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THURSDAY, JAN. 19, 2023



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Villa Park Review

INSIDE:

Police Reports.....6	Puzzles.....16
Viewpoint.....5	Classifieds.....17

A first-place performance

Senior Sarah Ball of the Willowbrook girls gymnastics team is pictured while approaching the vault during the Warriors' home meet against Addison Trail on Jan. 12. Ball delivered a first-place effort on the vault, receiving a score of 9.4. She finished in a first-place tie on the balance beam and placed second in floor exercises. Ball placed fifth on the uneven bars and finished second to Willowbrook sophomore Naomi Campbell in the all-around standings. Willowbrook defeated Addison Trail 133.95 to 125.05. For more about the meet, see page 3.

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Willowbrook Warriors beat Blazers

Campbell wins on the uneven bars and claims all-around title; Ball wins vault and ties for first on beam

STAFF REPORT

Willowbrook and Addison Trail squared off in last week's girls gymnastics meet in Villa Park. The Warriors earned a victory in the dual meet, outscoring the visiting Blazers 133.95 to 125.05.

Willowbrook sophomore Naomi Campbell finished first in the meet's all-around standings with her total of 35.05. Campbell won the championship on the uneven bars with her score of 8.9. She posted a second-place score of 9.3 on the vault. Campbell delivered fourth-place scores on the balance beam (8.5) and in floor exercises (8.35).

Senior Sarah Ball of the Warriors placed second in the all-around competition with her score of 34.3. Ball turned in a first-place score of 9.4 on the vault.

She tied for first on the balance beam (8.8) and finished second in floor exercises (8.75). Ball posted a fifth-place finish on the uneven bars (7.35).

Willowbrook junior Mia McBride finished third in the all-around scoring with her total of 33.15. McBride placed second on the uneven bars (8.1). She delivered a third-place score of 8.5 in floor exercises and took fifth on the vault (8.7).

Senior Molly Morris of the Warriors placed sixth in the all-around standings with her total of 30.80. Morris tied for third on the vault (8.75) and placed sixth in floor exercises (7.55).

Senior Hanna Mitrick of Willowbrook posted a seventh-place finish in the all-around competition. Mitrick's all-around score of 30.65 included a fifth-place score of 8.2 on the balance beam and a sixth-place score of 8.65 on the vault.

Addison Trail senior Maddie Mucciatti delivered a first-place effort in floor exercises; her routine received a score of 9.0. Mucciatti finished third on the balance beam (8.6) and fourth on the uneven bars (7.8).

Junior Nicolette Franczak of the Blazers tied for first on the balance beam (8.8). Franczak tied for third in the vault (8.75) and placed third on the uneven bars (8.05).

Franczak tied for seventh in floor exercises (7.25). She placed fourth in the all-around standings with her total of 32.85.

Addison Trail sophomore Olivia DeBeau placed fifth in the all-around scoring with her total of 0.9.

DeBeau placed fifth in floor exercises (7.6) and sixth on the balance beam (8.1).



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's girls gymnastics team defeated Addison Trail in last week's dual meet between District 88 rivals in Villa Park. Senior Sarah Ball of the Warriors delivered a first-place score of 9.4 on the vault. Ball and Addison Trail junior Nicolette Franczak tied for first on the balance beam with their scores of 8.8. Ball, who is pictured above during her beam routine, placed second in the meet's all-around standings. Sophomore Naomi Campbell (below) of Willowbrook won the meet's all-around title with her total score of 35.05. Campbell, who is also pictured below on the balance beam, earned a first-place score of 8.9 on the uneven bars. She posted a second-place score of 9.3 on the vault and delivered fourth-place efforts on the balance beam and in floor exercises. Also pictured (above right) is senior Hanna Mitrick of the Warriors. Mitrick is shown during her fifth-place performance on the balance beam. Her routine on the beam received a score of 8.2.



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WE'RE LOVEN THE OVEN

"we have seen amazing things today"

Luke 5:26

God is good, so so good!

