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B-MAC EDITION

Volume 14 | Number 4 | February 18, 2020

Blue Island, Midlothian, Alsip, Crestwood



Fire Chief Tom Styczynski

Alsip proposes \$150 Fire Department Lift Fee

by Jan Glaz

At the Jan. 3 Village of Alsip Board of Trustees Meeting, Alsip Fire Chief Tom Styczynski provided details in regard to a request for the Village Attorney to draft an amendment to an ordinance to reflect for 'Lift Fee' schedule, as discussed at the Jan. 27 Committee Meeting.

Trustee Christine McLawhorn was against charging a fee of \$150 for calling the Fire Department for people/seniors who need help. Alsip Mayor John Ryan responded that there's a problem with people calling 911 or the Fire Department for non-emergency situations instead of calling for alternative help.

Chief Styczynski informed the board that other Fire departments that provide non-emergency situations have dedicated companies for fire apparatus: "We don't have that, we have jump companies, so I have four people at each Fire Station, two on the ambulance and two on the engine. I don't have anyone to say all right go out and help with a lift assist. That's

what Oak Lawn and Crestwood does because they have dedicated companies, we do not.

"It has happened several times that we were on a lift assist and then we get called for a heart attack and then we have a delay for the ambulance. Most of the people calling for assist have family or others that can help them, but they choose not to. It's a big problem for all fire departments. It's turned into a normal occurrence. Sometimes we do three in one day. Towns that don't have a lot of manpower are splitting their personnel to one place or another. Towns who have dedicated companies send three or four people on one vehicle, we would have to send two vehicles to do the same thing."

Board meeting postscript: Trustees agreed to a contract extension for D-Ryan Tree & Landscape Service to perform additional work in an amount not to exceed \$19,000. The extension would complete all remaining Village Parkway trees to be pruned west of Cicero Avenue.



Alderman Fred Bilotto

Blue Island presents Adult-Use Cannabis Ordinance

by Jan Glaz

City of Blue Island Alderman Fred Bilotto reported

that a draft of the City's Ordinance Amending the Zoning Ordinance of the Code of Blue Island, Illinois, regarding Adult-Use Cannabis is available for view on the City's website at <http://www.blueisland.org>.

Bilotto disclosed that he has had nothing but positive comments sent to him about the amended ordinance regarding cannabis and that the City's Planning and Zoning Committee worked very hard and spent many hours putting together and modifying the document.

Alderman Bilotto stated that copies of the draft had been sent out to all the school districts and churches. Several public hearings have been conducted related to cannabis, the last on Monday, Feb. 17, in the council room chambers at City Hall.

The ordinance regarding cannabis, in part, covers the following areas: adult-use cannabis business establishments, cannabis craft grower facilities, cannabis cultivation centers, cannabis dispensing organizations, cannabis infuser organizations, cannabis processing organizations and cannabis transporting organizations.

In other city council news: Aldermen passed a Resolution Authorizing and Approving a Proposal for "Geotechnical Engineering Services" in relation to parking lot improvements for the City Parking Lot located at 13101 S. Western Ave. Alderman Bilotto commented that Geotechnical Engineering Services plan to drill beneath the surface in order find out why the parking lot is sinking inches per year. "Drill samples will tell us exactly what we need to do and how much it will cost," concluded Bilotto.

Crestwood seeks Home Rule status

by Jan Glaz

At the Village of Crestwood Board of Trustees Meeting on Feb. 6, officials considered a resolution to place before the voters of Crestwood a referendum asking whether the Village shall become a home rule unit of government. A municipality is automatically "home rule" when its population exceeds 25,000 residents. Communities with fewer than 25,001 residents may elect by referendum to become home rule entities.

The purpose of home rule is to allow a municipality to exercise any power and perform any function unless it is specifically prohibited by state law. Home rule is important to communities because issues can be addressed promptly as they arise, without seeking approval of the State legislature. Ordinances can be created, drafted and approved to address a town's specific needs based on local input.

Crestwood and all non-home rule towns may only exercise powers for authority provided by state law and they are dependent on obtaining grants of authority from the General Assembly and governor. Home rule allows greater flexibility with economic development, borrowing money and acquiring additional revenue sources. Thus, property taxes may be stabilized, or possibly lowered. Currently there are 217 home rule communities in the State of Illinois. For additional information in regard to home rule status please visit <http://iml.org/homerule>.

Meeting endnote: Before

the Crestwood board meeting adjourned, trustees agreed to allow the Village Attorney to prepare an ordinance upon the request of Mary Toomey for "All Automotive Complete Auto Repair" at 4304 W. Midlothian Turnpike.

Black History Month event

In honor of Black History Month, Glessner House, in partnership with Second Presbyterian Church, Friends of Historic Second Church and Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church, will host a lecture entitled "Black Chicago Aspires for Residential Security: Battling the Restrictive Covenant, 1927-1948" on Sunday, Feb. 23, at 1:30 p.m. The event will take place at Second Presbyterian Church, 1936 S. Michigan Ave. in Chicago.

In 1940, a restrictive covenant went into effect that covered a large portion of the South Loop between Roosevelt and Cermak roads. Covenants such as these were all too common across the country until they were outlawed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948.

The presentation will be given by Dr. Christopher R. Reed, professor emeritus of history at Roosevelt University, and recognized as "the Dean of Black Chicago History" for his numerous publications and his work within the Black Chicago History Forum. Following the presentation, Dr. Reed will be joined by Courtney Jones and Ronald Branch, current and former president respectively, of the Dearborn Realist Board, for a panel discussion of current issues facing minorities in the housing market.

There is no charge for the event and reservations are

not required. For more information, call 312-326-1480.

Lenten fish at St. Benedict

Starting Feb. 28, St. Benedict Church, at 2339 York Street in Blue Island, will have its 50th Annual Lenten Fish Fry.

The fish fry will be held every Friday during Lent through April 3. No Fish Fry on Good Friday, April 10.

The hours for serving Lunch are 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and Evening 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10, which include cole slaw, beets, french fries, rye bread and butter, coffee and lemonade.

Carry outs are available. Call ahead at 708-385-9266.

Paddy Homan to perform on McCord Stage

McCord Gallery and Cultural Center announces the return of Paddy Homan to the McCord stage, Saturday, March 7, at 4 p.m. Once again, traditional Irish tenor Paddy Homan will bring his talented voice and his witty humor to the McCord. Hailing from County Cork, Homan elevates traditional and contemporary Irish songs to new heights. Adding a layer of warmth and familiarity to his performances, he welcomes the audience into a unique Irish experience. He has earned his place beside a wide variety of talented musicians who are recognized as the best in the business.

Tickets are \$20 and can be reserved by calling our office (708) 671-0648.

For more information, visit mccordgallery.org.



