

lifeinfo



Carol Pavlik
Columnist

Keeper of secrets

“I need to tell you something, but you can’t tell anyone...”
If I had a dollar for every time I heard these words! People like telling me their secrets, and I willingly partake.

Secrets can be delicious, like velvety chocolate melting in your mouth. When someone trusts me enough to tell me something, I take it very seriously. Knowing someone trusts you is a huge compliment, and a huge responsibility. It isn’t lost on me that blurting out a single secret could bring down the entire house of cards built on trust, so I take it seriously. I lean in, an audience of one, and prepare myself for whatever will follow. I harden my stomach and tighten my shoulders, almost as

though I’m preparing for someone to whip a basketball right through my middle, and I have to stand strong enough to catch it, absorb it, and avoid dropping it. The moment before a secret is revealed is a quiet, breathless pause. It’s scary not knowing what’s on the other side.

Secrets can be a burden, when it’s about illness or a type of loss that is almost too raw to put into words. I find it best to stay mostly silent when someone is divulging a secret — and plant your feet squarely on the ground. When telling a secret that is painful, the secret-teller is taking a heavy weight and placing it in the secret-keeper’s arms for safekeeping.

Secrets can also be gossip, lying, manipulation, or withholding, but these aren’t the secrets I like. I like the happy ones: the ones that involve pregnancies, new jobs, proposals, true love. I love a secret that is too delicate and special to broadcast to a crowd, so it is doled out carefully to one set of ears at a time.

It’s no wonder secrets are the topics of movies, plays, TV shows, and podcasts. They are dramatic, and they are often a

pivotal point that delineates the before and the after. Sad secrets are even more delicate, because they have the power to change everything for the worse. Holding those kinds of secrets can sort of chip away the insides of you; they plant a shaky feeling that settles in the pit of your stomach. A lot of times it feels like holding your breath until the secret-teller opens it up, finally offering it up to the world. Then — relief!

Today, I’m holding someone’s happy secret. It puts a bounce in my step and makes me want to burst. It almost scares me to think that I wear it on my face and people will know just by looking at me! But I’m well aware that the secret doesn’t belong to me ... I’m only carrying it for a bit.

I don’t often have my own secrets, but when I do, it really hits me when I’m on the other side of it, deciding who I can trust to listen without judgement, to show compassion without doling out unwanted advice. It makes me be careful about who I choose, since I know so well the weight and the burden it can cause, not to speak of the real estate it occupies in the secret-keeper’s psyche. It’s a big ask, and not to be taken lightly. Open-ended vague questions

like, “Are you free on Friday?” always feels like a trap to me. If I answer “I’m free,” then I’ve abandoned any excuse for why I can’t do whatever the next thing is. And it could be anything! “Are you free on Friday?” Answer “yes” and you’ll end up hearing, “Good! You can help me move!” “Good! You can watch my three rowdy kids!” Kiss your Friday goodbye.

Or ... Friday could turn into a fun night out with friends, tickets to an event, and a perfect first date. When someone asks if you’re free, you have fractions of a second to make a very big decision.

It’s the same way with “Can I tell you a secret?” Most of the time I say “yes,” and I find out immediately if I made the right decision or not. But there’s no going back — secrets only move forward, and there is no way to take it back or give it back. Which is why the tellers must be gentle and the keepers must be stalwart. Secrets have the ability to destroy with a heavy hand, but the really good secrets are more of an even exchange than they might first appear — both sides of the secret, the giver and receiver, dance together precariously on a tightrope, in a courageous act of love and trust.



The views in these letters are the writers’ own.

At the Pickleball Picnic on June 19, Board of Director Bob Olesen made a presentation to the approximately 200 attendees about the need and planning for major renovations to the existing 12 pickleball and 5 tennis courts. The justification (as I understood) was they are aged (approximately 25 years old), badly in need of repairs and the court underpayments was not done originally properly which contributes to the existing problems. Costs for this major work were estimated (by an “expert”) at \$1.6 million, although the mechanics of how this would be distributed had not been decided.
Mr. Olesen indicated the work could be done during March and April of 27.
I do not believe this work is justified as the courts are in very playable condition.
I have played regularly as a member of the tennis club on these courts active-

ly for 14 years and regularly as an active member of the pickleball club since it was formed about 10 years ago. This year I play 5 days a week (2 days tennis and 3 days pickleball) - 2 hours a day. I have never seen a player fall because of cracks or uneven surfaces, seen a player not want to play on a certain court, or seen a courts surface affect a play or outcome of a match.
This year, as in past years, cracks on the courts were professionally sealed (I am told estimated costs this year were \$20,000.). A few times, through the years, players have complained about dead spots on the courts (where the balls do not bounce as expected) — perhaps a bad spot on the court, or perhaps bad ball, or perhaps player excuse.
I have heard - 2 or 3 times - similar type complaints when playing at the indoor Huntley Park District pickleball courts through the last 14 years. It does appear some maintenance work is needed on the fences (and supporting posts) which divide several of the courts - which does not affect play.
I suggest that any decision for major renovations to the courts should have the full recommended approval of both pickleball and tennis clubs.

Bobby Brown
Sun City resident

politicalplace

The views in these letters are the writers’ own.

The era of appeasement is over. The conflict in Iran is over. The message to Iran and the world is unmistakable. The United States will NEVER allow the world’s leading sponsor of terrorism to obtain a nuclear weapon.
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American strength prevents war. American resolve secures peace. When leadership is strong, enemies think twice and allies stand taller.
Our Commander in Chief, our national security team, and our negotiators stood united with one mission: defend America, protect our allies, and preserve peace through strength.
Peace in the Middle East is secured through strength, deterrence, and unwavering American leadership. The Stars and Stripes still stand as the greatest symbol of liberty the world has ever known.
God bless our military. God bless our allies. And God bless the United States of America.

