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Antioch PD welcomes comfort dog to staff

By Sandra Landen Machaj
CORRESPONDENT

In the fall, the Antioch Police Department welcomed its newest recruit.

But Flo is very different from the other members of the department – a 3-year-old black lab who came into the department with a specific job already assigned to her.

While many police departments throughout the country have police dogs on their force – K-9 units who respond to emergency calls, sniff out drugs and help apprehend criminals – Flo has an untraditional job.

“Flo will provide emotional support wherever needed,” said Kelley Crimmins, communications specialist for the Village of Antioch.

“While traditional police dogs focus on law enforcement, Flo is a comfort dog, where the focus is on well-being and providing emotional support wherever needed,” Crimmins explained.

Flo has been in training since she was a puppy, so she was ready to begin her work immediately after her swearing in, which took place Oct. 23, 2024, at the Village Board Meeting.

Like all other members of the force, Flo has a badge. Hers, though, is embroidered on her jacket, which identifies her as a support dog and a member of the Antioch Police Force.

Her fellow members of the police department, however, had to learn how she would assist them in enhancing public safety – as well as how to partner with a dog, share the work load among officers and function with the department.

Crimmins said that the transi-

tion was fast and easy, as both Flo and her teammates fell in love with each other.

Taken on a tour of the station, courtesy of Flo

In a recent visit to the station, Flo greeted her visitors with tail wagging, along with Nicholas Garcia, Commander of Administration.

Flo took the lead in going through the station, as if showing off her home – though Commander Garcia was allowed to tag along (perhaps because he brought a cup of Cheerios along and that’s her favorite treat).

There’s no question the station is her home. She is in and out of the offices of all the officers and other employees on site, with each person stopping to say hello and give her a pet.

“Flo has definitely taken over,” Garcia said. “Before she arrived, we emptied a storage room, painted it pink for her and turned it into her room.”

“While her cage is kept in this space, the cage is never locked,” he added. “She is free to go in, especially if she needs some time and space away from people, or a nap, but she is never locked in it.”

Another change to the station is in the Sergeants’ room, where a dog bed is located under each sergeant’s desk.

When she is the one who needs comfort – or just a break – Flo is the one who chooses where to settle in.

According to Garcia, she does sometimes play the officers against one another as she chooses her spot.

“Flo lives at the police headquarters full time and is there 24 hours a day unless she is out in the community working,” shared Garcia.

“Since we are open 24 hours and the station is manned at night, we do have to encourage her to sleep during the night.

“(It’s) often difficult for her because there are people there (at the station) who may need some attention or are ready to give Flo some attention,” he added.

Trained for a specific job

Flo is a service dog who was trained by Supporting Independence through Teamwork Service Dogs, which is located in southern Illinois.

The organization specializes in canine therapy and offers a variety of different canine services.

Antioch Police Chief Geoff Guttchow became interested in obtaining a comfort dog for the village after seeing the positive impact the dogs are having in police departments across the country.

It’s been shown that these dogs benefit not only the community, but also members of the police force.

As the department often does when they have a need for something that is not covered by their budget, Guttchow approached the Lions Club of Antioch for assistance to help cover the cost of a comfort dog. It was his hope that the Lions Club would be able to provide at least part of the funds to allow Antioch to bring a support dog (also referred to as a comfort dog) to the community.

“And once again the Lions Club, as it so often does, came through for us,” shared Commander Garcia. “The Lions Club has always been there to help the police department and other community organizations, for which we are very grateful.”

Flo has a variety of jobs, includ-



COURTESY KELLEY CRIMMINS/VILLAGE OF ANTIOCH Hi-Liter/MCN

Students at a local school are happy to get a special visit from the Antioch Police Department comfort dog, Flo.

ing going out in the community with an officer to visit schools, childcare facilities, independent living facilities, support groups, community events or just to walk the streets, meeting residents.

Officers find they are more approachable while out and about if accompanied by Flo, who loves responding to the attention she re-

ceives from those they cross paths with.

She serves as a bridge between the community and the department, but that is not her only job.

Flo is often made available to victims and witnesses who have been exposed to excessive trauma.

See COMFORT DOG, Page 4

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Antioch mayor releases statement regarding SAFE-T Act reforms

'Illinois justice system must return to common sense and human decency'

In response to this month's discovery of Antioch resident Megan Bos' body in Waukegan and the subsequent release of the man charged with concealing her death, Antioch Mayor Scott Gartner is calling for immediate reforms to the SAFE-T Act to restore judicial discretion and refocus Illinois' criminal justice system on public safety and human decency.

"We have lost all common sense when it comes to enforcing law and order," said Mayor Gartner. "When the SAFE-T Act was being debated, there were voices sounding the alarm about what could happen if it were to become law. We are living that nightmare scenario that was



Scott Gartner

ability to apply those laws with reason and humanity, the system fails all of us."

Megan Bos was reported missing in March and her body was found on April 10 in a garbage container. The man charged with hiding her body, who admitted to doing so and to destroying her phone, was released under current guidelines of

predicted by many. The law is supposed to protect the innocent. Without well-thought-out laws, there is no society. And without the

the SAFE-T Act because the charges were not classified as detainable.

