

# Villa Park REVIEW

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THURSDAY, NOV. 23, 2023

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CHRIS FOX PHOTO Villa Park Review

## Curtain call

Willowbrook High School presented its fall musical—Disney's "The Little Mermaid"—last week. There were three performances—one on Thursday, Nov. 16, one on Friday and one on Saturday. The photo from the end of Friday's performance shows (foreground) Junior Gillian Falco, who portrayed Ariel, standing near senior Sean O'Brochta, who played Prince Eric, while other cast members look on.

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## Pre-trial release denied for Chicago man on bond for attempted murder charged with fleeing Oak Brook police

*Defendant allegedly robbed a woman with her infant at gunpoint in the Woodfield Mall parking lot*

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and Oak Brook Chief of Police Brian Strockis have announced that Judge Brian Jacobs granted the state's motion to deny pre-trial release for a Chicago man accused of fleeing police after allegedly robbing a woman at gunpoint in Schaumburg.



Jaquan Wilkins

Jaquan Wilkins, 28, appeared in First Appearance Court recently and is charged with one count of illegal possession of a firearm (Class 3 felony), one count of criminal damage to state supported property (Class 3 felony), one count of aggravated fleeing and eluding (Class 4 felony) and one count of aggravated unlawful use of a weapon (Class 4 felony).

On Nov. 9, at approximately 2 p.m., officers with the Oak Brook Police Department received information that an individual who allegedly had just committed an armed robbery of a woman with her infant at the Woodfield Mall parking lot in Schaumburg—later identified as Wilkins—was at the Oak Brook mall.

Officers located the suspected vehicle, a gray Mazda 6, and attempted

to box the vehicle in at which time the Mazda, allegedly driven by Wilkins, fled the mall parking lot eastbound on 22nd Street. Officers activated their emergency lights and sirens and initiated a pursuit of the vehicle.

It is alleged that Wilkins continued to flee the police, crashed into two vehicles, and continued to flee westbound on I-88. It is further alleged that officers with the Downers Grove Police Department picked up pursuit of the vehicle southbound on Highland Avenue. It is further alleged that Wilkins continued to flee authorities eastbound on Ogden Avenue where officers spiked his car.

It is alleged that while on Ogden Avenue, Wilkins threw a loaded Glock 43 9mm firearm out of his window. The weapon was later recovered by authorities.

It is alleged that Wilkins then struck an occupied unmarked police car before coming to a stop. Oak Brook police officers took Wilkins into custody at this time.

Wilkins is currently out on bond out of Will County on attempted murder and aggravated battery charges filed prior to enactment of the Safe-T-Act, which went into effect on Sept. 18.

"The apprehension of the defendant in this case is a textbook example of

law enforcement agencies working together to keep our communities safe," Berlin said. "These collaborative efforts not only took a gun off the streets, but also resulted in the capture of a man suspected of robbing a woman at gunpoint. We are all thankful that the woman in the Schaumburg case was not physically hurt as well as the officers involved in the pursuit or any innocent motorists or bystanders. I thank the Oak Brook Police Department for their outstanding work on this case and for their continued efforts in keeping our neighborhoods safe. I thank the Downers Grove, Elmhurst, Hinsdale, and Schaumburg police departments for their assistance as well."

"This was a perfect example of collaboration between multiple police agencies to get a violent criminal in custody," Strockis said. "The Oak Brook police department continues to utilize our technology driven, proactive policing efforts to keep our community safe. We will not tolerate violent criminals that believe they can flee from the police without consequence. I'm grateful that no officers were seriously injured in the offender's reckless efforts to elude arrest."

Wilkins' next court appearance is scheduled for Dec. 4, for arraignment in front of Judge Brian Telandier.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Halloween costume contest at Cortesi Park

The cold weather didn't stop the crowds from showing up Saturday, Oct. 28, at Cortesi Park in Villa Park for the annual Halloween Costume Contest. Once again the fun event featured several celebrity judges, including Villa Park Village President Nick Cuzzone and Villa Park Fire Chief Steve Stapleton, along with comedian Matt Kissane as emcee. The Villa Avenue Trick or Treat was sponsored by several area businesses, including Mike's Meat Market and Michael Anthony's Restaurant. Kissane is pictured introducing contestants.

## Willowbrook presents its fall musical this week

Willowbrook High School invites the community to take a journey under the sea and experience the school's fall musical, Disney's "The Little Mermaid," this week.

There will be three performances of the musical in the school's auditorium. The first will be tonight, Thursday, Nov. 16. There will also be one performance on Friday, Nov. 17, and one on Saturday, Nov. 18. Each performance begins at 7 p.m.

The story tells the classic tale of transitioning from youth to adulthood—discovering who you are and

where you belong, falling in love and finding your voice.

Ariel is a 16-year-old mermaid who longs for adventure and to explore the world beyond her home in the waves. While on an excursion to the shore, Ariel saves a young man (Prince Eric) during a shipwreck, and an instant connection forms between the two.

When Ariel's father, King Triton, finds out she disobeyed his orders to stay away from land and humans, he destroys her precious collection of items from the world up above.

Devastated, Ariel makes a dangerous deal with the sea witch, Ursula, and risks it all for the life she desires.

Junior Gillian Falco plays Ariel and said she's thrilled to portray her "favorite princess."

"I hope the children in the audience feel a connection to the character like I had growing up and that I can provide them with a sliver of the joy I always experienced when I watched this show," Falco said. "We're able to add a level of depth and humanness by bringing the story to life on stage. It's an opportunity

to rediscover that childhood wonder, and we can all relate to Ariel trying to figure out her path—especially after the impact of COVID-19."

Senior Sean O'Brochta, who plays Prince Eric, said he recently watched the cartoon version of "The Little Mermaid" for the first time.

"People can expect to see the story they know and love, but it will be an enhanced version, with expanded scenes and music," O'Brochta said. "When people leave, I want them to have the iconic songs stuck in their head for days."

Tickets cost \$10 for adults (13 years old and older) and \$5 for children (12 years old and younger). Admission is free for those with a District 88 Student ID or a District 88 Senior Gold Card.

Tickets for the musical can be ordered online at <https://www.dupage88.net/site/page/15745>. Tickets will also be available outside of the auditorium.

For more information about the musical, contact Willowbrook Theater Director Regina Wathier at [rwathier@dupage88.net](mailto:rwathier@dupage88.net).

## Police Reports

The Villa Park Police Department recently reported the following arrests and citations. Readers are reminded that an arrest does not constitute a conviction, and that suspects are considered innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Persons charged with domestic battery are not named in order to protect the privacy of victims. Juveniles age 17 or younger are not named.

### Nov. 4

A 29-year-old Maywood man was charged with two counts of domestic battery at a hotel in the 1-100 block of W. Roosevelt at 2:36 a.m.

### Nov. 3

Nicholas R. Krentiras, 30, of Arlington Heights, was charged with two counts of DUI and improper lane usage near Villa and St. Charles at 1:39 a.m.

### Nov. 2

Fabian, Pena, 29, of Elgin, was charged with two counts of DUI near

W. North and Westwood at 5:07 a.m. A complainant in the 300 block of N. Yale reported that suspects threatened them on Halloween.

