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# Village View

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good news!

## B-MAC EDITION

Volume 14 | Number 23 | December 1, 2020

Blue Island, Midlothian, Alsip, Crestwood

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### Bremen Township Officials Reject Pay Increases

Supervisor Kathryn Straniero along with the Bremen Township Board of Trustees voted unanimously to reject pay raises for all Bremen elected officials at their board meeting Nov. 16. The voting member of the Bremen board consists of Mary Catuara, John M. (Mike) Tatro, Carolyn Carter, Ed Maggio, and Supervisor Straniero. The re-

maining Township official includes Clerk John Lord, Assessor Willie A. Jones, and Highway Commissioner John Flaherty.

Newly appointed Supervisor Kathy Straniero stated that she is so proud of this board that has put the interest of Bremen Township taxpayers first in recognizing that many of our residents are being financially

challenged during these uncertain times and are willing to do their small part to help alleviate the burden. Assessor Willie A. Jones announced that Cook County will be re-assessing our area this coming year and commended the Board of Trustees for being proactive in refusing to accept any pay increases, pensions or benefits.



Supervisor Kathryn Straniero

### South Suburban College to host open houses on WEI funding

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) recently announced an award of \$1,200,000 for the continuance of the Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) Grant at South Suburban College. The WEI project is designed to create, support and expand short-term workforce training opportunities in high need areas within SSC District #510. Through new programs, expanded access, opportunity, and support services, the project is anticipated to yield impactful outcomes for individuals, families, communities, and local businesses.

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For more information about the WEI programs at SSC, please call (708) 596-2000, ext. 2413, email [workforceequity@ssc.edu](mailto:workforceequity@ssc.edu) or visit [www.ssc.edu/wei](http://www.ssc.edu/wei).

Spring classes begin Monday, Jan. 11, and class schedules, registration services and a new "live chat" with staff are all available online from [ssc.edu](http://ssc.edu). Future SSC students should get started at [admissions.ssc.edu](http://admissions.ssc.edu). In addition to the live chat function at [ssc.edu](http://ssc.edu), prospective students may call (708) 210-5718.

### Goodman's 'A Christmas Carol' is audio this year



You are invited to join the Goodman Theatre as "A Christmas Carol — An Audio Play" begins its streaming run at 7 p.m. December 1 (through December 31).

Experience Goodman Theatre's 43-year "Christmas Carol" tradition anew with our FREE audio streaming version. The voices you love, including Larry Yando as Scrooge, and our signature soundscape come to vivid life in your home.

In addition, the audio play will be broadcast on Chicago public media sta-

tions (WBEZ 91.5 FM and Vocalo 91.1 FM) over the Christmas holiday on Thursday, December 24, at 3 p.m. and Friday, December 25 at 11 a.m.

"A Christmas Carol Future" Gift Certificates make a great present this year and are an investment in the future of the production. Receive double the value of the purchase amount (up to a \$400 value) redeemable for "A Christmas Carol" next year, when live in-person indoor performances can safely resume at the Goodman.

### Crestwood Police introduces Operation Pinch the Grinch!

Mayor Lou Presta and Police Chief Dave Weigand want to help prevent package thefts this holiday season. With Covid-19 cases on a huge uptick, residents will choose to do more holiday shopping online, and thieves know this. We want to help prevent package thefts during this already trying time in our lives.

Ensure secure delivery of your packages by shipping them to the Crestwood Police Department. You can then pick them up from the Police Department and have one fewer thing to worry about.

We will accept packages through Tuesday, Dec.

22nd.

Packages must be picked up within three days of arrival at the Police Department.

Dec. 23rd is the last day to pick-up your package. Packages must be under 50 pounds. The name of the person picking up the package must match the name on the mailing label.

There is no charge for this service.

If you purchase gifts on Craigslist, E-Bay or other exchange websites, you can make the transaction in the Safety Exchange Zones in our lobby and public parking lot. This service is available year-round.



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## FAR SOUTH EDITION

Volume 18 | Number 23 | December 1, 2020

Mokena, Oak Forest, Orland Park, Tinley Park

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### Virtual gala, silent auction benefits Orland Park Library

The Orland Park Public Library and Friends of the Library have partnered to present the Building on Our Future Virtual Gala. This gala at 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, will include a silent auction, raffle, wine tasting, overview of naming opportunities around the Library, and a grand reveal of the renovated areas of the Library.

