MY SUN DAY NEWS

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quickshot



Clayground fires up fundraising for ALS 13

quickquote

The competition in fibers is fierce. 11

quicktake

Transitions can be challenging, yet they are an inevitable part of life. 12



Christine Such | MSDN Photo

This year, the Such family 3D printed table favors to accent their holiday meal, introducing a touch of modern technology to this old tradition.

Picture-perfect traditions meet real-life holiday chaos

Christine Such
For My Sun Day News

Cooking Thanksgiving dinner is a huge balancing act. It is a magical time when families gather for a meal that takes days to prep, minutes to consume, and hours to sleep off. While we envision a perfect scene, reality is usually a mix of kitchen disasters, improvised menus, and furry thieves.

Every home cook approaches Thanksgiving with high ambitions. But when you are juggling side dishes and managing dozens of guests, human error strikes.

Adrianne Kaplan's family learned that even seasoned hosts can make mistakes.

"My grandmother lived with us for many years, and we always had Thanksgiving at our house," Kaplan said. "When it was time to take the turkey out, my grandmother realized she never turned the oven on."

With 26 starving guests, the Kaplans flipped the script.

"We ate Thanksgiving backward," Adrianne said. "We had our dessert, and we snacked a little bit on potatoes and stuffing. Then we had turkey last, about three hours later."

If human error doesn't stall the meal, the family pets will try. Thanksgiving is a tempting holiday for dogs tracking delicious scents.

Dolores Fischer experienced this firsthand when her Labrador decided to skip the line. "The most unusual thing I've experienced for Thanksgiving was our black lab jumping up on the counter and playing with the frozen turkey breast in the sink," Fischer said. "She got it out of the sink, and it dropped to the floor. She tried to eat it."

Even if food survives the kitchen, transporting it is another matter. Packing the car with kids and fragile casseroles can be a chal-

CHAOS | Pg. 4

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happy thanksgiving

lifeinfocus



Carol Pavlik
Columnist

Weave me alone

As an early birthday gift to myself, I've enrolled in a weaving class at an arts studio. So far, I've completed two sessions. The studio has an entire room with high ceilings that is devoted entirely to looms: floor looms, rigid heddle, and inkle looms. I speak each new vocabulary word out loud, liking the way it feels to form these ancient terms that are new to me.

The project I'm working on is a rag rug, and as I'm preparing the materials, the entire process is rife with metaphors for life: the concept of "measure twice, cut once" rings in my ears as I measure the warp and weft, the pieces of super-strong cotton cord and the brightly colored strips of fabric that will criss-cross to form a rug. I love the concept of re-using scraps of fabric, fabric that has outlived its use for wearing. And looking up close at each strand and tiny fiber, I'm reminded how incredibly strong woven fabric really is, despite being made of miniscule parts. The power of one; the power of many!

My teacher is deeply experienced and inexplicably calm, with a soothing voice. She has woven for decades, and is patient with my novice approach.

"Am I doing this right?" I'll ask, as I'm measuring and lining up the colors of the warp string according to my pattern.

"It looks good to me," she says, patting me softly on the shoulder. "And if we run into trouble later, there's always a way to fix it."

Inside my anxiety is trying to remind me how hard this is, how much I don't know, and how intimidating it all is, but the anxiety is standing on slippery ground; it can't grab hold of anything. Instead, there is calm washing over me as I hear the sounds of the scissors cutting through fabric, or the way I see blue thread unspool like a kite as I pull it at arm's length for measuring.

The art of weaving feels very similar to when I bake bread: I'm aware that I'm participating in an ancient practice that both men and women, children and adults have been participating in since nearly the beginning of time. Not only is this something that can be done, but I know I can do it, too. And like anything that lasts over decades, like a piece of music or a painting or a sculpture, I know it is good simply by virtue of the way it withstands the test of time. Things that are good and useful endure. Things that are beautiful are treasured. Most importantly, practical things can — and should! — also be beautiful. It's the same reason why I reach for certain mugs for my early morning ritual of coffee. It's why I feel cozier when covered by a quilt my grandmother made than I am under a mass-produced blanket made with cheap material.

At this week's class, my teacher wore an exquisite twill jacket with blues, greens, and threads of silver that caught the light when she moved. It fit her perfectly. I overheard someone ask her if she made it, and couldn't believe it when she said yes.

For now, I'm focusing on one rug, a modest rectangle with only three colors. I will most likely keep it for myself, as a reminder that I am a beginner that can learn new things.

In the meantime, my eyes are opened to a new dimension, where even the colors that are woven into chairs in waiting rooms, clothing, and other home goods spark awe and admiration.

Each mistake I make along the way will teach me a lesson that I'll apply to each next project. Each flaw will add to the woven beauty and uniqueness. Maybe I won't wind up weaving my own textile for clothing, but even knowing that it's a possibility makes me feel tiny yet strong, like the individual fibers on the loom. The power of one, the power of many!

politicalplace

The views in these letters are the writers' own.

The political world has shifted and is going to move forward in a new way. Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, who pushed to shift our government, should begin to think and write to their new representatives and senators to push for what they want to see happen.

Get rid of Citizens United by the states, or federally, taking dark money out of politics. Put in place a publicly funded election system to rein how much it costs to get elected and create a system that allows more of our talented citizens to contemplate running for offices. Roll back the Big Beautiful Bill, pushed through congress, that cuts Medicare, SNAP benefits, and other citizen supportive programs. Investigate and prosecute corruption done by anyone in government today. Get rid of school vouchers and support public education. Change the laws of our country so that our citizens can afford to eat, purchase homes, find jobs, and begin to make our government function for everyone. Set up rules for granting presidential pardons. Get rid of ICE and develop an immigration policy that is not cruel but is effective. In government contracts, such as privately owned prisons, SpaceX, and others, place guidelines with regular oversight on a schedule; regular contract adjustments; and the ability to cancel contracts that do not adhere to the guidelines or have proven not to benefit the citizens or the government.

These are just some ideas. It would be refreshing to see people write about some ideas they think could be done. It was surprising the number of Sun City residents who voted straight Republican in 2026, much different than the rest of Illinois. It is a time for everyone to express their views and together we will build a better, stronger America.

Gail Talbot
Huntley resident



On the BRIGHT Side

The Del Webb Artesian Fair was quite a success. One gracious woman, who enjoys designing jewelry, made people happy by giving them free jewelry. Also, some artisans donated proceeds to ALS, Grafton Food Pantry, and the Animal House Shelter. They all are happy, living their dream and helping others.

