Whittling it down

D219 begins meeting with superintendent candidates.
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SHOUT OUT

Shari Vass, real estate manager, booster

Shari Vass, a property manager with the Braside Group, grew up in Skokie and now lives in Lincolnwood. She recently won the Leasing Agent of the Year Award at the Premier Awards of the Institute of Real Estate Management in Chicago. Vass represented owners in 83 lease transactions in 2015. Pioneer Press recently asked her a series of questions.

Q: What do you do for a living?
A: Executive problem solving. You never know what you'll be doing from one day to the next - fixing a leak in a rainstorm or pouring concrete in a common area. Managing buildings is a challenge, but the people make it worthwhile.

Q: Where did you grow up?
A: Skokie. I graduated from Niles North.

Q: How long have you lived in this area?
A: I grew up here, moved to Marina City for awhile, and came back around four years ago. I love it here. Downtown Chicago is a concrete jungle. The landscaping is a container filled with geraniums.

SHARI VASS PHOTO

Shari Vass
Here the grass is green and there are flowers. Parking and shopping are easy.

Q: Do you have any pets?
A: Yes. You have to be home to walk a dog. I like pet people, though.

Q: What book are you currently reading and what book would you like to read next?
A: I just read "Brotherhood in Death" by J.D. Robb and the new Mary Higgins Clark book will be auto-delivered to my kindle April 5.

I love mysteries.

Q: What was your first job?
A: My first job was at Sheldon Good & Associates. I started out in commercial and industrial sales. There weren't a lot of women in real estate back then.

Q: As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
A: I've always been fascinated with making buildings work. It's instant gratification. Things go wrong and you make them right. Somehow I knew this when I was young.

Q: Do you have children?
A: Two beautiful children and five stunning grandchildren.

Q: Favorite charity?
A: Orchard Village of Skokie and UCP Seguin in Cicero. These are both homes for developmentally disabled adults. I have a special needs nephew who lived at one, then the other - and I'm still involved with both.

Q: What is an interesting fact about yourself?
A: I only exercise so I can eat more.

- Pioneer Press staff
D219 begins whittling pool of candidates for superintendent

BY BRIAN L. COX
Pioneer Press

After almost a year of internal turmoil and the resignation of its last superintendent, the Niles Township High School District 219 Board of Education is meeting with candidates hoping to land the district's top job.

Thirty candidates are being considered for the new superintendent position in Niles Township High School District 219 as interviews for the district's top job start next week, officials said.

"It's a noble cause that you undertake right now and that is finding a new leader who will start on July 1," District 219 interim Superintendent Mark Friedman told the Niles Township High School District 219 Board of Education during its April 5 meeting.

"Enjoy being together a lot over these next couple of weeks," he said. "This really is a growth experience for a board together. It's very rare that you get a chance to select a new superintendent. It's your No. 1 responsibility."

The district has been without a permanent superintendent since late last year when then-Superintendent Nanciann Gatta left the district following an internal investigation.

In addition Niles North High School Principal Ryan McTague is leaving the school at the end of the school year to become the superintendent of McHenry School District 156.

Friedman said the board will be tasked with interviewing more than 30 applicants for the superintendent position from across the country in the next few weeks and said that from there they will have to whittle the list down to six, then three, and then make their final selection.

The pool of candidates, he said, is diverse racially culturally, ethnically and gender wise, adding that the diversity in District 219 "is attracting diversity."

He said the district is also scheduling "stakeholder interviews" so members of the community can meet with the candidates who make the final cut, adding that the dates for those meetings are still to be worked out.

"This is an inclusive and transparent search, as much as it can be," Friedman said.

He also said there is a need for discretion in the hiring process and that therefore the first few rounds of interviews will not be open to the public.

"Of course, releasing names, we can't do that because most everyone's gainfully employed and that could impact their current employment situation," he explained. "Their districts would not be happy that they are interested in another district, so we'll keep things as confidential as we can until the very end and then those names will become public as you make your decision."

Board President Mark Sproat on April 5 thanked all residents who filled out a survey from the district asking what they want in a new superintendent.

"That's not the message we want to send."

Board President Mark Sproat on April 5 thanked all residents who filled out a survey from the district asking what they want in a new superintendent.

"That's not the message we want to send." Lampert asked. "This voting in of officers is becoming a very proud moment for some of my fellow board members."

"Is this really what we've become?" Lampert asked. "This voting in of officers should be a very proud moment for some of my fellow board members."

"It's very informative," he said. "Not only for the candidates but for myself personally just to see the comments that are out there."

Brian L. Cox is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Lampert: Some in community 'bully' board members

BY BRIAN L. COX
Pioneer Press

The Niles Township High School District 219 Board of Education recently elected its new officers even as the board's outgoing vice president chastised members of the community who she said were trying to bully, shame and threaten board members to ensure people they support were made officers.

"There are several people in our D219 community who apparently feel it's appropriate to bully, shame and threaten the members of this Board of Education for their own agenda regarding board positions," outgoing board Vice President Linda Lampert said during the board's April 5 meeting. "I do not know anyone on this board who does not keep the constituents in mind when taking a vote."

The board, during its April 5 meeting, voted to keep incumbent board President Mark Sproat as president and also voted to make board member Brian Novak vice president.

Board member Carlton Evans was elected secretary and Joseph Nowik was elected secretary pro tem.

Lampert did not specify whom she was referring to in her comments but instead talked about what she said was a lack of civility and rumor mongering in the community.

"The rumors about some of my fellow board members are disrespectful and ridiculous," she said. "I have heard so many crazy things the past few weeks that I felt compelled to say something."

She said one rumor involved the fact the board president has a key to the schools and can enter buildings at any time.

"Guess what?" Lampert said. "When I became a board member I received a key. I used it once. We do not run around naked in the middle of the night or whatever you think inappropriate actions are taking place."

"The fact that a key, a holiday greeting or a basketball game is causing such an uproar is teaching our students not to put themselves out there because they'll be judged on everything," she said. "That's not the message we want to send."

Outgoing Vice President Linda Lampert chastised members of the D219 community on April 5.

Linda Lampert was elected secretary and Joseph Nowik was elected secretary pro tem.
Board cancels North, West health centers contract

BY BRIAN L. COX
Pioneer Press

Less than a year after opening school-based health centers in Niles West and Niles North high schools, District 219 is closing them, citing low usage of the facilities by the students they were established to serve.

“We had such high hopes it would work out,” board member Linda Lampert said. “I am so sad it hasn’t.”

The board, during its regular meeting on April 5, voted to terminate at the end of the school year its contract with Heartland Health Centers, the company that runs the centers. That vote comes despite pleas by representatives from the company who said closing the centers is a mistake that could have long-lasting repercussions on student health.

“I’m just extremely disappointed in their decision,” Gwenn Rausch, chief executive officer at Heartland Health Centers, said after the vote. “I felt like the board members were not telling the whole story. They sort of picked and chose the kind of things they wanted to talk about.”

The centers were opened eight months ago with the help of a $1.3 million grant from the North Suburban Health Care Foundation and the district’s promise to spend $500,000 on the centers for the first two years of their operation, officials said. They said that the district eliminated social work, psychologist and nursing position at both high schools to cover that cost of the $500,000 subsidy.

“It was believed at the time that services provided by the student health center staff would offset this loss of district services to district students,” board President Mark Sproat said. “This has not been fully realized in the eight months since the opening of the student health centers.”

He also cited low usage of the centers and said Heartland has only obtained consent forms from about 21 percent of students allowing them to be treated in the health centers.

“That leaves 79 percent of the students to be served by a significantly reduced district staff of social workers and psychologists,” Sprout said.

“Some might say that this is a money issue, that District 219 does not want to pay the $500,000 subsidy for next year;” he said. “We prefer to frame this decision as one of providing the best-quality services for our students.”

Representatives from Heartland Health Centers said the district has not given the program enough time to realize the results the district is seeking. They said that closing the centers could affect low-income families the hardest and affect student health, among other things.

“They act like 20 percent of the students, 1,000 students, is trivial,” Rausch said. “A thousand students receiving health care is significant especially in an eight month period of time. Frankly we have no choice but to look at what options we have to take action.”

A representative from the North Suburban Health Care Foundation told the board that the $1.3 million grant received by the district to open the centers might need to be repaid because of the boards decision to close the health centers.

District staff in a memo to the board did note that one area where Heartland has been successful is with psychiatric appointments, “where there is great student need.” It said there have been 27 psychiatric visits at Niles West to date and 25 at Niles North.

Brian L. Cox is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Senior Center to host veteran program

BY KARIE ANGELL LUC
Pioneer Press

Local veterans will share their stories April 19 in Niles at a Rainbow Hospice and Palliative Care-hosted recognition called Salute in Story, a We Honor Veterans event.

The event takes place from 4:30 to 9 p.m. in the Niles Senior Center.

"I think it's important for (veterans) to share their stories because people who haven't gone through it don't really understand and it can help to create a culture where we can better assist them," said Valerie Nikolas of Lake Zurich, marketing & communications specialist with Rainbow Hospice and Palliative Care.

A panel of Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard veterans will discuss veteran-specific issues.

"It's incredibly powerful to hear their stories," Nikolas said. "The organizers and veteran panelists are super excited about it." The Salute in Story event includes a ceremony during which Wayne Messmer of Glenview will sing the national anthem.

"Every day is Veterans Day in my eyes," Messmer said. "These are the very same people who have put their lives on the line so that the freedom that we enjoy might continue ... we cannot dismiss their contribution once they have finished their service and returned home."

After the panel discussion, veterans in the audience are encouraged to share their own military experiences. An 8 p.m. pizza party follows an opportunity for viewing of Navy ship replicas on display.

"It's going to be a fantastic affair," said Tom Amirante of Glenview, commander of the Niles Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7712.

Amirante said the panelists will discuss what happens when veterans return to everyday life.

"Normally, the only option veterans think they have is the Veterans Administration," Amirante said.

"But they are concerned with education, jobs ... getting back into employment and home loans," he said. "They don't really know where to go other than the VA ... the forum will help educate the public as to the needs of veterans."

We Honor Vets is a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO), in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs with a goal to bring veterans a peaceful end-of-life experience with education and advocacy, officials said.

"As more veterans are aging, we just want to provide better health care and support for them," Nikolas said. "They have made sacrifices for us, so in return, we can make sacrifices for them."

The Salute in Story event is hosted in partnership with the Veterans Memorial Committee of Arlington Heights, American Legion Merle Guild Post 2018 of Arlington Heights, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Extra Mile Veteran Care, Military Outreach USA, Niles Memorial VFW Post 7712, Northwest Suburban Marine Corps League, Veterans of Foreign Wars Des Plaines Post 2991, Vietnam Veterans of America and Warrior Watch Riders plus Dignity Memorial.

Rainbow Hospice and Palliative Care, which has served seven Illinois counties for 35 years, is a 501(c)3 organization with facilities in Park Ridge, Mount Prospect and Chicago.

Register to attend at RainbowHospice.org/SaluteInStory or contact Katie Kirby, volunteer services manager at Rainbow Hospice and Palliative Care, at 847-653-3199 or KKirby@RainbowHospice.org.

Karie Angell Luc is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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Niles police offering property inspections free of charge

BY LEE V. GAINES
Pioneer Press

Niles residents concerned about wild critters shacking up in and around their home are encouraged to reach out to the Niles Police Department for a free inspection of their property, according to a news release from the agency.

Niles police Sgt. Robert Tornabene said the department recently hired Officer Janie Copley to address animal control issues throughout the village. As part of the department's Nuisance Wildlife Abatement Program, Copley will visit residences at the request of homeowers to identify potential risk areas around the property where animals like skunks, raccoons and opossums might reside, in addition to providing residents with tips to reduce the presence of wildlife around their homes.

Wildlife poses a risk of rabies and distemper — a viral disease that could potentially affect residents' pets, according to the release.

"We already have ordinances to deal with certain things, but this is a way to educate people and give them tips — we've been dealing with wildlife issues in the village for years," Tornabene said.

He said the department previously had a full-time animal control officer on board, but subsequent budget cuts reduced the position to a part-time post, and at one point it was nearly eliminated. Tornabene said the mayor and Village Board made it clear they wanted someone in the department monitoring animal issues in the village. Copley's position, he said, is a part-time role.

The advice residents can expect to receive from Copley will depend upon the wildlife issue, he said.

"It could simply be learning how to mitigate burrowing of opossums and raccoons under their property or referring them to specialized services to address it and make it a permanent fix," Tornabene said. "It really depends on the wildlife."

Residents interested in a free inspection are encouraged to call Copley at 847-588-6508.

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

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Council awards Marine veteran key to the city

BY LEE V. GAINES
Pioneer Press

U.S. Marine Corps veteran Edmon Akhteebo was given a key to the city by Niles' mayor and trustees at a recent Village Board meeting.

Akhteebo, a gunnery sergeant and Niles resident for 17 years, is one of several vets to receive the honor from the village in recent months.

In his acceptance speech, Akhteebo credited his friends and family for the support they had given him over the course of his 20 years of military service, and said he received the honor on behalf of the Assyrian-American community. He also jokingly warned Niles police Chief Dennis McNemey that he planned to head first to Chase Bank with his key to the city.

Akhteebo joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1996 and served in a range of roles from infantryman to counter-intelligence during his two decades of service, according to a proclamation from the village. Akhteebo was deployed twice to Afghanistan and three times to Iraq between 2001 and 2009, and was wounded in combat in May 2005 in Husaybah, Iraq, the proclamation states.

He's the recipient of numerous awards and was honorably discharged in February of last year.

Lee V. Gaines is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Lincolnwood officials delay decision on self-storage tax

BY NATALIE HAYES
Pioneer Press

Customers who rent units from any of the three public self-storage facilities within the village of Lincolnwood could see higher monthly rental bills if village officials pass a measure to implement a storage tax that would be passed on to the renter.

Lincolnwood officials during the April 5 Committee of the Whole meeting, however, decided to postpone a decision on whether to initiate a new tax on rental facilities that could generate up to roughly $235,000 in new annual tax revenue for the village.

The village's proximity to Chicago and easy access to major highways makes it a thriving locale for the trio of public storage companies that operate in the community, but village officials say they'd rather see tax-generating businesses occupy their commercial areas.

"To add taxes, you need to look at all the prime commercial real estate (storage facilities) could be taking away," Trustee Jesal Patel said. "But any time we're taxing someone or talking about increasing taxes we need to be careful."

Lincolnwood's trio of storage facilities boast an approximate 90 percent occupancy rate, according to village officials, and paid a combined $267,680 in property taxes in 2014 — with 10 percent of that amount going to the municipality, according to information provided by the village from Cook County's tax assessor.

If the village decides to initiate a new storage tax, it would have two options. One is a flat tax structure based on the number of storage units in a self-storage facility. If a $5 monthly tax per unit was charged to each of the 2,000 storage units within Lincolnwood, it could equate to $120,000 in additional annual local tax revenue, according to Doug Petroshius, assistant village manager.

The other option is a progressive tax, which would charge per square-foot of the units, which vary in size.

If the village were to charge $1 a year per square foot on the 235,147 square feet of storage unit space that exists among the three facilities, it could generate up to roughly $235,000 annually, Petroshius said.

If Lincolnwood eventually adopts a storage tax, it shouldn't be the first community in the Chicagoland area to do so. Morton Grove, North Chicago and River Grove all impose storage taxes on self-storage facilities.

If the storage tax doesn't materialize, village leaders agreed that — at the very least — the community should have limitations in place that would require any new storage businesses that wanted to open in a commercial area to apply for a special-use permit under the local zoning code.

Village Manager Tim Wiberg said the village expects to receive $260,000 less from the state this year, and the storage tax proposal was a way to "diversify local revenue" rather than filling a certain gap or two in specific areas of the budget. "(Storage facilities) are a type of use that you don't want a high concentration of — we already have three in a 2.7-mile-square radius," Wiberg said.

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

RETAIL THEFT
- Two 17-year-old girls from Skokie were each charged with retail theft on April 2 after they allegedly stole more than $415 worth of clothing from a store at Golf Mill Shopping Center. They were released to their parents and petitioned to juvenile court.
- Anna Ryjawuczjubm, 32, of the 8900 block of Knight Avenue, unincorporated Maine Township, was charged with felony retail theft on April 5 after police said she stole four containers of Tide laundry pods valued at $71.96 and a box of scrubbing pads from a store in the 8900 block of Greenwood Avenue. Police said a felony charge was approved because Ryjawuczjubm had a prior conviction. She has an April 30 court date.
- Scott Greenberg, 54, of the 8000 block of Green Wood Road, Gurnee, was charged with retail theft on April 5 after he was accused of stealing a can of beer and a bottle of a liquid sleep aid from a store in the 9000 block of Golf Road. He has an April 19 court date.
- A 24-year-old Des Plaines woman was ticketed after she allegedly left her child locked inside an unoccupied car in the 8200 block of Golf Road on the afternoon of April 2. A witness reportedly contacted police after seeing the boy asleep in the car. The mother, who was not identified by police, said she did not want to wake up her son, police said. The Department of Child and Family Services was contacted, according to police.

BATTERY
- Chinmayi Desai, 40, of the 8300 block of Oketo Avenue, Niles, was charged with domestic battery on April 5. She was given an April 11 court date.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY
- A 28-year-old man told police on April 3 that he discovered rock salt and fecal matter inside a bag of his clothes that his former girlfriend dropped off at his house. The man did not want to sign complaints against the woman, police said.

THEFT
- Store security video captured a man stealing numerous packages of king crab legs, lobster tails and baby back ribs from a store in the 8900 block of Greenwood Avenue on April 4, police said. An investigation is pending.
- An unknown man in his twenties attempted to steal a $300 laptop computer from a store in the 8500 block of Golf Road on April 4, police said. An employee was reportedly able to grab the computer from the man as he fled the store.

DISPUTE
- A 28-year-old man told police on April 3 that he discovered rock salt and fecal matter inside a bag of his clothes that his former girlfriend dropped off at his house. The man did not want to sign complaints against the woman, police said.

BURGLARY
- A bag containing a laptop computer and $90 in cash was reported stolen April 2 from a car parked outside Golf Mill Shopping Center. Police said the car had been forcibly entered.

2 facing gun charges after crash, chase

BY LEE V. GAINE
Pioneer Press

Two Chicago men were arrested last week on gun-related charges following a car crash and a foot chase with Skokie police, according to a department news release.

Skokie police attempted to stop a vehicle driven by Harvey Pitts, 22, of the 1600 block of W Juneway Terrace, and containing passenger Leroy Francis, 21, of the 2000 block of West Arthur Avenue, for a traffic violation April 6, the release states. In an attempt to flee, Pitts lost control of the vehicle and crashed it near Dempster Street and Interstate 94 at about 1 p.m., Officer Eric Swaback said. A short foot chase ensued before both were apprehended, police said.

