry about memory loss

Recently, I was at a Bar Mitzvah for my friend Lisa's son and I was speaking with her cousin whom I've met on several occasions. During the conversation, the cousin mentioned that I wrote an article about his kidney transplant a bunch of years ago. Although I kept speaking to him like nothing was wrong, I was having a different conversation in my head. Here's how it went:

"OH MY GOSH! I have no recollection whatsoever of writing a column about his kidney transplant! How can this be? I've actually written a few columns on some of his family members but wouldn't I remember a kidney transplant? And since I know a bunch of people in his family, wouldn't I think about his kidney transplant and ask him how he's doing each time I bump into him?" Why isn't any part of this sounding familiar?"

My head was spinning. Was this the start of dementia? Should I see a doctor? Is this what happens as people get older? Luckily, Lisa happened to stop by our table before the cousin walked away. "OMG, Lisa!" I said. "Your cousin says I wrote an article about his kidney transplant and I'm FREAKING out because I don't remember anything about it!"

"That's because you didn't write the article, Susan," Lisa assured me. "I remember reading it and you were not the author." "Hmmm," said the cousin. "I really think you wrote it 15 years ago.

A huge sigh of relief ran over me. "I've only been writing for the paper for 11 and a half years, so it couldn't have been me," I said to the cousin. Of course, I then had to ask him a million questions about the kidney transplant and thought how interesting a future, follow-up article might be at some point.

Then, after realizing I was not losing my mind yet, I thought about how real this sort of "forgettable" situation might become in my future or anyone's future, for that matter. I decided to contact my friend, former Buffalo Grove resident and internist with a specialty in geriatrics, Jodi (Malis) Goh, to ask a few questions about the mind's aging process and when to seek help.

So, how much forgetfulness is normal as we age? "Starting at age 30, people do start having memory problems with names and such," says Dr. Goh. "The feeling you get that something's at the tip of your tongue and then it comes to you in the middle of the night and you're like, 'now I remember!'" That's normal. We actually call it "normal memory loss with age."

When is it time to call the doctor?

"If something is affecting your daily life and your daily activities, it's time to see your physician," says Dr. Goh. "Like problems paying your bills, managing your money, working your appliances, repeating yourself with questions or stories and getting confused while driving, not being able to figure out the name of an object so you describe it instead, losing things and finding them in strange places and dressing inappropriately for the weather."

"Actually, most times it's a spouse or other family member who notices something is different before the person does," says Dr. Goh. "If you have dementia, you would not always notice anything is wrong."

Dr. Goh highly recommends the Alzheimer's Association website www.alz.org for more information. "They have TONS of information on what's normal and what's not," says Goh. "The site is also a really helpful resource if you have family members with Alzheimer's or dementia."

Additionally, "People with dementia cannot learn something new," says Dr. Goh. "And they cannot think back to find something misplaced."

Dr. Goh also says, "If you have high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol, you'll want to get all of it under control because besides increasing your risk for heart disease, it also increases your chances of getting dementia. Alcohol and smoking can also increase your risk for memory loss."

And, to help in the prevention of memory loss, Dr. Goh says you must do aerobic exercise and continue learning new things like an instrument, dancing, computer, crossword puzzles and increasing social activities. "Now is the time to be healthy," says Dr. Goh.

To contact me about future columns or to be on my email list when I take a poll or do a survey, email gabbin@susandubin.com.

The imaginary QB Cam-troversy

Will everyone please get off Cam Newton's back?

For a guy who just took his team to the Super Bowl after going 15-1 in the regular season, you'd think he was a contestant on "American Idol" being judged by a panel of Simon Cowell clones based on his heightened level of sports media scrutiny.

Really, a quarterback who cares too much after scoring touchdowns? Where were these critics during one of the most awkward celebration eras in NFL history? Of course, I'm referring to the "Ickey Strutter."

To say sports and news media have been piling on to create a "Cam-troversy" is an understatement.

When you peel away the layers of criticism, one reason for calling out Cam is unfairly comparing him to the studious and non-celebratory Peyton Manning and his "normal" emotional spectrum.

Breaking news on that one - Cam studies game film and his digital playbook to prepare just as hard as every other quarterback in the league or else the Panthers wouldn't have played one overall pick in the NFL Draft, makes watching football fun because he's having fun. What's wrong with that?

He has the winning record to back up the occasional showboating and oh yeah... he throws, but hands footballs to little kids in the stands after scoring touchdowns. This is a guy we want to criticize?

OK, so maybe some of his past performances in press conferences haven't been great, including Sunday's post-Super Bowl media gathering where he wasn't super talkative after losing the biggest game of his career and walked out. Would any of us really want to look into a sea of lights and cameras and explain why we just failed? Yeah, me neither.

It seems like this level of criticism shouldn't be happening when you win and play well enough to compete for the ultimate prize. Imagine if we were talking about Jay Cutler?

Eric Scott is a freelance writer for Pioneer Press.

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Library director will be missed

Morton Grove Public Library staff and board members are preparing to say farewell to Debra Stombres, our library's director since March 2014. These past two years of the library's history will stand out in part because of the massive reconstruction project and in part, due to the superior leadership demonstrated by Ms. Stombres. Throughout the period the library was partially kept open for all but a few days. Much of the credit for keeping things running smoothly, both the reconstruction and library functioning is due to the director's outstanding effort and determination.

Ms. Stombres' departure will take place in early March for her new position as director of the Poplar Creek Public Library District in Streamwood. Not only will this be a step up on the promotion ladder, possibly more important, it will take an hour off her driving time to work. She will be leaving our Morton Grove Public Library running smoothly under the leadership of qualified department heads together with all of the modern electronic paraphernalia in today's library world, study rooms, teenagers' space, a digital media lab, and coming soon will be a brand new public computer room.

Yes, Debra Stombres you will be missed! On behalf of my fellow trustees, we wish her only the very best in her new endeavors. We also will continue to serve our patrons and the community as the Morton Grove Public Library continues to be one of the best small libraries in the country.

— Barbara Novick, president, Morton Grove Public Library Board of Directors
How long do we mourn before moving on?

Northlight stages ‘Mothers and Sons’

BY CHRIS JONES
Chicago Tribune

"Don't they know it's the end of the world?" Karen Carpenter once asked in a deeply poignant song, marveling how time marches on, the perplexingly cheery popular music seemingly oblivious to the bereft singer's pain.

Katherine Gerard, the bereaved mother at the heart of Terrence McNally's haunting drama "Mothers and Sons," now in its first Chicago production, at the Northlight Theatre, doubtless would sympathize.

Although her pain took root a quarter of a century ago when her only son died of AIDS, it clearly has continued, marinating in the woman's burden of guilt for not having accepted her son's gayness. Thus she condemns herself for not really knowing her son at all. Years after his death, where does that leave her?

For, while her grief is stubborn, the world around Katherine (Cindy Gold) has changed. McNally sets his play on the day that Katherine visits her son's old partner, Cal Porter (Jeff Parker). Cal has, of course, moved on. What choice did he have? He has a new partner — a new husband, no less, in young Will Ogden (Benjamin Sprunger). For the world has changed that much. And these two men have a kid. A very cute one (played by Ben Miller). At once appalled, jealous, envious and racked with remorse, Katherine is furious about that which society affords her no right to be angry. And she has to swallow these emotions as she is a guest in the home of men she hardly knows at all.

But she has cards to play, and play 'em she does. A mother, Katherine insists, cannot move on.

You were barely his mother! That's Cal's retort. It comes from the man who stood by the side of a dying young actor, one of so many being felled by a plague, and who is now being forced to relive all that pain because the actor's very difficult and caustic mother is standing in his living room even though she refused to hug him at her son's funeral. Years ago.

To some degree, "Mothers and Sons," directed at Northlight by Steve Scott, is a construct. Katherine comes to New York and, suddenly, her son's former partner's life, through a flimsy excuse — to return her late son's diary (true, many of us use such devices to motivate the unpleasant but necessary).

But I thought this an important play when I first saw it on Broadway in 2014 (it starred Tyne Daly), in part because I remember seeing a couple of mothers like Katherine at funerals, in part because it reminds us what some (hardly all) family members did to those who died of AIDS, but mostly because it offers a chance to think about guilt, mourning and moving on, while we're in the hands of one of America's most compassionate and yet unflinching playwrights.

At one point, Cal, who is played with great sincerity by Parker, wonders aloud whether moving on to a new partner means he did not love Katherine's son enough. It's a common worry of the widowed, although the play is, I think, arguing that he has no choice, given how time moves so inexorably forward, leaving some of us behind.

Scott's production does not take enormous risks, nor does it capture all the humor that was present in the Broadway original, and the fireplace-free set is a bit more low-budget than would be ideal for a tony Manhattan apartment with a view. But it's a very solid and well-acted endeavor.

Gold's performance is an exceptionally sincere and honest piece of acting that moved me greatly in some moments. Parker also nails the sheer horror of your past walking right through your front door, dredging up all that complexity. And Sprunger, playing that new man in Cal's life, has just the right lack of compassion for that which he was just young enough to miss.

You'll sense I'm fond of this emotional play, imperfect as it may be, and you would be right. It is honest, fair and moving, and entirely applicable to any number of other circumstances in which we find ourselves.
SHOW

Everyone can relate to 'The Internet Ate My Brain'

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
Pioneer Press

"Please leave your cell phone on."

That's something you wouldn't expect to hear during a show but "The Internet Ate My Brain" is not your ordinary show and Bill Dyszel, who created the innovative evening, is unique — to say the least.

Dyszel sang with the New York City Opera for 14 years and has won rave reviews as a cabaret artist in New York. He is also the author of 21 books in the "Dummy" series, including, "Microsoft Outlook for Dummies." And he's a filmmaker who has created more than 60 short films. He will perform "The Internet Ate My Brain" at the Skokie Theatre Feb. 27.

Sounds like someone who would really understand how the Internet could chomp on your cerebral cortex, but Dyszel declared, "When the Internet eats your brain, you're the last to know."

"The Internet really is changing how we're thinking," he added. "Nothing has ever changed the way people behave as rapidly as the Internet has done. In some ways, we're not ready for it. This is the last time humanity will know a world without and with the Internet."

What should we do about it? In Dyszel's case, he has created a number of parodies and original tunes about such topics as people's addiction to online shopping and to selves.

The New York resident, who spends half his time in Palatine because he inherited his family's home, decided to create this show about a year ago.

"I have been writing a bunch of the songs one by one," he said. "I do a lot of cabaret and open mics so I've been going to Pette- rinno's in the Loop."

Every Monday night, Dyszel brought a new original song to gauge if people liked it. The ones people loved are in the show.

About half of the songs are parodies; Dyszel wrote music as well as lyrics for the other half.

"Most of my parodies are in the Great American Songbook," he noted. That includes, "Google, Facebook and Bing" to the tune of "Bubbles, Bangles and Beads," and "Top Secret Love" to the tune of "Secret Love." The audience will get into the act via those turned on cell phones. "I pose questions to them and ask them to discuss them and then send me a text message," Dyszel said. "I give a prize for one of the text messages for each question I pose."

Dyszel has presented, "The Internet Ate My Brain" at Don't Tell Mama in New York City four times to critical acclaim and the editors of BroadwayWorld.com nominated the show for a BroadwayWorldNY Cabaret Award in the category of Best Musical Comedy. Audience members have been enthusiastic, too, Dyszel indicated, noting, "Everybody identifies with the topic."

Confirmation of that, Dyszel related, is that when he walks down the street wearing his, "The Internet Ate My Brain" hat and jacket, people tell him, "That happened to me."

Evening Post comic strip, came to Drury Lane's attention via Stanczyk, who saw an early reading of the show in New York. "I think of 'Hazel' as 'Matilda' meets Jersey Boys," Stanczyk says. "It's the kind of big, bold beautiful new show that I see Drury Lane doing more and more of."

Stanczyk started working with Drury Lane in 2010, when she helped cast "Fusmy Girl" with New York City Opera for a world premiere. She has also had the lock on pre-Broadway tryouts, giving Chicago area audiences their first look at shows including "The Producers", "The First Wives Club" and "Gotta Dance."

For the last 20 years or so, Broadway in Chicago has had the look-out pre-Broadway tryouts, giving Chicago area audiences their first look at shows including "The Producers", "The First Wives Club" and "Gotta Dance."

It remains to be seen whether Drury Lane can when it comes to landing the next "Producers." But in some ways, Drury Lane has slowly but surely already begun building a reputation as a nurturer of new shows.

Stanczyk will remain based in New York, where she estimates she sees around 100 or so readings and backer's auditions of new shows over the course of the year. Logistically, that's something Stanczyk just can't swing. "We do seven shows a year at the Drury Lane," she says.

"We're always either auditioning or in tech or getting ready to open. I need someone on the ground in New York who can wade through all the new works coming down the pipeline and help find those that would be a good fit here."

New York-based producer and casting director Laura Stanczyk will help bring new musicals to Drury Lane.

"From the opening to 'Hazel' is so deep? "The problem we run into is that Chicago actors are so crazy talented, they're already booked lots of times when we want them," Stanczyk says.

Stanczyk was instrumental in bringing last year's new musical "Beaches" to Drury Lane. When "Hazel" opens in April, it will be a bona fide world premiere. The show, based on the spirited maid in Ted Key's beloved Saturday
Why boredom is anything but boring

Embracing ho-hum moments can spur creativity and productivity. Page 3
Aurora woman's fare simple, yet delicious

By Judy Buchenot

Louise Christian doesn't like to boast about her cooking, but she has a recipe that is easy to fix and tastes great for just about any occasion.

