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THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022



SUBMITTED PHOTO: Villa Park Review

Cold plunge

Several members of the Villa Park Police Department joined other area law enforcement officers to take part in Saturday afternoon's 2022 Polar Plunge at the Oak Brook Bath and Tennis Club. The event's participants took a brief plunge into an outdoor pond at the club during wet and chilly conditions. The Polar Plunge is a fundraiser for the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Illinois. The members of the Villa Park Police Department who took the plunge on Saturday have

so far raised over \$8,700. Their fundraising efforts will continue through the end of March. Willowbrook High School Principal Dan Krause (not pictured in the above photo) joined the Villa Park Police Department team in Saturday's Polar Plunge. Krause first took part in the plunge in 2020, after Villa Park Detective Donald Glammarino—the resource officer at the school—spoke to him about making a donation to the team.

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Warriors' offense shines in first week of the season

Rock Valley Publishing - Thursday, March 24, 2022 • 5VP

Willowbrook scores 19 total runs in impressive wins over Bartlett and Glenbard East

STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook baseball team opened its 2022 season with a pair of victories last week. The Warriors began their season with an 11-5 win over Bartlett at Lee Pfund Stadium in Carol Stream on March 14. Willowbrook moved to 2-0 with an 8-1 win over Glenbard East in Villa Park on March 16.

Senior Max Vaisvila and junior Isaac Sobieszczyk both homered in the Warriors' win over Bartlett. Sobieszczyk connected for a two-run homer in the first inning. Vaisvila drilled a two-run homer in the third inning. Vaisvila's blast gave the Warriors an 11-0 lead.

Sobieszczyk went 2-for-3 and drove in four runs. He scored three runs. Vaisvila went 1-for-4 and drove in three runs.

Junior Joey Tumilty, who was Willowbrook's leadoff hitter, went 2-for-2 and scored three runs. Sophomore Aiden Baerenklau went 2-for-2 and scored one run.

Senior Jacob Skinner pitched the first three innings for the Warriors. Skinner didn't allow any runs. He recorded five strikeouts while giving up one hit and one walk.

Willowbrook scored one run in the first inning of its game against Glenbard East. The Warriors scored three runs in both the third and the fourth innings, and added one more run in the sixth inning.

Senior Jacob Kutella went 3-for-4 and drove in three runs in the Warriors' win over the Rams. Kutella hit a pair of doubles. Tumilty went 2-for-



Willowbrook's baseball team opened its season with a pair of wins last week. The Warriors beat Bartlett 11-5 on March 14. Two days later, Willowbrook earned an 8-1 home win over Glenbard East. One photo from the Warriors' March 16 win in Villa Park shows senior Max Vaisvila (above left - No. 1) at the plate. Another photo shows junior Isaac Sobieszczyk (above right - No. 9) heading toward third base, where Willowbrook head coach Vic Wisner instructs him to stop. Vaisvila and Sobieszczyk both homered in Willowbrook's March 14 win over Bartlett.

CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

3 and scored two runs. Sobieszczyk went 2-for-3 and drove in two runs. Junior Alex Chalón went 1-for-3 and scored two runs.

Vaisvila worked the first three and two-third innings on the mound. He struck out five batters while allowing one run, three hits and three walks.

Sophomore Dayne Meyer pitched three and one-third scoreless innings. He allowed four hits and no walks. Meyer struck out two Glenbard East

batters.

Willowbrook's schedule this week includes home games against Glenbrook South and Glenbard South.

Warriors start season by winning two of three matches in the Windy City Classic

STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook girls soccer team began its 2022 season by playing three home matches last week. The Warriors won two of the three matches. All three contests were part of Reavis High School's 32-team Windy City Classic.

The Warriors opened their season with an 8-0 win over Oak Lawn on March 15. Two days later, Willowbrook suffered a 2-1 loss to Glenbrook South. The Warriors bounced back from that loss by beating Plainfield South 2-0 on Saturday.

Junior Kennedy Vannoy scored three goals in the first half of the Warriors' match against Oak Lawn to help Willowbrook to a 5-0 halftime lead. Seniors Rachael Klamecki and Brooke Vandergrift each scored one first-half goal. Vandergrift scored another goal early in the second half. Senior Mackenzie Parente netted a goal to increase the lead to 7-0. Sophomore Natalia Garcia-Avila scored the Warriors' final goal of the match.

Vannoy scored a goal early in the March 17 match against Glenbrook South to help the Warriors to a 1-0 halftime lead. Glenbrook South pulled out the victory with a pair of second-half goals.

Vandergrift scored the Warriors' first goal in Saturday morning's contest. Willowbrook's next goal came on an own-goal by Plainfield South.

The Warriors will play at least one more match in the Windy City Classic this week. Willowbrook will open its West Suburban Gold Conference schedule with an April 5 match at Addison Trail.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's girls soccer team started its season with an 8-0 victory over Oak Lawn in Villa Park on March 15. The match was part of Reavis High School's 32-team Windy City Classic. Senior Brooke Vandergrift (above left - No. 6) scored two goals for the Warriors in the win over Oak Lawn. Senior Mackenzie Parente (above right - No. 16) added one goal. Junior Kennedy Vannoy scored three first-half goals in Willowbrook's season-opening win. The Warriors continued play in the Windy City Classic with two more home matches—a 2-1 loss to Glenbrook South on March 17 and Saturday's 2-0 win over Plainfield South. Willowbrook will play at least one more match in the tournament this week. The Warriors will begin their West Suburban Gold Conference season with an April 5 battle at Addison Trail.



Why did they get rid of drive-up mail drop at Villa Park Post Office?

Editor's note According to the Villa Park Police Department in November, there were incidents of mail theft from the collection boxes.

If some Villa Park Village Board members want to continue wearing masks at board meetings, that's up to them. But why would those members remove their masks while they are speaking. Does that make sense?

So JB Pritzker and Lori Lightfoot got booed at the South Side Irish Parade. Good! They deserved all the boos and jeers they got because of how they have run this state, and a once dynamic city, into the ground.

The United States was energy independent two years ago. In fact, the U.S. was exporting oil at that time. The U.S. is producing 1.5 million barrels of oil less than we were two years ago. To lower inflation and especially the cost of fuel, we need to be energy independent again. Biden wants to get oil from Iran, Venezuela or Saudi Arabia? That's not smart. When oil is taken out of the ground and used for fuel, it has the same effect on the planet no matter where on earth it was drilled. Drilling oil in Russia, Saudi Arabia or the U.S. is all the same. The only real effect is the cost of the oil to the American consumer. Open up the Keystone pipeline, make our own fuel and lower the cost of everything.

To the caller who said I can't compare Lombard or Villa Park to Aurora for a "Love Local" kind of event, I do realize what's going on and I know they are two different-size populations, so maybe you misunderstood. The idea is to have a similar event, tailored to our size villages, just more than once a year on Small Business Saturday—maybe a weekend sidewalk sale in the summer, with food samples from our restaurants. And yes, I think there are enough businesses to hold such an event for two days, like a Saturday and Sunday. It would certainly attract people to Lombard's downtown, and Villa Park's, too.

To all of you who don't want to place blame on President Biden for the rising gas prices, I saw them go up the very day after he was inaugurated. Coincidence? I think not, after immediately announcing his so-called energy/green plans. I was no fan of Trump, but I was better off financially (call me selfish if you want), and Putin didn't want to mess with a president you call a "madman." It seems Biden isn't listening to those experts in the military who are

warning publicly that the sanctions are not going to have much of an effect, and that we may end up with boots on the ground, or missiles in the air, to help defend our NATO allies. I will take Trump's mean tweets—which I can ignore—over Biden's unwillingness or inability to listen to military and economic leaders, which could affect our very well-being as a nation. That we cannot ignore.