Two guns were found inside the vehicle and marijuana was recovered from Pitts, according to the release.

Pitts and Francis were each charged with unlawful possession of a weapon and obstructing or resisting a peace officer. Pitts was additionally charged with felony aggravated fleeing and eluding, unlawful possession of marijuana and driving while license revoked, in addition to traffic violations. Francis was also charged with a parole violation.

Bond for Pitts was set at $80,000 and $30,000 for Francis. Both men are scheduled to appear in court April 26.

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

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Transit systems eye Uber, Lyft for savings

BY BOB SALSBERG
Associated Press

Pace is among several transit systems weighing partnerships with Uber and Lyft to defray costs of providing services for the disabled.

The potential deals are unsettling some advocates who note that ride-hailing services have themselves faced criticism over accessibility.

Paratransit, which Pace offers as Dial-A-Ride, is required under the 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act. But the costs, which include door-to-door pickup and drop-off, can be steep.

The average cost of operating a single paratransit trip is about $23 in the U.S., compared with less than $4 for the average trip on a bus or light rail. Transit agencies nationwide logged about 223 million paratransit trips at a cost exceeding $5.1 billion — about 12 percent of total transit operating costs — in 2013, according to the most recent data from the American Public Transportation Association.

"I understand there are budget concerns. But for me this is a quality-of-life issue," said Sarah Kaplan, 32, who was born with cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. She rides a vehicle operated by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority to get to and from her job.

"I want the right to leave my house like everyone else," Kaplan said.

The deficit-ridden agency hopes to cut $10 million in annual paratransit costs by expanding an existing taxi voucher system and contracting with ride-hailing services.

The plan, not yet finalized, would charge customers $2 per ride, while the MBTA contributes up to $13 for the trip. If a trip costs more than $15, the passenger would pay the difference.

A potential incentive for riders: Uber or Lyft can be summoned immediately with an app; trips on MBTA vehicles must be scheduled a day ahead.

With a limited number of wheelchair-accessible vehicles, the ride-hailing services would be available largely to people who can walk. And while a majority of individuals certified to use paratransit fit that bill, advocates worry about creating an unfair and possibly even illegal two-tiered system for the disabled.

Uber and Lyft have both cited efforts to improve offerings for disabled riders. But the services have argued they are technology, not transportation, companies, meaning they are not required to provide accessible vehicles. Advocates for the disabled have filed a handful of lawsuits.

In January, a coalition including disability rights groups and labor unions wrote to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, known as Metro, expressing alarm over the agency's interest in contracting with companies such as Uber or Lyft.

Metro hopes to solicit formal proposals from ride-sharing companies this summer but will pay careful attention to how such a program is structured, said Christian Kent, assistant manager of access services.

Pace has had preliminary meetings with Uber and Lyft, said agency spokesman Doug Sullivan.

Uber did not provide details of current paratransit proposals, but the company has pointed to disability outreach efforts such as UberACCESS that connects riders with wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

In a statement, Lyft said it has been in discussions with transit officials in Boston and was monitoring developments in Washington with the hope of participating in paratransit programs in both cities. The company also said it was working to accommodate people with disabilities.

Fire on tracks stops Yellow Line trains for over an hour

BY LEE V. GAINES
Pioneer Press

Service on the CTA Yellow Line was suspended for more than an hour April 4 after a fire broke out near the tracks at North Central Road, according to CTA spokesman Jeff Tolman.

He said the incident occurred around 1 p.m. between the Dempster and Oakton stations in Skokie. Skokie fire Chief Jim Walters said the incident was a small transformer fire. Service on the Yellow Line was subsequently suspended and resumed at 2:30 p.m., Tolman said. He said shuttle buses transported passengers along the line while service was out.

Walters said transformer fires are "fairly common." He said fire officials were on the scene for less than an hour while the blaze burned itself out because "we don't like putting water on electrical fires."

Tolman said the fire was unrelated to an incident that took place April 4 in which a woman was killed and several others injured after a car collided with a CTA Yellow Line train.

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

CTA: Purple Line ridership increases

BY BOB SEIDENBERG
Pioneer Press

Ridership on the Chicago Transit Authority's Purple Line is trending upward — good news for Evanston officials boosting the city as a transportation hub.

According to figures released earlier from the CTA, ridership on the Purple Line has increased by 9.5 percent from 2005 to 2015.

Average weekend travel is up 21.5 percent from 2005 to 2015.

Figures released by Evanston's Community Development department last week support the trend of much higher weekend travel on the Purple Line, with an increase of over 40 percent at the South Boulevard and Main Street stations, and over 50 percent at Dempster Street from 2005 to 2014.

In this file photo, a Purple line train arrives at the Davis Central, Foster, South Boulevard and Noyes, according to city figures.

CTA spokesperson Jeff Tolman cited on April 7 the "unprecedented investment in the transit system, particularly in the Purple Line," the CTA has made in recent years, as possibly contributing to the ridership increase.

Evanston officials, meanwhile, have touted the city's advantages as a transportation hub. At Davis and Main Street, CTA and Metra stations are located close to each other, one of the few places in the county with that kind of proximity.

In addition, officials pointed to the city's vibrant downtown.

Mayor Elizabeth Tisdahl has spoken previously about the city's efforts to attract young professionals who work in Chicago, but then return to Evanston and frequent its restaurants and cultural activities.
Religious leaders to host interfaith 'peace breakfast'

BY NATALIE HAYES
Pioneer Press

With the goal of putting religious boundaries aside for a day, local leaders of Christian, Muslim and other faiths from Niles, Morton Grove and neighboring communities will enjoy a meal together on April 15 during an interfaith breakfast at a local diner.

As part of a self-initiated listening tour called the Pursuing Peace Project, Elizabeth Jones, pastor of St. Luke's Christian Community Church in Morton Grove, is hosting the private event, which she described as a “peace breakfast.” Kappy’s Restaurant in the 7200 block of Dempster Street will play host to the breakfast, where local government officials and religious leaders are invited to brainstorm ideas to promote peaceful ideas in the community.

“Everyone seems to be in their own little cubicle these days where you plug into technology and shut yourself off from anything happening around you,” Jones said. “I want to promote the idea of peace and harmony, and peace starts with getting people to talk to each other.”

As a pastor, Jones talks to many people every day, many of whom open up to her about their fears and hopes for the future, she said. Recently, she said, she’s noticed a shift in the mind-sets of people she talks to that has led her to believe there’s a deeper feeling of general anxiety.

“I’m sensitive to people’s emotional states, and people tell me they feel free to speak their minds to me,” she said. “There’s certainly a different level of fear today — almost like an undercurrent of anxiety and fear.”

In February, Jones launched the Pursuing Peace Project, a local listening tour intended to uncover people’s perspectives of what peace is by simply asking them to share their personal definitions. She then asked each person who agreed to speak to her to write down his or her definition and pose for a photo holding the piece of paper.

Jones, who posts all responses on her blog said she was careful not to use the opportunity to preach religious rhetoric, but many of the responses she received nonetheless touched on people’s perspectives of love and religion.

“I just go up to people and ask them what peace means to them, and I get anything from a one-word answer to a few sentences,” she said. “What I’m doing has a Christian outlook, but I try not to push the ‘God’ thing unless the person really stresses the role of God in their definition — then I’d feel free to go there.”

The Peace Breakfast is the latest peg of her mission, and Jones hopes religious leaders will come ready to think up ways to plan activities that will bridge the gaps between different religions.

An interfaith peace walk that would take participants on a tour of the different religious centers in the Niles and Morton Grove area is one such event, but it’s still in the preliminary planning stages, according to the Rev. Dennis O’Neill of St. Martha’s Catholic Church, also in Morton Grove.

O’Neill, whose parish hosted an annual interfaith Thanksgiving dinner last year, said the Peace Breakfast would be a good opportunity to get to know other local religious leaders.

“Interfaith events are not new for us, but I think it would be great to have more things like this planned,” he said. “This will be a good opportunity for us to get to know each other better.”

The Muslim Education Center, also based in Morton Grove, hosts an annual interfaith Thanksgiving dinner as well.

Natalie Hayes is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
Skokie library nationally honored

ALA recognizes 'Voices of Race' programming

BY MIKE ISAACS
Pioneer Press

For some three months last year, Coming Together in Skokie and Niles Township departed from its regular program routine to take an unprecedented look at the thorny subject of race.

Voices of Race ran last year for months to coincide with a provocative exhibition on race at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center — Race: Are We So Different?; now Voices of Race has been heard loud and clear well beyond the area, capturing a prestigious national award for the Skokie Public Library from the American Library Association’s Cultural Community Fund.

According to the American Library Association, the Excellence in Library Programming Award recognizes a library that “demonstrates excellence by providing programs that have community impact and respond to community needs.”

The Skokie Public Library is one of the main partners that stages Coming Together every year. Except for last year, when it turned its spotlight on race in general, the program annually has examined one culture through literature and myriad other programs.

Skokie Public Library Director Carolyn Anthony said the American Library Association award is not often given to a library like Skokie’s.

“This is an award that’s open to all libraries, but many of the winners have been academic libraries,” she said. “It’s not the first time a public library has won, but it’s often been a different kind of library.”

The judging committee, in fact, was made up mostly of representatives from academic libraries, Anthony said.

The Skokie Public Library applied for the award, she said, because it knew Coming Together was offering something special.

“We were all a little bit apprehensive because doing a whole series of programs about race, and having people talk about race isn’t always done,” she said.

“You think, ‘Can we keep this under control? Can this get away from us?’”

For Voices of Race, the library and others hosted “compelling programs” for patrons of all ages that included theatrical performances, lectures, book discussions and more, the American Library Association said.

The program did not shy away from controversial and timely issues either; one library program focused on the violent deaths of young black men from Emmett Till to Michael Brown to Trayvon Martin, another saw Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White discussing his background and growing up in a different era when Jim Crow laws existed.

In addition to the library, Coming Together was hosted by Niles Township High School District 219, Oakton Community College, local schools, the Skokie Park District and more.

In announcing the award, the American Library Association made note of Skokie’s diverse population and the Coming Together program in general.

It also acknowledged that more than 8,000 people from Skokie and beyond attended programs in the race series with more than 60 percent indicating it was their first visit to a Coming Together event.

“This was something new, and we weren’t sure exactly how it was going to go and if people were going to come,” Anthony said.

“Would they get something from it and see it as a benefit or might it even create some discord?”

Based on the feedback, she said, the organizers knew quickly it would be the former.

Coming Together in Skokie and Niles Township was founded by five women, including Anthony, from different parts of the village. They said they wanted to bring a diverse community together by sharing and exploring cultures through literature and other programming.

The award includes $5,000 and a citation of achievement that Anthony will pick up in June at the 2015-16 American Library Association’s annual conference in Florida. She said the money will be pumped back into the Coming Together program.

While many communities this week are celebrating their libraries for National Library Week, the Skokie Public Library is no stranger to awards and accolades.

Anthony said the library has always tried to read the changing pulse of the community and offer programming that has meaning to its members.

“We thought this was a pretty special program because so many people turned out, and it involved so many partners in the community.”

— Carolyn Anthony, Skokie Public Library director

The 2015 Coming Together program explored race in a way not done before in the community.

SPL has won a national Excellence In Library Programming Award from the American Library Association. The library was honored for the 2015 Coming Together in Skokie and Niles Township program exploring the subject of race.

“We thought this was a pretty special program because so many people turned out, and it involved so many partners in the community.”

— Carolyn Anthony, Skokie Public Library director

The 2015 Coming Together program explored race in a way not done before in the community.
Holocaust survivors share their personal stories

BY DANIEL I. DORFMAN
Pioneer Press

Silence enveloped an auditorium at Glencoe's Am Shalom as Beatrice Muchman told the story of when she was five years old in Germany.

At that point, Hitler had been in power for five years, but Muchman's parents thought the poisonous atmosphere for Jews in Nazi Germany would get better. Then came Kristallnacht, the night in November 1938 when Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues were smashed, and a dark reality set in.

"My parents were no longer able to leave. They had to flee. That is what I remember best," Muchman told the crowd. "Suddenly, my life fell apart."

Muchman was one of three people who fled Germany in March 1939 and went to Belgium, but eventually the Nazis occupied that country and Muchman's uncle was arrested.

Muchman, who lives in Chicago, said her uncle was an attorney who mistakenly believed the law would protect him.

"If I abide by the law and do the right thing, this will not happen. I will be free," Muchman said her uncle wrote in some letters.

Instead, he was killed at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

"So much for thinking that laws are always great, and one should always do what one is told," she said.

By 1942, with Nazis still controlling much of Europe, Muchman said her parents decided it was time to separate themselves from their child to give her a better chance of surviving.

She was taken with a cousin to a farm just outside of Brussels to be raised by two Catholic women who wanted to save Jewish children.

She would never see her parents again.

After the war, she was reunited with her grandmother in Brussels, and the two soon came to the United States to join an aunt and uncle who had already made the journey.

In 1991, Muchman's daughter found a cache of fraying letters, documents and photographs from the entire family, asking for the aunt and uncle to get them visas to the United States, not realizing the borders were closed.

After the passage of more than five decades, Muchman was not sure what to do with the items, but she eventually decided to give them to the Holocaust Museum for preservation.

"Giving these things away is not easy, but you want to share them," Muchman said. "Where I first felt hesitant, I don't anymore."

She was joined by fellow survivors Estelle Laughlin of Lincolnshire and Wilmette's Nellie Fink on stage at Am Shalom, along with other survivors in the audience. Each survivor donated items that provided a personal perspective on the Holocaust for a time capsule that will be opened at the museum's 50th anniversary in 2043.

Muchman said she hopes her family's letters and photos will mean something to future generations.

"It is my hope that with all of these treasures held at the museum, it will make a difference to someone, somehow, someday."

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

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President Barack Obama speaks to students at the University of Chicago Law School April 7. Obama addressed his U.S. Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland.

Obama's 'black lesbian from Skokie' comment sends suburb trending

BY RICHARD RAY
Pioneer Press

A comment made by President Barack Obama at the University of Chicago Law School regarding his nomination for the Supreme Court sent the northern suburb of Skokie trending on Twitter on April 7.

"But at no point did I say ‘Oh, you know what? I need a black lesbian from Skokie in that slot. Can you find me one?’ " the president said. "I mean, that's just not how I've approached it."

The comment was in response to a question from an audience member that was critical of his nominating Merrick Garland, an appeals court judge from Lincolnwood, citing a lack of racial and LGBT diversity in the country's courts.

Twitter users responded to the comment with an array of tweets ranging from the comedic to the incredulous.

When something trends on Twitter, the keywords are promoted by an algorithm that identifies popular topics users are discussing on the platform, according to a 2010 Twitter blog post.

“Twitter users now send more than 95 million tweets a day, on just about every topic imaginable," the post reads. "We track the volume of terms mentioned on Twitter on an ongoing basis. Topics break into the Trends list when the volume of tweets about that topic at a given moment dramatically increases.”

Obama was at University of Chicago to promote Garland, who attended high school at Niles West in Skokie and was born in Chicago, as his Supreme Court nominee, calling him "as good of a judge as we have in this country right now."

In response to questions on April 7 about diversity in the federal courts, Obama defended both his record and his nomination of Garland, the Chicago Tribune reported.

"Not to brag, but I have transformed the federal courts, from a diversity standpoint, with a record that's been unmatched," Obama said.

"Yeah, he's a white guy, but he's a really outstanding jurist, sorry," Obama said of Garland.

Tweets on Skokie

@ashley_wood: Skokie is trending on Twitter I never thought this would happen
@JPOMalley1: By the way, @POTUS? Merrick Garland is from Lincolnwood, not Skokie youwerethisclose
@jonlong522: You guys!!! Obama said my home town is a great place :) waddup Skokie!!!
@Dream_Fight_Win: It's not often you see "Skokie" in national headlines...
@StacyLaMelle: I wish we had a Black Lesbian from Skokie running for POTUS.
@barbластics: Obama with the #Skokie shoutout
@mrmilkybig: Am I late for #skokie trend? [Love] our village
City, VFW site owners to discuss ‘acceptable’ uses

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON
Pioneer Press

Representatives of a corporation that recently purchased the longtime Park Ridge VFW building at the corner of Canfield and Higgins roads say they are willing to work with city officials to come up with suitable uses for the site.

Hubert Cioromski of Canfield Higgins LLC and attorney Nicholas Fтикas addressed the Park Ridge City Council on April 4, offering to delay a rezoning request before the Cook County Zoning Board of Appeals so they could discuss development options with city staff for the site at 10 W. Higgins Road.

“We hope to come to a meeting of the minds on how we can proceed with our current application,” Fтикas said, explaining that talks would focus on “uses that would be acceptable to the city of Park Ridge and uses that would be absolutely unacceptable.”

Though it abuts Park Ridge to the west and north, the property is in unincorporated Cook County, which means the city of Park Ridge can not regulate what is built there unless it is annexed.

Canfield Higgins LLC had applied for a “restricted industrial” zoning classification for the property and the zoning board had been scheduled to hear the request on April 6. That zoning allows for a wide range of uses, including assembly and machine shops, banks, dry cleaning businesses, gyms, bars, restaurants, car repair centers and retail shops, according to county code.

A report from Strategy Planning Associates, hired by Canfield Higgins LLC to “evaluate the fiscal and economic impact to the taxing jurisdictions” of development, said a McDonald’s or a convenience store have been discussed. But Fтикas said a specific business has not yet been identified.

The property, which includes the VFW building and a parking lot along Canfield Road, is currently zoned for single-family homes, but that is not the “best use” for the site, Fтикas said. He asked that Park Ridge not move forward on annexing the land at this time. Aldermen began discussing that possibility on March 21.

“We understand Park Ridge retains that right to annex the property at any point in the future, but we’ve had about 7½ to eight months of work to get to this point and an annexation would effectively restart the process,” Fтикas said. “It would add another three or four months to a process that we’re nearing completion on.”

The owners hope to reach some kind of agreement with the city on acceptable uses under county zoning and then “at a later date potentially discuss the annexation,” he said.

The property is zoned for single-family homes, but that is not the “best use” for the site, Fтикas said. He asked that Park Ridge not move forward on annexing the land at this time. Aldermen began discussing that possibility on March 21.

Second Ward Ald. Nicholas Milissis called the proposal “an acceptable solution.”

Acting Mayor Marty Maloney said he did not want it to appear that the city “did that developer a favor” by allowing representatives from Canfield Higgins LLC to enter into talks with city staff.

He asked that any list of acceptable uses be submitted to the City Council for review.

