



OUR VILLAGE



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For the Collar Suburbs

Next Edition
February 6

FREE

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P.O. Box 31391,
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Issue 2
January 23, 2015



Early Spring?

Find Out February 2nd
Happy Groundhog's Day

(See Page 2 For History)

ST. DEMETRIOS 3RD ANNUAL WINTER GREEK FOOD FESTIVAL

** FREE ADMISSION **

Enjoy a Taste of Summer!



Dine In
OR
Carry Out



Friday, Feb. 6 • 5 pm to 8 pm
Saturday, Feb. 7 • 12 noon to 8 pm
Sunday, Feb. 8 • 12 noon to 3 pm



Come join us for 3 days of delicious
traditional Greek Festival Cuisine
including appetizers, a variety of
main course entrées, mouth-watering
desserts and drinks. Each night a
50/50 raffle will be held for cash prizes!



St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
2727 W. Winona St., Chicago, IL 60625
Office: 773-561-5992

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2015

National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2015 is January 25-31. Schools typically observe this week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and other community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities and our Nation.



The theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2015 and for several years to come is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service."

The annual Catholic Schools Week celebration is a joint project of the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Mayor Emanuel Supporting Police Memorial Foundation Through City Council Gift



Photo by Brooke Collins // City of Chicago

See Page 9 For More

Twenty Million Americans Headed To Super Bowl Parties

Good Luck To Both The Seahawks And The Patriots On Feb. 1st.

Submitted by Bernie DiMeo

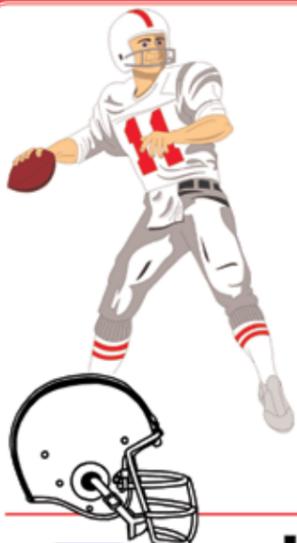
Super Bowl Sunday has become bigger than New Year's Eve as a party day and the second biggest food consumption day in the U.S. next to Thanksgiving Day. More than 20 million Americans will be attending parties that day and 10 million man hours will be spent preparing food for those parties. As a comparison 10 million man hours were also spent making the movie Avatar.

Other interesting facts and figures about the Super Bowl compiled by treehugger.com:

- One billion chicken wings will be consumed that day.
- 325.5 gallons of beer will be drank.
- \$5.6 billion will be spent on Super Bowl related items.

One of the more interesting facts about Super Bowl Sunday is that an estimated 40% of the people who watch the game do not describe themselves as football fans. "It's obviously about the party, the food and the drink," DiMeo said.

(See page 10 for recipe ideas for the Big Day.)



Chicago Brauhaus

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ANNUAL POST
SUPER BOWL PARTY

Monday,
February 2, 2015

5:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.

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ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET
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Sickweather Alert: Chicago Illnesses Going Around 1/20/15 – 1/27/15

Sickweather is observing peak flu activity this week in your area and is prepared to help Chicagoans navigate through the remaining flu season. This is the weekly forecast for your area:

Common Cold, Cough, and Fever are going around in Chicago. Reports of Flu are likely at peak levels for the season.

Here's the link to the Animated 5-Day Chicago Map: <http://sick.io/52yv1>

Sickweather Forecast & Maps explained: Sickweather uses a patent-pending process to track and map reports of illness on Twitter and Facebook. The forecast represents the top trending illnesses reported in any given area. The maps show clusters of activity as represented by a heat map, or individual reports as represented by blue "SICK" map markers.

About Sickweather: Sickweather, a Baltimore-based company, provides online reports and a mobile app that scans social networks for indicators of illness, and maps real time data on more than 23 different symptoms and illnesses. Sickweather launched their beta website in November 2011, and now qualifies over 2 million reports of illness each month. In 2012, they were recognized among "100 Brilliant Companies" by Entrepreneur Magazine and featured on the Today Show, NBC Nightly News and The Doctors for successfully identifying the early start of the 2012 Flu Season 6 weeks before the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). For more information, please visit: <http://www.sickweather.com>

Winter Driving Tips

- Test your battery – Have it checked out, as your battery can lose power due to the drop in temperature. The last thing you want is to be stuck in freezing weather with a car that won't start!
- Check your tire pressure monthly – For every 10 degrees the temperature drops, your tires can lose about 1 pound per square inch (PSI) of pressure. Monitor your tire pressure more closely during the winter time.
- Replace all-season tires with winter tires – Temperatures lower than 45 degrees cause your all-season tires to stiffen and lose traction, but the latest generations of winter tires remain flexible in freezing temperatures, improving traction and available grip. Check your tire depth with the penny test to make sure you have enough tread to grip the road in ice and precipitation.
- Keep your car washed – Keep the exterior washed and waxed to protect your vehicle from the elements as the seasons change.

IACTE Conference

The IACTE, Illinois Association of Career and Technical Education, has announced its 85th annual Convention on Feb. 12 & 13 2015 in East Peoria Illinois. There will be a pre-convention session on Feb. 11th, 2015. The Pre-session will have tour of the Caterpillar plant and 5 workshop sessions. The regular days of convention will have about 40 workshop sessions. All sessions can have CPDU's given the session goes through Illinois Universities, making the conference one of the fastest way to accumulate many CPDU's at one place. The opening session speaker will at the Thursday luncheon. On Thursday, the exhibitors area of more than 50 exhibitors will also open. For more information contact Connie Campbell at either 1-815 978 0839 or bnhs.bus@gmail.com. Hotel, information contact is 1-800-547-0711. Ask for the conference rate. IACTE's number is 309-699-7711.

Foster/Harlem Meeting

The Foster Harlem Property Owners Association's next meeting is scheduled for Thursday February 19th at 7:00pm at St. Monica's Beyenka Hall, 5101 N Mont Clare.

The Association will host the aldermanic candidates for the 41st Ward to discuss their position on policies in a forum setting. This will not be a debate and open questions will not be allowed during the forum. Candidates are encouraged to stay after the Association meeting to answer questions.

St. Thecla Seniors Meetings

St. Thecla Seniors located at 6725 W. Devon meet at 11:30 a.m. on the first and third Thursdays of the month in the Queen of Peace room. There is a short meeting followed by sweet rolls and coffee. Bingo and cards are played. We have parties!!! Please join us as you may like us! For information, please call Joanie at 312/608-4092.

Evanston/Skokie Valley Metropolitan Family Services - Giving Hope And Opportunity To Families

With your help last year Metropolitan served more than 53,000 individuals and families in the Chicago area, helping them become more self-sufficient and strengthening family bonds. Learn more about our organization by visiting our website, metrofamily.org.

Norwood Park Seniors Club

at 5801 N Natoma Chicago meet the second and fourth Thursday of the month. We play pinochle and baingo, have parties on special occasions. Meetings start at 10:30 with coffee and a sweet roll. Call Joan at 773-774-7075.

OUR VILLAGE & STREET LEVEL

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Phone For Legal Advice At No Cost

The Chicago Bar Association (CBA) Lawyer Referral Service hosts Call-A-Lawyer on the third Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Volunteer attorneys will give free legal advice over the phone to Chicagoland residents who call (312) 554-2001.

National Wildlife Federation The Real Reason for Groundhog Day

Punxsutawney Phil, America's most famous weather forecaster, will have love, not weather, on his mind when he emerges from his hole on February 2. Researchers tracked 32 groundhogs for more than four years and concluded that the real reason for the early February appearance is a version of the dating game, groundhog style.

Male groundhogs wake up after three months of hibernation to check out the available pool of ladies within their territory. They select a female with whom they spend the night, and this sleepover acts as a first date, allowing the groundhogs time to get to know each other before the official start of mating season the following month. During these meet and greet sessions, contact is confined to rubbing noses - there's no going "all the way."

After scoping out two or three females, the male groundhog returns to his burrow to sleep again until March, dreaming of the hotties he has just met. When he awakes and revisits each of the females, the earlier slumber parties allow the woodchucks to skip the small talk and get right down to the business of breeding.

Climate Change

Here's a round-up of recent news on how climate change is affecting wildlife: (Go to nwf.org for articles.)

Has Punxsutawney Phil been predicting climate change?

Are the seasons shifting? The highest summer and lowest winter temperatures have been happening an average of two days earlier.

Antarctica is warming faster than previously thought.

Deep sea life is being impacted by climate change.

Climate change forces tropical insects to higher elevations.

Forests are in decline as temperatures rise.

Climate change effects are irreversible according to new study.

David Mizejewski, Naturalist
National Wildlife Federation

Adapted from materials provided by USDA/Agricultural Research Service. Contact us at info@nwf.org, 1-800-822-9919, National Wildlife Federation, 11100 Wildlife Center Drive, Reston VA, 20190. © 2008 National Wildlife Federation. All rights reserved.



Keeping Your Car Clean

Keeping your car clean has many significant financial and environmental benefits, especially when performed by a professional car wash.

Let's start with the financial rewards. Every day our cars are subjected to sun, salt from the sea, salt from snow trucks, grease and grime from the road, acid rain, smog, tree sap, dead bugs, and worst of all, the ever-acidic compound of bird poop bombs. We've all been riddled and splattered at one time or another.

