

JULY 2024

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# The Breeze



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Chain O' Lakes area

- Summer concerts
- Watch a ski show
- Local history of American Lotus





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# Summer concerts

## LIVENING UP TUESDAYS

### *Family-friendly music at Independence Grove cover range of genres*

Imagine calming breezes, breathtaking sunsets over the lake and award-winning music performers on stage at the outdoor venue for the annual Concerts in the Plaza music series. Concerts are held at Independence Grove Forest Preserve in Libertyville, 7–8:30 p.m. Tuesdays, and will go through Aug. 6.

The performances take place at the preserve's outdoor Millennia Plaza overlooking a 129-acre lake. From tribute bands to the blues, and rock and country to reggae, there's something for just about any music taste in this season's entertainment schedule.

This year's concerts are supported by North Shore Gas (platinum sponsor), Libertyville Bank and Trust (bronze sponsor) and Lake County Journal (media sponsor).

Remaining concerts this summer are as follows:

#### **JULY 9 - MACKENZIE O'BRIEN AND BAND**

Stands as the hottest young country band in the area boasting a lineup of full-time musicians and led by the captivating talent known as Chicago's new country queen.

The band covers a wide array of music from contemporary country stars such as Little Big Town, Miranda Lambert and Chris Stapleton, as well as classics from legends including Dolly Parton and Waylon Jennings.

#### **JULY 16 - AMERICAN ENGLISH - BEATLES TRIBUTE**

Has been named the best Beatles tribute band of our time. They were voted No. 1 in sound-alike contests at The Fest for Beatles Fans for three consecutive years.

Their demand here and abroad, coupled with their fan base, anchored them in larger venues and theaters worldwide.

#### **JULY 23 - THE INSIDERS - TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS TRIBUTE**

A band dedicated to honoring Tom Petty

and the Heartbreakers, offer authentic performances that evoke the spirit of the legendary rock group.

Spectators are astounded by the band's talent and unwavering dedication. With six veteran musicians and decades of combined touring experience, the group is genuinely running down the dream.

#### **JULY 30 - THE WAYOUTS**

Dedicated exclusively to garage rock hits from the 1960s, The Wayouts deliver an authentic revival of rock 'n' roll's first generation with hits from The Kinks, The Animals, The Trigs, the Monkees, The Rascals and more.

Veterans of the Chicago music scene, they have diverse musical resumes.

#### **AUG. 6 - MISSISSIPPI HEAT**

Led by Chicago Hall of Fame harmonica master and songwriter Pierre Lacocque, Mississippi Heat stands as a world-class Chicago Blues Band.

They describe their style as "traditional blues with a unique sound" as they present a blend of fresh innovative musical

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## The Breeze

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**on the cover:** This trio of Wonder Lake water skiers flip into the air without getting in each other's space.

PHOTOS COURTESY WONDER LAKE SKI TEAM *The Breeze*

**above:** The annual Concerts in the Plaza music series is underway at Independence Grove Forest Preserve in Libertyville. Held Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m., there are a half-dozen concerts remaining on this summer's schedule, which will run through Aug. 6.

LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVES PHOTO *The Breeze*



# Take in a ski show

*Wonder Lake Water Ski Club ready to make waves again*

By **Sandra Landen Machaj**  
CORRESPONDENT

Summer is the time to get out on the water for many. Whether heading out for a day in a canoe or kayak, jumping into a boat for a ride around the lake, or relaxing while lounging on the beach with an occasional dip in the water to stay cool, summer is a season when people flock to area waterways.

While most of us look forward to summer, particularly excited for the warm weather and time out on the lakes are area waterski teams that know how to have fun on the water and entertain residents and visitors with regular shows.

But that's not all as they also take their talent to the competitive level and have been very successful, winning titles at the state and even national level for some.

The teams are comprised of volunteer skiers who put in countless hours to perfect their craft and often more than one family members is involved with a team, adding to the fun while mixing in some quality family time.

The Chain O'Lakes area features the Wonder Lake Water Ski Club, which was founded in 1955 by eight teenagers. But it was the building of its first jump in 1956 — which was 24 feet long and 4 feet high — that saw their membership increase to 40 as many skiers wanted to try out that jump.

They did not begin as a competitive team but a show team, putting on their first



Pyramids performed by the Wonder Lake Water Ski Club takes a lot of practice and proper timing but area always a sight to see.

