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Richardson corn maze honors John Deere this year

By **Cynthia Wolf**
CONTRIBUTOR

The same year that Spring Grove's Richardson Farm was established in 1836, a man named John Deere moved to Illinois, discovering that the state's sticky, clay soil slowed farmers, who often had to stop every few feet to scrape the dirt off of their cast-iron plows. Deere's invention the next year of a self-scouring steel plow revolutionized agriculture – in the U.S. and around the world.

In celebration of that milestone – and Deere & Co.'s continuing agriculture and construction equipment innovation prowess – this year's "World's Largest Corn Maze" is an homage to Deere. The public will be able to take it all in – as well as other fun to be had at the Richardson Adventure Farm – Thursdays to Sundays, through Oct. 27.

A portrait of John Deere is featured in the southwest corner of the rectangular, 28-acre maze this year, with a depiction of the original, steel, moldboard plow pulled by a horse in the southeast corner.

Along with the company's tagline are a couple of Deere & Co.'s more modern offerings: a construction loader (with a pumpkin in the bucket), and a quad track tractor. At the center of this year's 10.8 miles of trails is a hammer and anvil, representing Deere's humble start as a blacksmith.

"We always have fun working out the details of each year's maze," said George Richardson, who operates the farm at 909 English Prairie Rd., Spring Grove, with his wife, Wendy, brother, Robert, Robert's wife, Carol, George's son, Ryan, and Ryan's wife, Kristen.

In the spring, Idaho-based MazePlay again brought its special planter that uses GPS to drop seeds precisely, creating the maze design and

leaving gaps for the trails, Richardson said.

When in bloom, a 12-acre sunflower maze is included with the price of admission, too. Visitors are encouraged to check richardsonadventurefarm.com or find Richardson "World's Largest" Corn Maze on social media for updates.

Of course, hiking through miles of towering, golden corn or vibrant flowers is far from the picturesque farm's only draw. Family fun abounds at Richardson's. There are jumping pillows, pedal karts, giant slides, a train ride, a carousel, 50-foot viewing tower, pig races, an expansive gift shop with a wine sampling bar, and several indoor restrooms.

Add to that food trucks, as well as a new, 54-foot-by-90-foot, concrete-floored, enclosed Barrel House beer pavilion (now under construction), where 9th Hour Brewing craft beers and more will flow.

That's not to mention the air cannons, live music on weekends, Zorbing and a zip line. In other words, just bring your face and the farm will put a smile on it.

"I'm looking forward to seeing people enjoy the things we've worked so hard to create for them," Ryan Richardson said. "Between the zip line, the time spent around campfires with family and friends – just the whole experience – everything is an Instagram moment on the farm."

Regular admission to Richardson Adventure Farm admission ranges from \$20 for ages 3 to 12 through Sept. 29 to \$30 for ages 13 and older on October weekends. Children 2 and younger are admitted free. For more information including details on pricing as well as campfire and picnic site rental, visit richardsonadventurefarm.com.



The Richardson Adventure Farm zipline ferries an adventurous youth northward across the grounds from the farm's 50-foot-tall observation tower. The fall fun at the adventure farm begins in early September.

TOM FUNK PHOTO *Catch the Action*



Ashley Richardson sits atop a 1941 John Deere Model A displayed at the farm. This fall's "World's Largest" Corn Maze design pays tribute to the agricultural icon.

KRISTEN RICHARDSON PHOTO *Catch the Action*



A family explores the farm's corn maze during its 20th anniversary. This year's fall fun will be open until Oct. 27.

TOM FUNK PHOTO *Catch the Action*

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PM&L Theatre to wrap up 2024 season

Here is a rundown of what will take the stage Shows at PM&L Theatre in Antioch to close out 2024 and start next year's season.

Bring a meaningful end to your year with the magic of *A Christmas Carol*. The first 2025 performance will be *She Loves Me*, followed by *Marjorie Prime* and *Hairspray*.

HELLO DOLLY SEPT. 6 – SEPT. 22

Step into the vibrant world of matchmaker Dolly Levi as she navigates the hustle and bustle of New York City. This spirited musical comedy promises unforgettable songs and dazzling dance routines that will have you tapping your feet all night long. Join us for a toe-tapping, heartwarming journey as we bring the beloved classic "Hello Dolly!" to life! With unforgettable tunes and timeless romance, this show is sure to leave you singing and dancing all night long.

OUT OF SIGHT...OUT OF MURDER OCT. 18 – NOV. 3

Get ready for a thrilling blend of mystery and humor as a writer's characters leap off the page and into his stormy, secluded mansion. A suspenseful and witty plot unfolds, keeping you on the edge of your seat. Prepare for a night of mystery and hilarity with "Out of Sight...Out of Murder"! Follow a writer's quest for inspiration, where fiction and reality collide in this witty and suspenseful whodunit.

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW OCT. 25 – NOV. 2

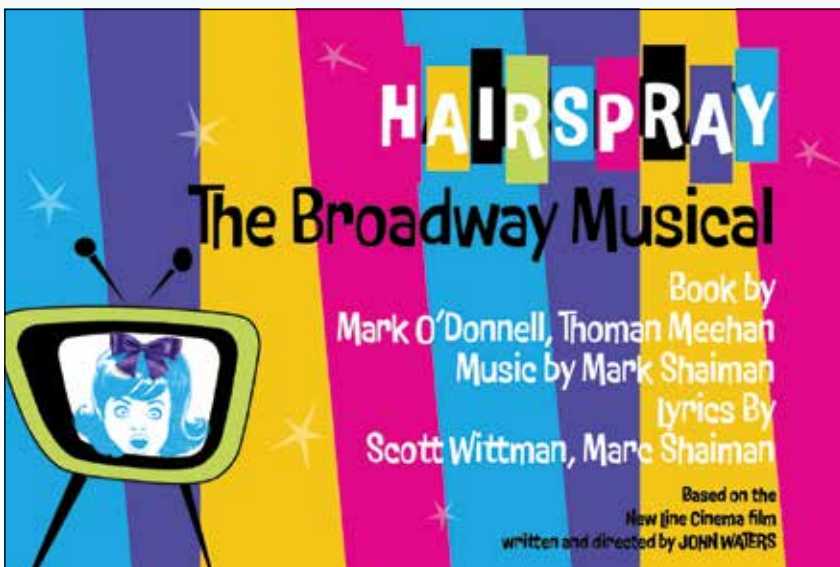
Embark on an outrageous adventure with Brad, Janet, and the flamboyant Dr. Frank N. Furter in this cult classic musical. A unique mix of rock-n-roll and sci-fi, it's an experience you won't soon forget. (Bonus Show, \$25 per ticket, presented at 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays after Out of Sight, Out of Murder.) Join us for a wild ride with "The Rocky Horror Show" - a cult classic packed with outrageous characters, electrifying music, and plenty of surprises.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL DEC. 6 – DEC. 22

Watch the heartwarming transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge from a miser to a generous soul in this timeless production. Relive the spirit and charm of Dickens' classic tale, perfect for the holiday season. Rediscover the true spirit of the holiday season with our magical production of "A Christmas Carol"! Follow Ebenezer Scrooge's transformative journey as he learns the joy of giving and the power of redemption.