2022 dealt a lot of us some serious set backs and sad times, myself included. But, look at all the goodness that accompanied it! We can't forget it, I'll never forget it. We have seen amazing things this year in a time where there is so much toxicity and turmoil surrounding us, I am blown away by the kindness and generosity generated by this community and some of the neighboring communities around us. I had heard of go fund me, even gave to a few of them, but knew nothing about them really. Certainly never thought for a second that I would be on the receiving end of one and it still overwhelms me. Because of so many peoples' crazy selflessness I was able to replace that oven a lot quicker than was ever anticipated. I was able to use the balance to absorb the high increase for the cost of goods without passing it on to you. While I don't know how long that will last, I feel blessed it was possible because of you. Your goodness did not stop there, you continued to spread it throughout the year. Many of our local businesses, old and new, have been kept thriving because of the sacrifices you make to support us. In our community alone, the two holiday food drives hosted by Villa Park Office Equipment and GM Smith & Son Realtors I believe had record breaking success in donations to help stock our local food pantries. And let's not forget our local motorcycle enthusiast who partook in a freezing December parade ride to support Toys for Tots. Who does this? At a time when so many are struggling themselves, who does this? You do! You, this community does. Our faith is so often tested. I know mine has been tested and tested and retested this past year. You have helped me stay focused in my faith in some very trying times. I will forever be grateful to you. I will continue to thank God for the amazing people he has brought into my life by having a business in this community, and shouldered by the awesome communities around us. And I will forever be so, so proud of all of you who do so many good things. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Thank you for everything! I encourage you to stay the course with all of your good deeds. Give to someone if you can. Call someone you haven't spoken to. Hold a door, shovel a walk, share a kind word or a great big smile. Do it all if you can! Do for each other what you have done for me and spread your goodness everywhere you can. Thank you again, for the oven, for your patronage, for your kindness, for everything! Thank you for you! I pray you all have an amazing and blessed 2023!

You have my heart - Dawn from Kuppie's Bakery

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'Young Hearts for Life' coming to Addison Trail High School

Register your child by Feb. 16

Addison Trail has partnered with the Young Hearts for Life® (YH4L) Cardiac Screening Program, a not-for-profit organization, to offer electrocardiograms (ECGs) to identify high school students at risk for heart conditions that can cause sudden cardiac death (SCD).

More than 60 young adults die from SCD each week in the U.S., most without any warning signs. A simple, noninvasive ECG can detect about 70 percent of heart conditions that can cause SCD; a pre-participation can only detect about 4 percent of these conditions.

Edward-Elmhurst Health is generously sponsoring this free, quick and painless cardiac screening for all Addison Trail students. Addison

Trail encourages all parents/guardians to take advantage of this program and to register their child.

Young Hearts for Life free cardiac screenings will take place at Addison Trail on Thursday, Feb. 23 during the school day. The testing is free, but youth must be registered by a parent or guardian at tinyurl.com/YH4LRegistration by Thursday, Feb. 16.

Volunteers are needed to help

run the event. Parents, guardians and members of the community can sign up to volunteer at sign-up.com/go/dPjexNA. Please sign up by Feb. 9.

For more information, contact Denise Arenz at Denise.Arenz@aah.org, or go to www.yh4l.org. You also can contact Dani Brink, D88 director of community relations at dbrink@dupage88.net or 630-530-3989.

Art sale benefits Addison Center for the Arts

Works on display at Village Hall Rotunda through Jan. 27

Spruce up your home or office with original art and help your local art center. Addison Center for the Arts (ACA) makes this easy with their benefit art sale at the Addison Village Hall. The ACA will be offering some gorgeous paintings from the Bruce Peterson Legacy Collection from 9 to 5 in the rotunda through Friday, Jan.

27. The Peterson Legacy Collection was bequeathed to the ACA by Bruce Peterson's family and it is our mission to find each piece a good home. Peterson, a prolific and admired local artist, died four years ago, but his work lives on. The proceeds from this collection will help us to continue to

bring arts programming to Addison and surrounding communities. You can read more about Bruce Peterson and his on the ACA's website under the "Support the Arts" menu heading.

Stop in to browse a sample of the Peterson Legacy Collection. If you can't make it to the Village Hall Monday through Friday business hours,

you can email Julie Mars, director of communications at the ACA, to schedule a time to view the collection on a Saturday or evening. Her email is julie@addisoncenterforthearts.org.

In addition to this art sale, the ACA will have a formal exhibition of Bruce Peterson's artwork opening in May.

