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THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022



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## 'AT's Best' honored

The students pictured here represent those who were nominated by their teachers as "AT's Best," that is, someone who has achieved a personal best in service, cooperation, dependability, initiative, leadership or other contributions. See story inside.

## Cullerton resigns Senate seat, reportedly plans to plead guilty to federal charges

### Former labor committee chair was charged with being paid by unions without doing work

By Peter Hancock  
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS

State Sen. Tom Cullerton, D-Villa Park, resigned his seat on Wednesday, Feb. 23 and will reportedly plead guilty in March to federal corruption charges.

Cullerton, 52, a former chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, was first elected to the Senate in 2012 and was seated in 2013. In August 2019, he was indicted on multiple charges of embezzlement for allegedly receiving

pay and benefits from Teamsters Joint Council 25 while doing little or no work for the union.

Cullerton had denied any wrongdoing and was originally scheduled to go on trial in 2020, but that was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. His most



Tom Cullerton

recent trial date was scheduled for April 18.

On Feb. 23, though, the *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that Cullerton's attorney, Daniel Collins, had requested a change of plea hearing and Cullerton submitted his resignation to the Senate.

U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman scheduled that plea hearing for March 8.

"Tom Cullerton served his constituents in the 23rd Senate District for nearly a decade. I look forward to welcoming and working with a new senator from the district," Senate President Don Harmon, D-Oak Park, said in a statement.

Cullerton's indictment in 2019 grew out of a sprawling investigation by U.S. Attorney John Lausch's office into public corruption in Illinois politics. That investigation also led to indictments of former Sen. Martin Sandoval, now deceased, former Sen. Terry Link and former Rep. Luis Arroyo, all Democrats.

It also led to indictments of sever-

al officials at utility giant Commonwealth Edison for allegedly trying to bribe former longtime House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago, in exchange for passing favorable legislation for the company.

Although Madigan himself was not charged and denied any wrongdoing, that controversy, among others, led to him being ousted from the speaker's position by Democrats in the General Assembly and, in 2021, his resignation from the House.

In October 2021, Cullerton's attorney filed a motion to dismiss most of the charges. In that motion, he explained that Cullerton had been a member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and worked as a truck driver for Hostess Brands until that company filed for bankruptcy in 2012, the same year he was elected to the Senate.

"Cullerton had been elected to the state Senate, but like most members of the state legislature, he needed a second job—one with some flexibility, especially since he would be

in Springfield during legislative sessions," his attorney explained.

In March 2013, John Coli, the former president of Teamsters Joint Council 25 who has also been indicted, hired Cullerton and told him "to complete his political responsibilities and to attend picket lines and other union events," according to a statement Coli made to a grand jury that was included in Cullerton's court filing at the time.

Cullerton was charged with 39 counts of embezzlement—one for each paycheck he received—as well as illegally obtaining health care through the union's health insurance plan.

Judge Gettleman denied the motion to dismiss the charges and ordered the case to proceed.

Cullerton's seat will be filled by appointment from the Democratic party organization in the 23rd Senate district.

Prior to serving in the state Senate, Cullerton served as Villa Park village president from 2009 to 2013 and was a village trustee from 2005 to 2009.

## INSIDE:

- Police Reports..... 6
- Puzzles..... 11
- Viewpoint..... 7
- Classifieds..... 14

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202001

# Addison Trail names 'AT's Best'

On Feb. 25, a group of Addison Trail students was named as AT's Best. The AT's Best award honors students who have achieved a "personal best." The following categories have been used to recognize recipients: service, Blazer Pride, cooperation, dependability, initiative, leadership, humanitarian spirit or unique contributions. Students receive a pin or a T-shirt for their efforts.

**Honorees Include:**

• Jessica Clark, English teacher and yearbook advisor nominated

seniors Mia Giometti, Fernando Padua III, Monserrat Barrun, Atziri Valguena and Sara Bojczuk; and, sophomore Suzette Mancilla.

