



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

Play ball

Senior Colin Slivka (No. 1) of the Willowbrook baseball team fires a pitch during the Warriors' recent home opener against Bartlett. Willowbrook defeated Bartlett 5-2 in the March 22 contest, which was called after five innings due to darkness and rain. Willowbrook opened its 2023 season with a 9-6 loss at Glenbrook South on March 21. The Warriors' season opener in Glenview was shortened to five innings because of darkness. Slivka pitched two innings for the Warriors during the home victory over Bartlett. Senior Alex Chaitin pitched the first three innings of the game for Willowbrook. Neither pitcher allowed an earned run. Chaitin, who gave up one hit, struck out six batters and issued three walks. Slivka, who allowed two hits, recorded two strikeouts and walked one batter. The Warriors improved to 2-1 with a 9-0 victory over Glenbard South at Lee Pfund Stadium in Carol Stream on March 27. Willowbrook sophomore Sam Marrese went 2-for-2 and drove in three runs in last week's win over the Raiders. Slivka went 2-for-2 and scored two runs. Senior Isaac Sobieszczyk went 2-for-2 and drove in one run. Junior Gabe Ness pitched the first four innings for Willowbrook in the shutout win over Glenbard South. Senior Eddie Munson pitched the final three innings. Ness allowed two hits and struck out one batter. Munson gave up one hit and recorded seven strikeouts. The Warriors, who played a couple of games in Tennessee during their spring break trip last week, will open their West Suburban Gold Conference season with this week's three-game series against Downers Grove South. This week's schedule also includes non-conference games against Lake Park and Oak Park/River Forest.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Season opener

Willowbrook's boys volleyball team began its 2023 season with a March 21 home match against Glenbard East. The visiting Rams defeated the Warriors 25-15, 22-25, 25-14 in Villa Park. One photo from the match shows Willowbrook senior Patrick Dasbach (No. 15 - above), who hammered a team-leading six kills against the Rams. Another photo shows junior Andrew Ciesinski (No. 32 - left), who delivered two kills for the Warriors. Not pictured is junior Carter Ferguson, who handed out a team-high 13 assists. Willowbrook fell to 0-2 following a three-game home loss to Glenbard South on March 23. The Warriors won the first game of that match, but the visiting Raiders rallied for a 19-25, 25-19, 25-17 victory. Willowbrook opened its West Suburban Gold Conference season earlier this week, when it played a home match against Hinsdale South. The Warriors will finish the week by competing at Warren High School's invitational in Gurnee. The invitational begins today and ends on Saturday.

•Parole (Continued from page 4)

"The 3,251 current inmates who were sentenced prior to June 1, 2019, or Jan. 1, 2024, should have the opportunity (for parole review)," Lewis said in committee. "That is the essence of this bill."

The measure passed out of committee on a 7-3 vote and awaits action from the full House.

The push to abolish youth imprisonment for life follows five U.S. Supreme Court decisions that found "children are constitutionally different from adults in their levels of culpability." One 2012 ruling found life sentences for those under the age of 18 violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment. Lewis' bill is the latest in a series of moves re-examining sentences for young people in Illinois.

The Rev. Lindsey Hammond, policy director at Restore Justice, a non-partisan statewide organization that advocates for criminal legal reform, testified that juveniles are more capable of rehabilitation as they "grow and mature."

"Many people convicted of crimes as children and young adults will age out of crime and not commit crimes later in life," Hammond said. "People

who receive extreme sentences as children and youth are uniquely capable of change and therefore recidivate at extremely low rates."

Jennifer Bishop-Jenkins with Marsy's Law for Illinois, an organization that advocates for crime victims' rights, testified against the bill. Jenkins said the bill as drafted doesn't do enough to ensure victims or their families will be notified when an individual becomes eligible for parole.

"In the case of a retroactive change in the law, you have to do it differently," Jenkins said in an interview. "You have to make sure that everybody that's going to be affected is found and notified and heard from."

Currently, the bill states the Prisoner Review Board must provide notice to the victims or victims' families by certified mail before the parole hearing date.

Jenkins said this wasn't enough, instead suggesting the court of origin should handle the notification rather than the Prisoner Review Board.

Committee chair and state Sen. Elgie Sims, D-Chicago, said there would need to be a commitment to continue conversations on the bill for the committee to pass it.



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Juveniles charged with possession of stolen vehicle, leading Villa Park officers on high-speed chase

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and Villa Park Chief of Police Mike Rivas announced that two Aurora juveniles, one of which was allegedly armed, have been accused of leading police on a high-speed chase in a stolen car.

Both juveniles appeared recently at a detention where Judge Demetrios Panoushis ordered that they be detained until at least their next court appearance. One of the juveniles, a 17-year-old male, is charged with one count of possession of a stolen motor vehicle (Class 2 felony), one count of aggravated fleeing and eluding a police officer (Class 4 felony) and two counts of misdemeanor reckless driving. The other juvenile, a 15-year-old male, is charged with three counts of unlawful use of a weapon (Class 4 felony) and one count of misdemeanor criminal trespass to a vehicle.