These conditions eat away at a car's metal and chrome. They dull the paint. They corrode and cause rust. They attack your pride and joy day after day. You may not see it right away, but over time they will contribute to the decay of your car's exterior, ultimately diminishing its resale value.

By professionally washing your car at least twice a month, you help preserve one of your biggest investments.

Another benefit? Saved time and convenience. Lugging everything in and out of your garage or house is exhausting compared to a quick trip to the nearest car wash.

Few people also realize that washing their cars at home pollutes the environment. Soap and road grime such as oils, tar, and dirt end up in storm sewers that flow into lakes, streams and rivers - the same water in which your children might swim, or where you fish or hunt.

Wastewater from professional car washes enter a sanitary sewer system. facilities designed to protect the environment. No polluted water from professional car washes will reach our waterways.

Though a parking lot car wash might sound like a good way to make money for your organization, many groups don't realize that dirty water from parking lot and driveway car washing enters the storm sewer system. Meant only for rainfall, storm sewer water flows directly into the closest creek, stream, or river

Water conservation is another benefit: professional car washes can use about half the amount of water it takes to do it yourself.

(See also http://environment.about.com/od/greenliving/design/a/car_wash.htm)

For all these reasons, you can't beat a professional car wash. And oh what fun it is to take your kid through the wash from the inside of the car! Or just follow along by the window.

All sorts of interesting facts illuminating how we use and abuse our cars can be found at www.carlove.org.

So treat your car the way you want it to treat you. Add having your car washed to your list of chores; go to the bank, pick up the dry cleaning, visit the grocery store, and get the car washed. There's just no excuse not to swing through one every two or three weeks. You'll protect your investment, save time, and minimize environmental impact inspiring the best feeling of all; unconditional love for an unconditional friend.

Submitted by Chicago's #1 Car Washes, Four Convenient Locations



Boys & Girls Clubs Positions Available

The Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club is an independently run, unique and self supporting Boys and Girls Club located on the north side of Chicago. We offer a diverse program of athletic, social, recreation, leadership and cultural experiences. This non-profit has been a fixture in the area for over 80 years providing programs to "build better men and women".

The NBGC is currently taking applications for a Site Director and After School Assistants for our new After School Program scheduled to open in February at Grover Cleveland Elementary School.

To apply for these positions please send your resume to resumes@nbgc.org. No phone calls or walk ins, please.

To apply for the ASM Internship or Leadership positions, please follow directions listed below.

After School Site Director

We are looking for the impossible -- a dynamic, creative, responsible, organized individual to take charge of our after-school program located inside a local CPS school. Reporting to the Social Program Director, the Site Director is responsible for daily operations including lesson planning, parent/school communications, supervision of site staff, adherence to policies/procedures and regular administrative data collection and reports. An ability to resolve troubleshoot problems is very important. Qualifications: must be at least 21 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalent, a Bachelor or Associates degree is preferred, and strong consideration will be given to candidates having two or more years of experience working in a supervisory role with youth in an afterschool care setting. Bilingual Spanish preferred.

The position is full-time salary (exempt). Benefit package, after appropriate waiting periods, includes health insurance and paid time off. Please send your resume to Resumes@nbgc.org.

After School Assistant

Our programs are growing and we need YOU! After school assistants are responsible for assisting the Site Director with the daily operations of our program located inside a local CPS school. Responsibilities include: keeping youth safe, helping to build a sense of community, supervising and leading recreational activities, assisting youth with their academic homework. Candidates must work well with a team and respond well to supervision and re-direction. Bilingual Spanish preferred.

Part time hourly position

Hours: Monday-Friday 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm and 8:00 am - 6:00 pm on CPS days off.

Must be 18+ years old.

Rate of pay: \$8.50 - \$11.00 hr.

After School Intern

NBGC is once again working with After School Matters to offer teens afterschool opportunities to gain valuable job skills by working at NBGC. Duties include assisting with the daily educational and recreational activities for youth 5-14 years old. Learn to run a multifaceted afterschool program with a FUN focus! Candidates must be at least 16 years old and have a valid social security number.

Flexible start times depending on your school schedule. Teens must be available 9 program hours per week. Program begins February 2nd and ends April 24th and runs Monday-Friday 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm and 8:00 am - 6:00 pm on CPS days off. Rate of pay: \$8.25 hr.

To apply for the ASM Internship go to <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org>

1. Click on link: Apply for Spring 2015

2. Search for Community After School Kids Club in the keyword box

3. Select the following program: Community After School Kids Club, Neighborhood Boys & Girls Club.

After you have submitted your application please contact Maria Gomez at maria@nbgc.org for an interview

Youth Leader

The Neighborhood Boys & Girls Club will be taking applications for Spring 2015 Leader Candidates. If you are 13 years old or older and think you have what it takes to make a great Leader please contact Tim Jensen at 773-463-4161x120 or tjensen@nbgc.org.

The Leader Program is what NBGC is all about! The youth leader team is comprised of 13-25 year old leaders & staff who are responsible for the day to day operations offered by NBGC. This group of dedicated young people facilitate all athletic, social and educational programs. Individually they bring to the Clubhouse a variety of strengths that collectively make an AWESOME TEAM!

Benefits to the NBGC Leader Program

1. Community accountability / responsibility
2. Hands on experience and job training focusing on soft skills and leadership
3. Performance based stipends for youth
4. Access to a pool of Scholarship dollars yearly

Program will be starting in February. Applications must be in by January 26th.

Parents please do not contact Tim about this opportunity. The first steps to Leadership is to take initiative. Please allow them to do that if they want this opportunity.

For more information about the club, please see our web site at www.nbgc.org.

To submit a resume and cover letter, e-mail resumes@NBGC.org.

No phone calls or walkins, please.

Annual Easter Ham Raffle. Sign Up NOW!

Belmont-Central Chamber Of Commerce

Sign up now to raffle Easter Hams. Hams are \$20 each. Deadline is February 10th.

The raffle will take place between March 1st to March 18th. The Chamber will provide tickets, raffle buckets and contact the winners for you.

All business participants plus raffle entry forms will be listed in the TV Facts for free. Over 800 entries were received for the 2014 Ham raffle, 300 being TV Facts entries.

Contact the BCCC office at 773-647-1644



NORWOOD COMMUNITY GUIDE BOOKS

will be distributed to the Norwood Park community door to door in January. They will also be available to pick up at the following Norwood Park local businesses: Iron Horse Ale House, Dish Dine & Drink, Norwood Park Ace Hardware Norwood Crossing & Norwood Seniors Network, Dino's Pizza, Ron's Barber Shop, Presence Resurrection Medical Center, I.C. Church, Signature Bank, Cosmetic Auto, 41 Ward Alderman's Office, Harlem/Higgins Dunkin Donuts, Mathers More Than A Cafe, & The Danish Home & Norwood Park Train Station.

The Lira Ensemble Would Like To Send Its Condolences To The Migala Family Following The Passing Of Estelle Migala.

**Estelle (Stanislawa) Migala
1916-2014**

Estelle Migala (nee Suwala) died quietly, of natural causes, at her home in Antioch, Illinois on Tuesday, December 23, 2014 at the age of 98.

Mrs. Migala was the first donor and supporter of the Lira Singers, co-founded by her daughter Lucyna. The performing company composed of a symphony orchestra, singers and dancers is now known as the Lira Ensemble and is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Mrs. Migala was an advisor to the company for most of those 50 years.

Estelle Migala is survived by three daughters and one son - Barbara Holtzinger, Lucyna Migala (wife of Frank Cizon), George Migala (husband of Grzazyna), Krista Dinges - as well as 6 grandchildren, 5 great grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren. A fourth daughter, Diana Maria Migala passed away earlier this year.

Visitation will take place from 10-11am at St. Ladislaus Church, 5345 West Roscoe (church entrance is on Long Avenue) followed by a funeral Mass this Saturday, January 3, 2014.

The family sincerely requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent to the Jesuit Millennium Center, 5835 West Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634.

Cook County Crosses Million-Pound Threshold In Effort To Rid Itself Of Old Paper

Cook County has recycled more than one million pounds of old documents, reports and miscellaneous paperwork in the last year-and-a-half, confronting a decades-old problem of records storage as well as generating savings and revenue for the County.

Over the past 18 months, the Records Management and County Salvage divisions of the County's Bureau of Administration have overseen identification and review of paper that was eligible for destruction. Among the documents collected for disposal were old financial spreadsheets, dated legal journals, files from long-ago settled court cases, years-old dog bite incident reports, and documents from expired bond transactions.

"Whether due to forgetfulness, inertia or neglect, it became obvious that the County had a 'paper problem'," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "We determined that we needed a centralized disposal effort that would free up usable space, produce savings and generate revenue, and establish a structure for orderly removal and destruction of records no longer needed."

"To date, this initiative has proven to be successful, as crossing the threshold of one million pounds would indicate."

Some of the paperwork dated back to the 1960s. All of the documents were eligible for destruction under local records statutes. Certificates for disposal of the paperwork were obtained from the Illinois Secretary of State's office, as required for official government documents.

