

HI-LITER

~ including McHenry County News

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As of Feb. 9, 2022 Hi-Liter is the successor publication to McHenry County News

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Volo Museum offering spring break staycation options

The Volo Museum has planned a weeklong spring break staycation that will offer plenty of smiles — without breaking the bank.

“From Saturday to Saturday, March 23 to March 30, we will have all kinds of cool activities for kids and families to enjoy,” said Jim Wojdyla, marketing director for the museum located at 27582 Volo Village Road, Volo. “With inflation pushing prices up and many families squeezed, we wanted to offer a fun option where people can still make memories and have fun, but not overload the credit card. Nearly all of our special activities will be included with regular admission.”

The spring break week will be booked with opportunities to interact with costumed characters ranging from Jasmine to Ironman. Plus, each day will boast a new adventure:

- March 23: Princess-Superhero Activity Day — Two princesses and two superheroes will engage kids in one-hour sessions including storytelling, sing-alongs, games, photos and an optional cookie-decorating activity (nominal fee added for materials). This takes place in the Party Barn from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., 1 to 2 p.m. or 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- March 24: Extreme RC Car Racing Day — Try your hand at a remote-controlled racing challenge race track and obstacle course from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- March 25: Magician Monday — Between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., Wizzo the Wizard performs. At 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., family magician Jamie Aponte



Princesses and a pair of visitors pose for a photo op in the Carousel and Music Hall at the Volo Museum in spring 2023. This year, princesses (and superheroes) once again will entertain museum guests, starting and ending a special week of Spring Break Staycation activities March 23-30.

JIM WOJDYLA PHOTO HI-LITER/MCN

amazes audiences in the Party Barn with his illusions, several of which involve animals.

- March 26: Balloon Twisting Tuesday — Between noon and 3 p.m., a balloon artist will be on hand twisting up some amazing shapes for cap-

tivated kiddos.

- March 27: Face Painting Day — Treat the kids to some free face painting from noon to 3 p.m.
- March 28: Mobile Escape Room Day — The Mobile Adventure Co. brings an escape room trailer to the

Volo Museum. Up to 10 people at a time can enjoy 15-minute, superhero-themed challenges between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

- March 29: Pop-up Game Show

See **STAYCATION**, Page 3

Sheriff's Special Investigations Group arrest drug, gun trafficker

The Lake County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Group (SIG), a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) funded task force, concluded an investigation which led to the arrest of a Vernon Hills man who was selling guns and drugs.



Dentri J. Henning

Members of SIG conducted an investigation after receiving information Dentri J. Henning, 34, of the 300 block of Farmingdale Circle, Vernon Hills, was selling firearms and drugs. During their investigation, members of SIG seized a semi-automatic pistol and more than 30 grams of cocaine.

On March 7, members of SIG arrested Henning at his residence. After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the investigation, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the following charges: Armed Habitual Criminal (Class X Felony), Two counts of Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Deliver (Class X Felonies), Two Counts of Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance (Class 1 Felonies).

See **ARREST**, Page 3



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Nearly 9 in 10 state-level primaries give voters no choice in candidates

Data analysis shows March 19 primary is least competitive in at least 2 decades

By Andrew Adams
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

On March 19, voting will conclude in primary contests for hundreds of seats in the Illinois legislature and in the state's court system. But most of those contests are uncompetitive.

Statewide, 88 percent of judicial and state legislative primaries feature either a single candidate or no one running at all. This is the highest number of uncompetitive primaries for those seats in at least 20 years, according to a Capitol News Illinois analysis of data going back to 2004.

The number of primaries with no candidates running at all is similar to years past, about 33 percent. But the number of primaries with a single person running has jumped to 55 percent, from 46 percent in 2020.

John Shaw, director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, said Illinois' primary participation mirrors a national trend and is partially stoked by growing political polarization and state redistricting practices. The state process for drawing legislative districts is a partisan one by law, meaning many districts have been drawn in a way that favors one party over the other.

While that's made primaries increasingly important in districts that lean heavily

in favor of one party over the other, it's also helped reinforce a trend of parties choosing not to run candidates in districts that were not drawn in their favor.

"The only battle is the primary," Shaw, a former congressional reporter, told Capitol News Illinois.

Shaw said the expectation of candidates to work across the aisle has decreased in recent decades, meaning that parties lean into ideology more.

"It is not good for governance when candidates run unopposed in a primary or general election," Shaw said.

For about 65 percent of state legislative and judicial seats, only one party's primary has any candidates running, with most of those primaries featuring a single candidate.

While many of those races will likely be uncompetitive in the general election as well, the number of contested seats could grow beyond what the primaries indicate via a political appointment process. The political parties have until June 3 to select a person to run on the party's behalf in races where the primaries did not produce a winning candidate. That person would be chosen by local party officials, such as county board chairs in downstate Illinois or ward committees in Chicago.

"It's not routine, but it's not unheard of," Illinois Board of Elections spokesperson Matt Dieterich said of the process.

Long-term trends

John Jackson, a professor at the Paul Simon Institute, said the stark divisions in party control are driven by party realignment and polarization, which have resulted in fewer candidates running on politically moderate platforms.

"That started nationally, then trickled down to state, even now to local," he said.

Jackson, who works at an institute founded by and named for a conservative Democratic senator, noted this trend only emerged in the past few decades.

"There used to be moderates in the Republican party and moderates in the Democratic party," Jackson said. "They were much more heterogeneous than they are."