As the Library Renewed Our Story in 2020, new rooms and areas were created leaving opportunity for new local families, businesses, nonprofits, and membership organizations to purchase naming rights.

Donations benefit the

capital campaign fund, which can be spent to improve the library building and premises. In the next year, the library will need half of its roof replaced and a new parking lot. In the post COVID-19 climate, increasing the property tax levy to cover those expenses is not an option.

A half roof replacement and a new parking lot will cost the library over \$300,000 each to complete.

The Friends of the Library is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to helping advance the cause of the Library to benefit engaging programs and community betterment.



The Friends have partnered with the Library on this virtual gala to take in any donations made so that they may be tax deductible.

Please browse the silent auction items and bid generously. All silent auction items can be bid on. The winning bid pays by credit card, and checks out with a virtual cart at the end of the auction. Once winning bids are paid for, an email

will be generated to the winning bidder describing where and when to pick up your winnings.

If you register your cell phone number during this virtual gala, you will receive texts when you are outbid on items, so keep your cell phone close!

The Library thanks the generous sponsors of this event for donating to the silent auction and raffle.

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interest of Bremen Township taxpayers first. Jones announced that Cook County will be re-assessing our area this coming year and commended the Board of Trustees for being proactive in refusing to accept any pay increases, pensions or benefits.

### Mokena board approves one-time fee waivers

Understanding the unprecedented hardships being placed on the local business community as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, your Mokena Village Board Monday evening agreed to waive liquor license fees for 2021 for

restaurants and bars, along with the annual business license fee paid by all Mokena businesses.

Restaurants and bars have been among those businesses taking the hardest hits over the past eight months, continually having to adjust to copious operating restrictions imposed by Governor Pritzker in response to the virus.

Liquor license fees, which range from \$500 to \$1,100 annually, will be waived for

all thirty restaurants and bars holding a current license. The waiver will not apply to holders of package licenses, nor will it be made available to new applicants for or recipients of liquor licenses moving forward.

The \$36 business license fee waiver will be extended to all active Mokena businesses as a broad show of support for the entire business community. Approximately 800 businesses will benefit from this waiver. As

with liquor, the waiver will not be made available to future applicants for or recipients of business licenses.

The Village of Mokena is financially sound, according to Wipfli, LLP, an independent auditor examining the Village's books. At its November 23 meeting, your Mokena Village Board received a copy of the Village's official financial audit for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020 and heard testimony on the au-

dit. Current debt levels are manageable, as the Village Board has carefully worked to balance improving the Village's core infrastructure while assuming principal and interest payments that can be met through earmarked sources. The Village Board has also been able to continue its philosophy of earmarking capital reserve funds for current and future improvement projects. These core projects include water and sew-

er utility improvements, various road projects, and facility improvements.

Both of the Village's pension funds are stable. The Police Pension Fund is 78% funded, and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund is 71% funded. The audit's overall findings support the Board's financial stewardship which has led the way to Mokena consistently having the lowest municipal tax rate in the Lincoln-Way area.



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## SOUTH SUBURBAN EDITION

Volume 21 | Number 23 | December 1, 2020

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

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### Committee releases ComEd documents related to Madigan, schedules Dec. 14 hearing

(The Center Square) Documents spanning over nearly a decade related to the ComEd bribery scheme implicating Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan have been released, and members of a committee investigating the speaker have different takes.

Since entering a deferred prosecution agreement with Commonwealth Edison, federal prosecutors have charged five people in a scheme they say lasted from 2010 through 2019 where the Exelon subsidiary paid \$1.3 million in bribes to Madigan associates in an effort to influence the speaker.

Madigan, D-Chicago, has not been charged with a crime and maintains he's done nothing wrong.

The Illinois House Special Investigating Committee, launched this summer by House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, R-Western Springs, hasn't subpoenaed Madigan despite Republican requests, but did request documents from ComEd weeks ago.

Committee chair state Rep. Chris Welch, D-Hillside, said in a statement the documents "underlie the deferred prosecution agreement and were previously

obtained by federal investigators."

"It's clear that a full, honest reading of these documents shows that associates of ComEd assisted with job recommendations for people from both parties, both chambers, and multiple branches of government," Welch said.

The committee's minority spokesman had different observations.

"What sticks out is the number of times quote 'our friend' is mentioned having asked for something, responded somehow," said state Rep. Tom Demmer, R-Dixon. "So that the Speaker's letter saying he couldn't answer questions about conversations he wasn't a part of, these documents show he was part of quite a few conversations."