PHOTOS COURTESY WONDER LAKE WATER SKI CLUB *The Breeze*

performance on Labor Day in 1959. In 1962, the team performed a show for Fiesta Days in McHenry. Today they continue to offer "shows for hire."

The Wonder Lake Water Ski Club will take their show on the road to perform at events as long as the water depth is safe.

They have done shows in Mundelein

and St. Charles in Illinois and at Venetian Festival on Geneva Lake. This year the team's Venetian Festival performance will be held on Aug. 18 at 6 p.m.

By 1986 the team began to participate in competitions with remarkable success. From 1996 to 2010, they were the National Show Ski Champions four times.

Being a team in northern Illinois is different than for teams in Wisconsin. There are so few in Illinois do not have a state championship competition but rather a Regional Championship of several Midwest states.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## GYPSY GLEN



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# The American Lotus of the Chain O' Lakes

By **Kathleen Marie Considine**

CONTRIBUTOR

Lotus beds, once a prominent sight in the Chain O' Lakes, were the center of a resort industry that drew thousands to the area each summer.

A large reason for the popularity of the lotus on the Chain O' Lakes was resort owners' claim that the lotus grew in only two places in the world, the Nile River in Egypt, and the Chain O' Lakes in Illinois.

Although the species are quite similar, the American Lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*) found in the Chain O' Lakes is not the same plant as the Egyptian Lotus (*Nymphaea lotus*). Contrary to those claims, the American Lotus is native to the Eastern United States, mainly occurring in the Mississippi River and tributaries. Its optimal habitats are shallow naturally occurring or man-made low velocity waterways with plenty of sunlight.

The American Lotus is a macrophyte, a large aquatic plant, that is characterized by sizable light-yellow flowers and large leaves that emerge well above the surface of the water. The flowers are similar in size to a dinner plate with a pleasing fragrance. Each flower grows from a long stem, called a peduncle, that extends up to two feet above the leaf canopy. The peltate leaves, the type of leaf where the stems connect to the center of the leaf, are also very large.

From June through September the American Lotus flowers bloom. The flowers open each morning and close each night for up to four days. Afterwards,



Though the American Lotus and Egyptian Lotus are similar in many ways, the Egyptian one has blue flowers, a stark contrast to the light-yellow of the American species.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*

the petals fall off the flower and the remaining center develops into a seedpod. If the flower was pollinated, the seedpod will contain around 20 holes that each house one seed. These large round seeds have hard shells and are known to remain viable for an extended period of time, allowing the lotus to recolonize hospitable habitats.

While the flowers and leaves provided the showy parts of the American

Lotus, throughout the soil a network of rhizomes, or horizontal stems, along with roots and tubers wove into a thick lattice anchoring the lotus beds.

American lotuses establish dense colonies, also known as beds. Floating leaves are characteristic of new or recovering colonies, while erect leaves are shaped like a trumpet, and are a good indicator of an established colony.