Importantly, none of the 1.14 million pounds of paper was sent to a landfill. Instead, the paper was sold for recycling through a contract with a County vendor. Revenue from the sale of the paper to date has yielded the County more than \$20,000 and removing the paper from County offices and facilities has cleared more than 71,000 cubic feet of space.

In addition, by centralizing the disposal process through Records Management and Salvage - formerly, a number of units within the County had their own contracts for document disposal - the County has saved at least \$200,000 from what it would have spent with multiple vendors for the same services.

Records Management will continue its pro-active outreach to all County departments to identify, collect and dispose of old paper records that are eligible for destruction, Preckwinkle said.

Ask The Psychiatrist Your Questions About Mental Illness

Meet Dr. John Zajecka, M.D., from Rush University Medical Center, Assoc. Professor at Rush University Med Center and an expert in the diagnosis and pharmacological management of psychiatric disorders. Dr. Zajecka will answer your questions about mental illnesses.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Cook County North Suburban, invites the public to this free program on Monday, January 26, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Midwest Care Center, Administration Building, 2050 Claire Ct, Glenview 60025. For more information or directions, call 847-716-2252.

03.15.2015

NORTHWESTSIDE IRISH PARADE

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2015

SAVE THE DATE



www.northwestsideirish.org

The 12th annual Northwest Irish Parade is a celebration of faith, family, & heritage on the Northwest side of Chicago in Norwood Park.





#NWSI * LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Chicago Named Host Site For 2016 Ncaa Men's Basketball Regional

Chicago To Serve As A Host For Sweet 16 And Elite Eight In 2016

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that Chicago has been named the host site for the 2016 NCAA Men's Basketball Championship regional. The NCAA made the announcement today on all sites for the tournament. The Big Ten Conference will serve as the official host of the event in collaboration with the Chicago Sports Commission and the United Center.

"I am thrilled that Chicago has been selected as a future host for the 2016 NCAA Men's Basketball Championship tournament. Hosting these national events is a great opportunity to showcase Chicago as a first-class sports and tourism destination and we look forward to welcoming NCAA student-athletes, coaches, families and fans from across the country to the most American of American cities, Chicago. From the NCAA men's 'Frozen Four' to the NFL Draft, and now the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship tournament, Chicago is becoming a destination for athletes and fans alike. I applaud Chose Chicago and the Chicago Sports Commission for their aggressive work to lure these marquee events and many others to our great city."

Chicago has been named the host site for the 2016 NCAA Men's Basketball Midwest Regional, the NCAA announced on Monday. The Big Ten Conference will serve as the official host of the event in collaboration with the Chicago Sports Commission and the United Center. The conference will be

hosting its first NCAA men's basketball regional after managing earlier rounds on four previous occasions.

"The Big Ten is excited to once again host some of the nation's best college basketball teams for the 2016 regional of the NCAA Tournament," said Brad Traviolia, Big Ten Deputy Commissioner, CFO/COO. "We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Chicago Sports Commission and the United Center, and look forward to bringing this great event to the city of Chicago for the fifth time."

"We are honored that the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Committee has selected Chicago to host the 2016 NCAA Tournament regional. It is a great testament to the incredible partnership that has developed between the Big Ten, Chicago Sports Commission and United Center, as well as Chicago's growing position as one of the premier destinations for sport in the U.S. and around the world," said Kara Bachman, Chicago Sports Commission Executive Director.

The partnership between the Big Ten, Chicago Sports Commission and United Center first came to fruition with Chicago's hosting of the 2013 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournament, when the conference set an attendance record with more than 124,000 fans. The three organizations will also collaborate for the 2015, 2019 and 2021 Big Ten Men's Basketball Tournaments at the United Center.

Historically, thousands of fans have traveled to NCAA Tournament host sites, thereby filling thousands of hotel rooms and generating millions in visitor spending. Chicago has already experienced the positive impact of hosting NCAA basketball: the 2016 event will mark the fifth time the Big Ten has hosted the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament at the United Center, including 1998, 2002, 2007 and 2011.

"We are thrilled to again be hosting the NCAA Tournament at the United Center, which has become one of America's most iconic sports and entertainment venues," said Steve Schanwald, Chairman of the Chicago Sports Commission and Vice President of Marketing for the United Center. "Chicago is the greatest sports city in the world and the City of Chicago is adept at rolling out the red carpet to welcome the nation's top sporting events, teams and their supporters."

The hosting of the Midwest Regional will be the first NCAA event the Chicago Sports Commission will collaborate with in Chicago with local partners since the organization's founding in 2011. The NCAA has already committed to hosting two other events in Chicago in the upcoming years – the 2017 Division I Men's Hockey "Frozen Four" and the 2018 National Collegiate Men's Gymnastics Championship, both of which were awarded to the Chicago Sports Commission along with venue and institutional partners in December, 2013.

The Actors Gymnasium Partners With Award-Winning Organizations To Launch Exciting New Professional Program

Actors Gymnasium (AG) was created in 1995 by professional physical performers looking for a place to hone their craft. Nearly 20 years later, the next chapter in that journey unfolds. The Chicago area's first and longest-running circus school launches a Professional Circus Training Program set to open in September 2015 under the direction of Master Teacher Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi. Applications are being accepted for all interested students at www.actorsgymnasium.org. The highly recommended Early Admission Application Deadline is February 17th.

The program is designed to prepare students for professional circus performance, or for audition into a multi-year circus program. It is intended for dedicated artists looking to take their circus training and theatrical skills to the next level.

"To me, circus is magic," explains AG Co-Artistic Director Larry DiStasi. "Circus is a dazzling display of one impossible thing after the next. In the circus, people can fly. Who wouldn't want to do that? I can't imagine anyone who wouldn't. And that's why we started The Actors Gymnasium. At least, it's part of the reason. And it's why I study circus myself."

Equally as passionate, Co-Artistic Director Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi elaborates, "The thing I love about Circus Arts is that it means different things to different people. It can be used to tell a story: it can be used to portray a metaphor: it can be used to show the limits of what the human body (and mind) is capable of. I believe there is validity in all forms of circus. Do it because it makes an audience feel something. Do it to amaze your audience. Do it because it makes you feel something. Do it to prove to yourself you can. I embrace any and all reasons that people do circus."

Program Director Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi is a second generation circus performer who grew up touring with various circuses, including Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus. She also performed at The Circus World Championships in London, England. In 1990, she moved to Chicago and began her career as a circus teacher and choreographer. Sylvia is

a co-founder of The Actors Gymnasium and an Artistic Associate of The Lookingglass Theatre Company. Other theater credits include The Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Children's Theater, Marriott Theater, and The Steppenwolf Theatre, among others. She recently won the 3Arts award for design, and she has been nominated for five Joseph Jefferson Awards for her choreography, winning four.

To provide a foundation for The Professional Circus Training Program and ensure students receive a well-rounded education, AG is partnering with the award-winning companies Lookingglass Theatre and Lucky Plush Productions, who will provide dance and physical theatre instruction. Our faculty also features some of the leading circus and physical comedy instructors in the Chicago area, including Nourbol Meirmanov, Oyunchimeg "Oyuna" Yadamjav and Dean Evans.

Chicago was recently featured as one of the U.S.'s top three vibrant circus cities according to Spectacle Magazine. At the first annual Chicago Contemporary Circus Festival, it was cited in panels as one of the most supportive places for circus professionals to live due to the large number of circus companies, variety of working opportunities, and relatively low rent for living and working spaces compared to their West and East Coast peers.

The Actors Gymnasium has been a pioneer in Chicago's circus-theatre movement since 1995. Celebrated for its longstanding collaborative relationship with Lookingglass Theatre, AG has won awards for artistic excellence from 3Arts, The City of Evanston and the Joseph Jefferson Committee. Multidisciplinary training is a hallmark of AG, and applications are encouraged from those who have additional skills in music, acting, design, original work and more.

The 9-month intensive curriculum provides 27 hours per week of premier training in circus arts, dance and physical theatre. Aerial arts skills including trapeze, silks, lyra, straps, Spanish web, invented apparatus, and Chinese pole are featured, as well as handbalancing, tumbling, partner acrobatics, juggling, tightwire, and contortion. Study also includes stretching and conditioning, pilates, and special topics such as rigging and career management.

Each week, students work on circus skills, stretching and conditioning, dance (classical and modern forms), physical theatre training, and a special topic course. Students also receive one private lesson per week and 2-3 hours of open practice time daily. The program culminates in a capstone performance in May when students will showcase their work.

DiStasi continues, "For me, the idea of a year-long program, where a person can study circus full-time, with additional courses in dance and physical theatre, sounds like a dream come true. I've seen the incredible progress that kids make in our four-week long summer camp. I've seen stunning grace and strength and fantastically creative, original circus acts developed in our 6-week Circus Intensive Workshop each summer. Now, after 9 months of continuous study at the end of our new Professional Circus Training Program, I cannot wait to see what evolves. I think it could be breath-taking."

Complete details on tuition, faculty, schedule, audition deadlines, and more can be found at www.actorsgymnasium.org/classes-camps/professional-training/professional-circus-training-program/

Millennium Park's Ice Rink Is Now Open

The McCormick-Tribune Ice Rink in Millennium Park opened on Friday, November 14, and will remain open through Saturday, March 7, 2015, weather permitting. For more than a decade, the rink has drawn over 100,000 skaters annually and is free and open to the public. The rink, located on Michigan Avenue between Washington and Madison Streets, offers skate rentals.