"Our friend" is widely believed to be Madigan.

"With this information, the committee plans to resume meeting in-person on Monday, December 14, giving members time to take necessary health and safety precautions following the Thanksgiving holiday and return prepared to safely continue the work of the committee," Welch said.

Demmer said Republicans will continue to push for Madigan to be subpoenaed.

"And hopefully a vote can take place in order to conduct a thorough and comprehensive investigation," Demmer said.

Among the documents included in Wednesday's release was the subpoena federal investigators sent to Madigan seeking any and all communications and documents between his office and ComEd.

But the federal subpoena didn't end with communications between the speaker's office and ComEd.

Federal investigators also sought all documents and communications between the speaker's office and AT&T, Walgreens and Rush Medical Center.

The feds also sought all documents and communications from Jan. 1, 2018 to present concerning efforts to give, seek, recommend, secure or obtain a benefit for Kevin Quinn, who Madigan was forced to fire from his political operation after allegations of sexual harassment by a campaign worker were made public. The federal investigation uncovered thou-



sands of dollars in payments to Quinn from lobbyists after Quinn was fired, including close Madigan associate Michael McClain.

McClain, who allegedly acted as a gatekeeper between Madigan and ComEd, was indicted last week along with two former ComEd executives on bribery charges.

Agents also sought all documents and communications related to a property located on the northeast corner of Cermak Road and Wentworth Avenue in Chicago referred to by the feds as the "Chinatown parcel." Earlier this month, See Y. Wong pleaded guilty to wire fraud in an unrelated case. But Wong secretly recorded Madigan and then Ald. Daniel Solis in 2014 during a conversation over the Chinatown properties.

Solis cooperated with the federal government in its investigation of longtime Chicago Ald. Edward M. Burke, who was charged in 2019 with corruption-related crimes.

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## SUBURBAN EDITION

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

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Elliot Mandel  
Photography

### Do-It-Yourself Messiah 2020

Join us on December 20 at 2 pm for this year's virtual Do-It-Yourself Messiah!

This free 50-minute virtual performance will feature excerpts from Handel's masterpiece hosted by our incomparable conductor, Stanley Sperber. We will include newly recorded selections along with video from our 2017 perfor-

mances at the Harris Theater. We invite you to sing along as you watch from the comfort of your home. The performance will be available for viewing on the International Music Foundation's website at imfchicago.org beginning December 20 and will remain available through January 3, 2021.

### Notice to public of special meeting in Oak Lawn

Notice is hereby given that the President and the Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Lawn will hold a Public Hearing in regard to the proposed 2021 Municipal Budget in the Municipal Center, 2nd floor Auditorium, 9446 S. Raymond Avenue, Oak

Lawn, Illinois on Tuesday, December 08, 2020 at 7:15 p.m.

A copy of the proposed 2021 Municipal Budget is available at the Village Clerk's office at the above address during regular business hours 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 a.m.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The Environmental Protection Agency Protected Workers. Environmentalists Are Furious.

Democrats on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee recently took issue with the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to temporarily waive certain compliance requirements in light of the coronavirus outbreak.

The Oversight Democrats join a growing number of activists who have accused the EPA of using COVID-19 as an excuse to roll back environmental regulations and enable energy companies to pollute freely.

These accusations miss the mark completely. When most non-essential workers stayed at home, energy firms couldn't meet every federal re-

porting requirement. The EPA's guidance allowed firms to scale back administrative work without incurring a fine. The policy didn't change federal environmental standards in the slightest.

The EPA's memo helped energy firms protect workers during the outbreak. As with all industries, public officials required non-essential energy workers to stay home for a time to contain COVID-19. These new restrictions made it harder for energy firms to perform "routine compliance monitoring" and report results to the government.

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**Rather than force these firms to choose between paying a hefty fine and putting workers at risk, the EPA granted them flexibility on these tasks. That doesn't mean energy firms had a free pass to pollute.**

putting workers at risk, the EPA granted them flexibility on these tasks.

That doesn't mean energy firms had a free pass to pollute. The EPA made exceptions on "a case-by-case basis," and only if the agency determined COVID-19 was at the root of a firm's noncompliance. The agency also explicitly stated that the guidance "does not say that the COVID-19 pandemic will excuse exceedances of pollutant limitations."