Christian retired to Aurora but grew up and lived in Oswego her whole life. She raised four children and spent a considerable amount of time preparing meals for them. Gardens provided her with many ingredients over the years.

"My parents had a big garden. In those days, I think everyone had a garden. My mom even sold some of the things from her garden. I remember helping her pick and wash green beans to take in to Kroger to sell." she said.

Her own garden was also bountiful. "I had a big strawberry patch, so we ate strawberry shortcake till it came out of our ears," she said. "I grew peas too but the kids loved them raw out of the garden, so the peas never made it to the kitchen. My Uncle George always planted some sweet corn for me and we also had carrots, beans, cucumbers, everything. I used to get up early and spend a half hour working in the garden every day before the kids got up."

She found that if she spent some time each day in her garden, she never lost control of weeds or other maintenance. She canned some of the produce like tomatoes and froze some things like corn. "I miss my garden - not working in the garden, though - just eating all of the fresh things," said Christian.

Christian cooks most meals without recipes. "Once I make something that I like, I can make it again and again with a few changes," she said. With eight grandchildren and three great grandchildren, she still has opportunity to cook for a large group when they come to visit.

For example, one of her simple family favorites is her chicken and dressing. She starts with a 14- to 16-ounce bag of sage and onion seasoned stuffing mix. She noted that all flavors of stuffing mix will work in the dish, so just choose a favorite.

"Then you have to get the stuffing moist," she said. She usually starts by adding a can of condensed cream of chicken soup but noted that other flavors like cream of mushroom or celery would also work. She then adds 1 to 2 cups of chicken broth or milk until the mixture is moist. Next she adds about a pound of cut-up cooked chicken.

Everything is mixed together, placed in a casserole dish and baked at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. She then removes the casse-

Mandarin Orange Salad

| 2 15-ounce cans mandarin oranges |
| 1 15-ounce can pineapple tidbits |
| 2 3-ounce boxes orange Jell-O |
| 2 3-ounce boxes tapioca pudding |
| 1 8-ounce container whipped topping |

1. Drain mandarin oranges and pineapple, saving the juice. Combine juices and add water if needed to make three cups liquid. Pour liquid into saucepan. Stir in Jell-O and tapioca mixes. Bring to a boil, while stirring. Remove from heat and cool until thickened but not solid. Stir in oranges and pineapple. Stir in whipped topping. Spread into a 9-by-13-inch pan and refrigerate until set.

Coconut Angel Squares

| 1 pre-made angel food cake (8 to 10 ounces) |
| 1 quart vanilla ice cream |
| 1/2 cups milk |
| 2 3.4-ounce packages instant coconut pudding mix |
| 1 8-ounce container whipped topping |
| 1/2 cup coconut |


Louise's Culinary Cue

Louise always wanted her children to try new dishes, so she instituted the "no thank you helping." This is a single spoonful of a new dish that everyone had to try. After tasting, sometimes the response was a simple "no thank you," but many times, they would request more because they had learned that the new dish was pretty tasty.

role and tops it with cheese, either shredded or sliced. The casserole goes back into the oven for a few minutes to melt the cheese. It is then ready to serve.

When making a baked item, Christian

does pull out her recipes, which she has organized into a notebook. "I know that a recipe is a good one when I make it and everyone asks me for a copy of the recipe," she said.

Two dishes that always elicit recipe copy requests are her mandarin orange salad and her coconut angel squares. As with all her favorite recipes, the two dishes are simple yet unique and delicious. The angel food cake squares require a prepared angel food cake, which can be made or pur-

Aurora's Louise Christian gets ready to mix up a chicken and stuffing casserole, one of her easy-to-make, yet delicious family meals.

Judy Buchenot is a freelance writer.
Why boredom is anything but boring
Embracing ho-hum moments can spur creativity and productivity

By Leslie Barker
The Dallas Morning News

An unexpected word is making the rounds, one that causes some embarrassed eyes to lower, some astonished jaws to drop.

The word? Boredom.

Embarrassed because “admitting you’re bored,” says Peter Toohey, author of “Boredom: A Lively History” (Yale University Press), “is a bit like saying you burp in church or something dreadful like that. People will deny it.”

Astonished because, well, in this day and age, how could anyone ever be bored? Even in historically boring situations — jury duty room, post office line, last day of the flu — out come the phones to alleviate any of that nonsense.

But boredom shouldn’t be seen as “an unpleasant, disgusting experience,” Toohey says. He and others say that mastering it can boost productivity, enhance creativity and more.

“The big problem with the world we live in is that there’s no excuse to be bored,” says Austin Kleon, author-illustrator of “Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative” (Workman Publishing) and who, incidentally, doesn’t mind being bored. “We’re in this culture in which entertainment is at your fingertips 24/7.”

But, adds Kleon, “I think part of an artist’s job is to bore yourself into working. I really do.”

At Southern Methodist University, advertising professor Willie Baronet asserts that creativity is “one way to get un-bored.” As to whether there exists a link between creativity and boredom, “I’m not a researcher, but this is fascinating to me,” he says.

Whatever it does or doesn’t, something about this ho-hum topic is garnering attention. Boredom is so mundane that even the Bible, which deals with all sorts of emotions, doesn’t mention it.

Toohey points out (although the idea that the devil finds work for idle hands apparently goes back to 18th-century hymn-writer Isaac Watts, and Chaucer’s 14th-century “Canterbury Tales” quotes St. Jerome about the dangers of being unoccupied.)

“It was trivial until the early 2000s,” says Toohey, a professor of Latin and Greek, among other ancient topics, at the University of Calgary. “There’s a book by a Norwegian, which I think is a better book than mine, and that started the topic. There’s a huge amount of interest in boredom. People call me all the time to talk about it.”

Kleon, who just released “The Steal Like an Artist Journal” (Workman Publishing, $12.95), says boredom has a movement behind it.

“I think boredom might make a comeback,” he says from his home in Austin, Texas. “I think it’s an almost a luxurious thing, a decadent thing. To allow yourself to be bored is almost like a pampering thing. I can see a boredom ranch: ‘Come here and be bored!’

Here’s how boredom has figured into the news lately:

A Spanish company has developed an algorithm to determine, by phone usage, when someone is bored. It then offers suggestions on what to do.

As part of a University of Central Lancashire study linking boredom to creativity, participants were divided into three groups. The first was instructed to copy names from a phone book. The second, to read the phone book and the third, to do nothing. Booooring! The groups were then asked to take part in a task requiring creativity. The results? Even boredom has layers: Boring activities involving reading led to more creativity “in some circumstances” than boring written activities, which were more creativity-inducing than no pre-task activity at all.

A summary in the journal Science of boredom-related studies found that participants preferred “mundane activities,” including administering electric shocks to themselves, to being in a room alone with their thoughts, even for less than 15 minutes.

Toohey knows how boredom can lead to productivity, it’s how he came to write his book.

“It was telling me to do something,” he says. “It drove me to think about it, to sit down, spend a couple of years reading and writing about it.” He pauses.

“That sounds pretty boring!”

His research taught him something about himself too: “Realizing that boredom can be a positive experience surprised me, that my proneness to boredom wasn’t the product of a lazy, idle nature or being too much of a dreamer, the sort of thing teachers accuse you of being. It’s part of me and what I’ve achieved, which is part a feeling of restlessness, of dissatisfaction and slight disgust of things.”

When Baronet sees people sitting down and looking at their phones, he says, “It makes me wonder, would they be bored otherwise?” He’s seen people at the museum looking at their phones. I’m not judging or saying it’s wrong, but it should be noted: “It’s very easy to check messages, turn on the phone, stay engaged. There will never be a lack of content.”

Challenging himself to not do so, however, “can provoke me to do something new, read or take a walk, to do something likely to cause a different kind of creativity,” he says, “and I like that a lot.”
Variety is key for a bird-friendly backyard

Winter is a good time to plan changes

By Tim Johnson
Chicago Tribune

I would like to attract more birds to my garden in coming years and would like advice on how to do so.
- Ellen Sanderson, Highland Park

Winter is a good time to plan to enhance your garden with plants that will attract birds all year long. It takes more than feeders, bird houses and a birdbath, along with some flowers, for a truly bird-friendly garden.

Birds need a complete habitat that includes food, shelter, nesting areas and perching spots. A good garden for birds tends to have more of a natural look to it. Design your garden so that there are different vertical levels, each attracting and providing something important to different bird species. Some birds prefer the canopy of tall trees while others perch in the understory trees and shrubs. Different species of birds will have varying requirements and preferences for nesting, eating and shelter. Try to create as many of these levels as possible in your backyard garden to attract a larger variety of birds. Even open areas of soil can be beneficial by providing an area for birds to take a dust bath.

Select plants to provide food for birds at different times of year. Fruit of different plants will ripen in different seasons. For example, serviceberries provide spring-ripening fruit, and red-twig dogwood does in summer; hawthorns and crab apples provide fruit in fall and winter. Perennials such as purple coneflower and grasses such as prairie dropseed provide seed to act as a food source. Sunflowers are quick-growing annual flowers that will produce seeds that are attractive to birds. Nectar-producing plants such as penstemon, Mexican bush sage and columbine are attractive to hummingbirds. It is a good idea to include a mix of evergreens in your planting to provide year-round shelter for the birds. When feasible, leave some dead branches on living trees to provide zones for the birds to perch on. Prune any dead branches that are safety hazards, though.

To attract birds to your yard, you need to offer a complete habitat that includes food, shelter, nesting areas and perching spots. Plus, keep in mind that different species have different needs, so variety is key.

Leave the leaf litter in your garden beds this fall as an easy and environmentally friendly method to recycle material and help meet some of a bird's basic needs. Other organic materials such as small twigs, fallen seeds, fruits and berries should be left in the litter too. Many insects will thrive in the leaf litter and insect-eating birds will be attracted. Some birds will store their seeds and nuts in the leaf litter for later use.

There are many kinds of seeds and feeders to choose from if you decide to start a feeding program. Take the time to do some research as different species of birds prefer different types of seeds and feeders, and no one type is preferred by all birds. It is best to avoid buying bags of mixed birdseed as they contain a lot of filler, such as red millet, which most birds won't eat. The filler ends up on the ground, where it rots.

Place your feeder in an open area where it is easy to see 10 feet or so away from protective cover (for the birds) and convenient to refill (for you). If the feeders are too close to large plants then squirrels will have easy access to them. To maximize the number of species that visit your feeders, you'll want to offer a variety of food and at different heights above the ground.

Tim Johnson is senior director of horticulture for the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe.

PET OF THE WEEK

Joseph

I am just a puppy with everything that goes with being a puppy. Every outing is a reason to discover new things and of course to meet people, small kids, big kids, and other dogs. I get along well with other dogs and can't wait for a family where the real fun will begin! Interested in meeting me and all the extra work that will come with adding a puppy to your family, then head out to Save-A-Pet.

For additional information, please visit www.saveapetil.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...
Dear Help Squad,

I saw your Nov. 11 column regarding an issue with Direct Auto (Insurance) and decided I should enlist your help with a claim.

On August 24, 2015, a driver hit my fence and my neighbor’s fence. A police report was filed. There was significant damage to both of our fences. We filed a claim with our homeowner’s insurance and were compensated, minus our deductible of $500. Our insurance company, Traveler’s, tried numerous times to contact Direct Auto to recover our deductible. A representative from Direct Auto told Travelers that (its insured) was not responding to its investigation so no payment would be made. We sent in the requested paperwork and my husband followed up with the representative numerous times with no response.

This accident was in no way our fault or our neighbor’s fault and we have each had to put out money for repairs. Because the parties involved were not cooperating, Direct Auto just leaves it at that? I have filed a complaint against Direct Auto with the Illinois Department of Insurance.

Sandra, Orland Hills

Soon after requesting that Sandra forward me all her claim information and repair estimates, she sent this email: “Initially, when we requested our deductible be reimbursed, Direct Auto told us they would not reimburse. It was only after I filed a complaint with the Illinois Department of Insurance ... that they agreed to settle. However, we will only receive a portion of our deductible as Travelers also takes a percentage, which I think is unfair. Out of $600, we will receive $195.”

First up: the Illinois Department of Insurance. Alissandra Calderon, the Illinois DOI’s public information officer, along with her staff, answered all my questions and provided data on Direct Auto.

Calderon explained, “Insurance regulations require that insurers maintain detailed documentation to permit reconstruction of the company’s claim activities. When an insurer claims noncompliance, DOI requests copies of all notices sent to their insured and any other documentation supporting their claim. DOI also performs market conduct examinations to ensure compliance with insurance laws and regulations related to claims practices.”

As to the topic of market conduct examinations, just such an investigation of Direct Auto was recently concluded, Calderon said.

Per Travelers, $600 was actually the settlement amount it obtained via subrogation from Direct Auto - not a deductible reimbursement.

Because Illinois is a pro rata insurance state, Sandy was awarded 39 percent of the $500, because $600 is 39 percent of the total claim value of $1,520.94. (Got that?) Sandy agreed to accept the settlement rather than take Direct Auto to small claims court.

The examination resulted in an Illinois DOI “stipulation and consent order” (a disciplinary report highlighting non-compliance issues that an insurer agrees to address).