The council last month passed a resolution formally objecting to the request for restricted industrial zoning from the county.

An official of Park Ridge VFW Post 3579 has said the group will relocate to the White Eagle banquet hall at 6839 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Niles by early summer.

Public records show that managers of Canfield Higgins LLC are Cioromski, who is president of Troy Realty in Chicago, and developer Spiro Angelos, founder of Jameson’s Charhouse.

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A Chicago Tribune Publication | Thursday, April 14, 2016
#1
Buffalo Grove couple opens mikvah spa

By Ronnie Wachter
Pioneer Press

A sacred and ancient Jewish ritual can now be performed in a Buffalo Grove couple's garage.

"It's an incredible feeling, it's hard to describe," Rabbi Shimon Zehnwirth said of watching rainwater fill a spa he built inside his garage. "It's water sent from heaven."

Zehnwirth and his wife, Elisa, are the operators of the Women's Mikvah Spa of Buffalo Grove, which they hope will become a source of spiritual renewal for Jewish women in the northwest suburbs.

The couple hopes that Mikvah, opened on April 10, will prove to be an asset to Jews of every denomination, combining the millennia-old cleansing tradition of the same name with modern technology.

"There's a little pampering involved, but it's in the context of coming into closer contact with one's spirituality," Zehnwirth said. "It's not an entertainment center, in any sense."

The Zehnwirths built a compact, but brightly lit and lightly appointed, four-room spa into about half of their garage at 491 Farrington Court. The facility includes two changing rooms with showers and a 1,402-gallon immersion pool that is the center of the mikvah ritual.

The spa has its own entrance separate from their home, and Elisa said she is solely in charge of making appointments and serving clients during a ritual the couple said should be an intimate religious experience.

Shimon said the mikvah procedure grew from instructions found in the Torah that describe how all kinds of objects, including living bodies, should be cleansed. The Torah includes instructions on how women should separate themselves from their husbands during their menstrual cycles, Shimon said. Mikvah is the ceremony women go through after that cycle to be considered clean again, he said.

It begins with rainwater. A portion of the water that women will dip themselves in flows to the pool through a series of PVC pipes from the Zehnwirths' rooftop. The basis of the ancient practice calls for water that has not been transported or manipulated, Shimon said.

"The water has to flow by itself," he said.

But he and Elisa both said Jewish authorities have updated the tradition through the centuries, and the immersion pool includes some water from Buffalo Grove's municipal pipes. It also includes bromine, a chemical with less odor and irritation than chlorine, that kills algae. Other additives are added to balance the pH level, the couple said.

Shimon chuckled while talking about all of the explaining they did with Buffalo Grove health officials, who wanted to know how they intended to keep clients clean during the unique cleansing ritual.

"The village had no idea what was going on," he said. "It took a few years, but we finally got it done."

And then, there are the varying protocols of different Jewish traditions to follow. The spa includes three separate rainwater storage tanks, totaling 1,361 more gallons to accommodate the Chabad practice.

"We built it both ways," Elisa said.

Opening a spa has been their goal since they bought the house, the couple said.

Shimon lamented that the practice is no longer strictly observed in most Jewish communities. The nearest mikvahs to Buffalo Grove are in Skokie and Rogers Park, he said, and his goal is to eliminate the driving distance that some women cite as a reason for not partaking.

Joel Schatz, director of news and information for the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago, said that while his group does not actively monitor the number of mikvahs, they do seem to be rising in popularity outside of Orthodox synagogues.

"Resurgence is too strong of a word," Schatz said. "But it is rejuvenating."

The Zehnwirths said the practice has modern appeal, as well as an ancient spiritual function. They say it can provide a monthly renewal of a marriage. By observing the mikvah tradition, couples give themselves built-in time off on a regular basis and something to celebrate after the ritual's completion, they said.

"It's like having a wedding every month," Shimon said. "It elevates the whole relationship. The fires are rekindled, in a certain way."

Ronnie Wachter/Pioneer Press

Rabbi Shimon Zehnwirth checks the plumbing that directs rainwater from the roof of his home into the immersion pool he and his wife Elisa will soon use for the Jewish cleansing ritual known as mikvah.
The case against higher minimum wage doesn't add up

**Paul Sassone**

If employers aren't willing to pay low-end employees a decent, living wage, you'd think they could at least come up with some new excuses why they won't.

Instead, we hear the same tired, phony prophecies of doom should workers make enough to feed themselves and their families.

Recently, when Chicago teachers walked out for a day to call attention to how the state funds (or doesn't fund) education, they were joined on the picket line by fast food workers and other minimum wage earners who want the minimum wage set at $15 an hour.

And sure enough, there on TV was a representative of the Illinois Retail Merchants Association telling reporters that an hourly wage of $15 would force businesses to lay off workers. Thus, raising the minimum wage would hurt workers, not help them.

Every time I hear this explanation, I wonder why employers now keep on the payroll workers they can do without.

People who own and operate businesses are smart. They hire people to perform tasks that make money for the businesses they own and operate. So, if they lay off staff because the minimum wage has risen, then they didn't really need those workers to operate a successful business. Because if they laid off staff needed to operate a successful business, the business would be put at a competitive disadvantage, which might result in less business and lower profits.

A $15 minimum wage is an annual salary of roughly $31,200. The federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour yields an annual salary of roughly $15,100. In Illinois, the minimum wage is $8.25 an hour, or roughly $17,200 a year.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sets the poverty level for a family of four at

- $24,800. Neither the federal nor Illinois minimum wage rates come close to paying enough to support a family. A minimum wage of $15 would.
- But the folks who pay salaries continue to reject minimum wage hikes - for workers' own good.

The logical result of such thinking is that if increasing the minimum wage reduces the number of jobs, then lowering the minimum wage would create jobs.

Thus, if workers were paid nothing there would be jobs for everyone. Right?

Paul Sassone is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.

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Does food industry need more government intervention?

**Randy Blaser**

My doctor's advice was simple. Think of it like this, he suggested. In China, we say that you should eat one less grain of rice each day of your life.

That was his latest metaphor to help me get my weight under control, which I sadly admit has gotten off the chart.

That's a hard thing to admit for someone who was derided as "Skinny-minnie" throughout grade school in the days when

bullying was a more active pastime in the kid world.

How did I keep that svelte figure back then? I don't know. Heck, look at the tapes. Everyone was thin. I just remember my mom giving me a carrot whenever I asked for a between-meal snack.

And I was happy to have that taste as good today as it did way back then.

But now that I have total control of the refrigerator and can weigh the difference between a piece of banana cream pie or a carrot as a snack, well, the pie wins every time.

So what I need is an adult to control the refrigerator. But that's not all. I need some real clear advice on the best way to eat that's healthy, tasty and do-able.

One friend swears by the caveman diet. The idea is you only eat foods available to prehistoric man. OK, nuts and berries are plentiful. But mastodon is a bit harder to find.

One of my neighbors tells me to snack on almonds to satisfy that daily hunger. At the club, a fellow member tells me to focus on protein and cut the carbs and sugars. My dad says cut the sandwich in half and save the rest for later.

Another friend eats pre-packaged food that looks like healthy candy bars. I admit he's lost weight and I am envious. But I think I'd rather stick with a good carrot.

And maybe that's my problem. That's no joke about my mom giving me a carrot, or a stalk of celery, or a tomato between meals. I kind of remember enjoying them, too.

But where can I find a good carrot or a tasty tomato? Is it possible food doesn't taste as good today as it did way back then?

That's my theory and I'm sticking to it.

The American diet, I'm convinced, lacks flavor. So we butter it up, so to speak, with salt and sugar and artificial flavors to give it some pizazz. Rather than blame myself and my own poor habits, I'm blaming the American food industry.

And maybe the recipe to light when we vacationed in the City of Light - Paris. The food just tasted so much better over there. And, of course, I lost weight on the trip.

It was like a miracle to me. Food that tasted better than ever with the added bonus of being healthier. How can I replicate that at home?

Alas, I've been on a never-ending search for the answer ever since.

I've reached the point where I want the federal government to step in. I don't want New York Mayor Bill de Blasio telling me what size Coke I can drink, or First Lady Michelle Obama pushing healthy lunches on my kids. But I do want Uncle Sam to tell the food industry to stop pumping chickens and cows full of growth hormones and antibiotics and to cool it on pesticides and herbicides. And stop putting corn in everything.

Instead of growing more food faster, how about growing better food?

Randy Blaser is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
Dennis Hastert deserves no sympathy

Begging mercy in federal court, former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert is described as a devoted and loving father, a man so dedicated to his children that he would “take them fishing, rain or shine.” That’s a nice daddy. But what about other people’s kids? Like those four alleged victims of sexual abuse when he was a teacher and coach at Yorkville High School, the predation put in context in a riveting front-page Tribune story by reporters Christy Gutowski and Jeff Coen.

Of the four students, Hastert says nothing. His silence is shameless, because it was his appetite for boys — and his decision to pay $1.7 million in hush money to one victim and then lie about the cash withdrawals to the FBI — that brought Hastert down.

Once only a few heartbeat away from the presidency, Hastert is now in complete and utter disgrace. He’s awaiting sentencing after having pleaded guilty to illegally structuring cash withdrawals to pay a former student, known publicly only as Individual A.

Hastert wants sympathy, but before anyone throws a pity party, consider this: Gutowski and Coen reported that Hastert’s lawyers approached the family of one of his four former students and asked them to provide a Denny Hastert mercy letter for U.S. District Judge Thomas M. Durkin.

Even in this corrupt state, it doesn’t get creepier than that. In his final act, you might wish to keep two things in mind: The first is that his mercy plea is full of details about his medical condition. Corrupt politicians and gangsters always seem to get sick and helpless around sentencing. The other thing won’t be found in the court papers, but if you’re a longtime reader of mine, you might remember:

Hastert, a Republican boss of the corrupt Illinois bipartisan Combine, once tried to take over the process for naming the top federal prosecutors in Illinois. By tradition, naming federal prosecutors is reserved for the senior senator of the party of the president. In 2001, it was conservative Republican reformer Sen. Peter Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald wanted a politically independent prosecutor, an untouchable who couldn’t be reached by boss Democrats and Republicans.

But Hastert didn’t like that. So he puffed out his chest to let Illinois know that he, not Fitzgerald, had the mojo.

“You know, that’s not a senatorial patronage job,” Hastert told a Tribune reporter in 2001. “That’s a job that’s given by the administration. I have my contacts with the administration as well as anybody else.”

He waged war with Fitzgerald, who was almost all alone. President George W. Bush needed Hastert. And Hastert had his media contacts and relationships with presidential adviser Karl Rove, the Illinois Republican establishment, and Democrats too.

But Hastert lacked two things. He didn’t have the Chicago Tribune. And he didn’t have you. And you readers let the Bush White House know where you stood.

I took Fitzgerald’s side in this dispute, as did the Tribune Editorial Board. And Hastert and his clique were hammered.

Sen. Fitzgerald picked Patrick Fitzgerald (no relation) as the federal prosecutor in Chicago. The White House went along. The Combine lost. If you follow corruption in this corrupt state, you know the rest of the story.

Ryan was convicted. Blagojevich was convicted. Outfit bosses and City Hall payroll artists and hired truck scammers went away. As payback, Hastert and the Illinois Republican Party refused to endorse Peter Fitzgerald, the incumbent Republican senator, for re-election.

Peter Fitzgerald was run out of politics. And a new fresh face, a Democrat, was elected senator from Illinois: Barack Obama.

Hastert wants probation. But he deserves federal prison.

College rejection a distant fear as life's lessons take hold

This is the story of a woman who feared her life was ruined when she was rejected by the college of her dreams.

Her name is Ashley Bunnell, and in 2003, after getting a rejection letter from Dartmouth College, she wrote me in search of what she called "perspective."

"I'm 18, fairly intelligent and ready to take on the world," she wrote. "Or at least I was until I got my rejection letter. What do you have to say to hopeless overachievers?"

Not convinced that I had the wisdom she sought, I nonetheless tried to provide some answers in a column. I tried to persuade her, and the many dispondent students like her, that rejection, whether it comes from a college, an employer or someone you love, can be an "alternate route" sign that takes you in fascinating directions you might not have known existed.

Many years later I received another letter from Ashley Bunnell. This time she was reporting on where her alternate route had taken her.

From Zion-Benton Township High School she headed, unenthusiastically, to Knox College in Galesburg, Ill. She hated the place. Home for winter break that year, she plotted her transfer out.

But to her surprise, when she came back to Knox for the second term, something shifted.

"I fell in love with it," she said. "I stayed and now I can't even imagine having gone anywhere else."

She studied English lit and physics, learned to stretch canvas and paint pictures, took flute lessons and ancient Greek.

"I did everything I think I should have," she wrote when she got back in touch. "Drank too little, then too much, learned how to dance in front of other people, changed my major three times, stayed up late nights talking about philosophy and psychology and politics, wrote naive editorials, and some very wise ones, joined a sorority, learned the secret handshake, dropped out of a sorority, prayed, loved, really loved."

After graduation, she worked for awhile then went back to school to get a master's in psychology. She was working on her thesis when everything changed.

Dec. 12, 2011, she was diagnosed with Stage 3 cervical cancer. In the months that followed, she went through chemotherapy and radiation. There were times she was too sick to walk, too exhausted to think.

In the midst of the confusion, she took comfort in the online company of a man she had started corresponding with before she was diagnosed. He lived in Pittsburgh; they had met in the comments section of a blog. She liked his wit, and on Fridays, while she sat for hours in chemo, they chatted via Facebook.

In June of 2012, after being told there was no trace of the cancer, she met him in person for the first time and they began dating long-distance.

Then the cancer, it seemed, resurfaced. More tests, more fear. "Two more times they told me I was going to die," she said.

She lived on. The cancer, it seemed, hadn't resurfaced, though in March 2013 doctors removed one of her kidneys, damaged as the result of a cancer-related surgery.

That summer, she moved to Pittsburgh to be with that kind, funny man she'd met online. They married that November.

Bunnell has been in Pittsburgh ever since, feeling healthy, working with homeless people as part of a project to help them move off the streets. Her husband, Jon Mathieu, works for the church they both attend.

"Marriage is awesome, and hard, and mess, and glorious," she said. "Definitely worth the chemo." She is 31 now, still wondering what life holds.

"I am so grateful for age!" she emailed recently. "Not just because cancer threatened to steal mine, but because I own myself now in a way that I didn't then. When I was 18, I worried so much about making a mark on the world, about doing everything right. And that anxiety is still there (it might just be part of who I am) but it is not nearly so ferocious, nor is it central. I'm enjoying things now just for what they are — my perfect nephew, new ideas, a dance class, knitting needles, old friends, new friends, a professional challenge. Life isn't perfect. Never will be, I imagine. But it is deeply good."

I asked her what she would say to her 18-year-old self, to any high school student in despair over a college rejection.

"I would start by saying I'm not sure that she would listen," Bunnell said.

She laughed, then answered: "I would tell her that life is much longer and it's bigger and it's more flexible than she imagines. It's big enough to absorb her mistakes and disappointments. Just because she isn't going to get into Dartmouth or win a Fulbright scholarship doesn't mean she won't do work that's fulfilling and meaningful, that she won't have awesome experiences and love."

That's perspective, the kind only living can offer. 
RE-VINYLIZING

Indie music shops gearing up for Record Store Day

BY BRUCE INGRAM
Pioneer Press

Nine years ago, with illegal downloads crippling the music industry in general, things were looking grim for independent record stores. In fact, the situation is still far from rosy and numerous record stores continue to fail every year. For the survivors, however, the outlook is improving. And that has a lot to do with the efforts of Record Store Day, an organization formed in 2008 to secure hundreds of new vinyl releases and other promotional items, to be distributed exclusively at independent record stores.

According to Val Camilletti, owner of Val’s Halla in Oak Park, only 500,000 vinyl records were sold nationwide in 2005. But now that number is somewhere between 11 and 12 million. It’s enough to keep some local record store owners going in the business they love. We spoke with a few of those owners about Record Store Day, taking place April 16 this year, and being in a challenging, changing business.

For more information on Record Store Day, including a list of participating stores, go to www.recordstoreday.com.

Val’s Halla
239 Harrison St., Oak Park,
www.valshallarecords.com

After being in business for nearly 50 years, owner Val Camilletti came very close to closing her doors four years ago, until loyal customers stepped in to save the day with a fundraiser.

“Apparently, they felt they wanted us to stick around,” she said. “That helped us get over the hump, so we’re still struggling along day by day. And I’d definitely like to say a big thank you to Record Store Day for giving independent record stores the opportunity to make that happen.”

Camilletti says the annual event has become the biggest single day of the year for stores like hers. Though she stops short of crediting it entirely for the recent popularity of vinyl records.

“Now that kids can buy record players again, they think they have to have one if their friends do,” she said. “And that makes their parents dig out their old record players and remember again how much fun it used to be to look for records and buy them and play them.”

All of which is good news for Camilletti, who keeps roughly 20,000 vinyl records in stock.

And also more than enough reason for her to make each Record Store Day “a big hoop-de-doo.” Camilletti celebrates by opening two hours early and providing refreshments for the customers that start lining up at 4 a.m. (Record Store Day rules preclude precorders and forbid stores from holding product for customers.) She also has a store-wide sale and live music by a roster that begins at 10 a.m.

As for the Record Store Day releases, Camilletti said she’s always most enthusiastic about the annual Sun Records compilation including tracks voted on by record-store owners, and proud to be one of five stores carrying vinyl versions of WXRT-FM’s annual “ONXRT: Live from the archives” compilation. And she’s personally psyched about Patti Smith’s live recreation of her classic “Horses” last year at the famed Electric Lady recording studio.

Rainbow Records
421 N. Northwest Highway,
Barrington, http://bit.ly/1qAy5w

Now in his 19th year of operating Rainbow Records (which began in the mid-70s in Park Ridge), John Thominet says he likes to joke with people about the terrible business he’s chosen to be in.

“I tell them the lobotomy took on the third try,” he said with a laugh. “Am I getting rich? Definitely not, financially. But I’m rich in the soul and the heart.”

Asked how the business has changed in the last 30 years, he can’t resist a slightly derisive snort.

“When I first took over, in 1989, vinyl was nonexistent,” he said. “It was all CDs. Then, around the time of the turn of the century, we had the wonderful introduction of Linnware and Naperst and all those file-sharing guys.

“And that basically put a knife in the back of the record industry.”

Things are better now, though, Thominet says, largely because of Record Store Day.

“You can’t make a bootleg of a vinyl record,” he said. “At least, not easily.”

Currently, Thominet estimates that he has between 12,000 and 18,000 vinyl records in stock.

