

MY SUN DAY NEWS

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And at this time of year, we older folk have a saying about birds and bees. 14



Provided | MSDN Photo

On their pilgrimage to Italy through St. Mary's Church in Huntley, Sun City residents Dick Bosold and Claudia Millington (not pictured) gained an audience with Pope Leo XIV.

Sun City travelers join historic Italian pilgrimage

By Christine Such

For My Sun Day News

Sun City residents Dick Bosold and Claudia Millington recently joined a delegation of 25 travelers for a 10-night pilgrimage through Rome, Assisi, and Florence. Led by Father Julius of St. Mary's in Huntley, the group's itinerary featured a momentous highlight: a Papal audience with the first American-born pontiff, Pope Leo XIV.

Elected in May 2025, Pope Leo XIV, formerly Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, holds a special place in the hearts of the Midwest travelers. Born at Mercy Hospital in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood on September 14, 1955, the Holy Father's roots are firmly planted in Illinois. He grew up in the south suburb of Dolton and attended school at St. Mary of the Assumption on the far south side, making this international pilgrimage feel like a visit with a local hero.

After arriving at 5 a.m. in St. Peter's Square to secure a front-row vantage point, Millington described the moment the Pope finally appeared.

"The excitement was incredible as he drove past in the Popemobile," Millington recalled. "Having seats right at the front of the square put us directly in his path; he was right there in front of us."

PILGRIMAGE | Pg. 4



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lifeinfocus

Is everyone really doing their best?



Carol Pavlik
Columnist

A core value of mine is this: Everyone is just doing their best.

I really do believe this, and it plays out during the day when there are minor infractions committed against me, like getting cut off in traffic, or seeing when someone hasn't cleaned up after their dog in the neighborhood, or the cashier forgets to scan a coupon.

My family teases me about this. In many ways, I could be accused of being a bit Pollyanna-ish, especially when it comes to giving others the benefit of the doubt. I move through my life wanting to believe that most people, deep down, are good, competent, and have only the best of intentions.

When my children complained about a teacher who overlooked them for the lead role in the school play, I placated them by suggesting that the teacher perhaps needed to give a chance to another student who needed it more. Just doing her best.

The policeman who pulled you over? Probably under im-

mense pressure from the chief to enforce the city sticker laws. He's doing his best.

What about the rude server at a restaurant? It's because they are having a bad day. If someone forgets about something I need from them, I can only assume it is because they are balancing so many tasks in their life, and who isn't prone to errors when overwhelmed?

Now ... for myself? I'm not so kind. While everyone else is "doing their best," I am more likely to scold myself because I could always work harder, better, faster, etc.

I'm a sucker for productivity hacks. I love scouring Substack for people's overly-optimistic tropes describing how they went from being a lazy, unproductive slug to a CEO of their own company while simultaneously raising three children and shedding 30 pounds just by cutting out carbs. They got divorced and rode their bikes across the country. Their company laid them off after 25 years of service, so they finally opened their pottery studio and now their creations are being featured on "Good Morning, America." Their set of original acoustic folksongs are available on Spotify. Now, they're on a book tour, because of course they had time to write

a memoir during all this.

I'm happy for them. Really.

Why do I read these blogs and posts? It's because I secretly feel like an unproductive slug, and seeing their stories of transformation give me hope. At least, I think it gives me hope, although on further examination, I think it just reinforces my general feeling of sluggishness.

Amy Poehler has a podcast, "A Good Hang," where she has conversations with other funny people. While interviewing Rashida Jones, Amy said:

"One of the reasons I wanted to do this podcast is because I've watched men doing absolutely the bare minimum. I'm truly giving 25%, which for most people is 75%. It's like, enough is enough. Enough with the 100%! Enough with improving ourselves and listening to things about how we're supposed to get better and better and better."

Oh, Amy. This is the demotivational speech I need right now. Enough of attempting to do it all.

My daughter called me from college. "I feel so behind," she said. "I have so much to do, and finals are next week." I choked back a caustic guffaw. Have I failed my daughter? Did I somehow give her the impression that at some point in your adult

life, you will not feel behind? Not feel like a phony? Feel like you're operating at 50% capacity?

My husband doesn't share my opinion of people, although he appreciates my (mostly) positive attitude. "Not everyone is doing their best," he'll say to me. "Some people are just lazy."

Well, that may be, but I can't go through life with such a dim view of the strangers that surround me. I can't and I won't. If I expect strangers to give ME the benefit of the doubt when I come up short, then I most certainly have to extend that same kindness to them. Maybe I'm not being realistic. Maybe I'm naïve. If that's true, then so be it. The alternative is to go through my days annoyed, angry, and indignant about every little thing, and I don't have the energy for that. If a driver cuts me off in traffic, I will probably spin a tale in which he is driving his wife, who is in active labor, straight to the hospital. Because that's the only logical reason I can conjure for his erratic driving. Let me live in my world where people are good, people have reasons, people sometimes fall short because of their humanness. I'll do my best, and you do yours.

politicalplace

The views in these letters are the writers' own.

In today's political chaos, many who write to explain feelings or relay facts that they have learned need to pay acute attention. Current Republican statements blaming Democratic rhetoric as the basis of what took place at the White House Press Correspondents Dinner is not true. However, both parties should be aware of the inherent message to watch their words. Long before the January 6 insurrection, words had led

to violence. It should not be tolerable or normalized by anyone.

To anyone who writes, remember to watch your words; they are important. Monitor your emotions as you write. Monitor your involvement with the subject you are writing about. Civic engagement matters. Being involved matters. Writing about how you feel or about facts that you have vetted is important. Using words to influence or share is a good thing that will become part of the dialogue. As you write however, know that words are a strong weapon that can be used for good or for evil.

Gail Talbot
Huntley resident

May God Bless the United States of America!