John Parker
Sun City resident

Have an opinion or some commentary? Send it to
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Philip Aleo Presents:
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Christine Such | MSDN Photos

Top: This model of a mobile home features fully functional lights and even a tiny chandelier. Above: Vega recreates a trolley car from toothpicks.

•VEGA

Vega continued, “In 1994, my engineering career was cut short. I was forced into early retirement by a severe form of arthritis.” The chronic condition aggressively attacked his joints, eventually requiring major surgeries. “I had to have both knees replaced.”

Rather than letting the illness limit his life, Vega pivoted fully to his passion for art. When the physical pain was about to overwhelm him, his art room served as a sanctuary.

Vega said, “I discovered that the concentration required for structural art helped manage my chronic pain.” Employing his engineering discipline, he began spending up to eight hours a day meticulously bringing miniature-scaled blueprints to life.

Vega is perhaps most famous for his architectural models built entirely from everyday materials, toothpicks, matchsticks, and tongue depressors. Bonded together with standard household cement, these pieces are examples of scaling and patience. Among his most remarkable projects is an intricate, 55-inch replica of the Eiffel Tower, constructed

from thousands of individual toothpicks. Vega said, “I have built five of them. They keep selling.”

Vega specializes in recreating famous structures, from the Taj Mahal to trolleys and airplanes.

“I built a carriage for my nieces’ wedding,” he shares. “It features working lights and includes a bride and groom inside.”

To preserve his heritage, Vega cataloged his life’s accomplishments, including his artwork, educational accomplishments, awards, and precious mementos, into a unique scrapbook made entirely from toothpicks.

Beyond his structural models, Vega is an accomplished painter. His lively canvases are influenced by his heritage.

Vega said, “I like to paint from my roots. I paint stone ruins of the Incan Empire and the vivid, busy street scenes of indigenous Peruvian villages.”

Vega’s unique creations have drawn attention far beyond his local community. His work has been showcased at universities, public libraries, and the prestigious Pan-American Art Festival hosted by the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry.

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When a Spouse Passes Away:
A Financial Checklist
Presented by Cheryl Red, CFP™

Losing a spouse is one of life’s most difficult transitions, and the financial responsibilities that follow can feel overwhelming at a time when emotions are already heavy. For many families in our local community, the first few weeks can bring urgent questions about where to find important documents, how to access accounts, who to notify, and which decisions can wait. Having a clear checklist can help create structure, reduce stress, and give surviving spouses a practical place to begin.

COLLECT ALL KEY DOCUMENTS

As the surviving spouse, your first financial order of business is to collect the documents required to handle your spouse’s financial affairs.

Within a couple weeks of their passing, you’ll want to order at least 10 certified copies of the death certificate, which is typically available from the funeral home or can be ordered through the city clerk’s office, county registrar, or local health department. These are critical since most financial institutions, government agencies, and creditors require a death certificate before they’ll allow you to take any action, such as closing accounts, and insurance companies also require one to pay survivor benefits.

Then, gather the documents that will help you identify any assets and debts, and submit benefit claims. These include:

- Your spouse’s will and trust (if applicable)
- Beneficiary designations for retirement accounts, pensions, and insurance policies
- Their most recent tax return
- Recent pay stubs
- Insurance policies
- Financial statements for checking, savings, investment, and retirement accounts
- Credit card statements
- Mortgage statements and other home-related documents

Next, if the executor of your spouse’s estate is someone other than you, set up a meeting to go over these documents and discuss the legal and tax issues related to settling the estate.

You (and the executor, if necessary) may then want to review such issues with professionals, including your financial advisor, CPA, and an estate planning attorney, who can explain the various rules and guidelines involved in administering estates, including the probate process—the legal process of executing a will.

SETTLE THE ESTATE

Within three months of the funeral, cancel your spouse’s cell phone, memberships, and subscriptions that are no longer needed. Pay any outstanding bills and plan to have tax returns for your spouse prepared, or request an extension, by April 15.

To prevent potential fraud or identity theft, cancel credit cards for which they were the sole account owner, and update your joint cards to remove them from the account. You’ll also want to send a copy of the death certificate to each of the credit reporting agencies so no one can open any new accounts in your spouse’s name.

Next, contact the institutions where your spouse had accounts, such as banks, brokerage firms, and insurance companies. In general, assets held jointly will pass directly to you without needing approval from a probate court. That said, you may need to request that joint bank account funds be released to you. You can change the property titles of other joint assets, such as a mortgage or any vehicles, into your name by contacting your mortgage company or local county assessor and your state’s Department of Motor Vehicles.

For retirement and pension funds, ask the administrators to guide you through the process of applying for benefits and having ownership of assets transferred to you and the deceased’s other beneficiaries (if applicable). For example:

- If your spouse had an IRA or other retirement accounts, find out if (and when) you will be required to take distributions from them.
- If your spouse had a pension through a former employer, ask that company’s benefits office about benefits or other income you may be entitled to. As you navigate this challenging process, consider this final suggestion: Try to avoid making any immediate decisions about assets you inherit—such as an insurance payout, an IRA, or a brokerage account—especially if you are still feeling highly emotional. Instead, consult with a trusted investment professional or your CPA about tax issues related to the inheritance as well as to get objective advice about managing the assets as you plan for your future.



Cheryl Red, CFP™ is a Financial Consultant at Charles Schwab with over 25 years of experience helping clients achieve their financial goals. As a Certified Financial Planner™, she helps clients navigate major financial transitions, including retirement, inheritance decisions, and the loss of a spouse. Her work and experience gives her a practical perspective on the key financial steps surviving spouses often face. Some content provided here has been compiled from previously published articles authored by various parties at Schwab.