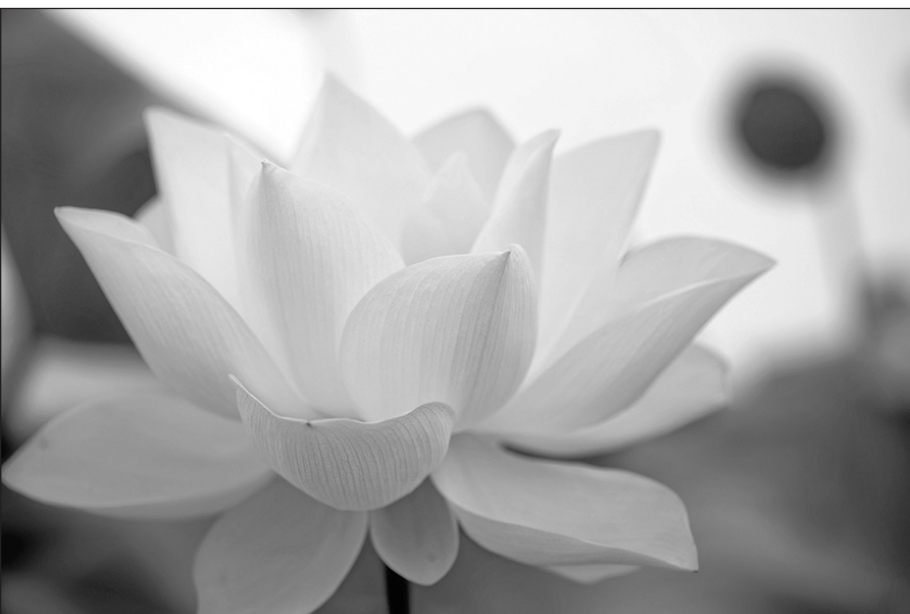
Well-established colonies like the

historical beds located on Fox Lake, Pistakee Lake and Grass Lake often exceed 75,000 leaves, 8,500 flowers and 45 miles of rhizomes per acre. The rhizomes typically grow up to 15 meters per growing season. Examination of aerial photographs taken in 1939 reveal large beds of American lotus that can be observed covering substantial acreage on three of the larger lakes that make up the Chain O' Lakes. Fox Lake had 253 acres, Pistakee Lake had 104 acres and Grass Lake had 700 acres.

The Chain O' Lakes experiences a tremendous influx of recreational boating during the summer months. Outboard motors with planing hulls became the prevailing watercraft of the Chain O' Lakes after 1950. While small motorboats did appear around 1930, and resort owners cut channels through the dense lotus beds for their daily excursion tours, these tours were conducted in low horsepower, low speed displacement cruisers. It was after 1950 when the shift to high horsepower planing watercraft occurred that marked the decline and eventual disappearance of American Lotus.

Aquatic plants are an important part of freshwater ecosystems. They create a buffer along the shoreline that can slow down the speed of moving water. Reducing water speed results in sediments being transported to settle to the bottom. Their root systems anchor those sediments stabilizing the river or lake bottom and shoreline reducing erosion.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



The American Lotus plant features light-yellow flowers with some appearing almost white. They are similar in size to a dinner plate.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*



From June through September the American Lotus flowers bloom. They open each morning and close each night for up to four days.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*



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# Lake County continues fight toward bird-friendly building design

On the heels of passing a groundbreaking bird-friendly building design policy last month, the Lake County Board approved a new ordinance at its June meeting to mitigate fatal bird collisions with glass on non-residential buildings in unincorporated Lake County. The ordinance, which will go into effect on Aug. 11, 2024, requires bird-friendly design as part of new construction or major renovation of non-residential development

in unincorporated areas of Lake County. These projects must use at least 80 percent bird-friendly glass on their exteriors from ground level to 100 feet high. This ordinance also applies to non-residential accessory structures such as free-standing glass walls, accessory storage buildings, glass-enclosed gazebos and pavilions and similar structures.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



Palm Warblers are among the millions of birds that migrate through Lake County each year.  
SUBMITTED PHOTO *The Breeze*



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## SUMMER CONCERTS

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

concepts while remaining rooted in vintage blues traditions.

### ABOUT THE CONCERTS

“For more than two decades, the Concerts in the Plaza series has been a beloved highlight of summer at Independence Grove,” said Angelo Kyle, president of the Lake County Forest Preserves. “Each performance creates unforgettable memories for families year after year.”

Entrance is \$10 per car after 4:30 p.m. on event nights. Pricing includes drop-offs. Cash or credit card accepted. 100% of vehicle entrance fees directly support the Forest Preserves’ endowment fund.

Managed by the Preservation Foundation, the endowment provides a perpetual, dependable funding source to care for beloved preserves such as Independence Grove.

For the safety of guests, and as a courtesy to preserve neighbors, please park in preserve lots only. Cars will be turned away when parking lots are full.

For concert reminders, weather updates or to learn if a concert has been canceled, call 847-968-3499. There is no rescheduling in the event a concert is canceled.

Concerts are open to all ages and are held at the preserve’s outdoor amphitheater overlooking a 129-acre lake. Bring a blanket or lawn chair for seating and arrive early to secure a spot.

Pack a picnic, or purchase a light dinner, snack or beverage from the preserve’s walk-up café or from the Beer Garden at Independence Grove.

To make your concert outing even more memorable, call 847-968-3499 to reserve a pontoon boat for groups of up to six.

With the exception of service animals, dogs, horses and other pets are not permitted at Independence Grove.

For the safety of all guests, all items brought into the forest preserve (including, without limitation, coolers, picnic baskets, bags, backpacks and purses) are subject to search upon entry or reentry into the park and may also be inspected again upon entering Millennium Plaza.