This year Thominet has ordered 150 or so of the roughly 350 new titles available from the likes of The Kinks, The Animals, Phish and The Grateful Dead. And he’s particularly excited by this year’s some-thing more obscure released, such as a single by The Runaways (Joan Jett’s old band) on red vinyl.

Thominet in-store April 16 celebrations this year will include performances by Chicago blues artist Universal Slim and a band performing a tribute to Radiohead.

Vintage Vinyl
925 Davis St., Evanston,
www.vvmo.com

Unlike most independent record stores, Vintage Vinyl owner Steven Kay, as the name of his shop implies, has always focused almost exclusively on vinyl. He has a successful mail order business, a stock of roughly 100,000 records and he was also able to sidestep most of the economic woes caused by file-sharing.

But that doesn’t mean that Kay, who’s been in business since 1979, doesn’t have proper appreciation for Record Store Day.

“We participate in it because we’re always interested in getting new people into the shop and this is a good way to do it,” he said.

Like Camilletti, Kay doesn’t feel the recent resurgence of interest in vinyl can be attributed entirely to Record Store Day. In fact, he considers the word resurgence to be a misnomer, his shop being proof that vinyl never entirely went away.

“What has happened is that vinyl has been introduced to a new, younger demographic,” he said.

“For those people, the experience of playing a record is new because they didn’t grow up with it. They grew up downloading music on computers. In comparison, records are a very different, tangible experience. And that can be exciting.”

Rolling Stones Records
7300 W. Irving Park Road,
Norridge, www.rollingstonesmusic.com

Mike Golen, a manager at owner Wayne Rohalla’s Rolling Stones Records in Norridge, which has been in business since 1970, believes there are other reasons Rolling Stones has stayed open where so many other indie record stores have failed.

“I think this store has survived because of customer loyalty and the fact that we have an aesthetic and a brand,” Golen said.

Though that doesn’t mean he doesn’t appreciate how good Record Store Day has been for business.

“It’s been extremely helpful for us,” he said. “I’ve been here nine years and the last Record Store Day was the busiest I’ve experienced in my time here.”

Like Camilletti and Kay, Golen believes the current popularity of vinyl has a lot to do with people’s desire to have a different sort of listening experience.

“I think that people have a craving for physical product again,” he said. “Plus, if people want the full, undiluted experience of an album, they can only get it by buying an LP or a CD. That way, people get to hear the music the way it was intended.”
Classic Film Series having a 'Thunderball' at Pickwick

BY BRUCE INGRAM
Pioneer Press

Pickwick Theatre Classic Film Series host Matthew Hoffman planned to kick off his third season last year with a special 50th-anniversary screening of "Thunderball" - Sean Connery's fourth outing as super spy James Bond.

He ran into a little problem with "Spectre," however (the new Bond film, not the evil organization intent on world domination). MGM didn't want any of the old Bond films in circulation while its latest Bond opus was in theaters, so Hoffman simply rescheduled.

Now the 50th-anniversary-plus-one screening of "Thunderball" will take place April 21 on the big screen of the Pickwick Theatre in Park Ridge with lots of extras to help make up for the delay. In addition to the actual prop model plane used to film the hijacked RAF Vulcan Bomber in the movie, the first 100 people through the door will have a chance to win a tour of the James Bond prop facility in Kankakee.

"I was really eager to do another one. Besides, I've always been a huge fan of the Connery Bond films and I'd like to keep the tradition going," Hoffman said. "Next season, I'm hoping to show 'You only Live Twice' for its 50th anniversary. And the year after that, I'd like to go backward and show 'Dr/No' and 'From Russia with Love' as a double feature."

Hoffman said he also has some hope that "Thunderball" and the final film of his third season, "Captain Blood," will be his first sellouts of the 950-seat Pickwick. He's certainly been moving in that direction since a comparatively slow start his first season, when he averaged 200 people per screening. Since then, though, beginning with the Tyrone Power centennial double feature that closed that season, his audiences have been increasing steadily. The film series averaged 500 people per screening last season and it has done similarly well this time - even drawing roughly 800 people to a Halloween showing of "Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein."

"That was more people than we had for the 75th anniversary screening of "Gone with the Wind,"" Hoffman noted with a laugh.

Hoffman said he realized that the secret to success at the Pickwick is doing his best to make every film an event. An anniversary, if preferably, with special guests and prizes and fun extras.

"But the bottom line is always giving people the chance to see these great films on a big screen, the way they were meant to be seen," he said.
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PEOPLE
Spotlight: What people in the arts are up to

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
Pioneer Press

Here's a look at the latest news on local authors, actors, artists, musicians and more.

They've got his number:
You know you're headed for a downhill slide when your name is Mr. Zero. Oak Park native Neala Barron is helping to tell the story of the man who is replaced by a machine as a cast member of The Hypocrites' production of "Adding Machine: A Musical." The Off-Broadway hit by Joshua Schmidt (music, book and lyrics) and Jason Leowith (book and lyrics) started in Chicago. Barron, who holds a BFA in acting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has shared her musical theater talents in productions at Porchlight Music Theatre, Griffin Theatre Company, Kokandy Productions and the Brown Paper Box Co. "Adding Machine: A Musical" runs through May 15 at Den Theatre's Heath Main Stage. For tickets, visit www.the-hypocrites.com.

Down in the dumps:
Skokie native Kirk Jackson plays the son of a faded, drug-addicted B-movie star in New American Folk Theatre's Midwest premiere of Johnny Drago's "Trash." The dark comedy is set in a garbage-filled trailer. An Illinois State University acting graduate, Jackson is a company member of New American Folk Theatre. The show runs through May 15 at the Den Theatre. For tickets, visit www.newamericanfolktheatre.org.

Struck the right chord:
Twenty-eight Maine South High School students joined the Park Ridge Civic Orchestra in a performance of Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" at the orchestra's March 16 concert. The students, who were led by conductor Victor Muenzer, prepared with their Maine South teachers, Martin Nocedal (orchestra) and David Hutter (band). The students were Julia Benbenek, Nicole Burdyn, Lian Haller, Patrick Oleksy, Caroline Patterson, Victor Sbiga and Georgia Slojkowski on violin and Natalie Briggs, Caroline Dudlak and Paige Keller on viola. Cello players were Anastasia Dalianis, Katarina Ehni and Alec Wojda, and bass players were James Butler and Robin Reinhard. Playing flute were Mary Claire Nagai and Anna Sptyk. Also performing were clarinet players Anthony Dare and Joe Hands; trumpet players Ben Levin, O'Leary and Kara Swamon and Dominique Divalerio, Steve Manos and Fiona Nimietz on French horn. Christo Fosse and Alex Krysl played trombone, Justin Pinsky tuba and Katie Daehler percussion.

Liu comes through:
Twenty-one-year-old Winnetka native Kate Liu is one of five classical pianists who are finalists for the American Pianists Association's 2017 awards. The finalists go through a 13-month competition of solo and chamber performances, including a concerto performance with the Indianapolis Symphony. Liu, who is currently studying with Robert McDonald at the Curtis Institute of Music, trained at the Chicago Institute of Music with Alan Chow, Micah Yui and Emilia del Rosario.

Mothers and sons can play bingo and get to know the firefighters at the Lincolnwood Fire Station from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on April 21.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Bingo!: A fun night at the Lincolnwood fire station

BY MYRNA PETLICKI
Pioneer Press

Fire stations are magical places for youngsters. You and your son, ages 4-12, can spend time inside one during Mother Son Bingo at the Lincolnwood Fire Station, 6-7:30 p.m. April 21 at 6900 N. Lincoln Ave.

"They move all the fire trucks out so it's a really great space for boys," said Linda Verin, community outreach and marketing coordinator for the Village of Lincolnwood. "The firemen call the bingo numbers. They also let the kids try on the boots and the uniforms."

It's a low-stress evening for moms, Verin noted. All they have to do is play bingo with their son and enjoy a pizza dinner with him.

The fire station will be decorated and bingo prizes will follow the theme, including firemen tattoos. "This is the second year we're doing it," Verin said. "Everybody had a great time last year."

The cost is $15 per couple for residents, $19 for nonresidents. Registration is required.

For details, call 847-677-9740 or go to www.lincolnwood.org.

Party for the Planet

Learn how Emily Oaks has changed over the past 200 years at an "Earth Day Celebration: A Journey Through Time," noon-4 p.m. April 17 at Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Broommel St., Skokie. Native Plants and earth-friendly foods will be sold. Admission is free.

For details, call 847-674-1500, ext. 2500 or go to www.skokieparks.org/emily-oaks-nature-center.

What a workout!

Kids ages 2-6 will stretch their musical muscles at Vocal Gymnasium with Wendy Morgan, 10-10:30 a.m. April 16 at Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave. Children will dance, sing, do finger play and learn tonal and rhythm patterns from the popular children's entertainer.

For details, call 847-965-4220 or go to www.mgp.org.

Back to nature

There will be family games, craft projects and educational activities at Playdate with Nature, 9-10 a.m. April 16 at Wildwood Nature Center, 529 Forestview Ave., Park Ridge. The event is free but registration is required.

For details, call 847-692-3570 or go to www.prparks.org.

Stroke of luck

Everyone is invited to contribute to a community painting during "An Afternoon of Creativity: Exhibition of Melanie P. Brown and Library Youth," 3-5 p.m. April 17 at Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St. You and your children will see work by teaching artist in residency Brown as well as artwork by the youth who participated in her month-long program. Light refreshments will be served at this drop-in event.

For details, call 847-673-7774 or go to www.skokielibrary.info.

#HUMANATURE

Songs of Fire, Love, Water, Grief and Whirlwinds

Tickets to all performances: $35 adults, $25 seniors/students and $10 children under 12, 847-382-5085 or at www.lakesidesingers.com. Group prices are available. Discount to members of Grace Church. Preferred seating for $45.00 at MIC and The Fourth Presbyterian Church. Tickets are available at the door.

Celebrating music from renaissance to rock
Parishioners and community members met at Divine Savior Church, Norridge, just before 2 p.m. on Good Friday, March 25, for the annual “Way of the Cross” procession through the streets of Norridge. Santo Faso, a parishoner, led the group on the hour walk, stopping at Stations of the Cross, which had been set up for this outdoor version of that service. Members of the group carried a wooden cross, in commemoration of Jesus’ walk to Calvary.

Town police directed traffic, so the way was safe for worshippers, who were back at the church by 3 p.m. for the Mass that honors the traditional hour of Jesus’ crucifixion. For more, go to divinesaviornorridge.org.

- Pioneer Press staff report

Parishoner Santo Faso, who led the procession, explains particulars about the walk to participants.

Way of the Cross participants took turns carrying a cross to commemorate Jesus’ walk to Calvary on the first Good Friday.

The Way of the Cross procession took about an hour, with participants stopping to recite Stations of the Cross.

PRCO musician Lisa Taylor, left, enjoys a laugh with a class participant.

Music therapist Nancy Swanson works with music class participants.

Class participants from the Adult Down Syndrome Center in Park Ridge each built a sound board with which to create music.

We want to publish your photos. To submit, visit http://community.chicagotribune.com or email sburrows@pioneerlocal.com.
Parents in interfaith marriages should be open-minded and supportive. Something as small as a Hanukkah ornament for the family Christmas tree can help make the holiday season a learning and consciousness-raising experience.

DAYNA SMITH/WASHINGTON POST

Raising kids in an interfaith marriage

Children complicate religious traditions, holiday celebrations
The key to a good meal? Add some spice

By Judy Buchenot
The Beacon-News

When Jim MacRunnels thinks about who influenced his cooking style, the Elburn resident first recalls Justin Wilson, the Ragin’ Cajun, who was the star of his own cooking show back in the 1970s.

Wilson’s shows were always filled with colorful stories about squirrel hunting and escapades in the deep South as well as an irreverent approach to cooking, MacRunnels said. One of Wilson’s tag lines was that he found it relaxing to “stir in a pot and drink a little wine.”

“Once I got one of his cookbooks, I started trying new things,” said MacRunnels. Wilson’s cookbooks were filled with unique recipes like rabbit andouille gumbo or rum baked beans. “He was never afraid to use his spices and his dishes had plenty of flavor,” says MacRunnels.

After trying a few recipes from Wilson’s cookbook, MacRunnels boldly created his own flavor-filled dishes. “I don’t really have any cooking wisdom to share except that cooking should be fun. I have always been a creative cook. When I was in college, we went fishing and caught blue gills. I figured out how to fry those fish in a popcorn popper because that was all we had,” he said with a shrug and a smile.

Since he likes hunting, MacRunnels cooks some unusual meals. “One of my favorites is barbecued pheasant breasts. I dip the pheasant breast in a little egg and then some Panko crumbs and deep fry it. I wait until the next day to put the fried breasts into the crock pot with a little barbecue sauce. I let them get nice and hot and then I put the breast on a Kaiser roll, crumble on a little bleu cheese, and it is delicious.”

Many of MacRunnels dishes have an Italian flair to them. “I have learned not to be afraid of putting fennel in Italian dishes.” The herb is part of the parsley family and gives a licorice flavor to dishes that compliments rich tomato flavors well.

“I take the fennel, pour it in my hand and then crush it with my fingers right before I put it in the dish,” he said.

The last-minute grinding of the herb adds the stronger flavor to the dish, according to MacRunnels.

In addition to mixing up great meals, MacRunnels is known for mixing up great fundraisers for Special Olympics. He and his wife, Colleen, first got involved with raising funds for the organization over 10 years ago.

Then about five years ago, the couple teamed up with the Maple Park Police Department to try to reach a goal of raising $20,000 for Special Olympics: “We raised $24,000, so the next year, we set a goal of $40,000 and raised $47,000.” The fundraising goal has grown every year since.

In 2013 and 2014, MacRunnels and the police department were the top fundraisers for Special Olympics in Illinois.

MacRunnels organizes events throughout the year that draw great support. A recent Polar Pub Crawl featured a challenge to visit multiple pubs in St. Charles wearing shorts, sandals and T-shirts during winter temperatures. Each month MacRunnels hosts a “name your own price” booth at the Kane County Flea Market. In July, he works on organizing Hogwild, a pig roast complete with live bands.

The next event will be the ninth annual Clay/Trap Shoot on May 15. Details on this event as well as the many other raffles and other fundraising events are posted on the organization’s website, publingforspecialolympics.com.

When he cooks for his son and wife, MacRunnels often makes his Chicken What the Hell, a Cajun inspired, Italian-style dish. He notes that the dish can be mixed together in advance and then popped in the oven for the final baking when guests arrive.

He also shares an interesting breakfast mixture that is sure to wake up the whole family.

Judy Buchenot is a freelance writer.

Chicken What the Hell

1. Pound chicken breasts to make them an even thickness. Mix together flour, Italian seasoning, 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper, black pepper and 1 tablespoon crushed fennel in a bowl.
2. Coat large frying pan with a thin layer of olive oil and heat. Dip each chicken breast in the flour mixture and place in hot oil. Brown each side of the breast until golden brown. Place in a 9-inch by 12-inch casserole dish. Set aside.
3. Without cleaning the frying pan, add garlic, parsley, onions and mushrooms. Cook and stir to light golden brown. Add red wine and deglaze the pan. Add oregano, 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper, 1/2 tablespoon fennel, spaghetti sauce and diced tomatoes.
4. Cook and stir the mixture until it begins to brown slightly. Pour over the chicken breasts. Bake at 325 degrees for 45 minutes.
5. While chicken is cooking, cook spaghetti according to package directions. To serve, divide spaghetti between four serving plates or bowls. Top each plate with a chicken breast and spoon a generous layer of sauce over it. Sprinkle 1/2 tablespoon of Parmesan cheese over each serving.

Jim’s Hearty Breakfast

Amounts depend upon number of people and the size of the appetite.

1. Start with a lightly browned corn tortilla. Top tortilla with a serving of browned and drained chorizo. Add a layer of cooked scrambled eggs.
2. Top with a layer of guacamole and then salsa. Sprinkle on cilantro and finish with a generous layer of queso cheese.

Jim’s Culinary Cue

When you use dried herbs and spices, take a minute to warm them in a frying pan before adding them to your dish. The heat releases the aroma and intensifies the flavor.
It just so happens that April is National Grilled Cheese Month. As a result, the Internet is brimming with recipes riffing on the humble toasted cheese sandwich. These indulgent creations are often mile high monstrosities toutting everything from pulled pork to basil pesto. While these recipes sound delicious, they don't quite fall into grilled cheese territory in my book. Call me a purist, but a proper ooey-gooey melted cheese sandwich should contain nothing more than butter, bread and cheese. Period.

To make matters worse, I have a secret love affair with floppy American cheese and squishy white bread. I came from a wheat bread, Colby-only kind of family and always longed to find a stash of plastic wrapped-cheese singles in my refrigerator and a loaf of Wonder Bread on the counter. Alas, it never happened.

It turns out, however, my longing for these grocery store staples was totally in keeping with perfect grilled cheese production. History tells us the grilled cheese sandwich rose to popularity in the 1920s shortly after James L. Kraft started producing processed cheese singles and Wonder Bread hit the market. Who am I to deny this classic combination of fat, carbs and protein?

So these days I make a good ole' grilled cheese with a loaf of dense country-style white bread and a little American cheese for good measure. I marry this classic couple with a heaping dose of grated Swiss and cheddar cheeses and create a frico-inspired crust with Parmigiano-Reggiano and salted butter. My cheese choices range from the bottom of the barrel to the top of the heap, but the resulting sandwich leaves little to complain about.

This glorified grilled cheese has a shatteringly crisp exterior and the gorgeous melty center we all crave.

A frico crusted grilled cheese is divine on its own, but pairing it with a bowl full of creamy tomato soup smacks of childhood in the best possible way.

MELISSA ELSMO/OUT OF MEL'S KITCHEN

Gooey grilled cheese meets roasted tomato

A white bread grilled cheese sandwich made with American, Swiss and cheddar cheeses pairs perfectly with a roasted tomato soup.

out of Me/s Kitchen

MELISSA ELSMO

It just so happens that April is National Grilled Cheese Month. As a result, the Internet is brimming with recipes riffing on the humble toasted cheese sandwich. These indulgent creations are often mile high monstrosities toutting everything from pulled pork to basil pesto. While these recipes sound delicious, they don't quite fall into grilled cheese territory in my book. Call me a purist, but a proper ooey-gooey melted cheese sandwich should contain nothing more than butter, bread and cheese. Period.

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Doggedly pursuing a cure

By Jane Stancill
Raleigh (N.C.) News & Observer

Eliza, a 13-year-old Labrador retriever from Charlotte, N.C., is a four-legged miracle.
Almost a year and a half ago, her cancer was essentially cured during a clinical trial at North Carolina State University's vet school.