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theviewfromplanetkerth

Two birds in the gourd are worth a flock in the bush



TR Kerth
Columnist

Last week I told you about a stubborn robin that pecked at my bathroom window, defending a nest that didn't exist against a foe that also didn't exist. Well, that false-heroic bird finally declared victory and moved on — probably to the golf course to waste still more time pretending to be a winner in another meaningless exercise.

Well, now I have a different pair of stubborn birds taking the stage just outside my breakfast-nook window. But unlike that delusional robin, these birds are true go-getters, experts at getting things done.

Their nest is in a giant gourd I bought a few years ago at an art fair in Barrington—a bulbous basketball-sized gooseneck gourd that just cried out to go home with me. With its neck and head curved gracefully over its back, I thought it would look great on the porch next to a few pumpkins.

So that's where it sat until after Thanksgiving, when I wondered what to do with it next. Would it keep over the winter, or would it just rot and make a mess? I decided to take a chance with it on the workbench in the garage, where cleanup would be easy if everything went bad.

By spring the following year, the gourd had dried as light as a feather, bleached from dark green to a sort of sand-colored patina. And although a crack had formed across the bottom, I decided that it might make a good birdhouse. I had just the spot to hang it — a clematis trellis just outside the window where I eat breakfast each day.

And with any luck, it might attract my favorite birds of the garden — the little house wrens, with their lilting song and friendly demeanor.

I went to work, drilling a wren-sized entry hole exactly one inch in diameter, then yanked the dried "guts" out of the gourd with a long needle-nose pliers. I looped the neck of the goose-gourd over a metal bar of the trellis just outside the window, and then I waited.

I wasn't disappointed. Within a couple days, a handsome male wren showed up, shuffled in and out of the gourd with the beginnings of a nest, and then sat atop the curved gooseneck, singing out his resume as a good catch for some lucky lady wren.

I'll spare you the salacious wren-wrangling details I witnessed from my breakfast table over the next several days, but within a few weeks I watched this little wren family grow from a happy couple to a feathery suburban family of six. Mom and Dad worked endlessly gathering worms and beetles for their tykes to eat.

It was a bittersweet day when those babies flew the coop, but I felt glad for Mom and Dad, who were surely exhausted from their constant labors raising the chicks. I wished them a calmer, quieter

summer ahead.

So imagine my surprise when, a week later, the whole thing started all over again. I couldn't tell if it was the same couple of wrens canoodling just outside my window, but by the start of July another gang of gangly chicks goggled out the gourd-hole to see where all those snacks came from that Mom and Dad provided all day long.

When that second flock flew off, that was it for last summer's hatchlings. In October I cleaned the old nesting material out of the gourd with the long needle-nose and left it to hang through the winter so this year's wrens could get an early start.

But to my surprise, this spring a pair of sparrows shouldered the wrens aside and decided to claim the gourd for their own. They pecked the opening much larger so they could fit, and by the start of May, they took occupancy right there outside my breakfast window. If they had any hint of the irony that I was gobbling eggs while they were laying theirs, they never let on.

It's July now, and not only did those two sparrows raise a family of chicks and send them out into the world in early June, but they (or a second pair) moved right in and did the same thing. They begat and raised another five young sparrows, who just sailed away into the garden a week ago.

So by my calculations, at least 20 baby birds have been birthed and dispersed in that goosy gourd over the last two summers.

"So that's it for this year," I thought. Deciding to get an early start on my seasonal clean-up, I went to work with that old needle-nosed pliers and pulled an astounding skein of nesting material through the front door of the basketball-sized gourd after a double-round of sparrow spawning. If it had been wool, I could have knitted a cardigan.

I hung the empty goosy gourd back on the trellis, glad to have at least one seasonal clean-up duty finished already.

I'd like to tell you that that is the end of this story, but it isn't, because as I write these words a third pair of sparrows are doing unspeakable things to each other on the trellis. Between rounds of their debauchery, they gather new nest-material and stuff it into the gourd.

And so, on and on it goes for the third time this season, and for who knows how much longer? Don't they ever get tired of cuddling and re-furnishing the old home-stead? After fully raising two families, shouldn't they be planning their retirement to Florida by now?

Robins. Wrens. Sparrows. Between the obsessive window-whacking and baby-booming, who knows what goes on inside a bird's brain?

All I know is that two birds in the gourd are worth a flock in the bush.

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



Christine Such | MSDN Photo

Among other initiatives, the Volunteer Committee organized a group of Outdoor Concert Ambassadors (seen above) to aid in residents' concert attendance to make experiences safer and more enjoyable.

SC kicks off new volunteering initiative

By Christine Such
For My Sun Day News

To promote a thriving volunteer community, the Sun City Community Association of Huntley Board of Directors unanimously approved a new volunteerism goal on March 25. The centerpiece of this project is a cross-functional Volunteer Committee composed of staff, board leaders, and representatives

from Lifestyles, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), and the Charter Club Presidents Council (CCPC).

Among those driving the effort are residents James Papak, Sheri Goldstein, and Amy Sanecki, as well as staff members Debby Seger and Liam Sullivan. The group is charged with breaking down barriers to resident engagement and creating implementable strategies to increase active participation—a mission

that directly advances the Association's wider Strategic Goal 5.

To promote a friendly environment, the group introduced a new questionnaire for incoming residents. This form explores their unique interests and skills to help them connect more easily with neighbors. Additionally, the group hosted a pop-up ice cream social on June 10 to thank everyone who contributes to our friendly, helpful community.

As excitement builds for the upcoming summer music season, organizers are stepping up efforts to ensure a safe, smooth, and enjoyable experience for every attendee. Following a review of past events, the committee identified a critical need for strengthened guest services and crowd management during the Sun City outdoor concerts series. To address this, Shannon Smith, Sun City's Lifestyle Assistant, worked closely with the committee to analyze logistics. Together, they mapped out operational gaps and drafted a clear, organized framework outlining the responsibilities for a new team of Outdoor Concert Ambassadors.

