Golden achievement
Niles art teacher surprised with award for excellence. Page 12

Art teacher Tina Daskalopoulou, back, of Viola H. Nelson Elementary School in Niles poses with her students, colleagues, parents and others after being surprised in her classroom on March 29, with announcement that she won the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Easter brunch
Who's serving up what——from Croque Madame to a bananas Foster waffle——and where to find it. Page 21

Prep work
Some local athletes have turned to East Coast prep schools as an alternative path to college. Page 38

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SHOUT OUT
Nicole Neff, Devonshire PTA vice president

Nicole Neff serves as vice president of Devonshire School’s active parent teacher association. Earlier this year, Neff helped work at the school’s first Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, which was sponsored by the PTA. She recently answered a series of questions for the Skokie Review.

Q: What do you do for a living?
A: I’m an occupational therapist. I work with adults in a hospital to help them regain their independence.

Q: Where did you grow up?
A: I grew up in Syracuse, Ind. I continue to enjoy visiting there regularly.

Q: How long have you lived in Skokie?
A: Four years now.

Q: Pets?
A: Yes, I have a cat named Lily.

Q: What book are you currently reading and what book would you like to read next?
A: I’m reading “The Sleepwalker” by Chris Bohjalian. Up next for me is “Roller Girl” by Victoria Jamieson. It’s a graphic novel that my daughter highly recommends.

Q: First job?
A: I was a tennis instructor during the summers when I was in high school.

Q: As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
A: A marine biologist.

Q: A movie you’d recommend?
A: “The Queen of Katwe.” It’s an inspiring film about survival and determination.

Q: Do you have children?

Nicole Neff

A: Yes, I have three children.

Q: Favorite charity?
A: I have two favorites — the Skokie Food Pantry and Heifer International.

Q: Words of wisdom?
A: “Bloom where you are planted.”

— Staff Report
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Skokie event helps families prepare for Passover ceremony

BY KARIE ANGELL LUC
Pioneer Press

The Pesach Fair sponsored by the Chicago Rabbinical Council was held April 2 in Skokie to help Jews prepare for Passover, which begins next week.

The Pesach Fair has been presented by the CRC for approximately 12 years, organizers said.

"Passover is the busiest time of the year," said Rabbi Sholem Fishbane, kashruth administrator with the CRC.

An estimated several hundred people turned out for the fair, many of them carrying boxes or baskets of metal serving pieces and other wares and goods into the Hebrew Theological College to prepare for the religious period, which runs through April 18.

The metal needed to be placed in boiling water per Jewish tradition, faith leaders explained.

Knives were sharpened too, organizers said.

"One of the things that the Jews have done for thousands of years ahead of Passover is a special process of taking metal and dunking it in boiling water to allow it to be used on Passover," said Rabbi Levi Mostofsky of Chicago and executive director of the Chicago Rabbinical Council.

"You have to make everything kosher for Passover," Mostofsky said.

The Pesach Fair also included education for such things as romaine lettuce checking. Romaine lettuce is a food typically served at Passover, fair organizers said.

Attendees were also able to have knives sharpened and to have questions answered.

April 2 also marked the 85th anniversary of CRC being incorporated with the state, said Mostofsky.

"Today is a big day for the Chicago Rabbinical Council," Mostofsky said of the anniversary.

The regional council represents more than 140 rabbis, he said.

Patrons at the fair could also have clothing inspected to ensure fabrics met religious requirements, a process called shatnez testing, CRC leaders explained.

"There's a verse in the Bible that you can't have wool and linen woven together," Mostofsky said.

"This is a serious biblical requirement.

People could also ask questions of rabbis.

"We become the go-to people for kosher questions," Fishbane said.

A Skokie couple, Moe and Andrea Herman, brought many items to be boiled.

"I come every year," Andrea Herman said, showing appreciation for a safe opportunity to bring her items to the event annually.

"They do a great service and I let them do it so I don't get burned!"

David Gross of Chicago was accompanied by his 8-year-old son, Avrumi. They brought their share of items to be placed in boiling water too.

"This is incredible and it's so convenient," Gross said.

KARIE ANGELL LUC/PIONEER PRESS PHOTOS

Yehuda Dov Reiss, 16, of Chicago, works in the boiling area of the kitchen at the Pesach Fair sponsored by the Chicago Rabbinical Council April 2 at Hebrew Theological College in Skokie.

Moe and Andrea Herman of Skokie organize their serving ware items after the items were boile during the Pesach Fair April 2 in preparation for Passover. The fair was sponsored by the Chicago Rabbinical Council.
Bulls' Canaan, mascot visit kids at Park Ridge hospital

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON
Pioneer Press

Several patients at Advocate Children's Hospital, including a baby just 3 months old, had a chance to meet a Chicago Bulls player during a special visit recently.

Bulls guard Isaiah Canaan, who was signed to the team last summer, met with children, took photos and signed autographs at the Park Ridge hospital on March 28. He was accompanied by Bulls mascot Benny the Bull.

According to the hospital, Advocate Health Care is a corporate sponsor of the Chicago Bulls, and a player, along with Benny the Bull, typically visit patients at the children's hospital once each season.

jjohnson@pioneerlocal.com
Morton Grove considers welcoming ordinance

Leaders to hold town hall meeting at 6:30 p.m. April 17

By Mike Isaacs
Pioneer Press

Morton Grove leaders will hold a town hall meeting to consider whether the village should adopt a welcoming community ordinance, often referred to as sanctuary city status, after several residents and others spoke out last week at a village board meeting.

The town hall meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. April 17 at the Morton Grove Civic Center, 6140 Dempster Street.

"There's two sides to every story," Morton Grove mayor Dan DiMaria said during the March 27 Village Board meeting, after he and trustees heard from multiple impassioned speakers.

"There are 23,000 residents in our community and this is a polarizing issue. It's divisive."

Although most speakers urged Morton Grove to adopt welcoming community legislation of the likes of Skokie, Evanston and Chicago, a couple of speakers offered counter positions. Those at the meeting who favor new legislation, one said, were an organized front, and everyone in Morton Grove should have opportunity to have a voice.

"One of the greatest parts of Morton Grove is that we come together on these hotbed issues and we discuss it," DiMaria said.

In the wake of President Donald Trump's controversial executive orders surrounding immigration, which are now being legally challenged for a second time, some municipalities have decided to adopt welcoming city legislation to support immigrants in their communities.

In general, such legislation stipulates that municipal authorities will not pursue residents because of their immigration status, deny them services, detain them, or turn them over to federal authorities without a court-issued warrant.

But Trump has threatened "sanctuary city" communities, saying his administration would withhold federal funds, which has caused some residents concern.

Morton Grove resident Mary Elsner submitted a letter to the village board signed by dozens of residents as well as business, religious and political leaders supporting new legislation.

The letter states it is in the interest of Morton Grove as a municipality "to foster an environment where immigrants, whether they are naturalized citizens, green card or visa holders, or otherwise, feel safe and comfortable."

"It's incumbent upon us as a community to do what we can within the boundaries of the law to ensure that our public facilities and services are a safe place for those who are rendered vulnerable by political agendas that ignore their valuable contributions to our community and their inherent worth as human beings," the letter reads.

Morton Grove resident and former pastor Robert Burkhart also said he supports the village adopting welcoming community legislation.

The importance of the ordinance, he said, isn't so much that it's a legal document but a moral statement, "a moral commitment that we value one another."

Burkhart said he and his wife chose Morton Grove as their home following his retirement, in part because of its diverse community.

"Now we're poised to further the diversity of our village by officially declaring publicly that we are a welcoming community where all are safe and welcome," he said.

A representative of Americans in Solidarity - Chicago said the organization wants the village to adopt a draft ordinance that is posted on its website.

"I stand united with Niles North High School students also in favor of a potential ordinance."

"There are 23,000 residents in Morton Grove and always will be a welcoming place to all its residents," said senior Sammy Schein.

Resident Habeeb Quadri, principal of the Muslim Education Center in Morton Grove and MCC Academy in Skokie, also spoke in favor of a welcoming ordinance in Morton Grove as he had done in Skokie earlier.

Morton Grove resident Laura Frisch told the board the village should not turn away from passing an ordinance because of the president's threat to withhold federal funding.

"There are families that have to worry every day about their status, every day about whether or not they are safe in our community," she said.

If that portion of the budget needs to be taken away for families to be safe, she said, "so be it."

But Morton Grove resident Susan Pellicano said that withholding federal funding should be considered, especially since Morton Grove has many seniors who have limited funds.

"I'm not OK for the village to lose federal funding in order to protect illegal immigrants," she said. "I'm not OK to become a magnet for more illegal immigrants."

In making a case against a welcoming ordinance, Pellicano said she doesn't know how she teaches her grandchildren "which laws are OK to challenge and which laws aren't."

Ted Smuckler of Open Communities, an organization that aims to promote "just and inclusive communities" in north suburban Chicago, countered that what is being proposed is a welcoming ordinance, but it doesn't call for breaking any federal laws.

DiMaria said that no matter whether the village adopts such an ordinance or not, he wants residents to know "that they do not have to worry now or in the future."

"Nobody should feel afraid of Morton Grove," he said.
Police explore ‘possibility of more victims’ in couple’s sex abuse case

Two charged with sexual assault in Prospect Heights

BY DUAH ELDEIB
Chicago Tribune

Police have widened their investigation into a married couple charged with sexually abusing three teenage boys, and the state’s child welfare agency has removed the couple’s children from their home.

Prospect Heights police said they are investigating whether the alleged abuse by Christopher Wheeler, 30, and Anthony Wheeler, 25, went beyond the three teens.

“Our highest concern is the possibility of more victims,” Prospect Heights police spokeswoman Stephanie Conboy said, adding authorities hope that anyone with information will feel “comfortable and safe enough to come forward.”

The Wheelers were arrested on March 28 and charged with criminal sexual assault and aggravated criminal sexual abuse after allegedly forcing the boys, ages 14 and 15, to perform sexual acts. Prosecutors said Christopher Wheeler told one boy, “What happens in the house stays in the house.” Some of the alleged victims were given alcohol and shown pornography, police said.

Police were alerted after a 15-year-old boy who was allegedly sexually abused at the Wheeler home went to a Chicago hospital for medical assistance, Conboy said. Hospital staff informed Chicago police, who then informed Prospect Heights police on March 7, she said. Separately, another boy’s mother contacted police after seeing a text message to her son that referenced the alleged sex acts, authorities said.

Also on March 7, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services received a hotline call reporting the alleged abuse. The couple have one adopted child and were foster parents to a second child. DCFS launched an investigation, which is ongoing, and removed the children from their Prospect Heights home on March 8, DCFS spokeswoman Veronica Resa said. The foster child is in a “safe place,” and the other child was placed with relatives, she added.

The Wheelers passed a background check in September, and DCFS placed the foster child in their home in December, Resa said.

“DCFS is in the process of revoking their foster parent license pending the outcome of the investigation,” Resa said.

None of the three alleged victims is related to the men, officials said.

Before moving to Prospect Heights, the family lived in Skokie, records show. Police were called in 2015 after the couple’s child went missing, but the child returned before police could complete the missing person’s report, Skokie police said.

Christopher and Anthony Wheeler made their first court appearance in Cook County on March 30, when a judge set cash bonds at $4 million for Christopher Wheeler and $3 million for Anthony Wheeler. They remain in custody.

Their attorney, Marie Taraska, said on March 30 that she expected they would be cleared of the charges. Taraska also said that both men were employed at the time of their arrest, but she did not specify their line of work. Christopher Wheeler worked as a bus driver in 2012 for Evanston-based Positive Connections, which provides bus services to school districts and other groups, according to a company employee.

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The following items came from Niles police reports.

ASSAULT
■ Daniel Salcedo, 36, of the 8300 block of Milwaukee Avenue, was charged with aggravated assault on March 8, police said. A family member told police that Salcedo pointed a folding knife at her while arguing about rent money he wanted back. Salcedo was scheduled to appear in court April 11.

TRESPASS
■ Michael Tsopnang, 24, of the 1000 block of South 13th Avenue, Maywood, was charged with criminal trespass and public intoxication on March 11 after police responded to a call of a car burglary in the 7900 block of Caldwell Avenue. According to police, officers located Tsopnang in the driver's seat of a parked car, but the owner of the car said he did not know Tsopnang. Police said Tsopnang "appeared to be highly confused and incoherent" and was unable to remember how he got to the parking lot. Nothing was reported missing from the car, police said. Tsopnang was scheduled to appear in court March 17.

THEFT
■ David Ouimet, 32, of the 7600 block of West Addison Street, Chicago, was charged with theft on March 10. Police said Ouimet stole $6,049 worth of items, mainly boxes of refrigerant, from a company he had worked for in the 6100 block of Mulford Street.

POLICE REPORT
■ Police said a man refused to pay after receiving an oil change at a business in the 8400 block of Dempster Street on March 7. He also allegedly claimed to be a "mystery shopper" and threatened to have an employee fired.

CONDUCT
■ A 23-year-old woman was charged with disorderly conduct on March 11 after police said she was accused of striking another woman in a parking lot in the 8500 block of Golf Road. A man, who told police he has a child with the suspect, reported that he tried to stop the women from fighting, police said.

RENTAL OF ALCOHOL
■ The owner of a pool hall in the 7900 block of Waukegan Road was ticketed March 11 for allowing alcohol to be consumed on the premises without a license, police said. According to police, the owner had been told "several times" that no alcohol was allowed on the property. A customer reportedly told police that he had brought in the alcohol from down the street.

BURGLARY TO VEHICLE
■ A device used for hauling or lifting was reported stolen from a truck parked in a lot in the 7500 block of Caldwell Avenue between Feb. 21 and March 7.

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Niles teacher wins Golden Apple award

BY MIKE ISAACS
Pioneer Press

For the second time this year, the nonprofit Golden Apple organization managed to joyfuly fool Viola H. Nelson Elementary School art teacher Tina Daskalopoulos.

A group burst into the teacher's art class where she was working with her fifth-grade students March 29 to let her know she had won the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Golden Apple officials were there alongside school administrators, parents, board members and the teacher's colleagues, making this anything but a normal day at the East Maine District 63 school in Niles. According to officials, no Nelson School teacher had won a Golden Apple before.

"Oh my God," Daskalopoulos said as applause, screams and various whoops broke out. The teacher covered her mouth, trying to push back emotion and then reached for the art room where she was notified about it "one of my happiest places in the world."

According to Golden Apple officials, this year's award recipients were selected from a pool of more than 600 fourth-through-eighth-grade teachers throughout Chicago and surrounding suburbs. Recipients were nominated by students, community members, parents and colleagues who have directly engaged with them, they said.

Teachers, college professors, administrators and former Golden Apple winners served on the selection committee to help decide the winners, officials said.

The winners receive a tuition-free spring quarter sabbatical to study at Northwestern University, a $5,000 cash award and become fellows of the Golden Apple Academy of Educators.

"We continue to see conclusive evidence that being taught by an effective teacher has significant consequences on student achievement," said Golden Apple CEO Dominic Belmonte. "Our 2017 award recipients have distinguished themselves through their talents, creative approaches to powerful modern teaching and devotion to their students."

Those on hand for the surprise ceremony March 29 described Daskalopoulos' approach to her job with the same word: "passion."

"She has absolute passion for art and for teaching and for her kids," said Nelson School Principal Jean LeBlanc. "She shares her love about art and (helps) them view themselves as artists and as people who appreciate art."

"She remembers a student," Fragassi said. "I asked her 'What's on your agenda?' and she said 'I'm going to the beach.' I said, 'Well, I'm going to the beach, too.'"

"It was a silk box that he made," she said. "In it was a crystal apple and he wrote 'I made this for you and I want you to keep this because you opened up a part of my life that I would not have had.'"

"She's a really nice person," she said. "She has the right instincts. She's really nice and she helps us with our artwork."

Eve Kaczowski, a former student, said she took off from Oakton Community College to join the surprise party. "She's pretty special and this is awesome," she said.

Her mother, Janet, said all three of her children had art under Daskalopoulos. "It's amazing what she can coax out of the children," she said.

"She's really nice and she helps us with our artwork," Eve Kaczowski, a former student, said she took off from Oakton Community College to join the surprise party. "She's pretty special and this is awesome," she said.

Her mother, Janet, said all three of her children had art under Daskalopoulos. "It's amazing what she can coax out of the children," she said.

Sixth-grade teacher Tracy Fragassi had tears in her eyes as she hugged her colleague and offered congratulations.

"She means everything to the kids," Fragassi said. "She is in their lives forever after they leave here. Everyone talks about Mrs. D."

Daskalopoulos said the award validates what she has always believed. "Art is a component of the whole person," she said. "It has to be addressed. It has to be explored. It has to be included for a complete education."

The teacher may never have won a Golden Apple before, but this isn't the first "apple" she has received for her teaching, she said.

"She has absolute passion for art and for teaching and for her kids," said Nelson School Principal Jean LeBlanc. "She shares her love about art and (helps) them view themselves as artists and as people who appreciate art."

"She remembers a student," Fragassi said. "I asked her 'What's on your agenda?' and she said 'I'm going to the beach.' I said, 'Well, I'm going to the beach, too.'"

"It was a silk box that he made," she said. "In it was a crystal apple and he wrote 'I made this for you and I want you to keep this because you opened up a part of my life that I would not have had.'"
Pride shared at Maine East’s International Celebration

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

Indian and Mexican dance were the highlights of Maine Township High School District 207’s International Celebration, held April 1 at Maine East High School in Park Ridge.