Under the leadership of Donald Trump, American strength, resolve, and clarity have once again been put on full display for the world to see. Our brave men and women in uniform, standing on the front lines in Iran, have delivered a decisive and overwhelming blow to what has long been the most dangerous state sponsor of terrorism on the planet. In just

four weeks, they dismantled a regime that has spread instability, fear, and violence across the globe for decades.

This level of precision, speed, and effectiveness does not happen by accident. It is the direct result of strong leadership from the commander in chief on down through the chain of command. The strategy has been clear, the execution disciplined, and the outcome undeniable. This was NOT chaos or hesitation, but a demonstration of what happens when American power is used with purpose and conviction.

For the first time in the last 47 years, there is a real and tangible opportunity for peace, not the weak kind built on concessions and appeasement, but peace through strength. The possibility that Iran could move toward freedom and prosperity is no longer just talk. It is within reach if this momentum holds.

Pray for our troops. Pray for wisdom and continued strength for our commander in chief. Pray that this cease fire becomes the foundation for lasting change in a region that has known far too much conflict.

In the end, this moment proves a simple truth. When America leads with strength, the world becomes a safer place.

John Parker
Sun City resident

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Provided | MSDN Photo

Participants of the pilgrimage visited the 14th-century Duomo di Orvieto.

Cathedrals, fountains, wine, and art; these travelers made the most of their pilgrimage

•PILGRIMAGE

While the group spent their first few days touring Rome's other historic landmarks, the papal encounter remained the trip's undisputed highlight. Bosold noted that the Pope even seemed to recognize their group's origins.

"It was unbelievable to be that close, and he actually acknowledged that we were from the Chicago area. We were all waving and just thrilled. It's a moment we'll cherish forever."

The trip included many incredible sites. It featured a visit to Fattoria San Donato, a lovely, family-run organic winery just outside the medieval town of San Gimignano. Once a village along the historic Via Francigena pilgrim route, the estate is centered on an 11th-century Romanesque church and features original architecture, including a watchtower and a fortified villa.

"It was so beautiful," Bosold said. "Small, not like Napa Valley."

Bosold also had the unique opportunity to serve during the jour-

ney. "We attended mass at the Basilica, where I got to do a reading," he shared. "It's a part of the pilgrimage experience; it gave me another treasured memory."

Millington added, "I thought one of the interesting parts of the pilgrimage was visiting the Leaning Tower of Pisa. It doesn't lean that much,"

Bosold said, "We visited Scalla Sancta, or Holy Stairs." These 28 marble steps are the same ones Jesus ascended to face Pontius Pilate. Today, they lead to the Sancta Sanctorum, a chapel once used as the private place of refuge for early popes. The site is defined by a rigorous tradition of penance.

Millington said, "To go up these stairs, you are supposed to do it on your knees." This physical act serves as a meditation on the Passion of Christ.

While most visitors find a single ascent grueling enough, Bosold famously climbed the stairs six times. For those unable to complete the trek on their knees, parallel staircases allow a standard walk.

Millington said, "There was so much to see, beautiful cathedrals, historic sites, and one of my favorites, Rome's National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art."

Bosold said, "I enjoyed visiting Trevi Fountain in the heart of Rome. The fountain features the god Oceanus riding a shell-shaped chariot pulled by sea horses."

The tradition is to toss a coin over one's shoulder to ensure a future return to the Eternal City. The gesture totals over a million euros annually, which are donated to charitable causes like Caritas to support those in need.

The group returned with photos of their group and stories to share, along with the bragging rights of a close encounter with the pope. Millington noted that the group's chemistry was a highlight of the experience.

"The trip was made even more enjoyable by the people on it," she said. "We were such a cohesive group."



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theviewfromplanetkerth

The frog in the pot: An American fable



TR Kerth
Columnist

“Well, here we are,” said the frog, to nobody in particular. It just seemed like the right thing to say, given the situation he was in.

And that situation, of course, was that he was in water — which should come as no surprise to anybody. Frogs love water, and this frog was no exception. Like all frogs, this frog could think of no place he would rather be than to be sitting in water, which he was.

Except that this frog was not sitting in the water of a lake, or a river, or even a pond or a puddle. He was sitting in a pot of water. Which was fine with this frog, because who wants to share the water with all those low-life turtles, clams, and snails that hang around in rivers, lakes, and ponds?

So an isolated private pot of water was exactly where this frog wished to be.

But this frog’s pot of water was on a stove. And the water was starting to feel pretty warm. Maybe even uncomfortably warm.

Still, he was a frog, and this was water he was sitting in. And a frog, once in water, likes nothing better than to keep sitting in it.

And so: “Here we are,” the frog kept saying to himself, trying to convince himself that the warming water he was sitting in was just froggy fine.

He couldn’t remember exactly how long he had been sitting in the potful of water, only that he had jumped into it willingly some time ago. And he remembered how delightful and delicious it felt when he first splashed into the pot.

And he didn’t have a very clear memory of exactly where he had been sitting before he jumped into the pot. All he remembered was that splashing into that pot’s welcoming water seemed cool and refreshing.

He was sure it must be better than wherever it was that he had been sitting before he jumped into the pot of water.

“Well, here we are,” he remembered breathing with a sigh of satisfaction.

And so he relaxed, as any frog in water would.

But outside of his little pot, other things were happening, things he didn’t fully understand or want to understand — even things that he denied were happening even though he saw them happening with his big froggy eyes.

And bit by bit, the dial on the stove got turned up.

And the water got warmer. And warmer still.

At first it was barely noticeable, but gradually he became aware that the water wasn’t nearly as cool and refreshing as it

had been. But that was OK, because he was a frog, and he was sitting in water he had chosen to jump into. How bad could it be?

And the water got warmer. And warmer still.

In time the water became downright uncomfortable. He couldn’t remember if he had ever been in water this warm. This water started to feel wrong to him. He poked his big froggy eyes above the rim of the pot, looking for someone to blame.