• Anna McSweeney, English teacher and theatre director, nominated the following students: seniors Antonio Bruno, Dylan Hernandez, Julia LoPresto, Monserrat Barrun; juniors Megan Sowa, Grace Mendoza, Aiste Stupenius; and sophomore Barbara Martinez.

• Christina Trapani, social studies teacher, and Hanna Sutton, English teacher, nominated the following students, all of whom are freshmen:

Nathan Redmann, Raina Ashrafi, Roberto Rizo Mut, Evelyn Villarreal, Arabella Rodriguez, Marisa Lloveras, Chloe Perez, Jacke Lee, Christopher Mejia, Vanessa Boffro, Mareli Pina Perez, Anthony Cichon, Joseph Rohlfling, Vanessa Zink, Aryan Shine and Krishna Mistry.

• English teacher Katie Inzinga nominated senior Kaitlin Meisinger.

• Social Studies teacher Mark Olson nominated senior Isabella Rojas; junior Brianna Matthews; and, sophomores, Zachary Morris, Christian Zachari and Mekalah Haywood.

• Olson, Inzinga and science teacher Aileen Sullivan nominated freshmen Lesley Diaz, Jaden Gutierrez, Adan Garcia, Natalia Loncar, Riannah Barchese, Viviana Rojas, Julia Hecht, Lizzeth Alvarez, Juan Juarez and Audrey Bekielewski.

• Special education teacher Anna Grice and science teacher Laura Garcia nominated the following freshmen: Aimee Nava, Carly Woebler, Bianca Angiulo, Renata Betancourt, Yesica Alvarez, Malory Ruggero and Leo Valdez, and sophomore Alfredo Alvarado, Jr.

## Library board approves policy change

*Teens can obtain cards more easily, check out more materials*

The Addison Public Library's Board of Trustees voted on Tuesday, Feb. 15 to update a circulation policy allowing middle school and high school students to get a Teen Restricted library card without a parent or guardian present.

Under the new policy, these cards will now be called Teen Limited Access cards and will allow students to check out more types of library materials. The new policy also allows the library to work with Indian Trail Junior High School to verify student addresses, ultimately increasing library access for local students.

At the Addison Public Library, children under age 18 are able to get their own library card with their parent or guardian, who must provide proof of address and a photo ID on the child's behalf. The Teen Limited Access card allows students in grades 6-12 under the age of 18 to get an Addison Public Library card without a parent or guardian present.

The Board of Trustees first approved the Teen Restricted card in January 2014. Head of Teen Services Elizabeth Lynch said this was an important step in improving library access for Addison teens.

"We know from talking to kids every day after school that many of them want to borrow from the library, but a lot of our kids have parents that are working nights and weekends, or are caring for family at home," said Lynch. "It becomes difficult for teens to get a library card when their parent isn't able to come to the library and provide the documentation we need to issue a library card."

"The updated Teen Limited Access

card means that it's going to be easier for those kids to get a library card, so when we find the book that gets a kid excited to read or the perfect tool for their creative project, they'll be able to use their library card and take those items home."

Students who want to sign up for a Teen Limited Access card will need to show their school ID and fill out a library card application. To complete their registration, the library will also need to verify the student's address. Addison Trail High School students can verify their address with a copy of their transcript, which they can request from the school. Indian Trail students can log into their Skyward account, which shows their name, birthdate, and address, to provide proof of residency. If an Indian Trail student is unable to show proof of address when signing up for a Teen Limited Access card, the library will work directly with the junior high school to verify the student's address.

"We are excited and grateful for the opportunity to work together with District 4 in helping our teen community sign up for a library card," said Jenny Cuevas, Head of Guest Services. "Working with the schools was a crucial step in making this possible, since address verification presents a challenge. They welcomed the idea to help the library with this initiative and for that we are thankful. By working together, we are able to support our teen community in their educational, developmental, and recreational needs."

