

Hi-LITER

~ including McHenry County News

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From TV to gallery: Bob Ross painting exhibit featured at Dunn Museum

A special exhibition, “Art for Everyone: Bob Ross®,” opened August 31 at the Bess Bower Dunn Museum in Libertyville. It runs through January 20, 2025.

Ross captivated audiences of all ages through his television series, “The Joy of Painting®.” Famous for his serene landscapes and memorable phrases, such as “happy little trees,™” Ross made art feel approachable.

The Museum’s exhibit showcases 75 of his original pieces, illustrating his original techniques and commitment to making art accessible to all. It celebrates how Ross used painting to spread joy and encourage creativity.

“We’re honored to bring the exhibit to the Museum,” said Education Director Alyssa Firkus. “Bob Ross’ ability to make art feel welcoming and approachable is something truly special. We’re excited to give our visitors a chance to experience his unique charm and creative firsthand.”

Robert Norman Ross, born in Florida in 1942, joined the U.S. Air Force at 18. During his time stationed in Alaska, he fell in love with the rugged landscapes—a passion that would later be reflected in so many of his iconic paintings.

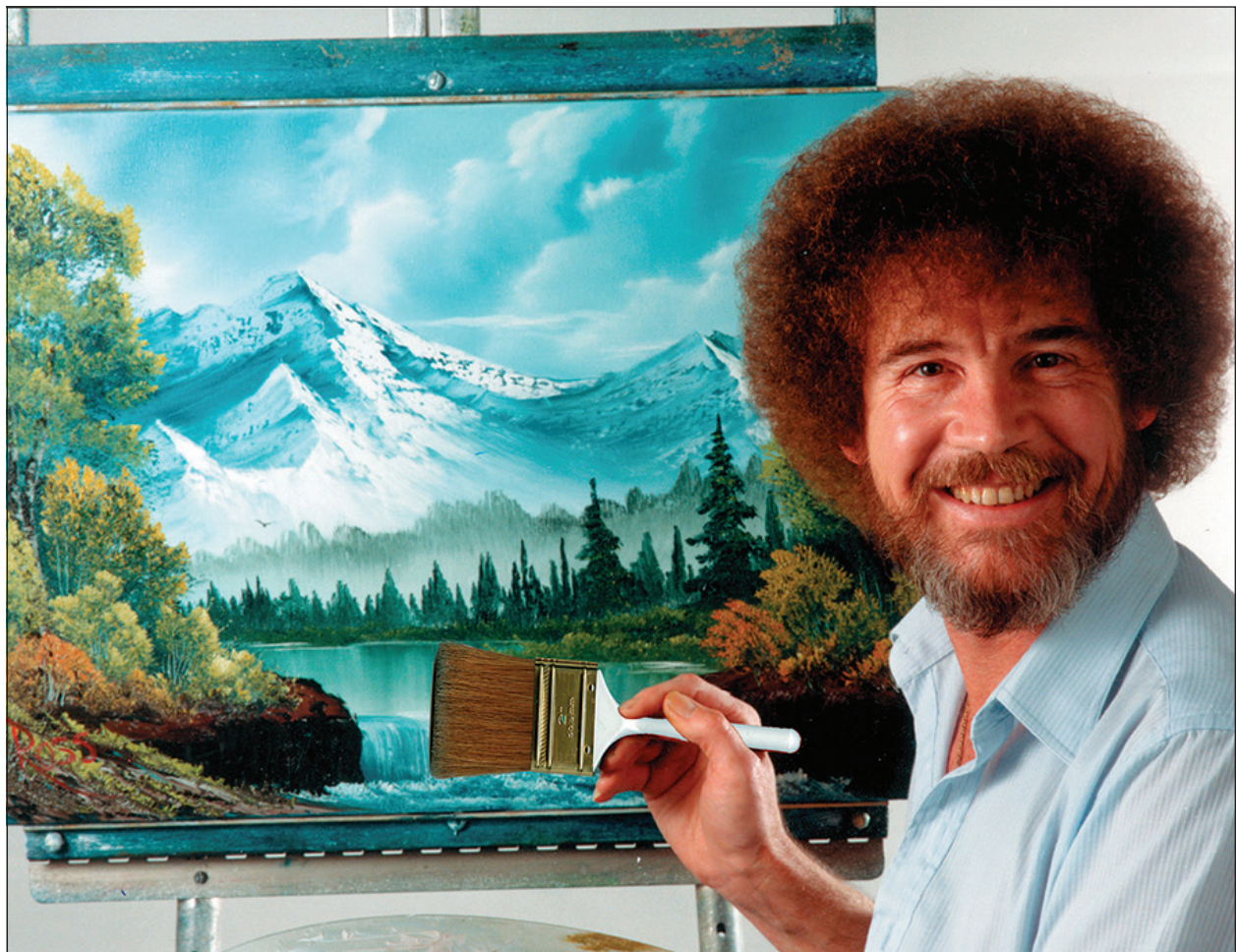
After 20 years in the Air Force, Ross retired to Florida. He took painting classes and discovered the “wet-on-wet” technique taught by artist William Alexander. The method allows an oil painting to be completed in a single session without waiting for layers to dry.

In 1982, he and his business partners formed Bob Ross Inc. They launched the TV series, the “Joy of Painting®” on PBS, viewed nationwide. Ross possessed a quiet, natural charisma that endeared him to audiences.

He crafted a painting in less than 30 minutes for every episode, often drawing inspiration from the Alaskan landscapes he loved. From 1982 to 1994, he recorded about 400 episodes, sometimes producing as many as three shows in a single day. He continued to produce works for the TV show until shortly before his death from lymphoma on July 4, 1995.

Bringing art closer to home, the exhibition showcases the creative works of numerous artists who once called Lake County their home, enriching the local connection to the displayed pieces. “This provides a distinctive opportunity for the community to explore and appreciate their cultural heritage,” Firkus said.

Museum hours and admission prices are listed at DunnMuseum.org.



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Bob Ross captivated audiences of all ages through his television series, “The Joy of Painting®.” He used a “wet-on-wet” technique, enabling him to complete an oil painting in a single session. The Dunn Museum in Libertyville is showcasing 75 original Bob Ross pieces in a special exhibition that runs through January 20, 2025. For more information visit DunnMuseum.org.

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Secretary of state enlists high schoolers to encourage organ donation

Pritzker, Commonwealth Edison tout electric vehicle infrastructure program

By Andrew Adams
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

The secretary of state's office is launching a new program to enlist Illinois high schoolers to promote organ donation.