But, still, he was a frog, and he was in water. He could take it. Besides, his situation must still be better than whatever situation he was in before he jumped into the pot of water, right? Or else why would he have jumped into it in the first place? He couldn’t remember too clearly, but that made sense, right?

So he decided to wait it out, trusting that soon, somehow, someone would make water cool again. Soon, very soon, there would be brisk and refreshing water, the likes of which no frog had ever seen.

Maybe in a week or two. And the water got warmer. And warmer still. Tiny bubbles began to dance around him.

As a light mist of steam rose from the pot, he tested his legs, stretching and flexing them in the water. Although his legs had always been the strongest part of his body, it was now a burden to move them, as it had never been before. Now they felt weak and flaccid, almost as if his muscles had been melted by the warmth of the water.

Is this what total satisfaction feels like, he wondered? Or was it something else? Something far less pleasant — like paralysis?

After all, if you plunked a frog into boiling water, what frog in his right mind wouldn’t jump right out? No, the only way to boil a frog is to lure him into cooler water, and then to turn up the temperature, degree by devious degree.

But if the water got any warmer than this, the frog wondered, would his listless legs be able to jump out of the pot — even if he could summon the grit to do it? When would it be too late to swallow his froggy pride and leap for cooler waters? And even if he could make that happen, might the denizens of the lake refuse to welcome him back?

“Well,” said the frog, to nobody in particular, “here we are.”

And the water got warmer still.

And the bubbles around him grew larger and larger.

And the rising mist clouded around his eyes, blinding his vision.

• *TR Kerth is the author of the book “Revenge of the Sardines.” Contact him at trkerth@yahoo.com*

quⁱckshot

Get ready to help Stamp Out Hunger



Provided | MSDN Photo

Pantry volunteer Rich Ford (right) brings a bag to fill for STAMP OUT HUNGER to residents Kathy and John Angele. The Annual USPS STAMP OUT HUNGER effort is Saturday, May 9. Simply place bags/boxes of non-perishable food, paper goods, or personal care items by your mailbox to be collected by your postal service to help local families in need.

iheardthisquote...

By TR Kerth
Columnist

I'm working for a world in which it's easier for people to behave decently.

- Dorothy Day

The Creator is a comedian whose audience is afraid to laugh.

- H. L. Mencken

There is no flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people.

- Howard Zinn

HURRICANES TEAMS HAVE BANNER YEAR IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS

By Steve Peterson

For My Sun Day News

The Huntley Community School District D-158 Huntley Hurricanes Special Olympics teams have had success in several sports this season.

Advisor Crystal Miguel explained some of the highlights for the participants, ages 8-22.

"Many athletes do multiple events at once," Miguel said. "Some were in soccer skills and participated in track-and-field, or on the soccer and track-and-field teams. Every year our program keeps growing. There are 22 athletes on the track-and-field team, 12 in soccer skills and 12 are on the high school soccer team."

Huntley Hurricanes Special Olympics' athletes also participate in the community events, such as leading stretches at the "Don't Be Fooled" 5K event April 11 at Huntley Town Square. That event benefits the Law En-

forcement Torch Run, a fundraiser for Special Olympics.

The teams' seasons began in March, as the Junior Basketball Team advanced to the State Tournament and earned an impressive fourth place finish in their division.

"On April 12 there were 12 Hurricanes who participated in soccer skills at Belvidere. Five athletes earned gold medals and four have the ability to attend State in June," Miguel said.

The Hurricanes high school soccer team competed in their regional event April 19 at Hinsdale South High School and three athletes won silver in their division.

A total of 22 athletes competed at a track-and-field event at Hoffman Estates High School April 25.

"We are proud of our athletes' dedication and hopeful for continued success, including additional first place finishes and opportunities to advance to the State level in June," Miguel said.

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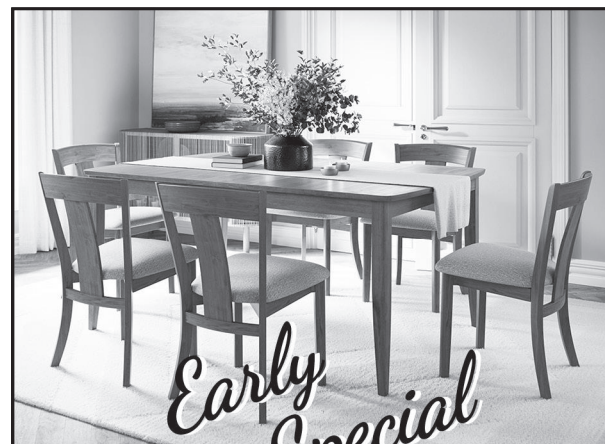
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askanangel



John Barrett
Columnist

Q I'm writing because I'm worried about my mom and her ability to manage her finances. My dad always handled the bills and finances before he passed away about five years ago. Since then, I've stepped in to cover some of the bigger expenses, like paying utility bills online and other housing costs. My mom doesn't really know what I've been doing, she trusts me completely, but I'm realizing that this arrangement isn't sustainable.

I'm busy with work and family, and I can't continue managing all of her finances indefinitely. At the same time, I want her to regain some independence and feel in control of her own

money again. She's still sharp in many ways, but numbers and budgets intimidate her, and she hasn't had experience handling these tasks before.

I'm not sure how to make this transition back to her in a way that feels safe and supportive, rather than overwhelming. I don't want her to feel like I'm abandoning her, and I don't want her to make mistakes that could affect her stability. Are there ways I can help her regain autonomy over her finances while still guiding and supporting her from a distance?

A It's very understandable to feel torn between wanting to protect your mom and giving her back control over her finances. Many families face this situation when a parent relies heavily on a spouse for money management.