Is anyone paying attention to what this administration is doing? They do not care about the American people. Russia is taking over Ukraine and Biden and his staff are negotiating a deal with Russia and Iran—supposedly to prevent Iran from having a nuclear weapon. My word, people, you elected an idiot. Look into it. As big of a jerk as Trump was, at least he loved America.

A caller last week claimed Chicago was the 40th most violent city. There are 19,495 cities in the U.S. I'm glad they are happy being in the top 40. Last year, there were 25,532 violent crimes in Chicago. I guess that's not too many. There were 797 murders in Chicago last year; that isn't too bad, either, according to the caller. Really?

Hooray! Our mallards are back in our yard for the fifth year. They have found their regular food and nesting spot. Finally something normal and wonderful! We have had nine to 13 ducklings every year, even during COVID!

I've been a resident at the same address for 12 years now, and I am still receiving a lot of mail for the previous owner. I've also had the same mail carrier for a few years now. One would think that by now with all the return mail I give them that the postal worker would know who lives and doesn't live at my address. I also get mail for my neighbors on my block and the next. Are these workers incompetent or lazy (don't want to separate it properly)? If I made the amount of errors at my job, I'd be given the pink slip by now! Come on USPS! You can do better!

Catalytic converters are once again being stolen during the day at Walmart and Willowbrook High School. I don't know what to do to stop this, but we somehow have to keep our eyes open everywhere and protect our vehicles.

Jan. 20, 2021, Joe Biden was handed an oil independent country. Now this inept president is going to Venezuela and the Middle East and asking them to ramp up production. It is be-

yond belief how incompetent this administration is. I am beginning to believe their entire agenda is to destroy the U.S. as we know it. Please tell me what they have done for the American people. How much better is your life today, other than your go-to that Trump is not president?

Biden said he would do everything he could to lower gas prices. Then he said there was nothing he could do, stating Russia was responsible. Gas prices were way up before Russia invaded Ukraine. Remember when prices dropped slightly, and Biden's administration tried to take credit? But when prices rise, it's Russia's fault, it's COVID's fault, it's the oil companies' fault.

Many people seem very emotional about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. I would hope people would try to learn more about Russia, Ukraine, Crimea and the border issues in that region before making conclusions. Things are not as simple as they appear. That's all.

It's time for everyone to realize we are in a revolution and civil war when it comes to politics. We need to unite, if America is going to survive as it was. The first step is to change our Senate and House seating from left to right. It needs to be arranged more like a checkerboard so our representatives are integrated, not segregated. That's a start for unification. Too simple? Try it.

From Wiktionary: "Trumped Up": "Fraudulently devised or concocted; false, adjective. Faked, fabricated or falsely manufactured. Usually in the phrase trumped-up charges referring to legal accusation made for illegitimate reasons." Now then, I know it doesn't need to be said, but there are some people who need help, like the QAnons, Kamala Harris, 93.45 percent of California and 80 percent of the entertainment business not in California. So, quite obviously Trump is the king of trumping up stuff. From the election being stolen, to his popularity, to his achievements and the size of some people's hands. I'm sure the phrase was around long before Trump came into the world. I guess it's that true, that there are no coincidences.

How much longer can we afford to play the game of "Hidin' Biden?" What's the difference between a socialist dictator and a socialist president who is not held accountable for anything by his followers or the mainstream media?

I'm sure you heard on the news that Willie Wilson gave \$200,000 in free gas to 10 gas stations in Chicago. Wilson is a millionaire businessman who's run unsuccessfully for mayor of Chicago in the past. I also read that Wilson is giving \$1 million more in free gas to people this week. Some might say Willie Wilson is grandstanding. I don't. I applaud him because he's actually trying to help out the little guy. I don't see any Chicago celebrities, sports or otherwise, stepping up to help. I certainly don't see the abysmal Chicago mayor or the Democratic Party stepping up—you know; the ones that always say they are for the little guy. Keep on doing what you're doing, Willie!



CHRIS FOX/PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Warriors win their opener

The Willowbrook softball team kicked off its 2022 season with a 16-0, four-inning victory over Wheeling in Villa Park on March 17. Senior Caitlyn Kulczynski (above - No. 19) fired a perfect game for the Warriors, striking out all 12 batters she faced. Offensively, Kulczynski went 3-for-4 and drove in one run. Willowbrook scored seven runs in the first inning. The Warriors added five more runs in the second inning. Playing in her first game with the Willowbrook program, freshman Hannah Kenny tripled in her first at-bat. In her next appearance at the plate, Kenny hit a home run over the center-field fence. Junior Kayleigh Dennison went 1-for-4 and scored two runs. Dennison is pictured below while rounding third base and heading home to score a run. Freshman Sonia Ruchala went 2-for-4 and drove in two runs in her first game as a Warrior. Sophomore Lindsey Rugg went 2-for-3 and drove in one run. The Warriors' upcoming schedule includes this Saturday's home doubleheader against Plainfield Central.



WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

Catholic Prep's Nick Renteria capped his year with state championship

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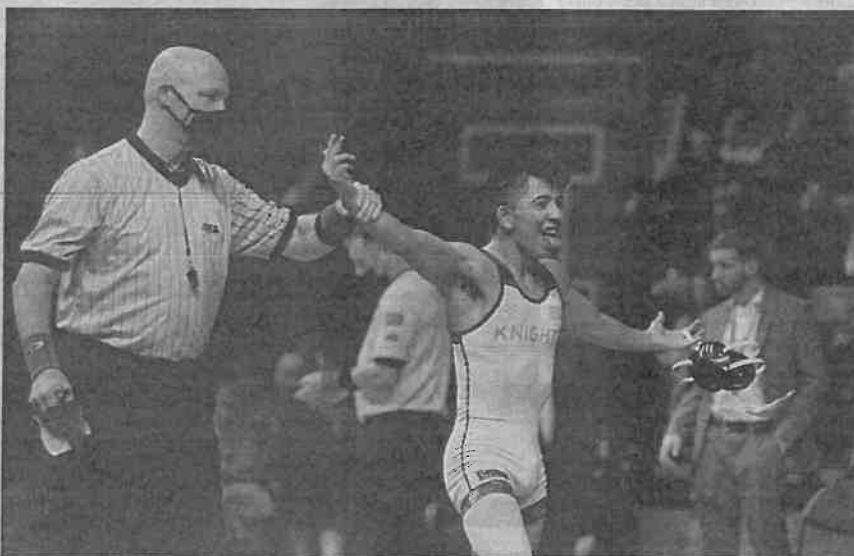
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Alex T. Paschal/apaschal@shawmedia.com

IC Catholic Prep's Nick Renteria celebrates his win over Yorkville Christian's Isaac Bourge during the Class 1A 120-pound finals Feb. 19 at the IHSA state wrestling tournament in Champaign.

Suburban Life All-Area Wrestling team

FIRST TEAM

Michael Calcagno, IC Catholic Prep, so., 182 pounds; Jayden Colon, Montini, so., 145; Phillip Dozier, Glenbard West, sr., 195; Isalah Gonzalez, IC Catholic Prep, sr., 285; Marko Ivanisevic, Hinsdale Central, so., 220; Moe Khalil, Lemont, sr., 182; Harrison Konder, Downers Grove North, so., 138; Jordan Lewis, Downers Grove North, sr., 285; David Mayora, Montini, so., 152; Jadon Mims, IC Catholic Prep, sr., 220; Jimmy Nugent, Downers Grove South, sr., 138; Nick Renteria, IC Catholic Prep, sr., 120; Diana Rodriguez, Morton, sr., 190; Alex Tagler, Lemont, sr., 170; Cody Tavoso, Hinsdale Central, jr., 132; Jennifer Villagomez, Morton, sr., 110.