SHE LOVES ME FEB. 7 – FEB. 23, 2025

In a charming 1930s perfumery, two feuding clerks unknowingly fall in love through anonymous letters. This delightful and romantic musical will





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MARJORIE PRIME
MARCH 28 – APRIL 13, 2025

Consider a future where artificial intelligence brings past relationships to life. This compelling drama explores the intricate dance between memory and technology, posing thought-provoking questions about the essence of human connection. This drama delves into the complexities of memory, identity, and the impact of artificial intelligence on our lives.

HAIRSPRAY
MAY 30 – JUNE 22, 2025

Join Tracy Turnblad on her quest for fame on a 1960s TV dance show, championing diversity and inclusion along the way. Bursting with catchy tunes and vibrant dance numbers, this energetic musical is a feel-good hit for all ages. Get ready to shake and shimmy with the irresistible energy of “Hairspray”! Bursting with infectious music and unstoppable dance numbers, this big-hearted musical celebrates diversity, friendship, and the power of change.

ABOUT THE THEATRE

A theatre community since 1960: Palette – symbol of the artist; Masque – symbol of the actor; Lyre – symbol of the musician.

These three symbols were put together to form the name of the group of people who were interested at that time primarily in producing (overseeing the executive and financial aspects) of plays, art works, and concerts, according to history shared on the website.

A dozen individuals (actors, business people, artists and musicians) banded together and donated \$10 each. With \$120 burning a hole in their pockets, the group set out to bring culture to Antioch. Shows and art exhibits were given for the benefit of the Antioch Women’s Club, Lake County Mental Health Group and various P.T.A.s.

Then, in 1963, the group was offered the opportunity to rent the Lakes Theatre (originally named the Crystal Theatre, constructed circa 1914) on Main Street. With the added responsibility of maintaining a theatre and putting something on the stage with some regularity, it was decided that membership should be broadened to include general members. The response was gratifying.

Palette, Masque, and Lyre, Inc. moved into what is now the PM&L Theatre, and with few exceptions has not looked back since.

“In fact, in 1982, the group (with some trepidation) purchased the building. Over 60 years later, we continue to work to provide quality theatre, while maintaining and striving to make additional improvements to our space,” the website states. “Support from our patrons and the community is always appreciated as we continue to open doors to the arts for so many for now and into the future.”

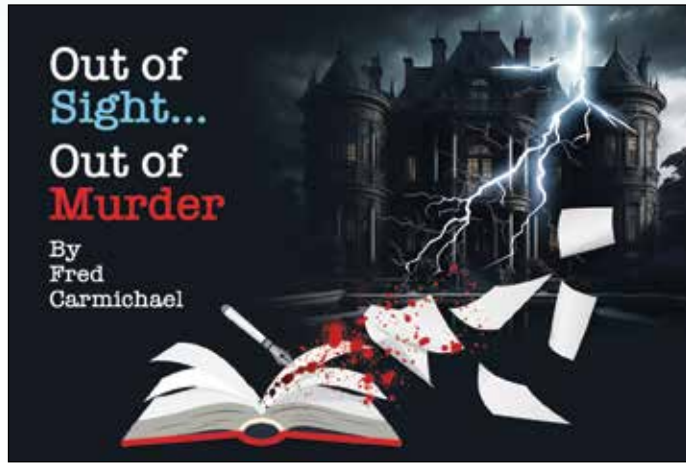
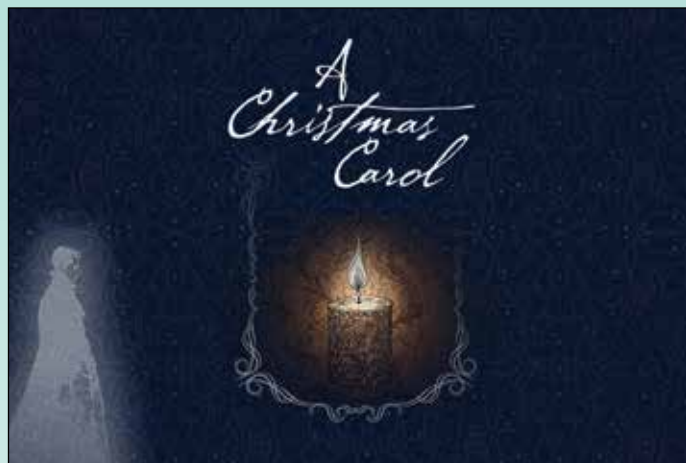
GET INVOLVED

PM&L has been run and operated by its volunteer membership for over 50 years. From the sets they build, the props they make, the refreshments they serve, and the spectacles they create they are entirely volunteer driven.

Many may call it “community theatre” but to them it’s really a theatre community – a group of dedicated volunteers with the mission of bringing the arts to the communities they serve through a community they create.

“No matter your experience, no matter your level of talent, there’s a way for you to help us. Drop us a note and start your journey to becoming a part of the PM&L community,” the website states.

To learn more about volunteering, visit the website at pmltheatre.com.



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What the glaciers left behind

Volo Bog offers the opportunity to see nature, wildlife

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

Those who haven't been to Volo Bog might want to consider a visit as it's open daily throughout the year. It's a unique area, overflowing with the nature, highlighted by plants and animals who make it their home. Most important is the natural quaking bog located on site, the only one in Illinois.

While some may prefer spending time at the bog during the warmer months, others might prefer the cooler fall weather or even winter. Any time is suitable for admiring the landscape and all of the living things that can be found there.

Volo Bog is in Ingleside and is the result of when the Wisconsin glacier began its final melt thousands of years ago. The receding glacier left a covering of debris that included clay, sand, gravel and sometimes even large boulders.

Also imbedded in with the debris were extremely large chunks of ice, some so large that as the climate continued to warm, they melted into lakes, bogs and marshes which remain today and are responsible for the landscape of this portion of northeast Illinois.

"This bog is unique in that it is the only

open water quaking bog in Illinois," shared Carol Janssen, a volunteer docent as she prepared to begin a recent morning tour of the bog with a group of visitors.

"To be a bog it must have five different distinctive rings of vegetation surrounding an open water area. Closest to the water is the herb mat, then a low shrub zone, the tamarack zone, and finally the tall shrub zone. As we walk the trail through the bog to the open eye, we will see each of these areas. The three innermost rings are not on solid soil but are floating above a pond that is 50 feet deep," Janssen explained.