"Common sense dictates that if someone is caught concealing the body of a victim the last thing we need as a society is to have that person walking around in our community," Gartner said. "A sane and sober society is one that values human life and the basic decency we owe each other as people. What is happening in this case is more than just a legal flaw, it's a moral one."

While the SAFE-T Act contains reforms worth preserving, such as those related to police accountability and low-level offenses, Mayor Gartner said it must be reeval-

uated to allow judges discretion in cases involving serious crimes, including those related to death, weapons, and obstruction.

"The SAFE-T Act, as it stands, places politics above public safety," said Gartner. "It demoralizes our law enforcement, undermines victims and their families, and makes communities like ours feel less secure. Our officers put a great deal of effort into solving this case and now their work could be all for naught. I urge state legislators to revisit and amend the law to restore balance, empower judges, and ensure the system does not put procedural technicalities ahead of justice."

Officials celebrate completion of US 41 and Stearns School Road project

On April 25 local officials gathered to celebrate the completion of the US 41 at Stearns School Road intersection project in north-central Lake County.

This \$6 million project was driven by an important goal, to reduce serious crashes. Over five years, this intersection saw more than 100 crashes, including some that resulted in serious injuries and fatalities. Now, with key upgrades in place, motorists can expect a safer and smoother drive through one of the area's busiest intersections.

To address safety and traffic operations, several improvements were made. A new right-turn lane and left-turn lane were added on southbound US 41, a second left-turn lane was added on northbound US 41, a second right-turn lane was added on eastbound Stearns School Road and a new westbound receiving lane was added on Stearns School Road. Left-turn signals are now protected with "green arrow only" timing, a proven safety measure that reduces left-turn crashes by 99 percent.

In addition to the traffic improvements, the culvert under Stearns School Road was extended and the storm sewer along US 41 was reconstructed to fit the new road design.

The Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) partnered to bring this project to life. LCDOT led the engineering and land acquisition phases, which helped expedite the project, while IDOT managed construction using federal Highway Safety Improvement Program funding.

The project achieved a Benefit-Cost Ratio of nearly 6 to 1, as calculated using state and federal guidelines, a required step when applying for federal funding to determine whether a project is a sound investment and how it compares to alternate projects. For reference, projects with a ratio above 1 to 1 are eligible for federal safety funding.

LCDOT would like to thank the public for their patience during construction. As always, motorists are encouraged to drive safely as they travel through the area.

The Lake County Health Department invites you to its upcoming STI prevention events

The Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center and its partners are hosting free community events to educate about sexually transmitted infections (STIs); encourage routine screening, preventative care, and treatment; and emphasize vulnerable populations for providers and the community. The following events will take place in May and June:

Health and Wellness Fair

Wednesday, May 7, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Belvidere Medical Building, 2400 Belvidere Road, Waukegan, in the Large Conference Room.

National Hepatitis Testing Day

Monday, May 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Lake County Administration Building, 18 N. County Street, Waukegan.

HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day

Thursday, June 5, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Lake County Health Department, 3010 Grand Avenue, Waukegan, in the Third Floor Board Room.

"Routine testing helps track and control the spread of sexually transmitted infections before they lead to serious com-

plications in our residents and within our community," said Valerie Johansen, the Health Department's Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) / Need-2Know Lake County Program Coordinator. "These events help us inform residents that help is available and they can get the resources and treatment they need to live healthily."

Health and Wellness Fair (May 7) and National Hepatitis Testing Day (May 19)

At these events, participants can learn about hepatitis, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections. We are also sharing information on resources

available in Lake County, such as education, prevention and harm reduction, testing, and treatment, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Attendees can receive free referrals for hepatitis A and B vaccinations and other Health Department services and schedule a confidential appointment for free hepatitis C and HIV tests at the Health Department's STI program office, 2400 Belvidere Road in Waukegan.

The Health and Wellness Fair is in partnership with the

See LCHD EVENTS, Page 4

Volo Bog Avian Art show continues through May

The Avian Art show will be on display at Volo Bog State Natural Area through May 25. It is open Wednesday through Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The 'Celebrating Wild Birds with Art', silent auction and artists' reception will take place on Sunday, May 25 from 1-3 p.m. Auction bids close at 2 p.m.

Proceeds from the sale will support VBSNA through the Friends of Volo Bog.

Volo Bog State Natural Area is located at 28478 W. Brandenburg Road, Ingleside, IL. Visit FriendsOfVoloBog.org for more information.

Highland Park parade shooting offender sentenced to life in prison

On April 24, the offender of the Highland Park Parade shooting case was sentenced to seven consecutive terms of natural life in prison—without the possibility of parole. The offender pled guilty to 21 counts of first-degree murder on March 3, 2025. The natural life sentence is the maximum sentence for murder in Illinois.

In addition to the seven consecutive life sentences, the Honorable Judge Victoria Rossetti imposed 50 years in prison for each of the 48 Attempt Murder charges that the offender was convicted of (via plea). Under the law, those 48 sentences of fifty years are concurrent to each other, and that fifty years is consecutive to the seven life sentences. The fifty-year sentence constitutes the maximum possible sentence for Attempt Murder and will be served at 85% under

The offender did not appear in Court, but Judge Rossetti did instruct the defense counsel to advise him of his right to challenge the sentence by withdrawing his plea.