In Illinois, that's led to stark partisan divides that also fall squarely along urban-rural lines. The city of Chicago remains the center of Democratic power in a democratically controlled state. Republicans have few primary candidates in the city and no serious challengers to most Democrats running.

Rural Illinois, meanwhile, remains almost unrepresented by the state's Democratic party in the legislature or on the bench, with few Democratic

candidates filing to run on rural primary ballots.

Only one legislative seat is competitive for both Democrats and Republicans: the 76th House District. This district contains most of the city of DeKalb as well as stretches of DeKalb, LaSalle and Bureau counties. The district's current representative, Rep. Lance Yednock, D-Ottawa, is not running for reelection, and two Republicans and three Democrats are vying to replace him.

The legislative primaries that have drawn the most candidates include two four-way Democratic contests in the Chicago area. The primary for the 20th Senate District in Chicago, a seat currently held by Sen. Natalie Toro, D-Chicago, is Toro's first senate race. She was appointed to the seat last summer to fill out the remainder of former Sen. Cristina Pacione-Zayas' term after she resigned to take a position with the city of Chicago.

In the House, the south suburban 79th District also features four Democrats vying for the seat. The district has been represented by a Republican since 2016 and is currently held by Rep. Jackie Haas, R-Kankakee.

The 53rd Senate District Republican primary also drew four candidates. That seat is currently held by Sen. Tom Bennett, R-Gibson City,

who is not running for reelection. He was appointed to the seat early last year after serving in the state House.

Judicial elections getting more attention, low competition

While there are primaries for 82 judicial positions across the state, about 85 percent of them feature either one or no candidate on the ballot. Just over half feature a single candidate across both major party primaries.

Part of this is due to the high number of races in Cook County, a very Democratic area which operates the second largest court system in the nation.

But the low number of interested candidates can be partially explained by shifting career goals among lawyers, according to Elizabeth Monkus, senior research attorney at the nonprofit judicial reform advocacy group Chicago Appleseed Center.

"People come into the profession with different goals than they used to," Monkus said.

Monkus noted that there are more people interested in what she called "movement lawyering," where a person furthers political and social goals through legal advocacy, rather than working as a trial lawyer or working on criminal cases.

"If you're working to

change the world, judges have less power to do that than you might expect," Monkus said. But judicial elections are important because of their impacts on a local, often personal, level, where Monkus said judges' decisions can have "long and lasting" impact.

Monkus noted that since she began working in judicial elections over a decade ago, people are more aware of judicial elections than they used to be, despite the relatively low number of candidates in any given race. She attributed that to increased voter interest, more campaigning in high-profile races and more thorough news coverage.

The most high-stakes judicial primary this year is the battle over one of the state's Supreme Court seats from the 1st District in Cook County.

That race features Joy V. Cunningham running to keep the seat she was appointed to in 2022 against Jesse G. Reyes, an appellate court judge who also ran in 2020 in a heated seven-way primary for the seat currently held by P. Scott Neville. Reyes came in second in that race with 20.3 percent of the vote to Neville's 26.2 percent.

As with most judicial races this year, it's a one-party race at this point. No Republicans are currently running for the seat on the state's highest court.



This is Cadette Troop 7256 out of Elkhorn. Their Co-Leaders are Cyndi Borgen and Kristal Wulf. This is their Christmas meeting, where they began the night caroling at Lakeland Health Care Center, had a McDonald's dinner, and ended at Grand Geneva to look at all the Christmas decorations.



Cadette Troop 7256 earned their Trail Blazing Badge at Price Park.



Daisy Troop 8105 Service Project line up: (front row) Lily Balsitis, A'Ziana Arizola, Sophia Newman, Elanor Rogers, Gwynonwen Treutelaar, Elizabeth Krol, McKenna Vyhnanek, Elsie Perkins, and Kelsey Markling.



Daisy Troop 8105 out of Walworth created their own Board Game (they called it Underwater Game and it was super fun to play) and earned their Toy Design Patch! They also made pizzas at Jojo's in Delavan and coordinated a giving tree for Walworth Children's Foundation with Co-Leaders Tess Treutelaar and Lynette Vyhnanek.



Girl Scout Troop 7166 from Lakeland School has earned the Science of Happiness, Trees, and Girls Love WI State Parks Badges this fall by doing the required activities. The picture shows the door decorations they made for Lakeland Health Care Center in February.



McKenna Vyhnanek of Daisy Troop 8105 giving her presentation on the Clover Project for her Girl Scout Between Earth and Sky Journey, which is a badge-earning process to learn about the environment and make the world a better place.



Daisy Troop 8105 at the Discovery Museum. Line up is (left to right) Elizabeth Krol, McKenna Vyhnanek, Lily Lovell, Gwynonwen Treutelaar, and Lily Balsitis.



Troop 8265 Kindergarten Daisies had a blast getting "all wrapped up" for their first time participating in the annual Christmas parade.



Daisy Troop 8625 had the best time celebrating Valentine's Day. They dressed up as princesses and learned from Rapunzel how to stuff their own stuffed animals.

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Heroes save big with Bremer Team

Real estate brokers forego 25 percent of commissions to shave up to \$2,000 off closing costs for first responders, veterans, others who serve the public

Cynthia Wolf
CONTRIBUTOR

A newly launched program offered by the Bremer Team — Keller Williams Success Realty will save a select set of new home buyers and sellers big money.