In addition to changing the name, the Teen Limited Access card also comes with increased borrowing

privileges. Previously, Teen Restricted cardholders were not able to borrow video games or Library of Things items. Now, Teen Limited Access cardholders will now be able to check out video games and items from the Library of Things collection in addition to books, DVDs, Blu-rays, CDs, audiobooks, and downloadable materials.

Teen Limited Access cardholders may borrow one charging cable and up to three library materials at a time. The only items that remain restricted to Teen Limited Access cardholders are internet-enabled devices like laptops and mobile hotspots. This is unchanged from the 2014 policy, which restricted access to those library materials to ensure the library remains compliant with the Children's Internet Protection Act.

With the new Teen Limited Access card policy, Cuevas is looking forward to helping more Addison teens sign up for their library cards.

"We have to give a special thank you to our Library Director and Board of Trustees who have been supportive in this new policy, and to

library staff who contributed," said Cuevas. "We are very excited about this change."

To celebrate the new Teen Limited Access cards, the library is holding a Teen Library Card Sign Up Drive on March 21-25 from 3-4:30 p.m. each day to encourage students to sign up for the new Teen Limited Access card. Any student who gets a library card during the sign-up drive will receive a gift from the library.

Students may apply for a Teen Limited Access card any time the library is open.

The Addison Public Library is located at 4 Friendship Plaza in Addison, IL. For more information about getting a library card, please visit [addisonlibrary.org/get-a-card](http://addisonlibrary.org/get-a-card), call 630-543-3617 or email [circ5@addisonlibrary.org](mailto:circ5@addisonlibrary.org).

## Women's Club of Addison seeks scholarship applicants

The Women's Club of Addison is currently accepting applications now through Monday, April 4, for two \$1,500 scholarships for the 2022-23 academic school year. They will be awarded to two female graduating seniors who have been accepted at an accredited two or four-year college or university. Candidates may attend any high school but must be a current resident of Addison.

Scholarships will be awarded based on scholastic achievement, school involvement, community service, and financial need. Applications are currently available through the Addison Trail High School guidance department and at the Addison Village Hall information desk.

Decisions will be made mid-April and the scholarships recipients will be announced no later than Saturday, April 30.

## AT's School to Work class visits Chicago Wolves

*Learns business of sports first-hand*

On Feb. 15, 13 Addison Trail seniors participated in the "High School Career and Business" program hosted by the Wolves.

Those students are enrolled in Addison Trail's School to Work class (taught by teacher Stacey Puccini), which provides pupils with real-world experiences through visiting local businesses and meeting with career professionals.

During their visit with the Wolves, students received a behind-the-scenes look at the organization's business operations and learned about the Wolves' social media, marketing, partnerships, promotions and game operations strategies. They met with Senior Executive Director of Ticket Sales Kevin Dooley, who shared best practices when it comes to being college and career ready and how to follow your passion.

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# Concert to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

## Local celebrity Matt Kissane is part of lineup

Tickets for the 2022 Spring Concert for Jimmy Zito, "Rockin' the House for St. Jude," benefitting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, are now on sale.

The annual event will also be supporting the Chicago Friars Club.

This year's lineup includes The Chicago Hitmen with Nick Psychogios, Phil Feo, John Erst, Jack Skalon, Carlo Isabelli, Natalie Lande, John Truncale, Doug Sylvester, Ken Modaff, Chuck Sloka, Roger Reupert and Dez Desormeaux.

Performances by Diva Montell, Stefanie Lemmon-Bnneagar, Tony Ocean, The Jersey Girls, Jack D'Amico, Vito Zatto, John Anthony, Leah

Oduro-Kwarten, Traci and Mike Bruccoleri, Regina Karma, Lee Stevens, Jackson Snelling, LuLu and Lombard and Villa Park's own, Matt Kissane.