In making the office's sentencing recommendation, State's Attorney Rinehart commented:

In the middle of a beautiful day celebrating America, 83 shots rang out in 40 seconds that would change everything. 83 attempts to hurt people, 83 attempts to terrorize a community, 83 attempts to kill. 83 attempts to reduce the light of the world. This was his evil plan: to end the happiness he saw around him.

This offender caused an ocean of grief, pain, trauma heartache and loss. What should have been a day of baseball, music, and laughter became a day about "rifle teams," "reinforcements," "trauma centers," "bullet holes," "broken glass" and "broken hearts."

But in the midst of this, hundreds of people acted heroically to assist others, to gather loved ones, to lift a child, or to simply make eye contact with each other to re-establish a human connection.

While he took only a few seconds on July 4 to end and alter lives, we know from the excellent work of Brian Bodden and Maureen Mazola that these seconds ... these 83 attempts to change the world -- were preceded by cold, calculating, and detailed planning. You heard how he studied "response time" and surveilled the downtown area and

police for weeks. This is a new level of pre-mediation.

After highlighting some of the different experiences that victims and survivors shared with the Court, Rinehart concluded:

I know the Court has noticed how often I have used the word "attempt." Even though there was loss of life, loss of love, loss of years of happiness ... the offender failed in extinguishing the light from the good and wonderful people who experienced this crime.

Their light will always go on through the memories and great and small acts that everyone described in this Courtroom and in their statements.

In the name of Katie Goldstein, Jacki Sundheim, Nicolas Toledo Zaragoza, Eduardo Uvaldo, Kevin McCarthy, Irina McCarthy, and Stephen Straus and all of those who have suffered, the People of the State of Illinois request the maximum sentence on all counts.

After Court, in a brief press conference, Rinehart again thanked the City of Highland Park, victim support professionals, the trial prosecutors, State's Attorney investigators, and all of the employees of the State's Attorney's Office who assisted in securing justice in the courtroom.

Rinehart concluded: *I want to take a moment to praise law enforcement's efforts in this case. This is something I have not been able to talk about as much while the case was pending.*

Law enforcement not only protected the community immediately after the shooting, but they also conducted an excellent investigation. Without this investigation and the interrogation of the offender by Detective Brian Bodden and FBI Special Agent Maureen Mazzola, we would not have had this day. If this offender had even one inch of an argument, he would have gone to trial.

Law enforcement's ability to get a statement in this case slammed the door shut for him. We heard his confession in his own words. This confession, along with DNA evidence, trajectory evidence, video footage, and eyewitnesses, removes all doubt as to his guilt.

The Lake County State's Attorney's Office will continue to stand with every victim and survivor and provide the support they need to move forward.

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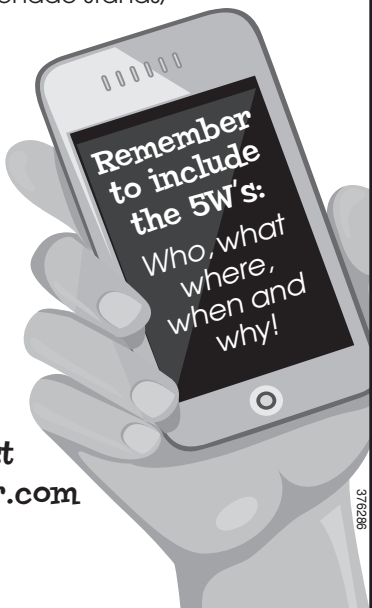
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McHenry Outdoor seeks influencer families

Cynthia Wolf
CONTRIBUTOR

When the Drabczynski family rolls in to the McHenry Outdoor Theater in their black SUV to see Marvel’s “Thunderbolts*” on May 17, it will be a brand new experience for them — and for followers of the theater’s social media.

Other than for an Easter egg hunt, the Drabczynskis have never been to the Outdoor, said Maggie Drabczynski, whose family was among the first to be selected for new Influencer Family status this season. Each selected Influencer Family will receive a few carload passes as well as gift cards for concessions. In exchange, they’ll post to social media throughout their evenings about all of the fun they are experiencing.

More Influencer Families are wanted, said Joe Cicero, president of marketing and promotions for the theater located at 1510 Chapel Hill Road, Lakemoor. Those interested are

invited to apply at goldenagecinema.com

“It doesn’t necessarily have to be somebody with kids,” Cicero added. “It could be a couple, which also would be considered a family — or even a group of friends.”

Drabczynski, of McCullom Lake, owns E-Ssistant, a small business management firm that, among other things, handles social media for clients. She also often posts on her own social media about fun, family-friendly activities happening around the community. So, when she saw the influencer opportunity announced on Facebook, she jumped. And her family, including husband, Tom, and children Matthew, who turns 9 May 25, and 5-year-old daughter Julia, are enthusiastically onboard, she said.

“We’re very excited,” Drabczynski said. “This will be a whole new experience. The kids have never been to a drive-in. It’s just going to be really

fun.”

Capturing that excitement is what the Influencer Family plan is all about, said Cicero, who understands the value of user-generated content and is working to partner more and more with area residents.

“The McHenry Outdoor Theater is doing this to highlight how family-oriented we are and to let others hear and see firsthand about the experience of going to the drive-in,” he said. “Whether it’s the influencer’s first time here or they’ve been attending for years, we think having those first-hand impressions for others to see will be a win-win.”

