Sawmill TIF passes
Morton Grove board clears way for ‘lifestyle center.’ Page 4

The Morton Grove shopping center at the southeast corner of Dempster Street and Waukegan Road, pictured a few weeks before demolition began, will be redeveloped into Sawmill Station.

WHAT TO DO

Big Band sound
The Flat Cats will croon for a crowd at Skokie’s next Wednesdays on the Green concert July 24. Page B13

SPORTS

A personal story
Melissa Isaacson’s new book details 1979 Niles West girls basketball team. Page 21

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Ed Zelnis, director of Park Ridge Chorale

Ed Zelnis is director of the Park Ridge Chorale, which will present its annual summer concert on July 20 at 7 p.m. at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge.

The concert, entitled British Invasion, provides a taste of rock nostalgia, but it has also turned out to be very timely, Zelnis noted.

Q: What are some of the highlights of the concert?
A: The one thing that made it attractive to do a concert like this was that we have the opportunity to do a lot of music by Queen. [The film] "Bohemian Rhapsody" came out and in the past we had done the song "Bohemian Rhapsody," but we hadn't ever done anything else by Queen. And their stuff is so vocal, even choral, so we decided to feature five or six Queen songs. What we didn't realize at the time we decided to do the concert was that there were going to be quite a bit of movie tie-ins with it. The Elton John movie "Rocketman" came out recently and we had already decided to do some Elton John pieces in the concert. There's also a Beatles-themed movie ["Yesterday"] out now and we had planned some Beatles songs.

Q: Anything else?
A: I wrote an a capella medley of pieces [by the Bee Gees] from the movie "Saturday Night Fever" 20 years ago....So this concert will give us an opportunity to do that. We're also going to have a four-piece rock band that will perform with us.

Q: Whose idea was it to perform a concert dedicated to British artists?
A: I'm not sure who came up with it, but one of the things we do every year is we have a music selection meeting that is open to all the membership, and they throw out ideas for various concerts. This theme actually came from a member who attended the meeting.

Q: Who is your favorite British artist?
A: I've got to admit Freddie Mercury is the one thing that made it attractive to do this concert. I'm a big fan of the original Bee Gees. The Bee Gees had a lot to do with it. The Bee Gees were in the movie "Saturday Night Fever" and they were in the movie "Bohemian Rhapsody." The Bee Gees were in the movie "Yesterday." The Bee Gees were in the movie "Rocketman." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." The Bee Gees were in the movie "The Beatles Story." 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However, as you age, this fluid dries out, leaving your bones to painfully rub and grind against each other with every step. And unfortunately, there's no way for the knee to make more.

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Morton Grove approves renovation

Clears way for Sawmill Station ‘lifestyle center’

BY DANIEL I. DORFMAN

After the Morton Grove village board voted to approve legislation at its meeting July 8, it officially set the stage for a renewal of the long-underused shopping center at the southeast corner of Waukegan Road and Dempster Street.

The large property, known to many as the former home of Par-King mini-golf and Dominick’s grocery, has had several vacancies since Dominick’s closed in December 2014.

The team developing the property, IM Kensington MG LLC, envisions it as Sawmill Station, a $150 million “lifestyle center” featuring commercial buildings, approximately 250 luxury apartments with a mix of retail, a health club, restaurants, movie theaters and a supermarket.

IM Kensington bought the property in September 2018 and has already started the demolition process of the mostly dilapidated 26-acre Prairie View Shopping Center, with completion expected by September.

The only current building on the site that will remain is a Bank of America branch.

“This is a very big night in Morton Grove,” Village President Dan DiMaria said on July 8. “This is a legacy decision and we are moving Morton Grove forward.”

At that evening’s meeting, the village board of trustees unanimously passed a series of ordinances abolishing the existing TIF district that encompassed the area and establishing a new TIF district.

Illinois municipalities routinely use TIF districts to encourage economic development of underused commercial areas.

IM Kensington said they would only purchase the property if the village provided financial assistance, village officials said.

John Schoditsch, an IM Kensington principal, said he believed there is a healthy future ahead for the property if the village provided financial assistance, village officials said.

Schoditsch said negotiations are ongoing with a nationally known grocery store, but would not specify the name.

Under the TIF, the village will reimburse the developers approximately $25 million of TIF qualified expenses paid through incremental property taxes and 50 percent of the new sales taxes generated from the development, Village Administrator Ralph Czerwinski said.

He added if Sawmill Station is not successful and does not generate property and sales taxes above what is currently derived from the site, the village will not have to pay the developers.

“The numbers seem large, but the key is this is all numbers and performance driven,” DiMaria said. “It is investment for the village.”

Three of the ordinances were introduced for the first time at the July 8 meeting with Czerwinski saying the concepts had been brought before the board at June 24 public hearing. Therefore, the board was in a position to waive first reading.

Trustee Bill Grear voted against waiving first reading, stating he did not like waiving first reading. However, Grear voted yes on all of the ordinances that created the TIF district.

Construction of the lifestyle center is expected to be completed by mid to late 2020, Czerwinski said.
Mayor honors two top Lincolnwood students

Mohammad Larya, second from right, of Niles West High School listens as Lincolnwood Village President Barry Bass, at lectern, names Larya the village’s male student of the year. During his four years at Niles West, Larya enrolled in a “rigorous college prep curriculum of honors and advanced courses,” Bass said. Larya was a member of the Distributive Education Club of America for four years, where he brainstormed ideas to advertise and promote DECA fundraisers such as a charity basketball game, yogurt and ice cream sales, and fall and spring plant sales, Bass said.

Yunyan Mo was one of two Niles West High School students who were named Lincolnwood Student of the Year by Village President Barry Bass. Mo, who was named female Student of the Year, and classmate Mohammad Larya, who was named male Student of the Year, each received a check for $100. Mo, who came to the U.S. from China in 2014, was transferred into the general education honors curriculum after one semester as an English language learner, Bass said. Mo was a member of the Niles West Go Green Recycling Club, the swim team, the math team, the ping pong club and the astronomy club, he said.
Kids can learn how butterflies migrate

BY RACHEL K. HINDERY

Hidden heroes, many with wings, lurk behind each cool cucumber or summertime strawberry.

They're insects, and on July 18 between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., families can discover their secrets during Insect Fest at Cummings Square, 536 N. Harlem Ave. in River Forest. It's sponsored by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

Kids can use a bug net, discover butterflies and make lots of art during a program that is designed for children 12 and under, especially kids in preschool and early elementary school, and their caregivers.

"We are doing lots of art-making activities," Program Specialist Kristen Taylor said. "They can make insects out of plaster and spoons, they can make caterpillar necklaces and antennas, and we also have nature exploration and a bug hunt."

Are bees or butterflies in a bashful state? Families can find them on the bug hunt.

"It's using a bug net and going through the bushes that are along the sidewalk to catch some insects," Taylor said.

The University of Illinois Extension, https://extension.illinois.edu, will once again host an insect petting zoo, which Taylor said is among favorite activities at the fest. The fest will also show how insects are valuable as pollinators.

"People underestimate the value of insects," Trailside Museum Director Sue Dombro said. "Without them we wouldn't have our fruits and vegetables."

As insects help people grow food, they are also food for animals like frogs and toads. "Almost all birds depend on insects for their food and feeding their young," Dombro said.

Butterflies are a favorite insect with families, and Dombro said they're making a comeback.

"Last year their population was the highest it has been in 20 years," she said. In part, that's thanks to the 14,000 registered pollinator gardens in Chicagoland.

The National Pollinator Garden Network set a goal of 1 million pollinator gardens worldwide, which they surpassed last year. According to a February press release on their website, www.millionpollinatorgardens.org, Chicago has some of the highest numbers of registered gardens of any metropolitan area.

Communications Manager Stacina Stagner said everyone can help butterflies, and the Forest Preserves' Conservation@Home program can show them how.

"You can get your school, home garden or business garden certified as forest preserves-friendly," Stagner said; perhaps a reason why Insect Fest is held in the middle of the day.

Until the 1980s, Dombro said people thought this dragonfly was gone forever. "It was thought to be extinct and was rediscovered in this area in 1988," she said. "They've since discovered other populations around the Midwest."

"It was thought to be extinct and was rediscovered in this area in 1988," she said. "They've since discovered other populations around the Midwest."

Cook County is also home to a very special and secretive insect, Dombro said - the emerald dragonfly. "It's official name is the Hine's emerald dragonfly," Dombro said. "It's native to Cook County and in fact it's a very rare dragonfly, because it needs to breed in areas where there's spring-fed water running over limestone."

"It was thought to be extinct and was rediscovered in this area in 1988," she said. "They've since discovered other populations around the Midwest."

Dusk and dawn are some peak times for mosquitoes, Stagner said; perhaps a reason why Insect Fest is held in the middle of the day.

At Insect Fest, Taylor said families love "being able to see the insects and learn about insects," she said.

Families can discover more online at https://fpdcc.com/event/insect-fest.
Niles convenience store reports second armed robbery in three weeks

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

A Niles convenience store was the target of a reported armed robbery for the second time in less than a month, according to police reports.

Two men robbed the 7-Eleven at 7450 W. Oakton St. of cash and cigarettes during the early morning hours of July 7, exactly three weeks after a previous robbery was reported at the store, police said.

According to police, one of the men approached an employee outside the store around 3:40 a.m. and displayed a black semi-automatic pistol while the second man "dragged" the clerk back into the store.

The robbers made off with approximately $100 in cash and about $100 worth of cigarettes, a store representative told police.

Police were not contacted until 24 hours after the incident occurred, the Niles Police Department said, and information about the incident was not released publicly until July 11.