Hosting the event will be Ron Onesti and Nick and Phyllis Psychogios.

There will be handouts to the audience and a guitar auction, this year featuring "The Cornerstones of Rock Guitar" which is autographed by all members of that show, including Ides of March, The Buckingham, Cryin Shames, Shadows of Knight and others.

For tickets visit [www.arcadaville.com](http://www.arcadaville.com).



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Matt Kissane was recently given a huge shout-out from fellow entertainer and talk show host Tony Ocean during an interview he was conducting with Tom Farley. The Facebook Live show called "Ocean's Pit," which airs weekdays at noon, was in the process of concluding an in-depth interview with Farley when out of the blue Ocean, aka Moe Carrara, announced that his good friend Matt Kissane does an incredible Chris Farley impression. Even more, he added, Kissane co-starred with Tom and Chris' other brother's John and Kevin in the A&E Biography "Chris Farley Anything For A Laugh!" "I was totally blown away," said Kissane. "It was so nice of Tom and Tony to mention me." Matt Kissane and Tony Ocean will appear together in May at the Arcada Theatre in St. Charles as part of The Concert for Jimmy Zito, "Rockin The House for Saint Jude's Children's Hospital."



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Klamecki honored as 88's Best for January

Willowbrook High School senior Rachael Klamecki of Villa Park was named her school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of January. Klamecki was recognized during the District 88 Board of Education's Jan. 24 meeting. She is pictured (right) recently with Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause. The 88's Best honor recognizes students for their achievements in and out of the classroom. Klamecki is an accomplished student who has participated in a multitude of extracurricular activities at Willowbrook. She has been named to the school's Distinction Honor Roll in each semester of her time at Willowbrook. Klamecki is an inductee of the National Honor Society, the National English Honor Society, the Math Honor Society, the World Language Honor Society and Willowbrook's social studies honor society—Civitas. She has also been named an Illinois State Scholar. Klamecki is a member of Willowbrook's math team, as well as its Science Olympiad and Scholastic Bowl teams. She's also a member of Willowbrook's Environmental Club, Key Club and Blue Crew. Additionally, Klamecki is a standout member of Willowbrook's girls soccer team, serving as a team captain and earning recognition on the West Suburban Gold Conference's All-Conference Team. Klamecki has served as a leader in the school's New Beginnings program, a program in which upper-class students mentor freshmen and assist them in adjusting to high school. She's also served as an ambassador to assist students who transfer to Willowbrook. After she graduates from Willowbrook, Klamecki plans to study software or mechanical engineering. She ultimately hopes to create or join a business that helps improve the quality of life in third-world countries.

## DuPage County presents \$10.6 million to DuPage Foundation

DuPage County presented a check for \$10.6 million to DuPage Foundation this morning to mark the launch of a strategic grantmaking partnership known as the DuPage Community Transformation Partnership (Partnership).

Over the next five years, the Partnership will implement a \$10 million grant program to support social service not-for-profit organizations helping DuPage County residents most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program will focus on providing assistance for food insecurity, housing instability, mental health, and substance abuse.

In January, the County Board voted to execute an agreement to allocate \$10.6 million to DuPage Foundation in federal funds received through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for the grant program. The Foundation received \$600,000

to administer the program and disburse the ARPA funds on behalf of the county.

"Together, the County Board, DuPage Foundation and our non-profit organizations will make a positive, lasting difference to those workers and families in DuPage County who have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis. This partnership fosters a sustainable, whole-community approach to supporting those in need," said DuPage County Board Chairman Dan Cronin.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to provide transformative change for our community, and our staff and Board of Trustees are thrilled to commence our partnership with the county," said DuPage Foundation President and CEO Dave McGowan.

Guidelines will be developed over the next few months and an announcement regarding the application process will be made this spring.

## Villa Park Library events

Editor's note: Unless otherwise indicated, information on each of the following events and programs can be found by visiting the library's website at [vppl.info](http://vppl.info) or by calling 630-834-1164.