You have to search pretty hard to find a downside

to the EPA's memo. Environmentalists were up to the challenge.

Some activists and politicians attacked the EPA within hours of the memo's release. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass) lambasted the Trump administration for "using this public health and economic crisis as a cover to roll back environmental laws." One prominent activist called the move "an absolute abdication of the legal responsibilities of the EPA."

Environmentalists are

lying to score political points. The memo didn't lift limitations on pollutants or any other environmental regulation. And even if they wanted to, energy firms couldn't just flip a switch and ramp up pollution on a moment's notice.

These companies have incorporated federal environmental regulations into their standard operating procedures. Violating these rules would require firms to upend their processes and facilitates. Even under the new rules, any company that tried such a thing would face severe penalties.

More importantly, this policy was only temporary. The EPA drafted the memo to protect energy sector employees as they work to keep the lights on during the pandemic. It

was no different than the countless stay-at-home orders, business closures, and distance-learning arrangements implemented over the past few weeks.

The EPA's memo was a reasonable effort to keep workers safe in the face of a global health emergency. It's no surprise that environmentalists refused to see it that way. They never let the truth stop them from unfairly smearing their political opponents.

*Bonner R. Cohen, Ph.D., is a senior fellow with the National Center for Public Policy Research, where he concentrates on energy, natural resources, and international relations. He also serves as a senior policy analyst for the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, and has testified before Congress a number of times.*

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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 vote against Chicago's budget and a property tax increase

Earlier today, I voted against the 2021 Chicago Budget. My vote reflects my strong opposition to a property tax increase in the middle of an economic and public health crisis. I also do not support the elimination of over 600 police positions, which will likely result in reduced patrol coverage

in the 22nd District in the coming fiscal year.

Chicagoans, and certainly residents of Morgan Park, Mount Greenwood and Beverly, have clearly demonstrated that they do not want a property tax increase. It was with your voices in mind, that I voted against this budget and the increased burden it places on property owners.

While I respect and acknowledge the serious fiscal challenges facing our City, our government is too reliant on property taxes. In lieu of the proposed property

tax increase, I proposed legislation to legalize video gaming in Chicago. Unfortunately, a majority of the City Council disagreed with this approach.

I'd like to thank the many residents, business owners, and other stakeholders who took the time to share their opinions with me about this pandemic budget. Thanks also to the hard working men and women of the budget office and all the public employees who worked on this year's budget, while I do not agree with the final product, I

appreciate their hard work and the time they spent addressing my questions and concerns.

Moving forward, I hope to continue discussions about video gaming expansion, and explore other revenue sources to fund our government. It's also my hope that Chicago will receive resources from the Federal Government to help address the budget crisis that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Matthew J. O'Shea is Alderman of the 19th Ward in Chicago.*

### Budget Is Not Perfect, But It's Fair and Equitable

Today, former Cook County Clerk, former Chicago Mayor, former Chicago Alderman and current Chairman of Good Government Illinois, David Orr released the following statement in response to the passage of Chicago's 2021 budget:

"No budget is perfect and as things currently stand we cannot rely on

more funding from the state or federal government. As much as this isn't the budget we were hoping to see a year ago, this budget reflects compromise and an equitable approach to raising revenues and cutting costs.

"I give the Mayor and the Aldermen who came to the table willing to work hard for our City a lot of credit for getting this

done. They found ways to prevent layoffs while providing more money for violence prevention and intervention. Making tough choices during a hard time in our City is what leadership looks like."

*David Orr, former Cook County Clerk, Chicago Mayor and Alderman, is the founder of Good Government Illinois.*

**Happy holidays from the Village View!**

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United Business Association of Midway  
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## Cherie Dimaline, *Empire of Wild* (Penguin Random House 2019)

As we exit the month in which we celebrate Native Peoples of North America, start reading *Empire of Wild*, a breath-taking story about a monster, a murder, and a marriage; a large, loving family, a small town, and a long history; tribal lands taken not by force, but by wile and religious seduction in revival tents with “hundreds of folding white chairs ... like crocodile teeth,” facing a “wooden cross about 9 feet high painted white and barbed with clear Christmas lights.”

Métis/Ojibwa Cherie Dimaline writes gorgeous prose shot through with vivid metaphors. Dimaline’s ancestors were driven from Georgian Bay’s Drummond Island, which was colonized by France, acquired by the US, and eventually purchased by Tom Monaghan, of Domino’s pizza fame, who founded a conservative public interest law firm aiming to “preserve America’s Judeo-Christian heritage, ... restore family values ... promote strong national defense and a free and sovereign United States.”