The trail through the bog includes a floating plank trail which takes visitors over the wetlands. The floating plank bounces with the movement of those walking on it and does not have any handrails so can pose a challenge, especially for young children and others with balance concerns.

Visitors are advised to wear sturdy shoes to help with balance and – though it should go without saying – the sturdier ones in a family or group should hold on to children and the elderly while traversing it.

While the trail may be difficult to maneuver, the walk through the bog is certainly worth the extra effort.

It's filled with unique plants and walkers will go past the Tamarack tree. It can be a surprising sight to see such tall trees that grow in the sphagnum moss.

The walk ends with the arrival at the eye, the original lake of open water that is the

center of the bog. Visitors often describe it as beautiful and serene, and many spend time there simply taking in the scenery before heading back to the Visitor Center.

"There are additional trails that visitors may use for hiking. The Tamarack View Trail is perfect for hiking and covers 2.75 miles. This trail is a good way to view the diversity of the grounds," Janssen said.

She said from the higher elevations, those on the trail can look down into the bog basin.

"This trail begins just south of the Visitor Center and is a one-way trail. Pick up the trail brochure before starting down the trail," Janssen advises.

In the winter, the Tamarack View Trail is available for cross country skiing when there is an appropriate amount of snow. Two other hiking trails offer an additional two miles of hiking, and, according to the docents, they take hikers through woods, fields and prairie restoration areas.

What a discovery

Volo Bog was first discovered in 1921 by W. G. Waterman and was originally named the Sayer Bog, after the land's owner George Sayer, a local dairy farmer.

Sayer was known as a wealthy butcher

The eye of the bog is a clear lake, which many visitors consider a beautiful and reflective spot.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Catch the Action*



from Chicago who was said to have invented a sausage filling machine before he moved out to the Ingleside area and invested in multiple dairy farms. He also built and lived in the largest home on Pistakee Bay, known as the Rose Villa, which was named after his wife Rose, and her favorite flowers, roses.

The barn on Sayer's property in Ingleside now serves as the Visitor Center where volunteer docents explain the history of the bog. They also discuss the activities held there and share information with visitors about the many items on display.

After being documented by Waterman, Cyrus Mark – the first director of the Illinois Chapter of the Nature Conservancy – began a fundraising effort in 1958. That led to \$40,000 being collected, mostly in donations from school children, groups and individuals for the purchase of the property covering 47.5 acres.

The property was deeded to the University of Illinois, which retained ownership of the land until 1970 when it was transferred to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. That was done to ensure the protection of the bog as developers began encroaching on the area.

An additional 1,100 acres of land have been purchased to protect and enlarge the state preserve, which now includes marshes, prairie restoration areas, woodlands and two additional bogs.

Volo Bog, because it includes all stages of bog succession, was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1972. A plaque noting the designation can be seen at the beginning of the bog path.

Programs and more

The visit to the barn while at Volo Bog is a favorite stop for visitors who enjoy seeing the variety of past and current wildlife that have, or do, make their home on the land. There is also a large meeting room where various talks and programs take place.

“We offer a variety of programs here. From fun and educational programs that appeal to most ages, to historical programs to share the story of the bog,” Janssen said.



top left: Volunteer Carol Janssen shares the story of the bog with members of a tour before beginning group walks.

at left: The floating plank walk takes visitors over the various zones of the bog. **below:** Located at 28478 W. Brandenburg Rd. in Ingleside, Volo Bog welcomes visitors year-round.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Catch the Action*





Volunteer naturalists lead the one-hour public tours of the bog on Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. They request advance registration for the tours but if visitors happen to be there and there is room on the tour, late additions are allowed.

There is no charge to participate in the tour and visitors will likely leave not only with a wealth of knowledge about the bog but also how it continues to survive.

Recurring events held at Volo Bog include bog tours, bird walks, walks with a naturalist, art shows and photo contests.

There are numerous occasional programs offered at the bog including the following: wetland botany, tree ID, wildflower walks, forest therapy, insect safari, spider walks, fall color walks, animal tracking and winter ecology.

Special events are held throughout the year with fall and winter featuring Ghost Stories, the second Saturday of October, and Winter Fest, which is in January or February. There are ongoing programs offered to youth and school groups free of charge though they do require registration.

It's important to note that

ground fires are not allowed, and alcohol is not permitted in the park.

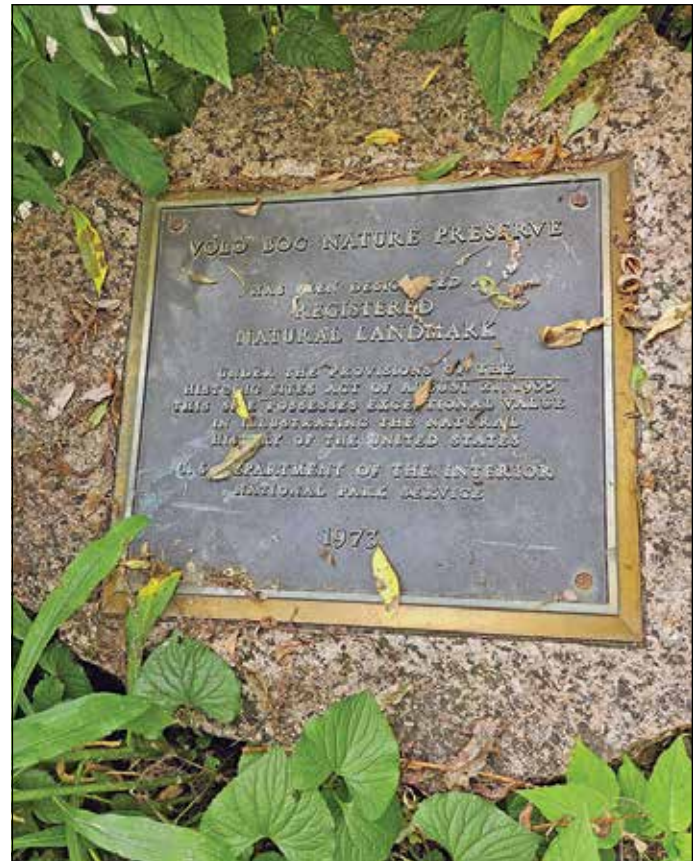
Guests are responsible for removing all their garbage when they leave. There are no garbage bins in the park because they are a magnet for a variety of wildlife such as raccoons, opossums, and other animals found in the area and, eating garbage is detrimental to wildlife.

Not having garbage pickup in the park saves taxpayers money and preserves the beauty of the area for visitors.

The park is open 363 days per year, closed only on Christmas and New Year's. The gates open daily at 8 a.m. while closing times vary based on sunset. Guests should check the posted sign when arriving to be certain that they can retrieve their vehicle prior to the park closing. Parking is free.