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FAR SOUTH EDITION

Volume 18 | Number 4 | February 18, 2020

Mokena, Oak Forest, Orland Park, Tinley Park

Mokena combats burglaries

by Jan Glaz

On Feb. 10 at the Village of Mokena Board of Trustees Meeting, Chief of Police Steven J. Vaccaro provided new information about ongoing burglaries in the village. "Operationally we have a lot of things are happening some I can report on and some I cannot at this time. We've added extra personnel. One detective has been taken off his recent responsibilities and assigned to investigate these incidents on a full-time basis. Police officers have been placed in key areas within the village and we are working very closely with the Cook County Sheriff's Office, the police departments of Frankfort, New Lenox, Orland Park, Tinley Park, Cook County, City of Chicago and the Illinois State Police.

"We are also working with the Tri County Auto Theft Task Force, plus, resources have been made available from other agencies. We continue a close collaboration with Frankfort, New Lenox and Will County as we are all on the same radio band and have a mutual assistance agreement, should we require additional personnel or if they need additional personnel."

Chief Vaccaro updated

steps being taken toward crime awareness and notifying the public. "We have 23 neighborhood watch groups; they are continually increasing their number of participants. School District 159 sent notices to all parents in their system. Our police department is contacting numerous homeowner associations through Mokena's Chamber of Commerce, and we're working with our businesses and the Fire Protection Agency." Vaccaro concluded, "Please lock everything up and watch out for your neighbors, if you see something suspicious report it immediately, and please do not confront any of these subjects!"

Board meeting postscript: Chris Tuman, owner of new Mokena business On the Spot Auto Detailing, 18813 S. 82nd Ave., announced: "I've been in business for about six years. In our operation we go to your home and detail your car. We offer hand car washes, complete auto detailing, paint correction and enhancement. We will be holding an open house on Feb. 22 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m." More information is at onthespot-mobileautodetailing.com.



An English Garden Florist & Gifts, 16800 Oak Park Avenue, Tinley Park.

Tinley Park permits conversion of historical property

by Jan Glaz

Officials in the Village of Tinley Park granted a Special Use Permit for a property at 16800 Oak Park Avenue, English Garden, LLC, at the Board of Trustees Meeting on Feb. 4. The petitioner/property owner, Kim McAuliffe, requested permission from the Village to convert the "Heritage Site" from a standalone commercial building to a mixed-use building with a second-floor apartment.

The property was constructed as a residential home in 1859 as the home of Tinley Park settlers John and Jane Fulton and

is considered historically significant real estate classified as a Heritage Site in Tinley Park's Legacy Code. Most recent the property had functioned as a standalone commercial property (law office and GiGi's Playhouse).

The petitioner renovated the first floor for the business An English Garden Florist & Gifts, which opened in 2019. Modifications are required to meet the building code requirements for second-floor residential use. The addition of an apartment will allow McAuliffe to collect rent on the unit and

will allow the property's taxes to be assessed at a lower rate through Cook County. The apartment will have three bedrooms and is approximately 1,214 square feet in size.

New & Noteworthy: Trustees agreed to adopt an ordinance granting a Special Use at the request of Vequity, LLC, for an Automobile Service Gas Station and permitting construction of a 7-Eleven at 17100 Harlem Ave. The proposed gas station includes 10 vehicle fueling stations and a 3,511-square-foot convenience store building.

Oak Forest Fleadh 5K and Family Parade

The Oak Forest-Crestwood Area Chamber of Commerce with the City of Oak Forest is excited for the 11th Annual Oak Forest Fleadh 5K and Family Parade on Saturday, March 7! The Fleadh includes a 5K run/walk, an open streets event (ride, blade, skate), a family parade up Cicero Avenue (157th to 151st Streets), and a pub and restaurant open house.

This year's Fleadh Family Parade grand marshal is the Acorn Public Library, celebrating 50 years.

Visit oak-forest.org/fleadh for more information.

Register for the Parade at oak-forest.org/fleadhparade. Register for the CNB Oak Forest Fleadh 5K at raceroster.com/26447.

Explore Village View archive

Explore digitized microfilm from the Oak Lawn Village View Publications. Papers range from 1973 to 2013 and are hosted by the Internet Archive. Look at our website, vvnew.com.

Orland Park secures Boley Farm revenue

by Jan Glaz

Orland Park Trustees approved a lease agreement with Henry Jacobs (Boley Farm/Farm Stand) at the Orland Park Board of Trustees Meeting on Feb. 3. The rental terms cover a two-year period from 2020 to 2021. The Village will receive \$15,900 each year for a total of \$31,800.

The rental agreement includes 2.12 acres of land for agricultural purposes as well as retail sale of agricultural products from the barn measuring 46 by 72 feet and the parking lot of approximately one-third of an acre. Jacobs has been operating the farm stand of the Villages Boley Farm property located on the south side of 151st Street, west of 80th Avenue, for many years and with multiple two year leases.

Henry Jacobs last paid the Village \$15,450 for

the 9½ months of 2018 and \$15,900.00 for the 9½ months of 2019. Due to disruption and restoration activities throughout 2020-21 it's been decided that the lease rate will remain flat at \$15,900 per season.

In other board meeting news: Orland Park Bakery, 14850 S. LaGrange Road, was honored as Orland Park's business of the month by President Keith Pekau and the Board of Trustees. The bakery first opened in 1970 as part of the Orland Park

Plaza at 143rd and LaGrange Road. In 2003 it was acquired by Tom and Dan Major and in 2012 the bakery moved to its current location.

The Orland Park Bakery makes everything homemade/inhouse and sells approximately 1,000 wedding cakes per year and countless birthday cakes. The owners are generous with annual donations and community participation. For more information or to place an order, visit orlandparkbakery.com or call 708-349-8516.



Orland Park Bakery, 14850 S. LaGrange Road, Orland Park



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SOUTH SUBURBAN EDITION

Volume 21 | Number 4 | February 18, 2020

Chicago Ridge, Worth, Palos Hills, Palos Park, Palos Heights

Chicago Ridge amends village code for military personnel and veterans

by Matt Mayer

Officials at the past Chicago Ridge Board of Trustees meeting approved an ordinance amending village code provisions regarding the vehicle license fee for veterans and active duty military personnel in the village. The amendment allows veterans and active duty military personnel one village sticker at no cost with appropriate documentation.

An ordinance amending an article titled "Rental Units and Dwellings" of a chapter of the village code was approved. The amended ordinance now includes violation of the Illinois Controlled Sub-

stance Act. An ordinance amending a chapter of the municipal code titled "Signs" was also approved. This will allow advertising signs at the Chicago Ridge Mall Kiosks.

Continuing education for the village clerk to attend the Illinois Municipal League's Annual Conference from May 17 to May 20 with an approximate cost of \$2,000 was approved, as well as an expense reimbursement to Chris Schmelzer for \$675.96 and the Avenue Proposal for \$2,067.06 for hardware/software maintenance. A request for a façade improvement for Extreme Clean Car Wash

was also approved.

In other business, the following expenses were approved: Kane, McKenna, \$1,662.50 for the proposed downtown TIF (tax increment financing) district and \$262.50 for the Harlem TIF; Atty Cainkar, \$3,847.50 for Harlem TIF; and GWA, \$1,406.25 for financial services for December.

The following businesses were approved: Smoke & More, 10343 Southwest Highway; 7-Eleven, 10658 S. Ridgeland Ave. (new ownership); Sew Exceptional Sock and Accessories, a kiosk in Chicago Ridge Mall; and Protocol, a storefront in the mall.



