2-1-04 Daily Herald

# Gorecki vote likely to go down to wire

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Meg Gorecki's case is headed for the jury. But the panel set to debate on Monday the fate of Gorecki's career as Kane County state's attorney isn't made up of 12 peers.

This jury consists of 26 duly elected politicians. Scattered among them are Gorecki's allies, rivals, longtime friends and even enemies.

They are not impartial and are not considering Gorecki's case in a court of law, though four of them are lawyers.

At 8 a.m. Monday during a public debate, the Kane County board will have to decide whether Gorecki's Illinois Supreme Court-ordered, four-month law license suspension for suggesting a fictitious bribes-for-jobs scheme in 1998 creates a vacancy in her office.

**Special meeting**

- **Who:** Kane County Board
- **When:** 8 a.m. Monday
- **Where:** Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Building A., Geneva

Last week's lawsuits, injunction requests, legal opinions and special appointment did not resolve the issue.

And now, to the chagrin of some on the board, the members must sift through a pile of legal paperwork to decide on an answer.

"We've got lawyers coming out of our ears," said board member Bill Wyatt, an Aurora Republican. "You get into this lawyer stuff and it can go 10 different ways."

See **MEETING** on **PAGE 13**



# Meeting: 14 votes would make

*Continued from Page 1*

As for the answer to the question, Wyatt says "there seems to be" a vacancy. But it's all a matter of interpretation and opinion, some board members say.

The state attorney general says there is no vacancy in Gorecki's office.

A private Aurora attorney hired by the county as a special assistant to review the matter says there absolutely is a vacancy.

Two Kane County judges asked to weigh in last week essentially didn't, though one called the attorney general's version credible.

The result is confusion and a county board vote hard to handicap.

Removing Gorecki, 36, by declaring the office vacant would require a simple majority of the board, or 14 votes out of 26.

A straw poll of about two-thirds of the board heading into Monday's meeting shows at least six board members are on each side. At least three are undecided.

The votes aren't following party lines, women are on both sides and traditional geographical voting blocks common around the board table have disappeared.



Meg Gorecki

"It just doesn't seem to me there is a vacancy," said board member Dorothy Sanchez, an Aurora Democrat, offering her thoughts on Gorecki's future. "Let her come back to fill out the term the people elected her to serve."

To some, it's not that clear.

"From what I have been told," said board member Ken Griffin, an Aurora Democrat, "I think the seat is vacant. Once it's been vacated I don't think she could come back."

The board's chairman, Mike McCoy, an Aurora Republican who would have to cast the deciding vote in case of a tie, doesn't believe the votes will be there to oust Gorecki.

But so many things have changed since Jan. 23, the day he called the meeting, he's not willing to bet the farm on that prediction.

"I can't even guess how the board will vote," McCoy said Friday.

Over the past 10 days, the board role in the Gorecki case seemed to fluctuate and hang somewhere in the middle of what McCoy has called a "legal labyrinth."

It started with McCoy calling the meeting to ensure Gorecki's suspension, which starts today, wouldn't leave an authority vacuum in the judicial system. The idea was the board likely would vote the office vacant and appoint a successor to fill out Gorecki's term, which ends Nov. 30.

Hours after McCoy called the meeting, state Attorney General Lisa Madigan issued a legal opinion giving new hope to Gorecki. It said her four-month suspension does not leave her office legally vacant, clearing the way for her to return in June, and told the county board it had no authority in the matter. Propped up by the Madigan opinion, Gorecki on Monday filed in Kane County court a request for an injunction against the county board. The following day, the county's chief judge appointed state's attorney office civil division chief Katherine Moran as a special state's attorney to fill the job in Gorecki's temporary absence.

The chief judge called the Madigan opinion "persuasive" but said it did not address the county board authority over the vacancy issue now before it.

Judge Michael Colwell, who refus... against ... sidestepped ... Colwell's order ... did not agree with whatever the board did — after it did it — she could return to court to fight it. This is leading everyone on the county board to a contentious and generally unwelcome debate of opposing legal positions.

"You can get four lawyers and six different opinions," said board member Don Wolfe, an Elgin Republican who is leaning toward vacancy.

His sentiment about lawyers may be right. Even the four on the board don't agree.

Take Cathy Hurlbut, an Elgin Republican, attorney and board vice chairman. "I think there is a vacancy," she said. "It's a constitutional issue."

Without a license, Hurlbut says, Gorecki can't hold office and that means the board has the right to select a successor.

But John Noverini, an Elgin Republican, attorney and not exactly a close friend of Gorecki, thinks differently.

"Losing your law license is not a legal disability," Noverini said. "I've got to follow the law."

Spring Hill Farm Rd.

2-1-04 Chronicle

# Gorecki suspension starts today

## *Top assistant Moran takes over until June 1*

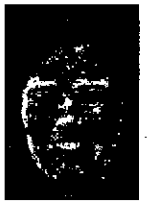
By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Even though her duties have more than doubled, Katherine Moran refuses to accept a high-profile seat in Kane County's legal arena.

"I'm staying here," Moran said of her fourth-floor office in Geneva's Old County Courthouse, headquarters of Kane County's civil prosecution unit.

Moran, 51, takes over today for State's Attorney Meg Gorecki, who must vacate her office at the Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles to begin serving a four-month suspension of her law license.

It is a role Moran politely declined to discuss between meetings Friday, about an hour after a lawsuit that Gorecki filed to shield her political career was rejected in a courtroom downstairs.



Gorecki

"We're very busy," Moran said, disappearing down the hall.

Moran was named last Tuesday as a special state's attorney to oversee Gorecki's office while she is suspended for implicating Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy in a phony jobs-for-bribes scheme.

The appointment casts Moran into a legal quagmire created Nov. 20 when the Illinois Supreme Court suspended Gorecki and raised questions on exactly who decides the administration of the state's attorney's office.

Monday, county board members are set to debate at a special board meeting whether Gorecki's suspension creates a vacancy in her office and if they are required to nominate a permanent replacement.

See GORECKI, page 2

## Gorecki

Continued from page 1

Moran, the chief of Gorecki's civil division, starts her watch at the top of a short list of candidates for the job.

Although Moran lacks experience prosecuting criminal cases, other attorneys and county leaders think the University of Tulsa (Okla.) law school graduate is up to the task.

"She's a good choice as a lawyer," McCoy said.

Moran's appointment was based in part on an opinion by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan that allows Gorecki to return, but called on Kane County judges to select someone to serve in her absence.

Chief Judge Philip L. DiMarzio picked Moran. Gorecki in her lawsuit to block the special board meeting had asked to select her own substitute. Gorecki has not returned telephone calls for comment on Moran's appointment.

The rulings by Madigan and DiMarzio also might convince some county board members to vote against declaring the vacancy and allow Moran and Gorecki to return to their normal duties June 1.

"How can you argue with the attorney general?" said Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora. "That's just goofy."

Gorecki was suspended for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct for suggesting in 1998 that a county job could be obtained by making a contribution to McCoy's campaign fund.

McCoy was cleared of involvement and Gorecki was cleared of criminal wrongdoing after a federal investigation determined that the scam did not exist.

Moran said all assistant state's attorneys will continue to prosecute full caseloads and promised to maintain Gorecki's initiatives and policies.

Gorecki last week divided most of her workload among several assistants.

James Grogan, a spokesman for the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, said disciplined attorneys usually are prohibited from maintaining a presence in their offices during the time they cannot practice law.

However, Gorecki will not be in the crosshairs of the state disciplinary panel while she serves her suspension, Grogan said.

"We don't typically follow people," Grogan said. "We do do a search to make sure people are complying with the order."

There might be a simple explanation for why Moran will work from her office in Geneva instead of Gorecki's in the judicial center, located on the same floor as the courtrooms for most of the county's criminal cases.

"Katherine probably will handle all of her civil duties, as well, and her office is three times larger than Meg Gorecki's," Assistant State's Attorney Michael Coghlan said. "All of her files are there, and it's only a temporary thing."

1-31-04 Daily Herald

# ComEd spikes Randall Road plan

By Gala M. Pierce
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

After months of putting the Randall Road power line proposal on hold, ComEd officials have completely pulled the plug on the 138,000-volt route.

While residents are rejoicing, local officials remain leery the utility giant has found a tenable long-term solution of providing reliable electric power to residents.

"In the months since we have put the Randall Road project on hold, we have been continuing a broader effort to find better ways of doing business," ComEd spokeswoman Meg Amato said. "In that initiative to find better ways of doing things, it led us to this alternative plan."

With new technology, the utility giant plans to upgrade and extend the existing 34,000-volt lines, which eliminates the need for a new transmission line on Randall from South Elgin to North Aurora, ComEd officials said.

Amato declined to comment on the east-side options ComEd was reviewing as an alternative for the Randall Road power line.

With ComEd's announcement, members of People United for Responsible Energy or PURE, the group formed a year ago to battle against the power line plan, saw a long sought-after goal reached.

"It's a major victory for the people in the Tri-Cities, even for North Aurora and South Elgin," PURE member Ron Ziegler said. "It was a slap in the face for all five communities and this is definitely a victory — the people prevailed."

PURE activists began protesting shortly after the plan to build 80- to 120-foot power towers was presented last year.

Ziegler said he and other PURE members understood the company's plan to boost power supplies, but couldn't understand or accept the route.

"Thy just happened to pick the wrong location," Ziegler said.

Tri-Cities officials, however, are wary of ComEd's plans to upgrade existing lines, which the company outlined in a report submitted to municipal leaders Jan. 16.

"No one can claim any victory yet," Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke

See **COMED** on **PAGE 5**

## ComEd: Reliability a concern

*Continued from Page 1*

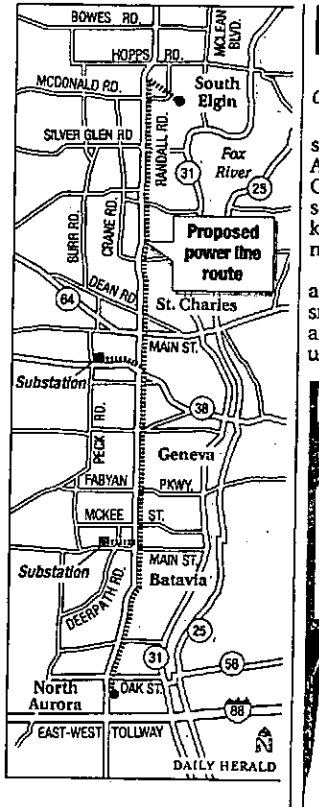
said. "The issues of power supply and demand are not going to go away and still have to be answered."

St. Charles City Administrator Larry Maholland especially had concerns about how ComEd will be able to provide long-term reliable power to residents.

"We found some major problems in their analysis," he said. "We hope to improve reliability of what we have now. We need more time to look at this, but we're finding we wouldn't be better off, but worse off."

PURE members say upgrading current lines was an inevitable solution.

"PURE applauds and supports ComEd and the Tri-Cities' search for a responsible solution for its anticipated power needs," PURE President Harry Eng of St. Charles said.



# Gorecki fate up to board

1-31-04 Daily Herald

## *Judge refuses to block county vote on her return*

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*



Meg Gorecki



Mike McCoy

A Kane County judge Friday left State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's fate up the county board, refusing to block a decisive vote determining whether the embattled prosecutor can return in June following her law license suspension.

Gorecki's Illinois Supreme Court-ordered four-month suspension as punishment for suggesting a jobs-for-bribes scheme in 1998 begins Sunday, but questions surrounding her future remained unanswered heading into the weekend.

After a week of lawsuits and court hearings aimed at securing her job, Gorecki now has to wait until Monday morning to see if the 26-member county board will allow her to return in June and complete her four-year term, which ends Nov. 30.

Judge Michael Colwell, ruling on an injunction request filed by

See **COUNTY** on **PAGE 7**

**Page 7**

- The state's attorney's office without Gorecki.



# County: Gorecki would have time for appeal

*Continued from Page 1*

Gorecki on Monday, said Gorecki had no grounds to claim damages and block the board from acting.

"Since the time of the issuance of this order no determination has been made by a vote of the county board of Kane County as to whether a vacancy exists in the office of Kane County state's attorney," Colwell said.

"This is not a case of actual controversy," he added.

In his ruling, Colwell said the court has no right to assume the county board "will not follow the applicable law" when it comes to the future of the office.

What Colwell did not address — and what has been at issue since the state supreme court ordered the suspension in November — is what the correct laws governing the office's future are.

In her now-rejected injunction suit filed against the county board and its chairman, Mike McCoy, Gorecki asked for judicial support of an opinion from Attorney General Lisa Madigan issued last week saying Gorecki could keep her job.

The opinion states that Gorecki's suspension does not force her from office and says the county board has no authority on the issue. A special assistant state's attorney hired with Gorecki's approval and employed to advise McCoy, disagrees with Madigan's assessment.

But now the two interpretations are moving away from the courthouse and toward the floor of the county board room.

Lawyers for Gorecki and the county board declined to comment on the case after Colwell's ruling was read.

McCoy called the controversial meeting eight days ago, just hours before the Madigan opinion came out. At the time, McCoy said he was acting to ensure a smooth transition and prevent a breakdown in the judicial system because of a lack of authority at the top.

On Tuesday, 16th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio effectively solved that potential problem by appointing civil division chief Assistant State's Attorney Katherine Moran as a special state's attorney during Gorecki's suspension.

The order did not specifically address the issue of vacancy in the office, but did say the attorney general's opinion was "persuasive."

With DiMarzio's actions and the Madigan opinion seemingly on her side, Gorecki looked to end the debate by asking the circuit court to block the county board from any action.

When approached by reporters at the county judicial center Friday, Gorecki refused to comment on the case or her office's future.

After the hearing, McCoy said he agreed with Colwell's ruling and promised the 8 a.m. meeting would go on.

If nothing else, that could bring all this to conclusion, he said.

"I do think the citizens and the people want to get this over with," McCoy said. "And I'm not convinced the board will declare a vacancy."

If the board voted to remove Gorecki from office, McCoy said he believes "100 percent" that Gorecki would appeal, returning the issue to the courts.

McCoy says having the meeting Monday gives Gorecki enough time to work through any possible appeals — should the board remove her — before the suspension ends June 1.

**Kane County Board Special Meeting**

- When: 8 a.m. Monday
- Where: Kane County Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Building A., Geneva.

1-31-04 Beacon News

# Kane Board members hold mixed opinions on Monday's meeting

**By Daniel Duggan**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Is there a vacancy or isn't there?

Monday, members of the Kane County Board will meet to debate the technical legal issues surrounding the suspension of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's law license.

They will be asked to decide whether Gorecki's office should be declared "vacant" and a permanent replacement named, or they may decide it is not "vacant" and that a temporary appointment will suffice.

While many board members remain undecided on the issue and will wait until they hear all the opinions Monday before taking a stand, some have staked out early views on the matter.

Among the attorneys serving on the board, there are mixed opinions.

"There is vacancy here," said Cathy Hurlbut, R-Elgin. "It's a constitutional issue."

Hurlbut, whose law office is in Elgin, said the Illinois Constitution states that a state's attorney must have a license to practice law. Since Gorecki won't have a license starting Sunday, she should be permanently replaced, Hurlbut said.

Paul Greviskes, a Democratic board member and lawyer from Aurora, also said he believes the office will be vacant. Part of the statute states there is a vacancy if the person is under a "legal disability," and this situation would seem to fit that, he said.

But board member and lawyer John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, said he does not believe the "legal disability" argument applies to Gorecki's situation.

"I just don't see it in the law," he said. "A legal disability is something like being declared incompetent, and I don't think that's the case here."

Noverini is part of a coalition of northern Kane County Board members who often vote in unison. That group includes Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville, but she disagreed with Noverini.

"In my mind it's clear, there (will be) a vacancy," she said.

## Leaning toward 'no vacancy'

South Elgin Republican Dan Walter said he is leaning more toward saying there is no vacancy.

"I respect the opinion of the attorney general and the judge who made the appointment (of an interim state's attorney), and I haven't seen real clear evidence yet that would make me change my mind," he said.

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan issued an opinion last week that the circuit court should appoint a replacement to serve in Gorecki's place while the four-month law license suspension is in effect. Gorecki could then return to office when the suspension ends, according to Madigan.

Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, said she will wait until Monday to decide.

"We have a large packet of information that I still have to look through," she said.

She added it will be important to be briefed by Patrick Kinnally, the special assistant state's attorney dealing with the issue on behalf of the County Board.

"I still want to hear what our attorney thinks," she said. "So I'm still a little cautious to make a decision."

## Gorecki support lost

To Meg Gorecki: As a female voter, I supported you even though I didn't exactly support your indiscretions. I would hope you, as a highly educated lawyer, would think a little bit more before you spoke, but we are all human and I understand that. I also certify that you are up against some of the good old boy politics in Kane County. However, seeing that you are now suing the Kane County Board and Mike McCoy, who, as I recall, was a good friend to you for a long time, I can't back you anymore. I think it's time for you to let go. Unfortunate things happen in all of our lives and this was a horrible, horrible lesson for you to learn. I reiterate, I am not so sure that some of the other men in the county would have had to be exposed to such a problem as you have. However, now you are hurting the rest of us who live here, and we shouldn't have to, with our tax dollars, go, when they could be spent in other ways that the county really needs. So, please, stop your lawsuit, realize that you need to start a new phase in your life and I sincerely wish you a happier, more prosperous, intelligent, wise future.

## Ask clerk questions

The Jan. 27 *Kane County Chronicle* showed a headline of "Study shows county clerk services costly." The cost to taxpayers is $422,806 and there is supposedly a study conducted by Maximus of Northbrook. What I would like to know before the County Board takes any action on this is if they raise these fees, will the taxpayers see a corresponding reduction in the taxes they pay to the county clerk or is this going to be just another slush pot for the county to take the money away so they'll now have increased fees and then increased taxes to boot. I'd also like to know, when they did that study, how much of that was duplication of services. When you look at the taxes that they take in and you do the cost, how much duplication of services is there that they are counting? For example, if the same clerk does marriage licenses and tax redemption fees and birth certificate fees, how did they determine each cost when the employees are there every single day and they are doing a multitude of different things? Did they have a list of employee times that they spent on each of these things? You can inflate all kinds of costs if you duplicate services and if people don't ask questions. So I sure hope the County Board asks some real difficult questions before they take a vote on this issue.

## It's Kane gas

This is for Ask Sound Off. As I previously said, and you gave the answer. You are telling everyone about how the electricity is generated by Waste Management. Why do they get the profits of the gas, the gas produced by the garbage which people pay for to dump on Kane County property? If it's on Kane County property, generated by Kane County garbage, why does Waste Management get to collect this methane and not Kane County collect it and sell it to ComEd and give us some money back? Why do you give it to Waste Management? Who are they? They just collect the garbage and they just maintain it. We can get anyone to maintain it and I'm sure if we had other people in there, other than friends of the Kane County Board, we, the people of Kane County, would derive a little bit of money for ourselves and not for the conglomerate of Waste Management. Why not? It's our gas, not Waste Management's gas.

## Shake up the board

Recently, Mike McCoy criticized the inordinate delay in resolving the jail issues. Thank you, Mr. McCoy. We are supposed to be getting an evaluation of the proposed concept. What do we get? An evaluation that we need to repair, reorganize security and add to the facility. Sheriff Ramsey and the rest of the county already knew that. Exactly how much did this wisdom cost the taxpayers? And how convenient that the consultants' endorsements for the jail proposals, yea or nay, will not come until another two months or just before the election. What a depressing performance for fiscal responsibility and county management. We need another performer for Kane County Board chairman, not a flashy talker. Bring on the election. Time to shake things up.

1-21-04 Chronicle

2-1-04 Chronicle

Kane County Notebook

# One-third of Kane County's homeless are veterans

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

When it is so cold, it might be interesting to note that estimates show that one-third of all homeless people are veterans.

In Kane County, which has about 3,000 homeless, that would mean 1,000 of those served their country only to have no place to call home.

Veterans Assistance Commission Director John Carr said that 19 percent of the vets transported to the VA hospitals are homeless.

Carr said there are many reasons that bring about the homelessness, including mental health and alcohol and substance abuse problems.

And there are numerous avenues for services, Carr said.

Still, it boggles the mind during what can be called only an upsurge in patriotism, the richest country on earth cannot provide for these men and women and their families.

"Apathy," said board member Jack Cook, R-Elgin. "Somewhere all along the line the general population is apathetic."

"You just assume that people who fought for this country are taken care of, and they're not," said Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora. "I think it is one of the most shameful things. It makes me nauseous."

The two nearest homeless shelters to the Tri-Cities are Lazarus House in St. Charles and Hessed House in Aurora.

"It is a multi-faceted problem that has to be addressed on a number of different fronts," Carr said.

* * *

The county will not sponsor a used tire drop-off for residents this year.

Apparently, businesses had begun to abuse the service designed for private citizens. The businesses were dropping off their old tires to avoid the $7 per tire disposal tax.

Recycling coordinator Gary Mielke said one business, which he did not name, sent old tires to the drop-off in several different vehicles to avoid the appearance of a being a commercial enterprise.

Over the course of the program, 10,000 tires were collected, of which Mielke estimated 75 percent were not from individuals.

The county will be collecting used tires from public agencies, such as cities, townships and the Kane County Division of Transportation this year. These agencies pick up old tires off of public property.

# Absentee ballots available Thursday

2-1-04 Chronicle

KANE COUNTY CHRONICLE

GENEVA — Absentee ballots will be available at the office of John Cunningham, Kane County clerk, beginning Thursday.

The ballots are for registered voters who expect to be absent from the county on March 16, primary election day, or who are physically incapacitated and unable to go to the polling places.

State law requires that any registered voter wanting to vote absentee first must obtain an application for absent voter's ballot from the clerk's office.

This application must be completed and received in the clerk's office no later than March 11, the last day a ballot can be mailed to a voter.

Residents also can vote absentee in person at the clerk's office from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays, March 6 and 13, and 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 11 through March 10.

Absentee voting also is available during regular business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The last day to vote absentee in person is March 15.

The clerk's office is at Government Center, 719 S. Batavia Ave. (Route 31), Building B, Geneva.

Absentee ballots also can be cast at city offices of Batavia, St. Charles and Elgin; village offices of Gilberts, North Aurora, West Dundee, Montgomery and South Elgin; and township offices of Dundee, Rutland, Aurora, Elgin and St. Charles.

For information, call (630) 232-5993.

1-31-04 Daily Herald

# Uncertain future for office

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Meg Gorecki spent her last day as state's attorney before her suspension — and possibly ever — overseeing the final details of an Aurora Township murder trial she was supposed to argue.

But when Joshua Minniti walks into court Monday to hear the state's opening argument against him, Gorecki will not be there.

Monday is the first business day of Gorecki's Illinois Supreme Court-ordered law license suspension, handed down as punishment for ethics violations committed more than a year before she was elected to office.

Her return at the end of the suspension remains in doubt, but her actions between Sunday and June 1 will leave nothing to interpretation, one of her assistants said Friday.

"I'm expecting to have zero contact with her the next four months," said Mike Coghlan, the deputy chief assistant state's attorney.

Her suspension dictates that Gorecki cannot practice law and to comply, Coghlan says Gorecki will not return to any of Kane's courthouses during that period.

She also will not accept parts of her $129,000 salary during the suspension, Coghlan said.

But she is by no means moving out, he said.

"Her office is just like mine," Coghlan said. "There are files stacked on her chair."

Gorecki refused to answer any questions about the suspension or her plans Friday when asked as she walked out of her last court hearing and toward her office at the Kane County judicial center.

Inside the office, Coghlan said, little has — or will — change.

Gorecki called her eight top assistants together Thursday and discussed her absence with them. Coghlan said the duties of the office will be divided up according to area of expertise, with civil division chief Katherine Moran serving at the top as special state's attorney.

"My to-do list just got longer," Coghlan said.

He said the procedural response to Gorecki's absence will be just like what happens when someone leaves on a vacation or is transferred out of a particular division.

"Everything is covered," Coghlan said.

1-31-04 Chicago Tribune

# Judge dismisses Gorecki's suit over job

By John Biemer
Tribune staff reporter

A judge dismissed a lawsuit Friday filed by Kane County State's Atty. Meg Gorecki seeking to stay in office during a four-month suspension of her law license.

The decision paved the way for the County Board to vote Monday on whether to oust her.

In his ruling, Circuit Judge Michael Colwell cited state election code, which gives the County Board the power to determine whether the facts in the case cause a vacancy in the office. Gorecki's suspension, ordered last year by the state Supreme Court, will begin Sunday and last until June 1.

Colwell also mentioned Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio's appointment Tuesday of a special state's attorney who will be sworn in Sunday to assume Gorecki's powers during the suspension.

In the lawsuit, Gorecki alleged that she "retains the prerogative to appoint an acting state's attorney during the period of [her] suspension from the practice of law." Though not stated, the implication is that she would return to office after the suspension and finish her term, which ends this fall.

After Friday's ruling, board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora) acknowledged that Marzio's appointment of Katherine Moran, chief of the state's attorney's civil division, to fill in for Gorecki during the suspension had resolved the impending "uncertainty" in the office.

Gorecki's suspension results from an incident of unethical conduct in 1998, before she ran for office, when she suggested falsely to a friend that McCoy could be bribed in exchange for a county job, authorities said.

McCoy was cleared of any wrongdoing.

If the board votes to declare the post vacant, McCoy could fill the office.

# Bliss Woods campground might close

2-1-04 Chronicle

## *Septic system, location are major problems*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — This summer might be the last season for camping at the Bliss Woods Forest Preserve near Sugar Grove.

Problems with the septic system, poor location and an outdated design at Bliss Woods might force the district to close the campground.

"I think that thing is worn out. It was designed in a different era," Executive Director Jon Duerr said.

Last summer, the district discovered that it had problems with the septic system when sewage began seeping to the surface.

When the district opened the campground, it was in a remote area, and the county had little or no regulations concerning septic systems and soil types.

"Now it's a residential area. The situation is not a good one for septic systems," Duerr said.

The campground itself abuts a now-busy Bliss Road, and across the road is a privately owned shooting club, neither of which lends itself to a quiet camping experience, Duerr said.

Director of operations Mike Holan said fewer campers use Bliss Woods than facilities at Paul Wolff Forest Preserve on Big Timber Road in Elgin and Rutland townships or Buffalo Park Forest Preserve on the Fox River in far-northern Dundee Township.

Bliss averaged 15 campers during the week last year, Holan said.

The campground is used mostly by recreational vehicles, which require the use of a septic dump station.

The district residence on the property no longer is occupied, which will ease the strain on the septic system this summer, Holan said.

With talk of abandoning the only campground in southern Kane County, officials are looking at another location, possibly Big Rock Forest Preserve.

"I'd like to keep a campground in the south end of the county," Holan said.

Some commissioners are in favor of a campground at Big Rock, some are not.

Big Rock has amenities such as a lake and hiking trails through some of the most pristine landscape in the county, qualities both sides use to promote their positions.

"I'm not inclined to put camping at Big Rock," said Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora. He said the pristine nature of some of the features could be destroyed.

Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville, said people want activities such as boating and fishing nearby when they go camping.




2-1-04 Chronicle

1-31-04 Beacon News

# Judge bounces Gorecki's fate back to Kane

## Matter heads to special board meeting Monday

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — A Kane County judge chose Friday not to take a stand on the issue of how to fill the office of state's attorney, setting the stage for an explosive meeting of the Kane County Board on Monday.

In the ongoing saga dealing with the suspension of Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki's law license, 16th Circuit Court Judge Michael Colwell's ruling had been expected to shed some light on the unprecedented situation.

Instead, he declared the issue is "not a controversy ripe for judicial resolution."

The County Board now must decide the fate of Gorecki's term — whether her removal from office will

❖ *Turn to* **GORECKI, A2**

### Paid vacation a possibility?

BEACON NEWS STAFF

GENEVA — Depending on a decision from the Kane County Board Monday, State's Attorney Meg Gorecki could just be suspended from her office for four months rather than lose her office completely.

She also could serve that four-month suspension with pay.

County Board Chairman

❖ *Turn to* **VACATION, A2**

### Inside

■ Kane Board members hold mixed opinions on Monday's meeting.

## GORECKI

*From page A1*

be temporary or permanent.

"We'll go forward with the meeting and make sure there is no uncertainty with the situation," County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said after Colwell's ruling.

The Illinois Supreme Court suspended Gorecki's license over ethical misconduct charges stemming from a bribery scheme later found to be bogus. The suspension effectively bars Gorecki from acting as state's attorney for four months, starting Sunday.

Earlier this week, 16th Circuit Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio named Katherine Moran as "special state's attorney" to serve during the four-month suspension of Gorecki's license.

DiMarzio's action followed the lead set by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, who issued an opinion indicating Gorecki still can hold her office but that a special state's attorney should be appointed in the interim by the circuit court.

Contrary to Madigan's opinion, some Kane County Board members believe there will be a "vacancy" in Gorecki's office. If the board declares the office vacant, Gorecki would not be permitted to return to the position after the four-month suspension.

Gorecki filed a lawsuit against McCoy and the County Board, asking the court to stop them from declaring a vacancy. Friday, however, Colwell simply said the County Board should follow the law.

"The circuit court has no right to presume that the County Board will not follow the applicable law as it relates to the existence of a vacancy in the office of Kane County state's attorney," the judge said.

McCoy said the matter now is in the hands of the 26 County Board members.

At the 8 a.m. Monday meeting, the board first will decide whether there is a vacancy in the state's attorney's office. If the board votes yes, then a candidate for the post would have to be nominated, and the board would vote on that person.

McCoy has said he is happy with DiMarzio's appointment of Moran and supports her, but he stressed it is a decision to be made by the County Board.

One of Gorecki's top deputies, however, said he planned to warn board members they would be "acting without legal authority" should they choose to declare the office vacant.

"I don't even see a question," said Michael Coghlan, deputy chief of the state's attorney's office. "She's coming back."

Gorecki, who was in court on Friday prosecuting a case, walked away from reporters who asked for comment, saying she had to meet with a murder victim's family. She did not make herself available for comment following her meeting.

It was unclear when, or if, Gorecki would move from her office.

"Her office looks full to me. She's not clearing out. She's not leaving," Coghlan said. "She's the state's attorney."

*Staff writer Mike Cetera contributed to this report.*

## VACATION

*From page A1*

Mike McCoy said that, under the county's internal controls, only elected officials make decisions on matters of salary for themselves.

"So, it would be up to Meg to decide whether or not she gets paid during that four months," McCoy said.

Board member Paul Gretiskes, D-Aurora, said if that is the case, Gorecki will get a "four-month vacation."

"She could be sitting on a beach in Aruba, sipping drinks and getting paid," he said.

2-1-04 Beacon News

# ComEd eases tower plan

FROM STAFF REPORTS

ComEd, which raised a furor last year when it announced plans to string up 16 miles of heavy-duty power lines along Randall Road from South Elgin to North Aurora, now says the project no longer may be necessary.

According to ComEd, an updated study found that its proposed Randall Road transmission line no longer is the least-expensive way to serve future electrical needs.

ComEd spokeswoman Meg Amato said Saturday the utility found it could take advantage of automation to use existing low-voltage power lines to provide reliable, expanded electrical service to the area. Some of those existing lines, she said, might have to be extended or have branches installed.

"These are the low-voltage lines running on wooden poles familiar to most people," she said, pointing out that the new plan would deliver electrical service in a way that creates little change to the visual landscape.

The utility's original proposal was to string a 138,000-volt power line on 80- to 120-foot-tall steel poles along the Randall Road commercial corridor to feed a growing demand for electricity there.

The utility's plan sparked a furor among residents along the corridor. They feared the project would decrease their property values and pose health risks for those living near the high-voltage lines.

The proposal was considered so controversial that residents formed an activist group, People United for Responsible Energy, and Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn entered the discussion.

Last summer, ComEd agreed to stall its plan, asking the Illinois Commerce Commission to stay its proposal while an alternative was sought. A task force was formed — made up of representatives of PURE, ComEd, the Kane County Board, the villages of South Elgin and North Aurora, and the cities of Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles.

"We've been meeting since May... . Right now, we're in a mode to share information, and we've been working very closely with the task force," Amato said. At the same time, she said, the utility was seeking ways to improve its efficiency.

One of those ways, the utility found, was finding new uses for its automation capabilities. That helped spark the latest option.

"ComEd thinks this better serves the community," Amato said, adding the utility is continuing to work with the task force.

The next step could be a request to the ICC to review the low-voltage power line option, although she stressed there has been no decision on the plan yet.

2-1-04
Beacon News

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

# Controversial museum to reopen

By Brian Shields
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

AURORA — Revin Fellows remembers when he was as skeptical of Dr. Charles Smith and his African-American History Museum as some of Smith's neighbors seemed to be.

But once Smith told Fellows, in his signature blunt style, why the museum on Aurora's East Side was important, Fellows said he was forced to look for his own answers as to why the museum, which also honors black men who fought in the Vietnam War, should be revered.

Several years of work to keep the museum going likely will bear fruit this month, which appropriately enough is also Black History Month.

The museum is scheduled to reopen on Feb. 28, pending approval by the Kane County Board of a special-use variance applied for more than a year ago.

**Inside**

- Landmark Supreme Court decision is Black History Month theme. **Page A6**

"This is something we should be happy with, but it should have happened a long time ago," Fellows said. "Dr. Smith said this museum is for the living, the dead and the unborn. The museum was built for our culture, for our young brothers and sisters, but it is also here for other cultures to learn about black history."

Fellows, who is chairman of the museum's board, has been working on behalf of Smith to address safety issues on the property at 126 S. Kendall St. as the ap-

❖ *Turn to* **MUSEUM, A2**



STEVE ROSENBERG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Dr. Charles Smith's African-American History Museum on Aurora's East Side is set tentatively to open anew on Feb. 28, pending Kane County Board approval of a special-use variance.**

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# MUSEUM

*From Page A1*

plication for the variance has been winding its way through county government.

Mollie Millen, who heads the Zoning Department, said the County Board will vote on the special variance request at its Feb. 10 meeting. The variance is needed because the museum is located in a mostly residential neighborhood.

The museum board continued with its renovation and made plans to reopen even though the County Board has not agreed to the variance request. But the County Board has historically deferred to the decisions of its committees, Millen said.

"They're doing (the opening plans) at their own risk, but they can be relatively comfortable in thinking that it will be approved by the County Board since it has already been approved by the Zoning Board and Development Committee," Millen said.

Since Smith, who was not available for comment, began transforming his property with his artwork in 1986, there have been nuisance ordinance complaints from neighbors about the materials he kept in the back yard.

Smith moved to New Orleans in 2002 and has established a similar museum there, but he still owns the museum and land in Aurora.

A Vietnam veteran, Smith created hundreds of pieces symbolizing the struggles of black people. It includes exhibits depicting the earliest African-American history — blacks being rounded up in their homeland, chained and brought to the United States as slaves.

"Each piece tells a specific story of the African-American experience," Smith said in a 1998 interview. "It's one man's love for God, his culture and his people."

The private Kohler Foundation of Wisconsin, which is specifically interested in the work of self-taught artists such as Smith, had purchased many of Smith's works in 2001 and distributed them to museums around the country for display. The Smithsonian Institution plans to display 16 pieces this year.

Jessie Bates, a private consultant who helped implement the plan to refurbish the museum and informs Smith of progress on a regular basis, said Smith's willingness to answer concerns about zoning, safety and nuisance issues was a big step toward making the place less obscure to locals.

Bates was doing consulting work in Rockford about six years ago when a friend of Smith's told her about the museum. Another consultant, Lisa Stone, did a study to gauge what Smith would have to do for the museum to thrive.

The Heritage Preservation Foundation in Washington, D.C., gave the museum a grant to fund some of the preservation work on the property. Private donations also have been made.

"I told him that, instead of fighting, he should just do the things they are asking him to do," Bates said. "So we got a (not-for-profit status), got incorporated, and the last step was to do the preservation. The zoning took a little bit longer than we would have liked, but now, it's done."

Tentative plans are for an open house at the museum from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Feb. 28, with a ceremony sometime during the afternoon.

Eventually, Bates will try to persuade the board to hire a local curator to help care for the pieces and run tours.

Almost all of the renovation and preservation work is finished, which will enable staff to get pieces out of storage and bring them back to the museum in the next few weeks.

Fellows marvels at the fact that many of Smith's works are going all over the country for display.

"When the Smithsonian wants to display your stuff, that's when you know you're the man," Fellows said with a laugh.

The national and international attention the museum has garnered over the years makes what he says is a lack of local recognition all the more shocking.

Fellows feels the museum can aid Aurora in generating more tourism revenue and giving black children a sense of where they come from and improved self-esteem.

"To this day, I don't think it's been received by Aurora," Fellows said. "We want Aurora to respect the museum, and for the children to benefit from it. Going through the legalization of everything, the zoning and things, makes it legitimate.

"The fight is over, and now, we're looking for respectability."

# Judge: County can meet on Gorecki replacement

1-31-04 Chronicle

## *Vacancy debate, vote likely Monday*

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki lost a bid Friday to stop an assembly that could end her political career.

Judge Michael J. Colwell rejected a lawsuit Gorecki filed to block the Kane County Board from conducting a special meeting Monday to declare her office vacant and appoint her replacement while her law license is suspended.

Gorecki, 36, must take leave of absence beginning Sunday to serve a four-month suspension she received for implicating county board Chairman Mike McCoy in a fictitious jobs-for-bribes scheme before she was elected.

Colwell's order allows board members to discuss whether Gorecki's suspension creates a permanent vacancy and would require them to appoint a surrogate to serve until her term ends Nov. 30.

Gorecki, buoyed by an opinion from Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan allowing her to return after the suspension, sued McCoy and the board Jan. 26. She claimed that the county does not have the authority to replace her.

In his five-page order, Colwell said



Gorecki

the 26-member county board has not declared Gorecki's office vacant and therefore has not created a situation that demands his intervention.

"If at a future date the Plaintiff's claim becomes ripe because of action taken by the Kane County Board she can return to this Court with her claim," Colwell wrote.

McCoy said he plans to conduct the special meeting, but is concerned that not enough board members would agree that a vacancy exists or would appear to allow a vote.

"I think it's the safest thing to go along with the attorney general," said McCoy, who until Colwell's order was undecided whether he would call the meeting. "If we meet Monday and decide there's not a vacancy, I think it's cleared up."

See GORECKI, page 2

Protect your pipes

Kane County
Chronicle

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# Gorecki

Continued from page 1

Larry Wechter of Geneva, Gorecki's attorney, declined to comment after Friday's hearing. Gorecki, too, maintained her silence on the matter as she has since she was prosecuted for misconduct by a state disciplinary panel.

Gorecki spent most of Friday in meetings and had not cleared out her small office in the west wing of the Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles, Assistant Kane County State's Attorney Michael Coghlan said.

Coghlan, the deputy chief of the criminal division, said Gorecki has divided among her assistants a list of cases to prosecute, meetings to attend and programs to oversee in her absence.

"It was a pretty long list," Coghlan said. "I assume that represented part of her work load."

Colwell's order did not address part of the lawsuit questioning Madigan's opinion that also called on Kane County judges to appoint a special state's attorney while Gorecki is suspended. Gorecki sought to name her own substitute.

On Tuesday, Chief Judge Philip L. DiMarzio directed Katherine Moran, chief of the civil division, to serve until Gorecki can return June 1. Moran is among the highest ranking assistants who resides in Kane County.

Moran, who declined to comment Friday, also has been tapped by McCoy to complete Gorecki's term. However, McCoy is unsure Moran would accept the job as a permanent replacement.

But McCoy said Moran, who earns about $70,000 a year, stands to gain a sizable pay increase while she serves as a special state's attorney and even more if she accepts the board's nomination if Gorecki is replaced.

Moran would receive the monthly slice of Gorecki's $129,807 annual salary during her tenure, said McCoy, adding that it is unknown whether Gorecki would forfeit her paycheck while suspended.

Even though the state reimburses Kane County for about $118,000 of Gorecki's salary, the issue is enough to convince some board members to vote Gorecki permanently out of office.

"She gets to take a four-month vacation and collect her salary, so nothing happens," said Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, who said he considers Gorecki's office vacant effective Sunday. "She can be on a beach someplace sipping margaritas."

Still, a canvas of the county board Friday indicated a stalemate, although several members remained undecided on their vote. McCoy would break any tie, but did not indicate his decision.

Of 14 board members available for comment, five endorsed declaring Gorecki's office vacant, five opposed and four said they are undecided. Many cited Madigan's 15-page opinion that maintains that Gorecki's suspension is temporary.

"Based on what I've seen, I tend to lean toward the attorney general's and chief judge's opinion," said Daniel Walter, R-South Elgin. "As I see it, there isn't a vacancy."

"I'd like her to come back, I know she wants to," said Barbara Wojnicki, R-St. Charles. "I think she's done an exemplary job."

At least 14 board members must be present for a vote to be taken.

On Nov. 20, the state Supreme Court suspended Gorecki for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct for suggesting in 1998 that a friend could obtain a county job by making a contribution to McCoy's campaign fund.

Gorecki has acknowledged that she made the statements in three telephone calls, tapes of which surfaced just before the 2000 Republican primary. An investigation cleared McCoy of any involvement and Gorecki of criminal wrongdoing.

*Contributing: Tom Schlueter, Dan Chanzit*

# ComEd offers alternative to power towers

1-31-04 Chronicle

## *STC officials not convinced automation system is the answer*

By PAUL ROCK
Kane County Chronicle

ComEd representatives believe they have a solution to the controversy over the high-voltage transmission lines proposed along Randall Road.

St. Charles officials are not so sure.

Representatives from the utility met Friday in Batavia with representatives from the Tri-Cities to consider a recent study that shows ComEd could withdraw its petition to the Interstate Commerce Commission requesting to build 138-kilovolt power lines along Randall Road between South Elgin and Batavia.

ComEd and local officials say the lines are needed to meet the requirements of a rapidly growing population in central Kane County.

The ICC petition has been on hold for several months while ComEd and the cities discuss alternatives to placing the lines on Randall Road.

Instead of the Randall Road lines, ComEd would implement an automation system it says would reduce the strain on the power grid but would not require additional high-voltage lines.

Under the automation system, the utility would be able to electronically monitor its power lines and implement idle transformer substations for backup power.

The automation system would not require ICC approval, ComEd spokeswoman Meg Amato said.

"By using automation we will enhance the reliability of the system," Amato said. "This would provide the same reliability of the Randall Road transmission lines."

The new proposal would require fewer infrastructure improvements and would cost "several million" dollars less than the Randall Road proposal, Amato said.

ComEd vice president George Lofton said that while the automation technology has existed since 2000, it had not been used as an application for substations. The utility has been studying better alternatives to the Randall Road proposal since May.

Lofton said the automation system "takes advantage of new technology and a new operational approach. We think that's good news for the residents of these communities."

See POWER, page 2

residents to check their roofs for ice dams.

Ice dams form after snow and extreme cold. Water from melting ice can become

normal high temperature for this time of year is 30.

before the 2000
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## Power

Continued from page 1

St. Charles City Administrator Larry Maholland, who attended Friday's meeting, said the Tri-Cities were informed of ComEd's plans earlier this week and did not have ample time to study the effectiveness of the automation system.

Initial response from city engineers was not positive, however.

"Some engineering people looked at it and had deep concerns about the reliability of the system," Maholland said. "At this point, we don't agree with what they're saying. We hoped a Randall Road line or a (system of 138-kilovolt lines) would improve reliability and limit distribution costs."

St. Charles officials believe the 138-kilovolt lines still are the best alternative but seek alternatives to the Randall Road proposal. One leading contender is near the DuPage County line east of Kirk Road.

"The 138 lines provide significantly more reliability than the 34.5-kilovolt lines do," Maholland said. "What they're proposing won't provide us with the reliability that we have even now."

Amato disagreed, saying the automation system would be as reliable or more reliable than the 138-volt lines.

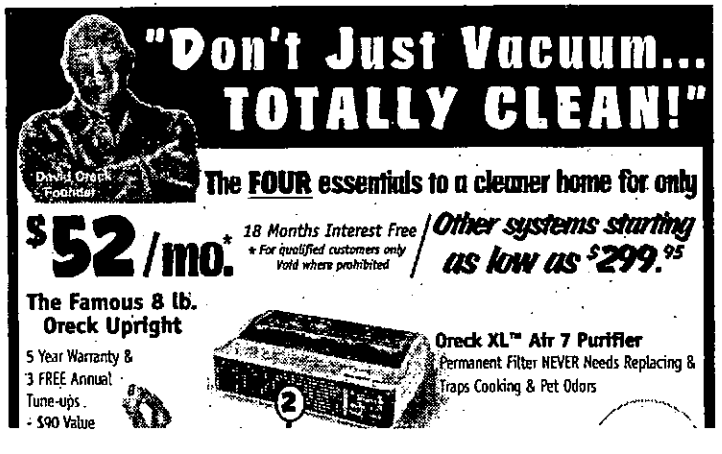
She said ComEd will continue to discuss the issue in good faith with the city representatives.

"We have not made any decisions," Amato said. "We are working in good faith with the municipalities, and at this point we are honoring that process."

The Randall Road proposal generated complaints from residents and led to the formation of a citizens group. Opponents cited potential health hazards. ComEd eventually backed away from the plan, saying it wanted to be a good neighbor.


RIVE SAFE
ITH NEW TIRES



# St. Charles joins call for study of power lines along Fox River

2-3-04 Daily Herald

BY LISA SMITH
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

St. Charles on Monday night became the last of the Tri-Cities to sign off on an intergovernmental agreement calling for ComEd to study the feasibility of installing high-voltage power lines east of the Fox River.