Called the Bremer Team Heroes Savings Plan, the program is offered to a sizable list of people who make key differences in their communities, including: health care workers, emergency medical services personnel, police officers, teachers, firefighters and U.S. military personnel — whether active duty, veteran or serving in the reserves.

Through the program, members of the Bremer team will forego 25 percent of their commissions, giving this money back to eligible buyers and sellers as a credit at closing for a savings of up to \$2,000.

“Men and women who work in public service are heroes,” said Dawn Bremer,

owner and president of the Bremer Team — Keller Williams Success Realty. “This is something we can do to show our appreciation for their dedication.”

Twenty-six-year-old Michael Adams — a buyer’s agent and Realtor on the Bremer Team since 2021 — was part of the inspiration for launching the new plan, Bremer said. A U.S. Marine veteran, Adams served two tours of duty in Iraq.

“I think it’s great to let our heroes know that people appreciate what they do — especially teachers and nurses, who may not always get the appreciation they deserve,” said Adams, a 2016 graduate of Crystal Lake South High School who joined the Marines at 17, and who deployed to Iraq for several months in 2017 and again in 2019. “It’s our intention that this will make people feel good, appreciated and seen. It’s an opportunity for signif-

icant savings that lets them know ‘We’re here to support you; we’ve got your back.’”

Bremer — who also is president of the McHenry High School District 156 board as well as of the Kids In Need of McHenry County board — said giving back to the community is part of her entire team’s DNA. She said she hopes many eligible home buyers and sellers will come forward to take the Bremer Team up on its offer, and that such shows of goodwill will become more commonplace.

“The world right now is a hard place in many ways,” she said. “But if we can give back at this magnitude and this sort of positivity spreads, think what we can accomplish.”

The Bremer Team offices are located at 1218 N. Green St., Unit D, McHenry. For other information, call 847-456-6334, or send queries to Bremerteam18@gmail.com.



Dawn Bremer, owner and president of the Bremer Team — Keller Williams Success Realty, and U.S. Marine veteran Michael Adams, a member of the Bremer Team, take a break to talk about the team’s newly launched Heroes Savings Plan.

Conservation district events

Festival of the Sugar Maples

March 16 & 17, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., Coral Woods, 7400 Somerset Drive, Marengo.

Join us for this unique opportunity to learn about the history of maple sugaring and the evolution of the sap collection process through hour-long tours and hands-on demonstrations and activities. Tours begin every 15 minutes and involve a half-mile hike through the woods. Attendance is free but pre-registration is required.

Paddling McHenry County

Wednesday, March 20, 7-8 p.m., Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

In this indoor presentation, learn everything you need to know about paddling on the Nippersink, the Kishwaukee,

and the Fox Rivers. Ages 14+.

Conservation Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 23, 1:30-2:30 p.m., Winding Creek Conservation Area, Hebron.

A short hike leads kids to various bird habitats where they search for ‘eggs’ of local birds. Everyone finds eggs and everyone gets a prize. Ages less than 13.

Letterboxing

Friday, March 29, 2-2:30 p.m., Rush Creek Conservation Area, Harvard.

Go on an adventure through nature while following a story-like scavenger hunt. Individually or as a group, set off to find clues along the trails. Ages 7+.

Wetlands and Waterfowl

(Continued from front page)

museum and Jurassic Gardens for two consecutive days.

“Between our special, added staycation features and all of our regular, jaw-dropping exhibits, there will be no shortage of opportunities to make some great family memories,” Wojdyla said.

The Volo Museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; closed on Easter Sunday. Regular museum admission is \$22.95

Walk

Saturday, March 30, 8-10:30 a.m., Glacial Park Conservation Area, Kettle Lot, Ringwood

Enjoy a spring walk with volunteer bird enthusiast Dave Miller. Drive to various locations in search of migrating waterfowl and other birds.

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 20, Noon to 4 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Spend the afternoon celebrating the earth. Explore earth-friendly activities and craft stations, plant seeds, take a guided hike, view a puppet show and more. All ages.

For more information or to sign up for programs please visit the McHenry County Conservation District website at MCCDistrict.org.

per adult, \$20.95 per senior or military, \$12.95 for children ages 5 to 12 and free for children 4 and younger. Separate, single-day admission to the Jurassic Gardens dinosaur park is \$16.95 each; free for children 4 and younger. Members are admitted free.

For other details, visit volofun.com, find Volo Museum on social, or call 815-385-3644.

Staycation

Day — Jeopardy and other trivia-style interactive games will engage people of all ages, with prizes for winners.

• March 30: Princess and Superhero Day — Any child 12 and younger who is dressed in costume will receive free admission to the Volo Museum and Jurassic Gardens. Five Disney princesses will pose for photo ops in the museum’s Carousel Room and Music Hall, and more than 30 costumed superheroes from Costumers With a Cause will be throughout the museum campus. Characters from Marvel, DC, “Star Wars,” “Ghostbusters” and more will be represented.

“On March 28, the Mobile Adventure Co. is also bringing some really fun lawn games, like giant Connect Four, giant Jenga, football bowling, Frisbee golf and bags,” Wojdyla said, noting that the Volo’s platinum and gold passes will be especially valuable during the week of special activities.