The McCormick Tribune Ice Rink will operate under the following hours:

- Monday-Thursday: Noon-8pm
- Friday: Noon-10pm
- Saturday (Through Jan. 3): 10am-10pm
- Saturday (Beginning Jan. 10): 10am-9pm
- Sunday: 10am-9pm

For more information about events in Millennium Park during the winter months, visit millenniumpark.org or call 312.744-3316. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter, @Millennium_Park.



Evanston's Outdoor Skating Rinks Open Jan. 10 & 11

Thanks to the recent wave of cold temperatures, City of Evanston parks crews were able to flood the three outdoor ice rinks for community members to enjoy skating outdoors at their neighborhood parks this weekend. This year, community members can skate at:

- Bent Park, Central St. at Cowper Ave.
- Arrington Lagoon at Dawes Park, Sheridan Rd. at Church St.
- Baker Park, Forest Ave. at Keeney St.

Baker and Bent Parks will officially open to the public on Saturday, January 10 while the Arrington Lagoon location is expected to open on Sunday, January 11. Signs will be posted to alert residents when ice is thick enough to skate safely. For an update on outdoor ice rink conditions, please visit cityofevanston.org/skating-and-sledding or call 847-859-7822, ext. 8.

Please note that attendants will not be on duty to supervise rinks and shelter houses will be closed.

Residents who prefer to participate in indoor activities this winter can take advantage of the Robert Crown Community Center and Ice Complex, located at 1701 Main St. Ice skating is available on the main rink Monday through Friday, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Sundays, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Ice skating is also available on the studio rink on Mondays, from 4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.; Fridays, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.; and Saturdays, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is \$8 and skate rental is \$3. The annual skate pass is \$125. For more information, please call 847-448-8258.

Evanston community members are also reminded that sledding, tobogganing, skiing and snowboarding on the James Park large center hill is prohibited by Ordinance (Evanston City Code 7-10-4). Evanston police and park supervisors are instructed to issue violation tickets to those individuals trespassing on the center large hill.

Sledding on the small and intermediate hill is at the user's own risk. No tobogganing, skiing or snowboarding is permitted. Users assume full responsibility for determining if conditions are safe for sledding. Adults are responsible for supervising children in their care.

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First Annual Roll The Cold Bike Challenge Tracks Riders On The Frozen Road

Join The Challenge And Prove That A Little Cold Won't Slow Your Roll

Today the Active Transportation Alliance announced the first annual Roll the Cold Bike Challenge, which will be held January 17 through January 23. Participants in the challenge will track their trips to earn bragging rights for the most miles biked during a frigid week that includes the anniversary of Chicago's coldest day ever on January 20, 1985.

Challenge participants will also receive information and tips for how to stay safe and warm while biking through the winter, which includes not biking at all when road and/or weather conditions are unsafe. Registration for the Challenge is online at www.activetrans.org/rollthecold.

Cycling is on the rise in Chicago, and winter biking is now common. Data from the U.S. Census and City of Chicago bike counts indicates that more than 8,000 Chicagoans bike commute in the winter, with many more biking to transit, school, the grocery store and other destinations.

Active Transportation Alliance, a nonprofit advocacy group that promotes better biking,

walking and transit, is hosting the Roll the Cold Bike Challenge to recognize these winter warriors and raise money to continue the fight to make our streets safer for everyone who uses them.

Roll the Cold Bike Challenge participants who raise money to support Active Trans will be eligible for prizes, including merino wool socks from Icebreaker and windproof biking gloves and a fat tire bike provided by Kozy's Cyclery! The participant with the most tracked miles will win the title of King or Queen of the 2015 Roll the Cold Bike Challenge and be featured on the Active Trans blog and social media pages. In addition to the weeklong challenge, Active Trans invites all winter commuters and biking enthusiasts to join us for the Winter Bike to Work Day on January 23 from 6:30 to 9 a.m. in Daley Plaza in Chicago's Loop. Mingle with Roll the Cold Bike Challenge participants, other winter cyclists and Active Trans members while you enjoy free coffee and cheesecake.

Evanston Community Members Encouraged to Share Input on Potential Divvy Bike Share Station Locations

The City of Evanston invites community members and visitors to provide their input on potential station locations for the City's coming Divvy Bike Share program by completing a brief survey.

The survey is available through Saturday, January 31 online at surveymonkey.com/s/divvylocations or by calling/texting 847-448-4311. City staff will also distribute surveys at the Levy Center, 300 Dodge Ave., on Wednesday, January 21 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and at the main Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave., on Tuesday, January 27, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. In the survey, community members are asked to rate the importance of 17 potential bike share station locations across the city

and provide feedback on how they would use those stations.

Initial funding for Evanston's Divvy Bike Share program allows for eight stations in 2015. City staff will utilize the survey feedback to make recommendations to the City Council on where those stations should be located.

Potential station locations were identified by the City using a variety of criteria, including connection to public transportation, population density and proximity to Chicago's Divvy system, retail spaces, public venues and major employers. The City utilized input gathered from the City's 2014 Bike Plan Update Survey, reviewed locations suggested by community members on Divvy's website, and worked

with two groups of Northwestern University Industrial Engineering students to evaluate possible locations.

Once the final eight station locations are approved by the Evanston City Council, the City will work with local businesses, organizations, and neighbors to identify a specific station site within each of the locations.

The expansion of the Divvy Bike Share program is possible thanks to a \$3 million state investment, which will add 700 new bikes and a total of 70 docking stations in Evanston, Oak Park and Chicago. To learn more about Evanston's Divvy Bike Share program, visit cityofevanston.org/divvybike or call/text 847-448-4311. For convenience, residents can also dial 3-1-1 in Evanston.

Health Club Complaints Climb for Second Straight Year Reports the Better Business Bureau

Every year the number one resolution made by individuals is to get in shape. That's a boon for health clubs but can be a boondoggle for those who choose to join.

In the past two years, national complaints have grown 20%, topping 8,000 last year alone. The complaints range from billing and collection issues to overall unhappiness with the contract.

"The number of complaints filed show that the negative issues that surround gym memberships show no sign of change," said Steve J. Bernas, president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving Chicago and northern Illinois. "Picking the best gym or fitness center for your personal interests can be a difficult choice, so check each one's rating on the BBB website. It's important to do careful research before making a final decision and signing on the dotted line."

Five questions to ask the gym:

1. What are the terms of any introductory offers? Gyms often use special introductory offers to lure in new members. Make sure you understand the terms and what the price will be once the introductory period is over.

2. Will my membership renew automatically? Many times people who join a gym don't realize that their contract renews automatically and that they would have to take specific steps to cancel their contract.

3. How can I get out of my contract? Getting out of a gym contract isn't always as easy as getting into one, so make sure you understand what steps you would need to take to cancel your membership.

4. What happens if I move? Gyms have a number of different policies when it comes to how moving will affect your membership. It might depend on how far away you're moving and if they have other locations nearby.

5. What happens if the gym goes out of business? Ask the gym to explain what will happen to your money if they suddenly close down.

Five questions to ask yourself when looking at potential gyms/health clubs:

1. What are my fitness goals? Determining your fitness goals in advance will help you select a facility that is most appropriate for you. If you have a serious health condition, consult with a medical professional when setting your fitness goals.

2. Is this location convenient? If the gym is across town, you'll be less likely to work out. Choose a fitness club that is convenient to work or home so the location is not a deterrent to getting exercise.

3. Can I really afford this every month? Monthly gym fees add up and, after any introductory periods are over, the price could jump higher than your budget can handle. Do the math before you join and make sure you can afford a gym membership.

4. Am I feeling pressured to join? Do not give in to high-pressure sales tactics to join right away. A reputable gym will give you enough time to read the contract thoroughly, tour the facilities, and make an informed decision.

5. Did I get everything in writing? Read the contract carefully and make sure that all verbal

promises made by the salesperson are in writing. What matters is the document you sign, so don't just take a salesperson's word for it.

For more information on scams, visit www.bbb.org, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

About The Polar Bear...

1. Of all living bear species, polar bears are the largest, averaging eight feet in height and weighing between 440 and 1,700 pounds.
2. Polar bears inhabit Arctic sea ice, water, islands and northern limits of the continental coastlines of the Northern Hemisphere.
3. Black skin protected by a dense coat of under fur, covered by a coat of longer guard hairs, allows the polar bears to survive harsh Arctic conditions where temperatures drop to well below freezing.
4. Polar bears can live as long as 30 years, but only a small number live beyond 20 years.



Protecting Wildlife Can Be Easy And Fun!

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1. Grow native plants found in your area, including trees, shrubs and other plants that offer food such as pollen, nectar, nuts, cones, berries and other seeds.
2. Provide water for wildlife with a small pond, birdbath or shallow dish ... or care for a natural spring or stream on or near your habitat.
3. Create protective cover for wildlife by growing a meadow, a prairie, densely branched shrubs and, when appropriate, evergreens. Place hollow logs and rock piles in your yard.
4. Build birdhouses, attach to metal poles and monitor their use.

Grow host plants for butterfly and moth caterpillars to eat and provide dense plantings to create safe areas for nesting wildlife.