In December, a store employee thwarted a robbery attempt by waving a stick at a man who demanded money while carrying an object described as "possibly a spoon or a knife," police said.

Police searching for man who approached kids in forest preserve

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

Cook County Sheriff's Police are looking for a man who approached children along a forest preserve bike trail near Morton Grove and Niles with an inappropriate request.

According to police, the man approached several children during two separate incidents between 3 and 6 p.m. July 11 while he was riding a red bicycle on a trail in the Miami and St. Paul Woods east of Caldwell and Oakton Streets. Police said the man allegedly pulled down his pants and offered the children money if they would change his diaper.

The children ran away from the man, police said. A similar incident reportedly occurred July 8 on a bike trail at Harms Woods in Glenview, sheriff's police said.

A police sketch of the suspect was created. He is described as in his early 20s, between 5-foot, 10-inches and 6 feet tall with brown hair. He was unshaven at the time of the alleged incident and was last seen wearing a black T-shirt, black jogging pants and black shoes, police said.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Cook County Sheriff's Police detectives at 708-865-4896.

Cook County Forest Preserve police have "heightened attention to the area," including increasing car, foot, bike and ATV patrols on the bike trails, the Forest Preserves of Cook County said in a statement released July 16.

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

Niles

DISORDERLY CONDUCT
- A 31-year-old Glenview man was ticketed for disorderly conduct on July 5 after he was accused of fondling himself around other customers at Smart Wash, 8716 W. Golf Road, Niles. Police said the man was not washing any clothes and was told he was no longer allowed on the premises.

DOMESTIC BATTERY
- Jonathan C. Susulescu, 29, of the 2400 block of Happy Hollow Road, Glenview, was charged with domestic battery on July 9 following an alleged incident in the parking lot of Burger King, 7133 W. Dempster St., police said. He was given an Aug. 20 court date.

THEFT
- Yiannis Leventopoulos, 31, of the 3600 block of Tripp Avenue, Chicago, was charged with theft on July 6 after he was accused of fondling himself around other customers at Smart Wash, 8716 W. Golf Road, Niles. Police said the man was not washing any clothes and was told he was no longer allowed on the premises.

DOMESTIC BATTERY
- Kazimierz Kozikowski, 63, of the 5100 block of Marmora Avenue, Chicago, was charged with domestic battery on July 10 following a traffic stop at Golf Road and Linneman Street, police said. She was given a July 8 court date.

THEFT
- Three unknown people allegedly stole approximately $2,000 worth of merchandise from Walgreens, 8001 N. Milwaukee Ave., unincorporated Maine Township, was charged with driving under the influence on July 3 after he was reportedly found sleeping on the ground outside Walgreens, 9000 N. Greenwood Ave., just before midnight. He was taken to the hospital, police said.

PUBLIC INTOXICATION
- A 54-year-old man from unincorporated Maine Township was charged with public intoxication on July 3 after he was reportedly found sleeping on the ground outside Walgreens, 9000 N. Greenwood Ave., just before midnight. He was taken to the hospital, police said.

BURGLARY
- A home on the 8500 block of North Oriole Avenue was reported burglarized on July 9. Jewelry, estimated by the homeowners at approximately $20,000, as well as $10,000 in cash were reported stolen, according to police.

THEFT
- Three unknown people allegedly stole approximately $2,000 worth of merchandise from Walgreens, 8001 N. Milwaukee Ave., on the afternoon of July 3, police said.

THEFT
- Two laptop computers were reported stolen July 4 from a car parked on the 8400 block of Callie Avenue. A window on the car was broken open, police said.

Morton Grove

DUI
- Joan Wallenberg, 52, of the 8900 block of Western Avenue, unincorporated Maine Township, was charged with driving under the influence on July 7 following a traffic stop on the 9200 block of Waukegan Road, police said. She was given an Aug. 12 court date.

BURGLARY
- A resident of the 8900 block of Moody Avenue told police she returned home on June 24 to find a door had been forced open. At the time of the report, it was not known if anything was stolen.

THEFT
- On June 22, a man told police he believed his wallet was stolen from a gym locker room at Planet Fitness, 7300 W. Dempster St.

- Two laptop computers were reported stolen July 4 from a car parked on the 8400 block of Callie Avenue. A window on the car was broken open, police said.

- Tires, wheels, brake pads, and other parts were reported stolen July 4 from two vehicles parked on the 7000 block of Golf Road.

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Hot temps, hot food mark Taste of Park Ridge

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

The daytime temperatures were almost as hot as the food, but that didn’t stop crowds from descending on Taste of Park Ridge last weekend as the annual summer food fest celebrated its 20th year.

The three-day festival of food, music and entertainment featured about 20 eateries lining Summit Avenue and 13 live bands on stage, in addition to other performances.

As in past years, crowds packed the area of Summit and Touhy to near capacity on Saturday night to catch the high-energy music of headlining band 7th Heaven.

There were no arrests or citations issued in Uptown during the Taste, said Park Ridge Deputy Police Chief Duane Mellema.

"I thought it was probably one of the nicest [Tastes] from our perspective," Police Chief Frank Kaminskitold the City Council. "The crowd was very well-behaved and the kids were not a problem."

Fire Chief Jeff Sorensensaid two people were treated by paramedics due to heat-related illnesses on Saturday, and two others required medical assistance related to other causes. Thirty-one people received some kind of minor first aid during the festival, he added.

jjohnson@chicago tribune.com
Twitter @Jen_Tribune

Lynette's School of Dance performs at the Taste of Park Ridge on July 13.

Miles and Dan Whalen of Park Ridge cool off in the shade with ice cream.

Colleen McNaughton of Lisa's Italian Ice serves cold drinks.

Jeffery Li of Des Plaines tries the pizza during the Taste of Park Ridge on July 13.
Amtrak train hit a minivan in Morton Grove Sunday; 1 killed

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

Metra officials say a Morton Grove railroad crossing was functioning properly when a minivan and an Amtrak train collided early Sunday afternoon, killing one person.

The crash occurred shortly after 12 p.m. on the Milwaukee District North Line at Lincoln and Lehigh Avenues, just north of the Morton Grove Metra station, police said.

According to Morton Grove police, an Amtrak train was traveling south on the tracks when it struck a minivan that was going east on Lincoln Avenue, killing the driver, who was the only occupant in the vehicle.

The Cook County Medical Examiner's Office identified the driver as Mihalis G. Vassos, 57, of Skokie. His death was ruled an accident, according to the office.

Metra spokeswoman Meg Reile said data from the crossing gate mechanism as well as Amtrak train video shows the crossing gates and lights were operating at the time of the collision.

"The gates were down, the lights were flashing and the car drove around the gates," she said. "All the information we've gathered indicates the driver disregarded the gates and warning lights."

No one on the train was injured, Reile said. Roads in the area of Lincoln and Lehigh were closed for about five hours Sunday while authorities investigated the crash.

On Monday, several bouquets of flowers and a religious candle had been left near the site of the collision.

Reile said the incident occurred while only one track on the Milwaukee District North line was open due to service work taking place on the second track. A freight train was also waiting to go through the area, which resulted in blocked crossings at Oakton Street and Touhy Avenue for a time until the second track could be reopened, Reile said.

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Flowers mark the site where the driver of a minivan was killed after the vehicle collided with an Amtrak train on July 14 at Lincoln and Lehigh Avenues in Morton Grove.
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OPINION

Why Mom diving into pie-eating contest means so much to me

SALLY SCHWARTZ HIGGINSON

Where's the flower with the petals that tells me what I think? Not the one that deciphers whether he loves me or loves me not. I'm talking about the one for daughters wondering how they feel about their mothers. You pluck one petal for, "I love her," and another for, "She drives me nuts."

"Oh, that mother of mine!" That's what my friend, Nina, claims is the mature response after talking on the phone with her mom. "If you can listen patiently, absorb the commentary on your life and still hang up the phone and laugh, then you've arrived as a self-actualized person," she says.

As an adult daughter with an octogenarian mother who occasionally embarrasses me, regularly corrects me and endlessly suggests ways I could improve my clothing, parenting and overall life choices, I'm striving to become self-actualized. My gal pals all understand. We've been known to polish off a fair amount of liquor while discussing it.

To be clear: I love my mother. I really do. But there are times when love is not the dominant emotion I experience after every mother-daughter encounter.

The thing is, my dear mom is genetically wired to tell me exactly where I fall short. After I permed my hair in college, she held a strand of my chemically frizzed hair and announced, "You've ruined your only redeeming feature." I'm sure she said it with love but, at the time, I might not have recognized the tenderness with which it was offered. But the perm grew out and I grew up. And then, a week ago, everything changed.

For some reason, the hamlet in which my entire family lives decided that as part of its sesquicentennial celebration, it would host a pie-eating contest. Big pies. Cherry pies. Bent Fork Bakery pies. And to judge the competition, the city elders in Highland Park tapped my sister Betsy and me.

In 90-degree heat with at least 1,000% humidity, Mom showed up.

"You girls are judging?" I asked. As I tied a contestant's plastic bib around her neck, I forgot everything my mother ever did to bug me. What she proceeded to do earned her my eternal respect, admiration and worship.

"You're gonna enter?" I asked. Betsy and I stared. Our mother usually orders whitefish at restaurants and takes home the leftovers to eat as lunch for the next five days.

"You're gonna enter?" I asked. As I tied a contestant's plastic bib around her neck, I forgot everything my mother ever did to bug me. What she proceeded to do earned her my eternal respect, admiration and worship.

"You giants are judging?" She said as she assessed her competition. "I hope I'm not too late." She scooched up the folding chair to move closer to the table with the pie, and then removed her earrings. "I'm pretty good at this."

