

MY SUN DAY NEWS

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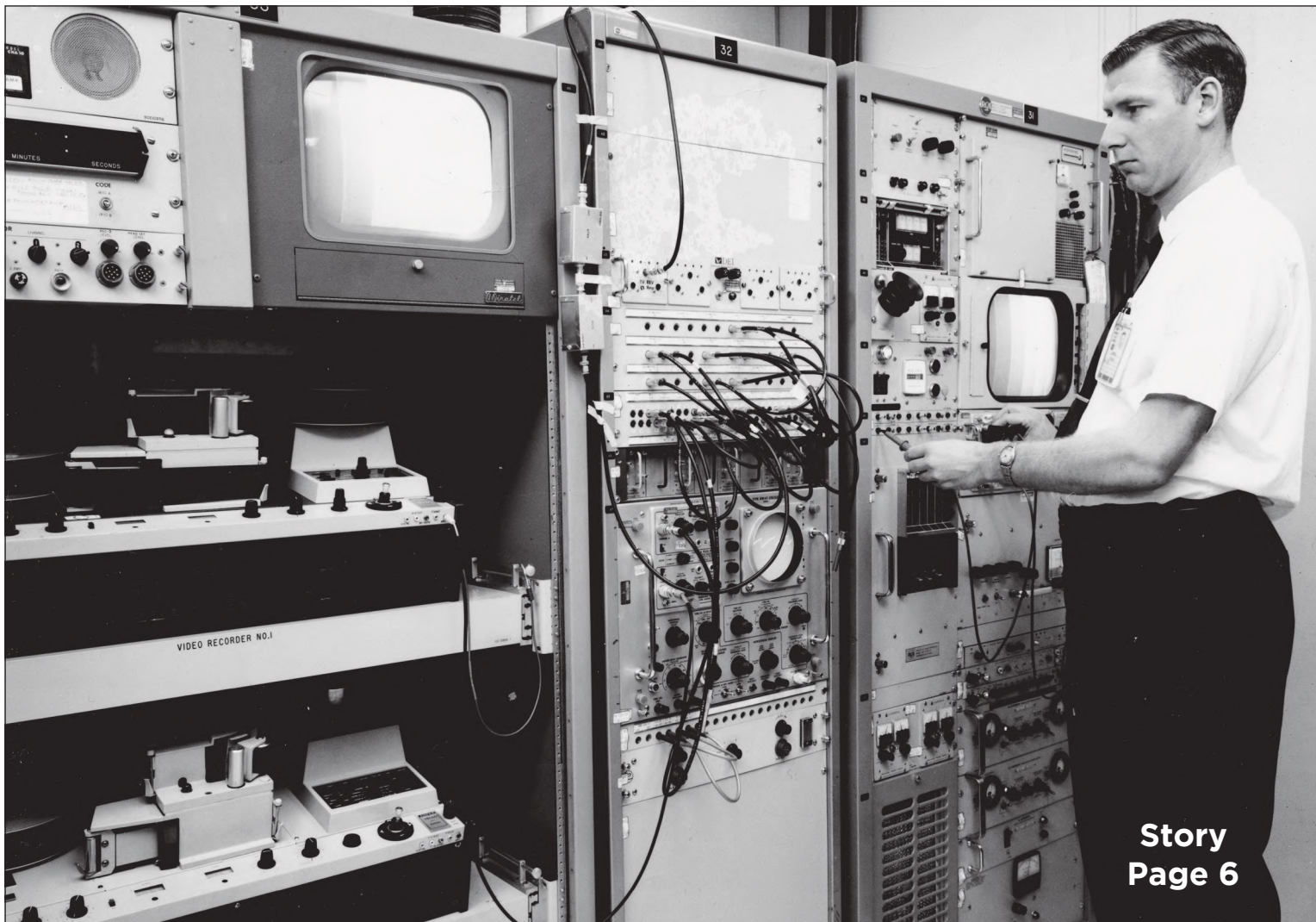
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Provided | MSDN Photo

Working as a GE Contractor, George Gawell operates controls of Apollo-era NASA technology for the Apollo 7 broadcast from space on October 14, 1968.

Live from outer space

SC resident shares experience bringing famous Apollo 7 broadcast into homes across America



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lifeinfocus

When the best option is to stick to the plan



Carol Pavlik
Columnist

By Carol Pavlik
For My Sun Day News

Our annual summer vacation has been in the works for months, making campsite reservations and studying maps. This year we’re doing a repeat of a vacation we took back in 2020: driving the more than one-thousand-mile perimeter of Lake Michigan in our teardrop camper, but with two huge differences: This time, there is no global pandemic going on to close down many tourist attractions, nor are our four children accompanying us. It is me, my husband, and our dog.

As we packed up the camper, our neighbor came out to tell us that there were Canadian wildfires that might affect air quality on our trip. His alarmist message, as we stood under a nearly cloudless blue sky, didn’t really sink in. I was skeptical. I gave it very little thought, then promptly forgot about it.

We began our clockwise trek: north through Wisconsin, up to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, then down the western coast of Michigan. Almost immediately, just over the Wisconsin border,

the smoke from the Canadian wildfires reached us: the sky became hazy, and our eyes and throats burned with the acrid smell of smoke. The sun seemed to hang stagnant in the sky, a glowing orange ball that tried its best to break through the smoky atmosphere, but couldn’t. Air quality maps showed that the highest concentration of smoke pollution would hover like a shroud, clinging to the shoreline, as if the fires were privy to our itinerary. On the first night, we sat in our camper, windows closed tightly to keep the stinking air at bay, and we pored over maps and forecasts to weigh our options. The lake, only a few yards from our campsite, appeared as a shapeless gray mass — it looked less like a lake and more like a lifeless slab of concrete.