Please watch what you plant in your garden. Exotic species not native to your region can become invasive and can be harmful to both people and wildlife. NWF's Certified Wildlife Habitat™ program helps you plan your landscape with the needs of wildlife in mind.

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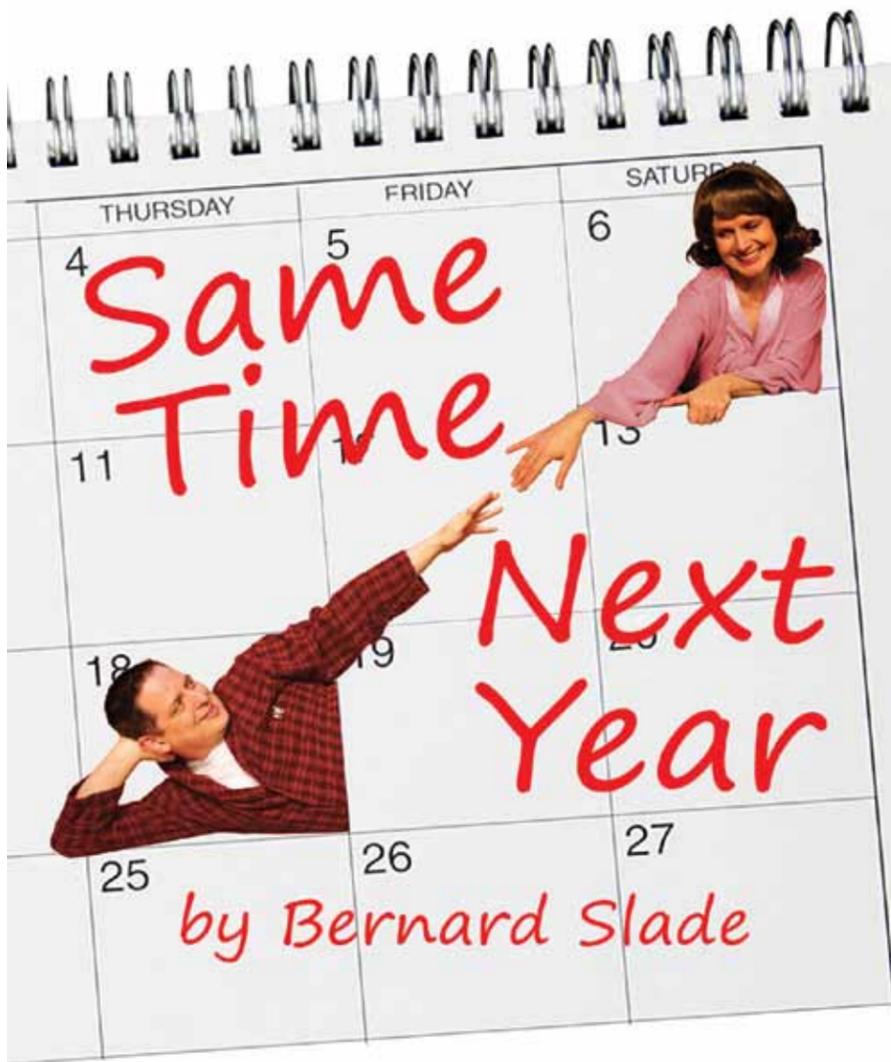


Same Time Next Year

By Wayne Mell – Managing Director

Can true love ever be wrong? That's the question we ponder every February. And this year, you can find the answer at Skokie Theater.

First up, MadKap Productions presents everyone's favorite Same Time, Next Year. One of the most popular romantic comedies in American theatre follows a love affair between two people, Doris and George, married to others, who rendezvous once a year.



Twenty-five years of manners and morals are hilariously and touchingly played out by the lovers. Steve Genovese, who directed last year's Tuesdays With Morrie is back to make you laugh and make you cry. The play stars Jim Jarrell and Laura Sturm as the two perennial lovers.

The show opens February 6 and runs through the 22. Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2:00 p.m., and a Wednesday matinee on February 11 at 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$28 for general admission, \$24 for seniors, and \$18 for students. Tickets can be purchased online at SkokieTheatre.org or by calling 847-677-7761.

Maybe you'll defy your spouse, but will you defy the gods themselves. That's the dilemma faced in Wings of Love. Nationally renowned story-teller Megan Wells brings the story of Psyche and Cupid (yes, that Cupid) to life in a story is passionate, ancient, and enduring. Psyche is the most beautiful princess in all of Rome, which angers Venus, the Goddess of love and beauty. When her son, Cupid, falls in love with Psyche, it's more that she can bear. The angry Goddess sets numerous tasks and challenges on the mortal girl so she can prove herself worthy to be the wife of a god.

If you saw Megan perform Dracula, you know how engaging and versatile Megan can be as she plays all of the different characters in the story. And if you haven't, then what are you waiting for? This is your chance to experience something rich. Wings of Love performs Wednesday, February 4 at 1:30 and again Sunday, February 8 at 7 pm. Tickets are only \$15. Buy them online at SkokieTheater.org or call 847-677-7761.

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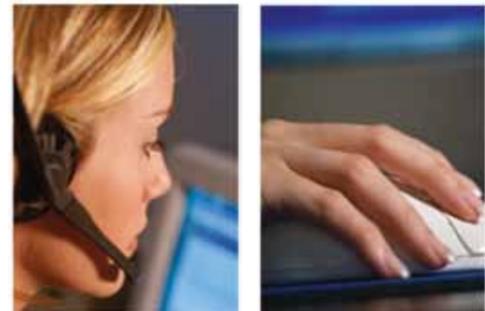
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The Lira Ensemble Receives National Endowment for the Arts Grant

Grant To Support Midwest Concerts Of Polish Music And Dance With Guest Artist Grazyna Auguscik

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu announced that the Lira Ensemble is one of only 163 nonprofit organizations nationwide to receive an NEA Challenge America grant. Lira has had the privilege of being a recipient of NEA grants since 1996.

The Lira Ensemble is recommended for a grant to support its Midwest Holiday concerts with guest artist Grazyna Auguscik, distinguished jazz vocalist. These famous concerts include an English language narrative explaining the history and tradition behind the music and dance performed and illuminate the Polish-American immigrant experience, as well as demonstrate Polish holiday customs. Guest artist Grazyna Auguscik will perform her own jazz arrangements of beloved Polish carols, something rarely heard in the US.

NEA Chairman Jane Chu said, "I'm pleased to be able to share the news of our support through Challenge America including the award to the Lira

Ensemble. The arts foster value, connection, creativity and innovation for the American people and these recommended grants demonstrate those attributes and affirm that the arts are part of our everyday lives."

Lucyna Migala, artistic director and general manager of Lira, said "this year's grant is especially wonderful because 2015 is the company's 50th anniversary."

The Challenge America category supports projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability. The NEA received 347 eligible Challenge America applications and will award 163 grants for a total of \$1.63 million.

For a complete listing of projects recommended for Challenge America support, please visit the NEA website at arts.gov. Follow the conversation about this and other NEA-funded projects on Twitter at #NEAFall2014.



Chicago's Famed Second City Comes To Niles North High School In Skokie

On Saturday, March 14, 2015, Chicago's legendary sketch comedy theatre, The Best of The Second City will appear at Niles North High School, 9800 Lawler Avenue, Skokie, IL 60077, at 7:30 p.m. featuring some of the best sketches, songs, and improvisations from The Second City's fifty two year history.

America's famed comedy troupe, The Second City, is coming to town with The Best of The Second City. The company that launched the careers of Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell, Gilda Radner, Bill Murray and more, brings the next generation of the comedy world's best and brightest in an evening of hilarious sketch comedy and Second City's trademark improvisation.

The Second City celebrates over 55 years of cutting edge satiric revues and continues to deliver the leading voices in comedy while touring the globe. With scripted and improvisational elements, audiences always enjoy being part of the show and playing along with the next generation of comic legends.

Whether it's ripped from the morning headlines or a classic gem from their 55 year archives, The Second City is always a laugh out loud hit.

Tickets for The Best of The Second City are \$30 general seating; \$50 limited cabaret seating, and can be purchased at <http://www.secondcitycomestonorth.org>. For more information email info@secondcitycomestonorth.org or call 847-665-9799, leave your name and number, and your call will be returned by a volunteer.

There will also be a 50/50 raffle the night of the event, visit <http://secondcitycomestonorth.org> to pre-purchase raffle tickets or to make a donation. Tickets will be for sale at the event.

The community is welcome to attend.

This event is sponsored by The Niles North Athletic Booster Club and the Niles North Fine Arts Parents & Patrons, Ltd. and all proceeds benefit:

- Niles North Athletic Booster Club.
- The Niles North Athletic Booster Club is a not-for-profit, 501(c) 3 organization. The NNABC raises funds for the sole purpose of supporting our teams, individual athletes, and the athletic and fitness programs at Niles North. We also provide direct financial support for the Athletic Leadership Council: student-athletes who work to develop leadership skills so vital to their future and their ability to impact our community.

- Niles North Fine Arts Parents and Patrons, Ltd.

Incorporated as a not-for-profit charitable organization Dec. 19, 2000, the primary purpose of Niles North Fine Arts Parents & Patrons is to foster, promote and expand community support of the Niles North Fine Arts. NNFAPP provides student and department educational and charitable grants. For more information visit www.nilesnorthfapp.com.