### Nov. 1

Police said Larry Heredia, 49, of Lombard, was arrested on an original complaint and warrant on the above date for theft of labor, services or use of property for an incident that allegedly occurred Oct. 22 at a restaurant in the 400 block of W. St. Charles.

Police said a 23-year-old Villa Park man was arrested on an original complaint and warrant for two counts of domestic battery on the above date for incidents that allegedly occurred on Oct. 25.

A 29-year-old Chicago man was charged with unlawful restraint and two counts of domestic battery at a hotel in the 1-100 block of W. Roosevelt at 10:38 a.m.

A complainant at a store in the 100 block of W. Roosevelt reported that un-

known suspects removed sweatshirts that were inadvertently left behind on a clothing rack.

### Oct. 31

Police said Eric L. Jones, 27, of Calumet Park, was arrested on an original complaint and warrant for obstructing identification on the above date for an alleged incident that occurred Dec. 27, 2021. Police said Jones also was arrested on the above date on an original complaint and warrant for fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer in a vehicle, no valid driver's license and disobeying a stop sign that allegedly occurred Dec. 28, 2021.

### Oct. 30

Jorge F. Rodriguez, 22, of Addison, was charged with two counts of attempted unauthorized possession of a vehicle title, registration and license plates, no valid registration, no insurance and operating a vehicle with foreign dealer plates to/from Illinois

without being here for repairs near N. Grace and E. North at 9:10 p.m.

A complainant in the 500 block of W. Division reported that an unknown subject removed laundry that was left behind in the laundry room.

A complainant in the 700 block of E. Madison reported at 5:35 p.m. that an unknown suspect damaged a section of fence around a building generator.

### Oct. 29

A 38-year-old Villa Park man was charged with two counts of domestic battery in the 400 block of W. Division at 1:38 a.m.

A complainant at an establishment in the 300 block of E. Kenilworth reported at 2:16 a.m. that an unknown suspect battered them.

A complainant at an entertainment center in the 700 block of W. North reported at 8:22 p.m. that subjects were causing a disturbance in the parking lot.

A complainant in the 300 block of

N. 2nd reported at 9:45 p.m. that a suspect would not stop contacting them via text messages.

### Oct. 28

A complainant at a store in the 900 block of S. Route 83 reported two juvenile suspects removed items from display shelves and left the store without paying. The complainant does not want to press charges and only wanted the suspects trespassing. Officers spoke with the suspects, and they were trespassing.

### Oct. 23

A complainant at Willowbrook High School reported at 11:49 a.m. that they were battered by a subject.

### Fraud, identity theft

According to information provided by the Villa Park Police Department, police reported one incident of residents being a victim of fraud or identity theft.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

## Fall musical at Willowbrook

Willowbrook High School presented its fall musical last week. The cast and crew of the school's theater department gave three performances of Disney's "The Little Mermaid" from Nov. 16-18.



## Illinois State Police to conduct alcohol countermeasure enforcement patrols throughout November

Illinois State Police (ISP) Troop 15 Acting Commander Ken Benson announces the ISP will conduct Alcohol Countermeasure Enforcement (ACE) patrols in Cook and DuPage counties during November.

ACE patrols allow the ISP to focus on preventing, detecting and taking enforcement action in response to violations associated with impaired driving and illegal transportation or consumption of alcohol or drugs.

The ISP has zero tolerance for impaired driving in Illinois. Officers working the detail will be watchful for drivers who are operating vehicles in an unsafe manner, driving with a suspended or revoked driver's license, transporting open alcoholic beverages and most importantly:

- Driving under the influence (DUI);
- Safety belt and child restraint use;
- Speeding;
- Distracted driving; and,
- All Illinois vehicle code and criminal violations.

Alcohol and drug impairment are factors in more than 30 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes in Illinois. There is one alcohol-related traffic fatality every 53 minutes in the United States. The ACE program allows officers to work even harder at removing dangerous DUI offenders from the road. This project is funded through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

### Roadside safety check in DuPage County Nov. 17

Illinois State Police (ISP) Troop 15 Acting Commander Ken Benson has announced the ISP conducted a Roadside Safety Check (RSC) in DuPage County on Nov. 17.

The use of RSC combine a strong sense of public awareness and enforcement in order to save lives of the motoring public.

The ISP has zero tolerance for impaired driving in Illinois. Officers working the detail will be watchful for drivers who are operating vehicles in an unsafe manner, driving with a suspended or revoked driver's license, transporting open alcoholic beverages and most importantly:

- Driving under the influence (DUI);
- Safety belt and child restraint use;
- Speeding;
- Distracted driving; and,
- All Illinois Vehicle Code and Criminal Violations.

Alcohol and drug impairment are factors in more than 30 percent of all fatal motor vehicle crashes in Illinois and, throughout the U.S., nearly 10,000 people die each year due to alcohol-impaired driving.

RSCs are designed to keep our roads safe by taking dangerous DUI offenders off the road.

This project is funded through the Illinois Department of Transportation.

## Special cooking oil collection this Saturday in Villa Park

Planning on deep-frying your turkey in oil this Thanksgiving? What will you do with the cooking oil after Thanksgiving? Did you know that cooking fat, oil and grease can clog the pipes in your home and in our wastewater system?

Dispose of your cooking oil responsibly by dropping it off at the Special Cooking Oil Collection at the Salt Creek Sanitary District parking lot, 201 S. Route 83, Villa Park, this Saturday, Nov. 25, from 9 a.m. to noon.

All cooking oil that is collected will be converted into bio-diesel.

All cooking oil must be dropped off in a sealed container. Containers will not be returned. Only vegetable-based oil will be collected and no bacon grease or other animal fats will be accepted.

This event is sponsored by the Salt Creek Sanitary District in partnership with the Villa Park Environmental Concerns Commission, and SCARCE (School and Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education).

For more information, contact Bob Wagner at 630-484-8856.

## Police Reports

The Villa Park Police Department recently reported the following arrests and citations. Readers are reminded that an arrest does not constitute a conviction, and that suspects are considered innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Persons charged with domestic battery are not named in order to protect the privacy of victims.

Juveniles age 17 or younger are not named.

### Nov. 11

A complainant at a bank in the 100 block of E. Roosevelt reported at 6:23 p.m. that an unknown suspect robbed them of money while they were taking money out of the ATM.

### Nov. 10

Patryk K. Karaluch, 29, of Stream-

wood, was charged with retail theft/possessing displayed merchandise exceeding \$300; while Pawel D. Szymulewski, 30, of Bartlett, was charged with retail theft/possessing displayed merchandise exceeding \$300 and driving while license suspended at a store in the 1-100 block of E. North at 8:04 p.m.

### Nov. 9

Nancy Bonilla, 28, of Melrose Park, was arrested on an original complaint and warrant for retail theft/possessing displayed merchandise not exceeding \$300 on the above date for an alleged incident that occurred Sept. 26.

Luis N. Lagares, 48, of Villa Park, was charged with two counts of battery in the 400 block of W. Division at 8:09 p.m.

Complainants at a school in the 300 block of W. Jackson reported a juvenile battered them.

### Nov. 8

A complainant at a store in the 900 block of S. Route 83 reported that an unknown suspect removed items from display shelves and left the store without paying for the items.

### Nov. 6

Angel D. Betancourt, 25, of Maywood, was charged with retail theft/possessing displayed merchandise not exceeding \$300 and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia at a liquor store in the 600 block of W. North at 7:35 p.m.