SECOND TEAM

Kat Bell, Montini, fr., 100; Sean Berger, York, jr., 120 pounds; Ben Bielawski, Glenbard West, sr., 182; Leliani De Leon, Morton, jr., 120; Gunnar Garelli, Lyons Township, so., 126; Max Konopka, Glenbard West, sr., 160; Anthony Lopez, Morton, jr., 113; Nick Mabutas, Willowbrook, sr., 170; Devin Medina, Wheaton North, jr., 152; Zach Parisi, York, so., 113; Mikey Bosch, Wheaton North, jr., 170; Cooper Schodrof, Lyons Township, sr., 170; Will Schuessler, Downers Grove South, jr., 170; Brennan Skoda, Glenbard West, sr., 152; Luke Swan, Downers Grove South, jr., 132; Tyler Wilms, Lemont, sr., 220.

man year at St. Laurence in Burbank.

Elmhurst native Calcagno, a sophomore, was introduced to Renteria in a firsthand manner as a precocious eighth grader.

"Nick started it off between the two (Mims being the other) when I was smaller," Calcagno said of working out with Renteria two years ago. "It made me get better."

In the aftermath of crowning three individual state champions, the Knights advanced to the team quarterfinals with a one-sided sectional final triumph over St. Laurence.

"It was nice to come back and see those guys," Nick Renteria said of competing against his former teammates.

The Knights' season, however, ended in Bloomington with a gut-wrenching five-point loss to Tremont.

Nick Renteria received forfeit victories in both of the Knights' team post-season matches.

bump. It was all about being mentally tough in tight situations."

to keep it close and get (Nick) at the end," coach Renteria said.

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Gary Middendorf - gmiddendorf@shawmedia.com

Glenbard West's Braden Huff (left) and Ryan Renfro celebrate the final seconds of a 56-34 win over Young in the Class 4A state championship game March 12 at State Farm Center in Champaign.

"Braden combines his unique talent with a cool and calm demeanor," Pecellunas said. "He never gets rattled by an opponent or the moment. He's a fierce competitor who doesn't want to lose at any game or drill. His positive and jovial attitude masks his drive. He always is thinking team-first, which is illustrated by his many passes when his coaches are imploring him to shoot. It's rare to see such a high-level player be liked by so many people."

Assistant coach Rod Molek said Huff's unrelenting work ethic and modesty rubbed off on his teammates, including helping Hinsdale South transfer Bobby Durkin quickly adapt to his new teammates last summer.

"(Braden) made every player on the team better through his leadership and focus," Molek said. "He showed every day what it took to be a state champion and that example rubbed off on, not just the team, but the entire school and local community."

Huff is the rare superstar unwilling to speak freely about himself nor take too much of the credit. He chooses his words carefully and speaks slower when discussing personal achievement or his legacy.

But that's just Huff – a humble teammate who shies away from the spotlight and would rather be hanging with his teammates.

"It's an honor to have a legacy and I

can't wait for a couple of years to roll by and come back here and be reminded about everything we were able to accomplish," Huff said. "It's awesome and really exciting to see what we did, and cool to see the whole town come together behind our team. The ride from my freshman year to now has been crazy, just coming in as freshman and not knowing what to expect and suddenly being on the varsity level."

"I was a little skinny guy running up and down the court, mainly to the corner to hopefully to shoot 3s and then to now. It has been unbelievable. It was an unforgettable experience. ... I'm beyond grateful that it happened."

So is Glenbard West and Glen Ellyn.

Basketball team

boys

Caden Pierce, Glenbard West, senior, guard: Princeton recruit. A multi-purpose two-way threat who averaged 11.7 points, 4.9 rebounds and 2.0 assists while burying 47 3-pointers.

Ben VanderWal, Timothy Christian, senior, forward: Averaged 26.6 points, 10.0 rebounds, 2.3 assists and 2.3 blocks. Named Metro Suburban Blue Division Conference Player of the Year. Furman recruit.

SECOND TEAM

Garrett Bolte, Hinsdale South, senior, forward: Averaged 19.2 points, 9.5 rebounds, 2.5 assists and 1.2 steals per game. Team captain. Scored 30-plus points in multiple games. Hillsdale College recruit.

Jalen Brown, Glenbard South, junior, forward: Averaged 14.6 points, 13.9

Bobby Durkin, Glenbard West, senior, guard/forward: Decommitted from Army. A first-year Glenbard West player after transferring from Hinsdale South. He matched a Class 4A state finals record with seven 3s in the state semifinal win over Bolingbrook. Durkin averaged 12.9 points, 4.4 rebounds and 3.4 assists to go with 82 3-pointers.

Tavari Johnson, Lyons, senior, guard: Akron recruit who averaged 16.5 points, 4.5 assists, 2.0 rebounds, 2.0 steals and shot 51 percent from the field. Named to the All-Tournament team at the Jack Tish and Burlington MLK West Suburban Silver All-Conference.

Marquel Saleek, Willowbrook, senior, guard: Averaged 20.1 points, 6.5 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.6 steals. West

HONORABLE MENTION

Cole Andrews, Wheaton Academy, senior; Jacob Bozeman, Downers Grove North, junior; Tyrese Buffkin, Glenbard East, senior; Noah Campbell, Willowbrook, junior; J.P. Hanley, Riverside-Brookfield, senior; Johnny Hilgart, IC Catholic Prep, senior; Drew Kircher, York, senior; Brady Kunka, Benet, senior; Gabe Madej, Fenwick, senior; Emory Marshall, Montini, junior; Joeyonn McCottry, Riverside-Brookfield, senior; Braylen Meredith, Wheaton Warrenville South, junior; Ben Oosterbaan, Hinsdale Central, junior; Nik Polonowski, Lyons, junior; Rourke Robinson, Wheaton Warrenville South, senior, guard; Andrew Stokes, Montini, senior; Kyle Thomas, Benet, senior; Dominic Trefenberg, Nazareth, senior; Paxton Warden, Glenbard West, senior; Brendan Varusso, St. Francis,

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VOL. 18 • NO. 15

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THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022

Alena Edwards named Willowbrook's new assistant principal

She will officially begin her new role on July 1

During its March 21 meeting, the District 88 Board of Education approved the administration's recommendation to name Alena Edwards as Willowbrook High School's new assistant principal, effective July 1.

Edwards will succeed Bob Daly, who has served as an assistant principal since 2018 and will transition to a new role.

Edwards joined Willowbrook during the 2020-21 school year as a dean and also is an advisor for the class of 2023 and the AMEMSA (Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian) affinity group.

"I couldn't be more pleased with the board's support to appoint Edwards to this position," stated District 88 Superintendent Jean Barbanente. "I am confident her positive energy and passion for doing what is right for students will make a tremendous impact."

Before coming to District 88, Edwards was a dean at York Community High School, where she also served as an interim assistant principal of student services and coordinated the Extended School Year (ESY) program for a summer.

Edwards began her career as a teacher assistant and a special education teacher at Waubesa Valley High School. She then taught special education, served as a 504 Plan coordinator and led a bridge class to help incoming freshmen prepare for high school at Metea Valley High School. During her time at those schools, Edwards also coached boys and girls volleyball and Special Olympics bowling and track. Additionally, she sponsored Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Student Council.