"We have nine concerts scheduled this summer," Smith said, stressing the scale of this year's lineup. "The ambassadors will be easily identified by the vests they are being provided with. They will assist residents, ensure golf carts are parked in the designated area, and keep sidewalks clear for safety."

Smith is the main point of contact for the outdoor concerts.

The first Outdoor Concert was held on June 25. Before the concert, Smith held an orientation and an informational meeting.

She said, "The purpose of the meeting was to explain what the ambassadors will be doing. We also took a walk to the am-

phitheater, and I pointed out areas that we need help with."

Among the initial outdoor concert ambassadors who attended this orientation were Cathy Herrick, Cathy Skowronski, Debbie Liberatore, Katherine Nakis, Joyce Schulte, Kathy Allen, Scott Sands, and Traci Phillips.

Smith said, "The outdoor concert ambassadors were so helpful at our first outdoor concert last night. They arrived around 5:30 and helped monitor sidewalks, parking, and golf carts, as well as greet people and answer questions. I checked with them all at the end of the evening, and they reported feeling able to be useful and that it was a fun volunteer experience. Several expressed thanks for creating this position. It also helped me out a lot to have extra eyes on the crowd and keep the sidewalks clear."

Allen said, "As an ambassador at outdoor concerts, I walk around the venue welcoming people as they arrive and help if people need assistance walking up or down the hills. People don't always know where the bathrooms are or exactly where to park their golf carts, so I help with directions. After the concert, I help people as they headed back down the hills and directed a little traffic when golf carts and people with chairs try to use the same sidewalks. It's fun to interact with the people at the concert. At the Fourth of July concert, I spritzed people with a cool mist to help them stay cool. The band really appreciated that since they were sitting in the sun."

• Residents interested in joining the outdoor concert ambassadors team for future events can contact Shannon Smith at 847-515-7713. No prior experience is required, and training will be provided for all new volunteers.



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askanangel



Q I've been reading your column for years, and I never thought I'd actually write in, but here I am. I'm in my early 70s, and I can't sleep. I sometimes have trouble falling asleep, but the bigger issue is staying asleep. I'll wake up around 2:00 a.m. and just lie there. Sometimes I need to use the bathroom, but most nights I'm restless for hours. By the time I drift off, it's morning. My sleepless nights are starting to affect my days. I'm more irritable in the mornings than I'd like to admit. By the afternoon, I'm so groggy that I end up napping in my chair, even though I know that it probably

isn't helping me. I miss having energy. I miss my early, quiet mornings (I've always been an early-bird). I don't like being short-tempered with the people I care about. Do you have any advice to help me get back to sleep?

A It means a lot to know you've been a long-time reader. I'm more than honored to provide some practical advice regarding your sleep. What you're describing is more common than you think. As we age, our sleep patterns shift. Waking in the early hours and struggling to fall back asleep is a pattern many older adults experience. There are a few areas worth examining objectively, starting with your evening routine. What does your screen time

look like in the evening? Light from screens, whether it's your phone, tablet, or television, can make it more challenging for your brain to settle into sleep. Setting aside all screens an hour before bed and replacing them with something calmer, such as reading a book or listening to relaxation music, can send signals to your brain that it's time to wind down. You might also want to consider adding a consistent bedtime ritual to help trigger sleep. A cup of caffeine-free tea, dim lighting, and going to bed at the same time each night can create a rhythm your body begins to recognize. I also suggest looking at your sleep environment. Many women find that as hormones shift with age, they become more sensitive to heat at night. A

slightly cooler room, breathable bedding, or even a fan can help you stay cool and eliminate your body waking up due to heat. When you do wake up in the middle of the night and can't fall asleep after 20 minutes or so, it can be helpful to get out of bed briefly and do something quiet in low light until you feel tired again. Lying there, frustrated, often makes the wakefulness feel longer. Your instincts about your afternoon naps are spot-on. Although I understand the need to nap after an awful night's rest, consistent napping can contribute to poor overnight sleep. I suggest that instead of reading, you go for an afternoon walk. The movement can help you feel more alert, boost your mood, and make it easier to stay awake until bedtime.

If these adjustments don't bring improvement, I recommend you speak to your doctor. Sleep changes can sometimes be linked to underlying health issues, such as hormonal shifts, sleep disorders, or stress. Your doctor can help you sort through these possibilities and offer further guidance. You're not alone in this, and with a few small adjustments, better sleep is within reach. Be patient with yourself; you deserve to wake up feeling rested and like yourself again.

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

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Christine Such | MSDN Photo

Dolores Fischer's leadership and volunteerism runs deep in the Sun City community and beyond.

A 'Fischer' among students

By Christine Such
For My Sun Day News

For 18 years, Dolores Fischer has called Sun City home. Like many residents, she initially moved here for a personal reason; to be closer to her children and grandchildren. However, what began as a move centered around her own family quickly developed into a serious commitment to the wider community. Over nearly two decades, Dolores has had a profound effect on local education, transforming the lives of many students and molding the fundamental fabric of our neighborhood through her passionate leadership

and firm devotion. Her voyage here actually began with a blueprint from her own family history.

"My parents retired at 55 and moved to the original Sun City in Arizona," Fischer shares. "They loved Sun City and truly lived their best life."

In 2008, Sun City Huntley was still building new homes.

"There were only 15 homes in Neighborhood 35 in September, 2008. After hearing about the Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), I chose to host our first neighborhood meeting at my home. Following some careful research, I chose to volunteer as our Neighborhood Representative. The NAC members were extremely friendly and I quickly grew to appreciate NAC's collaborative spirit and round-table discussions. I proudly served in this role for three years. Today, our neighborhood has grown significantly to 106 homes. In 2025, I decided to get involved again as a NAC member".