The goal is to create a system that restores her autonomy while keeping her safe and supported. Here are a few strategies:

Consider hiring a financial advisor, certified financial planner, or elder law attorney to help your mom manage her accounts. This professional can guide her in creating a budget, paying bills, and making safe investments without you having to handle day-to-day transactions.

If that's not an option, set up a regular time each month to review finances together. You could prepare a simple budget in advance, showing her income, expenses, and what's available for discretionary spending. This way, she gets a clear picture of her money, and you can offer guidance without managing daily transactions.

If she's comfortable, you can transfer a set amount of money

for categories, like groceries, utilities, and fun money, so she controls spending without those limits. For example, you might give her \$800 for groceries, \$400 for personal expenses, and so on. This helps her practice decision-making while keeping risks manageable.

I also suggest searching for budget or financial classes your mom can attend. Many public libraries, community centers, and banks offer classes on budgeting, online banking, and financial literacy for seniors. These programs can give your mom confidence and practical skills.

Another suggestion is to simplify things on your end. It sounds like you're already paying utility bills online; if you haven't already, set those recurring bills on auto-pay so it's one less task you need to manage.

The key is gradual transition.

Start small with low-risk tasks, like monitoring her spending or having her pay a few minor bills. Then build toward more responsibility as she gains confidence. Reinforce that your support remains, but your goal is to empower her to make her own financial decisions.

With patience, structured support, and clear communication, your mom can regain her independence while you still provide guidance from a safe distance. This approach balances autonomy, safety, and your own need to step back from daily financial management.

• Have a question for our angel correspondent? Send our angel an email at jjbarrett@visitingangels.com, or write in at Ask An Angel, 65 Woodbury St., South Elgin, IL 60177.

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Steve Peterson | MSDN Photo

Sun City Huntley Pickleball Club instructor Mike Christy makes a point about pickleball during an indoor lesson at the Birch Room April 22.

LESSONS PROVIDE GOOD START FOR NEW PICKLEBALL PLAYERS

By Steve Peterson
For My Sun Day News

The ninth season of the Sun City Huntley Pickleball Club (SCHPC) officially kicked off with a social on May 2. Pickleball players of all ability levels will take to the 12 courts daily from now to Halloween.

Officials said the club is about 600 members strong, with a steady growth from 164 members back in 2017.

Potential members received some pointers from SCHPC members Mike Christy and Nancy Clark at two sessions before heading to the courts.

The first inside session was Pickleball 100, followed by an outdoors Pickleball 101, where the basics of the sport will be shown.

"I played all the sports except tackle football, and found pickleball to be the most fun, and it's competitive," Christy said. "You get a chance to play with different partners each game, and that's where the social benefits come in. It's easy to learn, but challenging to master. When practicing, it's always good to have a routine."

Newcomers can always find a player of more experience to lend a hand.

"I think it's indicative of the spirit of the club that we have a mentor

program, people who volunteer to help," Christy said.

Interested future pickleball players learned of the serving, role of the Kitchen (No Volley Zone), and expected pickleball procedures to follow and etiquette.

"You should always give your opponent the benefit of the doubt," Christy said of close calls. "You should also shout the score nice and loud, so your opponent can hear it 44 feet away."

Christy stressed the importance of proper gear, especially protective eyewear, while playing pickleball, which is also encouraged by the sport's top female professional, Anna Leigh Waters. Also important is stretching and warm-ups, and there are exercises specific to pickleball match.

Proper shoe apparel should be shoes that help lateral movement, as opposed to forward motions.

There is also the matter of buying the right kind of paddle.

"Pickleball paddles vary in size and you should spend about \$90 on one so you can use it a couple of years," Christy said.

Most players at the Sun City pickleball courts are rated from 2.0 to 3.5, on the 5.0 scale.

"Players should compete against others a slot or so higher, but not too much higher," Christy said.

Although the season is scheduled to go to November, sometimes matches are held later than that.

"We play matches in 30-degree weather, as long as there is sun and no wind," Christy said.

Or, as a flier at the event read, "'pick up a paddle to protect your heart, boost your mood and more'."

politicalplace

The views in these letters are the writers' own.

Question: What kind of fool am I?

Donald Trump has an ego the size of the sun. He also places the interests of the American people before politics and personal interests. This dual ability has the mainstream media, and, quite frankly, a majority of American citizens, bewildered and dismayed.

He does not relate to the political atmosphere as many of the past democratic leaders have. He does not think or speak like a politician. He is rough and gruff. He says what he thinks, not what a typical politician would say. The typical politician's every move was dictated by politics and polls. Just analyze some of their actions. Afghanistan. Men in girls' locker rooms and washrooms. Ignoring the Iranian government's 47 years of continued attacks on the US military. Benghazi. Tariff deficits. America as the world's police force, etc.

Trump took control of the Panama Canal, which was previously controlled by the Chinese Communist government. He bluffed Greenland into allowing more American military forces to protect the United States from any unforeseen ballistic missile attack. He took control of Venezuela, which was shipping tons of illegal drugs to the U S, which caused roughly one hundred thousand American deaths per year. And, in the meantime, destroyed a squadron of Russian fighter jets that were staged in Venezuela. He took control of the Cuban economy while forcing Chinese security troops out of that country. He is in the process of eliminating the murderous, tyrannical religious regime of Iran and its proxies, which have been killing Americans for years while being ignored by past presidents and enabled by others. Remember chants of Death to America?

If you have the internal capacity to understand this man's love of country, you're in the minority. He works a crazy number of hours every day, seven days a week, for which he accepts no salary. He has accomplished more for this nation in the past year than the past three Democratic presidencies combined. Could you imagine what he could do if the Democrats and some Republicans governed instead of obstructing everything he does? Or if the media would simply state facts and the truth, rather than being agenda-driven. Or if the court system wasn't used as a decisive tool, attempting to dismantle everything he does.

You may not like the character, but the pro-American accomplishments are amazing.