Carolyn
Sun City Resident

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Wednesday, December 9
10 a.m. to 3 p.m
Holiday Craft Fair

We are hosting a special Holiday Craft Fair showing off the artistry of local vendors, as well as the talented residents who live here! Stop by any time between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to browse and purchase a variety of beautiful mediums on display. It's never too early to start your holiday shopping! Find one-of-a-kind gifts for the special people in your life, only at our craft fair. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

Friday, December 11 | 1 p.m.
Jessica Michna Presents:
Caroline Ingalls with Mittens on the Tree

Just in time for the holiday season, watch in wonder as Jessica Michna brings to life Caroline Ingalls, mother of noted author Laura Ingalls Wilder, during Christmas of 1886. She'll share the seasonal recipes and family traditions that made a mark on the Midwest.

Friday, December 18 | 1 p.m.
William Pack Presents:
The Essential Christmas Carol

In this annotated storytelling lecture, William Pack will perform a reading of *A Christmas Carol* from a script derived from Charles Dickens' 1867 abridged copy. In this hour-long program, William enhances the reading with a modern recreation of a magic lantern slideshow that was popular during Dickens' lifetime. An interactive Q&A will follow.

RSVPs are required. Call 847-262-9630 today. *Snacks and beverages will be served.*

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• CHAOS

Fischer recalls another classic mishap in which a prized dish met a disastrous end.

"I was the designated maker of the pumpkin pie," Fischer said. "As we got ready to leave, my husband put the pumpkin pie on the roof of the car as we were loading the kids. We totally forgot about the pie as we drove off. The concrete driveway enjoyed the pie."

The menu can also be a contest between tradition and personal taste. While some households refuse to deviate from classic poultry, others showcase unique dishes. Russ Diprizio prefers to deviate from the cookbook. Diprizio makes a bright squid-shrimp salad packed with squid rings, shrimp, fresh red pepper, sweet onions, garlic powder, oregano, and Italian dressing. Come late November, it pulls double duty as a Thanksgiving staple for his Polish granddaughter.

Not everyone agrees with unconventional seafood at the holiday table. "Some people get revolted because it has squid," Diprizio admits. When his wife, Kathy, asked where he learned it, Russ revealed his secret. "I told her it is my own concoction," Russ says. "I don't have an exact recipe, but I improvise when I cook. I do not bake. I hate to bake because you have to follow exact recipes."

For Jean Christie, holiday favorites mean serving up her surprise meatballs. The best part of this crowd-pleasing dish is that the meatballs can be made ahead of time, taking the stress out of holiday prep.

What's the surprise?

It is the unexpected, tangy-sweet sauce made by combining chili sauce, cranberry sauce, brown sugar, and finely chopped sauerkraut. To make them, mix 2 pounds of ground beef (or a beef and pork blend) with 1 cup of dry bread crumbs, 1 package of onion soup mix, 3 eggs, and an optional but recommended 1 to 2 tablespoons of horseradish, then shape the mixture into meatballs. For the surprise sauce, simmer 1 bottle of chili sauce, 1 bottle of water, 1 can of whole or jellied cranberry sauce, 1 can of drained and finely chopped sauerkraut, and 3/4 cup of brown sugar together before adding the meatballs to cook.

Joan Shimabukuro also brings a unique regional tradition to the table with a dish that tastes "Just like Auntie Flo's," a delicious batter-fried purple sweet potato.

"My aunt made this at family gatherings in Hawaii, and I've just recently started to continue the tradition because I can now obtain these healthy potatoes through Amazon," Shimabukuro said. "What's nice is that the sweet potato is loaded with nutrients, so this is more like a healthy donut," she said.

To replicate this Hawaiian tradition, start with purple sweet potatoes that have been steamed and cut into 1/4-inch slices. Dip the slices into batter and deep-fry until golden brown. For best results, keep your oil temperature at 375°. Drain well and let them cool before serving.

Sometimes, updating a classic requires a little something extra. Judy Cieciwa shares an adult-only recipe for bourbon sweet potatoes, which always brings a smile to the table.

"My daughter said it was the tastiest 'carrots' ever… because of the circular shape of the sweet potatoes," Judy laughed. "Definitely an adult favorite."

To make her signature side, arrange 6 peeled, thinly sliced sweet potatoes in a 9x13 dish. In a saucepan, combine 1 cup of sugar, 1/2 cup of butter, 1/2 cup of bourbon, and 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla, then bring the mixture to a boil. Pour it directly over the potatoes, gently mixing them to ensure every slice is coated. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes, until soft and caramelized.

quickshot



Provided | MSDN Photo

Once again Woodchucks carve out holiday cheer for Food Pantry

For over 20 years, the Sun City Woodchucks have donated boxes of toys and household items to Grafton Food Pantry.

"The Woodchucks work all year round to create hand-crafted beautiful toys and household items to make the recipients feel special. The items are unique and treasured by our families, especially the children. So many of the items are timeless and get passed on to younger siblings. We are so fortunate to be receiving each and every item." said Grafton Food Pantry President Harriet Ford. Pictured (L to R): Gail Darm. Mike Shortridfe, Andy Jones, Kurt Hetzel. Larry Rostis, Janet Hessel.

Harriet Ford
Grafton Food Pantry President



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An ad that puts the L in POOL



TR Kerth
Columnist

In my last column, I wrote about curious sales pitches, like the one by the Ivory Soap Company that boasts that its product is "99 and 44/100ths percent pure!" I thought it unusual that any American company would advertise that its product was anything short of perfect.

But just this morning, I ran across an advertising campaign for a very different product that I found even more baffling.

I was at Home Depot, searching for a toilet seat to replace one in my home that had gotten broken (don't ask), and way back at the end of Aisle 5, I found rows and rows of them, hanging off the shelves like melting Salvador Dali watches.

There had to be 50 or 60 choices, each of them different from the others in some vital way—different enough that Home Depot finds it profitable to offer so many ways to perform a task that (I'm guessing) we all perform it pretty much in the same way that everybody else does. (I haven't done enough research to confirm that my toilet-seat performances are any different from your toilet-seat performances, other than the fact that your toilet seat probably isn't broken right now.)

And yet, there they all were—plastic seats, wooden seats, round seats, oval seats, seats with heaters, seats with little squirty nozzles that probably are not used to take a sip of water as you wait for the thunder-down-under to begin. All this and more.

Who would have guessed that Home Depot's toilet seat aisle would sport a more baffling menu than Starbucks? Some cost hundreds of dollars. Some could be had for less than a Starbucks Gran Ponderoso Jamocha Crappiata.

I picked out the toilet seat that resembled the one that needed replacement, grabbed a box holding a fresh one, and walked past Aisle 5's toilets toward the check-out registers.

That's when I saw an advertising promise that was even more surprising than the Ivory Soap ad I wrote about last time.

The ad, plastered to the front of a gleaming white toilet, said: "FLUSHES 7 BILLIARD BALLS IN A SINGLE FLUSH. TESTED AND PROVEN."