Tiffany Durlak of Antioch also was among the first to apply and to be selected. She and her husband, Brian, and their children, Noah, 13, and twins Sydney and Kaelyn, both 11, look forward to free movie nights during which they’ll create content to share.

Durlak, who moved to Il-

linois from New York City’s Long Island about 13 years ago, also will be a first-timer. “Where I grew up, there wasn’t a drive-in around, so I’m excited for the experience and excited for the kids to have it,” she said.

Additionally, Durlak applauded the Outdoor for its influencer marketing initiative. “I think if you get the right people, it can bring a lot of traffic to your social media accounts and bring a lot of business to the theater,” she said. “It’s so cool.”

The public will be able to view the user-generated content on the McHenry Outdoor Theater’s Facebook and Instagram pages.

The McHenry Outdoor Theater is now open weekends only. After Memorial Day Weekend, it will be open seven days a week throughout the summer. View the updated movie schedule at goldenagecinemas.com.



JOE CICERO PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

The Cifonelli and Carlson families enjoy a night out at the McHenry Outdoor. This season, families and friend groups may become social media influencers for the theater. For information, visit goldenagecinemas.com.

Gift honors lifelong love of nature, supports restoration

Nature was always in the picture for Paula Lillard and her late husband John. Their childhoods were shaped by winding creeks and the quiet company of trees. The woods served as their playground.

When it came time to raise their five daughters, they chose homes where the untamed beauty of nature was just outside the door. “The outdoors has always been central to our lives,” Paula said. “We both understood that the human spirit thrives in nature.”

Married for 70 years, they passed that passion down through generations. With nine grandchildren and eight great grandchildren, their love for the land will likely continue to grow for years to come.

Before he passed just over a year ago, John left Paula notes outlining the causes he cared about most. At the top of the list was protecting the land they both loved. That guidance—and their shared devotion to the outdoors—is why Paula is donating \$1.02 million to the Preservation Foundation of the Lake Coun-

ty Forest Preserves.

The gift will fund an endowment for long-term land management at Middlefork Savanna in Lake Forest, Oriole Grove Forest Preserve in Lake Bluff and nearby properties cared for by the Lake Forest Open Lands Association (LFOLA). An endowment is a fund where the original gift is invested, and the earnings are used to support an organization’s mission. The donation supports the Forest Preserves’ Every Acre Strong campaign.

John, co-founder of Wintrust Financial Corporation, served as a longtime leader and life director at LFOLA. He believed deeply in the power of public-private partnerships to protect open spaces. “He was a true visionary,” Paula said.

The new endowment is unusual in that it benefits both LFOLA and the Forest Preserves. Seventy percent of the funds will go toward restoring 772 acres of forest preserve land, with the rest supporting stewardship of LFOLA’s 314 acres. The focus will be on managing invasive species

including buckthorn and promoting ecological resilience.

“This endowment is a game-changer,” said Ryan London, LFOLA president and CEO. “It ensures conservation isn’t just a one-time effort, but a lasting commitment. This partnership reinforces our commitment to preserving the area’s natural landscapes.”

The Lillard’s daughter Paula Preschlack, who now serves on LFOLA’s board, grew up in a home adjacent to what is now Middlefork

Savanna. “We spent our days riding ponies, exploring the woods and letting our imaginations grow,” she said.

She remembers her father out in the yard with a chainsaw, clearing buckthorn by hand. “He believed in restoring nature—one tree at a time,” she said.

“Growing up surrounded by prairies, open skies and towering oak trees, I came to realize just how spectacular this landscape is,” Preschlack said. “It’s not just beautiful—it’s inspiring. And it’s right

here for all of us to cherish.”

Forest Preserves President Jessica Vealitzek says the gift highlights the power of partnership. “Protecting our natural spaces takes all of us—

public and private partners, neighbors and volunteers,” she said. “Together, we can make sure these landscapes remain healthy for generations to come.”

Bridge closure on White Oaks Road

White Oaks Road is currently closed from State Line Road to York Road due to a bridge failure. To rectify this, work was scheduled to begin April 28, to replace the bridge. Local access to homes will be maintained at all times. Signage will be placed to notify road users of the upcoming detour route.

The detour redirects traffic from the intersection of White Oaks Road and State Line Road to White Oaks Road and York Road. The detour will use State Line Road, Lawrence Road, Perkins Road and White Oaks Road to bridge the gap in White Oaks Road. Signs are currently posted along the designated route to help guide vehicle drivers while the detour is in place.

The project will replace the

existing bridge on White Oaks Road over the West Branch of the Piscasaw Creek. Work is expected to be completed by November 1, 2025.

Follow the Division of Transportation on Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor to stay abreast of construction projects on county highways.