Platinum passes — \$49.90 for adults and \$39.90 for children ages 5 to 12 — permit entry to all attractions, including the indoor Jurassic Gardens animatronic dinosaur park, for two consecutive days, plus single-day entry to the Titanic exhibit and the Crime & Punishment exhibit. Gold passes - \$34.95 for adults or \$24.95 for children - include all-day access to the

Arrest

(Continued from front page)

Unlawful Possession of a Firearm by a Felon (Class 2 Felony), Three counts of Aggravated Unlawful Use of a Weapon (Class 2 Felonies), and Two counts of Unlawful Sale of a Firearm (Class 4 Felony).

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, “Yet again, our Special Investigations Group has worked diligently to apprehend

someone trafficking guns and drugs in our community. I am proud of everything they do to keep guns out of the wrong hands and drugs out of our community.”

Henning was held in the Lake County Jail pending an initial court hearing.

All defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

HI-LITER

~ including McHenry County News

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Lake County Forest Preserves enhances engagement with chatbot

The Lake County Forest Preserves has adopted cutting-edge technology designed to enhance communication and accessibility for visitors to their website.

The Forest Preserves utilizes a computer program, known as chatbot, to simulate conversation with human users through text-based interactions. This technology prioritizes accessibility for all users and bridges language barriers through multi-language translation capabilities.

“The Lake County Forest Preserves recognizes the importance of inclusive and accessible communication in serving its diverse communities,” said Director of Administration Mary Kann. “Chatbot, powered by state-of-the-art artificial intelligence, is designed to enhance the overall user experience and provide valuable information about the preserves, programs and available services.”

Key features of the

Forest Preserves chatbot include:

- Accessibility for all: The chatbot is equipped with functionalities that adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, ensuring that users with disabilities have equal access to information and services. This inclusivity aligns with the Forest Preserves commitment to serving all residents.
- Multi-language translation: Understanding the diverse linguistic landscape, the chatbot offers multi-language translation capabilities. Visitors can engage with the chatbot in their preferred language, fostering a more inclusive and user-friendly experience.
- Real-time assistance: The chatbot provides real-time assistance to users, answering frequently asked questions, offering information about events and activities and guiding visitors through the expansive offerings of the Forest Preserves.

This instant support, also available when our offices are closed, enhances the efficiency of communication, ensuring that visitors can quickly access the information they need.

• Feedback and suggestions: The chatbot serves as a valuable tool for the Lake County Forest Preserves to gather feedback and suggestions from users. This direct line of communication allows for continuous improvement of services and better meets the evolving needs of the community.

“We are excited to embrace this new technology, emphasizing our dedication to community engagement,” said Angelo Kyle, president of the Lake County Forest Preserves. “By leveraging the capabilities of the chatbot, we aspire to provide a more accessible, informative and user-friendly experience for all visitors.”

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Left: Entries by Bob Reynolds and Sari Nienaber earned Best of Show awards. Above: The top winners in the color vertebrate (other than birds) category are shown with their respective ribbons.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS HI-LITER/MCN

Volo Bog SNA 37th annual nature photo contest winners

The winners of Volo Bog State Natural Area's 37th Annual Nature Photo Contest were announced at the WinterFest event in January.

A record total of 203 entries submitted by 21 photographers (also a record) were entered in ten categories.

Visitors to the State Natural Area from October 21 - January 12 were asked to vote for their favorite in each category, and for their favorite overall. First, second and third place ribbons were awarded to the top vote recipients in each category. Two Best-of-Show plaques were also awarded – a Peoples' Choice and a Judges' Award.

Volo Bog State Natural Area's annual Nature Photo Contest runs from mid-October through the Friday preceding the second Sunday each January. Entry forms become available each September. Email dnr.volobog@illinois.gov to request more information about the contest.

All the winning photos can be viewed on the Friends of Volo Bog's Facebook Page and are posted to their website as well.

The annual competition and show are presented each year by Volo Bog State Natural Area with support from the Friends of Volo Bog.

Winners of each category are as follows:

Best of Show Judges' Award

- Bob Reynolds of Lake Barrington for "Palm Warbler"
- Sari Nienaber of Kalamazoo, MI for "Mushroom Galore"

Color Birds

- 1st place – Michael Schmitt of Grayslake for "Cardinal Incoming"
- 2nd place – Sari Nienaber of Kalamazoo, MI for "Knee Deep in Snow"
- 3rd place – Michael Schmitt

of Grayslake for "Indigo Bunting"

Color Landscape

- 1st place – Bob Reynolds of Lake Barrington for "Autumn View"
- 2nd place – John Berwanger of Winnetka for "Standing Guard"
- 3rd place – Carl Stineman of Vernon Hills for "Moonrise Mirage"

Color Vertebrate – other than birds

- 1st place – Bob Reynolds of Lake Barrington for "Duckweed Resident"
- 2nd place – Stacey Greenhill of Wheeling for "Coyote in the Snow"
- 3rd place – Paul McFadden of Crystal Lake for "I 'eared' You The First Time"

Color Plant

- 1st place – Carl Stineman of Vernon Hills for "Spruce Cones"

- 2nd place – James Hojnacki of Hoffman Estates for "Turkey Tail"
- 3rd place – Carl Stineman of Vernon Hills for "Spring Beauties Opening"

Nature in My Neighborhood

- 1st place - Sari Nienaber of Kalamazoo, MI for "Mushroom Galore"
- 2nd place – Paula Hiller of Burralo Grove for "Bridging the Season"
- 3rd place – Paul McFadden of Crystal Lake for "Four Off the Floor"

Black & White Animal

- 1st place – Michael Schmitt of Grayslake for "Sleepy Screech Owl"
- 2nd place – Jessica Lanners of Antioch for "Take Off"
- 3rd place – Michael Schmitt of Grayslake for "Mallard Chick"