Sauganash Neighborhood Reunion



Chicago residents who grew up by the old railroad underpass in the Sauganash Park area recently had a nice neighborhood reunion. Guests were: Eric Adrian, Claudio Cozzini, Peggy Dolan, Eva Folker, Teri Foster, Jim Gunther, Cindy Johnson, Steve & Mike Lange, Manny LoGalbo, Kathy O'Connor, Vicki Pagnucci, Chris Piccoli, & Maureen Walsh. The underpass is still located at Granville & Lowell and it now runs under the Sauganash Trail.

"Experience Res" Day
Friday, February 13, 2015
8 am to 3 pm

7th grade girls welcome to spend the day at Resurrection rotating through all nine academic areas to "Experience Res."
Register at www.reshs.org

Alumnae Games
Saturday, February 28, 2015
noon to 4 pm

All are welcome to cheer on our alumnae at the 3rd annual alumnae volleyball and basketball games. Players register by Feb 9.
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School Choice Policy In Illinois At Roundtable Discussion, Film Screening

Event Moderated By Award-Winning Director Bob Bowdon; Timed To Coincide With National School Choice Week

When it comes to school choice policy in Illinois, what are leaders in Chicago doing right, and where could they improve? And what new information do parents need to know about choosing the right education environments for their children?

On Wednesday, January 28 at 5:30pm, a panel from across the Prairie State will gather to answer those questions, and more, at a special event planned to coincide with National School Choice Week (January 25-31, 2015).

The panel, which will be moderated by award-winning education filmmaker and Executive Director of Choice Media Bob Bowdon, will include Ted Dabrowski, vice president of policy, Illinois Policy Institute.

The discussion will follow a screening of Bowdon's 2014 documentary short "The Ticket: The Many Faces of School Choice," which provides a closer look at the unique and distinctive education options available to students and parents in different states across the country.

The event is planned by the Illinois Policy Institute in partnership with Choice Media, Inc. "Giving parents a choice means giving kids a chance to receive the education they deserve," said Ted Dabrowski, vice president of policy at the Illinois Policy Institute.

"We're excited to bring 'The Ticket,' to Chicago, the place where some of the most dramatic footage of the film was shot. Testimonies from a Chicago charter school makes some of the most compelling arguments for school choice I've ever heard," Bowdon said. "National School Choice Week provides a unique opportunity, every year, to shine a positive spotlight on the need for, and benefits of, educational choice. That's exactly what we'll do at this event."

Celebrated every year in January, National School Choice Week shines a positive spotlight on all types of effective education options for children, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, magnet schools, private schools, online learning, and homeschooling. The celebration is nonpartisan and nonpolitical. National School Choice Week 2015 will feature a history-making more than 11,000 independently planned and independently funded events across all 50 states.

This event is being held at the Icon Theatre at 1011 S. Delano Court in downtown Chicago. Reservations are highly recommended since space is limited. Call 312/346-5700 to secure your seat. Tickets are \$5.00 each.

Chicago Public Library

Special Collections Exhibits

SOX VS. CUBS: THE CHICAGO CIVIL WARS
Through February 8, 2015
Special Collections, Exhibit Hall, 9th Floor

For most Chicagoans, the rivalry between the Chicago White Sox and the Chicago Cubs is legendary. Fans' loyalty to one team or the other appears to divide the city into North and South Sides. This fun exhibit features each team's historical development, statistical information, photographs, memorabilia, souvenirs and other materials. The Sox vs. Cubs exhibit was produced by the Elmhurst Historical Museum, a department of The City of Elmhurst, Illinois.

GREAT EXPECTATION: DRAWINGS BY DAVID LEE CSICKO
Through February 17, 2015
Congress Corridor, Ground Floor

Originally commissioned for an adaptation of the Charles Dickens' novel by Strawdog Theatre in Chicago, artist David Lee Csicsko brings to life Pip, Estella and the other characters of Great Expectations.

LOVE ME FOREVER! OH! OH! OH!
Through March 8, 2015
Congress Corridor, Ground Floor

Twenty states now recognize same-sex marriage, with court cases pending in many others, in Love Me Forever! Oh! Oh! Oh!—a selection from The Best American Comics 2013—cartoonist Jeremy Soresse explores the idea of getting married.

Since 1873, the Chicago Public Library (CPL) has encouraged lifelong learning by welcoming all people and offering equal access to information, entertainment and knowledge through innovative services and programs, as well as cutting-edge technology. Through its 80 locations, the Library provides free access to a rich collection of materials, both physical and digital, and presents the highest quality author discussions, exhibits and programs for children, teens and adults. CPL recently received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards; won a National Medal for Library Services from the Institute for Museum and Library Services and was ranked number one in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. For more information, please call (312) 747-4050 or visit chipublib.org.

Tu B' Shevat (Israeli Arbor Day) To Be Celebrated At Ezra-Habonim, The Niles Township Jewish Cong.

Tu B'Shevat, the Israeli Arbor Day, will be celebrated by the Sisterhood of Ezra-Habonim, the Niles Township Jewish Congregation, 4500 W. Dempster, Skokie, with a gala luncheon and Bingo, Wed., February 4, starting at 11:30 a.m.

Tu B'Shevat is considered "The New Year of the Trees." In contemporary Israel, the day is celebrated as an ecological awareness day, and trees are planted in celebration. In the Middle Ages, Tu B'Shevat was celebrated with a feast of fruits in keeping with the description of the holiday as a "New Year."

The luncheon and Bingo is open to the public.

Cost is \$18 for Sisterhood members and \$23 for non-members.

One Bingo card is included with each paid reservation. Additional cards are available for purchase.

For further information or for reservations, please call the synagogue office at 847-675-4141.

Tips For Finding The Right School For Your Child

By Andrew Campanella

If you'd like to send your child to a different school next year, now's the time to start the process of researching your options.

As Illinois prepares to commemorate National School Choice Week later this month at 745 events across the state, and nearly 11,000 events nationwide, many parents will begin evaluating the educational opportunities that are available for their children.

Believe it or not, seats in schools are already beginning to fill up for the 2015-2016 school year. Interest in school choice – the process of actively choosing a public, charter, magnet, private, or online school – is high. That means that waiting until the spring or the summer to begin researching schools for your children could restrict your options.

No handbook or tip sheet can truly guide parents through the entire process of selecting a school, because choosing schools is an individual experience that will be unique to every family.

However, parents can start by making a list of the attributes that they hope to find in an ideal school. Ask yourself: what's most important to you and to the academic, social, and emotional well-being of your child? Is it the academic performance of a school, school safety, the instructional methods, the qualifications of teachers, the school's educational theme, a school's shared values, or other factors?

Once you've identified what matters most, start looking into the options available to you. In addition to the local public school, you may be eligible to send your child to a school outside of your ZIP code, or in a different school district. Look into nearby charter schools and magnet schools. Don't leave private and faith based schools off your list! You might be able to find scholarships to cover the costs of tuition. And for some families, online learning

and homeschooling work best.

To find the options available to you, look at information from the Illinois Department of Education, as well as information on state-based education reform or school choice organization websites. For a directory of most schools in your area, along with parent rankings and some performance metrics, parents can visit this website: greatschools.org.

With your list of requirements and your list of schools in hand, start making appointments to visit the schools. Ask to sit in on classes, and make sure to ask as many questions as possible of teachers, the administration, and support staff. You'll want to find out what motivates the adults in the building, while also seeing how the students in the classes respond to their teachers. Ask yourself: is this a place where I'd want to send my child for most of his or her weekday waking hours?

Finally, make sure to talk with other parents – and to your own children. Ask parents how the schools' administrators treat parents, and whether they welcome, or discourage, parental involvement. And most importantly, ask your children about their perceptions of the schools that you've visited. Find out what excites and motivates your child at school, but also ask about their worries, concerns and apprehensions.

Making the decision to change schools certainly isn't easy. And switching schools isn't a piece of cake, either. But if you start now, and plan out the journey, you'll find that the destination – a great school for your child – is well worth the diligence and effort.

Andrew R. Campanella is the president of National School Choice Week. National School Choice Week, which runs from January 25-31, 2015, is America's largest-ever celebration of opportunity in education. Andrew lives in Miramar Beach, Florida.

Evanston Public Library

Winter Reading Program Promotes Reading To Kids From Birth

During the month of February, the Evanston Public Library will promote reading to our youngest children through a winter reading program, "Winter Words: Read and Talk with Your Young Child." The program is specifically aimed at children from birth through age 3 years.

Early exposure to words, language and reading is now understood to be a key component of future success in school and beyond. In 2014, The American Academy of Pediatrics, which represents 62,000 pediatricians, made it policy to promote reading to children from birth. Studies show that children who are talked to frequently from birth are significantly better prepared for school success.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to come to any location of the Evanston Public Library to participate in the program with young children in their care. "Winter Words" includes a reading log, prize books, staff recommendations of books to read and a fun craft. The Library will also pilot the program at a small number of home daycare facilities in the community and reach out to families with very young children throughout the community.