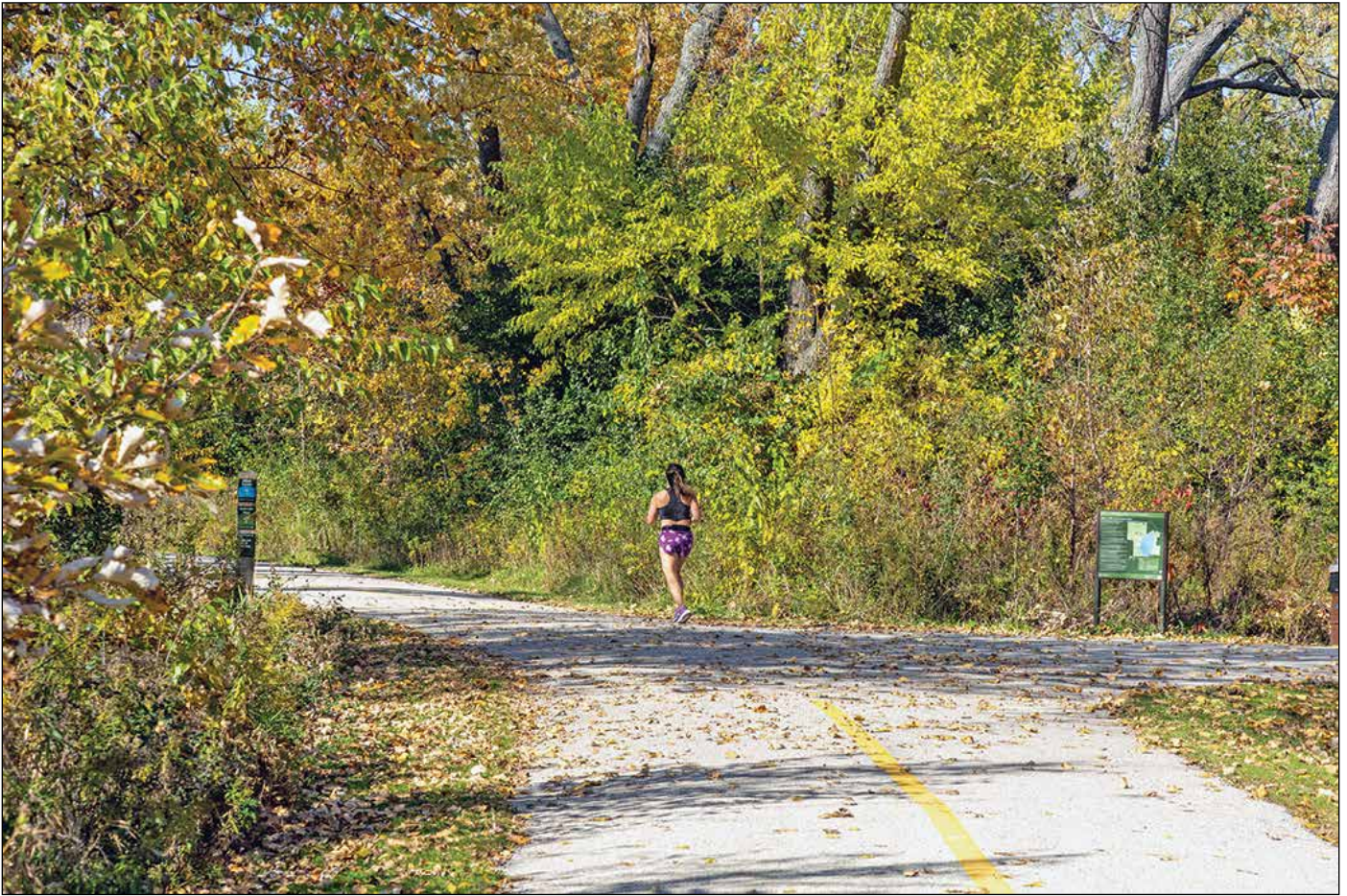
The Visitor Center is open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday.

Volo Bog is at 28478 Brandenburg Rd., Ingleside. For more information, call 815-344-1294, stop by the Visitor Center at Volo Bog or visit the website at dnr.illinois.gov/parks/park.volobog.



top: A family of Sandhill cranes makes its home on the grounds of Volo Bog as do several other cranes. **above:** This plaque outside the Visitor Center recognizes that Volo Bog is a Registered National Landmark as recognized by the Department of Park Services in 1973.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Catch the Action*



It's the 26th annual Hike Lake County challenge

For those seeking a fresh way to embrace fall, the Lake County Forest Preserves has a challenge – or seven of them. Grab some walking shoes and head to the trails to participate in the 26th annual Hike Lake County program while enjoying the change of seasons, fall breezes and autumn colors.

Medical research shows that being outdoors in nature has many wellness benefits. Hike Lake County provides a way to get a dose of wellness while walking in a beautiful preserve.

Complete seven of 12 designated walks before Nov. 30 and earn a free commemorative shield for a walking stick or a zipper pull. Each year features a new lineup of trails, shields and zipper pulls. This season, the medallion fittingly showcases a periodic cicada.

At each selected preserve, look for Hike Lake County logo signs at the preserve entrance and trailhead to get on the right route. Not that bicycling or horseback

riding do not count toward the program.

To get started, walkers need an official travel log to record your routes, which can be found online at lcfpd.org. One travel log can be submitted for up to five participants. For larger groups, submit additional travel logs.

Let a canine companion join in the fun and complete the hikes with you. Record their name on the travel log and receive a free commemorative dog tag (up to three dogs per participant).

To receive a free dog tag, zipper pull or commemorative shield, submit your travel log online, or mail it with a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Lake County Forest Preserves, 1899 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville, IL 60048 by Jan. 31, 2025.

Walkers can also stop by the general

office in Libertyville or the Ryerson Welcome Center, which is at 21950 N.

Riverwoods Road, Riverwoods, to pick up free commemorative materials.

The 2024 Hike Lake County locations include: Captain Daniel Wright Woods in Mettawa; Cuba Marsh in Deer Park; Fourth Lake in Lake Villa; Fox River in Port Barrington; Half Day in Vernon Hills; Heron Creek in Lake Zurich; Lake Carina in Gurnee; Lyons Woods in Waukegan; Raven Glen in Antioch; Ryerson Conservation Area in Riverwoods; Sedge Meadow in Wadsworth; Sun Lake in Lake Villa.

Participants can also choose a 2-mile trail location in any Lake County Forest Preserves as a “Wild Card”.