**Ongoing programs**

**Harry Potter Book Night take-home kits now available**

Everyone can celebrate all things Harry Potter with the Villa Park Public Library's Harry Potter Book Night take-home kits. These kits will have fun activities and crafts to go along with this year's theme: *Magical Journeys*. Registration with a

valid email address is required. Info: visit the library's website at [vppl.info](http://vppl.info) or call 630-834-1164.

**Library hosting community storytimes**

The Villa Park Public Library will hold Rhythm & Rhyme Community Storytimes on the following Mondays: March 21 and April 18, all from 11:30 a.m. until noon. This drop-in program will be held offsite at the Oakbrook Terrace Park District Heritage Center, located at 1S325 Ardmore Ave., in Oakbrook Terrace. Registration is not needed, but masks are required for all attendees.

# Warriors' season ends with a loss to York

Dukes edge Willowbrook 53-45 in post-season opener; Warriors finish with a 20-10 record

**STAFF REPORTS**

The Willowbrook boys basketball team's 2021-22 season ended with last week's 53-45 loss to York in an IHSA Class 4A game at the Glenbard West Regional.

The Warriors led the Dukes 27-22 at halftime in the post-season opener on Feb. 23. York outscored Willowbrook 14-3 in the third quarter to take a 36-30 lead. The Dukes maintained the lead throughout the fourth quarter.

Junior Joey Tumilty drained a 3-point shot with about 4:30 left in the third quarter to provide Willowbrook's only points of that period. Tumilty's score gave the Warriors a 30-26 lead. York then delivered a 10-0 run to end the quarter.

Willowbrook completed the season with an overall record of 20-10. The Warriors' record stood at 5-8 on New Year's Day. Willowbrook proceeded to win 15 of 17 games to close the season. The Warriors' only losses of 2022 were an 82-74 West Suburban Gold Conference loss at Proviso East on Jan. 21, along with last week's loss to York.

Willowbrook and Proviso East shared the 2021-22 West Suburban Gold Conference title. Both teams posted conference records of 10-2. The Warriors avenged their Jan. 21 loss at Proviso East with a 79-77 victory over the Pirates on Feb. 12 in Villa Park.

York's season ended with a 64-26 loss to Glenbard West in Friday's regional final. The powerhouse Glenbard West team advanced to this week's Bartlett Sectional. Two wins in Bartlett would propel the Hilltoppers to a super-sectional game at Northern Illinois University. The winner of the super-sectional in DeKalb will advance to the IHSA state semifinals in Champaign.

Senior Marquel Saleek scored a team-leading 22 points for the Warriors in their loss to York. Saleek made four of 12 attempts from behind the 3-point line. One of his 3-point baskets cut York's lead to 42-40 with about 3:40 left in the game. Saleek's next 3-point basket reduced the Dukes' lead to 49-43 with about 34 seconds to play.

Junior Noah Campbell provided 10 points for Willowbrook. Ju-



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's boys basketball team opened the IHSA post-season with last week's 53-45 loss to York in a semifinal game at the Class 4A Glenbard West Regional. The Warriors finished the season with an overall record of 20-10. Willowbrook held a 27-22 halftime lead, but the Dukes outscored the Warriors 14-3 in the third quarter to take a 36-30 lead with eight minutes to play in the Feb. 23 contest. York's season ended with a loss to Glenbard West in Friday's regional final in Glen Ellyn. Senior Marquel Saleek (above left - No. 3) scored 22 points for Willowbrook in last week's post-season battle against York. Junior Noah Campbell (above right - No. 25) added 10 points. Junior Joey Tumilty (right - No. 20) provided the Warriors' only points of the third quarter with a 3-point basket that gave the Warriors a 30-26 advantage. York went on to a 10-0 run to end the quarter. Willowbrook won 15 of its last 17 games of the season. The team's record stood at 5-8 on New Year's Day. The Warriors claimed a share of the 2021-22 West Suburban Gold Conference title with Proviso East. Both teams posted conference records of 10-2.

nior Isaac Sobieszczyk scored three points and grabbed 15 rebounds.