Kathleen Abbott

Exelon exec named Crisis Center board president

The Crisis Center for South Suburbia is pleased to announce Kathleen Abbott as the organization's board president. Abbott served as a member of the Crisis Center board of directors for five years before her elevation to her role as president. She is currently the Vice President of Business Operations and Technical Services for Exelon Corporation. Abbott has worked with Exelon since 2001 and has served in finance, risk and supply chain leadership roles.

Abbott says she is immensely grateful to have the opportunity to broaden awareness about domestic violence and the impact the Crisis Center has in the community. "I am truly inspired by the critical role the Crisis Center plays in helping individuals on their journey from victim to survivor. Watching people carry the flame for this cause and then ignite that passion in others is tremendously inspiring and has proven to me that one person really can make a difference in the world."

While she is a strong advocate for the emergency

shelter, housing, counseling and advocacy programs, there is no question that Abbott is a committed proponent of the Safe Start program that provides education on healthy dating and relationships to high school and junior high students. "As a community we can never go wrong by educating our youth on the signs of domestic violence, how to protect themselves, and how to get help."

Abbott has helped guide the agency through challenging times. She has also helped celebrate much success and growth. She serves on the agency's strategic planning committee and has been instrumental in expanding programs, increasing revenue and growing the organization's budget to a healthy 4.3 million dollars. She is also currently serving as one of the chairs for the Crisis Center's annual gala, 'An Evening in Paris', which will be held on Saturday, February 29th at The Odyssey in Tinley Park. Tickets are \$100 and more information can be found online: www.crisisctr.org/gala20. This year the Crisis Center is hoping to have a record 500 attendees at the event.

"The need is great and the challenges are many when it comes to domestic violence," she shared. Abbott knows that the Crisis Center must rely heavily on the generosity and support of the local community. "The gala not only helps us expand awareness about domestic violence and the free services provided at the Crisis Center, but it raises much-needed funds that help us keep our services going."

The Crisis Center for South Suburbia has been providing hope and a path to freedom for victims

of domestic violence and their families for over forty years. For more information, visit www.crisisctr.org



Traditional Irish tenor Paddy Homan

Paddy Homan to perform on McCord Stage

McCord Gallery and Cultural Center announces the return of Paddy Homan to the McCord stage, Saturday, March 7, at 4 p.m. Once again, traditional Irish tenor Paddy Homan will bring his talented voice and his witty humor to the McCord. Hailing from County Cork, Homan elevates traditional and contemporary Irish songs to new heights. Adding a layer of warmth and familiarity to his performances, he welcomes the audience into a unique Irish experience. He has earned his place beside a wide variety of talented musicians who are recognized as the best in the business.

Paddy doesn't just create an atmosphere of beautiful music, but rather, crafts an authentic real Irish experience. Tickets are \$20 and can be reserved by calling our office (708) 671-0648.

For more information about this event, please call 708-671-0648 or visit us online at www.mccord-gallery.org.

Palos Heights reveals important Census facts

by Jan Glaz

On Feb. 4, City of Palos Heights Mayor Robert Straz predicted mailing of the U.S. 2020 Census should be delivered to the general public around March 15. Mayor Straz announced, "This year will be different; this year will be the first online Census and questions can be answered on the internet. Census takers will be going out door to door to take information on those who have not complied by mail or online sometime in April of this year."

Mayor Straz stressed the importance of residents taking the Census: "The city itself receives a good portion of tax dollars based on Census numbers. We get a per capita share of income

from the State of Illinois, approximately \$183 annually for every resident living in Palos Heights.

"The share stems from income tax paid to the state, motor fuel tax paid (which is in addition to the sales tax on gasoline) and there's a portion from the renewal tax, which is the city's portion of the tax increase that was placed on gasoline last year. Please fill out the Census! At about \$183 per person, if we miss say 1,000 people, which is not realistic, it would cost us about \$183,000."

Expenses approved by the city council include: Purchase of a new step van from National Auto Fleet Group under the Sourcewell Joint Purchasing Contract 120716-NAF in

the amount of \$152,204; purchase of two additional dump trucks from Rush Truck Center under the Sourcewell Joint Purchasing Contract 081716-NVS in the amount of \$351,344; payment to Deere & Company for the Lake Katherine John Deere Gator in the amount of \$16,626.73; payment to K-Brothers Fence for the installation of a new fence along Route 83 near 75th Avenue in the amount of \$5,986; the purchase of lawn service from TruGreen for municipal parks and properties in the amount of \$17,337; and payment to Rush Truck Center for two dump trucks delivered in December in the amount of \$347,896.



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SUBURBAN EDITION

Volume 46 | Number 16 | February 18, 2020

Burbank, Evergreen Park, Hickory Hills, Justice, Oak Lawn

Evergreen Park approves streets, highway maintenance program

by Matt Mayer

During the business portion of Evergreen Park's Board of Trustees meeting Feb. 3, a resolution for maintenance of streets and highways under the Illinois Highway Code for all of 2020 was approved, as well as a request from Deputy Chief Peter Donovan to approve John Sheehan's request to participate in the Evergreen Park Police Department's college student internship program. A request regarding the March4Meg event on Saturday, March 28, at 10 a.m. at Klein Park was also approved.

The following business licenses were approved: Z Gallerie (home décor/retail), 9700 S. Western Ave.; Classmates (teacher store), 3625 W. 95th St.; 7-Eleven, 2747 W. 95th St.; Illinois Home Health Care (home health agency), 9730 S. Western Ave., Suite 405.

The village's Independence Day Parade will be held July 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Oak Lawn Arts and Events commission gets donation

by Matt Mayer

A recent brief Oak Lawn Board of Trustees meeting commenced with the presentation of a check for \$27,320 by Firehouse Subs for the Oak Lawn Fire Department rescue tools.

During the business portion of the meeting, an ordinance amending certain sections of Title 1 Chapter 11 of the Oak Lawn Municipal Code was approved, as well as a resolution regarding a one-year lease extension for a district office at 5210 W. 95th St. for Congressman Daniel Lipinski. A resolution waiving the competitive bidding requirements and authorizing the purchase of one Ford F-550 truck was also approved.

A resolution waiving the competitive bidding requirements and authorizing the renewal of a shooting range maintenance agreement with Best Technology Systems Inc. was approved, as was a resolution authorizing and approving a standard subscription agreement with Pulse Point Foundation.

Pulse Point is a non-profit foundation based in the San Francisco Bay area. The mission is to make it much easier for citizens who are trained in CPR to use their life saving skills to save lives. Through the use of modern location aware mobile devices Pulse Point is building applications that work with local public safety agencies to improve communication with citizens and empower them to help reduce the millions of annual deaths from sudden cardiac arrest, according to the foundation website.

Mardi Gras Casino Night

Oak Lawn Community High School's Spartan Educational Foundation will present a Mardi Gras Ca-



Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos poses with President Gary Dingalls (Right) and Matt Brik Sertoma, vice president and former MWRD Powerhouse Dispatcher for 29 years.