Larry Casey
Huntley resident

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YOU'VE GOT RHYTHM

Time to understand your circadian rhythm

By Joan Davis, RN, MS
For My Sun Day News

You've got rhythm...and it's based on light, not music! Since the 70s, scientists have been discovering how human bodies are designed to follow the rhythm of the sun, rising and setting every day. This is the body's natural 24-hour clock, keeping you operating on a healthy wake-sleep cycle.

In the past six months there have been a flurry of headlines announcing research studies focusing on Circadian rhythm and how its disruption can negatively affect the human body. In Oct. 2025, the American Heart Association published "The Role of Circadian Health in Cardiometabolic Health and Disease Risk." Then in Feb-

ruary 2026, the publication Biogerontology published "Circadian rhythms in aging and longevity..." outlining how out-of-sync circadian rhythm can cause dysfunctional aging. And just this month Springer Nature Link published this article "Circadian rhythm and the gut microbiome..." reflecting on how circadian rhythm can affect our

gut microbiome.

With heart disease, premature aging, even disruption of our gastrointestinal system, emerging research is making it clear: when our Circadian rhythm is off, our health will suffer. Yet this is a relatively new concept, and scientists are just beginning to discover the complexity of this signaling system.

And it's not just the wake/sleep cycle

The master clock is not just limited to signaling for the hormone melatonin. It helps to coordinate the timing of the entire endocrine system, including other hormones which then act on the pituitary gland to direct the functions of the thyroid gland, adrenal glands, reproductive organs, and even the immune system, and the immune system.

Where is this "Master Clock?"

To clarify how Circadian rhythm affects humans, let's start with what's resting in your brain in your hypothalamus, just where your optic nerve splits. This area is technically called the suprachiasmatic nucleus or nuclei, commonly referred to as SCN or your Master Clock. It receives direct light input from the eyes to synchronize body functions with the 24-hour light-dark cycle. The most well-known master clock action is its daily evening signal to the body to sending out the hormone melatonin to encourage sleep and switch to night mode and then in the morning to stop the melatonin to wake the body for the daytime functioning. Most living creatures have circadian rhythms, including animals, plants, and microorganisms, although a few nocturnal species like bats and raccoons have their wake/sleep rhythm reversed.

It's the recent research studies mentioned at the beginning of this article that are now clarifying how Circadian rhythm sends out signals throughout the day and night, which can influence your appetite, digestion, temperature, thyroid functioning, metabolism, even cholesterol. This is opening whole new fields of medicine. These promising new fields will be reviewed in next month's health news report as well as how humans can cause disruptions in normal circadian rhythm - and how to help sync your peripheral and master clock towards normal health circadian rhythm.

Should you wish to learn more about this newsworthy, but admittedly complex, health topic, you can check out this 7-minute online video: "Following Your Body's Circadian Rhythm: A Look at the Master Clock in the Suprachiasmatic Nucleus."

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Victory gardens: how to bring red, white, and blue into your foliage



Kathleen Carr
Columnist

Tuesday, December 23, 2025, our family gathered to celebrate a birthday. As the party was coming to a close, I looked at my phone and gasped. There were 18 unread texts all offering the same message: "Congratulations!" A two-year journey, that included reading a transcript of a Salem witch trial, learning that an ancestor was scalped by Native Americans in the War of 1812, and discovering that there are plaques throughout New York bearing the names of my ancestors, had come to a close. The National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution accepted my application and acknowledged Abel Nettleton, my fifth great grandfather, as a patriot in the war that gained our country's independence. This has particular significance as our country is celebrating our 250th year of the signing of the Declaration of Independence this summer.

As we embrace summer and the celebration of winning the American Revolution War, consider planting a few flowers that reflect our country's history. There are many annual and perennial flowers that can be incorporated into a garden that allow us to show our patriotic spirit. For this column, I have broken them up into perennial and annual flowers. Perennial flowers, when planted in the ground, should come back next year. Annual flowers, often planted in containers, will complete their lifecycle within one year.

American Goldrush Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* 'American Gold Rush') and American Goldfinch Baptisia (*Baptisia* 'American Goldfinch') both do best in full sun and offer gorgeous yellow flowers. Fireworks Solidago (*Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks') is a tall perennial flower reaching 4' high and wide and boasts arching firework like flowers. There is a series of award-winning hostas titled Patriot, Liberty and Loyalist. All are variegated and a bit more heat tolerant than other hostas. Blazing Star (*Liatis aspera*) is a native plant that attracts hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. New England Aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*) extends a garden's bloom time through its late fall flowers. Red, White and Blue Columbine (*Aquilegia Kirigami*) offer a variety of spring color. Pride and Joy Sedum (*Sedum Rock 'n Round* 'Pride and Joy') is a low-growing groundcov-

er with pink blooms from late summer through fall. The ornamental grass Stars and Stripes Bulrush (*Scirpus pendulus* 'Stars and Stripes') has beautiful white flowers that resemble stars coupled with yellow and green striped foliage. All of these perennial flowers are appropriate in our northern climate and do well in a variety of situations.

While perennial flowers are a subtle way to honor our country's heritage through their names, brightly colored annual flowers offer a very visual way to show our true colors. Whether planted in the ground or in containers, a combination of red, white, and blue annual flowers offers the chance to showcase the colors of our national flag. Three Angelonia varieties: Archangel Cherry Red, Archangel White, and Angel Face Blue, when combined make a vivid display and do best in full sun. Salvia Saucy Red, Salvia Victoria Blue, and Periwinkle Valiant White is another great flower combination for a full sun to part shade garden site. Traditional impatiens such as Bounce Cherry Red and Bounce White can be combined with the New Guinea Impatient Sonic White to add brightness to an otherwise shady area. Shade gardens would also benefit from combining begonias Bossa Nova Red and Bossa Nova White with Lobelia Techno Upright Dark Blue. The Easy Wave series of Petunias offer a tried-and-true way to add loads of color through long bloom time annual flowers. Easy Wave Petunias are available in Red, White and Blue and do not require dead-heading (pulling off the old flowers).