The organ and tissue donation registry, a voluntary database administered by the secretary of state, catalogs peoples' wishes regarding organ donation after death.

On Sept. 3, Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulis announced his office was creating the Lifesaving Education and Awareness on Donation, or LEAD, program, which will designate student "ambassadors" for organ and tissue donation.

"Today you have an opportunity, without impacting your lives at all, to truly save lives," Giannoulis told students at a news conference.

These students, under the supervision of a faculty member at their high school, will create awareness campaigns and engage in other efforts to support donor registrations, particularly among young people.

Students in the new program will be eligible for service-hour credits that can fulfill volunteering requirements at some schools and honors programs. Students who volunteer 20 hours to the program will receive a certificate from the secretary of state.

These volunteer activities might include operating registration tables at schools, passing out awareness pins, writing newsletters or articles for school papers, or speaking at community events.

Students and teachers can bring the program to their schools by going to the organ donation program's website LifeGoesOn.com.

Teen organ donor registration has expanded since 2018, when a state law opened the donor registry to 16- and 17-year-olds.

Despite this, Illinois has experienced a 38 percent decrease in the number of new organ donor registrations among 16- to 21-year-olds over the past 10 years with 2023 seeing the lowest registrations in the decade, according to Giannoulis' office.

"We don't really have the data to inform us as to why it is," Giannoulis said. "We've looked at it, thought about it, and there are a million contributing

factors."

EV expansion

Gov. JB Pritzker and officials from electric utility Commonwealth Edison on Sept. 3 presented the village of Skokie, a Chicago suburb near the city's northwest side, with a \$45,000 rebate check to help fund the village's efforts to "electrify" its vehicle fleet.

It is one of the first municipalities to receive funding through ComEd's beneficial electrification plan. That plan, alongside others outlining the company's efforts to strengthen the electric grid and keep electricity bills manageable, is required by the state's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

"Reaching our state's EV goals requires more than just individual consumer choices—it means municipalities, school districts, and other organizations also commit to EVs as we fundamentally reassess the landscape of clean transportation in Illinois," Pritzker said in a news release.

Since launching in February, the company said it has offered rebates for more than 1,600 new charging ports and 109 new fleet vehicles in northern Illinois.

Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen said that the fleet electrification is part of the village's efforts to encourage electric vehicle adoption.

The village was among the first group of municipalities to participate in the EV Readiness Program at the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. That program lays out actions that cities can take, like changing zoning requirements, parking rules and permitting procedures to make it easier to switch to an electric vehicle.

ComEd's rebate program—and the state law requiring it—is part of the state's broader efforts at encouraging electric vehicle adoption and courting the electric vehicle industry.

Last week, the governor announced the 13th incentive package offered to a company through the Reimagining Energy and Vehicles program. Ymer Technology, a Swedish manufacturing firm specializing in cooling technology, is set to receive \$2.9 million in tax incentives through the program while creating 33 jobs.

County wins Distinguished Budget Presentation Award

Once again, McHenry County has won top honors for budget reporting from an international organization of its finance professional peers.

McHenry County received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for its current FY 2024 budget. The award recognizes that McHenry County met stringent and nationally accepted standards and guidelines in presenting its annual budget to policymakers and the public.

This is the 10th time that McHenry County has won the prestigious award; only seven counties in Illinois, and 317 nationwide, received the honor for 2024.

"Our repeated recognition by GFOA is an honor – but more importantly, it's a testament to our fiscal responsibility, and an assurance to the taxpayers we serve, that we are careful stewards of their money," County Board Chairman Mike Buehler, R-Crystal Lake, said.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional organization that advances excellence in government finance by providing best practices, professional development, resources, and practical research for more than 21,000 members.

"McHenry County takes its fiduciary duty to the public very seriously. We work hard every year on these reports, and we're proud to once again win this prestigious award and be recognized as among the best of the best when it comes to budget reporting," Chief Financial Officer Kerri Wisz said.

McHenry County offers the public a number of tools to review county government revenue and expenses.

The full 2024 budget is on display through Questica OpenBook, a powerful tool that allows viewers to easily examine it in as great a detail as they wish; it can be found at <https://bit.ly/3AxCDbT>.

Taxpayers also can visit the county's Financial Dashboard, a simpler tool for reviewing expenses and reve-



McHenry County Chief Financial Officer Kerri Wisz is shown holding the GFOA plaque.

nues; it can be found at www.mchenrycountyil.gov/financialdashboard, and dashboard reports are available going back to 2017.

The County Board's standing committees are in the process of developing the budget for the 2025 fiscal year that starts Dec. 1 – you can watch these meetings in their entirety through the McHenry

County Meeting Portal. The link to the Meeting Portal can be found on the top bar of the county homepage at www.mchenrycountyil.gov.

McHenry County government also streams and archives its meetings on its McHenry County Meetings channel on YouTube; it can be found at www.youtube.com/@mchenrycountymeetings.

State law banning concealed carry on public transit ruled unconstitutional

Limited ruling applies only to plaintiffs; both sides considering next steps

By Peter Hancock
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

A federal judge in Rockford has declared a state law banning concealed firearms on public transit systems unconstitutional—at least as it applies to four individuals who challenged it in court.

But the law remains in effect for everyone else as the parties in the case consider their next steps.

In a decision released Aug. 30, Judge Iain D. Johnston said under current U.S. Supreme Court standards, the law violates the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"After an exhaustive review of the parties' filings and the historical record, as required by Supreme Court precedent, the Court finds that Defendants failed to meet their burden to show an American tradition of firearm regulation at the time of the Founding that would allow Illinois to prohibit Plaintiffs—who hold concealed-carry permits—from carrying concealed handguns for self-defense onto the CTA and Me-

tra," he wrote.

Johnston cited the 2022 Supreme Court decision, *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen*, which struck down a century-old law in New York requiring individuals to show "proper cause" for needing to carry a firearm before they could be issued a concealed carry permit.

The Illinois case challenged a portion of the state's 2013 Firearm Concealed Carry Act, which allows certain individuals to obtain permits to carry concealed firearms in many public places.

But the law also lists several prohibited areas where it remains illegal to carry concealed weapons, including "Any bus, train, or form of transportation paid for in whole or in part with public funds, and any building, real property, and parking area under the control of a public transportation facility paid for in whole or in part with public funds."