The annual event, open to students of all three Maine high schools to celebrate the district’s ethnic diversity, featured student cultural clubs and performers predominantly from Maine East, with Maine West also represented.

The entertainment portion of the day included four Maine East groups performing modern and traditional Indian dance moves in brightly colored dress, a mix of popular Latin American and Tejano dance styles by the Hispanic Student Club of Maine West, traditional Mexican folkloric dance by the Maine East Latino Club and a combination of Bollywood and Latin grooves by members of the Maine East International Club.

Also represented were Assyrian, Filipino, French, Greek, Hispanic, Italian, Korean, Polish and Serbian student clubs that set up booths with information and/or food for sale. Henna body art was also available from the Maine East International Club.

Prachi Patel applies a henna tattoo April 1 during the International Celebration at Maine East High School.

Members of the Maine East Latino Club perform a traditional Mexican folk dance during International Celebration on April 1 at the Park Ridge high school.

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Student art will be used to honor police, fire

Niles West student's poster chosen for local campaign

BY MIKE ISAACS
Pioneer Press

If a picture is worth a thousand words, Skokie resident Elline Eliasoff said her campaign to honor the men and women of the Skokie police and fire departments is looking good.

"This is perfect and has everything," Eliasoff said last week when she announced which student-created poster would be used for the second annual "Honoring Skokie's Finest and Bravest."

Once again, a local high school student's artwork will promote the month-long program. Throughout May, Eliasoff and other organizers are asking that residents and businesses tie blue and red ribbons to trees to show appreciation for the jobs police and fire staff undertake.

The official poster for the event is from Niles West High School senior Molly Izzi. She created her work, not with brush and canvass as one might expect, but with Apple Pencil and iPad; Izzi's poster is all digital.

As part of a contest, students in Barbara Wismer's painting and drawing class were told their posters had to include a police officer, a firefighter, a tree and ribbons, the teacher said.

"Pretty much, they could do whatever they wanted otherwise," she said.

The assignment not only promoted a worthwhile campaign, according to Wismer, but it advanced her students' development as artists.

"When they have some constraints they have to work within, it forces them to be a little bit more creative," she said, "I saw some really interesting solutions to the project."

Wismer provided her input as to which posters she thought were strongest, she said, and then Eliasoff decided on first-, second- and third-place winners. She came to Wismer's class on March 23, along with Skokie Fire Chief Jim Walters and Skokie Police Deputy Chief Michael Pechter.

"What we looked at was what would look best on a poster and what would look great from far and great from near," she told the students. "It was hard to make a decision."

Eliasoff announced Izzi as winner, along with sophomores Uros Tubic and senior An Lu as runners-up. The students each received a $25 gift card from Westfield Old Orchard. "We appreciate the positive thoughts," Walters told the students. "All of the artwork was fantastic. I looked at the (positivity) that was in those pictures and it's very much appreciated. I could have never done close to that."

Izzi said she wasn't sure digital submissions made on an iPad would be allowed, but her teacher told her everything goes. "I did it step by step," the senior said of her process using an iPad app called Procreate. "I Googled policemen and firemen and got ideas from that. I was very happy with the way it turned out."

Her poster has a patriotic theme with a vibrant flag as the backdrop and a faceless police officer and firefighter standing in the forefront, along with a tree with red and blue ribbons prominent in the upper right corner. Last year, in the inaugural year of the campaign, Eliasoff held the poster contest at Niles North. She said she wanted to switch it up this year to give all students a chance.

Hearing attended the Skokie Citizens' Police Academy, Eliasoff said she came up with the idea to honor local police and fire departments to counter some of the anti-police sentiment throughout the country following the controversy in Ferguson, Mo.

"Some of the graduates of that 2014 police academy just wanted another voice heard," Eliasoff said. "We felt that all of the anti-police stuff really didn't represent most people or apply to Skokie."

"One and done" was how she anticipated last year's event, she said. But many people responded positively and asked her to carry on the campaign for a second year.

Eliasoff said she hopes to make even more noise with the event this year.

For one thing, she said, the ribbon campaign will go on the entire month of May, longer than last year. For another, the campaign has been linked with Skokie Police's neighborhood watch program, which she says should generate more participation.

Last year, the campaign distributed 4,000 ribbons, according to Eliasoff. This year, it is packaging 6,000 ribbons with the help of clients with developmental challenges at Skokie's The Douglas Center. She said the ribbons will be available at sponsor locations, which can be found online, and at Skokie Park District buildings throughout the village.

For a list of sponsors and more information, access www.honoringskokie's-finest.weebly.com.

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Metra surveying area residents on future fares, services

BY BILL BIRD
Naperville Sun

Regardless of whether you're a current, former or prospective passenger, Metra wants to hear from you.

Metra users have until March 31 to weigh in on potential ticket and fare options being considered by the transit agency. Opinions are being sought on subjects that include off-peak-time and reverse-commute pricing, one-day and seven-day passes, and a possible "loyalty program" similar to those offered by airlines, restaurants and other businesses.

An estimated 8,200 people to date have taken an online survey that seeks to gauge how residents feel about Metra, and how it might improve its services.

Metra officials in November approved their third rate increase in three years.

A Metra survey is seeking information on a variety topics, including possible fare changes and special deals that could appeal to non-peak and weekend riders.

Fares on Feb. 1 increased an average of 5.8 percent, following a 2 percent hike in 2016 and an 11 percent increase in 2015.

That translated into a 25-cent jump in adult one-way tickets, a $2.75 increase for 10 rides and an $11.75 increase on monthly passes in 2017, the latter being the kind most often used for most trips on the system.

Reduced-fare riders are paying an extra 25 cents for one-way tickets, $1.50 more on 10-ride passes, and $7.50 more on monthly passes.

Metra spokesman Michael Gillis said the agency will be spending more than $16 million on "capital needs" that include infrastructure repair and upgrading, the purchase of new engines and passenger cars and installation of a federally mandated safety system.

The survey is part of a study Metra commissioned last summer to evaluate the agency's distance-based fare structure and fare products and to recommend changes that best serve the region's needs.

Metra's consultant, Four Nines Technologies, is working to determine opportunities and costs of potential fare structure changes and developing a model that can help the agency evaluate those potential changes.

"Different fare options can encourage different riding behavior, and that's why we are seeking input both from our existing customers and prospective customers as part of this process," Metra Executive Director/CEO Don Orseno said. "The goal is to come up with a fare structure that works well for our customers and increases ridership and fare revenue that can impact our bottom line."

Survey participants are asked about their commuting habits and needs, and ultimately for their opinions about myriad potential changes.

One idea is the creation of a one-day pass that would allow a rider to make round trips, transfer between lines and make unlimited trips inbound and outbound during the day on all of the lines in their zone pair, similar to a monthly pass.

Other possibilities include lowering weekday fares for "reverse commuters" and those traveling during times outside rush hour; the sale of a seven-day or weekly pass priced the same as eight; one-way tickets that would be valid Mondays through Sundays, instead of the current "10 ride ticket," a "Weekend Pass" that would expand to include travel on Friday evening trains; asking patrons to consider changing their travel times should Metra offer a lower fare on weekdays for trains that arrive and depart the downtown during non-peak hours; and a Metra "rider loyalty" program.

Gillis said the restructuring of fares, if any, is "all to be decided" after the survey results are tallied. Metra could, for example, "maintain (current) fares for the rush hour and lower them for off-peak users," he said.

The survey can be taken at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MetraFareStudy

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Proposals to take SAT off transcripts gain traction

Suburban parents back state bills that would change rules

**By Haley BeMiller**
Chicago Tribune

**SPRINGFIELD** — Some suburban parents are rallying around proposals to keep their children’s SAT scores off high school transcripts, arguing students should have more control over what information is sent to college admissions offices.

But some education experts argue the effort is a solution in search of a problem, indicative of a generation of parents who are overprotective.

Under current state law, a student’s transcripts must include results from the free, state-sponsored exam that all high school juniors are required to take. Illinois switched to the SAT last year after 15 years of using the ACT. It was scheduled to be administered in classrooms April 5.

While the test is designed to evaluate whether a student is prepared for college, some parents say it’s unfair to rely on just one exam. They note that anything from an illness to anxiety could disrupt the test-taking process, leaving students stuck with a score that could hurt their chances of getting into their dream school.

“Any of those things could affect the student’s results on this one test, which is one data point, as opposed to their (grade point average), which is a whole bunch of data points which are more meaningful,” said Evanston resident Elizabeth O’Connor, who has two children at Evanston Township High School.

A bill sponsored by state Sen. Julie Morrison, D-Darwinfield, would allow parents to remove the state organized test score from their child’s transcript so that students who take the test again on their own can send newer, improved scores to the college of their choice. Those scores would be submitted through the testing agency, which already is common practice. The measure cleared an initial hurdle in the Senate.

“I think if the student has the ability to send a test score to a college, they have the opportunity to kind of show themselves in the best light,” O’Connor said.

Jennifer Wallace, an independent college coach and counselor who lives in Evanston, contends the current transcript requirement doesn’t hurt students applying for college.

“I think it’s more of a lightning rod for parents’ anxiety about the college process in general rather than a huge issue in of itself,” she said.

Still, Dave Otwell, who also has children at Evanston Township, argues that automatically including the state SAT scores on transcripts could unfairly harm students who test better on the ACT, those who apply to test-optional schools and those who want to take a gap year before college.

“I can’t think of any reasons to put it on there,” Otwell said. “I don’t see who that benefits.”

The Illinois State Board of Education has not taken a formal stance on the proposal but said keeping the state score on transcripts could benefit students who can’t afford to retake the test outside of school.

“We believe there is some value, especially for low-income students, to have this information included on the transcript for the purpose of college admissions,” agency spokeswoman Megan Griffin said in an email. She added that the requirement “also helps ensure students will take the exam seriously.”

Amy Herzog, of North Shore College Consulting, said the Senate proposal could also hurt parents and students who don’t realize they have the ability to opt out.

“Those kids could be punished in the long run because they’ll end up with a test score on their transcript while a lot of other kids from the state won’t,” she said.

Morrison said her bill eliminates the possibility that people will try to skirt the exam due to concern over the requirement, which could affect a district’s testing numbers.

In the House, Rep. Scott Drury, D-Highwood, is aiming to address the issue in a different way. His measure would eliminate the requirement that student transcripts include an SAT score.

Drury said this gives schools and counselors the freedom to decide whether scores should be attached to transcripts, as opposed to a “one size fits all” approach. Scores would remain on students’ permanent records.

The measure passed the House without opposition March 29. It now heads to the Senate.

“Every school district’s going to have different needs. Their populations are going to be different,” said Evan Wilson, director of admission at Illinois College in downstate Jacksonville, who supports Drury’s bill. “And so it may make sense for a district or school to default to putting it on the transcript, but the beauty of this is that the school gets to decide, at least initially, what they want to do for their students.”

College coach Wallace said the legislation is more about parents than their children.

hbemiller@chicagotribune.com
Rock 'n' roll thriller with local ties to be shown in Chicago

BY MARK LAWTON
Pioneer Press

Jeremy Vranich laughs when asked how much fake blood was used in the film "Chicago Rot."

"Gallons and gallons and gallons," Vranich said. "I would go through the budget and I would see listed skin blood, mouth blood, gut blood and zombie blood. Is $400 too much for gut blood?"

Vranich, who grew up in Lake Bluff and attended Lake Forest High School until halfway through his sophomore year, was one of a few people from the Lake Forest or Lake Bluff to work on what he described as the "rock and roll horror revenge thriller.

Former classmates from Tribeca Flashpoint College in Chicago approached Vranich, who came on as director. Before starting on filming, Vranich first went to Tanzania to work on a documentary along with sound engineer Sam Fell and Catherine Lynch, a casting director and acting coach who grew up in Lake Forest.

Vranich hired both of them to work on "Chicago Rot."

"Chicago Rot," Vranich first went to Tanzania to work on a documentary along with sound engineer Sam Fell and Catherine Lynch, a casting director and acting coach who grew up in Lake Forest. Vranich hired both of them to work on "Chicago Rot."

"This was a work of passion," said Fell, who grew up in Lake Bluff. "We believed we had something really cool, something different. It's a dark love letter to Chicago."

The plot revolves around a convict who is released from prison after 10 years. "He's looking for revenge against the person who killed his mother and, he believes, stole his soul," Vranich said. "There are some supernatural aspects to it."

Filming started in 2011 and was done periodically over a four- to five-year period.

"What's hard is keeping momentum," Vranich said. "This took us six years (including post production after filming). You have a lot of people working for free and working long hours. Some people had one or two or three other jobs."

It was a complicated movie in terms of sound engineering, Fell said. "You're talking about 100 minutes of dialogue, sound effects and sound design," Fell said. "We were eating watermelon, stabbing lettuce and torturing produce to come up with different sounds for fighting effects. It was a complete custom job."

Filming took place at several Chicago locations, including Metro nightclub, the John Hancock Center, and McCormick Place, which let them in at 2 a.m. so they could film at sunrise, Vranich said.

The crew also invited people to Liars Club on Fullerton Avenue, Lynch said.

After a year of post-production work, they took it on the festival circuit in 2016, showing "Chicago Rot" at Nightmares Film Festival in Columbus, Ohio; FilmQuest in Salt Lake City, Utah; and Hells Half Mile Film and Music Festival in Bay City, Mich.

Midnight Releasing, a distributor, will soon make the film available for digital rental or purchase on Amazon, iTunes, Xbox and elsewhere, Vranich said. A DVD version is in the works, Vranich said. The film is also scheduled to be shown at the Music Box Theater in Chicago at 9:30 p.m. April 6.

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Evanston votes 5-2 to aid restaurant in move from Skokie

BY MIKE ISAACS
Pioneer Press

The Evanston City Council on March 27 signed off on authorizing the city to negotiate a "forgivable loan of up to $50,000 to help the under-construction Kabul House restaurant open at 2424 Dempster St."

The incentive, which was recommended by Evanston's Economic Development Committee, was approved in a 5-2 vote.

The Kabul House has been a long-standing popular restaurant in downtown Skokie, but owner Akmal Qazi has said it has outgrown its space. Despite trying to find a new home in Skokie, he said, the right locale was found just over the border near Dempster and McCormick Boulevard.

The project includes renovating the existing building, which used to be home to Chicago's Home of Chicken & Waffles, according to officials.

Qazi said last year that they did not want to leave downtown Skokie, but made a business decision to move after they couldn't close on any property in downtown Skokie.

Qazi originally said the Skokie restaurant would close at the end of last summer or a little later just before the new Evanston restaurant opened. But the project has moved slower than anticipated, and the restaurant doesn't appear ready to open soon.

The Skokie site remains in business for now and Qazi could not be reached for comment for this story.

In January, Evanston's Economic Development Committee recommended against providing the Kabul House with a grant through the city's Storefront Modernization Program.

The program, Evanston Assistant City Manager Martin Lyons said, restricts funding for properties that have received storefront or facade funding in the last 10 years. According to Lyons, the same property received improvement funding in December, 2012 as well as a mortgage write-down of $157,000.

In a memo to the city council, Lyons said the Kabul House has a $440,000 mortgage and the owner is investing $500,000 in the build-out and $200,000 in equipment. Kabul House owners anticipate hiring 20 new employees, bringing the total up to 40, he said.

The economic development committee considered three ways to help Kabul House complete the project. It looked at an interest-bearing loan of $50,000 for Kabul House with a junior position on mortgage, but the owner did not want to take on additional debt, Lyons said.

Another option considered, he said, was a liquor and tax revenue sharing agreement of $50,000 with anticipated repayment in the first years based on food and liquor sales.

Instead, the incentive calls for a $50,000 forgivable loan to the owner to be funded by the Economic Development Division. Under terms of the loan, still to be negotiated, $10,000 per year for five years will be forgiven should Kabul House maintain its business in Evanston and meet a resident hiring goal.

Kabul House would have to make "best efforts" to hire Evanston residents for the 20 new jobs under terms of the proposed loan, Lyons said. "On the one-year anniversary of opening staff will obtain Kabul House residential employment data to confirm continued efforts," he said.

Ald. Mark Tendam, one of two council members who voted against the economic development committee resolution, said he believes it "sets a bad example.

Tendam said he supports the city's facade improvement program and other programs that help stimulate economic development.

"But I thought we were trying to get away from outright grants for our forgivable loans to different businesses coming to town so I really do have a lot of problems with this," he said.

The Kabul House, which serves Afghan cuisine, has received strong customer reviews on Yelp and has won several notable dining awards including the Michelin Bib Gourmand distinction multiple times.

With the new space, Qazi said last year that the Kabul House will be able to expand its menu and grow from 60 to 140 seats. The new restaurant will include a party room for events and a tea lounge for the first time, he said.
**OPINION**

**Could another Cubs championship season erase past horrors?**

Randy Blaser

Here's something Cubs fans aren't used to: Beginning the season as the reigning world champions. But it is true. The Cubs proved they were not only the winningest team in baseball last season with a league-leading 103 wins, but also the best team in baseball by winning the World Series. And now the question that will send Cubs fans back to back pennants and back to back World Series? Back to back World Series winners hasn't happened since 2000, when the New York Yankees capped a three-year reign by beating the Crosstown rival Mets. And repeat National League pennant winners hasn't happened since the 2007-2008 Philadelphia Phillies.

So if the Cubs repeat and win the pennant again, that will be one for the history books. But if they win another World Series, now those Lovable Losers are flirting with greatness. In addition to the Yankees, who were repeat winners six times, including five straight from 1949-1953, the other great repeat teams include the Oakland A's, Toronto Blue Jays, Cincinnati's Big Red Machine and the old Philadelphia Athletics. And, of course, the 1907-1908 Cubs.