Now, Eliza and other canine patients might teach researchers something about cancer in their two-legged friends.

Cancer experts and drug developers increasingly believe they can create and speed successful treatments in dogs, with implications for certain types of human cancers. The field of oncology is moving away from toxic chemotherapy and more toward medicines targeted to tumor mutations and treatments that rev up the immune system.

The Duke Cancer Institute and NCSU's College of Veterinary Medicine recently formed the Consortium for Canine Comparative Oncology, or C3O, for short.

Dr. Michael Kastan, executive director of Duke Cancer Institute, said the time is right to compare treatments in people to treatments in animals other than mice, which are intentionally given diseases in a lab setting. Dogs and people live in the same environment, and they share some similar types of tumors that spontaneously occur.

And because many pet owners don't have easy access or the financial wherewithal to seek cancer treatment for dogs, there should be a large group of volunteers eager to participate in clinical trials.

“People want to treat the cancers that occur in their pets, and so this is an opportunity to help us learn about how to use these new drugs that are being developed,” Kastan said. “The dogs will benefit, the owners will benefit, and when we take the drugs to humans, we'll know a lot more about how to use them.”

Kastan said half of all dogs over the age of 10 will die of cancer. It's generally a disease of aging, similar to that in humans. There are differences, most notably that people smoke and get a whole host of cancers that dogs don't get. At the same time, certain breeds of dogs have a higher incidence of cancer. Kastan said doctors can learn more by studying the genetics of those breeds.

Eliza the Labrador didn't smoke but developed what appeared to be a terminal case of mouth and nose cancer.

One warm day in 2014, Eliza's owner, Lynne Murchison of Charlotte, noticed that the beloved family dog had a swollen snout. At first it seemed like a simple bee sting. But when she took Eliza out for a walk, the dog started bleeding from her mouth.

Later, a veterinarian delivered the bad news. Eliza had maybe five weeks to live. “I was destroyed,” Murchison said.

She scoured the NCSU vet school website, where she scrolled through various clinical trials and hit upon one for oral tumors.

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Soon, Eliza was in Raleigh, N.C., the first dog enrolled in that particular study.

First, veterinarians implanted tiny particles in the tumor, then injected her with drugs and small doses of X-rays that converted to UV light. It's a new treatment called immunolight therapy. The light activates drugs in the tumor, causing an immune response against the cancer.

Eliza had nine treatments spread across a month. At first the dog struggled with a bad reaction to one medication. Her teeth were loose, she had trouble eating and she began to lose weight. “I didn't think she was going to make it through,” Murchison said.

Then about halfway through the treatment, Eliza began to secrete a mucous from her nose. In the words of Dr. Mike Nolan, Eliza's oncologist at NCSU, the tumor "literally melted away." The swelling went down, and she started to eat again.

Last fall, about a year after the treatment, Nolan did a CT scan on Eliza and found no cancer.

Murchison said her dog suffers from hip dysplasia, common in older dogs. But she walks three times a day.

Nolan said that clinical trial ended a few months ago with encouraging outcomes. Next, doctors will try the same treatment on dogs with oral melanoma, a terrible disease similar to mucosal melanoma in humans. Lessons can be learned.

Murchison said she'd like to think of Eliza helping humans down the road, while she continues to outlast the average life span of a Labrador.

“I think it's absolutely the right thing to do,” she said of the clinical trials. “Where else are we going to learn these things?”

PET OF THE WEEK

When I was diagnosed diabetic, my family felt they couldn’t care for me. They said I was an amazing and super loving cat. I lived with two small kids, a cat and a dog. I will also dispel any myth that you cannot train a cat. Thanks to my family, they taught me all kinds of tricks, like sit, roll over and sit pretty. Anything for food. I am a cuddler and I even enjoy belly rubs. What more could you want, I am pretty much your perfect cat.

P.S.: I am available for adoption or for permanent foster.

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,

In August 2011, I checked my credit through the three credit agencies. When reviewing Experian's report, I discovered my name was affiliated with (three individuals) living in Sterling. I had no idea who these people were. The other two agencies did not list this incorrect information. When I called, I was told Experian inadvertently matched these names to mine, which in turn, affected my credit score. Experian immediately corrected the error and sent me a new credit report with an upgraded score.

At the closing of my home in April 2012, I was asked who these individuals were, as the lender still had them in their reports. I explained Experian's error and was able to close on the house with no problems.

Months later, a friend contacted me regarding info she found on WhitePages.com stating I was affiliated with these individuals and I had lived in Sterling! After much trouble, I was able to get my name and all info removed from WhitePages.com. Over the past few years, WhitePages.com has re-added my name, listing me as currently living in Sterling and affiliating me with (the individuals) again.

Now I find several other address finders have my name - also with the incorrect information. Did Experian sell a list to WhitePages.com, and they in turn sold a list to other address finders? I just want to have removed the people not affiliated with me. Can you help?

Linda, Skokie

Linda sent me links to four listing services: WhitePages.com, BeenVerified.com, MyLife.com and PeopleFinder.com. After clicking on each, it appeared that BeenVerified was currently the only site containing incorrect information. I proceeded to reach out to each service, along with Experian, to learn more about their data sources and whether listings can be corrected. I received responses from BeenVerified, MyLife and Experian. Below is what I learned.

Anonymous MyLife.com customer care representative: “In this case the information on MyLife probably came from Experian or other public sources of information. We gather public information and sometimes provide an expedited method through our services to correct, remove or potentially hide public information. The public service sites we source information from (are) PeopleFinders, 411Locate, Spokeo, WhitePages, Intellius, USPeopleRecords, PeopleSmart etc.”

Carla, BeenVerified.com customer care representative: “BeenVerified aggregates data from a number of publicly available sources. Sometimes the information in public databases is not 100% correct. We are currently working on a feature that would allow customers to correct their listings.”

Rod Griffin, director of public education; Roslyn Whitehurst, director of public relations, Experian: “I don’t know how this data would wind up in WhitePages’ information because that wouldn’t have anything to do with a credit report,” Griffin said. “We have marketing data that helps businesses identify potential customers, completely separate from our credit reporting business.”

Whitehurst also provided me a link to Experian’s Usage of Marketing Data webpage. Though neither Griffin nor Whitehurst answered directly whether Experian sells data to WhitePages.com or the others, my reading of this page indicates it is possible.

My takeaway from all of the above is that these services are symbiotic: due to their reliance on public records, each sources data from the other, resulting in the potential for incorrect information to be dropped and added in an endless loop.

Need help?

Send your questions, complaints, injustices and column ideas to HelpSquad@pioneerlocal.com.

Cath Cunningham is a freelance columnist.
The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories
By Ken Liu, 453 pages, Saga, $24.99
Ken Liu is among the most important figures to emerge in science fiction in the last decade or so, not only as a prolific short-story writer but as translator (his translation of Cixin Liu's "The Three-Body Problem" won last year's Hugo Award) and fantasy novelist (his first novel, "The Grace of Kings," also appeared last year). The moving title story of his new collection, "The Paper Menagerie," is the only work ever to win the Hugo, Nebula, and World Fantasy Awards, and for good reason. Its narrator is the son of an American father and a Chinese mail-order bride, who entertains him as a child by folding origami animals that come to life, but whose lack of acculturation and difficulties with English become an embarrassment to him as he grows older. After his mother's death he discovers a heartbreaking secret encoded in one of those magical old toy animals.

Such cultural and family tensions appear often in Liu's stories. The title figure in "The Literomancer" — who can tell fortunes by interpreting the Chinese characters in one's name — is an elderly Chinese who befriends an American girl in Taiwan, where her father is on assignment in the early 1960s. But the friendship inadvertently leads to a violent tragedy related to America's involvement in China at the time. In "Simulacrum," a new invention that can capture and play back any moment in a life becomes a source of alienation and it is, as to who is actually doing the conning. The ending of such a tale needs to be pretty clever, of course, but nearly all are provocative, and several are brilliant.

The Devil You Know
By K.J. Parker, 125 pages, Tor, $10.99
For more than 15 years, no one knew who K.J. Parker was, not even this enigmatic author's gender. Still, Parker gained passionate fans, winning awards for stories and novels mostly set in a richly textured society that, with its invented philosophies, religions, and arts, ingeniously echoed Europe from the late medieval period to the Enlightenment, while commenting with a sharp satirist's eye on human foibles. So "Parker" stories and novels continue to appear, mostly connected to his faux-Europe but written as standalone tales that require no prior familiarity with his work.

Parker may be strongest at novella-length stories (he won two consecutive World Fantasy Awards in this category), and "The Devil You Know" is a delightful introduction to his comic-philosophical world. On one level, it's a familiar deal-with-the-devil story, except that instead of being tempted by Satan, the great philosopher Saloninus invites a demon to sign a contract in which he promises his soul in return for 20 years of youth, power, and prosperity. The demon, who really rather likes humans and is a fan of Saloninus's work, grows suspicious that the philosopher has something up his sleeve — some of his requests seem to make little sense, like invading an insignificant neighboring country — and the intellectual and spiritual cat-and-mouse game that follows, partly narrated by the demon and partly by Saloninus, keep us guessing as to who is actually doing the conning. The ending of such a tale needs to be pretty clever, of course, and it is, in characteristic Parker fashion.

CHICAGOLAND BEST-SELLERS
1. "The Little Paris Bookshop: A Novel" by Nina George (Broadway, $16)
2. "My Brilliant Friend" by Elena Ferrante (Europa Editions, $17)
3. "The Nest" by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney (Ecco, $26.99)
4. "H Is for Hawk" by Helen Macdonald (Grove/Atlantic, $16)
5. "Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania" by Erik Larson (Crown, $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).
Northern Exposure: Explained at 115 Across

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

ACROSS
1 Dog star of ‘60s TV
7 Capital of Eritrea
13 City on the English Channel
19 Cornell's locale
20 Spruce (up)
21 Points properly
23 5 CENTS
25 Great Lake connecting river
26 Antagonizes
27 1 or 33 Across
28 25 CENTS
30 Symbols of industry
31 Personalized music medium
33 Diminutive dog
36 Tolkien monster
38 Cupid alias
41 When Claudius became emperor
42 1 CENT
50 Anxious feeling
51 Original Star Trek studio
52 Front runner
56 Hindu garb
57 Makes known
58 Garb
61 Video effect, for short
62 "Just leave it to me"
63 Fraction of a fl oz.
64 Archeological find
66 Mall HQ
67 Flinflam
68 10 CENTS
71 Comics “Ouch!”
72 Quaint quarters
73 Fingerspelling skill
74 IRS ID
75 Trespassing or slander
76 No longer minor
78 Coral creation
79 DVR button
81 Car Talk medium
82 New parents, usually
84 Subway of song
86 Fabricated
87 50 CENTS
91 Well-put
92 100 yrs.
94 Source of inflation
95 DC VIP
96 Made with ghost peppers
97 Expressions of awe
99 Knee protectors
102 Frankincense, e.g.
104 Potato holder
105 Bedazzle
107 Sears Holdings subsidiary
109 Elevator innovator
110 "Front" or "back" course part
111 Word on Irish stamps
112 That woman
113 Homemade stadium sign
114 Unpredictable
115 Theme of the puzzle
118 Second or third edition
119 Profession
120 Club member’s jacket
121 Hershey brand
122 Blue Jays’ div.
123 Most slippery

DOWN
1 Only inanimate sign
2 Stayed home for supper
3 Commandments verb
4 Preserves
5 Preserves, in a way
6 Musical talent
7 Take over, as land
8 Auto accessory
9 Scratch up
10 Minimal amount of magnesium
11 Brief summary
12 What Bermudas won’t cover
13 Diva’s performance
14 Diva’s performance
15 False witness
16 Auspices
17 Ready to be shipped
18 Walk in the park
19 Medina resident
20 State one’s views
21 About 1.6K
22 Flautist, for instance
23 Heaviest snake
24 Bank-loan phrase
25 Stretch out
26 Containing animal fat
27 I Loves You Porgy” singer
28 15-season series on 117 Down
29 Scratched (out)
30 Auspices
31 About 1.6K
32 Garb
33 “I Loves You Porgy” singer
34 15-season series on 117 Down
35 “I Loves You Porgy” singer
36 “I Loves You Porgy” singer
37 Sagacity symbol
38 Flautist, for instance
39 Heaviest snake
40 Afternoon break
41 About 1.6K
42 Flautist, for instance
43 Heaviest snake
44 Bank-loan phrase
45 Stretch out
46 Containing animal fat
47 Wedding setting
48 La Vita — (Dante work)
49 Hoedown participant
50 Anxious feeling
51 Original Star Trek studio
52 Front runner
53 Reformer, unkindly
54 Big store
55 Vane spots
56 Son of Jacob
57 Breezes through an exam
58 Source of inflation
59 Breezes through an exam
60 Smart-mouthed
61 Video effect, for short
62 "Just leave it to me"
63 Auto accessory
64 Archeological find
65 Mall HQ
66 Archeological find
67 Flinflam
68 10 CENTS
71 Comics “Ouch!”
72 Quaint quarters
73 Fingerspelling skill
74 IRS ID
75 Trespassing or slander
76 No longer minor
78 Coral creation
79 DVR button
81 Car Talk medium
82 New parents, usually
84 Subway of song
86 Fabricated
87 50 CENTS
91 Well-put
92 100 yrs.
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113 Homemade stadium sign
114 Unpredictable
115 Theme of the puzzle
118 Second or third edition
119 Profession
120 Club member’s jacket
121 Hershey brand
122 Blue Jays’ div.
123 Most slippery

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Quote-Acrostic

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

Clues Words
A. Tickled pink
B. On the move
C. Ideal, as in an ending
D. Out of the picture
E. His game was invented in Springfield, MA
F. Howl
G. Suitable
H. Sam Davis, Jr. autobiography: 3 wds.
I. Endorsement: 2 wds.
J. Not plebian
K. Joined by kinship
L. Living sculptures
M. Demonstrative
N. They carried four states in '48
O. Follows a fender-bender
P. It can't be stolen: 2 wds.
Q. Declare
R. Free from slavery
S. Delightful
T. Absolutely: 2 wds.
U. Impartial
V. Approaching: 2 wds.

Across
1 Aircraft carrier
2 Quips
3 “___, the Herald Angels Sing”
4 Century plant
5 Famed TV dragon
6 Essayist
7 Coarse glazed thread
8 Homeric poem
9 Orient
10 Speed it up
11 Best-selling author
12 Nights preceding holidays
13 Whirlybird, for short
14 Airlines
15 Tams or fedoras
16 Fish
17 Resembles in feature
18 Conquered
19 Sashes
20 Courage
21 Percentage
22 Staple food
23 Twines
24 City problem
25 Musty
26 Arabian Nights city
27 Filling beyond capacity
28 Bay window
29 Bay window
30 Threesomes
31 French father
32 Century plant
33 Spurious
34 And not
35 Dolt
36 Jargon
37 Resembles in feature
38 Fish
39 Tails or fedoras
40 Whirlybird, for short
41 Fish
42 Comes down.

Down
1 Wits
2 Came to rest
3 Part
4 Became lively
5 United with
6 Havelock ___, author
7 Narrow opening
8 Spanish aunt
9 Persistent
10 Paid attention to
11 Turkish regiment
12 Venture
13 Kiss Me, ___
14 Eggs
15 Benches
16 Jargon
17 Publicly conveyed
18 Aromatic seed
19 Card or board
20 Twines
21 Lifeless
22 Scandinavian
23 ___ Garson
24 Wire nails
25 Entertainment of another day
26 Pelted with shot
27 Precious
28 Korea's former name
29 Chess piece
30 Scrap
31 Mark of omission
32 Division of a road
33 Anne Nichols character
34 Evil
35 But: Fr.
36 Frog genus
37 English school
38 Escritoire
39 Epoch
40 Last week's answers appear on the last page of Puzzle Island

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Squad

BY DON GAGLIARDO AND C.C. BURNIKEL
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

Across
1  Check some figures?
2  Mulching material
9  Hot spot
14  It leaves trails
17  Song often sung in Italian
18  Tiny tank plant
19  Brain freeze-
20  Photo subject for NASA's New Horizons
22  "Forever" purchase
25  Broad-leaved ornamental
26  Desert climate feature
27  Blog updates
28  Like easier-to-swallow pills
29  "... Miniver"
30  Strain to lift
32  Humana rival
33  Chinese gambling mecca
36  Sloppy, as security
38  Regarding
40  Score after deuce
41  "The Simpsons"
46  Government
49  Storage medium
50  Bulgarian capital
52  Enterprise counselor
53  Capital with a Viking Ship Museum
54  Prohibition-era gun
55  Simple to use, in adspeak
58  Reminders on cards
59  "Feliz año nuevo" time
61  "You - right!"
62  Champion
64  Like Gen. Powell
66  More painful
69  ... - year
70  WWII Navy vessel named for the 29th state
73  Ocular sign of mischief
76  On the ball
79  Puerto Rico, por ejemplo
80  Corporate uncertainty
82  Cedar Rapids campus
85  Marsh duck
86  Hindu deity
87  Salentina
88  Peninsula country
89  Bowl over
90  Judge's decree
93  Three-syllable foot
95  FDR successor
96  Erode
97  "Kung Fu" actor
98  "Feliz año nuevo"
99  Gets one's feet wet
100  Bombards with e-junk
102  Yucatan native
104  Billion-year span
105  Takes in, say
106  Weapon in a scabbard
107  Weapon in a scabbard
110  Nutmeg State team
111  Kingdom
115  It has a November kickoff
118  Kunta - of "Roots"
119  Ritzey retreat
120  "Oy vey!"
121  Figure of interest?
122  "Ditto"
123  Great - Mountains
124  Orgs. that donate to runners
125  Do some cleaning

Down
1  Clumsy type
2  Electrical system
3  New York MTA-owned commuter line
4  Patsy
5  Treasure map units
6  "... Enchanted", 2004 film
7  Aunt in P.G.
8  Wodehouse's 'Jeeves' stories
9  Prof's aides
10  "Ristorante rice dish"
11  Play times?
12  Peridot and garnet
13  Claim subject to debate
14  "Ahat!
15  Relative of Jet
16  Pond hopper
17  Instagram fodder
18  Wells Fargo product
19  Pain usually pluralized
20  UV-blocker rating
21  Gospel singer
22  Takes out
23  Winsans
24  "Semper Fi" org.
25  Biblical name meaning "hairy"
26  They're often pickled
27  "Jeeves" stories
28  Relative of -let
29  Due west
30  "Sauce with a kick"
31  Takes out
32  "Sloppy, as security"
33  "Sloppy, as security"
34  "Sloppy, as security"
35  Great Sioux War of 1876 event
36  Sponge made from a vine fruit
37  "Sauce with a kick"
38  "Sauce with a kick"
39  Highway noise barrier
40  Score after deuce
42  "Sauce with a kick"
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115 "Sauce with a kick"
116 "Sauce with a kick"
117 "Sauce with a kick"

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.