The decision comes on the heels of an announcement by the utility company that it will not build a controversial 138,000-volt power transmission line along Randall Road from South Elgin to North Aurora and instead plans to upgrade and extend the existing 34,000-volt lines used in the Tri-Cities.

St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia officials are seeking an electric connection to ComEd's existing Joliet-to-Crystal Lake electric transmission system by 2006. The proposed ComEd study would determine whether the connection could be constructed without negatively affecting ComEd's system.

The Batavia and Geneva city councils approved the agreement last month. The study is expected to cost at least $50,000, to be split evenly among the Tri-Cities.

The cities now operate on 34,000-volt lines, which officials say are increasingly unreliable as the population grows.

"We're hurting on the east side," St. Charles City Administrator Larry Maholland said. "We need to make a decision pretty quick."

ComEd has proposed upgrading and extending the existing system, but city officials want the company to examine the 138,000-volt, Fox River alternative.

"Most of our outages happen because of failures on the (34,000-volt) ComEd lines," Maholland said. "It's rare to have a failure on the 138s."

Maholland also said the higher-powered system would allow the city to save an estimated $2 million annually in distribution costs.

A group of Tri-Cities residents formed People United for Responsible Energy to protest ComEd's Randall Road plan, saying the power lines would lower neighboring home values and produce a health hazard.

044-1043.

2-3-04 Beacon News

## Electionwatch

Citizens for **Sue Norris,** Republican candidate for Kane County Circuit Clerk, are sponsoring a spaghetti dinner fund-raiser on Feb. 10 at Aurora Turner's, 1335 Mitchell Road in Aurora. The event, featuring raffles and a cash bar, will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Tickets are $15 at the door. Visit the Web site www.vote4suenorris.org or call (630) 742-1271.


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Sponsored by Citizens for Sue Norris.


2-3-04 Chronicle

2-3-04 Daily Herald

# Rival candidates have raised most campaign money

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

The leading candidates for Kane County state's attorney won't be setting fund-raising records, but they are pulling apart from most of the county-wide political field with cash campaign accounts toping $20,000.

State's attorney hopeful John Barsanti of St. Charles outdid everyone in competitive races by bringing in $24,973 between July 1 and Dec. 31, 2003, according to the latest campaign finance records.

"We've gotten very good donations," Barsanti said. "We've got 100 people working for us through volunteer committees. People are really motivated and working hard."

Barsanti's chief rival for the prosecutor job, Tim O'Neil, of St. Charles, isn't far behind in the fund-raising race having brought in $21,875, finance records say. O'Neil says all of that came in since October, when he entered the race.

"I think I did pretty well for getting in it at Halloween," O'Neil said. "I think that indicates the level of support I have."

The race's other two candidates lag far behind in the money race, records show.

Joe Rago of Geneva brought in $7,884 since July 1.

Michael Leuer of Geneva did not have a campaign finance report because his organization did not reach the $3,000 benchmark that requires a candidate to file papers. His campaign manager said Leuer hit that mark this month, after the filing period ended.

At the top of the race, Barsanti is collecting thousands from colleagues with high profiles in Kane County's criminal courtrooms. Money has come in from supporters such as well-known defense attorneys Van Richards and Glen Sowa as well as Patrick Kinnally, who was hired by the county board chairman to research the future of incumbent state's attorney Meg Gorecki.

Gorecki is now serving her four-month Illinois Supreme court ordered law license suspension for ethics violations and is not seeking re-election.

O'Neil, too, has a list of prominent lawyers on his campaign contribution list, many of them civil attorneys like David McCardle, who represented a developer that tried to locate a garbage transfer station in Cary.

O'Neil also picked up $500 and an endorsement from Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy. McCoy transferred the money from his campaign fund.

The only fund-raising rival to top state's attorney candidates is Arney Silvestri, who is seeking the District 14 county board seat.

Primarily on the backs of real estate developers, Silvestri has brought in $20,178, more than any candidate in any other race in the county with the exception of state's attorney and county board chairman.

7-3-04 Chronicle

# STC joins study on ComEd power lines

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Funding for a ComEd study to research power-line options on the east side of the Tri-Cities was approved Monday by city council members.

Council members voted to approve their third of the costs of the study and an agreement with Batavia and Geneva city officials to fund and authorize ComEd to complete the study.

The study is expected to look at the feasibility of placing high-voltage power lines on the east side of Kane County. The lines would plug into a ComEd line in DuPage County to help ease the area's growing power demand.

Tri-Cities' officials say the proposal might be an alternative to the ComEd plan to build power lines down Randall Road. The company shelved that project last year because of public opposition.

But the most cost-effective proposal and alternative to the Randall Road plan could be updating the area's power distribution system with automation equipment, according to a ComEd plan pitched last week.

City officials though, are not sold on that plan.

"This was an alternative to Randall Road," St. Charles City Administrator Larry Maholland. "This next decision is huge in terms of the future."

ComEd and Tri-Cities' officials are trying to find a solution to address the capacity of the area's power distribution system. The current system is insufficient for future power needs of the growing cities.

ComEd officials proposed building high-voltage power lines down Randall Road and said that was the most cost-efficient answer. But ComEd last week told city officials that a study recently completed shows that the most-cost effective way now is to install automation equipment on the power system.

"We have found by doing this updated study that Randall Road would no longer be the least-expensive plan," said Meg Amato, ComEd spokeswoman.

City officials, however, are questioning that study because the ComEd proposal would use existing low-voltage lines. In addition, Maholland said the cities still would have to pay ComEd for distribution fees.

Maholland said the cities' proposed study would look at the feasibility of building high-power lines from substations in St. Charles and either Batavia or Geneva to plug into a high-power line in DuPage County owned by ComEd.

Maholland said this could cut down on power distribution fees that the cities pay. He said the study would cost about $75,000 and should be completed within 60 days.

"We need to make a decision pretty quickly and get it resolved," he said.

2-3-04 Chicago Tribune

# Gorecki will have job upon return

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter

Even with her law license suspended for four months, Kane County State's Atty. Meg Gorecki can return to her office June 1 and work until Nov. 30, the end of her term, the County Board concluded Monday.

The board voted 14-10 not to declare Gorecki's elective post vacant as a result of a four-month, court-ordered suspension that took effect Sunday. She has said she will not seek re-election.

Barring any unforeseen litigation, attorneys familiar with Gorecki's unprecedented circumstances said the board's vote ends an unrelenting political and legal controversy that has dogged Kane for nearly four years.

"It's settled now. This is the final decision by the County Board," said Patrick Kinnally, of Aurora, a special assistant attorney for the county who argued successfully in Circuit Court last week that it was the board's prerogative to decide whether a vacancy existed.

Gorecki was unavailable for comment.

But her chief deputy, Michael Coghlan, said the vote ensures that Gorecki will "never not be the state's attorney" during the next 10 months.

"I don't see any further litigation," he said.

One of Gorecki's chief assistants was sworn in Sunday to act with the full powers and authority of the office until Gorecki's suspension is concluded.

Special State's Atty. M. Katherine Moran, 51, of Geneva, will be paid on a pro-rata basis for four months based on Gorecki's annual salary of about $130,000. Moran had been chief of the office's civil

PLEASE SEE **GORECKI,** PAGE 4

## GORECKI: Assistant supervising office now

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

division since Gorecki hired her in January 2001.

Gorecki notified the county's payroll department last week that she did not want to be paid a salary while suspended.

Had he been required to cast a tie-breaking vote whether to declare a vacancy, County Board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora) said he would have opted to maintain the status quo. Previously, McCoy had indicated he favored declaring a vacancy.

"I would have voted 'no vacancy' [exists]," said McCoy, who decided to call a special meeting to force a resolution of the dispute and to ensure that the integrity of the state's attorney's office was maintained without interruption. McCoy said uncertainty surrounding Gorecki's ability to remain state's attorney while her license was suspended had diminished from the time he scheduled the special board meeting.

A subsequent legal opinion by Illinois Atty. Gen. Lisa Madigan and related court orders by Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio on Jan. 27, and Judge Michael Colwell on Friday, convinced him that the board had taken the correct action, he said.

After Madigan's opinion, DiMarzio ordered Moran's interim appointment as special state's attorney.

Then Colwell dismissed a lawsuit by Gorecki in which she sought to pre-empt the County Board from considering the matter.

McCoy said he saw in Colwell's order a hint to note a Nov. 20 state Supreme Court opinion that ordered "the suspension and not the revocation of [Gorecki's] license."

Coghlan said Gorecki was not in the office Monday. She did not tell him what her plans would be until she returns to practice, he said.


Gorecki

While divided on the issue of vacancy, none of the County Board members who spoke Monday was critical of Gorecki's management of the office. Nearly all said their constituents were tired of the controversy and implored board members to end it.

The state Supreme Court ordered Gorecki's suspension because of an incident of unethical conduct in 1998, before she ran for office, when she suggested falsely to a friend that McCoy could be bribed in exchange for a county job.

McCoy was cleared of any wrongdoing.

2-3-04
Chronicle



**Bill Page**

# Break out the broom

On July 1, St. Charles School District 303 welcomes its new superintendent, Barbara Erwin. Dr. Erwin comes here after stints as superintendent in Arizona, Texas and Indiana. Her reputation is that of a no-nonsense administrator who turns around troubled organizations, much like a corporate "fixer" in the business world. There's not much doubt that that particular skill is going to be put to the test as soon as she walks in the door.

District 303, despite the booster-ish hype, is a district in trouble. Long plagued by a leadership vacuum, the district does not enjoy the support of the majority of parents and taxpayers. The manner in which the mold crisis was handled has left scars that will not heal soon, and a recent decision to have courses without textbooks alienated many parents.

This distrust is further exacerbated by the way the administration and the school board deal with any challenge to their authority, no matter how trivial or serious. To say they do not handle controversy well would be a gross understatement. As many a parent has discovered, neither the board nor the administration want to hear from those who do not totally agree with the party line.

For Dr. Erwin to succeed, she must reach out to the rather large group of parents, staff and taxpayers who feel that their concerns have not been heard. A perfect place for her to start would be to do away with one incredibly rude policy in effect at board meetings. This is the policy where no one on the board or in the administration responds to any "civilian" who addresses the board at their meeting.

This is a slap in the face to parents and residents who want a response after they have spent hours at a board meeting just for a chance to face the board and publicly air concerns. Eliminate this policy and Dr. Erwin immediately will win many friends in the community.

Dr. Erwin also is known as a leader unafraid to clean house, and if there ever was a house that needed a bit of tidying up, 303 is it. With her hiring, Dr. Erwin has been given the go-ahead to start swinging the broom. Here's hoping she makes it a clean sweep.

* * *

Someone please tell me why Joe Rago and Mike Leuer still are in the race for the Republican nomination for state's attorney? Neither has run anything close to a recognizable campaign, garnered any important endorsements or raised enough money to make any kind of impact.

I don't doubt that both truly believe they are the right guy for the job, but fellas, it takes votes to win this job. Votes you ain't got. Time to turn out the lights and call it a day.

* * *

Someone mentioned to me today that "the Gorecki matter is finally settled."

Oh, really? Rather than feel any sense of relief, I just know there's another shoe waiting to drop somewhere.

Hey, it's been that way for four years, why should things change now?

* * *

The Great Batavia Dam Debate also is lurching toward its own nonconclusion, with votes scheduled by some group to decide something that I thought some other group had decided before. Or did they not decide to do it? I'm confused, as I'm sure most of the residents of Batavia are about the whole issue.

I have heard very intelligent arguments from both sides in the debate — and some real wacky theories, as well. One thing is for sure: If the dam goes, it is highly unlikely that the consequences will be as dire as what some would have us believe. On the other hand, removal will create a noticeable change in the riverbank appearance from what exists now, so the decision is not easy.

Good luck to those stuck making the call; you're about to tick off 50 percent of the people no matter what you do.

■ *Bill Page can be reached at wpage@mediawerks.org, or (630) 584-0809.*

2-3-04 Daily Herald

# Why it's critical to vaccinate your pet

By Rob Olmstead
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

As if you didn't have enough to worry about with mad cow, avian influenza, West Nile and SARS.

Now, there's raccoon rabies.

It began on the East Coast and soon spread to Ohio and Tennessee.

Don't panic. It's not in the Chicago area, yet, and if it does arrive here, there's a vaccine prepared and ready to go — it has been for years — as well as successful post-infection treatment methods.

But you'd better do something that an overwhelming proportion of Chicago-area pet owners haven't done — get your pet vaccinated.

Health experts here estimate that only 25 percent to 30 percent of dogs have been vaccinated for rabies.

That level is well below the minimum recommended inoculation rate of roughly 55 percent, said Charles Rupprecht, chief of the rabies unit at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

"I think that's a level to be concerned about in any urban, suburban population of dogs," Rupprecht said.

Dan Parmer, Cook County's Animal & Rabies Control administrator, would like to change the rate, but that gets tricky to do.

"In order to reach that target, you cannot leave it up to a population voluntarily," said Parmer, who has embarked on a campaign to get Cook cities and suburbs to start enforcing rabies vaccinations through municipal licensing — with fines and court appearances if necessary.

But most towns are hesitant to take on any new responsibilities in an era of tight budgets and reduced staffing.

Convincing the municipalities to get tough "has to be handled in a very diplomatic, nice way," said Parmer, who thinks he's got the answer: math.

If towns required vaccinations as a precursor to a pet license, and then went out searching for and fining owners of unlicensed pets, you'd see vaccination rates increase while the fines would pay for the enforcement, he says.

**Number of vaccines**

| County | Annual no. |
|---|---|
| Cook | 550,000 |
| Lake | 80,000 |
| DuPage | 250,000 |
| Kane | 86,000 |
| McHenry | 32,898 |

Source: Animal control departments

Parmer notes "it has to be profitable" or at least a break-even proposition for municipalities to pressure scofflaws.

"My desire is to get the cities ... to enforce licensure," he said. "In most suburbs, it's 'hope you come in and buy one.'"

It was that way in Wheeling until last year, said Christine Brady, the city's licensing clerk.

Then, the village began cross-checking with the county's rabies vaccination list and sending notices to pet owners who hadn't registered dogs with the city.

"We more than doubled, I would say almost tripled (the number of $5 licenses sold)," Brady said.

That's fine, said Parmer, but it doesn't help find dogs that aren't already vaccinated.

To do that, you have to go out looking.

Currently, Wheeling doesn't do that, said Michael Mondschain, the city's director of finance.

"I know that some communities in the past have done dog and cat censuses," said Mondschain, "(But) until there's some direction from our village board to do that, I don't think it's going to be done."

Arlington Heights thinks it does a pretty good job now of enforcing vaccinations, but said it would be willing to hear Parmer out.

"We would always look at something that would improve the safety in this community," said Commander Richard Niedrich of the police department, which runs the city's animal control efforts.

The CDC's Rupprecht said vaccination through raccoon-bait programs have stopped the spread of raccoon rabies in Ohio, and they may even be able to push the disease back into Pennsylvania.

But Parmer goes by the adage of "better safe than sorry."

"We would be negligent if it does get here and we do not have the public prepared for it," Parmer said.

The raccoon rabies issue aside, Rupprecht said Parmer is absolutely right to increase the vaccination rate.

"Of course, the primary objective here is to prevent human exposure," Rupprecht said.

"Domestic animal vaccination is a tried-and-true method — for more than 50 years."

He added that raccoon rabies isn't the only danger. Bats and skunks carry the rabies virus, and Illinois routinely finds wild animals with rabies.

With low vaccination rates, "you just set yourself up for having, potentially, a dog rabies outbreak," he said.

If raccoon rabies does get here and vaccination rates aren't any higher than they are now, things could get ugly, Parmer said.

"Then you'd have a calamity and you're out here trying to vaccinate a million animals. ... It'd be the biggest Excedrin headache you ever saw, and there's no need for that."



CHRISTOPHER HANKINS/DAILY HERALD

**Elgin veterinarian Ronald Bone gives a rabies shot to Penny, a terrier mix, with the assistance of Sandy Hoambrecker.**

**What you should know about rabies**

- Rabies almost always is transmitted through animal bites. Signs of rabid animals include excess saliva, foaming at the mouth and paralysis. Odd behavior — a wild animal unafraid of humans or a normally outgoing dog that suddenly acts shy — is another possible sign.
- Once symptoms occur in humans, there is no cure. But if the virus can be stopped before symptoms begin, it almost always can be eliminated.
- If you are bit by an animal you suspect may have rabies, wash the bite with soap and water and see your doctor immediately.
- The physician likely would give you a shot of rabies antibodies, meant to kick-start the body's immune system. It would be followed by a series of five vaccine injections over the next month.
- Forty-two people died of rabies in the United States between 1980 and 2000, and 13 of those contracted the disease in other countries.

Source: Webmd.com

2-3-04 Beacon News

# McCoy supports O'Neil's bid for state's attorney

## *Barsanti leads in fund-raising*

**By Daniel Duggan**
STAFF WRITER

While John Barsanti leads the pack of Republican Kane County state's attorney candidates in fund raising, Timothy O'Neil has brought in large union donations and political muscle, according to campaign finance documents filed with the state.

Among O'Neil's contributions was $500 from Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, who said Monday he is endorsing O'Neil.

"I've known him for a while, and I like his stance in pledging to use the office of state's attorney to protect the environment," McCoy said.

O'Neil, a Geneva resident, took in a $5,000 donation from the International Union of Operating Engineers, as well money from some area law firms. His total fund-raising effort has amounted to $22,000 since July.

Barsanti, a St. Charles resident, raised the most money — drawing $25,000 in campaign donations, according to reports. He has spent the most money, too, leaving him with $16,500 on hand compared to O'Neil's $19,000.

Among Barsanti's largest contributions were $3,000 from Andrew Sosnowski of Elgin and $1,500 from Michael Bellissemo of St. Charles.

O'Neil originally set a goal of $100,000 in contributions but said he isn't bringing in the amounts of money he anticipated.

The latest round of campaign disclosures reveals a gap between the four candidates, with Geneva residents Joseph Rago and Michael Leuer bringing in less than Barsanti and O'Neil.

Rago raised $3,200 but had more to spend out of his campaign fund with $4,200 of his own money. His largest donation was $1,000 from the Carpentersville-based Family Taxpayers Network, a conservative group with ties across the state.

Leuer, the last Republican to enter the race, did not meet the $3,000 level of donations required to file a campaign disclosure form. His campaign manager, Jon Zahm, said Leuer recently met the threshold and will file disclosure forms in the next filing period.

2-3-04 Daily Herald

# Gorecki will be back after her suspension

## County board ends 2 years of battle, votes to let her return June 1

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Meg Gorecki should be back in her office June 1 ready to fill out her term as state's attorney, complete with the endorsement of the Kane County Board.

Effectively ending two years of uncertainty that have surrounded the office, the board Monday voted 14 to 10 to allow Gorecki to return to the job after her Illinois Supreme Court-ordered four-month law license suspension.



Meg Gorecki

"I think Meg has taken enough punishment," said board member Barbara Wojnicki, a St. Charles Republican, who voiced her support for Gorecki but was absent at the final vote. "I feel this has been a witch hunt from day one. She has every right to come back."

That right has been in dispute since before the state high court issued its ruling in November suspending Gorecki's license for ethics violations.

The punishment stems from three phone messages Gorecki left on a friend's answering machine in 1998 suggesting county jobs could be bought in exchange for campaign donations.

News of the messages surfaced just weeks before the 2000 GOP primary which Gorecki went on to win.

No evidence of such a bribery scheme ever was uncovered, and no criminal charges were filed.

Still, the scandal has clouded Gorecki's entire term, which ends Nov. 30.

Soon after she took office in December 2000, the state commission that oversees attorney licensing brought a discipline case against Gorecki, a complaint that led to the suspension.

When the high court ordered Gorecki's suspension to start Feb. 1, questions remained as to whether she could remain in office.

In the week leading up to her suspension, opposing opinions on Gorecki's return were put to the test inside and outside the courtroom.

With that in mind, on Jan. 23,

See **RETURN** on **PAGE 9**



JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

**Kane County Board members, including Caryl Van Overmeiren, left, Rob McConnaughay, John Hoscheit and Bob Kudlicki, debated for less than an hour before voting to allow Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki to retain her office after her suspension.**

## How they voted

Here's how the county board votes broke down.

**Absent**

Barb Wojnicki, R-St. Charles
Doug Weigand, R-Batavia

**Not Vacant** (Vote results in Gorecki retaining office)

- Penelope Cameron, R-Aurora
- Jan Carlson, R-Elburn
- Jack Cook, R-Elgin
- John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles
- Bob Kudlicki, R-Hampshire
- Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles
- Rob McConnaughay, R-Geneva
- Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora
- John Noverini, R-Carpentersville
- Mary Richards, R-Aurora
- Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora
- Jackie Tredup, R-Elgin
- Caryl Van Overmeiren, R-St. Charles
- Dan Walter, R-South Elgin

**Vacant** (Vote against Gorecki retaining office)

- Deborah Allan, R-Elgin
- Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee
- Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora
- Ken Griffin, D-Aurora
- Cathy Hurlbut, R-Elgin
- Gerald Jones, D-Aurora
- Rudy Neuberger, D-Aurora
- Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville
- Don Wolfe, R-Elgin
- Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora

# **Return:** Chairman wants to change law

*Continued from Page 1*

county board Chairman Mike McCoy called for a special meeting of the county board to decide if Gorecki should be replaced.

The same day, the state attorney general issued an opinion saying Gorecki could return and advising the county board had no authority in the matter.

The following week, Gorecki sued to stop the board from meeting and asked a judge to endorse the attorney general's opinion. Neither happened.

In the midst of it all, the county's chief judge appointed a temporary special state's attorney to fill in the role during the Gorecki suspension.

That led everyone to Monday wondering if the county board would welcome back Gorecki or block her return.

Some voted a certain way for legal reasons.

"The (state) constitution says in order to be state's attorney you have to have a law license," said board member Paul Greviskes, an Aurora Democrat, who voted against Gorecki's return. "I don't think we can duck the issue."

Others went the other way for different legal reasons.

With special state's attorney Katherine Moran in office until June 1, John Noverini said the debate is over.

"The state's attorney, Katherine Moran, has a law license," the Carpentersville Republican who voted for Gorecki said. "Where's the vacancy? There is no vacancy."

Some around the board table took a more personal approach in taking Gorecki's side.

"Most people are totally tired of what they have been reading and hearing," said board member Jackie Tredup, an Elgin Republican. "I think Meg has paid her dues on this. It shouldn't have ever got to this point."

Lee Barrett, an East Dundee Republican, said he voted to oust Gorecki so she could fight it in the courts and let them decide.

A number of board members called up on the state legislature to take a good look at this.

McCoy said he would be taking the issue back to state Attorney General Lisa Madigan and asking her help in getting state laws changed to address a situation like Gorecki's.

Ever since setting the meeting date, McCoy says he just wanted a vote — yes or no.

He was pleased with the outcome and its finality.

"I'd say it's over," McCoy said. "Which is a good thing."

Gorecki released a statement through her private attorneys praising the county board and its action.

"Ms. Gorecki trusts that the action of the board brings closure to this question," Gorecki's attorney Larry Wechter said. "My client looks forward to her return to all the duties of her office on June 1, 2004."

In legal terms, the lawyers around the boardroom Monday seem to agree the board decision should erase any further disputes.

"The county board had the right to make this determination," said Pat Kinnally, an Aurora attorney hired to research the Gorecki issue for the county board. "The system works. This is over."

## Reaction



## History of Gorecki's troubles

The case against Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki stem from allegations during the 2000 campaign

**2000**

**March 2:** Allegations surface that Meg Gorecki suggested that a family friend, Kane County Sheriff's Deputy Jane Morrison, make a campaign contribution to Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy to secure Morrison's then boyfriend a county job. Morrison turns over the tape from 1998, which included the taped messages from Gorecki, to sheriff's officials. Allegations become public three weeks before the Republican primary in which Gorecki was challenging then State's Attorney David Akemann. Gorecki said she offered help in getting Morrison's boyfriend a job but denied suggesting a campaign contributions-for-job scheme.

**March 3:** Gorecki turns the focus of the allegations on how the information was leaked to reporters. She also denies allegations and suggests the voice on the answering machine tape may not even be hers.

**March 21:** Gorecki wins the Republican primary.

**2001**

**Aug. 28:** County Board Chairman Mike McCoy releases a transcript of the answering machine tapes.

**Sept. 1:** Gorecki holds a press conference and admits to making the statements. Kane County Judge Grant Wegner approves hiring a special prosecutor. Akemann requests special prosecutor after the Illinois attorney general's office and the FBI declined to investigate.

**Sept. 8:** Wegner appoints Dan Doyle, a former appellate court judge and former prosecutor in Winnebago County, as special prosecutor.

**Oct. 24:** Doyle ends investigation and issues a report clearing McCoy and Morrision of wrongdoing and stating that there is not enough evidence to pursue criminal charges against Gorecki. Doyle suggests she face a disciplinary review and forwards the report to the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

**Nov. 7:** Gorecki wins the general election, defeating Democrat Bob Steffen with a vote of 67,527 to 65,212.

**2002**

**Feb. 23:** The Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission files a formal complaint accusing Gorecki of misconduct. An inquiry board reviews the complaint.

**May 1:** ARDC determines the complaint should proceed to a hearing board for a disciplinary hearing.

**Nov. 30:** ARDC hearing board hears the case. During the proceeding, attorneys for the ARDC recommend a one-year suspension of Gorecki's law license while Gorecki's attorneys recommend a censure.

**April 29:** The hearing board issues a report recommending the Illinois Supreme Court suspend Gorecki's law license for six months. The report also included a dissenting opinion from one of the hearing board members who recommended censuring Gorecki.

**Sept. 13:** Review board for the commission hears arguments in Gorecki's case. As before the hearing board, ARDC attorneys again argue for a one-year suspension of Gorecki's law license and Gorecki's attorneys suggest a censure.

**2003**

**Jan. 14:** The review board issues a report recommending the Illinois Supreme Court suspend Gorecki's law license for two months.

**Feb. 18:** ARDC attorneys ask the Illinois Supreme Court to review its argument for a one-year suspension of Gorecki's law license.

**March 5:** Gorecki's attorneys file documents with the Illinois Supreme Court suggesting a two-month suspension — rather than a censure – would be fair punishment.

**May 22:** Illinois Supreme Court justices order additional arguments in Gorecki's case.

**Aug. 20:** Gorecki's case scheduled to go before the Illinois Supreme Court for oral arguments on Sept. 17.

**Aug. 27:** Gorecki announces she will not seek election to a second term as state's attorney.

**Sept. 17:** Illinois Supreme Court justices hear oral arguments in Gorecki's case. Justices take the case under advisement but do not give a date when a decision will be rendered.

**Nov. 20:** Illinois Supreme Court rules that Gorecki will be suspended from the practice of law for four months. The effective date remains unclear.

**Dec. 1:** Gorecki petitions the court to delay her suspension until Nov. 30, 2004, her last day in office.

**2004**

**Jan 13:** Illinois Supreme Court rejects Gorecki's request for a delay and orders the suspension to begin Feb. 1.

**Jan. 23:** Special Kane County Board meeting called to address the state's attorney position. Independently, Illinois attorney general issues opinion saying the suspension does not create a "vacancy" in the office and that only the courts can name an interim special state's attorney during a suspension.

**Jan. 26:** Gorecki files suit seeking to block the special county board meeting.

**Jan. 27:** Court names Katherine Moran interim Kane County state's attorney.

**Jan. 30:** Judge denies Gorecki's request to block the special county board meeting.

**Feb. 2:** Kane County Board votes 14-10 that Gorecki's suspension does not create a vacancy in the office, allowing her to return to office June 1.

Source: News reports, Daily Herald archives

Source: News reports, Daily Herald archives

"The county board had the right to make this determination," said Pat Kinnally, an Aurora attorney hired to research the Gorecki issue for the county board. "The system works. This is over."

## Reaction



"I'd say it's over. Which is a good thing."

**Mike McCoy, board chairman, above**

"Most people are totally tired of what they have been reading and hearing. I think Meg has paid her dues on this. It shouldn't have ever got to this point."

**ckie Tredup, an Elgin Republican**

"My client looks forward to er return to all the duties of ıer office on June 1, 2004."

**arry Wechter, Gorecki's attorney**

# County board: Gorecki can return

2-3-04 Chronicle

## *Suspension ends June 1*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Board on Monday declared no vacancy in the state's attorney's office, allowing Meg Gorecki to return June 1.

The board voted 14-10 that Gorecki's four-month law license suspension did not constitute a "legal disability," meaning the vacancy created Sunday when she began a four-month suspension is temporary.

Gorecki, 36, began a leave of absence Sunday to serve a four-month suspension she received for implicating county board Chairman Mike McCoy in a fictitious jobs-for-bribes scheme before she was elected.

Monday's vote allows Gorecki to return to the post once the suspension ends and serve until her term ends Nov. 30. Gorecki said last year that she will not seek re-election.



Gorecki

"The county board has a right to decide this issue, and they did," said Patrick Kinnally, the special assistant state's attorney assigned to represent the board on the issue. "It's over, as far as I'm concerned."

Kinnally was referring to the county board's statutory authority to declare a vacancy in an elected office.

After the vote, Gorecki's attorney, Larry Wechter, said in a written statement that the county board "responded appropriately to the legal issues.

"Ms. Gorecki trusts that the action of the board brings closure to this question. My client looks forward to her return to all the duties of her office on June 1, 2004," Wechter's statement read.

McCoy on Jan. 23 called for Monday's special meeting. He set it for 8 a.m., an hour before the start of court the day after Gorecki's suspension began.

Two resolutions were on the agenda — one to declare a vacancy, and one to appoint civil division chief Katherine Moran as state's attorney.

See GORECKI, page 2

### Decision details

• County board members explain why they voted the way they did on the Meg Gorecki suspension.

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## LOTTERIES

ILLINOIS LOTTERY
**MON. PICK 3 MIDDAY:** 4-7-4
**MON. PICK 3 EVENING:** 0-9-1
**MON. PICK 4 MIDDAY:** 4-8-6-7
**MON. PICK 4 EVENING:** 4-6-7-6
**MON. LITTLE LOTTO:** 1-08-09-13-23
**LOTTO JACKPOT:** $2 million

MEGA MILLIONS
**EST. JACKPOT:** $85 million

INDIANA LOTTERY
**MON. DAILY 3 MIDDAY:** 4-6-4
**MON. DAILY 3 EVENING:** 2-2-8
**MON. DAILY 4 MIDDAY:** 1-8-7-9
**MON. DAILY 4 EVENING:** 7-9-1-9
**MON. LUCKY 5 MIDDAY:** 2-9-22-27-28
**MON. LUCKY 5 EVENING:** 2-4-13-20-26
**EST. JACKPOT:** $1 million

POWERBALL
**EST. JACKPOT:** $85 million

WISCONSIN LOTTERY
**MON. PICK 3:** 8-4-6

He said that to legally prove someone is "disabled" in probate court requires the ruling of a judge.

To declare Gorecki disabled, "It seems to me we would have to adjudicate this," suspension should be viewed the same as the suspension of someone's driver's license.

"I think this is just a lawyer's opportunity to prove the things lawyers like to ing there is no vacancy in the office.

"I don't see a vacancy. don't see a legal disability. She's the state's attorney. It's not our job to punish Meg Gorecki," Noverini said.

# Gorecki

Continued from page 1

As the first resolution was defeated, the second became moot.

"I'm happy with what the board did," McCoy said.

He said had he been called to cast a tiebreaking vote, it would have been against the vacancy.

"I didn't call this meeting because of any legal advice. I called it because it was the right thing to do," he said.

After McCoy announced the meeting, Gorecki sued him and the county board, citing Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's nonbinding opinion that a four-month suspension did not constitute a "legal disability," which granted her the right to return to her job once the suspension ended.

The Illinois constitution requires a state's attorney to hold a valid law license. But the constitution does not address what would happen if a sitting state's attorney's license is suspended.

McCoy said he would ask state legislators to include language in the statutes to prevent the legal wranglings that have plagued Gorecki and the county for so long from happening elsewhere.

He said he agrees with Madigan's opinion, that the threshold for "legal disability" kicks in at six months should be in the law.

Assistant State's Attorney Michael Coghlan said Gorecki will not accept her salary while her law license is suspended. She is paid $129,807 annually, and the state reimburses Kane County for about $118,000 of Gorecki's salary.

Coghlan said 30 cases originally assigned to Gorecki have been reassigned to other prosecutors.

Although she will not be paid, McCoy said the county board might vote to extend benefits to Gorecki through her suspension.

The move would not be unprecedented. McCoy said the county board extends benefits to employees who are on a maternity leave.

Also, the county paid Lorraine Sava's salary and benefits during a 19-month period in which Sava attempted to recover from an aneurysm when she was unable perform her duties as county clerk.

Sava suffered the aneurysm at her office in June 1999 and continued as clerk until she resigned Feb. 1, 2001. Deputy clerk Bernadine Murphy fulfilled Sava's duties during her absence.

Coghlan said that while he had not researched the law surrounding the succession in the county clerk's office, he said the county board has the same authority to declare a vacancy in that office.

Last week, Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio appointed Moran to serve as a special state's attorney until Gorecki returns.

Considering Madigan's opinion, Monday's county board vote and DiMarzio's appointment of Moran, county officials believe the legal questions have been answered.

"The legal issues have been decided," Coghlan said.

However, the possibility does exist for a private citizen to challenge the county board's vote, Coghlan said.

"A citizen can bring any legal issue they want," Coghlan said. "Legally, it appears they would not have a leg to stand on."

On Nov. 20, 2003, the state Supreme Court suspended Gorecki for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct for suggesting in 1998 that a friend could obtain a county job by making a contribution to McCoy's campaign fund.

Gorecki has acknowledged that she made the statements in three telephone calls, tapes of which surfaced just before the 2000 Republican primary. An investigation cleared McCoy of any involvement and Gorecki of criminal wrongdoing.

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PAG

# County board members explain Gorecki decisions

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA—When a special county board meeting was called for 8 a.m. Monday, some people wondered if enough board members would show up.

As it turned out, 24 members voted, 14 of whom said no vacancy existed in the state's attorney's office. That cleared the way for Meg Gorecki to return to her office when the four-month suspension of her law license ends June 1.

The discussion preceding the vote was at times emotional but for the most part measured.

Although on Friday many board members appeared to be undecided how they would vote, by Monday morning it was clear they came with their minds made up.

Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, an attorney in private practice, said he always believed that the suspension created a vacancy because it left Gorecki with a "legal disability."

As an example, he said children under 18 years old cannot sign contracts because of a legal disability.

"I think that (the suspension) creates a vacancy in that position," Greviskes said.

John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, also an attorney, disagreed.

He said that to legally prove someone is "disabled" in probate court requires the ruling of a judge.

To declare Gorecki disabled, "It seems to me we would have to adjudicate this," Hoscheit said.

Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee, said he wanted the board to declare a vacancy not "for political reasons, but for clarification of the statutes. Setting aside political rhetoric, we're not clear on what a vacancy is."

Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin, said the county board should declare a vacancy to protect itself from the potential of lawsuits and overturned convictions.

"I err on the side of being conservative," Hurlbut said.

Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles, said Gorecki's suspension should be viewed the same as the suspension of someone's driver's license.

"I think this is just a lawyer's opportunity to prove the things lawyers like to prove. I think Meg should be able to come back in June," VanOvermeiren said.

Gerald Jones, D-Aurora, said elected officials are held to a higher standard.

"It's a sad day to be here as elected officials," Jones said. "In certain aspects, she has failed. Would any of our constituents receive this kind of opportunity?"

John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, said Katherine Moran, appointed by Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio to serve as a special state's attorney on Gorecki's absence, has a valid law license, meaning there is no vacancy in the office.

"I don't see a vacancy. I don't see a legal disability. She's the state's attorney. It's not our job to punish Meg Gorecki," Noverini said.

## Resolution to declare a vacancy

**Voting no**
- Penelope Cameron, R-Aurora
- Jan Carlson, R-Elburn
- Jack Cook, R-Elgin
- John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles
- Robert Kudlicki, R-Hampshire
- Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles
- Robert McConnaughay, R-Geneva
- James Mitchell, R-North Aurora
- John Noverini, R-Carpentersville
- Mary Richards, R-Aurora
- Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora
- Jackie Tredup, R-Elgin
- Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles
- Dan Walter, R-South Elgin

**Voting yes**
- Deborah Allan, R-Elgin
- Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee
- Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora
- Kenneth Griffin, D-Aurora
- Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin
- Gerald Jones, D-Aurora
- Rudy Neuberger, D-Aurora
- Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville
- Donald Wolfe, R-Elgin
- William Wyatt, R-Aurora

**Absent**
- Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia
- Barbara Wojnicki, R-St. Charles

# Records show Barsanti, O'Neil top funding race

2-3-04 Chronicle

*Campaign finance reports were due Monday*

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

Kane County state's attorney candidates John Barsanti and Tim O'Neil are winning the fund-raising race, but Barsanti is the top spender.

Semiannual campaign finance reports filed within the last week show that Barsanti and O'Neil each has raised at least three times that of their closest opponent, Joseph Rago.

**Sharing wealth**

- Politicians show where they are getting money.

**Page 2A**

Barsanti, O'Neil, Rago and Michael Leuer seek the Republican nomination for state's attorney in the March 16 primary. Leuer's report was unavailable.

The winner likely will face Democrat Renee Robinson in the November general election.

The reports were due Monday. They cover campaign donations and spending between July 1 and Dec. 31, 2003.

While the records show comparable fund-raising, Barsanti outspent O'Neil by nearly four times during the six-month period. Barsanti outspent Rago by nearly three times during that same period.

"I do not think it (signifies anything) other than I have been working on this over a year," Barsanti said. "I have had plans in place."

Barsanti raised nearly $25,000. Rago raised more than $7,000, but much of that was in personal loans of at least $3,700 to his campaign.

The reports show that O'Neil raised nearly $22,000 during the period, including a $500 donation in November from Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy.

See REPORTS, page 2

## Reports

Continued from page 1

"Anytime a person of the political stature of McCoy (endorses you), I think that is good," O'Neil said. "It is a great endorsement to have."

The endorsement had not been made public until O'Neil filed his report Monday.

O'Neil said he planned to publicize the endorsement in two weeks. McCoy could not be reached for comment.

On the spending side, Barsanti topped the field by shelling out more than $11,000, while O'Neil spent nearly $2,900. Rago spent more than $4,000.

O'Neil attributed the spending difference to the length of time he has been a candidate compared to Barsanti. O'Neil also said he had been raising funds for two months while Barsanti was raising funds for six months.

O'Neil said in October he would seek to become the county's top law-enforcement officer. Barsanti announced his candidacy in late June.

Barsanti said he paid for signs and printing during the period, and said his fund-raising began in earnest at the end of September.

The finance records show O'Neil had the most cash at the end of December.

His report indicated that he had nearly $19,000 and debt of about $280. Barsanti ended the reporting period with about $16,500 in hand and no debt. Rago had more than $3,700, but a debt of more than $4,000.

In other countywide races, Deborah Seyller raised more than $11,000 during the six-month period in her bid to be re-elected circuit clerk. Seyller spent about $2,900. She had more than $13,000 in cash at the end of the period.

Challenger Sue Norris, who opposes Seyller for the GOP nomination, raised more than $4,000. Norris also spent more than $4,000. She ended the period with about $160 in hand.

In the coroner's race, incumbent Charles West raised more than $3,700 and spent nearly $800. He ended the period with more than $3,000.

Challenger Stan Hickrod raised nearly $10,000 during the period, but most of that amount was due to four personal loans to his own campaign totaling $9,700. Hickrod spent about the same amount and ended the period with about $40 in hand.

West, Hickrod and Bob Tiballi seek the Republican nomination for coroner. Tiballi's report was not available.

The winner likely will face Democrat Robert Moore in the general election.

Moore does not face a challenger for his party's nomination.

2-3-04 Beacon News

# County Board says Gorecki can return



## 'No vacancy' in the office of state's attorney

**■ In four months:** Suspended official will be back in June

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Nearly four years after it was disclosed that Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki was involved in an ethical gaffe, the final word in her disciplinary actions came down Monday.

The Kane County Board voted 14-10 against declaring her office "vacant," meaning Gorecki will be replaced temporarily and will return after June 1 following a four-month suspension of her law license.

"This whole thing is over as far as I'm concerned," said Patrick Kinnally, the attorney appointed to assist the County Board in the Gorecki matter.

Monday's split vote by the board ended a chain of events filled with legal twists and turns as public officials debated how to proceed through a situation that had never occurred in Illinois history — an incumbent state's attorney being stripped of her law license by the Illinois Supreme Court.

It leaves Katherine Moran in the position of state's attorney for the next four months as Gorecki's temporary replacement.

Gorecki admitted that, in 1998, she left two messages on a friend's answering machine stating that the way to get a county transportation job for a friend was by making campaign donations to County Board Chairman Mike McCoy.

The scheme was later found to be bogus and McCoy was cleared of any wrongdoing; but the state Supreme Court — acting on a complaint filed by the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission — deemed it was still a violation of the ethics code binding lawyers and ordered Gorecki's law license suspended for four months. The suspension began on Sunday.

### Vacant or not?

Some members of the County Board believed the suspension meant Gorecki's office could be declared "vacant" and the board could appoint a successor for the duration of her term, which ends on Nov. 30.

❖ *Turn to* **GORECKI, A2**

## Valley *headlines*

**Aurora**
Blood evidence leads opening of murder trial.
Our Towns, A3

**Batavia**
Bicyclist rides to work each day — at NIU.
Daybreak, B1



STEVE ROSENBERG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Mike McCoy (above), president of the Kane County Board, listens as board members debate the Meg Gorecki issue during a special session Monday morning. The board voted 14-10 to allow Gorecki (top photo) to return to her job as county state's attorney after a four-month suspension of her law license.**

## forthe record

*The Beacon News tries to be accurate and fair in every story it publishes. When a mistake occurs, we want to fix it. To report errors, call the managing editor at 844-5881.*

- In a story Monday about the Chi Town Tear Down Pit Crew Competition, a student's name was spelled incorrectly. The correct name is Zach Barnwell.

## recent deaths

Obituaries / Page A6

**Latta, John B. 'John Boy,'** 24, Sheridan
**Leden, Brian P.,** 40, North Aurora
**Miller, Capt. Adam E.,** 29, Midlothian
**Nicholson, Rita M.,** 85, Aurora
**Nowodzelski, Marion Louise,** 96, formerly Aurora
**Villalon, Pedro,** 67, Aurora
**Winn, Delbert Jacob,** 77, Sandwich


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**Newsroom fax:** (630) 844-1043
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**To submit a press release:** Call communities editor Jolene Kramer or Dixie




STEVE ROSENBERG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Assistant State's Attorney Michael Coghlan answers questions from reporters after Monday morning's meeting of the Kane County Board. Coghlan argued that the board was getting bad legal advice and did not have the authority to declare a vacancy in the state's attorney's office.**

# GORECKI

*From page A1*

That was in contrast to the advice of Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, who on Jan. 23 issued an opinion stating a special state's attorney should be appointed only during Gorecki's suspension. The opinion stated that Gorecki could resume her duties after the suspension.

Following Madigan's lead, 16th Circuit Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio appointed Moran to fill in during Gorecki's suspension. Moran has been the chief of the civil division of the state's attorney's office under Gorecki.

Gorecki believed she should be able to make the appointment of her temporary replacement and had sought a court order to stop the Kane County Board from voting.

Last week, 16th Circuit Court Judge Michael Colwell declined to stop the board from meeting and declined to rule on the matter of whether there would be a vacancy when the suspension began.

### Explaining their votes

The four lawyers serving on the County Board were split on the issue of whether the office should be declared vacant: Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, and Cathy Hurlbut, R-Elgin, said there was a vacancy; John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, and John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, said there was not.

Greviskes said it comes down to a part of the law stating there is a vacancy if the state's attorney is under a "legal disability." While he said there is such a disability in Gorecki not having a law license for four months, Noverini disagreed.

"The term legal disability doesn't speak to having or not having a law license," Noverini said.

Through the debate, board members gave a wide variety of reasons for their votes, from suggestions made by residents to their own sense of the complicated legal issue.

"I'm not a lawyer, and I think you can look at this thing either way," said Gerald Jones, D-Aurora, "but I think it's a vacancy."

Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora, said the issue is about choosing public officials.

"The voters knew what they were doing" when they elected Gorecki to a four-year term in 2000, she said. "She should be allowed to come back."

Some board members said they wished the matter would have been settled by the courts, while others said the state Legislature should have made the laws clearer.

"I'm sorry we're dealing with this, but here it is in our laps," said Deborah Allan, R-Elgin.

McCoy said he plans to seek the help of Madigan's office in having the law clarified in the event that the situation occurs somewhere else.

McCoy, who called Monday's special meeting, had been silent about his own feelings on the issue before the vote, saying he didn't want to "sway any of the board members." The chairman may vote only in the event of a tie.

"I would've voted for no vacancy," he said Monday.

### Questioning legal advice

Michael Coghlan, deputy chief of Gorecki's civil division, who has been in charge of following the matter within the state's attorney's office, said the board made the right choice.

He said that, after reading all the laws and statutes, there is no way the board should have declared a vacancy.

"It's clear the board was getting bad legal advice," Coghlan said. "I don't think the board had the legal authority to declare a vacancy."

Kinnally, who has been advising the board, dismissed Coghlan's comments.

"That's his opinion," he said. "God bless him, let's move on."

One of Gorecki's private attorneys, Larry Wechter, said the board "responded appropriately" to the legal issues.