It’s that kind of erasure of the indigenous past that motivates Dimaline: “It struck me that the only way my kids are going to have an understanding of what our heritage is, the land they came from, who they are, is if I keep those spaces that no longer exist in the real world alive in my stories.”

Dimaline borrows from authentic, folk, and literary history. Her hero is Joan, a raven-haired, hard-drinking roofer, who escaped from her “town of Arcand ... a church, a school, a convenience store, a bootlegger and a crowd of stooped houses leaning like old men trying to hear a conversation over a grave,” but returned with a handsome husband in tow, the love of her life, who might have been kidnapped, or killed, or transformed into a kind of Métis werewolf.

This contemporary Jeanne d’Arc, armed with a small knife, traditional medicines, and apotropaic magic (accompanied by her Sancho Panza sidekick, a 12-year-old brave with a Johnny Cash playlist) sets off to find her Victor. Her adventures overlay her erotic memories of honeymoon lovemaking; her nightmares; Victor’s real or imagined captivity in their 27 acres he wanted to sell to the White man; and the parceled wisdom of two Women Elders with quick fists, smart mouths, and big hearts.

Then there is Rogarou, a changeling who preys upon people, sometimes out of hunger, but most often as moral arbiter. “Talked back to your mom in the heat of the moment? Don’t walk home. Rogarou will snatch you up. Hit a woman under any circumstance? Rogarou will call you family, soon. Shot too many deer, so your freezer is overflowing but the herd thin? If I were you, I’d stay indoors at night. Rogarou knows by now.” Watch yourself, and read.

Lorraine Schmall



## Holiday events this season in Tinley Park

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which unfortunately forced the Village of Tinley Park to cancel the Holiday Market, the Parade of Lights and Photos with Santa this year, there are still plenty of fun holiday activities planned!

Residents can watch the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony this year from the comfort of their own home on the Village’s Facebook page. Tune in from 6 to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 4.

If you’re downtown, swing by the Holiday Walk in the westernmost portion of the north commuter lot at the Oak Park Avenue train station. Visitors will be able to walk around and take photos while they enjoy the scenery, or even drop off a letter for Santa or a card for someone in the



Armed Forces. Plus, there are Kindness at Christmas charity drives from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays Dec. 6-20.

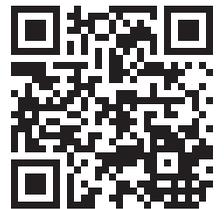
New this year, residents can participate in the Elf in the Window Scavenger. Participating Downtown Tinley businesses have placed personalized elves in their window fronts, and it’s your job to find them all! To play, just download the entry form and answer questions about each elf as you find them. Then just drop off your entry form at the Tinley Park Chamber of Commerce or email it to [mktg@TinleyPark.org](mailto:mktg@TinleyPark.org) for a chance to win great prizes!

# In 2021, you can look forward to improved transit service in south Cook and north Will counties.

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Tell us how the pandemic has affected you and what ideas you have to make transit work better in south Cook and north Will counties.

Eligible participants will receive a \$5 gift card for coffee while supplies last.

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## Easy Buttermilk Mashed Sweetpotatoes

(NAPSI) Side dishes are often the best part of a meal, and mashed potatoes are among the top contenders. Here's a very simple take on that old favorite with a modern twist: mashed California sweetpotatoes with

buttermilk and fresh herbs. The buttermilk provides a hint of tang and the herbs add brightness, making this a versatile dish that offsets a heavy winter meal yet pairs perfectly with lighter springtime or summer fare. Plus, California sweetpotatoes are a nice change of pace from regular mashed potatoes, and with more fiber.

Recipe Serves 6 to 8  
**Ingredients:**  
 2 1/2 lb orange or yellow-white fleshed sweetpotatoes, or a combination, peeled and cut into 1-in chunks  
 4T butter  
 3/4c buttermilk (see note)  
 1T chopped fresh cilantro  
 1T chopped fresh dill

1T chopped fresh parsley  
 2tsp chopped fresh mint  
 1tsp salt, or more to taste  
 1tsp pepper, or more to taste  
 Place sweetpotatoes in large saucepan or small stockpot, cover with water by 1 inch, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce to a simmer; continue to cook until very tender, 6 to

8 minutes. Drain sweetpotatoes; return to saucepan. Add butter and mash. Add buttermilk, cilantro, dill, parsley, mint, salt and pepper. Add more salt and pepper to taste and serve.  
 Note: If you prefer, substitute plain yogurt, sour cream, milk, half and half or cream for the buttermilk.  
 For further facts, tips and



recipes visit [www.casweetpotatoes.com](http://www.casweetpotatoes.com).