Fischer is a highly accomplished educator and leader with a distinguished career in mathematics education and fostering student leadership and mentorship. She attended the University of Illinois, Urbana campus for her undergraduate degree and holds a Master's degree in Mathematics Education from DePaul University, along with extensive graduate coursework

in teaching and reading from National Lewis University and Northwestern Illinois University.

Fischer began her teaching career at Evergreen Park High School before joining Stevenson High School in 1972, where she spent more than 40 years teaching mathematics and inspiring students through leadership development and mentoring. Throughout her distinguished career, she earned recognition for creating innovative curriculum and leading a wide range of academic and extracurricular programs. In addition to her classroom leadership, she coached cheerleading, the dance team, the math team and served as Stevenson's ice hockey manager.

She is best known as the co-creator and director of Stevenson High School's Freshman Mentor Program (FMP), a nationally recognized program designed to help incoming freshmen successfully transition to high school. Led by highly respected upper-class role models, the year-long program provides guidance, support, and encouragement to freshmen while fostering leadership, communication, and mentoring skills for the upper-class leaders.

"I had amazing opportunities to present this innovative concept at major educational conferences and consulted with schools across the US and Canada assisting with the development and implementation of a freshman transition program." Her dedication to education has been recognized with prestigious awards, including the Distinguished Service Award from the Illinois Directors of Student Activities as well as Stevenson's Heritage Award. Even after retirement, she continues to mentor students, support neighborhood initiatives, and foster educational partnerships, exemplifying a lifelong devotion to student growth.

Fischer reflected, "Shortly after moving to Sun City, I spent some time substitute teaching mathematics at Huntley High School. It was there that I learned about opportunities to mentor students in the Engineering Academy. I reached out to Eileen Delahanty, the volunteer coordinator for Huntley schools, to let her know I was very interested in the position. That decision opened the door to an incredibly rewarding experience.

Delahanty agrees.

"Dolores perfectly represents my philosophy that there is a place for everyone in District 158 if they want to volunteer," she said. "A few years ago, she responded to an article published in the newspaper about our need for volunteers in the Engineering Program. After explaining that she was a lifelong high school math teacher, she told me, 'I'd love to volunteer with your engineering students, but I don't know how I could help them.' Here we are four years

FISCHER | Pg. 9

iheardthisquote...

By TR Kerth
Columnist

Friends, if we be honest with ourselves, we shall be honest with each other.

- George Macdonald

Ignorance, when voluntary, is criminal, and a man may be properly charged with that evil which he neglected or refused to learn how to prevent.

- Samuel Johnson

All men should strive to learn before they die what they are running from, and to, and why.

- James Thurber

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BIRDWATCHING SWOOPS INTO THE LEAD AT GOLF CART PARADE



The Sun City Birdwatching Club takes first place at this year's competition



Provided | MSDN Photos

Above: John Garland of the Birdwatching Club works on assembling the wings. Each feather was cut and painted individually to make up the wingspan of The Eagle golf cart (pictured upper-left).

Christine Such | MSDN Photo



Left: Members of the Birdwatching Club pose with winning golf cart.

•FISCHER

later, and the impact Dolores has had on our students has been immeasurable. She is 100% committed and faithfully works with our Engineering Design & Development students every week throughout the school year. She has even shared her personal email address and meets with students outside of school when they need extra help or simply want her advice."

In early 2025, Fischer took the floor at a Sun City Huntley Community Association Board meeting with a clear, transformative vision; closing the gap between generations. Drawing on her

firsthand experience volunteering with students and faculty, Fischer passionately advocated for a formal partnership with Sun City and Huntley High School. She illustrated how a structured

alliance would improve both ends of the age spectrum, offering high school students' valuable mentorship while providing active adults with meaningful civic engagement. The Board voted unanimously to pass the motion, cementing a joint framework that will benefit Huntley residents for years to come.

Delahanty said, "Dolores exudes a love of learning and an energy that is contagious. She has also been a wonderful ambassador, encouraging more Del Webb residents to visit our schools, see what they're missing, and discover how they, too, can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students."

According to Fischer, the program experienced immediate success. It promoted unique collaborations, such as the railroad club partnering with engineering students on a display project, the "Sew n Sews" hosting crocheting workshops, and nurses supporting

the Medical Academy. And recently, she has taken on a more active role in the ongoing Medical Academy Pen-Pal program. Fischer actively serves the Sun City community through her roles on the Lifestyle Committee and the NAC Executive Board.

Fischer's continued leadership and commitment reflect a lifelong dedication to fostering meaningful connections between education and community, ensuring that both students and residents benefit from shared learning, mentorship, and collaboration.

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Standing for plants: An interview with Environmental Defenders



Kathleen Carr
Columnist

"Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has." Although this quote is attributed to Margaret Mead it could very easily be the motto of the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County. For over 50 years they have worked diligently protecting our ecosystem and preserving our natural environment all while educating residents. They have successfully protected valuable areas such as Ryder's Woods in Woodstock and the Volo Bog State Natural Area. They also assisted in the development of the Crystal Lake watershed protection ordinance and the McHenry County Stormwater ordinance.

For this column, Erin Kennedy, the executive director of the Environmental Defenders has agreed to help us understand their current initiatives, upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Thank you, Erin, for being available to answer a few questions.

Can you please tell us a bit about the history of the Environmental Defenders?

The Environmental Defenders of McHenry County history begins

in 1969 when the Fox Valley Freeway was proposed. In response to the proposal that would pave over some of the most ecologically significant features within the Fox River watershed, a group of concerned citizens from the Barrington area formed the Defenders of the Fox to protect and improve the Fox River ecosystem and its tributaries. The Defenders of the Fox's first goal was to fight the freeway. In February 1970, a group of like-minded people from Crystal Lake and other parts of McHenry County joined the Barrington group, forming the McHenry County chapter of the Defenders of the Fox. At about the same time, an ad in the Woodstock Daily Sentinel called for people interested in environmental matters to attend a meeting at Pleasant Valley Outdoor Center. The meeting attendees eventually formed the McHenry County Environmental Council.