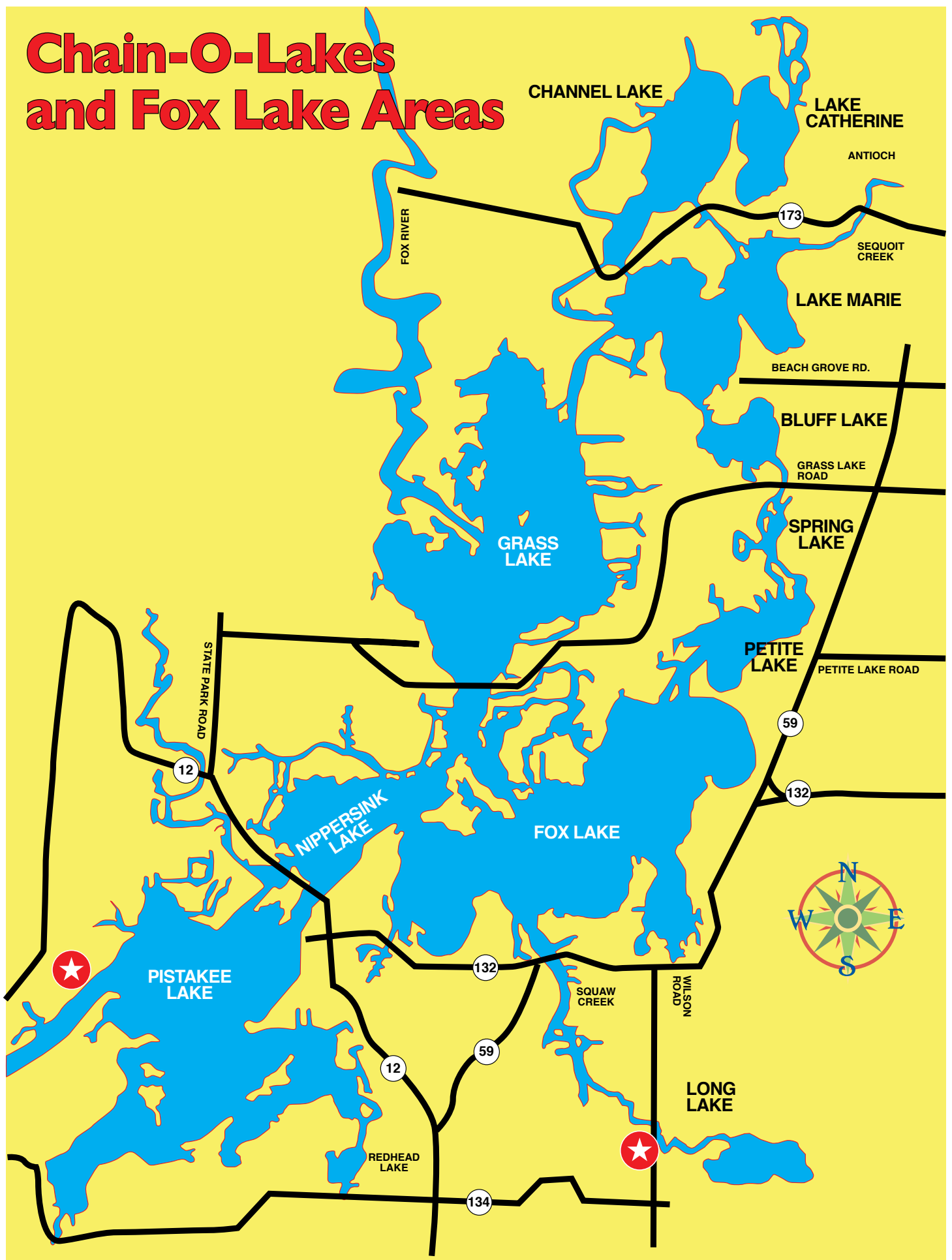
For more information and travel log visit lcfpd.org.



Hike Lake County is an annual walking program that encourages residents to explore a variety of forest preserves. A periodical cicada is featured on this year's commemorative shield.

PHOTO COURTESY R. SCOTT MCNEILL *Catch the Action*

Chain-O-Lakes and Fox Lake Areas



Upcoming events

Oktoberfest at Mickey Finn's

Friday, Sept. 20 and Saturday, Sept. 21, 5 to 10 p.m.

Dust off your lederhosen and say 'pretzel' because Oktoberfest is coming to downtown Libertyville.

The event will be held in the back lot at Mickey Finn's Brewery, 345 N. Milwaukee Ave. in Libertyville.

Enjoy live music while sampling a fine selection of beer, food available for purchase and live music on Friday from 5-10 p.m.

Attendees can also play traditional Bavarian sports like Hammerschlagen or Masskrugstemmen, show off their finest dirndl and lederhosen, or relax with neighbors and friends at this unique community event.

Families with children are invited to "Family Garten" – family-friendly hours are from 2-4 p.m. on Saturday; regular event hours resume on Saturday from 5-10 p.m.

Alpine Thunder will entertain guests on Friday night from 5-10 p.m.; on Saturday, attendees will enjoy music from The Phenix Band from 2-4 p.m. and Marlin & the Shakes will perform from 5-10 p.m. on Saturday.

General Admission tickets are \$25 and include a plastic stein and one beer ticket.

VIP tickets are \$50 and ticket holders receive two beer tickets, a commemorative ceramic stein, and the opportunity to tour Mickey Finn's Brewery with the head brewmaster.

General admission at the door on the day of the event is \$30, and \$55 for VIP tickets.

Additional beer tickets are available for at the event by credit card only; this is a cashless event.

You must be 21 years or older to attend this event. IDs will be checked at the door.

For more information, call 847-362-6688.

Junie B. Jones: Toothless Wonder

Thursday, Sept. 26 – Friday, Sept. 27 at the James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts at the College of Lake County, 19351 W. Washington St., Grayslake.

Junie B. Jones is having a rough day – no, scratch that, a rough week! First off, she is about to lose her first tooth, and what does the Tooth Fairy do with all those teeth anyway? Even worse, everyone in her class has been invited to her classmate Jim's birthday ... except for her. Will Junie land that surprisingly elusive invitation? And if her tooth comes out, what will she even look

like? Visit Junie's charming and witty world as we learn together what it means to grow up and fit in.

For more information, call 847-543-2300 or email clcboxoffice@clcillinois.edu.

Long Grove Apple Fest

Friday to Sunday, Sept. 27 to Sept. 29 – how do you like your apples? Fresh? Baked in pies? Dipped in chocolate or caramel? Candied? Are you drooling yet? However you like them, Long Grove has them.

Long Grove's Apple Fest is known for the apple pies, donuts, caramel dipped to candied apples, apple wine, sangria, and more! In addition to all of the delightful apple specialties, you can even try some options right off the menu at the historic downtown's local hometown restaurants.

What's a Long Grove fest without a stage full of great rhythm and sounds showcasing all your favorite styles of music? Long Grove is curating artisans in the area to come and showcase their wares and talents.

Indulge yourself (and your taste buds) with three fun-filled days that the entire family (including your fur-baby) can enjoy.

For more information, call 847-634-0888 or email events@longgrove.org.