Spyropoulos speaks to the Sertoma Club

Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos was honored to have the opportunity to speak to the Hickory Hills Sertoma International Club.

The Hickory Hills Sertoma Club has provided Service to Mankind Since 1970. This year is their 50th

year and they look forward to continuing to support the community and providing scholarships.

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District is an award-winning special purpose government agency responsible for

wastewater treatment and stormwater management. MWRD's mission is to protect the health and safety of the public, the quality of the water supply source (Lake Michigan) and protect businesses and homes from flood damages.

sino Night to benefit the Foundation's student scholarships and educational programs. All businesses are invited to attend. Several sponsorship options are available.

The event, hosted by St. Gerald's Holy Name Society, will take place Saturday, Feb. 22, at St. Gerald's Jonathon Collins Activity Center, 9310 S. 55th Court. Doors open at 6 p.m. A \$50 ticket includes appetizers, \$5,000 in chips and unlimited beverages (soda, wine, beer, specialty drinks).

All chips will be exchanged for raffle tickets and a chance to win great prize baskets. No cash prizes will be awarded. Tickets can be purchased online at olchs.org or in person. For

more information, contact Maria Vanderwarren at mvanderwarren@olchs.org or at 708-741-5602.

Evergreen Park News & Events

FantaSciFest: Calling for Vendors/Artists: EP Recreation Department "FantaSciFest," Saturday, Feb. 22. (Celebrating Multi-Genre Pop Culture and Entertainment) Genre Artists, CosPlayers, Dungeons & Dragons, Film Screening Room, all at the Senior Center, 9547 S. Homan Avenue.

Fish and Sports Show: The Annual Event, presented by the Fraternal Order of Police, Evergreen

Most Holy Redeemer Trivia Night: Saturday, Feb. 29, at 6 p.m. \$450 per table (max of 10 per table). Tix must be purchased in advance at MHR.

Queen of Martyrs Celtic Ceili: Saturday, Feb. 29, 4 p.m. Irish Mass. Party is 5:30-10 p.m. Entertainment by The Larkin and Moran Brothers For more info, email karenoreillymaning@yahoo.com.

Paddy Homan to perform on McCord Stage

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Saturday, March 7, at 4 p.m. Once again, traditional Irish tenor Paddy Homan will bring his talented voice



and his witty humor to the McCord. Hailing from County Cork, Homan elevates traditional and contemporary Irish songs to new heights. Adding a layer of warmth and familiarity to his performances, he welcomes the audience into a unique Irish experience. He has earned his place beside a wide variety of talented musicians who are recognized as the best in the business.

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For more information about this event, please call 708-671-0648 or visit us online at www.mccordgallery.org.

Cook County offers property tax relief for seniors

The Cook County Treasurer's Office is offering a program that assists senior citizens who are hard-pressed to pay their property taxes. Seniors whose annual household income is \$55,000 or less can apply to the Senior Citizen Real Estate Tax Deferral Program for loans to cover property tax payments.

The State of Illinois issues the loans, which do not have to be repaid until the property is sold or the homeowner dies. The State charges an interest rate of 6% per year. The maximum loan is \$5,000 per year. To qualify, homeowners must be at least 65 years old by June 1 of the year in which the application is made.

To apply, download the application at www.cookcountytreasurer.com. Submit the completed application and copies of the required documents to the Treasurer's Office by March 1. Applications after that date will not be accepted.

The first installment for tax year 2019 is due March

3. Homeowners must reapply every year.



Assessor Fritz Kaegi

Senior Exemption deadline extended

Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi extended the deadline for the Senior Citizen and Senior Freeze Exemptions until Friday, Feb. 28, so eligible seniors may take advantage of these important property tax saving exemptions. As a reminder, all exemptions appear as deductions on second-installment tax bills.

"Our office has made a tremendous effort to make the exemption application process easier, especially for seniors. It's why we worked with legislators to make the Senior Exemption automatically renew each year,

so seniors no longer have to come to our office," Kaegi said.

The Homeowner and Senior Homeowner Exemption renew automatically while property owners must reapply for the Senior Freeze Exemption every year, as the qualification is based off annual household gross income of \$65,000 or less.

Many seniors were also mailed either a booklet or postcard from the Assessor's Office this year, notifying them of their status. Property owners can mail in their applications or apply for the exemption online.

Senior Exemption: Provides property tax savings and most homeowners who are 65 years and older qualify. Seniors receiving the Senior Exemption qualify for the Homeowner Exemption and do not have to apply for it separately.

Automatic Renewal: Yes, a new law allows for automatic renewal for seniors who received the exemption last year. Newly qualified seniors must file initial applications in 2020.

Apply Online: cookcountyassessor.com/senior-citizen-exemption

Senior Freeze Exemption: This exemption provides property tax savings for seniors and eligibility is based on an income qualification of \$65,000 or less annually. It is important to note that this exemption does not freeze the amount of a property tax bill. The property tax savings may fluctuate due to

the state multiplier and tax rate based on the taxing district in which the property is located.

Automatic Renewal: No, you must apply annually.

Apply Online: cookcountyassessor.com/senior-freeze-exemption

Seniors who did not receive applications in the mail but believe they are entitled to an exemption(s), are encouraged to visit www.cookcountyassessor.com/exemptions. They may also call 312-443-7550 and request a form be mailed to them.

"I hope that the deadline extension will give seniors the time they need to get their exemption applications completed and returned to our office," Kaegi said. "We want to ensure that seniors in Cook County receive all the property tax saving exemptions to which they are eligible."

Burke highlights property tax relief grants awarded to local school districts

State Rep. Kelly Burke, D-Oak Lawn, announced recently that two local school districts were awarded property tax relief grants from the state.

"Skyrocketing property taxes continue to place an unfair burden on families in Illinois, and it is paramount that we take the steps needed to provide real relief for homeowners,"

Burke said. "In addition to education funding reform, we must also look for other ways to provide school districts with funding that will ease the burden of property taxes while ensuring our students receive the quality education they deserve."

The Illinois State Board of Education recently announced that 39 school districts in Illinois will receive property tax relief grants. Local school districts that have been awarded grants include Evergreen Park Community High School District 231, which will receive \$668,831 in grant funding and Worth School District 127 which will receive \$866,277. In exchange for grant funding, school districts will be required to abate money back to taxpayers, totaling \$797,140 and \$921,069 for each district, respectively.

"Shifting the school funding burden onto the state and off of homeowners is critical in helping members of our community afford to remain in their homes," Burke continued. "The Illinois State Board of Education grant program will reduce property taxes for local homeowners and fund school districts in our community."

Law guarantees tips are the property of the employees who earned them

Legislation signed by

Gov. J.B. Pritzker clarifies an existing state law and makes it crystal clear that employees own their tips.

The law, which took effect the beginning of this year, amends the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. The law states that gratuities are the property of employees, and that their employers cannot retain them.

"People in the various service industries work hard for their money and in many cases, such as for restaurant servers, tips make up an important part of the overall compensation," said Michael Kleinik, Director of the Illinois Department of Labor. "This law leaves no doubt that gratuities belong to the workers who earned them."