## Try This Treat

(NAPS) Here's an exotic twist that transforms everyday cheesecake into something sophisticated, elegant and worthy of your holiday table. Pureed sweetpotatoes, five spice powder and candied ginger star in a dessert that's easy to make and can be enjoyed year-round. The sweetpotatoes not only provide luscious texture and flavor, they prevent the cake from cracking—so it's deliciously decadent and practically foolproof. Give it a try.



2 tsp ground ginger  
 1/2 tsp Chinese five-spice or pumpkin pie spice blend  
 3/4 tsp salt  
 3 large eggs  
 3 c orange-fleshed sweetpotato puree  
 1/2 c sour cream  
 1 tsp vanilla extract  
 2 c whipped cream  
 1/4 c chopped candied ginger

Sweetpotato Cheesecake with Gingered Whipped Cream  
 Serves 10 to 12  
 8 oz gingersnap cookies  
 4 tbsp butter, melted, plus more for pan  
 3 8-oz packages cream cheese  
 11/4 c sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter bottom and sides of 9-in springform pan. In food processor, pulse cookies until finely ground. Add butter and pulse until blended. Transfer to prepared pan and press into bottom.

Bake 10 minutes. Set aside to cool. Use an electric mixer to combine cream cheese, sugar, ground ginger, spice blend and salt, beating until smooth. Beat in eggs. Add sweetpotato puree, sour cream and vanilla, beating just until smooth. Pour mixture into cooled crust. Place springform pan inside larger pan and pour very hot tap water into larger pan, to reach 1 inch up springform pan. Bake until edges are set and center is slightly wobbly, 45 to 50 minutes. Remove springform pan from larger pan and cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled. Fold candied ginger into whipped cream. Serve cheesecake with gingered whipped cream.

To learn more you can visit [twww.casweetpotatoes.com](http://twww.casweetpotatoes.com).

## Pop up new traditions

(NAPSI) Although the holiday season may be a little different this year for families, you don't have to say goodbye to fun and good cheer. Create new traditions and make lasting memories of good times together with fun family projects. For example, you can cook up some great gifts in your own kitchen with tasty popcorn recipes.

Wrap them up beautifully and do contactless drop-off to spread some tasteful cheer among all your friends and family—and give yourself and your immediate family a good time making them, too.

Here's one recipe to try for White Chocolate Peppermint Popcorn Bark:  
**Ingredients**  
 5 cups popped popcorn



12 ounces white chocolate baking chips, chopped white chocolate or white candy coating  
 1 cup crushed hard candy peppermints

Cover a baking pan with foil or wax paper; set aside. Place popcorn in a large

bowl; set aside. Melt chocolate in a double boiler over barely simmering water, stirring until smooth OR melt according to package directions. Stir in crushed peppermints after chocolate is melted. Pour chocolate mixture over popcorn mixture and stir to coat. Spread onto prepared pan; allow to cool completely. When chocolate is cooled and set, break into chunks for serving. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

## Oak Forest has tree trimming contest

Be sure and stop by City Hall to see the trees decorated by local families, businesses, Boy and Girl Scout Troops and organizations. They all signed up for the annual City of Oak Forest Trim-A-Tree Contest.

Tell us your favorites and who you think deserves the top prize. Email us at [CityofOakForest@oak-forest.org](mailto:CityofOakForest@oak-forest.org) before December 6, 2020 to cast your vote.

Due to COVID-19, we will not be having the Christmas Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony. Trim-A-Tree winners will be notified and announced during the City Council Meeting on December 8th.

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## Own a home? You may be wealthier than you think

(NAPSI) The economy has taken its toll on American households over the last year, leaving many homeowners strapped for cash, but you may not have to be among them. Here's some good news: If you've lived in your home for some time or if it has appreciated in value, you may be sitting on substantial wealth in the form of home equity. In fact, The Wall Street Journal found that homeowners with mortgages hold nearly \$10 trillion in home equity thanks to a decade of rising home prices.