The Warriors made 17 of 62 at-

tempts from the field in the regional semifinal against York. Willowbrook sank eight of 35 shots from 3-point range and converted three of four free-throw attempts.



## Willowbrook/AT boys swimmers compete at Leyden Sectional

Squad earns a fifth-place finish in the team standings

**STAFF REPORT**

The Willowbrook/Addison Trail boys swim team completed its season at the IHSA Leyden Sectional on Feb. 19. The combined squad of Warriors and Blazers swam to a fifth-place finish in the team standings of the 10-team event.

The Willowbrook/Addison Trail swimmers who earned top-10 finishes in individual events included junior Alexander Dean, who finished eighth in the 500-yard freestyle, which he completed in 5 minutes, 30.99 seconds. Dean provided another eighth-place effort in the 200-yard freestyle, which he finished in 2:00.25.

Sophomore Michael Sampey placed eighth in the 200-yard individual medley (2:18.19). Sophomore Jason Hasler swam to a 10<sup>th</sup>-place finish in the same

event, which he completed in 2:19.67.

Sampey added a ninth-place finish in the 100-yard breaststroke (1:11.62).

Senior Michal Niemirski delivered an eighth-place finish in the 100-yard freestyle, which he completed in 51.26 seconds. Niemirski swam the 50-yard freestyle in a ninth-place time of 23.26 seconds.

The 200-yard freestyle relay team of Sampey, senior Gerald Legaspi, Hasler and Dean earned a fifth-place finish (1:40.11). The 400-yard freestyle relay foursome of Niemirski, sophomore James Burns, Legaspi and Dean turned in another fifth-place effort with its time of 3:39.98.

Burns, Sampey, Hasler and Niemirski earned a sixth-place finish in the 200-yard medley relay. The four swimmers finished the race in 1:52.10.



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This is Villa Park calling. It sure would be nice to see more Villa Park residents turn out at the village meetings to challenge this new rec center. We got \$10 million in grant money and it looks like our elected officials will probably double that amount or more before they're done. It's about time some of us start showing up. Thank you.

A few weeks ago, I got a flyer from state Sen. Tom Cullerton trumpeting the 300 new laws from Springfield that he had his hand in legislating. I wonder how many of those laws separated the taxpayer from more of his or her hard-earned money, and saddled Cullerton's constituency with more burdensome rules and regulations? My guess is all of the above! Does he really think this is something we wanted to hear? How tone-deaf is this man? And now I hear he has resigned and will reportedly plan to plead guilty to federal embezzlement charges. Behind that smiling face and fancy suit and tie is what appears to be just another corrupt Illinois politician!

Bill Gates says the chances of catching a severe infection from COVID-19 are dramatically lower, but he believes another pandemic is likely. I know Gates is filthy rich, but I didn't realize he's an epidemiologist, a COVID prophet and an authority on COVID all rolled into one. Gates sounds a lot like the great Dr. Fraud-ci to me.

I heard that Biden's climate change mouthpiece John Kerry warned Russia not to lose sight of the bigger need to combat climate change before Putin invaded Ukraine. Wow, that turned out to be a real deterrent! Putin and the president of China have to be beside themselves laughing at Kerry and these regressive leftists and how feckless this nation has become. By the way, did you climate change alarmists know Russia has agreements with both China and India to supply them with millions of tons of coal? Now you do.

Can you believe it? Our former, disgraced, twice impeached president is complimenting Russian President Putin for invading Ukraine! He says the invasion would not have happened if he were still president; of course, not because the former president was selling out our country to the Russians and then they would just take Ukraine. This man continues to be such a traitor.