Heading into opening day 2017, it looks like there is no reason why the Cubs can't repeat. Their pitching is strong. So is the defense. And their star sluggers -- Rizzo, Bryant, Russell, Baez and Schwarber -- have yet to reach their peak production years.

So as we stand at the beginning of a new season, Cubs fans are still celebrating and even more hopeful than last year that this year is next year, if you know what I mean.

So right know, before the first pitch of the season is thrown, is a good time to reflect on what a difference a year and what a difference a world title can make. Kris Bryant gathering up a grounder for the final out of the season while smiling and soaking it in the sun is a great memory. But can it erase completely the following parade of past Cubs horrors?

Ron Santo shouting “No!” during a radio broadcast in 1998 when Grant Brown’s dropped fly ball cost the Cubs a key win.

Steve Bartman reaching for a foul ball that Moises Alou probably couldn’t catch anyway. The Cubs then blew the lead over the Marlins, then lost the game and finally the pennant to the team from Florida (my God, Florida!).

Babe Ruth calls his shot in the 1932 World Series. I say one World Series doesn’t erase all those memories and fears. But two in a row?

Now you’re talking. Go, Cubs, go!

Randy Blaser is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.

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**Chicago alcohol sales change is a sign of society’s increasing urgency**

Paul Sassone

Where are you going in such a hurry? No, seriously. Why the rush?

I want to ask that so often of so many people -- the tailgater, the guy who pushes by on the sidewalk.

Or the woman who plows into your heel with her shopping cart.

Ouch! Watch it, please ... "OK"

OK? Not, "excuse me." or "sorry" as she rushed away. We really have become the land of the impatient. I was reminded of how we have not a minute to spare when I heard of a proposed Chicago ordinance that would permit store cashiers between the ages of 18 and 20 to serve liquor in restaurants and to sell and stock unopened liquor bottles at supermarkets.

Under the proposed ordinance, these teens still wouldn’t be permitted to open cans and bottles and pour or mix drinks -- which is a good thing, who knows what kind of mixed drink a 17-year-old would come up with?

They would, however, be allowed to serve and sell drinks after completing a state-sponsored course. I have no strong feelings against such an ordinance. And I would imagine it is the harbinger of such ordinances in the suburbs.

After all, we cannot allow a teen liquor selling gap, can we? The ordinance is being promoted as a job creator for teens. And more jobs for more teens -- more jobs for anyone -- is good.

But, beyond that the law is being touted as one for your benefit. This law can save you time. You know how you are in line at the grocery store? In addition to your frozen chicken pot pie and bag of Oreos suppose you have a six-pack of beer in your cart.

And suppose your checker is between the ages of 18 and 20. He can’t check out your beer.

So, he shouts out something that sounds like, “21 on 14!” The checker (over age 20) in the next lane leans over and runs the six-pack over the scanner. That took about 40 to 60 seconds.

But, I read that some customers are annoyed by wasting those 40 to 60 seconds. I wonder what they would have done with those seconds ...

Something very important, I bet.

Paul Sassone is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.

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**CLARIFICATION**

A column in the March 30 edition about Meals on Wheels incorrectly stated the number of individuals served each year. In 2016, Meals on Wheels served 219 million meals to 24 million senior citizens.
Is bee decline a precursor for other extinction?

Recent reports that certain types of bees are experiencing steep population losses were unnerving, especially when you realize that foods and beverages we take for granted — apples, strawberries, walnuts, beer and coffee, to name a few — depend on pollination.

There's so much unsettling news swirling around on a regular basis, from North Korean leaders talking about first-strike nuclear capability to nearly nonstop political "pressers" to Monday morning recaps of urban violence death tolls, that reading about alarming declines in pollinators is another layer to the larger worry of possible extinction.

Being the Debbie Downer that I admittedly am, I got thinking one night while I was trying to go to sleep — that being the worst best time to think about the world's problems — that there are many things that I take for granted that might as well be on an endangered list.

I fret sometimes when I look around church on certain Sunday mornings and see an overwhelming amount of churchgoers who are senior citizens. What will these pews look like a generation from now? Who will be there? Who will be presiding over the services? If I don't go as regularly as I should or could, who am I to cast judgment on people who aren't there?

Then I think and wonder, there in the dark of night when worry creeps up and takes hold, what about groups that rely on service and honor, such as Scouts and service clubs? I've seen participation in some of those groups fall off in recent years, thanks to the popularity of travel and club sports and other factors, and wonder how membership will be sustained into the next few decades.

On the seemingly trivial side of life, I ponder traditions that may go by the wayside, given the inevitable lifestyle and generational shifts. I love pancake breakfasts, spaghetti dinners and fish fry put on by service organizations, where you can pour yourself a coffee into a styrofoam or paper cup with the built-in handles and swirl in some powdered creamer. Will those still be part of the community when my kids grow up, or will they be considered a quaint relic of the past or perhaps not even considered at all?

What about Easter egg hunts and Christmas carols, in an era when the populace is wary of marking occasions for one form of religion? And don't get me started on the service events. Why is a holiday not taught in some schools, because I see the handwriting on the wall, so to speak, for a future that relies awfully heavily on all things electronic.

Progress and time stop for no one. I just hope that, like pollinators that enable the growth of plants and food, that as we march ahead, we take time to stop and feed the roses.

Lynn Petrik
Home on LaGrange

Eric Scott

There is no doubt your sports attention span is getting shorter by the minute with drama developing in March Madness basketball, excitement building for opening day baseball and Chicago Blackhawks playoff hockey on the horizon.

But the team that's probably not on your radar deserves some special attention. I mean, how many teams do you know that register a huge win by refusing to play?

If you only watch the U.S. Women's National Hockey Team every four years during the Winter Olympics, then you might have missed the recent victory the players scored against their own country.

In a gutsy attempt to call attention to what they felt were highly unequal levels of support by USA Hockey, several star players initially threatened to boycott the 2017 International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championship in Plymouth, Michigan.

For a while, it looked like USA Hockey was unwilling to respond to the players' concerns, especially over financial compensation. A recent National Public Radio interview with team captain, Meghan Duggan, revealed that players only were receiving $1,000 a month for six months out of the year.

Separately, lawyers representing the players said about half of the players on the team held two or three jobs, in addition to training full time, just to make ends meet.

Finally, three days before the beginning of the world championships, the players and USA Hockey announced March 28 that they agreed to a new deal, which would boost compensation. The players also sought better marketing and public-relations opportunities from USA Hockey to improve outreach to fans and youth hockey organizations — similar to what the men's national team receives.

It's almost embarrassing that a team as successful as U.S. Women's National Hockey had to wage a legal battle against its own governing organization, nearly causing a tournament boycott. The team has won Olympic medals in all five Winter Games that have featured women's hockey, as well as seven world championships since 2000.

What's even worse is the fact that USA Hockey actively recruited "scab players" as potential replacements if the team decided to follow through with their boycott. But cooler heads prevailed and both sides appear to be "on the same team," as Duggan noted in a recent USA Hockey news release.

"Our sport is the big winner today," Duggan said. "We stood up for what we thought was right and USA Hockey's leadership listened. In the end, both sides came together. I'm proud of my teammates and can't thank everyone who supported us enough. It's time now to turn the page. We can't wait to play in the world championship later this week in front of our fans as we try and defend our gold medal."

This may not be a huge deal on the sports radar right now, but it will be in years to come, especially for younger girls learning the basics of hockey while dreaming big. The boys also should take note of this unprecedented stance by the U.S. Women's National Hockey Team and take away new lessons in teamwork and standing up for what you believe in.

Cheers to the team that won an off-ice battle that they should never have had to fight in the first place. I would not want to be the first team that has to take the ice and face off against this tough crew.

Eric Scott is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
Hunt is on for tasty Easter brunch

Hop over to these brunches for everything from mimosas to omelets

BY SAMANTHA NELSON
Pioneer Press

Want to celebrate an Easter morning or afternoon with the family but don't want the stress of hosting? Let one of these local spots do the cooking for you and just relax as you enjoy a lavish buffet or special menu of holiday favorites on Easter Sunday, April 16. Reservations are required or highly recommended.

Gene & Georgetti, 9421 W. Higgins Road, Rosemont, 847-653-3302; www.genandgeorgetti.com; Snap a photo with the Easter bunny and enjoy a buffet of classic brunch fare including omelet and carving stations and a Bloody Mary bar. Adults get a mimosa when they arrive. Brunch is served from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. and costs $39 or $19 for kids under age 12.

White Eagle, 6839 N. Milwaukee Ave., Niles, 847-647-0660, www.whiteeaglebanquets.com; A family-style menu including bread, soup, roasted chicken with gravy, mashed potatoes, beef brisket with gravy, Polish sausage and sauerkraut, pierogi, honey-baked ham and dessert, will take place from noon to 6 p.m. with a cost of $27.50 per person. A buffet-style menu will be available from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a cost of $25 per person and feature a breakfast station, fish station, carving station, Italian station and a dessert station.

The Capital Grille, 5340 N. River Road, Rosemont, 847-671-8125; www.thecapitalgrille.com; A buffet offering from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. includes a carving station, raw bar, a selection of soups and salads, dessert table and breakfast options. There's also macaroni and cheese, chicken fingers, mini-burgers and French fries. Nonalcoholic drinks are included and you can add a mimosa, Bloody Mary, bellini or grapefruit buck for $7. Tickets are $49 or $15 for kids.

Hyatt Regency O’Hare, 9300 Bryn Mawr Ave., Rosemont, 847-663-4465; www.ohare.regency.hyatt.com; The Easter Bunny makes an appearance at this brunch buffet, which has stations serving traditional favorites such as leg of lamb and honey-glazed ham along with breakfast and brunch dishes, desserts and kids fare. Brunch is offered from 10 a.m.-1:45 p.m. and costs $53. Kids ages 5-12 are half-price and kids under age 5 are free.

Curragh Irish Pub, 6705 N. Northwest Highway, Chicago, 773-774-6170, www.curraghirishpub.com; Brunch, with seating times at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m., will include eggs Benedict, French toast, scrambled eggs, roast lamb, corned beef and cabbage, barbecue ribs, honey-baked ham, mostaccoli, lemon chicken, salad, mashed potatoes, veggie, fruit and pastries. Cost is $24.99 for adults and $9.99 for kids.

White Pines Golf Club & Banquets, 500 W. Jefferson St., Bensenville, 630-766-0304 ext. 2; www.whitepinesgolf.com; An extravagant buffet features seafood, carved prime rib and omelet stations plus appetizers, salads and a sweets table. A Bloody Mary and champagne bar is also available. Brunch runs from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Brookfield Zoo is hosting an Easter Sunday brunch with a visit from the Easter Bunny.

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White Eagle Inn in Niles is hosting family-style and buffet-style Easter brunches.

**Brunch, from Page 21**
a.m.-2:30 p.m. and costs $35.95 or $15.95 for kids ages 5-10. Kids under age 5 are free.

Carlucci, 6111 N. River Road, Rosemont, 847-588-0990; www.carlucicrose.com: Enjoy seafood, prime rib and other carved meats, made-to-order omelets, traditional breakfast favorites and mimosas from 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Tickets are $44.95, $16.99 for kids and free for kids under 5.

Monastero's, 3935 E. Devon Ave., Chicago, 773-588-2515, www.monasteros.com: Champagne brunch will take place between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Entrees begin at $22, with a children's menu starting at $16. Cost includes choice of entree, soup, fruit or salad; dessert, coffee, tea and choice of a glass of champagne, orange juice or mimosa.

Harry Caray's Italian Steakhouse, 10233 W. Higgins Road, Rosemont, 847-699-1200, www.harrycarays.com: A Champagne brunch will take place 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will offer smoked salmon, eggs Benedict; omelet, waffle and carving stations; salmon cakes, seared tilapia, pomegranate vodka; desserts and children's selections. Cost is $44.95 for adults and $23.95 for children and includes mimosa, coffee, sodas and juices.

Brookfield Zoo, 3400 W. 31st St., Brookfield, 708-688-8355; www.CZS.org/Events: All-you-can-eat Easter Brunch buffet will include coffee cakes, muffins, croissants, French toast, Caesar salad, smoked salmon, lox and bagels, grilled chicken breasts with Marsala sauce, an omelet station, a carving station and a dessert table. Champagne and other beverages will be served tableside. Children can have their photos taken with costumed characters Mr. and Mrs. Bunny. Additional entertainment will include music by the Banjo Buddies. Brunch seatings are offered at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. and reservations are required. The cost, which includes zoo admission and parking, is $39.95 for adults and $29.95 for children ages 3 to 11. Children 2 and younger eat for free.

E&O Food and Drink, 125 Randhurst Village Drive, Mount Prospect, 847-363-3636, www.eofoodanddrink.com: Brunch buffet will take place 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will include assorted scones and danishes, sliced meat, housemade granola, sushi, peel and eat shrimp, scrambled eggs, Parmesan breakfast potatoes, chicken frittata, French toast, bone-in ham, chicken tenders and prime rib. Free family photos included. Cost is $34.95 for adults and $16 for children ages 4-12, free for children 3 and younger.

**REVIEW**

‘By the Water’ is about washed away homes, lives

**BY CHRIS JONES**

Chicago Tribune

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York last week, one-third of Americans say they would struggle to raise $2,000 in the event that they were hit with an emergency. That indication of ongoing financial fragility is especially sobering because such emergencies can and do happen. Imagine, for example, that you lived on Staten Island during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Twenty-four residents were killed by the storm, and there was unparalleled destruction of dwellings, especially in the coastal communities of what has remained mostly a blue-collar community despite its proximity to the ever-growing affluence of glittering Manhattan.

Shayn Rothstein’s play “By the Water,” a piece that premiered at the Manhattan Theatre Club in 2014 and can now be seen at the Northlight Theatre under the very solid direction of the emerging Cody Estle, is about all those things.

Sandy, Staten Island and the shifting sands of life from paycheck to paycheck.

This is not an excessively ambitious drama; there is no epic coming together of disparate plot strands. The one-set physical production is conventional. A debt is owed to the school American realism, be it gritty TV naturalism or such plays as Arthur Miller’s “All My Sons.” But new, non-condescending plays about working-class characters remain rare, especially dramas where you feel like the writer really knows and cares about the people whose fates she is chronicling, and there is poignancy in this writing. This is not as depressing a play as it may sound, even though it was sparked by the real-life destruction of a neighborhood.

It is a work appreciative of human resilience. And also a reminder of how you can get to 60 and find that all you have worked for over your life has been washed away.

“By the Water” is also a chance to see some distinguished Chicagoland acting, here plays a guy named Marty Murphy, a fellow ensemble member who has just been released from prison. Rothstein is clearly sympathetic to Marty’s moral, but he also holds him accountable for the trajectory of his marriage to Mary (Penny Slusher), a kind woman trapped in her husband’s mistakes. And she similarly wants to see her brother (Jordan Brown) and the struggling Brian (Joel Reitsma).

Meanwhile, the couple’s friends the Carters (played by Patrick Clear and Janet Ulrich Brooks) are trying to persuade the Murphys to take up the state’s offer to buy the ruined houses and let the coast return to its natural state, but the offer only is triggered when 80 percent of the residents agree. Marty, who has his reasons, wants to stay.

There’s also a sweet subplot involving a romance between the recently divorced Carter daughter Emily (Amanda Drinkall) and Brian, who has just been released from prison.

You intuit that the pair have about as much chance of making it as a house rebuilt on Oakwood Beach, but you pull for them, thanks in no small measure to these actors’ ability to grasp how we look for small atolls in the storms of life.
“INSIGHTFUL WORK, AN IDEAL PRODUCTION! HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.” — Chicago Sun-Times

“DISTINGUISHED CHICAGO ACTING”
— Chicago Tribune

“POWERFUL. A RICHLY REWARDING EXPERIENCE.”
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by the water
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Salon owner dabbles in high tea

Barkdoll shares recipe for ham salad, raspberry lemon scones

By Judy Buchenot
Pioneer Press

On Friday, doughnut lovers are being invited to take part in the Donut Taste-Off at the David L. Pierce Art & History Center in downtown Aurora.

Six bakeries will compete for the best doughnut title. Tonya Barkdoll, a longtime aficionado of all things sweet and delicious, has a few suggestions for those participating in the event.

“A great doughnut is never too greasy,” she said. “Doughnuts should be able to stand alone without frosting. The frosting should just complement the doughnut flavor.”

Doughnuts are just one of the many sweet treats that Barkdoll, 50, enjoys. She operates the Calla Lily Salon and Day Spa in Aurora and lives in Lisle. She is excited to be reopening the Calla Lily Victorian Tea Room at a new location in Aurora this fall. Barkdoll always enjoys making the popular tea room fare of dainty treats, sandwiches, fresh salads and rich soups.

One of her specialties is scones. Barkdoll noted many people view scones as being very dry and crumbly. “But scones are only that way if they are not made properly,” she said. “The key is to never overwork the batter. Scones should sort of be like a cross between a biscuit and a cookie — flaky and light like a biscuit and lots of flavor like a cookie.”