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.
By Jacqueline E. Mathews. © 2016 Tribune Content Agency, LLC. All rights reserved.

4/13/16

ACROSS
1  Soda shop orders
2   In; wearing
3   Cuts of beef
4   Segments
5   App for those needing a ride
6   Cross
7   Great pain
8   Listening
9   Aroma
10  Listening
11  All; in a bad mood
12  History
13  History
14  History
15  History
16  History
17  History
18  History
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96  History
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98  History
99  History
100 History

Solutions

1   Tumor
2   Eve's husband
3   Gray wolf
4   Scout groups
5   Bulls
6   Part of the face
7   Knob
8   Arm
9   Arm
10  Arm
11  Arm
12  Arm
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99  Arm
100 Arm

Last week's crosswords

"Water Log"

"Pen In Hand"

"Thin Is In"

Last week's Quote-Acrostic

LEO LIEBERMAN: ON MEMORIES:
Memory contains a leavening of humor, of smiles, and even giggles. Admittedly, it is sometimes laughter through tears but there is always the laughter and the need not to take ourselves too seriously.

Last week's Sudoku

This week's Jumble

CRUTCH DUPLEX WALNUT INCOME CURSOR ROCKET
His memory of the huge auto salvage yard he once owned was a —

"WRECK-COLLECTION"

chicago tribune.com/games
Interactive puzzles and games

DUD
How to help your spouse grieve the loss of a parent

Romantic relationships are so much easier when everything in life is going great. But what happens when tragedy strikes your partner and his or her world is turned upside down? I’m referring to the death of a spouse’s parent. The devastation and other intense emotions someone feels when losing their mom, their dad or a sibling can cause a lot of stress in a marriage, especially if the spouse doesn’t know how to help.

Nicole Gerber is a Northbrook-based licensed clinical psychologist, who has counseled couples facing this issue. She also lost her mom 15 years ago.

“A person who loses a parent feels a wide range of emotions, such as relief (if their parent was suffering), shock (if their parent died suddenly), sadness, guilt, fear, despair, loneliness, anger, frustration, hopelessness, helplessness and devastation,” said Gerber, who has been in practice for 18 years. “It is important to just be with them during their grief and allow them to fully feel their emotions.”

Gerber said there is also a loss of identity that occurs when a person loses their parent, which can cause an overwhelming void.

Here are Gerber’s four tips for helping your spouse when his or her parent dies.

1. Follow your partner’s lead. If they want to talk, then listen. If they need space, then give them space. Asking your partner, “What do you need from me?” is a good starting point. Communication is crucial.

2. Do not try to fix their problem — because you can’t bring their parent back. Acknowledge and validate how hard it must be for them to have lost their parent. Offer support without judgment. Let your partner know that you are there for them if they need you. This is especially important if your spouse is pulling away from you.

3. Do not have a timeline in mind for when you think your partner should be with their grief. Grief does not come in neat stages, but rather it comes in waves and feels more like a roller coaster of emotions. They may be grieving intensely one day and barely get out of bed and the next day they may be functioning perfectly fine. Be patient, attuned and attentive to where your partner is at and try to meet them there.

4. Helping your partner keep the memory of their parent alive is helpful to the grieving process. Telling stories, reminiscing and sharing fond memories of that parent is important.

Looking at pictures and videos and sharing rituals such as lighting a candle on their parent’s death day can also be helpful. Paying tribute to that parent by doing something like a walk for breast cancer in their memory or finding other meaningful ways to honor their memory is also important.

I have been truly fortunate in that I have not yet experienced the death of my parents. However, I feel like I’m at that age where so many of my friends have experienced it.

It’s very difficult to know what to say, what to do or how to act around someone who just lost a parent, because if you think about it there isn’t anything you can say that will take away their pain. It’s a helpless feeling. And, whatever you end up saying, you’re always wondering if it was the right thing, if it sounded stupid or even if you made the person feel worse.

I think just showing up to see your friend, putting your hand on theirs or giving them a hug is often better than words. It’s telling them in silence that you care. People won’t remember what you said, but they do remember that you came to see them. I also believe most people who suffer the loss of a parent remember how their spouse acted during that shattering time.

“When I lost my mom, I remember my husband feeling helpless. He could not take my pain away or absorb my loss. However, he was there for me when I needed a shoulder to cry on, to listen to me, to hold me or just to sit with me in silence,” Gerber said. “All of these things were very comforting and aided tremendously in my grieving process.”

Gerber said going through the grieving process with your partner can offer a tiny silver lining: strengthening the bond you have with your partner.

“If you can get through this intense and arduous process as a team, you can get through other difficult times together,” she said. “As they say, ‘for better and for worse.’”

Jackie Pilossoph is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
Women with heart conditions should get care while pregnant

Women who have heart conditions should consult a doctor before becoming pregnant.

Babies born to women with congenital heart disease have a higher risk of having a heart abnormality themselves.

Mitrail valve stenosis. In this condition, another of the heart's four valves becomes stiff. As a result, blood tends to back up into the lungs. Unless this condition is very mild, treatment often is needed to protect mother and baby.

Other conditions. Some forms of arrhythmia (an irregular heartbeat) and cardiomyopathy (disease of the heart muscle) also increase risk of problems during pregnancy.

Finally, some heart medicines are dangerous to a developing baby. Be sure to discuss your medications with your doctor before becoming pregnant.

Most women with heart problems can have a successful pregnancy and a healthy baby. The most important thing is that you consult with your doctor about whether it is safe for you to become pregnant. If so, find out what treatments might be needed to protect both of you.

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.
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**10:55am to 12:05pm**

**The Five Most Powerful People in the World**
William Burke-White / University of Pennsylvania
Levin Award for Excellence in Teaching

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**1:25pm to 2:35pm**

**Five Essential Negotiation Skills For Everyday Life**
Linda Ginzel / University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Faculty Excellence Award

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**2:50pm to 4:00pm**

**Five Films That Changed America**
Marc Lapadula / Yale University
Outstanding Teaching Award

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Raising kids in an interfaith marriage

Children complicate religious traditions, holiday celebrations

By Alison Bowen
Tribune Newspapers

Finagling where to spend a holiday and which traditions to meld together as a couple becomes more complicated when children arrive.

But it adds another layer of complexity when two people practice different faiths or disagree about a higher power existing at all. Navigating holidays or religious traditions can be tricky when interfaith partners are deciding how to incorporate children.

For example, perhaps an in-law wants to know when the baptism or naming ceremony will be. Preschool decisions include religious options. Or it's unclear if and who puts up holiday decorations.

"I have several families who are interfaith marriage, and they have a hiccup when the child is old enough to understand, to comprehend," said Dr. Azmaira Maker, a San Diego-based psychologist.

In the season of Easter and Passover, when and whether to involve children in religion can easily slide into conflict. And it can affect children's lives in more concrete ways than parents might think.

"This is impacting your kid on a daily basis," Maker said. "This is not something esoteric, theoretical.

"Interfaith marriages are common in the U.S., especially among young people who've recently gotten hitched.

A 2015 Pew Research Center study found that 39 percent of Americans who had married since 2010 had a spouse of a different religion. Only 19 percent of couples who had wed before 1960 said they were in an interreligious marriage.

Experts offered tips on approaching what might masquerade as an abstract topic.

First, discuss between partners.
Ideally, talk about your parenting style before you get married.

Seattle Rabbi Ted Falcon said a good question for couples to tackle is, "What do you do differently in your life because of your faith?"

Even among those who identify as religious, Falcon, who tours with blended spiritual speakers the Interfaith Amigos, said he often sees people fairly loosely tied to those beliefs.

"That said, what is important for couples to know when they get together is to what degree each is attached to their own faith and tradition, and how they imagine children," he said.

Know that the conversation can and should continue, as you both might feel different down the road.

Maybe one spouse has a life-changing moment that amps up faith before parenthood nears; maybe another's religious fervor ebbs.

Each person's faith is laden with layers of meaning, explained Dr. David Hauser, a clinical psychologist at The Family Institute at Northwestern University.

Part of the difficulty of these conversations, he said, is the necessity gray. People might leave a conversation without plotting a steady Sunday plan for the next 18 years.

"People struggle with having any kind of conversation that doesn't arrive at some kind of conclusion or finality," Hauser said.

But that flexibility is key, experts said.

Be open-minded. Both people might want to allow space to reimagine their views. For example, is it possible for a child to be Jewish and still celebrate Christian holidays?

"I think when people come in with a very close-minded approach to teaching about religion, that's when we get stuck," Maker said.

Part of this will create conversations about the parents' own comfort level.

"Can they live with the nuances?" Maker said. "Or does it have to be pretty clear-cut, black and white? 'This is not really a process, this is a faith, and it's clear. And this is how I want to raise my child.'"

Discuss not only what you want, but why.
Hauser said a conversation about religion and incorporating your children should center on what religion means to you.

Maybe you feel passionately about passing on the Muslim or Hindu beliefs and practices your family imparted. But what does it mean to you? Celebrations with extended family? Meditative moments? Or maybe you want your child to attend Sunday school because it was formative throughout your childhood.

Get to the core of what you enjoy and embrace, so you can communicate what you want your child to encounter.

"What's so important is that you understand your partner's belief system and where it comes from," Hauser said.

That could also include acknowledging that religion is less, not more, important than you thought. Maybe getting a Christmas tree is key but not so much reading the Bible story.

"A lot of Christians observe, for example, Christmas as a family thing, exchanging gifts, but, in fact, they don't believe a word they're saying," Falcon said.

Don't wait for your child.
Parents might assume they can hang back and let children decide faith on their own or bring it up themselves. But children are curious, Maker cautioned.

"Kids ask questions about everything," she said. "If your kid is going to preschool by 2 or 3, they're being exposed to the word 'God.' Just like when kids salute the flag, the word 'God' is in there."

Plus, a small child might bring up spiritual questions in small ways, she noted.

"Even when a kid sees a dead bug, some kid says, 'That bug's going to heaven,'" said Maker, who also tackles talking to kids about tough topics in her book, "Family Changes: Explaining Divorce to Children."

Consider, for example, the specific religion and when a child starts to participate in it — Hebrew school, for instance. It might be right away in the case of an infant's baptism or a naming ceremony.

Resist the temptation to avoid the conversation. Children will have something chugging along in their mind either way, Maker said, so steer them with clear statements.

"A kid's confusion in their imagination is far worse than the actual facts," she said.

Consider a crisp, honest explanation like, "We are going to have our family do this in this way, where you come to church with me, but dad doesn't. But we're going to respect each other in the process. That's it. Do you have any questions?"

Support each other's decisions.
This doesn't necessarily mean an agnostic partner should be guilted into attending church.

But after you communicate together, make clear who is participating in what. And back each other up, especially against meddling but well-meaning in-laws.

"It's just the two partners making this decision," Maker emphasized.

Within one of her client families, the father is Christian and the mother Jewish in a blended family with children. Every December, conflict crops up around Hanukkah and Christmas — some kids set up Christmas decorations, with confusion about which celebration takes precedence.

"It's simple stuff, but it creates tremendous tensions for the family," she said.

She suggested that each support the other. The Christian father should buy Hanukkah presents, the Jewish mother should lug out the Christmas decorations. This sends a message to the children that participating in both is welcome, she said.

Above all, Maker said, make sure children don't feel tugged between two parents.

"That's toxic for kids," she said.
Naperville home with four finished levels: $1.59M

ADDRESS: 35 S. West St. in Naperville
ASKING PRICE: $1,599,000
Listed on March 3, 2016
Five-bedroom property equipped with hickory flooring, 10' first floor ceilings and newly redone powder room on the first floor, along with kitchen with breakfast bar island and Wolf, SubZero stainless steel appliances. Family room has built-in bookcases and a fireplace. Second floor has a laundry room, luxurious master suite with fireplace, huge walk-in closet and custom glorious bath with programmable steam shower. Two more additional bedrooms and a home office are on the third floor. The lower level was recently finished with custom bar, wine cellar, game/recreation room, Sony home theater and exercise room. Backyard was recently finished with a pavilion housing, brick fireplace, pizza oven and built-in grill.
Agent: Gail Niermeyer of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Naperville office, 630-430-1835

At press time, this home was still for sale.

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Address: 1644 Ferndale Ave.
Price: $399,900
Schools: Glenbrook North High School
Taxes: $5,105
Agent: Val Napadov/RE/MAX Villager

HAWTHORN WOODS
Four-bedroom, 3.5-bath home on tree-lined 1-acre lot. Traditional layout with spacious living room, separate dining room and family room with fireplace. Eat-in kitchen with island and pantry. Landscaped yard with gazebo. Rec room on lower level. Master suite with vaulted ceiling, private balcony & a master bath with dual sink, jetted tub and skylight. Professionally landscaped exterior.

Address: 11 Rutgers Court
Price: $415,000
Schools: Stevenson High School
Taxes: $11,039
Agent: Helen Olivi/Keller Williams

Realty Partners

SKOKIE
Four-bedroom, two-bath brick Tudor. Freshly painted living room flows into dining room. Eat-in kitchen has newer stainless steel appliances. Screened-in porch. Large recreation room in basement. Flexible floor plan allows for the master to be on either the 1st or 2nd floor. Seller providing credit for 1-car garage construction. Near parks, shopping, and transportation.

Address: 7847 Lowell Ave.
Price: $339,900
Schools: Niles North High School
Taxes: $7,375
Agent: Jason Mrozik/CONLON/Christie's International Real Estate

WINNETKA
Three-bedroom, 2.5-bath red brick colonial home. Living room with fireplace, separate dining room, family room. Panned recreation room in basement, breakfast room has door to patio, landscaped backyard. Master bedroom with private bath. Near schools.

Address: 341 Rosewood Ave.
Price: $699,000
Schools: New Trier Township High School
Winnetka
Taxes: $20,013
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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, April 14

Will Hoge: With Elise Davis. 8 p.m. Thursday, SPACE, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $20-$40, 847-492-8860

Project Space: Curatorial Vision Series: The Art Center invites three curatorial practice students from the School of the Art Institute to present an exhibition and public programming that engages audiences in meaningful ways while fostering the Art Center's relationship to its community. Young curators are selected during the spring/summer of 2015. 10 a.m. Thursday-Wednesday, Evanston Art Center, 1717 Central St., Evanston, free, 847-475-5300

“Arcadia”: 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 3 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday, Thursday; 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, Writers Theatre, 325 Tudor Court, Glenco, $35-$80, 847-224-6000

National Library Week Patron Appreciation Reception: A National Library Week tradition hosted by the Circulation Staff. Drop by the Library Lobby for light refreshments and camaraderie. 2 p.m. Thursday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Mrs. Schmitt’s Drop-In Story Time: Mrs. Schmitt brings her stories and fun to the Library for children ages 2 and up, with adult. Just drop in the Youth Services Preschool Area. 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Build It at Kohl Children’s Museum: The popular temporary exhibit Build It allows children to explore their creativity while learning about architecture, science, storytelling and much more. Children may grow using 10 different varieties of building blocks, all in one exhibit space. 9:30 a.m. Thursday-Wednesday, Kohl Children’s Museum, 2100 Patriot Blvd., Glenview, $11 children and adults; $10 senior citizens; free for members and children under 1, 847-832-6600

Books and Bites Offsite for Grades 3 and 4: Read each individual book selection and join in a casual, fun book discussion once a month (snacks provided). Registration required for “The Thing About Georgie” by Lisa Graff. 4 p.m. Thursday, Meatheads, 6734 N. Lincoln Ave., Lincolnwood, free, 847-677-5277

Wonder Ground Open Lab: Look, touch, tinker and play with an intriguing array of science-oriented curiosities in this new space designed especially for kids. A drop-in visit is meant to last about 15 minutes. Activities are repeated each week from Tuesday to Thursday. The Wonder Ground is a STEAM playground for kids. 4 p.m. Thursday-Tuesday, Niles Public Library, 6600 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Karaoke: A’s Karaoke Bar has karaoke every day from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. Thursday, A’s Karaoke Bar, 8751 N. Milwaukee Ave, Niles, free, 224-534-7158

Wee Play (Birth to 24 Months): Music, rhymes, giggles and books for the caregiver and baby. 10 a.m. Thursday, 11 a.m. Thursday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 497-272-6224

Poetry Sharing Circle: Do you enjoy poetry? This small group reads poetry aloud, sharing poems each has written as well as published poems and is open to poets of all skill levels. Center membership is required to participate. 1 p.m. Thursday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Rd., Northfield, free, 847-781-6030

Park Ridge Fly Tying Club Meetings: Chicago Fly Fishers Club meet at 7 p.m. Thursdays from October through May. 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. 7 p.m. Thursday, Park Ridge Community Church, 100 S. Courtland Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-823-3164

Legends of Laughter II: The Comedy Teams Film Series: This ten-film series showcases the great movie comedians of the 1930’s, ’40s and ’50s. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for patrons of all ages to enjoy. 7 p.m. Thursday, Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-720-3209

Park Ridge Toastmasters Meeting: This is the Park Ridge Toastmasters Bi-weekly meeting. All are welcome to join for impromptu speaking, prepared speeches, jokes and much more. 7:30 p.m. Thursday, First United Methodist Church, 418 Touhy Ave., Park Ridge, free, 224-715-5128

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

“Butler”: 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. Friday, 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, 2:30 p.m. Sunday, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 5901 Skokie Blvd., Skokie, $15-$74, 847-673-6300

Special Exhibition Three Years, Eight Months, and Twenty Days: The Cambodian Atrocities and the Search for Justice: Learn about the Cambodian genocide and the current trials to bring the perpetrators to justice, 40 years later. 10 a.m. Thursday-Wednesday, Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, 9603 Wood Dr., Skokie, free, 847-967-4835

HIT180: A low-impact, high-intensity cardio and strength fitness class. Visit www.hit180fit.com for more information and to register. The first class is free, but please register three hours before the class. 5 a.m. Thursday-Wednesday, Hit 180 Fitness, 193 Northfield Rd., Winnetka, First class free, 224-216-2086

Electric Slide Workshop: Slide into this one-day workshop and have the ability to get up and join the group. 7 p.m. Thursday, Just Dance Studios at Georgetown West, 301 South Prospect Ave., Wood Dale, $10, 630-542-7644

Friday, April 15

Steeple Canyon Rangers: 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Friday, SPACE, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $20-$38, 847-492-8860