Coming events

Editor's note: Unless otherwise specified, learn more about these events and programs at: addisonlibrary.org/events or call 630-543-3617.

Thursday, Jan. 19

• Life through the lens of Kodak

From 7-8 p.m. on Zoom via the Addison Public Library, in 1895, Eastman Kodak was producing 90 percent of all the film in the world. Join us as we meet Kodak founder George Eastman, who will share stories of experiences in his hometown of Rochester, N.Y. and across the country that shaped his life and photography as we know it. You'll also see photos with demonstrations of several distinctive Kodak cameras from 1896-1936, including the famous Brownie camera. Co-sponsored by Addison Historical Society.

Friday, Jan. 20

Free time Fridays

From 11 a.m.-noon at the Adult Program Room of the Addison Public Library. Join us for crafts, games, light refreshments, conversation, and fun with friends old and new. We'll do something different each time we meet and it will always be a fun treat.

Saturday, Jan. 21

Chinese New Year story time with the Language Labs

From 2-2:30 p.m. at the Addison Public Library, learn about the origins of Chinese New Year, share stories, and make a traditional Chinese New Year craft.

Monday, Jan. 23

• Healing pups

From 4-4:45 p.m. at the Addison Public Library, join Claudia Orozco of Healing Pups and her dog Marlie for this special meet and greet. You'll learn all about what therapy dogs do and how they help our community. Limit 10 participants. For grades 1-5.

• Bullet journaling for everyone

From 7-8 p.m. at the Large Meeting Room of the Addison Public Library, join us for an introduction to bullet journaling. We'll have supplies to get you started, or bring your own to share with others while creating a meaningful way to organize and document your life.

Tuesday, Jan. 24

• Nailing the virtual interview

From 10-11 a.m. on Zoom via the Addison Public Library, much of our working life has moved

online, so it's no surprise that virtual interviews have become more common. In this workshop, you'll learn the dos and don'ts of virtual interviews and practice with People's Resource Center (PRC) job coaches.

• Understanding Social Security:

A look at the bigger picture

From 7-8 p.m. at the Large Meeting Room of the Addison Public Library, are you are going to collect Social Security benefits in the next 10 years? In this session, we'll cover when to take benefits, working while getting benefits, taxation and Social Security, and spousal benefits.

• TinkerCAD basics: Keychains

From 6:30-8 p.m. at the Adult Program Room of the Addison Public Library, learn the basics of TinkerCad, an online 3D designing software. During this class, you will learn how to add your name to a 3D keychain.

Wednesday, Jan. 25

• Hot topics round table

From 7-8:30 p.m. at the Large Meeting Room of the Addison Public Library, three hot topics that can range from legal issues, politics, foreign policy, business, education, and more will be discussed. Let your voice be heard during this discussion.

• Nature story time with the Morton

Arboretum

From 10-10:30 a.m. at the Addison Public Library, you're invited to an interactive nature storytime with an early childhood educator from The Morton Arboretum as we explore how weather, trees, and animals change with the season.

Friday, Jan. 27

• Winter wonderland dance party

From 10-10:30 a.m. at the Addison Public Library, join Innovation Arts Connection to discover the magic of imaginative play with singing, exploration, and learning new dance skills. We'll explore multiple styles of dance and read a winter story together. Please wear comfortable clothing and dance shoes if you have them.

• Digital converting: 35mm film, slides and photos

From 1-2 p.m. at the Adult Program Room of the Addison Public Library, learn how to digitize your 35mm film and slides and your print photos using equipment from the library's Sound Studio.

Tuesday, Jan. 31

Retirement tax planning

From 7-8 p.m. at the Large Meeting Room of the Addison Public Library, get the most up-to-date information on retirement taxation, including way to efficiently harvest your income sources like Social Security, 401(k)/IRA, other sources, or a combination of them all.

Ongoing events

Open enrollment is ongoing for the Addison Park District Preschool

The Addison Park District preschool program curriculum reflects the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Visit www.illinoisearlylearning.org for more details. The Park District helps children develop prekindergarten skills, including letter/name recognition, listening skills, healthy habits, cooperative play, fine motor, and socialization skills. The experiences are both educational and recreational, which aid in social, physical, intellectual, and emotional growth. Registration is taken in-person at the Centennial Rec Center. Call (630) 233-7275 option 3 for registration availability. Visit addisonparks.org for required paperwork due prior to first day of program.