The teacher at Willowbrook who was placed on administrative leave sent a message to his teachers' council in which he said, among other

sarcastic remarks, "The problem is, badly raised students will probably be unmasked tomorrow." If I were a Willowbrook parent, I would be outraged, no matter my opinion on masks. He even took it to social media. This is not only a person of authority in the classroom, but in a leadership position as both chair of the English department and (now resigned) president of the teachers council. Entitled to an opinion? Yes, but the comment was an affront to parents—who pay his salary, by the way—with whom he apparently disagrees. Another example of an apparent liberal's so-called "tolerance" of others' opinions—or should I say intolerance—except if it doesn't align with his.

Biden's anti-energy policies (killing the Keystone XL pipeline, pausing oil and gas leasing on federal lands) haven't just jacked up energy prices for the American consumer. His policies have funneled more money to other countries, including countries that don't particularly like us. Biden's push against our nation's energy production might be his biggest mistake.

Did you see the recent poll showing Biden has a positive approval rating in only four of our nation's 50 states? I thought Biden received more votes than anyone in U.S. history. A little more than a year later, he's under water in heavily Democratic states like Illinois, California and New York. I don't know how accurate this poll is, but I'm pretty sure there were no mail-in responses.

In one way, the invasion of Ukraine is a great opportunity to distract from President Biden's poor leadership. At the same time, it actually puts his poor leadership in the spotlight. Gas was going up before the invasion, and is certain to climb higher with the sanctions he has proposed. So we will now suffer more at the pump, and elsewhere, even more, and the president even acknowledged that! But the worst is: I would bet when Putin saw how Biden handled the Afghanistan withdrawal, he figured the president would be a pushover. And to think people bought it when Biden campaigned on his experience with foreign policy. Like many, I was not a fan of Trump and his mean tweets, but Putin—who reportedly has been planning this invasion for a long time—knew Trump would react swiftly and severely. Putin was just biding his time. And this is coming from an independent thinker, not Fox News, so don't even go there.

There are a lot of kids from our

area attending the University of Iowa, which is just over 200 miles away. There are no COVID vaccine mandates, and there haven't been any mask requirements in classes during the 2021-22 school year. In other words, it's been a pretty normal year. Despite some zealots' predictions, students haven't been dropping left and right from COVID. You would think some Illinois residents and legislators would take notice.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine reminds me of the game Risk, which sometimes has unpredictable outcomes, and also of Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939. That outcome was a world war. Now is the time for our president to take the reins and help convince our world allies to rally together and put a stop to mad-man Putin. We are not the world's police and we need the strength in numbers. Even Russians are risking their own safety by protesting the invasion. Prayers go to Ukraine.

I hope Democrat voters are proud of themselves. What's the Democrat platform these days? It seems like it's in favor of open borders, being soft on crime, stifling American energy production, high inflation, forced masking of kids and blaming others. Let's not forget mass mail-in voting, ballot harvesting and abandoning election integrity.

So the former president not only reportedly took unauthorized documents when he left the White House, he allegedly took secret and other classified documents. I had a secret clearance and know this is punishable by prison time. I can only wish that he sees the inside of a prison cell.

This is in regard to the callers who were complaining about schools being closed. Yes, there wasn't the snow that they thought. My problem is, each caller's complaint was that they had to figure out what to do with their children. So, it wasn't the fact that their children were missing school or missing out on an education; their complaint was that their tax-funded day care was taken away from them. This is the issue these days. If you have children, you should be willing to take care of them and have something in place for an emergency. Thank you.

Can you imagine the media coverage if one of Trump's family members had shady ties to Ukraine? Imagine if one of Trump's sons had been paid \$1 million per year by a Ukrainian energy company, like Hunter Biden. I think we all know what would happen. There would be nonstop media coverage. But with Biden's son, nothing. The mainstream media is a joke.