Donut Taste-off

What: Donut Taste-Off
When: 6 to 9 p.m. Friday
Winner will be announced around 8:15 p.m.
Where: David L. Pierce Art & History Center, 20 E. Downer Place, Aurora
Cost: $3 a person and includes doughnut tastes and a beverage.
More Information: www.aurorahistory.net

Ham Salad

For the dough:
1. cup cold, unsalted butter
2. cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup mayonnaise

For the glaze:
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1/2 cup chopped currants
3/4 cup chopped crystalized ginger
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1/2 cup lemon curd
1/2 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup honey
1/2 cup chopped almonds
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1/2 cup chopped pecans

1. Cut butter into 1/4-inch pieces and return it to the refrigerator to keep it cold until ready to mix scones. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Chill mixtures for at least 4 hours to allow flavors to blend. After chilling, stir briefly to recombine mixtures.

3. Pour dough onto a floured surface. Add raspberries to the mixture and gently knead until it comes together. There may still be a few stray bits and dry patches. The most important thing is to avoid overworking the dough. Divide the dough in half and shape each half into an 8-inch circle about 1/4-inch thick. Using a knife or pizza cutter, divide each circle into 6 pie-shaped pieces.

4. Separate the scones carefully on parchment lined baking sheet to give them room to spread. Bake at 425°F for 12 to 15 minutes.

5. To prepare the glaze, combine lemon juice and 1/4 cup powdered sugar and beat until smooth. Add more sugar, as needed to create a glaze. Cool scones for 10 minutes and then dip in glaze. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Tonya Barkdoll arranges scones on serving plate for a delicious treat.

From England who ran a tea room, Barkdoll learned to make several traditional English dishes from the woman including homemade lemon curd. “It was such a blessing to have worked with her. She taught me so many things,” Barkdoll said.

Although she learned many things from her past tea room experience, Barkdoll has made up several of her own specialties and occasionally caters for various clients including the Aurora Historical Society. She said people tease her that all of her recipes are a fairly accurate description but defends herself by saying “flavors really need to go beyond just plain chocolate.”

For example, she makes a miniature dessert that consists of a chocolate shortbread cup filled with chocolate mousse and topped with a “drunken strawberry,” which is a strawberry soaked in Grand Marnier and honey.

With Easter just around the corner, Barkdoll knows there will be leftover ham so she plans to make her custom ham salad. She shares this recipe and her recipe for raspberry lemon scones for others to try.

Fudgy Lemon Scones

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Peeps cuisine
America's favorite marshmallow critters escape the Easter basket

BETH ENGELMAN
Mommy on a Shoestring

Move over, jelly beans. According to market research company IR, Peeps brand candies is the No. 1 nonchocolate branded candy at Easter. In fact, roughly 1.5 billion Peeps are consumed each spring. In recent years, the marshmallow critters have also given rise to a creative cottage industry. Artists design whimsical Peeps habitats and dioramas. They also, along with foodies and fans, create recipes involving Peeps that give new meaning to the phrase “eye candy.” Here are some of the fun ones.

Peeps Lemon Drop Martini
Peeps aren’t just for kids, according to cooking and crafting aficionado Lauren Everson, creator of the website, Sew You Think You Can Cook. Her recipe reaffirms the old adage, “when life gives you lemons, make a lemon drop martini.”

You need:
- 3 Peeps (Everson recommends using yellow chicks)
- 1/4 cup vodka
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- Sprinkles (optional)

Directions:
- Make Peep vodka. In a glass jar, soak peeps in vodka for at least 4 days. Remove Peeps from vodka and strain if necessary.
- Create a simple-syrup by dissolving sugar in water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Set aside to cool.
- Decorate the rims of each martini glass by placing sprinkles on a flat plate. Run a slice of lemon along the rim of a martini glass and gently twist the glass in the sprinkles.
- In a cocktail shaker with ice, combine equal parts lemon juice, simple-syrup, and Peeps vodka. Pour into martini glasses. Cheers!

Peeps Popcorn Balls
Although these popcorn balls are not as cute as other Peep delicacies, they add a bright spot to lunches and snacks.

You need:
- 1-2 cups popped popcorn
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 5-8 Peeps
- Colorful sprinkles
- Cupcake liners

Directions:
- Melt butter and marshmallows in a small saucepan over medium-high heat (or use the microwave).
- Pour the melted marshmallow mixture over the popcorn and stir until well combined.
- Spoon 2-3 tablespoons of the Peep and popcorn mixture into each cupcake liner then add a dash of sprinkles.
- Set aside until cool and enjoy!

Hula Bunny Peeps
These super cute bunnies are the perfect reminder that summer, beach and fun are not far away. Thank you to Michelle Clausen, founder of the website Sugar Swings, for sharing her recipe. If you like sugar, sweets and pop culture you will absolutely love her blog.

You need:
- Hula Bunny Peeps
- Square pretzels
- Green candy melts, melted and in a pastry bag*
- Brown candy melts or chocolate chips, melted and in a pastry bag*
- M&M candies
- Non-pareil sprinkles
- Daisy sprinkles

Directions:
- For each bunny, use a square pretzel as the base. Add a dab of melted candy to the pretzel and attach the bunny. Next, pipe the green melted candy in vertical rows to resemble a grass skirt. Add a brown belt with the melted brown candy. Use the melted candy glue to add the M&M bikini top and non-pareil sprinkle arms. Finally, add a finishing touch with the addition of a candy flower on the ear.
- “If you don’t have pastry bags, Clausen recommends using Ziploc bags.”
- Melted white chocolate or candy melts
- Directions:
- Start with the wheels. Use melted candy to “glue” one daisy sprinkle to the center of each Lifesaver “wheel” then set aside until dry. Next, use the candy “glue” to attach the wheels to the skateboard cookie. Set aside until wheels are dry and securely attached.
- To make the carrots, cut Starburst into three pieces. Roll each piece into a carrot shape and add green daisy “stems.” Now, you are ready to assemble the bunny and carrots on the skateboards, using the melted candy as glue. Vanover suggests holding the bunny in place for a few extra seconds because, according to her, “Peeps aren’t known for their balancing skills.”
Dogs can't do two things at the same time, either

By Cathy M. Rosenthal
Tribune Content Agency

Q: We have a wonderful beagle/mix who is almost 10 years old. We are constantly amazed by Tanner’s intelligence and loving nature, but he has one behavior that we cannot seem to control. He barks at everyone who walks by our house, whether or not they are walking a dog, and everyone who comes to our door. If they come in, he wags his tail and loves them, so it’s not that he is ferocious. He’s just really loud. Is there anything we can do to curb this behavior? — Helaine Yancey, Charlotte, N.C.

A: Barking is a normal behavior that dogs do to alert people to changes in their environment, and in your dog’s mind, he has saved your life a thousand times. I don’t think it’s a behavior you should stop altogether, but one that you simply need some control over when you know there is no threat to you or your property.

There is a saying that most people can’t chew gum and walk at the same time. The same can be said of dogs, except they usually can’t bark and run at the same time — or bark and sit or bark and do a trick. Think about it; when you call your dog into the house to get him to stop barking, he stops barking the moment he turns and run toward you. Mission accomplished.

Use these same tactics in the house. When your dog starts barking at the window, shake a can of coins to interrupt the behavior and get his attention, then say, “Tanner, stop” followed by a recall command like “Tanner, here.” The second command is needed, so he learns he is being rewarded for the recall and not for barking. Begin this training by standing a few feet away from him. Over time, you should be able to say, “Tanner, here” from almost anywhere in the house and he will come running to you.

As for the door barking, ask a friend to help you train Tanner. Have your friend stand outside and ring the bell. When Tanner barks at the bell, say, “Tanner, thank you,” and then give the command “Tanner, sit.” Tanner will have trouble maintaining his barking if he is sitting. Reward him for sitting and being quiet, then open the door and let your friend in. If he stands or barks, have your friend step back out and ask him to sit again.

Repeat this process at least 10 times each session until your intelligent boy learns that after his initial alert, you can handle things from that point on. You may need to keep him on a leash initially to keep him from jumping on people and barking. That is something dogs can do at the same time.

Q: My husband shared your column about the owner of a Dachshund and Dachshund mix whose dogs peed in the house within a half-hour of being brought in from outside. I reminded him that our Dachshund pee when his routine is upset, like when we pet-sit our children’s dogs or go away on a vacation. Any suggestions on how we can combat this? — Joy Cruess, Columbia, Md.

A: It's not uncommon for dogs to relieve themselves in inappropriate places when they are anxious and stressed. Assuming he is neutered (since not being neutered can lead to inappropriate elimination, as well), he may be peeing to gain some control over the changes in his environment, which happens when you leave or when your children's dogs come to visit.

Dogs also pee to communicate to other dogs.

He may be peeing to let the visiting dogs know everything in the house belongs to him, which can be a more difficult problem to address.

Maintain your dog's regular feeding, sleeping and play routines when you leave or company comes over, and add a few more potty breaks to his schedule. Most dogs want to urinate after eating, sleeping or drinking water, so treat your dog like a puppy in training when his routine is altered.

Your dog may also benefit from some anti-anxiety treatments during times of stress or change, including using a plug-in pheromone, which mimics a mother dog's smell and calms some dogs down; putting an anxiety wrap on your dog — they aren't just used for storms; or talking to your veterinarian about the temporary use of anti-anxiety medications to help your dog when his routine is interrupted.

Cathy M. Rosenthal is a longtime animal advocate, author, columnist and pet expert who has more than 25 years in the animal welfare field. Send your pet questions, stories and tips to cathy@petpundit.com. Please include your name, city and state. You can follow her on Twitter @cathymrosenthal.
Advice on avoiding construction issues

With Help Squad's recent focus on new construction issues experienced by some D.R. Horton Carillon Club homeowners, I decided to get some expert advice on what consumers can proactively do to protect themselves against a builder who is unresponsive to quality construction complaints. For insight, I reached out to Scott R. Fradin, construction practice group co-chair at Much Shelist, Chicago, and James Oberholtzer of James Oberholtzer, Chartered Attorneys at Law, Chicago and Portland.

Both lawyers strongly emphasized the importance of taking the time to perform due diligence before making the most expensive purchase of a lifetime.

Fradin put it bluntly: Prospective homeowners need to do their homework.

In Illinois, this is particularly important. Illinois does not have a board of licensing requirements. In simplest terms, this means anyone can call themselves a builder. And though just about every builder carries commercial general liability (CGL) insurance, Illinois, defective workmanship is not covered by CGL. This is because defective work is not considered an accident.

Fradin added because a home purchase is contractual, and most sophisticated sellers require buyers to sign off on warranty exclusions before buying, there wind up being few consumer protections in place after the sale. One of the biggest warranties to be waived by buyers is the applied warranty of habitability. Buyers can refuse to waive this, but as long as other buyers are willing, it can often be a deal-breaker.

How do you do that? Fradin offered these suggestions:

- Check the circuit court records of the counties where the builder has worked. Search defendants to see if there are cases against the firm; you will be able to see details of any lawsuits.
- Read the purchase sale agreement thoroughly to determine if product warranties are assigned to the homeowner or the builder. If homeowner-assigned, know that you will have to deal directly with each individual product vendor (windows, furnace, roof, etc.) should a warranty issue arise.
- Hire a third-party contractor or architect to thoroughly inspect the home before buying.
- Be sure to hire a residential closing lawyer to review and advise on all of the above.

Oberholtzer also emphasized Illinois home buyers need to be especially careful when evaluating a home. Taking a builder to court after the fact can be expensive and exhausting. He recommends involving a reputable lawyer from the start to ensure appropriate consumer protections.

Oberholtzer noted buyers of new construction actually are entering into two transactions: payment for construction and purchase of a finished home. Because home buyers have no opportunity to participate in the former, they need to take actions to protect themselves. With this in mind, here are his suggestions for ensuring the most favorable consumer outcomes:

- With a bank involved, a series of draws can be used to ensure that work is done properly. The developer requests payment from the bank as work is completed. However, compensation is only received if the bank's professional inspector confirms specifications have been met.
- In addition to the bank's inspector, buyers should hire an independent inspector and include in the contract the right for him or her to make periodic site visits.
- Also included in the contract should be a clause that if construction expectations go unmet, the contract can be canceled.
- For a home that is built, a series of inspectors should be brought in to dig deeply into work that already has been completed. The budget for such an effort is a minimum of $5,000. Compared to the costs it could potentially prevent, however, Oberholtzer advises this is money well-spent.

Need help?
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Cathy Cunningham is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.

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Handicapping the Pulitzer

By John Warner

The British do big book awards better than we do. For one, the Man Booker Prize for Fiction — their top literary competition — pays more than four times the amount in prize money than our Pulitzer Prize (nearly $65,000 vs. $15,000). For two, you can bet on the Man Booker Prize.

Betting on the Pulitzer in this country isn't legal, but that's not going to stop me from crafting some odds in advance of the prize announcement April 10.

Good handicappers have to understand the full nature of the competition, and here it's handy to know that the Pulitzer has something of an odd process where a "jury" of three people from the literary field (critics, writers, academics) selects three finalists, with the ultimate winner being chosen by the Pulitzer board, which currently includes a single fiction writer, Junot Diaz, who won the Pulitzer in 2008 for "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao."

So who are the favorites?

Louise Erdrich has already won this year's National Book Critics Circle Award for her novel "LaRose." This isn't quite the equivalent of a Golden Globe in advance of the Oscars, but an NBCC win has preceded a Pulitzer several times in relatively recent years. Diaz won both for "Oscar Wao," as did Jennifer Egan in 2011 for "A Visit from the Goon Squad" and Marilynne Robinson in 2005 for "Gilead."

Two other Pulitzer-eligible authors on the NBCC finalists list: Michael Chabon ("Moonglow") and Ann Patchett ("Commonwealth"), are also strong contenders. Both have vied for many top prizes, and Chabon won the Pulitzer in 2001 for "The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay."

The 2016 National Book Award winner, Colson Whitehead's "The Underground Railroad," has to be considered a favorite. It's also an Oprah Book Club pick; does that help or hurt? Only Cormac McCarthy's "The Road" was selected for the Book Club prior to winning the Pulitzer, in 2007.

If we're looking for a debut novel to match the feat of last year's winner, "The Sympathizer" by Viet Thanh Nguyen, I'm looking toward "Your Heart Is a Muscle the Size of a Fist" by Sunil Yapa, both a critical and reader favorite.

Since there's no official betting odds for the Pulitzer Prize in fiction, we might as well just accept mine:

"LaRose" by Louise Erdrich: 6-1. She's been a Pulitzer finalist, and the NBCC award carries some weight. A win for her seems inevitable, but is this the year?

"The Sport of Kings" by C.E. Morgan: 10-1. It won the relatively new Kirkus Prize, and it's a big, ambitious book that may impress the Pulitzer board if it makes it past the jury.

"The Heart Is a Muscle the Size of a Fist" by Sunil Yapa: 15-1. I've got a feeling this book will be a finalist.

"Barkskins" by Annie Proulx: 20-1. Proulx won the Pulitzer for "The Shipping News," but "Barkskins" hasn't gotten as much play as one would expect.

"Moonglow" by Michael Chabon: 50-1. Big authors, but not necessarily best books.

"What Belongs to You" by Garth Greenwell, "The Nix" by

Ann Patchett is the author of "Commonwealth."

Nathan Hill and "The Queen of the Night" by Alexander Chee: All 99-1. Some other book winning the prize: 1-1. Only fools try to predict these things.

John Warner is the author of "Tough Day for the Army." Follow him @biblioracle.
END OF MESSAGE:
Specifically, 115 Across
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

Across
1. Overhead
6. Stride
10. Farm structure
14. More distressed
15. Honduran seaport
16. Armor
17. Manual skill
19. Formerly
20. Netherlands city
21. Squeeze in
22. Quibbled
24. Turn aside
25. Take away by force
26. Femme
29. Helsinki man
30. Brit. knighthood order
31. Like a bird
34. Gem weight
35. Chinese dynasty
36. Fuel
37. Inn
38. Spar
39. Noun suffix
40. Subdued: with down
41. Digger
42. "--was going to St. Ives"
43. Herd of deer

Handily

BY CHARLES PRESTON

Across
1. Overhead 12. __ homo
45. Suggestive of Trafalgar Square 18. Algonquian language
47. Conjuror's rod 23. Express
48. Some Broadway shows 24. Glut
49. US illustrator 25. Installed lighting
53. Unruly moppet 27. Cuban ballerina
55. Secondhand 28. Assume charge
56. Bombast 29. Greek goddesses
58. Bombast 31. Swiss city
59. Symphony instrument 32. Among: Fr.
60. Ascended 34. Island, Brooklyn
62. Labels 37. Bold attempt to achieve the impossible
63. Nocturnal sound 38. Reason
39. Island, Brooklyn

Down
1. Tennis ace
2. Onus
3. French department
4. Sustained
5. Fall by drops
6. Stall
7. Harnessed oxen
8. Sprite
9. Fatherly
10. Porticos
11. In close quarters
12. __ homo
13. Action
18. Algonquian language
23. Express
24. Glut
25. Installed lighting
26. Beauty treatment
27. Cuban ballerina
28. Assume charge
29. Greek goddesses
31. Swiss city
34. Island, Brooklyn
37. Bold attempt to achieve the impossible
38. Reason
40. Gait
41. Cattle troughs
43. Herd of deer
Women over 50 have radiance in abundance

Perhaps one of the most depressing things that has ever happened to me occurred the other day when I was riding a crowded bus from an airport to a rental car place and a guy who looked way older than me stood up and offered me his seat.

Why is that depressing? Because it made me feel old, which, let's be honest, I am.

Like me, I think most women over 50 have insecurities about aging, especially when it comes to two things: the physical drawbacks that go along with getting older and dating.

I can't count the number of emails I receive from women over 50 who tell me how hard it is to meet men and how men our age and even older want to date younger women.

So, when I got this email from a 53-year-old single guy, I was so excited, I felt like doing cartwheels around my kitchen.