English reading circle

Starting at 11 a.m. Tuesdays at the Adult Program Room of the Addison Public Library, build your vocabulary and reading skills in a small group setting.

English conversation groups

At 2 p.m. Mondays on Zoom, and at 7 p.m. Wednesdays at the Adult Program Room of the Addison Public Library, practice listening and speaking skills in a small group setting. Learn more at: addisonlibrary.org/events.

English reading circle

At 11 a.m. Tuesdays at the Adult Program Room of the Addison Public Library. Learn more at: addisonlibrary.org/events.

Heroes story time

From 10-10:30 a.m. at the Addison Public Library, join us for stories and activities about everyday heroes, superheroes, and more.

Clubs and organizations are welcome to send entries for this column to: news1@rvpublishing.com. Please include a phone number or e-mail address to contact for information.

Two Warriors claim individual berths in this week's boys bowling sectional

STAFF REPORT

A pair of Willowbrook bowlers earned individual berths in the upcoming IC Catholic Prep Sectional with their performances during Saturday's Naperville Central Regional at Lisle Lanes.

Seniors Henry Jarrett and Dylan Primdahl secured berths in this

week's IHSA boys sectional by finishing among the regional's top 10 individuals who weren't members of sectional-qualifying teams. The top four teams at the regional in Lisle advanced to the sectional.

Jarrett rolled a six-game series of 1,196 at the regional, while Primdahl fired a six-game total of 1,163. Wil-

lowbrook did not compete as a team at the regional. Jarrett and Primdahl were the only two Warriors who competed in the event.

Jarrett finished 11th among all individuals at the regional. He placed third among the group of 10 bowlers who advanced to the sectional as individuals. Primdahl placed 16th in the

regional's individual standings. He was sixth in the group of individuals who moved on to the sectional.

Jarrett turned in his best game of the regional in his third game, when he rolled a 233. Primdahl delivered his best score of the event when he bowled a 217 in his first game.

The IC Catholic Prep Sectional

takes place this Saturday at Bowlero in Glendale Heights. The sectional's competitors will try to earn berths in the IHSA boys state meet, which will be contested Jan. 27-28 in O'Fallon. The sectional's top seven individuals who aren't members of state-qualifying teams will advance to the state meet.

Warriors suffer narrow loss to Plainfield North

Tigers rally to beat Willowbrook 50-47

STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook girls basketball team's overall season record fell to 10-9 following Saturday's 50-47 loss to Plainfield North at the Coach Kipp's Hoopsfest event at Montini Catholic High School in Lombard.

Playing their first game in seven days, the Warriors took an 11-10 lead through one quarter of the game against Plainfield North. The Warriors led the Tigers 22-19 at half-time and 37-33 at the end of the third quarter.

Willowbrook's lead stood at 41-35 with 6:30 left in the game, but the Tigers made two quick 3-pointers to tie the score at 41-41 with 6:05 to play.

Plainfield North, which made three 3-point shots during the fourth quarter, held a 49-47 lead in the game's closing seconds. The Tigers took the two-point lead after making a pair of free throws with 47.5 seconds on the clock.

Willowbrook missed an inside shot with a few seconds to play. The Tigers grabbed the rebound, and the Warriors committed a foul with three-tenths of a second on the clock. Plainfield North then made one of two free throws. The Tigers deflected Willowbrook's ensuing inbound pass to prevent the Warriors from trying a desperation 3-point shot at the buzzer.

Senior Rimón Kari, who made a pair of 3-point baskets in the first quarter, scored a team-leading 13 points for Willowbrook. Junior Elle Bruschuk scored 12 points and pulled down 13 rebounds. She also handed out five assists in the game, which



Warriors, Seniors Nina Nytko and Yazmin Setaram scored five points each. Nytko's driving basket gave Willowbrook its final lead of the game—a 47-46 advantage with 1:55 remaining. Less than 20 seconds later, the Tigers made one free throw to even the score at 47-47.

Willowbrook's season continues with three home games this week. The Warriors will play West Suburban Gold Conference contests against Addison Trail and Hinsdale South, along with a non-conference game against York. Willowbrook began the week with a conference record of 5-2.