Black & White Plant/

Landscape

- 1st place – Anthony Roma of Gurnee for "Apostle Islands"
- 2nd place – Michael Schmitt of Grayslake for "Amnicon Winter Waterfall"
- 3rd place – John Berwanger of Winnetka for "Lotus & Bee"

Color Invertebrate

- 1st place – John Berwanger of Winnetka for "The Eyes Have It"
- 2nd place – Carl Stineman of Vernon Hills for "Bumblebee on Milkweed Flower"
- 3rd place – James Hojnacki of Hoffman Estates for "Lady on the Beach"

Beyond the Midwest Animals

- 1st place – Bob Reynolds of Lake Barrington for "Staying in School"
- 2nd place – Michael Schmitt of Grayslake for "Island Fox"
- 3rd place – Michael Schmitt of Grayslake for "Little Crab

Living in a Log"

Beyond the Midwest Plants/Landscapes

- 1st place – Michael Schmitt of Grayslake for "Seascape"
- 2nd place – John Berwanger of Winnetka for "Giant 'Egg'"
- 3rd place – Sari Nienaber of Kalamazoo, MI for "Sunset at Valley of Fire"

The Friends of Volo Bog is a Not-for-Profit 501(c)(3) membership organization. Visit www.FriendsofVoloBog.org.

Volo Bog State Natural Area is an Illinois Department of Natural Resources site located at 28478 W. Brandenburg Road, Ingleside, IL 60041 For further information on the contest and other programs, contact Site Naturalist Stacy Iwanicki at 815-344-1294 or dnr.volobog@illinois.gov or visit <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/Parks/Pages/VoloBog.aspx>.

Nominations open until April 1 for Educator of the Year awards

The McHenry County Regional Office of Education is seeking nominations from the public, parents, students and colleagues for its annual Educator of the Year Awards.

The annual awards, granted in partnership with the Community Foundation for McHenry County, recognize McHenry County's top teachers,

administrators and support staff, Regional Superintendent Diana Hartmann said. "McHenry County schools are home to outstanding and dedicated educators and the people who support them," Hartmann said. "The Educator of the Year Award is our opportunity to celebrate the best of the best, as nominated by parents, students,

staff, and the community."

The contest is open to all schools in Educational Service Region 44, which covers most of McHenry County except School Districts 300, 220 and 118.

Nominations can be made in nine categories: preschool teacher, elementary school teacher, middle school teacher,

high school teacher, administrator, student support personnel, early career educator, private/parochial school employee, and educational service personnel. Teachers must have a minimum of five years of experience and spend more than half their time in instruction – the early-career educator award recognizes teachers in their second to fifth

year of service.

The deadline to submit nomination forms and the needed documentation to the ROE is Monday, April 1; the nomination form and instructions can be found on the ROE webpage at www.mchenrycountyl.gov/departments/schools-roe.

Nominees and winners will be honored at the Educator of

the Year dinner at 6:30 p.m. on May 11 in Crystal Lake. Nominees must attend the banquet in order to win.

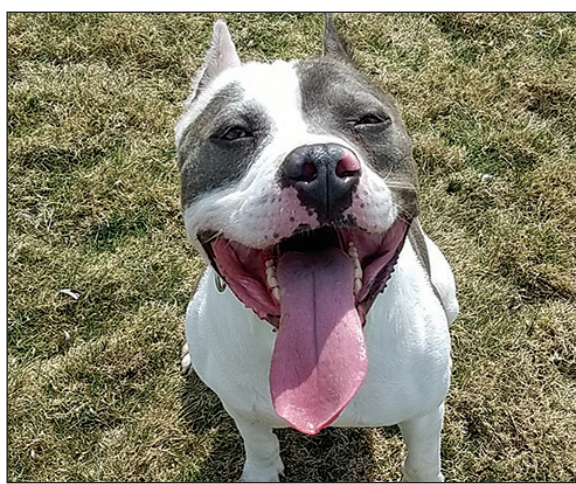
The ROE is soliciting sponsorships to help cover the cost of the event; sponsors who are interested can contact Hartmann at 815-334-4055, or at DKHartmann@mchenrycountyl.gov.

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Pet of the week

Leonardo, is about 4 years old, neutered, up-to-date on routine shots (incl. rabies), tested negative for heartworm and on preventative and micro-chipped.

While walk-ins are welcome, adoptions are by appointments only to ensure we have the staff available to help adopters. For information and/or to complete an online application, please visit www.saveapetil.org/adopt.

Regional Office of Education seeking sponsors for 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee

The McHenry County Regional Office of Education is looking for sponsors to help send the winner of the McHenry County Regional Spelling Bee to the 2024 Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The county Regional Spelling Bee will take place at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20 at McHenry County College, and the champion of the local competition will represent McHenry County in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which takes place in National Harbor, Md., from May 26 to June 1.

"Participating in the McHenry County Regional Spelling Bee helps young people develop public speaking skills, confidence, and other important attributes that will serve them well in adolescence and adulthood," Regional Superintendent Diana Hartmann said. "And for the winner comes the once-in-a-lifetime experience of traveling to represent McHenry County schools at the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Whatever help he can receive to cover the costs to make sure McHenry county's winner get this unforgettable chance to compete would be greatly appreciated."

Sponsors who are interested can contact Hartmann at 815-334-4055, or at DKHartmann@mchenrycountyl.gov.