The entrance to Independence Grove is located on Buckley Road (Route 137) just east of Milwaukee Avenue (Route 21) and west of River Road in Libertyville.



## SKI SHOW • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

In 2023, Wonder Lake was awarded first place in that competition.

“Our team members are mostly local skiers who live here in Wonder Lake,” said Brea Imse, one of the team’s show skiers.

“But we also welcome skiers from other areas. We have a Junior Club open to skiers 6 or older who know the basics of waterskiing, and a Senior Club which currently has members as high as in their 60s.”

Imse and fellow team member Arik Lebda represented the USA at the World Show Tour in 2018 where the team placed first.

Among the unique features of the Wonder Lake team is the prefab pyramid, which is created while still on the pier, three skiers high at which point the boat begins to pull the pyramid to its feet with everyone remaining in place.

They also present a prefab pyramid where two sections of skiers are gathered on the piers, the piers split apart and a

pyramid section already on the water joins them, filling out the center.

“Last year our show theme was ‘Beauty and the Beast,’” Imse said.

“This year we are working hard on a new theme, ‘Kids Rule 2024.’ It will start out as a Blues Brothers’ piece and then the kids will hijack the show and change what will come through. It will be a fun program,” Imse added.

The team is proud of the many former team members who have gone on to become professional water skiers, appearing in places such as Sea World, and Cypress Gardens, and the Tommy Bartlett Water Ski Show.

Additionally, members have performed not only in the United States but in several other countries including Australia, Germany, Malaysia and Japan.

The Wonder Lake Water Ski Club presents free shows to the public on most Fridays through Labor Day Weekend. See the sidebar for details.

## See a ski show

The Wonder Lake Water Ski Club offers free shows throughout the summer. While the shows are free, donations are accepted and appreciated as they help defray some of the costs of putting on the show.

Guests are encouraged to bring a chair or blanket although some of the sites have seats and offer food, snacks and drinks.

Here is a breakdown of the team’s schedule for 2024:

Wonder Lake Water Ski Club performs at Wonder Center Beach, a private beach owned by the Wonder Lake Property Owners Association. The beach opens up to the public for scheduled special events, including water ski shows.

Located at Hancock and East Lake Shore drives, free shows are held on Fridays, and will take place this summer on the following dates and times: July 6 at 4 p.m.; July 19 and 26 at 7 p.m.; Aug. 2 at 7 p.m.; Aug. 16 at 6:45 p.m.; Aug. 23 at 6:45 p.m.; Sept. 1 at 4 p.m.

The team will also perform at Venetian Fest in Lake Geneva this year. That show will be on Aug. 18 at 6 p.m.

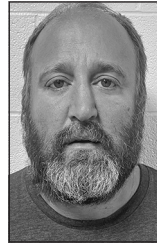
For more information, visit [www.wonderlakesskiteam.org](http://www.wonderlakesskiteam.org).

Putting together a ski show requires the work of many people including skiers, boat drivers, announcers, safety lookouts and show directors.



# Marina license suspended, owner arrested in forgery investigation

The Fox Waterway Agency has suspended the commercial use permits for Anchor Pointe Marina (also known as AP Marine), located at 42125 North 4th Avenue, unincorporated Antioch. Additionally, the agent of the marina, Steven Wooden, 41, of the 41000 block of North Westlake Avenue, unincorporated Antioch, was arrested for one count of forgery (class 3 felony) following a paperwork scam.



**Steven Wooden**

In order for a person or company to rent boats, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) must receive a boat rental license application. IDNR then verifies that each boat listed in the application is worthy of being used for rental purposes. Following their review, IDNR stamps and signs the official form, before sending it back to the person or company.

Companies renting boats on the Fox Waterway must submit the IDNR paperwork to the Fox Waterway Agency, so the agency can verify and ensure compliance, verifying the boats are safe for users.

On April 17, Wooden submitted IDNR paperwork to the Fox Waterway Agency to apply for Fox Waterway commercial use stickers for dozens of boats. The purpose of this was so Anchor Pointe Marina could rent the boats to patrons during the 2024 Chain O'Lakes boating season. The forms submitted by Wooden appeared to have been approved by IDNR, as they were signed by a purported agent of IDNR.