"Ms. Gorecki trusts that the action of the board brings closure to this question," he said in a prepared statement. "My client looks forward to her return to all the duties of her office on June 1, 2004."

The proceedings are not entirely over, however.

Under the county's policy for elected officials, Gorecki has the right to decide whether she is paid during her suspension. McCoy said she has declined to be paid.

However, if she is to continue receiving health benefits from the county during her suspension, she will need the board's permission, McCoy said. That issue will be debated by the board's Executive Committee on Feb. 11.

McCoy said the decision is up to the board but added he does not have a problem with her receiving benefits.

# Records: Silvestri raised more than Davoust

*GOP nominee likely will face Elaine Stern for District 14 seat*

2/4/04

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Arney Silvestri raised more than three times the amount that his opponent Mark Davoust did in the last six months of 2003, campaign finance records show.

The records also reveal that Silvestri, 35, spent more money than Davoust, 45, raised during that same period.

The two St. Charles Republicans seek the Republican nomination for the Kane County Board District 14 seat being vacated by Karen McConnaughay. The primary election is March 16.

McConnaughay chose to forgo re-election and instead is running for county board chairman.

Davoust brushed aside the fund-raising numbers, saying that he continues to raise money and would continue to campaign for the nomination.

"I feel good about the campaign," he said. "I feel very good with the campaign that we are running at this point. (I have) no worry of having to back out because of lack of funds."

Campaign finance records show that Silvestri has taken a commanding lead in fund-raising.

Silvestri raised more than $20,000 in contributions and loans from July 1 to Sept. 31. He personally loaned his campaign more than $4,500.

Silvestri did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Davoust raised about $6,500 during the six-month period. Records show that his wife, Melody, loaned his campaign $3,000 during that time.

**GOP campaign money**

| Candidate | Raised | Spent |
|---|---|---|
| • Mark Davoust | $6,500 | $5,500 |
| • Arney Silvestri | $20,000 | $8,000 |

St. Charles Democrat Elaine Stern did not file a report by Monday afternoon, which is required of candidates who raised or spent more than $3,000.

The records show that Silvestri spent more than $8,000, much of which went to pay for campaign materials, such as printing.

Davoust spent nearly $5,500, with at least half that being spent on a campaign consultant.

District 14 includes precincts in western St. Charles and Geneva. Randall Road runs through the district.

The District 14 Republican nominee likely will face Stern in the November general election.

# Former Maple Park top cop seeks apology from village

2/4/04

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

MAPLE PARK — A former acting village police chief says he might sue the village for slandering him before picking someone else to take over the department.

Former acting Maple Park Police Chief Lenny Stover accused Trustee Terry Borg on Tuesday of making comments during a selection meeting last year that cast him in a bad light.

Borg's remarks "are not without consequences," Stover told village board members.

Stover demanded an apology and threatened to sue if he did not receive one.

Borg declined to apologize and asked for more time to review minutes from meetings.

"It was never my intent to ruin your career," Borg told Stover. "But I can't be expected to do that (review meeting minutes) before the end of this meeting."

If Stover sues the village, it will not be the only lawsuit against Maple Park. And, it will not be the only defamation accusation Stover has lodged against a village.

Stover filed a lawsuit against Elburn in 2003, accusing the village of Elburn and Elburn Police Chief James Linane of defamation. A motion to dismiss the case was filed last month, and the next hearing will be on March 15.

In April 2003, former sergeant John Mittvick filed a federal suit alleging he was improperly fired after pursuing an investigation into village funds.

Village officials admitted making an improper fund transfer in October 2002 that was corrected in January 2003. An Illinois State Police investigation determined there was no wrongdoing.

No trial date has been set, and village attorney Bob Britz said the village seeks to have the case dismissed.

Maple Park officials said they believe that Stover's motivation for suing the village is because he was not named police chief.

In March 2003, the village named former Kane County Deputy Coroner Chester Morris the village's new police chief. He replaced Stover, who had been acting chief for about six weeks.

Morris' appointment came after a political battle for the job. Morris and Stover each received three votes from the village board.

Maple Park President Mark Delaney cast the tie-breaking vote. Stover immediately resigned from the department.

Stover complained Morris was not qualified to take over the department. When appointed, Morris had police qualifications but had never served as a chief.

Britz said state law gave Morris six months to undergo the necessary training, which he did. That included a 40-hour refresher course in Elmhurst.

Delaney said he does not know why Stover wants to sue Maple Park. Delaney said he believes Stover never got over not being named top cop.

"He didn't want to accept it," Delaney said. "I say go on with your life."

# Aurora recognizes three with honorary streets

**■ Prominent figures:** Tributes to Prentiss Thompson, Dezo McGill, James Benson

BEACON 2/4/04

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — The city is set to recognize three people with honorary street names as tributes to their decades of service to the Aurora community.

Alderman gave preliminary approval to the designations Tuesday and are expected to formally adopt them next week. The move will bring to 10 the total number of streets in Aurora with honorary names attached to them.

Two of the Aurora residents being honored are prominent men in the African-American community who were suggested by Alderman Scheketa Hart-Burns, the only black member of the City Council. The third is a well-known businessman brought forward by Mayor David Stover.

Gillette Avenue between Florida and Illinois avenues on the near West Side will be designated honorary "Prentiss Thompson Avenue" after the founding member and officer of Aurora Community Study Circles, an organization aimed at improving race relations in Aurora. Thompson, who died in October, lived on the block.

Thompson also served as a member of the Citizens for Neighborhood Improvement and the city's African-American Heritage Advisory Board.

"It's basically about their involvement in the community," Hart-Burns said of the criteria for honorary street names. "We should have done this before he passed on."

Loucks Street between Kane and New York Streets on the near East Side will be given the honorary name "Reverend Dezo McGill Avenue" after the senior pastor of Main Baptist Church who has fought crime near his church and home.

McGill is chaplain for the Aurora Police Department and represents the black community nationally and internationally in several prominent ministries and organizations.

Finally, the street behind Old Second National Bank downtown will be named honorary "James Benson Avenue" after the retired president and chairman of the bank. Middle Avenue will receive the designation between Downer Place and Galena Boulevard.

Benson worked at Old Second for 45 years, and the bank's assets doubled under his leadership. He also was a founding member of Aurora Downtown, chairman of the Greater Aurora Chamber of Commerce and a West Aurora School Board member for 30 years.

The other honorary streets in Aurora are named after Bishop William Bonner, Dr. Lloyd A. Hall, Vernon Louis Parrington, the Rev. Oliver Shackelford Jr., the Rev. Robert Wesby and Marie Wilkinson. Stolp Avenue downtown is also known as Blues Alley.

# Village to adorn Rte. 31 with Lincoln Highway banners

*Signs will be placed on every 3rd or 4th pole*

2/4/04

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — North Aurora officials continue to look at ways to spruce up Route 31.

The Route 31 Committee wants to purchase Lincoln Highway banners to put along the corridor. The banners will be hung from ComEd poles.

Economic Development Director Ken Lopez this week asked village trustees for permission to purchase the banners.



Berman

Lopez said the village would have to assume liability for the banners.

"ComEd's official policy is that they do not allow such banners on their poles. On the other hand, it was mentioned that ComEd does not have the time or resources to police them," Lopez said.

His plans are to purchase 25 banners. The banners will be spread across the corridor, being placed on every third or fourth ComEd pole.

The cost of the banners is not known. The money would come out of the tax-increment-financing district established along the corridor.

Trustees gave Lopez permission to buy the banners.

"These will be good. I think we should assume the liability," trustee Dale Berman said.

The banners probably will be in place by spring, Lopez said.

The Route 31 Committee has adopted Lincoln Highway as the theme for the corridor. In 1913, the Lincoln Highway was started as the first transcontinental highway, stretching from San Francisco to New York City.

In North Aurora, the Lincoln Highway ran along Route 31, also known as Lincolnway. Signs along Route 31 designate the corridor as part of the historic Lincoln Highway.

A TIF district allows the amount of tax revenue a taxing district receives from the area to be frozen at current levels. A TIF district can be in place for up to 23 years.

The proposed TIF district would be in place for 10 years. Lopez said $80,000 is available.

Evanston-based Teska Associates has worked with the Route 31 Committee to develop design guidelines for the corridor. The plan encourages businesses to use split-rail fences to fit in with the Lincoln Highway theme. The plan also recommends that business signs be grouped to minimize visual clutter along the corridor.

The village also is providing an incentive for business owners along Route 31 to clean up their buildings.

Business or property owners can apply to the village for matching funds up to 25 percent of the project's cost. The village's contribution is capped at $20,000 per location.

### Lincoln Highway

- North Aurora adopted Lincoln Highway as the route's theme, which was established in 1913 as the first transcontinental highway from San Francisco to New York City.

METROPOLITAN DIGEST

SCHOOL DISTRICT U-46

2/19/04

# Board delays boundary vote

A vote to change attendance zones in one of the state's largest school districts has been delayed two weeks to give Unit District 46's Board of Education more time to study the changes, a district official said.

"There are tons of questions and concerns," said Larry Ascough, spokesman for the Elgin-area district. "The vote has been moved to March 15 to give school board members more time to consider the impact."

Ascough said changes in attendance zones for 2004-05 are part of an overall plan to open three new elementary schools and a middle school, as well as close two elementary schools.

In the end, the district will have 40 elementary schools, eight middle schools and four high schools, with another high school to open in time for the 2005-06 school year. Boundaries would be redrawn so more children could attend a school in their neighborhoods, he said.

"What you have now are students passing two to three schools before they get to the place where they go to school," Ascough said. "Over the years, with so many changes, the attendance zones have become a patchwork."

# Two large pieces of concrete

Chronicle 2/4/04

**WARNING: There is nothing in this column about Janet Jackson, Justin Timberlake, the Super Bowl, CBS, MTV or the FCC.**

Next week, Batavia aldermen will be discussing and we hope making decisions about two large pieces of concrete in the Fox River.

Both will have long-lasting effects on the Batavia landscape and community life.

The replacement of the Wilson Street bridge and the repair, replacement or removal of the north dam are what local political leaders call "100-year decisions."

At 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 10, the city council Community Development Committee will decide on the structural design of the new bridge. Interestingly, there has been little comment from the public on this issue.

To be sure, plenty of people showed up at an open house last year to look at bridge designs and register their opinions.

People like the idea of a pedestrian plaza, and city officials already have indicated that they like the idea too, and whatever the bridge looks like, it will incorporate some sort of plaza into the design.

Nobody got upset when aldermen ruled out suspension bridge designs, which would have precluded the option of keeping the crossing open during the work.

So now aldermen are essentially facing issues such as how many piers will be in the water. There are basically four designs on the table, with a fifth that is a variation of one of the others.

Once aldermen decide on a design, they will open another round of public input on what sort amenities people want to see, such as the pedestrian plaza, ornamental lighting, benches, stairways, and how the bicycle trail will run underneath the bridge.

The more critical decision to be made is whether the crossing will be kept open during the work in 2006. City officials are awaiting the recommendation of a citizen committee, but they already seem to be leaning in the direction of keeping the crossing open.



**Mark Foster**

Other than the open house and the citizen advisory panel, there has been little in the way of public involvement in the bridge planning process.

The issue of the north dam, on the other hand, has attracted more public involvement than any issue that I can remember with the possible exception of the development of the property next to the Braeburn Marsh.

At 7 p.m. on Feb. 12, there will be a special meeting of the city council to once again consider the issue.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources will be there to present its latest proposal to build a replacement further up stream and to answer questions. The Keep the Dam group and the Batavians for a Healthy River group will make presentations.

After last year's advisory referendum in favor of keeping the dam, and all of the proposals, and the Batavia Park Board's vote for the second time in favor of a half-dam option, I don't envy aldermen for the decision they will have to make.

I would not be surprised if after three hours of presentation and debate that they decide to bring the meeting to a close and put off a decision for another day. On the other hand, I would not be surprised if they take a vote. And I would not be surprised if that vote leaves everyone wondering just what happens next.

The city is dealing with the fate of two large pieces of concrete in the river. The process for replacing one rests on solid bedrock. The process for replacing the other is amid turbulent waters.

■ *Mark Foster covers Batavia. He may be reached by calling (630) 845-5362, or at mfoster@kcchronicle.com.*

WARNING: There is nothing in this column about Janet Jackson, Justin Timberlake, the Super Bowl, CBS, MTV or the FCC.

# Letters

Chronicle 2/4/04

## False claim

To the Editor:

In the Jan. 22 *Kane County Chronicle*, political muckraker Bill Page made critical and false attacks on my candidacy for Kane County State's Attorney. He claimed that I was attempting to "avoid the public" by missing joint candidate forums and events.

This claim is totally false. Since joining the four-way Republican primary for state's attorney in November, I have attended every joint meeting of candidates, but one — which I announced in advance that it conflicted directly with my work obligations and suggested alternative means of participation. As a husband and father of four young children, conflicts may arise in the future where family considerations must be placed before a political event. This has not been the case to date.

I am comforted in knowing that Mr. Page has singled out two of my political role models, Illinois Supreme Court Justice Bob Thomas and Sen. Chris Lauzen, for critical and unfair attacks. Maybe because the three of us are all conservative Republican reformers — with no ties to the insiders and the cronies of Illinois politics — we do not meet his approval for holding public office.

While I believe the reputation of Mr. Page precedes him, I still thought it important to set the record straight.

I think Proverbs says it best: "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight." (Proverbs 12:22 (NASB)).

**T. Michael Leuer**
Republican candidate
for Kane County State's Attorney
Geneva

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**LEGAL NOTICE**
**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT KANE COUNTY ILLINOIS**

THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF KANE COUNTY, a body politic, Plaintiff,
vs,
DOUGLAS A. GILL, as Successor Trustee of a Trust Agreement dated March 4, 1999 and known as the LUCILLE B. GILL DECLARATION OF TRUST; the ESTATE OF LUCILLE B. GILL, deceased, DOUGLAS A. GILL; CLAYTON GILL; GARRETT GILL, TYLER GILL, UNKNOWN HEIRS & LEGATEE OF LUCILLE B. GILL, deceased, and UNKNOWN OWNERS, Defendants.

**NOTICE OF PUBLICATION**

The requisite affidavit for publication having been filed, notice is hereby given you [names of parties who cannot be served with summons, and "UNKNOWN HEIRS & LEGATEES OF LUCILLE B. GILL, deceased and 'UNKNOWN OWNERS", defendants in the above entitled cause, that suit has been commenced in this Court by Petitioner against you and other defendants, praying for judgment as to the determination of just compensation for certain real property hereinafter described, and for other relief, that summons was duly issued as provided by law, and that said cause is still pending.

Now, unless you, the said defendants named above, file your appearance in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Kane County Courthouse, 100 South Third Street, Geneva, Kane County, Illinois, or otherwise make your appearance herein, on or before the 5th day of March, 2004, this cause may be tried and judgment entered as prayed for in the petition without further notice to you.

The real property which is the subject of this proceeding is situated in the County of Kane and is legally in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

**EXHIBIT A**

THE LAND REFERRED TO IN THIS COMMITMENT IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

PARCEL ONE: LOT 1 IN DEERWOOD, ST. CHARLES TOWNSHIP, KANE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

PARCEL TWO: EASEMENT FOR INGRESS AND EGRESS FOR BENEFIT OF LOT 1 ON AN OVER PART OF LOT 2 PER PLAT OF SUBDIVISION DOCUMENT 96K75964.

PARCEL THREE: EASEMENT FOR ACCESS CREATED BY WARRANTY DEED DATED NOVEMBER 24, 1952 AND RECORDED NOVEMBER 28, 1952 IN BOOK 1598, PAGE 390 AS DOCUMENT 712123, MADE BY DAVID D. BENNETT AND DENISE BENNETT, HIS WIFE, TO DAVID A. GILL AND LUCILLE BENNETT GILL, HIS WIFE, FOR THE BENEFIT OF PARCEL ONE OVER THAT PART OF THE NORTHEAST 1/4 OF SECTION 22, TOWNSHIP 40 NORTH, RANGE 8 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: A STRIP OF LAND 10 FEET WIDE, THE CENTER LINE OF WHICH IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE EAST LINE OF THE WEST 1/2 OF SAID NORTHEAST 1/4 350 FEET SOUTH OF THE NORTH LINE OF SAID QUARTER SECTION (BEING IN THE CENTER LINE OF THE OLD HIGHWAY); THENCE SOUTH 89 DEGREES, 48 MINUTES, 0 SECONDS WEST PARALLEL WITH THE SOUTH LINE OF THE WARFIELD PROPERTY 614 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 72 DEGREES, 53 MINUTES, 0 SECONDS WEST 70 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 59 DEGREES, 30 MINUTES, 0 SECONDS WEST 18 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 87 DEGREES, 48 MINUTES, SECONDS WEST TO A POINT ON A THE EASTLINE OF PARCEL ONE, 9 FEET NORTH OF THE SOUTHEAST CORNER THEREOF, IN THE TOWNSHIP OF ST. CHARLES, KANE COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

THE FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF KANE COUNTY
/s/ Paul G. Krentz,
One of the attorneys for the Petitioner

KINNALLY, KRENTZ, LORAN, HODGE & HERMAN, P.C.
2114 Deerpath Road
Post Office Box 5030
Aurora, IL 60507-5030
630-907-0909

(Published in the *Kane County Chronicle*, February 4, 11 & 18, 2004.)

Chronicle 2/4/04

# Weisner leads pack in funding for campaign

Beacon 2/4/04

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — The latest state campaign finance records show that mayoral candidate Tom Weisner not only has raised more money than all the other candidates combined but also has built a support base that is far more broad than his opposition.

Records released Monday show Weisner raised $43,151 from July 1 to Dec. 31, bringing his total receipts for 2003 to more than $65,000. Weisner, who was the first to announce his candidacy for the spring 2005 Aurora mayoral race, was the only candidate who raised enough money in the first half of last year to also file a report in July.

The head start largely contributes to Weisner's lead over his opponents, but even the numbers for the latest period alone show his dominance, with the mayoral primary election still a year away. Two other candidates filed paperwork Monday, reporting combined receipts of $43,198, only $47 more than Weisner.

"I have a pretty good cross-section of supporters," said Weisner, Aurora's director of community services. "I think I have the trust and confidence of a lot of people in the community."

Kane County Board member Bill Wyatt came in second in fund-raising with $24,300. Attorney Richard Irvin raised $18,898. Angel Hernandez, who announced his long-shot candidacy in October, did not file paperwork.

Wyatt and Irvin both said their fund-raising efforts started later in the filing period and will intensify this year. Irvin said Weisner benefited early on by getting "special-interest" support from contributors with ties to the city.

"All that reflects is that he's been an employee of the city for more than 15 years," Irvin said. "In the end, money doesn't vote. People do."

A closer look at the individual contributions, however, reveals that Weisner has used his head start to build a formidable and diverse support base.

Weisner listed 50 individual contributions of more than $150, including several labor unions, businesses and individuals from varying political and ethnic backgrounds.

❖ *Turn to* **FUNDING, A2**



**Tom Weisner has raised more than $65,000 from a diverse group of supporters.**



**Bill Wyatt has raised $24,300, more than 60 percent of which came from one individual.**



**Richard Irvin has raised $18,898, nearly half of which he personally loaned to his own campaign.**



**Long-shot candidate Angel Hernandez did not file paperwork.**

## FUNDING

*From Page A1*

Among them were $5,000 from the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, which is headed by Kane County Democratic Party Chairman Mark Guethle; $1,500 from Dick Hawks, a longtime business associate for Jim Oberweis, the Auroran seeking the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate; $1,025 from Hilary Brennan, president of the Aurora YWCA and co-chairman along with Hawks of Weisner's finance committee, and donations from various developers, engineering firms and other companies associated with the city.

Weisner also had $15,241 in nonitemized donations from fund-raising events, which campaign officials said came mostly through $25 or $30 campaign event tickets sold to more than 600 people.

"It's not a situation where one or two people were making up the large number of donations," Weisner said.

Wyatt listed 14 large donations, but they came from only seven contributors, including one who has bank-rolled more than 60 percent of Wyatt's campaign to date. Kevin Fitzpatrick, a Geneva broker and long-time friend of Wyatt's, made three donations of $5,000 each.

"I don't think money puts anyone at an advantage or disadvantage," Wyatt said. "It's what you do with it. We've only spent ($5,000), but are we out there? We've been active."

Irvin has relied heavily so far on funds he has personally loaned his own campaign. Records show the former Kane County prosecutor loaned the Irvin for Aurora campaign $7,070 in the six-month period.

Outside contributions to Irvin's campaign totaled $11,828. Twenty-two large contributions came mostly from law firms, financial companies and businesses. Sherman Jenkins, Aurora's economic development director, made two donations totaling $175.

Records show Weisner has spent $52,863 so far, including $30,000 in short-term CD investments, leaving him with $12,722 in his campaign fund at the end of the year. Irvin has spent $12,744, leaving him with $6,154. Wyatt has spent $5,299 and has $19,001 remaining.

**A Metra train from** Chicago arrives in Geneva at 11: 46 a.m. Tuesday. Geneva currently has a quiet zone status that keeps train whistles from sounding.

# City plans to keep whistle ban

## *Report: Geneva must upgrade crossings at Third Street, Western Avenue*

2/4/04

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — City officials expect to bring two railroad crossings into compliance with new federal safety standards so the city can maintain its quiet zone status.

A recent report by the Federal Railroad Administration shows dozens of Illinois municipalities risk losing the status if they fail to make improvements to their crossings.

Quiet zones are crossings where trains do not need to blow whistles as they approach an at-grade crossing. New federal guidelines require upgrades at some crossings to ensure safety.

The new guidelines would require Geneva to install a median near the Third Street and Western Avenue crossings to prevent motorists from trying to drive around the gates when a train is approaching.

"It is an issue that we need to address," said Tom Talsma, the city's public works director. "The data I've seen is compelling."

The law takes effect Dec. 18. By then, municipalities must tell federal officials whether they want to keep their quiet zones.

There will be a public hearing on the rule today in Washington, D.C. Several political leaders from the Chicago area will attend. FRA spokesman Warren Flatau said the rule likely is in its final form, but public comment still will be accepted.

After the rule takes effect, Geneva would have five years to make the improvements at the Third Street and Western Avenue crossings.

Federal transportation officials said the improvements are meant to improve public safety and maintain quality of life for those who live and work near crossings.

### On the Net

• **For information about quiet zones,** visit www.fra.dot.gov/ Click "Train Horn Rule" under Current Events.

"The greatest concentration of existing bans is in (the) Chicago (area)," said Flatau. "A good number won't need to make improvements, but some will."

Flatau said in many cases the existing whistle bans in Illinois were approved with no changes made at crossings.

"We want communities to have the flexibility to maintain the ban without diminishing safety," Flatau said.

See TRAINS, page 2

### Trains

Continued from page 1

Some crossings already were judged to meet the new safety standards for a whistle ban. But Flatau said some of the data used in the calculations might be outdated.

"There can be an update to the records that would change the level of risk," he said.

Geneva City Administrator Phil Page said the city is reviewing its options.

"No federal or state funds have been set aside for the projects.

"It seems like (the improvements) will be costly," Page said. "It will be a challenging proposition."

Talsma said some reports estimate upgrades to cost about $200,000 per crossing.

"If a community has to make some upgrades, it is going to be dependent on how much you can afford," he said.

That likely would require the city to prioritize other capital projects rather than consider a tax increase, he said.

"We will have to factor all of that into future budget planning," he said.

The city could inherit a third crossing at Old Kirk Road, where city officials are considering annexing land to the city.

If the petition is successful, the city would have jurisdiction over that crossing, he said. "It will require prioritizing."

# Coroner's office to go 'paperless'

## *Business Systems Engineering providing equipment free of charge*

2/4/01

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The coroner's office will get computers that can take handwritten notes, transform them into typed documents and transmit them to the office via wireless telephone.

With notebook-type computers and ballpoint pens that "remember" the words that they write, coroner deputies will be able to forego typing and retyping the 23 forms that must be filled out when someone dies.

The best part about the automated system is that it will cost the county nothing.

"The cost to the county is zero, so you can't argue with the price," Coroner Chuck West said.

Business Systems Engineering of Chicago is offering the goods and services valued at $100,000 free of charge because it is betting that the county will want to expand the automated systems to other departments.

And because few if any government agencies anywhere use similar technology, Kane County will be the test site for the products.

Toshiba and CDW-G are two firms working with BSE and the county to set up the system.

The company will provide six laptop computers, which have screens that swivel and become a writing surface. The coroner's legal forms will have been scanned into the system.

The coroner's forms record information from a death scene.

Once on the scene, deputies will fill out the forms on the laptop computers using specialized pens. The laptops convert handwritten letters into typed words.

Information gathered at a death scene then can be transmitted using a special computer card with cellular phone technology.

The pens contain a memory chip that electronically records what they write. They also can be used like a regular pen.

Information Technologies Director Roger Fahnestock invited BSE to demonstrate its products.

The coroner's office was chosen for the case study because it is a relatively small office and because of the large amount of paperwork it generates.

"I can see this migrating to all departments that work in the field," said Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, a member of the Public Safety Committee.

Transportation, health and development departments all do field work, Griffin said.

See CORONER, page 2

### Coroner

Continued from page 1

The benefit to the coroner's office will be the time saved in having to retype the same information 23 times, West said.

Once the information is put into the computer, it will be transferred to all required documents.

"We've been trying to solve this problem for over three years on a system that's been obsolete for 12 years," West said.

Fahnestock said that before the system is used, he wants to know maintenance and upgrade costs.

He said system maintenance costs typically are 10 percent of the development costs. "It's going to be nominal," he said.

Kim Gumino, senior field account executive for CDW-G, said the system will push the county closer to a paperless environment.

"We've been hearing about a paperless for a long time, yet a lot of trees get cut down," she said.

# Sheriff defends Randall Road enforcement

Chronicle 2/4/04

## *County committees seeking ways to make S-curve near STC safer*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — One county study shows that the Randall Road S-curve has more bad-weather crashes, and another study indicates it has a low rate of accidents.

Sheriff Ken Ramsey on Tuesday told members of the Public Safety Committee that the stretch of Randall between Silver Glen Road and Dean Street does not have an unusually high number of accidents.

Last month, a study was presented to the Transportation Committee that indicated the rate of accidents on the S-curve was three-times higher during bad weather than during normal driving conditions.

Both committees are trying to find a way to make the S-curve safer in the wake of the Nov. 4, 2003, death of 17-year-old St. Charles North senior Samantha Joos, whose car crossed the center line during a rainstorm.

Ramsey said he will meet with officials from the Kane County Division of Transportation to work out a solution involving the sheriff's police and the highway department.



Ramsey

At January's Transportation Committee meeting, some members criticized Ramsey's office for a lack of enforcement.

"To take the tragic death of a teenager and claim it is my fault is the height of irresponsibility. The last time I checked, I'm not responsible for citizens' cars," Ramsey said.

Ramsey said bald tires were a factor in the crash.

KDOT engineer Steve Pasinski said 75 percent of the drivers exceed the speed limit in the stretch between Thorn Tree Drive and Crane Road.

See RANDALL ROAD, page 2

# Randall Road: Enforcement stepped up

Continued from page 1

Ramsey has ordered "directed enforcement" for the stretch of road, meaning that more deputies are out clocking drivers. Speed trailers also will be installed to collect traffic speed data.

In the meantime, Ramsey said, his office can do only so much. At some point, drivers must take responsibility for their safety, he said.

"Be responsible for your own actions. No one forces anyone to speed," he said.

He said drivers should not be tempted to speed because "everyone else is doing it."

The speed limit on that stretch of Randall Road is 55 mph, and the sheriff's study of tickets issued in that region show that the average speed over the limit was 14 mph.

Ramsey said 80 percent of those ticketed did not live in the area, which he defined as St. Charles, South Elgin and Elgin.

In most directed enforcement areas, the vast majority of those who receive speeding tickets live in the area. The significance of the figure is that those living in the area are more likely to reduce their speed in their own neighborhoods.

Ramsey said his office conducts directed enforcement in 21 other areas in the county.

"There's just not enough hours in the day. There's not enough people to go around," he said.

St. Charles resident Stephen Cole appeared at the county board meeting on Dec. 9, 2003, to plead with board members for safety improvements on the S-curve.

KDOT staff members conducted their study in December and January and presented their findings at the Jan. 23 Transportation Committee meeting.

St. Charles North High School students Katie Venegas and Emily Zepeda, Joos' classmates, appeared before the committee and presented a petition with 200 names calling for safety improvements.

It was at this meeting that board member Donald Wolfe, R-Elgin, criticized Ramsey for what he said was a lack of enforcement.

"He has to hear it from the parents and the school board. People travel well over the speed limit, students and adults," Wolfe said at the time.

Sheriff's Capt. Rick McKinness said the office has not received complaints from the public about the safety on Randall Road.

McKinness said the sheriff's office issued 9,800 tickets last year, of which 298 were issued to drivers on Randall Road between Silver Glen Road and Dean Street.

The Transportation Committee approved installation of warning signs along the stretch of road as the first phase of a safety program.

A second phase would involve installing a raised median.

# Kane County seeks domestic violence unit

2-5-04 Beacon News

■ **'Rampant' problem:** Kane might ask for $1.5 million from feds to fund prosecution

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County might seek a $1.5 million federal grant to establish a special, domestic-violence prosecution unit.

Linda Healy, director of Mutual Ground in Aurora, and Gretchen Vapnar, director of Community Crisis Center in Elgin, Wednesday asked the County Board's Executive Committee to recommend applying for the federal grant. The full board will vote on it Feb. 10.

The new unit would have several new assistant state's attorneys to prosecute domestic-violence cases, at least three Kane County sheriff's deputies to investigate cases, Kane County Health Department caseworkers and counselors from both crisis centers in Aurora and Elgin, Healy said.

The special unit would be housed in about 5,000 square feet in the former Montgomery Ward building on Randall Road in St. Charles next to the Kane County Circuit Clerk's offices.

The point, Healy said, is to provide special prosecution for what has become the single biggest crime in the county.

"Domestic violence is rampant throughout this county," said County Board member Caryl Van Overmeiren, R-St. Charles. "This

❖ *Turn to* **DOMESTIC, A2**

## DOMESTIC

*From page A1*

would be huge. Anything we can do to help and encourage prosecution would be positive."

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, compared the unit to the Child Advocacy Center, bringing the various elements of a domestic-violence case "under one roof."

"We could concentrate and specialize," Healy said. "It gives a chance to get good tracking software, which we don't have, to actually keep track of cases."

Kane County is one of 369 applicants for a total of $20 million nationwide budgeted by the federal government for these special units. That makes the bids very competitive.

Healy said federal officials told Kane County it has a good chance because of the active Mutual Ground and Crisis Center programs.

"We have a good core already in place," she said.

# Gorecki can return to office once suspension ends

By Eric Walter
Staff writer

2-5-04 Republican

The Kane County Board voted down a proposed vacancy in the Kane County State's Attorney's Office, clearing the way for Meg Gorecki to return to the post later this year.

On Feb. 2, the board voted 14-10 against a proposal to declare Gorecki's post vacant in light of the suspension of her license to practice law, which went into effect Feb. 1. Gorecki became the state's first sitting state's attorney disciplined for violating the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct, after the Illinois Supreme Court decided she had falsely implied a job-for-bribe scheme in 1999.

Gorecki will be unable to perform her duties as an attorney until Tuesday, June 1, when her license becomes valid again, according to a decision by the state Supreme Court.

While some members of the County Board argued that Gorecki was no longer qualified to serve as the county's top legal representative, others defended the embattled state's attorney.

Board member Paul Greviskes (D-7th District) of Aurora said it was "inappropriate" for the county to retain Gorecki because her license was not valid.

"In order to be state's attorney, you have to have a law license. It's a constitutional requirement," he said.

Caryl Van Overmeiren (R-13th District) of St. Charles likened Gorecki's situation to the suspension of a driver's license.

"They don't have the ability to operate a vehicle until their suspension is up," she said, noting that Gorecki's law license has been suspended for only four months.

A handful of board members cited the appointment of Geneva resident Katherine Moran as special state's attorney. Moran will serve in that capacity during the four months Gorecki will be unable to perform her job.

Sixteenth Circuit Court Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio made the appointment Jan. 27, following the release of a Jan. 23 opinion by Attorney General Lisa Madigan that said the responsibility of filling the post lay in the hands of the court.

Despite Madigan's opinion, Gorecki's attorneys filed a lawsuit seeking to stop the County Board from making a decision on replacing her. Sixteenth Circuit Court Judge Michael Colwell dismissed her suit Jan. 30, citing that the board had not yet taken action on the issue and that DiMarzio had appointed Moran to fill in for her.

After the County Board's vote against declaring a vacancy, Karen McConnaughay (R-14th District) of St. Charles said the board had made the right decision.

"To move to declare a vacancy would've create more entanglements," she said.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said he intends to approach state lawmakers on the issue of vacancies. State election laws do not spell out whether the suspension of a law license creates a vacancy or not, he explained.

"The vacancy statute isn't very clear," said McCoy. "Let's say Meg's suspension was more than six months. It still isn't clear."



Meg Gorecki

The controversy behind Gorecki's suspension dated back to 1999, when she left messages on an answering machine owned by family friend Jane Morrison, implying that Morrison's then-boyfriend, Eric O'Neil, could obtain a job by making campaign contributions to McCoy. Gorecki was elected state's attorney in 2000.

The Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, an investigative arm of the state Supreme Court, charged Gorecki with misconduct, eventually leading to the decision by the state Supreme Court to suspend her license.

McCoy said Gorecki had agreed not to be paid her salary during her suspension. Gorecki decided last summer not to seek re-election. Her term ends in November.

## County Board votes

The following is a list of how County Board members representing the Tri-Cities voted on declaring the Kane County State's Attorney's Office vacant:

- James Mitchell Jr. (R-9th District) - No
- Douglas Weigand (R-10th District) - Absent
- Robert McConnaughay (R-11 District) - No
- John Hoscheit (R-12th District) - No
- Caryl Van Overmeiren (R-13th District) - No
- Karen McConnaughay (R-14th District) - No
- Barbara Wojnicki (R-15th District) - Absent

2-5-04 Republican

# Fabyan garage may have new life

## *County panel gives group until May to find restoration funds*

**By Rita Hoover**
Staff writer

The Fabyan garage has been given a temporary reprieve from the wrecking ball.

The Kane County Forest Preserve District Utilization Committee Jan. 29 voted to allow the nonprofit Friends of Fabyan historic preservation group until May to apply for grant funding to help restore the building.

"I knew there would probably be an extension on it," said Michael Holan, Forest Preserve District director of operations.

Holan said public safety and liability issues would not be as big a concern for the Fabyan garage, built in 1912, because it is not open to the public.

The decision by the Utilization Committee comes after a survey by district staff last year recommended 67 district-owned buildings, including Fabyan garage, be demolished in 2005.

The craftsman-style building along Route 31 that was constructed by Geneva brothers Oscar and August Wilson is one of the few original structures on the historic 350-acre Riverbank estate of George and Nelle Fabyan. The structure's most unique feature, a rotating platform built to accommodate five of George Fabyan's prized automobiles, is beyond repair. After the death of Nelle Fabyan, the Forest Preserve District purchased 235 acres of the estate, according to the district's Web site.

Connected to the two-story garage along its east side is a linear section that once served as a workshop and pigeon coop. Holan said that specific part of the building is "pretty much falling apart" and presents "major structural problems."

Liz Safanda, head of Preservation Partners of Fox Valley, which contracts with the district to maintain historic county-owned properties, said her group favored sacrificing the workshop in order to concentrate on keeping the garage, which has an upstairs chauffeur's quarters.

Safanda suggested utilizing the garage "in a very low-level practical way," such as for storage.

But Friends of Fabyan member Karen Peter said her group feels strongly that the entire building should be saved.

"Nelle (Fabyan) had pigeon coops on top of that workshop," said Peter, who added that the garage contributes its own "unique part" of the Fabyan story.

She said there are several people still living in the area who are children of the former chauffeurs employed by the Fabyans, and the group is attempting to learn more about the building through them.

According to the engineering study presented at the Jan. 29 meeting, it would cost approximately $600,000 to restore both the garage and workshop, much more than the group had estimated.

Both Safanda and Peter said the study was "very thorough." Safanda said the meeting raised "some hope for compromise. There was openness and willingness to listen" from Kane County Board members. "They're taking it seriously and they're taking their time," she said.

Peter said competition for funding is tough, but her organization will "go as full force as (it) can to pursue the grant money."



Staff photo by Rita Hoover

**The Fabyan garage, part of the original estate of Col. George Fabyan and now owned by the Kane County Forest Preserve District, was slated for demolition next year. But preservationists have been given an extension to seek restoration funding.**

2-5-04 Daily Herald

# County OKs old school sale to Geneva library

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

A Geneva downtown shuffle took its first step Wednesday when Kane County Board leaders agreed to a $1.025 million sale, handing over the old Sixth Street Elementary School to the Geneva Public Library.

The move will allow the school, now used by the county for offices, to be demolished and a new Geneva library to be built in its place.

"It is what people wanted — to keep the library downtown," said library district President Don Cummings. "I am happy to be able to keep it there."

But beyond moving the library down the street, the county's long-negotiated sale could open the door to substantial changes with Geneva's key public buildings.

City leaders have sketched out a vision that would move city hall offices to the existing library, 127 James St., as the library moves to a new building on the site of the old school, 210 S. Sixth St. What today serves as city hall, 22 S. First St., would be renovated into a cultural arts center.

None of this, including the building of a new library, will happen overnight.

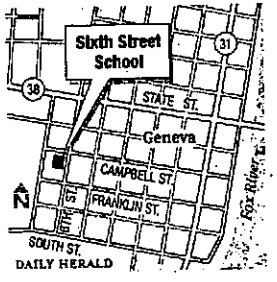
The sale of the school building will be completed soon, but an exact date and subsequent timeline for remaining county offices to move out hasn't been finalized, said board member Paul Greviskes, an Aurora Democrat.

When the county first took control of the school, it housed divorce court. In later years it became home of the health department and regional office of education.

The education office is all that remains at the old school, but it is moving to the old Montgomery Ward building on Randall Road in St. Charles, now home of the circuit clerk's office.

Library leaders say whenever the county moves out, the rush will not be on for the library to move in. Cummings said the library can afford the purchase price but would need a tax rate increase through voter approval to put up a new building, a project that is likely five to 10 years off.

The county board's executive committee recommended approving the sale Wednesday. It will go before the full board, where it is expected to get final approval, on Tuesday.




# Kane board settles fates of buildings

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County officials on Wednesday effectively ended a protracted tug of war over the future of two decrepit county-owned buildings in the heart of Geneva by recommending to sell one and replace the other.

In separate actions, the County Board's Executive Committee voted to urge the sale of its so-called 6th Street School site to the Geneva Public Library District and to advance a much-delayed plan to replace its existing Child Advocacy Center.

The panel approved an agreement to sell the old school building at 210 S. 6th St. for $1,025,000. It also authorized nearly $48,000 for design work on the new center, which will be located on the site of an old county-owned house at 427 Campbell St.

The full board is expected to consider the proposals Tuesday.

Pending the city's approval of the necessary zoning and building permits, the county is expected to begin construction this summer on a scaled-down, more residential-looking child advocacy center. Geneva historic preservationists twice rejected earlier designs as being too institutional for the residential area.

Recent meetings between Geneva officials, County Board Chairman Mike McCoy and State's Atty. Meg Gorecki helped end a long battle between the county and the city over the demand that anything built on the Campbell Street site be compatible with the city's historic district.

Disagreement between county and Geneva officials over the fate of the vacant 186-year-old Campbell Street house has spanned several years.

"It [the revised design] looks like a house," McCoy said. "We have approval to tear down the old [child advocacy center] building. We've jumped over the main hurdle."

The existing advocacy center is in cramped quarters behind the old 3rd Street courthouse and next to the dilapidated, two-story frame house the county plans to raze.

The advocacy center is designed to be a central, non-threatening investigative site where a team of advocates can work in privacy with children suspected of having been abused.

The Library District plans to demolish the outmoded three-story school building and use the 2-acre 6th Street site for future expansion.

The district had a right of first refusal on the property, which County Board Administration Committee Chairman Paul Greviskes (D-Aurora) said was outmoded and of no further use to the county.

3-5-04 Chicago Tribune

2504 Chicago Tribune

# Kane, 2 shelters go after grants

## Family justice center is sought

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County and two of its non-profit crisis centers have set their sights on one of a dozen grants the federal government is scheduled to award in September to help local agencies concentrate domestic violence services in one location.

The so-called President's Family Justice Center Initiative grants are being awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women.

In concert with the county, Mutual Ground in Aurora and the Community Crisis Center in Elgin will apply this week for a $1.5 million grant to establish a family justice center in Kane.

The basic goal of a comprehensive family justice center is to improve access to services for victims of domestic violence and their families.

Based on Kane's strong, coordinated community response to violence against women, the directors of the two crisis intervention agencies said that Wednesday they were encouraged by U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) to apply for a share of the $20 million grant program.

***'This is something we desperately need. Domestic violence is huge, and, anything we can do to help, we need to do.'***
—Caryl VanOvermeiren (R-St. Charles), County Board member

According to Linda Healy, executive director of Mutual Ground, and Community Crisis Executive Director Gretchen Vapnar, nearly 370 applications have been made nationwide for a share of the grant money.

As outlined by Healy and Vapnar, the idea is to locate the center in vacant space at the county's Circuit Court headquarters on Randall Road in St. Charles.

The county's consistent support for the state's attorney's domestic violence unit and a centralized domestic violence court, combined with the efforts of two comprehensive domestic violence centers in Elgin and Aurora, puts Kane "in a good position to get a grant," said Healy.

The County Board's executive committee agreed Wednesday to be the grant's primary applicant, a requirement of the process.

"This is something we desperately need," said County Board member Caryl VanOvermeiren (R-St. Charles). "Domestic violence is huge, and, anything we can do to help, we need to do."

Each of the centers approved for funding are required to offer counseling, legal assistance, links to medical and mental health professionals, limited medical services, child care, assistance for emergency transportation and food vouchers. They also are required to have a strong volunteer component.

The grant funding covers an 18-month period, said board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora).

2-5-04 Chronicle

## Supports decision

To the Editor:

Now that the Illinois Supreme Court has issued the order to suspend Meg Gorecki's law license for four months, it is time for Ms. Gorecki to immediately resign her office. She has violated the public trust and has lost the moral authority to lead.

Illinois law requires that a state's attorney hold a license to practice law. While some may hold the opinion that a legal gray area may exist regarding suspensions of less than sixth months, the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission has stated that there is no reason not to immediately appoint a replacement to serve the citizens of Kane County until the next election. In addition, ARDC Commission spokesman Jim Grogan has expressed valid concerns regarding the precedent set by delaying a suspension.

I support the decision by Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy to finally begin the process of selecting a replacement to run the office until the election in November. The work of the Kane County State's Attorney's Office is too important to suffer from the ongoing distraction of its discredited leader.

**Frank Craig**
Democratic Candidate
Kane County Board
District 4

2-6-04 Daily Herald

## Clinton, Gorecki milestones identical

Here are the milestones in the Monica-gate scandal:

Bill Clinton does a bad thing. Clinton covers it up. Clinton is confronted with the allegations. Clinton denies it. Clinton accuses his opponents of mud-slinging for political advantage.

Hard evidence is produced. Clinton runs out of wiggle room. Clinton confesses. Other politicians protect him from consequences because he is doing such a great job in office.

The milestones of the Meg Gorecki scandal? See above.

Among the fallout from yet another scandal are two key problems. How are we supposed to respect authority? How can we expect to attract high-quality leaders to elected office?

The message I get from Meg Gorecki's position through all of this: "I lied to you, but that doesn't matter. I am irreplaceable."

Such arrogance. What a shame.

Doug Heaton
Elgin

# News

2-5-04 Republican

# Traveling trash

## *Lack of landfills means more transfer stations, rising costs*

By Jim Harris
and Meghan C. Smith
Staff writers

The future of waste disposal will likely be more costly for garbage haulers and their customers.

With the number of local landfills in both DuPage and Kane counties dwindling from one to zero within the next few years, and with transportation and manpower costs for waste haulers increasing, fees to local customers for trash service will continue to rise, according to waste contractors serving the area.

Last year, state lawmakers increased the per-ton tax on trash going into landfills from 95 cents to $2, a cost that eventually is passed on to customers when contracts between haulers and local towns are renewed.

In addition, rising health insurance premiums and an increasing need for haulers to transport garbage to remote landfills will force those within the industry to ultimately increase costs to the consumer within the next few years, said Frank McCoy, manager of the Elgin office of hauler Browning Ferris Industries Inc.

### Rising business costs

Labor costs for garbage workers increased after a new contract was reached last fall between striking union garbage workers and management, following a two-week halt to trash pickup throughout the Chicago area.

Base wages for workers are expected to increase by roughly 22 percent before 2008. Haulers' contributions to health insurance and pension funds will increase by a combined 16 percent this year alone, McCoy said.

State licensing fees have increased for haulers 36 percent over last year.

"Anyone running (the waste business) in this area is going to be looking at these same costs," McCoy said.

The largest costs for a waste disposal company are transportation, labor and disposal.

"The big cost is having ... trucks driving past everyone's home every week," McCoy said.