Jack-O-Lantern World

Sept. 27 to Oct. 27 at Paulus Park, 200 S. Rand Rd., Lake Zurich.

This annual event is a tradition for tens of thousands that is dedicated to getting even more exciting each year. Walk the immersive and interactive trail filled with thousands of jack o'lanterns hand carved by over 50 artisans.

Don't forget about the pumpkin spiced donuts and Halloween candy.

Special needs time slot (Oct. 14 – 6 p.m.) This is a limited time slot with less people that starts about 40 minutes before true darkness. It's an opportunity for those with special needs to go through while it is lighter and less crowded.

For more information, call 224-757-5425.

Waukegan's Past-Time

The Waukegan History Museum in Bowen Park, is exhibiting Waukegan's Past-Time through Nov. 5. Hours are noon to 3 p.m., Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and the exhibit can be viewed for free.

The exhibition at the Waukegan History Museum explores the town's longstanding connection with baseball since 1859. It showcases the town's baseball history, including teams like the Athletic Baseball Club and the Belvidere National and Waukegan Baseball Clubs from the early 1870s.

Through vintage photos and memorabilia, the exhibit illustrates the town's baseball heritage, highlighting community spirit and enduring passion for the sport. Today, the Museum portrays life of the late Victorian

period in 1870s Waukegan through the use of carefully researched wallpapers, carpets, drapes, light fixtures and period furnishings from prominent Waukegan families. The rich history of Waukegan is found throughout the Museum in the form of exhibits, photographs and artifacts.

For more information, call 847-336-1859. The museum is at 1917 N. Sheridan Rd., in Bowen Park, Waukegan.

Titanic: Tribute to the Tragedy

Volo Museum, 27852 W. Volo Village Rd., Volo, is hosting the exhibit until July 1, 2025.

An emotional 45-minute experience that pays tribute to the lives and losses on the fateful night of the Titanic's sinking in a completely original way that will captivate both Titanic history enthusiasts and fans who have only seen the movie.

Step into the heartrending tale of the Titanic, where emotion intertwines with education, providing an unforgettable journey into the lives of those who sailed on this tragic vessel. Tailored for history aficionados and knowledge seekers alike, this immersive experience goes far beyond mere entertainment.

It aims to inspire a profound appreciation for the past while honoring the memory of those onboard. It is a poignant and intellectually enriching expedition, setting itself apart from typical attractions designed for fun and amusement.

One-time tickets are \$19.95 for ages 5 and up. Combine with a Volo Museum or Jurassic Gardens ticket and save \$5. Titanic tickets are date – time-sensitive. Members get \$5 off when purchased at the ticket sales counter.

For more information, call 815-385-3644.

Growing up X

Grayslake Heritage Museum is hosting this exhibit until June 14, 2025.

On loan from the Illinois State Museum, this award-winning exhibit will fill you with nostalgia for the super rad toys, cutting-edge computers (complete with dialup), and other cultural touchstones that defined being a kid in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. Get your big hair on and grab your fanny packs because it's going to be a rocking good time when visiting the "Growing Up X" exhibit at the Grayslake Heritage Center & Museum.

The "Growing Up X" exhibition is organized by the Illinois State Museum and sponsored, in part, by the Illinois State Museum Society.

2024 hours: through Sept. 25 are Wednesday, noon to 7 p.m.; Thursday to Saturday, noon to 4 p.m.; Sept. 28 – Dec. 14, Wednesday to Friday, noon to 7 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Dec. 15 – Dec. 31, Wednesday to Saturday, noon to 4 p.m.

For more information, call 847-543-1745.

Prepare for a sledding adventure



The cold and snowy months of winter can be made much more fun with the addition of some outdoor recreation, not to mention the positive health effects it offers. Sleighs and sleds are par for the winter season, especially when a bounty of snow is in the forecast.

Sledding has been part of snowy celebrations for ages. Sledding is a fun-filled activity, but it can be made an even better time, and a little safer, if revelers learn a little more about it.

Sled styles

Sleds come in many different styles, each with its own advantages. Sleds with metal blades will work like ice skates, balancing riders' weight on two metal runners. These sleds can work well during icy conditions or with hard-packed snow.

Toboggans can fit multiple people, which can increase the fun factor and downhill speeds. Saucer-style sleds are good for one or two people. Foam liners on some saucers can absorb shock for riders, making those downhill bumps a little easier on the backside.

Keep in mind that sleds with steering mechanisms are easier to control, which can

equate to safer sledding.

Layer up

It is best to dress in layers when going sledding. Even if it seems warm at home, it may be colder and windier at the top of hills. Sweating when it's cold out can increase a person's risk for hypothermia.

According to experts at Timberline Trails, a person who works up a sweat and comes in contact with ambient air when taking a break will feel an immediate chill. This is called evaporative danger, and can be remedied by dressing in layers and trying to stay dry.

Consider a helmet

Using a helmet while sledding is a good idea, especially for young children. At high speeds, a blow to the head can cause a concussion or worse.

Let others go first

If out sledding on a hill where other people are sledding, consider waiting until other some sledders have already gone downhill. This will allow them to compact the snow somewhat, which should make for a smoother ride.



Choose safe hills, such as those that are free of bare spots, holes, trees, and obstructions, and do not end abruptly at a road. Hills with a long, flat areas at the end make for easy, safe stopping.

Safety first

Put safety first when sledding. Sled during the daytime so visibility is better. Keep arms and legs on the sled, and only sled feet-first, advises the National Safety Council.

By keeping these guidelines in mind, sledders can make sure this popular winter activity is as safe as it is fun.

(METRO CREATIVE)

By taking a few safety precautions, sledding can be a safe and fun activity for families. Bundle up, grab a sled and head out on a fun winter excursion.

STOCK PHOTOS Catch the Action



Calling all book lovers

Area bookstores offer variety of reads for people of all ages

by **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

For those who love books and reading, nothing is more exciting than finding and visiting a new and different bookstore – especially indie bookstores that offer something unusual in our own communities.

While the way people read has changed over the years (from a printed book to e-books on various devices, or listening to an audiobook), printed books seem to always have a place. There is something special about going to the bookstore, picking out a book and taking it home.

Once there, finding a favorite reading spot, fixing a cup of coffee or tea (or a glass of wine) and relaxing to lose oneself in the story is something special. Holding the weight of the book in your hands, touching pages, breathing in the aroma of the print and paper – none of that is easy on an e-reader.

While electronic readers are great for travel (i.e., not having to carry all those books with you) and audio books help with driving long distances, holding a book from a local independent store is always a treat.

Here are two in the Chain O’Lakes area waiting for a visit:

This Old Book

For 21 years, This Old Book has been a fixture on Center Street in downtown Grayslake.

Originally opened by Dick Navarre at this location, it was purchased by Janet Elliott 11 years ago.