It was too heartbreaking. We had looked forward to this trip for so long. Could it be over before it even began? We talked about alternatives: head home, pretend to be out of town, and design an impromptu staycation? Head in a new direction away from the hazardous air quality, and hope to find open spots during the busiest camping season? Ultimately, we couldn’t pull the plug on it. We decided to “stick to the plan.”

“Stick to the plan” has come in handy quite a few times in our lifetime. In parenting alone,

“stick to the plan” is usually the best response in the face of temper tantrums, diaper blowouts, stomach viruses, lost permissions slips, and moody teens. This trip has had big and small moments. I’m channeling my inner Dorothy Gale, feeling stranded in her sepia-toned Kansas world, until she steps out her door to adventure in a technicolor Land of Oz. The Lollipop Guild themselves couldn’t make the gradual disappearance of the smoke more exciting. I yelped out with joy on Day 3 when I saw a small patch of blue sky overhead. Progress! It wasn’t until Day 4 when saw the sharp line of a horizon across water that appeared blue, not gray. Our eyes and throat no longer burned. Hallelujah.

The plan includes some big outings, namely exploring the beach and the sand dunes, as well as boarding the ferry to Mackinac Island, transporting us from the mainland to the quaint Michigan town where cars are left behind and traded for bicycles and horse-drawn carriages. The smaller, unplanned moments come in the form of friendly conversations with strangers, or an especially delicious glass of cold lemonade after a hot and sweaty hike. We found a nearly empty beach where we launched our kayaks for a sunset paddle. We even happened to come upon a

mother duck marching her flock of fuzzy ducklings, one by one in a straight line, into the water. No matter how you slice it, it’s all vacation, including the way our poor dog wedged himself beneath my knees late last night, trembling at the sound of thunder and rain hitting the camper’s roof. Now the smoke from the Canadian wildfires is also baked into this vacation, for better or for worse.

Moments of indecision rear their heads at our jobs, and in our relationships, too, threatening to dismantle a carefully constructed blueprint. Someone should embroider it on a pillow in a curlicue font: Whenever you can, stick to the plan.

“Stick to the plan” is the real-life equivalent to “the show must go on,” I suppose. When unexpected things threaten to muck things up, it feels as though the only thing to do is throw our hands in the air and admit defeat.

Or ... we pause, put our heads down and move forward with what we originally set out to do. Thank goodness we didn’t abort this mission. Thank goodness we stayed on the road and didn’t turn back. It’s not exactly the vacation we planned, but it is vacation, so I’ll take it. On with the show, even if the show turns out a little differently than it was written.

politicalplace

The views in these letters are the writers’ own.

I am writing in response to John Parker’s letter in the July 16 edition, where he stated that “The era of appeasement is over, The conflict in Iran is over!” I think John’s premature claims may rely too heavily on truth in Presidential statements. Also Russia and North Korea can certainly give Iran a run for the money when it comes to world terrorism leaders with nuclear capabilities. Trump did nothing to thwart Putin’s initial invasion of Ukraine (see Trump Moscow Hotel) and he also exchanged “Love Letters” with Kim Jong Un.

Depending on the source, Trump has suggested or stated that the conflict or a deal to end the war in Iran was imminent or achieved between 32 and 40 separate times. Notably, shortly after his last victory statement, three more service members were killed. I, too, mistakenly thought the conflict had concluded when the Secretary of Defense announced a program to test testosterone levels in male and female service members. Oops on me!

To help determine the accuracy of presidential statements, I would like to offer some opinions on subjects the President does and does not care about.

Here are things Trump does not care about:

- You
- The General Public (unless they are gen- uflexing),
- The Cost of Living/Economy/Affordability,
- Any Minority or Any Immigrant (unless a WASP),
- Middle class and lower tax payers,
- The Environment,
- The Constitution.

Here are things Trump does care about

- Increasing the Trump Family’s personal wealth, (Estimated at \$2,000,000,000 since taking office),
- Power and never losing,
- Constant media attention preferably fawning,
- Naming rights,
- Pointless memorials to himself,

Gold appliques and Autopens, Mail-In voting,

The release of the Epstein Files, and most importantly,

Increasing the Trump Family’s personal wealth.

I have voted for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents in fifteen Presidential elections. I have not always agreed with things that their subsequent administrations proposed or eventually did but I never doubted that all believed they were doing what was best for the country. In good conscience I cannot say that about this administration.

Ed Purmann
Sun City resident

Have an opinion or some commentary? Send it to mycommunity @mysundaynews.com

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MSDN File Photo

Sun City softball players and Huntley first responders wrap up 2022's National Night Out with a round of handshakes.

HUNTLEY GEARS UP FOR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT CELEBRATION, VINTAGE SOFTBALL UNIFORMS FEATURED

By Steve Peterson
For My Sun Day News

SUN CITY - "We are excited to expand our Aug. 4 NNO celebration this year by welcoming area businesses to join in the community fun," Police Chief Linda Hooten said. "The afternoon will begin with a friendly softball game at 3:00 pm in Sun

City between the Huntley Police and Fire Departments, with players wearing vintage jerseys in celebration of Huntley's 175th anniversary."

The family friendly event continues at 5 p.m.

"After the game, bring the entire family to downtown Huntley for an evening of games, kids' activities, a police and fire

touch-a-truck display, opportunities to meet a 911 dispatcher, a drone demonstration, and connect with the public safety professionals and community partners who serve Huntley."

Hooten noted some new NNO highlights this year.

"This year's event has moved to the gathering area near the Shops on Main, creating a great setting for residents, businesses, and first responders to come together," Hooten said. "NNO is one of my favorite events of the year because it gives us an opportunity to strengthen relationships, engage with residents in a relaxed and welcoming environment, and celebrate the strong sense of community that makes Huntley such a special place. We look forward to seeing everyone downtown from 5 -7 pm for a fun and memorable evening."