"Edwards has only been with us for two years, but she instantly con-

nected with and engaged students and families and made a huge impression," said Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause. "We couldn't be more excited to welcome her to the administrative team, and I know she will be an amazing asset to ensure the Warrior Pride at Willowbrook continues for years to come."

Edwards earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from University of Michigan, where she also minored in statistics. She earned her

Master of Arts degree in special education, her administrative credentials and completed credits for her Director of Special Education Certificate at Lewis University. Edwards also took continuing education courses at Augustana University.

"In this new position, I hope to partner with staff to keep building relationships with students to help each child reach his or her full potential," Edwards said. "I look forward to learning and understanding more

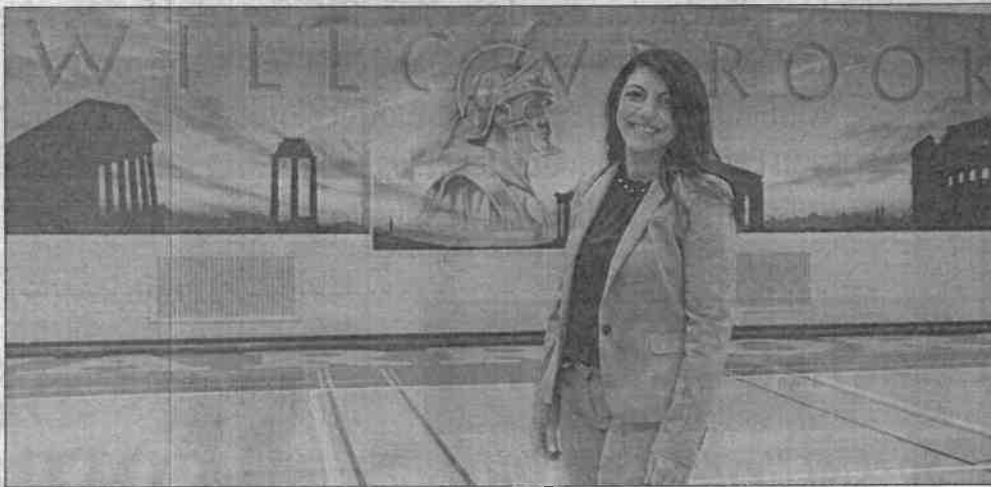
about the school and community culture and enhancing our environment of inclusion and belonging for all students and staff. Our school has so much to be proud of, and I want to celebrate all of our successes."

As an assistant principal, Edwards said three of her main goals are: (1) To assure students and staff she is there to assist and support them; (2) To listen to a variety of voices and make sure Willowbrook represents all stakeholders to build on Willow-

brook's tradition of excellence and keep the school moving forward; (3) To enhance the district's mental health resources and initiatives.

"And my fourth goal is to try and surpass Principal Krause's relentless passion, energy and enthusiasm," Edwards said with a laugh. "District 88 truly is like a goldmine. It's incredibly evident everyone here works together to put students first."

Edwards lives in Kane County with her husband and two children.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Villa Park Review

The District 88 Board of Education recently approved the administration's recommendation to name Alena Edwards (pictured) as Willowbrook High School's new assistant principal, effective July 1. Edwards will succeed Willowbrook's current assistant principal—Bob Daly—who will transition to a new role. Edwards joined Willowbrook during the 2020-21 school year as a dean. Before coming to Willowbrook, Edwards was a dean at York Community High School.

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PAPER 1114

Martin's Big and Tall to sell inventory and close its doors

Martin's Big and Tall—a pioneer in its retail niche that survived a devastating fire at its original location and thrived for 70 years by adapting to changing consumer tastes—will sell its entire inventory and close its doors, said co-owner Bruce Kraus.

"As a specialty store, we draw from a wide area and we've been a destination location for many years," Kraus said. "My family and our employees know so many customers by

name and have had such tremendous relationships with them for so long. We've appreciated their loyalty more than we can say, but the time has come for a new chapter to begin."

The business, located at 15 W. North Ave., Villa Park, will hold its store-closing sale from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. It will return to normal business hours—9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mondays-Saturdays and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays—until the remaining inventory is sold.

Bruce's father, Martin Kraus, began his career as a window trimmer, designing the merchandise displays that drew customers into retailers in The Loop and nearby suburbs in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

"Being a window trimmer was

See MARTIN'S, Page 4

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Monday-Friday 11am-3pm



Villa Park Police Department urges motorists to avoid distracted driving

Extra patrols will be watching for distracted drivers throughout April

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and the Villa Park Police Department is partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), the Illinois State Police and more than 200 local law enforcement agencies throughout the state to remind motorists to "Drop It and Drive."

"Texting while driving puts everyone on the road at risk by distracting a driver visually, manually and cognitively," said Villa Park Police Sgt. James Cibak. "During Distracted Driving Awareness Month, we're working to increase awareness of these dangers and encourage all motorists to give driving their full attention."

At a time when traffic fatalities are on the rise in Illinois and across the country, the Villa Park Police Department is committed to reducing the traffic crashes caused by distractions like texting or talking on a cell phone.

Motorists can expect to see increased patrols and enforcement zones during the entire month of April. Villa Park Police will be ticketing drivers who text or use their cell phones while driving.

The distracted driving campaign is administered by IDOT with federal traffic safety funds.

Willowbrook Music Boosters to hold Trivia Night on April 9

Registration and payment deadline is April 6

The Willowbrook High School Music Boosters will hold their eighth annual Trivia Night on Saturday, April 9. The upcoming event will take place in the school's cafeteria from 7 to 10 p.m. Check-in will begin at 6 p.m.

The registration and payment deadline is Wednesday, April 6.

Teams of 8 to 10 players are recommended. The entry fee is \$10 per person. For teams of 11 to 15 players, the entry fee is a flat \$150 for the team. Proceeds will go toward scholarships, grants and other music department needs. There will also be raffles and prizes, including a prize for the team with the best theme. Teams are encouraged to be creative, decorate their tables and dress in costumes.

Food and drinks are allowed, but alcohol is prohibited.

All players must be at least 13 years old, or currently in eighth grade.

To register, or for full event details, visit wbhsmusicboosters.org/trivia-night.

For questions or more information, send an email to info@wbhsmusicboosters.org.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Villa Park Review

Michigan State University's Model United Nations Conference

From March 18-20, eight Willowbrook High School students competed in Michigan State University's Model United Nations (MSUMUN) Conference. The Willowbrook students (pictured, from left to right) who participated in the event are: freshman Natalie McKenna, junior Sean Maciejewski, senior Nathaniel Falco, junior Riley Biggs, junior Kevin Diederich, junior Lia Galindo, junior Neeraja Kumar and freshman Tyler Zabilka. About 300 students from 30 schools took part in the conference. Competitors presented their country's point of view, debated, compromised and produced solutions to various issues. For more information about the event, visit www.msusun.org. Willowbrook represented Germany in the General Assemblies to debate important issues, such as the Chernobyl accident in 1986, funding priorities for the United Nations and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Students also competed in Specialized Committees and Crisis Committees, representing a Chicago alderman in the 1920s, a Roman general during a war with Germanic tribes and a religious leader at the Jamestown Colony. Willowbrook earned several awards at the conference, including the Best Delegation (first place) honor in the small group category. (This is the first time that Willowbrook has received a team award at this event.) Additionally, Riley Briggs won the Best Delegate (first place) award (1920s Chicago Prohibition). Neeraja Kumar received the Book Award (third place) honor (Jamestown Committee). Lia Galindo also earned Book Award (third place) recognition (World Cocoa Foundation).

• Martin's (Continued from front page)

kind of a big thing in those days. He worked at independent men's clothing stores and there were quite a few of them back then," Kraus said. "Sometimes there'd be two or three clothing stores within a few blocks of each other."