“The department continues to actively monitor (Direct Auto’s) compliance with the order and is engaged in ongoing discussions with the company,” Calderon said.

Send your questions to HelpSquad@pioneerlocal.com.

Cathy Cunningham is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
ROUNDUP | CRIME FICTION

The Widow
By Fiona Barton, New American Library, 324 pages, $26
Riding the streak of humdinger, unreliable-narrated mysteries started by "Gone Girl" and "The Girl on the Train," Fiona Barton's debut, "The Widow," has you right where it wants you from the start. In 2006, in the southern British city of Southampton, a 2-year-old girl left unsupervised outside her home went missing. Four years later, with the case still unsolved, the child porn addict suspected of abducting and likely killing her, Glen Taylor, is struck dead by a bus. When his widow, Jean, hears the footsteps of hotshot newspaper reporter Kate Waters coming up her path, "(h)eavy-footed in high heels," the fun begins. Waters thinks she's in control after sweet-talking the mousy, media-beleaguered Jean and then whisking her off to a posh hotel for an exclusive interview. Fully aware of how she's being used, but happy to be treated to a little luxury after being bottled up in an unhappy marriage, the widow (the book's main narrator) proves anything but easy pickings. D.I. Bob Sparkes also thinks she is holding back. He has determined that Glen, reduced to driving a delivery van after being fired from his bank job, was in the area when baby Bella disappeared. Was the alibi provided by his wife solid? Did he act alone? For all its twists, "The Widow" never loses sight of the dark secrets that define ordinary lives, the gray areas where deception gives way to truth. This is one book in which such subtleties matter as much as the plot.

Even the Dead
By Benjamin Black, Henry Holt, 304 pages, $27
Quirke, the pathologist hero of Benjamin Black's Dublin-set mysteries, is in no shape to take on a new case. His drinking has caused him to experience stretches of not knowing who or where he is, he suffers from depression and he's convalescing from a brain lesion. But when his daughter, Phoebe, tells him of the disappearance of an imperiled pregnant woman she tried to help, he can hardly remain on the sidelines — especially since the woman's story resonates with the supposed suicide of a man authorities say crashed his car into a tree. At the heart of "Even the Dead" is an insidious plot involving the Catholic Church's plot to sell babies to rich American families. With the help of his old sidekick, Inspector Hackett, Quirke is soon face to face with the prime villain. The mystery matters less, however, than the moral vacuum against which the aging Quirke takes a last-ditch stand. Black, the pen name of Booker Award-winning novelist John Banville, never worries about letting the plot against which the aging Quirke takes a last-ditch stand.

NEW IN PAPERBACK

The Monopolists
By Mary Pilon, Bloomsbury USA, 314 pages, $17
Pilon explores the lost history behind the classic board game Monopoly, revealing its true origins compared to the history present by Parker Brothers and others. Pilon looks at the game's original inventor, a forgotten feminist named Lizzie Magie who created the identical but anti-capitalist "Landlord's Game" more than 30 years before Parker Brothers sold their version.

The Doll's House: A Detective Helen Grace Thriller
By M.J. Arlidge, New American Library, 421 pages, $15
The body of a dead woman has been found on a secluded beach. The woman has been dead for years, but why would her family report her missing when she is still sending them text messages? Detective Helen Grace knows the murder is not the work of an amateur and must race to solve the case before the killer can claim another victim.

Our Auntie Rosa
By Sheila McCauley Keys with Eddie B. Allen Jr, TarcherPerigee, 201 pages, $15
The nieces and nephews of Rosa Parks share their memories of the civil rights icon as both a leader in the movement and as a mother figure. "Our Auntie Rosa" shares lessons taught by Parks and her experiences growing up in the segregated South.

Munich Airport: A Novel
By Greg Baxter, Twelve, 271 pages, $14.99
An American man living in London receives a call from Germany informing him his sister, Miriam, has been found dead from starvation in her Berlin apartment. Over the course of three weeks, the man, his father and an American consular official wait for the body, grieve and attempt to share Miriam's suffering.

CHICAGOLAND BEST-SELLERS

3. "The Swans of Fifth Avenue: A Novel" by Melanie Benjamin (Delacorte, $28).
5. "My Brilliant Friend" by Elena Ferrante (Europa Editions, $17).

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), Lake Forest Book Store (Lake Forest).
For Valentine’s Day:
AKA 29 Down

BY S.N. | EDITED BY STANLEY NEWMAN
(stanxwords.com)

**ACROSS**

1. Role model
5. Participated, with “in”
10. 350, in the Forum
14. Disbursed
19. *Jurassic Park* menace
20. Blueblood
21. Starter for sweet
22. Elizabeth I’s house
23. Train puller
25. Evinces vitality
27. The other side
28. Least common base hit
30. Online lingo
31. Downhill transportation
33. Oprah’s network
35. Nintendo systems
36. Props up
40. Zoo features
42. CD predecessors
43. Not-so-gentle menace
44. Physical reprimand
45. Ideal societies
46. Encroach
47. Motel amenity
48. Moore poem VIP
49. Singer Amos
50. Strong cleanser
51. Winter apparel
52. Sources of wisdom
53. Signs of affection
55. Flock loser of rhyme
56. Flock members
57. Denies
58. Saturn’s largest moon
59. On the Road narrator
60. Cost of leaving
61. Spa treatment, for short
62. Large quantities

**DOWN**

1. Just chillin’
2. Canadian singing superstar
3. Long ago
4. Tower (over)
5. Donor of Lennon’s home to the National Trust
6. Ceramic artisans
7. Former Fords, for short
8. First rock star on a US stamp
9. Thought-provoking
10. Narnia creator
11. Encouraging word
12. “Me too!”
13. Equilibrium
14. Inexpensive mags of yore
15. Actress Falco
16. Astronomical body
17. Encroaching
18. Arduous journey
19. Parliament Hill symbol
20. Valentine’s Day First rock star on a US stamp
21. Starter for sweet
22. Elizabeth I’s house
23. Train puller
24. Séance holders
25. Evinces vitality
26. The other side
27. Least common base hit
28. Least common base hit
29. Winter apparel
30. Online lingo
31. Downhill transportation
33. Oprah’s network
35. Nintendo systems
36. Props up
40. Zoo features
42. CD predecessors
43. Not-so-gentle menace
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47. Motel amenity
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56. Flock members
57. Denies
58. Saturn’s largest moon
59. On the Road narrator
60. Cost of leaving
61. Spa treatment, for short
62. Large quantities
Quote-Acrrostic

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 | Words
--- | ---
A. Hair piece: 2 wds. 21 13 1 37 80 141 92 110 123 48 50
B. Day-Lewis' writing implement: 2 wds. 94 47 19 159 4 127 143 29
C. Tree farm: 2 wds. 96 55 133 39 20 63 145 128 78
D. Lost child, often: 2 wds. 96 111 27 68 53 139 17
E. Dapper, sl.: 2 wds. 113 87 82 40 144 58
F. Layered veggie: 2 wds. 77 71 152 114 102
G. Like a glove: 2 wds. 153 110 43 146 73 85 103
H. Struggle: 2 wds. 140 149 26 125
I. Throne: 2 wds. 131 11 28 118 68 81 88 56 150
J. Missed: 2 wds. 99 83 126 36 162 10 112 65 107

K. Din, e.g. 120 98 160 64 79
L. Troops' carrays: 2 wds. 100 90 37 122 25 151
M. Invisible regal duds?: 2 wds. 155 115 32 54 42 59 89 76 9 24 101 109 69 132 142
N. Decay: 2 wds. 75 45 35 61 15 52 97
O. Close summer house windows, say: 158 30 60 90 130 116 51
P. Making pilots: 117 3 129 137 70 106 84
Q. Rut: 2 wds. 62 49 8 156 23 135 44
R. Undecided: 4 wds. 7 46 91 147 154 138 31
S. Vulnerability: 2 wds. 22 124 33 14 104 157 5 38
T. Rich mining guy 136 108 86 121

Musicale

BY CHARLES PRESTON

Across
1. Ben-
4. Spots for struggling artists
11. Some of the IBM line
14. Eight bits
15. Of Aquitaine
16. Modern music style
17. Well/Brecht opus, with The
20. Ten or pen followers
22. Tasty
23. Certain Chopin works
25. Velocity
27. His cookies are famous!
31. Fine fiddle
32. Cornettist Red. Nichols' story
35. Antofagasta announcement
36. Small-stakes school
43. Di Laurentis, and namesakes
44. "...we forget..."
45. Launder
46. Line from Lod
47. - the ocean
49. Violinist Oliveira
51. Suitable
54. Garde starter
55. Somerset Maugham tale, with The
58. Deviate
59. Oyster, for example
60. EC member
61. Functional or peptic beginning
62. Modern sculptor
63. Palm Sunday mount

Down
1. Roastee's place
2. Let go
3. Send a different way
4. Canadian flyers
5. Jungfrau or Eiger
6. Great Barrier, e.g.
7. Pretoria specie
8. Sicilian resort
9. FAO Schwartz product
11. Get ready
12. Roman kindness
13. Dug
14. "... the beginning": Churchill
15. Quebecois
16. London theater or cabbage
17. Musically, this can be heavy
18. Have a view
19. Shiites and Shakers
20. London's of Court
21. Hold up to ridicule
22. Charms
23. Pitcher Ryan
24. Branch or oil
25. Displays
26. Lessees
27. Considered
28. Von
29. Broccoli
30. Selling letters
31. Early college entrance exam.
32. Bathroom wall-covering, often
33. Chill
34. Sweet age, in old Roma?
Cherish the Thought

By Jake Braun

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Nichols Lewis

Across
1 Kitchen qty. 95 "Ingénue's benefactor
5 Band of schemers 98 "Venezuelan wonder
10 Orgs. on 84-Across 102 "... today is better than a
touch 84-Across!"
15 Swerves at sea 89 IRS IDs
19 Swerves at sea 86 Over
20 Pine Tree State 85 Sign of success
campus town 83 Place for pips
21 One who gives you 82 It was orig. the State
chills 78 Some trial evidence
22 Taberna snack 77 Indistinct
23 Hunter's target 74 Intensifies
24 "120-year-old candy 71
Way to the top 67 Vet
27 Put together 66 Methodology word
29 Chicago rumbler 60 Today's honoree,
30 Like a good waiter 58 Butter container
32 Dumas duelist 57 Coop group
33 With 35- and 60- 56 - quandary
Across 32 jumbo baker
35 See 33-Across 31 Consumer
37 Withdrawn 30 I-road?
38 Hurt 29 Covered with
39 Puts on the air 28 Hunter's target
43 Isn't resolved 27 Way to the top
45 Brought to court 26 Put together
46 Dishonesty 25 Hunter's target
48 Cut it out 24 "120-year-old candy
49 St. with both Lewis 23 Hunter's target
and Clark counties 22 Taberna snack
50 Rolls up, as a flag 21 Swerves at sea
51 Covered with spots, in a way 20 Pine Tree State
52 I-road? 19 Swerves at sea
53 Jamie of 18 "120-year-old candy
"M*A*S*H" 17 Swerves at sea
55 Consumer protection org. 16 "120-year-old candy
56 - quandary 15 Swerves at sea
57 Coop group 14 "120-year-old candy
58 Butter container 13 Swerves at sea
60 Today's honoree, nicknames for 12 "120-year-old candy
whom begin the answers to starred clues
66 Methodology word 11 "120-year-old candy
67 Vet 10 "120-year-old candy
70 Runway activity 9 "120-year-old candy
71 Jai alai ball 8 "120-year-old candy
74 Intensifies 7 "120-year-old candy
76 Get up 6 "120-year-old candy
77 Indistinct 5 "120-year-old candy
78 Some trial evidence 4 "120-year-old candy
79 Where she blows 3 "120-year-old candy
81 Sea of France 2 "120-year-old candy
82 It was orig. the State 1 "120-year-old candy
School of Mines and
dMetallurgy
83 Place for pips 28 "Dracula" (1931)
director Browning
84 Sign of success 25 "Inebriate"
anonymous text, as of
86 Over 24 "Drunken"
88 Birth announcement 23 "Inebriate"
words 22 "Drunken"
89 IRS IDs 21 "Drunken"
90 Agree to pay later 20 "Drunken"
93 Code 19 "Drunken"

Down
1 Kind 30 "Drunken"
2 Double-dealer 30 "Drunken"
3 "Offer that can't be refused 30 "Drunken"
4 Motivated, with up 30 "Drunken"
5 Farm houses 30 "Drunken"
6 Shortstop who made his MLB debut at age 18 30 "Drunken"
7 Cause of a start 30 "Drunken"
8 Tiny worker 30 "Drunken"
9 Drop a game 30 "Drunken"
10 Hard-to-beat forsome 30 "Drunken"
11 "Get out of my yard!" 30 "Drunken"
12 Corp. top banana 30 "Drunken"
13 TripAdvisor alternative 30 "Drunken"
14 Snowball impact sound 30 "Drunken"
15 On occasion 30 "Drunken"
16 Innocent 30 "Drunken"
17 Fluctuating 30 "Drunken"
18 Sharp-tasting 30 "Drunken"
19 Informal message for one's 60-Across 30 "Drunken"
20 "Dracula" (1931) director Browning 30 "Drunken"
21 Racetrack edge 30 "Drunken"
22 University of 30 "Drunken"
Cincinnati athlete 30 "Drunken"
23 Month after Av 30 "Drunken"
24 PC time meas. 30 "Drunken"
25 Hunter's target 30 "Drunken"
26 Way to the top 30 "Drunken"
27 Put together 30 "Drunken"
28 Covered with 30 "Drunken"
29 Chicago rumbler 30 "Drunken"
30 Like a good waiter 30 "Drunken"
31 Consumer 30 "Drunken"
32 Jai alai ball 30 "Drunken"
33 With 35- and 60-Across 30 "Drunken"
Dumas duelist 30 "Drunken"
35 With 35- and 60-Across 30 "Drunken"
Dumas duelist 30 "Drunken"
36 Craving 30 "Drunken"
37 Withdrawn 30 "Drunken"
38 Hurt 30 "Drunken"
39 Puts on the air 30 "Drunken"
43 Isn't resolved 30 "Drunken"
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81 Sea of France 30 "Drunken"
82 It was orig. the State 30 "Drunken"
School of Mines and Metalurgy 30 "Drunken"
83 Place for pips 30 "Drunken"
84 Sign of success 30 "Drunken"
86 Over 30 "Drunken"
88 Birth announcement words 30 "Drunken"
89 IRS IDs 30 "Drunken"
90 Agree to pay later 30 "Drunken"
93 Code 30 "Drunken"

Jumble
Unscramble the six Jumbles, one letter per square, to form six words. Then arrange the
circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by this cartoon.