Four individuals who hold concealed carry permits filed suit in 2022 to challenge the law, saying it prevented them

from carrying their firearms for self-defense on mass transit trains and buses in the Chicago metropolitan area. They included Benjamin Schoenthal, of DeKalb County; Mark Wroblewski, of DuPage County; Joseph Vesel, of suburban Cook County; and Douglas Winston, of Lake County.

Johnston's ruling held that the law is unconstitutional, but only as it applies to the four plaintiffs, meaning the law remains in effect for everyone else.

A spokesperson for Raoul, a defendant in the case, said that office would likely appeal the ruling. A spokesperson for Cook County State's Attorney Kimberly Foxx, who was also named as a defendant, declined to comment.

Asked about the decision at an unrelated event, Gov. JB Pritzker said he disagreed with Johnston's opinion. He said the rights protected under the Second Amendment are not absolute and that there should be limits on the kinds of weapons people are allowed to carry and where

those weapons should be permitted.

"So it's clear that there are some misguided decisions that get made at the circuit court level, the federal court level, and I'm hoping that it will be overturned along the way, if it has to all the way the Supreme Court," he said. "It will be disappointing if they uphold this. But I'm hopeful that the law that was passed in Illinois a number of years ago, that's frankly done a lot to keep people safe, will be upheld."

In July, the Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of challenges to the state's 2021 ban on assault-style weapons and large-capacity magazines, at least for the time being. Several lawsuits seek preliminary injunctions to block enforcement of that law while the cases are being tried, but the court said it would not hear those challenges until after the lower courts have conducted their trials.

The first of those trials is scheduled to begin Sept. 16 in U.S. District Court in East St. Louis.

ICC approves McHenry County rail safety upgrades

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) approved installation of automatic warning devices at the Kuhn Road (AAR/DOT #387891P) highway-rail grade crossing near Solon Mills in McHenry County. The project came to the ICC's attention after rail safety staff evaluated the crossing.

"Keeping Illinois' rail infrastructure safe is a top priority for the ICC. The Grade Crossing Protection Fund allows the Commission to help local governments and railroad companies across Illinois make important safety improvements to their rail crossings," said ICC Commissioner Michael T. Carrigan.

The estimated total cost of the signal design and installa-

tion project is \$417,431. ICC staff recommended that the GCPF be used to pay 95 percent of the cost, not to exceed \$396,559. The Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Company will pay the remaining 5 percent of the costs, along with all future maintenance costs. All required work is to be completed within eighteen (18) months from the Order date.

About the Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund

In 1955, the State of Illinois passed legislation creating the GCPF. Since then, Illinois has strengthened its commitment to public highway-rail safety by increasing funding toward projects such as the closure and consolidation of existing

public crossings, installation of new warning systems, highway approach improvements, upgrades to existing warning devices and interconnection to nearby traffic signals, construction/reconstruction of grade separation structures and the construction of pedestrian grade separations. The Commission administers the GCPF, which is funded by motor fuel tax money designated for rail safety improvements. The General Assembly appropriates \$42 million annually for the GCPF.

About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program,

the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient, and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities, and equipment in the state.

Circuit Court partners with Canines 4 Comfort, adds facility dog to staff

The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Court's newest employee has four legs, curly apricot-colored hair, a fuzzy tail, and an uncanny ability to make almost everyone smile. Desi is a one-year-old purebred standard poodle raised and trained by Canines 4 Comfort of Round Lake, Illinois, and donated to the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit as the Court's first Facility Dog, one of the only designated courthouse facility dogs in the state of Illinois.

Desi's training equips her to perform a wide range of specific skilled tasks in the courthouse, from helping victims, petitioners, and defendants in court to welcoming and spending time with jurors, visiting children in Kids' Korner, and even supporting employees and our justice partners including judges and attorneys throughout the workday. Desi's training and skills make her an invaluable and unique addition to the courthouse, bringing hope and positivity to all she interacts with. "Desi has already made a significant

impact on our community. We are incredibly fortunate and grateful to Canines 4 Comfort and their volunteers for finding and training a facility dog that is a wonderful addition to our Nineteenth Judicial Circuit family. Desi has already shown us that she can make a positive impact on court participants and employees alike. Facility dogs like Desi are trained to lessen stress, anxiety, and trauma. Her job is to provide support and affection; when you see her around the building, ask her handlers if you can pet her, she will brighten your day," said Chief Judge Daniel B. Shanes.

Canines 4 Comfort is a 501(c)3 that provides trained dogs to support mental health and wellness; the dogs provide life-changing comfort, stability, and purpose for those who are privileged to interact with them. Desi began her career with the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit full-time two weeks ago. She is destined to have a long career that positively touches lives in Lake County.

Coroner's affidavit shows as many as 800 human remains could have been misidentified

No criminal charges have been filed against former Carlinville funeral director

By Beth Hundsdorfer
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

As many as 800 families across the country who patronized a Carlinville funeral home may never know if the remains on their mantles belong to their loved ones, according to an affidavit signed by Sangamon County Coroner Jim Allmon.

The affidavit was filed in a lawsuit pending against Carlinville-based Heinz Funeral Home and its director August Heinz for mishandling remains and providing the wrong cremated remains to family members.

The number of families is based on the number of clients Heinz handled between 2017, the time of the first known allegation, and 2023. Cremated remains cannot be identified by using DNA because they are degraded during the incineration process, so families can never be fully sure whether the remains given to them by Heinz are truly those of their loved ones.

The affidavit stated that Allmon confirmed 75 cases of families from across the country receiving incorrect cremains using existing records.

In one of those cases, a woman prayed and talked to what she thought was her mother's ashes every day.

"During the course of this investigation, someone had to go to her and tell her that it wasn't mama," said Don Craven, who represents one of the affected families.

The investigation also found that Heinz stored bodies in unrefrigerated rooms at funeral homes, left them in the local hospital morgues for weeks, and mislabeled bodies and human remains with the wrong names.

Don and Joe Craven, of the Springfield law firm of Craven & Craven, are seeking to certify former clients of Heinz as a class in lawsuit, stating those 800 families have similar claims under the law.

The Cravens also serve as legal counsel for Capitol News Illinois.

At the time the Heinz case came to light, it wasn't immediately clear if or how he might have broken the law. The Illinois State Police investigated criminal wrongdoing, but as of Tuesday, Heinz has not faced any charges in connection with his handling of bodies.

But charges have not entirely been ruled out.