I'm a 53-year-old man. My 23-year marriage ended in 2010. I find that women my age have so much more to offer. Most have a real sense of who they are and what they want in a relationship. They're open and dedicated to making this next part of their lives really amazing. They come to life, and revel in the freedom that comes with being single with so much waiting to be discovered. Some men are genuinely drawn to a younger woman's energy but from what I've seen most are looking for an ego boost.

To all you women who might be wondering what this next stage holds, go out there and enjoy life. Your radiance will be more than enough to attract real men.

What makes this so inspiring is that it isn't coming from me but rather from someone who represents our desired demographic.

Like our new favorite guy explains, there are many, many advantages to being a woman over 50. To talk about them, I sat down with Judy Freedman, a 59-year-old New Jersey-based writer and the creator of her 9-year-old blog, "A Boomer's Life After 50."

According to Freedman, a retired corporate communications executive who is now a yoga instructor and meditation enthusiast, the two biggest reasons why being over 50 is fabulous are wisdom and confidence.

"Fifty is a turning point. It's when you say to yourself, 'Wow, so what do I want to do that I haven't done?" said Freedman, a mom of two who became a widow at 49. You have all this wisdom which comes from the experiences you've had personally and professionally, and if something doesn't go your way, you feel like it's OK."

Freedman said women over 50 are willing to take more risks, both from an adventure standpoint and by being more vulnerable in relationships.

"You start to feel so much more comfortable in your inner self. It's not just about 'OK, I have a middle-aged middle,' but about being healthy and vibrant," Freedman said. "Being confident and liking yourself isn't arrogant but rather reveals healthy self-esteem."

Like Freedman, I find myself a big fan of vulnerability. It's refreshing and inspiring to show your authentic self to someone and discover that they like you for who you really are.

Vulnerability is something I know I personally am more capable of as I've gotten older.

What else do women over 50 have more of than we did in our younger days? Freedman and I thought of two more things: independence and gratitude.

"It took a long time to get here, but I like being by myself," Freedman said. "I do have a companion and I enjoy being with him, but I also appreciate time I spend alone. The key is, you have to like yourself."

One and a half years into my 50s, I find myself feeling gratitude more and more. Every morning when I wake up, before I get out of bed, I spend a few minutes thinking about all the wonderful things I have in my life, and I name the people for whom I feel grateful.

It sets the tone for a beautiful, happy day and makes all of my daily problems seem manageable.

Here's the thing about being in your 50s. It's a little scary and sad to think that you've lived most of your life, and it's a little depressing to see and experience the physical changes happening. But if you take the advice of our awesome 53-year-old friend - who writes, "Go out there and enjoy life" - not only will your radiance attract real men, as he states, but with or without a man, you will be radiant. In other words, you will be healthy and glowing and happy. That doesn't sound old to me.

Jackie Pilossoph is a freelance columnist.

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Studies show surprising link between diabetes and pollution

By Dr. Robert Ashley

Dear Reader: I can understand your disbelief. My first thought when I saw this study was that it was correlative, not causative. In other words, air quality is simply worse in cities, which are more likely to have large numbers of people with lower socioeconomic status. In turn, they tend to have greater rates of obesity and diabetes. Then I looked more closely.

Air pollutants assessed in the studies include nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter below 1 to 2.5 microns in size (PM 2.5). Early epidemiologic studies showed a correlation between areas of greater pollution and diabetes but did not control for socioeconomic status. Then came a 2010 study that used census data from three counties in the United States and assessed both rates of diabetes and Environmental Protection Agency data regarding PM 2.5 pollution.

The authors took into account such socioeconomic variables as median income, high school completion, male sex and ethnicity — all markers for diabetes risk. The authors found a 16 to 20 percent increase in the prevalence of diabetes in these areas that had the highest amounts of PM 2.5 versus those areas with the lowest amounts, even with other factors being equal.

Then came this year’s study published in the journal Diabetes that included 314 obese Latino children in Los Angeles. The authors analyzed where the children lived; the amount of pollution to which they were exposed; measured by both nitrogen dioxide and PM 2.5; and their parents’ socioeconomic data. The children were followed for 3.4 years, during which time they underwent tests of blood sugar, two-hour glucose tolerance, insulin and insulin response to glucose. The authors found that the markers for future diabetes were much greater in those exposed to greater amounts of pollutants. This was independent of socioeconomic status and even independent of the level of obesity.

The cause isn’t completely clear yet. Studies in rodents exposed to pollutants have shown increased inflammation within fat cells, accumulation of cholesterol in the liver and decreased ability of muscles to use sugar. This leads to both metabolic dysfunction and obesity. Further, pollutants can lead to systemic inflammation that in turn leads to insulin resistance and thus the inability to bring sugar into the cells of the body, leaving it to sit in the bloodstream.

What is clear is that there does appear to be an association between pollution and diabetes, but more studies are needed to evaluate the degree of the association. Regardless, pollution is obviously unhealthy and needs to be controlled within society. The measurements of pollution provided in these studies come from the Environmental Protection Agency, whose existence is to safeguard the health of current and future societies.

Robert Ashley, M.D., is an internist and assistant professor of medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Send your questions to askthedoctos@mednet.ucla.edu, or write: Ask the Doctors, c/o Media Relations, UCLA Health, 924 Westwood Blvd., Suite 350, Los Angeles, CA 90095. Owing to the volume of mail, personal replies cannot be provided.

False alarm: Coconut oil won’t clog your arteries

By Joe Graedon

Q: My surgeon says that coconut oil is very bad for me and will cause heart attacks. So many others recommend it. Is coconut oil good for you or not? I have been cooking with it for about a month now and wonder if I should stop.

A: Coconut oil is rich in saturated fat, so it got a bad rap with respect to heart health.

In a study published last year, patients with heart disease were randomly assigned to cook with either coconut oil or sunflower oil for two years (Indian Heart Journal, July-August 2016). At the end of that time, there were no differences in the impact on blood fats or cardiovascular events.

Epidemiological research does not show a connection between coconut-oil consumption and an increased risk of heart disease.

If you don’t get enough vitamin B-12, you could suffer nerve damage, heart palpitations, fatigue, dizziness, weakness, tingling in the hands and feet, and a sore tongue.

Q: Where can I find persimmon tea? Is it good for acid reflux? Does it make you lose weight? (I am slim and don’t want to lose any weight.)

A: Persimmon tea doesn’t cause weight loss, but it does appear to help ease heartburn. Here is the original story we got from a reader:

“My reflux became really bad after menopause. Acid-suppressing drugs worked great, but after two months I couldn’t stop them without the heartburn recurring.”

“One night, I took colleagues to dinner at a Korean restaurant. Someone
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Moving in with your in-laws

How to set rules, get along, still have privacy for sex

By Danielle Braff
Chicago Tribune

Jessica Fromm and her mother-in-law used to have a great relationship.

It ended as soon as her mother-in-law moved into their small brick house in Chicago four years ago.

“Rules don’t apply to her,” Fromm said of her mother-in-law. “We don’t want her living with us anymore.”

It’s the little things. When Fromm throws her clothing into the washing machine, she’ll return to find it tossed on the floor. And when she has friends over, Fromm notices that her mother-in-law is eavesdropping on her conversations.

The mother-in-law, Susan Fromm, said that while they have had their issues, she appreciates all the time she has been able to spend with her family — and especially with her grandchildren.

“Any grandmother would be fortunate enough to be with their grandchildren on a full-time basis,” Susan Fromm said. “It’s just a gift.”

“If we had more space, maybe it would work,” said Jessica Fromm, who also shares the space with her husband and three children ages 3 and under.

Hers is far from the only family dealing with in-law issues.

According to the Pew Research Center, there were 57 million Americans — or 18 percent of the population — living in multigenerational households in 2012, which is double what the number was in 1980.

Some are doing it for financial reasons, and others are doing it because they could use help raising children while both parents work. Regardless of the reasons, it’s very common for personality clashes and other issues to occur, but there are ways to make the transition smoother.

“Changing the basic family structure always has an impact on everyone’s relationships, no matter how simple or easy it may look before it happens; and no matter what the reason, when a couple moves in with one partner’s parents, or when a parent moves in with a couple, it is a change in family structure,” said Diane Barth, New York-based psychotherapist.

Barth said that, often, one of the adults will begin acting childlike.

“He has always been warm and loving and extremely patient with the two children; suddenly, he is grumpy with her and has a short fuse with the kids,” Barth said.

“Without anyone realizing it, he has fallen back into patterns he once had as a teenager when he was trying to assert his independence from his parents.”

In other cases, one normally happy adult will suddenly get her feelings hurt by silly things, finding herself crying for no reason. In these scenarios, she may feel left out by her husband and his parents, who have inside jokes — and she becomes the third wheel in her own home, Barth says.

Some couples may even feel a distorted version of sibling rivalry with each other for their in-laws’ attention, with the in-laws for a spouse’s attention or with the grandparents for the children’s love.

“Even if there is no sibling rivalry or jealousy involved, putting more people into a family inevitably shifts the equilibrium of the family,” Barth said.

To make the transition go well, it’s best to make the expectations on both sides clear before the move, said Meredith Hansen, a marriage psychologist in California.

If there are rules and guidelines that you don’t agree with, have a direct conversation about them ahead of time, and try to find a compromise. Once the guidelines have been agreed upon, share them with your children in a way they can understand.

“For example, ‘We’re moving into grandma’s house, and she has some different rules than we have at our house. We want to make sure we show respect to grandma, so that she feels comfortable, and she wants us to feel comfortable, so we all need to follow these rules,’” Hansen said.

That’s exactly what Stefanie Cohen did before she and her husband moved in with her in-laws for five months while they did a massive renovation.

“They became overly opinionated, set a boundary right away,” Hansen said. “Let them know that you know they are coming from a loving place but that their feedback is not helpful.”

This type of opinion and criticism can cause problems in a marriage and should be minimized.

Cohen said she wasn’t criticized but definitely felt a lack of privacy when she and her husband were trying to conceive a child while living with their in-laws. Their bedroom happened to be above the family room.

“We would hear his parents talking about ‘The Blacklist,’ and it would put us out of the mood,” she said.

It didn’t work there, but they managed to conceive a baby on vacation, and Cohen’s mother-in-law made onesies in every size with “Made in Oregon” on them.

Janet Cohen — the mother-in-law — said she enjoyed living with her son and daughter-in-law so much that she thinks everyone should do it.

“We got to be really close,” Cohen said. “It gave me a whole new perspective on Stefanie,” said Cohen, who described her as her daughter, not her daughter-in-law as she had before they lived together.

Still, it’s important to remember that there are other relationships to consider before bringing everyone together under one roof.

Getting along with the in-laws is important, but maintaining your relationship with your spouse while you’re living with the in-laws is also crucial, said Terri Orbuch, therapist and author of “5 Simple Steps to Take Your Marriage From Good to Great.”

Orbuch followed 373 couples for 30 years and found that living with in-laws greatly affects marital relationships.

It takes time away from the spousal relationship, in general, but it usually causes greater stress for women, who typically try to please their mothers-in-law more than men try to please their fathers-in-law, Orbuch said.

It’s important not to discuss your marital issues with your in-laws, she said.

When you’re all living together, you also need to have some alone time as a couple — including making time for your physical relationship, Hansen said.

“Some couples may use this as a way to rekindle the passion in their love life — think high school strategies for finding places to be alone,” Hansen said.

And you probably never thought you’d have to resort to that again.

Danielle Braff is a freelancer.
Highland Park home with wine cellar: $3.7M

ADDRESS: 2480 Sheridan Road in Highland Park
ASKING PRICE: $3,650,000
Listed on March 3, 2017

This carefully restored William Boyington-designed home, built in 1892, includes seven bedrooms and sits on 1.4 acres. The home features smart home technology and security along with landscaping for a welcoming atmosphere and heightened privacy. The property includes a gourmet kitchen, master suite, third-level playroom, walkout lower level with theater room, wine cellar, exercise room and three-car attached garage.

Agent: Noah Levy of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Highland Park office, 312-203-2416

At press time, this home was still for sale.

To feature your luxury listing of $800,000 or more in Chicago Tribune's Dream Homes, send listing information and high-res photos to ctc-realestate@chicagotribune.com.
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Boys get to check out fire engines, play rousing games of Bingo and have a great evening at Mother-Son Bingo Night at the Lincoinwood Fire Station on April 20.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Moms, sons will enjoy Bingo at the firehouse

BY MYRNA PETLICK
Pioneer Press

Little boys will have a thrilling evening with their moms during Mother-Son Bingo Night at the Lincoinwood Fire Station, 6-7:30 p.m. April 20 at 6900 N. Lincoln Ave.

When the couples arrive, the sons receive a badge with their name on it. First, they dine on pizza and juice. “Then the firemen come out and dress them up in their gear,” said Aryn Fletcher, Youth Programs Coordinator for the Village of Lincoinwood.

“After that, the firemen run the bingo game. There’s prizes for the sons and there’s also prizes for the moms.”

Fletcher said that kids are excited to be “where the trucks actually park. The firemen go in there that morning and clean the place out. The tables are set up in there. It’s a really neat atmosphere.”

The event is geared toward boys ages 4-12. The cost is $15 per couple for residents; $19 for nonresidents; $9 and $11 per additional child. Registration is required.

For details, call 847-673-1540 or go to www.lincolnwoodil.org/mother-son-bingo.

Why not try DIY?

Third-graders through adults are invited to a How-To Fest, 1-3:30 p.m. April 9 at Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St. Local experts and library staff will be at 15 stations assisting visitors on such skills as playing the autoharp, making ribbon bookmarks, spotting counterfeit money, go-go dancing and more.

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

Cool way to spend spring day

There will be skating games and fun for kids and grown ups at Spring Skate, Bunny Hop, 12:30-1:45 p.m. April 15 at IceLand, 8435 Ballard, Niles. The cost for this drop-in event is $6 per person; skate rental is $4.

For details, call 847-297-8010 or go to www.niles-parks.org.

Rocky start

The author of the hilarious New York Times bestseller, “The Day the Crayons Quit,” has another funny book out, “The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors.” Children can hear the tale at a special story time, 11 a.m. April 8 at Barnes and Noble, 55 Old Orchard Center, Skokie.

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

Bubbles galore...and something more

You and your children will learn some scientific concepts while being entertained at Second Sunday Ben’s Bubble Show, 2-2:45 p.m. April 15 at Niles Public Library, 6960 Oakton St. Pick up free tickets in KidSpace starting at 1:30 p.m. that day.

For details, call 847-663-1234 or go to www.nileslibrary.org.
Avenues to Independence raises $65,000 at Irish Fest

Event: 20th anniversary Irish Fest
Hosted by: Avenues to Independence, Park Ridge, which provides healthy lifestyle programs and support for the more than 200 adults with developmental disabilities
Date: March 12
Location: Cotillion Banquets, Palatine
Attended: 330
Raised: $65,000
Website: www.avenuestoinddependence.org

GARDEN WALKS & PLANT SALES
Thinking spring? We are, and we're planning a roundup of local garden walks and plant sales.
Garden clubs and other groups who host these events can submit the address, date, time and some details of the event, whether there is an admission fee, and a phone number or email for publication, to Debbie Hoppe, dhoppe@pioneerlocal.com, by April 7 to be included.
COMMUNITY REAL ESTATE HOMES IN YOUR AREA

LAKE ZURICH
Address: 176 Vista Road
Price: $374,900
Schools: Lake Zurich High School
Taxes: $8,363.49
Agent: Cherie Smith Zurek, Re/Max Unlimited Northwest

VERNON HILLS
Address: 358 Donnelley Place
Price: $559,800
Schools: Vernon Hills High School
Taxes: $12,564
Agent: Ann George, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Winnetka

MOUNT PROSPECT
Address: 1416 S. Birch Drive
Price: $298,000
Schools: Prospect High School
Taxes: $5,820
Agent: Marilyn Krumm, Baird & Warner Palatine

WILMETTE
Address: 1627 Wilmette Ave.
Price: $699,000
Schools: New Trier High School
Taxes: $10,016.35
Agent: Mark Steward, Baird & Warner Evanston

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More than one-third of kitchen renovation projects now involve increasing the room’s size, according to the 2017 Houzz Kitchen Trends Study. Open floor plans continue to rise, with 51 percent of new kitchens more open to other rooms of the house than they were before the remodeling.

“Half the kitchens we do, we end up taking out a wall or partial wall,” said Craig Weber, architect and owner of Bridgewater Construction in Bloomington, Minn. “It makes for a much more dramatic kitchen. Most people entertain in the kitchen, whether they want to or not.”

Often the unwanted wall is load-bearing, so it’s important to consult with a professional, noted Max Windmiller, an architectural designer with Windmiller Design Studio in Wayzata, Minn. He advised Frick during her project and also brought in a structural engineer.

“She knew what she wanted, but she wanted to make sure it would be possible,” Windmiller said. “You have to figure out how to transfer that load. It’s a structural challenge.”

Remodelers from the 1950s and ’60s are good candidates for wall removal, Weber said. “The floor plans are pretty flexible.”

Wall removal can be more complicated in a split-level or older two-story home, but just about anything is possible.

“We’ve taken walls out of homes from pretty much any era,” Weber said. The results are worth it, said Steve Ribnick, who hired Weber to remodel his family’s 1978 two-story in Wayzata, Minn. He advised Ribnick and his wife considered a cosmetic face-lift for their kitchen but ultimately chose to remove the wall between the living room and family room to create an open floor plan with a casual dining area. Their formal dining room is now a music room/playroom.