The Fox Waterway Agency issued 26 rental stickers to Wooden, under the belief that the IDNR forms were valid. Upon further inspection, it was determined IDNR never issued the forms to Wooden, that he in turn provided to the Fox Waterway Agency. It was determined that Wooden submitted forged documents to the Fox Waterway Agency.

Members of the Sheriff's Marine Unit conducted an investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, Sheriff's Marine Unit Deputies reviewed the facts and circumstances of the investigation with the Lake County State's Attorney's Office, which approved the charge of forgery. Marine Unit Deputies then obtained an arrest warrant for Wooden.

Wooden was arrested without incident on May 29 and was transported to the Lake County Jail where he was held pending First Appearance Court.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office warns anyone who may have an upcoming reservation with Anchor Point Marina; AKA AP Marine (42125 North 4th Avenue, unincorporated Antioch), that the marina is not allowed to rent watercraft on the Chain O'Lakes.

Last year, 'The Boatyard,' another marina owned by the Wooden family, faced a suspension of renting privileges, however, ownership continued renting the boats. Unknowing renters had their recreation cut short, as the boats were subsequently impounded after they paid money to the business to rent the watercraft.

# Excitement builds for summer at McHenry Outdoor Theater

## Movies Make Memories Getaway contest adds to suspenseful season

By **Cynthia Wolf**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Kids kick a soccer ball across the grassy expanse below the towering screen. Heretofore strangers bond over a shared love of dogs. Families stake out the perfect seating arrangement in their truck beds.

The Rockwellian tapestry that plays out long before the sun sets and the first film credits roll is back in full force at the McHenry Outdoor Theater, 1510 Chapel Hill Rd., Lakemoor, where the theater's weekends-only spring schedule recently transformed to seven days a week.

"It's going to be an especially exciting summer season," said Scott Dehn, owner. "And the fun once again will continue through the fall and into December, like last year."

In addition to the thrill and anticipation of first-run films like "Deadpool & Wolverine" (July 26), "Beetlejuice Beetlejuice" (Sept. 6) and much more, a getaway contest currently in the works will spell a \$6,000 Universal Studios vacation for some lucky family.

The Movies Make Memories Getaway will include roundtrip airfare, four nights at the Cabana Bay Resort, four-day park-to-park passes good for both Universal Studios Florida and Universal's Islands of Adventure theme parks, plus round-trip airport transfers for two adults and two children — with the ability to upgrade the length of the stay, the resort and the number of guests at the winner's expense.

The giveaway is a joint venture between the Outdoor, The Bremer Team — Keller Williams Success Realty and Worldwide Traveler.

For Worldwide Traveler, it's part of their 40th anniversary celebration, said Darrellynn Hanes, president. "We are so happy to be a part of this wonderful sweepstakes to help send a family to Universal Orlando," Hanes said. "Creating travel memories is what we do best!"

Dawn Bremer is owner and president of The Bremer Team, which two years ago formed a business partnership with the Outdoor that has led to extensive and now fully completed renovations at the concession building. Now known as the Bremer Team Taphouse and Snack Bar, choices there include pizza, treats from



**above:** A pair of moviegoers approach cashier Savannah Heidler at the fully renovated Bremer Team Taphouse and Snack Bar at the McHenry Outdoor Theater, which is now open seven days a week. **top:** It's not uncommon to find a band playing outside of the Bremer Team Taphouse and Snack Bar before the movies start at the McHenry Outdoor Theater. Shown are members of the Bridgeport Ramblers. **left:** Fresh renovations and an all-new look greet visitors to the Bremer Team Taphouse and Snack Bar at the McHenry Outdoor Theater.

CYNTHIA WOLF PHOTOS *The Breeze*

Rita's Italian Ice & Frozen Custard, beer, wine, soft drinks, popcorn and more.

Bremer said getaway excitement is sure to build as the season goes on and is just what a frenzied world needs.

"We just want to spread joy and hope that it's contagious," she said.

Dehn said he's thrilled to add yet another element of suspense to moviegoers' experience.

"I've always wanted this place to be more than just a movie theater," he said. "I'm always trying to find ways to increase the content of what visitors receive for the price of admission, and getaway prize eligibility is one way to do that. This is one heck of a prize!"

Ten names will be drawn each month starting in June and continuing into December. Of the 70 who gain eligibility, the grand prize winner will be drawn in December, and will have until December 2025 to use the getaway.