Sally Schwartz Higginson's mom, Ronnie Schwartz, took part in a pie-eating contest during an event in Highland Park and earned the columnist's admiration in the process.

SALLY SCHWARTZ HIGGINSON/PIONEER PRESS

Sally Schwartz Higginson is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press.
To catch a gator, ‘Swamp People’ style

Growing up on the Near West Side, I often heard tales of a nearby land of wonder just a few miles west of our three-flat. Humboldt Park was a land of wide boulevards, a playground, green baseball fields — and a grand, flowing lagoon.

Humboldt Park was also the great city landmark where we played Tuley High School, later Roberto Clemente High School, in baseball, where the great Puerto Rican Day parade was held and the setting for my older cousins’ famed hockey game story.

As the story goes, one winter, they were playing hockey on a frozen section of the lagoon when a Chicago police officer drove his squad car onto the ice to warn them of the dangers of skating on the thin ice of the lagoon.

Oh, the irony.

And, oh, how quaint the 1960s were.

Today, we have the story of the Humboldt Park gator. Earlier this week, a woman dialed 911 when she saw a Facebook post about an alligator living in the Humboldt Park lagoon.

Alligators in the sewers have been an urban legend since my great-grandmother took the train to Ft. Lauderdale every winter. But one in the lagoon? Now that’s news.

Soon police, animal control experts, gawkers and someone the media identified as “Alligator Bob” — described as a fixture of exotic animal searches in Chicago — gathered near the lagoon.

Some hoped to see the reptile, certainly a rarity in Chicago park waters. Not so rare elsewhere, as a gator was found near Waukegan Harbor last fall. But Alligator Bob was determined to catch the critter.

One photograph of Alligator Bob showed him paddling in the lagoon in a small canoe, outfitted in a life jacket, binoculars and a fishing hat.

I’m certainly no gator expert, but if the episodes I’ve seen of “Swamp People” are right, that’s not how to catch a gator.

“Swamp People” is a reality TV show that chronicles the lives of Louisiana swamp denizens who hunt alligator for a living. Here’s how they do it:

You go out and hang hooks baited with a whole chicken purchased at the local Walmart or Kroger or wherever from a low-lying tree branch above the banks of the local swamp.

Then you come back the next day and look for the missing bait. Sometimes you’ll see where the bait was, a shaking limb to indicate you’ve got a gator on the end of your line.

You know you have a monster gator, maybe a 7-footer, when you see that branch wildly going up and down. That’s what Troy, the king of the gator hunters, calls, in his long Louisiana drawl, “a tree-shaker.”

You bring your boat up to the branch and start gathering in the line. Soon, you have a big fight on your hand as the gator starts to battle for its life, flailing and jumping and twisting into a death spiral.

Eventually, you wrestle the gator to the surface and your partner shoots him in the top of the head in a spot about the size of a quarter.

My kids loved this show, which also taught valuable business and math skills, such as how many gator tags to buy at the beginning of the season to turn a profit, how many gators you have to catch a day to use all your tags by the season’s end.

Now that’s how you catch a gator.

Of course I realize you can’t go shooting the Humboldt Park gator. It’s not the gator’s fault it ended up there.

Thankfully, the Chicago parks aren’t overpopulated with alligators — the way it is in the swamps of Louisiana, where gator hunting is allowed.

But you can’t let a gator live in the lagoon, either. After eating everything in the lagoon, it will eventually begin wandering the park.

So the gator must be caught, humanely, and then probably sent away to a gator sanctuary.

Alligator Bob, what’s the game plan?

Randy Blaser is a freelance columnist.
Mom or dad’s new job might be the best thing to happen to the family

Starting a new job can be exciting.
A steady paycheck, the opportunity to advance in the company, benefits like healthcare and the chance to do work you find fulfilling are all reasons to love that time in your life.
But what if you’re a stay-at-home parent who hasn’t worked in years and who, instead of looking forward to the new gig, is feeling, well, terrified?
That’s the case for one mom who recently posted this message on a Facebook group page:

Is it wrong to have so much anxiety ... starting my first full time job in nine years and since having my kids? I know it’ll be fine, but, man, I’m scared. I know this is a huge positive in my life and will finally give me financial freedom, but I’ve been so used to staying home with my kids and doing everything for them.
I completely understand how she feels.
Three years ago, with two junior high-age kids, I started a full-time job after not having had a 9-to-5 in more than a decade. I feared everything from new technology to my ability to handle the role for which I was hired. And that’s not to mention relinquishing control of my micromanaging mindset when it came to the kids.

Dr. Lisa Kaplin is a psychologist and a certified life and executive coach who says lots of her clients are parents returning to the workforce who have these same fears.
“A lot of clients have this mindset of ‘I haven’t worked in 10 years, how am I ever going to even get a job? Will anyone respect me?’ and ‘Who’s going to run the house?’” said Kaplin, a certified professional counselor who spent 18 years working as a therapist before becoming a life coach in 2011. “It’s a valid fear, but what I tell them is, ‘Face your fear and do it anyway.’

Why? Because going back to work has countless benefits. Together, Kaplin and I came up with eight benefits of going back to work, even after a long stint of staying home:

1. You’re bringing home a paycheck.
Another income can take pressure off financial worries, it can help build savings and it can be a ticket to fulfilling lifelong dreams you couldn’t otherwise afford.
Plus, think about the emotional impact a paycheck can make. Being an earner drastically improves self-esteem and self-worth.

2. You’re contributing to the world and helping others. Of course parents do that at home, too, but having a sense of purpose and meeting the needs of someone other than your kids can be healthy and can foster pride. It can give you a purpose in life that has nothing to do with being a mom or a dad.

3. You’re meeting new people and developing new friendships. A new job means getting out of your comfort zone — and that includes socially. New relationships enrich our lives. They can teach us things and make us wiser and more interesting.

4. You’re learning new skills and lessons every day. Exercising one’s cognitive skills is scientifically proven to lead to a happier, healthier life. What better way to do that than by starting a new job with a big learning curve?

5. You might learn to appreciate your kids, spouse and family more.
Absence truly can make the heart grow fonder. Coming home to your family after a long day feels wonderful and promotes gratitude. Romantic relationships might even improve when mom or dad goes back to work because there’s less time to argue and more time to appreciate each other.

6. Your kids might see you in a new light.
Even at a young age, kids are capable of seeing what you’re achieving and learning to respect you for it. They also might have a new insight into how much you did for them before you started working.

7. Kids can become more independent and self-sufficient.
One of the best gifts you can give your children is the ability to realize they can do things by themselves. They might grow to be stronger, smarter and happy as they begin to do things you once did for them.

8. Work is sexy — and so are you.
Dressing up, doing your makeup or hair, or finding the perfect work laptop bag can inspire confidence. Your spouse might notice, but even more importantly, you might love seeing yourself looking polished and professional. Putting looks aside, though, having passion for what you do is sexy all on its own.

In fact, Kaplin said she can’t think of one client who went back to work and regretted it.

I do want to make one thing clear: There is absolutely nothing wrong with being a stay-at-home parent. Despite its challenges, it’s a job that can be fulfilling and enjoyable.

Jackie Pilossoph is a freelance columnist for Pioneer Press. She is also the creator of her divorce support website, Divorced Girl Smiling.
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Quote-Acrostic

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

**Clues**

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<td>165 152 85 72 106 2 26 129 51</td>
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**K. Weasel**

| 52 155 121 102 115 141 |

**L. Opera viewing aids**

| 110 164 99 140 29 44 80 153 64 132 |

**M. 2003 song of the year: 3 wds.**

| 36 10 22 1 147 49 28 154 81 58 127 |

**N. Theme**

| 130 95 158 66 19 114 50 84 4 |

**O. British court and street: 2 wds.**

| 108 94 150 136 54 23 162 3 117 |

**P. ‘Room at the Top’ star**

| 70 90 160 16 16 34 134 59 6 |

**Q. Alley Oop phenomenon: 2 wds.**

| 73 48 83 37 100 25 137 122 |

**R. Beg or borrow**

| 53 143 92 32 12 |

**S. Advertisers’ purchase**

| 118 128 170 97 148 20 76 |

**T. Persistent proponent**

| 156 146 24 7 116 |

**U. Disguise source of**

| 33 125 74 159 111 98 8 |

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**Cool Down**

**BY CHARLES PRESTON**

**Across**

1. Computer fodder
5. Leeward Island
9. Sun-dried brick
14. Enos' grandfather
15. Secondary sch.
16. Miles and Zorina
17. Pocket bread
18. Coarse file
19. Style of abstract painting
20. “... and I am sick at heart”: Hamlet
23. Station
24. Shoelaces
25. Actress MacKenzie
28. Certain college exams
32. Houston player
33. Stun
34. Affirmative vote
35. “Though your sins be scarlet, they shall ...”: Isaiah
39. Hockey's Bobby
40. Ripener
41. Run off to wed
42. Prepared a new version
45. Academy Award winner in 1936 and 1937
46. Galatea's beloved
47. Type of press.
48. “... can Spring be far behind?”: Shelley
54. Lion company
55. Words of understanding
56. Lendl
58. Reveals
59. ... about
60. Granular snow
61. Advantage
62. Capone catcher
63. Expanded

**Down**

1. Skip
2. Admission site
3. Mr. Hulot
4. Misers
5. Shade
6. Smell ... be suspicious
7. Worst
8. Hors d'oeuvre
9. Long-legged shore bird
10. Testify
11. Nuncupative
12. Shakespeare or Spenser
13. Part of i.e.
14. Further down
15. “...cockhorse to Banbury Cross”
21. Hungarian hotshot
22. River to the Rhine
25. Look at fixedly
26. Defeated at chess
27. Talked continuously
29. Nearsighted one
30. Surface drain
31. Absorption of ideas
32. Hand: abjectly
33. Far Eastern grp. of 1955-1976
34. Dieting
35. Loiter
36. Most frigid
37. Indy entrants
38. Angers
39. Pierre's son
40. Anglo-Saxon laborer
41. Old autos
42. Invariably
43. Barring
44. Sch. group
45. Strange
46. Absorbent
47. State agent
48. Clog
49. Divorce
50. Chelsea
51. Accomplish
52. Affirmative
53. R seaward
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55. Chases
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PORT OF CALL: NAPA VALLEY

TUESDAY • AUGUST 13 | 2:30 PM Please RSVP by August 6

Join us for an exploration of Napa Valley from the comfort of our community! Learn about this region’s unique vineyards, relaxed demeanor, and stunning views regardless of season.
EXPERIENCING MORE IS REALLY LIVING.
SPENDING LESS IS REALLY LIVING.
LIVING HERE IS REALLY LIVING.