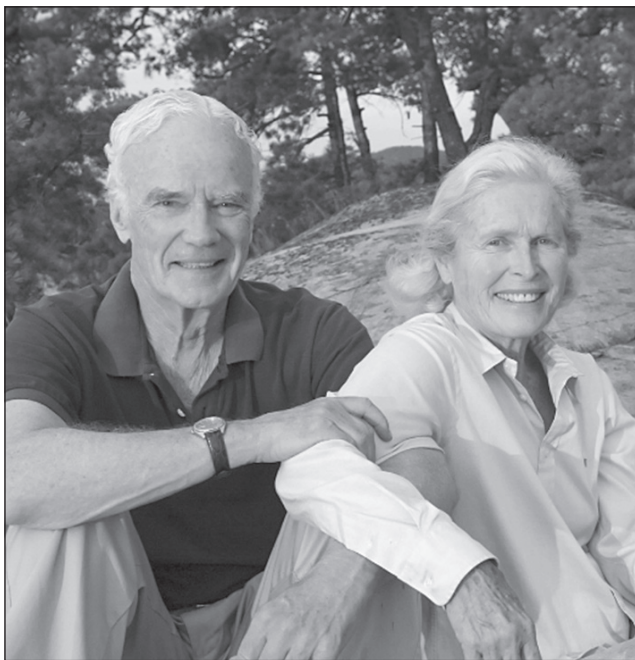


PHOTO COURTESY OF LILLARD FAMILY Hi-Liter/MCN

Paula Lillard and her late husband, John, shared a deep love for nature. She donated \$1.02 million to support long-term land management of two forest preserves and neighboring land managed by the Lake Forest Open Lands Association.

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• Comfort dog (Continued from front page)

Having Flo there to console the person lowers stress levels and helps the person affected deal with the event more easily.

One big family
“Police work is a highly stressful profession,” Garcia said. “We gain so much personally from having Flo here in the station.

“When our stress levels are up, coming into the station and being given a friendly greeting by Flo helps to lower

them,” Garcia explained.

Flo lives at the station full time and there is not any one person in charge of her. All of the police department officers and staff pitch in feeding her, as well as taking her outside for walks and needed breaks.

“Even dogs need a day off from their jobs now and then,” Garcia said. “So occasionally one of the members of the staff will take her home for a long weekend. It seems that Flo enjoys her short weekend

vacations, and we always get good reports that she has behaved well.”

While she enjoys getting away, Garcia said she’s also happy to back in her space.

“She always seems happy to return to her real home, The Antioch Police Station... where her entire family lives.”

The Antioch Police Station (and Flo’s home) is at 433 Orchard St. in Antioch. For more information on where to see and meet Flo, call 847-395-8585.



Above: Flo heads for her cage when she needs a break from comforting staff and visitors. Left: Commander Garcia and Flo take a break in Flo’s room, which was painted pink in recognition of her being a female.

PHOTOS COURTESY
KELLEY CRIMMINS/
VILLAGE OF ANTIOCH
Hi-Liter/MCN



It’s tulip time

Above: Thousands of people have visited the Richardson Farm Tulip Festival each year since 2021. This year’s fest, that opened Saturday, features about 1 million tulip blooms plus tens of thousands of daffodils. Left: Well-behaved, leashed dogs are welcome at the Richardson Farm Tulip Festival. Check richardsonfarm.com or follow Richardson “World’s Largest” Corn Maze on Facebook for more information.

TOM FUNK PHOTOS
Hi-Liter/MCN

Conservation district events

Woodland Wandering

Thursday, May 1, 6-8:30 p.m., Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Join volunteer bird enthusiast Dave Miller for an evening 2-mile hike through the woods. Catch a glimpse of the birds that are passing through on their migration and search for those that stay as summer or year-round residents. Ages 14+.

Fire Building

Saturday, May 3, 10 a.m. to noon, Rush Creek, Harvard.

Do you know how to start a fire? How about without using

a match? There are many different ways to build and start a fire. Join us as we explore the different methods of getting a fire going! Ages 7+.

Community Science: Oak Savanna Tree Aging

Saturday, May 3, 1-2:30 p.m., Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake.

Learn how to age a tree by taking special calculations in our local oak savanna. Adults and families will work in small groups like scientists to explore and collect data for our records. Ages 10+

Just Who is Samuel

Walker?

Sunday, May 4, noon – 4 p.m., Powers-Walker House, Glacial Park, Ringwood.

Come visit this Greek Revival 1854 restored house and learn more Samuel Walker, a prominent and influential man who owned the house in the late 1800s. Volunteers in historical attire are available to answer your questions. All ages, drop-in special event. Registration not required.

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

• LCHD events (Continued from page 2)

Health Department’s STI Program / Need2Know Lake County, Behavioral Health Services, A Way Out, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program, as well as AbbVie, A Safe Place, Community Walgreens, and Gilead Sciences.

The National Hepatitis Testing Day event is in partnership with the Health Department’s STI Program / Need2Know Lake County and Lake County Stands Against Stigma.

HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day (June 5)

Each year on June 5, HIV Long-Term Survivors Awareness Day is celebrated. This is a time to raise awareness of the challenges HIV Long-Term Survivors face every day. This celebration coincides with the anniversary of the first official reporting of what became known as the AIDS epidemic on June 5, 1981. RSVP by calling Need2Know Lake County at (847) 377-8450.

This event is in partnership with the Lake County Health Department STI Program/Need2Know Lake County, Lake County Stands Against Stigma, and Ascension Alexian Brothers Housing and Health Alliance.

About Need2Know Lake County

The Need2Know Lake County program works to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases in Lake County. The program offers confidential screening for hepatitis, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. They also offer treatment services, vaccines, counseling, educational-based support groups, and many other services.