Nia: Holistic dance fitness: With Nia develop flexibility, agility, mobility, strength and stability in your body. 11 a.m. Friday, Wednesday and Monday, Raydiant Day, 1400 Greenleaf St., Evanston, $11 drop-in. $80 unlimited class pass, 847-869-6477

The 10th Annual Opera Idol Competition: The 10th Annual Opera Idol, hosted by The Merion, is the highly-anticipated vocal competition for aspiring opera singers all across the Midwest. The winner of the competition receives a full ($3,000) scholarship with airfare to attend the nationally recognized two-week workshop directed by baritone Sherrill Milnes and the nonprofit VoiceExperience in Savannah, GA. 7 p.m. Friday, The Merion, 1611 Chicago Ave., Evanston, free, 847-570-7895

Purple Line Release Party: An award-winning Purple Line beer is released. Purple Line is a tart, fruity and super refreshing Bavarian wheat ale brewed with hibiscus, blueberry and blackberry. The release party includes Purple Line branded merchandise and $4 Purple Line beers all day. 11 a.m. Friday, Smylie Brothers Brewing Company, 1615 Oak Ave., Evanston, free, 224-999-7320

Citizens’ Climate Lobby-Evanston: Help build the political will for a stable climate by empowering breakthroughs in personal and political power. Support a carbon disposal fee and dividend plan to reduce carbon pollution, increase jobs and save lives and lobby at the national level. 1:30 p.m. Friday, Curt’s Cafe, 2922 Central St., Evanston, free, 312-301-6638

Ring 43 Magic Club Meeting in Evanston: The members perform magic and teach. Guests pay $5, which may be applied to a Ring 43 membership. 7:30 p.m. Friday, Presence Saint Francis Hospital, 355 Ridge Ave., Evanston, $5 guests, 847-729-3950

Rhythms Dance: Come explore the Rhythms Dance - a movement meditation to music. 7:30 p.m. Friday and Tuesday, Foster Dance Studios, 915 Foster St., Evanston, $15; $10 for students and seniors, 847-869-0250

Teen Advisory Board Meeting Is VolunTEEN Opportunity: Ninth to 12th-graders, join us during National Library Week for the first meeting of the Glenview Library Teen Advisory Board (TAB). Let your voice be heard on books, and programming. plus earn service credit by attending. 4 p.m. Friday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

GlenVIEWing to Show Pawn Sacrifice: American chess prodigy Bobby Fischer and Soviet Grandmaster Boris Spassky enthralled the world during the 1972 World Chess Championship. A casual audience-led discussion follows matinee screenings. 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Friday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

The Shakespeare Project of Chicago: “Cardenio” “Cardenio” by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, adapted by Stephen Greenblatt and Charles Mee, directed by Peter Garino. Enjoy a theatrical reading followed by a discussion. 6:45 p.m. Friday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-4234

Flashback to the ‘80s Classic Storytime: Turn to Calendar, Next Page
Satuday, April 16

Dave Simonett: 10 p.m. Saturday, SpaceX 7, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $15-$25, 847-492-8860

Chris Smither: With Andrew Combs. 7:30 p.m. Saturday, SpaceX 7, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $20-$35, 847-492-8860

FUSE: Studio: Drop in with friends to wire LEDs, compose a ringtone, build an amp, mix chemicals to make gel beads, navigate a robot obstacle course and more. For grades six to 12. Midnight Saturday, Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave., Evanston, free, 847-448-8600

Ecology Center Winter Market: Learn about the benefits of eating fresh and locally grown foods. Shop for a variety of seasonal and artisan products. 9 a.m. Saturday, Ladd Arbor, 1204 McCormick Blvd., Evanston, free, 847-448-8045

Peter Mayer: After a sold-out concert two years ago, nationally revered folk singer/songwriter is back. Peter sings from the soul about love, social justice, the environment and silliness. Just his guitar genius alone makes for an unforgettable experience. Doors open at 7 p.m. in The Celtic Knot Pub, 122 Central Ave., Wilmette, $10 Art Gala, $15 Workshop, 847-251-7424

Wilmette Theatre Hosts Lunar Shot Film Fest: This traveling short film fundraising festival is dedicated to promoting awareness about women's issues. The fest is about women, and for women. The six featured films include stories of reflection, hope and humor from around the world. Additional shorts are screened following the main feature. 7 p.m. Friday, Wilmette Theatre, 122 Central Ave., Wilmette, $25, 847-251-7424

Lunafest Short Film Fest Afterparty: Continue the discussion after Lunafest at Persimmon. Free wine will be served! All donations will benefit the Breast Cancer Fund. 9 p.m. Friday Persimmon, 1167 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-920-1167

Wilmette Children's Theatre presents "G2K Cinderella": Adapted from Rodgers and Hammerstein's original full production to suit younger audiences, "G2K Cinderella" opens in the Theatre of the Wilmette Park District's Community Recreation Center. Performances run through April 17 and

Sunday, April 17

Callaghans: 7 p.m. Sunday, SpaceX 7, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $14-$24, 847-492-8860

John Williams' Sunday Music Session: 3 p.m. Sunday, The Celtic Knot Public House, 626 Church St., Evanston, free, 847-864-1679

The Maxwell Street Klezmer Band: 2 p.m. Sunday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 866-653-1234

Celebration of Cultures Faire: Experience and appreciate the variety of cultural backgrounds of people living and working in the North Shore. The family event includes dancing, singing, cultural art, artifacts and traditional costumes. For more info. contact Erik Jensen, erik.jensen@northbrook.il.us. Sponsored by The Northbrook Community Relations Commission. Noon Sunday, North Suburban YMCA, 2705 Techy Rd., Northbrook, free, 847-272-7250

Outery: 7 p.m. Sunday, Allstate Arena, 6920 Mannheim Rd., Rosemont, $39.95-$109.95, 847-635-6601

Author Richard Reeder at Temple Beth Israel: The Brotherhood's Adult Education Program features author Richard Reeder. Chicago Sketches speaking about Saul Bellow's distinguished literary career and his years growing up in Chicago. Call the Temple office to RSVP by April 13. 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Temple Beth Israel, 3601 W. Dempster St., Skokie, free, 847-675-0951

Finding Inner Peace What the Sacred Texts Teach: The Winnetka Interfaith Council hosts an open and inclusive forum on Finding Inner Peace. A panel discussion includes leaders of local Bahai, Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations. 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Winnetka Presbyterian Church, 1255 Willow Rd., Winnetka, free, 847-446-7777

Source Healing Winnetka Opening Celebration: This acupuncture and holistic health studio hosts an open house with guests enjoying brunch, raffle prizes, flower essences, swag bags, $50 certificates to the first 25 people (one per family). There are also complimentary Traditional Chinese Tongue and Pulse Analysis from experienced practitioners. 11 a.m. Sunday, Source Healing, 723 Elm St #26, Winnetka, free, 312-335-9330

Monday, April 18

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 St., Evanston, free, 847-448-8600

The Mudflaps live every Monday: The Mudflaps sing and play their hearts out every Monday in the pub from 8 p.m. until 11 p.m. Food and drink served late. 8 p.m. Monday, The Celtic Knot Public House, 626 Church St., Evanston, free, 847-864-1679

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

Botanicals: Intimate Portraits: Featuring more than 20 images by celebrated photographer Laurie Tennent. Botanicals is a collection of Tennent's work that captures the dramatic color and texture of her subjects. Her use of light, soft and directional that rapidly fades to black, gives the images a three-dimensional element not often seen in photography. 8 a.m. Monday, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Rd., Glencoe, free, 847-875-5440

Learn To Be A Shark: Come to the north shore's only coworking space and entrepreneur incubator. VCcapital speak-
CALENDAR

Calendar, from Previous Page

ers Ryan Kole and Jim Vaughan explain how to invest in early and mid stage companies, joining investor networks and be a part of venture funds. 6:30 p.m. Monday, Callan Building, 1939 Waukegan Rd., Glenview, free, 847-414-7342

Knitting Rountable for Adults:
Ronnie Rand, an expert knitter, shows attendees how to knit or how to start knitting challenges. Bring one's current project(s) and needles. 2 p.m. Monday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Knitting Rountable:
Come work through knitting projects and socialize with fellow knitters. Expert knitters can show you how to solve knitting challenges. Don't forget your current knitting project and needles! Call 947-929-5101 or visit www.mglpl.org for more information. 2 p.m. Monday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Yoga for Kids: Stretch, Bend, Breathe:
Kids ages four through eight can learn yoga poses and breathing techniques, feel relaxed and energized afterward. There is no experience needed. Bring a large bath towel or yoga mat and wear comfortable clothes. Parents need to stay in the room with children through second graders. 4:30 p.m. Monday, Niles Public Library, 6960 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Munch a Bunch of Books:
Listen to new books, munch on a snack and have fun with activities and crafts. For kids ages K-3. 4 p.m. Monday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Monday Movers:
Enjoy a morning at the Library's Story Corner with your little one. For walkers up to 24 months of age. 10:30 a.m. Monday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Ballroom Dance Classes:
Come enjoy a Basic Ballroom Dance Class at 6:45 p.m., and an Intermediate Class at 7:45 p.m. These classes were formerly held at the Highland Park Moose Lodge which has been sold. 6:45 p.m. Monday, Bernadine Weinger JC, 300 Revere Dr., Northbrook, free, 847-757-2227

American Politics and Current Events:
Come to actively contribute to the moderator-led discussion as we cover a wide variety of topics, or come just to listen and learn from the opinions of others. 9 a.m. Monday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Rd., Northfield, $19 (NSSC member); $25 (non-member), 847-784-6030

Skokie Synagogue Re-Opens Gift Shop:
The chairperson of the Gift Shop, Marcy Feinberg, says the gift shop opens to the public with beautiful gifts to bring to Passover as well as crystal glassware, books, photo albums, spice boxes and yads, challah covers, challah boards and kiddush cups for Shabbas. 10:30 a.m. Monday-Wednesday, Ezra Habonim, The Niles Township Jewish Congregation, 4500 Dempster St., Skokie, free, 847-675-4141

Exploing Grief:
7 p.m. Monday, Kenilworth Union Church, 211 Kenilworth Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-251-4272

Tuesday, April 19

Esme Patterson:
With Cold Country. 8 p.m. Tuesday, SPACE, 1454 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $12-$20, 847-492-8860

Rotary Club of Evanston Lightweight:
This community leadership group boasts 80 members and meets every Tuesday. 11:45 a.m. Tuesday, Hilton Garden Inn Chicago North Shore/ Evanston, 1818 Maple Ave., Evanston, free

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

YMCA Preschool Art Classes Ages 3-5 with an adult:
The North Suburban YMCA Art Academy provides opportunities for preschoolers to create art. A parent or caregiver must be present. A Glenview Library card is preferred and register by calling or to the website. 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 390 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

The Poet Within Series:
Award-winning poet Bill Yarrow reads his poems. Bring a poem to share during open mic. To register, call or go to website. 7 p.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 390 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Digital Demos in the Lobby:
Ask the experts! Explore the library's digital movie, TV program, music, ebook, audiobook and magazine collections, hoopla, MyMedia Mall and Zinio, and learn how to download items to your portable device. Information and instruction are also available about the library's online databases. Sessions are conveniently held in the library lobby, so feel free to drop in. 2 p.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 390 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Happy Birthday Queen Elizabeth:
Learn the about the remarkable life of Queen Elizabeth II as she nears her 90th Birthday. 7 p.m. Tuesday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Financial Planning Appointments:
Need a financial tune-up? Schedule a free one-hour consultation with a certified Financial Planner. Register by calling 847-729-7500. 9 a.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Power Employment Workshop:
Illinois WorkNet Center speakers share what's working and what's not in today's job market. This workshop discusses identifying SMART goals to keep you on track, using social media to connect with active hiring managers, getting your resume through today's Applicant Tracking Systems and critical interview skills to sell yourself and land a job. Visit workmetnc.org to register. 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Veteran Center Services:
An informational table about readjustment services available to eligible veterans and their families in the form of counseling, benefits info, job referral and employment assistance. Hosted by the Evanston Vet Center. Noon Tuesday, Lincolnwood Public Library, 4000 West Pratt Ave., Lincolnwood, free, 847-677-5277

Mozart's "Requiem":
Niles Metro Chorus performs Mozart's "Requiem" this spring. New singers are welcome, and for more information, please call. Rehearsals are weekly, every Tuesday. 7 p.m. Tuesday, St. John Brebeuf Parish Church, 8307 North Harlem Ave., Niles, free, 702-806-8421

Salute in Story: We Honor Veterans Event:
Rainbow Hospice and Palliative Care hosts this Salute in Story, a We Honor Veterans event honoring our service men and women through the stories they share. A panel of Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard veterans of all major conflicts and wars are present to discuss veteran-specific issues. Singer Wayne Messmer opens the event, which runs until 9 p.m. 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Niles Senior Center, 99 Civic Center Dr., Niles, free, 847-653-3199

Yoga for the Rest of Us:
This class is uniquely designed for individuals of all fitness levels to relax and unwind. Their certified yoga instructor, Artha Kohut, accommodates individual needs through the use of chairs, blocks, bolsters and other props to help attendees develop a more mindful awareness of their bodies and a sense of overall well-being. 9 a.m. Tuesday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Rd., Northfield, $75 NSSC members; $89 non-members, 847-784-6030

Dancing for Weddings and Special Occasions:
This class is taught by a professionally-trained, working dancer and dance instructor to help participants brush up on all of the most important dances for that special event. Please register in advance by contacting the Centennial Activity Center, 1051 7 p.m. Tuesday, Park Ridge District-Centennial Activity Center, 100 South Western Ave., Park Ridge, $72 member, $80 guest, 847-692-3597

Lincoln School Jazz Band:
The Lincoln School Jazz Band performs smooth jazz favorites. Register in advance, for this event. 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Park Ridge. Park Ridge District-Centennial Activity Center, 100 South Western Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-692-3597

Twentieth Century Club presents
Leslie Goddard:
Leslie Goddard is the featured General Meeting guest speaker. Ms. Goddard brings fascinating stories of dramatic figures to life through the use of costumes, stories, hands-on artifacts, period photos and historical illustrations. 1 p.m. Tuesday, Park Ridge Presbyterian Church, 1300 W. Crescent Ave., Park Ridge. Guest fee $2, 312-391-6788

Twenty-three Years In Books and Publishing:
Elizabeth Taylor, Chicago

Turn to Calendar, Next Page
Wednesday, April 20

Lizz Wright: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, SPACE, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $25-$45, 847-492-8860

ETHS Booster Board Meeting: Held on the third Wednesday of most months in Room S-214. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Evanston Township High School, 1600 7000 Forrest Ave., Evanston, free, 847-448-8610

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

New Hours and Programs: The museum is doubling the hours it is open to the public, including Thursday evenings and first and third Saturdays. New programming for students and collectors, access to research library and collection, a blog and special exhibits are in the making. See website for hours. 10 a.m. Wednesday, American Toby Jug Museum, 910 Chicago Ave., Evanston, free, 877-862-9687

Musicians open mic: Kids open mic 6:30-7:30 p.m.; adults 7:30-11 p.m. Bring your instruments and bring your friends. 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, The Rock House, 1742 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free

Summer Reading Program Service Day Grades 6-8: Earn service hours while helping the library prepare materials for the Summer Reading Program. A Glenview Library card is preferred and register by calling or to the website. 3:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Rd., Glenview, free, 847-729-5670

Glenview Community Youth Sports Open Forum: Long-time Glenview resident and coach, Jon Cohn, leads an open discussion on topics such as: New trends in youth sports, safety and concussions, coach training, travel teams, personal sports trainers, specialization in just one sport, extended sports seasons or others. This program is open and highly encouraged for parents, coaches and sports program board members alike. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Glenview Park Center, 2400 Chestnut Ave., Glenview, free, 847-724-5670

Converting your VHS home movies: Learn how to convert your movies. 10 a.m. Wednesday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-929-5090

St. Haralambos Spring Bake Sale: The Ladies Philoptochos Society of the church announces their Spring Bake Sale in the Community Center. Featured are: Sweet Tsoureki Bread, Kouloiaria, Greek pastries, Red eggs and Easter candles! There is free admission and parking; and purchases vary. 9 a.m. Wednesday, Holy Taxiarhai-St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 North Caldwell Ave., Niles, free, 847-647-8880

Chess Club: Whether you're a skilled player looking for a challenge or a beginner interested in learning new skills, all are welcome at this new, weekly Chess Club! Chess sets and clocks provided. No registration is required. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

Free Film "The King and I" - Telling the true story of an Englishwoman, actress Deborah Kerr plays Anna Leonowens who comes to Siam as a schoolteacher to the royal court in the 1860s, with the King played by Yul Brynner. The movie is presented in CinemaScope-SS & 4K DCP. 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

*80s TED Talk Discussion: Did you know that TED was born in 1984? Come for a flashback to a fascinating '80s TED talk, and stay for the lively discussion after. Registration is required. 6 p.m. Wednesday, Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

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

"Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" ★ ½
PG-13, 2:33, action
Having killed thousands of bystanders at the end of "Man of Steel," high-flying alien Superman (Henry Cavill) is now considered a pariah by many. Batman (Ben Affleck) has hardened into a boozy sociopath who wants to murder the alien invader with the "S." Crucially, there's a new headliner in town: Gal Gadot's Wonder Woman. Long before she actually suits up, though, you're good and sick of waiting for Gadot to hijack all the rage-y, steroidal, bone-crushing smackdowns. "You don't owe this world a thing," Lois Lane tells Superman at one point. Maybe so. But at this point in the twinned mythologies of two extremely hardy DC heroes, humankind deserves a better blockbuster. — Michael Phillips

"Zootopia" ★★★
PG, 1:48, animated
Somehow, Disney has managed to pull off a hard-boiled police procedural thriller about political corruption starring an adorable, large-eyed bunny. As strange as this combination might seem, it works. Judy Hopps (Ginnifer Goodwin) is a plucky bunny who sets her sights on life in the big city of Zootopia, making the world a better place as a police officer. In Zootopia, the predators and prey are civilized, clothes-wearing city dwellers. Judy throws herself headlong into an investigation of missing mammals, specifically one Emmet Otterton, with the aid of wise-cracking fox Nick (Jason Bateman). One of the strongest messages is about discrimination. — Katie Walsh

"My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2" ★★
PG-13, 1:34, comedy
Back in 2002, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" became a bona fide cultural phenomenon, a romantic comedy that mined the cultural specificities of the Greek heritage of unknown writer and star Nia Vardalos. Fourteen years later, Vardalos and gang are back again for another wedding, but this time, it's to drastically diminished returns. The screenplay feels as if it was written the year after the first film's success, just with a few jokes about Facetime inserted for 2016 topicality. The rest of the jokes either don't land or feel about as fresh as a two-day-old spanakopita. — K.W.