When you choose Embark Senior Living, you’ll find yourself spending more time enjoying hobbies and activities, and less time maintaining your home. So you can live the life you deserve.

Lease by July 31 and your community fee is only $500!*
That’s a savings of up to $1,500!
Call 847.978.4036 for more details!

An Independent Living Community
8975 W Golf Rd | Niles, IL
847.978.4036
embarkseniorliving.com

*Valid for new leases signed between 7/1/19 and 7/31/19. Must take financial responsibility by 7/31/19. Cannot be combined with other offers. Terms and restrictions apply. Talk with our sales director for details.
When the young eagle learned to fly, it was a

SIGHT FOR
"SOAR" EYES

MARK TWAIN: FOR THE SAKE OF...:
Adam was but human, this explains it all. He did not want the apple for the apple's sake, only because it was forbidden. The mistake was in not forbidding the serpent; then he would have eaten the serpent.
the sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

The successful bidder for the sale will receive a Certificate of Title that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate. A title search and any inquires as to the validity of title will be the responsibility of the purchaser. A title search will be conducted on the property and a copy of the title report will be given to the purchaser at the time of the sale. The sale is subject to the approval of the United States District Court, Southern District of Illinois, Eastern Division.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the time of the sale and the balance due within twenty (20) days.

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WHAT TO DO

Big Band sound

Skokie's Wednesdays on the Green presents Flat Cats

BY MYRNA PETLICKI

Jazz and blues lovers are in for a treat when The Flat Cats performs a free concert on July 24 as part of Skokie's Wednesdays on the Green series. The 7 p.m. outdoor event will be held at 5187 Oakton St., between the Skokie Village Hall and the Skokie Public Library.

The Chicago-based six-piece band has played its mix of contemporary classics and standards at such venues as Navy Pier, the Drake Hotel, Pete Miller's and the Green Dolphin Lounge. Members include Amanda Wolff (vocals), Jonny Kostal (tenor sax), Kevin Gawthrop (baritone sax), Stuart Olsen III (electric guitar), Ben Smith (bass) and Barry Rose (drums).

Kostal is the music director of the group, which was formed in 2006. "A few of us played together in other bands before," he said.

Kostal said The Flat Cats has "a big band style with a small group. We do a lot of the standards from the swing era but we have other varieties, too. The music spans from the pre-'20s up to the '50s and some beyond that."

Although the band tends to concentrate on music from the '20s through the '40s, they also perform some rock and blues numbers from the later decades.

The tenor saxophonist said he loves "the rhythm, the feel, the instrumentation, the repertoire, the tradition of" Big Band Era music.

The popular group has a few standing engagements. "We play in the Palm Court of the Drake Hotel regularly and we have a pretty good following there. A lot of people come out to dance to our music," Kostal said. "We also play at the Club Arcada in St. Charles. We're there a couple times a month. We also do private events and a lot of summer concerts."

The Flat Cats has backed several prominent singing groups, including The Drifters and The Crystals. They have also performed at the Chicago Theatre, the former Star Plaza in Merrillville, Indiana, and Pabst Theatre in Milwaukee.

The Wednesdays on the Green concert "will be a high-energy show with a good variety of music from well-known artists like Count Basie and Frank Sinatra," Kostal said. "We'll do some Latin-inspired music as well." Selections will likely include "Fly Me to the Moon," "Mambo Italiano," "Stompin' at the Savoy" and "No Moon at All."

"We do a good stage show that's entertaining to watch and listen to," Kostal said. "A lot of people like to get on their feet and dance."

The show will include some audience participation. Audience members will be invited to sing along on some numbers and participate in call-and-response routines. "A lot of times we'll do a dance contest for the kids," Kostal said.

The Wednesdays on the Green series continues with Dancing Queen, an ABBA tribute band, on July 31; Humboldt Park Orchestra, a group of salsa musicians, on Aug. 7; Kaleidoscope Dance Night with Classy Clown presenting dancing and activities for kids on Aug. 14; and Mellencougar, musicians who perform the music of John Cougar Mellencamp, on Aug. 21.

The free concert series is presented by the Skokie Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the Village of Skokie, Skokie Park District and Skokie Public Library.

Myrna Petlicki is a freelancer.

"We do a good stage show that's entertaining to watch and listen to. A lot of people like to get on their feet and dance."

-Jonny Kostal
WHAT TO DO COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Thursday, July 18

The Barn Steakhouse Nightly Specials: This cozy and chic modern restaurant offers New American fare and craft cocktails, tucked away in a rustic, restored stable in Evanston. Owner and founder of The Barn Steakhouse and Found Kitchen, Amy Morton, has created a meat-centric eatery, delivering only the finest quality ingredients, meats and Heritage Angus Beef. Open Monday through Thursday 5-10 p.m., Friday through Saturday 5-11 p.m. and Sunday 5-9 p.m. Visit The Barn Steakhouse’s website to see the menu and check availability, and follow the restaurant on Facebook and Instagram.

5 p.m. Thursday, The Barn, 1016 Church St., Evanston, see the menu, 847-868-8041.

Hedwig and the Angry Inch: Hedwig Schmidt is a genderqueer glam rock 'n' roll goddess from East Germany whose botted sex-change operation left her with an "angry inch" of flesh where her female genitalia should be. One of the first musicals to explore issues of gender identity, its varied score includes female genitalia should be. One of the first musicals to explore issues of gender identity, its varied score includes

8 p.m. Thursday, Evanston Space, 1245 Chicago Ave., Evanston, $24-$44, 847-492-8860.

Outdoor Family Game Night for all ages: Enjoy summer nights with the family and play a mix of classic outdoor games. Just drop in. (Rain Location: Community Room ). 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Panera, 1199 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-853-8222.

The Lion King Preview Fundraiser: Be among the first to see the new live action movie “The Lion King” and support the local community at the same time. Proceeds benefit the Park Ridge Community Fund and the 29 health and service agencies it supports.

6 p.m. Thursday, Pickwick Theatre, 5 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, $16, 847-825-5800.

Friday, July 19

Friday Nights Live: Every Summer starting in June, Friday evenings in Des Plaines feature a special line-up of performances at Metropolitan Square. The entertainment goes from 6-9:30 p.m., weather permitting. "Friday Nights Live!" offers family-friendly entertainment, games for the kids, and an opportunity for friends and family to come together. 6 p.m. Friday, Metropolitan Square, 647 Metropoli

8 p.m. Friday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, free, 847-784-6030.

Fashion Outlets of Chicago’s Back-to-School Celebration: This “Back-to-School” celebration offers savings provided by retailers throughout the shopping center. Also visit Concierge Services on Level One, and show your school ID to receive exclusive offers. Shoppers are invited to bring a new school supply valued at $5 or more to benefit SOS Children’s Villages Illinois. 10 a.m. Friday through Wednesday, Fashion Outlets of Chicago, 5220 Fashion Outlets Way, Rosemont, free, 847-928-7500.

Saturday, July 20

Free Berner and Pilates Sessions: Hidden Power Life Coaching & Pilates is offering free health and fitness sessions that include 8-minute Bio-Electromagnetic Energy Regulation (BEMER) along with 20-minute Pilates sessions. Registration is required; call 847-962-5912. 12:30 p.m. Friday, Hidden Power Life Coaching & Pilates, 3340 Dundee Road, Northbrook, free, 847-962-5912.

St. Nick’s Rummage Sales: Find great

Turn to Calendar, Page 15
Meow MeetUp Chicago Cat Expo and Festival: Meow MeetUp Cat Expo & Festival is an immersive and experiential event where cat lovers from all over Chicagoland and the Midwest come to enjoy all things cat like kitty yoga, a cat café, presentations by cat experts, paws-on workshops, celebrity cat meet and greets, shopping, entertainment and more. Hosted by The Catnip Times, Inc. 9 a.m. Saturday, 9 a.m. Sunday, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 5555 North River Road, Rosemont, $25-$35 adults; $9-$12 kids; children 5 and under are free.

2019 3rd Annual Taste of Korea Chicago Festival: Taste of Korea hosts the international "Changwon World K-POP Festival" Competition. Saturday's 4 p.m. Opening Ceremony honors our Korean War veterans for their bravery. Expect various authentic and fusion cuisine options, Korean merchandise available for purchase, plenty of activities for all, and onstage cultural performances. This takes place at the Mall's West Lot (left of the Orange Garage). Celebrate everyone who's KoreanAtHeart! 11 a.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. Sunday, Westfield Old Orchard, 4999 Old Orchard Center, Skokie, free, 847-673-6800.