### Home Equity Loans

A home equity loan is one with a fixed interest rate over a fixed term, using your home equity as collateral. Lenders will take a number of factors into consideration including your combined loan-to-value ratio, the appraised value of your home, and your own credit history. Some homeowners like this option because they can accommodate fixed monthly payments and the additional debt burden. However an increasing number of homeowners have

found lenders have tightened their criteria and are unable to qualify.

Home Value Investments

A Home Value Investment, also called home equity sharing, is an innovative offering that emerged 4 years ago. Companies, such as Noah, which offer this product provide upfront funding in exchange for a share of your home's value. Unlike a home equity loan, there are no monthly payments over the period of the investment—typically 10 years. At the end of the term, you buy out the investment by refinancing, selling, or with savings. The amount you owe is based on your home value, whether it has gone up or gone down. Some homeowners like this option because it does not require monthly pay-

ments or add more debt to their credit reports. However, Home Value Investments are only available in select places, so you should check your eligibility.

### Cash Out Refinancing

When you refinance your mortgage to take cash out of your home, you replace your existing mortgage with a larger mortgage, often at a lower rate. To take advantage of a lower rate, you'll pay origination fees and likely have higher monthly payments over time. In times of economic uncertainty, if your home declines in value, you could end up with a mortgage that exceeds your home value.

### Learn More

For further information on options to access your home equity, visit [www.Noah.co](http://www.Noah.co).

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## Gifts That Do A World Of Good

(NAPSI) This holiday season, you don't have to look far to find items that deliver great features and functionality but use less energy. Products that earn the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR label save money on energy bills and

help protect the environment, making them gifts that do a world of good.

With a wide range of things to wrap up—from smart thermostats, laptops, tablets and other electronics, appliances and even lighting—you can put a bow on a gift that has been independently certified to meet strict standards for energy efficiency.

A typical household

spends about \$2,000 a year on energy bills. A home outfitted with products that have earned the ENERGY STAR label can save 30% or about \$575 a year on household energy bills. Over their lifetime these products save about \$8,750 on utility bills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 77,000 pounds of carbon dioxide.

The ENERGY STAR Holiday Gift Guide at

[www.energystar.gov/holiday](http://www.energystar.gov/holiday) features energy-saving products popular this time of year, along with special deals from manufacturers, retailers, and utilities that participate in the ENERGY STAR Program. Looking for the ENERGY STAR label on products specially priced for the holidays means you save on the initial price, plus keep saving through the holidays and beyond.



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Solutions to puzzles for November 17, 2020 issue

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## Tree lights at Oak Lawn church

On Dec. 4, Calvary Church of Oak Lawn, at 10056 Central Ave., will begin their Christmas season with their 2nd annual Tree Lighting. Rain-out day is Saturday, Dec. 5, from 5-7 p.m. The church has a 40-foot evergreen tree with thousands of lights on the east side (front) which will be lit at 6:30 p.m. Friends and neighbors will gather for seasonal music, refreshments, and sponsored treats from Dunkin Donuts, Chick-Fil-A, and Nothing Bundt Cakes. Covid-19 safety rules will be in place. There will be kids' crafts, fire pits with s'mores, a bean-bag tournament, Christmas trivia and 4 free raffle giveaways! Register at [Calvary.org/OakLawn](http://Calvary.org/OakLawn) by Dec. 3 to get 4 extra entries for the raffle baskets valued from \$80 to \$200 each. Complete Vision Care Company is sponsoring a photo booth to take fun memento pictures. This event is free to the public. For more information, call 708-429-2200, or visit [ThsCalvary.org/OakLawn](http://ThsCalvary.org/OakLawn).

## A 100-year rivalry between Bears, Packers

The Bears faced off against the Packers on Sunday at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin, continuing a matchup that has become one of the longest-standing rivalries in the NFL and the league's most played. (The Bears lost 41-25.) Their first meeting was in 1921, when the Bears, then known as the Chicago Staleys, beat the Packers 20-0, starting a century-long conflict.



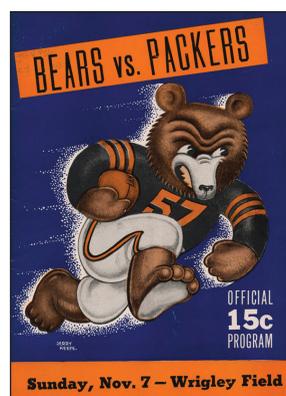
Mike Singletary plays against the Packers.