And then, just in case the bold capitalized words weren't clear enough, the box proudly displayed a photo of the toilet, lid up, with seven (count 'em, seven!) billiard balls stuffed inside the bowl.

I swear I am not making this up.

I stared at the words and the photo for a while, trying to imagine why a toilet company would hire an advertising company to tout how many billiard balls you could eliminate in a single flush with their product. And I thought, well, maybe people really do use their toilets in unique, individual ways that are different from any way I have used them.

Is America filled with goobers who take their pool balls to the toilet when they need a good washing?

But if they do, why would they want to flush them down? Do anybody's billiard balls get so nasty that flushing them gone is the only course of action left?

And is water so expensive that they need to get rid of them all—including the cue ball, and maybe a cue chalk or two—in no more than three flushes?

And then it occurred to me—Aha!—that maybe "billiard balls" was a metaphor or a euphemism for something else. Something you might naturally expect to end up in a toilet. Something that a toilet manufacturer would pay an advertising company not to mention directly—and certainly not to show in a graphic full-color photograph, for goodness sake.

You know what I'm talking about. Don't make me say it.

But now that we all know what we're talking about, imagine answering the urge to visit a toilet and somehow producing the equivalent mass of seven of them!

Go ahead. Imagine it. I'll wait.

To help you get the picture, a billiard ball is 2.25 inches in diameter. It weighs about six ounces. Line up seven billiard balls in a row and you'll get a mass almost 16 inches long, more than two inches thick, weighing more than two and a half pounds.

Yikes! Who does that?

But apparently there are enough Americans performing that remarkable feat, so that Home Depot finds it profitable to stock toilets guaranteeing its removal in a single flush.

To be fair, I don't know how many of those turbo-powered toilets actually get sold by Home Depot. I never ran into anybody in Aisle 5 who was shopping for one of them—and I'm glad I didn't. I'm certain my curiosity would have gotten the better of me, enough to strike up a conversation.

And after telling him my toilet seat story, I might have asked what he's been doing lately to get by, ever since his old under-powered toilet broke.

And if he had invited me over to his place for a quick round of pool, I shudder to think what he's been dropping into the corner pocket lately. Because who's to say that the billiards-to-bathroom crossover is a one-way street?

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



Steve Peterson | MSDN Photo

Veterans, (front to back) Ed Novak, Chuck Stwora, and Riforsiato sing "God Bless America" at the Marlowe Middle School Veterans Program on Nov. 9.

Marlowe salutes veterans' service at event

By Steve Peterson
For My Sun Day News

Marlowe Middle School students lined both sides of the main entrance to the school, readying for each U.S. Military service veteran, cheering and saying "thank you" for their service.

Each veteran had a few chance moments earlier to wave after his name was read and sang "God Bless America."

The Mustangs' salute to about 70 veterans (a total of 110 guests) of the US Army, Navy, Air Force Marines and Coast Guard held Nov. 9, two days ahead of the annual Veterans Day, Nov. 11. Marlowe's Service Club helped coordinate the breakfast and program event, along with performances from the eighth-grade band, choir and orchestra.

"We hope this gesture of appreciation has shown just how much we value your sacrifices, your courage, dedication and unwavering commitment to this country," Marlowe Middle School Principal Jill Pearce said in remarks.

Service Club advisor Michelle Kenefick said the 30-member club sets up decorations, serves the breakfast and learns how to greet and interact with the veterans. Students Joealla Chibangamoto and Ava Ver Vautren read a Veterans Day poem. Student Amer Esposito won the Veterans Day art contest and her work was featured on the program.

Veterans praise event

About 70 veterans attended and all praised the veterans program and breakfast event, held since Marlowe's first years.

"They do such a great job with this event," Vietnam era Army veteran John Cizowski of Gilberts said. "It is special because the students get to learn about how to love the country and appreciate the veterans. "I served in the Army and serving in Vietnam, we go to see the world, from Hawaii to Wake Island, and Okihnawa."

Sun City resident Jim Riforsiato also was a Vietnam era Army veteran.

"I can't believe it's been 60 years," he said of the end of his service in 1967. "I remember coming home from Vietnam to San Fransisco and we had things thrown at us," he said. "It's much better now. I recently had a chance to be part of an Honor Flight for veterans (to landmarks in Washington, D.C.), which was great."

"It's a wonderful event," Army veteran Mike Ostertag, Marine Corps 1989-93, who served during Desert Storm, said.

"I think it's fantastic," long-time Huntley resident and veteran Chuck Veach said of the Monday morning event.

Sun City Marines Color Guard members Joe Scorn, Tom Culumber, Cliff Kruger, Marion McCarthy and Doug Logan, posted and retired the colors and led the Fallen Heroes Display, which was from the Lake in the Hills American Legion Post.

The Fallen Heroes Display consisted of the rifle, "with bayonet pointed toward the ground, is a memorial to a soldier killed in action; the helmet is a symbol of the soldier's sacrifice; the boots represent the final march of the soldier's last battle and the dog tags identify the soldier's name so that he or she shall not be forgotten," according to the event program.

"It's a wonderful event, a tribute to all who served," Logan, who served for 13 years as a Marine, said of the Marlowe event. His dad served in World War II and his older brother in the Korean Conflict.

Al Roberts of the Sun City Veterans Charter Club and other members were on hand.

"We started with 19 veterans sitting around a table and now we have 350 members," Roberts, an Air Force veteran

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(HUNTLEY VILLAGE HALL)



Steve Peterson | MSDN Photo

Sun City Concert Band members teamed up with Heineman Middle School Band at the school's Veterans Day concert. Sun City Concert Band members, front row from left: John Knuth, Esther Ball, Save Pakiz, Mike Hetzel and Barb Reggio. Back row: Carlos Garrison, Mark Porter, Rick Ankenbrandt and director Pam Jorgensen.

SC concert band joins in at Veterans Day program

By Steve Peterson
For My Sun Day News

Nine members of the Sun City Concert Band, (SCCB) wearing their signature red shirts, contributed to the patriotic spirit of Veterans Day at the Heineman Middle School (HMS) program, along with the middle school's band, Nov. 11.

"It's fabulous," SCCB President Rick Ankenbrandt said of the group. "We're definitely a music family, helping each other out and enjoying music. I love the event today."

"We're proud that we can still play music," flutist Esther Bell said.

HMS Band Director Pam Jorgensen led the combined performance. She has been a middle school band director for 29 years, originally at then named Huntley Middle School, and has been part of SCCB for 12 years.

"The original SCCB director, Donna Bressler, would let me direct some pieces, then she asked me to take over full-time," Jorgensen said. It's great, I love it. We practice every week and have about 55 members."

The SCCB, which has been in existence for over 20 years, is also involved in the community. Ankenbrandt announced that the group has approved a $1,500 donation to Grafton Food Pantry.