Full contest details will be posted soon on all three businesses' websites as well as on their Facebook pages, Dehn, Bremer and Hanes said.

For theater ticket pricing, carload specials, movie schedules and other information, visit [goldenagecinemas.com](http://goldenagecinemas.com). Also visit [worldwidetraveler.net](http://worldwidetraveler.net) and [bremersteam.com](http://bremersteam.com) to watch for the latest getaway news, and eligibility opt-in opportunities.







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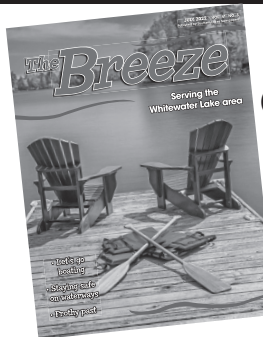
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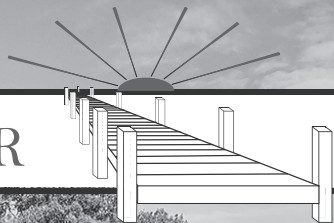
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**BIRD-FRIENDLY**

• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

“The Lake County Board continues to march forward in our commitment towards innovative environmental policies and decisions as highlighted in our strategic plan,” said Sandy Hart, Lake County Board Chair. “We are taking a proactive approach to safeguard the numerous bird species that enrich our natural landscape and our lives.”

Nearly one billion birds annually collide with glass in the United States according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To birds, glass is an invisible, deceiving threat. Since they cannot see glass the way people do, they do not treat it as a barrier to avoid.

“Bird-friendly infrastructure is not just a win for the environment, but also for the community at large,” said Paul Frank, Lake County Finance and Administrative Committee Chair and Board Member for District 11.

“These measures will help reduce bird collisions, conserve biodiversity, and set a precedent for sustainable development that municipalities, other counties, businesses and residents can practice too,” Frank added.

Those seeking to make major renovations or construct new buildings in unincorporated Lake County are required to receive permits. Lake County Planning, Building and Development will work with non-residential builders both at the project design and permit stages to ensure they meet the new bird-friendly requirements.

Projects will be able to comply with the requirements through a variety of approaches, such as exterior screens, façade modifications and other external applications including bird-friendly films, coatings and even etched or fritted glass.

“Last month, we took a significant step by mandating bird-friendly glass for Lake County government buildings,” said Jessica Vealitzek, Chair of the Planning, Building, Zoning and Environment Committee and Board Member for District 10.

“Now, with this new ordinance for non-residential buildings in unincorporated Lake County, we are broadening our impact. By implementing these changes, we will save countless birds each year, reinforcing their vital role in our ecosystem,” Vealitzek added.

The Lake County Board continues to put a strong emphasis on protecting and enhancing the natural environment through its strategic plan. Learn more about the County’s sustainability efforts by visiting the website at lakecountyil.gov/sustainability.

**Guilty verdicts for aggravated DUI that left two dead**

Late afternoon June 6, a jury trial concluded in the Lake County Courthouse with guilty verdicts on all counts related to a 2020 fatal DUI rollover crash.

Jose S. Aguirre, 30, was convicted of nine counts of Aggravated DUI, a class 2 felony. Aguirre is facing up to 28 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

After the verdict, State’s Attorney Eric Rinehart stated, “We will continue to hold dangerous and intoxicated drivers responsible for their criminal, dangerous, and immoral acts. This is a preventable tragedy, and all parts of our community must continue to raise awareness about how wrong and reckless intoxicated driving is. Our team of prosecutors helped bring justice to these families, and we will always support them.”

The jury trial began on June 3, lasting four days. Jurors heard from different state witnesses, including an accident



**Jose Aguirre**

reconstruction expert and law enforcement officers, who explained how the collision occurred and the physical state of the defendant at the time of the accident.

The defendant chose to testify on the last day of the trial and denied being the driver of the vehicle, although eyewitnesses testified to seeing Aguirre get into the driver’s seat and expert witnesses testified that the injuries Aguirre sustained from the crash were consistent with Aguirre being the driver.

On September 27, 2020, around 3:20 a.m., a Round Lake Police Officer attempted to stop a white Chevy Traverse that was speeding. The vehicle, later determined to be owned and driven by Aguirre, refused to stop. The officer reported the Chevy Traverse to reach a speed of 123 mph in a 45-mph zone and terminated the brief chase due to safety concerns.