Sudoku
Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box in bold borders contains every
digit 1 to 9.

Level: 1334

PRINT YOUR ANSWER IN THE CIRCLES BELOW

This week's answers appear on the next page

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek. © 2016 Tribune Content Agency, LLC. All rights reserved.
New laws aim to make divorce easier

Most people who have been through a divorce will tell you that the process can be long, and that months or sometimes even years spent in litigation can cause stress, extra tension between the divorcing couple and, of course, huge legal fees.

But new divorce laws, which went into effect last month, aim to lessen the time couples spend in divorce court and make the devastating life change easier.

Michael Ian Bender is a Chicago-based family law attorney and former Cook County judge, who gave me some of the highlights of the new statutes. Here are four changes in Illinois divorce law and the reasoning behind each:

1. **There are no more grounds for divorce, just irreconcilable differences.**

   Bender explained that the former law made it difficult for couples to get divorced before living separately for at least two years. So, in order to shorten that length of time, one or both parties would often allege grounds, such as "extreme physical or mental cruelty," "adultery" or "drug addiction."

   "The other person would get a petition and be shocked because it was so inflammatory," said Bender, who has been a family law attorney for 22 years. "So it immediately started a fight."

   The new law eliminates grounds and only provides for a no-fault divorce based upon "irreconcilable differences." Also, the period of time a couple has to be living apart is now six months.

   "When people are less defensive they can reach an agreement and move on quicker," said Bender. "They're not stuck in the litigation process due to misinterpretation of the other person's intentions."

2. **The term 'custody' is no longer used.**

   The term "custody" in divorce law used to mean the right to make significant decisions for the children, in areas that included health care, education and religion. The new law now calls custody "decision making."

   "People would come to court and say, 'I want full custody' because they were confusing the term with parenting time," Bender said. "The new law is more friendly and understandable to parents as to what those terms mean. And with more understanding comes less stress, anxiety and fear, which leads to more peaceful negotiation."

3. **'Visitation' is now called 'parenting time.'**

   "You don't visit with your child, you parent your child," Bender said. "Who wants to be told you are visiting your own children? The new term is more accurate and less inflammatory."

4. **Relocation just got easier.**

   The old law: a parent could move anywhere in the state of Illinois without court approval, but if he or she wanted to go beyond state lines they had to get court approval — even if they were moving five miles away, but the new home was in Wisconsin, rather than in Illinois.

   The new law states that if the move is 25 miles or less, a parent can move across state lines without seeking court approval.

   What's the benefit? According to Bender, it's protecting children from being taken too far from the other parent while eliminating needless litigation over a benign move.

   Being someone who went through a divorce, I think these new laws make a lot of sense and could make the divorce process smoother, shorter and much less expensive.

   Think about it. If you tell a mom she has "visitation," how does that make her feel? Or how about a dad who gets served divorce papers that include the word adultery on them, when in reality those grounds will make no difference in the outcome of the divorce?

   Divorce litigation is an extremely emotional process, and, sadly, fear, anger, resentment and jealousy often play a part in one or both of the divorcing party's decisions. Not having a full understanding of terminology on legal documents or misinterpreting what court orders mean can only intensify one's already fragile state of mind. That's why these new laws might really make a difference in reducing conflict, thereby shortening the process.

   I do feel the need to express, however, that no matter how hard lawmakers try to simplify and expedite the divorce process, going through a divorce remains brutal. So there's a part of me that feels that whether it's called visitation or parenting time, the bottom line is, divorce means spending less time than you used to with your kids. And no new divorce laws can change that really sad fact.

Jackie Pilossoph is a freelance columnist.
Massage is legitimate therapy for back pain

Dr. Anthony Komaroff says massage therapy is a legitimate way to relieve back pain.

Dr. Anthony Komaroff
Ask Doctor K

Dear Doctor K: My back is always sore. A friend suggested that massage therapy might help. Massages are expensive, so I want to make sure there's some evidence behind this. Is there?

Dear Reader: Massage used to be considered an indulgence. But it's now recognized as a legitimate therapy for some painful conditions — including back pain.

Therapeutic massage may relieve pain in several ways. It may relax painful muscles, tendons and joints, or relieve stress and anxiety. It may even change the way the brain processes pain signals.

Many types of massage are available in the United States, with Swedish massage being the most common. It involves long, gliding strokes and kneading of the major muscle groups, as well as friction, gentle rhythmic slapping and vibration. Other massage techniques include deep-tissue, pressure-point, Thai and neuromuscular massage. (I've put a table describing different types of massage, and what they involve, on my website, AskDoctorK.com.)

Massage therapy can also involve varying degrees of pressure. Massage doesn't have to be painful to be therapeutic, so be sure to tell your therapist what type of touch you prefer (light touch, firm pressure, hard pressure).

Massage should not be the only treatment you use for back pain. Instead, use massage in addition to standard care. That includes taking anti-inflammatory pain relievers, staying active as possible, getting physical therapy and giving your body time to heal. When added to the mix, massage can reduce pain and speed your return to normal activities.

There hasn't been enough research to say for certain what type of massage is best for back pain. We also don't know the optimal “dose” and frequency of treatment.

Talk to people you know to get a recommendation. Good practitioners get good results and generate positive referrals. Find out if a medical center in your area has an alternative or integrative medicine program. Such programs typically offer massage by qualified practitioners: people licensed to practice in your state, and certified by a national organization such as the American Massage Therapy Association (www.amtamassage.org).

When I was just beginning medical practice, I learned a valuable lesson. A woman in her mid-80s told me that she had trouble sleeping. I told her about the various ways to improve her “sleep hygiene,” such as going to bed and getting up at the same time each day, not watching TV while in bed, etc.

When I saw her a few months later, she said a massage therapist had cured her sleep problem — and implied that my advice hadn't done much good. What was keeping her up (as I would have known, had I asked her more questions about her sleep problem) was chronic back pain. That was resolved with massage — and she slept like a baby.

Dr. Komaroff is a physician and professor at Harvard Medical School. To send questions, go to AskDoctorK.com, or write: Ask Doctor K, 10 Shattuck St., Second Floor, Boston, MA 02115.

Garlic takes the bite out of reader’s cold symptoms

By Joe Graedon and Teresa Graedon
King Features Syndicate

Q: I have used garlic for at least 20 years to ward off a cold. It works nine times out of 10 if I use the garlic as soon as the symptoms begin.

Simmering the garlic for 12 to 15 minutes softens the taste and smell so it is no stronger than a cooked onion.

Here’s my current favorite recipe: Pour an 11.5-ounce can of V8 into a saucepan and add half a cup of water. Bring to boil and add six large cloves of fresh garlic, chopped; the juice of one lemon; and as much hot pepper as you can stand. Simmer for 12 to 15 minutes.

I drink half when I make it, half the next day. I know of no other remedy with such an amazing record of preventing a developing cold.

Some people do not tolerate fresh garlic. I have no recipe for garlic pills, but maybe someone can contribute one.

A: Thank you for sharing your recipe.

Many people may find that much fresh garlic challenging, but they don’t have to give up on garlic.

We were fascinated to read an article in the Journal of Nutrition (online, Jan. 13) that reinforces your observations. A University of Florida researcher gave aged garlic extract to 120 volunteers in a randomized controlled trial.

After three months, the volunteers taking the garlic extract had no fewer colds, but their symptoms were less severe, and they missed fewer days of work or school. Two types of immune system cells were activated. The scientist concluded: “(Aged garlic extract) supplementation may enhance immune cell function and may be partly responsible for the reduced severity of colds and flu reported.”

People interested in other remedies may wish to consult our “Guide to Colds, Coughs and the Flu,” at www.peoplespharmacy.com.

Q: Our adopted son, now 11, suffered from severe, often-bleeding eczema for most of his life. A dermatologist suggested using coconut oil topically. After using this daily for three months, the eczema vanished.

We had tried everything for nine years — diet and topical lotions and ointments. She said perhaps his body wasn’t getting some kind of midlevel oil.

His eczema scars also are fading. He used to scratch, scratch, scratch. That is no longer a problem.

A. Eczema (also known as atopic dermatitis) is a chronic skin problem in which the skin becomes inflamed, red and itchy. A rash with liquid-filled blisters sometimes develops.

One study compared virgin coconut oil to mineral oil applied to the skin to treat symptoms of ec-
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A deep red such as cranberry stands out when paired with a contrast color such as a crisp white. When considering colors to pair with red, think about neutral colors that will not conflict, such as black, brown, charcoal gray, white and taupe. Ruby, bright poppy and rich tomato are other shades of red easy to work with in a space.

Accent on red helps perk up your home

By Cathy Hobbs
Tribune News Service

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, you will likely see a lot of red home decor items in retail stores. Red is a strong, bold color that can perk up a space year-round. If you are looking to infuse red into your home decor, now is an ideal time to snag key pieces.

Shades of red
Red comes in all shades and tones, and you don't have to limit yourself to using just one in a space. For example, it's OK to mix tomato red with burgundy in the same space. This technique essentially involves using a tint or shade of a dominant color. In home decor, some of the easiest shades of red to work with in a space are ruby red, bright poppy and rich tomato. These shades of red can serve as ideal pops of color.

How to use red
Red, like other bold accent colors, can be used in virtually any room, but be sure to use the color purposefully in order to not overdo it. Some of the best ways to bring red into the home are through bold, bright pops of color used in deliberate and thoughtful ways. Incorporating small yet impactful red accents could be achieved through the use of pieces such as chairs, artwork, toss pillows and area rugs. These types of accent pieces will allow you to bring the color red into your space, while still allowing versatility should you choose to swap in another accent in the future.

Color pairings
Looking to purchase red accent pieces for your home? Why not start out small with toss pillows, lamps or signature art pieces? The use of a bold accent color will not only make a statement and add interest but could also serve as the springboard for the rest of the color story around your space. When looking for colors to pair with red, consider neutral colors that will not conflict, such as black, brown, charcoal gray, white and taupe.

The use of artwork with red accents provides color in this master bedroom. Chairs, toss pillows and area rugs are among other ways to incorporate shades of red in your decor.
DREAM HOME

At press time, this home was still for sale.

French provincial estate in Winnetka: $1.695M

ADDRESS: 1144 Tower Rd. in Winnetka
ASKING PRICE: $1,695,000
Listed on Jan. 28, 2016
A two-story foyer with bridal staircase welcomes guests into this five-bedroom home. First-floor features include a living room with coffered ceiling, kitchen with light cabinetry and top appliances and a family room with French doors that lead to the stone terrace. A library with built-ins provides a private study. On the second floor, the master suite with deck boasts of two walk-in closets and a spa bath. The lower level with radiant heat has a recreation room, fireplace, theater, exercise room, fifth bedroom, full bath, additional laundry and storage. In the heart of Hubbard Woods, near town, train and schools.
Agent: Sherry Molitor of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices KoenigRubloff, 847-441-6300

At press time, this home was still for sale.

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Laura Doherty debuts songs from her new album at the Park Ridge Public Library.

**FAMILY FRIENDLY**

Laura Doherty performs new songs at concert

**BY MYRNA PETLICKI**

*Pioneer Press*

Families will get a sneak preview of the latest album by popular children's entertainer Laura Doherty during a Winter Kids' Concert, 11-11:45 a.m. Feb. 20 at Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave.

“I have a new CD coming out in April called, ‘Animal Tracks,’” Doherty said. “It’s a collection of my animal songs plus three brand new songs.” Selections include, “Early Bird and Night Owl,” “I’m a Turtle” and “Animal Tracks.”

The songwriter/singer/musician will also perform songs from her three earlier CDs.

Audience members will have something to do during each song. In addition, Doherty said, “I use a few puppets in my show and I’ll have a child or two come up and do the puppets.”

Doherty enjoys performing family shows because, “I love that kids are so spontaneous and they love music and they love to move and dance and sing.”

Registration is required.

Non-Park Ridge Library cardholders must pay $3 per person.

For details, call 847-825-3123 or go to www.parkridglibrary.org.