Police said Joseph P. Laskero, 33, of Villa Park, was arrested on an original complaint and warrant and

was charged with criminal drug conspiracy, delivery of a controlled substance/fentanyl/amphetamine other amount in the 200 block of E. Terry. According to police, the incident occurred April 14 and the suspect was arrested on the above date.

A complainant in the 600 block of W. Roy reported an unknown suspect damaged a vehicle while it was parked in the parking lot. The suspect also entered the vehicle and removed a backpack.

A complainant at a store in the 900 block of S. Route 83 reported that a suspect removed items from display shelves and left the store without paying for the items.

### Nov. 5

A complainant in the 100 block of W. Roosevelt reported that a suspect

threw rocks at the cameras on the building. A citation was issued.

A complainant at a store in the 100 block of W. Roosevelt reported at 5:19 p.m. that unknown suspects removed items from behind the counter and left the store without paying.

### Nov. 4

A complainant at an establishment in the 300 block of E. Kenilworth reported at 12:39 a.m. that an unknown suspect battered them. The complainant does not want to sign complaints.

### Fraud, Identity theft

According to information provided by the Villa Park Police Department, police reported one incident of residents being a victim of fraud or identity theft.

## Pre-trial release denied for Willowbrook man charged with breaking into woman's apartment and beating her

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and DuPage County Sheriff James Mendrick have announced that Judge Joshua Dieken granted the state's motion to deny pre-trial release for an unincorporated Willowbrook man accused of breaking into a woman's apartment and beating her.



Abelardo Zapata

grated battery great bodily harm—victim 60 years or older (Class 2 felony).

On Nov. 12 at approximately 8:03 a.m., Willowbrook police officers responded to the victim's apartment for a call of a man, later identified as Zapata, who allegedly broke into the woman's residence and beat her. Upon their arrival, officers found the victim, who is more than sixty-years-old, with visible red marks and blood on her face. She was transported to a local hospital for medical attention where she received eight stitches to the top of her head.

An investigation into the matter found that Zapata was allegedly at the apartment complex walking with another tenant to her apartment when

he kicked in the door to the victim's apartment and entered.

It is alleged that once inside the victim's residence, Zapata attacked the woman, striking her in the face. It is further alleged that after striking the woman, Zapata grabbed the woman's head and slammed it against a cabinet. It is alleged that Zapata took her cell phone and then fled the scene. It is alleged that after Zapata fled, the victim called 9-1-1 from another phone.

Police took Zapata into custody without incident a short time later from a McDonald's approximately one block away.

"The allegations that for no apparent reason, Mr. Zapata kicked in the front door of an innocent woman's

apartment and then severely beat her are shocking," Berlin said. "A person's home is their sanctuary and people have every right to feel safe in their homes. Mr. Zapata's alleged actions destroyed this victim's feeling of safety and security. I sincerely hope that the victim in this case has a speedy recovery from her physical injuries and I wish her the best as she is now forced to cope with the psychological harm allegedly caused by Mr. Zapata."

"In DuPage County, we have absolutely no tolerance for the type of violent crime alleged in this case," Mendrick said.

Zapata's next court appearance is scheduled Dec. 11 for arraignment in front of Judge Michael Reidy.

## IDNR announces Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities grant award

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is announcing the latest recipient of a grant for projects funded through the Wildlife Preservation Fund grant program.

The Wildlife Preservation Fund provides grants under the Illinois Non-Game Wildlife Protection Act. Five percent of non-federal dollars deposited into the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund are committed to grants through this program. The act provides for a voluntary check-off designation on state income tax return forms, allowing individual taxpayers to make charitable donations to the fund.

These contributions provide grants to help with maintenance of existing Illinois wildlife rehabilitation facilities that care for threatened and endangered species. Eligible uses of grant funds are limited to structural repair and maintenance of existing buildings, pens, cages, and appurtenant facilities used to take care of threatened or endangered wildlife species.

IDNR has awarded the following grant through the program:

Willowbrook Wildlife Center—\$4,000 for the center, which is within the Forest Preserve of DuPage County, to install a shallow pool drain in the rehabilitation bird enclosure to facilitate the drainage, cleaning, and refilling of the water source within that enclosure.

Willowbrook Wildlife Center rehabilitates about 10,000 sick, injured, or orphaned wild animals annually.

Eligible grant recipients must possess a current wildlife rehabilitation license or permit issued by IDNR and must have provided care for threatened or endangered wildlife during the three-year period preceding the date of their grant application.

Applicants who intend to use any portion of grant funds received from IDNR to take care of migratory birds must also possess a current wildlife rehabilitation license or permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allowing that activity.

Go online for information about applying for a future Wildlife Rehabilitation Facilities grant.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Perry receives 88's Best award for October

Willowbrook High School senior Alexander Perry is his school's recipient of the 88's Best award for the month of October. Perry was recognized during the District 88 Board of Education's Oct. 30 meeting. He is pictured (right) at that meeting with Willowbrook Principal Dan Krause (left). The 88's Best award recognizes students for their achievements in and out of the classroom. The award recognizes nine Willowbrook students and nine Addison Trail students each school year. Krause read comments from some of Perry's teachers during the Oct. 30 board meeting. Those teachers described Perry as an academically gifted and hard-working student who is very helpful and caring. Perry is an inductee of several honor societies, including the National Honor Society, the National English Honor Society, the Math Honor Society and Willowbrook's social studies honor society—Civitas. He is an Illinois State Scholar, and he has been named to Willowbrook's Distinction Honor Roll each semester of his high school career. Perry is a four-year member of the school's math team. He's also a member of Willowbrook's boys cross-country team. Perry is considering what school he will attend after he graduates from Willowbrook. He is planning to pursue a career in business.



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Calling all carolers

Bring your friends to the back room at Manny's Ale House, 683 St. Charles Road, Elmhurst, to sing Christmas carols on Friday, Dec. 15, at 7 p.m. Join in on the holiday version of this monthly Beer and Hymns event, sponsored by St. Paul Lutheran Church, Villa Park. Feel free to bring a musical instrument and play along.

## VILLA PARK REVIEW

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## •Broncos (Continued from page 22)

Junior Nikki Kerstein, who is in her first year at Montini, scored 19 points for the Broncos in their season opener against Plainfield East. Junior Shea Carver added 14 points for the Broncos, while senior Victoria Matulevicius supplied 13 points. Junior Lily Spanos contributed nine points for Montini. Senior Alyssa Epps added eight points for the Broncos.

Montini held a 27-21 halftime lead over Lockport in Friday's game. The Broncos owned a 51-37 lead by the end of the third quarter.

Kerstein scored 20 points in the Broncos' victory over Lockport. She

scored a basket with about one minute left in the game to hit the 1,000-point mark in her varsity career. Kerstein added one more basket in the closing seconds to reach 20 points for the night and 1,002 points as a varsity player.