"God's Not Dead 2" ★ ½
PG, 2:01, drama
The Almighty is still alive, albeit also under continuing attack, in "God's Not Dead 2," a sequel in which the issue of religion in schools leads to a courtroom showdown over God's rightful place in society. Harold Cronk's follow-up concocts a laughable crisis of faith whose resolution is a fait accompli, turning the endeavor into a torturous exercise in one-note proselytizing. The franchise's disciples will surely fill its collection plate as full as 2014's $60-million-grossing original, but this paranoid persecution-complex fantasy is unlikely to win many converts. — Nick Schager, Variety

"Miracles From Heaven" ★★ ½
PG, 1:49, drama
Jennifer Garner plays Christy Beam, mother to Anna (Kylie Rogers), who suffers from a debilitating, incurable intestinal disorder. One day Anna is climbing a tree and falls, headfirst, 30 feet inside the dead tree trunk. When firefighters pull her out, not only is she unharmed, but she's miraculously cured. Garner is compelling as the dedicated mom questioning everything she believes while fighting for her daughter's life, and young Rogers gives an impressive performance as Anna struggling to maintain her sunny outlook while coping with pain and suffering. — K.W.

ALWAYS GIVING ADVICE?

Here's a tip:
start a blog

If you can dish it out, we want to take it. Simply pick a topic you're passionate about and send us your pitch. If chosen, you'll join ChicagoNow, a network of hundreds of local bloggers. No worries if you're a newbie — we'll help you build and launch your platform. So get going, Chicagoland's waiting for your words of wisdom.

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Wendt, John William
John William Wendt of Park Ridge, Illinois, 83, died peacefully Saturday, April 2nd, 2016 at Avantara Park Ridge In Park Ridge, IL. Beloved husband of the late Lorraine (Hedges) Wendt. Loving father of Susan and dear grandfather of Rachel and Samantha. Loving father of Edward and dear grandparent of Allison. Born and raised in Chicago, IL, the son of George and Helen (Maurer) Wendt, he was a longtime resident of Park Ridge, Illinois. A memorial service will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Des Plaines, Illinois. April 23rd, 2016 at 11am. A private interment will be held at Memory Gardens, in Arlington Heights, Illinois. In lieu of flowers, contributions in memory of John may be made to Trinity Lutheran Church, 675 E. Algonquin Road, Des Plaines, IL 60016.

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Showoffs

Last but not least, New York's lineup features diverse, buzzworthy models

BY TOM KRISHER AND DEE-ANN DURBIN | Associated Press.

From hot-selling SUVs to cool new small cars to electric vehicles and hybrids, the 2016 New York International Auto Show features a diverse lineup of new and redesigned vehicles. The last major auto show of the season concludes Sunday and previews what will be exciting and new on dealer lots as early as this summer.

Here are some of the buzzworthy new cars and trucks rolling off the show floor onto driveways in 2016.

Buick Encore: After three years of surprisingly strong sales, General Motors' Buick brand is protecting its franchise by freshening the Encore. The tiny SUV gets a new front end and interior. With 66,000 sales last year, the Encore is Buick's top seller. SUVs are now almost two-thirds of Buick's sales. Buyers can opt for a new 1.4-liter four-cylinder engine that has 14 more horsepower than the base model. Available in the fall.

Toyota Highlander: Toyota's three-row SUV gets some upgrades for 2017. Base models still have a four-cylinder engine and six-speed transmission, but drivers can upgrade to a new 3.5-liter V-6 with a new eight-speed transmission. Toyota says the new combination has more power and is more fuel efficient. All V-6 models will come with stop-start technology, which automatically turns off the engine at a stop light. The Highlander goes on sale in the fall.

Audi R8 Spyder: Audi added the open-top R8 to its supercar lineup Wednesday, pulling a tarp off a yellow version of the car at the New York auto show. The Spyder has the same V-10 engine as the R8 Coupe, but its hardtop folds mechanically behind the seats. The 5.2-liter, 540 horsepower engine can take the car to nearly 200 mph, even with an open top. "I think this is quite cool," said Dietmar Voggenreiter, board member for sales and marketing.

Subaru Impreza: Subaru debuts two Imprezas: the four-door sedan and a five-door hatchback. Both are slightly longer and wider than outgoing models, which gives them more interior space. They also sit lower to improve aerodynamics. The Impreza is built on a new, stiffer platform for improved handling and better crash resistance. Inside, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are now standard. One new safety option is reverse automatic braking, which can halt the car if it's about to back into something. Goes on sale later this year.

Toyota Prius Prime: The cult car for the environmentally conscious got a makeover last year. The Prius Prime, a plug-in electric version, can go 22 miles on battery power alone, about double the previous plug-in model. Toyota says the new car handles much better and can drive up to 84 mph in electric mode. The electric range meets the daily commuting distance of more than half of U.S. drivers, according to Toyota. Price wasn't announced. It's due out in late fall.

Nissan GT-R: Godzilla, as it's known, gets its first big makeover in a decade. The 2017 GT-R has a bigger grille for engine cooling, as well as a higher line below the windows in the rear. Handling is improved. The 3.8-liter V-6 twin-turbo delivers 565 horsepower, a 20-horsepower improvement over the 2016 GT-R. The car gets an improved six-speed dual-clutch transmission. The interior is simplified, with fewer switches and paddle shifters. Goes on sale this summer.

Honda Civic Hatchback: Honda says the hatch is making a comeback in small U.S. cars. The automaker shows off a five-door Civic hatchback, and Senior Vice President Jeff Conrad says it will cater mainly to Generation Y (ages 18-34), which likes hatchback utility and sporty performance. The hot hatch gets a 174-horsepower turbocharged 1.5-liter four-cylinder engine. It's the first U.S. Civic hatch since 1995. Price wasn't announced, but it's due out in the fall.

Hyundai Ioniq: The Ioniq is designed to handle three methods for making it move: battery power, gas and electric hybrid, and a plug-in hybrid that can travel over 25 miles on battery alone. The hybrid versions have a 1.6-liter, 104-horsepower engine made specifically for hybrid use. Hyundai paired it with a six-speed automatic transmission for better acceleration and driving performance. The electric Ioniq can go up to 110 miles per charge. It's expected out in fall.

Acura MDX: The three-row MDX SUV, Acura's best-seller, gets a pentagonal grille and a chiseled hood, narrowed headlights and LED fog lights and twin tailpipes. The Sport Hybrid powertrain pairs a 3.5-liter V-6 engine and three electric motors that power the front and rear wheels. The motors help the SUV accelerate faster. Acura expects the MDX Sport Hybrid to get 26 mpg city/highway, or 7 mpg more than a nonhybrid MDX. MDX goes on sale this summer, with the Sport Hybrid version later this year.

Mazda MX-5 RF: If you want to ride with the wind, Mazda has a car for you. The RF stands for "retractable fastback," a new version of the Miata sports car with smooth mechanics that fold the roof panel above the seating area into a spot behind the passenger compartment. No price was given for the new version, which goes on sale in the late summer.
Is it better to brake or to shift when descending or slowing?

**Q:** My cars are all automatics with the shift lever on the floor. When heading downhill or approaching a red light, I downshift. I do this to save on brake wear, but am I damaging transmission or gears with these frequent downshifts? I seek your advice — brake or downshift?

— R.L., Schaumburg, Ill.

**A:** Brakes are easier and cheaper to replace than transmissions. So leave the tranny in drive unless you are descending a long, steep hill. Driving down from the summit of Mount Washington can get the brakes very hot. If that heat boils the brake fluid, the brakes will fade. Placing the transmission in a lower range to provide engine braking is the way to go.

**Q:** Twenty years ago I bought a used, loaded, 1979 Chrysler Cordoba with 22,000 miles from a private seller. I've kept it in a garage and only drove it 12,000 miles. I want to sell it but I've lost the seller's documentation (repair receipts) verifying the low mileage. I thought I could verify the mileage using Carfax, but they cannot provide information for cars built before 1980. Is there any other way I can document the mileage?

— G.B., St. John, Ind.

**A:** Carfax was not launched until 1984 so, of course, there would be no proof for a potential purchaser. You could offer your word. But with so many words being broken, it may carry little value. One option is to create an affidavit and swear to its truth before a notary public.

**Q:** What is the best way to get white bird poop out of a convertible top?

— K.B., Glenview, Ill.

**A:** We have used two products with success, 303 brand Toneau Cover & Convertible Top Cleaner, and Meguiar's Convertible Top Cleaner. The trick is to allow the cleaning solution to work, sometimes up to 30 minutes, and then use a soft nylon bristle brush to loosen the deposit. If the stain has been there for a long time, it may never be fully removed.

**Q:** I have a 2012 Jeep Grand Cherokee with the six-cylinder engine. When I have driven 100 miles or so on a hot day the climate control stops blowing with any force. The air is cool but it will not blow enough out to cool the car, no matter what setting you put it in. The dealer could not duplicate this situation so they insist it operates normally. Any idea?

— J.S., Northbrook, III.

**A:** This is a classic symptom of an iced-up A/C evaporator and is more likely to happen on a hot humid day. The evaporator is a heat exchanger that resembles a miniature radiator. The cold evaporator under the dash causes moisture to precipitate out of the air. That water falls to the bottom of the housing where it drains onto the ground. If the drain is clogged, ice may form on the evaporator and block airflow.

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

- **BOB WEBER**
- **Motormouth**

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The 2016 Volkswagen Passat has tech and safety upgrades; styling is mostly unchanged.

**Passat part of VW's problem**

**BY ROBERT DUFFER**

Tribune Newspapers

Volkswagen has a problem.

Even without the diesel scandal, the refreshed Passat is indicative of the slowness of VW to adapt to a rapidly changing market. If you can overlook that VW whiffed on the crossover craze, or take exception because of the outstanding 2015 Golf, then you still can't mistake that the updated Passat is just plain boring.

That's a shame for a nameplate over 40 years old that, until the 2009 launch of the CC and the larger 2012 redesign, was one of the most distinct luxury-leaning mainstream midsize sedans.

Volkswagen obliged on the tech and safety update Passat so badly needed but otherwise left it the same. The hood gets a slightly raised middle portion, the front fender is more defined and the lower grille appears different. VW says only the roof, doors and sides haven't been changed, but you would have to look really hard, even side by side, to see the changes.

The powertrains remain the same, without the TDI diesel. There is an available 3.6-liter V-6 engine, though we tested the 1.8-liter turbo four-cylinder with the six-speed automatic in the SE with Technology trim. The TSI (turbo stratified injection) engine makes a grumpy 170 horsepower and a sunnier 184 pound-feet of torque at just 1,500 rpm. The car jumps on throttle without much lag, though the naturally aspirated Mazda6 and Nissan Maxima are far better inside and out. The six-speed automatic is smooth and quick.

"Why do they put sport mode in all these family cars?" the 9-year-old asked.

I shifted the gear stick into sport mode to show instead of tell, but there was no answer forthcoming.

Fuel economy of 25 mpg city, 38 highway is good, though. We shouldn't need an asterisk with those numbers. In our mixed commutes averaging 46 mph over 100 miles, the Passat averaged 36.5 mpg.

The cabin has a bit more fit and finish to restore some of the upscale feel absent from the exterior, as it should in the near top-of-the-line SE trim with Technology. The second-gen modular infotainment platform uses a standard 6.3-inch screen. It's narrow but functional, yet feels like an older system that was once cutting edge. Large icons on Apple CarPlay (we didn't test the available Android Auto) make the system easier to execute.

Voice commands were necessary. Advanced safety features such as adaptive cruise, forward collision avoidance and a blind spot monitor complete the trim level.

There is plenty of room and good visibility. The trunk fits a hockey bag and plenty of kid gear. The ride is quiet and comfortable, and combined with the highway fuel economy (and dealer desperation discount) makes a marginal argument to include the Passat on the shopping list.

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Brunson wins national title with Villanova

By Nick Bullock
Pioneer Press

Stevenson graduate Ja-
len Brunson was an in-
tegral part of the Villanova
men’s basketball team’s run
to the national champi-
onship.
The freshman guard
started each of the team’s
six tournament victories,
recording 22 combined
points in the team’s first
two games.
Brunson, a Lincolnshire
native, started 39 of the
team’s 40 games this sea-
son, helping the Wildcats
finish 35-5. He ranked fifth
on the team in scoring (9.6
points per game) and sec-
ond in assists (2.5 per
game).
He also contributed to
Villanova’s lethal 3-point
attack, making 49 of his 128
3-pointers this season (38.3
percent).
Brunson, 2015’s Illinois
Mr. Basketball and a state
champion with Stevenson,
was a unanimous selection
to the Big East All-Fresh-
man squad.

Oldshue helps
at NYU

Glenbrook South gradu-
ate Lindsey Oldshue started
21 games for the New
York University women’s
basketball team, which
concluded its season with a
loss to Bowdoin College in
the second round of the
NCAA Division III Cham-
pionship on March 5. The
Violets finished 19-8.
Oldshue, a junior for-
ward, averaged 3.0 points,
3.1 rebounds and 1.2 assists
in 23.4 minutes per game.

Cavalieri’s big day

Fenwick graduate Gino
Cavalieri, a sophomore in-
fielder for the Illinois Wes-
leyan baseball team, pow-
ered the Titans to a double-
header win against North
Park University on April 5
in Bloomington.
Cavalieri, the team’s
leadoff hitter, finished the
day 4-for-10 at the plate,
with a home run, four RBIs,
five runs scored and a walk.
A number of other area
athletes are also on the
team. Loyola’s Danny
Kelly is a sophomore in-
fielder. Stevenson’s Mitch
Goll is a sophomore pitch-
er. Barrington’s Mitch
Pfeiffer is a freshman out-
fielder and infielder.
Lake Zurich’s Joey
Holtz is a sophomore
catcher and infielder. Deer-
field’s Xander Horwitz is a
junior pitcher and infielder.
Vernon Hills’ Joe
Marras is a freshman
caught and infielder.

Curtis stands out
in goal

Monmouth College
women’s water polo goal-
keeper Natalie Curtis, a
Hersey graduate, was
named to the Collegiate
Water Polo Association’s
Defensive Player of the
Week honor roll on April 8.
The sophomore is aver-
ing 12.4 saves per game
on the season through April
8.

Pack your bags

Fenwick graduate Jacob
Peterson, a sophomore
goalkeeper on the Loras
College men’s soccer team,
was named to a USA Divi-
sion III squad that will play
a series of matches in Brazil
in May.

Have a suggestion for the
College Roundup? Send an
email to Nick Bullock at
bullockpioneer-
press@gmail.com.

Above: Villanova
fresman guard Jalen
Brunson helped cut
down the net after
the Wildcats’ thrilling
NCAA championship
victory.

Right: Glenbrook
South graduate
Lindsey Oldshue
averaged 3.0 points
and 3.1 rebounds this
season as a junior
forward for NYU.

Nick Bullock is a freelance
reporter for Pioneer Press.
Niles North plays bigger than its height

BY ERIC VAN DRIL
Pioneer Press

In a sport where size is so valuable, the Niles North boys volleyball team is an aberration.

The Vikings are very short, by volleyball standards. They only have two players on their roster listed as 6-feet or taller.

Niles North has been successful this season, despite being undersized, by using a combination of intelligence, defense, jumping ability, togetherness and heart. Senior right-side hitter Kevin Ferrer said the team also has benefited, psychologically, from its lack of size.

"We're the underdogs," said Ferrer, who's 5-foot-7. "And then if we do something - like a stuff block, or some crazy hit, over some 6-foot-6 blocker - it's like, 'Wow, how did this happen? How did this person come over here and hit it - or block it?' It's motivation."

Ferrer said that after Niles North defeated Warren - a team with a frontline that is significantly taller than the Vikings' - by a score of 25-17, 19-25, 15-11. Ferrer recorded the first kill of the third set.

Junior middle hitter Griffin Dunn (6-3) and senior middle hitter Brian Cua (5-11) all recorded at least one kill in a tense third set against the Blue Devils.

In each of its matches, Niles North played with a ton of energy and passion. Its players - both on the court, and on the bench - celebrated heartily when one of their teammates made a big hit or big block.

"In our hearts, we're all over 6-feet."

- Kevin Ferrer

Eric Van Dril is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Twitter @VanDrilSports

Niles North's Kevin Ferrer (12) goes for the kill on April 9 against Palatine at the Warren Invitational in Gurnee.
It can be difficult for athletes to remain positive when their team is losing. That isn’t true for Niles West’s Phil Duros, however. Negativity has never been in his nature – not when he’s at home doing schoolwork, in class or on the volleyball court. Duros’ unrelenting positivity is why he was named a captain this season even though he’s a junior who’s in his first season on varsity.

“He is the exact kind of teammate you want to have,” Niles West coach Drew Roche said.

Duros’ upbeat personality has been important for Roche’s squad because it’s struggled, thus far. The Wolves entered this week with a 4-9 record. They lost their eighth match of the season against New Trier at the Warren Invitational on April 8.

There were positives for Niles West to take away from its 25-20, 25-10 defeat to the Trevians. The Wolves were competitive in the first set. They also seemed to respond well to the change from a 6-2 offense to a 5-1 offense, Roche said. That change will likely be permanent, he added.

Still, a loss is a loss. But Duros remained upbeat afterward. Later that night, he helped the Wolves beat Grant 29-27, 25-14 from the bench.

“I wasn’t playing at all. They had me resting this match, but I was still very enthusiastic and encouraging my team, saying, ‘Come on, guys. Let’s go,’ ” Duros said.

I’d still be loud and tell them to keep the energy up.”

Duros wasn’t the only Wolves player to remain positive after the loss to New Trier, but senior libero Caleb Olar said that Duros’ positivity is consistent and helps the spirit of the team, which has improved since the beginning of this season.

“We need energy and momentum,” Olar said. “We need more positivity, for sure. Once we get that going (in a match), and it’s constant, then we’re good.”

Duros added that Niles West has a three-second rule after a loss, and that has helped. Players have three seconds to get really upset before they have to shake it off and move on.

“It’s hard to stay positive during a run of losses. I do my best, but I know it’s not my strong suit,” Roche said. “But we try and tell the guys, ‘Think about what you say, how you say it. And is it really helping anybody? I think the guys have been very conscious of it. When you start winning, when things start going your way, the positivity really starts showing itself.’

Another reason why Niles West’s victory against Grant was encouraging was that there were moments when the Wolves seemed to be on the verge of squandering the first set.

They didn’t, however. Like Duros, they didn’t give in to negativity.

“I love it,” Duros said of staying upbeat. “It’s just who I am.”

Eric Van Dril is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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