On March 21 at approximately 9:55 a.m., a Villa Park police officer located a car that was reported stolen out of Naperville the previous day traveling eastbound on Roosevelt Road. The officer activated his emergency lights and attempted to pull over the vehicle, a Honda CRV.

It is alleged that instead of pulling over, the Honda fled from the officer at times reaching speeds in excess of 100 mph. It is alleged that the pursuit continued along I-88 and I-290 where the driver exited the expressway on 25th Avenue. It is further alleged that the pursuit ended when the

CRV came to a dead end on Derby Lane in Westchester, at which time the juveniles fled on foot.

The juveniles were located in a barber shop approximately one quarter mile away and taken into custody. Through the course of the arrest, officers located a loaded Polymer 80 9mm handgun without a serial number, underneath a pile of wood along the route the juveniles allegedly ran when they fled.

It is alleged that one of the juveniles was previously in possession of the handgun and attempted to hide it from authorities when he fled.

"We have seen time and again that subjects allegedly in possession of a stolen vehicle will be in possession of a weapon to be used to commit more violent crime in our communities," Rivas said. "Based on this repetitive behavior, and relationship between stolen vehicles and additional violent crimes committed, the Villa Park Police Department will use every resource at our disposal to go after subjects in stolen vehicles."

"A stolen vehicle, fleeing from police at a high rate of speed, places everyone in danger in their path. We urge everyone to stop and pull to the right for emergency lights and siren for everyone's safety. We commend our police officer for his vigilance and bravery in pursuing the stolen vehicle in this case."

The juveniles' next court appearance was scheduled for March 30 in front of Judge Panoushis.

Bill aims to guarantee youth sentenced to life in prison a chance at parole after 40 years

Measure would extend recently signed law retroactively for all individuals sentenced while under 21

By Nika Schoonover
CAPITOL NEWS ILLINOIS
Illinois lawmakers advanced a bill recently that would effectively abolish life sentences for any incarcerated individual who was under the age of 21 when they received their sentence.

In January, Gov. JB Pritzker signed a law that makes any individual who was under the age of 21 when sentenced to life in prison eligible for parole review after they served 40 years or more of their sentence. But, the measure only

applied to those sentenced on or after June 1, 2019.

Senate Bill 2073, carried by Republican Sen. Seth Lewis, of Bartlett, would extend the measure retroactively to apply to any currently incarcerated individual who was sentenced before turning 21. The law signed by Pritzker in January takes effect Jan. 1, 2024, and SB 2073 would be effective July 1, 2024.

See PAROLE, Page 7

Willowbrook Music Boosters to hold Trivia Night event on April 15

Deadline to register is April 12

The Willowbrook Music Boosters Club will hold its annual Trivia Night at the school on Saturday, April 15. The event will take place from 7 to 10 p.m. Check-in will begin at 6 p.m.

The registration and payment deadline for this year's Trivia Night is Wednesday, April 12.

All Willowbrook students, parents/guardians, alumni, staff, community members and friends are

invited to participate. Teams should consist of eight to 10 players. The entry fee is \$100 per team. Proceeds will go toward scholarships, grants and other music department needs.

The evening will also feature raffles and prizes, including a prize for the team with the best theme.

To register, and for full event details, visit <https://tinyurl.com/WB-TriviaNight2023>.



SUBMITTED PHOTO: Rock Valley Publishing

Amelia Tortorici receives 88's Best honor for March

Willowbrook High School senior Amelia Tortorici was named her school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of March. Tortorici was honored during the District 88 Board of Education's March 20 meeting. She is pictured (right) at the meeting with Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause (left). The 88's Best award recognizes students for their achievements in and out of the classroom. In addition to being an academic standout in Willowbrook's Class of 2023, Tortorici shines on the stage as a distinguished member of the school's choral and theater programs. Tortorici has been named to Willowbrook's Distinction Honor Roll in each semester of her time in high school. She is a member of the National Honor Society, the National English Honor Society, the National Math Honor Society, the Tri-M (Modern Music Masters) Honor Society, the World Language Honor Society and Willowbrook's social studies honor society—Civitas. Tortorici is the captain of Willowbrook's speech team. She's also the president of the school's Key Club, which focuses on community service. Throughout her four years at Willowbrook, Tortorici has excelled on the stage. Earlier this year, she was named an All-State Musician by the Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA). As an All-State Musician, Tortorici performed in the Honors Chorus (Alto II) at the Illinois Music Education Conference in Peoria in January. Tortorici sang the national anthem at the recent IHSA girls state basketball tournament in Normal. She was also a cast member of Willowbrook's IHSA contest play—"Proof"—which placed fifth at the IHSA state drama competition that took place March 24-25. Tortorici will attend the University of Dayton. She plans to pursue a career as a secondary education teacher.