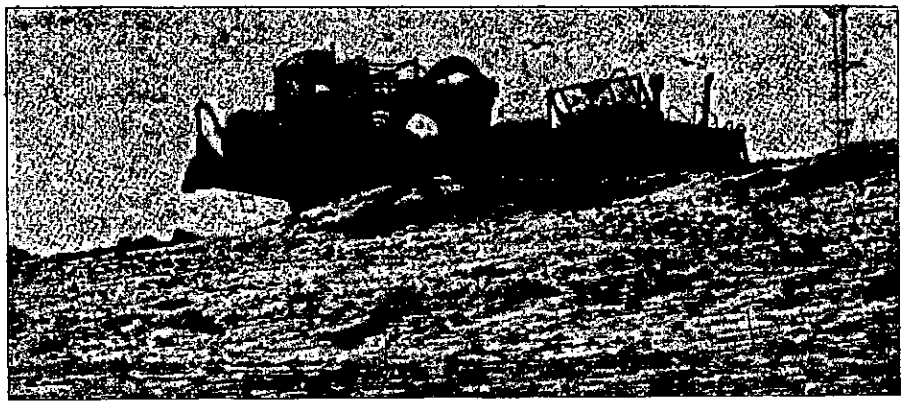
Companies pay state and local dumping fees to dispose of waste in landfills. The increase in state fees last year will need to be carried on to consumers, he added.

Haulers using waste transfer stations or landfills operated by another company pay for their use. In addition, local governments, including villages or counties where landfills or transfer stations are located, are paid hosting fees by the owners of such facilities, said Bill Plunkett, a spokesman for Waste Management Inc.

"Transfer stations are businesses, and they have to be operated at a profit, otherwise the economics just don't work (for their owners)," he added.

However, one possible brake on rising prices is the competitive nature of the local industry. A number of both large national and smaller independent contractors all are looking to attract municipal contracts.

"This business is absolutely competitive," said Pete Sarin, area manager for Onyx Waste Services Inc. "There's not a situation I know of where a monopoly exists in any community."

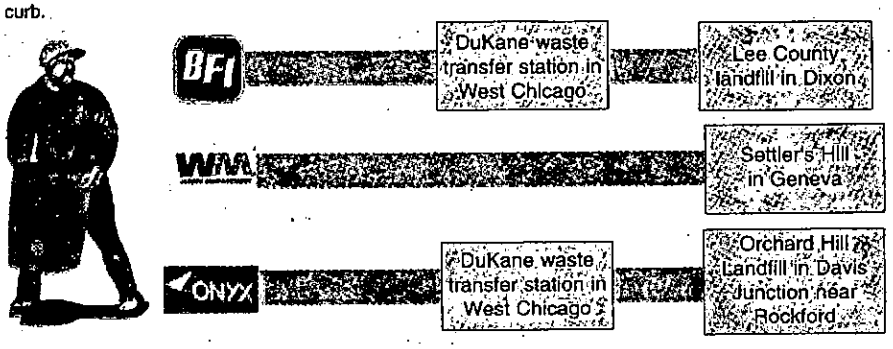


Staff photo by Mark Busch

**Seagulls swarm around a tractor working at the top of Settler's Hill landfill in Geneva. The landfill, which is owned by Kane County but operated by Waste Management Inc., is scheduled to close by 2006.**

### Where the trash goes

There are three major waste haulers for this area, Waste Management, Inc., Browning-Ferris Industries and Onyx Waste Services. Here is the path that trash takes when a waste hauler picks it up from the curb.




### Which waste haulers serve which communities?

**BFI**
Glen Ellyn
Bloomingdale
Glendale Heights
Roselle
Itasca
Geneva
Bartlett

**Waste Management**
Wheaton
Winfield

**Flood Brothers**
Carol Stream

**Crown Disposal**
West Chicago

**Onyx**
St. Charles
Batavia

**Arc Disposal & Recycling**
Warrenville

### Taking the garbage out

Large national haulers such as BFI, Waste Management and Onyx Waste Services serve the majority of area customers.

BFI serves a number of municipalities in this area, including Geneva. Waste Management serves Wheaton and Winfield and operates the Settler's Hill landfill in Kane County. Onyx serves St. Charles and Batavia.

Where the trash goes after it is placed curbside by residents depends on which hauler serves the community.

For BFI customers, all trash is taken from garbage trucks to the DuKane Waste Transfer Station in West Chicago. At that facility, trash is dumped by the local drivers and processed for transfer to regional landfills in larger semi-tractor trailers, McCoy said.

The DuKane facility is owned and operated by Crown Disposal Inc., which is paid a processing fee by other contractors using the site. Crown also serves as West Chicago's contracted waste hauler.

From there, trash handled by BFI is taken to a landfill owned and controlled by the company near Dixon, about 80 miles west of the West Chicago site, McCoy added.

See **Trash** Page 6

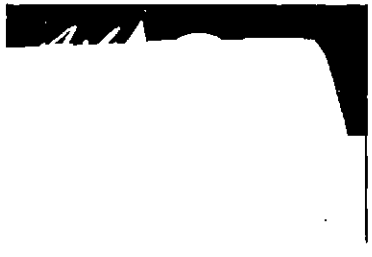
# Trash

Continued from Page 3

"Our goal is to internalize our own waste so we know we can have control of our own disposal and that everything is done to our specifications," McCoy said.

Other major haulers serving the area agree that disposing of trash in a company-owned landfill is the most cost-effective measure.

Onyx also uses the DuKane station, but from that point ships trash to a company-owned landfill near Rockford, area manager Pete Sarin said.



For Waste Management, Settler's Hill landfill in Geneva is the only destination for trash from this area.

Settler's Hill is owned by Kane County but operated by Waste Management. Because of the landfill's proximity to municipalities served by Waste Management, garbage collection trucks can drive directly to the landfill without the intermediate step of a transfer station, Plunkett said.

While the ability to take trucks directly to a landfill reduces a company's transportation costs, environmental issues and state regulations have made small local landfills a thing of the past, he added.

## Transfer stations needed

Waste transfer stations are quickly becoming a priority for haulers because they allow a local drop-off point for garbage trucks unable to drive long distances to a landfill.

"(Waste haulers) want collection trucks on the streets as many minutes and hours as we can," Sarin said. "We can't afford to have a (collection) truck be off the streets for six hours driving to a remote landfill."

Settler's Hill is slated to close at the end of 2006, meaning Waste Management soon will need to find waste transfer stations to long-haul trash to a remote site, he added.

No landfills remain in DuPage after the closure in the late 1990s of the Mallard Lake and Greene Valley landfills, owned by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, said county chief operating officer Greg Wilcox.

On Thursday, March 18, Kane County officials will hold a public hearing on the county's Solid Waste Plan Five-Year Update. The hearing will be at 7 p.m. in the Kane County Government Center, Building A, 719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva.

Tim Harbaugh, director of the Kane County Department of Environmental Management, which oversees Settler's Hill landfill, said residents might comment on how the county will deal with waste once Settler's Hill closes in 2006.

Kane County's solid waste plan states that when Settler's Hill closes, the county's waste could go to five different landfills: Lee County landfill in Dixon, operated by Allied Waste Industries; Orchard Hills landfill in Ogle County, operated by Onyx; Prairie Hill landfill in Whiteside County, operated by Waste Management; Prairie View landfill, also operated by Waste Management; and Livingston landfill in Pontiac, operated by Allied Waste Industries. Harbaugh said Livingston landfill is the second busiest in the nation.

## Waste hauler contracts

Batavia approved its most recent contract with Onyx March 13. The contract will expire May 31, 2008. Randy Recklaus, Batavia assistant city administrator, said part of the reason the city chose Onyx as its waste hauler was the promise of locating a waste transfer station in the city.

Onyx applied for a siting permit Dec. 19, 2003. A series of public hearings have been scheduled for the week of April 12, said Recklaus.

Onyx wants to build a facility that could handle up to 1,000 tons of refuse per day. The company has an option to buy four acres of land at the corner of Hubbard Avenue and Hunter Drive.

Under state law, after a siting application has been filed, elected officials cannot discuss the project with the public, Recklaus said.

If residents have concerns, they may call the city at 879-1424 to give input, which will be shared with the city's elected officials during the public hearings, he added.

Geneva has a five-year contract with BFI Waste Systems, which will expire in 2008. For 15 years prior to 2003, the city had contracts with Speedway Disposal, a small independent waste hauler in Geneva. Speedway Disposal was bought out by Waste Management.

St. Charles has a three-year contract with Onyx, which was approved July 1, 2002. Before 2002, the city had a contract with BFI.

"The market seems to be very competitive," said Cliff White, environmental services superintendent for St. Charles. "When (St. Charles) went up for bid (in 2002), five companies submitted proposals for the work. We must be a good community to work for."

Harbaugh said the county will rely on municipalities like Batavia, or the private sector, to develop waste transfer stations in response to market demand.

Waste Management's Plunkett said, "As (landfills) have closed, the only option remaining has been using facilities out of state or downstate that necessitate having waste shipped farther and farther away. Transfer stations today are a critical link between collection and disposal in Illinois."

However, siting for transfer stations is likely to remain a contentious issue. In DuPage County, residents in West Chicago have opposed a proposal for a second waste transfer station for residential waste. The DuPage County Board is expected to vote on the proposed station's siting application Tuesday, Feb. 10.

Jim Gaca, a resident of the Cornerstone Lakes subdivision, located near the proposed transfer station, said during a rally last June, "I don't want the smell, don't want all the traffic, all the trucks, all the noise, everything."

# Health care 'turf war' emerging

**■ Aurora clinics:** Some complain that 2 downtown facilities would be too close

2-5-04

By Steve Lord Beacon News
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County officials want to make sure a turf dispute between two publicly supported health clinics in Aurora does not endanger a federal grant coming to the area.

Members of the County Board Executive Committee on Wednesday recommended a resolution that would allow the county to receive a $409,240 Health Resources and Services Administration grant. The money would go toward renovating a downtown Aurora building for Aunt Martha's Youth Services primary care health clinic.

If the full County Board approves the resolution next week, the county could receive the funding and disperse it to Aunt Martha's to renovate a building at 101 S. Broadway — at the southwest corner of Broadway and Benton Street.

The grant has the support of the Kane County Health Department, which, along with Provena Mercy Center and Rush-Copley Medical Center, applied for the grant.

"If we turn this down, it's going back to the federal government," said Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, Public Health Committee chairman. "It's probably not going to come back here."

But Linnea Windel, president and CEO of the Visiting Nurses Association, urged County Board members to consider letting the grant lapse and applying for a new one only if Aunt Martha's considers another location for the clinic. The VNA runs a free health clinic in downtown Aurora — on Downer Place across from City Hall, and the renovated Aunt Martha's clinic would be only about a block away.

"We provide the same service to essentially the same people, the uninsured and the underinsured," Windel said. "Considering the need is across Aurora, it is illogical to place two so close to each other."

Windel said the VNA does not oppose the present Aunt Martha's clinic in the 400 block of Downer Place, about four blocks away from the VNA's facility. She said the need is so great for primary health care in Aurora, that "Aurora is very fortunate to have two clinics."

"It's not a question of stopping it; it's where it should be placed," Windel said.

### Coordination or competition?

Both the VNA and Aunt Martha's provide a full range of medical and dental services for all people, regardless of their ability to pay.

Aunt Martha's officials said their move to the new building has been

❖ *Turn to* **TURF WAR, A2**

## TURF WAR

*From page A1*

approved by all necessary federal agencies, which have no restrictions on how close such facilities may be. They said being close to the VNA should be a positive factor; the VNA provides some services Aunt Martha's does not, so Aunt Martha's refers patients to the VNA at times.

"We believe that coordination of effort between federally funded health centers is essential," Marsha Conroy of Aunt Martha's said.

VNA officials are not so sure. Back in 2001, when the Health Department, Aunt Martha's, Provena Mercy Center and Rush-Copley formed the Aurora Primary Care Consortium, they asked the VNA to participate, too. The consortium planned to apply for federal funds, but the VNA decided to apply on its own.

Windel said that, at the time the contract, to join with the other agencies would have meant agreeing to "future consolidation," which the VNA was not ready to do. She said Wednesday the VNA wants to make sure nothing hinders a planned expansion of the VNA clinic, which wants to stay downtown.

Both the VNA and Aunt Martha's agree the need for two clinics is there. With both clinics at full capacity, they reach only about 40 percent of the 31,525 people in Aurora the federal government says are eligible for subsidized health care.

Most of those people are on the near East Side of Aurora. Aunt Martha's officials said a downtown site is near where the need is. They pointed out that many people walk or take public transportation to the clinic. Bus service is most readily available to downtown in Aurora.

"We're talking about people who need medical care," County Board member Doug Weigand, R-Batavia, said. "I'm totally stumped at how, with both clinics running and the area still underserved, it matters whether it's two blocks or four blocks away."

# Appeals dropped in Ramsey's bottled-water lawsuit

2-5-04 Chronicle

## *Sheriff, attorneys can split $1.4 million settlement*

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Sheriff Ken Ramsey and his attorneys can divvy up more than $1.4 million that they received in a national class-action lawsuit over bottled water.

Appeals filed with the Illinois 2nd District Appellate Court in Elgin were withdrawn Jan. 30, ending attempts to block the sheriff's settlement with the owners of Poland Spring Water Co., Ramsey's attorney, Robert Foote of Geneva, said Wednesday.

Ramsey sued Maine-based Poland Spring on July 29, 2003, claiming he and others were victims of business fraud and deceit because the water was inappropriately labeled "spring water" to ratchet up the price.

Nestle Waters North America Inc., which owns Poland Spring, maintained that there was no wrongdoing, but settled with Ramsey 22 days later to end a 10-year legal debate over the definition of "spring water" that has made the company the target of lawsuits.

The agreement provides the sheriff $12,000, and Foote, Ramsey's long-time friend and campaign manager, $810,000 in fees and expenses. Geneva Attorney Linda Chavez, who does contract work for Foote's law firm, Foote, Meyers, Mielke & Flowers LLC, also will receive $540,000, according to court documents.



Ramsey

Ramsey said he is pleased that the appeals were dropped, adding that he has been "inundated with requests" from local charities asking for donations since the lawsuit became highly publicized in September 2003.

"I was very uncomfortable with the publicity," Ramsey said. "I understand it, but I was uncomfortable because I filed (the lawsuit) as a private citizen."

Kane County Judge Michael J. Colwell approved the settlement on Nov. 5, 2003, after a courtroom full of attorneys argued that a deal was reached to shield Poland Spring from their own national class-action lawsuits seeking big-money payouts.

See RAMSEY, page 2

## Ramsey

Continued from page 1

Attorneys from Massachusetts, New Jersey, Florida, Kentucky, Missouri and California claimed that the time taken to reach the settlement, the amount and Ramsey's relationship with Foote suggested a collusion with Nestle.

Although Colwell acknowledged that Ramsey likely would lose if the lawsuit went to trial, he endorsed the settlement because he said further litigation would be costly for both sides. An appeal was filed Dec. 1, 2003.

Nestle also is required to pay about $10.8 million over five years in coupons, discounts and donations to charities, according to the settlement, which ends at least 10 similar lawsuits against the company.

Foote declined to comment further on the matter, but said he and Ramsey would decide which organizations might receive a portion of the sheriff's share of the settlement.

"We look forward to being able to help local charities with some of the settlement money," Foote said.

# County to sell former school site

2-5-04 Chronicle

*Geneva Library District likely will tear down building*

By TOM SCHLUETER
and PAUL ROCK
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Board's Executive Committee on Wednesday authorized the sale of Sixth Street School to the Geneva Library District for $1.02 million.

"It's not a very useful building for us," said Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, chairman of the Administration Committee, which oversees county buildings.

**Library looks ahead**

- The Geneva library will use the Sixth Street School property as the site of a new library when it is ready to leave its building on James Street.

The transaction, which is expected to be approved Tuesday by the full county board, means demolition of the school is imminent when library officials are ready to vacate the 27,500-square-foot building they occupy at 127 James St.

It also means the Regional Office of Education must vacate its offices in the building and relocate to the county's building on Randall Road.

The education office will need about 30,000 square feet of office space, Superintendent Clem Mejia said.

The Randall Road office has 80,000 square feet, of which 40,000 is being used by the circuit clerk's office.

"Whatever is in the best interest of the county, we're in favor of it," Mejia said.

Geneva library officials have no construction timetable, Director Jeanne Hintz said.

See SCHOOL, page 2

# School: No date set for new library

Continued from page 1

"I think we'd be smart to figure out how the population fills out west," Hintz said. "We want to make sure we have a real clear picture of who we'll be serving."

While the district has enough money to pay for the Sixth Street property, a referendum would be required to build a library.

Library board Trustee John Burns said the purchase allows the district to fulfill the wishes of library users. In a survey last year, 50 percent of residents expressed desire for a new library downtown.

"We're trying to meet the taxpayers' request to keep the library downtown, and we've accomplished the most difficult part of that," Burns said. "But this is not a thing where the bulldozers will be there March 1 to knock the building down."

The current library was designed to serve up to 23,000 users and now serves about 28,000 users, Hintz said. Construction of the proposed Grand Prairie subdivision on the district's west side likely would make a new building necessary.

"We'll decide when those cards become apparent," Burns said. "I don't think it's appropriate to put any specific date on it."

The current library was built in 1908. Additions were completed in 1938, 1986 and 1998.

When the school district moved out of the building, it was sold to the library district. The county purchased it from the library as a stop-gap measure for the courts while the Judicial Center was being planned and built in the early 1990s, Greviskes said. It housed court services and divorce courts.

The health department occupied the first floor until it moved its headquarters to Aurora in June.



Robert Barcroft — Chronicle photo staff

**The Sixth Street School** in Geneva, home to the Regional Department of Education, will be sold to the Geneva Library District.

# Geneva historic committee OKs Child Advocacy Center drawings

2-5-04 Chronicle

## *County authorized contract with firm to make drawings*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Geneva Historic Preservation Commission approved drawings of the county's Child Advocacy Center, clearing the way for an expansion of the facility.

On Wednesday, the Kane County's Executive Committee authorized a $47,840 contract with Geneva architectural firm Adams Design Group to develop schematic drawings for the 4,587-square-foot building.

"I think we've cleared the main hurdle," county board Chairman Mike McCoy said.

The commission in April 2003 rejected the county's proposal for the advocacy center's annex because it appeared too much like a commercial building and would have looked out of place in the city's historic district.

The historic commission acts in a capacity similar to the plan commission. It can recommend, but its votes are not binding.

McCoy said he and State's Attorney Meg Gorecki met with commission members last month and asked what the county can do to satisfy their requirements. McCoy said they recommended Terry Adams of Adams Design Group, which has performed work in the city's historic district.



McCoy

The building's new design faces Campbell Street. The rejected design faced Fifth Street.

The exterior design appears more residential, but the interior provides the same space, and the cost, $600,000, is the same as the rejected design.

"It looks like a house," McCoy said.

The residential appearance fits the needs of the neighborhood and the mission of the advocacy center.

The advocacy center is operated by the state's attorney's office, which prosecutes cases of physical and sexual abuse against children.

Currently it operates out of the brick house at Fifth and James streets, and the expansion will take place on land at Fifth and Campbell streets, site of an abandoned house.

A residential setting helps ease the fears of children, who must act as witnesses in the abuse cases.

The commission's approval of the design includes the teardown of the abandoned county-owned house at 427 Campbell, where the new building would go up, McCoy said.

The office at Fifth and James streets is too small, limiting staff members to interview one family at a time. In another example of the space limitations, three employees share a single desk.

The new building also would provide a medical examining room. The CAC currently rents space at the Delnor Hospital Health and Wellness Center.

# Kane seeks domestic violence grant

2-5-04 Chronicle

## *Bush has made $20 million available nationwide*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County will act as the lead agency for a $1.5 million U.S. Department of Justice grant to help fight domestic violence.

The grant was written jointly by the county's two domestic violence counseling centers, Mutual Ground in Aurora and Community Crisis Center in Elgin.

Mutual Ground Executive Director Linda Healy said it is a competitive grant with 369 applicants nationwide.

"We are not assured of getting anything," Healy said.

Healy said President Bush has made $20 million available.

Mutual Ground and Community Crisis Center give Kane County the best counseling program in Illinois, Healy said.

"We were strongly encouraged to apply for this grant," she said.

The county must act as the lead agency to meet grant requirements.

The grant would provide money for counselors, investigators and office space for 18 months.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy told members of the Executive Committee Wednesday that they must decide whether to continue paying for the program if and when the federal dollars run out.

The state's attorney's office has four prosecutors assigned to its domestic violence unit.



VanOvermeiren

If the county receives the grant, the attorneys, along with sheriff deputies to act as investigators, would be at the Randall Road office.

"Domestic violence is rampant across this county," said Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles. "I think we need to take a positive look at this."

The state's attorney's unit was begun under a state grant.

When the grant expired last January, the county took over the unit's annual cost of $408,000.

Setting up an office at the Randall Road site in the old Montgomery Ward's building in St. Charles would give the program a location in the central part of the county, said Gretchen Vapnar, executive director of Community Crisis Center.

"This would result in many more victims coming forward," Vapnar said.

One of the committee's two Democrats used the opportunity to criticize Bush.

"Twenty million dollars across the country seems to be a piddling amount of money from the Bush administration," said Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora.

McCoy said the office would need 5,000 square feet, which would include a large conference room.

The Regional Office of Education is expected to move to the Randall Road site and will need about 30,000 square feet of space.

The county has about 40,000 square feet of unused space in the building.

2-6-04 Daily Herald

# Appeals to bottled water settlement dropped

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

At least 15 people unhappy with last year's settlement of a class-action lawsuit brought against the makers of Poland Spring bottled water by Sheriff Ken Ramsey have dropped their appeals looking to have the matter re-opened.

The eight appeals filed on behalf of Poland Spring customers around the country were uniformly dropped Jan 30, effectively locking in a settlement Ramsey's attorneys had arranged and a Kane County judge had approved in November 2003.


Ken Ramsey

The original suit brought by two Geneva attorneys and naming Ramsey as the plaintiff, argued that Poland Spring water did not come from a natural spring and it was not safe to drink. It was one of 10 similar suits filed around the country.

Part of the Ramsey case settlement includes a $12,000 award to Ramsey and a combined total of $1.35 million in attorney fees. The overall $10 million settlement also includes $8.05 million in coupons and other discounts to consumers over the next five years and $2.75 million in charitable contributions.

The settlement applies to consumers represented in the nine other class-action lawsuits still pending across the country.

Objections to the settlement surfaced even before Judge Michael Colwell approved it following two days of arguments.

Attorneys representing the objectors argued the settlement was unfair to the nearly 10 million Poland Spring consumers across the nation. They noted the agreement calls for $8 million in rebates and coupons — not any cash settlements — to be offered to consumers over the next five years.

Fifteen named customers filed an appeal in the Illinois' 2nd District Appellate Court in Elgin in December.

2-6-04 Daily Herald

# ComEd ready to scrap proposal

## *Company plans to pull unpopular petition for power lines along Randall Road*

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

A week after saying power lines on Randall Road are no longer the best solution to the Fox Valley's long-term power needs, ComEd officials Thursday said they are ready to formally pull the plug on the unpopular plan.

For more than a year, the Randall Road power line project has sat, mostly idly, in front of the Illinois Commerce Commission, the independent panel charged with approving utility projects.

To build the proposed power lines, which if built would hang from 80- to 120-foot poles along Randall Road between South Elgin and North Aurora, the utility company needed the permission of the ICC.

ComEd initially filed its project request with the ICC in December 2002. At first, the company stressed the need for the project to be approved by the end of 2003. If it wasn't, the company said, power failures could result in the next few years.

But opposition to the plan — specifically the large poles it called for — forced the company to back off and put the ICC proceedings on hold. But even since the approval process stopped moving forward, ComEd has refused to pull the petition — until now.

Withdrawing the petition would force ComEd to start the traditionally yearlong process from scratch if it someday wanted to move forward with the Randall Road project.

Last week, ComEd announced it was working with leaders in North Aurora, Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles and South Elgin to develop a more reliable power infrastructure by improving existing power lines.

ComEd leaders said Thursday they expect to host an open house later this month to present the details of the new power plan.

With that moving forward, the company will work toward withdrawing the Randall Road project from ICC consideration on March 8, said George Lofton, the company's vice president of external affairs.

2-6-04 Beacon news

### The people lose again

Enough already. The state's attorney took an oath to uphold the law. The taxpayers pay her salary. She takes that money and fools the hand that feeds her. What an example for those she prosecutes. Justice is indeed blind to some, and we wonder why the people don't vote. This ongoing situation does nothing to encourage many that voting is worth their effort. When this process is finally over, it will be November. We, the people, lose again.

**Eva Rodgers,** *Aurora*

### Age of innocence gone

I think this ongoing Meg Gorecki situation can be applied to much of society's ills today. The age of innocence is past, and along with it went shame and embarrassment.

**Let people with kids pay**

2-6-04 Beacon news

# Child Advocacy Center building project back on

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — It appears that, after an almost 10-year effort, Kane County will be able to build a new Child Advocacy Center here.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, said plan for a new center in the 400 block of South Campbell Street has been approved by the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission. The commission had rejected two previous county plans.

The advocacy center has been operating in a former house on Campbell Street, behind the old courthouse on Third Street. The county owned another house on the site, which it wanted to tear down to put up a new building.

Because the house is in Geneva's Historic District, it needed preservation commission approval. McCoy said the commission will allow the county to tear down the old house and replace it with the new building, which "looks like a house." It was designed by architect Terry Adams, who was suggested by the preservation commission because of his experience working in historic districts.

The Child Advocacy Center houses offices for state's attorneys who prosecute criminal sexual abuse cases throughout the county. Attorneys work with representatives from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services during interviews with victims — usually held at the center because it is designed to provide a more comfortable environment for children.

McCoy said he believes the final cost will be within the $680,000 allocated for the project. That cost is being funded by three grants.

McCoy said the project still will need zoning from the city of Geneva.

"But I think we've jumped through the biggest hoop," he said.

2-6-04 Beacon News

# Towns support change in ComEd power-line plan

**By Janelle Walker**
STAFF WRITER

Several area municipalities that strongly had opposed ComEd's plans for a controversial high-voltage power line along Randall Road are applauding the utility's decision to back off the proposal.

ComEd said Thursday it will host an open house later this month to give area residents information on a new proposal to provide power to Fox Valley communities.

The electrical utility announced a week ago that it probably would drop plans to string high-voltage power lines along Randall as a way to bring needed extra power to the Tri-Cities from an existing substation in South Elgin.

When the Randall Road plan was announced a year ago, residents and villages from North Aurora to South Elgin feared the 16 miles of high-voltage lines, with 80- to 120-foot towers, would affect property values and could cause environmental and health problems.

South Elgin Village Administrator Larry Jones said he participated in a conference call this week with ComEd officials and representatives of other communities.

"At this time, they are examining other, less-expensive ways to address power needs," Jones said.

According to ComEd, the new plan would extend existing, low-voltage lines already in the system. Utility spokeswoman Meg Amato said a new study pointed to a cheaper option — the use of automation on equipment in substations already serving the areas.

Amato compared the new proposal to county highways serving residents, rather than a large, six-lane highway moving traffic — or in this case, electricity — to those who need it.

The time and date of the open house has not yet been set, Amato said, but it will be scheduled later in February.

ComEd has asked the Illinois Commerce Commission for a 30-day delay on its petition for construction of the Randall Road power lines. The company has requested several such delays over the past six months.

At the end of the 30 days, the Randall Road high-voltage plan likely will be removed from consideration, she said.

# ComEd may drop Randall project

## Complaints elicit alternative plan

2-6-04 Chicago Tribune

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Before pulling the plug on a plan to build a high-power transmission line along Randall Road in Kane County, Commonwealth Edison Co. said Thursday that it asked the Illinois Commerce Commission to delay action for another 30 days while it confers with "all interested parties" on a less-intrusive proposal.

Local officials and residents criticized ComEd's proposal to build an elevated, high-voltage line for about 16 miles along or near Randall Road in east-central Kane. The utility said it was the least-expensive means of providing reliable electric service to the fast-growing area, but opponents objected for an array of reasons ranging from appearance to alleged adverse environmental impact.

ComEd's less-expensive alternative to the proposed 138-kilovolt transmission line on Randall incorporates the use of existing power lines and more automated substations. The revamped proposal will adequately meet the area's growing electricity needs, said company spokeswoman Meg Amato.

With the support of several Kane communities affected by the Randall Road proposal, Amato said, the utility will brief residents later this month about the alternative and answer questions about the new plan.

At the meeting, the company intends to provide information on the design, function and impact of the plan using a variety of displays, demonstrations and informational kits it will distribute, she said.

Amato said ComEd believes the alternative to the Randall Road line will deliver the same or better electric service at less cost and with little change to the landscape. According to ComEd Vice President George Lofton, the company expects to be able to withdraw the Randall Road petition before the ICC by March 8.

"We believe we have a solution that will work for everyone," said Lofton.

Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn, who entered the fray in mid-2003 on behalf of residents opposed to ComEd's plan, said opponents are "very happy with the progress that has been made.

"A year ago, if you talked to any of us, the company was bound and determined to put 16 miles of power towers through the heart of Kane," said Quinn. "This is a much better approach [and] a real victory for homeowners and consumers."

# ComEd seeks to keep Randall towers an option

2-6-04 Chronicle

*Delay gives company time to present plan to affected community members*

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — ComEd officials will keep their Randall Road power line proposal on life support while they continue to negotiate an alternative with local officials.

Company officials on Thursday asked the Illinois Commerce Commission to grant another 30-day delay of consideration of their request to build high-voltage power lines down Randall Road.

The move comes a week after ComEd officials unveiled a new alternative to the Randall Road proposal, which was shelved last year by the company after a public uproar.

The new plan calls for automation of the power distribution system and new lines on existing power lines to help address the growing power needs of central Kane County.

The delay gives company officials time to present the alternative automation plan to affected community members in a public hearing to be held at some point this month, ComEd spokeswoman Meg Amato said.

"The objective is to share information with residents and customers in the area, give them the opportunity to ask questions about the plan," Amato said.

The decision to ask the ICC to again delay consideration of the Randall Road proposal came this week after a conference call between community members, state officials and ComEd representatives.

Amato said a consensus of those involved in the call felt that the Randall Road proposal should not be pulled until information about the alternate plan could be presented to community members.

No date has been set.

See POWER TOWERS, page 4

**ComEd's alternative**

- Plan calls for automation of the power distribution system and additional low-voltage power lines.

## Power Towers

Continued from page 1

ComEd and city government officials in central Kane County seek to expand the area's power distribution system to meet growing demand because of population growth.

Although the Randall Road plan technically still would be alive, its future is dark.

Amato said a recent ComEd study showing the costs of installing automation equipment on the current system revealed that the Randall Road plan no longer is the most cost-efficient proposal.

She said the state requires the company to build the least costly project, which would be the automation of power distribution equipment and adding additional low-voltage power line on additional poles.

2-7-04 Chronicle

# McCoy backs forest preserve plan to purchase Teeple Barn

By PAUL ROCK
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The ongoing revival of the Teeple Barn could have an ally in Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy.

During Friday's Forest Preserve Executive Committee meeting, McCoy said he would support the ownership transfer of the 119-year-old barn to the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

The 16-sided barn, the only one in Illinois, on four acres at Randall Road southeast of Interstate 90, is owned by the Kane County Farm Bureau and AgTech, a nonprofit organization working on the barn's restoration.

Under the latest scenario, the barn would stay put and not be moved elsewhere, as was previously proposed.

"The Teeple Barn is significant technically, historically and symbolically," Steve Arnold, the director of the farm bureau, told the committee. "It is one of the true treasures of Kane County's past."

Arnold said the title transfer, which would be free to the county, would not take effect until AgTech raises the $149,000 necessary to match a federal grant for the barn's roof and siding. AgTech's portion of the money must be raised by May 2005.

The fund-raising effort would be aided by the forest preserve district's ownership of the barn, Arnold said.

"We want the forest preserve district to take the title because it gives the public confidence in the future of AgTech," Arnold said. "We believe it will help us raise money for the restoration if they know the forest preserve will take ownership of the land. I think it adds credibility."

McCoy equated the ownership of the Teeple Barn with the acquisition of Fabyan Villa, a museum in the 245-acre Fabyan Forest Preserve that straddles the Fox River and is the most popular destination in the district.

"I think this is the right proposal," McCoy said. "This is a very famous building. I think that if we took over, we would have the financial responsibility. But I think the farm bureau will do that in this case, which would be a good partner to have."



McCoy

McCoy said he envisions transforming the barn into an educational facility with information about current and past farming practices. With the nearby tollway access, he said, the barn also could serve as a visitors bureau.

"I think we should save it," McCoy said.

Forest Preserve Director John Hoscheit said he would hesitate to take over the property until maintenance costs are determined.

"One of the challenges with historic structures is we have the responsibility to maintain them," Hoscheit said.

The district's utilization committee will consider the issue March 29.

The circa 1885 Teeple Barn originally was used for a dairy farm. It has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978.

# Triad will help Kane seniors fend off scams

2-9-04 Chronicle

*Monthly meetings to empower elderly, prevent abuse*

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

Last year, a handful of con artists scammed local seniors with some fairly clever ruses.

An elderly Campton township woman's house was robbed while another man tried to sell her a home improvement package.

An 85-year-old Maple Park man lost $23,000 after being duped by a Canadian lottery ploy.

An Elgin-area senior was tricked while buying tires at a car repair shop. Rather than replace her tires, the shop spray-painted them black.

According to Illinois Triad, a senior is abused, neglected or exploited in Illinois every seven minutes.

"We've told seniors over and over not to fall for these scams," said Ziv Sabin of Elgin-based Senior Services Associates, an organization that helps senior citizens.

"These seniors have family, and they don't want to let others know," Sabin said. "They don't want to look stupid."

A new organization hopes to change all that.

On Monday, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey and police chiefs from Elburn, Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles will form a local Triad chapter. They will be joined by Senior Services and Delnor-Community Hospital in Geneva.

Triad's mission is to help senior citizens through education and advocacy. The chapter is part of a national organization sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Sheriff's Association.

"It's to better their lives and their safety," said Deputy Ken Johnson, the liaison for the Kane County Sheriff's Office.

Successful Triads already operate in Elgin and Aurora.

The central Kane County chapter will host monthly meetings with guest speakers on issues of elder abuse, scams, public safety, insurance, car repair and funeral and estate planning.

"This program has a lot to offer," Johnson said. "It is going to give seniors an opportunity to voice their opinions."

It also will be a chance for seniors to speak up about their problems. Sabin said early warnings on local scams will prevent other seniors from becoming targets.

"Seniors are well-intentioned people," Sabin said. "When they are tricked, they don't want to let others know. Hopefully groups like this will get people to come out of hiding. That way, we can be on the lookout."

Elburn Police Chief James Linane said he is looking forward to Elburn's participation in the program.

"We are trying to do what is right for seniors," Linane said. "We are very interested in putting an emphasis on senior safety."

**Protect yourself**

- To find out if the charity is registered with the Office of the Illinois Attorney General, call (312) 814-2595.
- To report a suspected consumer scam, call the Consumer Fraud hot line at (800) 386-5438.
- To complain about a business, contact the Chicago office of the Better Business Bureau at (312) 832-0500 or mail to 330 N. Wabash, Ste 2006, Chicago IL 60611.

# La Fox open house focuses on future land-use plans

2-8-04 Chronicle

## *Residents concerned about housing density, retail impact*

By MICHAEL LOOMIS
Shaw News Service

La Fox residents met Saturday for an update on future land-use plans and a controversial proposed development slated for the unincorporated area in central Kane County.

"We want to bring everyone up to speed so they don't feel as if they've been left out of the loop," said Jack Stone, of Concerned La Fox Area Residents. The planning open house was held at Lord of Life Church at the corner of Route 38 and LaFox Road. The four-hour meeting drew more than 70 people.

At issue is an unnamed residential and commercial development proposed by Wyndham Deerpoint Homes and Town & Country Homes for a lot at Bunker and LaFox roads. Initially called Grand Prairie, the development first surfaced in 2001 and called for 1,600 houses on 1,200 acres. La Fox residents were worried about the housing density and the impact the project's retail shopping elements might have on the area. It sparked the formation of CLAR. The group wants to eventually incorporate La Fox into a village in order to have more input on the growth in their community.

CLAR representatives said Saturday that they're getting more comfortable with the proposed development lately because the builders have agreed to reduce the density to around 1,100 homes.

"They've let us have some input, so now we feel much better," said CLAR's Donna Neiler. "Density has been one of our big issues."

She said that the Grand Prairie plan at first did not match the character of La Fox.

"Development is going to happen. We might as well be smart about it," Neiler said.

Representatives for Town & Country Homes and Wyndham Deerpoint Homes did not attend the meeting Saturday and could not be reached by phone. Wyndham also is the developer of a residential project at Harley and Keslinger roads, and Town & Country built the Harvest Hills townhouses on Peck Road in St. Charles.

La Fox is about four square miles, roughly defined by Route 38, Keslinger Road, Harley Road and Brundige Road. The area includes around 580 residents.

"Our big concerns are population density, architectural style and the layout," said Mike Jessen, a contractor who has lived in La Fox for six years.

Grand Prairie has been dropped as the name of the development, Jessen said. He said the developers haven't proposed a new name yet, but have agreed to have La Fox as part of it.

CLAR is working on a La Fox Comprehensive Land Plan, a recent version of which was on display at Saturday's meeting. Renderings showed how La Fox might look with a new school, a community park and the Metra train station that's already under construction, among other new elements.

Jessen said the point of Saturday's meeting was informational and to keep La Fox area residents up to date.

"We don't want anyone in the area to feel like we're negotiating without them," he said. Jessen said CLAR and the developers will continue meeting to work out a development plan that fits the La Fox Comprehensive Land Plan and the Kane County 2020 Land Resource Management Plan. He said the next public meeting probably will be in April.

Chronicle



### A voice in LaFox

I'm calling about the Grand Prairie development and the story that Town and Country is negotiating with LaFox residents. I'm a long-time LaFox resident, and I can assure you I've never been contacted by anybody or negotiated with by anybody and I just resent the fact that there's a group out there, and it sounds like one individual to me, who is talking to these people and the residents are not being communicated to. I don't want them speaking for me. I don't think they should be making decisions without the community's input, and I know there is an organization, but they are obviously not doing their job in representing the community when they don't communicate with us and ask what we feel about this.

### Move back to city

This is in response to farmer's dust being pollution. Do you know where your food comes from? Not just the grocery store. The food we eat every day is grown right here, possibly coming from the farmer that you want to put out of business or make trouble for. Something is terribly wrong here. Before moving out to the country, realize that you are moving into farm country and, yes, dust is common on farms. If this is something you cannot handle, move back to the city where there is no dust, only smog. I really wish the Kane County Board would stop people from moving into farming communities unless they understand all the things (dust and smells, good and bad) that go with it.

### Chairman's ego trip

I'm still not totally clear on why Meg Gorecki is being punished for something that happened even before she ran for office. What kind of a friend holds onto a tape for years? It's a real shame. I had an opportunity to sit on a grand jury this year earlier and, out of all the hundred or so cases that we heard, she was the best attorney that we heard. It's really a loss for the county.

### Keep the motto

### Replace Gorecki

Meg Gorecki needs to be reminded that she is a public servant and the public is no longer being served by her, as decided by the higher courts of Illinois. Her continued attempts to hold power certainly signal something about her character that people should take note of. This is no longer about her. She should step down and allow a replacement to be taken. The trust was violated and she needs to get past the power politics and let law take its course.

### No builder on board

I'm calling in regard to the Republican candidates who are running for county positions. We have a builder who is responsible for building strip malls and homes and subdivisions in Kane County. I just read about somebody who is supporting a builder, Arney Silvestri, because he's a builder. He thinks its a good thing that this individual is on the board. I disagree. I liken the subject of having a builder on the board, keeping watch over growth in our county, the same as I would view having a criminal run the sheriff's department.

### Construction mistake?

When Kane County built the Judicial Center, didn't they realize they were building it in St. Charles? I always thought the government for Kane County was in Geneva. Didn't they realize when they built that they were building it in the wrong town? Are they changing the county seat of Kane County to St. Charles and moving it from Geneva? They should annex the Judicial Center to Geneva because then that would be able to be our new courthouse.

2-8-04
Daily Herald

## Gorecki driven from position unfairly

Kane County attorney Meg Gorecki is being driven from office unfairly.

The supposed single offense was a conversation two years before her election when she held no office of responsibility.

The offense consists of the interpretation of remarks to a "friend's" persistent requests for help in getting a job.

Gorecki was irritated by the repeated calls and in casual terms advised the caller to work for officeholders and contribute to them. Such a remark has two possible messages.

Did Gorecki advise the caller to offer a bribe in the form of a contribution in order to get a job, or was it the loosely phrased common comment that you should help in the campaigns of officeholders if you want a public job?

This old heretofore unknown conversation became a last-minute campaign accusation. Even so, Gorecki won the election over the incumbent prosecutor David Akemann. While still in office, Akemann sought an investigation.

Gorecki was cleared of any offense, but the pursuit of Gorecki continued, causing her termination as prosecutor. By that time, those who weren't part of the Kane County "officeholders' protection network" concluded that the charges were politically motivated by the sore losers. Gorecki herself apologized profusely for the careless remarks.

My impression is that Gorecki's professional and personal standards are higher than those of applicable law or those of her accusers.

She would not stoop to saying that the remarks were poorly phrased and inconsequential but instead took responsibility.

I admire her integrity and despise the petty vendetta that is now removing this talented public servant. We are losing the services of a really fine prosecutor who has served in office without blemish of any sort, and who enjoys the high regard of the attorneys working for her.

A lesson should be learned — that partisan politics has no place in the prosecutor's office. The power of that office is great; they decide which cases to prosecute.

There is the potential to let some off and to pursue political enemies relentlessly. You don't want prosecutors who are trying to set a record by putting notches in their gun belt.

The law must be enforced, but it should not become the enemy of the powerless or the reformer. A new election will replace Gorecki.

Hopefully, one of the sore losers will not get this powerful top spot and continue political vendettas.

Jack Roeser
President
Family Taxpayers Network
Carpentersville

## Ramsey lauded for sensible response

Three cheers for Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey's words on the Randall Road S-curve!

To blame a road for people's stupidity and careless driving is ridiculous beyond words.

Tim Schmidgall
Elgin

2-9-04
Chronicle

## Actions reflect poorly

To the Editor:

I find it extremely ironic that Meg Gorecki would claim her absence from the States Attorney Office would be disruptive to its proceedings, while in fact, it is her very presence that has been a incredible distraction for more than three years.

Gorecki has made a mockery of the very system she has been sworn to uphold. She has made every end-run possible to escape the consequences for her actions. Actions that are not in dispute and actions that violated the rules that she and her profession are bound by. Are we expected to believe that it has been business as normal at the Kane County States Attorney's Office while this atrocity continues.

What about the cost? Has anyone thought about the dollars this has cost the taxpayers? Consider the hours, days, weeks and months that have occupied the time and resources of the various courts, the review boards, the disciplinary committees, the state licensing authority, the county board, etc. My estimate of the cost is in the tens of thousands of dollars — and for what?

The states attorney should be the example of integrity and honesty, and have character above reproach. This is not the case with Gorecki. For some reason thinks her own agenda is more important than the reputation of her office, and of Kane County.

Her actions have reflected poorly on all of us. Gorecki has dominated the front page of the newspapers for more than three years, and for all the wrong reasons. Not as the county's top prosecutor, but as the county's top arrogant and selfish politician.

Why no one in authority has called for Gorecki to leave office and let the county get on with its work is a total mystery to me. Had this scenario played out in the private sector, the offender would have had two choices, resign or be fired. Should we expect any less from our elected officials.

Let me be so bold as to ask Meg Gorecki: For once in this whole ordeal to do the right thing and *resign*.

**Dick Graff**
St. Charles

2-7-04 Beacon News

# Hull receives warm welcome in new Aurora office

By Brian Shields
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

AURORA — Blair Hull was looking at another few hours of campaign stops Friday night when he pulled into the parking lot of his new office on Lake Street after a long rush-hour trip from Chicago.

Hull, a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, betrayed no fatigue as he walked into a full house of curious people and outright supporters for the grand opening of the office.

The candidate made a short speech about his priorities, which include more affordable prescription drugs, job creation and retention, and his pledge to be free of pressure from special interests in Washington.

Afterward, he talked to the voters for about an hour before leaving for yet another campaign stop.

"There's a fatigue factor, and you have to pace yourself," Hull said after his short speech and the ribbon-cutting. "But I feel like we're hitting our stride, and I feel good about the pace we're going and how our message is getting out."

Hull, 61, of Chicago, is fighting for the Democratic nomination in an effort to win the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Republican Sen. Peter Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald decided last year not to run for a second term.

Other Democrats in the primary include Gery Chico, former president of the Chicago Public Schools; Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas; State Comptroller Dan Hynes; state Sen. Barack Obama; healthcare executive Joyce Washington; and talk show personality Nancy Skinner.

Hull, who owns a financial trading firm, has said he does not have the name recognition many of his opponents have, so he has set up campaign offices in Aurora and 10 other sites throughout the state, including two in Chicago.

Aurora school bus driver Dennis Ford said he came to the opening because he supports Hull's platform of job creation and more affordable health care. Ford also respects the fact Hull came from humble, working-class beginnings and established himself as a self-made millionaire.

"We need someone to stop the jobs from leaving Illinois," Ford said. "We've had the Republicans in there for a while now, and we need a change. He can relate to us, because no one gave him anything; he made it himself."

There were several people in attendance who had feelings similar to Felipe Sanchez.

Sanchez, a worker at Caterpillar who has lived in Aurora for 33 years, said he has been leaning toward giving Obama his vote but wanted to give Hull a chance to state his case as to why he should be the next senator.