"We are currently exploring any and all options for charges," said Macoupin County State's Attorney Jordan Garrison. The case also spurred Illinois lawmakers to introduce bills to more closely regulate funeral directors and the handling of human remains.

Last month, Gov. JB Pritzker signed the Dignity in Death Care Act into law. The Act mandates funeral directors keep

a chain of custody with unique identifiers that stay with the remains to ensure the proper identification of remains through cremation or burial.

Typically, funeral directors consider it best practice to place a titanium medallion containing the funeral home's name and a unique identifying number with the body when it is picked up and transferred for cremation.

The crematorium keeps a record of the person and number. The medallion stays with the remains through the transfer and the cremation and is typically affixed to the bag with the remains when it is returned to the family.

This tracking system would ensure that the remains given to the family are truly those of their loved ones.

Heinz did not have a crematorium at his funeral home but did contract with at least two local businesses to do cremations. Those crematoriums kept records that Heinz did not have access to, allowing investigators to piece together the identities of some cremains.

Under the new law, a funeral director who makes a false statement on a death certificate, prepares false records or alters the chain of custody records could be charged with a felony.

The new law also mandates that the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation has 10 days to inspect funeral homes after receiving a complaint.

In Heinz's case, Morgan County Coroner Marci Patterson filed a complaint against Heinz six months before it was made public by Sangamon County Coroner Jim Allmon. One of Patterson's deputies went to the Carlinville funeral home and found a decomposing body in an embalming room. Patterson reported it to IDFP and then tried for months to get the agency to act.

IDFP did not take immediate action against Heinz's funeral director license because if the agency suspended the license, it would have only 30 days to complete an investigation and go to trial, a spokesperson said.

During that time, Heinz continued to conduct cremations and funeral services. Heinz surrendered his license last year after Allmon went public during a news conference about what he found at the Carlinville funeral home, including three decomposing bodies. Allmon went to the funeral home after a Springfield hospital called him about a body abandoned in their morgue. When Allmon called the family, they told him that Heinz had already delivered their loved one's ashes to them.

Allmon then launched an investigation that also resulted in at least nine exhumations, including five at Camp Butler National Cemetery, a resting place of more than 32,000 military veterans.

Community briefs

Community Police Academy application deadline is Sept. 12

Sheriff John D. Idleburg announces the return of the Lake County Sheriff's Office Community Police Academy, which will begin the week of September 16, and run until November 18. Classes will be held on Mondays at the sheriff's substation in Libertyville and headquarters in Waukegan.

The Community Police Academy is open to all Lake County residents aged 18, or older, of good moral character with no felony convictions. This is a free series of events and participants will get an in-depth view of all the various responsibilities of the Lake County Sheriff's Office. Participants will get an inside look at our Corrections Division, Patrol Division, Court Security Division, Criminal Investigations Division, Crash Investigations Unit, Evidence Collections/Processing Unit, and more.

Sheriff John D. Idleburg said, "I am pleased to offer our second 'Community Police Academy' this year! This is a wonderful opportunity to get an inside look at the operations of your sheriff's office. You will have a chance to hear and learn from our professionals who serve the community each and every day."

The application deadline is Thursday, September 12, 2024. Applications are available on the homepage of the sheriff's office website <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/5777/2024-Community-Police-Academy> at: <https://bit.ly/4e0h15y>.

Health Department hosting Sept. 21 residential recycling event

The McHenry County Department of Health is holding a residential electronics recycling event from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Sept. 21 at the County Administration Building.

This is an event for residential waste only, no business waste will be accepted.

- Accepted items include:
- Computers (desktop, laptop, tablet)
 - Printers, fax machines, scanners, small scale servers
 - DVD players, DVD recorders, VCRs
 - Video game consoles
 - Portable digital music players

- Converter boxes, cable and sat receivers
 - Textiles and clothing
 - Clean Styrofoam
 - Alkaline batteries*
 - Television and monitors*
- *Fees apply

The County Administration Building is located at 667 Ware Road, Woodstock.

For more information about MCDH recycling events, please contact Kelli Boeckmann, McHenry County Solid Waste Manager, at (815) 334-4585, or visit bit.ly/mcdhsolid-waste.

McHenry County Department of Animal Control hosting low-cost rabies vaccination and microchip clinics

The McHenry County Animal Control & Adoption Center (MCAC) is hosting three low-cost rabies vaccination and microchip clinics for cats and dogs this fall: September 17, October 1, and October 8 at the McHenry County Animal Control and Adoption Center, located at 100 N. Virginia Street in Crystal Lake.

These clinics are by appointment only, and registration is available online at bit.ly/mcac-clinics. Residents with questions can call (815) 459-6222.

Cash is the only form of payment accepted at the clinics. Clinics are available for both cats and dogs, and will be offered on the following days and hours:

- Tuesday, September 17, 1 – 4 p.m. (dogs only)
- Tuesday, October 1, 1 – 4 p.m. (dogs only)
- Tuesday, October 8, 1 – 4 p.m. (cats only)

Special package pricing is being offered for fixed (spayed or neutered) animals. All animals attending one of the clinics will be microchipped unless a previous microchip is registered or scanned during the event.

Special package pricing for fixed (spayed or neutered) animals:

- Dogs: Microchip, 1-year vaccination and registration – \$20
- Dogs: Microchip, 3-year vaccination and registration – \$50
- Cats: Microchip, 1-year vaccination and registration – \$15
- Cats: Microchip, 3-year vaccination and registration – \$40

Intact animals (not spayed or neutered) can still attend the clinics, with the costs being \$15 for a 1-year vaccination and \$30 for a 3-year vaccination. Registration is a separate fee. Intact animals receiving a vaccination will also receive a free microchip unless previously microchipped.

All dogs must be leashed, and all cats must be in an approved carrier when arriving for their appointments. Please do not bring animals that are in heat. Information about bite history for dogs that are easily stressed will be requested when making an appointment. Owners are responsible for putting a muzzle on any dog that needs one prior to their appointment.

Rabies is a virus that attacks the central nervous system of animals and humans and is fatal once symptoms appear. A change in an animal's behavior is often the first sign of rabies in a pet. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame, and it may lose fear of people and become docile or become excited and irritable.

We strongly urge adults to educate children about avoiding contact with unfamiliar animals and to immediately inform an adult if they are bitten or scratched by an animal. Any animal bites or encounters with animals suspected of having rabies should be reported to the MCAC at (815) 459-6222.