The law requires gratuities to be paid to employees within 13 days after the end of the pay period during which the gratuities were earned. Employers are required to pay tipped workers a minimum of 60% of the state's minimum wage, which rose to \$9.25 an hour Jan. 1, and the tips and wage combined must equal at least the minimum wage.

The law does not prohibit a tip pooling arrangement among employees as permitted by law.

Workers or employers who have questions regarding the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act can call the Illinois Department of Labor at 312-793-2800 or email DOL.Questions@Illinois.gov.

Proud member of following Chambers

Alsip Chamber of Commerce www.alsipchamber.org	Justice Chamber of Commerce www.villageofjustice.org
Bedford Park-Clearing Industrial Association www.bpcia.org	Oak Forest-Crestwood Area Chamber - The OC Chamber of Commerce www.oc-chamber.org
Blue Island Chamber of Commerce & Industry www.blueislandchamber.org	Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce www.oaklawnchamber.com
The Burbank Chamber of Commerce www.burbankchamber.com	Orland Park Area Chamber of Commerce www.orlandparkchamber.org
Evergreen Park Chamber of Commerce www.evergreenparkchamber.org	Tinley Park Chamber of Commerce www.tinleychamber.org
The Hills Chamber of Commerce www.thehillschamber.org	United Business Association of Midway www.ubam.org

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We have found that through the years of publishing the readers are interested in general information and also local happenings within their community. Therefore because we are fully electronic, we will not be accepting faxed or mailed news releases.

A message on voter registration from Cook County Clerk

Dear Voter,
Here are 2 powerful actions you can take today to help improve your community and your country as we approach the March 17th Primary Election.

1. Update your voter registration to your new address if you need to, then send this URL to a friend (maybe someone who just moved): ova.elections.il.gov.

This link works for any Illinois citizen who will be 18 by Nov. 3 (and 17-year-olds can vote in the March 17 primary if they will be



County Clerk Karen A. Yarbrough

18 by the general election Nov. 3).

Online Registration takes about 2 minutes.

You'll need a driver's license or state ID. Register or make updates online by Sunday, March 1.

No ID? You can still register. Follow the link above for a mail-in registration form. If you register on paper, put it in the mail by Feb. 18.

2. Apply to have your ballot mailed to you at cookcountyclerk.com/votebmail.

Only works if you're registered. If not, see step 1!

Not in Cook County? We probably link to your county.

Mail ballots must be postmarked by Election Day, March 17.

You don't have to cast your vote by mail. You can find an Early Voting site or your Election Day polling place at cookcountyclerk.com/agency/ways-vote.

We also need Election Judges in many precincts. Visit cookcountyclerk.com/agency/work-election-day for information on becoming an Election Judge.

Sincerely,
Karen A. Yarbrough
Cook County Clerk

Moraine Valley hosts documentary highlighting entrepreneur refugees' journey

Moraine Valley Community College will host a viewing of "Soufra," a documentary about several women from a refugee camp in Lebanon, on Wednesday, March 18, at 6:30 p.m. in the Dorothy Menker Theater in the Fine and Performing Arts Center, 9000 W. College Parkway, Palos Hills.

Tickets are \$5 each and can be purchased online at <https://bit.ly/2ts1f3K>, at the Box Office in Building F, or at the door the night of the event. Proceeds will benefit the Arab American Academic Excellence Scholarship fund.

The film, which premiered in 2017 and has been seen by audiences around the world, showcases the journey of Mariam Shaar, a refugee who has spent her entire life in the Burl El Barajneh refugee camp south of Beirut. Shaar and several women set out to change their fate by launching a catering company they call "Soufra" which is Arabic for "dining table." The refugee women, who are from Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Iraq, expand the company's reach outside the camp with a food truck business, and together heal

the wounds of war through the unifying power of food while taking their future into their own hands.

The film has received several awards, including Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature in 2018. It is presented by the Arab Student Union (ASU) at Moraine Valley and the Chicago Palestine Film Festival, an independent organization that exhibits and promotes films by Palestinian directors and films about Palestine.

"We're really excited to feature this film and we're grateful to the Chicago



Mariam Shaar displays one of the dishes she serves in the catering business she started with other women living in a refugee camp in Lebanon. Photo by Vivien Killilia Best.

Palestine Film Festival for teaming up with us," said Dr. Nina Shoman-Dajani, assistant dean of Learning Enrichment and College Readiness and ASU club advisor. "It's very timely in terms of the subject matter

and something that a lot of people can relate to. This is a very inspiring documentary."

For more information, contact Shoman-Dajani at shoman-dajanim@morainevalley.edu.

GO OAK LAWN

The Oak Lawn Park District announces GO OAK LAWN, a new wellness movement designed to increase community health through activity, education, and collaboration. GO OAK LAWN is sponsored by Advocate Christ Medical Center.

The GO OAK LAWN initiative is simple: Everyone makes a commitment to be active every day in their own neighborhoods, through Park District programs, events, services or at a park/trail. This free initiative offers an opportunity to encourage everyone in our community to take part in improving our health and wellness.

The Oak Lawn Park District will offer a variety of free to low cost activities throughout the year for GO OAK LAWN participants. This is in thanks to Advocate Christ Medical Center's sponsorship. A kickoff event will take place in May 2020. Each registered participant will receive a free T-shirt at the kickoff event.

Registration for this free movement is going on now. Register at any Oak Lawn Park District facility, excluding Stony Creek, or at www.olparks.com. Use code 510000.

Join the GO OAK LAWN Facebook Group to engage with other GO OAK LAWN participants. For more information, visit www.olparks.com or call 708-857-2200.

Free class for caregivers of dementia and Alzheimer's patients

Friends and family members who care for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or dementia face a variety of mental and practical challenges. Starting Monday, March 2, Midlothian Public Library will partner with the nonprofit AgeOptions to offer a free course that helps caregivers develop the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to handle these challenges.

"The Savvy Caregiver" is a

12-hour evidence-based educational program delivered over six 2-hour sessions by a certified instructor. Originally developed by researchers at the University of Minnesota, this program has been proven across a variety of states and populations to increase caregivers' skills, knowledge and confidence. The course provides participants a better understanding of Alzheimer's disease and dementia, strategies to meet their loved one's needs, as well as self-care techniques to maintain the caregiver's own well-being. Past program participant and Midlothian resident Eric Knoedler said that the course, "helped me understand what people with Alzheimer's and de-

mentia are going through, how to connect with them, and have the best care for them."

The class will meet at Midlothian Public Library, 14701 S. Kenton Avenue, on Mondays, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. While there is no charge, registration is required by Feb. 21. Call the library at 708-535-2027 or go online to bit.ly/Midlo-Care2020 to register. Without a minimum number of participants, the class will be cancelled. Registration is open both to Midlothian residents and non-residents alike, and ownership of a library card is not required. For more information, please call the library.

Ash Wednesday

Pilgrim Faith UCC of Oak Lawn will hold Ash Wednesday services Feb. 26 at 7 p.m. The church is at 9411 S. 51st Ave., Oak Lawn. Visitors are welcome. Communion will be served and is open to all Christians.