In 1952, Martin Kraus borrowed \$1,200 from his father to finance his own store and struck out on his own, opening Martin's Store for Men at Lincoln, Lawrence and Western in the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

Its evolution from regular sizes to a big-and-tall store began when a taller-than-average man lamented that he couldn't find shirts that fit him properly.

Kraus special ordered a box of shirts, and the grateful man purchased all of the shirts.

"The rest, as they say, is history," Bruce Kraus said. "The single instance not only set a new course for the store in terms of what we sold, it also set the tone for our relationship with customers. Service was so im-

portant to him that he always went the extra mile to please his customers, and it was a philosophy that he instilled in anyone who worked at the store."

Kraus recalls that the focus exclusively on big and tall sizes was unique at the time, and customers were especially grateful for the store's selection. The store in Lincoln Park burned to the ground in 1984 when a fire started in a neighboring business.

"We were in the store and we smelled smoke, so we all got out of there. It was one of the biggest fires in the city that year because it destroyed that business, our store, a restaurant, and a six-flat apartment building," Bruce Kraus said.

The Kraus family rebuilt with a single building on the entire site and reopened the business after the fire. The family maintained the Lincoln Park business while opening the Villa Park location.

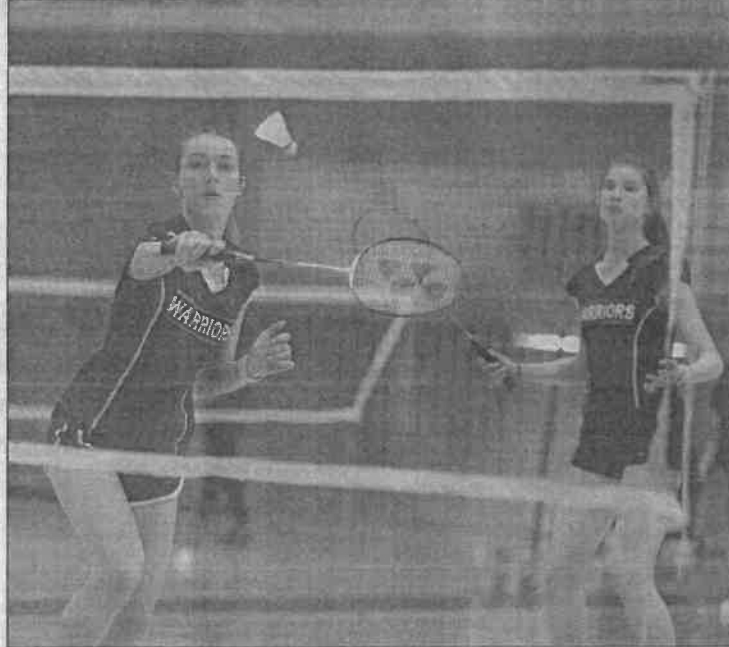
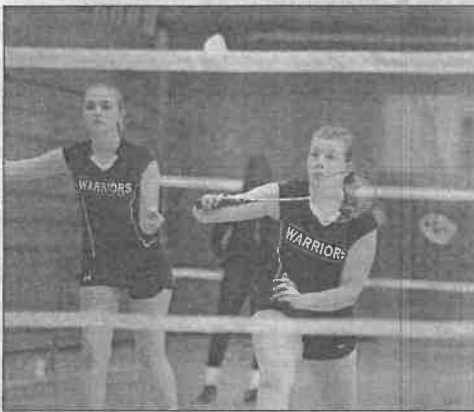
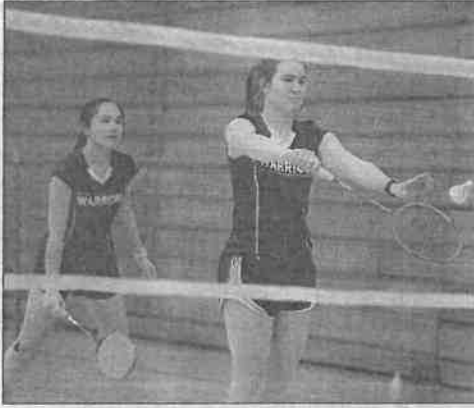
While the two locations over-

lapped for 15 years, the sale of the Lincoln Park store cleared the way for its demolition and the construction of a six-story apartment building in recent years.

Meanwhile, competition has become much fiercer today, as many department stores, online retailers and even specific brand names have all entered the arena. The transition of the workplace to more casual attire and the recent work-from-home trend have also influenced customer demands.

The decision to close the store doesn't mean Kraus is headed for the easy chair any time soon. In the 1990s, he responded to another consumer need by starting a sock company to serve larger-than-average men.

After considerable research, Kraus developed patented machinery that makes wider socks, and launched the Extra Wide Sock Co., in 1996. He will continue to devote time to that business.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Badminton team defeats Oak Lawn

The Willowbrook badminton team defeated Oak Lawn 15-0 in last week's dual meet in Villa Park. The Warriors won all 10 singles contests and all five doubles matches in the March 24 competition. One photo (top left) shows Willowbrook's No. 1 doubles team of seniors Becca Lopez Egan (foreground; hitting a serve) and Emma Rattana (background). Another photo (above) shows senior Amelia Gesicki, who joined junior Emma Foley at No. 3 doubles. Also pictured (left) is the Warriors' No. 4 doubles team of seniors Claire Harr (foreground) and Molly Williams (background).



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Warriors battle Rams and Raiders

Willowbrook's boys volleyball team began its 2022 season with a pair of road matches last week. The Warriors lost 25-8, 25-12 to Glenbard East in Lombard on March 22. Two days later, Willowbrook faced Glenbard South in Glen Ellyn. After losing the first game, the Warriors won the second game to even the match. The decisive third game was a tight battle. The teams were tied at 17-17; Glenbard South won the next point to take an 18-17 lead. The Raiders maintained the lead for the rest of the game on their way to a 25-22, 21-25, 25-21 victory. Senior Dom Fallo (above left - No. 23) handed out 22 assists for the Warriors in their March 24 loss to the Raiders. Junior Brandon Edwards bashed 13 kills for Willowbrook in the three-game loss, while senior Michael Mosbah connected for seven kills. Senior Franky Goles made 12 digs. Goles (above right - No. 3) is pictured while watching senior Joey Pearson receive a Glenbard South serve. "We're still learning," said Willowbrook coach Ryan Bazon after the loss to the Raiders. "Our goal is to progress as the year goes on." The Warriors will open their West Suburban Gold Conference season with an April 5 home match against Leyden.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

State send-off at Willowbrook

On March 24, Willowbrook High School held a state send-off celebration for the cast and crew of the school's Illinois High School Association (IHSA) Contest Play, "Good People." The production, which was directed by Willowbrook English teacher/Theatre Director Regina Wathier, qualified for the IHSA Drama State Competition. Willowbrook's performance took place on Friday, March 25, at Oak Lawn Community High School. Willowbrook's cast and crew of 54 students earned second-place honors at the state competition. Reavis High School of Burbank claimed the first-place award for its presentation of "Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles." The following description—available at www.stepsenwolf.org—provides details about Willowbrook's presentation at the state event: "When Margie Walsh (played by Willowbrook junior Amelia Tortorici) loses her job at a South Boston dollar store, she reaches out to old flame Mike (played by Willowbrook sophomore Sean O'Brochta), a Southie boy (Southie is a blue-collar Boston neighborhood) who left the neighborhood and became a successful doctor. Margie's attempt to hit Mike up for a job takes on a threatening cast when she realizes the power a secret from Mike's past holds. From Pulitzer Prize-winner David Lindsay-Abalde, "Good People" looks at the dangerous consequences of choosing to hold on to the past or leaving it behind."