The SCCB Sun City holiday concert will take place at 7 p.m., Dec. 3, at Drendel Ballroom. Tickets cost $15 for adults and $7 for students with an ID.

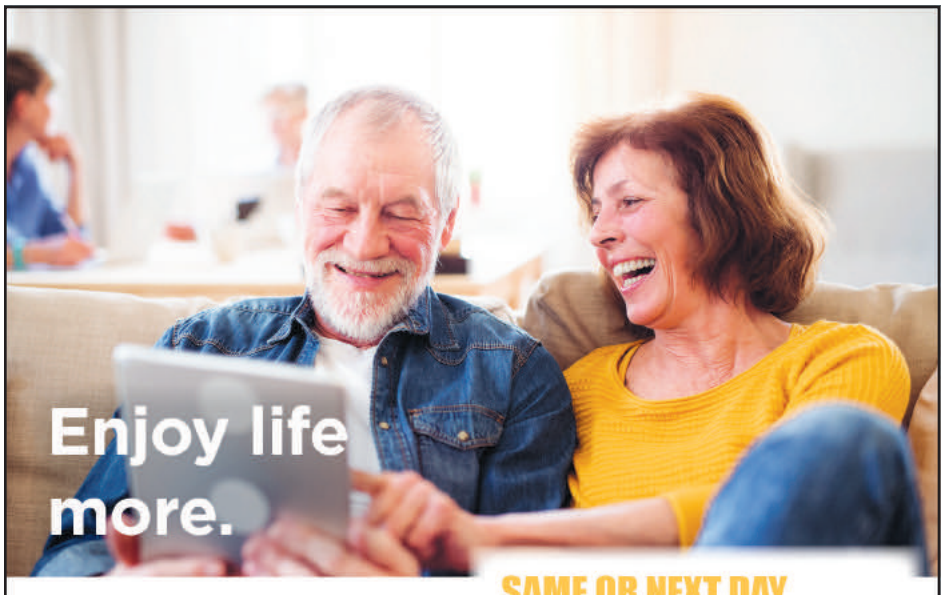
Other members of the SCCB performing at the Veterans Day event included John Knuth, Dave Pakiz, Mike Hetzel, Barb Raggio, Carlos Garrison, and Mark Porter.

Huntley American Legion Post 673 Color Guard posted and retrieved the colors.

The event at HMS included the playing of The Star-Spangled Banner; the Pledge of Alliance; breakfast was served by National Junior Honor Society members and the school choir also performed, "Song for an Unsung Hero." Student Kendall Olson read her winning essay, "What is a Veteran." Students sat alongside veterans during the meal.

HMS Principal Stephen Mogni spoke of the importance of the event.

"At Heineman, we are proud to honor the veterans who hold a special place in our students' lives and recognize the lasting impact of their service on our families, our community, and our country," Mogni said. "This breakfast is a small token of our appreciation for all they have given. We hope this time together offers veterans and their students an opportunity to connect, share stories, and help our students better understand what it means to serve."



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askanangel



John Barrett
Columnist

Q I ' m a 79-year-old, and feel that I am still perfectly capable of making my own decisions. At least, I think so. My adult children seem to have a different opinion.

Lately, every decision I make seems to come with a second opinion that I haven't asked for. My children question my choices, offer advice about things I've managed on my own for decades, and insist on getting involved in my finances and medical appointments. I know they mean well, but I'm starting to feel like I've lost my independence.

My wife and I raised these kids and have taken care of many responsibilities without someone always looking over our shoulders. Although my wife is no longer with us, I'm still managing everyday tasks on my own. I appreciate my kids' concern, but I don't need them treating me like I'm incapable of running my own life. How do I get them to give me a little more space without hurting feelings or pushing them away?

A First, thank you for your honesty. Many older adults share your frustration of feeling that the children they raised no longer trust them to make their own decisions.

You have every right to maintain your independence. Nearing 80 doesn't mean you suddenly need permission to manage your money, make medical decisions, or live life on your own terms. Your experience, judgment, and dignity deserve respect.

At the same time, consider what might be behind your children's behavior. They may be noticing slight changes, worrying about what the future holds, or simply realizing that you're not going to be around forever. The grief of losing their mother could also be affecting their behavior towards you. Their stepping in and offering advice may be their way of trying to help, even if it comes across as criticism or control.

I suggest starting with an honest conversation. Choose a calm moment, perhaps while out for a cup of coffee, and explain how their actions make you feel. Let them know you appreciate their concerns, but need them to ask before offering advice or getting involved in your personal affairs. You might say, "I know you love me and want what's best for me. I want you involved in my life, but I also need you to trust me to make my own decisions."

You can also look for ways to address their concerns without handing over control. If they're worried about your finances or health, consider sharing what you're comfortable with and discussing plans for the future together. For example, you can invite one of your children to a doctor appointment when you want support, without making them a permanent fixture at every visit.

I also highly recommend putting important financial, medical, and legal plans in place while you're able to make those decisions yourself. Then, communicate those decisions, or at the very least, your end-of-life preferences, so that you and your children are all on the same page. Planning ahead is a way to protect your independence, not surrender it.

Most importantly, remember that standing up for yourself doesn't mean shutting out your children. You can set firm boundaries while still recognizing that their concerns come from a place of love. A little understanding on both sides can go a long way toward keeping your relationship strong.

• 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?

It's turkey time! Keep open sheets of newsprint next to where you're carving your turkey for easy disposal of cutoffs and bones. Newsprint also soaks up drippings really well.

Submit ideas to mycommunity @mysundaynews.com

Steve Peterson | MSDN Photo



Ken Kozy of Sun City stands at the "Flags for Heroes" display off Route 47 in Huntley. A Veterans Day service was held at the site Nov. 11, which included the Huntley American Legion Post 673, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 673, and Huntley Fire Department.

'Flags for Heroes' event marks months of special display

By Steve Peterson
For My Sun Day News

In addition to events at Marlowe and Heineman Middle Schools, also held on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, there was a ceremony at Huntley's "Flags for Heroes" display off Route 47.

A total of 425 US Flags (the combined anniversary of the Village of Huntley and USA) have been present since Memorial Day, but were slated to come down soon. The Sons of the American Legion Post Squadron 673, Huntley American Legion Post 673 Color Guard and the Huntley Fire Department were on hand.

"The response has just been fantastic," property owner Chuck Ruth, whose family has been in Huntley for eight generations, said.

"I believe that it is fitting to hold this ceremony at the site of "Flags for Heroes," Huntley American Legion Post 673 Commander Robert Stojak said. "Thank you, Mr. Ruth, for your generosity for providing this glorious display of patriotism and Americanism. I also would like to thank our SAL Squadron and volunteers for orchestrating the Flags for Heroes. The flags will come down after today."