Villa Park Police investigate armed robbery at tobacco store on St. Charles Road

Suspects tied up store clerk; took cash and merchandise before fleeing

The Villa Park Police Department is investigating an armed robbery that occurred at the Tobacco Hut located at 543 E. St. Charles Road in Villa Park on Tuesday, March 28, at approximately 11:45 a.m.

During this incident, three suspects, one of whom was armed with a handgun, entered the store and forced the store clerk to the floor. The clerk was then tied up while the suspects removed cash and merchandise from the store.

The suspects fled eastbound on St. Charles Road in a brown/bronze colored GMC Terrain with an Illinois temporary dealer plate #7750A.

The Villa Park Police Department is seeking the public's assistance to identify the suspects and vehicle involved in the incident. If anyone has information about this case, call 630-834-7447 or send an email to police@invillapark.com.

Suburban Life

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



ASHLYNN DURKIN

Downers Grove North, sophomore, softball

Why Durkin was selected: Durkin threw a one-hit shutout with 13 strikeouts in Downers Grove North's 10-0 win over Nazareth. Durkin had 13 strikeouts in a two-hit shutout against Neuqua Valley. She was selected the Athlete of the Week in an online vote.

Here is Durkin's interview with Sports Editor Joshua Welge.

Welge: Are 13 strikeouts a career high?

Durkin: Yes, that is my career high in high school. I was injured my freshman year and didn't play.

Welge: What was working for you in that Nazareth game?

Durkin: I was able to work around the plate to batters, throwing inside, outside and up, down.

Welge: What pitches do you throw and how would you describe yourself as a pitcher?

Durkin: I throw a curve, screw, rise-ball and change-up. I'm pretty calm in the circle and have a good mindset. I'm confident and trust in my teammates to back me up.

Welge: How old were you when you started softball? How did you get started?

Durkin: I started playing softball in

kindergarten for the Downers Grove DOLLS. My dad coached me when I was younger.

Welge: Do you play any other sports?

Durkin: I don't play any other sports. I used to play volleyball, but I decided to focus on softball.

Welge: Do you have any pre-game routines or superstitions?

Durkin: On the way to games I like to listen to music. Prior to pitching I like to warm up with plyos and I have a certain softball that I like to warm up with.

Welge: Do you have a favorite TV show or movie?

Durkin: My favorite TV show is "Criminal Minds."

Welge: What's your favorite meal that your parents or a family member make?

Durkin: My favorite meal is chicken, broccoli and rice that I take for lunch most days.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Willowbrook's Calli Kenny commits to Marquette

Willowbrook junior Calli Kenny, who led the high school program to its first sectional title as a sophomore and followed that with a 36-win season last fall, made a verbal commitment to Marquette on Monday.

Kenny joins a Marquette program coming off a 29-4 season and reaching the NCAA Tournament regional semifinals for the second time in school history after earning a Big East Conference championship.

This past fall, Kenny had a team-high 260 kills, 236 digs, team-high 79 aces (breaking her school record), 323 assists and 29 blocks.

IC Catholic's Eric Karner commits to Purdue

Eric Karner couldn't let the Purdue train pass him by.

Karner, a junior tight end for IC Catholic, received his first college scholarship offer from Western Michigan and then watched his recruitment skyrocket with 12 offers. But once he visited West Lafayette, Indiana, and met the Boilermakers coaching staff, Karner knew he needed to jump on the young coaching staff's momentum and committed March 7.

"It's unreal," Karner said. "A couple months ago, I didn't think that I would be in this position. It's crazy that I found a place with a coaching staff like Purdue. It's honestly a blessing."

NEWS BRIEF

Former congresswoman named new CEO at Little City

Former U.S. Rep. Marie Newman has been hired as the new CEO of Little City. Based in Palatine, Little City provides services to people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Newman will take the reins April 17 from CEO Shawn Jeffers, who is retiring after 20 years in the position, according to a news release from the agency.

Newman, a La Grange Democrat, represented Illinois' 3rd Congressional District from 2021 to 2023. After redistricting, she ran for the 6th Congressional



Marie Newman

District seat and lost the Democratic primary to U.S. Rep. Sean Casten.

She has a bachelor's degree in journalism with a business minor from the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Newman created a national coalition of 70 nonprofits to combat bullying after one of her children was bullied, which influenced a presidential executive order to require all schools to implement anti-bullying programs, according to the news release.

"My personal dedication to Little City's mission dates to when I first volunteered with my family in my formative years for the organization and when two of my cousins received Little City's services," she said. "These memories are still vibrant and guide me today."

- Daily Herald

OBITUARIES

GARY L. JOHNSON

Gary L. Johnson, 78, of Westmont, passed on 03/30/2023.

Arrangements entrusted to Cappetta's West Suburban Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Westmont. Additional information: Info 630-852-8000 or westsuburbanfh.com.

GAIL PRATL

Gail Pratl, 81, of Plainfield, passed on 04/01/2023.

Arrangements entrusted to Cappetta's West Suburban Funeral Home & Cremation Services, Downers Grove. Additional information: Info 630-852-8000 or westsuburbanfh.com.

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