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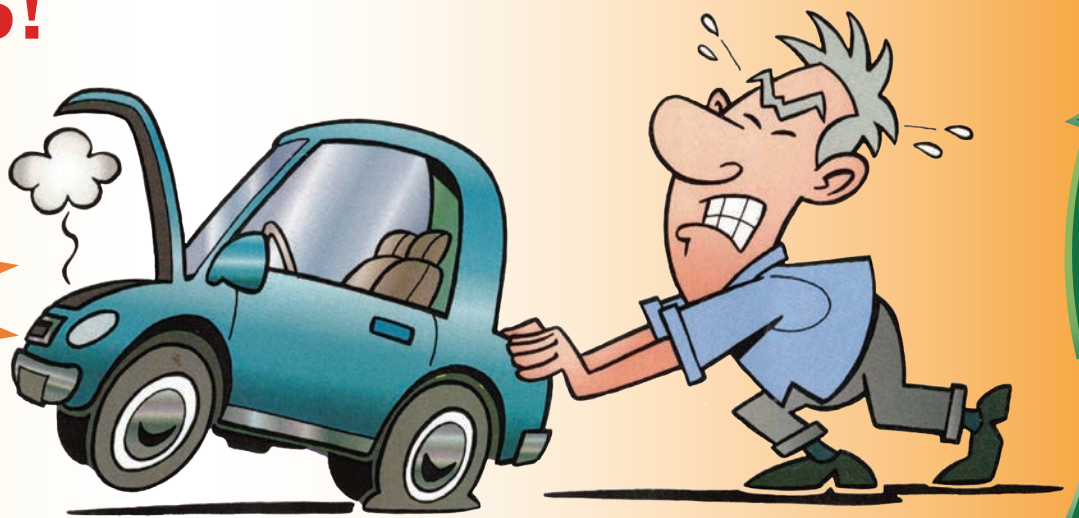


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SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

K9 Dax is shown with handler Deputy John Forlenza in a file photo. Dax was injured last week while pursuing a suspect.

K9 Dax injured while pursuing suspect

Lake County Sheriff's K9 Dax was injured during an apprehension of a fleeing felon this weekend.

On March 3, at approximately 11:55 p.m. Pleasant Prairie Police Officers were pursuing a stolen vehicle. The driver of the vehicle at one point struck a Pleasant Prairie Squad Car. After striking the squad, the driver crashed the stolen car in the 41000 block of North Green Bay Road, unincorporated Zion.

The driver then fled on foot. Sheriff's K9 Dax and Deputy Forlenza were requested to track the fleeing suspect, as it was believed he was hiding in a wooded area. The duo arrived at the scene and Deputy Forlenza gave announcements warning the offender to surrender, and K9 Dax began barking to further warn the offender. The offender refused to surrender or make himself known and after a brief track, K9 Dax located the offender hiding in the woods. K9 Dax bit the offender in the torso area, and he subsequently surrendered.

The offender, later identified as a 16-year-old juvenile of Zion, was apprehended, transported to an area hospital for the bite and treated. Charges are pending in Illinois and Wisconsin.

During the apprehension, K9 Dax sustained an injury resulting in him not being able to bear weight on his hind legs. K9 Dax is currently under the care of a veterinarian.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "We are extremely hopeful Dax's injury is not serious. Please send positive thoughts to Dax and Deputy Forlenza, as the extent of the injury is determined. We are all wishing Dax a speedy recovery."

A Way Out program provides access to substance use treatment

The Lake County Health Department, Lake County Opioid Initiative, and participating police departments are proud to announce that the A Way Out program has served 1,003 clients. A Way Out is a life-saving program in Lake County that helps people access substance use treatment.

A Way Out aims to reduce overdoses and improve access to treatment. Through A Way Out, a person can walk into a participating police department, turn in any drugs and paraphernalia without fear of criminal charges, and access inpatient or outpatient care. Law enforcement calls the Lake County Health Department which begins finding appropriate treatment for the person, and following treatment health department staff can continue to provide support. Recovery support and treatment can include peer support, case management,

withdrawal management (detox) and inpatient rehab, outpatient options including Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), transitional and recovery housing, and community resources.

"We're breaking the stigma of mental health and substance use disorders," said Sam Johnson, Director of Behavioral Health at the Lake County Health Department. "The A Way Out program allows people in our community to seek help without fear of judgment or legal consequences."

Following the implementation of A Way Out in June 2016, Lake County saw greater reductions in non-fatal overdoses, fatal drug and opioid overdoses, and property crime arrests. However, overdoses continue to be a concern in Lake County, particularly because of the increase in the use of fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid that carries a higher risk of death. In 2023

alone, Lake County saw 117 overdose deaths by the end of October, and fentanyl was involved in more than half of those deaths.²

A Way Out is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Anyone age 18 and over can participate in A Way Out. Citizenship status and language do not affect eligibility. To learn more about A Way Out, how it works, and to find participating police departments, visit lakecountyil.gov/AWay-Out.

About the Lake County Health Department

The Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center is a county health department, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) and a direct provider of behavioral health services to residents of Lake County, Illinois. The Health Department's mission is promoting the health and well-being of all who live, work, and play

in Lake County. To accomplish this mission, the Health Department works closely with community partners to address the social, economic, and environmental causes of health inequity. For more information, visit health.lakecountyil.gov.