Wilmette Sidewalk Sale Singing Contest: The Sidewalk Sale Singing Contest on Saturday is for singers ages 9 and over Reserve spots at www.wilmettekenilworth.com. Songs must be submitted by July 10. The Sidewalk Sale July 18-20 has businesses throughout Wilmette, plus artisans, crafters and vendors taking part. Expect on Saturday: Family Yoga Class by Yo-gaville at 8:30 a.m.; Frog Lady performs at 10 a.m.; Martial arts demonstration by Staley Martial Arts; Studio North Academy for Performing Arts show at 11:30 a.m.; North Shore Squares square dancing demonstration at 12:45 p.m.; Students from Music Institute are featured at 1:15 p.m.; Rock House Music School students perform at 2 p.m.; North Shore Music students perform at 3 p.m.; followed by the Singing Contest Finals at 4:45 p.m.; Grand finale by Jazz singer, Shara Maxwell. 8:30 a.m. Sunday, 12:15 p.m. Saturday, Wilmette Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, free, 847-251-3800.

Sunday, July 21

Fundraiser Clinics to Fight Sex Trafficking: Selaah Freedom is a national organization dedicated to fighting the sex trafficking of children. This fundraising event takes place at the the Des Plaines Park District's community center with a pair of teaching clinics that are offered for the sport of pickleball. One is designed for players at the 3.0 to 4.5 level (considered advanced) from 9-11 a.m., taught by top professional Dave "The Badger" Weinbach. The second clinic, Intro to Pickleball is from noon-2 p.m., designed for beginners to 2.5 level players, which is taught by Bob Rhine and other local instructors. 9 a.m. Sunday, Prairie Lakes Community Center Theatre, 515 E. Thacker St., Des Plaines, $50 for advanced players; $20 beginners; $20 spectators, 847-720-4495.

Vintage Garage Chicago - Evanston: Vintage Garage heads to Evanston, with their 2019 season on May 19, July 21 and Sept. 15. On these 3rd Sundays of May, July, and September, come see all of your favorite vendors and lots of new ones. Vintage fashion, clothing, jewelry, accessories, vintage furniture, home decor, Midcentury, oddities, vinyl, and more treasures await you. Come sell with them, when you fill out a Seller Application. Get your tickets at: https://www.vintagelagaragechicago.com/tickets/ For questions, send a note to hey@vintagelagaragechicago.co or Facebook https://www.facebook.com/events/287586986491079/. 10 a.m. Sunday, Maple Self Park Garage, 1800 Maple Ave, Evanston, $6.

Sundae Sunday: As part of Glencoe's 150th Anniversary, North Shore United Methodist Church gives out free ice cream, offered to the first 300 people attending. Ice cream with your choice of toppings is given, set up on the lawn area at the corner of Hazel and Greenleaf Avenues. 2 p.m. Sunday, North Shore United Methodist Church, 213 Hazel Ave., Glencoe, free, 847-835-1227.

Peace, Love and Woodstock at 50: Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Woodstock with Tommi Zender and Alton Smith from the Old Town School of Folk Music as they perform classic songs from many of the festival's original performers. Please register online: call 847-729-7500 ext. 7600 or visit Reader Services. 2 p.m. Sunday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

Concert: Sarah Marie Young In Concert: Award winning singer and songwriter Sarah Marie Young will perform songs from her past three albums, share new music and stories as well as her favorite covers loved by audiences worldwide, and share new music and stories. For more information about this event, visit www.mgp.org or call 2 p.m. Sunday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave, Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220.

Yoga in the Park: Rosemont's Parkway Bank Park entertainment district teams up with CorePower Yoga to present free Yoga in the Park every Sunday at 10 a.m. now through August 11. All ages are invited to participate. Yoga mats are not provided; guests should bring their own. Parking is free with validation. 10 a.m. Sunday, Parkway Bank Park, 5501 Park Place, Rosemont, free, 847-349-5554.

Monday, July 22

Monday Movers Storytime for all ages: Wear your dancing shoes and join the Youth Services Librarians as they twirl into the week at our new summer storytime. Just drop in. 10:30 a.m. Monday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

Business Expo and After Hours: Open to the public, to gain ideas and build your professional networks. Join the Northbrook, Glenview, Deerfield, Bannockburn, and Riverwoods Chambers of Commerce for fabulous food, drinks, drawings, cash prizes and more. 5 p.m. Monday, Hilton Northbrook Hotel, 2855 Milwaukee Ave., Northbrook, free, 847-784-0022.

Multi-Chamber Business Expo: See new products and make new contacts at the 2019 Multi-Chamber Business Expo. Learn about the latest business innovations and expand your professional network. More than 65 exhibitors from the Northbrook, Glenview and the Deerfield Bannockburn Riverwoods (DBR) Chambers showcase their products and services with interactive displays and in-depth information. Open to all business professionals. 5 p.m. Monday, Hilton Northbrook Hotel, 2855 Milwaukee Ave., Northbrook, free, 847-498-5555.

JCC Chicago Open Game Room: JCC Chicago offers free game rooms at the Bernard Weinger JCC in Northbrook. You bring the games, and we'll provide a room, tables and chairs. Noon Monday, Bernard Weinger JCC, 300 Reverie Dr., Northbrook, free, 224-406-9257.

Botanical Gardens Throughout the World: Longwood Garden: Longwood Gardens, located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania is a testament to the guiding hand of American entrepreneur, businessman, and philanthropist Pierre S. Dupont. At one time the Lenni Lenape Native Americans lived and thrived in the area, Today, the Gardens cover 1,077 acres with 20 indoor heated gardens, outdoor gardening, a professional horticulture school, hundreds of horticulture and performing arts events and spectacular fountain shows. 1 p.m. Monday, Northbrook, free, 847-965-4220.
**WHAT TO DO COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

**Calendar, from Page 15**

Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $12 member, $17 nonmember, 847-784-6030.

**Zumba in the Park:** Rosemont's Parkway Bank Park is teaming up with Rosemont Health and Fitness for free Zumba in the Park every Monday from 6-7 p.m. now through August 5. Advance online registration is recommended. Parking is free with validation. 6 p.m. Monday, Parkway Bank Park, 5501 Park Place, Rosemont, free, 847-349-5554.

**Tuesday, July 23**

**I Was There Man - Woodstock's Golden Jubilee:** Over 400,000 people attended Woodstock for three days of peace and music in 1969. Ellie Presents brings you music, food, flowers, dance, drums, and some daring escapades, all designed to bring that fantastic festival alive again. Please register online, call 847-729-7500 ext. 7600 or visit Reader Services. 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

**CJE SeniorLife Counseling:** 30-minute appointments: 9:30 AM-Noon CJE SeniorLife (CJE) Resource Specialists provide counseling to adults ages 60 and over, their families, and caregivers on topics such as selecting appropriate retirement benefits, picking the right health insurance and Medicare programs, determining housing needs and identifying supportive resources. For more information and to make an appointment, call Kathy Gaxing at CJE SeniorLife 773-508-1054. 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

**M.M A&M: Presentation: Radio Goes to War:** Steve Darnall examines some of the ways that radio brought the war into the lives of its listeners, with presidential speeches, news broadcasts, entertainment shows for the troops and programs designed to boost morale at home. For more information about this event, visit www.mmp.org or call. 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Ave., Morton Grove, free, 847-965-4220.

**Rotary Club of Northbrook Lunch Meeting:** Rotary Club of Northbrook weekly lunch meeting. Become a Rotarian. Noon Tuesday, Hilton Northbrook Hotel, 2855 Milwaukee Ave., Northbrook, free, 847-736-7168.

**Art Workshop:** Easily connect to your creativity and imagination! Share ideas with fellow students (beginning through advanced) as you develop your natural talent. Everyone chooses and brings the media they prefer, be it paint, pencil, pastel, crayon, mixed media and so on. Each participant is offered guidance by Carl Kock. Or, you are free to work independently. 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $225 member, $265 nonmember, 847-784-6030.

**Wednesday, July 24**

**Bearfoot in the Park Concerts:** Glenview Concert Band performs at Jackman Park Gazebo, Lehigh Ave. and Prairie Street through July 31 every Wednesday evening. Guests may bring their dinner, folding chairs and lawn blankets, and enjoy these shows guaranteed to please people of all ages. For a complete list of performers, visit glenviewparks.org. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jackman Park Gazebo, 1868 Prairie St, Glenview, free.

**Woodstock 1969: A Cultural History:** Isaac Turner, History of Rock & Roll professor from Kalamazoo Valley Community College, reflects on the significance of Woodstock and its lasting legacy 50 years later. Please register online, call 847-729-7500 ext. 7600 or visit Reader Services. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

**BOOKit! Exploring Nonfiction:** Fire Season: Field Notes from a Wilderness Lookout by Philip Connors. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Glenview Public Library, 1930 Glenview Road, Glenview, free, 847-729-7500.

**Mysteries of the Ocean Depths:** Journey into the dark ocean at night to find mysterious forms of life, including many that light up the night. Visit with mysterious denizens of the deep sea that exhibit fascinating strategies for staying alive in extreme environments from fabulous jellies to the giant squid, bizarre barrel head fish and sharks that glow in the dark. 10 a.m. Wednesday, North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Road, Northfield, $12 member; $17 nonmember, 847-784-6030.

**Park Ridge Fly Tying Club Meetings:** The Chicago Fly Fisher's Club meets at 7 p.m. Wednesdays, from mid-September through May. An experienced demonstrator does demonstrations of fly tying, with members tying the same pattern using tools and materials provided by the club. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Park Ridge Community Church, 100 S. Courtland Ave., Park Ridge, free, 847-823-3164.