HPD works with Sun City

The Huntley Police Department (HPD) maintains a strong relationship with the Sun City community through several groups, including the Neighborhood Advisory Committee / Neighborhood Watch, a HPD press release states. have also recently provided fraud prevention presentations and anticipate offering another presentation within the next few months.

The HPD also continue to promote our annual Citizen Police Academy. The academy, which concluded recently, provided participants with insight into how the department operates and responds to different types of calls. The program also includes station tours and opportunities to learn directly from department personnel.

political place

The views in these letters are the writers' own.

If you are worried about the security of our elections, I encourage you to become involved either as an election judge (which I am) or as a poll watcher. You will see firsthand just how secure our elections are. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, votes by non-citizens account for between 0.0003 percent and 0.001 percent of all votes cast. Therefore, this concern is a non-issue. For more reassurance, visit the American Bar Association's website where you will find an extensive list of facts about how our 50 states ensure that our elections are fair.

Jody Linton
Sun City resident

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TR Kerth
Columnist

If you have an android cellphone with Google Photos installed, you won't believe your eyes at what you're about to read.

But a word of caution: If you don't want to spend the rest of the day diving deeper down a fun "I can't stop myself" rabbit hole, then stop reading immediately. Turn the page. Bake a cake. Build a shed. Do anything else, because if you keep reading, you're likely to blow most of the rest of your day having way too much fun.

Still with me? Well, don't say I didn't warn you.

OK, go get your cellphone and open up a photo of you or somebody else you know — as long as you remember being there when the picture was taken. I started with a snapshot I took of my son and three grandkids when they stopped by my house the other day.

Now, find the three vertical dots at the top right of your cell phone screen—the "menu," or "more options" icon. (If you have an iPhone, these directions may not apply. In that case, go find an android friend. They'll be easy to find if they're reading this — just follow the laughter.)

After opening the three-dot menu, a box will open with a list of things you can do. Find the "create" tab and click on it...

(Or don't. Last chance. If you do it, you're about to dive down the rabbit hole of fun. Still here? Again, don't say I didn't warn you.)

If you clicked the "create" tab, another list will open. Click on "Remix."

You should now see several ways to change your original photo in fun, goofy, and addicting ways — a pen sketch, oil or watercolor painting, or much, much more. The most fun ones are the "collectible figurine" or "fashion photo shoot" options. Save each new creation if you want to — it won't eliminate the original photo.

Go ahead, start clicking. I'll wait — even if it takes you an hour or two to break away from the fun. But be sure to come back, because we've only just begun.

Back so soon? OK, now massage those "it hurts to smile so much" muscles and let's have some real fun.

Open the original photo again and start the process over — but this time after you click on "Create," find the "Photo to Video" tab and click it.

A list of choices will appear beneath the photo. When I clicked on "I feel lucky" with the photo of my son and grandkids, the screen flipped and flopped for about a minute as the phone decided whatever change it wanted to make.

And when the original photo came back on the screen, it was now an action video. My smiling granddaughter Natalie flipped her long hair back over her shoul-

der...even though she didn't do that in real life!

I remember. I was there. Real Natalie didn't really do that.

But right there on my screen was Natalie flipping her hair and smiling for the photo, as real and undeniable as if it were happening right before my eyes. Which I swear she didn't do. Even though you can clearly see that she did.

See what I mean about that rabbit hole?

But wait, there's more.

I called up another snapshot — this one of Donna sitting in a recliner, her hand frozen in a wave at the camera. This time after I opened the "photo to video" tab I found a box that said: "Describe movements."

Inside that box I typed an imaginary thing that never happened: "A dog climbs up into her lap."

And after a minute or so of processing, that still photo of Donna with her hand frozen in a motionless wave turned into a 4-second action video of an adorable brown and white spaniel walking into the frame and climbing up onto her lap as she smiles and reaches out to welcome it. To make room for the dog, Donna's waving hand reaches down to move some sheets of paper that rested on the arm of the chair. A soft exclamation of happy surprise comes from her mouth as she smiles down at the pooch snuggling into her lap.

Except that it never happened.

That adorable action scene right there in front of my eyes of a very real dog climbing up into a very real lap in a very real recliner — it never happened.

I swear it didn't. I was there. I took the picture.

No dog like that has ever been in my house.

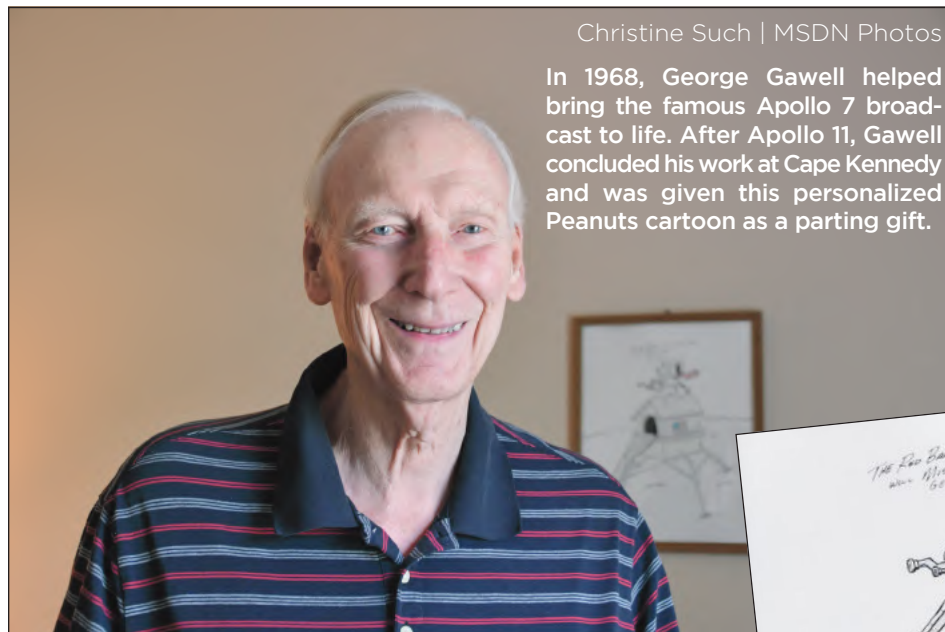
Except there it is, happening right before my very eyes. And what could be more proof-positive than watching something with your very own eyes? Even if you know positively that it never happened?