For additional information or to make an appointment, call (847) 377-8450 or visit lakecountyil.gov/1897/Need2Know-Lake-County-STI-Program.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Hi-Liter/MCN

Pet of the week

Ada, is about 10 years old, spayed, up-to-date on routine shots (incl. rabies), tested negative for heartworm and on preventative 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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Court & crime news

Ullrich sentenced to 12 years for involuntary manslaughter and communicating with a witness

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announced that Eric Ullrich, 52, of Richmond, IL was sentenced to 12 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for Involuntary Manslaughter and Communicating with a Witness. The sentence was handed down by the Honorable Judge Christopher Harmon on April 25, 2025, after a partially negotiated plea of guilty to both offenses.



Eric Ullrich

At the sentencing hearing, the State's Attorney's Office presented evidence from multiple witnesses that on January 3, 2024, the Richmond Fire Department responded to a call of an unresponsive minor, where emergency personnel attempted lifesaving medical treatment. The minor was later pronounced dead at Northwestern Hospital McHenry. A toxicology performed on the minor revealed his cause of death was the adverse effects of fentanyl and xylazine.

Several members from the McHenry County Sheriff's Office testified to the investigation into the minor's death. Photographs and body worn camera videos documented several full and used bags of narcotics containing heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine, along with assorted narcotics paraphernalia, throughout the residence. Evidence was also presented that Ullrich, the minor's father and primary legal and medical caretaker, was present in the home and aware of his son's overdose event. Ullrich consciously chose not to provide medical treatment for his child during the overdose event and did not call 911 until Ullrich realized, hours later, that his son wasn't breathing, and his heart had stopped. During the investigation, Ullrich consistently provided false information to investigating officers and to his own family members regarding circumstances of his son's death.

Judge Harmon also heard evidence from the Coroner's Investigator and an Emergency Room Physician about the minor's medical treatment and prognosis if treated promptly for the overdose event. Cook County Emergency Physician and Medical

Toxicologist Steven Aks testified that the minor would have survived if he had received medical attention during the overdose event. "I think this is a really a tragic situation that happened," Dr. Aks testified. "In the home, if it [the minor's overdose event] was correctly recognized and EMS was able to intervene. . . this was completely survivable."

Evidence was also presented that while the Involuntary Manslaughter charges were pending, Ullrich called his other son from jail, with the intent to persuade his other son, and younger brother to the victim, not to testify voluntarily and truthfully regarding the death of the minor.

Ullrich was sentenced to 9 years in prison for Involuntary Manslaughter, which runs consecutive to 3 years in prison for Communicating with a Witness.

Parents have not only a moral duty, but a legal duty to protect and care for their children. This senseless and tragic death of a 14-year-old was entirely preventable had medical treatment been sought for this child. Fentanyl continues to be a leading cause of death among young adults across the United States. The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office continues to remain committed to the prosecution of all those involved in drug-related deaths that occur in our communities, especially those involving the most vulnerable – our children.

This case was successfully prosecuted by McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese accompanied by Chief of Staff Ashley Romito and Special Prosecutor William Bruce. The State's Attorney's Office commends the diligent efforts of members of the McHenry County Sheriff's Office in their thorough investigation into this minor's death.

Hit-and-run driver apprehended

Lake County Sheriff's Deputies apprehended the driver of a hit-and-run crash that occurred in Beach Park.

On April 25, at approximately 3:30 p.m., Lake County Sheriff's Deputies responded to North Avenue and West Mawman Avenue in Beach Park for a traffic crash with injuries. Sheriff's deputies arrived and learned four of the five occupants in the at-

fault vehicle fled on foot, prior to their arrival.

A preliminary investigation shows a Mitsubishi Outlander, driven by Gilberto Santiago, Jr., 43, of 400 block of East Willow Drive, Round Lake Park, was traveling southbound on North Avenue and veered into the northbound lane of traffic, striking a northbound Nissan Versa, driven by a 70-year-old woman of Zion. The impact of the crash caused a rear door to open and a back seat passenger in the Mitsubishi, a 43-year-old man of Zion, fell out of the car and was injured. The back seat passenger was transported to an area hospital with serious injuries. The driver of the Nissan was also transported to an area hospital with serious injuries.

After arriving, sheriff's deputies established a perimeter around the area to search for Santiago, Jr. and the others who fled. With the assistance of a Waukegan Police Department K9 Team and Libertyville Police Department Drone Operator, Santiago, Jr. was located. One of the passengers of the Mitsubishi was also located. Both Santiago, Jr. and the passenger were uninjured. After an extensive search, the other two that fled from the Mitsubishi were not found.

Santiago, Jr. appeared heavily intoxicated and was transported to the Lake County Jail. After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the incident, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the following charges against Santiago, Jr.: Aggravated DUI (Class 2 Felony), Driving While License Revoked (Class 3 Felony), Aggravated DUI While Driving on a Revoked License (Class 4 Felony), Unlawful Possession of a Controlled Substance (Class 4 Felony) and Leaving the Scene of an Accident with Injuries (Class 4 Felony).

Santiago, Jr. was held in the Lake County Jail until his initial court hearing.

Update: Offender in custody following investigation

Following a thorough in-



Gilberto Santiago, Jr.

vestigation, Task Force Investigators and North Chicago Detectives determined Carlos D. Marchan, 25, of the 1000 block of Jackson Street, North Chicago, was responsible for shooting and killing Carl P. Marder-Grant.