Stojak told the audience that only 7.7 percent of the US population has served or are serving in the Armed Forces in the 250 years of this great country. Only 1 percent currently serve on active duty, Reserves and National Guard.

Stojak reminded the audience of the key dates of first Armistice Day, which began in 1919 to mark the one-year ceasefire between the Allies and Germany in World War I; to a declaration for a holiday status in 1938 and finally with the aftermath of World War II and Korean War, to Veterans Day, with a bill signed by President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954.

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Children 3 to 12 years.

SUN CITY CONCERT BAND

The Sun City Concert Band presents their holiday concert, "On a Winter's Night," on Thursday, December 3, at 7 p.m in the Drendel Ballroom. Tickets are $15 for adults and $10 for students. Purchase tickets in the Prairie View Lodge outside the main desk on November 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Rich Ankenbrandt 847-502-5485 via text or phone. A text message would be best.

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Christine Such | MSDN Photo

Members of the Sun City Woodchucks Charter Club showcase their award-winning crafts from the Illinois State Fair. From left to right: Kurt Hetzel, Carolyn Cuttle, Ed Cuttle, Rick Abbott, and Rich Escallier.

Woodchucks win ribbons in Springfield

By Christine Such
For My Sun Day News

The talent of the Sun City Woodchucks Charter Club members was on full display at this year's Illinois State Fair, where club members secured multiple ribbons across several competitive categories.

Ed Cuttle earned his ribbon from the judges for his detailed and precise pieces. His prominent piece, a beautifully detailed segmented vase entered in the woodworking-turning category, captured a first-place blue ribbon and was ultimately named champion for crafts. Cuttle has won Best of Show a remarkable four times.

Cuttle also earned a second first-place blue ribbon in the woodworking-other category for his skillfully crafted lighthouse.

Cuttle said, "Illinois State Fair rules dictate that contestants cannot submit multiple items within the same woodworking subcategory, so I entered two different categories."

Cuttle says he gets his ideas from interesting places.

"My inspiration for the lighthouse originally came from a picture in a magazine," he said.

The lighthouse has since raised significant interest from other woodworkers.

Cuttle said, "I am holding classes to teach others the building techniques for the lighthouse."

His wife, Carolyn, also found success in the fair's textile divisions. Carolyn earned a third-place ribbon in the highly competitive embroidered quilts category for her needlework on a Christmas-themed quilt. She also claimed a fourth-place ribbon for her quilted table runner.

"The competition in fibers is fierce," Carolyn said. "There is a vast array of talent on display across many categories, including quilting, embroidery, needleworking, and other textile arts. This was my first time submitting an entry to the state fair."

Ed added, "The fabric category is a particularly tough competition with a high volume of entries."

Adding to the club's ribbon wins, Rick Abbott won across multiple specialized woodworking categories. Abbott earned a first-place blue ribbon in the carving division, showcasing fine-art precision. His winning entry was completely hand-carved.

Abbott said, "The project took three to four weeks to complete."

"A highly-experienced woodworker actually thought a machine did it," Woodchuck Rich Escallier said. "It was just that good."

Abbott also took home a third-place white ribbon in the scroll saw category for an intricate piece that featured a custom-crafted frame that displayed the work perfectly. He rounded out his wins with a fourth-place yellow ribbon in the turning category.

Another Woodchuck, Kurt Hetzel, earned ribbons in two distinct categories with creations designed to spread joy. Hetzel's whimsical, colorful pieces earned their place at the Fair. To keep the distinct characters straight, Hetzel gave each item a unique name.

"I called them 'Duck on a Skateboard' and 'Duck on a Skateboard with a Yellow Shirt,'" Hetzel said.

The playful designs proved to be a hit, earning a fourth-place yellow ribbon in the imaginative toys division and another fourth-place yellow ribbon in the competitive carving category. Hetzel's toy-making skills are well known locally, reflecting his long-standing work with the Sun City Woodchucks, who make handcrafted toys to give back to the community.

WOODCHUCKS | Pg. 15







gardenersforum

Falling into place: transitioning your garden to winter



Kathleen Carr
Columnist

Transitions can be challenging, yet they are an inevitable part of life. Common occurrences include changing schools, going from being a child to an adult, and becoming a parent. Other transitions such as moving to a different home, losing a loved one and recovering from a serious illness can be infinitely harder. While transitioning from one season to another is relatively easy by comparison, there can be an adjustment period. This column aims to help make the transition from fall to winter just a bit easier.

Winter is the time that we tend to hibernate in our homes for several months. Although this certainly can be a welcome change of pace for some, for others it can be a challenge. Leaning into nature, even during the winter, can help make the long winter months seem shorter. Thankfully, there are several locations that we can continue to spend time in an outdoor type environment even when the weather doesn't cooperate. The Wilder Park Conservatory located in Elmhurst, Illinois features a holiday flower show that runs through November 30 through January 17, 2027. The Mitchell Park Domes Horticultural Conservatory, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin features over 1800 plant species. The Floral Dome, Desert Dome, and Tropical Dome each feature a variety of gorgeous plants sure to inspire and delight gardeners of all ages and abilities. It is open year-round, closing only on Thanksgiving and Christmas days. Admission and tours are both available for free at The Lincoln Park Conservancy. Located in downtown Chicago, The Lincoln Park Conservancy features areas such as the Palm House, the Fern Room, and the Orchid House.

Personally, the biggest challenge for me as we move from fall to winter will be the lack of homegrown cherry tomatoes. They have become a staple in my daily diet. An AeroGarden, which will allow me to grow vegetables indoors, is at the top of my Christmas wish list this year. Christmas does offer us a chance to replenish our gardening supplies with such things as gardening tools, seeds, a gift card to local garden centers or best of all, an IOU from a family member in the form of gardening chores.

Tending to houseplants can be tremendously therapeutic. Watering, pruning, and fertilizing provides the opportunity to support nature indoors when the weather does not cooperate outdoors. Cuttings can be taken from houseplants in order to start new plants. This is a relatively easy task and often results in multiple beautiful plants that can be given to friends, neighbors and/or family members. Amaryllis, paperwhites, and hyacinth are examples of bulbs that can be forced to flower during the winter. These bulbs offering gorgeous flowers and scents are sure to brighten up any room on a cold winter's day.