So if you called up a photo of a moment you clearly remember that happened right in front of you, and then created some other reality that is now unfolding right before your very eyes, you are now an eyewitness to history that never happened.

You have photographic proof that what wasn't...was. Because history is now whatever you decide it was, thanks to that magic "alternate facts machine" in your pocket. And the next time you find yourself saying "My memory isn't what it used to be," you can say it in a whole new way.

You're down the rabbit hole now. And who knows exactly how deep that rabbit hole goes? Maybe I'll see you at the bottom—if that really is you that I'll be seeing. Or, for that matter, if it is still really me seeing what may or may not really be you.

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



Christine Such | MSDN Photos

In 1968, George Gawell helped bring the famous Apollo 7 broadcast to life. After Apollo 11, Gawell concluded his work at Cape Kennedy and was given this personalized Peanuts cartoon as a parting gift.

By Christine Such

For My Sun Day News

When the crew of Apollo 7 beamed the first live television broadcast from an American spacecraft on October 14, 1968, history was made. Millions of viewers watched as astronauts Wally Schirra, Donn Eisele, and Walter Cunningham floated in microgravity, holding up a handwritten card reading: “From the lovely Apollo room high above everything.”

It was a public relations triumph for NASA. But behind that broadcast was an invisible army of engineers fighting a silent war against electrical physics at Cape Kennedy. Among them was General Electric (GE) contractor Sun City resident George Gawell, operating from a highly restricted room that few outside the space program ever knew existed.

Gawell, while working for GE in Florida, also played on a baseball team.

“One of my teammates asked me one day if I would like to help with the work at NASA. I said yes,” he said.

The challenge of broadcasting live from space in 1968 was a technological nightmare. To save weight, the RCA camera aboard Apollo 7 broadcasted in

a primitive Slow-Scan format. Commercial television networks like CBS and NBC ran on standard National Television System Committee (NTSC) formats. The two formats were completely incompatible.

Gawell said, “To bridge the gap, ground signals had to pass through a specialized sub facility inside the Manned Spacecraft Operations Building (MSOB) known as CURFCOE — the Common Use RF Checkout Equipment hub. It was here, surrounded by banks of monitors and tangled cables, that I worked with a giant patch panel, routing the delicate, incoming deep-space radio frequencies.”

“My primary tool was the sync separator,” he said. “In television engineering, a picture is painted line by line, split into horizontal and vertical video signals. The sync separator’s job was to strip away the visual picture information, isolate the hidden timing pulses, and keep the imagery perfectly anchored. If those horizontal and vertical signals fell out of

sync by even a microsecond, the historic broadcast from orbit would instantly be nothing but blur.”

For Gawell, the hours of routing signals evaporated the moment the hardware succeeded.

“My favorite memory of the entire program was the quiet magic of watching the signal stabilize, revealing the astronauts moving on the television monitor—live from space,” he said.

Gawell’s role wasn’t just about operating

equipment during a flight; it was about the bench-testing required to get the hardware ready for the next rocket. Because NASA was sprinting to meet an end-of-the-decade lunar deadline, ground teams immediately rolled into preparation for the next mission the moment a capsule left the launchpad.

During a high-stakes, around-the-

clock November crunch period preparing ground-support networks for the upcoming Apollo 8 flight schedule, a piece of Bendix-built circuit hardware meant for the tracking and telemetry infrastructure did not function. Left in the corner of a test lab, automated checkouts had completely failed to diagnose why the unit remained dead.

Gawell said, “I relied on old-fashioned engineering intuition. Early digital logic circuits of the era ran on a universal five-volt standard, I realized there was a fundamental electrical conflict on the power rails. I manually switched the polarity, inverting a faulty plus five-volt input feed down to the required minus five-volt rail. The circuit instantly surged to

life, clearing a major hurdle for the flight network.”

The engineering foundation established by Gawell and his peers during the flight of Apollo 7 paved the way for the most iconic television events in human history. Apollo 8 (December 1968) transmitted the first live television broadcast from lunar orbit, featuring the crew reading from the Book of Genesis on Christmas Eve. Apollo 11 (July 1969) transmitted the first live television broadcast from the actual surface of the Moon during Neil Armstrong’s historic lunar walk.

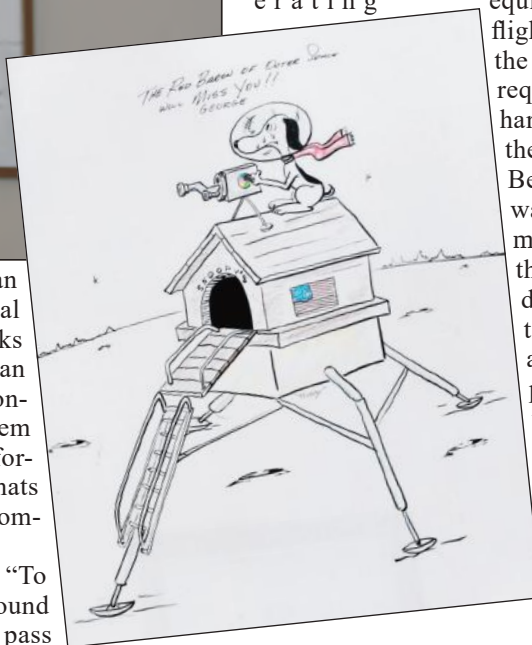
Gawell’s expertise eventually placed him in the room with the era’s historical figures. Following the monumental success of the Apollo 11 lunar landing in 1969, former President Lyndon B. Johnson visited the Cape Kennedy installations to honor the workforce.