**Kids auto love this**

Children ages 2-5, with a parent or caregiver, will create a cardboard car, then watch an animated film at “Coupes and Comedy: Indoor Drive-in Theater,” 10 a.m.-noon Feb. 26 at Lincolnwood Community Center, 6900 N. Lincoln Ave. Kids should bring a “seat cushion” for their car. Registration is required.

For details, call 847-673-1540 or go to www.lincolnwoodlibrary.org.

**Families that play together**

...will enjoy doing that at T.G.I.F. Family Night, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Feb. 19 in the Dance Studio and Gymnasium at Prairie View Community Center, 6834 Dempster St., Morton Grove. There will be entertainment, a tot play area, sports and other activities.

Parents must accompany kids. The cost is $3 per child and parents.

For details, call 847-965-1200 or go to www.mortongroveparks.com.

**Hoppy talk**

Beatrix Potter's bunny book will be read during a storytime featuring, “The Classic Tale of Peter Rabbit: And Other Cherished Stories,” 11 a.m. Feb. 20 at Barnes and Noble, 55 Old Orchard Center, Skokie. There will also be related activities.

For details, call 847-676-2230 or go to www.barnesandnoble.com.

**All about Alice**

Ballet, tap, jazz, modern and percussive dance styles will be used to tell the tale of “Alice in Wonderland” when the Evanston Dance Ensemble previews its upcoming production, 3-4 p.m. Feb. 21 in the Petry Auditorium at Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St.

For details, call 847-673-7774 or go to www.skokielibrary.info.
Writers Theatre Center opens in Glencoe

The Event: On Feb. 8, the whole Writers Theatre community - from the founders to the donors to the actors and core supporters - came home. Their new theater center was christened by 255 guests who came to Glencoe to celebrate and rejoice at the achievement that was 23 years in the making.

"I feel very blessed to be a part of this theater," said Alexandra Nichols of Winnetka. Support from her and her husband, John, along with that of five other families, paved the way to the creation of the Alexandra C. & John D. Nichols Theatre in the new building.

Created by Jeanne Gang and Studio Gang Architects, Writers' new home was constructed as it was envisioned: a seamless blending into the wooded, picturesque town of Glencoe that surrounds it. The new acoustically perfect Nichols Theatre seats 250, and a smaller flexible space, the Gillian Theatre, seating 50-99, that honors Writers original 50-seat book store space.

Cause Celebre: "My heart is so full and so grateful," said Michael Halberstam of Rogers Park, founder and artistic director.

Halberstam's vision was to create a theater that would focus on the written word. "We try to strip away what we consider the unessential (to) remove distraction," explained Halberstam.

"This theater will be a big game-changer for the North Shore," said Mary Pat Studdert of Wilmette, Steering Committee North Shore co-chairman. She was part of a team of three, including Glencoe and Chicago chair teams, tasked with a 34-million campaign goal.

The new building also includes a spacious atrium with seating for educational events, a gallery walk and a rehearsal room.

"Isn't it terrific to be able to have something like this on the North Shore of Chicago?" asked Donna LaPietra of Mettawa.

"It's going to bring artistic excellence in theatrical productions for years to come," said Nichols.

See writerstheatre.org

We want to publish your photos. To submit, visit http://community.chicagotribune.com or email sburrows@pioneerlocal.com.
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<td>319 Custer Ave, # 3E, Evanston</td>
<td>Tiberiu Hord</td>
<td>Brendan T Friedman</td>
<td>01-14-16</td>
<td>$155,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 Chicago Ave, # 300, Evanston</td>
<td>JLI</td>
<td>Victor Fong</td>
<td>01-15-16</td>
<td>$165,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2312 Bradely Pl, Evanston</td>
<td>Adam Lelong &amp; Malak L Ebin</td>
<td>Mary Juanita Wilkerson</td>
<td>01-12-16</td>
<td>$170,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list is not intended to be a complete record of all real estate transactions.

Data compiled by Record Information Services U 630-557-1000 U public-recordcom
Evanston

- Three-bedroom, 2.5-bath center entry
- Colonial. Oak floors and neutral decor
- throughout. Formal living room, wood-
- burning fireplace, built-in bookcases, duet
- blinds. Paneled den with built-in cabinet/
- bookcases and plantation blinds, access to
- rear patio. Galley kitchen with maple
- Amish cabinets up to ceiling. Door to
- backyard and patio.

Address: 2519 Ridgeway Ave.
Price: $669,000
Schools: Evanston Township High
Taxes: $12,398
Agent: Julie McWilliams, Berkshire
Hathaway HomeServices KoenigRubloff
Realty Group

Palatine

- Two-story family room offers custom,
- two-story stone fireplace & opens to
- kitchen. Updated gourmet kitchen fea-
- tures cherry cabinets, granite counters,
- tile splash, two islands & newer applian-
- ces. First-floor office/5th bedroom & full
- bath. Expanded, 7-foot, 3-car garage
- perfect for larger cars and toys. Bus stop
- nearby.

Address: 5512 Highland Drive
Price: $709,900
Schools: Fremd High School
Taxes: $16,293
Agent: Ann Baker, Coldwell Banker
Residential Brokerage The Groves

Lake Bluff

- Updated vintage classic meticulously
- maintained. Close to town, lake and train.
- Kitchen opens to family room with stain-
- less steel appliances. Hardwood floors on
- the first floor. Fresh, neutral painted
- interior. Spacious master bedroom with
- spa bathroom and sitting room. Dual
- vanity in second full bath upstairs. At-
- tached two-car garage.

Address: 548 E. Scranton Ave.
Price: $798,000
Schools: Lake Forest High School
Address: 548 E. Scranton Ave.
Price: $798,000
Schools: Lake Forest High School
Taxes: $14,654.66
Agent: Chris Weigren, CENTURY 21
Kreuser & Sell

Skokie

- 2,300-square-foot brick home located in
- the Devonshire. This recently remodeled
- home features four bedrooms, 2.5 bath-
- rooms, two family rooms and an expan-
- sive backyard. Hardwood floors through-
- out, maple kitchen and granite counters
- with stainless steel appliances.

Address: 4308 Davis St.
Price: $475,000
Schools: Niles North High School
Taxes: $9,924
Agent: Rose Alvarez, Berkshire Hathaw-
- way HomeServices KoenigRubloff Realty
- Group

Listings from Homefinder.com
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Thursday, Feb. 18

Marnie & Phil: A Circus Love Letter: Through the spectacular circus wizardry of The Actors Gymnasium, "Marnie & Phil: A Circus Love Letter," tells a time-spanning, multi-generational story by Phil. A Circus Love Letter," tells a story. He closely examines the role of Woodward and Bernstein’s efforts to uncover the truth as told in two films: All the President’s Men and The Final Days. The films Nixon & Dick are also discussed.

The Things We Keep: The Arc presents a family drama about an artist in the process of cleaning out her attic at the end of her life and her family's return home to settle the estate.

Hot Ticket: Sicario: This movie is about an idealistic FBI agent who is enlisted by a government task force in an effort to aid in the escalating war against drugs at the border area between the U.S. and Mexico. 2 p.m. Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-365-4220

Wonder Ground Open Lab: Look, touch, and play with an intriguing array of science-oriented curiosities in this new space designed especially for kids. The Wonder Ground is a STEAM playground for kids.

Reading with Rover: These friendly dogs are great listeners, always positive and always fun to cuddle with and read out loud to. This is for beginners to advanced readers to be in the room without parents (for grades kindergarten and up). 7 p.m. Thursday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Neighbor Time: Join us as we visit everyone's favorite neighbor. We'll watch, play, talk and sing in the style of this classic children's show.

Digital demos in the lobby: Explore the library's digital movie, TV program, music, e-book, audiobook and magazine collections. Learn how to download items to your portable device using Hoopla, MyMediaMall and Zimio. 9 a.m. Thursday and Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Art in the Library Exhibit Opens: The Call of the Shore: Artist Cherrie Platt creates water colors of the sea, sound of the waves on a sultry summer day.

Between the Lines: The Book of Unknown Americans: This book by Cristina Henriquez is about the Rivera family who move from Mexico to the United States when their daughter suffers a near-fatal accident. 10 a.m. Thursday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Wee play: Enjoy music, rhymes, giles and books for caregivers and baby. 10 a.m. Thursday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Tal Chi: Practice the ancient, healing art of Tai Chi, which is the practice of controlled, relaxed body movements. 9 a.m. Thursday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $75 NSSC members; $89 non-member, 847-784-8030

How Social Media Is Transforming Our Democracy: Julie Strauss, Ph.D., explores how candidates are harnessing the power of social media to bolster their campaigns. How voters are influencing the campaigns through social media outlets. 10 a.m. Thursday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $10 NSSC members, $13 nonmembers, 847-784-6030

Watergate: Watergate was the largest and most frightening presidential scandal Americans had ever faced. In this two-part presentation, Barry will look at the roots of the crime and the desperate attempts of the Nixon Administration to cover it up, all of which were unraveled by journalists, a judge, and Congress. He closely examines the role of Woodward and Bernstein’s efforts to uncover the truth as told in two films: All the President’s Men and The Final Days. The films Nixon & Dick are also discussed.

Friday, Feb. 19

Chicago Doo Wop Dreams: Music, Chicago, Live brings their hit show 'Chicago Doo Wop Dreams' to the historic Leela Arts Center.

Rock and Roll Kidz with Wendy Morgan: Kids sing, wiggle, jump, dance and have a great time with Wendy's original songs that encourage children to learn about their imaginations and teach musical basics.

The Freeze Basic Skills Figure Skating Competition: Take a break from the cold and watch the skating stars of tomorrow at this United States Figure Skating sanctioned competition which draws more than 180 participants across the Midwest and beyond.

Fancy Free Holidays: Elizabeth Killings of Fancy Free Travel will present an overview of the upcoming trips.

The Franklin Expedition: Tragedy in Ice: Of all the attempts to locate the Northwest Passage, none captured the imagination of a nation like the lost Franklin expedition. Departing to accommodate, the tragedy that followed initially disappointed a nation. Examine the fate of the Franklin Expedition by focusing on the events of the ill-fated voyage along with more recent discoveries and theories.

Park Ridge Fly Tying Club Meetings: Demonstrations of fly tying are performed by an experienced demonstrator. The members have an opportunity to tie the same pattern using tools and materials provided by the club.

Family Storytime for All Ages: Offers stories and crafts for the whole family.

Meeting of the MINECRAFTers For grades 4-8: Building, craft, mine, farm, and explore the expansive world of MINECRAFT. Come with your favorite servers, your own account, or play on one of the Library's. No Griefers. 6 p.m. Friday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Android Photography: Do you know all the capabilities of your device's camera? Learn how to take, edit and share photos with your Android phone or tablet. 2 p.m. Friday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Rise and Shine Storytime: Children are welcome to drop in for a 30-minute story time. The children and their caregivers listen to stories, share in some songs and get out some wiggles.

Turn to Calendar, Next Page
To Place An Ad
Online go to:

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### Calendar

**Gentle Yoga:** 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 on the floor. 9:30 and 11 a.m. Friday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-727-6224.

**Shabbat with a Twist:** Challah making, stories and songs with clergy for families with preschool age children. All are welcome. 11 a.m. Friday, Congregation Beth Shalom, 3433 Walters Ave., Northbrook, free, 847-498-4100.

**Israei Art Show and Sale at Temple Beth-El:** All are invited to enjoy this Israeli Art Show and Sale. This event is open to the community. 9 a.m. Friday and Sunday; 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Temple Beth-El, 3610 Dundee Road, Northbrook, free, 847-945-6830.

**More of a Loesser:** Frank Loesser was no one-trick pony. Besides the immortal Guys and Dolls, Loesser wrote the scores for several other successful musicals including "Where’s Charley?," "The Most Happy Fella" and "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," as well as a number of hit songs in his earlier life as a Hollywood lyricist. Turn to Calendar, Next Page.

**Polyglots Toastmasters meeting:** Polyglots is the only Toastmasters International Club in the United States that conducts its meetings in German. If you speak German or want to keep it fresh, come, it is an open club for all levels and ages. 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Des Plaines Public Library, 1501 Ellinwood St., Des Plaines, free, 847-527-5551.

**Great Decisions in Foreign Policy:** Gary Midkiff facilitates this discussion group that meets every other week to explore in-depth the topics featured in the year’s 2016 Great Decisions Briefing Book, including the Middle East, the rise of ISIS, the future of Kurdistan, migration, the Koreas, the United Nations, climate change and Cuba and the United States. 10 a.m. Friday, North Shore Senior Center, 101 Northfield Road, Northfield, $12 in advance, $15 at the door, 847-298-3950.

**Vincent van Gogh in Arles:** This spring, the Art Institute of Chicago hosts an exhibition of all three versions of The Bedroom by Vincent van Gogh. The show will reunite the Art Institute version with the two other versions of Van Gogh’s beloved painting for the first time in 126 years. Art historian Jeff Mishur will examine these works and others the artist produced while living in Arles, France. Vincent’s prolific and intense Arles Period resulted in some of his greatest and most famous paintings. 1 p.m. Friday, North Shore Senior Center, 101 Northfield Road, Northfield, $10 NSSC member, $15 non-member, 847-784-6030.