This project was supported by grant no. 2022-15PB-JA-22GG-0449-COAP awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Unions back measure protecting employees who skip religious or political work meetings

Opponents concerned about broad definitions, potential legal issues

By Alex Abbeduto
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

Democrats in the Illinois Senate on March 6 advanced a measure that would prohibit Illinois companies from requiring employees to attend work-related meetings about politics or religion.

Senate Bill 3649, which is backed by organized labor, passed the Senate Labor Committee 11-4. Backers have dubbed it the "Worker Freedom of Speech Act."

Tim Drea, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO labor organization, said the bill would help Illinoisans avoid unnecessary and potentially uncomfortable gatherings in which workers are forced to be a "captive audience" for their employers' political or religious speech.

"They go to work for a paycheck and to make a profit for the employer, period," Drea said. "Not to be

indoctrinated by anyone's religious or political beliefs."

Under the proposal, it would be illegal for a business to "discharge, discipline, or otherwise penalize" an employee who "declines to attend or participate in an employer-sponsored meeting 'about religious or political matters,'" according to the bill's language.

Employees who believe their workplaces violated the law would be able to file a complaint with the Illinois Department of Labor and sue their employer to reverse any illegal punishment, like being fired for not attending a meeting.

Opponents of the bill, like National Federation of Independent Business Illinois State Director Noah Finley, said the legislation would infringe on employers' civil liberties by creating "content-based discrimination." He also claimed the measure would prevent employees from getting new points of view from their employer—

such as which legislation their union dues could support.

Republicans on the committee expressed concerns that the bill's definitions of "religious" and "political" speech were too broad.

The bill defines "political matters" as anything pertaining to elections, changing laws or regulations, or joining advocacy groups, fraternal organizations, unions or political parties. "Religious matters" include anything pertaining to belief, affiliation, practice or decision to join any religious organization or association.

Opponents also argued the General Assembly has no authority to pass the legislation because it's preempted by the National Labor Relations Act, but no official ruling has been made in any of the five other states with similar laws.

Frances Orenic, legislative director for Illinois AFL-CIO, said the bill does not prohibit employees from exercising their right to free

speech. "It will just protect employees if they decide not to engage," Orenic told the panel.

The bill was introduced by Sen. Robert Peters, D-Chicago. He said he filed it in response to a 2022 memorandum from the general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board. The memo advocated for making "captive audience" meetings for political or religious matters a violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

But the NLRB has not taken such an action.

"With no response from the federal level, Illinois must step in to promote employee-friendly environments," Peters said in a news release.

While the bill passed committee, Orenic said negotiations on final bill language will continue in the coming weeks. She noted the AFL-CIO was working with groups such as the ACLU of Illinois, Equality Illinois and Planned Parenthood.

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Police & Sheriff's reports

Antioch Police issue community alert for residents after early morning vehicle thefts from residential driveways

Antioch Police Chief Geoffrey Gutschow alerted residents after two cars were stolen and a dozen other vehicles were burglarized during the early morning hours last Friday. While attempting to apprehend the offenders, Antioch Police were involved in a short pursuit, which ended when the fleeing suspects reached speeds of nearly 100 miles per hour.

Around 4:30 a.m. March 8, two vehicles were reported stolen from the Trevor Creek and Antioch Manor subdivisions. Responding officers spotted the vehicles, and a pursuit was initiated. As speeds reached nearly 100 miles per hour as they approached the downtown district, Antioch Police command staff terminated the pursuit out of concern for public safety.

Detectives determined that of the two vehicles that were stolen, one was being warmed up in the driveway by the owner when it was stolen. The

other vehicle was believed to have been "hotwired." In all, a total of 14 vehicles were entered, two were stolen, while a third had its steering column stripped in an attempt to hotwire the vehicle. One of the stolen vehicles was later recovered in Antioch. Residents are reminded to make sure their car doors are locked and belongings are secured at night. In each of the 14 most recent instances involving auto theft or burglary, every vehicle was left unlocked.

Chief Gutschow says residents should be on alert for suspicious activity.

"This type of crime is unfortunately becoming a normal part of living in suburban Chicago," said Chief Gutschow. "These crews operate as a well-organized crime syndicate targeting communities across the region. I would like to remind residents that if they see suspicious activity, they should call 9-1-1 immediately, and not intervene. In the past, we have

had video footage of some car thieves carrying guns, which is another common occurrence that we've seen in similar crimes throughout the suburban area. Please remember it is not worth risking your life to stop a car theft."

There has been no evidence that the most recent car thieves were armed.

Chief Gutschow says the police department is stepping up overnight patrols in residential neighborhoods. Any information related to these crimes, including security camera video, or anyone who may have been the victim of an unreported crime, should call the Antioch Police dispatch center at 847-270-9111 or email crime@antioch.il.gov.

Driver killed in fiery 2-car crash identified

On February 28, at approximately 8:51 p.m., the Barrington Hills Police Department and Barrington-Coun-

tryside Fire Protection District responded to the area of County Line Road and Bellwood Drive in Barrington Hills for a vehicle crash with injuries. Officers arrived on scene and found a two-vehicle crash with a fire that spread to the passenger compartment of one of the vehicles.

The driver of one of the vehicles was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the second vehicle was transported to an area hospital with serious injuries. Based on the seriousness of the crash, the Major Crash Assistance Team (MCAT) of Lake County was requested to conduct the crash investigation.

The Lake County Coroner's Office was notified and responded to the scene.