The Warriors opened their conference season with overtime losses to both of this week's West Suburban Gold opponents. Willowbrook lost 60-53 in overtime at Hinsdale South on Nov. 29. The Warriors dropped a 46-44 overtime decision at Addison Trail on Dec. 3. Since losing to the Blazers, the Warriors have reeled off five straight conference wins.



was one of eight contests played at the Coach Kipp's Hoopsfest event at Montini on Saturday.

Senior Sara Stout provided 12 points and eight rebounds for the



Willowbrook's girls basketball team lost 50-47 to Plainfield North in Saturday afternoon's game at the Coach Kipp's Hoopsfest event at Montini Catholic High School in Lombard. The loss to the Tigers sent the Warriors' overall season record to 10-9. Senior Rimón Kari (No. 30 - above) scored a team-leading 13 points for Willowbrook. Senior Sara Stout (No. 15 - top left) and junior Elle Bruschuk (No. 33 - left) scored 12 points each for the Warriors. Willowbrook's schedule this week features home games against Addison Trail, York and Hinsdale South.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's boys basketball team fell to 4-12 overall and 0-4 in the West Suburban Gold Conference following Friday's 77-69 loss to Proviso East in Villa Park. Senior Noah Campbell (No. 25 - below) scored a team-high 28 points for the Warriors. Campbell made four 3-point shots and sank all four of his free-throw attempts. He scored 13 of his team's 16 first-quarter points and provided nine of the Warriors' 11 fourth-quarter points. Senior Jaylin Brown (No. 20 - above) supplied seven points for Willowbrook.

Warriors fall to the Pirates

Campbell piles up 28 points in Willowbrook's loss to Proviso East

STAFF REPORT

The Willowbrook boys basketball team lost 77-69 to Proviso East in Friday night's West Suburban Gold Conference game in Villa Park. The Warriors slipped to 4-12 overall and 0-4 in conference play.

Proviso East led Willowbrook 24-16 after one quarter and 45-35 at halftime. The Pirates maintained a 69-58 advantage at the end of the third quarter.

Proviso East led the Warriors 70-58 with less than seven minutes to play. Willowbrook senior Noah Campbell drained a 3-point shot—his fourth 3-pointer of the game—to cut the Pirates' lead to 70-61 with six minutes remaining. About 20 seconds later, Campbell's driving layup trimmed the Pirates' lead to 70-63.

Senior Isaac Sobieszczyk delivered an inside basket for the Warriors to reduce Proviso East's lead to 72-65 with about 4:50 to play. Another driving basket from Campbell cut Proviso East's lead to 72-67 with about four minutes left in the game. Campbell went to the free-throw line and made both attempts to drop the Pirates' lead to 72-69 with 2:40 remaining.

Proviso East closed the game with a 5-0 run.



Campbell poured in a team-leading 28 points for the Warriors in Friday's loss. Campbell made three 3-point baskets in the first quarter. He scored 13 of his team's 16 first-quarter points.

See WARRIORS, Page 14



Per the Illinois State Board of Education report, last year, 57 percent of DuPage County's public high school students failed the English and language arts portion of the SAT. Willowbrook High School and Glenbard East High School had the fourth worst failure rate at 72 percent each (out of 23 schools). We are getting poor educational value for the high property taxes we pay for our schools. There must be an obvious reason for this high failure rate and dramatic recent change, likely related to school board edict, curriculum change, educator quality and motivation, or student demographics. Someone must be held accountable, as this can't continue.

I accept Biden's 2020 election like I accept the inflated home run totals of Sammy Sosa and several other "sluggers" from the late 1990s and early 2000s. The home run totals of that era in baseball are suspicious, tainted and bizarre. I suspect that's how more people will view the 2020 election.

Guest commentator Ben Ruddell of the ACLU (Jan. 12 issue) says "The campaign against ending money bond has really been about denying justice to people accused of crimes, to treat them as guilty before any court has adjudicated the charge." I believe he is saying some people are held simply because they cannot pay the bond, and yet might be innocent. He goes on to say that people have been held for "lengthy periods of time" because they cannot afford bail. But where does one (the judge?) draw the line at releasing someone on their own recognition or with low bail; non-violent offenses like felony-level shoplifting or burglary? Hit and run? Attempted murder? To Ruddell's point, then, should people accused of attempted murder, arson, etc., be allowed out on bail because they might be innocent and are being held in jail unjustly? He accuses "recalcitrant system actors" of spreading misinformation, but I have to wonder, is

Armed robbery reported at Lombard Dunkin Donuts

An armed robbery involving two suspects was reported at a Dunkin Donuts restaurant in the 1-100 block of E. St. Charles at around 5:41 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 7.