“When Dick opened the store, it was half the size it is today,” Elliott said. “Since we have been here the business has grown both in size and in the products we carry. We now carry over 32,000 titles.”

A visit to This Old Book is always a pleasant experience. The store is clean and well organized and the books available, even though they are used, do not have the look or even the aroma used books often do that comes from being stored in basements or garages.

“We only take books in excellent condition,” shared Elliott. “And we clean them before putting them out for sale.”

The store, while long and narrow, has a variety of built in bookshelves that make one feel as though they are in the library

of a fine home or a university. Despite the narrowness, there is plenty of room to peruse books up and down the aisles.

If a customer is in a hurry, Elliott or another employee can help find a book.

In addition to everyday book, This Old Book also carries rare and antique books.

“We sell them in the shop and also online,” Elliott said. “We have huge online offerings and encourage those looking for these rare and antique books to view the website or come into the store to inquire about them.

“We also work with local libraries to sell rare and collectible books. These are often books that have been donated to them,” she added.

There are many beautifully bound volumes on display at the store, including classics by Jane Austen, Louisa May Alcott, Mark Twain, Victor Hugo, Shakespeare and others.

While used books from paperbacks to rare selections are the store’s main business, they also carry some new books. These are written by local authors and available for purchase at the store. There have been several book launches by the local authors held at This Old Book.

Those authors, including novelist Michelle Cox, photographer Thomas Hines (who has published a photographic book on Frank Lloyd Wright’s work), and Riley Preston, known for children’s books, are all

Owner of This Old Book, Janet Elliott, is flanked by many fine binding editions offered both in the store and online.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Catch the Action*



Author Michelle Cox displays her latest release in front of the local authors' display at This Old Book. The store sells a variety of local authors' works.

PHOTO COURTESY JANET ELLIOT *Catch the Action*



top right: One way to get children to read more is to bring them to This Old Book and let them explore the children's section where they can choose books they will enjoy. **at right:** In addition to current favorite books, both fiction and nonfiction, This Old Book also carries fine binding editions which are showcased near the front of the bookstore.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Catch the Action*

on display, as well as the works of other local authors.

Check with This Old Book for book launch dates and author signing events, which are fun to attend and offer a chance to meet the authors and obtain a signed copy of their work.

Elliott is also a commercial photographer and creates a variety of pieces including printed vintage art posters out of book covers, if the cover copyright has expired. Many are on display at the store, and she can also create a poster of a buyer's choice. Elliot also makes bookmarks and cards and sells the prints at the store as well as through Etsy.

Contact staff at This Old Book for further information about purchasing her items online.

Anyone with antique books, first editions or other rare editions they wish to put up for sale should call and make an appointment to have the books evaluated.

Common books can be brought to the store any time. Store credit is given for those, and can be used to purchase for up to 50% of the cost.

Recently, This Old Book shared on its website that it now had a new book available, "The Golf Rangers."



"We are excited to introduce a new book by local author Lydia Sweeney and illustrator Mia Larson," the website states.

"In 'The Golf Rangers,' readers can follow Chip and Birdy on their adventure in the land of Friends and Fairways. Greenskeeper Bill has called the golf rangers to deal with a mole that's been digging and putting the course at risk," it states.

Have no fear however, as the reliable team arrives to locate the mole and save the

greens, the preview reveals.

"The Golf Ranger books explore golf terminology, kindness, and problem-solving," the website states.

This Old Book is at 138 Center St., Grayslake. For more information, call 847-548-6951 or visit the website, www.thisoldbook.com.

Hours are Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The store is closed Sunday and Monday.

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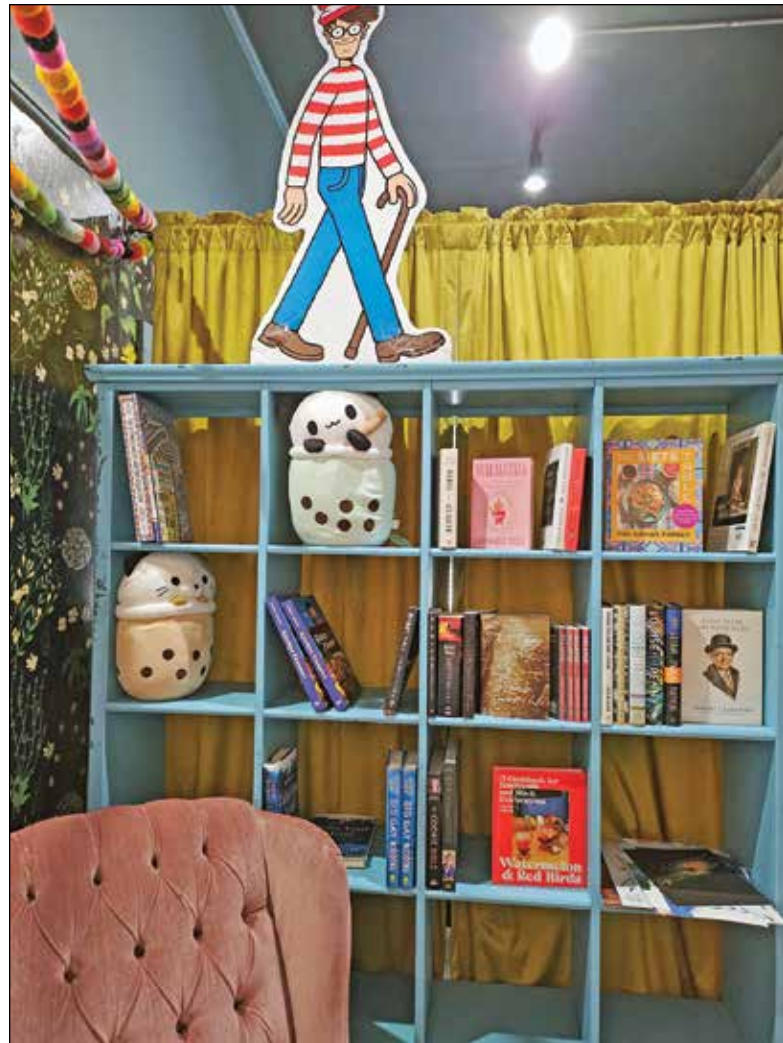
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Little Bean Books

Angela Burns said she has dreamed of owning a bookstore most of her life, but like many dreams, it didn't happen as quickly as she would have liked.

Her plan was to own an independent bookstore serving her local community.

"As I was always an avid reader, I anticipated that my first business would be a bookstore," Burns, owner of Little Bean Coffee Company and Little Bean Books said.

"In 2018, I had the opportunity to purchase Little Bean Coffee Company on Lake Street in Antioch. I thought it would be a



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good start, as coffee and books work well together.”

The coffee shop is comfortable and has several rooms that offer a place to read or work on a laptop. There is also a fireplace.