Our area schools are encouraging

students to be respectful of every teacher. That's great. Hopefully they'll encourage teachers to do the same. Did you read that email from the Willowbrook Teachers Council? It sure didn't sound like he was respectful and tolerant toward a certain group of people—those who wouldn't be wearing masks to school. I wonder how many of his fellow teachers feel the same way.

Hello. I just picked up my new license plate sticker and I can't help but notice that someone at the DMV thought it would be a good idea to put the month that the sticker expires on the sticker, as well as the license number off the sticker—making it 10 times easier for people to copy away from them. This is the issue these days. If you have children, you should be willing to take care of them and have something in place for an emergency. Thank you.

I noticed Vice President Givens in Europe to try to secure Ukrainian border. You might remember she's the point person who's supposedly working on immigration on our southern border. Well, Ukraine was invaded, and the U.S. Border Patrol reported more than 1.6 million encounters with migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border during calendar year 2021. That's all worked splendidly.



JOE PEARSON PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## All-Conference Warriors

Four members of the Willowbrook girls basketball team were named to the West Suburban Conference's All-Conference Team for the 2021-22 season. Pictured left to right are: sophomore E Bruschnik (No. 33), senior Sophie Sullivan (No. 1), sophomore Calli Kenny (No. 15) and freshman Hannah Kenny (No. 10). The four Warriors are pictured during the crossover game between the conference's Gold and Silver division champions at Addison Trail on Feb. 9. Willowbrook won the GC title with a perfect 12-0 record, delivering two wins against each of its six opponents in the GC Division (Addison Trail, Downers Grove South, Hinsdale South, Leyden, Morton and Proviso East Lyons Township claimed the Silver title with a 12-0 mark. Lyons Township beat Willowbrook 61-48 the recent crossover game. The Warriors finished the season with a 49-46 loss to St. Charles East in an IHSA Class 4A regional final in Villa Park on Feb. 17. Willowbrook completed the season with an overall record of 22-6.

## D88 students invited to BIG IDEA Pitch Contest at COD

Addison Trail and Willowbrook students are invited to share their business ideas with a panel of expert judges through the BIG IDEA Pitch Contest, co-produced by College of DuPage (COD) and Innovation DuPage (ID).

Students who have ideas for innovative products and services that solve real problems to satisfy the needs of growing markets are encouraged to participate in the event. Successful applicants will introduce scalable concepts that can be accelerated by connecting to key

mentorship and business resources.

Finalists will pitch live to a panel of judges and a livestreamed audience on April 13 at COD.

The top three contestants will receive a six-month membership to Innovation DuPage, as well as a cash prize (1st place is \$5,000, 2nd place is \$4,000 and 3rd place is \$3,000).

To apply, complete the written portion and submit a video by March 6. For details, and to apply, go to <https://tinyurl.com/2ryy7zkv>.

## D88 stakeholders invited to complete Illinois 5Essentials Survey

Through March 11, District 88 parents/guardians are invited to complete the Illinois 5Essentials Survey. This research-based survey helps identify strengths and areas for improvement in a school's learning environment and provides stakeholders with a voice in improving their schools.

The survey provides a comprehensive picture of a school's organizational culture in an individualized report measuring five "essentials" critical for school success. Those are:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environment
- Ambitious Instruction

District 88 truly values receiving feedback and encourages parents/guardians to participate in the survey. The goal is to gather a

variety of input to ensure we continue to accomplish our mission of working for the continuous improvement of student achievement.

District 88 is committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive environment for all students, staff and community members, and that focus aligns with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)'s new Equity Journey Continuum, an informational tool is meant to help districts view data through the lens of equity and identify gaps in student achievement, opportunities and supports.

Parent/guardian participation on the 5Essentials Survey will be part of the criteria used to determine District 88's placement along the equity continuum.

To complete the survey in English or in Spanish, scan the QR code above, or go to <https://survey.5essentials.org/illinois>.



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