For more information about rabies, registration fees, and microchips, please visit bit.ly/MCDHAnimalControl.

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Forest Preserves acquiring rookery, important wetlands

The Lake County Forest Preserves Board of Commissioners approved the purchase of about 41 acres in Antioch Township, known as the Fogel property, at its regular board meeting recently.

The property, situated east of Grass Lake Road, was acquired for \$361,000. The new site is adjacent to Vern Thelen Park on its eastern border and lies just north of Grass Lake Elementary School.

Typically, the Forest Preserves only acquire properties with a minimum of 100 acres to align with its mission. However, this property is an exception due to its significant ecological features, including important wetlands, wooded areas and the largest heron and egret rookery in Lake County.

"We acquired this property because of its sensitive ecological features," said Executive Director Alex Ty Kovach.

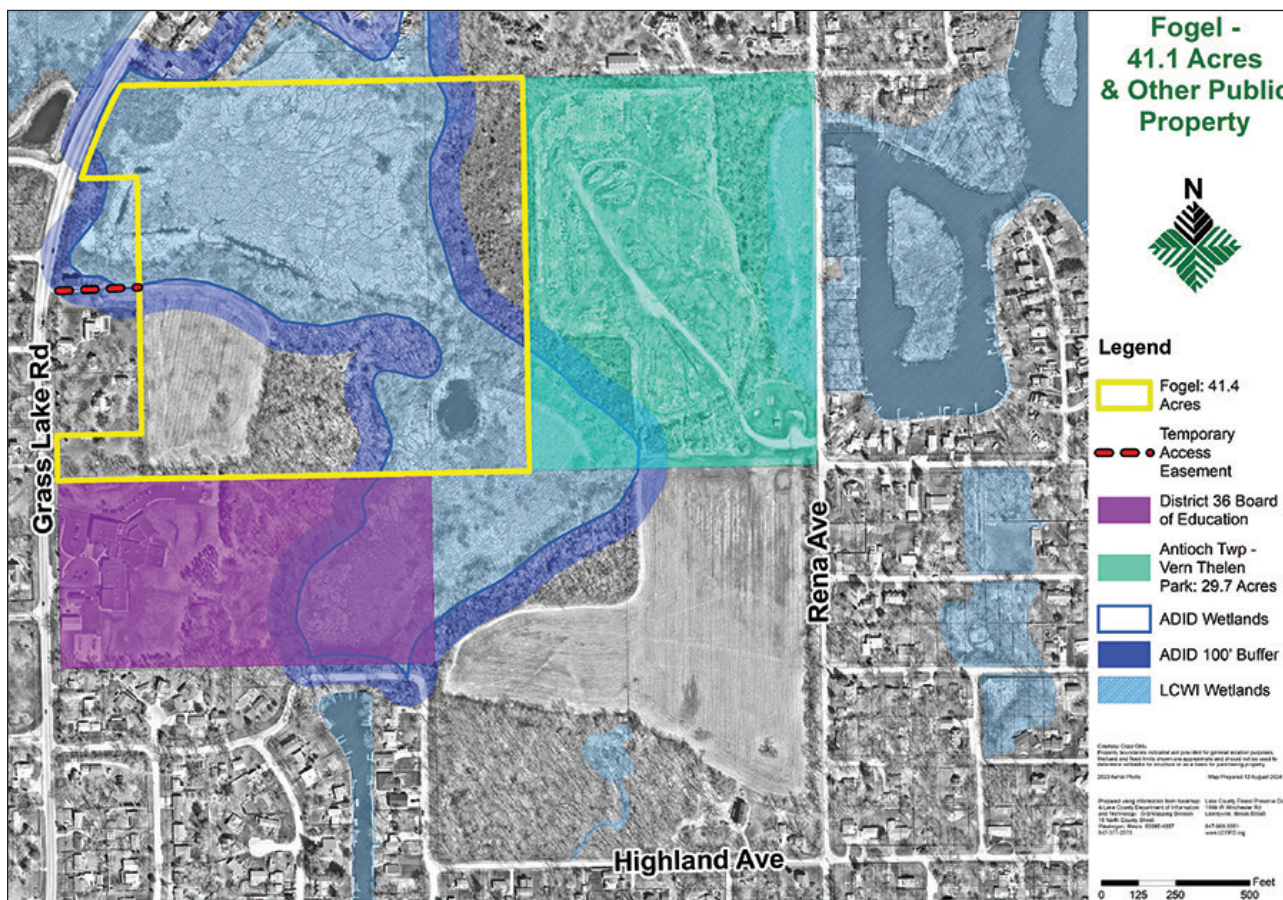
The property will be a "conservation preserve" rather than a "forest preserve" to indicate that the Forest Preserves will own and manage the site for the protection of its rare ecological attributes.

Developing public access

on this property would severely damage the delicate ecosystem and disrupt the vital rookery. Preserving this land ensures that these essential natural resources remain untouched and protected.

The planning committee reviewed a list of staff suggestions last week and made its decision. The full board of commissioners agreed and chose the name Lotus Country Conservation Preserve. The term "lotus country" has been associated with the Grass Lake area since the early 1900s when Lake County was a popular resort destination. Back then, one of the main draws was the extensive lotus beds, showcasing large, pale-yellow flowers that bloom in late July and early August.

It is believed that the lotus plant originated in the east-central United States. Prehistoric communities utilized its seeds and tubers as a food source, taking them along as they traveled. For thousands of years, tribal nations made their homes in the lakes region, where they thrived on wild rice, fish, waterfowl, beaver and various aquatic plants.



The Lake County Forest Preserves is in the process of acquiring a large heron and egret rookery in Antioch Township. The 41 acre parcel is adjacent to Vern Thelen Park and will be considered a "conservation preserve" in order to protect the rookery and its delicate ecosystem.

Storytelling Festival to offer multiple styles, topics, and speakers

The Spring Grove Storytelling Festival in Illinois is a family event for all ages, with the pleasures of hearing stories of adventure, hope, and humor.

Three featured speakers bring years of experience of telling tales around the world to the festival, as well as a workshop opportunity for those who want to learn how to develop their talking talents.

The Spring Grove Storytelling Festival is Saturday, Sept. 21, from noon to 6:00 p.m. on four stages in the village park. A morning workshop session from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. will be offered by one storyteller to learn details of story creation, writing, and telling.

Three storytellers will be featured on stage.

Noa Baum is recently back from Spain and once was a keynote speaker at the International Conference of Story Tellers in Australia. She has told stories in England, Swe-

den, and Turkey and is author of the book "A Land Twice Promised."