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 vplp.info or by calling 630-834-1164.

Tuesday, April 5-Wednesday, April 6 Library hosts AARP Safe Driver Course

The Villa Park Public Library will host a two-day AARP Safe Driver Course on Tuesday, April 5 and Wednesday, April 6 from noon to 4 p.m. Participants attend both days. The cost is \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-AARP members, payable by check to AARP and collected by the instructor on the first day of the class. All class materials will be provided. Registration is required.

Saturday, April 9 Virtual SAT practice test at the Library

The Villa Park Public Library will hold a virtual SAT Practice Test on Saturday, April 9 from 10 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., proctored by Huntington Learning Center. Students will need to have a calculator, two pencils, a quiet area, and the ability to download an answer sheet. All registrants must live in or attend a high school in Villa Park or Oakbrook Terrace. The test will begin promptly at 10 a.m. All test-takers will be automatically registered for the virtual SAT Results Follow-Up Session on Thursday, April 10 from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Students will return with results from Saturday's SAT Practice Test to hear a clear explanation of the numbers and to ask questions. Diane Kilcommons, director of Huntington Learning Center Elmhurst, will explain categories of questions and the structure of the SAT, and even suggest a few strategies.

Both sessions will be held online via Zoom. Registration with a valid email address is required.

See LIBRARY, Page 10

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•Lawmakers (Continued from page 6)

did not identify any other ARPA funds that they would like to see reallocated to be put toward the trust fund.

"If it was up to me, I would have taken \$5.5 billion a year ago—\$4.5 billion to completely wipe out this debt that we have to the federal government ... and \$1 billion to get back to our \$1 billion solvency target, which is part of the law today," Sen. Win Stoller, R-East Peoria, said at the GOP news conference.

GOP Senators said a \$16 billion revenue windfall in recent years—including \$8.1 billion from ARPA, \$3.4 billion from a previous federal stimulus and \$4.6 billion in state revenue growth beyond what was projected for the current year—should have first been used to pay down the deficit before other allocations.

Democrats called their action a fiscally prudent measure that goes a long way to addressing the trust fund problem while allowing other necessary expenditures of ARPA funds.

"You know as well as I do that we've used the ARPA funding during this emergency to support those institutions and those businesses who have been on the frontlines and delivering health care in our communities," Harris said in response to Republican criticisms March 23.

He pointed to spending for hospitals, nursing homes and purchases of personal protective equipment, as well as trust fund payments to gig workers and increased unemployment payments to workers which were paid by the federal government.

"And actually, I'm proud that we spent that money to be sure that these Illinoisans were protected, and the fact that you want to take it away from them, you think we should have shorted them—shame on you," he said.

Pritzker pointed to other expenditures of federal funds such as to aid child care providers, small businesses, homeowners and renters.

Interest accruing

As of March 23, the state had already accrued \$41 million of interest on the debt and it continued to accrue at a rate of 1.59 percent. That interest was due to be paid by Sept. 30, according to the U.S. Treasury.

By November, without action, that interest was expected to grow to \$80 million, Hoffman said. Interest can't be paid through ARPA, so it

would require a General Revenue Fund allotment, he added. Taking action by November would diminish that amount, he said.

GOP lawmakers argued that Democrats could have staved off some of that interest accrual by acting earlier. When lawmakers passed a budget last year, Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, and other Republicans called out the majority party for not acting on the trust fund deficit.

"When I brought this up a year ago, and I said you are failing to take action, you are going to make this worse, and you're going to hurt people," he said Thursday. "And here we are a year later. That's exactly what's happened."

Because Democrats put off action on the trust fund for over a year, the GOP said, interest not only accrued on the outstanding debt, but interest rates for the bonding the state is considering to pay down the remaining \$1.8 billion will have increased as well.

In July, Pritzker incorrectly told Capitol News Illinois that ARPA funds could not be used to pay down trust fund deficits although several states had already done so.

Other debt repayment

The measure also allocated \$898 million in general revenue funds to pay off old group health insurance bills, an added \$300 million to pension payments beyond statutory levels and \$230 million to pay off the unfunded liabilities of the College Illinois savings program—all cornerstones of Pritzker's debt retirement initiatives put forth in his budget proposal. Those allotments will come from the state's General Revenue Funds from the anticipated Fiscal Year 2022 surplus.

The pension spending would create \$1 billion in savings to the state's pension system over its life, while the group health insurance payments would save over \$100 million in interest and the College Illinois payment would create a \$75 million savings, according to estimates from House Democrats.

"By following through on our commitments to dedicate one-time revenues to one-time costs or liabilities, we are delivering Illinoisans, a stronger budget and a stronger state for years to come," Pritzker said.



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Villa Park is apparently getting a grant worth \$10 million from the state's Illinois Department of Natural Resources toward a new recreation facility. Can't the state find more important—or should I say more urgent—ways to give away money? I get that a new recreation center would be a nice amenity for the community, but I bet there are more pressing needs Villa Park could address first. Example: Let's say I really needed a new roof but got a great deal on a (fill in the blank), and spent the money on that instead. I think the taxpayers need to speak up, since the village is also spending some of its own money for this.

It is sad to read so many opinions of uninformed people who never understood how the U.S. was weakened by foreign-made goods, easy access to firearms and an inadequate health-care system. Case in point: How many of you have done anything to stretch a gallon of gas by making sure your tires are properly inflated, replaced dirty air filters or driven less aggressively? Also, Trump's first impeachment was over him trying to withhold arms from Ukraine. Should we surrender to Russia for cheaper gas? I would consider that un-American.

I was reading about a Quinnipiac University poll that asked if the U.S. was attacked similar to how Ukraine was attacked, who would stay and fight and who would leave? The poll showed 68 percent of Republicans and 57 percent of Independents would stay and fight, while 52 percent of Democrats would choose to leave. In the same poll, 40 percent of Democrats say they would stay and take up arms, while 25 percent of Republicans and 36 percent of Independents would leave. The results of this poll don't surprise me at all. For years, I've heard more than a few Democratic politicians, many progressive leftists and many college and university students and professors continually trash this country. If it's not "this country is systemically racist," it's something else. If that's what they believe, then I guess I can see their point. Why fight for a country you already despise?

I'm sure anyone who opposes Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination to serve on the Supreme Court will be accused of racism. Here's a reminder—more than 30 years ago, then-Senator Joe Biden voted against Clarence Thomas' nomination to the Supreme Court. Did anyone accuse

Biden of racism?

Throughout this terrible Russian invasion of Ukraine, I have asked myself more than once: What is the United Nations doing? The U.N. General Assembly took a vote with 141 of the 193 nations condemning the invasion, but that was basically a symbolic vote. If the U.N. is trying to broker a peace deal, or organizing food, medical and humanitarian aid, I haven't seen or read anything in the media about it. This once again proves to me how useless and incompetent the U.N. has become.

I heard that leaders of a student-run recreational ballet club at Princeton University recently denounced ballet as, quote, "an imperialist, colonialist and white supremacist art form" and spelled out goals to "decolonize" their group. Ronald Reagan once said that freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. With woke regressive leftists such as these students coming up through the ranks, it looks like that generation has arrived.

Someone left an answer to my post, so here is my answer to them. The former, disgraced, lying, twice-impeached president was, he says, "a good friend" of Putin and Putin would never do anything to hurt the U.S. The former president also denied weapons to Ukraine unless they gave him "dirt" on Biden's son. If Ukraine had those weapons then, instead of now, they would have been in much better shape to fight the invading Russians. The former president still has not taken back his remarks about Putin being a "genius." Does that tell you where he stands? Please look at the facts.