The New York Times reported that "according to a federal government survey of children's health, 60 percent of American children from families with incomes at least 400 percent of the federal poverty threshold -- \$94,400 for a family of four -- are read to daily from birth to 5 years of age, compared with around a third of children from families living below the poverty line, \$23,850 for a family of four."

"This can all give our youngest children a big advantage through the simple of act of reading. This program provides motivation and tools to support all parents and caregivers in reading and developing vocabulary in their babies whose minds are hungry to learn, right from the start," said Karen Danczak Lyons, Director, Evanston Public Library.



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Mayor Emanuel Announces New 311 Resource For Parents

Building on the nationwide success of "Text4baby," Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today the upcoming launch of a free text messaging service called Connect4Tots, which provides parents with information on caring for their child over age one. The messaging service will provide important resources to promote parental involvement in education, children's health, access to social services, and participation in city events. Connect4Tots is expected to launch in the fall of 2015 as part of the City's roll out of the next phase of Open 311.

"For the City of Chicago to succeed, we need to invest in the success of every child in every neighborhood right from their earliest years," said Mayor Emanuel. "Connect4Tots is another example of our larger strategy to empower parents and invest in every child from their early years through their college years to ensure their future

success."

Connect4Tots will expand on the success of Text4baby by offering the same important services to more parents. Just as Text4baby provided resources for new or soon-to-be parents on caring for their child less than a year old, this Chicago-based service will provide similar resources and information to parents with children aged one and older. Connect4Tots will also go a step further in its inclusion of social services and early childhood education information.

"This service will provide a central place for Chicago parents to receive maternal and child health as well as early childhood education information, in a quick, easy to use, and free manner," said Janine Lewis, Executive Director of EverThrive Illinois, the state's Text4baby outreach affiliate. "We are pleased to collaborate with the City of Chicago in this important expansion of mobile information services."

Communication with parents will touch on topics such as immunizations, nutrition, wellness and exercise, and social services. Parents can use the service to learn about the importance of reading to their child and additional ways they can help with their child's development through participating in programs such as Chicago City of Learning. Additional alert messages may be sent periodically with breaking news on city events, safety, disease outbreaks and key product recalls.

To ensure useful and appropriate messages, the service has identified a core group of experts in education, health care, and social services through the Early Learning Executive Council to develop message content in consultation with focus

groups of parents. Developers will solicit feedback from a broader group of partner organizations and will finalize message context and custom capabilities within the core group of partners and experts. The messaging service will then conduct a comprehensive review and revision of message content annually.

The messaging service will utilize a broad network of public-private partnerships including the Chicago Department of Public Health; hospitals and clinics; mobile health organizations; corporate sponsors; cellular service providers, technology vendors, and related non-profits; as well as health care, education and social service experts such as the Ounce of Prevention and EverThrive Illinois.

Adult Enrichment Offerings At Resurrection

Resurrection College Prep High School is offering an adult enrichment course entitled "In the Name of Freedom." This course will address the events and causes that led to the American Revolutionary War and the struggles of the thirteen colonies to work through different constitutions after defeating the British. In addition, the course will explore the American, British and French quest to save the culture of democracy, including significant artifacts, during the World War II era. There will be an emphasis on the moral issues facing the men and women who helped to form the United States in the Revolutionary years and the continued American and European struggles for freedom and democracy.

The course will meet on the following Tuesday evenings: February 10, February 24, March 10 and March 24, 2015, from 6:30-8:30pm at Resurrection. Resurrection faculty member Mr. Mike Longo will teach the course. Mike Longo is a Resurrection Religious Studies teacher and Chamber Orchestra director who holds a Master's degree in Music and Humanities from DePaul University and a Master's degree in Religious Studies from Loyola University. The resources used in the course will include the books 1776 by David McCullough, The Story of American Freedom by Eric Foner, and The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History by Robert M. Edsel, as well as the documentary film The Rape of Europa. The fee for the course is \$50; to register or for more information, please contact Alisa Martorano at amartorano@reshs.org or 773.775.6616 Ext 142.

July 10-12, 2015 ~ Historical Trip to Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestowne

Resurrection College Prep is also offering a Summer Adult Historical Trip to Williamsburg, Yorktown and Jamestowne that will take place from July 10-12, 2015. The Adult Enrichment Course and weekend trip are de-

signed to complement each other, but both the trip and the course are offered separately. Participants for the weekend trip need not have taken the Revolutionary War course in order to attend. All adults in the community are welcome to participate. Mr. Mike Longo will be the guide for the weekend trip which will explore America's Historic Triangle and the people, places and events of the Revolutionary period.

Participants will discover Williamsburg to learn about the struggles and daily life of colonial people, walk in the footsteps of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas at Historic Jamestowne, and visit the place where independence was won for the United States at Yorktown. The three-day, two-night trip will include round-trip airfare and ground transportation, accommodations, admission charges and guided tours. The cost is approximately \$1,000 to \$1,150 (depending on single or double occupancy) and a deposit of \$200 per person is required to hold a space. Please contact Jim O'Malley with Diplomat Travel Agency at jmo6835@aol.com or 773.774.2727 to reserve a space, for a complete itinerary or with any questions.

Resurrection College Prep High School, located at 7500 West Talcott Avenue in Chicago, is the largest all girls Catholic, Christian college preparatory high school for young women on the north side of Chicago. Since its founding in 1922, Resurrection has graduated over 13,500 alumnae. For more information about Resurrection College Prep High School, call 773.775.6616 Ext 129 or visit www.reshs.org.

Mayor Emanuel Supporting Police Memorial Foundation Through City Council Gift

Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced today that he will use a holiday gift given to him by City Council members to benefit the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, an organization that provides support and assistance to the families of Chicago police officers killed or catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

Earlier today the City Council presented the Mayor with one of the Horses of Honor, a life-size statue of a horse that was part of a recent public art campaign paying tribute to fallen CPD officers. The statue will be displayed on the fifth floor of City Hall outside the Mayor's Office, along with a box where residents can make donations to the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation. The Mayor and the City's First Lady, Amy Rule, made a personal contribution of \$1,000.

"I want to thank the City Council for this thoughtful gift that honors the dedicated men and women of our police department," said Mayor Emanuel. "I am happy to have this gift on display so we can help support the families of those brave officers who have given so much, and in some cases everything, in service to our city. Amy and I are proud to make a donation to the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation as part of this effort, and we encourage others to join us in supporting this great organization."

To learn more about the Chicago Police Memorial Foundation, and to contribute online, visit www.cpdmemorial.org.

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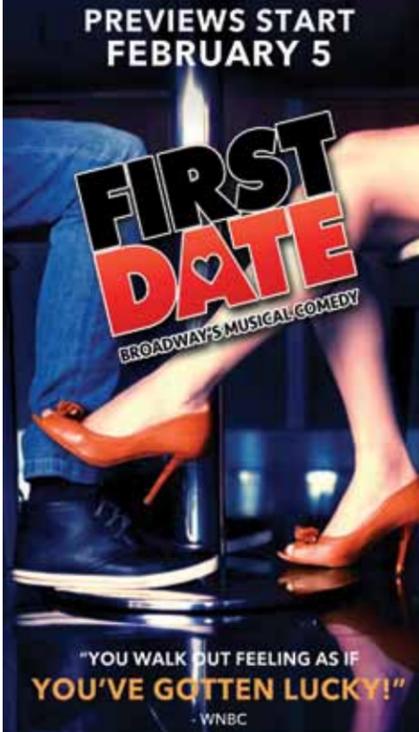
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Village Cooking Corner

Here Are Some Easy, But Very Tasty, Ideas For Your Super Bowl Gatherings.

(Any of the serving sizes mentioned may be increased by doubling, tripling, etc. to accommodate your guest list).

Stuffed Eggs (4 servings)

4 eggs
2 anchovy fillets
1 t prepared mustard
salt and pepper
2 T margarine
4 tomatoes
wine vinegar
tarragon
pinch of sugar
chives
black olives



Hard-boil eggs, peel and cut in half lengthwise. Scoop out yolks and mix with the finely chopped anchovy fillets, prepared mustard, salt, pepper and soft margarine and fill this mixture into egg halves. Cut tomatoes in half and season with wine vinegar, tarragon, salt, pepper and a pinch of sugar. Place eggs on tomato halves and garnish with chopped chives. Serve on plate decorated with olives that have anchovy fillets wrapped around them.

Cheese Mini-Sandwiches (8 servings)

Alternate 8 buttered slices of square pumpernickel with 7 slices sharp cheddar cheese; wrap in wax paper and place in refrigerator for some time, weighing the package down to make slices stick together. Unwrap, cut in cubes and garnish with olives, grapes or anything suitable. Note: You can use a variety of cheeses to fit your taste and garnish with anything from anchovies to pickles to nuts.

Kraut Salad (8 servings)

1 small head of cabbage
salt and pepper
vinegar
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic
chopped herbs (any combination to suit your taste)
4 strips smoked bacon



Cut cabbage in fine strips, season with salt, pepper and vinegar and place in a large, shallow container; weigh down with a water-filled dish for 2 to 3 hours. Then combine cabbage, chopped onion, garlic, herbs and the bacon which has been cut in thin strips and crisped. Mix the crisp bacon and its drippings into the cabbage salad; toss and serve lukewarm.