“We continued to focus on the coffee shop until another opportunity arose in 2022,” Burns explained. “It was my chance to open a bookstore here in Antioch.”

A special historical building became available in Antioch on Main Street – it was the original site of the city’s fire department.

While the building was small, Burns said what she saw was the perfect place to establish her own bookstore, Little Bean Books.

“It’s the only bookstore in Antioch,” she said. “And while it is small in space, we have made use of every inch of the building.”

Walking into the store, the bookshelves go from the floor almost to the very top of the high ceilings, all filled with books.

A large table with a display of books that are recommended by the staff is a good place to start for those looking for a new read.

In the back of the shop, there is a section dedicated to children’s books. It’s a place to help children or grandchildren find books they will enjoy.

“All our staff enjoy reading and are

always available to recommend authors and books that they enjoy,” Burns said.

While the coffee shop and the bookstore are two separate businesses, they work well together indeed.

“The two businesses often run events together,” Burns said. “We hold a book club at the coffee shop twice a month and encourage those interested to contact us and become a part of it. It’s a great way to meet other book lovers, and to increase your reading genres.”

Burns said they also hold or sponsor some author signings. In September, Little Bean is cosponsoring the Boozy Book Fair for Chandra Blumberg, author of “Second Tide’s The Charm,” and Stephanie Jayne’s “I’ve Got My Mind Set on Brew!”

The Boozy Book Fair will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Sept. 22, at Harbor Brewing Co., 136 Cedar Ave., Lake Villa. The two authors will be signing books and talking about their titles.

Little Bean Books is at 875 Main St., Antioch. For more information, call 224-360-9616 or visit the website, www.littlebeanbooks.com or Little Bean Books page on Facebook. Online ordering is available through the website.

The bookstore is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed Monday and Tuesday.



top, right: Angela Burns, owner of Little Bean Books, stands near a shelved wall of books inside the store, complete with a library ladder. She is happy to help customers find the book they’re seeking and will special order it if she doesn’t have it available. **top, left:** Little Bean Books is at 875 Main St. in downtown Antioch. It’s housed in the original Antioch Fire Station building. **above:** A variety of popular book titles displayed near the entrance to the store. **opposite:** A special children’s corner at Little Bean is designed for kids as a way to encourage them to read.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Catch the Action*



Stay safe on the snowmobile trails with these tips



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Snowmobiling can be an exhilarating experience and a fun past time for the winter season, but it can also be very dangerous if the proper safety precautions are not taken. To help keep you safe, we've compiled a list of important snowmobile safety tips.

Take a snowmobile safety course

Many states require a snowmobile certificate and each state has its own rules and regulations. A snowmobile safety course will instruct you on how to ride safely and responsibly and teach you the rules. It is especially essential for first time drivers or riders. You will learn riding techniques to help you operate the snowmobile and avoid hazards

Check forecast, trail conditions

It is always a good idea to check the weather and trail conditions to plan ahead. If the trail is frozen, the wind chill is too low, or a blizzard with white out conditions is in the forecast, you will want to plan your ride for another day. Checking the weather also helps you select the proper clothing for the day.

Wear appropriate clothes, gear

Staying warm and dry during your ride will make it more enjoyable and safer. Wear a snowmobile suit, which commonly consists of a jacket and insulated bibs. Under your snowmobile suit, dress in layers. Stay away from cotton because if it gets wet, it will freeze. Choose polyester blends to wick moisture away from your body. In addition, wear goggles or a face shield if you do not have a full-face helmet, socks (no cotton), waterproof gloves, winter hat, facemask and winter boots. Always wear a DOT-approved helmet, not only to keep you warm but to also protect your head from injury. Make sure children have a helmet that properly fits.

Inspect your snowmobile

Make sure your snowmobile is running properly before heading out on the trail. Having your owner's manual handy on your ride is a good idea for extra safety. It is important to follow the recommended service schedule to keep it maintained and running smoothly. Before each ride, check fuel and oil levels, battery, brakes, drive belt, skis, throttle, handlebars, headlights and taillights. Also, make sure you allow your snowmobile time to run for at least a minute to warm up before taking off.

Bring a buddy

Riding with a friend or in a group is fun and also safer, especially on trails you have never taken before. Someone else can help you if your snowmobile breaks down or if you get into an accident. It is



also recommended to tell a friend or family member your plans and route for your ride in case you do get stranded. Keep in mind that cell phones don't always work in remote areas.

Be prepared

Keep a basic first-aid kit in the snowmobile in case of injury. It should include: disinfecting wipes, bandages, hand sanitizer, gauze, adhesive tape and Band-Aids. In addition, carry an emergency kit with waterproof matches, flashlight, compass, map, blanket, water, snacks and a knife. A repair kit is also essential and should include: duct tape, tools, spare belt, tow rope, spark plugs and pry bar.

Avoid frozen rivers

It is impossible to gauge the thickness of ice. Ice can easily crack and give way under your snowmobile.

Do not speed

Driving at a moderate pace will allow you to react to an unexpected occurrence on your trail and avoid an accident. Many trails have posted speed limits to follow.

Stay on the trail

Marked trails are safer because they have been groomed for you and are less likely to have hazards. Going off trail can result in accidents because you are treading on unfamiliar terrain.

Also, many "public" trails run close to private property. Unless you have received permission from the landowner, stay on the marked trail. Failure to do so can also result in the trail being closed to the public in the future. Be a responsible rider by following the posted signs and trail markers.

Age appropriate activity

It is also strongly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics that children younger than the age of 16 do not operate a snowmobile. The reason for

this recommendation is because they may lack the skills needed to safely operate the vehicle and due to their stature, they can be easily injured.

Children younger than 6 should never ride as a passenger according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The snowmobile can ride rough and it takes a strong person to hold on tight, especially for long periods of time. Children younger than six lack this strength.

Stay alert

It is important to be observant and watch for obstacles in your path, such as rocks, fallen trees, barbed wire fences, ditches, open water, other snowmobiles, snow banks, animals, hikers and skiers.

Do not overload your snowmobile

Make sure you check your manufacturer's guide for the approved number of passengers and also the amount of weight it can carry. Exceeding these maximums either from an additional passenger or heavy gear can increase your chances of accidents and injuries.

Never drink and drive

Just like driving a car, operating a snowmobile while impaired can lead to delayed responses and cause accidents.

Do not pull anything

Snowmobiles are not designed to pull sleds, skiers or saucers and it is very unsafe to do so.

We hope these snowmobile safety tips lead to a fun and safe riding experience. For further protection, your snowmobile needs insurance coverage that's different from what your auto or homeowners insurance can provide. That's why Markel offers specialized snowmobile insurance coverage tailored to meet your unique needs.

For more information, visit markelinsurance.com.

Hitting the snowmobile trails in a group or with at least one buddy is one of several safety guidelines riders are encouraged to follow.

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