Epps scored 13 points in Friday's win, while Matulevicius tallied 12 points. Junior Audrey Kinney supplied eight points. Matulevicius scored 17 points in Saturday's lop-sided win over Morgan Park. Kinney piled up 14 points in the win, while Epps contributed 13 points. Spanos scored 10 points. Junior Natalie Gartlan added seven points for the Broncos.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

Montini Catholic High School's girls basketball team opened its 2023-24 season at Willowbrook High School's five-team, round-robin Thanksgiving Invite. The Broncos began the event with a 79-48 win over Plainfield East on Nov. 16. One night later, Montini beat Lockport 59-47. The Broncos improved to 3-0 in the Invite with Saturday's 78-20 victory over Morgan Park. Montini played its final game of the Invite against Willowbrook earlier this week. One photo from last week's action in Villa Park shows Montini senior Victoria Matulevicius (No. 5 top left), who scored 13 points against Plainfield East and provided 12 points against Lockport. Matulevicius scored 17 points in Saturday's victory over Morgan Park. Also pictured is Montini junior Nikki Kerstein (No. 3 above right), who scored 19 points against Plainfield East and piled up 20 points against Lockport. Kerstein, who is in her first season with the Broncos, needed 18 points in Friday's game against Lockport to reach the 1,000-point mark in her varsity career. She reached the milestone when she scored a basket with about one minute left in the game (above left). Kerstein added one more basket in the closing seconds of Friday's victory.

## Warriors drop their first two games before picking up a victory

### Bruschuk provides 12 points and 15 rebounds in a win over Morgan Park

The Willowbrook girls basketball team opened its 2023-24 season with three games last week.

The Warriors began their season with a 56-20 loss at Libertyville on Nov. 13. Willowbrook then won one of two games at its own Thanksgiving Invite. In their first game of the invite, the Warriors lost 51-28 to Lockport on Nov. 16. One night later, Willowbrook defeated Morgan Park 46-24.

The Warriors finished play at their five-team, round-robin invite earlier this week with games against Montini Catholic and Plainfield East.

Senior Elle Bruschuk scored 12 points for Willowbrook in the team's

season opener at Libertyville. Bruschuk made 10 free throws and added one field goal. Junior Kristin Woods scored four points for the Warriors in the Nov. 13 contest against the Wildcats. Junior Kendall Medinger provided three points with a 3-point basket in the first quarter. Senior Lilian Vish contributed one point with a second-quarter free throw.

Libertyville led the Warriors 17-5 after one quarter, 33-11 at halftime and 51-16 after three quarters.

Lockport led the Warriors 13-8 after one quarter of last week's game at the Thanksgiving invite in Villa Park. The Porters led Willowbrook 26-18 at halftime and 37-21 after

three quarters.

Bruschuk scored six points and grabbed 10 rebounds for the Warriors in their loss to Lockport. Junior Ayaani Gusman scored six points for Willowbrook, while junior Lorlai McIntyre provided five points and nine rebounds. Vish scored two points and pulled down nine rebounds. Medinger added three points with a 3-point basket. Woods, senior Tia Kelly and sophomore Joely Maciejewski scored two points each.

Bruschuk scored 12 points and snared 15 rebounds for the Warriors during their win over Morgan Park on Friday. McIntyre supplied eight points and nine rebounds. Gusman contributed six points and 10 rebounds. Medinger, who made one shot from 3-point range for the third straight game, scored seven points. Woods provided six points, while Kelly and Vish scored five and two points, respectively.

Willowbrook led Morgan Park 11-4 after one quarter and 24-7 at halftime. The Mustangs cut the Warriors' lead to 30-20 by the end of the third quarter.

The Warriors will open West Suburban Gold Conference play with a home game against Hinsdale South on Nov. 28. Willowbrook's conference season continues with a Dec. 2 home game against Addison Trail.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing



Willowbrook's girls basketball team started its 2023-24 season last week. The Warriors lost their season opener at Libertyville on Nov. 13. Willowbrook then began action at its own five-team, round-robin Thanksgiving Invite on Nov. 16. The Warriors lost their first game of the event, dropping a 51-28 decision to Lockport. Willowbrook won its next game of the invite, beating Morgan Park 46-24 on Friday. Senior Elle Bruschuk (No. 33 - above) provided 12 points and 15 rebounds for the Warriors during Friday's victory. Willowbrook junior Ayaani Gusman (No. 10 - right) contributed six points and 10 rebounds in the win. Junior Kristin Woods (No. 25 - left) contributed six points.





## Warriors celebrate

Several members of Willowbrook's girls basketball team are shown cheering from the sideline after one of their teammates—junior Kristin Woods—scored a basket during Friday's game against Morgan Park. The Warriors defeated Morgan Park 46-24 in Friday's contest, which was part of Willowbrook's five-team, round-robin Thanksgiving invite. The Warriors lost their first game of the invite on Nov. 16. Willowbrook completed play at its invite with this week's games against Montini Catholic and Plainfield East.

CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

### Answers

#### PUZZLE 1

8	9	4	1	7	6	3	5	2
3	2	1	4	5	9	8	7	6
5	7	6	2	3	8	9	1	4
4	5	2	8	1	7	6	3	9
6	3	7	9	4	2	1	8	5
9	1	8	5	6	3	4	2	7
7	4	3	6	2	1	5	9	8
2	8	5	3	9	4	7	6	1
1	6	9	7	8	5	2	4	3

#### PUZZLE 2

7	9	1	6	8	3	2	4	5
8	4	3	2	5	9	7	6	1
5	2	6	4	7	1	9	8	3
2	5	7	9	1	4	6	3	8
4	3	8	5	6	7	1	2	9
6	1	9	3	2	8	4	5	7
1	7	2	8	4	5	3	9	6
3	8	4	7	9	6	5	1	2
9	6	5	1	3	2	8	7	4

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THURSDAY, NOV. 16, 2023



SUBMITTED PHOTO Addison Independent

## An international snack

These Addison Trail students helped sell chicharrones that were available from 5 Stars Sports for students to purchase throughout International Fest Week Nov. 6-10. Chicharrones are similar to pork rinds. More about Addison Trail's International Fest inside this issue.

## Man charged with robbing two banks at gunpoint, one in Addison Suspect was on parole, pre-trial release denied

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin, Addison Deputy Chief of Police Roy Selvik and FBI Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Field Office Robert "Wes" Wheeler have announced that Judge Michael

Fleming granted the state's motion to deny pre-trial release for one of several individuals suspected of robbing at gunpoint two BMO Harris branch offices located in DuPage County.

Kenneth Eggleston, 30, appeared

at First Appearance Court and was charged with two counts of armed violence (Class X felony), two counts of armed robbery with a firearm, (Class X felony), one count of attempt armed robbery with a firearm (Class 1 felony), two counts of financial institution robbery (Class 1 felony), two counts of possession of a stolen motor vehicle (Class 2 felony), one count of possession of a firearm by a felon (Class 2 felony) and four counts of aggravated unlawful use of a weapon (Class 3 felony).



Kenneth Eggleston

It is alleged that on July 19 at approximately 9:30 a.m., two armed, masked men entered the BMO Harris Bank located at 320 W. Diehl Road in Naperville. It is further alleged that once inside the bank, the men ordered the customers and employees to the floor, took two bank employees at gunpoint to the vault and ordered them to open it.

It is alleged the men then took approximately \$95,716 from the vault and put it in a bag that they had brought with them. It is further alleged the men then exited the bank and fled the scene in a car that was reported stolen out of Chicago on July 9. It is further alleged that two days later, on July 21 at approximately 9:08 a.m., two armed and masked individuals entered the BMO Harris

Bank located in the 1300 block of W. Lake Street in Addison.