The Defenders publishes a quarterly newsletter with articles on environmental issues facing the county and about the work of the organization.

It seems that Action Teams are one of the reasons that your organization is so successful. Can you please give us a brief description of each Action Team and what they focus on?

The Defenders currently have six Action Teams.

Water & Natural Resource

Protection - Focuses on both water issues and natural resources issues. The team has regular workdays at Sterne's Fen to cut brush and remove invasive species. Water & Natural Resource Protection also hosts our BMP (best management practices) Talks & Tours series. That is a great opportunity for people to learn about various environmental topics and how they directly affect McHenry County. The team also works to encourage local governments to sign on to the National Wildlife Foundation's Mayors Monarch Pledge to encourage creating pollinator habitat.

Recycling - The Recycling Action Team coordinates recycling drives throughout the year and manages the Styrofoam collection in the county.

Waste Reduction - Focuses on bringing food scrap composting opportunities to McHenry County residents & businesses, educates the public on how to reduce food waste and encourages the community to reduce single use plastics.

Transportation - Promotes the development and implementation of policies that ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, balance the needs support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments. It encourages the public to use eco-friendly transportation options, including public transportation, carpooling,

bike path use, and other alternative means for commuting and running errands.

Outreach - Works on recruiting, retaining, educating and celebrating our members. These objectives are met by planning and creating unique events & educational opportunities.

Fundraising - Plans and executes several fundraising opportunities to help support the organization's environmental work throughout McHenry County

What are your most pressing needs as it relates to volunteers? How can our readers make the most difference to your organizations?

One of the Defenders most popular programs is our Styrofoam recycling. The Defenders operate three locations in McHenry County for residents to recycle their Styrofoam. Currently, our Algonquin Township location in need of the most help. This seems to be our most popular location, and additional volunteers would alleviate the accumulation of Styrofoam and reduce the time the Styrofoam shed must be closed due to it being full. The Environmental Defenders are always looking for volunteers to help with our Fall Book Sale, "Use it Again" Garage Sale, and the McHenry County Fair.

Your organization is membership based. How much is an an-

nual membership?

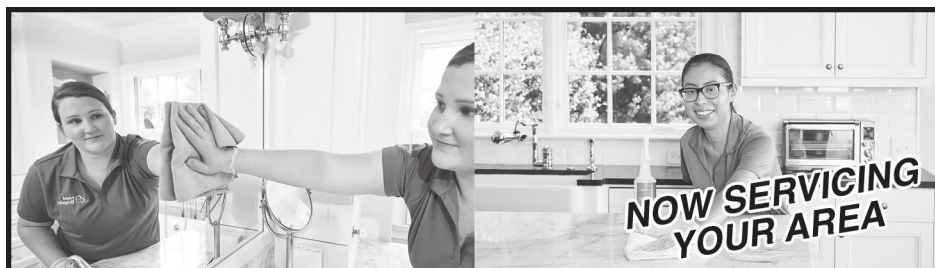
The Defenders offers several membership opportunities. A Basic/Family membership is \$50 for the year and our senior membership is \$30. The Defenders also offers membership opportunities for businesses and non-profits. Contact our office 815-338-0393 for membership questions or additional information.

If someone is interested in learning more about your organization, what should they do?

If someone is interested in learning more about the Environmental Defenders, I would encourage them to check out our website www.mcdef.org or visit our social media pages on Facebook or Instagram. The Defenders generates our weekly E-News for members and residents to stay up to date on environmental issues and events.

Many thanks to Erin for giving us so much information regarding the valuable work that this organization performs. I encourage you to check out their organization. You do not need to live in McHenry County to become involved.

• 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.



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On June 5, members of the Huntley Flyers visited the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. (L to R) Allen Pollack, Michael Birosak, Michael Marchese, Richard Witt, Vincent Lynn.



Scott Slagle

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By Steve Peterson
For My Sun Day News

SUN CITY - The Sun City Softball League is preparing for the annual all-star game. This year's game will take place at 5:30 p.m., Friday, July 24 at Veterans Memorial Field. Players vote for teammates to participate. "It should be a great game to come out and watch," Sun City Softball League President Chuck Hund said. Standings through July 2 games in the 16-inch evening league had the Mustangs

off to a solid start with a 10-0 record and 104 runs. The Lumbar Jacks were in second place, 7-1, 92 runs scored. Also, the Travelers were 6-3; Adjusters, 5-4; Monarchs, 2-6; Coyotes and Capitals, 2-7 and the Hurricanes were 1-7. The Mobilizers, meanwhile, led the Wednesday 12-inch evening league, 3-0 while the Molars were 2-2 and the Centurions 0-3. For the Thursday 16-inch morning league, the Bucket Listers led with a 5-0 mark, while Sluggers were 1-3 and Money Bags 0-3.

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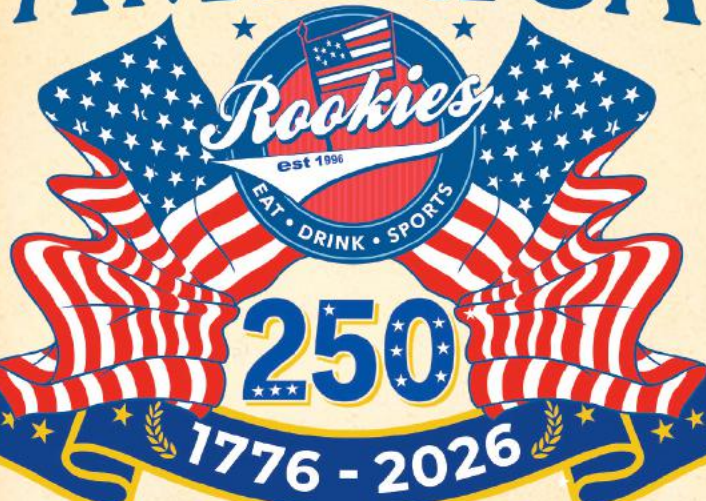