According to the Lombard Police Department, the two suspects, described as black males wearing all black clothing and masks, entered the business, displayed handguns and demanded cash from the register. They

this legislation so convoluted that it cannot be adequately explained or spelled out—even among intelligent people—so that everyone can understand it, then form an opinion based on fact and truth?

Our country's air-traffic system needs work, but don't worry, our transportation department is tackling the important issues, like pronouns and gender-neutral language.

Biden claims he doesn't know how classified materials ended up in his office and garage. He reminds me of the famous Sergeant Schultz line from Hogan's Heroes—"I know nothing." It sounds like Biden's son Hunter had access to his dad's garage and office. Hunter, by the way, was paid millions in shady deals involving China and Ukraine. When will the FBI raid Biden's home and office?

I'm glad the Buffalo Bills player is improving after he collapsed during the football game in Cincinnati on Jan. 2. It was comforting that so many people were united in praying for him. When there's a tragic event, some people in the media mock "thoughts and prayers" for the people who are suffering.

I knew the gas tax was going up at the beginning of the year, but I thought it was only by about 3 cents per gallon, according to several reports. Well, the price has been slowly creeping up; 10 cents here, 10 cents there, now up 50 cents a gallon from a few weeks ago. That is not all the gas tax. This inflation is devastating to those of us on fixed incomes.

I support the assault weapons ban in Illinois that was passed and signed (by Gov. JB Pritzker last week). Any gun owner I've ever known is law-abiding and responsible. Having said that, I see no valid reason for anyone to own an assault weapon. Last year's Fourth of July parade in Highland Park proved how deadly these types of weapons can be when

also reportedly took wallets from customers and employees, and then left the location in a dark colored SUV.

Police Chief Roy Newton said the suspects took approximately \$200 in cash from the register.

"This was a quick incident and they (suspects) did take some property from the victims," Newton said. "We (the police department) are in the investigation stage."

in the wrong hands.

Democrats recently released six years of Trump's tax returns. Guess what, there's no revelation of criminal activity, improper relations with Russia, etc. Once again, Democrats' narrative has fallen flat. Yet many dim bulbs, including some Speak Out contributors, will still believe all of the left-wing nonsense about Trump. These same people will probably gripe about any investigations into Biden's shady finances.

Why did Biden's lawyers start looking for classified documents in the first place if Joe didn't even know they existed?

I had highly classified information in my garage, but it's OK, because my garage was locked. That's reassuring, Joe. Can you imagine if Trump had said what Biden said? He would have been mocked on morning shows, network news shows, late-night talk shows, etc. But Joe's a Democrat, so he'll get a pass.

Hello all to the houses of worship and clergy in the Lombard in Villa Park area. Let's help our friends down at the border. I bet we could fill up a couple of buses and bring them up here—the people in need



Senior Joey Tumilty (No. 1) contributed five points. The Warriors will play conference games at Hinsdale South and Addison Trail this week. They will also face Glenbard East in this Saturday's non-conference contest in Lombard.

• Warriors

(Continued from page 7)

Campbell provided nine of Wilton's 11 points in the fourth quarter. He finished the game with 10 field goals, including four shots from 3-point range. He sank all four of his free-throw attempts.

Sobieszczyk contributed 12 points and 11 rebounds. Seniors Luke Davis and Jaylin Brown added eight and seven points, respectively. Senior Joey Tumilty scored five points.

The Warriors' schedule this week includes conference games at Hinsdale South and Addison Trail, as well as this Saturday's non-conference battle at Glenbard East in Lombard.

of housing and each congregation could adopt a family and put them up someplace and help out with the situation. Thank you.