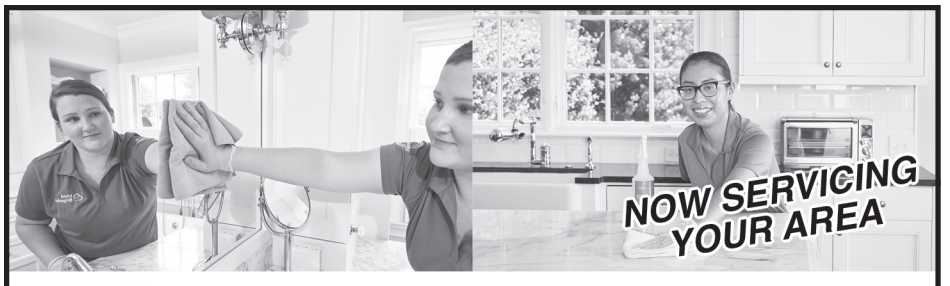
Curling up with a cup of hot cocoa, a blanket, and a good movie is a favorite pastime of many during January and February. While there are hundreds of great movies that feature beautiful gardens, here are a few of my favorites. *The Trader* is a movie about a widower who travels through the country of Georgia while using potatoes as currency in impoverish areas. It is a tale of perseverance and overcoming hardship available through Netflix. *Minari* follows a family that moves to a small farm in Arkansas in an attempt to better their lives. It is available through Apple TV. *The Gardener, This Beautiful Fantastic,* and *Greenfingers,* all available through Amazon Prime offer viewers glimpses into gorgeous scenery and the power of nature.

As the climate allows, our area is filled with gorgeous walking paths that are accessible year-round. The McHenry County Conservation District, the Kane County Forest Preserve and the Huntley Park District all have opportunities that allow for peace and tranquility in this hectic world.

As we transition from fall to winter, I hope that you find joy through interacting with nature through at least one of the avenues. I would love to hear about your experience. Feel free to send me an email.

Although this column will be going on hiatus, I wish you all the best over the next few months and look forward to the spring, when the flowers, shrubs and trees begin to bloom.

• 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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Clayground raises $1,500 for ALS at artisan fair

Christine Such
For My Sun Day News

Members of the Clayground Charter Club at the recent Artisan Fair, raised $1,500 to combat Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). The club sold hand-crafted pottery pieces made by the club's members. One-hundred percent of the proceeds benefited ALS United Illinois. Attendees bought raffle tickets for a custom-crafted ceramic purse adding to the club's fund-raising efforts.

The initiative was organized in honor of Barbara O'Neil, who was diagnosed with ALS, often referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease. "This cause is close to our hearts as we have watched Barbara's condition worsen over the last couple of years," said Kathy Stallone, president of the Clayground Charter Club. "She is such a strong person, and we never see her without a big smile on her face."

The fundraising momentum reached beyond the main studio sales. Stallone personally anchored a secondary location in the fair's busy activity hallway at Table #48, donating all profits from her personal pottery sales to the effort.

The community response far exceeded the club's expectations.

"It was fantastic," Stallone said. "Our members donated beautiful pieces for the sale, and we sold almost everything. This was the first time our club has been involved in a charitable event, and the response was incredible."

Beyond the monetary success, the table became a space for shared connection and experiences.

"The residents were incredibly generous, and some chose to donate directly without even filling out raffle tickets," Stallone noted. "As we talked with the people who stopped by, so many shared moving stories about friends and family members who had also been diagnosed with this disease."

O'Neil expressed deep gratitude for the support.

"I would like to thank my fellow Clayground members for focusing on ALS and my journey," O'Neil said. "My ALS symptoms began in 2021, limiting my participation in the Strutters dance group, Jazzercize, and pottery, and forcing me to close my business as a massage therapist and esthetician. My official diagnosis came in 2023, at which time I began to experience more limitations. My progression has been slow, and with the help of the Northwestern clinic, family, and friends, I have managed this journey as best as possible."

The Clayground Charter Club was not the only group to weave charity into their craft at the fair. The Woodchucks also joined the philanthropic effort, raising $1,700 by selling one-of-a-kind wooden pieces.

"The idea to do this came from Howard Hoyt," said Donna Bordsen of the Woodchucks. "The Woodchuck members were very generous with their donations, many even making items specifically for the fair. We are very happy to support the Grafton Food Pantry."

Together, these clubs proved that art is able to build a stronger, more compassionate community. Whether crafting with clay, wood, or fabric, the local artisans turned a creative showcase into a massive success for local and regional causes.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the ALS fundraiser can contact Kathy Stallone at kathytokheim@gmail.com.



Provided | MSDN Photo

(L to R) Pat England, Monica Bode, Jean Iverson, JoAnn Duller, and Jeaneen Schiller; Clayground club members donating their time and art.



Provided | MSDN Photo

Mary Shortridge presents a ceramic purse to Brian Vear.

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iheardthisquote...

By TR Kerth
Columnist

Forever is composed of nows.

- Emily Dickinson

It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so.

- Mark Twain

Honesty means nothing until you are tested under circumstances where you are sure you could get away with dishonesty.

- Dorothy Parker

The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: That's the essence of inhumanity.

- George Bernard Shaw

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by.

- Douglas Adams

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• WOODCHUCKS

The winning streak continued with another talented couple, Rich and Judy Escallier, adding multiple ribbons to the club's tally. Judy excelled in the 3-dimensional carving division, earning a second-place red ribbon for her hand-carved Hitty doll. The piece was based on the famous 6.5-inch-tall, 19th-century wooden peg doll discovered in a Greenwich Village antique shop in 1928 by author Rachel Field. The doll that inspired the 1929 children's novel, Hitty: Her First Hundred Years.

Rich said, "The doll required immense precision and difficult technical work to ensure that all of the doll's arms and legs could move fluidly like the original."

Rich placed in three separate categories. He brought home a first-place blue ribbon for a stunning chip carving entry. It was a detailed, hand-carved letter opener.

"Carving the wooden balls for the piece was not hard," Rich explained, "but getting them perfectly round was very difficult."

He also claimed a second-place red ribbon in the competitive boxes category for a piece featuring complex internal woodwork. "The jewelry tray was just as hard to make as the rest of it," Rich said.

Rich took a third-place white ribbon in the antique tools division for his rare antique champagne plier and cork remover dating back to the late 1800s.

Rich said. "It features a built-in dusting brush used to clear away debris and wax from the bottle collar before opening. The design's large u-shaped jaws and serrated end allowed users to rock and pull stubborn corks in a controlled fashion safely."

Beyond their involvement with the Sun City Woodchucks, both Ed and Rich are also active members of the Fox Valley Woodworkers Club.

"The Woodchucks and Fox Valley Woodworkers Club are the two biggest clubs in the area," Rich noted.

Fellow craftsman Dave Dockstader of the Fox Valley Club drove their strong participation at the state level.

Ed said, "Dockstader is on a mission to increase submissions in the woodworking category to the Illinois State Fair."

Recently, Ed has offered to share his skills at Huntley High School, teaching students to 'turn' a bowl on their new equipment.