If you believe Biden's claim that rampant inflation and high gas prices are Putin's fault, you haven't been paying attention. Inflation and gas prices were already high before Russia invaded Ukraine. The only thing Biden has been good at is making excuses. Every problem is Putin's fault, Trump's fault, COVID's fault, oil companies' fault, etc. Biden couldn't run a lemonade stand.

It seems like the COVID-19 pandemic is pretty much over in our area. I'm thinking about all of students whose lives were affected over the last two years. Schools closed to in-person learning, forced masking, quarantines, saliva tests, desks rearranged for six feet of separation, arrows on the floor, constant

reports of so-called case counts, etc. So many sporting events, concerts, plays, dances, graduations and other events were canceled. Was any of that worth it? Was even one student in DuPage County hospitalized because of COVID-19? We know there have been zero deaths related to COVID-19 in DuPage County residents under the age of 20. Will anyone apologize? Will anyone admit the obvious—that COVID-19 didn't severely impact healthy children? I doubt it.

Remember when the economy was booming, unemployment was at an all-time low, gas and products were cheap, other countries weren't walking all over us, fair economic trade, no threats of war, border control, lowest violent rates, America prospering and we weren't destroying our kids' futures? Oh yeah, mean tweets and a dislike for his personality made you vote against him. Dumb! Reagan once said "The downfall of society

will be the uneducated voter." Point proven.

Our country is filled with people doing terrible things. Murder, assault, carjacking and more. People are stealing catalytic converters every day, and how about the lowlives stealing mail and doctoring checks? Retail theft, identity theft, fraud, etc. There are so many dishonest people out there. But of course, there's no dishonesty or fraud in our elections. Those are perfectly safe.

Democrat-run cities and states are high-crime, high-tax disasters. Why would anyone want to give Democrats more power?

We have a president who can't communicate with his own people, so we can be sure he is incapable of negotiating with Russia and Putin. America could end up in a nuclear war if someone doesn't take the bull by the horns.

The "O'Biden" administration have a ripple effect on America years to come and it has three years to take the country down. my Democrat comrades going keep the momentum going or ch 180 degrees? Russia and China becoming emboldened by w weakness.

Watch out! There's a sub-variant of Omicron that is leading a new wave of COVID-19 infect across Europe. It's called B. They could call it R2-D2 for care. There will always be a COVID sub-variant. I can already predict what's going to happen this new sub-variant becomes n widespread here, it will give Fraud-ci, Allison Arwady, Roch Walensky and all the other unelected bureaucrats a new sense of purp so they can spread fear and push more vaccines, more mask-wear and more restrictions.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Warriors place ninth at the Windy City Classic

Willowbrook's girls soccer team won a pair of matches last week to earn a ninth-place finish in the 32-team Windy City Classic. The Warriors won four of five matches during the season-opening tournament. Willowbrook played four of its five tournament contests on its home field in Villa Park. The Warriors began the event with an 8-0 win over Oak Lawn on March 15. Willowbrook then lost a 2-1 decision to Glenbrook South on March 17. The Warriors rebounded from that loss to beat Plainfield South 2-0 on March 19. Playing its fourth straight home match to start the 2022 season, Willowbrook earned a 2-1 victory over Homewood-Flossmoor on March 22. Seniors Rachael Klamecki (top left - No. 23) and Izzy Manning (bottom left - No. 24) scored one goal each for the Warriors. Senior Erin Fitzgibbon assisted Klamecki's goal. Willowbrook traveled to Reavis High School—the host of the Windy City Classic—for last week's ninth-place match against De La Salle Institute. The Warriors defeated the Meteors 1-0 on March 24. Willowbrook junior Kennedy Vannoy scored the match's only goal with an assist from Klamecki. The Warriors will return to action on April 5, when they will open their West Suburban Gold Conference season with a match at Addison Trail.

• BASEBALL

Continued from page 18

St. Francis

Coach: Tom Ciombor (2nd season)
2021 record: 19-11 (9-2 Metro Suburban)

Top players: Rocco Tennita, Jr., IF, RJ McMillen, Jr., IF, Vince Polizzi, sr., IF, Will Gilroy, sr., OF, Bennett Worekemp, sr., P, Will Ricamato, sr., P, Thomas Smith, Jr., IF

Worth noting: The Spartans are looking to continue their uphill climb after winning conference, regional and sectional championships last season. The Spartans averaged over nine runs a game to punch a ticket to state for the third time in eight years. Tennita batted .485 with three home runs and Polizza, a Loras commit, batted .406. Worekemp had an ERA of 3.16 last year to be among the top returnees on the mound.

"We return the core of our offense and 95 percent of our pitching," Ciombor said. "We play a challenging non-conference schedule with the likes of Nazareth, St. Viator, Joliet Catholic and Mount to name a few."

Timothy Christian

Coach: Brian Whartnaby
2021 record: 21-9 (7-6 Metro Suburban)

Top players: Fletcher Roemnicht, sr., SS, P (Traylor), Donald Tober, Jr., C/P, Casey Folkers, sr., IF/P

Worth noting: Roemnicht is the big bat in the lineup, batting over .400 last year and leading the team in extra-base hits. Tober is the ace of the staff and a talented hitter and Folkers is looking to build off a promising freshman season as a starter.

This team is deep on the mound and is returning six varsity starters in the lineup," Whartnaby said. "We did graduate three everyday starters who really performed well down the stretch, so we'll be looking for who's going to step up to fill their shoes. We've got guys that support each other and enjoy playing the game. There's a



Shawn Media file photo

Fletcher Roemnicht hit over .400 last season and led Timothy Christian in extra-base hits.

Gedraitis hit .288 and played multiple positions.

"Solid defense and good hitting will be the strengths," Cocks said. "Our pitching needs to step up and prove it can hang with other teams on the schedule. The pitching is the key to the season. If we can get it, we will be tough. If we cannot, we will struggle bad."

"I will definitely say that this team worked very hard this offseason to get better. After going through a tough season like we had last year, these guys could have packed it up. However, they didn't and have worked very hard in the offseason and I'm excited to get another year with these guys."

Wheaton Academy

Coach: Justin Swider (4th season)
2021 record: 11-15 (5-6 Metro Suburban)

Top players: Hudson Williams, Jr., SS, IF, Alex Bagley, Jr., OF/P, Andy Roman, Jr., C, Alex Valdez, sr., 1B, DH, Will Leachner, sr., IF/P

Wheaton North

Coach: Dan Schoessling (23rd season)
2021 record: 13-15 overall (9-12 DuKane)

Top players: Will Fletcher, sr., P (Heathand), Aaron Holland, sr., C (Visconish Whitehead), Ryan Edmann, sr., P, Quinn Flanagan, sr., SS/P, Tyler O'Connor, Jr., IF/P, Jackson Moore, sr., IF/P (Illinois Wesleyan)

Worth noting: A deep lineup with a solid rotation is part of the reason why expectations are high for the Falcons. Fletcher, the ace of the staff, is looking to build off a 2.04 ERA with 44 strikeouts and a 3-1 record in 41 innings last season. Holland led the team with 22 RBIs, while throwing out 18 runners. O'Connor batted .341 with 21 RBIs and 27 runs scored last season.

Wheaton Warrenville South

Coach: John Schierman
2021 record: 7-19 (6-15 DuKane)

Top players: Tommy Boba, sr., P (Chicamatt), Cole Deatlas sr., P, J.P.

nosed group of guys. Behind the plate, we will look to sophomore Eric DeCosta to give us a lift at the plate."