“Best decision we made,” Ribnick said of losing the wall. “We use all of our house now.”
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810 Shermer Rd. Glenview
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444 W Witchwood In, Lake Bluff
Inverness
1805 W Ashbury Ln, #11, Woods
1 Rutgers Ct, Hawthorn Woods
2102 Shermer Rd. Glenview
2020 Franklin Dr, Glenview
1739 Ridgewood In W. Glenview
8157 N Susan Ct, Niles
8353 N Octavia Ave, Niles
8301 N Odell Ave, Niles
7742 N Oleander Ave, Niles
925 Florence Dr, Park Ridge
106 N Lincoln Ave, Park Ridge

The kitchen is a possible spot to dedicate as a technology oasis in your home.

HOME REMEDIES

Nearly any room can become a tech-free zone

BY EMILY UDELL

Technology brings so much to our lives: information, entertainment, security, and comfort in our homes. But it's easy to overdo it on tech time. Sometimes you need to unplug and connect with the great big world beyond the screen.

To help your household enjoy some time without electronics on a regular basis, consider establishing a tech-free zone in your home.

Here's how:

Pick a convenient area: Do you have a place at home to dedicate to a technology oasis? It could be a room that currently serves another purpose, such as your living room, bedroom or office. For example, if you use your kitchen for meal and homework time, establish a screen-free zone there (unless you need to make exceptions for internet research for schoolwork). If you have an extra room such as a sun porch or basement recreation area, even better.

Establish rules: Set guidelines for your tech-free zone. Maybe you decide it's OK to listen to music, as long as you push play before you enter and don't spend time searching and socializing on Spotify instead of focusing on other activities. Maybe you silence phones during your tech-free time, or leave them in another room when you take your screening breaks (unless you need to make exceptions for internet research for schoolwork). If you have an extra room such as a sun porch or basement recreation area, even better.

yoga, scrapbooking or crafts, art, writing, music and so on.

Whether you feel like knitting, meditating or journaling, make the tech-free zone a place to connect with the present, pursue personal or creative projects or just enjoy time with family.

Decorate accordingly: If you have a dedicated electronics oasis, consider decorating the space in such a way that facilitates feelings of creativity and relaxation.

Hang a fun sign declaring the area a tech-free zone and create a charging station to deposit phones before entering. If you plan to spend your screen breaks reading the classics, set up a comfy chair with a throw blanket.

If you want to use the space to meditate, paint the walls a relaxing color. Set up a big table and board games, reading, yoga, scrapbooking or crafts, art, writing, music and so on.

Whether you feel like knitting, meditating or journaling, make the tech-free zone a place to connect with the present, pursue personal or creative projects or just enjoy time with family.

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Thursday, April 6

Tift Merritt: 8 p.m. SPACE, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $20-$34, 847-492-8800

Barbara Mahany book event: "Motherprayer": Barbara Mahany reads from her new book "Motherprayer: Lessons in Loving." Mahany's ability to capture the beauty of small moments captivated readers of her first book, "Slow Time." Now, she writes of the sacred mysteries of mothering with a hope to apply these lessons to the world beyond our familial bubbles. 6 p.m. Bookends & Beginnings, 1712 Sherman Ave., Evanston, free, 224-999-7722.

Nature vs. Nurture: The Evanston Art Center announces an upcoming exhibit curated by Younsou Kim Flynn. It features the works by Nathan Braunfeld, Jack Flynn, Sue Jun Kim, and everything is Collective (Jason Lukas, Zachary Norman, and Aaron Hegert). Nature vs. Nurture runs from March 17 to April 23. Each of the artists focuses on redefining the complex relationship between natural and urban landscapes. All week, 9 a.m. Evanston Art Center, 1117 Central St., Evanston, free, 847-479-4500.

Kader Attia: Reflecting Memory: The Block Museum will present an exhibition of newly commissioned work by the internationally acclaimed French-Algerian artist Kader Attia, based in part on the artist's research in the collections of Northwestern University's Herskovits Library of African Studies and interviews with university faculty across disciplines. 10 a.m. All week. Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, free, 847-467-4602.

If You Remember, I'll Remember: This exhibition presents a selection of works by artists Kristine Aono, Shan Goshorn, Samantha Hill, McCallum & Terry, Dario Robleto, and Marie Watt, who investigate aspects of 19th and 20th century North American history and resonate with contemporary concerns about war, racism, and xenophobia. All week, 10 a.m. Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, free, 847-467-4602.

Triple T: Thursday evenings are their weekly taco special. That is four chef's choice tacos packed with a flight of their house-brewed draft beer— all for $15.4 p.m. Peckish Pig, 623 Howard St., Evanston, $15, 847-491-6778.

Everybody Move - Ages Birth to Two years with Caregiver: Celeste Cifala Roy, from early childhood movement and music program Everybody Move! has planned an hour of activities and exploration including scarves, balls, hoops and instruments to get your child up moving, singing and dancing. Weekly Thursday attendance is encouraged for this eight week session. Registration is required and is for the entire series: March 20 - May 25. 9:30 a.m. Lincolnwood Public Library, 4000 W. Pratt Ave., Lincolnwood, free, 847-677-5277.

2017 AudioBook Buzz from Penguin Random House: Registration is required to attend this presentation, which is led by a representative from Penguin Random House. This is an opportunity to get the inside scoop on the best of the future releases. Attendees receive a free tote bag and a full-length audiobook courtesy of the publisher. 2 p.m. Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220.

Butterflies Encounter at Golf Mill: This is a family-friendly event for all ages to encounter butterflies fluttering freely inside a special butterfly house located inside Golf Mill Shopping Center. Children ages two and under are free with an adult. Cost is $5 per person. This is a chance to see a butterfly hatch, and also feed a butterfly. The Butterflies! experience includes: a staff-guided tour about butterfly lifecycle, anatomy and ecosystem, plus complimentary craft projects for kids, storybook readings and more. 10 a.m. All week. Golf Mill Shopping Center, 239 Golf Mill Center, Niles, $5 per person, free for kids under 2-years-old, 847-699-1070.

Spring Bake Sale Greek Pastries: The St. Haralambos Ladies Philoptochos Society annual Bake Sale takes place for your Easter celebration. Featured are: Tsoureki bread and Koulourakia, Greek Pastries and Easter candles and red eggs. Lenten lunch is served both daily. 9 a.m. Holy Trinity-St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, 7373 N. Caldwell Ave., Niles, free admission and parking, 847-647-8880.

International Quilt Festival: Join hundreds of vendors selling quilts, supplies, fabric and all other things quilts. Watch artists working on current projects. 10 a.m. Thursday-Saturday, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 9291 Bryn Mawr Ave., Rosemont, $25, 713-781-6864.

Free Matzah Sample: There is a special spiritual significance to handmade Shmurah Matzah. If you would like a sample piece to use at your Seder, please contact Lubavitch Chabad of Skokie, as they are happy to provide it for you. Call or go online to order. All week, 315 p.m. Lubavitch Chabad of Skokie, 4089 Dempster St., Skokie, free, 847-677-1770.

Nature Fun and Frolic - Thursdays: This is for age two with a parent for weekly classes that introduce toddlers to different plants, animals and natural elements, while singing songs, playing games, reading books, and exploring nature in many different ways. Class takes place primarily outdoors, weather permitting. 9:15 a.m. Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Brummel St., Skokie, $95 Skokie resident, $119 non-resident, 847-677-7001.

Planning for Retirement Success: This 90-minute class for retirees and pre-retirees will cover the most effective methods for planning a safe and profitable retirement. Topics will include: Developing an income plan that ensures you never run out of money, and Investing for safety with maximum return. 6:30 p.m. National Louis University North Shore, 5202 Old Orchard Road, Skokie, free, 847-800-7515.

"By the Water": Northlight presents the story of a community ready to rebuild after Hurricane Sandy. 7:30 p.m. Thursday, 8 p.m. Friday, 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday. North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, 9501 Skokie Blvd., Skokie, $30-$81, 847-673-6300.

Friday, April 7

Friday Night Fish Fry at White Pines: White Pines will be hosting a Fish Fry every Friday night from March 3 through April 14. Bring the whole family and enjoy an all-you-can-eat lake Perch dinner for only $14.99. In addition to fresh fish entrees, there will also be weekly menu specials and delicious desserts. For more information call 630-766-0304, Ext. 2. 5 p.m. White Pines Golf Club, 500 W. Jefferson St., Bensenville, $14.99, 630-766-0304.

Segovia Classical Guitar: Raphaela Smits: Belgian guitarist Raphaela Smits, best known for her performances of historic repertoire on the eight-string guitar, was the first woman to win the top prize in Spain's Certamen Internacional de Guitarra Francisco Tarrega in 1986. Smits will perform Manuel Maria Ponce's Suite in A Minor - a Homage to S.L. Weiss, Silvius Leopold Weiss' Tom-
CALENDAR

This event takes place in Center Court and is titled Very Special Storytime with the Easter Bunny and the Very Hungry Caterpillar. Each attendee may meet the Easter Bunny, take a guided tour of the butterfly conservatory, and do a springtime craft project. “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle is read for all to enjoy. 10 a.m. Golf Mill Shopping Center, 239 Golf Mill Center, Niles, $5 per person, 847-699-1070

Second Saturday Breakfast Bingo: Kids and families are welcome to enjoy some breakfast treats as everyone plays Bingo. Enjoy a kick start to one’s weekend with a morning of fun and family at the library. 9:30 a.m. Niles Public Library, 6900 W. Oakton St., Niles, free, 847-663-1234

Second Saturday Family Storytime and Craft - All Ages: Stories and crafts for the whole family. 10 a.m. Park Ridge Public Library, 20 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-823-3123

Twenty-first Star Chapter April 2017 Meeting: A luncheon is served at noon with a meeting and program to follow. Chapter Regent of The Twenty-first Star Chapter of the NSDAR, Gail Enault, is pleased to have Mr. Robert Trownsell present a program entitled The Life of a Union Officer. Contact Second Vice Regent, Dorothy Wilson by calling for further details. 11:30 a.m. Park Ridge Country Club, 636 N. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, $22, 847-328-6946

Natural Egg Dying: This is for those ages 6-10 to decorate their own eggs with wax crayons and colorful dyes from berries, leaves and spices. While the dye sets, attendees hike outside and share a story. Please bring up to 12 hard-boiled eggs to use in class. 12 p.m. Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Brummel St, Skokie, $12 Skokie resident, $15 non-resident, 847-677-7001

Nature Fun and Frolic - Saturdays: This is for age two with a parent for weekly classes that introduce toddlers to different plants, animals and natural elements, while singing songs, playing games, reading books, and exploring nature in many different ways. Class takes place primarily outdoors, weather permitting. 9:30 a.m. Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Brummel St., Skokie, $84 Skokie resident, $105 non-resident, 847-677-7001

Classical Recital: The Second Saturday Coffeehouse welcomes back the always exciting Romanian born violinist, Daniela Bisienius. For this concert, Daniela is accompanied by pianist, Oletea Gurgui. Their concert includes, but is not limited to: Bartok, Brahms, Puccini, Khachaturian, and more. 8 p.m. Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago, 7574 N. Lincoln Ave., Skokie, Suggested donation $10, 847-677-3334

Preserving Survivor Stories: Ask Holocaust Survivor Pinchas Gutter any question you would like, and natural language technology software will respond as if Pinchas were in the room. 10:30 a.m. Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie, free, 847-967-4800

Sunday, April 9

Jazz Champagne Brunch: This event benefits the WE (Work Ethic) program of the Forrest E. Powell Foundation working with teens who want to be matched with mentors. The mentors work with the students in specific careers and teach skills, and they also receive a scholarship help. 11:30 a.m. Hilton Garden Inn Chicago North Shore/Evanston, 1818 Maple Ave., Evanston, $50 in advance; $60 at door, 847-721-9707

Live Jazz with Chad Willets Trio: On Sundays they have their full brunch menu with live jazz and the Chad Willets Trio from 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. 11:30 a.m. Peckish Pig, 623 Howard St., Evanston, free, 847-491-6778

John Williams’ Sunday music session: 3 p.m. The Celtic Knot Public House, 626 Church St., Evanston, free, 847-864-1679

Knife Single Weapon Certification: This class is taught by Chuck Coyl to learn the oldest and most visceral weapon style. Attacks, defenses, footwork and performance skills unique to the performance of safe and effective theatrical knife play are covered. Participants have the opportunity to take the Society of American Fight Directors skills proficiency test. 10 a.m. Actors Gymnasium, 927 Noyes St., Evanston, $415, 847-328-2795

National Library Week presents: Doing Dylan: A live performance celebrating 2016 Nobel Laureate Bob Dylan’s iconic words and music, as interpreted by two highly respected musicians from the Chicago music scene, Tommi Zender and Phil Agnotti. Please register at glenviewpl.org/register or by calling 2 p.m. Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

StoryWalk: The Grizzly Bear Who Lost His Grrrr: Little Bear Garden at Gallery Park, 2500 Chestnut Avenue is the place to go on the Storybook Trail and find out where that Grrrr got off

Turn to Calendar, Next Page
Beginning Square Dance Classes: Have fun and learn to square dance; beginner lessons are sponsored by the Glenview Square Dance Club and Glenview Park District. No experience necessary. 7:30 p.m. Glenview Park Center, 2400 Chestnut Ave, Glenview, free first registration for 9-week session $46/$54, 847-724-5670

Do More with Excel 2010: Registration required starting Feb. 20, for this hands-on workshop: Perform calculations with formulas and functions. Prerequisite: Introduction to Microsoft Excel 2010 workshop or basic familiarity with Excel 2010 required. 7 p.m. Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave, Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Grief Share Support Group: This is for anyone who can use help and encouragement after the death of a spouse, child, family member or friend. It is non denominational and features Biblical concepts for healing from grief. These sessions include a weekly DVD, small group discussion and workbook. 7 p.m. St. Paul of the Cross Catholic Church in Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

The Happ Inn: Celebrate the Jewish holiday by indulging in one of several specials, including matzoh ball soup, chopped liver, brisket, chicken, whitefish, potato pancakes and flourless chocolate cake. Choose from individual meals or family style option. Menu available for dine in or take out. 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, The Happ Inn, 305 Happ Road, Northfield, Menu prices vary, Family style option $35.95 per person, $19.95 children 12 and younger, 847-384-9200

Pesach Seder: The family at Lubavitch Chabad of Skokie hosts your family for Pesach Seder. Relive the Exodus, discover the eternal meaning of the Haggadah, and enjoy hand-baked matzah, wine, and a home-made dinner. Join in on April 10 and/or on April 11, for an unforgettable meal by reservation only. Call or go online to make a reservation. 7:30 p.m. Lubavitch Chabad of Skokie, 405 Dempster St., Skokie, Suggested Donation, 847-677-1770

Tuesday, April 11

Lego Club for Grades 1-2: Calling all Master Builders to join in this monthly free build. The Legos are provided. Space is limited, so register at glenviewpl.org/register or by calling. 4 p.m. Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Linkedin: Sign up for a Linkedin account before this class and it is limited to 12 attendees. Linkedin is for making connections and building your professional identity. Learn how to network using this professional social media site. A Glenview Library card is required and registration at glenviewpl.org/register or by calling. 7 p.m. Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Annual Share-A-Seder at Temple Beth Israel: This annual "Share-A-Seder" runs from 6 to 9 p.m. Participants please bring a family, hard boiled, peeled eggs; Kosher for Passover matzah, wine and/or grape juice. Dinner is provided. For more information call Temple Beth Israel or go to their website: 6:30 p.m. Temple Beth Israel, 3601 W. Dempster St., Skokie, adults $35; children $15 (ages 2-12), 847-675-0951

Lehrhaus Confirmation Class: Post Bar/Bat Mitzvah teenagers are invited to participate in this program which teaches young people how to utilize Jewish resources when faced with making a decision. This is a fascinating three-year program. 7 p.m. Ezra Habonim, The Niles Township Jewish Congregation, 4500 Dempster St, Skokie, $420 for entire year plus book fees, 847-675-4141

Nature Neighbors: Classes run weekly for those ages 4-5 to explore the wonders of the pond, prairie and woodland neighborhoods. They learn about the amazing animals that live there through exploration, play and creative projects. Activities change seasonally. Classes are primarily outdoors, weather permitting. Children must be toilet-trained. 1:15 p.m. Emily Oaks Nature Center, 4650 Brummel St, Skokie, $120 Skokie resident, $203 non-resident, 847-677-7001

Wednesday, April 12

Found's Salon Series Featuring Nicholas Barron: Found Kitchen and Social House are featuring a new collective of interactive events dubbed the Salon Series. As part of this series, Evanston's own Nicholas Barron is set to perform every Wednesday night. 8 p.m. Found Kitchen & Social House, 1631 Chicago Ave, Evanston, $10, 847-868-8945

Live Music Wednesdays with the Josh Rzepeka Trio: Hear the music of Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk and other classics of the era played by the Josh Rzepeka Bebop trio. Reservations can be made online or by calling. 6:30 p.m. Found Kitchen & Social House, 1631 Chicago Ave, Evanston, free, 847-868-8945

Triple B: Wednesday nights the burger special is of epic proportions! A burger of your choice, a house-brewed draft beer and a shot of buck bourbon—all for $15. 4 p.m. Peckish Pig, 623 Howard St, Evanston, $15, 847-491-6778

Literary Late Hour: This group shares a love of reading and offers an opportunity to meet like-minded people in an informal setting. If you just finished a great book and want to share it...
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or you are looking for something new to read, just drop in. Staff are available to talk about hot new titles and selections the library's book groups have been discussing. 10:30 a.m. The Glenview Grind, 1837 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-0111