Gawell said, “When I was given the rare opportunity to face the former Commander-in-Chief, I told him it is an honor to meet you, Mr. President. Johnson shook my hand and said the real honor is to meet you.”

The apex of the Apollo program brought an abrupt and difficult end to the golden age of Cape Kennedy’s workforce. Immediately following the success of Apollo 11, the program began to wind down.

Gawell said, “Federal budget cuts slashed the contractor personnel network at the cape from a peak of nearly 30,000 workers down to just 20,000. I was included in the massive layoffs.”

As Gawell prepared to say goodbye to the Cape Kennedy installations, his team gave him a unique parting gift: a framed, personalized cartoon of Peanuts character Snoopy. Outfitted in an astronaut helmet, Snoopy is depicted sitting on his doghouse. It was resting on lunar lander legs on the surface of the Moon—operating a TV broadcast camera. At the top, the crew inscribed a message that perfectly captured the camaraderie of the control rooms: “The Red Baron of Outer Space will miss you!! George.”



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Provided | MSDN Illustration



A celebration is in order

Grafton hosts fifth annual Neighborhood Advisory Council food drive

By Christine Such
For My Sun Day News

SUN CITY - The Grafton Food Pantry plays a vital role in ensuring no resident goes

hungry, but they cannot do it alone. By participating in this upcoming Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) food drive on Tuesday, August 11, you are providing essential nutrition di-

rectly to families, seniors, and individuals living right here in the community. This year will be the fifth year for the NAC Food Drive.

“For the past four years NAC has held the Food Drive to benefit Grafton Food Pantry, and the response from our community has been fantastic. The generosity of our residents here at Del Webb have helped so many people in our community, and we are all so grateful for the support,” said Sheri Goldstein, event chair.

Every item donated helps stock the shelves and ensures that community neighbors have access to the meals they need. Local support is the backbone of food security, and any involvement makes a tangible difference in the lives of those experiencing food insecurity nearby.

Goldstein said, “To show our appreciation for your generosity, NAC is turning this community effort into a celebration. Every person who brings a donation to the event on Tuesday, August 11, will receive one raffle ticket. It is our way of saying thank you for stepping up, coming together, and demonstrating the

true spirit of neighbors helping neighbors.”

There are two convenient locations to accept your contributions on Tuesday, August 11, making it easier than ever to drop off your items:

- Fountain View Drive-Thru Circle (9 a.m. to 2 p.m.): Drop off all physical goods and monetary donations here. This drive-thru setup allows you to give without even leaving your vehicle. It is perfect for dropping off heavy boxes of canned goods or household necessities.
- Meadow View Lodge (Starting at 7 a.m.): A collection box will be available early at this location for monetary donations only. This includes cash, checks, and gift cards, perfect for early risers who want to contribute.

While all standard grocery contributions are welcome, the pantry has requested specific items to meet current shortfalls. Please check expiration dates before donating, no expired goods can be accepted. The greatest needs include:

- Cleaning supplies to keep local homes healthy and sanitary.
- Paper goods like tissues, pa-

per towels, napkins, and toilet paper.

- Personal care items including soap, deodorant, shampoo, and toothpaste.

- Non-perishable food items such as canned goods, dry pasta, and peanut butter.

- If people have surplus produce from their gardens, The pantry enjoys being able to offer healthy, fresh veggies to families.

Harriet Ford, President, Board of Directors said, “The Annual NAC Drive at Sun City is an important event for Grafton Food Pantry. Donations are usually very light over the summer. This August event is at an ideal time since it is close to when school begins for the year and demand is often even higher. We are now serving over 240 families on a regular basis, which is providing services for approximately 800 plus individuals every month. The kindness and generosity of the Sun City residents and the NAC organization is incredible and makes a significant impact on our ability to continue serving the community. We are so grateful for their compassion for local families.”



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iheardthisquote...

By TR Kerth
Columnist

Truth is ever to be found in the simplicity, and not in the multiplicity and confusion of things.

- Isaac Newton

If you don't know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.

- Yogi Berra

The trouble with the rat race is that even if you win, you're still a rat.

- Lily Tomlin



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askanangel



Q Lately, I’ve been receiving a lot of emails saying that I’ve won a prize, gift card, or sweepstakes from companies that look legitimate. The message often contains the company’s logo, and most of these messages are from places I shop at frequently. I find myself extremely confused, especially since I can’t remember entering any contest or sweepstakes.

Part of me wonders if I’m missing out, but the other part of me is worried it could be a scam. A close friend of mine lost a significant amount of money a few years ago after responding to something similar online, and seeing what she went through has made me extremely cautious.

I try to be careful, but scammers seem more convincing these days. How can someone my age tell the difference between a legitimate email and a scam (or phone call, for that matter)? What can I do to better protect myself from fraud in the future?

A Thank you for writing in. Your concern is not uncommon, especially among older adults.

First, I want to start by saying that your instincts are spot on. If you don’t remember entering a contest or promotion, it’s smart to pause before clicking anything. Scammers often rely on excitement, urgency, or fear to get people to react quickly.

One of the easiest ways to distinguish a legitimate email from a scammer is to check the sender’s email address. Don’t al-

ways rely on the name displayed at the top; anyone can make this look as if it’s coming from an actual company. Scam emails often come from suspicious addresses that may include extra numbers, misspellings, or random letters. A message may say it’s from a major retailer, but the actual email address tells a different story.

Another important rule to abide by is to never provide personal information, banking details, passwords, or Social Security numbers through an email link. Legitimate companies generally will not ask for sensitive information this way, especially to claim a prize.