**Overeaters Anonymous:** Newcomer meeting on the last Saturday of the month. 9:30 a.m. at the National Club in the United States that conducts its meetings in German. If you speak German or want to keep it fresh, come, it is an open club for all levels and ages. 9:30 a.m. Saturday, St. Matthews Episcopal Church, 2120 Lincoln St., Evanston, free, 773-996-0609.

**Animal Arts and Seasonal Stories:** "Animal Arts & Seasonal Stories," are recommended for children ages 5 and up. Activities are offered at varying levels of difficulty and interest to engage the entire family. An adult must accompany participants. 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Saturday, Mitchell Museum of the American Indian, 3001 Central St., Evanston, $3 kids, $5 adults, 847-475-1030.

**Russian Storytime with Miss Vlada:** Kids ages 3 and older can drop in to hear Miss Vlada share stories in Russian and make a craft. 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

**Service Buddies: Project Buddy Bags for grades 1-8:** Students in 5th through 8th grades assist children in their daily lives. 4th grades with a service project to support the Glenview Fire Department. Service Buddies decorate canvas backpacks and fill them with items to comfort and calm children during emergencies. 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

**Glenview Resident Open House:** This drop-in event is for new and established residents includes refreshments, visits with police, firefighters and dispatchers. Learn more about the Village, service and community organizations. 9 a.m. Saturday, Glenview Park Center, 2400 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, free, 847-724-5670.

**Restoration Work Day:** Help Air Station Prairie's restoration team remove invasive plants to make way for native prairie grasses. Seasonal activities include brush cutting, weed removal and seed collection. Bring work gloves if you have them. 9 a.m. Saturday, Kent Fuller Air Station Prairie/The Tyner Center, 2400 Compass Road, Glenview, free, 847-299-6096.

**Special Event - Miss Jamie’s Farm for ages birth-6:** Wake up your weekend with Miss Jamie, as she and her puppet friends from the farm take the audience on a magical barnyard adventure. A sing-along, dance-along show that’s fun for kids and grown-ups alike. 10:30 a.m. Saturday, The Book Market at Hangar One, 2651 Navy Blvd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

**Practice ACT:** Prepare for the ACT with a free full-length practice test proctored by Kaplan. 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234.

**Fandom Club:** Anime and Manga Club has expanded to include all fandoms. Gather with fellow fans to discuss your pop culture favorites, make fan art and eat themed food. 2 p.m. Saturday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234.

**Say Hello to Raspberry Pi:** Come in to see a small credit-card sized computer that is capable of doing things you would never expect of a desktop computer. Raspberry Pi has been used to create a working robot to control a home thermostat. 10 a.m. Saturday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-272-6224.

**Magic Matt Family Fun Show:** This show is for the whole family, as children clap their hands, wiggle their fingers and shout out the magic words, to help throughout the show to make the magic happen. 10 a.m. Saturday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224.

**Junie B. Jones:** Adapted from a series of popular books, "Junie B. Jones, The Musical" brings a precocious first-grader to life. The musical takes a hilarious look at growing up. 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday, Northbrook Theatre, 3323 Walters Ave., Northbrook, $10-$12, 847-291-3098.

**Actors Training Center Hosts Auditions for BIG musical:** The Summer Musical Theatre Intensive is casting students entering 7th-12th grades for BIG: The Musical. 1 p.m. Saturday, Actors Training Center, 1122 Central Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-251-8710.

**Sunday, Feb. 21**

The Joyful Ringers 30th Anniversary Celebration Concert: The Simple Gifts Concert Series of the Glenview Community Church presents The Joyful Ringers 30th Anniversary Celebration Concert directed by Gary Wendt, Minister for Music. 3 p.m. Sunday, Glenview Community Church, 1000 Elm St., Glenview, Free. Turn to Calendar, Next Page.
CALENDAR

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Lincolnwood Chamber Orchestra concert: 3 p.m. Sunday, Lincolnwood Community Center, 6900 N. Lincoln Ave, Lincolnwood, free

Shakespeare Project of Chicago: 50 Minute Hamlet: Utilizing just two actors, this 50-Minute Hamlet, adapted by Jeff Christian, presents Shakespeare's most enduring tragedy. It contains many of The Bard's most famous lines and speeches while retaining much of his saga's pathos, poetry and passion. 2 p.m. Sunday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave, Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

St. John Brebeuf Do-It-Yourself Messiah Concert: The Musica Lumina 2015-16 concert series continues with this commemorative concert given in honor of the legacy of the Rev. Stanley Rudcki, the former chair of the Niles College Department of Fine Arts, who founded the Niles Concert Choir and the Niles Symphony Orchestra in the 1960s. The Avanti Guitar Trio performs. 3 p.m. Sunday, St. John Brebeuf Parish Church, 8307 N. Harlem Ave., Niles, free, 847-966-6145

Academy Awards film discussion: Join independent filmmaker Reid Schultz for his 24th annual pre-Oscar short film discussion. 2 p.m. Sunday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Concerts on 3 - GSO Ensembles: The library's annual winter concert series returns. Enjoy a relaxed concert setting with a spectacular view from the third floor. GSO Ensembles perform works by Mozart, Brahms. 2 p.m. Sunday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Meet the Curator and Children of Olympians: Olympian Jesse Owens' daughter, Marlene Owens Rankin and Olympian Ralph H. Metcalfe's son, Ralph H. Metcalfe, join in a moderated discussion about the legacy of their Olympian parents. Exhibition Curator Susan Bachrach, United States Olympic Museum, discusses themes of the exhibition. 2 p.m. Sunday, Illinois Holocaust Memorial Museum, 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie, $0-12, free with Museum Admission, 847-967-4800

Monday, Feb. 22

Book Babies: Songs, games, story time and free play for babies ages 2 and younger with a caregiver. 10:15 a.m. Monday, Evanston Public Library - North Branch, 2026 Central Street, Evanston, free, 847-448-6000

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

hoopla, MyMediaMall and Zinio individual appointments: Meet with trained library staff for a 45-minute one-on-one session and learn how to download e-books, audiobooks, magazines, movies, TV shows or music to your portable device. 10 a.m. Monday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

French Alliance of North Shore Aperitif: Meet fellow Francophones for mid-evening conversation, in French. Facilitated by one or more native-speaking or fluent-speaking AFDuNS members. 7 p.m. Monday, Glenview Grind, 989 Waukegan Road, Glenview, free, 847-328-9516

Knitting Roundtables: Work through projects and socialize with fellow knitters. Expert knitters can show you how to solve knitting challenges. Don't forget your current knitting projects and needles. 2 p.m. Monday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave, Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

MGPL Kids: Monday Morning Playgroup: Drop-in play time for preschoolers with a parent or caregiver to introduce young children to the library in a low-key, unstructured session. 10:30 a.m. Monday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave, Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Yarn Gang: Kids in grades one and up are invited to try their hand at knitting, crocheting or other yarn crafts. 4 p.m. Monday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave, Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Babytme Storytime: Drop in for the library's year-round short program of stories, songs and rhymes. This is followed by playtime for birth through two years old with an adult. 11 a.m. Monday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St, Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Lego Club: For students in K-8th grade to join in this club to create masterpieces at this new Lego Club. No registration is necessary. 4:30 p.m. Monday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St, Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Homework Help: The library hosts area high school students to offer a little homework help Monday nights. Enthusiastic teens are available to help kindergartners through fifth graders work on their weekly homework assignments. 6:30 p.m. Monday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St, Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Cardio Rhythm Plus: Get your heart rate up with this fun aerobic exercise class. A variety of exercises are used to increase muscular strength, range of motion, balance and coordination. Upper body strengthening exercises use hand held weights and elastic tubing. 2:15 a.m. Monday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $69 NSCC member, $79 non-member, 847-784-6000

It is not Over 'Til the Fat Lady Sings Great Opera: Through lecture, listening, and video examples, Michael Vaughan will examine several of the most dramatic finales in the operatic repertoire. 10 a.m. Monday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $19 NSCC member, $39 nonmember, 847-784-6303

STAR Art Workshop: Instructor Rae Penzin teaches all ability levels in acrylics. Advance registration required. 1:30 p.m. Monday, Park Ridge Park District Center for the Arts, 100 S. Western Ave., Park Ridge, $64 member, $74 guest, 847-692-3597

Great Decisions Foreign Policy Discussion Group: Join in watching a short video and then discussing the corresponding articles from the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions booklet. Participants need not attend all sessions. Please register online. 1 p.m. Monday, Winnetka Public Library, 768 Oak St, Winnetka, free, 847-446-7220

Tuesday, Feb. 23

Ratry Club of Evanston Light-house: This community leadership group hosts 80 members. 7:15 a.m. Tuesday, Hilton Garden Inn Chicago North Shore/Evanston, 1818 Maple Ave., Evanston, free

Supervision Group: Chicagoland's credentialed music therapists are invited to this networking event. 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dempster Street Theatre, 2008 Dempster St, Evanston, free, 847-448-8337

Irish music session: Enjoy Irish music every Tuesday evening. 7 p.m. Tuesday, The Celtic Knot Public House, 626 Church St, Evanston, free, 847-864-1679

Tuesday Morning Music: Garden visitors can enjoy free hour-long meditative musical performances on Tuesdays mornings in the McGlinn Pavilion overlooking Evening Island. Music varies from string quartet to Native American flutes and are focused toward an older crowd. 10 a.m. Tuesday, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoo, free, 847-835-5440

Historical newspapers: Learn how to find and search historical newspapers in your genealogy research and discover why they are an important resource. 10 a.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

CJE senior life counseling: Do you have questions about retirement and health insurance options? CJE Senior Life resources specialists provide 30-minute counseling sessions to adults 60 and over. 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Movies, Munchies, & More: Film: Everest: A climbing expedition on Mt. Everest is devastated by a severe snowstorm. Cast: Jason Clarke, Ang Phula Sherpa. 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave, Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Intro to iMovie: Learn the basics of video editing with Apple's iMovie. Topics covered include importing media, editing and saving your work on multiple formats. 7 p.m. Tuesday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St, Niles, free, 847-663-1234

2015 In Movies with Oscar Preview: The library's very own librarian, Cecilia, reviews the best and the worst of Hollywood in 2015. Join in this great opportunity to chat about movies and meet some fellow film lovers. 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St, Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Mozart's Requiem: Niles Metro Chorus performs Mozart's Requiem this spring. New singers are welcome. Rehearsals are weekly. 7 p.m. Tuesday, St. John Brebeuf Parish Church, 8307 N. Harlem Ave., Niles, free, 702-806-8421

Glenbrook North Band Concert: The Glenbrook North Band offers this free and open-to-the-public concert. Come enjoy the sounds of the Freshman Band, Symphonic Band and Symphonic Wind Ensemble under the direction of Rich Chapman and Mark Running. The concert features traditional band literature, marches, Latin music and movie music. 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sheely Center for the Performing Arts, 2300 Sherman Road, Northbrook, free, 847-412-0210

Villa Venice Luncheon: Adults can enjoy an Italian meal and listen to music from the Band Villa Venice at the Villa Venice Luncheon with the Northbrook Park District. 12:30 a.m. Tuesday, Northbrook Park District Leisure Center, 3323 Walters Ave., Northbrook, $15 for Northbrook Senior Center members, $25 for nonmembers, 847-291-2988

Turn to Calendars, Next Page
Life Transitions Group: A support group for men and women who have been widowed for one to four years. 7 p.m. Tuesday, Park Ridge Nonprofit Center, 720 Garden St., Park Ridge, $5 per session, 847-720-4170

Wednesday, Feb. 24

**Live Music Wednesdays with the Josh Rzepka Trio:** Hear the music of Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk and other classics of the era played by the Josh Rzepka Bebop Trio. 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Found Kitchen & Social House, 1631 Chicago Ave., Evanston, free, 847-868-8945

**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

**YMCA Preschool Art Classes for ages 3-5 with an adult:** The North Suburban YMCA Art Academy provides opportunities for preschoolers to create art. However, a parent or caregiver must be present. 10 a.m. Wednesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

**Toddler Time:** Stories, songs and rhymes for children with an adult caregiver. 10 a.m. Wednesday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

**Hands-on Tech with Makey Makey:** A Makey Makey is a gadget that lets you control a computer with everyday stuff, all by completing a circuit. Turn bananas into piano keys or turn tinfoil and toilet paper tubes into mini drums. 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

**3D Design with TinkerCAD:** Learn how to use TinkerCAD to design a 3D object. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

**Big Kid Storytime:** Kids age 4-kindergarten are invited to a series of one-hour storytimes that include songs, creative dramatics, stories and other fun activities. 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

**Chess Club:** Whether you’re a skilled player looking for a challenge or a beginner interested in learning new skills, all are welcome. Chess sets and clocks provided. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

**Knitting Studio and Workshop:** Certified Knitting Instructor Mary Staackmann provides personalized instruction, answers any questions about knitting, and perhaps gets you started on a new project. Bring your supplies or project in progress. Brush up on your skills, learn new techniques, or just spend an afternoon knitting with others. 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Evanston, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, free, 847-784-6060

**Chess Club:** Whether you’re a skilled player looking for a challenge or a beginner interested in learning new skills, all are welcome. Chess sets and clocks provided. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

**Knitting Studio and Workshop:** Certified Knitting Instructor Mary Staackmann provides personalized instruction, answers any questions about knitting, and perhaps gets you started on a new project. Bring your supplies or project in progress. Brush up on your skills, learn new techniques, or just spend an afternoon knitting with others. 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-784-6060