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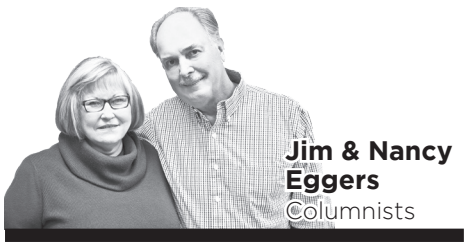
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thediningduo

Mark your calendar



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.

Sometimes we get lucky. Get your minds out of the gutter, I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about when an event at a restaurant is too good to pass up. Such was the case when Nancy saw an ad on Facebook for a Surf and Turf Buffet at Port Edward Restaurant in Algonquin.

This event happens the first Friday of every month starting in October and going on through May. For $68 per person, you can eat all the seafood, including lobster, and all the steak that your tummy can hold. Keep in mind, Jim's tummy can hold a lot!!!

When we walked in, we were amazed at the size of the buffet. You should go on their website to see all the offerings because they are too numerous to mention here. Instead, we will give you our own personal recommendations.

Let's start with their lobster bisque soup. It was delicious and considering what a high-end item this is, we were surprised to find it on a buffet.

Next, they offered a green salad and assorted cheeses. We skipped that and continued on to the good stuff. Our next favorites were the creamy shrimp salad and lobster salad. They were both awesome, so don't underestimate them.

Moving on, Jim loved the oysters Rockefeller and I loved the ramekins of Shrimp DeJonghe. Next in line was a carving station with a tray of lobster thermidor stuffed in their shells. For obvious reasons, there was a short line waiting to get them.

After gorging on these and many more items, we moved on to the turf part of the buffet. There we found a chef cooking Filet Mignon Oscar and Steak Diane. Nancy made her own steak concoction. She asked the chef to make steak Diane minus the mushrooms and substitute the crab topping from the Filet Oscar for the top of her steak. She also wanted extra garlic and shallots with a splash of red wine. Her steak was prepared perfectly right before her eyes. A well-done filet just melted in her mouth. How he did this with only a frying pan and a small burner, we'll never know…

We were still able to move (barely), so we got up and went to the dessert station to check out the action there. A chef was preparing cherries jubilee crepes and bananas foster. We decided on our favorite, bananas foster, which was served over ice cream and topped with fresh whipping cream. OMG!!! This was another high-end treat for a buffet. They also offer sugar fee items and various cakes, pies, and Jellos.

By this time Nancy's stretchy pants with an elastic waist was approaching the breaking point. Since we were both in a food coma, we decided it was time to quit.

Keep in mind, we just touched on the many items that are available (40 plus) and we neglected to say how many trips we made to the buffet. What happens at Port Edward, stays at Port Edward.

FYI: This restaurant is handicap accessible and we STRONGLY recommend reservations for this event.

Port Edward has been there for 63 years and if you haven't been there in a while, check it out. The interior is much brighter and more inviting than in the past, and the old muskiness is gone.

The price for our surf and turf pig out was $147.56. Being able to eat all the steak and seafood you want, priceless….

He Said / She Said

JIM'S TAKE: The quality of the food was above and beyond your average buffet.

NANCY'S TAKE: I loved it all. I need to get bigger stretchy pants for next time!!!

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

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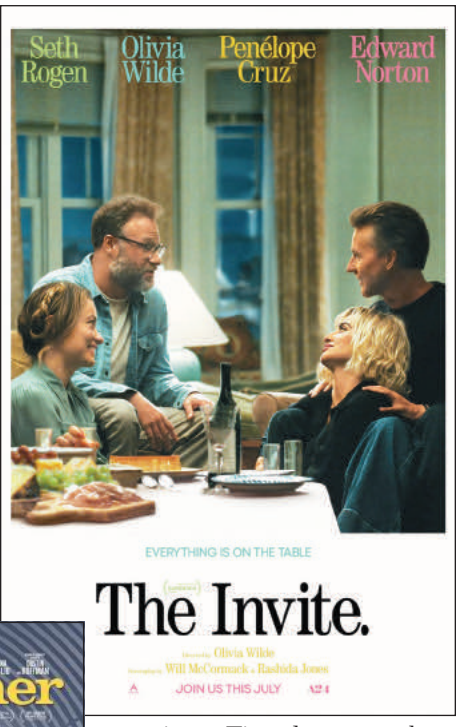
Will Moore
Columnist

Chamber pieces

Bombast is the name of the game in Hollywood. With the rise of the blockbuster in the seventies up to the current superhero glut, the very concept of smaller mid-budget films seems to have gone extinct. Even the average indie film can run a cool million. However, some studios are taking consideration in curating an oeuvre out personal storytelling and carefully selected projects. That said, some do slip through the creaks in my reporting. Luckily, streaming is there to pick up the stays along the way.

Buzz surrounded The Invite when it dropped at Sundance earlier this year. Indie darling studio A24 snapped it up for distribution this past summer. It might have been lost in the fray. If so, HBO Max has you covered now. Actor/director Olivia Wilde has been out of the scene a bit since her last film, the disaster that was *Don't Worry Darling*. Thankful for us, she finds herself on much firmer ground here. Olivia plays Angela, a perfectionist wife to Seth Rogan's Joe, a depressed music teacher. His sardonic wit matches her neurotic bickering. If the sometimes-overbearing score and beginning Oscar Wilde quote (Really, Olivia?) can attest, this is a couple on the rocks a bit. This is all presented before a dinner party with their next-door neighbors. Penelope Cruz and Edward Norton give the best performances of the film. As the night wears on, secrets are revealed and a proposition is put forth. Cue *La Habanera* for the seduction. What starts out as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* x10 veers slightly into *Carnal Knowledge*. As we all learn, the grass is never greener or the swinging any less mundane. Ultimately, this film splits the difference between the ambitions of her last feature and the indie provocations of her debut *Booksmart*. Will McCormick and Rashida Jones's script feels like a Pulitzer Prize winning play, however Wilde's direction does show how to open up the confines of such a story even in a small apartment. Just maybe listen to your husband and get those curtains.

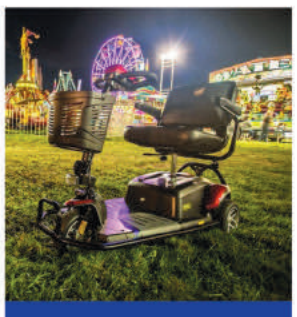
The Invite ends with a scene at a piano, whereas that is just where the movie *Tuner* begins. Over on Paramount Plus, documentarian Daniel Roher made this his first feature film. We meet Nicky played by Leo Woodall as the title worker, a man whose condition makes him hypersensitive to loud noise. Some sounds can cause him extreme pain, but makes him very good at his job. He was once a talented piano player before an injury brought about his current state. Now working alongside Harry Horowitz (played to perfection by Dustin Hoffman), he spends his days fixing instruments for wealthy clients who don't appreciate or music schools. When working in a conservatory, Nicky meets Ruthie. She is a driven player and composer, something Nicky will never be. The pair do strike a chord, however after a couple chance encounters and Harry's meddling. But when the elderly man ends up in the hospital and the business is failing, Nicky must turn to nefarious enterprises to help out.