I find it helpful to create a separate email account just for shopping, loyalty programs, coupons, and online sales. Keeping these promotional emails separate from your main,

personal account makes it easier to spot suspicious messages and better protect important information.

If your current email inbox feels overwhelming or has become flooded with spam, you may want to consider starting over with a fresh email account. Before you delete the old account, make sure all important contacts, bills, subscriptions, and accounts have been moved to your new address. Then, only share the new email with trusted people and organizations. Again, now would be the time to start that second email account specifically for shopping and promotional purposes.

The good news is that you don’t have to figure this out all alone. Many public libraries now offer free technology assistance, including help with email safety, scam awareness, and on-

line privacy. Some even provide one-on-one appointments or beginner computer classes for older adults. If your local library does not currently offer this service, it may be worth asking; they may consider adding a class if there’s enough interest in the community.

Above all, remember that when something online feels questionable, it’s perfectly okay to ignore it. Delete the email, mark it as spam, or ignore it altogether. A legitimate opportunity will still be there tomorrow, but scammers always make the matter seem urgent, hoping you’ll react quickly and foolishly.

• 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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SHELDON CLARK'S CREATIVE CORNER

What can you do with MSDN after reading it?
Mosquitos and flies are abundant right now. A rolled-up copy of the newspaper makes a pretty good fly swatter. Best part is you can toss it out after your victory!

Submit ideas to
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gardenersforum

A leaf out of your book: practicing nature journaling



Kathleen Carr
Columnist

Benedictine University located in Lisle Illinois is the home of the Jurica-Suchy Nature Museum. The museum, while small in scope, is filled with specimens that were collected all over the world. Brothers Father Hilary Jurica and Father Edmund Jurica spent their lives in pursuit of educating others through hands-on learning. They collected and exchanged animal and plant specimens with colleagues in the United States and Europe. Karly Tumminello, the Director and Curator of the Jurica-Suchy Nature Museum has agreed to answer a few questions for us about the museum and the importance of Nature Journaling.

What species are on display at the museum?

The Jurica-Suchy Nature Museum was established in 1971, and currently displays over 3,500 specimens from around the world. The museum is located on the 2nd floor of the Birck Hall of Science at Benedictine University in Lisle, IL. Some of our rarest specimens are a

collection of extinct animals including passenger pigeons, Carolina parakeet, whooping crane, ivory-billed woodpeckers, and more. We have a sei whale skeleton hanging from the ceiling at the center of the museum, and several dioramas highlighting different habitats.

If one of our readers wanted to visit the museum, how would they go about doing that?

The museum offers free admission and is open to the public. Our hours change seasonally because our museum is staffed by undergraduate student workers. Reservations to the museum can be made on our website: ben.edu/museum

Nature journaling while done for hundreds of years, is becoming more common. What is nature journaling?

Nature journaling is a wonderful tool that allows us to notice and document the natural phenomenon happening around us all the time. It is a process that promotes curiosity, celebrates awe and wonder, and brings us into a state of mindfulness. Nature journaling involves

creative non-fiction nature writing, drawing and sketching, and gathering data. It is an activity that all ages can partake in. It really involves getting to know your local environment and allows us to develop our sense of place within it.

Are any skills required before one starts nature journaling?

No special skills are required to start a nature journal. Many people get a bit nervous about drawing and sketching, but those are skills that just get better with practice!

The best advice I have is to keep your nature journaling kit handy. Make it accessible and embed it within a part of your daily routine. For example, do you always have your morning coffee and watch the bird feeder? That is a perfect place to keep a journal and pen ready to go!

Don't be afraid to come back to your journal sporadically either. Especially starting something new, we can't always commit to it daily. That is ok! Whether you can fit it in weekly, monthly, or even a few times per year, once you have a few entries to look back on you will see how powerful it can be.

Does nature journaling need to be done

outdoors?

Nature journaling can be done anywhere. It is a very accessible activity. Nature can be accessed through a window, via a nature walk, when traveling, or even through a nature webcam. Many people enjoy time outdoors, and then come inside to complete their nature journal session. It can also be fun to nature journal at different times of day, like documenting nighttime observations. There is no wrong way to create a nature journal!

What are the benefits of nature journaling?

There are many benefits of nature journaling. It can be a very mindful experience, promoting peace and relaxation. It can also be invigorating and exciting experience, like when spotting a rare bird. Overall, it is very good for your brain, which likes to be curious. Exploring nature can be good for physical health, mental health and wellbeing, as well as spiritual health.

Are there particular items that you recommend someone acquires prior to beginning to do nature journaling?

Nature journaling can be completed with very simple tools, such as a piece of paper and a pencil. It can also be completed with more elaborate gear, such as a drawing pens, watercolor pallet, markers, colored pencils – any and all of your favorite art supplies.

What types of media are usually involved in nature journaling? Is it primarily writing and drawing or does it involve photography as well?

There are many ways to nature journal. They can be handwritten or typed, they can be printed or online, they can include illustrations, photographs, collages, leaf rubbings, pressed plants, etc. There really is no wrong way to make a nature journal. It can be as creative as the author wants it to be.

• 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.

moneymatters



Deborah Haglund
Columnist

The Walmart store brand prices and Thompson's gas price for the items we have been tracking either stayed the same or decreased from last month, with only one exception: onions increased from \$1.00/lb. to \$1.28. Notwithstanding the decreases, the prices in our sample were up 3.51% since January 15. Of particular interest was the fact that, on July 21 at least, several of the items we track were in low supply or the shelves were completely empty. The bins of onions and potatoes were almost empty, and there were only a few gallons of milk on a mostly empty shelf. The eggs, peanut

butter and 1 lb. packages of ground beef were completely gone.