"What I like about Blair Hull is that he is for the working person, and I like the fact he brought up the situation with one of Caterpillar's plants closing," said Sanchez, whose wife likes Chico and keeps giving her husband good-natured grief about it. "He talks about the three key things — jobs, education and health insurance — that are important."



JONATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Blair Hull meets with staff and supporters at the opening of his Aurora campaign office Friday night.**

2-8-04 Chronicle

# Parking lot scheduled for veterans memorial

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Officials will accommodate an anticipated need for more parking at the government center when the Kane County veterans memorial is dedicated this fall.

A new lot will add 17 more parking spaces, change the flow of traffic at the government center and provide a demonstration plot for environmentally friendly paving methods, said Timothy Harbaugh, director of the Environmental Management Department.

"The target audience we want to reach comes to this building every day," Harbaugh said.

The demonstration plot will show the difference in how water runs off the existing asphalt lot and one built of paving bricks designed to allow water to drain through them.

The forest preserve district is constructing a similar demonstration project in the parking lot at Elfstrom Stadium at the Events and Cultural Center on Kirk Road.

Project manager Ken Anderson said the lot is meant to provide spaces for visitors to the memorial, but the new lot will provide overflow parking for the existing lot in front of Building A.

Once the new lot is built, government center traffic will be rerouted. The new lot will be connected to the existing one, which means visitors no longer will have to drive behind Building A to reach the front door.

Anderson said when developers come to the county to apply for building permits, they are encouraged to use "best practices" in construction. In building a parking lot, "best practices" means reducing the amount of stormwater runoff through the use of materials such as paving bricks and native plantings.

If builders have questions, they can be shown the parking lot and told, "This is what we're talking about, right out in front," Anderson said.

The project is expected to cost $220,000. The money will come out of the landfill surcharge fund, which is restricted to environmental projects.

The veterans memorial dedication is set for Veterans Day, Nov. 11. It will feature the names of Kane County residents who were killed in service to their country during the 20th century.

The memorial will display bronze plaques depicting the conflicts of the 20th century, as well as educational information about each one.

LEGISLATIVE PERSPECTIVE 2-8-04 Beacon News

# Listening to the district's residents




Patricia Reid-Lindner

STATE REP.
50TH DISTRICT
R-AURORA


The Beacon News has invited state legislators from Aurora and the surrounding area to share their insights on issues that affect us here in the Fox Valley and on what they are doing as our representatives in Springfield. The lineup:

**Today:** State Rep. Patricia Reid-Lindner (R-Aurora)

**Next Sunday:** State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia (D-Aurora)

**Feb. 22:** State Rep. Tom Cross (R-Oswego)

**March 7:** State Sen. Chris Lauzen (R-Aurora)

As your state representative, I am charged with the duty to make decisions in the legislature that affect our daily lives. It is my responsibility to try to represent the views of the 50th District.

In order to do this, I need input on bills that come before me. Many people contact me with their opinions. I am accessible by telephone, mail or personal appointment in my office. I appreciate anyone who takes the time to share their ideas, thoughts or concerns with me.

Although many people contact my district and Springfield offices, it is often difficult to gauge the thoughts and needs of the entire district. I try to assess the character and pulse of this growing region by meeting with various organizations throughout the tri-county area that the district encompasses.

I am a member of the Aurora, Batavia, Oswego, Plano, Sugar Grove and Yorkville cambers or commerce. I belong to the Kane and Kendall County farm bureaus, various economic development corporations and specialty organizations within the district. I regularly attend the meetings and gatherings put on by these groups and have enjoyed seeing and talking to so many of you there.

Even though my office receives hundreds of pieces of correspondence each week and there are often multiple meetings concerning the district to attend each evening, I still believe it is important to try to reach as many voices as possible.

In an effort to do so, I sent a survey to the entire district this past summer. I found the results very interesting and thought you might too.

Below are some survey highlights:

## Education

■ Should the legislature and governor continue to dedicate 51 percent of all new state revenue to education?
Yes 68%
No 32%

■ Do you believe that local control is an important element of our school system?
Yes 87%
No 13%

■ Would you favor shifting part of education funding from property taxes to the state income tax, even if it would cause a net increase in your tax burden?
Yes 38%
No 62%

## State budget/taxes

■ Would you support a state income tax increase, if coupled with a mechanism to guarantee a reduction in the local property tax?
Yes 60%
No 40%

■ Would you support expanding the state sales tax to services (such as dry cleaning) that are currently not taxed?
Yes 46%
No 54%

■ Should the state charge sales tax on items purchased over the Internet?
Yes 52%
No 48%

■ Do you favor the expansion of gambling in Illinois to generate more tax revenue?
Yes 35%
No 65%

## Other issues

■ Gun laws in Illinois are:
Too restrictive: 16%
Not restrictive enough: 34%
Adequate, but more should be strictly enforced: 50%

■ Should Illinois impose the death penalty?
Yes 65%
No 26%
No Opinion 9%

■ The following were ranked a number one concern of survey respondents:

| | |
|---|---|
| Affordable healthcare | 23% |
| Lower taxes | 22% |
| Reduce traffic | 4% |
| Expand O'Hare | 2% |
| Increase senior services | 6% |
| Build new Peotone airport | 2% |
| Increase education funding | 18% |
| Protect the environment | 9% |
| Help low-income families | 4% |
| Other | 10% |

To share your thoughts on these or other issues that are important to you, please contact my district office: (630) 466-9791 or Springfield office: (217) 782-1486.

2-8-04 Daily Herald

# Common-sense-killing disease shows ability to spread



**Chris Bailey**
*Fox Valley columnist*

**Amazing as it may seem, the other 16 Kane County Board members managed to make Meg Gorecki look good — by showing they lacked the fortitude she exhibited.**

Can't tell if the disease is transmitted via water or air. But it is contagious, for this unnamed destroyer of civic common sense is oozing relentlessly down the Fox Valley.

I'd say it initially made the jump to the human population in Lake in the Hills during the mid-1990s era of former Village President Tina Thornrose. It spread broadly through the village thereafter, until cops had to begin patrolling village board meetings, apparently to ensure no one would stray into, say, free speech or unselfish leadership.

Eventually, the disease moved on to the south, lending some credence to the argument that it was traveling, remora-like, on the waters of the Fox River.

Carpentersville was hit next and, in fact, is still suffering new cases almost daily. Its finances are such a shambles that its auditors won't venture an opinion. It argued for months over an ice machine and supported a secret investigation of its own board members on the taxpayers' dime. With leadership that swell and finances providing so much amusement, the board decided taxpayers deserved to pay for that entertainment with an increase on every tax and fee in town, sometimes twice.

That it lingers in Carpentersville didn't slow its southward drift, though. Elgin is quietly considering a telecommunications tax hike to pay for services, mostly fire and police personnel, it simply can't afford any other way. But it continues to approve tract after tract of new homes to the west — in multiples of thousands — none of which will pay their own way for services, either. And it has all but declared war on Elgin School District U-46.

Not that it shouldn't, given that stone-deaf school board members and a Texas-stubborn superintendent refuse to hear either its pleas on behalf of Elgin or any other public pleas for that matter.

U-46 insists on plunging ahead (after a two-week pause for appearance's sake) on an in-house, fast-tracked boundary plan that has prospective lawsuit, civic destruction and educational failure written all over it. Why? No one seems to know why, actually. Yes, the disease seems particularly entrenched here, but that hasn't slowed its spread.

Only 10 of 26 Kane County Board members — Don Wolfe, Cathy Hurlbut and Deb Allan of Elgin; Lee Barrett of East Dundee; Margaret Scalfaro of Carpentersville; and Paul Greviskes, Ken Griffin, Gerald Jones, Rudy Neuberger and Bill Wyatt of Aurora — had the moral certitude to show Non-State's Attorney State's Attorney Meg Gorecki the door instead of wishing her a joyous unplanned vacation. Amazing as it may seem, the other 16 managed to make Gorecki look good — by showing they lacked the sort of fortitude she at least exhibited when creating fairy tales and defending herself.

But the disease forged on, creating in its wake a power line solution so bizarre it had me pulling out the dictionary to double-check the meaning of "aesthetics."

That was the word used by foes of a ComEd plan for a high-voltage power line along Randall Road in the area of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia.

NNNNOOOOoooo! We can't destroy the aesthetics along Randall Road, went the arguments of naysayers, apparently blinded to reality by the glare of neon and headlights.

So ComEd backed down, basically saying the lack of future power would be on somebody's else's head then.

Unless you already have seen the anti-common-sense disease up close, you will never guess where those three communities now want ComEd to build that tall-towered, high-voltage power line.

East of the Fox River. Where a different group of residents who live in fancy homes, on golf courses, near forest preserves or along bike paths are sure to find a power line a perfect fit, aesthetically speaking.

It has to be a disease.

2-8-04 Beacon News

# Letters to the Editor

## A nod for Judge Spence

Most of us get a puzzled look on our face in the voting booth when we get to the section where we vote for judges. Who are these people? How can I possible know who to vote for? We all have a decision to make in the March primary for circuit judge, which encompasses Kane, Kendall and DeKalb counties:

This is a race between three genuinely nice men who are all dedicated public servants — but one stands out high above the other two: Judge Bob Spence. Judge Spence is currently a circuit judge serving as the presiding judge in family court. The other two gentlemen are currently serving as associate judges.

Judge Spence has vast experience in the criminal justice profession. He served as an assistant state's attorney for 15 years, in both Kane and DuPage counties. He went on the Illinois attorney general's office

Judge Spence is a man with the highest level of integrity. He has devoted his professional career to serve us. His rulings are firm, but compassionate. He works long hours, but is family man and a church elder.

Judge Spence has fresh new ideas for the court system. His most important initiative is in implementing a "fathers court." This is a unique approach in dealing with the tragedy of divorce. When it is implemented, it will increase the percentage of spouses paying child support, decrease the number of spouses serving jail time, and improve the relationship between the divorced parents and their child(ren).

I urge you to vote for Judge Bob Spence on March 16.

**Mitchell Belon**
*Geneva*

## One more vote for Bush

In November we will be going to the polls to elect or re-elect a President.

For what President Bush has done for this country since 9/11, I don't feel there should be any question of who should stay in the White House. It should be George W. Bush.

**Carol Phillips**
*Montgomery*

## Money for the March

Several weeks ago The Beacon gave a thumbs up to the Kane County Health Dept. for working with the March of Dimes to unravel the mystery of premature births. That statement immediately sent up red flags for me.

First, let's address the March of Dimes. The MOD gets their marching orders from Planned Parenthood. Proof? The MOD has removed information from its Web site about the risk of premature birth following abortion.

According to a report by Dr. Frank Joseph, there has been 50 studies which show that abortions increase the risk of preterm babies in subsequent pregnancies. Since the killing of unborn babies was made legal 30 years ago, preterm deliveries have skyrocketed, leading to low birth weights and an increase of physical and mental problems in the child, including cerebral palsy.

In an appearance before the Kane County Board I submitted a good deal of information on this subject. I also sent copies of the information to Mary Lou England, director of Kane County Health Dept.

At that time I requested that one or two professional pro-life researchers be included on the study committee. The answer has been silence. To me that means they already have arrived at that the answer they want, they just have to fill in the paper to make everything look kosher,

It is not unusual for an agency such as the MOD to undertake a study when they are in need of additional funding. At this time most agencies are desperately in need of additional funds, the MOD probably being no exception. I tried to research their total income for the past several years, but could not get a response from them.

**Joan Solms**
*Aurora*

2-7-04 Beacon News

# Power-line activist cautious, happy about ComEd decision

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

ST. CHARLES — A local group of activists knew the odds were stacked against them when they picked a fight with power giant ComEd.

Harry Eng knows the cold facts, that it takes a lot of work to beat a big corporation — that's why he's so pleased with recent developments.

Eng has lead the group calling itself PURE, or People United for Responsible Energy, for the last year in a fight with ComEd over a proposal to line Randall Road with 80 to 120-foot power towers running from South Elgin to North Aurora.

While ComEd announced in May that it had started looking at options other than Randall Road, it marked the formal end to the process only within the last week.

In the coming month, the company will hold an open house event to meet with residents and talk about options for the area's power needs and plans to formally withdraw the petition.

But Eng says he's not quite ready to start celebrating.

"You can say I'm cautiously optimistic," he said.

## Strength in numbers

Eng, a St. Charles resident who worked with a core group of angry residents to form PURE, said he's ready to look at the situation as a victory but is holding back.

"Right now, everything is moving in the right direction, and I haven't seen anything that I would say is a deal-breaker," he said. "But in these engagements, if you're perceived as falling asleep, the situation can turn on you in a second."

It was last April when some of the residents planning to line some of their back yards with the tall power lines. The residents had myriad questions about whether the lines will damage their property values, or even worse, harm their family's health.

PURE went to work, gathering support in terms of money and political muscle. Within a month, members had the backing of some key Fox Valley political groups and pledges for funds were pouring in.

Several months after forming, it was hard to drive down Randall Road without noticing the hundreds of yard signs promoting the group.

PURE got the ear of Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn — a noted clean power activist — who joined the fight and started attending local rallies.

In May, ComEd announced it was looking at other options.

## Stoked debate

During the course of debate over the power lines, some say the area's need for electrical power came to the surface. Eng and PURE engaged the public in a discussion over future power needs.

"The bigger issue of the location of these lines is planning for the future, where the power lines will be with all of our growth," said Mike McCoy, chairman of the Kane County Board.

The debate over the placement of the power lines arose when there was no plan for dealing with the lines — something McCoy said should be in place.

"We need to at least try and start to quantify our needs for increased power in 20, 30 years," he said. "We should start planning for the future. We try to plan ahead for road, traffic, water ... why not power?"

While McCoy said he was not opposed to the Randall Road plan, he thinks putting the be "a more suitable place." The bottom line, he said, is to have a plan.

Eng also believes the best place for the lines is to the east. He is a supporter of ComEd's current plan of improving the existing lines to run more power through the area.

## Learning experience

For Eng, the process has been a learning experience about power — in terms of both energy and politics.

"You look at the history of groups that have fought efforts and the level of success is minimal," Eng said. "We scored against that track record, and this group has been successful for protecting Randall Road."

The number of members was a key to the success, he said, boasting a membership of 4,000 at one time.

The other key: Money.

Eng said the group was approaching its goal of getting pledges for $100,000 in donations for the fight. While only about $25,000 in donations was actually cashed in, Eng said he's sure there would have been more money available when needed.

"People were looking at big decreases in their property values," he said. "You look at a $500 donation and it's just a drop in the bucket."

With a number of local political officials getting their start as activists, Eng said he has no political ambitions.

"My only aspiration is to retire someday," he said.

But, at the very least, he said the matter of the power lines is a lesson in the power of residents speaking up for themselves.

"Dumb things have happened if nobody jumps up and says they're dumb," he said. "But we've been very successful with the combined effort."

*Staff writer Janelle Walker contributed to this story*

2-7-04 Beacon News

# Kane to look at Teeple Barn ownership

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County Forest Preserve officials want a little more information before committing to taking ownership of the historic Teeple Barn in Elgin.

Members of the Executive Committee Friday sent the matter back to the Utilization Committee for further study.

Officials will consider if the county can hold title to the barn without incurring a commitment to yearly maintenance costs.

"Once we take title, we have an implied responsibility to maintain it," said Forest Preserve President John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles. "We have limited resources."

Hoscheit has for the past month wanted a detailed budget showing what needs to be restored in the building and what maintenance needs will be. He said without knowing what costs might be involved, forest preserve officials cannot make an informed decision.

The Utilization Committee will try to get that detailed report for the Executive Committee.

People working to preserve and maintain the Teeple Barn, an historic 16-sided barn built in 1885, have said it will be easier for them to raise funds to preserve the barn and run an historic education program out of it if prospective donors know the county will stand behind it.

Currently, the barn is owned by Ag Tech, a nonprofit agency formed by the Kane County Farm Bureau to save and maintain the barn. Ag Tech wants the county to take ownership of the four-acre site, which stands along Randall Road and Interstate 90 on Elgin's western edge. The county then would, in essence, lease the barn back to Ag Tech.

Steve Arnold, Farm Bureau manager, said the barn is an important part of agricultural history in Kane County, as well as "an icon for the northern gateway of Kane County."

He said preserving the farm and the land around it in the midst of a growing area is in keeping with the county's 2020 land-use plan.

"We consider this one of the true treasures of Kane County's past," Arnold said.

## Fund-raising needs

Arnold also pointed out that the Farm Bureau and Ag Tech are not looking for money from the Forest Preserve District. He said the Farm Bureau and Ag Tech are committed to raising the money to preserve and maintain the barn.

Ag Tech has a federal grant pending for preservation and needs to raise matching money for it to keep it, said Mark VanKerkhoff, Kane County's building and community services division director.

"It's kind of a Catch-22: they can't raise funds until they can let potential donors know what will happen," he said.

Some Executive Committee members are concerned about those fund-raising efforts. They have been hesitant to get involved with the Teeple Barn until they can be assured the barn will be restored.

"We've heard about the Teeple Barn, but so far, a lot of the fund-raising has been unsuccessful," said Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora. "The project has not gotten off very well."

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, said he is "all for" the county taking title to the property. The county has, in the past, donated about $200,000 in riverboat funds to the Teeple Barn.

"They've really scaled back their plans," McCoy said. "Yes, if we take the barn, we're going to take on some responsibility. But that's our job."

2-8-04

KANE COUNTY CHRONICLE

## Kane County Notebook

# Executive Committee OKs circuit court fees

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

The Kane County Board's Executive Committee approved an increase in circuit court fees.

This is not the first time the court fee increase was passed on by committee. The board has been debating the issue since May 2003.

Some board members, such as John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, and Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville, are opposed to government taking more money and can be expected to vote against the increase at Tuesday's board meeting.

The other side of the argument is that more money is needed to maintain the level of government services.

The fee increase will bring in an additional $250,000 a year.

The increases will be added to criminal charges, so the majority of taxpayers will not feel the sting.

* * *

Another measure approved at Executive Committee was amendments to the animal control ordinance.

This is another ordinance that has been bouncing around committees for a while, this one since September.

The changes will require animal shelters to spay and neuter all animals and insert identifying microchips in each animal.

Another major change is that shelters will be required to hold all animals for seven business days, as opposed to the old law's seven calendar days.

These changes are overdue, supporters say. Too many stray dogs and cats lead miserable lives with no one to take care of them. They tend to meet members of the opposite sex and make baby animals, which leads to more animals leading miserable lives.

The microchip technology will make it easier for pet owners get their pets back.

And the seven-day period would give owners a more time to pick up their pets.

* * *

The Kane County Animal Shelter continues to move forward, though mostly mundane things related to the zoning, utilities and working out agreements with Geneva.

Geneva plans to buy land from the county at Peck and Keslinger roads for a drinking water treatment plant. It is the same site for animal shelter.

Since the land is unincorporated, the city needs to annex it to provide the site with sewer and water services.

And, once the land is within the city limits, it needs to conform to city zoning regulations.

2-8-04 Beacon News

# Sugar Grove studying plan for retail growth

**By Linda Girardi**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

SUGAR GROVE — The village will take a closer look at a proposal designed to encourage new businesses to open shops and storefronts and diversify the tax base for Sugar Grove.

The proposal, basically, would require developers to set aside areas of their developments for commercial use or contribute to a fund for economic development.

"The real sustainable businesses that any community strives on are the small businesses," Trustee Robert Bohler said.

Bohler said the consensus from residents over the years has been a push for more commercial growth to generate retail sales-tax revenue and ease the burden of increased school taxes on residents and provide the community with more opportunities for convenient shopping.

"We see the big box stores come and go, and we've also seen what they can do to the small businesses of a town," he said.

Bohler is suggesting the village establish a commercial space requirement in the form of land/cash donations in future annexation agreements, similar to the practice of requiring open space or school sites in new residential developments today.

He said if they decided a commercial use was not appropriate for a certain area, the village could accept cash in lieu of land as part of the agreement. Bohler said the cash could be used to either fund the newly established Sugar Grove Economic Development Corporation or invest in a larger development.

"Too often, the common response from developers is that the commercial area on their proposal would be the last to develop. This would enable the village to see that commercial was in fact one of the first," he said.

Trustees Mari Johnson and Thomas Renk said they both thought the concept was a good idea. "We ought to put some effort into the idea and flush it out," Renk said.

Newly appointed Executive Director of the Economic Development Corporation Perry Clark also embraced the concept.

"It's a great opportunity for us to go to the table with a bargaining chip," Clark said.

He said neighboring communities utilize the funds to offer small-business loans as an incentive to lure them to town.

Clark said he believes this would be a program with small businesses in mind.

2-7-04 Daily Herald

# Batavia south dam removal could be left up to nature

**By Patrick Waldron**
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Some Kane County forest preserve commissioners spent part of Friday wondering if nature makes the best engineer.

Removing the aging south Batavia dam from the waters of the Fox River has been on the forest preserve's to-do list for years, but the river's power has started the job before work could begin.

Now, with a 70-foot hole in the dam, more commissioners are asking if the removal project should be scrapped in favor of gradual, natural dam removal.

"Why don't we just let it happen?" said commissioner Jim Mitchell, a North Aurora Republican.

Forest preserve officials say the district recently received permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to move forward but are still waiting on state permits that will come "soon."

But with the Army Corps approval in place, forest preserve commission President John Hoscheit, a St. Charles Republican, wanted to pose the "what if" question before final engineering preparations are paid for.

"My goal is to get this resolved either way," Hoscheit said at a meeting of the forest preserve's executive committee.

Hoscheit said if the dam can go away through nature, that could free up $800,000 in the Fox River trust fund for use on other projects, like the Fabyan Windmill restoration.

But the discussion and the decision is clouded by environmental and safety concerns.

For one, railroad ties and steel beams that once were part of the dam's sturdy construction have been left exposed as the dam crumbles.

Some commissioners suggested the forest preserve remove those types of dangers and leave the rest as is.

From an environmental perspective, most of the change to the river expected to come with the dam's removal has happened already.

Mike Clark, executive director of the Batavia Park District, said his group is already evaluating and planning for restoration of the Clark Island just upriver from the dam.

2-8-04 Chronicle



2-7-04
Beacon News

## Electionwatch

Aurora mayoral candidate **Bill Wyatt** is underwriting the admission fee for the Paramount Theatre offerings of Tuesday Nights at the Movies.

*Casablanca* will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday at the theater, 23 E. Galena Blvd. in Aurora.

Voter registration will be held in the lobby of the theater, where Wyatt will greet moviegoers. Call (630) 896-6666.

2-9-04 Daily Herald

# Fox Valley in 60 seconds

**Candidate forum Saturday:**

A business issues forum with the candidates for Kane County board chairman is from 7:30 to 9 a.m. Friday at 2000 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva. The candidates will participate in an open discussion with a question-and-answer time. Democrat Tom Meadath and Republican Karen McConnaughay are the guest speakers. For more information, call the Geneva Chamber of Commerce at (630) 232-6060.

**Cheerleading clinic set:**

A cheerleading clinic led by the St. Charles North High School cheerleading teams is from noon to 2:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at St. Charles North High School, 255 Red Gate Road. The clinic is open to students in first through eighth grade and will cover floor and sideline cheers, stunts, jumps and safety techniques. Participants will also receive a T-shirt to wear when they perform during halftime at the North basketball game on Feb. 21. Cost is $30 and includes a snack and drink. Advance registration is preferred; forms are available at St. Charles North High School and other St. Charle elementary and middle schools. Walk-in registration will be available on Saturday; parents must sign a registration form and waiver. For more information, call the school at (630) 443-5700.

**Citizens police academy:**

The North Aurora Police Department will sponsor the fourth citizens police academy. Classes begin Feb. 24 and will be from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesdays. The program will overview the fundamentals of police work, as taught by North Aurora officers representing various areas of expertise within the department. Course topics will cover traffic

# PACs, out-of-county donors fuel Kane races

2-9-04 Chronicle

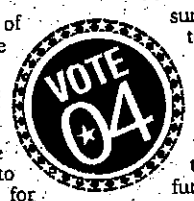
## *Many non-state residents also donating to McConnaughay's campaign*

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Money from businesses and out-of-county donors is fueling top high-spending political campaigns for two Kane County political positions.

A review of campaign finance records shows that businesses and out-of-county donors are supplying the majority of funds raised by Republican Karen McConnaughay in her bid to become county board chairman.

Her donors include lobbying groups, national Republican political action committees and host of companies that might have their eye on business in the county.




McConnaughay currently represents far-west St. Charles and Geneva on the county board. She is certain to win the GOP nomination for chairman in the March 16 primary election. Her sole opponent quit his campaign in January.

Arney Silvestri, 35, a St. Charles home builder, also has raised a large sum of money in his campaign to win the Republican nomination to replace McConnaughay on the board. His opponent has not fared so well.

Finance records show that the majority of Silvestri's funds are coming from in-county businesses, with nearly one-fifth of the donations coming from out-of-county donors.

The donations from out-of-county sources and businesses could propel both candidates to victory in their pursuit to occupy seats on the board.

Campaign records show that McConnaughay surely does not have a lack of funds as she ended the reporting period with more than $67,000 in hand. She raised more than $93,000 in donations between July 1 and Dec. 31, 2003.

The documents show that 77 percent of her donations came from businesses.

See DONATIONS, page 2

## Donations: PACs support McConnaughay

Continued from page 1

And the records show that 67 percent of the money came from out-of-county donors, and in some cases, non-state residents.

McConnaughay was unavailable for comment. Calls to her home and campaign office were not answered.

Among the contributions accepted by McConnaughay was a $20,000 lump-sum payment in November from the Statesman of the Year-State and Local Political Action Committee, a Countryside group that lobbies the state government.

State records show that the PAC received more than $250,000 in contributions during the six months from a variety of Illinois developer companies, construction firms and even unions, such as a $750 donation from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The PAC donated to only three political campaigns during that time — McConnaughay, Secretary of State Jesse White's campaign fund and a McHenry candidate.

Campaign records also show that McConnaughay accepted a more $12,000 in-kind donation from the FOXPAC/American Taxpayers Alliance. State records show that the PAC used to be called the "Keep ... Our Majority PAC State Victory Fund."


Davoust


Silvestri

The committee is a "leadership-PAC" affiliated with U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville, according to The Center for Public Integrity.

FOXPAC paid for a voter survey for McConnaughay, according to campaign finance records.

McConnaughay likely will face Democrat Tom Meadath in the November general election. Meadath raised more than $3,600 in the six-month period. About 24 percent of that money came from out-of-county sources and businesses or unions.

Silvestri hasn't had a problem raising funds to replace McConnaughay, who he said has given him advice.

Records show he raised more than $20,000 during the six-month period. About 59 percent of those donations came from businesses. At least 19 percent of the money came from out-of-county donors.

Silvestri said his donations are coming from friends that own small businesses.

"They are all people that I have known over the years," He said. "I don't think any of them have business with the county. I think if you look through our (records), most of them do not do county business."

St. Charles resident Mark Davoust, 45, is opposing Silvestri for the Republican nomination. Davoust raised only about $6,500 during the period.

About 7 percent of Davoust's money came from individual donors. At least $3,000 of his funds have come from donations less than $150, the source of which does not have to be reported.

Davoust also received about $3,000 in loans from his wife, Melody. And he received an in-kind donation of more than $2,000 from an Aurora accounting firm that has provided services for his campaign.

"I feel very good with the campaign that we are running at this point," Davoust said. "No worry of having to back out because of lack of funds."

# How many offices can one hold?

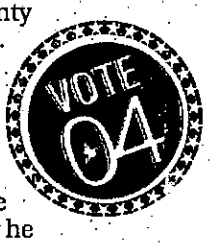
2-7-04 Chronicle

## *Law unclear whether VanCleave can serve on school, county boards*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Although there are conflicting legal opinions whether someone can hold two elected offices on local boards, there is no clear-cut guidance on the issue.

Batavia School Board President Thomas VanCleave is seeking the Republican nomination for the Kane County Board District 10 seat. Anthony Cvek, one of his opponents in the March 16 primary, said holding both positions would be a conflict of interest.




Cvek said VanCleave should announce whether he would step down from the school board if he wins in November.

"A decision should be made and the voters should be informed," Cvek said.

VanCleave said he would like to hold both offices but would step down from the school board if it were found to be incompatible.

"If it does prove to be a conflict, I would give up the school board," VanCleave said.

Cvek cited a 1993 Illinois Attorney General's opinion from Roland Burris that said the positions are "incompatible."

The Illinois State Board of Education also says that holding a school board seat and other elected offices is incompatible.

However, VanCleave said that before he decided to run for the county board, he sought advice from attorney John Izzo, who cited an Illinois appellate court ruling that said holding the two offices was compatible.

See BOARDS, page 2

## Boards

Continued from page 1

Izzo cited a 1982 case from Tazewell County, where a member of the South Pekin Village Board was elected to the South Pekin Elementary School Board. The Tazewell County state's attorney then tried to force the removal of the individual from the school board. The appellate court upheld the official's claim to both seats, and in 1983 the case went to the Illinois Supreme Court.

Izzo said the school board term ended before the Supreme Court could hear the case, after which it vacated the appellate court decision.

Izzo said the Supreme Court's action left Illinois with no clear-cut rulings on the issue, only nonbinding opinions.

"We have no binding authority one way or the other," Izzo said.

The appellate court's decision, Izzo said, holds as much authority as an opinion from the attorney general.

Naomi Green, press officer with the State Board of Education, said the agency's general counsel advised that once a school board member accepts a second position, meaning when the officer takes the oath of office, he or she automatically resigns from the first office held.

Nothing prevents a school board member from running for an office, Green said.

VanCleave's term on the school board ends in April 2005.

Kane County Regional School Superintendent Clem Mejia said the county board does not provide funding for school districts and has no regulatory power over school districts.

Mejia said that, in his opinion, the two positions would be compatible because the county board is a paid position while the school board is volunteer.

"There are certain positions you can hold and still be a school board member," Mejia said.

Izzo also said he sees no conflict.

"It is very common for the people of Illinois to sit on two different local governing bodies," Izzo said.

Izzo said an officer can hold positions on two boards until a judge rules that he or she cannot.

"I take the attorney generals' opinions with a grain of salt," Izzo said.

Joe Ferrone, who also seeks the District 10 Republican nomination, said voters should decide.

The primary winner will face Democrat Howard Katz in November.

# Water park floated

2-7-04 Daily Herald

## *Developer plans Dells-style facility in St. Charles*

By Lisa Smith
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*




A 25-acre water park that is expected to draw up to 5,000 visitors a day has been proposed for St. Charles' east side.

The $15 million facility would open in the summer of 2005, if approved by city leaders. The St. Charles plan commission is scheduled to consider preliminary plans Tuesday.

Developer Randy Witt of Hanover Park said the water park would be family-oriented and suitable for children of all ages. He considered more than 80 sites across the suburbs, including the east side of Geneva, before settling on a 70-acre site at Kirk Road and Division Street, just east of the St. Charles Park District's East Side Sports Complex.

"This is a market that is lacking a major water park," said Witt, a general contractor and partner of Lundmark Group LLC. "There are family aquatic centers in neighborhoods, but we are looking to provide an all-day entertainment venue."

The site plan also includes 15 acres of parking and 13 acres of commercial development, which the developer expects to lease to a casual dining restaurant.

The water park would have to be annexed into St. Charles as part of the city council's overall approval of the project.

More than 300,000 people annually are expected to visit the water park, which would be open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, said development consultant Jim Urhausen. The season would run from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Admission would cost $23 to $25 a person. Alcohol would not

See **PARK** on **PAGE 4**

## **Park:** Near sports complex site

be sold. The park would employ 125 to 150 workers.

The 15 to 18 attractions would include tube slides and a wave pool. The park would be larger than Magic Waters park in Rockford and of similar quality to the water parks in the Wisconsin Dells, Urhausen said.

"We hope to be the largest, most state-of-the-art water park in the Midwest," Urhausen said.

The entrance to the park would be located off Division Street, which would be extended farther east. The park itself would be built below street level so the noise would be contained on site, Urhausen said.

Witt also plans to donate 5 acres of the site to the city for an electric substation.

St. Charles Park District Director James Breen was unsure if the water park would relieve overcrowding at the park district's Pottawatomie swimming pool.

"It's a great thing for the community but most people aren't going to go there on a daily basis," Breen said.

2-8-04
Chronicle



Greg Rivara

# No laughs in this lawyer joke

Three lawyers walk into a bar and leave with four different opinions.

Or so goes a version of the lawyer joke.

But the little quip offers a layman's explanation of the latest chapter of the Meg Gorecki saga. Call it "My Legal Opinion is Better than Yours."

Gorecki's law license is suspended for four months because she concocted a story that a county highway job could be bought with a campaign donation. That she spun the yarn before being elected Kane County State's Attorney is irrelevant. Attorneys — now don't laugh — are not supposed to lie.

Gorecki did, and in doing so ran afoul with the ethics panel that oversees all lawyers in the state. Gorecki's misfortune, as opposed to others in the legal community who bend the truth in an honestly fervent effort to serve their clients, is that her critics complained to the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission.

In legal circles, it is called getting "beefed to the ARDC."

That was four years ago. Fast forward to today's battle of legal opinions. The prize: if not Gorecki's neck, then at least her position as state's attorney. Gorecki's reputation, as it always has, remains in her own hands.

The question: If Gorecki cannot legally practice law, how can she lead a prosecutor's office whose very mission is to prosecute lawbreakers?

Attorney General Lisa Madigan said Gorecki's law license still exists, it simply is not active during the time of her suspension. As such, Gorecki's office is not vacant and she can return.

Now, just as Gorecki is the top law enforcement officer of Kane County, Madigan is the top law enforcement officer of the state. When the county board has a legal question, it turns to its counsel in the state's attorneys office. When a state's attorney has a legal question, it turns to Madigan's office.

Here is the rub. Madigan is an attorney, just like 75,000 other attorneys in Illinois. Historically, the attorney general's office does not like it when they are relegated to the same status of other attorneys. In effect, however, the AG's opinion is just that — an opinion.

Madigan said Gorecki can stay, but also said the Kane County judiciary, not Gorecki or County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, gets to pick her replacement.

Remember attorney opinions? Well, McCoy's attorney took the position that Madigan is wrong and that Gorecki cannot return to office. The theory goes that if Gorecki does not have a valid law license she has to step down, and if she steps down she simply cannot step back up after her four-month vacation.

So McCoy, being prudent, really, schedules a county board vote to determine if Gorecki can return. In legal parlance, McCoy asked the board if the state's attorney's office should be declared vacant. The concern is that if Kane County does not have a state's attorney, do the assistant state's attorneys have the legal authority to continue prosecuting criminals on behalf of the people of Kane County?

Still remember attorney opinions? Gorecki does not like McCoy's idea. Nor does she like all of Madigan's. So she goes to the umpire and asks that McCoy be blocked from asking the county board for direction and that she be allowed to choose her replacement.

The umpire? The only attorney whose opinion trumps a lawyer's — a judge.

Gorecki's move was unique. Essentially, her attorneys asked a judge to block an action from possibly occurring. The judge wisely demurred, and the county board met.

By a 14-10 vote, county board members decided Gorecki can return. In effect, the vote told McCoy not to challenge the opinion of Madigan nor Gorecki. The vote said "Let's move on."

But the message is not as simple as some would have it portrayed. Of the 10 county board members voting to bar Gorecki from returning, all 10 live either in the north or south ends of the county.

We can cloak the county board's decision in many positive ways. Certainly, however, an attorney could look at the tally and argue the North-vs-South-vs-Middle political division still breathes.

Also left lurking in the shadows is a memo Gorecki quietly issued in May 2003 appointing an unnamed First Assistant State's Attorney to fill her role should, for any reason, Gorecki be stripped of her duties. The memo begins, "In the event of my temporary inability to attend the duties of my office, including but not limited to my suspension from the practice of law by order of the Supreme Court of Illinois..."

Gorecki made plans for her replacement six months before she was suspended. Chief Judge Philip L. DiMarzio essentially followed those plans when he appointed Assistant Kane County State's Attorney Katherine Moran to fill Gorecki's position.

There is no civics lesson in this episode. The Gorecki matter became messy because those revamping the Illinois Constitution in 1970 never envisioned a sitting state's attorney would be forced to step down. It spiraled out of control because although interesting politically, most people do not concern themselves with lawyers unless they absolutely have to, and because they already have a distrust of government.

That distrust is borne from elected leaders doing foolish things. And then denying them. And then other elected leaders trying to capitalize on the misfortune, while still other elected leaders duck and cover because they do not want to offend a friend. Or worse yet, offend that friend's political supporters.

And that's the punchline of this lawyer joke.

■ *Greg Rivara lives in St. Charles and is the Kane County Chronicle Managing Editor. He can be contacted directly at (630) 845-5355 or by e-mail at grivara@kcchronicle.com*

"Our aim:
To fear God,
tell the truth
and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

# Opinion

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*P3

2-7-04
Daily Herald

## Saturday Soapbox

*Some opinions require lots of words and elaboration. Some don't. This is Saturday Soapbox, briefly stated commentary from the Daily Herald's editors.*

**Speaking of reality:**
What a shocker. A public servant who tells the public they are responsible for the results of their own judgment. Poor judgments like speeding on a gentle S-curve on Randall Road near St. Charles. Sheriff Ken Ramsey said the S-curve area where a high school student tragically died last year is already a focus of enforcement efforts and statistically not as dangerous as many other places in Kane County. Ramsey is right. Despite wishes to the contrary, risk cannot be legislated out of existence. And at some point, each of us is responsible for our own safety.

**Into modern era:**
There's nothing quite like the possibility of bigger insurance bills to make you change your antiquated ways. South Elgin, jolted by a notice that its insurance rating was headed into the tank because of its outdated building codes, has leapt to make amends. Its director of community development has recommended rules that would require larger house numbers, sprinklers in more commercial/industrial buildings and conduit for all electrical wiring. Swift discussion and movement on these most basic safety issues should be close to automatic.

## Our View

**But who pays later?**
Kane County, the Community Crisis Center of Elgin and Mutual Ground of Aurora have a long history of leadership in the fight to reduce domestic violence. In fact, that history makes the county a leading contender to take home some federal grant money for establishment of a domestic violence prosecution unit. Such a unit would include the addition of several special sheriff's deputies, assistant state's attorneys, health department case workers and counselors. Nice enough idea. But who will foot the ongoing bills after the grant money is gone? The Kane County Board had better have an answer to that question before plunging ahead.

**Pickett refuses to charge:**
Sleepy Hollow Village President Stephen Pickett has long been an outdoor, environmentally aware kind of guy, so his refusal to cast a deciding vote on a gridlocked tree preservation ordinance might have surprised some constituents. But he is absolutely right in arguing, "I prefer to see the board, on a major issue, come to general consensus." That ought to be particularly so when the ordinance in question involves the usurpation of private property rights by the local government.

**Start Illinois on diet:**
With more than 6,000 units of government, Illinois could use a bureaucratic form of the wildly popular Atkins diet. And one has been proposed by Illinois Republicans who think the state's treasurer and comptroller could be the same person. The two financial positions have similar missions, safeguarding taxpayer money, and even their current occupants agree consolidation is a good idea. So, why not just do it, *it* being the saving of an estimated $20 million a year?

**Alcohol immunity?**
Nothing against margaritas or sake or ouzo, but if Elgin Liquor Commission members recommend and the city council passes some convoluted new ordinance that allows ethnic restaurants to bypass liquor license rules, they will become alcohol hypocrites. The city has long taken a pretty hard line toward alcohol abuses and enforcement of regulations. If it is going to continue to do so with any fairness and consistency, it simply can't allow small groups to live outside the rules, however appealing the addition of an ethnic drink to an ethnic menu might be. If a business wants to serve hard liquor, it should hold the proper license to do so. Period.

## forthe record

*The Beacon News tries to be accurate and fair in every story it publishes. When a mistake occurs, we want to fix it. To report errors, call the managing editor at 844-5881.*

## recentdeaths

Obituaries / Page **A8**

**Allison, Herbert W. "Smiley,"** Aurora
**Lambert, Marian E.,** 81, Batavia
**Munyon, Alvin,** 90, formerly Paw Paw
**Weiler, Bernard K.,** 79, Aurora


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# Kane County scores deal with free computers

2-7-04 Beacon News

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The projection on the screen said it all.

Like many other instances in the Kane County Board room, a company was using a projection from a computer to present a new product to board members.

Like many other instances, board members listened, anticipating that make-or-break moment when the bottom line would pop up on the screen — the cost.

What made things different at the board's Public Safety Committee meeting this week is that when that cost popped up, the highlight was a goose egg. A big zero. $0. Nada.

The new, state-of-the-art computer system will be installed in the Kane County coroner's office at no cost to the county.

The system will allow coroner's employees to file information directly into a computer at the scene of a death investigation, have it fill out the paperwork automatically and send it back immediately to the coroner's data base. It will work with the dozens of different forms at the coroner's office.

"This is quite an improvement," Coroner Chuck West said of the system, developed by a partnership of CDW-G, Business Systems Engineering of Chicago (BSE), Sprint; Toshiba; Logitech; and Anoto.

"We've been trying to work out a problem for three years on a system that's been obsolete for 12 years."

County officials are excited about the prospect the system can be expanded to other paperwork-intensive departments, such as Transportation, the Health Department, the Development Department and the sheriff's office."

"I see this migrating to all departments," said board member Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, who was partly responsible for the hookup between the partnership and the coroner's office.

"You're going to be thoroughly amazed. I was, and I come from a technology background. The cost saving of not having to hire additional personnel as this county grows is going to be big."

The arrangement is one of convenience. The partnership is willing to provide it cost-free to the county to develop a track record for the system so it can be marketed across the country.

Phoebe Tree, of BSE, said the system has been used since 1999 in Sweden, where it is a common part of government, but it is new to the U.S.

"You guys are not guinea pigs," she said. "It's not like there are a lot of bugs to work out. This is tried and true. It has been tested."

The system works using a pen that writes like a ballpoint, but also has a camera in it that records what is being written. The pen can be used directly on paper, but also writes on tablets on the screens of Toshiba laptops.

Imagine writing directly with a pen onto a word processing document, touching a button that converts the handwritten words to typewritten words and puts them in the proper box on the form.

Anything on the laptop tablets can be sent, using a Sprint wireless card, back to the main computer data base immediately.

"You can capture data directly onto the tablet and send it directly back to the servers while in the field," said Kim Gumino of CDW-G.

If the pen is used on paper, the pen itself records what is written and can be put into a dock and downloaded into any personal computer.

Partnership workers are ready to begin work installing the system anytime. The plan is to have it running by May 1.

2-7-04 Beacon News

# Likely funding cuts rein in Head Start services

## *Emergency assistance money running short*

**By Mary Ellen Moore**
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — When Angela Ramsey tried to scrape together her rent payment in January, she realized she was about $200 short.

At the end of November, she was laid off from her job as a nurse's aide, but she still owed $660 a month for the Aurora apartment she shares with her three kids.

So, Ramsey turned to Two Rivers Head Start in Batavia, which offers an emergency assistance program to help people make rent payments or cover medical bills. She was able to make the payment and keep her apartment, and now, she has an even better job doing customer service at Ken's Beverage in Plainfield.

But the Head Start assistance program may not be around for other families who fall on hard times.

Two Rivers stopped taking emergency assistance applications at the beginning of February because the federal grant that funds the program is likely to be decreased this year.

Federal legislators are still in the process of determining 2004 funding levels for the Community Services Block Grant, one of three federal grants on which Two Rivers Head Start relies for its total $8 million budget, according to Jennifer Dupasquier, a grant coordinator for the agency.

There's talk that Congress might decrease the Community Services Block Grant program by as much as $155 million nationally, so the folks at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the agency that distributes the money in Illinois, already are being careful about how much they dole out this year, according to Granada Williams, deputy director for the department's bureau of community development.

"There is a likelihood that new dollars or additional dollars will be coming, but until the federal government releases those dollars, we don't have them to give," she said.

For Two Rivers, that means a 22 percent decrease in community services funding, Dupasquier said. Last year, the agency received $595,000 in such Community Services Block Grant funds, but, as of Jan. 1, it is slated to receive just $460,000.

In addition to emergency assistance, the money is used to provide a food pantry, college scholarships, child care and job training, Dupasquier said.

❖ *Turn to* **CUTS, A2**

## CUTS

*From Page A1*

In order to keep those other programs functional, the agency decided to limit the budget for emergency assistance to just $20,000 this year, down from $140,000 last year.

"Of course, it comes out of money that would serve the people, which is unfair," she said.

The $20,000 ended up being enough to serve about 100 families, and the agency went through it in one month, she said.

The uncertainty about the Community Services Block Grant comes at a time when the federal government also is considering major changes in the other two grants Two Rivers receives — those for the Head Start preschool program and for the Early Head Start program, targeting children younger than 3.

Currently, Head Start money flows directly to the preschool providers themselves, but federal legislators have floated the idea of funneling the money through state departments in an effort to give state officials more oversight.

Head Start advocates say the move would decimate the programs by giving states the leeway to tinker with standards and cut budgets.

2-7-04 Daily Herald

# Ideas to ease traffic stall

*There were plenty of ideas among officials and experts on how to handle traffic congestion in the suburbs, but in the end the suggestions, like a gridlocked tollway, went nowhere*

By Dave Orrick
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Burt Natarus leaned over his mic, squinting to his left down a row of more than a dozen legislators, mayors and other officials.

Sizing up his targets, the witty Chicago alderman picked Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke to pick on.

"We're helping the city of Batavia by taking in their residents — and preventing sprawl," he said, drawing both laughs and nods at his point: Retired empty-nesters from the suburbs return to Chicago, which helps keep commute-stretching sprawl in check.