Have an event to submit? Go to www.ChicagoTribune.com/Calendars.
COMMUNITY REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

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<td>1 Oak Creek Dr, #3310, Buffalo Grove</td>
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<td>Richard Szafraniek</td>
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<td>728 Weidner Rd, #305, Buffalo Grove</td>
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<td>175 Lake Blvd, #354, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Donald Smith</td>
<td>Stanislav Szymanski</td>
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<td>1255 S Wellington Ctr, Buffalo Grove</td>
<td>Vidya Sagaraja Nagaraj Puramana Grove</td>
<td>Vlad Liberman</td>
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<td>440 Ferndale Ct, Buffalo Grove</td>
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<td>9041 Gulf Rd, #3E, Des Plaines</td>
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<td>943 Bay Colony Dr, #3N, Des Plaines</td>
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<td>1277 Brown St, #302, Des Plaines</td>
<td>Albert Alvarado</td>
<td>Evan Gilbert</td>
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Church pastor donates part of his liver to a Park Ridge mother with cancer

BY JENNIFER JOHNSON

Last fall, Ellen Totten knew the Rev. Matthew Hoffman only as the pastor of the Park Ridge church where her eldest child attended preschool.

Today, the pair share a unique bond neither could have imagined just a few months ago.

In April, Hoffman, who leads St. Andrews Lutheran Church and is a chaplain for the Park Ridge Police Department, donated 60 percent of his liver to Totten, a young mother who was in need of a transplant following a cancer diagnosis. He was one of several people who volunteered to be tested as a possible donor after learning of Totten’s plight — but the only one who was a perfect match.

“I always had a feeling that I was going to be a match,” Hoffman said during a gathering at his home on July 1. “I don’t know why. Maybe everybody has that feeling, I don’t know. But I really felt, from the time I signed up, that, ‘yeah, it’s probably going to be me.’”

“Matt saved my life,” an emotional Totten said. “I’m so grateful.”

Totten, 33, a Park Ridge native who moved back to Park Ridge with her family just a couple of years ago, was diagnosed with primary sclerosing cholangitis or PSC, an autoimmune disease, shortly after giving birth to her third child, Alice, in October, she said. Within approximately one week of the diagnosis, Totten received more devastating news: She had developed cholangiocarcinoma, a rare cancer that had developed in the bile duct of her liver.

Dr. Laura Kulik, Totten’s transplant hepatologist at Northwestern Medical Center, described bile duct cancer as a complication of PSC, with a liver transplant from a living donor as Totten’s best treatment option.

“When a living donor once you’ve undergone your chemotherapy and radiation you can move forward with the transplant without the need for waiting,” Kulik explained.

Because the liver can regenerate, a portion of the organ can be removed from a healthy person and transplanted into someone else. But where would Totten find a donor, she and her husband Ryan wondered.

Through word of mouth and social media — including help from the Totten’s church, South Park Church in Park Ridge — news of Ellen’s need for a living liver donor spread around the community.

Hoffman learned about it not long after he was told of Ellen Totten’s illness. Even though he did not know Totten well, he knew her daughter Jane and recalled being deeply affected by the news, particularly after visiting Jane’s preschool classroom that day.

“There’s a section of hallway between the church and the school and I just sat down on the ground and cried,” Hoffman said. “It was just really tough to think about what (the Tottens) were going through and what Jane could be facing.”

Later, he saw a social media post about a cancer patient who needed a liver from a donor with an O positive blood type.

“I remember seeing that and thinking, ‘I know who that is,’ Hoffman said.

Knowing he could possibly be a match, Hoffman considered being tested and talked to his wife, Anne, about it.

“She told me, ‘I don’t like the idea of you going through surgery, but if we were going through this, we’d want someone to help us,’” Hoffman recalled.

“I was really proud of Matt,” Anne Hoffman said. “Everyone wants someone else to step up (in situations like this). You were the someone else.”

It took about a month — and a lot of testing — before Hoffman learned he would, in fact, be Totten’s donor.

The surgery was set for April 17 — right in the middle of Holy Week, the days preceding Easter, which is an especially busy time for the Lutheran minister.

Hoffman’s doctor, a Catholic himself, recognized the dilemma right away.

“He said, ‘Matt, you’re not going to like this,’” Hoffman recalled with a laugh.

But St. Andrews and the Lutheran faith communities stepped up, he said.

“The church was awesome,” Hoffman recalled. “We had all these guest preachers lined up. I had someone different for every service and I even had pastors I had to turn away who were willing to come and help.”

Hoffman’s father, a retired pastor, arrived from California to perform the Easter service that Sunday.

Hoffman admitted to being anxious as the date of the surgery approached.

“They talk to you about what the surgery is and, unfortunately, they show you some pictures,” he said, laughing. “I was pretty nervous, I think. Excited to help, but nervous.”

For Hoffman, the surgery, performed at Northwestern Medical Center, lasted about eight hours. For Totten, it was a full 21 hours to remove her liver and perform the transplant, her husband said. She spent the next two days in intensive care.

Nearly three months on, Totten said her prognosis is good and there were no signs of cancer or cancer cells following her surgery.

“I feel really good,” she said. “I’m hanging out with my kids, my husband and my family — I’m living a normal life.”

Totten credits her Christian faith with helping her get through the difficult months of cancer treatments and the uncertainties she faced during her illness.

“I just felt God present, truly,” she said. “He was just so there for us. I felt at peace. I didn’t know if we would get the liver or not, but I just felt at peace. I prayed that God would answer my prayers.”

As a minister, Hoffman agrees that his own faith made him receptive to being an organ donor.

“You look at Christ’s example,” he said simply. “He gave himself so that we could live.”

The St. Andrews and South Park Church faith communities, as well as the Park Ridge police and fire departments, also stepped up to show their support, holding a prayer vigil at St. Andrews and the morning of the surgeries, Hoffman said.

“It really felt like the whole community was taking part,” he said.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Hoffman and Totten families have forged a relationship through their shared experiences.

“I really look forward to seeing Ryan and Ellen,” Hoffman said. “I kind of feel like I’ve earned the right to call Ellen my little sister. I never had a little sister.”

Ellen Totten said she looks up to the Hoffmans.

“I probably text them more than I should,” she said, smiling. The messages are often simple, like a note sharing how the family is enjoying their day.

“It’s very meaningful, just because it’s every day life,” Hoffman said.

His own life is also marked by his sacrifice.

“I have a scar on my abdomen and it brings me a lot of joy,” he said. “I’m glad I have it.”

jjohnson@chicagotor.com
Twitter @Jen_Tribune
District 64 approves tentative ‘good news’ budget

Draft plan projects $77.6 million in spending for 2019-20

By Heather Cherone

Flush with more property tax revenue than expected from new construction, the Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 school board approved a tentative budget Monday for the 2019-20 fiscal year, which began July 1.

The spending plan should be considered a “working budget” that will be revised up until the budget is adopted by the board, according to Chief School Business Officer Luann Kolstad.

The draft plan projects that the district will spend $77.6 million, up 0.5% from the 2018-19 tentative budget. It also projects that the district will collect revenues of $79.3 million, an increase of 3.4%, according to reports prepared for the board.

That gives the district an initial operating surplus of $1.7 million, Kolstad said.

“This is the first time in my career presenting a budget without an operating deficit at the start of the process,” Kolstad said, prompting laughter from the board when she said she went back and double checked all of her work.

The district is expected to take in $2.9 million more than expected in property tax revenue from newly constructed homes and businesses, Kolstad said. In all, new construction will add $12.9 million to the district’s bottom line.

“That is good news,” Kolstad said.

However, there are “so many unknowns” at this point, Kolstad said.

Kolstad warned the board that it could not continue to drain its unreserved fund balance to fund construction projects past the summer of 2020.

Kolstad said she would recommend that the board issue bonds to pay for those future projects.

In March 2017, the board approved a measure granting the district the authority to issue the bonds. That authority expires in 2020, Kolstad said.

First in December and then again in February, the board rejected Kolstad’s recommendation to borrow $11 million to fund a host of construction projects this summer. Instead, the board paid for the projects with cash from the district’s reserves.

The district’s unreserved fund balance dropped $3.2 million during the past year, Kolstad said.

The board is scheduled to hold a public hearing on the budget at 6:45 p.m. Aug. 19 at Jefferson School, 8200 W. Greendale Ave., Niles.

The final approval of the budget is set for Sept. 23, in advance of the state-mandated deadline of Sept. 30.

Chief School Business Officer Luann Kolstad told the Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 board that the tentative 2019-20 budget contains “good news.”
Trustee calls for dropping 'community' from college’s name to increase enrollment

By Steve Sadin

One student recruitment tool Oakton Community College could use includes changing its name, one trustee suggests, saying it could alter the perception of the two-year school among area high school seniors.

“I love this community,” said Trustee Ben Salzberg, chairman of the Oakton Community College board. “We are a community but the message has a stigma among (high school) seniors. The message is we are not a college. I want to have a discussion about changing our name to Oakton College.”

While several other trustees agreed with Salzberg that a discussion on a possible name change was a good idea, Oakton President Joanne Smith suggested caution.

“This must be thoughtful and deliberate,” she said. “We are the community’s college. We must be very thorough. There are pluses and minuses on both sides and we must be very careful.”

Salzberg made the suggestion after a presentation on the school’s marketing efforts during the June 25 board of trustees meeting. He said a renaming could be one way to change Oakton’s perception among high school seniors in the near north and northwest suburbs.

During the marketing presentation Katherine Sawyer, Oakton’s chief advancement officer, talked about a variety of ways the school is communicating its message and the groups it is trying to reach. One of those targets is college degree-seeking high school students.