Here are the prices as of July 21:

- Gas \$3.89
- Onions \$1.28 (only a few left)
- Potatoes \$0.88 (only a few left)
- Bread \$1.36
- Peanut Butter \$1.98 (none available)
- Ground beef \$14.94 (2 lb. package)
- Chicken \$2.23
- Rice \$0.92
- Black beans \$1.37
- Milk \$3.08 (only a few left)
- Eggs \$1.47 (none available)



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SUN CITY ATHLETES SHINE AT 44TH ANNUAL SIX COUNTY SENIOR GAMES

By Christine Such
For My Sun Day News

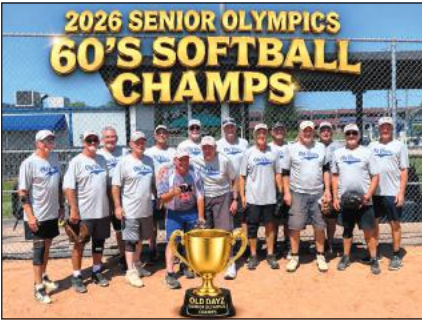
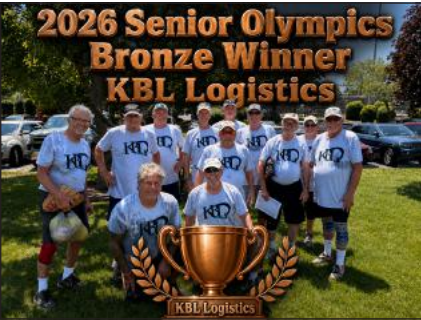
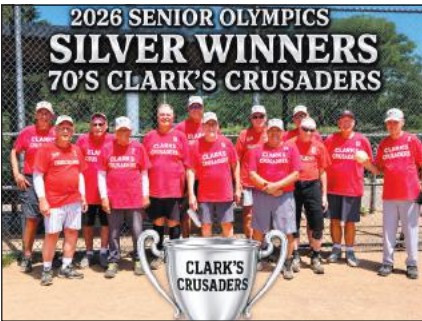
The Sun City Stingray Swim Charter Club had a standout showing at the 44th Annual Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) Six County Senior Games, earning 43 medals at the swim meet on July 16. The event took place at Courts Plus in Elmhurst, where 10 local swimmers, ages 64 to 88, competed all day and ensured the club was represented in every event.

During the competition, the team showed their skills in both sprint and middle-distance races. They swam freestyle, butterfly, backstroke, and breaststroke in the 50-meter and 100-meter events, as well as the 100-meter individual medley. The team also took on the 200-meter free-style endurance race, exhibiting their abilities.

These Stingrays, ages 66 to 88, brought home a total of 43 medals. Congratulations to Ginny Bennett, Julie Ford, Sandra Hupert, Rosean La-Sasso, Len Lencioni, Erik Krag, Linda Kucera, Marilyn Kulak, Bill Schaupp, and Mike Winberg.

Sun City's bowlers also had a strong showing at the Senior Games 6-County Area bowling event, winning several medals in different age groups. In the men's 65-69 category, Keith Uginchus won the gold medal and David Periabosco took silver. In the men's 80-84 division, Ed Fabro earned a silver medal. For the women, Nelly Fabro won gold in the 70-74 bracket, and Candi Thuringer took silver.

Sun City's softball teams also had a great run at the 2026 IPRA Senior Games, winning three medals in different divisions. In the 70s bracket, KBL Logistics took bronze, and the Clarks Crusaders finished with silver. The 60s group Old Dayz won gold after a strong performance. Chuck Hund, President of the Sun City Softball Charter Club, said, "It was a fun tournament. It's a great way to gauge our talent with teams that are outside Del Webb." The Six County Senior Games celebrate active lifestyles and the competitive enthusiasm of adults aged 50 and older.



Provided | MSDN Photos

Sun City athletes took home more than 50 medals combined between swimming, bowling, and softball events at the 44th annual Illinois Park and Recreation Association Six County Senior Games on July 16.

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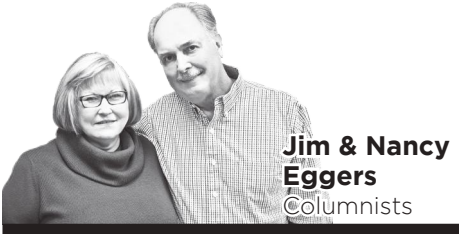


the

dining

duo

What's old is new again



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.

There is a Mexican restaurant we have gone to for quite a while and we reviewed it three years ago. Suddenly the restaurant was closed for “remodeling” and we were thinking the worst. Lo and behold, we heard it had new owners, was completely remodeled, and is now even open for breakfast. We are talking about El Molino Mexican Restaurant in Carpentersville.

The outside looks like a Mexican hacienda and the Mexican theme is reinforced on the inside with their two large dining areas and a huge bar in between. It was completely remodeled with new tables, chairs, and booths. The décor was much brighter than the old venue was. All of these changes were a welcome improvement.

The waiter brought over a basket of tasty chips with a hot salsa (red), and a mild tomatillo salsa (green) for dipping. Caution: On Jim’s sweat head meter on a scale of one to 10, the red salsa measured a solid 10, but still was very tasty.

To start off our fiesta, Nancy wanted to torture me even more and ordered the Jalapenos El Molino (\$13). These were four large stuffed jalapeno peppers filled with cheese and deep fried, topped with ranchero sauce and sour cream. What arrived was a beautifully presented appetizer. They were not greasy, they were not that spicy, and because of that, you could taste all the ingredients. They even included flour tortillas to sop up all the goodness.

Jim’s favorite dish at the previous El Molino was the Bistek a la Mexicana (\$28) and he decided to try it again. This was tender pieces of skirt steak seasoned with green peppers, onions, tomatoes, and ranchero sauce. He liked the refried beans, and said the rice was tasty. This dish comes with either corn or flour tortillas and he chose the flour tortillas. Jim was disappointed when his dish arrived and the ranchero sauce was missing. This is the key ingredient that brings the dish together. He brought it to the waitress’

attention who took it back to the kitchen and brought it back with ranchero sauce poured on top. Somehow, the dish was just not the same.