Loren Niemi will tell stories as well as conduct the morning workshop sessions. He wrote a book with Elizabeth Ellis: "Inviting the Wolf In: Thinking About Difficult Stories."

Chicago-based Peter Cook is an "internationally-known deaf performing artist whose work incorporates American Sign Language, pantomime, storytelling, acting, and movement," according to his website.

"Prepare to be amazed," writes Cook. "My shows are often described as dazzling and breathtaking."

Baum said humans have been relying on stories for tens of thousands of years to be engaged, educated, or entertained. "A story speaks to the most fundamental human need to create meaning and connection," she said. "Our brains are designed for narrative. It's fundamental to who

we are. At the festival, you find the good in humanity."

Niemi said his stories come from his own life and the places where he has lived. "I'm usually looking for a mix of humor, but not a punch line joke."

For the workshop he will conduct, he said those who attend should have a story they want to work on so they can address issues of context and structure. He will help to build confidence to take the stage, work with a microphone, and tell a story in terms of voice, breath, and speed.

Niemi also urged families to attend to enjoy the stories and perform an important function of any such gathering. "A story is always told to someone," he said. "The audience gives clues for what they want."

Tickets for the festival event and the workshop session are available at the door or at springgrovestorytelling.org.

Suicide prevention fundraising walk set for Sept. 28

On Saturday, Sept. 28, the McHenry County Suicide Prevention Task Force is proud to be hosting its annual Never Walk Alone event.

Never Walk Alone is a suicide awareness and fundraising non-competitive walk. It is an opportunity to honor those who have died by suicide, to share stories of healing and hope, and learn about resources for support. All funds raised go directly to supporting suicide prevention programs and support

for survivors.

This event is open to the public and all ages are welcome. The event is free to register. Registration link:

<https://givebutter.com/neverwalkalone24/>

The mission of the McHenry County Suicide Prevention Task Force is to raise awareness of mental health and suicide prevention, provide education, implement prevention programs and provide support for those affected by suicide within McHenry County, Illinois.

Audition slots available for 'A Christmas Carol' at PM&L Theatre

PM&L Theatre will be holding auditions for A Christmas Carol. Join in on this journey into the heart-warming world of Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and the Ghosts of Christmas.

Auditions will be held on September 29 & 30 at PM&L Theatre, and they're looking for actors of all ages to fill a variety of iconic roles. From Scrooge to the

Cratchit family and the unforgettable spirits, there's a place for everyone in this classic holiday tale.

Audition will be held Sunday, Sept. 29, from 4-8 p.m. and Monday, Sept. 30 from 6-9 p.m. at PM&L Theatre, 877 Main Street, Antioch.

Callbacks are by invitation and will be held Wednesday, Oct. 1, starting

at 7 p.m.

Full details can be found on their website pmltheatre.com, on the audition page.

What you need to know:

- Each auditioner will audition solo.
- Please come prepared with a 1-2 minute monologue.
- You may be asked to a cold reading from the script.
- List any special talents you have and would be willing to do on stage, ie do you play a musical instrument? Are you a magician? Do you sing or dance
- Please note if you are auditioning for one part only.
- List any/all conflicts that might prevent you from attending a rehearsal and/or performance. This is important information that needs to be included.

Secure your audition slot now by filling out a form online at pmltheatre.com. Follow the link in the audition form's confirmation message to schedule your audition.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Loki, is about a year old, neutered, up-to-date on routine shots, tested negative for FIV, feline leukemia and heartworm and microchipped.

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.



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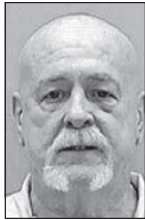


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Convicted murderer denied parole release by Illinois Prisoner Review Board

Patrick D. Kenneally, McHenry County State's Attorney, announces that on August 29, the Illinois Prisoner Review Board denied parole for Illinois Department of Corrections Inmate Mark Smith.



Mark Smith

Mark Smith was convicted in 1970 for three separate murders in Illinois. In each case, Mark Smith kidnapped, raped and brutally murdered a young woman. Two of these murders occurred in McHenry County. The third case occurred in Cook County. Smith was sentenced to a total of 500 years for the three murders in the Illinois Department of Corrections. However, prior to 1978, parole is afforded to inmates after serving 20 years. Hence, every three to five years, Smith is considered for parole by the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, requiring the surviving families of the victims to again relive their nightmare of the possibility of Smith's release.

Smith was convicted for the rape and murder of another woman in Arkansas. Smith also confessed to several murders of young women in Germany where he was stationed in the Armed Forces in 1969.

During an objection hearing on August 21, 2024, the McHenry County State's Attorney's Office hosted several family members of the three Illinois victims to voice their objections to the Parole Board. Criminal Chief William Bruce represented the McHenry County State's Attorney's Office on behalf of all the victims in Illinois, including the Cook County victim, as the Cook County State's Attorney's Office no longer participates in parole hearings.

McHenry County State's Attorney Patrick Kenneally recognizes the sincere and forceful objections presented to the Illinois Prisoner Review Board by the families of the victims, and the numerous letters submitted by the public objecting to Smith's release on parole. Patrick Kenneally is also very thankful that the Parole Board denied Smith's parole and granted our request to extend the next parole hear-

ing to five years from three, providing some reprieve for the families.

Horse killed in hit-and-run, sheriff's office seeking information

A horse was killed in a hit-and-run traffic crash in Wadsworth.

On September 2, at approximately 9:10 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies responded to the 40800 block of North Delaney Road, Wadsworth, for a report of a traffic crash involving a horse. Sheriff's deputies arrived and found several people tending to the injured horse.

Preliminary investigation shows a larger vehicle, likely a pickup truck, was traveling northbound on Delaney Road. It appears the horse was walking southbound in the northbound lane of traffic. The driver of the pickup truck struck the horse and did not stop at the scene. It is unclear if there was anyone riding the horse, or if the horse escaped from a nearby ranch.

The area was checked with a drone and canine team, to determine if a rider on the horse was in the area, injured. The search did not reveal a rider.

Multiple ranches and horse farms in the area were checked, in an attempt to locate the owner of the horse, however, the attempts were unsuccessful. The horse sustained major injuries in the collisions, and a veterinarian responded to the scene. Unfortunately, the veterinarian determined the only course of action was to euthanize the horse, due to the horse's injuries.