Schielke chuckled at Natarus' observation.

The joking was as plentiful as SUVs on the Northwest Tollway at 5 p.m. on Fridays. The scene was a Chicago meeting Friday of elected and corporate leaders and planning and transportation wonks gathered to talk about transportation topics.

Solutions weren't as plentiful as Natarus' needling at the fourth meeting of the Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Task Force, a blue-ribbon-type group established by the General Assembly earlier this year to fix the area's congested commuting scene — whatever it takes.

The group, which will make recommendations to the legislature this spring, was established, in part, to give the suburbs a greater voice in transportation funding requests in the face of a perceived statewide power imbalance favoring Chicago Democrats over suburban Republicans.

Lasting hours longer than its planned 90 minutes, a host of ideas — referred to by insiders as "bold" and "outside the box" — were discussed.

None was passed, allowing an alphabet soup of transit acronyms to survive.

For example, a proposed "merging of CATS, NIPC, RTA and ISTHA" into what some called a "super-agency" was



Jeff Schielke

soundly voted down.

CATS stands for Chicago Area Transportation Study, a planning arm of the Illinois Department of Transportation, or IDOT. NIPC is the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission. a group that measures population and other urban trends.

The RTA, or Regional Transportation Authority, oversees funding and planning for the suburban bus system, Pace, Metra and the CTA (Chicago Transit Authority). ISHTA is the tollway board's formal acronym.

Another "outside-the-box," super-agency idea came when George A. Ranney Jr., an influential Grayslake developer with suburban political ties, proposed destroying Pace. Instead, he suggested, individual county planning organizations — CPOs he called them — could work under the umbrella of the super agency, which he called an RPO, or regional planning organization.

Ranney was joined by Jim LaBelle, a Zion Republican and former chairman of the Lake County Board who also has served on regional planning groups in DuPage County.

Neither serves on the task force.

But as top brass for Metropolis 2020, a non-profit, so-called "public-private" think tank, the pair found themselves exactly where for years they have publicly stated they want to be: making their case for better transportation planning to regional leaders.

But their case got bounced.

What would happen to Pace's nearly $150 million in annual operating costs? Ranney said he had no answer.

Woodstock Mayor Alan Cornue asked, "How would democracy work under your plan?" That wasn't part of their recommendations, came the reply.

Schaumburg Mayor Al Larson defended Pace, pointing to its regional center near Woodfield mall as evidence of "regional service."

And when RTA Chairman Thomas J. McCracken Jr. asked the question on everyone's minds, "Who would be the winner?" many panelists rolled their eyes when Ranney responded: "The region."

Afterward, Ranney brushed off the grilling. "I expected it," he said. "It's controversial stuff."

2-7-04 Daily Herald

# Forest preserve urged to take barn

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Trying to save the historic Teeple Barn in Elgin, the Kane County Farm Bureau is pushing the forest preserve to take over the land on which the historic landmark sits.

A forest preserve takeover of the 4-acre barn site would be just the step preservationists say is needed to kick-start fund-raising and secure the barn's restoration.

"We don't want to begin a capital campaign until that (ownership) is transferred," said Steve Arnold, the farm bureau's manager.

The barn, located off Randall Road near the Northwest Tollway, is owned by Matsushita Electronic Components Corporation of America, the company that manufactures Panasonic electronics.

Matsushita has indicated it is willing to give the property to a government body, and the preservation group formed to save the barn, AgTech, has been working on the forest preserve since October to step into that role.

The latest version of the plan is to have the forest preserve take the land and lease the barn to the farm bureau. Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy compared it to the relationship the forest preserve has with the Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley, which operates the Fabyan Villa located at the Fabyan Forest Preserve in Geneva.

The issue to forest preserve commissioners is the expense of adding another building that would need to be taken care of. Most commissioners want some kind of promise that the Teeple Barn wouldn't cost taxpayers money.

"If we were to lease it back to the farm bureau it becomes their responsibility," said commissioner Gerry Jones, an Aurora Democrat. "They have to cover the cost."

Some on the commission are not convinced and have asked the staff to put together cost estimates of the barn's annual maintenance.

The matter was referred back to the commission's utilization committee.

The Teeple Barn is 118 years old and is the only 16-sided barn in the state.

Its restoration will cost about $300,000 to be split evenly between local fund-raising efforts — from AgTech and the farm bureau — and a federal preservation grant.



ALD

2-7-04 Daily Herald

# County board candidate gets mayors' support

By Lisa Smith
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Kane County Board candidate Mark Davoust on Friday received the backing of the mayors of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia in his bid to represent the 14th district.

"He will not be afraid to make hard and fair decisions on behalf of his constituents," St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer said in a statement.

The St. Charles Township resident is seeking the Republican nomination for the 14th district seat, which includes parts of St. Charles and Geneva townships.

He faces Arney Silvestri, a home builder who lives in St. Charles, in the March 16 primary election. The winner will compete against Democratic nominee Elaine Stern of St. Charles in the November general election.

"Mark Davoust has proven himself a great leader," Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke said in a statement.

Schielke has known 45-year-old Davoust, vice president of Batavia-based Brasel Products, for 20 years. Davoust lived in Batavia for about 18 years and ran unsuccessfully for a seat on the Batavia city council in the mid-1980s.



Mark Davoust



Arney Silvestri

"He will not be afraid to make hard and fair decisions on behalf of his constituents."

St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer on endorsing Mark Davoust

Davoust's campaign has raised about one-third as much money as his opponent, who has taken in more than $20,000 — which include thousands from developers and other residential builders, according to his campaign disclosure statements.

Silvestri, 35, builds about 10 custom homes a year in the suburbs. The District 14 seat currently is held by Karen McConnaughay, who is abdicating the seat and running for county board chairman.



JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

A 3-year-old boy plays in the children's waiting room at the Kane County Judicial Center in St Charles. The room, which has been open for a month, has become more popular with parents.

2-9-04 Daily Herald

# Waiting room gives kids, courts a break

By Kara Spak and Bob Musinski
*Daily Herald Staff Writers*

It's been a month since the Kane County Judicial Center's children waiting room opened, and it's a hit with the most important audience—the kids.

In fact, some kids have been reluctant to leave once they've been there a while.

"They absolutely love it," said Ann Lobb, coordinator of the waiting room.

In early January, the much-anticipated room in the lower level of the judicial center in St. Charles became available for children whose parents are in court or meeting with prosecutors or the public defender.

During January, there were almost 65 kids who were in the center.

"We really didn't have a lot of fliers or anything around the courthouse for the first couple of weeks," Lobb said. "We just got fliers out last week."

The children's waiting room is supervised by staff from Elgin's Jayne Shover Easter Seals Center and provides educational activities and toys for young children.

The waiting room project, nearly six years in the making, came from attorneys who noticed that parents were toting their kids into court with them, often because there was no one else to provide child care.

"The attorneys working in the courthouse noticed a real problem with young kids causing some commotion," said Paul Glaser, a state appellate public defender and Kane County Bar Foundation president. "And being in the courtrooms, they were hearing things that were not appropriate."

Glaser noted that the Kane County Judicial Center courtrooms were acoustically designed so that noise carries. But the noises haven't been carrying from the judge to those in front of her. They are also carrying from the back of the courtroom to the judge's bench, occasionally interrupting court business.

"On top of that there are those completely uncomfortable benches," Glaser said. "A court is not a place for a kid."

For these same reasons, children's waiting areas are standard in courthouses in DuPage and

See **WAITING** on **PAGE 2**

### Waiting room

Details about the waiting room at the Kane County Judicial Center in St. Charles:

**Hours:** 8:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday.

**Location:** In the lower level, in back of the cafeteria, of the Kane County Judicial Center, St. Charles.

**Ages:** Kids 3 to 12 years old can be in the center and must be potty-trained. No food allowed.

**Cost:** Free

**Procedures:** Picture ID required. Parent and child get matching wristbands, and parents get an in-house pager.

**Who can use center:** Anyone with business inside the courthouse

**Staff:** A coordinator, two part-time workers and a staff of volunteers. If you want to volunteer, call (630) 232-3954.

# Waiting: Lawyers pushed for project

*Continued from Page 1*

Lake counties. In McHenry County, a children's waiting room has been discussed, but no action has been taken to build it.

But what the Kane County board wouldn't fund, the lawyers decided to. Working through the Kane County Bar Foundation, the charitable arm of the local bar association, attorneys raised $70,000 to construct and furnish the room.

Donations came from local attorneys and law firms, as well as the Aurora Foundation and the Junior League of Kane and DuPage Counties, Glaser said.

Last year, the Kane County board agreed to raise the fee to file a civil lawsuit in the county by $5. This additional money will be used to pay those staffing the waiting room. There is no fee for parents to use the room.

Glaser said he's heard positive reactions to the waiting room.

"From our what I've heard from lawyers it's quieter in the hallways and kids in there genuinely like being in there. The room is extremely child-friendly.

"It tells us all the planning we did was for a purpose."

2-8-04 Daily Herald

# Is closure on north dam near?

## Batavia hopes so, but new plan could keep the long debate rolling

By Gala M. Pierce
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Two years ago, Batavia officials thought the fate of the Fox River's north dam was settled.

In an 11-2 vote, council members voted to remove the barrier, which three decades earlier had begun to crumble.

After public outcry and a referendum early last year in which residents overwhelmingly voted to save the dam, many again thought the issue was on its way to resolution.

Yet boards convened, meetings were delayed and residents, city and state officials barked back and forth about what's best for the community.

Now, the city finally hopes to bring closure to the divisive issue at a special meeting Thursday, but even that may have a wrinkle. One of the groups that has risen since the dam became an issue intends to throw a new mystery option on the table — adding to the myriad options that have been weighed and measured by the city, state, park district and citizens groups.

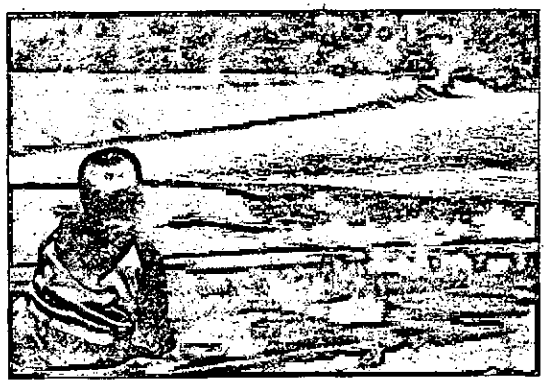
Recently, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, which was called upon when the dam breached, agreed to foot the bill for only two options: a full-width whitewater rapid or a modified dam removal plan.

Some worry the 1911 barrier may wash out altogether if action isn't

See DAM on PAGE 4

### Meeting to decide on dam

• 7 p.m. Thursday at city council chambers, Batavia Government Center, 100 N. Island Ave. Call city hall at (630) 879-1424 for information.



Matthew Stasell, then 2½, of Batavia stopped along the riverwalk in Batavia two summers ago to take a look at the north dam, while out with his grandmother.

LAURA STOECKER/ DAILY HERALD

## Replacing the Batavia dam

The removal of the Batavia dam presents four distinct challenges: Depot Pond must remain, fish must be able to move upstream, canoes must be able to move downstream, and movement of large amounts of accumulated sediment downstream must be minimized. These two options address these concerns.

### Whitewater Rapids option

**Addressing Depot Pond**

The biggest change in this plan involves converting what was once Duck Island into an extension of the current peninsula.

**The river bed**

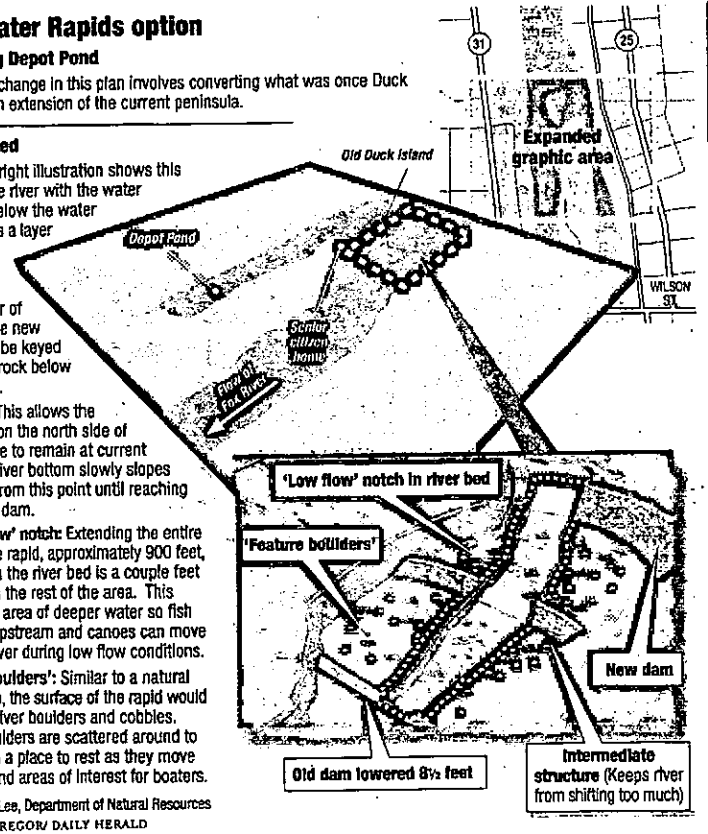
The bottom-right illustration shows this portion of the river with the water removed. Below the water level, there is a layer of sand and small stone sediment on top of a layer of bedrock. The new rapid would be keyed into the bedrock below those layers.

**New dam:** This allows the water level on the north side of this structure to remain at current levels. The river bottom slowly slopes downward from this point until reaching the existing dam.

**The 'low flow' notch:** Extending the entire length of the rapid, approximately 900 feet, this notch in the river bed is a couple feet deeper than the rest of the area. This provides an area of deeper water so fish can move upstream and canoes can move down the river during low flow conditions.

**'Feature boulders':** Similar to a natural river feature, the surface of the rapid would be natural river boulders and cobbles. Feature boulders are scattered around to provide fish a place to rest as they move upstream and areas of interest for boaters.

Source: Rita Lee, Department of Natural Resources
JASON MCGREGOR/ DAILY HERALD



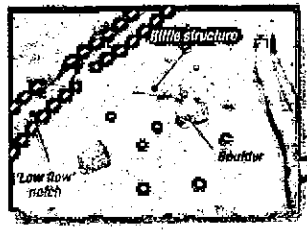

### Riffle/pool restoration

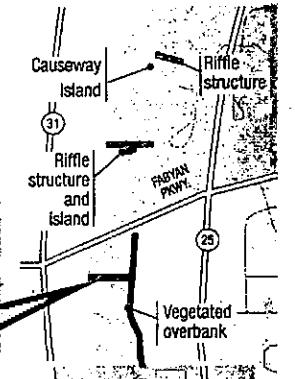
The primary purpose of the riffles, which are downstream of Causeway Island, is to help stabilize sediment and improve the water quality. The structures also provide places for fish to rest and live. Just south of Fabyan Parkway, an exposed floodplain will be created and vegetated with plants. It will narrow the width of the river and provide an area for excavated sand and gravel sediment.

**The riffle structures**

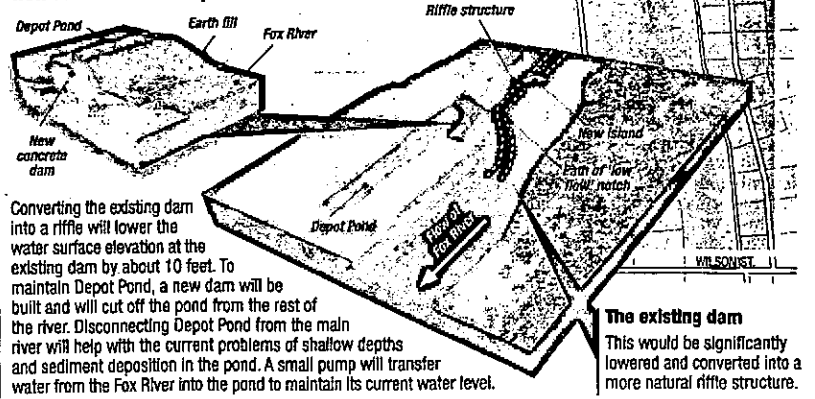
Like the Whitewater approach, a 'low flow' notch is included in this plan to ensure boat and fish passage during low flow conditions.

A series of riffles are placed at various locations. Each of the riffle structures increases water aeration and provides fish habitat.




**New dam to enclose Depot Pond**




Converting the existing dam into a riffle will lower the water surface elevation at the existing dam by about 10 feet. To maintain Depot Pond, a new dam will be built and will cut off the pond from the rest of the river. Disconnecting Depot Pond from the main river will help with the current problems of shallow depths and sediment deposition in the pond. A small pump will transfer water from the Fox River into the pond to maintain its current water level.

**The existing dam**

This would be significantly lowered and converted into a more natural riffle structure.

# Dam: Some call for still different, older plans

*Continued from Page 1*

taken, and the dam itself is a liability.

When state officials spent $1 million to evaluate all the alternatives, they concluded full dam removal was the way to go. The state adjusted the original design by including a series of structures called riffles to better restore the health of the river.

After recent inquiries into whether the state would pay for a repaired or replacement dam, the state offered a full-width whitewater rapid, which is a recreational ramp that would span the river.

"We'll discuss both options at the meeting and allow the city council to handle the questions and discussions," said Arlan Juhl, the acting manager for the Division of Planning in the Department of Natural Resource's Office of Water Resources.

The opposing sides of the issue — the Keep the Dam group and Batavians for a Healthy River Committee — will speak for 15 minutes each at this week's meeting as well.

Those against dam removal intend to offer a new solution at the meeting, and

"What we are planning on Feb. 12 is to present another alternative to keep the river clean and keep the dam in its present location," said Carol Leppert, who lives in the Riverrain Point Retirement Apartments.

City and state officials have encouraged the group to submit the proposal ahead of time, but the Keep the Dam group may not be ready. The state will not be prepared to comment on a new proposal unless it is similar to an alternative already dismissed, Juhl said.

But the state would research any option that warrants investigation.

Alderman Jodie Wollnik thinks the state's guidance could simplify the decision-making process, but she also wants to hear what the group has to offer — regardless of delay.

"I would definitely leave it open for consideration just to see what they've come up with," she said.

Although some worry the issue has torn an open wound in the community and needs closure, Mayor Jeff Schielke sees no urgency because the state's budget continually may come up short.

The state has appropriated $8.3 million for both the Batavia and Yorkville dam projects and deemed the $6.1 million four-step spillway for the Glenn Palmer Dam farther down the Fox a priority over Batavia's dam.

"There is going to be a lot of time to debate this, given the state's finances," Schielke said.

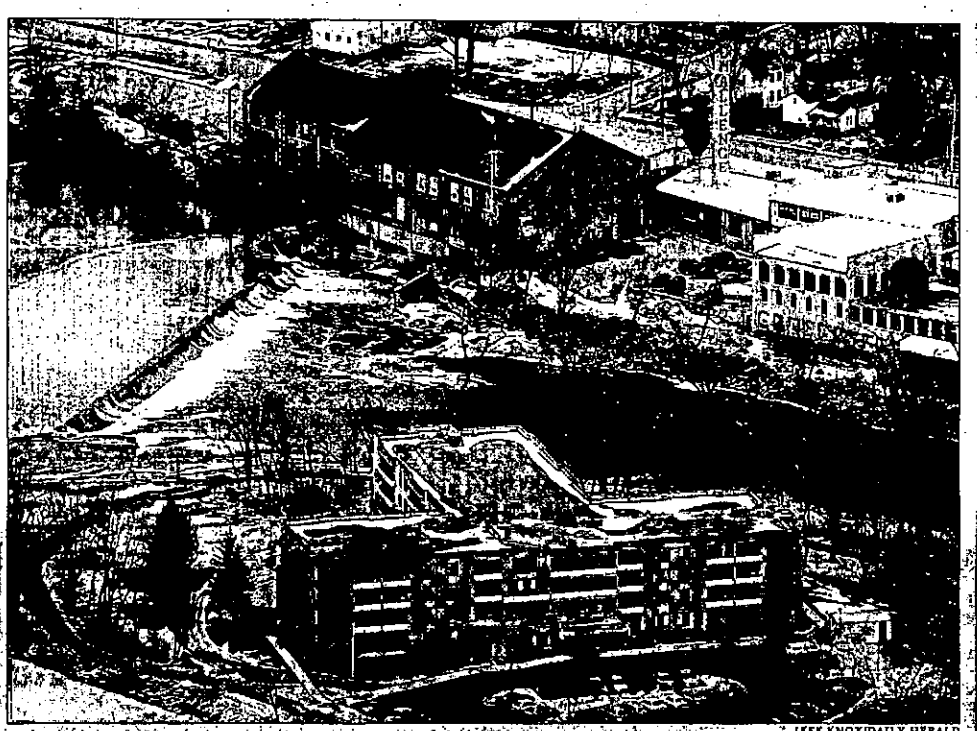
## Whitewater rapid

One of the favored plans — the full-width whitewater rapid — actually was scrapped by city officials three years ago.

The $8.26 million ramp involves cutting down the existing dam to about 8½ feet and repairing the breach.

It features a 900-foot rock ramp that would span the river and keep the water surface at the current level. The state says the pool would be retained and, therefore, would not benefit the river.

Duck Island would be converted into an extension of a peninsula near the retirement



JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

Batavia leaders may vote on the future of the Batavia north dam, which spans from the Challenge complex to the rear of the Riverrain retirement complex, during a meeting at 7 p.m. Thursday.

embankment. A new dam would be built at the northern end of the ramp, and another structure would be placed midway up the ramp to keep the river from shifting.

City officials dismissed the option because of concerns of too much recreational activity near the Riverrain complex that may pose a danger to residents. They worried that Depot Pond would fill with more sedimentation and the ramp would jam with ice floes in the winter.

Plus, the state said Batavia would retain ownership of the site, meaning the city would have to continue dredging Depot Pond. Four years ago, the city removed the sedimentation at $400,000, and some have estimated the cost would range between $500,000 and $1 million every dozen years or so.

Darek Smorczewski, a member of the Keep the Dam group, would prefer repairing the dam above all else, but he likes the whitewater ramp out of the other alternatives.

"All the current forms of recreation will be maintained with the whitewater rapid," he said. "It could potentially attract some people here to downtown Batavia."

Alderman Cathy Barnard would prefer the whitewater rapid option over full dam removal. She doesn't think removing one dam will help the state of the river when several other dams will remain.

"I don't think Geneva and St. Charles will ever remove their dams," Barnard said. "Just by taking ours out won't improve the water quality that much."

Luther Aadland has helped build 15 full-width whitewater rapid ramps during his tenure as a river ecologist at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

"That design has been applied at numerous dams especially in western Minnesota," he said.

Aadland has worked on ambitious projects such as the $405.7 million Riverside Dam on the border of North Dakota and Minnesota, and less elaborate endeavors such as the Red River in North Dakota. Plans for Batavia fall in between.

Although Aadland has success stories with ramp designs and also has overhauled many dams with riffle structures, it is not the first option he considers in any given project.

Total dam removal best restores the river's health, said Aadland, who has a background in hydrology.

A ramp over other dams, however, is attractive to the eye and requires less maintenance, Aadland said. The full passageway also attracts a variety of plants and animals and is easy for fish and canoeists to cross.

Aadland contends the ramps also improve safety compared to other dams, since water is directed toward the middle of the stream, which reduces the speed of the water. Furthermore, the ramp can survive flood conditions.

"A number of these dams have had numerous drownings," he said. "The low-head dams have undertows that pull people under water. This design eliminates that."

The pool behind a dam creates what some have called a "backwash," deemed dangerous for individuals to cross.

In Illinois, any dam lower than 15 feet is considered a low-head dam, said Rita Lee, project manager for the Batavia north dam with the state's Office of Water Resources. Just about all the dams along the Fox are considered low-head.

About 14 people have drowned at the Yorkville Dam, which exemplifies a hazardous low-head barrier. Two people have drowned at Batavia's north dam, and two more at the Geneva and North Aurora dams. Three firefighters also drowned at the Kimball Street Dam in South Elgin.

## Notched dam

Since the 1990s, the state has wanted to dismantle the dam and completely restore the health of the river.

To mollify parties against the plan, the state amended its original proposal costing $9 million or more.

Some 18 inches of the height of the current dam would be retained and turned into a riffle. A series of four more of these 2-feet-high structures would act as speed bumps for sediment in the river.

Since the structures would lower water levels, Depot Pond would require a new barrier to enclose it. A concealed electric pump that would cost the city about $4,400 a year to run would maintain it — much lower than the cost of dredging the pond. The state would plant any exposed banks.

David Horn, an Aurora University assistant professor of biology, prefers full dam removal but sees benefits of the state's current design.

"The DNR's proposal for the riffle structures does contain many ecological improvements over the current impounded state of the river," he said.

While the Batavians for a Healthy River Committee endorses the plan, it wants the state to consider reducing the number of riffle structures, which cost an excessive $2 million each, organizer Karen Kosky said.

"The reduction and elimination of some of the riffles could relieve some of the budgetary concerns and leave the river truly in a free-flowing pattern," said the Batavia resident, who works as a watershed engineer for Kane County.

The state has asked consultants to see if that's possible, Juhl said.

"We need to look at ways to save some dollars," Juhl said. "We have asked our consultants, can we get by with four riffles? There is some potential for some costs savings, perhaps in the reduction in the size of riffles."

But with smaller or fewer features, more sedimentation would build up in the river, Juhl said.

## Others in the wake

No one would disagree $9 million is a lot of money, and more on its current plans.

Because the community lacks consensus, some parties support either half-height option, full dam removal, or restoring the barrier's original purpose: hydropower.

The state is not likely to undertake any of these, Juhl said, but forces in Batavia continue to push for them.

Members of the Batavians for a Healthy River will ask the state to reconsider the original $8.6 million plan to fully remove it.

Because dismantling the barrier entirely would interfere with Geneva's flow of the river to the north, the state has walked away from full removal, Juhl said.

"Keep the Dam" proponents argue the state keeps ignoring cheaper alternatives. If the state doesn't reappropriate money for the project next year, which will be necessary, any plans could get pushed back indefinitely.

The Keep the Dam group suggested back in November the dam should be refurbished to provide hydropower, the purpose it once served for the Challenge Windmill & Feed Mill Co.

Alderman Jim Volk, a physicist at Fermilab, studied the possibility this week and concluded the idea was pointless.

After making some basic calculations, he deduced the dam could generate about 50 kilowatts of power. If the average house in Batavia uses 1 kilowatt, hydropower could generate enough power for 184 homes.

"It would provide less than a 10th of a percent of what we use today, and the cost would be about 10 times more than what we pay Commonwealth Edison for electricity," Volk said.

Leppert thinks the city should fix the dam now and take its time to consider alternatives in the next few years.

Smorczewski agrees.

"The DNR has determined one way or another to spend $10 million in tax dollars that the state can't afford," he said. "If people don't want their plan,

## History of the Batavia north dam

**1830s:** The north dam is constructed as a wood and rock crib dam, which eventually washes away.

**1911:** A concrete low-head dam is built across the east and west shores to produce energy for the adjacent Challenge complex.

**1974:** The dam is breached, and attempts to repair it are unsuccessful. The state is called upon for help.

**1977:** Ice jam almost wipes out the north dam, but it survives and incurs some damage.

**1994:** The city gives the state the dam's deed, but the state never records it.

**December 2000:** The Milwaukee-based McLaughlin Water Engineers, hired by the state, publishes a report of all the options.

**July 2002:** After years of debate and public meetings, Batavia City Council and the park district meet to consider two major alternatives: full dam removal or the half-height option. The council votes 11-2 for full dam removal, and park officials vote 3-1 for the half-height plan.

**December 2002:** Residents against dam removal successfully petition for an advisory referendum.

**April 2003:** Batavia voters indicate they wanted to keep the dam with a vote of 62 to 38 percent.

**October 2003:** The city council and park district reconvene to decide the dam's fate. Instead of rejecting or accepting the state's current plans, city council woman Cathy Barnard motions to see if the state would pay for the dam's replacement or repairs with a passageway for fish. The council splits the vote and Mayor Jeff Schielke votes "aye" to get an answer from the state. The park district board thought each alternative had pros and cons.

**November 2003:** The state answers their question by offering the full-width whitewater rapid plan.

**December 2003:** The park district board has a special meeting to re-endorse the half-height option with a vote of 4-1.

**January 2004:** IDNR representatives send a letter to the Batavia park board that the half-height option is no longer being considered and that the two alternatives on the table are the full-width whitewater rapid and the dam removal modified with riffles.

the dam."

Juhl doesn't think the state interested in owning and maintaining a repaired dam.

"If it's something the loc wanted to do on their own t could do that, but we wou prefer not to be involved," said.

Many have expressed ex peration by the subject of t north dam and would like c sure.

"Over time certain issu wear on you," Juhl said. certainly hope the city c come to some kind of decisi with the issue. I don't think good for them or for us for t

# Circuit Clerk's employees seek new contract

2-7-04 Chronicle

## *Last agreement ended in December; negotiations stalled over pay, benefits*

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Ninety Circuit Clerk's employees have worked without a contract since Dec. 1 while negotiations stumble over pay and benefit increases, county and union officials said.

The American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees Council 31 is seeking a new agreement to replace the three-year deal for its members who perform labor vital to Kane County courts.

The union employees are responsible for maintaining thousands of case files in the circuit clerk's office that are shuffled each day to courtrooms in St. Charles and Geneva.

AFSCME leaders are poised for more talks with county negotiators and Kane County Circuit Clerk Deborah Seyller, who said that the impasse could prompt workers to strike to jump-start negotiations for the new contract.

"It would bring court to a halt," Seyller said of a possible walkout. "We'd have to reschedule court cases."

Seyller said the undisclosed pay increases sought in the new contract are not allotted in the circuit clerk's share of the county's $66.8 million 2004 budget.

Last year, county board Chairman Mike McCoy endorsed giving county employees a 4 percent pay raise. McCoy said he thinks a new contract between AFSCME workers in the circuit clerk's office and the county will be reached soon.

The county and the union are set to meet again Wednesday, Seyller said.

"I can't sign a contract for what I'm not covered for," Seyller said of the pay increase. "I agree they should have it, but it's not in my budget."

If contract negotiations fail, it would not be the first time that union workers employed in the Kane County judicial system have debated whether to walk off the job in the wake of a snarled contract dispute.

See CONTRACT, page 2

### Contract

Continued from page 1

In November 2002, 115 probation officers and youth home counselors in the 16th Judicial Circuit who were affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters threatened to strike, citing low pay.

Anders Lindall, a spokesman for AFSCME Council 31, the union that represents public service and healthcare workers in state and local government, said the new contract also would include an increase in healthcare benefits.

Union members have not authorized a strike vote, but the notion has not been ruled out, Lindall said.

"If the county board is willing to provide us a fair contract, then there'll be no reason for a strike," Lindall said. "We'd rather do that on the bargaining table and not on the picket line."

*Contributing: Heath Hixson*

2-9-04 Beacon News

# Kane to save $1 million

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA – The Kane County Forest Preserve District is set to save more than $1 million by refinancing a $70 million referendum.

Commissioners will approve the refinancing Tuesday, which will lower the interest rate on the bonds from 5 percent to 3.7 percent. Forest Preserve President John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, said that will save taxpayers about $1.4 million in payments over the next 15 years, which will be reflected in lower property taxes.

The $70 million referendum was approved by more than 65 percent of Kane County taxpayers in 1999 to buy open space throughout the county. Hoscheit and other forest preserve officials said they would consider refunding the bonds when it was possible to save more than $1 million.

A favorable bond market recently gave the forest preserve that chance, Hoscheit told members of the district's Executive Committee Friday.

The $70 million referendum was considered a watershed in the county's efforts to preserve open space. It has led to three years of aggressive land acquisition by the Forest Preserve District.

2-10-04 Beacon News

# N. Aurora studies utility tax options

**By David Garbe**
STAFF WRITER

NORTH AURORA — In their first serious discussion about creating a utility tax since tabling the idea a year ago, village trustees decided to delay a vote on the proposed tax.

After a lengthy debate at Monday's village board meeting, trustees said they would continue to examine the issue and hoped to make a final decision soon.

The preliminary ordinance drafted for discussion calls for a natural gas tax of 3 percent, a telephone tax of 4 percent and an electricity tax of less than 5 percent, which would vary depending on total individual consumption.

The village board could begin collecting the tax 90 days after enacting an ordinance.

Village President Mark Ruby made the utility tax discussion a priority two weeks ago, saying the village was falling behind in road maintenance because tax revenues were insufficient.

"There's a whole slew of streets in town that are simply going to need grinding out and repair work (in the near future)," Ruby said Monday. If the streets are not repaired within a few years, they would need total reconstruction.

Village engineer Jim Bibby said such a reconstruction would be at least twice as expensive as resurfacing.

"If we could tackle those streets now," Ruby said, "it would save us a lot of money in the future, when they disintegrate."

Trustees agreed that road repairs were crucial but were hesitant to support creating a utility tax without further consideration.

Trustee Mike Herlihy said the tax ordinance should mandate that all utility tax funds be spent for nothing but road repairs. Even in that case, he said, "I'm not in favor of telling the people of this village they have to pay more in taxes."

Trustees Dale Berman and Mark Guethle proposed that the public should decide on the tax through a referendum.

Ruby said a referendum on the tax would delay collection for almost a year, putting the village that much further behind in its road repairs.

"This (tax) is not something that is burdensome to our residents," Ruby said. Village staff estimated the cost of the tax would be about $100 each year per household.

Before making any decision on the tax, trustees, said, they want to develop a more concrete plan for road repairs and other capital projects, such as a new village hall, police station and repairs to the North Aurora Activity center.

2-10-04 Daily Herald

# Fence Post

## Janes is best choice for circuit judge

I am writing to let the voters know who is the best choice for circuit judge in the Republican primary. Judge Robert L. Janes is seeking the position of circuit judge. He has done a marvelous job as an associate judge for the past seven years.

Just go into his courtroom to see for yourself how courteously and fairly he treats people despite the enormous court calls he must handle.

Judge Janes had more than 22 years of legal experience in all areas of the law before he even became a judge. As an associate judge, he has made quite an impact. He developed the video bond calls that have helped speed up court appearances while reducing the number of court personnel having to travel miles to their jobs.

He has streamlined his court calls to substantially reduce the hours and the number of days that citizens and police officers have to spend in court.

In short, he has made the court system a little more citizen-friendly while saving the taxpayers some money.

At the same time, he does what a judge is supposed to do: decide the tough and important cases before him on an impartial basis.

Judge Janes has embraced programs that are helping people to rehabilitate themselves and reduce crime.

However, Judge Janes has not hesitated in handing out strict sentences when warranted.

Judge Janes has been actively involved with the community for years, whether he is helping seniors or youngsters, students, veterans or church members.




He is a hard-working and compassionate man whose professional and community life demonstrates his deep concern for the citizens of our community.

I strongly urge you to vote for Judge Robert L. Janes on March 16. He is the best choice we have for circuit judge.

Patrick J. Brazill
Geneva

**Get out of town**

Hey, Bill Kindt, sports editor, here's my 2-cents worth. On your column regarding Bill Wyatt's great idea for the Aurora golf courses, I see it as very peculiar that you should comment on this since you are a Geneva resident. You don't even have a vote in Aurora so why are you commenting on a political football concerning Aurora? It's totally inappropriate. Now if someone from Aurora would write that, that would be fine. But Bill, you're a Geneva resident. You really have no say in the manner other than I'm sure you take advantage of our golf courses and golf there a lot in the summer.

**Mike Leonardi**, *Aurora*

**[illegible] best friend**

2-10-04 Beacon-News

2-10-04
Daily Herald

# Officials: Stay off contaminated land in Gilberts

BY MAX SEIGLE
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

State environmental officials are urging people to keep off a lead-contaminated site in Gilberts so the property's potential harm to the community can be accurately assessed.

The IEPA announced Friday it was sealing off a portion of the Kedzie property off Galligan Road north of Wiley Road because soil samples tested about 11 percent positive for lead contamination. Groundwater infiltration hasn't been reported. The site, roughly 3 to 5 acres, was the scene of an October fire that emitted noxious fumes, sending two police officers to the hospital and forcing evacuation of 40 homes.

IEPA officials said the site once was used to recycle lead from car batteries. IEPA said the threat of lead poisoning is softened by snow cover.

2-10-04 Chronicle

# N. Aurora trustees mull over utility tax uses

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — Village trustees want to know how much money a utility tax would raise to help catch up on road repairs.

Trustees on Monday discussed the proposed utility tax, which would be on a resident's telephone, gas and electric bills. Aurora, Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles are among communities which have a utility tax.

They tabled the issue until more questions are answered, such as how much money the utility tax would raise and its impact on homeowners.

Village President Mark Ruby suggested implementing a utility tax as a way to help the village catch up on road repairs. He said implementing the tax now would give the village a "jump start" on road projects.

The village could start to collect the utility tax 90 days after trustees pass it.

Ruby said he only knew of one community — West Dundee — that did not have a utility tax. The village board can implement a utility tax without voter approval.

But Trustee Dale Berman said the village needs to look at other possible uses for the utility tax — such as helping to pay for a new village hall and police station and deciding what to do with the North Aurora Activity Center.

"If we limit it to just streets, we are missing something," Berman said.

Berman suggested the board put the issue to a referendum.

"We need to present it to the public, and let them decide," Berman said.

But Ruby said the board needs to act soon.

"By the time we come up with a plan for what to do with village hall, our streets will be falling apart," Ruby said.

Trustee Mike Herlihy said the village needs to get concrete numbers on what a utility tax would generate.

"Let's be sure what we pass fits our needs. We need to know what its yields will be," Herlihy said.

Carolyn Jansons, an attorney with Drendel and Drendel, said she didn't know of any limits on how the utility tax funds are spent.

Ruby said Montgomery spends 80 percent of its utility tax on capital projects.

2-10-04 Daily Herald

# North Aurora officials can't get handle on proposed tax

By Darryl Mellema
*Daily Herald Correspondent*

How, when or if a utility tax becomes reality was a very hot topic at Monday night's North Aurora village board meeting.

In the end, the board opted to table the matter until Feb. 18 for further discussion.

Mayor Mark Ruby, who proposed the utility tax in January, said Monday the tax is needed to pay for road repairs throughout the village.

Board members wanted more specific numbers before moving ahead with the proposal, which included telecommunications, natural gas and electricity taxes.

"We're seeing an estimate," Trustee Michael Herlihy said. "I'm not in favor of approving something where I don't know what the yield is going to be."

Trustee Dale Berman suggested letting the voters decide by asking for a property tax increase in November.

"I think we're making the problem smaller than it really is," Berman said. "We need to zero in on exactly what we want to do, come up with what it is going to cost us and then put it to the residents."

But some board members did not want to wait.

"By the time we come up with a plan for what we are going to do with a village hall, we're going to have streets falling apart," Ruby said. "My intent was that we can attack immediately and do something about it."

Trustee Max Herwig said a property tax increase would mean revenues could not be collected until 2006. "We've lost over a year now of being able to collect that revenue," he said. "If we wait until the referendum, we've lost another year."

# Kane ready to sell old school site to library

2-10-04 Beacon News

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County officials are set to sell the former Sixth Street School building to the Geneva Public Library.

County Board members are expected to approve a sale price of $1.025 million at today's board meeting.

From county officials' perspective, it is a way to get rid of a building that has had little use for them since the Health Department moved out last year. While the Regional Schools office still is in the building, a former Geneva grade school, it will move to space in the former Montgomery Ward building on Randall Road in St. Charles, where the Circuit Clerk's office is.

From the perspective of Geneva city officials, buying the school is the first step in a plan to redo public buildings and services downtown.

The library at some point will raze the Sixth Street School and build a new, larger library on the property. While the library will not be downtown, it will be close and still in about the center of the library district, which extends west of Geneva's city limits.

When the library moves out of its current location downtown, next to City Hall, city officials are expecting to expand there. That will leave room to convert the current City Hall into a cultural arts center.

All of these are long-range plans, because the library is not ready to move into a larger facility just yet. Library officials would need a referendum from the electorate to increase the tax rate to pay for a new library building. That could be up to 10 years away, officials have said.

Consequently, county officials still are unsure exactly when they will move the Regional School offices out of Sixth Street School.

# U-46 worries about Grand Victoria tax effort

2-10-04 Daily Herald

By Tom O'Konowitz
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Elgin leaders will fight an attempt by the Grand Victoria Casino to pay them considerably less in property taxes than they do now, officials said on Monday.

If the casino gets its way, it could mean Elgin would collect $600,000 less a year from the riverboat than anticipated, said City Manager David Dorgan, who called that "significant" at a time when the city's budget is barely balanced.

"They want a tax reduction. We don't want it because it costs us money," Dorgan said.

The Elgin City Council on Wednesday night will consider passing a resolution to oppose the casino's effort to have the assessed value of its buildings lowered, meaning it would pay less in property taxes to the city and other governmental bodies each year.

Kane County officials previously rejected the casino's request to have its assessment reduced, and owners now are appealing that decision to the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board. The casino's pavilion and parking deck in downtown Elgin have a 2003 assessed value of $6.45 million, according to the Elgin Township Assessor's Office. Assessed value is one-third market value.

Elgin officials estimate its market value is a third higher.

The casino itself, since it's not on land, is not subject to property tax. The city of Elgin owns all the land on the casino grounds.

Casino officials couldn't be reached for comment Monday, but Elgin officials said the casino wants its assessed value lowered to $1.5 million.

While such a cut in property taxes could hit Elgin hard immediately, Elgin Area School District U-46 could take a pronounced hit in a few years.

Officials at U-46 said they weren't exactly sure how much property tax they receive from the casino each year, but they said it is considerably less than the $600,000 they would expect to receive from the casino property starting in 2008.

2-10-04 Daily Herald

# County predicts major congestion in the Tri-Cities

By Gala M. Pierce
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Kane County officials forecast major traffic congestion on Route 64 and Fabyan Parkway in the next 20 years.

Widening Route 64 and Randall to six lanes and Fabyan to four lanes west of Randall are three solutions identified in the county's 2030 transportation plan. Only about a fraction of the $2 billion sum of projects might be accomplished.

"It's likely we might only see $300 million worth of projects done over the next 20 years," said Tom Rickert, Kane County assistant director of transportation, at a public forum for the plan Monday.

About 20 Tri-Cities area officials and four residents attended the meeting at the Batavia library.

Other projects in the plan include widening routes 47 and 38 from two to four lanes.

Even if the county was able to move forward with all the construction needed to alleviate traffic, the Tri-Cities will see extreme congestion on Route 25, Kirk Road, Fabyan Parkway east of the Fox River and Route 31 between Route 64 and Route 38.

The county's population should increase by about 150,000 people in the next 20 years.

"This doesn't look real good," said Mark Koenen, St. Charles' public works director, looking at the projections. "It's saying we're going to have to live with congestion."

The meeting was one of a second round of meetings to get input on the potential project list. The county expects to complete a draft of the plan in March and to adopt it in the summer.

Developer-paid impact fees, which the county recently approved, will help with only about 8 percent of funding for construction, Rickert said.

"One of things we expressed to the county board is that it's going to be almost financially impossible to buy our way out of our congestion problems," Rickert said.

One of the problems the county faces is that it doesn't control growth, the municipalities do, said Michael Kirschman of the Geneva Park District.

St. Charles resident Kathryn Trendler said she was concerned about Route 47 becoming another Randall Road commercial corridor.

The county will have a meeting regarding the widening of Fabyan Parkway on Feb. 26 in Batavia, said Batavia City Engineer Noel Basquin, who attended the meeting.

Residents are encouraged to give the county input on the plan. Call (630) 406-7308 or visit www.co.kane.il.us/dot.

# Batavia prepares for $3M water plant project

2-10-04 Chronicle

## *Work could begin in April*

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — Work is expected to get started in April on a $3 million project at the Batavia water treatment plant.

The project is designed to bring the city into compliance with the federal standard for radium in drinking water and to increase the capacity of the facility.

The city council's Public Utilities Committee on Monday approved the low construction bid of $3,021,000 from Joseph J. Henderson and Co. of Gurnee. The full council is expected to approve the bid on Feb. 16.

When complete, the city will be able to rely on the treatment plant at Fabyan Parkway and Wenmoth Road, rather than the system of satellite wells that have served Batavia for 110 years.

The key to the project is the installation of filters for the hydrous manganese oxide absorption process, which will remove naturally occurring, radioactive radium from the city's water. The city's water currently exceeds the federal standard of 5 picocuries per liter.

Work also will include three new deep wells in addition to the three shallow wells already supplying water to the plant, Water Department Superintendent John Dillon said.

A new building will house three new pumps and a new system for iron removal at three times the current rate.

In addition, the project includes a 100,000-gallon ground-level storage reservoir to complement the 500,000-gallon reservoir already operating on the site.

The new and old wells, pumps, buildings and reservoirs at the plant all will be interconnected, allowing the city to blend the water and provide residents throughout the city with consistent quality, Dillon said.

The water plant now pumps about 3 million gallons a day, Dillon said, and has a peak capacity of about 6.5 million gallons a day. The project will increase capacity to 10 million gallons a day.

The work essentially will give the city a new water treatment plant. It will tie into the planned 20-inch crosstown transmission line that also will be constructed this year. That project, estimated at $6 million, has yet to be bid out.

Dillon said the city has secured a low-interest, 2.57 percent loan from the state to help finance the work. Water rates in Batavia recently increased by 40 percent to help pay for the improvements.