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August 22: 175th Celebration & Corn Boil with the Village Board

August 29: Chamber Day

September 5: Dog Day

September 26: Oktoberfest at the Market

October 10: Halloween at the Market

Weekly Live Music

July 18: Jay Highland

July 25: Grant Milliren

August 1: Fox Hills Music Teachers Association

August 8: DJ Don

August 15: Andrew Huber

August 22: Gray Roots Band

August 29: Justine Ewald

September 5: Jay Highland

September 12: Grant Milliren

September 19: Andrew Huber

September 26: Die Kellerknaben

October 3: Jay Highland

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Jim & Nancy Eggers
columnists

You asked for it

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.

Everywhere we went, people seemed to be coming out of the woodwork asking us if we’ve tried a new eatery in town. They all were bragging on how delicious it was, so much in fact, that they have been to it several times. We have never had so many people recommend a venue before. As a result, we moved this eatery to the top of our “to do list” and rushed off to Huntley’s Deli in, where else, Huntley.

The deli is in a strip mall and from the outside it is very unassuming. When we walked in it was different than any other place we have been to. There’s a long counter in the center with high top chairs and a row of benches behind them. We assume that the benches were there for the patrons to wait for a seat to open up if the counter was full or just to order and pickup their takeout. Behind the counter was an open kitchen.

We found two chairs that were open and sat down to checkout their menu. The hostess/waitress asked if we were ready to order and we said not yet but we would like two Pepsis. She pointed to the stand-up cooler and said grab what you want. You can request a cup with ice so you don’t have to drink out of a can.

The menu consists of pastas, salads, and sandwiches. Jim was in the mood for a good sandwich, and I was in the mood for pasta. Now the deliberation begins. Jim was torn between the chicken parmesan sandwich or their Cuban sandwich. I couldn’t decide if I wanted the pasta, pesto style, or the spicy aglio olio.

Jim finally agreed on the Chicken Parmesan Sandwich (\$16) which was a panko crusted chicken breast topped with house marinara and baked with provolone cheese and served on a French baguette. All sandwiches come with a bag of chips for your side. When Jim saw the

chef put the chicken in the deep fryer, he was amazed, it was the biggest breast he has ever seen!! When the chef built the sandwich, he actually had to fold the chicken in half to fit it in the baguette. There were tons of cheese on it and the homemade marinara sauce was incredible. The chicken was juicy and cooked to perfection. Half of his sandwich came home in a doggie bag.

Nancy was having a war in her little blonde head. She was so undecided, but the Fettuccini Pesto Pasta (\$13) with chicken (\$6.50 upcharge) was the winner. Boy was it a winner!!! She has never had pesto pasta as delicious as this and she couldn’t stop eating it. Nothing came home in a doggie bag for her because it was that good.

During a lull in cooking, we were able to engage the chef/owner Mario Arevalo in conversation. Nancy asked him in her tactful way, “so what’s your story.” That’s when he divulged his passion for cooking and it really shows. Check out more of his life long journey on the Huntley’s Deli website.

FYI: Because of the high-top counter seating, this restaurant might not be handicap accessible, but you could always order take out for home.

This eatery is totally different from anything we have ever been to. Watching the chef cook in front of you with all the sights, sounds, and smells is something everyone should experience. We were getting hungrier while the chef was cooking. The aromas were wonderful.

The price for our “Chef’s Table” lunch was \$42.76. Having a former Rosebud on Rush Restaurant chef cook for you in person, priceless....

He Said / She Said

JIM’S TAKE: My sandwich was in a class by itself.

NANCY’S TAKE: You can really tell the difference with homemade fresh pasta, there’s nothing like it.

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



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let'sgetreel

Catching up with old friends



Will Moore
Columnist

Despite the weather, hopefully your Fourth was a good time to spend with friends and family. Possibly you got to see some all year round. Or maybe you get only fleeting moments with them. Recently, a close confidant from the city moved a suburb over. With the summer in full swing, your small group can go on a trip. Netflix's *The Four Seasons* could give you some inspiration.

For a year, this little gem has been a blind spot in my viewing until earlier this summer with the drop of season two. Now fully caught up, it is safe to say that I will be returning for the next go-around. The show, spearheaded by Tina Fey, has been greenlit for a third next year. And it is easy to see why. Charm just emanates off the television screen with this cast. Fey and fellow SNL alum Will Forte are so perfectly cast as a couple in mid-life crisis. Humor gives way to an amazing wealth of empathy without bogging you down in saccharine. Coleman Domingo shows that drama isn't all

he can do. He can be adorable even as he snaps off a sassy quip at others' expense. Marco Calvani, who popped up in *You Me and Tuscan* earlier this year, plays his husband as a goof without falling into self-parody. Kerri Kenney plays the bumbling divorcee but doesn't sacrifice her humanity. Even Erika Henningsen, who could've become a punchline for the other woman, expresses so much depth where you least expect it. Through these eight episodes, we are brought into their shared travels and life journeys.

But a trip with even besties can be a hassle, as this show even demonstrates. Concerts can be a better fit, as this city friend I mentioned will be attending Lollapalooza with me later this month. Luckily, we will not be attending with bloodsuckers, as is the case with AMC's *The Vampire Lestat*. Picking up where *Interview* left off, our title antihero is back strutting stages as a 70s glam/80s hair metal throwback act. The original music written for this season is quite good and Sam Reid really sells it. Because we can't get enough, Jacob Anderson is back as Louis. This does affect the pacing of the show even if I am only a few episodes in. Eric Bogosian returns as Daniel and Jennifer Ehle manages to chew whatever scenery is left as *Lestat*'s vampire mother Gabriella. Fair warning: there is a bit of incest sub-plot that may

leave you squeamish. Not that the sight of all that blood wouldn't either.