Investigators determined Marchan opened fire on a group of individuals standing outside of a residence in the 1600 block of Victoria Avenue. Marder-Grant was struck and killed by one of the rounds.

After reviewing all of the facts and evidence, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the charge of first-degree murder against Marchan.

Marchan had an initial court appearance on April 27. The Lake County State's Attorney's Office intends to file a petition to detain Marchan in custody while awaiting trial.

Based on the circumstances and evidence, it is believed this shooting was gang related.

Note: Booking photo is from a previous booking at the Lake County Jail.

Original release: North Chicago Homicide Investigation

Lake County Major Crime Task Force Investigators and North Chicago Police Detectives are investigating the homicide of a 31-year-old man.

On April 23, 2025, at approximately 5:30 p.m., North Chicago Police Officers responded to a residence in the 1600 block of Victoria, for a report of a person shot. North Chicago Police Officers arrived and located a gunshot victim just outside of a residence. The man was transported to an area hospital, where he subsequently succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased.

Major Crime Task Force Investigators and North Chicago Police Detectives continue to actively investigate the homicide.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call North Chicago Police at: 847-596-8774 or Lake County CrimeStoppers at: www.lakecountycrimestoppers.org.



Carlos D. Marchan

Man sentenced to ten years for predatory criminal sexual assault of a child

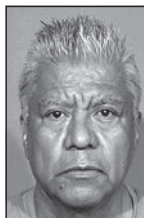
The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announces that on April 25, Arturo Martinez-Ortiz, 59, of Riverside, California, was sentenced to ten years in the Illinois Department of Corrections after entering a plea of guilty to a charge of Predatory Criminal Sexual Assault of a Child, a Class X felony. The sentence was handed down by the Honorable Judge Tiffany Davis after Martinez-Ortiz entered a negotiated plea of guilty to the charge.

In September of 2022, a child disclosed to her teacher that she had been abused. The Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) was notified, a report made, and the matter referred to the McHenry County Sheriff's Police Department for investigation. A victim-sensitive interview was conducted at the Child Advocacy Center, where the victim further revealed specific details of the abuse and identified Martinez-Ortiz as the individual who had inappropriately touched her.

Truth-in-Sentencing will require that Martinez-Ortiz serve a minimum of 85 percent of his sentence prior to being released from the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections. Upon release, Martinez-Ortiz will also be subject to a Mandatory Supervised Release period ranging from three years to the rest of his natural life. He will also be required to register as a sex offender for the remainder of life.

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese commends the child for her courage to report the abuse, the child's educators for creating a safe environment for her to disclose what had happened to her, and the investigative efforts of the McHenry County Sheriff's Police Department. Freese would like to especially thank Detective Vidal Garcia for his work on this case.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant



Arturo Martinez-Ortiz

State's Attorney Elizabeth M. Vonau.

Teen found in possession of 'ghost gun' during traffic stop

An alert sheriff's deputy located and seized two firearms during a traffic stop.

On April 20, at approximately 5:30 p.m., a Lake County Sheriff's Deputy conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle in the area of Green Bay Road and Wall Avenue, Beach Park, because the vehicle's registration was suspended.

While speaking to the driver, Dewan Frazier, 19, of the 0-100 block of Woodland Court, Park Forest, the deputy noticed the smell of fresh cannabis coming from inside the vehicle. Further conversation with Frazier revealed there was unsealed cannabis inside the vehicle.

As the deputy continued the investigation, he found that a juvenile passenger, a 17-year-old male of Park City, was in possession of a loaded, unserialized pistol. Another pistol with a drum-style magazine was located inside the trunk of the car.

Both Frazier and the juvenile were arrested and transported to the Lake County Sheriff's Criminal Investigations Division.

After reviewing the facts and circumstances of the incident, the Lake County State's Attorney's Office approved the charges of unlawful possession of cannabis with the intent to deliver, and unlawful possession of cannabis against Frazier. Sheriff's detectives petitioned the juvenile to juvenile court on the charges of aggravated unlawful possession of a firearm and unlawful possession of cannabis.

Frazier was processed and released with a court date. The juvenile was transported to the Hulse Juvenile Detention Facility near Vernon Hills for a court hearing.

Armenta-Ruiz sentenced to twelve years for possession of methamphetamine

The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office announces that German Armenta-Ruiz, 59, of Chicago, Illinois, was sentenced to twelve years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. The sentence was handed down on April 22, by the Honorable Judge Mark R. Gerhardt after Armenta-Ruiz entered a negotiated plea of guilty to the offense of Possession of Methamphetamine, a Class X Felony.

On September 19, 2024, the McHenry County Sheriff's Office received a tip of a large narcotics transaction planned to occur at the Super 8 Motel in Crystal Lake, Illinois. Members of the Narcotics Task Force conducted surveillance at the motel through



Dewan Frazier



German Armenta-Ruiz

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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.