In addition to planting flowers, gardens and our outdoor spaces offer other opportunities to honor those who have fought in war for our country. Setting aside a space in a garden to reflect upon family members or friends that fought is a significant way to honor their service. A garden stone representing their branch of service in that area and small solar candles may also be placed in that area.

As we come together as a community and nation to honor the signing of the Declaration of Independence, may be also continue to celebrate the freedom that our gardens and gardening in particular offers.

• *Kathleen Carr is the owner of The Growing Scene, Inc., a landscaping company. She can be reached by calling 815-923-7322 or emailing her at Kathleen@thegrowingscene.com. Have a gardening question? Please contact her. She may address it in an upcoming column.*

newsqu^{ick}

THE BARGAIN BARN

The Bargain Barn located at First Congregational Church of Huntley, 11628 E. Main St., Huntley, IL is opening the first Saturday of May. Due to its' popularity, we have added a second Saturday each month and the dates are as follows: June 8 and 20, July 4 and 18, August 1 and 15, September 5 and 19, and October 3 and 17, 2026: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For information about donations or volunteering call Cheryl 847-331-1463 or Nancy 815-353-0597.

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Sun City resident John Schwan won the silver medal at the US Open Pickleball Tournament.

Schwan brings national pickleball skills as teacher

By Steve Peterson

For My Sun Day News

Sun City's John Schwan began his pickleball season on the sport's biggest stage.

Schwan competed in the age 75-59 bracket at the US Open Pickleball Tournament. He faced four players with a higher rating than his 4.0, and won three matches. He lost to Ed Klarman, of Naples, Fla., a 4.5 rated player, 16-14 for gold, on April 12. This year marked Schwan's third time to qualify for the US Open, and he won his rating bracket's gold medal the last two years.

"I faced Klarman, a 4.5 rated player, in the gold medal match," Schwan said. "It could have gone either way as the final score indicates."

Schwan described the tournament's setting.

"The US Open Pickleball Tournament is the largest, most prestigious pickleball tournament in the world," Schwan said after returning to Huntley. "There are more than 55,000 spectators and more than 3,700 players from the US and 53 different countries. It is played at East Naples, Fla., where the USA Pickleball Association is headquartered. The facility has more than 65 courts making

it one of the largest pickleball venues in the world."

Schwan advanced to the gold medal match which was held April 12. He lost to Ed Klarman, a 4.0 rated player, of Naples, 16-14.

Sun City Pickleball Charter Club President Pam White congratulated

Schwan for his achievement. "We're so proud of Schwan," White said. "He is such a hard worker, so disciplined, and volunteers whenever he can. We're proud to have him in our club."

Schwan will be one of the Sun City Huntley Pickleball Club (SCHPC) mentors. The Sun City pickleball season got underway this week.

"Our Sun City Pickleball Club is by far and away the best in the nation," Schwan said. "I have been to several other large Del Webb facilities across the nation and none of them compare to the participation level and quality of activities as Sun City Huntley. "I'm looking forward to participating in the innovative SCH Pickleball Mentor program this year. I will have the opportunity to work with four new members who just joined the club. I get to work and practice with them and introduce them to pickleball and help them take advantage of our clubs' fun beginner activities."

Schwan's US Open results

He beat Larry Gordon, of North Miami Beach, Fla., 15-1; beat Tom Dyer, Portsmouth, Ohio, 16-14; beat Tobias Kaye, 16-14 and lost to Klarman, 16-14.

"It was the most competitive draw I've had since I've been in the Open the last three years," Schwan said. "The best evidence of that is that my DUPR (official Pickleball Players Association rating system) went from 4.0 to 4.37 as a result of my performance at the Open."

He noted Chicago area players who were also competing and whom he trains with are Ben Park, Dan Koste, and Ed Gordon.

Schwan's many other accomplishments in Illinois and internationally include: Gold medal win at the PPA Desert Open Championships; Gold medals at Illinois and Wisconsin Senior Olympic State Championships; Silver medalist at the Iowa Quad Cities Championships, 2024; Silver medalist at the Chicago Six-County Senior Games, 2024 and a gold medal win in 2025.

Here at Sun City Pickleball Courts, he has won 4.0 doubles gold medalist honor with Steve Desmarais, 2022, 2023 and was silver medalist with Mike Christie, 2024.

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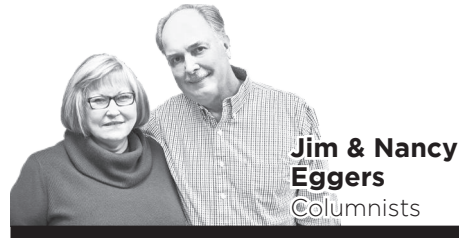
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Facebook farce

Jim and Nancy do not disclose the fact that they will review a restaurant before they attend, ensuring their reviews are unbiased and uninfluenced by their position with My Sun Day News.

Jim has been bugging me to try a restaurant for months now that he repeatedly saw on a Facebook ad. He said it looked really good, and the owner owns a farm nearby and they offer farm to table ingredients. I wasn't too excited about the restaurant, but I finally gave in since we had to make a stop at the DMV which was nearby. So, with high hopes we made our way to Isabel's Family Restaurant in Woodstock.

The minute we walked in the door at 12:45, we knew something was amiss. There was only one other couple in the restaurant. Undaunted, we sat down at one of their 12 tables. They also had 10 booths and counter space.

We perused their lunch menu and decided to order from their Thursday Lunch Specials menu to save a few bucks. We nixed an appetizer today so we could have a nice fountain creation for dessert.