It is alleged that once inside the bank, the defendants ordered the employees and customers to the floor. It is further alleged that one of the defendants jumped over the counter and ordered the tellers to open the drawers and put cash into a garbage bag. It is further alleged that once the drawers were emptied, one of the defendants ordered employees to the back vault at gunpoint and demanded they put more cash into the bag, it is further alleged that the duo then fled the area with approximately \$172,152.

It is alleged that approximately one week later, on July 28 at ap-

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# Addison Trail hosts annual International Fest Week

From Nov. 6 to 10, Addison Trail's International Club hosted the school's annual International Fest Week, which featured several events and activities. Ten presenters spoke with students about their travels and experiences from throughout the world. Through the presentations, students were able to learn about a variety of countries, cultures, topics and perspectives. Other events included:

- A Virtual World Language Fair was provided by Junior Achievement of Chicago, which featured world language career speakers discussing career pathways.

- Games From Around the World gave students and staff the opportunity to learn about entertainment in other countries.

- Resource classes participated in a Dec-A-Door contest, where they chose a country and decorated their door to represent that location and culture. The goal was to show that Addison Trail encompasses many nationalities but is one Blazer Nation.

- Chicharrones from 5 Stars Sports were available for students and staff



These are some of the performances at Addison Trail during the International Dance Show held Friday, Nov. 10.

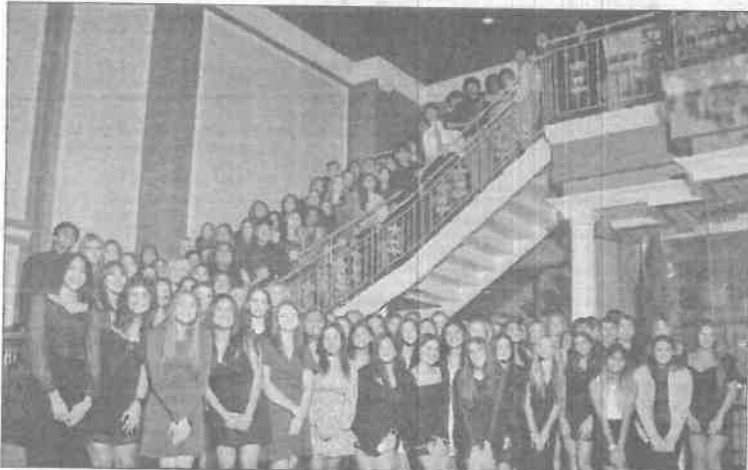
to buy throughout the week.

- Students and staff wrote notes of encouragement to St. Jude Chil-

dren's Research Hospital patients.

- International Fest Week culminated with the school's annual In-

ternational Dance Show on Nov. 10, which featured dances representing various countries and cultures.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing



## NHS officers

The officers of the Addison Trail Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) include (from left) Zachary Morris, president, Savannah Sosin, vice president, Alexander Addison, secretary, Suzette Mancilla, historian, and Léonel Gomez, treasurer. All are seniors. On Wednesday, Nov. 1, students were inducted and reaffirmed into the chapter.

## Cream of the crop

Pictured are Addison Trail students who were inducted and reaffirmed into the Addison Trail Chapter of the National Honor Society on Wednesday, Nov. 1.

## •Banks (Continued from front page)

proximately 9:53 a.m., two masked and armed men approached the entrance of the BMO Harris Bank located in the 2400 block of 75th Street in Woodridge. It is alleged that the defendants approached the security guard who was just opening up for the day and ordered him at gunpoint to open the door, which the security guard did not do.

It is alleged that the two men fled in another stolen sedan when they were denied entry to the bank. It is also alleged that a red Infiniti Q50 was known by law enforcement to be used as a getaway car in both the Naperville and Addison armed robberies as well as the attempted armed robbery at the Woodridge location.

At approximately 10:25 a.m., a Burr Ridge police officer observed the Infiniti driving at a high rate of speed on I-294 from I-55. A Chicago police helicopter was called in to assist and ultimately tracked the vehicle to 11631 Wallace Street in Chicago.

It is alleged that when officers arrived at the address, Eggleston was standing in front of the red Infiniti Q50 with a backpack in his hand. It is further alleged that Eggleston dropped the backpack and attempted to run from law enforcement but was apprehended and ultimately released. Further investigation into the matter identified Eggleston as a suspect. He was taken into custody on a previously issued arrest warrant in Chicago on

Nov. 3, without incident.

Eggleston, who is a convicted felon and was on parole for a weapon offense at the time of these alleged armed robberies, has two active arrest warrants out of Cook County for possession of a stolen motor vehicle and aggravated fleeing and eluding a police officer.

"Violent gun crimes, as alleged in this case, will not be tolerated in DuPage County and will be met with the full force and effect of the law," Berlin said. "We are all very grateful that no employees or customers at the banks were physically harmed during these alleged robberies. The apprehension of the first of several individuals who allegedly committed these

crimes sends the message that we will use all tools available to us, including assistance from the federal government and air support if necessary to hold accountable anyone suspected of this type of behavior.

"I thank the Addison Police Department for their efforts in this case as well as the Naperville, Woodridge and Chicago police departments for their work as well."

"This was a tremendous and lengthy investigation involving several agencies and our partners at the FBI," Selvik said.

Eggleston's next court appearance was scheduled Nov. 13 for arraignment in front of Judge Margaret O'Connell.

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## IHSSCA names Addison Trail's Vega Assistant Coach of the Year

Addison Trail's Angel Vega has been named as an Assistant Coach of the Year by the Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association (IHSSCA). One of just 12 assistant coaches in Illinois to win this award, Vega was recognized and honored on Monday, Oct. 16.

Vega has been the assistant varsity coach of the Addison Trail boys soccer team since 2014. During that time, he has helped Addison Trail win three Regional titles (in 2016, 2018 and 2022) and a PepsiCo Showdown tournament championship in 2016.

"Vega continues to influence the growth of soccer in Addison," said Ryan Dini, AT boys soccer team head coach. "He volunteers with TOPSoccer, organizes the team's participation in the annual Addison-Medina Shriners Parade, runs open gyms, coaches summer league teams and gives countless hours to reviewing video on Hudl. Most importantly, Vega is driven to help players reach



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing  
Angel Vega

the next step and continue the sport at the collegiate level (more than 30 players). Vega is all about the soccer program here in Addison, and that's what makes him one of the best coaches in Illinois."



SUBMITTED PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## St. Philip 8th graders celebrate

St. Philip the Apostle Catholic School held 8th grade night on a recent Friday night. The boys put up a great effort during their game. The girls team (pictured here) won their game and took first place in their division. Both teams are looking forward to the playoffs!



SUBMITTED PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

## Just for luck

Above: Addison Trail senior Zabrana Garza follows University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign tradition and rubs Abraham Lincoln's nose for good fortune during a visit to the campus on Wednesday, Nov. 1. Left: Addison Trail students gather by the Alma Mater statue at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

## Police Reports

The Addison and Bensenville police departments recently reported the following arrests and citations.

Persons who are charged with domestic battery are not named in order to protect the victim's privacy.

Readers are reminded that an arrest does not constitute a conviction, and that suspects are considered innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law. Juveniles age 17-or-younger are not named.