Great blue state, isn't it? JB's done it again, raising your taxes, and now infringing on the rights of civilians who want to protect themselves, protect your daughter from getting assaulted. So let's do a knee-jerk response to all the crime like what's going on in Chicago and the other big cities around the U.S. Let's ban guns. Let's go soft on criminals, all you people. As a former police of-

ficer, I think this is ridiculous. And apparently so do most of the sheriffs in Illinois outside of Cook County. That's C-R-O-O-K. Absolutely ridiculous, and I know the soccer moms probably jumped on this. Let's save the children. It's not us that are causing the problems. You think this is going to work? How ridiculous. Do you think people are going to listen? Do you think people are going to comply? Get a brain.

To grocery stores: we don't want coupons, digital or otherwise. Enough already please.

After stepping down as minority leader, Durkin to exit Illinois House

Suburban Republican says party has moved too far right

By Peter Hancock

CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS
Illinois House Republican Leader Jim Durkin left the Illinois Statehouse Jan. 12 for the last time as a state legislator.

After a bruising 2022 election cycle in which House Republicans lost five seats, Durkin did not seek another term as leader of the caucus. But on Jan. 23, the final scheduled day of the 102nd General Assembly, he resigned his seat altogether, and he left with some less-than-complimentary words for his own party.

"When you're in Springfield, numbers matter, and this is a game of addition. And unfortunately, we've been playing the game of subtraction on a statewide level," he said during a final news conference in his Statehouse office. "And that's not going to help this party."

Durkin, of Western Springs, was first appointed to the House in 1995, a time when Republicans were highly competitive in the Chicago suburbs and other parts of Illinois. He chose not to run for reelection in 2002 when the decennial legislative remap plan put him in the same district with another Republican, instead making an unsuccessful run against Democratic U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin.

In 2006, Durkin returned to Springfield via another appointment by party leaders before being elected to the 82nd District seat. His successor will be chosen in that same appointment process, a method Durkin acknowledged isn't perfect but contended is better than holding a special election.

A self-described moderate Republican, Durkin twice served as the Illinois chairman for U.S. Sen. John McCain's presidential campaigns. But during his time in office, he witnessed the national GOP move further to the right and the base of the state party move further toward southern Illinois—a move that at times put him at odds with his own caucus.

Most recently, he was the only Republican in the House to vote in favor of an assault weapons ban Jan. 12.

"I've been called a RINO (Republican in Name Only). That's fine. I wear that as a badge of honor. It's kind of funny," he said. "But if they really looked at my voting record, it doesn't reflect that."

Durkin said that as his party became more conservative, it also became more intransigent and less willing to

compromise on key issues, even to the point of punishing members who did not measure up to what he called a "purity test" imposed by conservatives.

"Again, this purity test that some of the people in this party demand, it's just... it's nonsense," he said. "It's absurd. And it's going to further damage the Republican brand."

The split between Durkin and the conservative wing of the party was evident during the 2022 election cycle when Durkin refused to endorse state Sen. Darren Bailey's campaign for governor. During the primary, he endorsed Aurora Mayor Richard Irvin, but Bailey ended up winning the nomination, only to lose to incumbent Democrat JB Pritzker by 12.5 percentage points.

But it was also evident in his public criticisms of former President Donald Trump, whom Durkin blamed for much of the party's losses in 2022.

"You know, he had an opportunity to do good things, but he turned into a bully," Durkin said. "And he doesn't understand that there's a Constitution which requires a peaceful transition of the office. He just can't get over it. But he is a person that still gets into the minds of so many people throughout the country, and it's wrong."

Durkin said he plans to return to his private law practice in the Chicago area, but he also plans to continue giving speeches and offering his opinions on issues he thinks are important.

As for the future of the Illinois Republican Party, Durkin said he sees plenty of young talent within the House GOP caucus, including some who are leaving office.

He pointed specifically to people that were part of his leadership team—outgoing Rep. Tom Demmer, of Dixon, who ran unsuccessfully for state treasurer; outgoing Rep. Avery Bourne, of Morrisville, who ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor; Rep. Ryan Spain, of Peoria; and his successor in the leader's office, Rep. Tony McCombie, of Savanna.

"What's really important for me has been to develop young talent," he said. "It didn't work out for Tom or Avery, but I still consider them the future of the party. They're young. They brought a lot to the table. They were well-liked, well-spoken and respected. And I still hope that those two and Ryan and Tony all have something to offer the state on a larger scale."