The sheriff's office continues to investigate and anyone with information about the horse, or the hit-and-run traffic crash is encouraged to call the Lake County Sheriff's Office at 847-377-4000.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office thanks the Gurnee Police Department, Waukegan Police Department, and Newport Fire Protection District for their assistance at the scene.

Seyller sentenced to two years for violation of an order of protection

Patrick D. Kenneally, McHenry County State's Attorney, announces that on August 30, Michael D. Seyller, a 50-year-old man from Cary, was sentenced to two years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for the felony offense of violating an order of protection, as Seyller had been previously convicted of Aggravated Domestic Battery. Seyller was found guilty after a bench trial and sentenced before the Honorable Judge Justin Hansen.

The evidence at trial revealed that on April 4, 2024, Seyller had an existing order of protection prohibiting contact between him and his former girlfriend. Seyller had a conversation with a third party, where he threatened his former girlfriend, and instructed the third party to communicate that threat to her. After a lengthy sentencing hearing, Judge Hansen sentenced Seyller to two years in prison.

McHenry County State's Attorney Patrick Kenneally is grateful to the Cary Police Department as well as Assistant State's Attorney William Bruce for their combined efforts. Orders of protection will be respected in McHenry County and those who do not will be prosecuted.

Man charged in serious crash that critically injured passenger

Lake County Sheriff's Deputies continue investigating a serious traffic crash that occurred on Saturday evening, involving a motorcycle.

On August 31, at approximately 8:30 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies were dispatched to the area of Route 59 and Diemer Street, unincorporated Antioch, for a traffic crash with injuries. Sheriff's deputies arrived and located a downed 1998 Harley-Davidson Motorcycle. They also



Michael D. Seyller



Gregory Shaer

found a 43-year-old woman of Antioch, unconscious and unresponsive in the roadway.

The woman, who was a passenger on the motorcycle, was transported to an area hospital with critical, life-threatening injuries.

The operator of the motorcycle, Gregory Shaer, 51, of the 25000 block of West Blackstone Place, unincorporated Lake Villa, initially told deputies that he was traveling southbound on Route 59 and swerved to avoid striking a vehicle that turned in front of him, which caused him to lose control of the motorcycle. Shaer did not sustain significant injuries.

Sheriff's deputies then located a 33-year-old woman of Antioch who said she was traveling northbound on Route 59 in her GMC Acadia, when she was sideswiped by the southbound Harley-Davidson motorcycle. The driver of the GMC said Shaer swerved into her lane of traffic and sideswiped her vehicle. Evidence was located at the scene consistent with the statement from the driver of the GMC.

Sheriff's deputies detected signs of alcohol impairment from Shaer. He was subsequently placed under arrest, but refused to provide breath, blood, or a urine sample for analysis. A search warrant was drafted for these samples and a Lake County Judge signed and approved the search warrant. Shaer was transported to a local hospital, where the samples were obtained and sent to the crime laboratory for analysis.

After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the case, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the following charges: Aggravated DUI - Resulting in Great Bodily Harm (Class 4 Felony), DUI - Alcohol (Class A Misdemeanor) and Driving in the Wrong Lane of Traffic (Infraction).

Additional charges are possible.

Fatal hit-and-run crash under investigation

Lake County Sheriff's Traffic Crash Investigators are investigating a fatal hit-and-run crash that occurred in Wadsworth.

On September 6, at ap-

proximately 11:45 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies were dispatched to a report of a 'person down' on Dilley Road just south of Wadsworth Road. Sheriff's deputies arrived and located an adult woman deceased in the roadway. The woman sustained significant trauma, consistent with being struck by a vehicle.

Based on a preliminary investigation, sheriff's crash investigators believe the woman was riding a bicycle northbound on Dilley Road, when she was struck from behind by a northbound GMC SUV. When she was struck, she was thrown from the bicycle, and the bicycle became lodged under the SUV, as the driver fled from the scene. The woman was then struck by a southbound Hyundai Elantra, driven by a 23-year-old man of Waukegan. That driver of the Hyundai is cooperative with the investigation.

Information was received from a witness who saw a GMC SUV dragging a bicycle eastbound on Wadsworth Road. The vehicle was identified and located parked at a residence in Winthrop Harbor. The vehicle had damage consistent with being involved in the hit-and-run crash. The vehicle was seized, and crash investigators have identified the suspected driver of that vehicle, a 32-year-old man of Winthrop Harbor.

The Lake County Coroner's Office responded to the scene and is in the process of identifying the woman and scheduling an autopsy.

The crash remains under investigation by the Lake County Sheriff's Office Technical Crash Investigations Team and criminal charges will be sought following the conclusion of their investigation.

Whitlow sentenced to 7 years for aggravated DUI

Patrick D. Kenneally, McHenry County State's Attorney, announces that on August 30, Valerie Whitlow, of Johnsbury, was sentenced to 7 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for the offense of Aggravated Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol. In addition, Whitlow was fined \$5,000 and must make a \$100 contribution to Moth-

ers Against Drunk Driving. This negotiated sentence comes after 5 prior DUI violations between 1983 and 2002.

On January 29, 2022, at 1:19 a.m., the McHenry Police Department responded to a single-vehicle accident. The driver, Valerie Whitlow, struck a pole in front of 3025 Lincoln Road in McHenry and was bleeding from her face. When questioned, Whitlow stated that she consumed a bottle of wine prior to driving. Whitlow showed signs of impairment on field sobriety tests and after her arrest provided a breath sample which revealed a .209 blood alcohol concentration.

McHenry County State's Attorney Patrick Kenneally recognizes the excellent work done by the McHenry Police Department and Assistant State's Attorneys Joseph Tarazon and Kevin Chrzanowski. Driving under the influence is not only illegal, but extremely dangerous. The McHenry County State's Attorney will continue to prosecute offenders in an effort to keep our roads safe.

Transport vehicle carrying 16 inmates involved in crash

A McHenry County Sheriff's Inmate Transport Vehicle, carrying several Lake County Jail inmates, was involved in a collision on September 4.

At approximately 1:00 p.m., Grayslake Police and Fire responded to a vehicle accident on Route 120 and Hainesville Road. One of the vehicles involved was the westbound McHenry County Sheriff's Inmate Transport vehicle. The transport vehicle was carrying 15 Lake County Jail inmates currently being housed in McHenry County and one McHenry County Jail Inmate, for a total of 16 inmates. Grayslake Police Department is investigating the crash, however, preliminary indications show the westbound bus collided with an eastbound sedan that was turning left (northbound), onto Hainesville Road, in the intersection.