2-10-04 Chronicle

# Tri-Cities mayors back Davoust

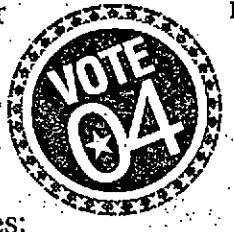
By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA—Tri-Cities' mayors on Friday threw their support behind Mark Davoust's bid to capture the Republican nomination for the Kane County Board District 14 seat.

Davoust, 45, of St. Charles, faces Arney Silvestri, 35, also of St. Charles, for the party's nomination in the March 16 primary election for the 14th District.

The seat is being vacated by Karen McConnaughay, who is running for county board chairman.

Davoust is the vice president of Brasel Products in Batavia. Silvestri is a home builder. The winner likely will face Democrat Elaine Stern in the November general election.




Mayors Sue Klinkhamer, St. Charles; Kevin Burns, Geneva; and Jeff Shielke, Batavia; all publicly endorsed Davoust.

"I appreciate the vote of confidence from these prominent mayors," Davoust said in a campaign statement. "If elected, I will do my best to represent the interests of the people of the 14th District."

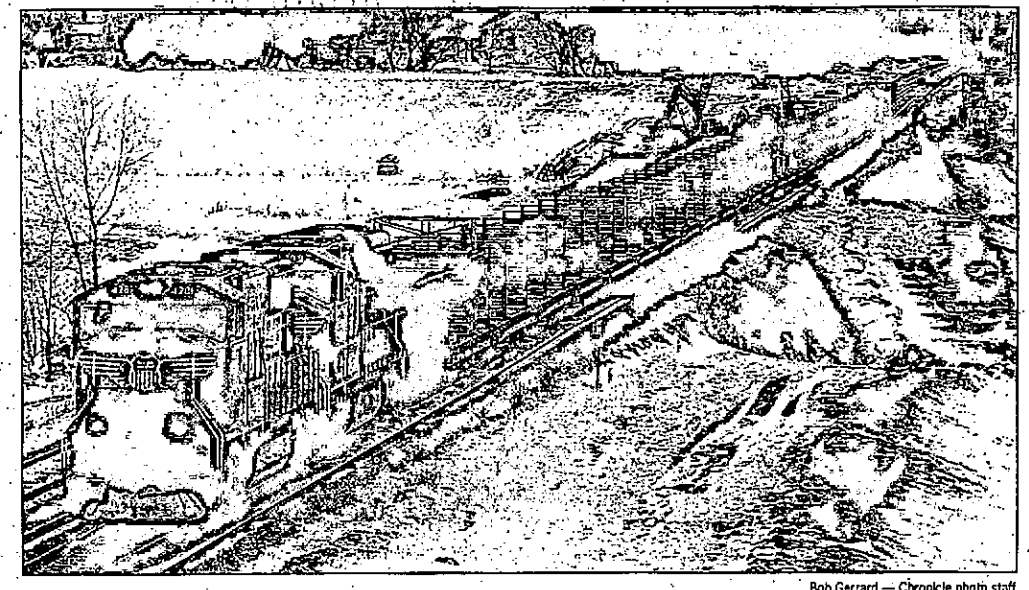
Silvestri said "endorsements are not the people that actually put you in office," and said he has been knocking on doors and meeting the public.

Silvestri has yet to unveil endorsements, but said he plans do so in the next week or two.

Davoust plans to announce more endorsements soon, states the campaign statement.

2-10-04 Chronicle

Working on the railroad



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

**Union Pacific workers transport** two 1,600-foot-long segments of track Monday east of Harley Road near Elburn. On Sunday and Monday, UP delivered 40 segments, which is enough steel for the third track extension from Geneva to Elburn for a commuter rail station and coachyard.

# Metra expansion moves ahead

*Workers unload 20 sets of 1,600-foot track sections*

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

The third set of tracks that will extend commuter service from Geneva to Elburn is in place.

Now it all just needs to be welded together.

On Sunday and Monday, workers dropped off 20 sets of 1,600-foot-long sections of track. Each set is a little longer than five football fields.

At those lengths, that is enough steel to extend the rail from Peck Road to the Metra coachyard and commuter station that is under construction in Elburn, about six miles west of Peck Road.

"There's a lot of work going on," said Bob Straiton, manager of special projects for Union Pacific.

Two sets of tracks already run between Geneva and Elburn. Rails for the third track were laid alongside the south track, several feet to the south.

"We'll use a crane to move them later," UP employee Tom Fitzgerald said.

Getting the 36-ton steel "sticks" to their destination took lots of planning and coordination, Straiton said.

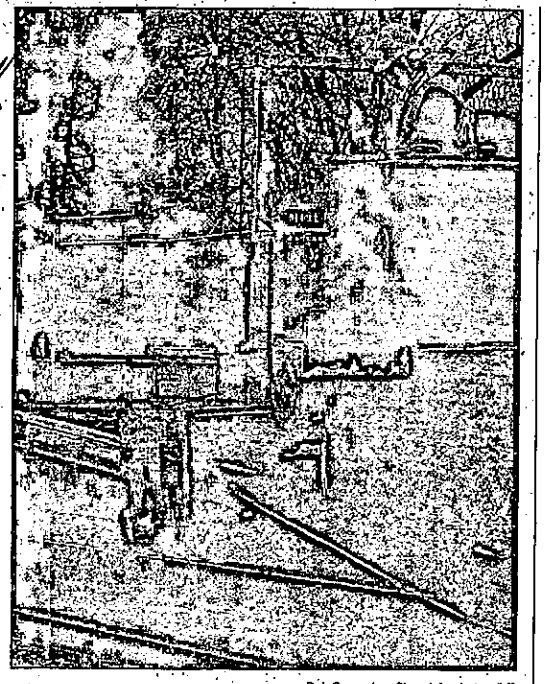
The rail segments were made last year at a factory in Wyoming. Eighty-foot sections were welded together at the plant to form the 1,600-foot sticks.

See TRACKS, page 2

### By the numbers

- **80** — Length (in feet) in one segment of track, per rail
- **20** — Segments in one section of track (also called a "stick")
- **1,600** — Length (in feet) of one stick
- **40** — Sticks required to build a third set of tracks from Geneva to Elburn
- **36.27** — Weight (in tons) of each stick
- **28** — Train cars used to transport two sticks
- **2** — Engines to pull 28 train cars carrying two sticks
- **15,000** — Concrete railroad ties that the sticks will rest on
- **6** — Miles of track between Geneva (Peck Road) and Elburn

*Source: Union Pacific*



Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

**Using a cable, Union** Pacific workers attach one end of the 1,600-foot-long track section to the existing track. The train moved slowly down the tracks, pulling the 36-ton section off the train and onto the ground.

## Tracks

Continued from page 1

Each set of sticks was transported atop 28-car trains pulled by two engines.

After the sticks arrived in central Kane County, workers attached a chain to one end of each stick, lashing them to the south track.

To remove each set of sticks from the train cars, the train slowly headed west, which allowed workers to feed each stick off the cars simultaneously through a steel guide.

The process resembles extruding a crescent moon shape onto the ground from a mobile Play-Doh Fun Factory. The track is somewhat flexible because of its length.

"It's just like a piece of spaghetti," Straiton said. "It's not hard steel. It is flexible. It's not stiff like you think it would be."

Work to prepare the track for assembly is ongoing, which includes grading the land to make it flat for the bed of ballast. Construction began in July 2003.

Assembly is slated to begin March 1, depending on the weather, UP officials said. Workers will lift the tracks with cranes to set them on about 15,000 concrete railroad ties.

"Concrete is more sturdy," UP spokesman Gene Hinkle said. "We're replacing the wooden ones with concrete. They just last longer."

The Elburn Metra station will replace Geneva as the last stop on the Union Pacific West Line. It will be on 50 acres north of Blackberry Creek and Keslinger Road.

The Elburn property will include a 300-space parking lot, a coachyard and a warming house.

Another station will be built in La Fox, an unincorporated settlement east of Elburn. It will have a 300-space parking lot and a warming house.

The project is expected to cost $135 million. About $81 million will come from federal funds, and the rest will come from state and local funds.

## A good two cents

I want to thank Bill Kindt for shedding more light on the privatization of our city golf operations (My Two Cents — Jan. 30).

I must point out that while Mr. Kindt obviously cares about our city, he is, in fact, not a resident of Aurora. Those of us who reside in Aurora must look beyond the "cheap golf" concept and consider what is best for all citizens.

Golf prices at Phillips Park have risen 40 percent in the last few years, yet our courses can "barely make the bond payment," according to Jim Pilmer, director of parks for the city of Aurora. Yes, the courses made money last year — if you don't count the bond payments and other expenses. Unfortunately, these payments do count in the real world of business and finance.

A quick check of pricing reveals that area privatized courses are comparably priced to Phillips Park and Fox Valley golf courses. Greens fees for Settlers Hill are $27, for Phillips Park, $26; greens fees for Hughes Creek are $30; for Fox Valley, $30.

Competition will always dictate price, and golf courses are no exception. I might also add that the city has decided to privatize the food service at the city courses, and I don't believe $5 hot dogs will be the end result.

In closing, I wish to thank Mr. Kindt for his kind words about me personally and my bid for the mayor's seat in the city of Aurora. While I can't cure cancer, I can certainly work hard to solve other problems within our city.

**Bill Wyatt**
*Aurora*

2-11-04 Beacon News

2-11-04



# Kane board raises salaries of members elected in '04

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter

The 13 Kane County Board members elected in November can each expect to be paid $17,500 in the final year of their four-year term, under an amended salary schedule adopted by the board Tuesday.

The 17-6 vote by the County Board also included increasing the annual salary of the next board chairman to $85,000 in the last year of the four-year term..

Under the plan, the chairman's current $81,000 annual salary will be increased to $82,000 beginning Dec. 1 and increased by $1,000 at the start of each succeeding year.

The existing salary schedule, adopted before the entire 26-member board took office in December 2002, calls for $500 pay raises for members on Dec. 1, 2004, and Dec. 1, 2005. The current salary for board members is $15,500.

With adoption of the new schedule, board members also will receive annual increases of $500 in 2006 and 2007.

State law prohibits the salary of any elected official from being adjusted during that official's term.

Although the board's action squares technically with state statute, board member John Noverini (R-Carpentersville) said it smacks of being a conflict because many board members who voted for the pay increase presumably will be re-elected this year and benefit directly from the raises.

"There's got to be a better way to do it," said Noverini.

"I don't see any need to increase my salary. I'm quite happy with the way it is," said board member Lee Barrett (R-East Dundee), an outspoken critic of the raises.

In addition to Noverini and Barrett, the six Republicans who voted against raising salaries included board member Karen McConnaughay (R-St. Charles), who is running for board chairman.

2-11-04 Daily Herald

# County board OKs future hikes in pay

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

The Kane County Board Tuesday approved pay raises for members who will be seated around the board table in 2006 and 2007.

Salaries for members will increase to $17,000 per year as of Dec. 1, 2006, and to $17,500 per year on Dec. 1, 2007.

These increases filled out the board member salary schedule for two extra years beyond annual raises already on the books.

The 26 board members now are paid $15,500 per year, a mark set as of Dec. 1, 2003, when sitting members took a $500 raise. The pay scale also calls for a $500 increase on Dec. 1 of this year and in 2005.

Also Tuesday, the board approved salary increases for the board chairman and vice chairman.

The salary for the chairman was increased from $81,000 today to $82,000 as of Dec. 1, with $1,000 increases to come in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

The board also approved allowing the board vice chairman to be paid as many as 10 per diems per month. The county's per diem rate is $30 per event.

Some board members disagreed with the board member increases and tried to get the issue split into separate votes for the board members, chairman and vice chairman payments.

"I don't see a need to increase my salary," said Lee Barrett, an East Dundee Republican.

Two attempts to break the vote apart were defeated and others on the board stressed the increases were for the seats not the people. All the raises approved Tuesday apply to future elected terms.

Board members Barrett, Deborah Allan, John Noverini and Don Wolfe voted against the raises, as did Doug Weigand, who is not seeking re-election, and Karen McConnaughay, the GOP nominee for the county board chairman.

# Fox Valley in 60 seconds

2-11-04 Daily Herald

**Kaneland teachers get deal:**
The Kaneland school board and the district's teachers union have reached a tentative agreement to extend the teachers contract one year, according to a district statement released Tuesday. The Kaneland Education Association is expected to ratify the agreement March 2, and the school board is expected to consider it March 8. If approved, the contract would be extended to June 30, 2005. Officials would not discuss terms or other details of the pending agreement. "We feel it's in the best interests of students, staff and community members of our district," said union President Angela Bateman. School board and association officials have sat at the bargaining table three times in the past two months, the district statement said.

**Court fees increased:**
A list of fees charged by the county circuit court clerk were increased Tuesday by the Kane County board. Many of the increases deal with fees tied to criminal cases working through the court system. But included in the list in an increase of the fee using a jury in a civil case. That fee, over the objections of several board members, increased from $192.50 to $212.50. The fee for certain record searches went up to $6 from $4. And the fee to forward a lawsuit appeal to the appellate court was increased $10. In all, 17 fees were increased. The increases are expected to generate an extra $240,000 to $250,000 per year.

**Old Sixth Street School sold:**
As expected and with no discussion, the Kane County board on Tuesday approved the sale of the old Sixth Street School in Geneva to the Geneva library district. After weeks of negotiations, the library and county agreed to a $1.025 million sale price. The library district wanted the building so it could eventually use the land. Long-range plans call for the school to be knocked down to make way for a new library. The county said it had no use for the building and wanted to get it off county books. It has served as home to several county departments in the last decade but now is home to only the regional office of education, which is set to move later this year.

**U-46 names new principals:**
Three new elementary schools in Elgin Area School District U-46 on Tuesday got what every campus needs: a leader. District veterans will take the helm at two of the new schools, with a third principal coming from Wisconsin. Current Woodland Heights Elementary Principal Tim Pociask will head the new elementary school on Rohrssen Road in far east Elgin. Highland Elementary Principal Rita Blankenship will take charge at the new school on Maureen Drive in Hoffman Estates. Joining U-46 from Whitewater, Wis., Marty Powers will serve as principal of the new elementary school on McDonough Road in Hoffman Estates.

2-11-04 Beacon News

# Kane County Board votes for pay raises

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — The Kane County Board dealt itself a future pay raise Tuesday, with a handful of members arguing against the increase.

Some members said they should not be getting more money in light of a bad economy.

"I choose to serve the community, not to take a paycheck," said Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee. "I don't think any of you went out and told people you were running for office and plan to give yourself a raise."

The raise will be incremental, moving from $16,500 a year in 2005 to $17,000 in 2006 and $17,500 in 2007. Members of the County Board now are paid $16,000 a year and receive full health benefits.

The raises won't benefit any of the members during their current terms, said board Chairman Mike McCoy, as the increase they approved will take effect in 2006, when all of their terms will have expired. A raise also was approved for the board chairman.

"You're giving a raise to the seats, not the people," he said.

But John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, said it's still a conflict of interest for members to give themselves raises because they will benefit if they are re-elected.

"You're still talking about the people sitting in the seats," he said.

A coalition of north-end board members that includes Barrett; Noverini; Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville; and Deborah Allan, R-Elgin, voted together against the measure. They were joined by Doug Wiegand, R-Batavia; Don Wolfe, R-Elgin; and Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, who also is the Republican nominee for County Board chairman in November's election.

The board chairman, who now makes $81,000 a year, will be paid $83,000 in 2005, $84,000 in 2006 and $85,000 in 2007. The vice chairman will be paid the same amount as other board members but also will be compensated for attending various meetings.

LIMIT QUANTITIES AND/OR CHANGE PRICES WITHOUT NOTICE SALE DATES:

2-11-04 Beacon News

# County accepts grant to help Aunt Martha's

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County will accept a grant to go toward renovation of a downtown Aurora building for Aunt Martha's Youth Services primary care health clinic.

The County Board Tuesday voted 20-3 to accept the $409,240 grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. It will allow Aunt Martha's to renovate a building at 101 S. Broadway in Aurora to expand its health clinic and move from the current location in the 400 block of Downer Place.

The situation also could spell the end of a downtown Aurora presence for the Visiting Nurse Association, which runs a health clinic about a block from the prospective Aunt Martha's location.

Linnea Windel, VNA chief executive officer, said Tuesday VNA officials still believe the two clinics will be too close, and that could affect where the VNA looks to expand its operation.

Both the VNA clinic and the Aunt Martha's clinic serve uninsured and underinsured low-income people.

"We've been in downtown Aurora for many, many years, but when it comes down to doing what's right for the community, we will do it," Windel said.

VNA officials think the right thing is for the two clinics to be located in different parts of the area the federal government has designated as medically underserved on Aurora's East Side.

Windel, appearing before County Board members for the second time in a week, presented a paper detailing the VNA's objections to the two clinics being so close.

The paper said the two would duplicate effort in a small geographic area and that it would be fiscally irresponsible because the people being served by the clinics live in neighborhoods scattered throughout the East Side, not just downtown.

"Our belief is that we should distribute the resources, not concentrate them," she said.

## Designated grant

The $409,240 for Aunt Martha's is a health construction grant, specifically for use at the South Broadway building. Aunt Martha's officials said it could not be transferred to another site.

Marsha Conroy, of Aunt Martha's, said it is "not entirely uncommon for two health clinics in an unusually needy area to be located next to each other."

This part of Aurora is seen as being particularly needy. With both clinics at full capacity, they reach only about 40 percent of the 31,525 people in Aurora the federal government says are eligible for subsidized health care.

Officials have said, if the county turned down this particular grant, it would go back to the federal government.

"I don't see how it serves the community to turn down $400,000 for a health clinic," said County Board member Gerry Jones, D-Aurora. "I don't see how, after our federal representatives went to bat for us, we give it back."

2-11-04 Chronicle

# Campton considers making changes to its open space plan

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

CAMPTON TOWNSHIP — Township officials might have another property to think about when considering how to spend their money on open space.

The property under consideration is about 65 acres and could be used for passive recreation.

"The property has been requested to be put on the plan," Campton Township Supervisor Neal Anderson said. "We can't even talk to the owner until it's on the plan."

Trustees have agreed not to consider land for purchase unless it is listed on the township's open space plan.

Since created, the 50-property open space plan has been amended twice to delete one property and add five others.

On Tuesday, trustees agreed to set a public hearing on the proposed amendment.

The meeting is slated for 6:45 p.m. March 9, at the Campton Township Community Center, 5N062 Old La Fox Road, Wasco.

In 2001, Campton Township residents approved an $18 million open space referendum, which township officials are spending on land to save it from suburban sprawl.

About 700 acres have been purchased so far, officials said.

That land will be used for public parks, ball fields, picnic grounds and open space.

The most recent buy was in November 2003 for the 120-acre Poyner property. Plans call for a pavilion, tennis courts, ball fields, soccer fields and a walking path.

Other purchases include:

- $6.1 million to buy 243 acres that contain the origin of the Blackberry Creek. The land was purchased in November 2002 from Shodeen Inc.
- $4.3 million for the 220-acre Corron Farm. The forest preserve and township paid $4 million for 340 acres. The state awarded a $2 million grant, and the township and forest preserve each paid $2 million.
- $1.1 million for 95 acres of the Mongerson Farm, which added open space to Garfield Farm.

Anderson said the township is in negotiations to buy several more properties, but he declined to elaborate.

"We are looking at another 100 acres or so," Anderson said.

Judy Hines, who serves on the township's open space committee, said work is progressing on what to do with each of the properties already purchased.

"I'm really happy with what is happening," Hines said. "We are starting to do a strategic plan."

## Volunteers needed

- Campton Township officials seek volunteers to serve on committees for the township's open space properties. To volunteer, call Campton Township Administrator Julia Glas at (630) 377-5705.

# Kane OKs transfer of part of Randall to North Aurora

2-11-04 Chronicle

*Proposal gives village control between I-88 and Orchard Road*

By TOM SCHLUETER
and ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Board on Tuesday approved an agreement to transfer control of a 1.6-mile stretch of Randall Road to North Aurora.

The stretch is between Interstate 88 and Orchard Road. North Aurora village trustees already had approved the agreement.

As part of the agreement, the county will pay the village $300,000 and continue to plow snow and mow grass until 2006. A previous agreement that county officials rejected had the county continuing those operations until 2008.

The county also will replace the bridge deck over Interstate 88 in approximately 2016.

But the county will not have to pay $190,000 to repair a dip in the road, which also was part of the rejected agreement.

The county would allow several curb cuts as part of the new agreement, including a right-in, right-out access on the west side of Randall Road, about 1,000 feet south of Comiskey Avenue.

The access would serve the 17.5-acre Randall Commons shopping center being proposed for the northwest corner of Randall Road and Oak Street.

Walgreens would be the first tenant in the center.

County board member Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, voted in favor of the transfer, but said the next time a road is transferred to a municipality, there should be no cost to the county.

"If they want the road, they should take over all costs. In the future the county should not be responsible for any cost," Griffin said.

"We came to a fair transfer. It will benefit North Aurora and it will benefit the county," said William Wyatt, R-Aurora, Transportation Committee chairman.

The Illinois Department of Transportation still must approve the agreement before the transfer can take place.

## Agreement includes ...

**Kane County will:**

- Pay $300,000.
- Plow snow and mow grass until 2006, instead of 2008.
- Replace bridge deck over Interstate 88.
- Won't have to repair dip in Randall.

2-11-04 Beacon News

# Man pleas to save his land from Kane grab

**By Daniel Duggan**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Clayton Gill pleaded with the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission to stop the process of condemning a portion of his property.

Gill and his nephew, Matthias also vowed to the board members that they do not intend to go along with condemnation quietly.

"We will litigate this to the end," Matthias Gill said. "This was my grandfather's property, and I will pass this on someday."

The Gill family has been at odds with the county since 2000 over a county bike path that runs through 200 feet of the Gill property along the Fox River north of St. Charles. Since 1987, the district had leased the stretch of land from the Gill family for just $10 a year. That agreement expired in 2000, and the district and the family began negotiations.

At one time, the family asked for as much as $1,500 a month for a new lease. The district offered as much as $500 a month. The district also offered $300,000 to buy the property, although the Gill family asked $1.2 million.

Clayton Gill pointed out that the forest preserve district has acquired the 53-acre Arthur Andersen parcel that surrounds the Gill property. He told forest preserve commissioners Tuesday that it would be far less costly — $90,000 by his estimate — to run the path around his property rather than take it through condemnation.

"Leave this to us; this is our property," he said. "For less money, you can route around us."

Commission President John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, did not respond to the Gills' request during the meeting. After the meeting, he said the plan had been considered, but it was not feasible.

"The topography there is so steep, we've ruled it out as an alternative," Hoscheit said. "You would also have to remove a significant number of trees, and then you have a slope that heads straight down near the river."

Clayton Gill, however, rejected that argument and said there are portions of the bike path that are a steeper grade than what is found on the property adjacent to his.

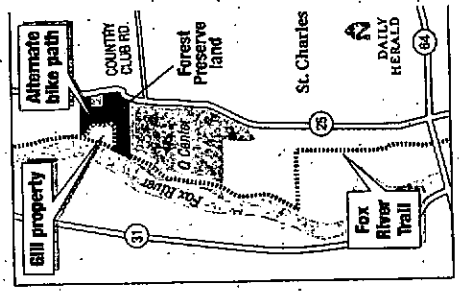
In a 19-5 vote last month, the forest preserve commission voted to condemn the property. The Gill family was served with the condemnation papers within the last few weeks, Clayton Gill said.

2-11-04 Daily Herald

# Family warms forest preserve district

## *Pursuing land condemnation would be costly fight, owners say*

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*




The family that controls a small stretch of the Fox River bike path in St. Charles Township didn't back down to the Kane County Forest Preserve at the negotiating table, and now says it won't in the courtroom either.

"We haven't lawyered up yet, but we will," said Clayton Gill, addressing the forest preserve commission Tuesday.

Years of private bargaining and often public back-and-forth, over the 200-foot stretch of the bike trail took a seemingly conclusive turn last month when the forest preserve commission voted to condemn the Gill's portion of the trail and the 1-acre homestead adjacent to it.

Now the Gills are warning the forest preserve to stay away from their land or face what they say would be a costly and unnecessary legal fight. As part of that, they have their own plan for the forest preserve to wrap the trail around them.

But what started as an effort to renew a riverfront lease has turned into a hostile land-acquisition battle. Forest preserve leaders say they are working to maintain the trail's continuity and tried for years to work out an amicable solution after a 15-year lease for the use of the property expired in 2000.

Gill family members say they have been bullied by the forest preserve and all they want is a fair amount for the property, which has been in the family for generations. Now they are trying to convince the commission to back off the condemnation method — made official Sunday when the Gills were served with court papers — and embrace a plan that would swing bikers around the property.

That plan was presented to the commission Tuesday by Clayton Gill, son of the original owners, and Matthias Gill, Clayton's nephew and grandson of the original owners.

The Gills want the forest preserve to consider rerouting the bike path onto newly acquired forest preserve land surrounding their property, known as Foxpatch. That surrounding property was bought from Arthur Andersen last month.

Clayton Gill presented a budget estimate and proposed route for the new bike path, saying the $89,000 reconfiguration would be cheaper then a drawn-out condemnation that easily could end up costing $500,000 to $1 million.

"The costs are leaning in favor of going around us," said Matthias Gill.

But forest preserve leaders say the sloped topography surrounding the Gill property makes moving the trail difficult and a poor alternative.

And forest preserve President John Hoscheit, a St. Charles Republican, said he isn't convinced by the late pleas from the Gills saying they want to keep the property and the house on it.

"What was said today is contrary to what was said before," Hoscheit said, referring to early negotiations.

Hoscheit said in those negotiations the Gills said they didn't want the house. Matthias Gill said Tuesday the family said that only to save the negotiations and stressed the family doesn't want to sell to anyone. Still, the forest preserve doesn't seem to be bargaining anymore.

"We are moving forward," Hoscheit said. "I don't anticipate any change in that."

2-11-04 Chronicle

# Gill family vows to 'litigate to the end'

*Wants bike path rerouted using Andersen land*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Gill family, whose property north of St. Charles is being condemned by the forest preserve, vowed Tuesday to "litigate this to the end."

Clayton Gill and nephew Matthias Gill spoke before the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission meeting and argued that moving the bike path would be cheaper than condemnation.

Clayton Gill said the forest preserve has offered $400,000 for the acre lot that has 200-feet of Fox River frontage. When added to the legal costs, Gill said the cost of the property could approach $1 million.

"Most of the cost of acquisition will go into court costs and attorneys' fees," he said.

Gill said his brother is a landscape architect who designed an alternative route for the bike path behind the Gill property. It would cost $90,000, he said.

"We are one acre, a house, a family. It's where I grew up," Gill said.

Forest preserve president John Hoscheit said the eminent domain suit was filed last week.

The district's attorney is paid on a retainer, and Hoscheit said the legal costs would not reach the numbers Gill was putting forth.

"His numbers are suspect," Hoscheit said.

The district last month bought 53 acres from Arthur Andersen that surrounds the Gill property. Gill proposes the bike path that now crosses in front of the house be rerouted using the Arthur Andersen land.

Hoscheit said he did not know how much rerouting the path would cost. Topography would make for a steep ride, he said.

Matthias Gill, whose father, Douglas, serves as executor of the estate, said the forest preserve has not negotiated in good faith.

"Negotiating with us while planning behind closed doors (to take the property) is not good faith. We are not willing to sell this land to anyone. We will litigate this to the end," Matthias Gill said.

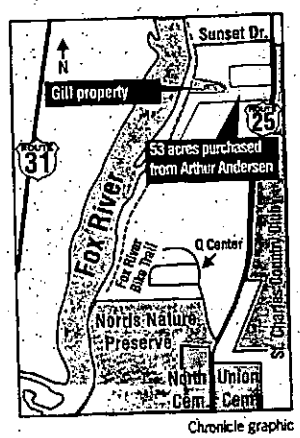
District officials were tight-lipped Tuesday. Hoscheit offered no other comments.

Talks between the Gill family and district have been contentious.

The relationship started in 1987 when the district negotiated a 15-year lease with Clayton and Douglas Gill's father that paid the family $10 a year.

The lease expired in August 2002. District officials said the family's asking price to renew the lease, $1,500 a month, was too steep.

See GILL, page 2



Chronicle graphic

## Gill

Continued from page 1

The family argued that the district has failed to live up to the terms of the lease, which calls for the trail to return to its natural state upon its expiration.

"There are better alternatives now that the Arthur Andersen property as been acquired," Matthias Gill said. "This is an issue of the proper use of government money and respect of property rights."

"This is discretionary spending. It's not for a new road, it's for a bike path," Clayton Gill said.

# Developers present STC water park plan

2-11-04 Chronicle

## *Residents worried about traffic, noise*

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

ST. CHARLES — Developers of a proposed water park on Kirk Road that would attract 300,000 seasonal visitors presented their concept plan Tuesday to the plan commission.

But residents in the area have questions about the park's impact.

The Lundmark Group of Batavia is pitching a 71.5-acre outdoor water park at the northeastern corner of Kirk Road and Division Street. The plan includes commercial space, but details of that use remain uncertain.

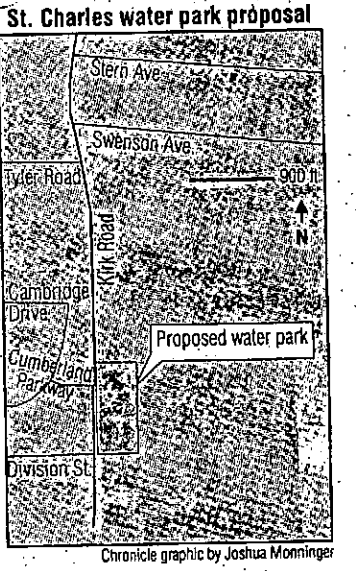
The park would extend north along Kirk Road to a point slightly north of Cumberland Parkway in an area currently part of unincorporated Kane County. The proposal calls for the area to be annexed into St. Charles.

Randy Whitt, a Lundmark Group principal partner, said the large water park has been in the works for nearly 12 years and includes a variety of water amusements, such as tube slides and a wave pool.

"We envision this to be totally family-orientated," Whitt said.

The plan calls for the water park to take up to 25 acres, 20 total acres of parking, a St. Charles electrical substation and a detention pond.

St. Charles water park proposal




Chronicle graphic by Joshua Monninger

Two different commercial lots are included in the plan, an 11-acre plot on the park's northwest side, across the street from the Cumberland Green Cooperative, and a 2-acre plot on the northeastern corner of Division Street and Kirk Road.

But questions about the proposal are mounting. Residents in the area wonder how the development would affect their quality of life. Traffic, lighting and noise were among the concerns of residents at the meeting.

"I see the perfect storm thing happening," said John Monken, who lives on Division Street. "I do see that traffic will be a situation."

Monken said traffic would be problematic on days of Kane County Cougars games, St. Charles East Side Sports Complex events and with the water park.

See WATER PARK, page 2

## Water park

Continued from page 1

Jim Urhausen, a consultant for the developers, said traffic would produce half of that which is produced by Cougars' games and would be accommodated with Division Street improvements.

Whitt said the park would be open from 10 a.m. to as late as 7:30 p.m.

The park is expected to average 3,000 visitors each day, with as many as 6,000 visitors flocking to the park on peak days. Developers hope to attract up to 300,000 visitors during the 100-day season.

Water use at the park initially would take 1 million gallons for the "initial fill" each year and would top 4 million gallons each season.

The plan commission took no action other than tell developers their concerns about the proposal because the plan is only a concept.

But if developers choose to move forward, they would face another meeting with the plan commission for a formal hearing. Annexation plans would trigger another public hearing.

# County board raises salaries

2-11-04 Chronicle

## *Vice chairman salary deleted*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — County board members voted Tuesday to increase salaries for the board chairman and themselves, while deleting the salary for the vice chairman.

The increase in board members' salaries approved at Tuesday's meeting will take effect Dec. 1, 2006. The chairman's salary increase will take effect Dec. 1, 2004.

Tuesday's 17-6 vote increased the chairman's salary $1,000 per year for the next four years, meaning whoever is elected in November — Democrat Tom Meadath or Republican Karen McConnaughay — will earn $85,000 at the end of his or her term.

Chairman Mike McCoy will earn $81,000 in his last year in office. He is not seeking re-election. His term ends in December.

County board salaries will increase $500 per year, as they have since Dec. 1, 2002.

See SALARIES, page 2

### Transfer OK'd

• The county board approved the transfer of control of part of Randall Road to North Aurora.

Page 4A

## Salaries

Continued from page 1

In 2000, the board, which had not increased its salary for four years, voted to bump salaries from $12,000 to $15,000 beginning Dec. 1, 2002, with built-in $500 per-year increases to $16,500 effective in December 2005. Board members' salaries now stand at $15,500.

"When we ran for office, people asked us why, and we said 'I choose to give back,' or 'I choose to serve the community,'" said Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee, who voted against the increase. "I'm quite happy with my salary the way it is."

Tuesday's vote increases board members' salaries to $17,000 on Dec. 1, 2006, and to $17,500 on Dec. 1, 2007.

John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, also opposed the salary hike.

"I personally believe this is a conflict of interest," Noverini said.

McCoy said the increase would not take effect until after the 2006 elections, meaning all 26 sitting members will have to stand for re-election before the increase kicks in.

"It's only a half-conflict," McCoy said, jokingly.

"You're voting for a position, not people," said William Wyatt, R-Aurora, who voted in favor of the increase.

The chairman's salary increase was approved without discussion. With the same vote, the county board removed the $7,500 vice chairman salary.

Instead, the vice chairman will be paid per diem, up to 10 times a month.

In addition to their salaries, county board members also receive a $30 per diem payment for every meeting or county function they attend.

### Voting 'yes'

- Penelope Cameron, R-Aurora
- Jan Carlson, R-Elburn
- Jack Cook, R-Elgin
- Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora
- Ken Griffin, D-Aurora
- John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles
- Catherine Hurlbut, R-Elgin
- Gerald Jones, D-Aurora
- Bob Kudlicki, R-Hampshire
- James Mitchell, R-North Aurora
- Rudy Neuberger, D-Aurora
- Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora
- Margaret Scalfaro, R-Carpentersville
- Caryl VanOvermeiren, R-St. Charles
- Daniel Walter, R-South Elgin
- Barbara Wojnicki, R-St. Charles
- William Wyatt, R-Aurora

### Voting 'no'

- Deborah Allan, R-Elgin
- Lee Barrett, R-East Dundee
- Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles
- John Noverini, R-Carpentersville
- Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia
- Donald Wolfe, R-Elgin

### Absent

- Robert McConnaughay, R-Geneva
- Mary Richards, R-Aurora
- Jackie Tredup, R-Elgin

# Lauzen: Borrowing will lead state to debt

2-12-04 Chronicle

## *Blagojevich officials say claims unfounded*

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

AURORA — State Sen. Chris Lauzen said studying at Harvard's business school gave him two things — rugby teammates and an understanding of how to use a calculator.

That's what Lauzen, R-Aurora, used Wednesday to show how recent state borrowing translates into future debt for Illinois residents.

"(The state) borrowed $1,000. It looks like $1,000 and in actuality what it is going to cost you is $4,300," Lauzen said with calculator in hand.

For those without an Ivy League calculator touch, Lauzen was portraying the amount that his calculator — using 5 percent interest over 30 years — estimates would be the share residents would owe because of refinancing of $10 billion.

State lawmakers approved the plan last year to shore up state employee pension funds.

Lauzen and other Senate Republicans are criticizing the move as part of a larger borrowing spree by Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich that will strap future generations with the burden of paying for spending today.

The lawmakers have introduced legislation designed to limit the governor's ability to borrow money and impose stricter rules on financial maneuvers, such as postponing interest payments for decades on bonds and length of payout.

The plan was introduced Friday, but lacks a Democratic sponsor. That could mean that the proposal is dead on arrival because Democratic lawmakers control both legislative chambers.



Lauzen

Blagojevich administration officials, however, called the claims unfounded and said there was an attempt to hide spending by previous Republican governors and legislators that caused the pension funds to be short.

"I think that Republican legislators are attempting to rewrite history," said Becky Carroll, spokeswoman for the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, "their own history, which was filled with fiscally irresponsible growth in favor of our predecessors' (budgets), that failed to meet the state's contribution to the pension fund and pay our bills on time."

Carroll said the governor's office negotiated the refinancing of $10 billion of an estimated $35 billion shortfall in the state's pension funds. She said the large deficit was caused by years of underfunding by previous administrations.

The state pension funds include nearly 600,000 retired and current employees, as well as dependents. The state contributed about $1.8 billion last year to the funds. At least $2.1 billion will be contributed this year, she said.

Carroll said the refinancing lowered the interest rate owed on that $10 billion by 3.5 percent. She said this resulted in savings of about $7 billion, which was used to help further stabilize the pension funds.

But Senate Republicans oppose the refinancing because it reversed the period of when the state pays its interests from sooner until later and extended the maturation period by five years. They said this would cost taxpayers more in the end.

Carroll said the a delay in interest payments is needed to pay for government services while also paying down interest leftover from debt entered into by former Republican Gov. George Ryan's administration.

Lauzen and other Senate Republicans also are criticizing Blagojevich for doubling the state's general obligation bond debt and allowing no-bid bond sales that have contributed to higher bond fees than the state has paid in the past.

2-12-04 Chronicle

# Barsanti gets backing of police unions, chiefs

## *Candidate is in heated four-way race*

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County state's attorney candidate John Barsanti was endorsed Wednesday by sheriff's and police unions and the police chiefs of four county communities.

Barsanti, 52, of St. Charles, is in a heated four-way campaign for the Republican nomination in the March 16 primary. The race includes St. Charles attorney Tim O'Neil, and Joseph Rago and T. Michael Leuer, both of Geneva.

Barsanti received the support of the Kane County Sheriff's Department Fraternal Order of Police, the St. Charles Police Patrolman's Association and members of Batavia and Aurora police departments.

A former Kane County prosecutor, Barsanti also was endorsed by police chiefs Chuck Budde of the Kane County Forest Preserve, and Joe Pena of East Dundee, James Montalbano of Sleepy Hollow and Tom Atchinson of Hampshire.

Barsanti called the support significant, noting the importance for the state's attorney to effectively work with police as the county's top law enforcement officer.

Wednesday's endorsements, at the Pump House banquet hall in Geneva, were the latest action in the state's attorney's race leading up to the primary, where Barsanti and O'Neil appear to be the leading contenders.

O'Neil last month was endorsed by members of several public safety and labor unions, the Tri-Cities mayors.

Barsanti also is supported by former Kane County State's attorneys Robert J. Morrow, Robert Casey, Gary Johnson and David Akemann and at least five elected officials.

The winner of the GOP primary would face Democrat Renee L. Robinson in the November election.

2-12-04 Chronicle

# Batavia officials to consider dam proposal today

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — Aldermen today will consider the Illinois Department of Natural Resources offer to replace the north dam with a new structure 900 feet upstream.

The city council will listen to IDNR officials, as well as representatives of the pro-dam removal Batavians for a Healthy River and the Keep the Dam group, which advocates repairing or replacing the structure in its existing location.

Whether aldermen accept the IDNR's proposal to build a new Fox River dam or take some other course of action appears uncertain.

"I think the council is fairly well divided," Mayor Jeff Schielke said. "I'm not convinced we're going to find a clear consensus."

The meeting will be at 7 p.m. today in the council chambers of the Batavia Government Center, 100 N. Island Ave.

IDNR initially had proposed to remove the dam, create an impoundment for Depot Pond and install a series of riffles and shoreline treatments as far north as the Fabyan Forest Preserve causeway. The project would cut the river's width in half and cost about $8.5 million.

However, opposition to the project and Batavia residents last April overwhelmingly voted in an advisory referendum to keep the dam in place.

Opponents say the narrower river would be unattractive and create mudflats along the shoreline. They also argue that the riffles that IDNR proposes placing in the waterway will constitute navigation hazards.

**Batavia dam meeting**

- **When:** 7 p.m. today
- **Where:** City council chambers, Batavia Government Center, 100 N. Island Ave.

Proponents contend that the project will improve the health of the Fox River by creating a free-flowing waterway, allowing the passage of fish.



Schielke

Late last year, the city council approved a resolution asking the IDNR if it would be willing to replace the dam.

The response from the state agency was that it would be willing to build a new dam 900 feet north, connecting with Duck Island. Depot Pond still would be impounded under the new plan.

Since then, the Batavia Park Board reiterated its position in favor of the 5-foot-high "half-dam" option, arguing that such a structure would achieve the park district's goals of recreation on the river and protecting the Batavia Riverwalk.

Schielke also supports the half-dam option.

See DAM, page 2

## Dam

Continued from page 1

"I have not changed my opinion," the mayor said. "But that's not even on the table."

IDNR officials have said it would cost about $2 million to repair the dam, but recommend against that option because it would not achieve IDNR's goal of allowing for the passage of fish and watercraft.

Schielke said he believes that whatever is decided, the state might not be able to fund the project anyway, because of budget constraints.

"My concern is we could be sitting here five years from now having this same discussion," Schielke said.

# 'County in good financial shape'

2/12/04 Chronicle

## Extra money will go toward transportation, capital projects

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Higher-than-expected fund balance is the result of higher revenue in 2003 means an additional $3.5 million will go into Kane County capital projects this year.

County Finance Director Cheryl Pattelli on Wednesday told members of the Finance Committee that the high revenues was the number of residents who refinanced their mortgages. The Recorder of Deeds office brought in $5.9 million last year, $2.5 million more than expected.

The county collects a $12 fee for every document recorded. County Recorder Sandy Wegman said the office recorded more than 200,000 documents in 2003, a record.

Pattelli said the final totals will not be known until May, when the annual audit is complete. The excess might be a little less as some bills from 2003 come in, she said.

"We are solid. The county is in good financial shape," Finance Committee Chairman Douglas Weigand, R-Batavia, said. "It's because of the hard work of this committee."

Board Chairman Mike McCoy said it was important to keep the extra money out of operating budgets. "When you have an excess fund balance, you don't want to turn that into operating funds," McCoy said. "That's just good accounting.

"It's not all about under-budgeting. It's about being tough on spending," he said.

McCoy said he will make suggestions to the board about what to do with the excess.

One idea, he said, is to use some of it to build the safety improvements on the S-curve on Randall Road south of Crane Road.

See MONEY, page 2

## Money

Continued from page 1

A median barrier on Randall Road would cost a minimum of $200,000, and McCoy said the project currently has no funding source.

"The board will make the final decisions," he said.

Some departments and offices still spent more than budgeted, and Pattelli warned that budget makers cannot rely on excess revenue every year.

"All that (mortgage) refinancing is done. You can't do your budgets hoping you're going to be $2 million to $3 million over," she said.

The sheriff's office was $1.05 million over budget, and corrections was $1.05 million over budget. Corrections board and care, the fund from which the county pays to farm out its inmates, was $482,506 over budget.

The state's attorney's budget came in $266,316 over budget and circuit clerk's office was $106,489 over budget.

On the revenue side, the state's attorney's income was $1.7 million, or $691,960 more than budgeted. Circuit clerk's revenue was $392,057 more than the $5.5 million projected.

The sheriff's office brought in $131,470 more than projected.

The $3.5 million brings the county's total fund balance to $25 million, which McCoy said is too high.

The county should keep three months operating expenses in the general fund, which would total about $15 million, McCoy said.

Any excess will be transferred to transportation projects and the county's capital improvement fund, he said.

# Campton backs Randall safety improvements

2-13-04 Chronicle

## *'It's our kids who are driving that road'*

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

CAMPTON TOWNSHIP — Township officials said the recent death of a 17-year-old St. Charles girl illustrates the need for safety improvements on Randall Road.

This week, trustees voted 4-0 in support of Kane County's effort to increase safety along a stretch of Randall Road north of Red Haw Lane and south of Silver Glen Road.

"Campton Township is the residence for hundreds of families who have children who attend (St. Charles) North High School and Wild Rose (Elementary) School," the resolution reads in part. "The safety and well-being of Campton Township residents are a primary concern."

Trustees debated whether to write a letter to county officials or to support a resolution instead. At issue was Randall Road's location, which is several miles east of the township's border.

"It's our kids who are driving that road," trustee Rich Manser said.

On Nov. 4, 2003, North High School senior Samantha Joos, 17, died after her car crossed the center line during a rainstorm.

The accident happened along the S-curve south of Red Gate Road.

Joos lived in Arbor Creek, a Campton Township subdivision.

Her death sparked a county debate over Randall Road safety improvements, which could include a speed limit reduction and the installation of a raised median.



**Joos**

Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey has ordered more deputies to issue tickets to speeders on Randall Road.

Also, speed trailers will collect traffic data to determine trends.

The speed limit on the S-curve is 55 mph, but Ramsey said a study of tickets issued shows that speeders, on average, travel 14 mph over the limit.

The safety debate was fueled by former St. Charles School Board member Steve Cole, who addressed the Kane County Board in December.

Since then, the Kane County Department of Transportation has conducted a study.

The county's transportation committee has approved plans to install warning signs.

A second phase involves raising the median.

Kane County Board member Barb Wojnicki, R-St. Charles, said a large median and road-widening project would be too expensive to implement.

Rather, county officials likely would favor a narrow raised median, said Wojnicki, whose district includes Campton Township.

*Contributing: Tom Schlueter*

2-13-04 Chronicle

# Friends of Fabyan get grant to help save garage

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Friends of Fabyan received a $5,000 grant, helping the group get closer to reaching its goal of saving the Fabyan garage.

The Landmark Preservation Council of Illinois awarded a $5,000 Endangered Building Grant to help prevent demolition of the garage located in the Fabyan Forest Preserve in Geneva.