### Nov. 7

Police said Miguel Zavala Jr., 18, of Addison, was issued a warrant for purchasing/accepting liquor by a minor in the 400 block of W Stevens at 10:30 p.m.

### Nov. 6

A 30-year-old Addison woman was charged with two counts of domestic battery in the 400 block of W Stevens at 10:04 p.m.

### Nov. 4

Kadijah M. Dean, 29, of Addison, was charged with two counts of DUI

and two counts of endangering the life of a child near Lake and Swift at 3:19 a.m.

A 31-year-old Hoffman Estates man was charged with two counts of domestic battery in the 1000 block of N. Rohlwing at 11:15 p.m.

### Nov. 2

Julio C. Ocampo-Marino, 40, of Chicago, was charged with two counts of DUI and failure to reduce speed in the 600 block of S. Wisconsin at 10:14 p.m.

### Nov. 1

A 44-year-old Addison man was charged with two counts of domestic battery in the 1100 block of N. Mare Barn at 3:52 a.m.

### Oct. 28

Police said Gloria Sanchez, 34, of Romeoville, was issued a warrant near Army Trail and I-355 at 9:48 p.m.

A 21-year-old Schaumburg man was charged with two counts of domestic battery, damage to property and aiding, abetting, possessing and

selling a stolen vehicle at 3:07 a.m.

### Oct. 27

Julio C. Salgado-Salgado, 52, of Addison, was charged with two counts of DUI, driving on the wrong side of the road and failure to reduce speed in the 500 block of W. Lake at 8:06 p.m.

Miguel Angel Saravia, 26, of Hanover Park, was charged with violation of an order of protection in the 1-100 block of S. LaLonde at 4:27 a.m.

### Oct. 26

Sanjay R. Patel, 42 of Addison, was charged with two counts of DUI and speeding near Lake and Ellsworth at 2:30 a.m.

### Bensenville

The Bensenville Police Department recently reported the following arrests and citations. Persons who are charged with domestic battery are not named in order to protect the victim's privacy. Readers are reminded that an arrest does not constitute a conviction, and that suspects are considered innocent

unless proven guilty in a court of law. Juveniles age 17-or-younger are not named.

Nov. 8, 11:10 a.m. in the 800 block of S. Center St., a complainant reported their house and vehicle were egged overnight by an unknown subject. This case is under investigation. BEPC23013186

Nov. 8, 3:05 p.m. in the 300 block of Pierce Road in Itasca, a Bensenville officer assisted Itasca police with a possible burglary to vehicle. BEP23013197

Nov. 8, 3:15 p.m. in the 1200 block of W. Irving Park Road, a complainant reported their vehicle stolen by unknown suspects. This case is under investigation. BEPC2300913

Nov. 7, 11:17 a.m. near E. Irving Park Road and N. York Road, the license plate reader hit on a stolen vehicle at westbound Irving Park and York. The area checked extensively with no results. BEP23013151

Nov. 6, 7:50 a.m. near N. Route 83 and N. Thorndale Ave., a complainant reported a road rage incident with an unknown suspect. This case is under

investigation. BEPC2300907

Nov. 5, 2023, 6:30 p.m. near S. Church Road and W. Jefferson St., Jose Angel Velasquez Velasquez, 28, of Bensenville, was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol and other traffic violations. BEPC2300906

Nov. 4, 5:31 p.m. in the 1000 block of S. York Road, a complainant reported theft from their Lyft account by an unknown suspect. This case is under investigation. BEPC2300903

Nov. 2, 9:25 a.m. in the 100 block of George Street, a 30-year-old Chicago man was arrested for domestic battery. BEPC2300894

Nov. 2, 5:03 p.m. near N. Church and W. Irving Park roads, the license plate reader reported a black Jeep Commander as a felonious vehicle that was located around Mohawk Park. The driver of the vehicle fled. Officers lost sight of vehicle around I-290 and York Road. This case is under investigation. BEPC2300895

Nov. 2, 8:51 p.m. near the 100 block of Bridget Court, Bryan Alvarado, 18, of Addison, was arrested on failure to appear warrants. BEPC2300896

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THURSDAY, NOV. 16, 2023



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Villa Park Review

## INSIDE:

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## Warriors finish third in state

Willowbrook High School's girls volleyball team completed its memorable 2023 season by winning the third-place trophy in the IHSA Class 4A state tournament. The Warriors defeated Barrington in Saturday's third-place match in Normal. The Warriors' 20-match winning streak ended with Friday's loss to Benet Academy in a semifinal battle at CEFCU Arena at Illinois State University. Mother McAuley beat Benet Academy in Saturday's Class 4A state-championship match. Willowbrook's girls volleyball program made its first appearance in the state semifinals this year. The program won its first regional title in 2021. The Warriors also won a sectional championship that season. Willowbrook won another regional title in 2022. This year's team won regional, sectional and super-sectional titles to earn its downstate trip to the Class 4A semifinals. The Warriors ended their 2023 season with an overall record of 40-2. This year's team set a new program mark for victories in a season. The 2021 Warriors held the previous record with 37 wins.

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# Warriors claim third-place trophy in Normal

## Team finishes historic season with a 40-2 record

The Willowbrook girls volleyball team completed its spectacular 2023 season by winning the third-place trophy in the IHSA Class 4A state tournament, which ended on Saturday night in Normal.

The Warriors defeated Barrington 25-20, 23-25, 25-17 in Saturday's third-place contest at Illinois State University's CFCU Arena (formerly known as Redbird Arena).

Willowbrook finished its season with an overall record of 40-2.

"That feels great; absolutely amazing," said Willowbrook coach Irene Mason while describing the satisfaction of winning the third-place contest. "I told these girls that two teams in the state get to end on a win, and we were going to be one of them. It feels good. These girls played great. They believed. They worked together."

The Warriors won their first 19 matches of the season before suffering a loss. They then won 20 straight matches on the way to earning regional, sectional and super-sectional titles and advancing to the Class 4A semifinals in Normal.

Willowbrook's 20-match winning streak ended with Friday's loss to Benet Academy in a semifinal battle. The Redwings edged the Warriors 25-19, 24-26, 25-16.

Mother McAuley beat Benet 25-22, 18-25, 25-16 in Saturday night's Class 4A state-championship match, which was a rerun of last year's title contest. One year ago, the Mighty Macs beat Benet in a three-game slugfest in the 2022 Class 4A state final. Mother McAuley finished second (to Metea Valley) in the 2021 Class 4A state tournament.

Mother McAuley finished its 2023 championship season with a 38-4 re-

cord. Benet completed the season with a 39-3 record.

The Warriors had to wait until the end of the Mother McAuley-Benet match to receive their individual medals and third-place trophy. Willowbrook finally received its trophy at about 11:45 p.m.

The Willowbrook girls volleyball program never won an IHSA regional title until two years ago, when the 2021 Warriors won regional and sectional championships before losing a super-sectional match (to Mother McAuley). One year ago, the 2022 Willowbrook team won a regional title before losing in a sectional final.