Perhaps a staycation is more in order. Even though the weather hasn't been the most cooperative. A good time to dine out? It only seems fitting that *The Bear*'s final season, on FX, begins with a torrential downpour that lasts one whole night. Taking a cue from the show *24*, creator Christopher Storer has inadvertently made a closer for the ages. One that pays homage to our hometown while crafting a magnificent ending to this found family of culinary misfits. I mean, even Tom Skilling makes an appearance as a guest on the craziest night in the restaurant's short existence. Even as the basement begins the flood and pipes burst in almost biblical fashion, their shared adversity and history makes up for whatever is thrown at them.

I will miss these people. A show can have a way of getting under your skin, making characters feel like people you've known your entire life. It only helps more that it takes place in a landscape most of us have, at least, ventured into. Chicago becomes more than just a backdrop. It's baked into the DNA of this show. Mentions of Schaumburg and the Publican are just window dressing to the already beating heart at its center, one that is as constant as the waves off Lake Michigan. I cried several times, not the least of which was a fitting tribute to the late Rob Reiner. Even if we may never see



some friends again, we are forever changed by them for the better. Much like *Army* and his crew.



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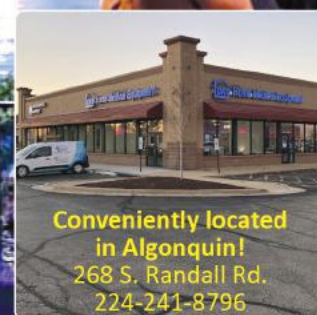
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Looking for Softball Players for the 2026 Season (Age 55+). Hit, field, throw, and run like you are in your twenties again. Make new friends, have loads of fun and experience team camaraderie. Season (May through August). Three leagues to choose from (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.

ONGOING ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, HARMONY
St. John's United Church of Christ, Harmony, will worship at 9 a.m. Pastor David Bateman will be following the lectionary for his sermon, following Children's Time with Pastor Dave the children will go to church school classes.
The church is located at 11821 E Grant Highway, Hampshire, the corner of Route 20 and Harmony

Road. For more information call the church office 815-923-4263, visit us on Facebook or at our website www.stjohnsuccharmony.org.

ONGOING POKER
Join our poker group. Every other Tuesday from 6-10 p.m. The stakes are very reasonable as is the companionship.
Call Ray at 708-917-6141 to discuss.

ONGOING BARGAN 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.

AUGUST 22 CINDERELLA AUDITIONS
The Theatre Company of Sun City's fall musical is, Rogers and Hammerstein's, CINDERELLA!
Show dates: November 19-22, 2026.
AUDITIONS: SATURDAY, August 22, 2026 (NOTE: this is a new date). If you would like to audition, please call Judy Stage at 517-927-8535.
We encourage all Sun City residents to know that they are more than welcome to audition. If you or anyone you know



is interested in the position of MUSIC DIRECTOR, Set design and helping with set build or costuming don't hesitate to contact Russ Howard, President at: 847-659-9144.

ONGOING SUN CITY FANTASY FOOTBALL LEAGUE
We are starting a 10-man fantasy football league for Sun City residents only. \$100.00 league fee per player for a \$1,000.00 total prize winnings, divided among the top 3 finishers. We will pay out 100% of money collected. If interested, please call Gerry at 931-444-9001.

AUGUST 15 & 18 SUN CITY CONCERT BAND
It is time to keep rockin' this summer with your Sun City Concert Band's annual "Rock the Ages" concert. A wide variety of rock-n-roll music will bring back great memories of music we all enjoy. The concert dates are Saturday August 15 at 1 p.m. and Tuesday August 18 at 7 p.m. Tickets will go on sale in July 23, July 30, August 6 and August 7 in Prairie Lodge in front of the library from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you are interested in buying tickets and cannot make the dates mentioned here, please contact Rich Ankenbrandt, President, 847-502-5485.

politicalplace

The views in these letters are the writers' own.

The beginning of the Declaration of Independence, primarily drafted by Virginia delegate Thomas Jefferson, age 33, begins with, "We mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." Three of the most important qualities for all citizens. Their lives were at stake because, if it did not take place, they would lose their lives as traitors. Their fortunes were at stake because their lands and all their possessions would be lost. Their wives and children would be left with nothing. And their sacred Honor would be lost forever in the annals of history; they would be known as traitors, and devious rebel rousers, instead of being revered as the founding fathers of the new United States of America.

There is so much more that we find in the Declaration of Independence but to begin, this is a reminder to everyone elected, you serve the people's needs, as you have pledged your lives, fortunes and honor as you support and defend our Construction. Our government is not a business. The taxpayers will hold our government to spend our money wisely, not expecting them to take our money for themselves or use it for their desired fetishes. The party in charge is challenging our government's checks and balances. They are forcing a unitary government on the people who, like those who wrote the Declaration of Independence, reject that idea. We do not want to be ruled by a king. The people will have a say in the current leadership in the upcoming midterm elections.

Check that you are registered. If applicable, know when mail-in ballots go out. If not received in a timely manner, call your county election office. Be prepared to vote. November 3, 2026.

Gail Talbot
Huntley resident

HIDE THE HAT LOCATION:

In June, the Sun City Flyers Club took a trip to the Air Force museum and they were all wearing the same hat for the trip. We thought the plane in the background of the photo may feel left out without some head gear, so we placed the hat over the top turrit of the bomber. Did you see it on Page 11?



Provided | MSDN Photo

Try again next edition!

THANK YOU FOR READING MY SUN DAY NEWS!

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Current data available in the Multiple List Service (MLS) as of 1-1-06 to 6-27-20. 2020

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