All "specials" are served with your choice of potato (baked, mashed, French fries, hashbrowns) or rice, a vegetable (cut green beans), soup or salad, and a roll and butter. Notice we said "roll" not rolls.

Jim was excited to try the Chopped Sirloin with grilled onions (\$16.95). For his sides he chose mashed potatoes with gravy and taco soup.

Nancy hasn't had chicken tenders since she had to eat the leftovers from when the grandchildren were in town, so she ordered the Crispy Chicken Strips (\$16.95). She chose a salad and hashbrowns for her sides.

Jim was impressed with the chef's resourcefulness when he received his taco soup. In our opinion, it seemed like this soup started off one day as minestrone, then beans were added another day and it miraculously became pasta fagioli, and now with the addition of a few tortilla strips on top it became taco soup. This soup was not a good start to the meal.

Nancy's salad was the smallest salad she has ever had. Once she removed the wilted brown lettuce leaves, there was hardly anything left to eat. She was very disappointed since she loves her salads.

It was about this time we noticed we didn't get our "roll" with butter, so Nancy asked the waiter for her roll. That is

exactly what we each received. A roll packaged in cellophane on a plate with two pats of butter. Even wrapped up these rolls have seen better days, they were dry, dense, and crumbly.

The surprises continued when Jim got his meal. The chopped sirloin resembled a smashed dried out hamburger patty with grilled onions that looked and tasted older than the rolls. The mashed potatoes had a light-colored chicken gravy on top which went really well with the chopped sirloin. Seriously???

Nancy's chicken strips looked really good, but after the first bite or two it had a different "plastic" taste that we are still trying to figure out. Her hashbrowns were the star of her meal.

Hope springs eternal. We decided to try their One Scoop Sundae (\$5.95) for dessert. I had the caramel sundae and Jim had the strawberry sundae. He asked if the strawberries were fresh or just sauce and was told they were fresh strawberries. He received six slices of a strawberry that was delicious. However, upon checking the bill we noticed the strawberry slices cost us an extra dollar which the waiter did not inform us about beforehand. The sundae was the highlight of his whole meal.

FYI: This restaurant is handicap accessible.

This restaurant is NOT a keeper; it's lucky they received a rating of one egg from us.

The price for this "Facebook Farce" was \$58.37. Contrary to popular belief, everything you see on the internet is NOT true.

He Said / She Said

JIM'S TAKE: The sundae was delicious, but \$1 for six strawberry slices???

NANCY'S TAKE: The caramel syrup on my sundae tasted more like butter-scotch to me, but the hashbrowns were awesome.

• Have comments or restaurant suggestions for the Dining Duo? Send them an email at thediningduo@gmail.com

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let'sgetreel



Will Moore
Columnist

Love and marriage

According to the calendar (if not the weather), spring would be upon us. And at this time of year, we older folk have a saying about birds and bees. I don't pretend to know everything about that, but I was surely stung by this latest film *The Drama*. Most of you probably have heard of this already. The controversy has certainly gained traction to keep the movie in the top ten. Robert Pattinson and Zendaya play fiancées Charlie and Emma. In a bout of pre-wedding jitters, their best man and maid of honor (married in their own right) try to get them to reveal the worse thing they had ever done during a food tasting for the reception. As some of you know, this doesn't end well. Emma, drunk, lets her secret spill and all hell breaks loose. I will preface that I had figured out this early twist before going into the movie.

However, this didn't prepare me for the kind of shenanigans I was about to get myself into. And for those know Emma's dark secret, isn't she more sympathetic than her friends? Because, you know, they actually followed through their horrible plans.

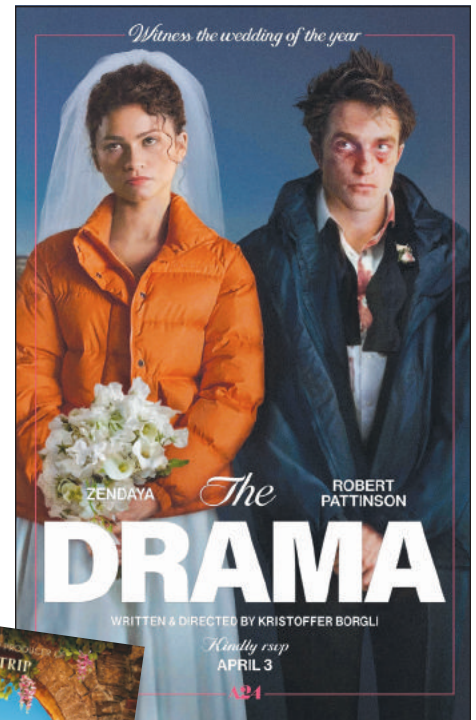
Auteur (used lightly) Kristoffer Borgli is the kind of cause celebre of a director that wishes he was Spike Jones or Ruben Östlund. Sadly, he is barely Lars von Trier; at least he can create a compelling sequence. Borgli's premises are half-hearted at best and mean-spirited at worst. Any point he wants to get across is blunted by the mere fact that the punchline never comes. All setup with no satisfying payoff.

In his last feature, *Dream Scenario*, you could argue that these are moments of magical realism not to be taken seriously. Everything that happens in *The Drama* (aside from a dream sequence) happens for real. You think seeing a real man you never meet in your dreams is unbelievable? How about our main character trying to have sex with his co-worker (Hello, Hailey Benton Gates) and she just goes along with it like she is a rag doll, in a post Me Too world? I started to think Zendaya should be the one to reconsider the marriage. In the end, you'll have to wonder if her "crime" is worth the punishment. Only, the characters who deserve that don't get it; we the audience do.