Due to there being 16 inmates onboard the bus, numerous Grayslake Police Officers, sheriff's deputies, and other police officers responded. All of the inmates were transported to area hospitals via ambulance, with non-life-threatening injuries. All of the ambulances transporting the inmates were followed by either Grayslake Police Officers or Lake County Sheriff's Deputies. All of the inmates remain in custody and under the supervision of Lake County Sheriff's Deputies/Corrections Officers, McHenry County Sheriff's Corrections Officer, or Grayslake Police Officers.

Two McHenry County Sheriff's employees and the driver of the sedan were transported via ambulance to area hospitals with non-life-threatening injuries.

The crash remains under investigation by the Grayslake Police Department.



Valerie Whitlow

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342522

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.

July 16

Alexander A. Russell, 18, Zion, was cited for aggravated fleeing to elude, aggravated speeding (72 mph in 40 mph zone), operating a motorcycle without classification and no insurance;

July 17

Juvenile, was cited for possession of child pornography; Ronald Harris, 42, Waukegan, was cited for battery; James Graham, 35, Waukegan, was cited for battery; Juvenile, was cited for no driver's license, curfew violation, and underage possession of cannabis;

July 18

Ricardo Davila, 34, Wauke-

gan, was cited for criminal damage to state supported property;

Jesus M. Ramirez, 40, Antioch, was cited for a warrant arrest: criminal damage to property;

Marisol Pedroza Ortiz, 37, Waukegan, was cited for aggravated speeding (66 mph in 35 mph zone);

Jade A. Booker, 21, Waukegan, was cited for no driver's license and improper transportation of cannabis;

Miguel Rodriguez, 18, Round Lake Beach, was cited for driving while license revoked and no insurance;

Ashley N. Esunis, 37, Palatine, was cited for DUI - alcohol, and improper transportation of cannabis;

July 19

Mateusz M. Lizak, 40, Round Lake, was cited for DUI - alcohol;

Juan A. Patriz-Siguenza, 35, Zion, was cited for DUI - alcohol, and no insurance;

Zarko Markovic, 48, Niles, was cited for DUI - alcohol, aggravated speeding (85 mph in 45 mph zone) and no insurance;

July 20

Heath A. graham, 57, Lindenhurst, was cited for aggravated speeding (88 mph in 45 mph zone);

Juan F. Figuera-Cabeza, 33, Elgin, was cited for driving while license suspended and suspended registration;

Alex Silva, 35, Grayslake, was cited for domestic battery;

July 21

Alexis Lopez-Ocasio, 42, Milwaukee, WI, was cited for no driver's license;

Jose Lopez-Sandoval, 30, Cicero, was cited for no driver's license, and suspended registration.

July 22

Richard Martinez-Messner, 36, Northfield, was cited for a warrant obtained: criminal trespass to a motor vehicle;

Thomas Walker, 39, Crest Hill, was cited for possession of a stolen motor vehicle, and driving while license revoked;

Mauresha S. Stamps, 28, Zion, was cited for a warrant arrest: violating a court order; Christian Alvarez Fajardo, 30, Waukegan, was cited for DUI - alcohol, driving while license suspended and open transportation of alcohol;

Giovanni W. Perez, 31, Woodstock, was cited for a warrant arrest: aggravated domestic battery, and aggravated battery (McHenry County);

Daniel Q. Garibay, 29, Ingleside; was cited for obstructing a peace officer and suspended registration;

July 23

Thomas E. Feeney, Jr., 35, Gurnee, was cited for DUI - drugs, and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia;

Zion Fleming, 23, Beach Park, was cited for aggravated battery;

Anthony T. Allegretti, 35, Libertyville, was cited for a warrant arrest: aggravated do-

mestic battery; Danny Rivera, 30, Zion, was cited for a warrant arrest: disorderly conduct, criminal damage to property, and a new charge: improper transportation of cannabis;

Myra A. Arteaga, 35, Mundelein, was cited for driving while license revoked and no insurance.

GARAGE SALES

Burlington Garage Sales

141 WESTRIDGE AVENUE Saturday, Sept. 21st, 10 am-3 pm. RUMMAGE & CRAFTS. Faith Chapel Church. Bake Sale, Fall Mums, Music & More.

Delavan Garage Sales

4104 BLUE GILL RD. Fri. Sept. 13 & Sat. Sept. 14; 9-5. Lots of carpentry tool, household items, antique child's desk; Harley Sportster seat, live traps & much more.

East Troy Garage Sales

SKYVIEW TERRACE MOBILE HOME PARK Sept 14 & 15, 9am-5pm. HD items & Parts, HD clothing, Household, Girls, Women, Mens, Linens, Toys, Games. Stop in. WATCH FOR SIGNS!

Elkhorn Garage Sales

N6794 AVATAIA TRAIL Sept. 13th & 14th, 9 - 4. Antiques, collectibles, hunting/outdoors, H/H.

Waterford Garage Sales

31601 HIGH DRIVE, BURLINGTON 9/21 & 9/22, 9:00am - 3:00pm. Estate Sale. Hobby Farm, horse troughs, chicken feeders, power tools, turbo heaters, household furniture, misc. household items.

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Monday to Wednesday.

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Complete an application at Southern Lakes Publishing, 1102 Ann St., Delavan, WI 53115 or email randy@slpublishers.com

HELP WANTED

Southern Lakes Newspapers LLC

and its affiliated companies are looking for a

SKILLED OFFICE MANAGER to lead and supervise all aspects of our business department located in Delavan, Wis. This is a full-time position, minimum 35 hours, no nights or weekends. You will be in charge of managing all day-to-day operations in the business department and directly supervising 3-4 employees.

Responsibilities:

- Oversee accounts payable and accounts receivable
- Manage banking accounts
- Quarterly and annual duties for tax filings and census reporting
- 401K and HR administration duties
- Oversee payroll for 3 companies
- Recruiting and training new employees
- Miscellaneous department management duties

Requirements:

- Proficient in QuickBooks
- At least 3 years experience in a management position
- Outstanding leadership abilities
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

Please submit resume to: kwhittington@rvpublishing.com

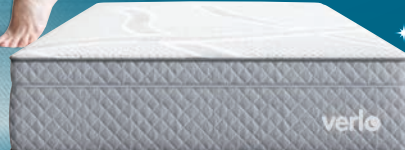
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