Nancy went with the Chiles Rellenos (\$18). This was two poblano peppers stuffed with your choice of: machaca beef, chicken, or ground beef and dipped in an egg batter and deep fried. It was topped with ranchero sauce, melted cheese, and sour cream. Nancy chose the machaca beef for her stuffing and asked for more rice, no refried beans please. Her dish was delicious and she brought one pepper and half her rice home in a doggie bag.

It’s comforting to know that the new owners kept the high standard and recipes from the old El Molino. This is still our favorite Mexican restaurant even though they messed up Jim’s entrée. People make mistakes and his steak was tender and juicy.

FYI: We did notice a 3% service charge on our bill. Could it be that we were a table of five? We did pay with cash, so we’ll see next time if there is a service charge added for just two people. This restaurant is handicap accessible.

The price for our Mexican fiesta was \$78.58. Time for a nice long siesta....

He Said / She Said

JIM’S TAKE: Next time we go there, I might try one of their breakfast entrees.

NANCY’S TAKE: Just give me their Machaca beef in any form and I am there. Next time, a chimichanga stuffed with Machaca beef.

• 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

Gods and monsters

Translation can be a beast. In order to come up with a faithful yet fresh take on a tale a few millennia old, so many needles need to be thread. Not the least of all period-accurate costuming. And many the gods save you if you cast one person out of place. Ultimately you must go with your gut on the choices you see fit. However, Christopher Nolan isn't one to listen to overly pedantic whining on the internet. He was too busy with a 60-foot animatronic cyclops to wield.

All this is and more awaits those you haven't seen his adaptation of *The Odyssey*. Which, judging from the \$125-plus million-dollar haul this opening weekend, I guess not many stayed away. For those who did, let me catch you up to

speed. Spoilers for the 3,000-year-old story, Matt Damon (in one of his finest performances) plays Odysseus; king of Ithaca. After defeating the city of Troy and winning the war, he and his crew set sail back only to be beset by peril at every turn.

The usual suspects (the aforementioned Cyclops, a witch, a trip to the underworld, and sirens are all present). Under Nolan's direction, there is a less direct approach that leads an air of mystique over the more fantastical elements. I remember, back in 1997, NBC had a mini-series version around the time I read Homer's book. That interpretation utilized a lot of CGI, hip for the time however makes everything from sets to characters look rubbery. Not in Nolan's world, men can be turned into pigs effortlessly and giants can tear you in half. Hades and Calypso's island are places you can vacation to if you so desire. Just beware you don't overstay your welcome.

As is the case of all of Nolan's projects, the cast is stuffed with as many A-list actors as he can muster. Aside from the mains, my personal favorite was John Leguizamo as servant and counsel Eumaeus. A magnetic and underrated actor, he has been the go-to for period and literary film; from *Moulin Rouge* to

Romeo+Juliet. Here he is one of the first people we meet and what an impression he leaves. I will not be surprised if he gets many supporting actor nominations come award season.

In a superb run of this year's acting turns, Anne Hathaway brings her stoic fury to queen Penelope as she fends off wolves at her banquet tables night after night. Wise to the ways of these men, her cunning resolve is all she has between her son and her kingdom being overrun. Tom Holland's Telemachus wants to help and lead, however is still inexperienced despite his tutelage.

Much has been discussed about Lupita Nyong'o's casting as Helen of Troy. However, my only gripe came when I realized that she would also be playing her sister Clytemnestra. Nolan, for the most part, carefully edited the flashbacks to avoid confusion. Because we know, all too well, how good Lupita is at playing dual roles (see my *US* review).

The fact that this wasn't a story about the gods didn't faze me in the slightest. Apart from Zendaya's portrayal of Athena (who is the only god who really matters to the story), Nolan seems more concerned with what we humans are doing in the world. Odysseus, in a way, created his own atomic bomb in the Trojan horse.



This gorgeous rendition, black against the morning sky, sticking out of the sand as the tide washes out. Its presence reminds us of the burning plane at the end of *Dunkirk* or the black box of the machine in *The Prestige*, seeds of our own destruction. War, for Nolan, is not always about glory. Sometimes a piece of our ourselves is lost in the interim. Much like our hero, the question reminds: How long must we wander before we find our way home?



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Call Ray at 708-917-6141 to discuss.

ONGOING 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.

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

HIDE THE HAT LOCATION:

Do you know what the mailing address is for My Sun Day News? No? Well, if you do, it's maybe because you found the hat. In this edition, it's hiding right on page 2 next to the MSDN PO Box. If you didn't find the hat and don't know our address, take a look! Granted we don't accept physical submissions any longer, but personal notes are always welcome!

luck marching her flock ducklings, one by one ght line, into the water. er how you slice it, it's ion, including the way r dog wedged himself my knees late last night,

PO Box 761
Huntley, IL 60142
847-658-6090

SUBMISSIONS

Try again next edition!



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.

ONGOING FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF HUNTLEY
First Congregational Church of Huntley, United Church of Christ, Sunday worship 9 a.m. Rev. Doctor Michael Smith leads a biblically based, inclusive church; whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey you are welcomed and valued here. Bible Study Tuesdays at 12 p.m.
The church is located on the Huntley square, 11628 East Main St., Huntley IL, 60142. Church office 847-669-3691. Visit us on Facebook or website fcchuntley.org

ONGOING MONTHLY POKER
There are many poker groups in Del Webb. We are looking for a few individuals that would like to play in a monthly group with one-to-three-dollar stakes? If anyone is interested, please call Buz Criscione (630) 476-0934 or email at btcriscione@gmail.com



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Current data available in the Multiple List Service (MRED, LLC) as of 3-1-06 to 7-6-26. 103

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