**Senior High Youth Group:** For all youth grades 9 to 12 to enjoy fun and friendship while engaging in meaningful discussions and service learning opportunities. The evening starts with a tasty dinner: sometimes chicken, sometimes pasta or pizza. 6:45 p.m. Wednesday, First Congregational Church of Wilmette, 1125 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-251-6660

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**Moving, an Important Play**

- **Chicago Tribune:** "Stunning, Powerful and Heartbreaking"
- **Chicago Reader:** "Sensitive, Heartfelt"

**Mothers & Sons**

BY TERRENCE McNALLY

DIRECTED BY STEVE SCOTT

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FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN SKOKIE

**Chicago Revealed!**

Thodos Dance Chicago

Sat, Feb 20 at 7:30pm

**The Celtic Tenors**

 Fri, Feb 26 at 8pm

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**Al Jarreau**

Wed, Mar 02 at 7:30pm

**Sandra Bernhard**

Is #blessed

Thu, Mar 10 at 7:30pm

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**NorthShoreCenter.org**

**Robins Family Foundation**

**The Center**

North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie
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Now playing

“Kung Fu Panda 3” ★★★☆
PG, 1:35, animated
A third installment in a franchise isn't always great. But sometimes, it can be a comforting guarantee of a good time at the movies, as is the case with “Kung Fu Panda 3.” The first two installments have been met with rapturous reception and box-office success, and this one will no doubt follow in their footsteps. Roly-poly goofy panda and Dragon Warrior, Po (Jack Black) is being promoted to kung fu teacher by his master, Shifu (Dustin Hoffman). With a star-studded voice cast, there’s no shortage of humor, but the animation is the real standout in this film. — Katie Walsh

“Hail, Caesar!” ★★★
PG-13, 1:40, comedy
With any sort of comedy set in Old Hollywood, the characters' names become weirdly important because, well... they just are. In “Hail, Caesar!” there’s a smooth British director by the name of Laurence Laurentz, whose trademark billing is “Laurence Laurentz presents.” Dueling Hedda Hopper-brand gossip columnists, who happen to be identical twin sisters, go by Thora Tacker and Thessaly Tacker. These details, like the perfect, vaguely threatening hats those last two wear, kept me smiling through much of “Hail, Caesar!” But it isn’t a laffer, in the parlance of Daily Variety. It’s a grinner at best, and the jokes are surprisingly meager. — Michael Phillips

“The Revenant” ★★★
R, 2:36, drama
The gorgeously brutal first hour of “The Revenant” marks the peak of director Alejandro G. Inarritu's glittering if not quite golden career. For a while his new movie's really something. Then, as Leonardo DiCaprio crawls across miles and miles of mighty pretty scenery filmed in Canada, Montana and Argentina, gradually it turns into not much of anything. “The Revenant” recounts Glass' tortures of the damned. DiCaprio's very good. You believe his character's suffering. There's not much more to Glass. — M.P

“Star Wars: The Force Awakens” ★★★
PG-13, 2:16, fantasy
So: Where were we? Let's skip past the prequel trilogy “The Phantom Menace,” “Attack of the Clones” and “Revenge of the Sith,” apparently written and directed by droids. In chronological story terms we last saw Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, princess-turned-queen Leia, Chewbacca, R2-D2 and C-3PO whooping it up at the Ewok luau back in 1983, in “Return of the Jedi,” celebrating the massive global popularity and merchandising sales of George Lucas’ bright idea. The idea was simple, and quaintly retro: The world, Lucas figured, might enjoy a whiz-bang riff on the old “Flash Gordon” serials. Now, minus the Ewoks, the gang's back. And it is good. Not great. — M.P

“The Choice” ★★
PG-13, 1:50, drama
The attributes of “The Choice,” the latest book-turned-film from author Nicholas Sparks, are also the hallmarks of almost every other movie based on the best-selling writer's romance novels. (See: “The Notebook,” “A Walk to Remember,” etc., etc.) “The Choice” is nothing if not consistent, following the well-worn footsteps of its predecessors. The film tells the complicated love story of Travis (Benjamin Walker), a smooth-talking veterinarian used to getting his way, and Gabby (Teresa Palmer), an uptight, career-focused medical student. Once again, Sparks delivers the goods to his waiting fans. — Caitlin Moore
Death Notices

We extend our condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have passed.

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Death Notices

Ballogg, Evelyn

Sign Guestbook at chicagotribune.com/obituaries

Sayre, Ruthann Hermanson
Ruthann Hermanson Sayre, 92, passed away peacefully Tuesday, February 9, 2016, at The Moorings in Arlington Heights, IL. She was born January 15, 1924 in Ruthven, Iowa. Ruthann attended Waldorf College and the University of Northern Iowa, earning a degree in Education. She also earned a Master's degree in Sociology from National Louis University. Ruthann dedicated more than 35 years to teaching and over 60 years to the P.E.O. Sisterhood (a Philanthropic Educational Organization). She is fondly remembered for her "graciousness," "smiles" and "positive outlook on life." Ruthann met her husband, William Buxton Sayre, on a high school trip they took to New York City for 4-H Leaders of America. After WWII, they married in 1947 and lived in Indiana, Iowa where they managed a family farm. In 1964, they moved to Wilmette, IL where William pursued a career in banking and Ruthann continued teaching. Both retired in 1985 and moved to Palm Springs, CA, returning to Park Ridge in 1996. They spent their remaining precious years at The Moorings of Arlington Heights where they shared many fond memories with dear friends and caring staff. Ruthann is preceded by her husband, William (April 2011), and survived by her children: Bill (Sandra) of Bristol, VT, Ann of Skokie, IL, Mary of Park Ridge, IL, and Elizabeth (Brian) of Chicago, IL; 6 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren; her brother Andrew (Elaine) Hermanson and many cousins, nieces and nephews. Services will be 11 am on Saturday, March 19, 2016 at The Moorings Harbor Room, 811 E. Central Rd., Arlington Heights, IL 60005. Memorial contributions may be made to the Geneva Foundation, specifying the "Moorings Memorial Fund" at the same address. There will be a private family interment at the Town of Maine Cemetery in Park Ridge. Arrangements by Friedrichs Funeral Home. Funeral Info call 847-285-7800 or friedrichsfh.com

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Chicago Tribune

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Fear of long-term auto loans

Experts warn against trend, say loose credit could backfire

BY RICK POPELY
Tribune Newspapers

After a year of record new-vehicle sales, automakers, dealers and the banks and finance companies that issue car loans are jubilantly exchanging high-fives.

Analysts list several reasons for record sales of 17.5 million vehicles in 2015, including an improving economy and job market, low interest rates and growth in leasing.

New-car sales also are being driven by easy credit: Consumers, many with marginal credit ratings, are borrowing higher amounts and for longer loan terms.

Experian, one of the three major credit bureaus, says that the average loan for a new vehicle in the third quarter was $28,936, up more than $1,000 from a year earlier, and the average loan was for 67 months.

What's more, consumers are trying to keep monthly payments affordable by stretching out the payments. Seventy-one percent of new-vehicle loans were for longer than five years, and nearly 30 percent were longer than six years. In addition, 29 percent of new-vehicle loans were issued to borrowers with credit scores below prime (600 or lower).

Potentially millions of consumers will owe more than their vehicle is worth for years. When they get the new-car itch again, they might have little or no equity in the vehicle they want to trade in.

Few within the auto or banking industries express concern about these trends, but others warn that loose credit that puts consumers in hock longer and for higher amounts could backfire in the future, especially if there is an economic downturn.

In an October speech to financial services executives, Thomas J. Curry, comptroller of the currency, head of the federal agency that regulates banks, warned that longer loans are “exposing lenders and investors to higher potential losses.”

“Although delinquency and losses are currently low, it doesn’t require great foresight to see that this may not last. ... It should be a real concern to the industry,” he said.

Melinda Zabritski, senior director of automotive financial solutions for Experian, notes that delinquency rates on auto loans are lower than before the recession.

In the third quarter of 2007, 2.81 percent of auto loans were 30 days past due. In 2015 it was 2.53 percent. The 60-day delinquency rate is virtually the same, at less than 1 percent.

Subprime borrowers — with credit scores below 600 — take out a smaller chunk of auto loans today than in 2007, 24 percent compared with 28 percent.

“In today’s market we’re pretty much where we were back pre-recession. The level of subprime borrowing is even a little more conservative than it was pre-recession,” Zabritski said in an interview.

Moreover, she added, most subprime customers pay on time. “Just because you’re subprime doesn’t mean you’ll absolutely go delinquent,” she said.

Loans are getting longer because car shoppers are seeing higher sticker prices on new vehicles, and more are opting for high-end models loaded with expensive features.

“Because cars cost more, consumers need to finance more of the vehicle in order to make that purchase, and that drives the monthly payment up,” Zabritski said.

“Most people who are buying a car are trying to negotiate monthly payments. If you can’t put more money down, and you’re increasingly having higher vehicle cost, the only way to keep that payment modest is to push out the term,” Greg McBride, chief financial analyst for Bankrate.com, said there is another way, but many consumers don’t want to hear it: Buy a cheaper car.

“If you’re buying a new car, and the loan goes beyond five years, you’re buying too much car,” McBride said in an interview. He added that too many consumers focus on their monthly payment instead of the total cost.

“That’s detrimental to your financial health. It’s financial engineering, the dealer can stretch out the loan term to squeeze that monthly payment into your budget. When people shop for a monthly payment, they’re not focusing on the total cost,” McBride said.

For example, stretching a $500 monthly payment over seven years instead of five raises the total cost by $12,000. Worse, the car’s value will decline faster than the principal balance.

“Automobiles are depreciating assets, and the longer you stretch it out, that loan term, not only does that mean your interest (cost) grows, but you spend more time being upside down,” he said.

The focus on monthly payments has also contributed to the growth in leasing, McBride said. Experian says that 27 percent of new vehicles were leased instead of purchased in 2015, up from 18 percent in 2010.

A key reason is that the average lease payment last year was $398 versus $482 for the average new-car payment. Another reason is that leasing is touted as a way to drive a more expensive car than a consumer could afford to buy.

“Thats fool’s gold, McBride warns.

“There’s no free lunch; the trade-off is that at the end of the lease you don’t own it. You hand the keys back and start all over,” he said. “You don’t get rich by driving expensive cars.”

McBride offers this “tough love” advice.

“Look at the total cost. Don’t look at what you can afford based on a monthly payment alone,” he said.

Rick Popely is a freelancer.

Auto loan costs

The longer you stretch loan payments on a new car, the more you will pay. It lowers the monthly payment but increases the amount of interest due. At the same time, depreciation continues to mount, so the car is worth less when the loan is paid off. The following examples are based on the average transaction price of $33,800 for a new vehicle; a down payment or trade-in value of $4,800; a $29,000 loan at the industry average 4.3 percent interest; and annual depreciation of 15 percent, which is a conservative estimate.

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SOURCES: Bankrate.com, Experian and KBB.com.
Mixing sport, sophistication

BY ROBERT DUFFER
Chicago Tribune.

The redesigned Nissan Maxima is like a new shoe. It looks sharp but feels better, and the more you wear it, the better it feels.

The Maxima is footwear that is athletic and sophisticated, functional and stylish. You can schlep the kids in it, take it out for date night, challenge its performance capabilities in the company of true sports cars, so you don't need a handle or a crane to get it away. There are enough seat adjustments to comfortably set your visibility, a trait that is positively more sedan than sport car.

That's a good thing.

Calling it a sports sedan, as Nissan has done, is like calling a Chuck Taylor a basketball shoe: not quite. In the company of true performance sedans such as the Audi S6 and BMW 5-Series, the eighth-generation Maxima handles more like the smaller Mazda6, but with upscale interior like the larger Toyota Avalon. I'd take the Maxima over either of the last two, despite the drop-off in fuel efficiency.

---

Radio stations: New normal

Bob Weber
Motormouth

Q: My wife bought a 2016 Ford Escape. We noticed that the AM band of the car radio starts at 879. She used to listen to a station at 877 on her 2009 Escape. She emailed Ford for an explanation but has not gotten an answer. Can you advise us if not getting 877 is normal?

---

A: Newer car radios will not receive broadcasts from any frequency below 879 MHz, as the lower frequency is assigned to TV channel 6. Some radio broadcasters use 877 where there was no channel 6 in use in the vicinity. Some simulcast the TV audio. Since the FCC required all TV broadcasts to be digital, this is going away.

Q: Two years ago, the cruise control in my 2003 Honda Accord began disengaging after five to 10 minutes, for no reason. I had the throttle body assembly and gas-

ket replaced ($400 parts, $120 labor), but now the problem has returned. At least one online Honda blog says it's a common problem in 2003 to 2005 Hondas, caused when a plastic notch breaks from its molding to the butterfly valve shaft. My local Midas guys can't see anything physically wrong with the throttle body. Do you think another throttle body replacement will fix the problem again?

---

A: The problem is usually the plastic cam on the side of the throttle body to which the cruise control cable is attached. Due to engine heat, the plastic gets brittle, breaks, and the cable falls off. Although this cam assembly and its spring attach to the outside of the throttle body with a couple of screws, Honda does not sell it as a separate part. If you can locate a cheap, used throttle body at a junkyard or eBay, any good technician can salvage the part and put it on your car instead of replacing the whole throttle body. But don't overlook a bad or misadjusted brake light switch or clutch switch, as these will cancel the cruise control intermittently as well.