Wits Workout

The Chicago Ridge Public Library, 10400 S. Oxford, is hosting, "Wits Workout" on Thursday, Feb. 27, from 10-11 a.m. The research is in: our brains need regular workouts too! Join us monthly for this program developed by University of Illinois Extension educators. This program is made pos-

sible through a grant from Age Options. Call the library at 708-423-7753 or visit the website, www.chicagoridge-library.org to sign up for this free program!

Health programs

At the Palos Township Health Service at 10802 S. Roberts Road, Palos Hills, we are having several programs going on this February.

Free hearing screening is 9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18.

Free BINGO is 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 20.

Cholesterol and hemoglobin A1C is 8:30 a.m. to noon Monday, Feb. 24. Fees apply.

Please call to register for all events at 708-598-2441.

Plan your future

Please join us for a tour and refreshments during our Sunday Open House on February 23, 2020 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Mercy Circle has a no-entrance-fee policy and a five-star CMS rating. The not-for-profit community provides spacious residences and a continuum of lifestyle and healthcare services for:

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Come out of hibernation for Brookfield Zoo's Winter Wine and Whiskey Fest

Don't let the winter cold keep you indoors, come and warm up at Brookfield Zoo's Winter Wine and Whiskey Fest on Saturday, Feb. 22, from 4 to 8 p.m. The 21-and-over-only event will feature more than 30 seasonal wines and whiskeys accompanied by complimentary small bites.

Guests will have the opportunity to sample a variety of wines and whiskeys, including Asbach Brandy, Broken Barrel, Casali Rum, Donegal Estates Irish Whiskey, Gilka Kaiser-Kummel Liqueur, Imported Spirits, Infuse Spirits, Jackson Morgan Southern Cream, Jeff Runquist Wines, Knockmore Irish Whiskey, Manner Neopolitan-er Cream, Quinta Nova, Quintessential Wines, Rogue Spirits, Scotto Cellars, SR262, Turn Me Wines, and Wein Bauer.

Live entertainment provided by the local band Spoken Four will add to the ambiance and will surely have guests

dancing and singing all night long. Additionally, there will be opportunities throughout the evening for up-close experiences with several of the zoo's animal ambassadors.

Two ticket options are available, both include zoo admission and parking on Feb. 22 (from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.), so attendees can plan to arrive earlier in the day to enjoy seeing all the animals before the fest begins.

General admission ticket is \$95 (zoo members receive a \$10 discount). It includes samplings from more than 30 wines and whiskeys, small bites, and a commemorative glass.

Designated driver ticket is \$45 (zoo members receive a \$10 discount). It includes unlimited soft drinks and small bites (no wine or whiskey).

Tickets to Brookfield Zoo's Winter Wine and Whiskey Fest are limited and available for purchase at CZS.org/WinterWineandWhiskey.

Women's Conference & Expo

South Suburban College (SSC) announces its 2020 Chicago Women's Conference on Friday, March 13, from 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., located at the college's Main Campus in South Holland. This year's theme, "Vision 2020 Sharpen Your Focus," marks the 12th annual event planned through the college's Business and Career Institute (BCI). Women of all backgrounds ages 18 and up are welcome to come together for one day dedicated exclusively to women.

What started off as a small series of workshops in 2009, has turned into a yearly event that continues to grow. Last year over 350 participants and 50 vendors attended this truly unique opportunity. SSC invites all women to join in the experience and connect with hundreds of other women this March. This year's keynote speaker, Ericka Glorious Moore, will present "Vision 2020: If You Can SEE It, You Can BE It."

The Admission Fee is \$49 per person and registration runs through March 11. The day's activities will include a hot breakfast buffet, networking opportunities, engaging break-out sessions on health & wellness, personal empowerment, business & finance and a fun and exciting fashion show! Attendees should be dressed to get a complimentary, web-ready headshot! Throughout the day, guests can shop the event's wonderful vendors featuring many women-owned and local businesses.

Submit the online registration form at www.thechicagowomensconference.org or email bci@ssc.edu with questions. South Suburban College is located at 15800 S. State St., South Holland.

Preschool open house

On Thursday, Feb. 25, from 6 to 7 p.m., preschool teachers will be hosting an open house at the Cynthia Neal Rec. Center, 8047 W. 91st Place, Hickory Hills.

The open house is for those parents wishing to enroll their child in a preschool program for the first time for the 2020-21 school year.

An informational pamphlet on our preschool program will be available that night or call (708) 598-1233 to have one mailed.

Spaghetti dinner

When you enter the doors of Trinity Lutheran Church auditorium on Saturday, Feb. 29 from 4 to 7 p.m., the aroma of spaghetti and rich homemade sauce will fill your taste buds for the most DELICIOUS Spaghetti Dinner anywhere! There will be fresh salad with homemade dressing, homemade desserts and beverages. There are options of gluten-free or wheat pasta and marinara sauce. Meatballs and Italian sausage also available.

The tickets for the dinner are \$10 for adults, \$6 for children 12 and under and those 3 years and younger are free. The cost for the meatballs or sausage is an additional \$1.50 each. Trinity Lutheran is at 9701 S. Brandt Ave., Oak Lawn.

Sip and sample

Enjoy an evening at the Evergreen Park Library, 9400 S. Troy, with friends and neighbors sampling foods prepared by local chefs, specially paired with sips of wine and beer, from 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. Music provided by A Week Back. Split the pot and basket drawings as well. A 21-year and over event.

Call (708) 422-8522.



Carrie Coon stars in "Bug" at Steppenwolf. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

'Bug': A luridly funny tale of love, paranoia and government conspiracy

Due to popular demand, Steppenwolf Theatre Company's production of "Bug," the skin-crawling, mind-bending cult classic by Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning ensemble member Tracy Letts, is extending one week and will now close March 15.

Directed by Tony Award winner David Cromer, the cast of this highly anticipated Steppenwolf debut features ensemble members Randall Arney (Dr.

Sweet), Carrie Coon (Agnes White) and Namir Smallwood (Peter Evans) along with Chicago favorites Jennifer Engstrom (R.C.) and Steve Key (Jerry Goss).

In a seedy Oklahoma motel room, a lonely waitress begins an unexpected love affair with a young drifter. And then they see the first bugs... Tracy Letts's mind-bending cult classic, a luridly funny tale of love, paranoia, and government conspiracy, roars back to Chicago for its Steppenwolf debut.

Bug will now run through March 15 in the Downstairs Theatre (1650 N. Halsted St). Single tickets (\$20-\$125) are available through Audience Services at 312-335-1650 or steppenwolf.org.

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'A Doll's House' by Henrik Ibsen, directed by Lauren Shouse

by Kathryn Moery

In this premier adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's 1879 revolutionary feminist play, the focal point of the conflict is subtly delivered

within the living room of the house where the action takes place. In this room, the opening scene portends of this conflict when Nora looks around her living room and expounds, "A house built on debt can never be a beautiful home."

Indeed, the walls of the set are covered with a paper that looks like a manuscript. Glass-doored bookcases re-

veal a matched set of large, bound books, mindful of a lawyer's office, with small keepsake statues randomly placed in front of them. The floor's border is punctuated with a pattern resembling a series of commas and apostrophes.