The Bears and Packers have been in the same conference since the NFL switched to a conference format in 1933, first in the Western Conference and then in the NFC North

since 1970, and usually play each other twice a year. They have met 201 times in regular- and postseason games. In recent years, the Packers have taken over the lead in the series with a 100-95-6 record.

Notable Bears wins over the Packers include their second meeting of 1963 (in the aerial shot), with both teams coming to the game with 8-1 records and playing for first place in the conference, and their October 21, 1985, win in which rookie defensive tackle William "The Fridge" Perry was put in at fullback and scored his first touchdown. Both seasons would end with the Bears as national champions.

Notable losses include the infamous "instant replay game" in 1989, when a Packer touchdown was credited after instant replay overruled a penalty



called on quarterback Don Majkowski for stepping over the line of scrimmage, and the teams' last playoff meeting in the 2010 NFC championship.

Look back at 100 years of Bears history on the Chicago History Museum's blog at [chicagohistory.org/bears100](http://chicagohistory.org/bears100).

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**De La Salle's Overton is Meteor of the Month**

De La Salle Institute proudly announces that LeeVonn Overton '22 has been chosen as the Meteor of the Month for October.

In a joint initiative between the school's Campus Ministry and its City of De La Salle student government, nominations are received from faculty and staff highlighting students who are motivated and enthusiastic about the school's Lasallian mission inside and outside of the classroom.

Specifically, nominees are students who stand out among their peers by having demonstrated one

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LeeVonn Overton '22 poses with De La Salle principal Tom Schergen '97. Overton ranks in the top 15% of his class and is involved in theater and Model United Nations.

or more of the Lasallian Principles of Faith, Community, Service, Social Justice and/or Association.

Overton excels in the classroom at De La Salle as he is enrolled in the Honors Program and ranks in the top 15 percent of the Class of 2022.

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**Moving ideas**

(NAPSI) If you'll be decking the halls of a new home this holiday season, you won't be alone. Every year, one in ten Americans moves to a new place. It can take some careful coordination in the best of times, but during the holidays (and a pandemic) it can be even more of a challenge. One of the most important things you can do is to stay connected to the people and things that matter most to you. For that, you'll want your Internet, Cable TV and phone up and running, so you can continue to work and learn from home, celebrate in new ways with family and friends, watch all your favorite holiday movies and shop online for presents and festive foods.

Here are hints on how:

1. Take the proper pandemic precautions: Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention disinfecting guidelines. While out for move-related errands, be sure to cover your mouth and your nose. Some festive holiday-themed masks are available. Also, wash your hands regularly with soap and water.

2. Stay Connected: A good move, even before you move, is to get in touch with the new home's local Cable provider through www.smartmove.us and arrange for new Touchless Installs that let you safely connect your tech services yourself. The cable company delivers the equipment

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with step-by-step activation information so you can set up your system on your own, or with support over the phone, online, through chat functionality or video tutorials. In most cases, no technician needs to come into your house.

3. Keep up with holiday traditions, or create new one just for your new home: Use your new online connection to find delivery services to help stock your pantry and fridge. Your new house will feel more like home if you take time to watch your favorite holiday shows, maintain your exercise program (to feel fit and fight those holiday pounds). Make time to connect with people you care about through group video chats or viewing parties and show off your holiday decorations or virtually ring in the New Year.

**MVCC hosting free Amazon Web Service Technical Essentials Course**

Moraine Valley Community College is hosting a free Amazon Web Services (AWS) Technical Essentials course on Monday, Dec. 7, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A variety of organizations within a range of industries use the cloud for data backup, disaster re-

covery, email, virtual desktops, software development and testing, big data analytics and customer-facing web applications.

This course introduces participants to AWS products, services and common cloud solutions. It provides the fundamentals to be-

come more proficient in identifying AWS services to help people make informed decisions about IT solutions based on business requirements and get started working with AWS.

The course code is AW5-099-300. For more information, visit us online.

Registration is required and can be done online or by calling (708) 974-2110.

For more information on noncredit classes, contact Corporate, Community and Continuing Education at (708) 974-5735 or communityeducation@morainevalley.edu.

# HOLIDAY SPECIAL

## FREE BONUS DOLLARS



**Spend \$20 Receive \$2**  
**Spend \$50 Receive \$10**  
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