Willowbrook

Coach: Vic Wisner (10th season)
2021 record: 13-10, 12-6 (West Suburban Gold)

Top players: Max Vaisville, sr., P (Loras College), Jacob Skinner, sr., P, Bennett Fleming, sr., C, Isaac Sobieszcyk, Jr., 3B

Worth noting: Sobieszcyk hit over .400 last season to earn team MVP honors while Skinner was the team's best pitcher. Jacob Kutella, a senior first baseman, is a player to watch after hitting .378 last season and being named to the all-conference team.

"I really feel like our pitching is going to be good," Wisner said. "We will be fast on the bases. Jacob Skinner should be really good. Max fought through some injuries and looks unshakable right now."

Work

22 • SOFTBALL

Continued from page 21

commit Hannah Organ, last year's conference Player of the Year and an All-State selection who hit .474 with 23 RBIs and also struck out 115 of the 368 batters she faced. Also back is Oliver Nazarene commit Apostolovich, Noel Organ and Levine.

"We continue to play the best competition in the Chicago land area with games versus Marist, Lincoln Way Central, Lyons and St. Ignace," Schultz said. "R-B will be the smallest 4A team when the state tournament starts since we missed the cutoff to the 3A enrollment threshold by 15 students."

St. Francis

Coach: Ralph Remus
Last year's record: 13-12

Top returning players: Brooke Hartzell, sr., IF; Grace Wanshek, sr., C; Sadie Racky, sr., OF; Taylor Austin, sr., IF; Meghan Stuess, so., P; Hailey Dillon, jr., OF.

Worth noting: Remus, who has 463 career wins, could win No. 300 this season. He has some returning hitters and believes his offense will be adequate. Hartzell hit .411 last season. Wanshek .464 and Racky .371 to lead the returning players. Remus also is counting on returners Katherine Globe at first base, Ella Malachowski in the outfield, Leah Givetti at third base and freshman Maggie Stewart and Julia Crawford to make the Spartans better. Stuess went 6-6 in the circle as a freshman. St. Francis will spend five days in Myrtle Beach for early spring games.

"Learning more about this team as we move along," Remus said. "Young pitching staff will improve as we move along. I am expecting us to have a much better defense this year. We are working hard on that in practice now."

Timothy Christian

Coach: Lindsay Slover (sixth season)
Last year's record: not provided
Top returning players: Emily Slover,

Last year's record: 5-16, 4-11 conference

Top returning players: McKenzie Blahie, sr., P; Jordan Karesh, sr., C/3B; Hayden Bos, so., CF/SS; Mary Niemeyer, sr., 1B; Kaitlyn Lauretis, sr., SS; Grace Heiden, jr., 2B; Kaley Malkowski, sr., OF.

Top new players: Dieliza Dilpi, jr.; Jonae Silva, jr.

Worth noting: The Sentinels' return seven starters and are hoping to be more competitive with the stronger teams in the conference. Blahie, who batted .321 last season and pitched Westmont's five wins, will pitch the majority if not all of the Sentinels' games. Karesh, who hit .245, will assume all of the catching responsibilities. Zapinski said she is a "natural leader." Bos, who hit .292 with a .382 on-base percentage, will be Westmont's leadoff hitter and spark plug. Sophomore Callie Devine was Westmont's most improved player last year and Zapinski is projecting a breakout season.

"After missing the COVID year, our seniors got their feet back under them last year and hopefully will have a strong season this year," Zapinski said.

Wheaton Academy

Coach: Autumn Ratliff (second season)
Last year's record: 0-7-1

Top returning players: Emma Tate, jr., P; Kiley Shapady, jr.; Moriah Husted, jr.

Worth noting: The Warriors, like last season, are fielding a JV team. The program received a boost with transfers Lopatka and Shapady.

"We have a young program as we are starting from the ground up again since COVID," Ratliff said. "We are planning on being more competitive this year with some of the new additions to our team as well as having so many returners."

Wheaton North

Coach: Alie Ravanesi (first season)
Last year's record: 20-7, 11-3 DuKane Conference
Top returning players: Erickson

third baseman Lauren Vaughn, who hit .457 with 12 doubles, eight homers, 32 RBIs and 36 runs scored last season. Is currently injured but Ravanesi hopes to have her back by mid to late April. Also back in the fold is all-conference pitcher Metz, all-conference catcher Harveth and all-conference outfielder Sipowich.

"After coming off a 20-7 season last year, needless to say we have some expectations to uphold and work to get done," Ravanesi said. "This program is definitely moving in the right direction. We had a good season last year but they do not hang banners for good seasons, so we cannot be complacent. We need to be hungry and show up and play ball."

Wheaton Warrenville South

Coach: Jeffrey Pawlak (12th season)
Last year's record: 16-10, 8-5 DuKane Conference

Top returning players: Leah Adamek, sr., SS; Emma Schuster, sr., 2B; Josie Siebert, sr., 1B; Katie Jensen, jr., 3B; Parker Leonard, so., RF; Marissa Lutes, jr., OF/P.

Top new player: Mackenzie Sowonik, jr., C.

Worth noting: Sowonik will lead the way behind the plate with her positive attitude. She was up with the Tigers' varsity last year but tore her ACL a month before the season. Her freshman year, Sowonik tore the ACL in her other knee, so this will be her first season playing for WW South. "Her upbeat attitude is contagious and she will lead a relatively new group of pitchers this season," Pawlak said. The Tigers return their entire infield, so it should be a strength with Adamek at shortstop, Schuster at second base, Siebert at first base and all-conference third baseman Jensen, who hit .315 last season with a .419 on-base percentage. Jensen and all-conference outfielder Leonard, who hit .381 with a .437 on-base percentage, will lead the way offensively. Lutes logged 18 innings in the circle last season and will share pitching duties with sophomore Middle Pool and freshman Pres-

Emily Pearson, jr., SS/2B; Zaida Soriano, jr., OF; Josie Chano, sr., OF.

Worth noting: All-conference selections Kulczynski, a Stenson commit, and Hayes, who will play in college at Elmhurst, lead Willowbrook's returning players. Kenny, who started on Willowbrook's sectional championship volleyball team and West Suburban Gold champion basketball team, is among the top additions to the softball team.

"The last two weeks of practice have shown me the potential this team could reach if we continue to put the work in," Karos said. "Our seniors and juniors are all great leaders that can continue to push and help our underclassmen continue to improve with each practice. Our goal for this season is to compete, decrease mental errors that cost us some games last year and get the ball in play to force teams to play defense. I believe with this lineup we will be able to do that and surprise some teams along the way."

York

Coach: Brendan Holba (third season)
Last year's record: 20-3, 11-1 West Suburban Silver, first place

Top returning players: Emily Fujiwara, sr., 2B; Lindsey Bingham, sr., 3B; Haley Sandoval, sr., OF; Kara Jensen, sr., P/1B; Molly Heiss, jr., OF.

Top new players: Avery Kanoue, jr., P; Caitlin Ledbetter, jr., IF/OF.

Worth noting: The Ducks will have a different look in the circle this season with Suburban Life Player of the Year and All-Stater Lauren Derkowski now at Michigan. A large group of returning players provides a strong core for a team that won a Silver title and reached a sectional final last year. Fujiwara, ICA second-team All-State and York's top Female Junior Athlete last year, hit .400 with nine doubles, seven homers and 28 RBIs and is back to anchor the lineup. Also returning is Bingham, ICA third-team All-State after hitting .392 with seven doubles and 11 RBIs. Sandoval was York's leadoff hitter last season and hit .340