Q: I have a 2005 Hyundai Accent with 155,000 miles on it. Periodically, the check engine light comes on. I go to the garage, and they clear it for a few days, and I pass inspection. Now they can't clear it. It has new plugs, cables and coil. The light still comes on and says all the spark plugs are misfiring. Any ideas on what it could be?

---

A: All of the spark plugs cannot be misfiring or the engine probably would not run, but there could be a random misfire. The misfire trouble code will be P0300. There are numerous possibilities such as faulty spark plugs or wires, faulty ignition coil, faulty fuel injector(s), faulty oxygen sensor(s), faulty catalytic converter(s), a problem with the EGR valve, a faulty camshaft position sensor or crankshaft position sensor. On Hyundais, the ignition coil wiring connector may be loose. Throwing parts at it is just a waste of money. Find a tech who can do a thorough diagnosis.

Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Fifth Floor, Chicago IL 60611 or motormouth@tribune.com.
Zirngibl singled out by CCIW

BY NICK BULLOCK
Pioneer Press

The North Central College football team's senior defensive back Richard Zirngibl, a Buffalo Grove alumnus, was recently named the 2015 Jack Schwartz Academic Award winner. The award is given by the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin each year to one male and one female student-athlete who achieves a 3.5 grade-point average or higher, is enrolled as a full-time student and earns a letter in his or her sport.

Other North Central football players from the area include running back Oshayne Brown, a Niles North graduate; defensive back Pat Cravens and linebacker Tom Sora, both from Notre Dame; running back Andrew Sledd, a Highland Park graduate; running back Zane Lodico, a Lake Zurich alumnus; defensive lineman Ben Sinajiovic, sophomore defensive lineman Gunnar Schiferl and tight end Alex Rose, all from Leyden; defensive lineman Ramsey Polkyfke, linebacker Mike Kosa novich and offensive lineman Eli Kosanovich, all York graduates; defensive lineman Emonte Logan, from Oak Park-River Forest; and offensive lineman Ricky Strba, a Buffalo Grove alumnus.

Zieba, Vandixhorn contribute to NU tennis

Freshman Ben Vandixhorn and junior Konrad Zieba powered the No. 21-ranked Northwestern men's tennis team to yet another victory this spring season, this time against Cornell on Feb. 7 in Ithaca, NY.

Vandixhorn, a Libertyville graduate, won at No. 6 singles 6-2, 7-6 (7). Glenbrook South's Zieba, ranked No. 16 nationally, won his No. 2 doubles match 6-4. He then held a 2-6, 6-3, 4-2 lead at No. 1 singles when the meet was decided, leaving his match unfinished.

Hinsdale Central's Michael Lorenzini is also on the team. The freshman holds a 2-2 singles record and a 1-1 doubles record.

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

Nick Bullock is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Football teammates help Ramirez advance

BY MATT HARNESS

Dylan Ramirez was a big part of the best football season in Niles North's history.

Chris Albandia, his wrestling coach, said Ramirez carried that success — the Vikings' football team won two playoff games for the first time in the fall — over to the mats. The junior heavyweight qualified for the Class 3A state tournament by finishing fourth at the Conant Sectional on Feb. 13 in Hoffman Estates. He lost the third-place match 4-2 to Rolling Meadows senior Maciej Pogorzelski.

"We absolutely expected this from him," Albandia said after Ramirez's state-clinching, 3-2 win over Lane junior Jeremiah Olojo in the consolation semifinals. "He got progressively better over the season. This was a tough sectional. There are some kids he lost to this season, but he's been on his knees.

Evanston

Chris Rivera rested his backside on the 106-pound junior Lightweight after losing in the second round, Rivera won four matches in the back draw to take third place, beating Mount Prospect freshman Andrew Baysinger 8-0 in the consolation final. Rivera (48-4) finished 5-1 at the sectional.

"It was good to finish the tournament strong," Rivera said. "It was good to recover from that loss. I was determined to get to the state tournament."

Rivera, who finished second at the Maine East Regional, said practicing against teammate David Rivera-Kohl, a 126-pound senior and Princeton recruit, in the week leading up to the sectional tournament was helpful in reaching his goal.

"I got beat up," Rivera said. "It was a hard week. [The coaches] really pushed me, but that's why I felt good here."

Evanston coach Rudy Salinas said Rivera normally doesn't train with Rivera-Kohl, but the other light weights were not available to practice due to injuries. Salinas said he's considering letting the two go at it again to prepare for the state tournament.

"It was sink or swim for Chris," Salinas said. "Davie gave him that edge. Maybe he can do that again."

Rivera, the 11th seed, is scheduled to face sixth-seeded Bolingbrook freshman Dylan Burnoski (30-8) on Feb. 18.

Rivera-Kohl (40-1) and senior 182-pounder Jaalen Banner (43-7) were Evanston's other state qualifiers. Rivera-Kohl placed third with a 7-3 win over Leyden senior Wesam Alabed. Banner also took third with an 8-7 win over Glenbard West's Jack Veseyick.

Notre Dame

Notre Dame wrestling coach Augie Genovesi didn't expect Dons senior Tom Simon to qualify for the state tournament.

However, Simon, who wrestled only 10 varsity matches last season, earned his way to Champaign by finishing fourth at 220 pounds at the Class 3A Conant Sectional. He secured his first trip to the state tournament with a 3-2 win over Schaumburg senior John Rowley Meadows' Maciej Pogorzelski (above) wrestles Niles North's Dylan Ramirez during the Class 3A Conant Sectional on Feb. 13 in Hoffman Estates.

"It was sink or swim for Chris," Salinas said. "Davie gave him that edge. Maybe he can do that again."

Simon's dedication to the weight room contributed to his standout senior season. Genovesi said he would open the school on Sundays to let Simon work out. In the fall, Simon was an all-East Suburban Catholic center for the Dons. He plans to play football at Augustana in Rock Island.

"He was a butterfly up until he found the weight room last spring," Genovesi said. "He spent almost every day in the spring and summer in the weight room. He transferred all of his weight around. He really tightened everything up. He's now put together like a brick house."

Genovesi said there were a lot of nervous moments at the sectional. Except for his 20-10 loss to Oak Park-River Forest senior Allen Stallings in the semifinals, Simon (32-14) was in close matches. His other four matches were each decided by two points or less.

"He makes it exciting for fans, but it can be a nightmare for us coaches," Genovesi joked. "But it was good to see that he was in almost every match."

Simon earned the 16th seed and is scheduled to wrestle top-seeded Plainfield South senior Eric Johnson (44-0) on Feb. 18.

Senior Jake Barzowski (40-1) and junior Josh Barzowski (52-7) were the other two Dons who advanced to the state tournament. Jake Barzowski took third at 138, and his brother placed second at 152.

Maine South

As soon as his wrestling season ends, Ibrahim Nasir said the first place he's going to eat at is Chipotle.

"I am going to have them make the biggest burrito possible," said Nasir, who qualified for the Class 3A state meet at 220 pounds.

The senior hasn't dined at his favorite restaurant since wrestling season started. It was a sacrifice he made in order to drop nearly 30 pounds to compete at 220. Nasir wrestled as a heavyweight last season, but he said he was on the lighter side of the weight class. He qualified for the 2015 state meet and went 0-2. Nasir said 220 is a more natural weight class for him.

A defensive lineman for Maine South's football team, Nasir said he weighed around 245 pounds in early November.

"Dieting was the hardest thing to do," Nasir said. "I'm a big guy, and I like my food. I just ate small meals or sometimes nothing at all."

Nasir (37-4) reached the Class 3A state meet by taking second place at the Conant Sectional. He lost to Oak Park-River Forest senior Allen Stallings 17-8 in the final on Feb. 13.

"I felt great [Saturday]," Nasir said. "It took a while for my body to adapt to this weight, but I am in the best shape of my life right now. I move well at this weight, and it's more natural. I can use my speed and strength better."

Nasir received the seventh seed at state and is scheduled to wrestle Belleville East senior Dewayne Hill (46-1) in his first match on Feb. 18. Hill is the 10th seed.

Nasir will soon add weight again to his 6-foot-2 frame. He plans to play college football at Middlebury, a Division III program in Vermont.

"Putting on pounds is not a problem for me," he said. "But I want to do it in a healthy way."

Matt Harness co-hosts a golf podcast called Teeing Off. Find it on Twitter (@Teeing_Off) or at www.facebook.com/teeingoffpodcast and on iTunes.

mharness@pioneerlocal.com
Twitter @harnesscrps
Girls Gymnastics State Meet Preview

New Trier’s Rohrer could vie for title on beam

BY ERIC VAN DRIL
Pioneer Press

Carmel junior Samantha Lococo, Barrington senior Abby Hasanov and DeKalb junior Aleah Lemar are the favorites on balance beam going into the state gymnastics meet. All three scored higher than 9.5 on beam at their respective sectional meets.

New Trier sophomore Emma Jane Rohrer received a 9.125 on beam at the Mundelein Sectional on Feb. 9, but she too has the potential to win a state championship on beam. She just has to stay on the beam.

Rohrer scored a 9.025 at the Central Suburban South meet on Saturday, Jan. 30. Rohrer fell off the beam in that meet, too.

In spite of the fall, which is a half-point deduction, Rohrer earned an automatic state berth on beam at the sectional by finishing in a tie for fifth. The top five individuals in each event earned automatic berths.

“Shes going to stay on the beam one of these days,” New Trier coach Jen Pistorius said following the Central Suburban South meet.

Rohrer fell early on in her beam routine at the sectional, but she recovered very well. The rest of her difficult routine was clean and executed crisply.

Staying on the beam “is harder than it seems,” Rohrer said at the sectional. “(People are) like, ‘You’ve just got to make it.’ It’s really hard to make it.”

Rohrer explained that the key to doing well on beam, especially in a high-stakes environment like the sectional or state, is for her to stay focused and patient as she goes through her routine.

“It’s just making sure you take your time, take one skill at a time and just focus on what you’re doing,” Rohrer said. “Once you make one [difficult element], you’re not done. You have to finish it up. Even after my [standing] back tuck, I still have a full turn [and a] dismount to get through. I can’t just blow it off, like, ‘OK, I’m done,’ and forget about the dismount and full turn.”

Rohrer qualified for state on all four events and in the all-around. She will be joined at state, which begins at Palatine on Feb. 19, by New Trier senior Taylor Kwok (floor exercise).

Loyola

Falls on balance beam are common at gymnastics meets, but they haven’t been for Claire Sullivan this year. Sullivan, a senior at Loyola, has fallen just once during the 2015-16 season on her favorite event.

A part of the reason for her success, Sullivan explained after finishing second on beam (9.45) at the Mundelein Sectional, is she feels completely comfortable on beam. It’s an event dreaded by many, but not Sullivan.

“It’s so different from the other events,” Sullivan said. “It’s a lot of poise. It’s mostly all confidence, I feel like. Just getting up there and knowing that I’m confident, I know in my head that I can stick the routine. There’s no better feeling than sticking a beam routine.”

Sullivan added that she hopes to make state finals again this year. She finished 10th on beam as a junior.

The state finals takes place on Feb. 20 at Palatine. Sullivan is scheduled to compete on beam, uneven parallel bars (she tied for third at the sectional, 9.30) and in the all-around (sixth, 36.50) on Feb. 19.

Niles West

Earlier this season, Niles West coach Sue Arcus praised the way Jasmine Dirks has refueled old tricks and picked up new tricks during her outstanding freshman campaign.

Dirks, who stepped away from gymnastics for two years prior to joining the Wolves’ high school team, picked up one more new skill in the week leading up to the sectional. After the regional, Dirks started piking her Yurchenko vault in practice.

Dirks debuted that trick at the Mundelein Sectional on Feb. 9, and almost stuck it on her first attempt. Dirks flipped through the air and landed on her feet.

“Tol a tiny step and I was really shocked,” Dirks said. “I was really happy.”

Dirks was awarded a 9.40 on vault. Soon after she finished competing, she was informed that she had finished in third, breaking a three-way tie for third place.

Dirks didn’t have to wait to hear if she’d earned an at-large berth to state, like many gymnasts. She had secured an automatic berth.

“I’m excited,” Dirks said with a big smile. “I thought I was going to be close to making it. Since it was my first year, I didn’t think I would make it.”

Dirks is the only Niles West gymnast who advanced to state.

Niles North and Glenbrook North

Neither Niles North nor Glenbrook North advanced any athletes to the state meet, but gymnasts on both teams were inspired at the end of the Mundelein Sectional.

The Spartans, who competed as a team at the sectional, are slated to return their entire roster to be close to making it. Since it was my first year, I didn’t think I would make it.”

Dirks is the only Niles West gymnast who advanced to state.

In this Jan. 30 photo, New Trier sophomore Emma Jane Rohrer is pictured at the Central Suburban South gymnastics meet after her dismount from the uneven bars.

Niles North sophomore Athena Xidis agreed.

“T is motivating,” Xidis said. “You want to get as good as them, especially by the time you’re a senior. That’s the goal.”

Xidis plans on training in the offseason, she said, and would like to incorporate more difficult elements into some of her routines. One example is giants on bars, and a Tsukahara pike is a possibility on vault.

“I just want to increase my skills on every event [for next year] and hopefully make state,” she said.

Eric Van Dril is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
GOING ALL OUT
Local wrestlers to compete in state tournament this weekend in Champaign.
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