Amidst these conscriptive symbols, the drama revolves around a promissory note fraudulently signed by

Nora to care for her husband, Torvald, early in the marriage, and the threat that he will find out from a disgruntled bank employee eight years later. The interaction between the husband, with his condescending, monotone cadence, and his wife, who towers over him physically, but who is emotionally subdued by the control he has over her, is

captivating.

Nora remains compliant to her husband's demands throughout the story, while trying to seek help to cover up and avert his discovery. The climax unfolds like a courtroom drama whereby the husband inflicts a punishment on his wife equivalent to a jail sentence in this house where she has been imprisoned as a "doll wife"

her whole life. Acting upon her realization that transformation "would be the most wonderful thing", she does.

The show runs through March 22 at the Raven Theatre, 6147 N. Clark. Tickets range from \$15-\$46 (with discounts for students, teachers, seniors, active military and veterans) and are available at raven theatre.com or 773-338-2177.

Entertainment Theater
by Your Entertainment Concierge
Richard and Denise Gore

Some recommendations:

Drury Lane Theatre, 100 Drury Lane, Oak Brook Terrace (630-530-0111) presents the regional premiere of the George and Ira Gershwin classic "An American in Paris," through March 29. This Academy Award winner for Best Picture and four-time Tony Award-winning show brings beautiful music, with well-known American standards such as "I've Got Rhythm," "The Man I Love," "S Wonderful," "Shall We Dance" and "They Can't Take That Away From Me." Dance from ballet to ballroom, all brought together with a wonderful story. An American GI in Paris after WWII tries his luck at making it as a painter; meanwhile, he falls in love with the city, Paris, and "the" girl. A real "don't miss." So good there was a standing ovation at the intermission!

Theatre at the Center, 1040 Ridge Road Munster, Indiana (219-836-3255), brings us the Chicago-area premiere of "Almost Heaven: John Denver's America," running through March 22. Variety is quoted as saying, "The show pays tribute to an artist who remains great at making people feel good." It promises to be a wonderful and intimate celebration of John Denver's life, career and music. Denver was raised in a military family, he went on to become a musician, songwriter and singer encompassing the 1970s, '80s and '90s. His long career included such hits as "Country Roads," "Rocky Mountain High," "Annie's Song" and so many more.

Chicago Shakespeare Theater on Navy Pier (312-595-5600) presents an enchanting new musical, "Emma." This delightful tale with one of literature's most fiercely independent heroines eloquently displays Jane Austin's sense of humor and will run through March 16. One of the stand-out stars is Lora Lee Gayer: Her portrayal of Emma is wonderful and right on point. Her singing, smiles at just the right time, and her proclivity for match-making, as she thinks she always knows best, make Emma come alive. Austen wrote about women of her times, 200 ago, and yet today's audiences get her wry sense of humor as she portrays her heroines almost with double vision, steady and self-deluding at the same time. With artistic director, Barbara Gaines at the helm, fabulous staging and a stellar talented cast, it's surely a don't miss. Also, Short Shakespeare will run Saturdays at 11 a.m. until Feb. 29. "The Comedy of Errors" is a classic with enough comedy, acrobatics and mistaken identities for the entire family. It's a condensed version, 75 minutes, and you can meet and talk with cast members after the show.

BrightSide Theatre, 31 S. Ellsworth, at Melley-Swallow Hall at North Central College, Naperville's (630-447-8497) only professional theatre performing in the historic district, will present, "Steel Magnolias" March 6 through March 22. With an all-female cast, we will be transported to Truvy's beauty shop, where the lives of six strong women increasingly hinge on the existence of one another. Just like life, this tale can be laugh-out-loud funny or touchingly tug at your heartstrings. You can't help but fall in love with this group of sharp, strong and compassionate women, so like the women that surround you in your life.

Porchlight Musical Theatre's (773-777-9884) 25th Anniversary Mainstage season continues with "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies," running until March 6, at The Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St., Chicago. This is a true celebration of the artist many consider one of the most important composers in the history of American music. A stylish salute to "the Duke" will take you on a tap dancing, singing and dynamic journey through the life and times of this wonderful showman. He started at Harlem's famous "Cotton Club," and continued to wow them at "Carnegie Hall," "Broadway," "Hollywood" and around the world. His award-winning songs included "Take the A Train," "It Don't Mean a Thing" and "Satin Doll."

For a great deal, you can order your tickets at chicagotheatreweek.com at a cost of \$15-\$30 to more than 120 different shows until Feb. 23.

'Emma' at Shakespeare Theater

Chicago Shakespeare Theater announces the cast and creative team for the Theater's highly anticipated production of "Emma," a musical adaptation of Jane Austen's beloved novel, with book, music, and lyrics by Tony Award-nominated composer Paul Gordon, whose world premiere production of "Sense and Sen-



Emma Woodhouse (Lora Lee Gayer, at right) and Mr. Knightley (Brad Standley) in "Emma." Photo by Liz Lauren.

sibility" captivated Chicago Shakespeare audiences in 2015. Directed by Artistic

Director Barbara Gaines, this lush period production features one of literature's most fiercely independent heroines in an enchanting new musical. Jane Austen's "Emma" is presented in the Theater's uniquely intimate Courtyard Theater, now through March 15.

Single tickets are \$49-\$90. Special discounts will be available for groups of 10 or more. Call 312-595-5600 or visit chicagoshakes.com for more information and to buy tickets.

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No need to 'warm up' modern cars

(NAPS) When the weather is cold, many motorists wonder if they need to let their vehicle "warm up" or idle before driving. In fact, today's modern cars are ready to drive in cold temperatures without excessive idling.

The idea of idling before driving dates back to when cars were built with carburetors. With new fuel-injection technology, complex computer systems and thinner synthetic oils, drivers don't need to warm up their cars before hitting the road.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "When a car idles for more than 30 seconds, it has several negative effects, such as increasing air pollution unnecessarily, wasting fuel and money and causing excessive wear or even damaging a car's engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and the exhaust system. Contrary to popular belief, idling isn't an effective way to warm up most car engines."

"Unless you are trying to defrost the windshield or warm the interior of your car, idling is not required

for today's vehicles," said Rich White, executive director, Car Care Council. "In most cases, idling longer than 30 seconds is unnecessary, even on the coldest days. The best way to warm up your car's engine is to drive gently at the start. Remember, a vehicle gets zero miles per gallon when idling and the result is lower fuel economy and wasted money."

The Car Care Council has a free 80-page Car Care Guide for motorists that features several pages of fuel economy and environmental awareness tips. Available in English and Spanish, the popular guide uses easy-to-understand, everyday language rather than technical automotive jargon and fits easily in a glove box.

The nonprofit Car Care Council is the source of information for the "Be Car Care Aware" consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers.

To order a free copy of the popular Car Care Guide, visit the council's consumer education website at www.carcare.org.

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Thank you for reading.

This paper is out because of you, the customer.

Help for the self-employed

(NAPS) Whether you run a part-time business, do freelance work, or own your own business, you're in good company. About 16 million adults in America work for themselves, and nearly half that number are baby boomers.