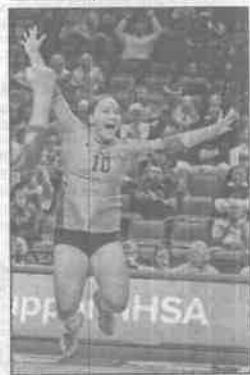
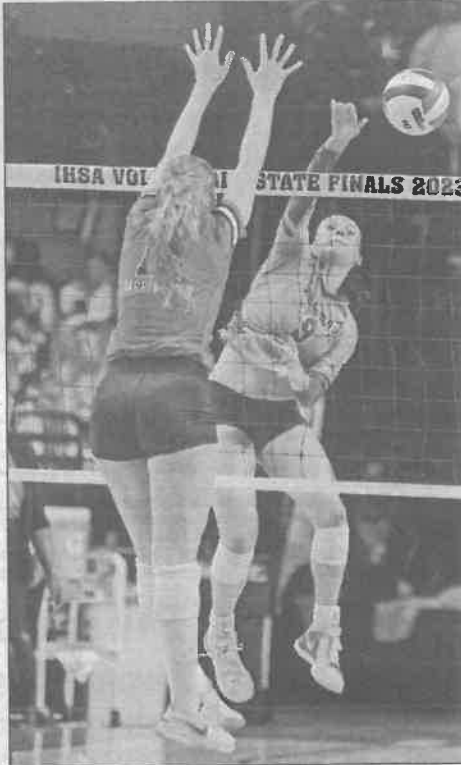
One of the 2023 team's goals was to produce the program's GOAT (Greatest of All Time) season. This year's Warriors clearly achieved that

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CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

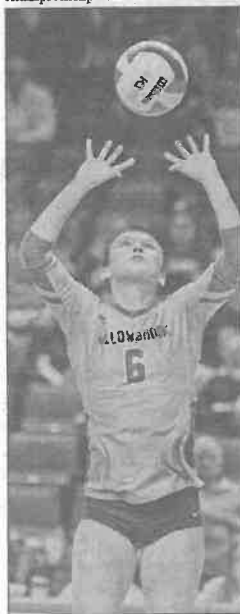
Senior Calli Kenny (No. 9 - right) of the Willowbrook girls volleyball team provided 17 kills, 15 assists and eight digs during Saturday night's IHSA Class 4A third-place match against Barrington. Playing in her final match as a Warrior, Kenny recorded the 1,000<sup>th</sup> kill of her Willowbrook varsity career during the contest. She will continue her academic and volleyball careers at Marquette University in Milwaukee. Senior Elisa Chivlio (No. 3 - above) made 20 digs for the Warriors in Saturday's match against the Filles. Junior Hannah Kenny (No. 6 - bottom left) supplied 11 kills, 23 assists and eight digs in the third-place battle. Junior Lily Javier (No. 10 - left), who contributed three kills, is pictured after Willowbrook completed its win over Barrington.



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

## Quite a season

Willowbrook's girls volleyball team concluded its historic 2023 season by beating Barrington in Saturday's third-place match at the Class 4A state semifinals in Normal. The Warriors posted an overall record of 40-2 during the season. Willowbrook won its first 19 matches before losing to Oak Park and River Forest on Sept. 29. The Warriors then reeled off 20 straight wins, which included victories in regional and super-sectional finals. Willowbrook suffered a three-game loss to Benet Academy in Friday's semifinal contest in Normal. Mother McAuley beat Benet in Saturday's Class 4A championship match. Willowbrook's team received its third-place trophy following Saturday's Class 4A final between the Mighty Macs and the Redwings.







## VOLLEYBALL - CLASS 4A STATE CHAMPIONSHIP: MOTHER MCAULEY DEF. BENET 25-22, 18-25, 25-16

## Mother McAuley once again holds off Benet for state championship

By BOB NARANG  
contact@shawmedia.com

**NORMAL** - Just like last season, Benet and Mother McAuley hooked up again in the final match of the volleyball season in the Class 4A state championship.

And for the Mighty Macs, the 2023 script led to another memorable result.

Mother McAuley added to its storied legacy, capturing its record 17th state championship late Saturday night with a 25-22, 18-25, 25-16 victory over Benet in the 4A state final at CEFCU Arena.

The silver lining in the defeat for the Redwings is they return the majority of their key players.

"These kids gave 100 percent and were all in," Benet coach Brad Baker said. "It's really hard. It hurts, when you are 100 percent in and this is the result. It's tough. These kids worked so hard to be here. These kids worked hard in the offseason, but if they continue to work, [next] season is going to be great for them. Right now, it's hard to see that."



Benet comes together as Mother McAuley celebrates their win in the Class 4A girls volleyball state championship match Saturday at Illinois State University in Normal.

The Mighty Macs, who defeated Benet 25-22, 17-25 and 25-14 in last season's title match, set the tone by steam-rolling out to leads of 13-10 and 23-17. The Redwings answered back by slicing the deficit to 19-17 on consecutive kills by Lynney Tarnow. Benet's Audrey Asleson added a kill and a block to stop another uprising, then she delivered a kill to bring the Redwings to 24-22 until a service error

gave the Mighty Macs (38-4) the first-set victory.

The Redwings (39-3) immediately went to work in the second set to silence the large and loud contingent of Mother McAuley fans. Led by Aubrey Asleson's big hitting, the Redwings possessed leads of 3-0, 6-2 and 12-8 but the Mighty Macs reeled off a big run to tie the game at 13-all.

The Redwings, aided by an ace from

Ellie Stiernagle, jumped back to a 17-14 advantage. Tarnow's kill gave the Redwings a 19-17 edge that grew to 23-17. Audrey Asleson, a Colorado recruit, sent the match into a third set with a highlight-reel kill.

The Mighty Macs were intent on avenging their regular season defeat to Benet, storming out to advantages of 5-1 and 14-6 in the third set. Asleson, who led her team with 17 kills, tried to keep the Mighty Macs from rolling to an easy win with several big plays, but nothing was stopping the state powerhouse on this late night. Aniya Warren paced Benet with 22 digs, while Stiernagle managed 36 assists and Tarnow netted 13 kills. Gabby Stasys finished with 5 kills in the defeat. Ellie White sparked Mother McAuley with 18 kills and 8 digs and Peyton Heatherly amassed 32 assists and 13 digs.

"McAuley played great," Baker said. "They looked like a team that has won a championship and looked like a team that has been here three years in a row. They did a great job, so give credit to McAuley for looking like a team that has been here before."

## VOLLEYBALL - CLASS 4A THIRD-PLACE MATCH: WILLOWBROOK DEF. BARRINGTON 25-20, 23-25, 25-17

## Calli Kenny caps career by helping Willowbrook take third in state

By BOB NARANG  
contact@shawmedia.com

**NORMAL** - Calli Kenny's storied career was missing one vital piece.

The Willowbrook senior setter didn't want to let Friday night's disappointing three-set defeat to Benet be the lasting memory of her storied run.

The Warriors, in their first state appearance, had an opportunity to win the program's first match at state on Saturday night.

Kenny, who signed with Marquette, has played in countless marquee matches on big stages in her club career, but Saturday's Class 4A state third-place contest was different. It marked the final match of her high school career and, just as important, the final time wearing a Warriors' uniform alongside her younger sister, junior Hannah Kelly.

The Kenny sisters have helped raise the bar for the Willowbrook program, joining forces with an outstanding cast of players who added one last memorable memory against Barrington. Calli Kenny put on a final dominating show with 17 kills, 15 assists, eight digs and three aces to power Willowbrook to a 25-20, 23-25, 25-17 win over Barrington in the third-place game.