The above recipes are taken from the

Burda International Cuisine Cook Book No. 2 of Festive Menus

Water Chestnut Hors d'oeuvres

Soak drained, whole water chestnuts in soy sauce 1/2 hour.
Roll in sugar.

Cut strips of bacon lengthwise, and crosswise wrap bacon around chestnuts, securing with toothpicks.

Bake: 400 20 minutes. Drain Grease and Bake again: 350 5 minutes.

From the Kitchen of Laurel Atkeisson

Onion Dip

1 4 oz. package of cream cheese, softened
1 envelope dry onion soup mix
Mix, chill and serve!



Devilled Ham Dip

1 4 oz. package cream cheese, softened
1 can devilled ham
Mix, chill and serve!

Serve both of these delicious recipes with crackers, chips or raw vegetables.

From the Kitchen of Marlane Marshall

Ultimate 7-Layer Dip

1 can (18 oz.) Refried Beans
1 Tbsp. Taco Seasoning Mix.
1 cup Breakstone's sour cream
1 cup Thick 'n Chunky Salsa
1 cup shredded lettuce
1 cup Mexican Style Shredded cheese
1/2 cup green onion slices
2 Tbsp. sliced pitted ripe olives
Ritz Chips original or Wheat Thins baked snack crackers



Mix: beans and taco seasoning mix. Spread onto bottom of 9-inch pie plate or quiche dish.

Layer: Remaining ingredients over bean mixture, cover and refrigerate several hours or until chilled.

Serve with chips or crackers.

Makes 48 servings, 2 Tbsp. dip and 14 chips or 16 crackers each.

Make Ahead: Prepare as directed, cover, refrigerate up to 2 hours.

Piquant Meatballs

2 pounds ground beef
1 egg
2 tablespoons bread crumbs
1 teaspoon salt
pepper, to taste
12-ounce bottle of chili sauce
6 ounces grape jelly
juice of 1 lemon



Combine meat, egg, bread crumbs, and seasonings. Shape into balls the size of a walnut. Heat chili sauce, jelly, and lemon juice in a heavy skillet or Dutch oven until blended. Add the meat balls, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes.

Uncover and cook 15 minutes longer, stirring frequently to prevent sticking.

Serves 8 to 10.



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To Do List For The Winter Doldrums



Chester M. Przybylo

Now that the holiday decorations are put away and the weather in Chicago can go from freezing cold to almost spring like, the winter doldrums can set in. Instead of just waiting around for spring to come, why not use this time to get a few things out of the way that you have been avoiding...so that when spring comes you can greet it with some items checked off your to-do list.

While you are still in the spirit of the New Year, it might be a good time to review any changes that took place in 2014 that may have affected your estate plans. Have there been any marriages, divorces, births, deaths or adoptions in your family over the year? If so, do you need to contact your estate planning attorney to update your plan? Oftentimes people don't think about these matters until they are ready to go on an extended vacation and need it done in a hurry. Better to do it now than to wait until

you may be in a crisis mode.

A lot of people are getting ready for Tax Day on April 15th. While collecting various financial information this is a good time to make sure that, if you have done your estate planning with a trust, all of the assets that should be in the trust have been funded. Funding a trust should not be a difficult task, the estate planning law firm that you used to create your trust can easily guide you on how this is done, if you have forgotten how since you signed your trust.

An often forgotten task is letting your heirs know where you keep your trust or will. While this may seem very elementary, over the years our office has received many calls from a decedent's heirs asking us where their parents kept their trust or will. There is seemingly no end to the creative places people have stored these extremely important documents---garages, ovens and freezers. This is why our office supplies an extra copy of the trust when it is signed along with the advice to keep the copy in a safe deposit box. So take the time to contact your heirs to let them know exactly where you have these documents stored.

With so many children moving away from their home state, it is also important to let all of your heirs, and especially those who live far away, know the name of your estate planning law firm. Make sure that they have a card from the firm so that in the event that they need to contact the firm, they can do this swiftly. When you select a full-service estate planning law firm for your estate planning needs, if heirs live far away they can have the firm help with any estate administration that may be necessary after one's passing.

Lastly, make sure that your adult heirs have done their own estate planning. Many times heirs have come to our firm after their parents' passing without any estate plan of their own. If parents have done a good job in their estate planning the heirs realize what a favor their parents did for them.

After taking advantage of this slow time of the year, it may be time to break out the seed catalogs for the spring.

Chester M. Przybylo has been elected to the Board of Governors of the prestigious American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys and has been engaged in the practice of law for the last 45 years. To register for an upcoming seminar, call the 24 hour reservation hotline at 1-800-638-7878 or register online at www.PlanOurEstate.com.

Northtown Garden Club

Our February meeting will be held on Thursday, February 5th, at 7:00 P.M. at Warren Park Field House, 6601 N. Western Ave.

We Kick off 2015 with our Garden Travelog

If we can't play in the earth right now, we can at least while away the winter with memories of nicer weather.

Lucy and Bob Radycki will show their slides from Cordoba in the south of Spain. They attended the Patio Festival where private homes open their inner courtyard container gardens to the public. They will also show a few slides from the mosque in Cordoba and the Alhambra.

Ireland and beyond will be Alice Dunlap-Kraft's travel exhibit.

This event is open to the public and a \$5.00 donation is requested from non-NGS members.

Other News and Events:

We are gearing up for our big fund raising event of 2015, the Artisan Fair on May 2, 2015, and we are still looking for artists or people who create handmade items. Forms are available on our website.

Northtown Garden Society
Member, West Ridge Chamber of Commerce
Member, Garden Clubs of Illinois
www.northtowngardensociety.org

Calling All Artisans...

The Northtown Garden Society (NGS) is holding a Nature and Garden Arts and Crafts Fair in May of 2015 to raise funds for our community service and educational programs. We are seeking artists and crafters to sell their creations at our fair.

Here are the particulars:

The theme of our fair is Nature and Gardening thus all art works need to depict gardening or nature or, in the case of soaps, candles, jewelry or foods, be made of natural products. We will offer all media including but not restricted to paintings, woodworking, textiles, soaps, ceramics, mosaics, photography and jewelry.

The fair will be held indoors in the gymnasium at the Warren Park Field House, 6601 N. Western Avenue, Chicago, on Saturday, May 2, 2015 from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Participants may purchase space for a 6' x 2.5' table for \$25.00 or a 6' x 8' booth for \$30.00. Tables may be shared by 2 participants.

Each participant must donate one item to NGS to be raffled. Raffle proceeds will go to NGS.

For more information or if you are interested in participating, review the rules and complete the application available on our web site, www.northtowngardensociety.org and mail in no later than February 28, 2015.

Got questions? E-mail Ginny at ngschicago@gmail.com

Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor:

Where are the candidates? Where are the candidates? Where are the candidates? Not on Chicago's far northwest side if coverage in the print and broadcast media is any indication. I thought the mayoral candidates--incumbent Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Willie Wilson, Ald. Robert Fioretti, County Commissioner Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, and William "Dock" Walls, III--are running for the office to represent the entire city. Instead, they are fixated on the city's south and west sides. Northwest side residents have yet to see any of them in the 41st Ward. No doubt there are other north and far northwest side wards that are wondering the same thing. We pay some of the highest real estate taxes in the city but suffer from insufficient police protection. We have issues of potholed streets, flooding and unbearable aircraft noise but are neglected by the candidates. We have candidates who support using public land for private use. Where are the candidates who will take a stand that no private buildings should be constructed east of Lake Shore Drive or that our parkland is solely for public use as park space? Do not take us for granted, candidates! In some cases, our needs are similar to other parts of the city and, in other cases, they are different. Get out of your comfort zones and bring your campaigns to the 41st Ward so we can hear you respond to our questions and issues! We demand no more, and we deserve no less.

Sincerely,
Stan "Tex" Banash

MWRD Officers Elected

Commissioner Mariyana T. Spyropoulos has been elected the new Board President of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Commissioner Barbara McGowan was re-elected Vice



Pictured, left to right, are Commissioners Tim Bradford, President Mariyana Spyropoulos and Frank Avila.

President and Commissioner Frank Avila is the new Chairman of Finance.

President Spyropoulos received her law degree from The John Marshall Law School and her MBA from Loyola University Chicago. She also completed graduate work in American government at Georgetown Uni-

versity, Washington, D.C. With her experience as an attorney, she provides a unique legal and business perspective combined with environmental activism. She has spoken to many community groups on the issues of the environment and specifically water issues. Previously, she is a former Assistant State's Attorney of Cook County.

Commissioner Barbara McGowan has served on the MWRD Board since 1998. Besides serving as Vice President, she is Chairman of the Affirmative Action Committee and the Procurement Committee. She is also Vice Chairman of the Pension, Human Resources and Civil Service Committee and the Public Information and Education Committee. She served as Acting President in 2012-2013 and 2014-2015.

Commissioner Frank Avila was elected to the Board of Commissioners in 2002 and was re-elected in 2008 and 2014. He is Chairman of the Engineering Committee, the Maintenance and Operations Committee and the Public Health and Welfare Committee. He is Vice Chairman of the Affirmative Action Committee and the Industrial Waste/Water Pollution Committee.



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Illinois Hospital Association Hospital Engagement Network Scored third in the state



Consumer Reports named OLR: #2 in patient safety in the city of Chicago in five categories



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