Even though self-employment comes in many forms, with a wide range of specific needs, some of the challenges are universal, including taxes. If you're new to the self-employment journey, you'll need to be prepared for some financial adjustments.

Avoiding Surprises

Older adults who have spent most of their careers benefiting from the services of a human resources department are often caught off guard by the tax requirements for self-employment.

Instead of the familiar W-2 from a single full-time job, self-employed adults may find themselves juggling multiple 1099s, wrestling with the time-consuming work of tracking expenses learning how to plan, save and submit quarterly tax payments.

If you work for yourself, you may need a resource that can help you handle multiple self-employment tax requirements. AARP Foundation Self-Saver is an online tax-tracking resource that allows you to connect your bank

Need self-employment tax help?

Sign Up



account and automate your self-employment tax withholding and payments.

As user Connie Johnson explained, "I'm an AARP member and I just happened onto Self-Saver. I felt like a miracle had happened. I had no idea I had to pay self-employment tax because as a contractor you're considered self-employed, so that was a little bit of a shock. I feel peace of mind knowing that has been taken care of."

The Self-Saver

Self-Saver saves you time and money with a set of tools that make tax time simpler, automated and less of a surprise.

By syncing to your bank account, Self-Saver informs you automatically about self-employment income received and expenses paid. The program provides an estimated tax rate based on factors that adjust as your income and other statuses change.

Self-Saver also gives you the option to automate your tax withholding, storing the right amount in an FDIC-insured bank. At the end of the quarter, Self-Saver submits your quarterly tax payments

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to the IRS automatically.

For additional self-employment education or to sign up for a free account, go to Self-Saver.org. Sign up before April 15 and Self-Saver will always be free!

The retirement balancing act

(NAPS) According to the U.S. Census, by 2035, older generations are projected to outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history, thus increasing the need for caregivers. Millions of adults, including Boomers, are already taking care of loved ones and facing new realities that require sacrifices to provide care.

Research from the Bankers Life Center for a Secure Retirement shows that among Boomers who expect to be future caregivers, nearly all (92%) are willing to make lifestyle sacrifices in order to provide that care. And although awareness about the need for retirement care is growing, Boomers remain financially unprepared. According to the study, one-third (30%) of Boomers who are caregivers have had to tap into their own nest eggs to support the care of a parent or loved one.

National Family Caregivers Month is a great time to develop a plan that balances retirement planning and long-term caregiving. Here are three steps to take to ensure you're financially pre-

pared:

1. Develop a budget.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services estimates that Boomers will face an average of \$138,000 in long-term care costs over their lifetimes. Though this cost is simply an average, it may fluctuate depending on your health as you age. Plan ahead and create a budget that addresses both your retirement needs and possible expenses, including costs related to necessary home modifications.

2. Consider long-term care insurance.

Long-term care insurance can help save thousands in caregiving expenses. It's a good idea to have a conversation with your loved ones to discuss insurance options. This ensures that the costs are not transferred over completely to you.

3. Don't know where to start? Get help.

With so many details to consider, enlist support. Professional financial advisors can shape a personalized plan that prepares for retirement and accounts for unforeseen expenses. Bankers Life, a national life and health insurer, offers tools and resources that can help protect retirement nest eggs from the high costs of long-term care.

There are options available for nearly any income and asset level, age, or risk tolerance. It is never too late to seek help and develop a better understanding of how to prepare for the future.

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Home improvements for safety

(NAPS) Research shows that most older adults want to live in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Most homes, however, were not built to support the mobility, sensory and cognitive changes that often accompany aging.

Fortunately, older adults and caregivers can make simple updates such as clearing clutter from the floor, improving lighting and removing rugs to help prevent falls—all of which can make homes meet the changing mobility, sensory and cogni-

tive needs of the older adults who live in them. Other changes such as installing a stair lift or renovating a bathroom are more complex and require outside assistance.

Many older adults who need to modify their homes don't know where to turn for advice or assistance—or even what modifications they may need. That's where the Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration for Community Living, comes in. It connects older adults and caregivers across the country to Area Agencies



One call to the Eldercare locator can connect older adults to local resources that can help them modify their homes so they can live there safely for many years to come.

on Aging and other resources—that can help determine what needs to be done, how to find a contractor to do it and look for ways to pay for it all—that can help ensure their homes meet their evolving needs.

To that end, the Eldercare locator created a brochure, "Modifying Your Home for Healthy Aging." For a free copy and further advice, call 800-677-1116 or visit the Eldercare Locator at eldercare.acl.gov.

**FREEFORM seat
technology: A
car owner's
dream**

(NAPS) Automotive seat design has become a crucial consideration for automakers as consumers spend more time in their vehicles, and as interior comfort becomes a major competitive battleground. Every automaker is striving to put a special "signature" on seats, one that conveys their distinct brand values.

To the benefit of both consumers and car makers, mobility technology company Magna International has recently introduced FREEFORM, an innovative seat trim cover technique that puts seat design on a par with exterior design.

Styling Flexibility

FREEFORM is just what its name suggests: the freedom to achieve nearly endless design possibilities with various shapes and crisp styling lines for striking visual effects.

Explains Eric Kozlowski, the Magna chief engineer responsible for complete seat system advanced research and development, "It's a great way to differentiate seats. You can do any kind of shape or form. Car makers see this and say, 'But they told me this was impossible!' It's not with FREEFORM."

FREEFORM is a car maker's dream because it achieves design details as sharp as 3–4mm radii compared to 20–25mm for traditional cut-and-sew methods.

Sculptural seats that provide "eye candy" are only the beginning.

Quality and Comfort

"You also get improved production consistency, craftsmanship, high quality and improved comfort with FREEFORM," Kozlowski said.

Magna's new patent-pending technology offers improved seat back comfort with highly concave surfaces and contours that hug the human shape. The sculpted, seamless surface offers more than 4 inches of concavity, resulting in added passenger comfort. Back panels have a "soft touch," with better rear seat knee clearance.

Seats are easier to clean due to the simple construction of the seamless surface and a zipper feature. This lets ride-sharing fleets for example easily clean and swap out

seat covers during routine maintenance.

FREEFORM adds to the seat comfort factor with up to more than four times the breathability of other molded trim technologies. Because FREEFORM uses hidden tie-downs, traditional trim attachment methods—which can add up to nearly 80 components in a traditional cut-and-sew trim cover—are eliminated. The technology works on leather, cloth or vinyl so you can still enjoy your choice of seat cover.

The next time you're looking for a new car, don't just kick the tires; kick back and try out the seats for class and comfort. For further facts and a look at how free from seats are made, go to www.magna.com.

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**Memories To Go
2020 at
Evergreen Park**

The Senior Council of Evergreen Park will host its Village-wide garage sale, Memories To Go. Please save the date of Saturday, May 2, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Yukich Field, 89th and Kedzie Avenue.

Vendors, it is time to reserve your spot. Price for an indoor (our covered ice arena) spot is \$50; outside spots are

\$35. There is a \$5 discount for previous participants and for signing up by April 1.

Registration is being done at the Community Center, 3450 W. 97th St.

If you need more information please call the Office of Citizens' Service phone number, 708-422-8776.

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