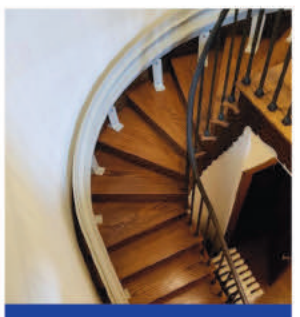




After working on a padlock safe for Harry and a run-in with some thieves at a rich client's home, he has found his condition can be a bit of a gift in some circles. Unfortunately, they are not the company you want to keep for long. Nicky's safecracking gets him into deep trouble very quick as each new job presents its challenges.

Director Roher knows the power of the edit for the kind of heist movie this turns into. Time-lapse to show a test the criminals give Nicky, the classic jazz that flits beautifully throughout the film. Music must be a major love of his, as even the legendary Herbie Hancock makes a cameo. Although I wouldn't use Nina Simone's "Sinnerman;" that is reserved for the *Thomas Crown* remake. The composition Ruthie plays scores the climactic scene that is so perfect, it should be a crime. Film studio Black Bear has been on a roll with this and *Wicker* (that I just reviewed). Keep up the great work.


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

ONGOING
CALLING ALL CHICAGO SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS!!!!!
The Chi-Town Sports Trivia Group is up and running. Friendly competition - the FIRST FRIDAY of each month, 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the Huntley Library. All questions covering the BEARS, BLACKHAWKS, BULLS, CUBS, WHITESOX, and the Chicago sports scene.

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
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.

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.

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.

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

NOV & OCT
SUN CITY THEATRE
The Theatre Company of Sun City's fall musical is, Rogers and Hammerstein's, CINDERELLA!
SHOW DATES: November, 19-22
Nov. 19, Thursday at 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 20, Friday at 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 21, Saturday at 3 p.m.
Nov. 22, Sunday at 1:30 p.m.
TICKET SALES: TICKETS are $25 *Limit 10 tickets per purchase*
ALL SEATS ARE RESERVED
Checks or cash for the exact amount please. Please let us know if a ticket is for a person with a scooter or wheelchair.
TICKET INFO: Thursday and Friday, 11-19 and 11-20 call: 847-515-8545
Saturday and Sunday, 11-21 and 11-22 call: 847-515-1583
If you or anyone you know is interested in in Set design and helping with set build or costuming, don't hesitate to contact Russ Howard, President at: 847-659-9144.

DECEMBER 5
SUN CITY SOFTBALL
Looking for softball players for the 2027 season, age 55+. Del Webb Sun City residents only. Hit, field, throw and run like you are in your twenties again. Make new friends, have loads of fun and experience team camaraderie. Season runs May thru early September. Three leagues to choose from, (all use mitts); 16" PM, 16" AM and 12" PM. Choose to play in one, two or all 3 leagues, if you wish. All games are played at our beautiful Veterans Memorial Field.
Registration will be held at Fountain View Lodge on the east side (outside the Birch room), on the following date, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.: December 5. Returning players must register by December 31st.
For registration information, please contact club President Chuck Hund at 847-456-0229 or at suncityhuntley-softball@gmail.com

DECEMBER 3
SUN CITY CONCERT BAND
The Sun City Concert Band presents their holiday concert, "On a Winter's Night," on Thursday, December 3, at 7 p.m in the Drendel Ballroom. Tickets are $15 for adults and $10 for students. Purchase tickets in the Prairie View Lodge outside the main desk on November 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Rich Ankenbrandt 847-502-5485 via text or phone. A text message would be best.

DECEMBER 12
PRAIRIE SINGERS HOLIDAY CONCERT
Huntley HS at 1 p.m.
Doors open at 12:30 pm.
Limited tickets available at the door. Pre-sale dates: Monday November 23 & 30 outside Library in Prairie Lodge from 12-4 p.m. Also Tuesday evenings from 5-6 p.m. November 24 and December 1 and 8 outside the Birch room in Fountainview Lodge. Tickets are $15 per person $5 for children 3 to 12 years.



FIND THE HAT LOCATION:
It's funny how things just pop up sometimes. Like MSDN's hat. It pops up in the darndest of places. For instance, this edition it's on Page 8 above an ad for the Karas Restaurant Group'sholiday pop-up themes taking over their various Rookies, Village Squire, and Alexander's locations, among others.



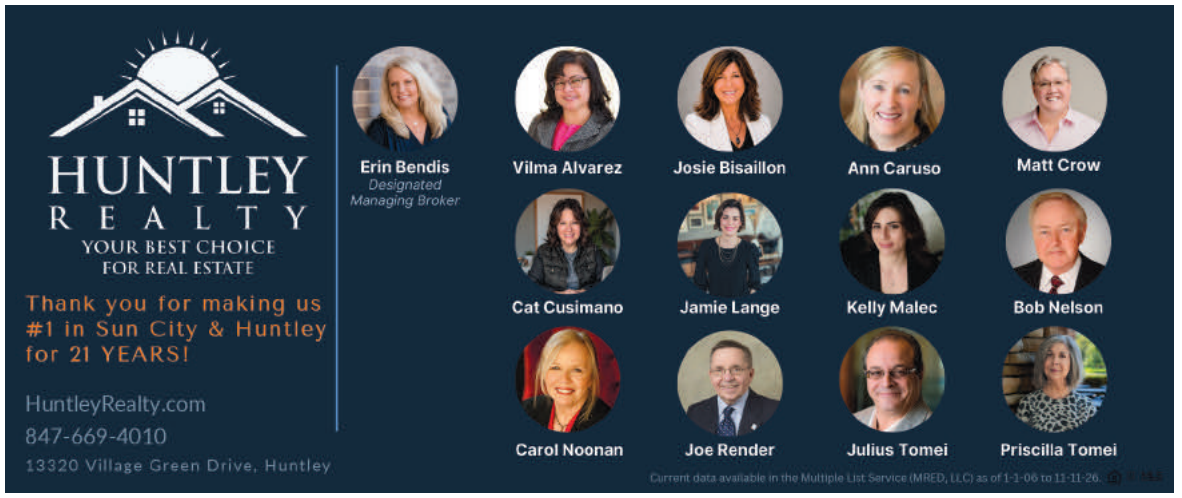
Try again next edition!

ADS ARE DUE BY 5 P.M. THE TUESDAY OF THE WEEK BEFORE PUBLICATION

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