On February 29, an autopsy was conducted at the Lake County Coroner's Office., and on March 5, the deceased was positively identified as 30-year-old Josue Campuzano-Cuin, of Carpentersville. Preliminary autopsy results

indicate that Mr. Campuzano-Cuin died from injuries suffered from the car fire which was a result of the crash.

The crash remains under investigation by the Barrington Hills Police Department and MCAT.

K9 Loki assists in locating missing woman

K9 Loki located an injured missing, endangered woman in unincorporated Lake Villa.

On March 7, at approximately 7:30 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's deputies responded to a residence in the 38000 block of North Villa Court, unincorporated Lake Villa, for an adult woman who attempted self-harm. Sheriff's deputies arrived and learned the woman had deep cuts to her arms and fled on foot prior to our arrival.

K9 Loki and Deputy Kevin Lowe responded to the scene to help look for the injured, endangered woman. After arriving, K9 Loki tracked toward the woman and located her in the neighborhood next to a neighbor's garage. The woman was transported to an area hospital for her injuries and a mental health evaluation.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "Kudos to K9 Loki and

Deputy Lowe for tracking toward the woman, ultimately locating her and allowing her to receive proper treatment. Our K9 teams are extremely active throughout Lake County and have incredible success. I am proud of all of them."

House fire ends with two deceased

On March 5 at 4:05 a.m., McHenry County Sheriff's Office was dispatched to an assist to Union Fire Protection District for a house fire in unincorporated Union.

Deputies arrived to find a home in the 9600 block of Knolltop Road completely engulfed in flames and were unable to make entry. Multiple fire agencies arrived on scene and extinguished the flames. During the course of the fire investigation, two deceased bodies were located inside the residence.

The investigation has been turned over to the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal.

Lake County Sheriff's arrest bulletin

The Lake County Sheriff's Dept. reported the following arrests in Lake County. Suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Feb. 5

Walter L. Applewhite, 43, Round Lake, was cited for domestic battery;

Angel J. Brito-Flores, 20, Beach Park, was cited for no driver's license, and underage possession of cannabis;

Ashley R. Thompson, 35, Woodstock, was cited for

a warrant arrest: fleeing to elude;

Guarepe Pernalet, 22, Chicago, was cited for no driver's license;

Jose A. Reyes Vincente, 44, Lake Villa, was cited for a warrant arrest: burglary;

Feb. 6

Aaron J. Amend, 21, Gurnee, was cited for a warrant arrest: criminal damage to property;

Juvenile, was cited for aggravated speeding (82 mph in 45 mph zone), and no insur-

ance;

Feb. 7

Margret A. Taylor, 50, Cary, was cited for a warrant obtained: theft and deceptive practices;

Jared S. Meyer, 26, Spring Grove, was cited for a warrant arrest: retail theft;

Anthony J. Morales, 25, Gurnee, was cited for violating an order of protection;

Edwardo A. Lopez, 37, Waukegan, was cited for no driver's license;

Martin Perez, 26, Zion, was

cited for DUI - alcohol, and open transportation of alcohol;

Feb. 8

April Reins, 27, Tower Lakes, WI, was cited for resisting a correctional officer;

Joel D. Kondic, 24, Lake Zurich, was cited for a warrant obtained: burglary;

Pablo F. Calix Zelaya, 28, Park City, was cited for DUI - alcohol;

Feb. 9

Yegor Fialko, 31, Grayslake, was cited for a warrant arrest: violating an order or protection.

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(Published in Illinois Hi-Liter and McHenry County News
March 6 & 13, 2024
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OFF**

All Mismatch
Mattresses &
Boxsprings

*On set purchase with factory select covers. Not applicable on previous purchases. One coupon per set purchase. See store for details.

**TWIN
MATTRESS**
Starting at
\$199

**QUEEN
MATTRESS**
Starting at
\$259

COMFORT
LIFETIME
GUARANTEE

AMERICAN MADE.
verlo
LOCALLY CRAFTED.

WHY MISMATCH?

We use mismatched or discontinued fabrics to cover your high-quality Verlo mattress. Put a sheet on it, and the only difference you'll notice is the price.



SAVE up to \$150 to w/coupon

v3 PLUSH
1-Sided No Flip Set Starting at
QUEEN SET
\$999
TWIN SET \$749 FULL SET \$899 KING SET \$1399

SAVE up to \$280 to w/coupon

v5 FIRM
1-Sided No Flip Starting at
QUEEN SET
\$1599
TWIN SET \$1049 FULL SET \$1349 KING SET \$1999

SAVE up to \$360 to w/coupon

v7 PLUSH
1-Sided No Flip Starting at
QUEEN SET
\$2099
TWIN SET \$1399 FULL SET \$1949 KING SET \$2699

BUY MORE SAVE MORE Mattress Protectors | Headboards | Pillows



**30% OFF
3+ ITEMS
-OR-
20% OFF 2 ITEMS**
On accessory bundles.



vMotion **SAVE UP TO \$400 OFF**
Adjustable Bases!

Great for watching TV or reading in bed
Reduces snoring & acid reflux effects
Alleviates lower back, knee & leg pain | Aids in circulation

LAKE GENEVA
2462 Hwy 120
262.249.0420

CRYSTAL LAKE
5150 Northwest Hwy
815.455.2570

McHENRY
3710 West Elm St.
815.578.8375

**FINANCING
AVAILABLE**

1-866-99-VERLO (866-998-3756) • verlo.com

See store for details.