Willowbrook reacts to their win against Barrington in the Class 4A girls volleyball state third-place match Saturday at Illinois State University in Normal.

In Calli Kenny's three full seasons on the varsity, the Warriors posted records of 37-2, 36-3 and 40-2, but the final match was one of her fondest memories. She hopes the victory is the start of putting Willowbrook volleyball on the state map, especially with her sister among the key returnees. Hannah Kenny, a Louisville recruit, compiled 11 kills, 23 assists, eight digs

and three aces.

"I think we just did it for each other, especially after yesterday's loss," Calli Kenny said. "Since I was a freshman, it was a lot of work in progress, so to finally be here is so special. We have such a great community. I'm so thankful to be a part of it."

"When I was a freshman, you can start from rock bottom but with hard

work and passion and just a love for the game and your team, you can do great things."

In the postgame, right before the question-and-answer session, Calli Kenny burst into tears when her coach, Irene Mason, glanced at the stat sheet and noticed her star senior possessed the 1,000 career kill mark.

"This was a big milestone for her to get," Mason said. "It feels great to end on a win. Third place for us, when we've never been here before and going against teams that just do this regularly, these girls believed and worked together, so this is a big moment."

The Warriors nearly pulled off shocker by battling Benet to three sets in the state semifinal, but they didn't let the defeat affect them against the Fillies. The Warriors came out aggressive, seizing a 15-10 lead following a block and kill by Calli Kenny. She sealed the first-set victory with a pounding kill, then immediately went to work in the second set.

Barrington, which finished in third place in each of the previous two seasons, notched the program's second fourth-place trophy. The Fillies, who have five players slated to extend their

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# IC Catholic falls to Mater Dei at state championship

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SUBURBAN LIFE

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ICC finishes runner-up  
for 2nd straight season

By BOB NARANG  
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**NORMAL** - All season long, IC Catholic answered nearly every challenge. Despite playing a schedule full of big-class opponents, including defending Class 4A state champion Mother McAuley and 3A runner-up Nazareth, the Knights kept building toward the final day of the volleyball season.

After losing in the Class 2A state championship match to Genoa-Kington last season, the Knights returned nearly their entire squad, most notably superstar and Penn State recruit Ava Falduto. The Knights were right on course for the program's fourth state championship, cruising to a two-set win over Carmi in Friday's state semifinals.

On Saturday afternoon at CEFCU Arena, IC Catholic struggled in the early portion of the first set against Breese Mater Dei's athletic and talented trio of Alyssa Koerkenmeier, Emma Johnson and Avery Wuebblers.

Even the standout IC Catholic group of Falduto, Lucy Russ, Emily Carling, Alysa Lawton, Delilah Hyland, Natalie Lawton and the rest of the team could not stop Breese Mater Dei.

Mater Dei relied on its length and defense to end IC Catholic's dream of a state championship, recording a 25-21, 25-22 victory in the 2A state final.

"Obviously, it wasn't the outcome we came here for," IC Catholic coach Nancy Kerrigan said. "I thought Breese played an excellent match and executed very well. We had some struggles. It's a tough loss and a bitter pill to swallow, finishing second for the second year in a row, but these girls' entire body of work and what they've done is just incredible. They had an amazing run."

In the final match of her illustrious prep career, Falduto showcased her brilliance in an all-around attempt to lead her team to the state championship. The Penn State recruit capped her career with a memorable line of 11 kills, eight digs and two aces.



IC Catholic's Jenny Formelt (22) consoles Emily Carling after their loss against Mater Dei in the Class 2A Volleyball Championship match Saturday in Normal.

Gary Middleton

"They were a very good team, and very strong with big blockers," Falduto said. "We knew we had to move the ball around and pass very well to keep them on their heels. I think we did our best, but they had the better game today."

Mater Dei (32-6) overwhelmed IC Catholic with a balanced hitting attack. Johnson paved the way with a team-high seven kills, Elyse Strader chipped in with six kills, Wuebblers went for five kills and Addison Nennering had four kills and 18 assists.

Mater Dei coach Chad Rakers credited solid team play and chemistry for winning the program's first state championship since 2011.

"This group has come so far and overcome so much," Rakers said. "This is our 25th trip to state, so (my) dad put together a pretty solid program. It's our job to keep it moving in the right direction and make sure we don't let it slip. The girls came out with an agenda and played fearlessly and played aggressively, and they didn't stop. Pulling this off in two sets is another feather in our cap."

That was a tough team on the other side of the net."

IC Catholic (36-3) lost just six matches in the last two seasons, rising up to become a powerhouse in Class 2A to earn the program's ninth state trophy. In total, IC Catholic has won three state titles, including the 2013 2A state championship, placed second five times and came in third in 1989.

"I remember watching the 2013 state team with Lucy when we went together and we wanted it so bad," Falduto said. "We came (to state) two times and it was a dream come true. I'm so honored."

Even with an experienced and driven team, IC Catholic couldn't build any momentum against Mater Dei. The back-and-forth match included six lead changes and 15 ties.

After Mater Dei tried to run away with the victory by taking an 11-6 lead in the first set, Falduto followed up a kill by Jenny Formelt, back-to-back aces by Falduto and a kill by Carling to tie the game at 11-11.

Wuebblers made two back-to-back plays - a block and a kill - to spark Mater Dei to a 20-16 lead that allowed it to pull out the first set.

Mater Dei built a 13-10 lead in the second set, but IC Catholic came roaring back to tie the game at 17-17 following an ace by Abby Pikulik. Johnson answered with two straight kills to give Mater Dei a 19-17 edge.

IC Catholic knotted the game at 21-21, though Mater Dei's Strader pounded a kill, Ava Lampe added an ace and Nennering's kill pushed the game out of reach.

IC Catholic picked up big efforts from numerous players, with Hyland collecting five kills, Russ finishing with 19 assists, 11 digs and three kills, Alysa Lawton going for 14 digs and Carling chipped in 10 digs and two kills.

"We were definitely outsize in this match," Alysa Lawton said. "They had very strong hitters at all three of the spots and never really made any hitting errors. They were a very consistent team."

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careers in volleyball in college and Molly O'Riordan signed to play basketball for Dayton, fought back in the second set to take leads of 9-5, 15-11 and 23-20. Berkeley Ploder and Addie Brookbank forced a third set with consecutive kills.

secutive kills.

The Warriors wasted little time seizing control of the decisive final game, building an 18-8 lead after an ace by Calli Kenny. Willowbrook sealed the victory when Calli Kenny scored two of the last three points via kills.

Barrington (35-7) picked up 13 kills and six digs from Jenna Meitzler and

seven kills from Ploder, while Molly Kozak had 12 digs and Gwen Adler added 25 assists and three assists.

"I'm incredibly proud of these girls," Barrington coach Michelle Jakubowski said. "They have worked really hard over the last four years ... We played on the last day for three years in a row, but really for four years with COVID. This is the first

time they've ever lost on the last day."

Meitzler, an Iowa recruit, noted the heart the team showed in mounting a comeback to push the match to three games.

"I think our positivity really helped us because we've lost a ton of first sets, but we believe in each other and the game and just played," Meitzler said.

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