As Monty Python would say, now for

something completely different. *You, Me & Tuscan* couldn't be more polar opposite to *The Drama*. Here we are in safe hands with producer Will Packer, the man behind *Think Like A Man* and *Girls' Trip*. Halle Bailey is our perfect heroine, this side of Sandra Bullock. A house-sitter for wealthy clients and a once-aspiring chef in culinary school, she stumbles into a hotel run by a close friend desperate for a room. In the bar, a suave Italian named Matteo tells her about his empty villa in central Italy. After waking up alone in his hotel room, Anna hatches a plan to skip out on NYC for the rolling wine fields of Tuscany. At the start of a major festival in his hometown, Anna can't get a place to stay.

So of course she breaks into Matteo's villa. Unbeknownst to her, his family still works on the upkeep and happens upon our Goldilocks. Through a series of mistakes, Matteo's family thinks Anna is engaged to him. And the usual tropes of the genre ensue, recalling such films as *While You Were Sleeping* and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. There's even a brief blink and you will miss her cameo from the latter. But these cliches are employed so well with a



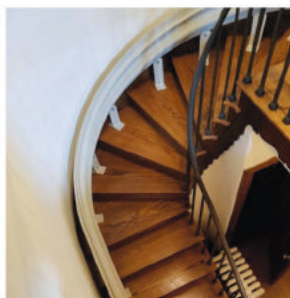
cast so engaging, you feel like this is a lost romantic comedy classic.

Marco Calvani (last seen on Netflix's *The Four Seasons*) is delightfully silly as a cab driver who befriends Anna. And I can't mention the streaming service and forget about The Duke himself, Regé-Jean Page as a vintner who complicates Anna's situation in more ways than I will go into here. All I can say is if you are looking for the sweetest Italian treat this side of gelato, look no further. You will eat, pray, love it.



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ESTATE SALE

Friday, May 15, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. 12983 Willow Creek Ln. Huntley For pictures and details visit our website tinkerbellsestatesales.com

SEEKING

SEEKING

Used car. J&B Barrett. 224-392-2465.

SEEKING

Wanted to buy. Golf cart. Doesn't have to be perfect. Please call 847-845-8697.

WANTED

Immediately seeking knowledgeable collectors to describe antique and vintage items for a local auction house. Flexible hours. Contact Randy at 815-790-9435.

derie. Season (May through August). Three leagues to choose from (all use mitts): 16" p.m., 16" a.m., and 12" p.m. Choose to play in one, two or all three leagues if you wish. All games are played at our beautiful Veterans Memorial Field. For registration information, please contact Club President, Chuck Hund at 847-456-0229 or at suncityhuntley-softball@gmail.com.

JUNE SUN CITY STRUTTERS

The Strutters present "THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC" On Tuesday, June 9, and Wednesday, June 10, at 7 p.m. in Drendel Ballroom.

The Performances will feature Tap, Ballet and Jazz dance routines. Guest performers will be joining us also.

The Strutters group is made up of ladies with a love of dance... ranging in age from 50 to 80+. The Strutters have been dancing and performing for 25 years.

We always welcome new dancers and invite any potential dancers to join us next fall for classes in Tap, Jazz, Ballet, with levels for beginner to advanced dancers. It's a good place to try out your talents, and it's a wonderful way to exercise both the body and the mind.

TICKETS ARE \$10 EACH AND CAN BE PURCHASED at Prairie Lodge and Meadow View Lodge Fitness Desks only. Seating will be reserved at the time of ticket

purchase. Please come and join us.

MAY 7 & 9 SUN CITY CONCERT BAND

Your Sun City Concert Band presents their spring concert, "FEELING SO GOOD", on Thursday May 7 at 7 p.m. and on Saturday May 9 at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$15. Purchase tickets in the Prairie View Lodge outside the main desk on April 16, 23, 24, and 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Rich Ankenbrandt 847-502-5485.

MAY 18 CULVERS SCOOPIE SHARE NIGHT

Culver's Scoopie Share Night & Valor Quilts fundraiser is Monday, May 18.

Come and join the Huntley Gazebo Quilters Valor Quilt ladies on Monday, May 18, for a fundraiser night from 4-8 p.m. Meet your family and friends to enjoy a delicious meal or the famous frozen custard at the Huntley's Culver's.

The Huntley Gazebo Guild Valor Quilts organization, honors our local Veterans with red, white and blue homemade quilts. We need your support to continue our work.

Huntley Gazebo Guild Valor Quilts will earn a percentage of all sales: dine-in, take out, and drive thru. Participate in a 50/50 raffle drawing for that evening. Please come out and support our Veterans.



MAY 28 WALKERS AND BIKERS

Walkers and Bicyclists for a Safer Community: MAY IS NATIONAL BIKE MONTH

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT from SCCAH FITNESS

Cycling Safety and Trail Etiquette Fundamentals in Sun City/Village of Huntley

May 28, Birch Room, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

What will be covered... Rules/Regulations - State and Local; info on E-assist bikes - Types, Local Shops, Setting Up for Fun and Exercise; Trail Etiquette Fundamentals for Cyclists and Walkers; Cycling/Pedestrian Safety.

Who Should Attend? Cyclists/Pedestrians/Trail Users; New/Returning Cyclists; Those Considering E-assist Bikes/Trikes

More information will be available in the May Lifestyles Magazine, SCCAH bi-weekly announcements or by emailing WBSC at: wbscsig@gmail.com.

This special Fitness Event, offered by Sun City Community Association of Huntley, is a "must do" for all bicyclists and anyone that walks for fun or exercise. Cookies and coffee will be provided. \$2.00 fee. PLEASE register online.



Do you have anything sweet to share? An act of kindness from a neighbor or a beautiful moment by Wildflower Lake? In addition to publishing your opinion pieces, My Sun Day News would love to share your happy moments, too. Nothing is too big or too small to share. Please drop us a note (along with a picture, if applicable) about it at mycommunity@mysundaynews.com.

HIDE THE HAT LOCATION:

Need some insurance? Some new furniture or a new garage door? No? Well, maybe if you did, you would have found the hat, located at the intersecting ads on Page 6.

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