March 10

Betsy Rubi, 26, Lake Zurich, was cited for a warrant obtained: aggravated DUI;

Justine A. Doerner, 47, Volo, was cited for a warrant arrest: violating a court order;

March 11

Clayton Q. Long, 39, Chicago, was cited for a warrant arrest: burglary and identity theft;

David Tobias, 30, Beach

Park, was cited for aggravated assault, disorderly conduct and battery;

Davad Tobias, 30, Beach Park, was cited for criminal damage to state supported property;

March 12

Froylan Gonzalez, 32, Park City, was cited for battery;

Aaron T. Swire, 29, Gurnee, was cited for aggravated battery to a correctional officer;

Jason D. Jones, 48, Glenview, was cited for obstructing/resisting a peace officer;

Juan D. Huila, 37, Round Lake, was cited for a warrant

arrest: violating an order of protection;

John L. Buithus, 56, Libertyville, was cited for battery;

Billy R. Whitehead, 44, Gages Lake, was cited for driving while license revoked, possession of a fraudulent driver's license, possession of a fraudulent ID card, no registration and no insurance;

Steven G. Czarnecki, 56, Gurnee, was cited for criminal trespass to property;

Thomas J. Rogers, 25, Moresville, NC, was cited for DUI – drugs;

Ruth Shirley, 66, Gurnee,

was cited for DUI – alcohol;

March 13

Emmanuel Guzman-Corona, 32, Zion, was cited for driving while license suspended;

Deavon M. Fonder, 24, Zion, was cited for a warrant arrest: aggravated battery to a peace officer, and resisting arrest;

Hector Rodriguez Banderas, 48, Park City, was cited for DUI – alcohol, and driving while license suspended;

Heidy Campos, 33, Round Lake Park, was cited for DUI – alcohol, suspended registration and no insurance;

March 14

Nicol M. Marshall, 46, Gurnee, was cited for criminal trespass to property and disorderly conduct;

Amber M. South, 46, Gurnee, was cited for DUI – alcohol;

March 15

Jenny L. Stahlhut, 49, Round Lake, was cited for DUI – alcohol;

Annalise S. Adams, 22, Waukegan, was cited for DUI – alcohol, leaving the scene of a crash, open transportation of alcohol, and improper transportation of cannabis;

Vanessa Zaragoza, 35, An-

tioch, was cited for DUI – alcohol, and endangering the life of a child;

Jose Hernandez, 26, Round Lake Park, was cited for DUI – alcohol, open transportation of alcohol and no insurance;

March 16

Gilberto Verastegui, 45, Kenosha, WI, was cited for DUI – alcohol;

Nicole D. Harris, 29, Waukegan, was cited for driving while license suspended, and no insurance;

Destin A. Peter, 25, Johnsburg, was cited for unlawful possession of a controlled substance, and DUI – drugs.

• Possession

which they observed Armenta-Ruiz, along with another man, arrive at the motel that evening. Officers approached the car he was traveling in, and after police canine officer alerted as to the presence of narcotics inside the vehicle, the men were asked to exit the vehicle and a search was conducted. Inside the car, deputies found over 900 grams of methamphetamine packaged for sale.

(Continued from page 6)

McHenry County State's Attorney Randi Freese commends the McHenry County Sheriff's Office, especially the members of the Narcotics Task Force that worked on this case, for their continued relentless and productive work in combatting the illicit sale and trafficking of narcotics in McHenry County.

This case was successfully prosecuted by Assistant State's Attorney Shelby Page.

Lake County jail implements digital mail system to enhance safety and security

Beginning May 27, the Lake County Jail will implement a new digital mail delivery system for all inmate personal mail. This change is being made to enhance the safety of correctional staff, reduce the introduction of contraband, and maintain a secure facility.

In recent months, there have been incidents of personal mail being used in attempts to smuggle drugs into the jail. This is a growing issue faced by correctional facilities na-

tionwide. In response, the Lake County Jail is partnering with TextBehind to digitize all inmate personal mail such as letters, photos, and drawings.

Under the new system, personal mail must be sent to a centralized facility where it will be scanned and delivered electronically to inmates via their tablets.

Effective May 27, 2025, personal mail must be addressed to: Lake County Jail, IL, Inmate's Full Name, In-

mate Identifier, P.O. Box 247 Phoenix, MD 21131

Important guidelines for mail delivery include:

- Include the complete facility name (no abbreviations) and state
- Include the inmate's full name and identifier
- Include the sender's full name and physical address
- Only send personal correspondence such as letters, pictures, and drawings

Legal mail, money orders,

checks, and other official or privileged correspondence should not be sent to the Phoenix, MD address and must continue to be mailed directly to the jail in accordance with existing policies.

This update aligns with best practices adopted by correctional institutions across the country to prevent contraband from entering secure environments. Additional information will be posted on our website and provided to inmates.

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8038 335th ST. (LILY LAKE) May 1, 2 & 3. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. 4 Family plus Estate Sale. Vintage, appliances, toys, HH & much more

8515 MCHENRY STREET May 1st-4th, 9-4. Tools, yard/garden equip., DVD's, furn., shelving, H/H & misc.

REAL ESTATE

Other Real Estate

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial/ status or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-900-669-9777. The toll-free tele phone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275. EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

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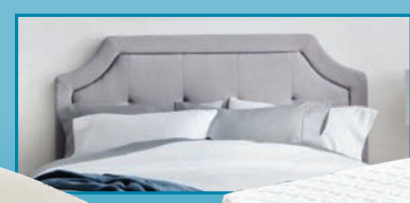
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