Two-year programs leading to an associate’s degree do not necessarily attract as many high school senior applicants as four-year colleges, she said.

Salzberg said there is a perception among some in that age group that schools like Oakton—junior colleges—are not as good as four-year colleges.

Sawyer pointed out nearby two-year schools that don’t have the “community college” moniker: the College of Lake County in Grayslake and William Rainey Harper College in Palatine.

Trustee Gail Bush said that of the 48 community colleges in Illinois outside of Chicago, only one-third have “community” in their name.

“We have an opportunity to review this and it’s appropriate in our 50th anniversary year,” Bush said. Oakton kicked off its half-century celebration earlier that day.

Trustee Paul Kotowski said he felt a discussion of a potential name change was worthwhile but “it won’t be easy.”

Salzberg said when the school was founded 50 years ago, it got the name Oakton Community College because Oakton Street runs from the west end of the school district in Des Plaines to the eastern boundary in Evanston.

“The discussion is expected to continue at the Aug. 20 meeting,” Salzberg said.

Oakton Community College Board of Trustees Chairman Ben Salzberg and President Joanne Smith talk during the June 25 board meeting at the Des Plaines campus.

This 2018 photo shows some of the vaping products and delivery devices taken from students at Naperville Central High School. To combat the use of the products by children in Oak Park, one trustee is asking if the products should be banned within its borders.

Oak Park considers banning e-cigarettes

By Steve Schering

While the Oak Park village board awaits an ordinance that could restrict the sale of e-cigarettes, one trustee is asking whether the product should be outright banned within its borders.

Following the July 8 village board meeting, trustee Jim Taglia cited recent bans on e-cigarettes and flavored nicotine products in San Francisco and Aspen, Colo., as possible measures for Oak Park to consider.

His suggestion follows on the heels of 2018 Illinois Youth Survey results, which showed children attending District 97 schools and Oak Park and River Forest High School used the products at an “alarming” rate. That information was presented to the village board last January.

“I know we’re waiting on the first read of a draft ordinance providing additional restrictions on e-cigarettes,” Taglia said. “Further to that, I would like to hear staff’s thoughts on the possibility of a total ban on the purchase and delivery of e-cigarettes within the village. E-cigarette use by our youth has increased at a level that has never been experienced with conventional smoking.”

Earlier this year, the village board reviewed data provided by its board of health related to e-cigarette use by local children and teenagers.

Among the proposals presented in January included a strict enforcement and strengthening of the village’s tobacco 21 ordinance, which prohibits the sale of tobacco to anyone under 21 years old. Staff also proposed various restrictions on electronic nicotine delivery systems, or ENDS, products.

This year's Illinois Youth Survey results, which indicated local youth used the products at an “alarming” rate.

According to that 2018 survey data, 45 percent of 12th graders had used e-cigarette products, while 32 percent of 10th graders and 13 percent of 8th graders also used ENDS products.

“The percentage increase from 2016 to 2018 for 12th grade increased 55 percent, 10th grade increased 167 percent and 8th grade increased 160 percent,” Charley said.

“Locally, we know the numbers mimic what we see around the country.”

When reached for comment, San Francisco-based e-cigarette manufacturer JUUL Labs released a statement opposing an outright ban of the products.

“The full prohibition of vapor products is widely opposed by San Francisco voters, San Francisco opinion leaders and public health experts across the country and world,” the statement read. “We are supporting these efforts, as part of the Coalition for Reasonable Vaping Regulation, to enact strict new regulation and enforcement instead of a ban for all adults that will fuel a black market of vapor products and the increased use of deadly cigarettes.”

Oak Park spokesman David Powers said the village’s law department is working on language to amend the current village code regulating tobacco products to include the additional e-cigarette rules recommended by the board of health in January, though a full ban of the products has yet to officially be requested.

Taglia, however, feels the village should take a possible ban in mind as a way to tackle the issue.

“I think we should consider every tool available to combat the crisis,” Taglia said. “I think we should look into it and consider it because it’s becoming an option other places are taking advantage of.”
Skip the minivan, try a truck

Pickups' space, versatility drawing in parents

BY PHOEBE WALL HOWARD
Detroit Free Press

DETROIT — Pickups aren't just for work anymore. Parents increasingly are buying trucks, especially midsize ones, as kid-friendly options for carpooling, outdoor activities, towing boats and road trips. Ford Motor Co., for instance, is seeing its Ranger expanding into a new role as a family truck.

"People are asking how many car seats can fit into the back of pickups now," said Chad Callander, a Ford spokesman. Safety features are vital, of course, for families. Toyota puts standard automatic emergency braking, forward-collision warning and lane-departure warning on its Tundra full-sized and Tacoma compact pickups, Consumer Reports notes.

"Pickup trucks are becoming increasingly popular for hauling families as well as cargo," says Jennifer Stockburger, director of operations at Consumer Reports' Auto Test Center.

Ford is spotlighting a new back-seat feature in its 2019 Ranger that includes an alert if someone unbuckles his or her seat belt.

Ford Motor Co.

Ford is spotlighting a new back-seat feature in its 2019 Ranger that includes an alert if someone unbuckles his or her seat belt.

Daniel Long helps his daughter, Alice Long, 5, into her car seat in their 2019 Ford Ranger in Southfield, Michigan. The family plans to take the truck on hiking, canoeing and camping trips.

its passenger-side small-overlap front crash test, which simulates when the front corner of a vehicle hits another car or a stationary object, according to Consumer Reports.

"In terms of the passenger-side small-overlap front crash test, I would say that the pickup truck class has further to go in terms of improving protection for drivers and occupants than other classes of vehicles like SUVs and cars," says David Zuby, the chief research officer for the IIHS. "In the most recent results, only about half of the pickup trucks have an acceptable or better rating for structure holding up in this kind of a crash, and only three of them earn a good rating overall."

Ranger's Belt Monitor is the first rear seat belt reminder system in the Ford truck lineup. The technology was introduced on the 2018 Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator and will be phased in across the entire North American lineup over the next few years.

The 2020 Jeep Gladiator also has a back-seat notification system, according to the owners manual. Company officials declined to comment on the system.

Ford has sold 22,900 Ford Rangers this year, according to Kelley Blue Book. And sales have more than tripled since the start of the year. The top three leaders in the midsize pickup segment since January are the Toyota Tacoma, Chevy Colorado and Nissan Frontier. Consumers have purchased 242,692 midsize pickups in 2019.

Joe Hinrichs, automotive president at Ford, notes that Ranger just won the midsize pickup category in the 2019 J.D. Power U.S. Initial Quality Study. And Ford ranked fourth overall in the highly respected measure of consumer sentiment. This year, the F-150 and Super Duty trucks, along with Escape, Expedition and Flex, ranked in the top three of their respective segments. Lincoln's top-three models included Navigator, Nautilus and MKC.
Crowley, Arthur R.
Arthur Robert Crowley died in Cape Coral FL on July 7, 2019 after a short illness. He was 93 years old. Art was born in Chicago IL on June 10, 1926 to Robert F. Crowley and Constance Crowley. He was the oldest of three children. His siblings were Eileen Crowley, middle child who died at age 11, and younger brother John H. Crowley who died in 2015.

Art attended St. Edward grammar school and graduated from St. George High School in Chicago in 1944. He enlisted in the army that year and served in World War II in the 24th Cavalry division attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant before receiving an honorable discharge in October 1946.

After his discharge from the Army, Art returned to Chicago and graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He pursued a career in engineering and lived briefly in Texas and Kansas. He returned to his Chicagoland roots spending the rest of his career in the Chicago area. While working full time, in 1969 Art earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Roosevelt University of Chicago. Primary companies he worked for included The State of Illinois, Zenith Corporation and Loyola University. Art voluntarily retired at the age of 66 from Loyola.

While attending a social dance at a north side Chicago church, Art met Grace Marie Trochowski. Love quickly followed and they married in April of 1951. Together they had five children, (Deborah, Cynthia, Neal, John "Jack" and Colleen). Art and Grace stayed happily married to each other for 58 years until Grace died in February of 2009.

Art led an active life before and after retiring. He was a member of the VFW in Park Ridge IL and the Elks Lodge of Des Plaines, IL and later attended functions at those same organizations in Michigan City IN and Naples FL. One of the great passions of his life was spending time on the shores of Lake Michigan with his wife and kids, his parents and his brother John and family. His favorite activities at the Crowley home in Long Beach IN included going for a swim in the lake or a walk on the beach, a game of golf or tennis with his sons, nephew and brother a night out with Grace, Jack and Dee dancing and socializing at The Polka Dot Lounge, cooking up kielbasa sausage at midnight and shore breakfasts on the beach on holiday mornings. If there was a friendly crowd, lively conversation, good food and a drink or two to be had, Art’s fun-loving nature had him in the mix.

Art lived most of his life in the Chicagoland area. After retiring, he and Grace moved from Park Ridge IL to Michigan City IN and split their time between summer seasons in the Indiana home and winter seasons in Naples FL. While in Naples, Art stayed active with the social events at his Deauville Lakes condo association. This included trips and cruises, dinner parties and special events and weekly social hours at the clubroom. He was well known for being a happy and friendly regular guy among the residents.

Art is survived by his five children, twelve grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Memorial services were held on July 13, 2019 at Fuller Funeral Home located 4735 Tamiami Trail East, Naples FL 34112. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the America Cancer Society in his name. For online condolences visit www.FullerNaples.com.
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Gibson looks to give Evanston a fresh spark

BY BOB NARANG

Jaylin Gibson hopes his junior year is defined by the number three.