Shortly after the chase was terminated, the officer came upon the Chevy Traverse which had crashed into a wooded area near Route 134 and Main St. in Round Lake.

Juan Renteria-Becerra, 34, and Edgar Herrera, 30, were both passengers in the vehicle and were pronounced deceased at the scene. Jorge Trevino, 32, was also a passenger in the vehicle and sustained non-life threatening injuries.

The Lake County Major Crash Assistance Team (MCAT) determined Aguirre was the driver of the vehicle and was traveling at speeds over 110 mph when Aguirre lost control of the vehicle, left the roadway, and entered in the wooded area striking several trees and rolling over before coming to a rest on its roof.

An arrest warrant was issued for Aguirre in October 2021, and after avoiding being arrested for over a year, police apprehended Aguirre in late December 2022.

Prior to the trial, Aguirre was being held in the Lake County Jail on a \$1 million bond. (This cash bond was set by a judge before the effective date of bail reform.) After the guilty verdict, Judge Lombardo revoked Aguirre’s ability to post bail.

Aguirre’s next court appearance is scheduled for July 15.

**LOTUS** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

They provide food for aquatic organisms and for pollinators. They also utilize nutrients carried into waterways that often build up and create algae blooms.

Repeated passes of boat propellers stir sediments and dislodge aquatic plants. A motor with just 10 horsepower can remove all aquatic vegetation 6 feet down. Powerboats on the chain have significantly more horsepower with an average of 300 horsepower. Resuspended sediment remains suspended by the constant boat activity reducing water clarity, the ability to see into the water. The elimination of aquatic plants results in increased shoreline erosion and sediment resuspension. Aquatic plant colonies cannot be reestablished until water clarity improves because suspended sediments cloud the water and block sunlight.

American lotus colonies only began to reestablish after the Fox Waterway Agency enforced No Wake Zones 150 feet from the shoreline in 1993 in an effort to improve water quality and safety. The ability of American lotus to propagate both sexually through seeds and asexually through rhizomes, combined with the extended viability of the seeds allowed for extremely rapid expansion.

By 2014 there were 272 acres of American Lotus present on the Chain O’ Lakes. The formerly prized beds are now perceived more as a nuisance than a blessing though because the dense beds make navigation through them difficult. Their ability to rapidly expand each season can block waterfront homeowners’



This postcard from 1938 is a photo by C.R. Childs of boats passing through a channel between the lotus beds in Fox Lake. Resort owners cut channels through the dense beds to take guests on excursion tours.

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piers and lifts, preventing access to the lakes.

Recreational boaters are no longer coming to the Chain O’Lakes to tour lotus beds, they come for wakeboarding and waterskiing. To cruise, dine at waterfront restaurants and swim. The lakes are a popular destination for fishermen.

A balance must be found that allows for people to continue to enjoy lakes and for conservation of the biodiversity that surrounds them. Improving the water

quality will benefit everyone.

*Considine is a graduate student earning a master’s in biology through Project Dragonfly’s Advanced Inquiry Program, a collaboration between Miami University and Brookfield Zoo. Part of her graduate studies is to restructure a previous paper, in this case her research paper The American Lotus written for BIO 695 Plants and People course, into a feature fit for publication. She lives near Petite Lake.*





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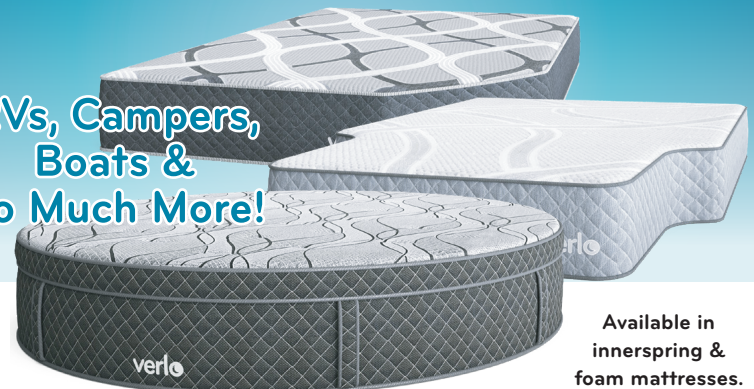
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