Census Records: Learn to find and use census records in your genealogy research. A Glenview Library card is required. Please register at glenviewpl.org/register or by calling. 2 p.m. Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Bringing It All Back: Dylan in the 60s: Rian Murphy of Drag City Records explores Dylan's influential 60s discography. Mr. Murphy traces the development of Dylan's sound and songwriting from political folk to electric rock through selected tracks and lively discussion. Please register at glenviewpl.org/register or by calling. 7 p.m. Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Portraits of People I Will Never Know - Gallery Talk: Larry Simon takes his inspiration from seemingly everyday objects, surfaces, and scenes that are transformed into painterly short stories when given the chance. Larry blends his instincts for street photography with his love of abstraction to tell compelling, often solitudinous tales. 6:15 p.m. Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500

Free Seminar: Living with an Anxiety Disorder: More than 25 million Americans live with an anxiety disorder. Attendees discover the different types of anxiety disorders including the signs, symptoms, developmental pathways, treatment options and more. This is presented by George Savarese, Ph.D., LCSW and includes refreshments. 5 p.m. Whitehall of Deerfield, 300 Waukegan Road, Glenview, free, 847-580-8323

Knitting Club: If you want to learn to knit, or you are working on a knitting or crochet project, drop-in to share tips, show off your work and converse with fellow needle arts enthusiasts. Bring your own knitting supplies. 11 a.m. Lincolnwood Public Library, 4000 W. Pratt Ave., Lincolnwood, free, 847-729-7500

Converting Cassette and Vinyl Records: Registration required starting Feb. 20, for Lecture/Demo: Learn how to convert your audiocassettes or vinyl records to MP3 or CD in the Digital Media Lab. Limited to four. 7 p.m. Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220

Free Film: Leviathan: Screened in Russian with English subtitles, Leviathan is a story of love and tragedy experienced by ordinary people. This is part of the library's Celebration of Cultures Film Series. 1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Northbrook Public Library, 1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, free, 847-272-6224

April Networking Event at Harry Caray's: Spring into action this April and join the Park Ridge Chamber for our Monthly Networking Luncheon. The Community Health Commission will speak on Green Business Programs. 11:30 a.m. Harry Caray's Italian Steakhouse, 10233 W. Higgins Road, Rosemont, Fee: $30, Discounted Member Fee: $25, 847-825-3121

41st Annual WNCC Recognition Lunch: Annual lunch recognizes outstanding area residents, community leaders, business members and volunteers. There will be networking, a fashion show, awards and a silent auction. 11 a.m. Winnetka Community House, 620 Lincoln Ave., Winnetka, $50 per person, $450 for a table of 10, 847-446-4461

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

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“Beauty and the Beast” ★★
PG, 2:10, musical
This chaotic remake of Disney’s 1991 screen musical “Beauty and the Beast” stresses the challenges of adapting a success in one form (animation) for another (live-action). The high points of director Bill Condon’s resume suggest he was the right person for this big-budget remake. But his new movie is more of a gratifying disappointment, despite its best supporting turns, human and animatronic. Emma Watson makes for a genial, bland-ish Belle, the outsider in her provincial French village. Underneath the digital fur and digital roars, Dan Stevens as the Beast, the transformed prince working on a rose-petaled deadline to become human again, locates some moments of pathos that stick. — Michael Phillips

“Power Rangers” ★★
PG-13, 2:04, action/adventure
Back in the ‘90s, you probably knew them as Mighty Morphin, and these days they take the prefix “Saban,” but we all know them best as simply the Power Rangers. Now, of course, we have the big-screen reboot, for better or for worse. This version of the “Power Rangers” is about as dark as a CW series: just enough to be taken (somewhat) seriously, but with enough of a sense of humor about itself to have some fun too. The team of screenwriters has brought a sense of levity, as well as realism, to the high school dramas, and the film is more about a bunch of oddball teens than it is about colorfully suited, karate-chopping superheroes. — Katie Walsh, Tribune News Service

“Kong: Skull Island” ★★★ ½
PG-13, 2:00, Action/Adventure
“Kong: Skull Island” is better, lighter on its feet (digital feet and human feet) and more fun than its reported $190 million production budget would suggest. I don’t know what you’d call it: a franchise reboot? A sequel to Peter Jackson’s 2005 “King Kong,” which I admired, but didn’t enjoy like this one? Any movie with the sense, the wit and the visual instincts to introduce Kong the way this one does is fine with me. Booooom, the mighty paw slams down on the top of a cliff as Skull Island’s landlord rises up to check out, nose to nose, the first humans we see on screen. Jordan Vogt-Robert’s film zips along and treats the Kong mythology seriously without getting balled up in the storytelling. — M.P

“Life” ★★
R, 1:43, sci-fi/fantasy
Calvin is a squishy, microscopic life form discovered in a soil sample taken from the surface of Mars. Described as all muscle, all brain and all-seeing, Calvin requires food, water and oxygen, just like the crew members of the International Space Station charged with bringing the samples back to Earth. Once the III Martian traveler establishes himself as A) a freakishly fast-developing adversary and B) a real stinker, the zero-gravity blood globules float freely, and, like in “Alien,” we have a sithly antagonist slithering amok in the space station. — M.P

“Logan” ★★
R, 2:17, action/adventure
Director James Mangold’s picture is the most sentimental and relentlessly violent of the nine films featuring Hugh Jackman, either in the lead or in a cameo, as the furry mutant. It’s set in 2029, when the specially gifted mutant population has been decimated. Laura, played by Dafne Keen, is a mini-Wolverine cloned from our hero’s blood. She is being pursued by security goon Pierce (Boyd Holbrook) and his “Mad Max”-style posse. “Logan” is deadly serious, and while its gamer-style killing sprees are meant to be excitingly brutal, I found them numbing and, in the climax, borderline offensive. — M.P

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SCHOOL CHOICE
Prep schools offer alternative East Coast route to college hoops

BY JON J. KERR
Pioneer Press

In April 2015, Rapolas Ivanauskas had just wrapped up his junior season on the Barrington boys basketball team. In his second year on varsity, the 6-foot-8 Ivanauskas quickly rose in the state recruiting rankings as he led Barrington to its first Mid-Suburban League title since 1979. He had scholarship offers from Iowa and Northwestern, among others, before committing to the Wildcats.

But seven months later, when he signed his national letter of intent with Northwestern, Ivanauskas was 1,000 miles away in Wolfeboro, N.H., where he spent his senior year.

A town of about 6,300 people, Wolfeboro is a popular resort destination for New England vacationers. It is also the home of Brewster Academy, a private boarding school for students in grades nine through 12, as well as post-graduates.

Not long after committing to Northwestern in April 2015, Ivanauskas consulted with Wildcats assistant coach Armon Gates. A Chicago native who played at Hillcrest before transferring to Brewster his senior year, Gates encouraged Ivanauskas to look into the school.

Brewster is perhaps most well-known for its top-tier basketball program, which has produced NBA players such as Mitch McGary, Thomas Robinson and T.J. Warren. Brewster has 16 alumni who played in the NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament this season. That's especially high considering Brewster is a relatively small school, with only 352 students currently enrolled.

Gates' recommendation soon led to a spot on the roster, assured by Brewster head coach Jason Smith, Ivanauskas was in New Hampshire by August 2015, four months after he committed to Northwestern.

"The decision to transfer was me and my family's choice," Ivanauskas said. "I knew I wanted to play basketball in a better league (than the MSL). I knew I needed to develop as a person."

After injuries limited his time on varsity, Libertyville alumnus Conor Peterson spent a post-graduate year at Brewster Academy and played with Rapolas Ivanauskas. Peterson later walked on at Xavier.

"We're not at that level"

On its website, Lake Forest Academy describes itself as a "co-educational, independent, college-preparatory school." The Caxys' basketball roster has two players from Canada and one from China. But coach Matt Vaughn scoffed at the idea that Lake Forest Academy could be compared to various East Coast prep schools.

"We have boarding schools and kids from all over the place, but we're not at that level," Vaughn said of Brewster and similar schools with a plethora of Division I players. "They place much more of an emphasis on basketball than us."

Lake Forest Academy plays a traditional November-to-February basketball schedule, but Vaughn said he knows of East Coast schools where the season begins in August.

"Once you get to campus, you are practicing and playing," he said. "It's essentially a two-season sport."

Brewster's schedule begins in early November and runs to March, and Bobcats athletic director Matt Lawlor disputed the notion that Brewster could be lumped with other schools where basketball is a primary focus.

"We have 400 kids in the school," Lawlor said. "We offer other sports - lacrosse, hockey, skiing and snowboarding. We have other athletes walking around. We are not a big hoops factory. The ones that are basketball factories don't have other sports."

An all-Central Suburban League player coming out of Highland Park in 2008, Josh Bartelstein received minimal interest from Division I schools. He decided to take a gap year on the East Coast in hopes of landing at an Ivy League or Big Ten school.

"There was a negative connotation about prep schools. It's the same as college, where some don't value academics," Bartelstein said. "But I wanted to have a new world understanding and wanted to learn about that space."

He visited Brewster and found it to be "a great school, but after talking to people I felt it was closer to a basketball factory," he said.

He chose Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, N.H. After a year at Exeter, Bartelstein ended up at Michigan and co-captained the team that made it to the 2013 NCAA title game.

"It worked out," said Bartelstein, now the assistant to Detroit Pistons executive Arn Tellem at Palace Sports and Entertainment. "My success that year (at Exeter) and getting seen and talked about helped me to play basketball at Michigan."

Two other Highland Park students went the prep school route for a year. Telf Lundevel played football and track at Exeter before moving on to Brown, where he also played football. His younger brother, Hallvard Lundevel, went to rival Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass., before moving on to the Wesleyan football team.

A second chance

In the high school class of 2015 alone, Hallvard Lundevel, Conor Peterson of Libertyville and Jack Lieb of Deerfield all spent a post-graduate year at prep schools.

Peterson, a 6-5 shooting guard,
Basketball, from Previous Page

and Lieb, a 6-8 center, were teammates with Ivanauskas at Brewster in 2015-16.

"I wanted to get a Division I scholarship (in high school), and I didn't achieve that goal," said Peterson, the older brother of Libertyville junior guard Drew Peterson.

At Brewster, Peterson improved his use of his non-dominant left hand as well as his shooting and footwork. He put on 20 pounds of muscle and committed to Xavier last August as a walk-on.

"Conor was really skinny (coming out of Libertyville) and wasn't at his physical peak yet. He was still growing," said Brian Burns, one of Peterson's AAU coaches with the Kessel Heat. "For a kid like him, (Brewster) was a great opportunity."

Back and knee injuries shortened Lieb's career at Deerfield, leaving him with an incomplete basketball resume. Lieb, unsure of what path to take after high school, asked Mullins, his AAU coach, for advice.

Mullins steered Lieb to Brewster. Mullins had known the Bobcats' coaching staff since former Oak Park-River Forest standout Christian Cornelius went there in 2005.

"Most guys get two or three years of varsity ball and Jack, through no fault of his own, did not get that opportunity," Mullins said. "The hope was he'd benefit like him, (Brewster) was a great opportunity."

Ivanauskas said, adding that he heard it from somewhere else, "Bryan Tucker."

Pioneer Press contributor Jon J. Kerr interviewed Brewster Academy dean of studies Peter Hess to learn more about how prep schools like Brewster operate.

Q: What makes Brewster a prep school? What percentage of students are post-graduates?
A: Parents send their kids here to prepare them for college. That's why we call ourselves a college preparatory school. It's not uncommon for us to have post-graduates. We take on a certain number. Out of our graduating class of 120 or 125, there between 15 to 22 post-graduates. Some are looking for better academic preparation and instructional support before college. Some are looking for another year of maturity athletically.

Q: What are the academic requirements?
A: We are on trimesters here. Students must complete five year-round academic courses. English and math are two requirements for the whole year. There is one credit for each course. They have to maintain that full load throughout the year. There is no change from one trimester to the next. Once they have received five academic credits, they get a certificate of completion. Just like any public school, students can earn college credit if they take Advanced Placement classes.

Q: Is there a minimum grade-point average required?
A: A score of 60 (percent) is required. If they fail, they have to make up that credit.

By Jon J. Kerr
Pioneer Press

TRACY ALLEN/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

By the end of his junior season, Rapolas Ivanauskas emerged as a dominant player at Barrington. He transferred to Brewster Academy in New Hampshire for his senior season.

"He made a decision that was best for him," Tucker said. "It wasn't personal. There is no bad blood."

One of Ivanauskas' Barrington teammates did not respond to requests for comment. Another former teammate declined to comment when contacted by Pioneer Press.

Chris Lester, who played with Ivanauskas at Barrington and is now a freshman at New Hampshire, said he's happy for his former teammate.

"He's at a D-1 school. He did what was best for him," Lester said.

Ivanauskas said he hopes to be cleared to resume basketball activities later in the spring. He said he made the right choice to prepare him for the athletic and academic rigors of a Big Ten university.

"I had to make a decision and needed to challenge myself for the transition to college," he said. "If I hadn't (transferred to Brewster), the transition would have been far more drastic."

Jon J. Kerr is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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Q&A: Brewster Academy dean of studies Peter Hess

There are 352 students enrolled at Brewster Academy for the 2016-17 school year. They range anywhere from ninth grade to post-graduates and come from 30 states and several countries. The price tag is hefty — $59,900 for boarding students next fall — and not far from the cost of attendance at some elite universities.

Q: Is there a minimum GPA to maintain athletic eligibility?
A: We handle that case-by-case. We haven't had an issue. Our academic programs are designed around a curriculum to meet success. We invest a lot in teaching practices here. The experience of the teachers and their expertise and commitment and the work they do with our students is above and beyond. It's a different mindset.

Q: Cost of attendance at Brewster is (about) $55,000 for 2016-17. Do students receive financial aid?
A: Most do. It's the same idea as college in regards to the process to receive financial assistance. Although we've been around for a long time, that money comes out of our operating budget. We used to be the local public school here going back to 1820. Then in 1964 the town built a regional high school, and that's when we became a private school. We don't have the huge endowments that other schools like Exeter or Phillips have. We are not in that category.

Q: What do you say to people who may perceive Brewster as a basketball factory?
A: There are schools like that. I can say with absolute certainty that basketball players here are enrolled in the same programs as all students and are held to the same standard. They are in class every day. They have an adviser. If they miss class, there are detentions. The coach of our program (Jason Smith) has been here a long time and has built a working reputation among college coaches. He knows the system very well, and if someone comes to Brewster, they know the (academic) program they will be involved in. He's able to be very selective about the students he brings in. We work very closely together.

Jon J. Kerr is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.
INDIVIDUAL EFFORT
For athletes without teams, state playoffs are a solo act

BY RICH MAYOR
Pioneer Press

On the Illinois High School Association website, Keith Engeriser is listed as the Maine South girls bowling coach. There's nothing odd about that, except Maine South technically does not have a girls bowling team.

Engeriser, like a handful of other coaches in the area, could also be considered supervisors. These coaches represent their schools — and individual athletes — in the IHSA-sanctioned state series. Their interaction with each player often does not begin until the regional playoffs and only continues as far as the individual advances.

Engeriser is the designee supervisor for Victoria Odarczenko, a senior and Maine South's only varsity girls bowler.

Engeriser first met Odarczenko at the Resurrection Regional on Feb. 8, 2014. Odarczenko was a freshman and bowled an 1102, good enough to advance to sectionals.

She bowled alone then and bowled alone the next three seasons as well. Engeriser said watching her compete without teammates is difficult, but could certainly be worse; she could not be there at all.

"It's tough seeing her, it really is," Engeriser said. "Especially the first year, not knowing what to expect was a bit of a shock. How well these (other bowling) teams are doing, you're just not competing for a team, you can't build the momentum."

Odarczenko is another coach who competes without a team, having expertise in the field but had no contact with the Lake Zurich gymnastics department.

"The other kids on teams compete twice or three times per week (Fulk) goes to meets once in a while. The difference between club and these meets is significant, it takes some getting used to. You're just not competing for a team, you can't build the momentum."

Aaron Chopra is listed as the Lake Zurich girls gymnastics coach on the IHSA site. He was a gymnastics coach at Barrington "for about 10 years," he said, but stopped because of the time commitment. His coaching role at Lake Zurich is much more limited.

Chopra is another coach who has expertise in the field but had no contact with the Lake Zurich gymnastics during the regular season. The first time he saw the team — freshmen Tegan Jones, Julia McDevitt and Krista Wohler — compete was at the Buffalo Grove Regional on Jan. 30. Jones advanced to the following week's Fremd Sectional in the vault.

"I think, the pressure on the school of having a gymnastics team sort of falls by the wayside because there was an outlet," Chopra said.

Under head coach Pam Bonniver, the Bears became a perennial contender at the state cheerleading meet and won the large school state title in 2011.

The cheerleading success is a silver lining to an often difficult system for Lake Zurich gymnasts, who compete without the support of a team. Engeriser, Marks and Chopra said the athletes at their respective schools still get the opportunity to compete against the state's best, even if the camaraderie looks a little different and the season doesn't start until the playoffs.

"The 'coach' term is there, but it's not like I do anything with (Odarczenko) during the year," Engeriser said. "Different schools have different levels of knowledge for people in that role, but at least I knew bowling. They can't necessarily go out and search for a coach, because it can be a one-week position."

"That's just the nature of the beast, really," Chopra said.