The Evanston guard enters his junior season for a program that's become one of the best in the state and has advanced to the Class 4A state tournament in consecutive seasons.

Gibson played more of a complementary role in helping the Wildkits earn a second-place trophy last March. He attempted five shots to finish with two points, six rebounds and an assist in a 71-59 loss to Belleville West in the 4A final.

Even though Gibson was a starter, the Wildkits' offense revolved around their senior trio of Jaheim Holden, Lance Jones and Ryan Bost. Now that those seniors have graduated, Evanston coach Mike Ellis is set to depend on a new junior trio of Gibson, Blake Peters and Isaiah Holden — Jaheim's younger brother — to continue Evanston's run of success.

"It's been a lot different this summer," Gibson said. "The last two years, we had three players who could also make plays for everybody else, but now as the 'new three' we have to make plays for ourselves and make sure everybody is doing the right things, in the right position and we have to link this group.

"I've been trying to help the (younger) players and help them understand. This is all new to them. I messed up a lot on varsity."

Ellis, who has won 200 games in nine seasons at Evanston, said the Wildkits endured a transition period in June following the loss of their senior leaders.

"Everybody had to step up in new roles, and those roles were elevated," Ellis said. "Those three juniors learned going up to that next step requires a lot. The key to our season is how far these three guys can elevate their games."

As part of the transition process, Gibson's game is also undergoing a reconstruction of sorts. As a sophomore, the 6-foot-5 Gibson only attempted 30 3-pointers in 37 games. He made 11 3s.

Gibson has already drawn recruiting attention as he has tweaked his game. He's a well-rounded player capable of slashing to the basket, hitting the boards and playing lockdown defense. Coaches admire those skills, and Gibson received offers from Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Drake and Chicago State in a span of four weeks.

"I've been focusing on my mid-range game and 3s this summer," Gibson said. "It has helped me a lot. A lot of players and teams know me as driving to the basket. If I hit a couple of 3s, I'll step up and drive or find an open man. I've just been working on my outside game so I can expand my overall game."

Bob Narang is a freelance reporter for Pioneer Press.

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Isaacson gets ‘personal’ with new book on 1979 Niles West team

BY DAN SHALIN

Melissa Isaacson’s new book got its start 15 years ago, when the former Chicago Tribune sportswriter wrote a column about her 1979 Niles West state championship girls basketball team.

That column, which coincided with the 25th anniversary of the state championship, led a Hollywood producer to suggest that Isaacson expand the story into a young adult book that could be turned into a screenplay.

Isaacson, who now lives in Northbrook, said she watched old tapes of games, interviewed teammates and looked through scrapbooks to aid in her storytelling. The resulting work never got beyond a manuscript, but Isaacson was not ready to let the project go.

Over the next many years, Isaacson worked on the book off-and-on, eventually crafting the basketball-heavy chapters into a deeply personal story about successful high school athletes coming of age shortly after Title IX legislation expanded opportunities for girls and women in sports.

“We were girls whose sisters, cousins and friends — who were just a little older than us — literally were shut out completely (from playing sports),” said Isaacson, who was a Niles West senior and reserve player on that 1979 team. “But our lives were forever changed us.”

The 1979 Niles West girls basketball team, including Melissa Isaacson (10, back right), won a state championship a few years after Title IX became law.

“This is Isaacson’s third book, but the married mother of two adult children said writing about Michael Jordan and the Bulls in 1994’s "Transition Game" actually came much easier than telling the story of her own historic team.

“It’s clearly the most personal thing I’ve done, and it’s virtually consumed my life. It’s loomed over my life in a good way and a bad way,” Isaacson said, adding that the book took so long to produce that former Niles West coach Gene Earl joked about her “imaginary book.”

“I’d borrow (teammates’) scrapbooks for years and write long apologetic emails saying I would return them soon.”

Isaacson said her former teammates always understood and repeatedly encouraged her to finish the book.

A turning point, Isaacson said, came about five years ago, when she ran into Sports Illustrated writer S.L. Price, a good friend who asked about the project.

“I told him it was written, it just had to be re-worked,” Isaacson said. “He said, ‘Missy, it’s your story, just tell it.’ That was an epiphany and allowed me to turn it into what it became: about the people, what happened to us and how the experience changed us.”

The final version of the book includes details about how the basketball team became a refuge for several girls dealing with struggles at home. Isaacson said she now realizes her parents likely were in the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease during that period.

“That was how basketball saved me,” she said.

The book, titled "State: A Team, A Triumph, A Transformation," will be released Aug. 13. It arrives 40 years after Niles West defeated East St. Louis and star athlete Jackie Joyner-Kersee in the title game. The book also covers a time when the U.S. women's national soccer team's equal pay dispute is the latest test case for women's rights in the American sports landscape.

“I think it was almost serendipitous that it ended up being the 40th anniversary and is released in a climate that is so ripe for talking about women's issues in general,” said Isaacson, who covered the 1990s Chicago Bulls, wrote for ESPN.com and is now a faculty member at Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism.

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The 1979 Niles West girls basketball team, including Melissa Isaacson (10, back right), won a state championship a few years after Title IX became law.

Melissa Isaacson poses with her new book, which will be released in August.

"I didn't know the stories that were going on at home in our lives," said Tuche, who is a physical education teacher at Niles West and has been instrumental in organizing team reunions over the years. "I started reading it and hadn't realized half my teammates were going through the same thing."

Eventually, Isaacson sold the book idea to Evanston-based Agate Publishing. Even before the official release, the book is generating buzz.

"State" is scheduled for a mention in Sports Illustrated's Scorecard section, and excerpts are slated for SL.com and espnW.com.

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To many Fire fans, winning is the only thing

BY JOHN KEILMAN

After a decade of tepid results on the field and shrinking enthusiasm in the stands, Fire fan Rogelio Rudas Jr. isn’t opposed to the change of scenery the team announced July 9.

He’s just not sure it will make much of a difference.

“At the end of the day, (a new home field) is not going to be enough,” Rudas said. “The city will root for a winner... The product on the field obviously has to improve for this to work.”

Team officials said the Fire will leave SeatGeek Stadium in Bridgeview at the end of this season, paying $65.5 million to break a lease that ran through 2036. Though the team hasn’t said where it will play next, it’s widely believed the Fire will return to Soldier Field, which hosted them for most of the team’s first eight seasons.

In interviews and online comments, Fire fans were happy, angry, indifferent and every mood in between. But almost everyone said the location won’t matter if the team doesn’t start winning.

“If the results aren’t on the field, any (attendance) bump you see will be temporary,” said Karl Schuster of Section 8 Chicago, the team’s independent supporters association. “This is a competitive market, and losing teams aren’t tolerated. The record of the Chicago Fire over many years hasn’t suggested that (increased) attendance based on the novelty of a city stadium is sustainable.”

SeatGeek Stadium can hold 20,000 spectators, but the Fire’s figures show attendance has been well below that during the team’s 13 years in Bridgeview.

Last year’s average of 14,806 during a season in which the Fire won only eight games — was the lowest since 2011.

Still, the stadium has been a comfortable home for fans such as Jim Werdeniuk of Bridgeview, who lives close enough to walk to games. He said he probably won’t renew his monthly ticket subscription if the Fire land at Soldier Field.

He expects tickets to cost more and seats to be farther from the field, and the location, needless to say, will be far less convenient for him.

Werdeniuk recalled that fans were excited to leave Soldier Field in 2006 for a soccer-specific stadium in the suburbs and questioned whether the Fire would squander the goodwill the team built up among certain supporters.

“They’re going to lose the loyal South Side people who’ve been coming for a while, and I don’t know that they’ll be able to offset that,” he said.

Tony Nielsen, who has gone to Fire games since 2007, said the stadium’s address didn’t matter when the team was winning. But he said the Fire’s large suburban fan base, which includes many families, might not put up with the expense and “logistical nightmare” of going into the city.

“The move to Soldier Field is a distraction that will not fix anything with the franchise itself,” he said. “The same lack of results and poor ownership will keep fans away. The only difference is that the low attendance will look much worse in a (61,000)-seat stadium than a 20,000-seat stadium.”

But Bradley Dlatt, who lives in Chicago’s River North neighborhood, said the city has a vast, untapped well of soccer aficionados. They wear club jerseys to bars and packed Lincoln Park to watch the U.S. women’s national team play World Cup games, he said, and they might back the Fire if the team were closer.

Dlatt said that Bridgeview has been hampered by its scant public transportation options and that Soldier Field could be a more appealing location for a large portion of the city.

“There’s an appetite for soccer fandom in Chicago, and I don’t know if it’s necessarily tied to winning,” he said. “It’s just a matter of putting the team in a place where the fans can access it.”

The possibility of higher prices is what worries Walter Arredondo of the Sector Latino supporters group. Like others, he expects Soldier Field to be a temporary home until the Fire can build a new soccer stadium in the city, and he said cost-conscious fans could be alienated if the team opts for an upscale model.

“Ideally, it would be somewhere in Pilsen, where it could be cheaper,” he said. “It just depends on how expensive it will be. As a fan, that’s the most concerning part.”

Rudas guessed that building a new Chicago stadium for the Fire could take up to a decade, given the complexities of big construction projects in the city.

A stadium proposed for the Lincoln Yards complex on the North Side was jettisoned earlier this year, and new Mayor Lori Lightfoot has said she will take a tougher line on public subsidies than her predecessor, Rahm Emanuel.

So if the Fire end up back at Soldier Field, Rudas said, they should be prepared to make the most of a long stay — and that starts with producing better results.

“You can get everybody to come in once, but you have to get them to come back,” he said.
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