Rich Mayor is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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HELP WANTED

BY JAKUB RUDNIK
Pioneer Press

The Niles West athletic department staff has been extra busy this winter and spring. The school has been tasked with finding new coaches for three of its highest-profile positions after head coaches resigned.

Scott Baum stepped down as the football coach and accepted the freshman defensive backs coaching position at Loyola. Baum has a son who will be a junior in the Ramblers program next year, and another who will be a freshman. Bob Williams, who has been the boys basketball coach, is retiring from coaching and teaching at the end of the school year. Tony Konsewicz won't return as the girls basketball coach and athletic director Terri Laux will begin contacting candidates this week for interviews.

This turnover is not common at Niles West. Konsewicz has been head coach for 10 seasons, while Williams each held their positions for the past eight seasons. While Griffin said he wasn't expecting all the change, the situation does offer the department the rare opportunity to shake much of its future all at once. He stressed that developing programs in the community will be essential to competing in the Central Suburban South.

"I want someone who is going to be a leader, someone who is going to get out in the community and build the program that way," Griffin said of the football and girls basketball openings. "Someone who is going to sell the program to the community, at the junior high and even at the youth level. We want someone with the ability to grow a program at a youth level. Someone who understands our cultural diversity and the challenges we face as a district."

Griffin said he, Laux, building-level administrators and select student-athletes will be involved in the interview process for the next football coach and offered their feedback on candidates.

"We want to get a feel of what (current players are) looking for in a head coach and what they'd like us to identify," Griffin said. "I want them to know that we feel it is important to get their feedback."

In an email, Baum said an incoming coach will have to deal with decreasing numbers at lower levels.

"As for Niles West, we return a group of players that played a lot last year," he said in an email. "Our sophomore numbers were good, but our freshman numbers were down a little last year. Like a lot of programs, we are struggling to get kids out for football ... Niles West has great facilities and support from the administration, just need to get more kids out playing football."

Konsewicz said the girls basketball program is "in great shape," with talented returning players on the roster.

"We had a very young nucleus on the varsity level that is only going to get better," he said via email. "We have some young and talented girls coming through the program. The new head coach is going to enjoy working with this team. Not only are they good basketball players, they are extremely hard workers. Above all else they are high character student-athletes."

Jakub Rudnik is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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In this Sept. 30, 2016, photo, Niles West football coach Scott Baum talks to his players during their game at Evanston.

Niles West hiring new football, basketball coaches

After starring for Vikings, Shaw becomes volleyball head coach

BY DAN SHALIN
Pioneer Press

In the spring of 2011, Niles North boys volleyball assistant coach Allen Tom was asked about senior star Andre Shaw, who got a late start to the season after helping the Vikings basketball team reach the Class 4A supersectional.

"He mentioned how much fun going to sectional was, and how he wants to do the same thing in volleyball," Tom said.

That didn't happen. Niles North lost in the regional final and finished the year 19-13. But Shaw now has a second chance.

Tom and Shaw are once again both part of the Niles North volleyball program, though Shaw is now the 24-year-old, first-year coach, and Tom is his assistant. Tom is in his 17th season as a Vikings assistant.

"(Tom) is handling it well," joked Shaw, who grew up in Skokie. "It's great to have someone like (Tom), he knows me well, being valued, then it is time to step away," he said in an email. "At the end of the day each and every one of us have our integrity and reputation. I can not sit by and have those impugned."

Wolves athletic director Kendall Griffin said that the boys volleyball position has been filled, pending approval at April's board of education meeting. That meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, according to the district's website.

The application windows for the other two positions have closed, Griffin said, and he and assistant athletic director Terri Laux will begin contacting candidates this week for interviews.

"He mentioned how much fun playing for (Olson) does in terms of his influence, a valuable resource and a role model," Dunn said. "Olson and I talk a lot," Shaw said. "Right now, my goal is to catch him. Basketball here now is really big, they're winning. I'm hoping to build that type of atmosphere for the volleyball community here."

Shaw added: "I try to replicate what (Olson) does in terms of his offseason and how he coaches the kids hard. He's somebody I can look up to, for sure."

Dan Shalin is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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After starring for Vikings, Shaw becomes volleyball head coach

In this Sept. 30, 2016, photo, Niles West football coach Scott Baum talks to his players during their game at Evanston.
Three seniors step into leadership roles for Dons

BY STEVE REAVEN
Pioneer Press

Just as in his previous six seasons at the helm of the Notre Dame boys volleyball program, Patrick Cole had a number of preseason tasks to perform this year.

There were open gym sessions to schedule, medical forms to collect and uniforms to sort and organize.

However, Cole omitted one traditional duty from his spring checklist - arranging for the selection of team captains.

Three seniors - Dan Murphy, Luke Apostolos and Kyle Stemper - had already donned the squad's mantle of leadership and a formal vote would have proved redundant.

"That's definitely a first for me, but there was nothing else to be said," Cole said. "Some guys are just naturals at stepping into leadership roles. These three bring it every day and the rest of the guys follow."

Each senior gleaned tenets of his leadership philosophy from a different source.

Murphy paid particular attention to last year's seniors. Apostolos looked up to upperclassmen while he was on the program's lower-level teams and Stemper gained valuable perspective from former assistant Ryan Roycroft, a 2014 Notre Dame graduate who plays volleyball at Robert Morris University.

"In addition to helping their teammates maintain a good attitude, the senior leaders also have been valuable members of the Dons' lineup," Murphy said.

Murphy, Notre Dame's primary setter, noted a team-high 190 assists in the Dons' first nine matches and has seen his on-court responsibilities change more since last year than any other Notre Dame player, according to Cole. He is physically stronger than he was last spring, so Cole trusts him in some front-row alignments as well.

Stemper, who ended last week's action with a team-high 62 kills, has a unique knack for balancing aggressiveness and intelligence at the net. He's also proficient at eyeing open seams in the opposing defense.

Apostolos, a defensive specialist who resides in Chicago's Lincoln Square neighborhood. "The three of us always bring energy to everything we do," Stemper said.

Apostolos said. "If you are, the whole team can be pulled in that direction because the other players look up to you."

The results thus far have been promising - a 5-4 start to the year after a 14-18 finish a year ago.

Murphy, Stemper and Apostolos all agree that the trust measure of progress will be how the team fares in conference. The Dons were 1-7 in the East Suburban Catholic a year ago.

Notre Dame's first conference game of the season is April 18 when it plays host to Benet.

The strong start to the year is a departure from last year when the team tended to not always take early-season matches seriously.

"This year, we realize that these early games count as much as conference," said Murphy, who lives in Chicago's Edison Park neighborhood. "Last year, we treated them almost as a cushion, and that hurt us. Now, we're going as hard as we can from the start to the end of the season."

Steve Reaven is a freelance writer for Pioneer Press.

IT'S TIME TO VOTE!

The polls are open for the Community Choice Athlete of the Year challenge! You have until noon on April 13 to go to chicagotribune.com/suburbs/athletes and cast your vote. You may vote once every 12 hours. Winners will be recognized at a ceremony in June at the Chicago Tribune Lit Fest, so vote early and vote often!

Erika Christiansen
Year: Junior
School: Maine East
Sport: Girls volleyball
Position: Setter
Season stats: 945 serve attempts with 35 aces, 225 hitting attempts (second on the team), 100 kills, 14 solo blocks, 26 blocks assists, 754 assists, 115 digs
Best game: In an Aug. 31, match against Niles West, Christiansen recorded five aces, three solo blocks, three assisted blocks, seven kills and 14 assists. Maine East beat the Wolves 20-25, 25-21, 25-20. Niles West went on to finish fourth in the state Class 4A.

Natalia Pehar
Year: Sophomore
School: Niles West
Sport: Girls volleyball
Position: Outside hitter
Season stats: Pehar tallied 360 kills, 34 aces, 40 blocks and 136 digs to help the Wolves reach their first state tournament. Niles West finished fourth and ended the year with a record 28 wins.
Best game: Pehar's play in the Class 4A Maine West Regional final against New Trier stood out to Wolves coach Stacy Metoyer. Pehar recorded three kills in a row to win the match and finished with 16 kills total.

Afroditi Balisas
Year: Sophomore
School: Maine South
Sport: Gymnastics
Position: Side hitter
Season stats: Balisas to finish in the top four in all events plus the all-around at Evanston's Chester Jones Invite on Jan. 7 and had personal bests on vault, uneven bars, balance beam and all-around.

Caleigh Pistorius
Year: Sophomore
School: Maine South
Sport: Girls gymnastics
Position: All-around
Season stats: She earned All-Central Suburban South honors and finished second on vault and fourth on the floor at the conference meet. Pistorius earned three first-place finishes at the regional (all-around, vault and floor exercise). Her season high scores: vault, 9.825; uneven bars, 9.825; balance beam, 9.425; floor exercise, 9.55; all-around, 37.35.
Best game: Pistorius finished as the co-state champion on the balance beam.

Mark Biedke
Year: Senior
School: Maine South
Sport: Boys soccer
Position: Goalkeeper
Best game: Biedke came on the bench for penalty kicks during the Class 3A regional semifinals. He stopped both of Lincoln Park's five penalty kicks to help Maine South win the shootout 4-3 and the game 3-2.
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Notre Dame grad Pryor wins slam dunk contest

By Dan Shalin
Pioneer Press

Area high school basketball fans who watched the State Farm College Slam Dunk Championship live on ESPN might have been caught by surprise.

There was Rodney Pryor, who played at Notre Dame for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 seasons, inspiring the hashtag #RodneyFlyer with his acrobatic dunks and winning the event on May 30 in Phoenix.

Pryor, a sixth-year graduate-student transfer at Georgetown, was a 3-point shooter and talented scorer for the Hoyas.

"In high school, I was not that athletic, I was a more of a shooter," Pryor said. "But to get better at the game of basketball, I knew I needed to reach a certain level of athleticism. So, during the summers and (seasons) I had different coaching staffs pushing me (to improve in that area)."

In his one season with the Hoyas, Pryor averaged 18.0 points per game, which ranked fourth in the Big East. He earned All-Big East honorable mention honors.

The slam dunk contest was part of the Final Four festivities and held in front of a raucous, capacity crowd at Grand Canyon University Arena.

"Being a part of that, the atmosphere and the fan base, it was crazy," said the 6-foot-5 Pryor, who earlier in the event teamed with Michigan senior Derrick Walton Jr. and Kansas State women's basketball player Kindred Wesemann to win the Skills Challenge. "I think I was more nervous in that setting than in an actual game. Being able to come out and compete and win it, it was a blessing to do that."

The dunk contest began with eight participants, and eventually reached a final stage in which Pryor and Eastern Tennessee State senior guard A.J. Merriweather squared off in a one-dunk-apiece showdown.

Pryor's last dunk involved him catching the ball off a bounce from Walton, elevating, putting the ball through his legs and throwing it down. The dunk put the pressure on Merriweather, who was not able to successfully execute his final dunk in the allotted time.

"I think I was more nervous in that setting than in an actual game."

— Rodney Pryor

The win earned Pryor a boxing-style championship belt, which he paraded around at the event's after party and said was destined for his mom's house in Evanston.

Pryor's participation in this year's event can be traced back to Notre Dame assistant coach Kevin Clancy, who just finished his 11th season on the Dons bench. Clancy said he recommended Pryor to his longtime friend Joe Salituro, who runs the slam dunk event for Intersport.

"We'd never had a (former) player who was a candidate to participate (until Pryor)," said Clancy, a 1998 Notre Dame graduate.

"Rodney has gotten so much attention this year, and they were looking for players (with a national profile), and with him being at Georgetown, it was a great fit."

Salituro, a 1998 Loyola Academy graduate, said Pryor's name was on his early lists for both the 3-point and dunk competitions. Pryor made 84 3-pointers this season and shot 41.2 percent from behind the arc.

"But it's more difficult to find those athletic freaks (for the dunk contest), so when you get somebody with the potential to be in both, you lean more toward the dunk than the 3-point," Salituro said.

For Pryor, the dunk contest victory is the latest chapter in a story of perseverance. He spent three seasons in junior college — two of which were lost entirely to injury — before emerging as a star at Robert Morris, a low-major Division I program. Then this winter he starred for the Hoyas.

In the coming weeks and months, Pryor said he will hire an agent, work with trainers and compete at the Portsmouth (Va.) Invitational Tournament from April 12-15 with the hopes of earning an invite to the NBA Draft Combine in May in Chicago.

Howard Megdal, an NBA Draft analyst for CBSSports.com, rated Pryor as the 16th-best shooting guard eligible for the draft in February.

Though disappointed by Georgetown's 14-18 season, Pryor said he was glad to have had the chance to prove himself on a big stage like the Big East, where he regularly appeared on national television. He hoped the dunk contest would be another way to raise his profile ahead of the draft.

"To have this event, it's just more TV time on ESPN, and if that helps moving forward, and more people are familiar with me, it's great," Pryor said.

Dan Shalin is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

Rodney Pryor won the State Farm College Slam Dunk Championship on March 30 at Grand Canyon University Arena in Phoenix.
Maramo sets Maine East up for success

By Dan Shalin

Maine East boys volleyball coach Jon Kulesza said he and assistant George Drase were initially perplexed when senior setter Marcus Maramo began passing the ball away from 6-foot-9 senior middle Michael Boduch in the third set of the Blue Demons' match against Niles North.

But the coaches soon realized Maramo knew what he was doing, and in fact was "making great volleyball decisions," Kulesza said.

After setting Boduch and 6-8 senior middle Denis Milchev on a regular basis early in the match, and drawing extra defensive attention to them up front, Maramo was sending the ball wide to the team's very capable, and less covered, outside hitters: seniors Abraham Manappallil and Sebastian Mihulet and junior Andreas Kotsifas. The end result was a 25-22, 25-27, 25-11 win for Maine East on March 30 in Skokie.

Kotsifas finished the match with 13 kills, Mihulet recorded five and Manappallil added three.

Kulesza said Maramo's adjustment was one of the keys to the Blue Demons' strong third set.

"Marcus is a senior co-captain (along with Boduch) and he's a glue guy. We're lucky to have him," Kulesza said. "He started last year, did a ton in the offseason. He might not be the biggest kid, but he's a smart kid and a leader. We'll take that any day."

For Maramo, much of the hard work was done at Deerfield-based Chicago Bounce Volleyball Club. Maramo said Bounce coaches like Blake Orlow helped point out areas in which he could improve.

"I was trying to play the long game," said Maramo, who lives in Niles. "I was establishing the middle at first. Once it got established, it would open up my outside and right side, which made it easier because we had solo blocks (there)."

"Since the beginning of the season, he has put all that hard work into his game," Kulesza said.

Maramo, who is a versatile passer, was the hardest hitter to deal with, according to Emiliano Hernandez, Maine East's setter.

"He's the glue to our team and he keeps us together. He's a really hard-working kid, and he's done workouts after school to improve his vertical. It's gotten much better," said Hernandez.

"He was our starting setter last year and that gave him a lot more experience," said Maramo. "This year, he has put all that experience to work," said Kulesza.

Marcus Maramo

Maramo, who lives in Niles.

"He's the glue to our team and he keeps us together. He's a really hard-working kid, and he's done workouts after school to improve his vertical. It's gotten much better."

Dan Shalin is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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Maine East's Torres paves way for female wrestlers

By Heather Rule

Lizeth Torres plays on the girls soccer team at Maine East. She's also a wrestler -- with the Blue Demons boys team.

Her cousin wanted her to join the wrestling team when they were both freshmen, and she wanted Torres to join too.

"I ended up liking it," Torres said.

Now a senior, she's found plenty of success in the male-dominated sport, paving the way for other female wrestlers. She's a two-time varsity letter winner and a team captain this year, becoming the first female team captain of a boys sport in school history, according to Maine East wrestling coach Emiliano Hernandez.

In her 106-pound weight class, Torres took fourth at the Springfield state tournament. Her freshman teammate Kate Cacho took fourth at the Illinois Wrestling Coaches & Officials Association's first girls state tournament in mid March.

After last year's loss to Glenbrook South in the Maine East Regional semi-finals, Maramo and the returning Blue Demons were extra motivated to improve in the offseason, Maramo said. Maine East was seeded eighth and Glenbrook South was the 10th seed.

"Our loss to Glenbrook South was heartbreaking. Whenever we think about it, we just feel sick," Maramo said. "So, we worked our butts off to make sure that doesn't happen again, and (the hard work) has really showed!"

For Maramo, much of the hard work was done at Deerfield-based Chicago Bounce Volleyball Club. Maramo said Bounce coaches like Blake Orlow helped point out areas in which he could improve.

"I was really lazy last year, wasn't working on my back-row defense," Maramo said. "My coach for club, he really believed in what Maine East had to offer this year, and he wanted me to work on my decision-making, back-row defense and taking the lead on the court."

In addition, Maramo said he improved his athleticism in the offseason by attending plyometrics sessions three times a week with his high school teammates. The workouts included exercises that required short, explosive bursts of energy such as jumping over objects. The training helped Maramo increase his vertical leap.

Milchev said Maramo has raised his game in several areas this year.

"He was our starting setter last year and that gave him a lot more experience. This year, he has put all that experience to work," said Kulesza.

Marcus Maramo

Maramo, who lives in Niles.

"He's the glue to our team and he keeps us together. He's a really hard-working kid, and he's done workouts after school to improve his vertical. It's gotten much better."

Dan Shalin is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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Georgetown's Rodney Pryor (23) dunks in front of St. John's Bashir Ahmed (1), Malik Ellison (0) and Darien Williams (45) during the Big East Tournament on March 8 in New York.
FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Notre Dame grad becomes social media darling with acrobatic dunks.

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