The garage, built in 1912 for Col. George Fabyan's estate, is plainly visible from Route 31 near the entrance to the forest preserve.

The forest preserve district's Utilization Committee voted in June to have the garage and attached shop building demolished. Friends of Fabyan and Preservation Partners, the group that operates the Fabyan Villa, requested time to apply for grants to save the garage.

The committee gave the groups until January. Then at its Jan. 29 meeting, it granted another extension to May.

An architectural study estimated it would cost $244,000 to refurbish the structure.

Friends of Fabyan co-president Darlene Larson said that, in addition to the Landmark Preservation Council, grant requests have been submitted to the state and National Trust.

The architect's study found that the garage, which has apartments on its second floor, to be in "reasonably good shape."

Larson said the $244,000 figure may be high and that volunteers would be enlisted to help in the building's restoration.

The same study found the shop area behind the garage to be in disrepair. Its renovation is estimated to cost an additional $359,000.

Fabyan had the garage built to house his exotic car collection. The garage floor has a turntable so that cars pulling off of Route 31 could be turned around to be facing out.

Fabyan was considered eccentric and housed bears and alligators on the property. Larson said 27 sites from the original site have been lost.

The Fabyan Villa is on the National Register of Historic Places.

# Batavia: Remove dam

2-13-04 Chronicle



Wayne Ratzlaff — Chronicle photo staff

**Batavia resident Dan Lobbes** weighs in for removal of Batavia's north dam on the Fox River during a special city council meeting Thursday at the Batavia Government Center.

## Aldermen vote 8-6 to accept IDNR plan

By MARK FOSTER
Kane County Chronicle

BATAVIA — The city council on Thursday voted to remove the north dam.

In an 8-6 vote, aldermen decided to accept the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' offer to remove the crumbling structure.

The IDNR's $8.5 million plan includes a series of plantings and other treatments along the new shoreline that would be exposed along a stretch of the Fox River that would become narrower.

The plan also calls for impounding Depot Pond.

However, the motion approved by the council specifically asked the state agency to eliminate the underwater riffle structures that had come to be a part of the dam-removal plan.

"I'm glad a decision has been made," said Arlan Juhl, an official with IDNR's Office of Water Resources. "We'd like to see this project move."

Juhl said he will contact the Batavia Park Board, which voted late last year in favor of the 5-foot "half-dam" concept, and see if it will concur with the council's decision.

"We need a consensus decision," Juhl said.

See DAM, page 2

## Dam

Continued from page 1

During the deliberations of Thursday's special council meeting, Juhl warned aldermen that without a decision in 30 days, IDNR would be forced to end its planning efforts for the Batavia dam project with the expiration of a consulting contract.

"Without consensus, we will have to reallocate our resources to other projects," Juhl said.

The special council meeting was called to consider IDNR's latest offer, which was to construct a replacement dam 900 feet north of the existing structure.

Juhl reiterated IDNR's position that removing the dam would be better for the health of the river, but said the agency would be willing to build a new dam if that is what the city wants.

He made clear that the agency would not be willing to repair the dam, nor replace it in its current location.

"We're not interested in reconstructing that dam," Juhl said. "We need to move on to a project that is going somewhere. We are going to devote our staff to projects that are going to move."

Voting in favor of taking out the dam were 1st Ward Aldermen Richard Hart and Jodie Wollnik, 3rd Ward Alderman Linnea Miller, 4th Ward Aldermen James Volk and Tom Schmitz, 6th Ward Aldermen Lisa Clark and Mary McCarter, and 7th Ward Alderman Dave Brown.

Those voting against were 2nd Ward Aldermen Charles Beckman and Alan Wolff, 3rd Ward Alderman Cathy Barnard, 5th Ward Aldermen Eldon Frydendall and Forrest Nelson, and 7th Ward Alderman Nancy Vance.

Aldermen did not vote on the dam replacement option.

Mayor Jeff Schielke, noting the state's dire financial situation, expressed concern that IDNR might start a project and then be forced to halt because funding dries up.

Juhl said that by law, his agency might not enter into construction contracts unless it already has all of the money it needs to complete the project.

# Registration deadline to vote looms

2-13-04 Chronicle

## *Last day to register to vote in March 16 primary is Tuesday*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Tuesday is the last day to register to vote in the March 16 primary.

County Clerk John Cunningham said residents do not have to declare party affiliation at the time they register.

A voter is considered to register as a Republican or Democrat when they vote in a general primary and request one or the other party's ballot.

"In Illinois, you don't have to declare your party until you pull a ballot," Cunningham said.

Voters will select their party's nominees to run in the Nov. 2 general election for county board, state's attorney, recorder, auditor, circuit clerk, coroner and 13 even-numbered county board seats.

The parties' nominees for state representatives, U.S. representative, U.S. senator and president will be chosen.

Referendums, such as the Geneva school district's requests for $48.9 million for a new middle school and an increase in the education fund from $3.08 to $3.43 per $100 of assessed valuation, will appear on the ballot.

To be eligible to vote, a person must be a citizen of the United States, 18 years old by March 16 and be a resident of the precinct for 30 days before the election.

Anyone who has changed names, by marriage or otherwise, must re-register in person. Also, those who have moved into Kane County from another county must re-register in person.

Those who have moved to a different address within Kane County can use the change of address form on the back of their registration card and mail it in.

Director of elections Joan Rennie said people can register at the clerk's office during regular business hours between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The clerk's office will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday to accommodate voter registration.

To register, bring two forms of identification, one of which should carry a current address, she said.

See REGISTER, page 2

### On the Net

- For information on the March 16 primary election, including a list of candidates and referendums, where to register, a list of polling places and requests for absentee ballots, see the county clerk's Web site at http://www.co.kane.il.us.

## Register

Continued from page 1

Absentee voting begins Feb. 23. Ballots can be cast at the clerk's office and most municipal and township offices.

Spring primary contests typically have lower voter turnout than November general elections.

At 34.32 percent, the March 19, 2002, primary had the third-highest turnout in the previous 20 years, surpassed only by the March 17, 1992, turnout of 47.09 percent and the March 15, 1988, turnout of 43.93 percent.

As of Jan. 15, there were 179,440 registered voters in the county, which is down from 219,721 in March 2002, however, it still is the second-highest total in the county's history.

By comparison, the 2000 presidential election saw a 68.62 percent turnout.

All totals exclude the city of Aurora, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Aurora Election Commission.

Cunningham said many precinct committee members also serve as deputy registrars.

To learn who your precinct committeeman is, or for any other questions, call the clerk's office at (630) 232-5990.

The county clerk's Web site contains a list of candidates and referendums, where to register, a list of polling places and requests for absentee ballots. The Web site is http://www.co.kane.il.us.

### Where to register to vote

- Kane County Clerk's Office
  Building B, Kane County Government Center
  719 S. Batavia Ave., Geneva
- Secretary of state driver facilities
  339 E. Indian Trail Road
  Aurora, IL 60505

  595 S. State St.
  Elgin, IL 60123

  1280 Powis Road
  West Chicago, IL 60185
- Public libraries
- Municipal offices
- Township offices

# Kane finds surplus of $3.5 million

**■ Happy choice:** Roads and other capital projects are likely places to spend

2-12-04 Beacon News

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County Board members are facing the pleasant — and unusual — choice of how to spend a budget surplus.

With near final figures in, finance officials believe the 2003 budget year had a surplus of $3.5 million to $4 million. That money is what's left over from revenues collected after budgeted money is spent.

"We underestimated revenues," board Chairman Mike McCoy said Wednesday. "It's like found money."

The surplus in part comes thanks to the huge number of mortgage refinancings during 2003 because of low interest rates. Those refinancings were all recorded as real estate transactions with the county's recorder's office. The revenue surplus in the recorder's office alone was more than $2.5 million, said Finance Officer Cheryl Pattelli.

Other offices also brought in more revenue than expected. Some of the bigger ones were the state's attorney's office, which brought in $691,960 more than expected, the county's development office, which brought in $291,787 more, the circuit clerk's office, which brought in $392,057 more, and the sheriff's office, which brought in $131,470 more.

All revenue collected in specific offices goes into the county's general fund. It is from that one pool of money that the county's different offices are funded. That is how a given office can collect more revenue than expected but still be over its budget.

For instance, while the sheriff's office brought in more revenue than expected, it still ended up a little more than $1 million over budget. The other sheriff's office budget, for adult corrections, was $754,397 over budget.

Among the other large budget overages were: the circuit clerk's office, $106,489 over budget; the state's attorney's office, $266,316 over; the corrections board and care budget,

❖ *Turn to* **KANE, A2**

## KANE

*From page A1*

which is for prisoners sent to other county jails, $482,506.

Pattelli said despite the overall surplus of revenue, the overages in different budgets is cause for concern.

"The amount over budget seems to be growing," she said. "It's much greater than in the past, which is what I'm concerned about."

### 'Good financial shape'

Members of the County Board Budget and Finance Committee Wednesday agreed they must keep an eye on the budget overages. But committee Chairman Doug Weigand, R-Batavia, said the fact the county was able to absorb overages and still have a surplus shows the county is "in good financial shape."

"Some say the sky is falling, but we held the line," he said.

McCoy said he is most likely to recommend that the surplus money be divided, with half of it going to the Department of Transportation, and the other half to the capital projects fund.

The capital projects fund currently has about $14 million, he said. About $12 million of that came originally from the Enterprise Fund, and has been earmarked for a jail project.

The county has many pending transportation projects, almost $50 million worth. Putting $2 million there may not seem like much, but McCoy said it should go toward changes on Randall Road in St. Charles. Those changes have been suggested by residents and board members for safety reasons, and a variety of options have been suggested by transportation officials.

McCoy said he likes spending some of the money on roads, because the county already puts so much money toward the courts and judicial system.

"There are a lot of people who never have a single thing to do with the courts," he said. "That's a way to spend some money on them, too."

The county also could roll over the surplus into the general fund, keeping it as part of the fund balance, but McCoy said putting one-time additional money into operating costs "leads you down a perilous path." Keeping the money in the general fund would be against county financial policy, which is to balance the budget each year.

2-13-04 Beacon News

# Realtor calls for change in impact fees

**■ Faulty planning areas:** Special cases still can be taken care of, McCoy says

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Recently enacted transportation impact fees will have "a negative impact on commercial and industrial development" in the county, a real estate official said Tuesday.

Frank Griffin, of the Realtors Association of the Fox Valley, made that assessment to the Kane County Board, which approved the fees in January. And his assessment carries some weight, because Griffin was on the advisory committee that recommended the impact fees to the County Board.

Griffin opposed the fees while on the committee, he said, although he and other members of his organization "are not against impact fees." He said he was against applying the planning partnership areas, which the county developed for other planning purposes several years ago, for impact fees.

He said that, because the PPAs were used, there is a gap between impact fees in various parts of the county.

"We believe the PPAs still work, but, if you use them to calculate fees, they create competition between areas," Griffin said. He pointed out that creating competition between developers is against orderly growth concepts, as written in the county's 2020 land use plan and its 2030 update.

"This will fly in the face of the 2020 plan," he said.

He pointed out that, since the fees are reviewed yearly, the county might wind up having to give back money to developers who were overcharged.

The board enacted the transportation impact fees to get developers to pay for road projects the county must do to handle congestion development brings. County officials identified 57 projects worth about $424 million planned for the next nine years that would be eligible for impact fee money.

The impact fee is expected to generate enough money to pay for only about 8 percent of those projects' costs, county officials have said.

Because the impact fees were applied differently to different parts of the county, officials in the Tri-Cities were particularly upset because development in Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles would pay higher fees.

Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke said it is critical in border areas, such as the 4,400-foot stretch along Kirk and Butterfield roads which has three parcels zoned commercial shared by both Batavia and Aurora. A commercial developer seeking to build in the 842 feet in Batavia could pay $400,000 more in fees than if that developer moved across Butterfield Road into Aurora, Schielke said.

Officials in the Tri-Cities are looking at the possibility of legal action against the county.

County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, in response to Griffin's comments, said Tuesday that Schielke has pointed to a few extreme areas that exist because the county had to draw lines somewhere.

He said the impact fee ordinance provides negotiation in those kinds of cases. He said a developer in that 842-foot area in Batavia probably could make a case for a lower impact fee, because it is so close to Aurora.

"Special situations can be handled," McCoy said.

Griffin, however, said the unusual situation, where the fee is much higher on the other side of the street, might not have happened if the PPAs were not used.

"My point is that we were using the PPAs for transportation, when they weren't developed for that," he said.

2-13-04 Beacon News

# Coroner candidates tout qualifications on radio

**By Daniel Duggan**
STAFF WRITER

ELGIN — The three candidates seeking the Republican nomination for Kane County coroner traded mild barbs Thursday on a local radio show.

Other than a comment incumbent Chuck West made about challenger Stan Hickrod's lack of a college degree, the candidates focused on their own qualifications and ideas for the office during their appearance on WRMN's *Politics and Issues* show.

West and fellow candidate Bob Tiballi are from Elgin. Hickrod is a West Dundee resident.

As the incumbent, West stressed his qualifications as the only one of the three to have worked in the Kane County Coroner's Office.

"I have 11 years (of) experience in the coroner's office and 40 years of experience in crisis intervention," he told the show's host and Elgin City Council member Tom Sandor. "My philosophy has been that it's not about death; it's about life."

Tiballi, a physician in private practice, touted himself as the only doctor in the race. His specialty of working with infectious diseases would help him to discern when a person needs an autopsy or not, he said.

"As a physician, I have a deep and profound understanding of the mechanics that keep people alive and also cause people to expire," he said.

Hickrod, a former investigator with the Streamwood Police Department, said he is the only person with a police background in the race — qualifying him to add an investigative perspective to the race.

"I'd be able to go in there and find more qualified staff members like myself," he said.

Toward the end of the program, West pointed out Hickrod's lack of a college education.

"My investigators are all educated in medicine and, unlike Mr. Hickrod, have a college education," West said.

While Hickrod did not attend a university, he has a degree in mortuary science from the Worsham Mortuary School in Wheeling, which he said gave him medical training equivalent to a first-year medical student.

Robert Moore, of Aurora, is the only Democrat running for Kane County coroner this year.

2-13-04 Beacon News

# Board approves parking lot for veterans memorial

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — There will be a new parking lot in front of the Kane County Government Center here.

The County Board this week approved construction of a 17-space lot that will provide parking for the new Kane County Veteran's Memorial, due to be dedicated in November. The lot also will provide more parking closer to Building A of the Government Center.

The roughly $220,000 lot will be located in front of the current lot at Building A, to the north of the memorial, which is being built into the south end of the front lawn, next to a grove of pine trees.

The lot will be made of Interlock Pavers, a special brick that does not use mortar, manufactured in Aurora.

The new lot also will not be part of the one-way traffic pattern at the Government Center, which will make it easy for people going in and out of the memorial to get in and out of the center.

Officials said landscaping at the front of the lot, combined with the new memorial, will change the look of the center from Batavia Avenue substantially.

Board members last year gave final approval to the Kane County Veteran's memorial, which will honor the 792 Kane County residents who lost their lives in seven 20th century conflicts. Those conflicts include: the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War and the Cold War.

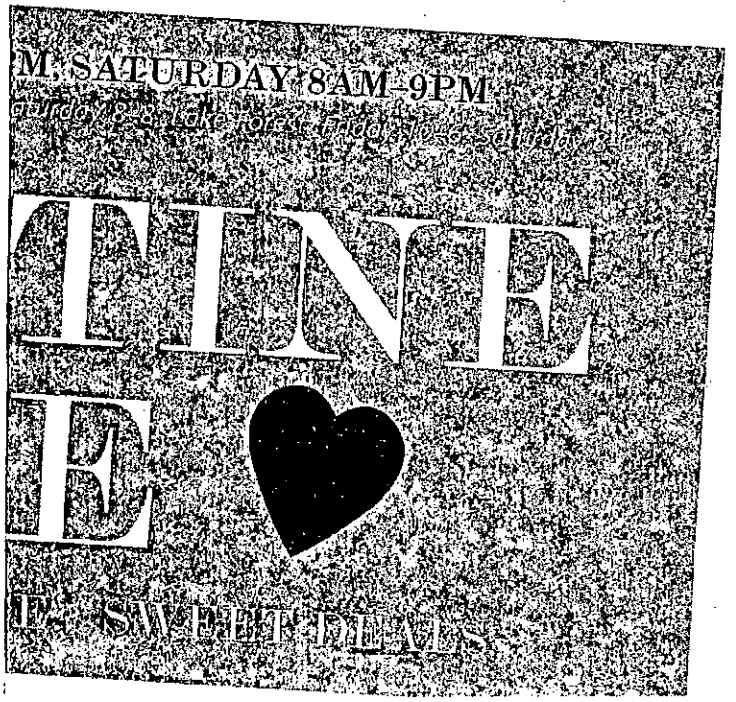
The memorial also will provide education with facts about the seven conflicts from both the county and national perspective and provide a place of solitude and reflection.

Officials are aiming to have the memorial, designed and built by St. Charles sculptor Guy Bellaver, finished by Nov. 11, Veteran's Day.

The memorial will be based around a monument to the citizen soldier, which will be eight feet high and feature a man in uniform except for his helmet, unfurling an American flag.

The County Board has allocated $400,000 from riverboat funds to cover about half the cost of the memorial. McCoy has said the county can incorporate the other $400,000 this year.

Kane County's veteran's organizations already have contributed $10,000 toward the memorial.



# Batavia OKs dam removal

2-13-04 Beacon News

By Jan Ramming
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

BATAVIA — After 18 months of public debate and reconsideration, the City Council on Thursday night voted 8 to 6 in favor of removing the North Dam. The vote will allow the state to set aside funding, proceed with engineering plans and obtain legal and land rights for the project.

Arlan Juhl of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources told council members that the state is offering two proposals: the IDNR's Alternative 1, a full-width white water rapid replacement dam; and Alternative 4A, full dam removal.

Juhl said that the state preferred full dam removal over the white-water rapid replacement dam, since it would open up a 6-mile stretch of the Fox River, improving the river's ecological health.

He urged council members to reach a consensus on the matter, saying that the state has budgeted $8 million for river improvement projects.

"We need to move on to a project that is going somewhere," Juhl said. "With our limited staff and resources that exist today, we are going to apply those to projects that are going to move."

Mayor Jeff Schielke expressed his concerns "given the state of the state budget" that state funds might not be available in the future to complete such a large-scale project.

"I'm nervous for my own town here," Schielke said. Juhl explained that the state was legally required to have all the dollars for the project in hand before work begins.

"Right now we have enough money to fund the engineering of the project," Juhl said. That phase of the project could be completed by this time next year, he said.

Alan Wolff, 2nd Ward, and Cathy Barnard,

2

## DAM

*From page A1*

3rd Ward, argued for Alternative 1 as a compromise between keeping or removing the dam. Mary McCarter, 6th Ward, and Dick Hart, 1st Ward, supported the IDNR's goal of removing the dam for better ecological health of the river.

Alderman Jim Volk, 3rd Ward, said he felt that, economically, dam removal would be best in the long run. And Volk firmly stated his case for dam removal for a healthier river.

"As far as improving the environment, some people say it's only a couple miles of the river.

"One hundred years from now, there won't be any dams on the river and people will be scratching their heads wondering why we got so wound up about this," Volk said.

"This is a start. Why didn't we begin yesterday?"

2-13-04 Beacon News



Tom Weisner is one of four candidates seeking to be the next mayor of the city of Aurora.

# Mayoral candidate Weisner quits city job

**■ Focus on campaign:** Resigns after 18 years working for Aurora

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — So much for Tom Weisner being a City Hall insider trying to ride the mayor's coattails into office.

The 2005 mayoral candidate turned in his resignation Thursday to Mayor David Stover and the Human Resources Department so he can focus on his own campaign. The resignation took effect immediately, meaning Weisner — for the first time in 18 years — is not a city of Aurora employee.

"I originally anticipated there would be a time when I would leave," said Weisner, who has been director of community services for five years. "I always thought, when the time was right, I would feel it — and I feel it."

Weisner's move caught even the mayor off guard, who said Weisner made a "wise choice" in trying not to campaign while working. Stover said Weisner will temporarily be replaced by Tess Wackerlin, who worked under Weisner as the manager of special events. Wackerlin also has been an alderman.

Someone needed to replace Weisner right away because he was in charge of the city's customer-service center, which has been providing information to residents about the water-boil situation, Stover said.

"Our main concern is for the call center," said Stover, who is not running for re-election. "That was one of his responsibilities."

❖ *Turn to* **WEISNER, A2**

## WEISNER

*From page A1*

A permanent replacement will be appointed once the city's water problems are solved, Stover said.

Weisner's decision also caught at least one of his opponents by surprise, and the move to some extent has stripped the other challengers of the most powerful weapon against Weisner: the perception that he is married to the current administration.

Richard Irvin, who has continually painted Weisner as an insider, said his resignation doesn't change the fact he has worked at City Hall for 18 years.

Irvin, who is running against Weisner along with Kane County Board member Bill Wyatt and resident Angel Hernandez, questioned the timing of Weisner's decision, especially because of his responsibility with the call center and the extension of the boil order.

"I don't know if this is a time for a leader to be stepping down," Irvin said. "If he's quitting in these trying times to focus on the campaign, then it's clear he's focusing more on the office than on the people."

By stepping down now, Weisner hopes to fend off criticism that he is campaigning on city time and running for mayor at the expense of his job. He also now considers himself "in a better position to define myself and my positions on issues."

Weisner realizes his resignation could cost him some supporters who jumped on board because of his ties to City Hall. But he also thinks it could gain him support from people who might not consider him an independent candidate.

"I'm proud of being a city employee," Weisner said. "What I don't like is discussion that I'm a clone of someone — of anyone."

By leaving a year before the election, Weisner said he hopes to broaden his support base by spending more time campaigning through neighborhoods.

"It is appropriate and timely for me to focus now on winning the office of mayor in 2005," Weisner said. "I want to walk the precincts, knock on doors and talk to as many voters as possible about what they want for the city of Aurora."

Weisner started working for Aurora in January 1986 as the city's emergency service coordinator. He held several department head positions before being named director of community services in 1999.

*Contact staff writer Dave Parro at (630) 801-5495 or dparro@scn1.com.*

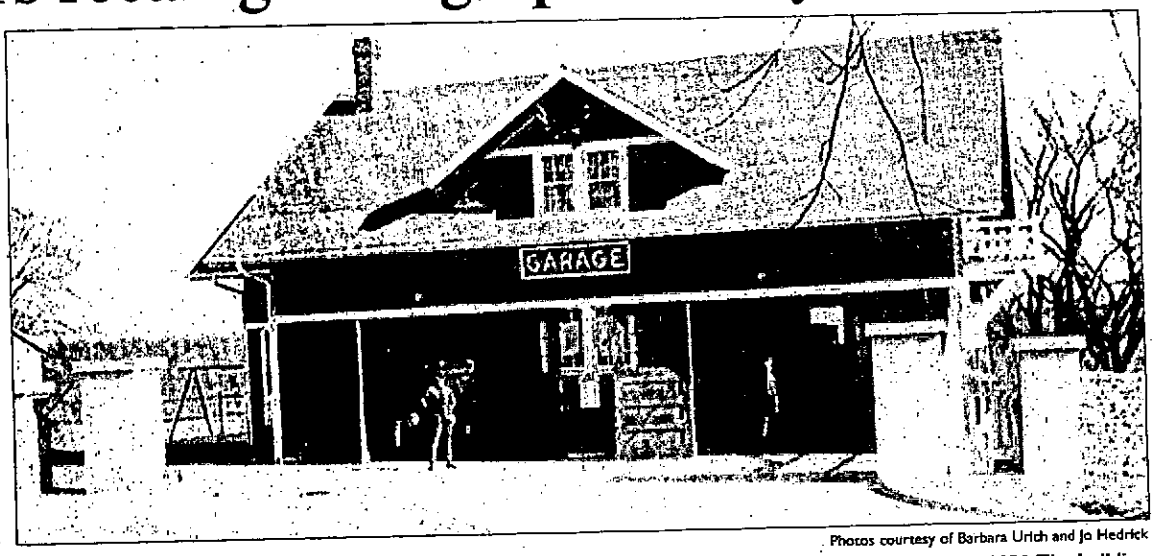
REPRODUCED

2-12-04 Republican

# Two sisters recall growing up on Fabyan estate

## *Both believe garage should not be torn down*

By Rita Hoover
Staff writer




Photos courtesy of Barbara Urich and Jo Hedrick

**Alvah Morical stands in his chauffeurs uniform in a bay of the Fabyan garage along Route 31 in Geneva, circa 1930. The building served as Morical's place of employment as well as his family's home from the late-1920s until the mid-1930s. Just north of their coach house on the Fabyan estate, the Morical children (from left) Jo, 10, Barbara, 4, and Bruce, 6, pose for a photograph.**

Jo Hedrick and her sister, Barbara Urich, insist there was "really nothing special" about their childhoods. Now in their 70s, Hedrick and Urich often sit at a dining table facing a picture window in Hedrick's Geneva home and examine albums filled with old family photographs.

They reminisce about feeding cantaloupe to bears, visiting captive coyotes and checking out the pigeons cooing inside the "pigeon fly" at the back of their home. This was nothing out of the ordinary to the sisters, who along with their brother, Bruce Morical, romped and played on the 300-acre estate of their father's employer, millionaire Col. George Fabyan and his wife, Nelle.

While the rest of the country scraped along during the years of the Great Depression, the Morical family lived a stone's throw from the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Fabyan Villa.

The Fabyans were known for keeping a menagerie on the estate, including bears, deer, coyotes and a monkey as well as a dairy herd and turkey farm. One Morical family photo depicts the children leading a pony through tall grasses.

"Yes, it was fun," said Hedrick.

Their father, Alvah, was hired by Fabyan around 1927 as a chauffeur. He and his wife, Arminta, were supplied with their own living quarters, consisting of a three-bedroom apartment on the second floor of the 1912 craftsman-style Fabyan garage, where the Morical children were later born.

"It was a large apartment," said Hedrick, who described more-than-adequate servants' quarters, including a living room, dining room, a "big kitchen," three bedrooms and a bathroom.

"And there was the porch," added Urich. "And the balcony," said Hedrick.

The "pigeon fly" is how Hedrick refers to the long, narrow structure known to others as the pigeon coop at the back of the garage.

"That's where Mrs. Fabyan kept her pigeons," Hedrick said, recalling how she spent many hours walking up and down the center aisle of the building studying the birds in the wire cages along each side. She also recalled that the pigeons flew into aviaries inside the building through entrances on its exterior.

Their father could often be found in a workshop below the pigeon coop, where tools for the estate were kept.

His job also included washing George Fabyan's collection of automobiles, made easier by the garage's unique rotating platform, Hedrick said.

"They'd drive a car in, turn it around, give it a wash and turn it out ready to drive again," Hedrick said.

Fabyan, whom they referred to as "The Colonel," was described by the sisters as a somewhat remote, but kind and generous figure on the estate, which was home to many employees and their families.

"He was highly respected," Hedrick said.

According to the sisters, it was Fabyan's paternal attitude toward his employees that led to their family's later success as turkey farmers.

"He encouraged his employees to find another way to earn a living," said Urich of Fabyan, who died in 1936.

Fabyan helped get the business started by providing Alvah with five turkeys. By 1940, the family had moved off the estate and had a successful turkey farm in Batavia.

The Morical turkey farm thrived, but their first home - the Fabyan garage - has fallen into disrepair.

The Kane County Forest Preserve District, which now owns about 245 acres of Fabyan's former estate, is considering demolishing all or part of the garage, one of the few original structures remaining on the property.

Asked what she would like to see happen to the building, Urich, wearing a necklace affixed with the $5 gold piece given to her by George Fabyan when she was born, said, "(The Forest Preserve District) should fix up what they have, what they have had for ages."



Last month, the Forest Preserve District Board gave the Friends of Fabyan, a volunteer citizens group dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the Fabyan legacy, until May to secure funds and grants to pay for repairs to the building, which have been estimated at more than $500,000.

Friends of Fabyan member Darlene Larsen said in addition to grant money, they are actively looking for donations from private or commercial sources.

As the two sisters look at their photos, Hedrick pauses when she spies a bird at one of her many bird feeders, and identifies it through binoculars.

"She's always loved birds," said Urich about her sister, "ever since those pigeons."

### How to help

For more information on how to help save the Fabyan garage, write to Friends of Fabyan, P.O. Box 801, Geneva, IL 60134, or call 232-2378.

# Endorsements pile up in state's attorney race

2-12-04 Republican



Staff photo by Eric Walter

**St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer endorsed Geneva resident Tim O'Neil for Kane County state's attorney during a press conference at O'Neil's new campaign office in St. Charles Jan. 28. He also received endorsements from the mayors of Batavia and Geneva.**

**Kane County political roundup**

**By Eric Walter**



With less than five weeks to go before the Tuesday, March 16, primary election, candidates in the Kane County state's attorney race are lining up endorsements as quickly as they can.

Two of the four Republican candidates have released lists of political dignitaries and public safety organizations that are backing their campaigns. Geneva resident Tim O'Neil held a press conference for his major announcement; St. Charles resident John Barsanti sent press releases detailing his supporters.

The two face off against Geneva residents Joe Rago and T. Michael Leuer in the Republican primary.

**Endorsement controversy?**

A statement by Barsanti during a Jan. 17 candidates forum in Batavia raised O'Neil's eyebrows. Barsanti told the crowd that Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey had endorsed him.

O'Neil questioned that fact Jan. 28, after his campaign manager, Rory Weiler, detailed a number of people who had endorsed St. Charles' current city attorney.

What is the deal with the endorsements? Ramsey said he endorsed both of them because it was difficult to choose between the two candidates.

"Out of the four people running, I think Kane County would be best served with either one as state's attorney," said Ramsey.

Ramsey did not mention the fact that Barsanti's wife, Dawn, is his secretary and O'Neil has been his personal attorney for about 10 years. No wonder he had difficulty choosing sides.

**O'Neil gets other endorsements**

O'Neil's Jan. 28 press conference gave local political spectators a list of who has joined the state's attorney candidate's bandwagon.

The endorsement by two-term St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer came as no surprise, considering O'Neil's employment by the city.

He also garnered the endorsements of Geneva Mayor Kevin Burns and Batavia Mayor Jeff Schielke. That adds up to a lot of local municipal clout, something that may play an important part in the March 16 primary.

Schielke, who was unable to attend the announcement, said one reason he backs O'Neil is his knowledge of municipal law.

"I'm heartened that he'll be able to understand issues facing municipalities," the Batavia mayor said.

In other words, if any of the towns in the county face legal problems, their municipal attorneys will be able to rely upon O'Neil for concise advice.

Among O'Neil's list of endorsements are the Elmwood Park-based Illinois Police Association; Union of Operating Engineers, Laborers International Union Local 149; Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 501; the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 99; and the Aurora Police Benevolent and Protective Association Unit 30.

**Barsanti lists supporters**

In addition to getting half of Ken Ramsey's endorsement, Barsanti has collected a number of police-related backers as well as a handful of former state's attorneys.

The Batavia, Carpentersville, Gilberts and South Elgin police officers' associations have put their might behind the St. Charles Republican.

David Ackemann, Gary Johnson, Robert Casey and Bob Morrow — every Kane state's attorney from 1980 to 2000 — also have joined the Barsanti bandwagon. Add retired Illinois Supreme Court Justice John Nickels to that group, too.

Barsanti also has garnered the support of state Republican House leader Tom Cross, R-84th District, of Oswego; state Rep. John Millner, R-55th District, of Carol Stream; and former state Rep. Tom Johnson of West Chicago. Millner served as police chief in the city of Elmhurst before his election to the Illinois House in 2002.

Barsanti added a few more endorsements Feb. 11, including the Kane County Sheriff's Department Fraternal Order of Police; the St. Charles Police Patrolman's Association; Chuck Budde, chief of the Kane County Forest Preserve District Police; East Dundee Police Chief Joe Pena; Sleepy Hollow Police Chief James Montalbano; and Hampshire Police Chief Tom Atchinson.

**More announcements to come?**

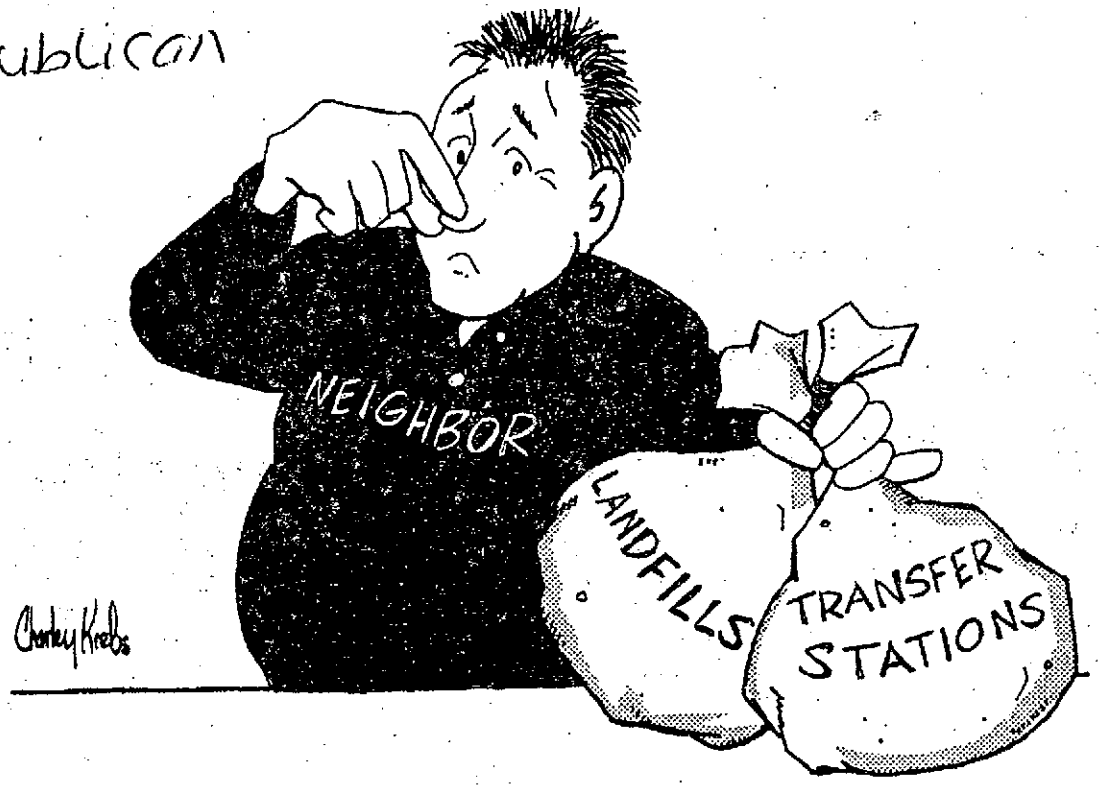
Joe Rago said last week he plans a major announcement sometime within the next two weeks. He declined to say what he intended to announce, holding it close to his vest.

T. Michael Leuer, the last Republican to join the race, said he has received no endorsements and is seeking none. Rather, he plans to seek "support" in the communities throughout Kane County.

The sole Democrat running for this office, Renée Robinson, does not need to worry about the endorsements yet, seeing as she is running unopposed in her primary.

2-12-04
Republican

Our View




Our Opinion

# Death, taxes, garbage

In addition to death and taxes, there is a third certainty in life — garbage. From animal bones in prehistoric caves to the garbage dumps of Roman cities, human habitation always means garbage.

As we reported last week, the days of the environmentally unfriendly local "city dump" are long gone. The only operating landfill left in DuPage and Kane counties, Settler's Hill in Geneva, is scheduled to shut down at the end of 2006.

Settler's Hill takes in garbage from DuPage towns served by Waste Management, Inc. Garbage from other towns in DuPage and Kane, served by Browning-Ferris Industries, Inc. or Onyx Waste Services, Inc., makes its way to the DuKane transfer station in West Chicago, then hits the road in truck trailers for landfills about 75 miles away in Dixon or Davis Junction, near Rockford.

DuPage and Kane export garbage because nobody wants to live or work near a new landfill. In DuPage, three landfills located on Forest Preserve District land were closed up after they filled up; no provision was made for any more. And if the wind is right, a driver on Kirk Road or a fan at a Cougars game knows — through his nose — why Settler's Hill's neighbors look forward to its closing date.

Although the landfill may be going extinct in DuPage and Kane, its little cousin, the trash transfer station, is proliferating. Right now the DuKane station in West Chicago is the only one in the area. More are needed. Proposals have been made for a new transfer station in Batavia and a second station in West Chicago; and a proposal is expected in Carol Stream.

The aroma zone around transfer stations may be less than around landfills, since garbage is kept indoors. But trade-offs include heavy truck traffic around stations, more big trucks on the interstates, higher transportation costs and, very soon, more locations.

The sad facts are that nobody wants to live near a landfill or a transfer station, but we all generate trash.

# County, library agree on sale of former school building

**By Rita Hoover** 2-12-04
Staff writer Republican

The Geneva Public Library District secured one of the last remaining available pieces of downtown property, giving it a chance to remain in the downtown area when future expansion is necessary.

The Kane County Board Feb. 10 approved the $1.03 million sale of county-owned property at the former Sixth Street School building, 210 S. Sixth St., to the Library District. The county's Executive Committee recommended the sale Feb. 4.

The 2-acre Sixth Street property has served various purposes since the Library District originally purchased it from Geneva Community Unit School District 304 in 1980 for a reported $240,000. The Library District sold it two years later to the county for $252,000. However, the library retained the right of first refusal for any future sale of the property.

The building had been the home of the Kane County Health Department until the department moved to its new Aurora location in July 2003. The 25,000-square-foot building now houses just one tenant - the Kane County Regional Office of Education, which would eventually be moved to a new location.

Last September, county officials deemed the building too costly to renovate or remodel and recommended it be put up for sale. The issue was again raised at the Nov. 25 Kane County Board meeting, where results of an appraisal showed the value of the property to be about $1 million.

With Geneva's current 27,600-square-foot library building at 127 James St. nearing full capacity, and predictions that the city's population may double in size within the next 10 to 15 years, library officials have been keeping an eye on the future.

The library conducted a survey last year that revealed patrons favor keeping the library in downtown Geneva. But the James Street site is landlocked, making expansion there impossible.

According to Jeanne Hintz, Geneva Library director, the purchase of the Sixth Street property is a first step and library officials will continue to utilize the current facility as long as possible, she said.

"There are still a lot of things to be considered," Hintz added.

She said space at the current facility has not become "critical" yet. But the pinch is beginning to be felt.

"We know it's coming. Some people don't realize the space crunch for the children's department," she said, especially during summer youth programs.

Hintz said one of the library's goals in the near future is to bring in a consultant to "help us best use the space we have."

Updating the former Sixth Street School building has been deemed too costly and library officials have said they would demolish it when the sale is finalized. The Library District is reportedly debt-free and a referendum to purchase the property would not be required.

2-12-04
Chronicle



**Bill Page**

# What's mine is whose?

One of my favorite John Kennedy quotes came when he referred to Nikita Khrushchev's world view. Khrushchev saw things, said Kennedy, as "What's mine is mine, what's yours is negotiable." I thought of that statement this week as I've followed two very different stories with the same common theme of property rights.

The first concerns a small bit of land on the riverfront that has been a point of contention for years. The lot is only about 1 acre, but it includes a short stretch that runs next to the river and has long been part of the Fox River bike trail. It is also property that has been owned by the Gill family for decades. If the Kane County Forest Preserve District has its way that may change.

In 1987, the Gills, for a nominal fee of $10 a year, leased the bike path portion of their land to the district. When that agreement ran out in 2002, the family offered a new lease, this time at $1,500 a month. The district balked at the price and since then both parties have been embroiled in an ongoing battle that has included the path being barricaded and legal action from all sides.

The district upped the ante last week when it filed a condemnation suit on the property. Essentially, the district seeks to seize the property from the family — and at a price far lower than what the Gill's feel it is worth. The Gill's vow to fight the district's move and I hope they prevail.

The Gill's showed themselves to be generous citizens for many years and even today allow people to, literally, trespass on their property. They are entitled to either a fair lease for access to their land or best value for the entire lot. However, selling or leasing the land should be their decision and no one else's. The district is attempting what is often called a land grab. Whether done with a lawsuit or a shotgun, it smacks of theft.

The land in question is being referred to in the press and legal proceedings as "The Gill Property," and for the best of reasons: it's theirs. This is more than an argument over how much a lot of land is worth, it is a challenge to the rights of all property owners in Kane County.

Another challenge may come in Geneva, where a proposed ordinance may dictate to property owners whether they may remove a tree from their land. Although the ordinance in its present form is not nearly as intrusive as the original draft, it still should raise concerns.

The ordinance would require property owners who wish to remove trees in order to facilitate construction to get more permits and of course, pay more fees. The object, say proponents, is to prevent certain types of trees (old growth or specific species, for instance) from being cut down. Another stated goal of those pushing this measure is to "educate" property owners about trees, but it's not clear how that is to be accomplished.

As noble as it is to want to preserve trees, there are several disturbing aspects to this ordinance. First, frankly, is the idea that what happens to a tree on my property is anyone else's business. If it is my house, garage, yard and garden, then guess what? It's my tree, too.

Another problem can be phrased as "Says who?" Just who is going to be passing judgment on you and your plans for your trees? Allowing a group of non-elected busybodies to make decisions about your property is probably not what many of you view as good government.

The next thing to be worried about is simple: What's next? If you allow a "commission" to dictate what you do with your trees, what's to say tomorrow doesn't bring the lawn and garden police, who'll "educate" you about what you should and shouldn't grow. Do you suppose they'll have a fee, schedule, too? Say, $5 for growing tomatoes because "we" approve of tomatoes, but $100 if you cultivate lima beans because "we" don't?

This is not the benign ordinance backers would have you believe. It is the government poking its nose where it doesn't belong.

Both Geneva's tree ordinance and the Kane County Forest Preserve District's actions are assaults on one of our most treasured beliefs. You recall it, don't you? It's the one that says something about home being castle. If these two governmental actions are any indication, that notion is not long for our society.

■ *Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.*

# County warns of excessive spending

2-12-04 Daily Herald

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Kane County took in about $3.5 million more than expected during the 2003 fiscal year, but despite the good news, county finance officials warned that several departments are spending too much money.

"We are giving ourselves a false sense of security," said Dan Walter, a South Elgin Republican and member of the county board's finance committee.

The committee Wednesday looked at year-end figures that show county revenue outpaced expenditures by $3,559,505 last year. But a cloud hung over the surplus figure since 11 county departments, offices or divisions spent more money than budgeted.

By percentage, some of the largest overspending came from the sheriff's office and the corrections department.

By the numbers, the sheriff's office spent $9.1 million in 2003, about $1 million more than its budget. Other overages were smaller. The circuit court clerk went $106,000 above its $3.5 million budget.

In many cases the numbers are larger than previous years, officials said.

"It seems to growing," said county finance director Cheryl Pattelli. "The amounts they are over is much greater than they have been in the past."

While departments or offices such as information technologies, the state's attorney and the coroner came in over, some others came in 10 percent or

See FINANCE on PAGE 17



Continued from Page 1

# Finance: Recorder of deeds office had surplus

*Continued from Page 1*

more under budget.

For example, emergency services spend only 80.9 percent of its budget, finance spent only 89 percent of its cash and the treasurer's office spent 88 percent of its money, according to finance department figures.

Many of the overruns — especially with the circuit clerk, state's attorney and sheriff — came from salary and overtime costs.

On the other end, the revenue surplus, Pattelli said, can be largely attributed to fees generated by the recorder of deeds office handling of a high number of mortgage refinance cases. The recorder brought in $2.5 million more than estimated.

Even some of the offices doing the most spending contributed to the surplus. The sheriff's office brought in $131,470 more than predicted and the state's attorney generated nearly $700,000 more than expected.

But because those numbers aren't likely to repeat in 2004, Pattelli warned that spending has to come down.

Overall, however, finance committee chairman Doug Weigand, a Batavia Republican, said the county's books look good.

"We are solid," he said. "People have made comments that the sky is falling and we were supposedly in bad shape. We have had battles but we have held the line."

**The cost of business**

Several Kane County departments spent more in 2003 than expected.

| | Budgeted | Amount over |
|---|---|---|
| Information technology | $1,713,775 | $30,395 |
| County clerk | $627,544 | $8,666 |
| Aurora Election Commission | $411,520 | $7,589 |
| Circuit court clerk | $3,498,522 | $106,489 |
| Judiciary & courts | $1,797,984 | $46,388 |
| State's attorney | $3,436,228 | $266,316 |
| Child Advocacy Center | $547,454 | $15,374 |
| Sheriff | $8,111,454 | $1,050,867 |
| Adult corrections | $8,105,193 | $754,397 |
| Corrections board & care | $1,900,000 | $482,506 |
| Coroner | $537,010 | $14,817 |

Source: County finance department

2-13-04 Chronicle

## A step forward

To the Editor:

On Jan. 23, the Kane County Transportation Department met with the transportation committee to discuss safety issues on Randall Road in the portion north of Red Haw Lane to Silver Glen Road.

This area includes the infamous "S" curve where a St. Charles student was killed two months ago. The discussion centered around three areas: the sheriff department's responsibility in enforcing speed limits, changes to the "S" curve including warning signs, barriers, etc., and speed limit changes. There was no discussion on the key issue of road access at Crane and Bulcom roads where motorists have to "guess" at car speeds and weave into Randall Road in order to cross. This hopefully will be discussed at future meetings.

The meeting participants all agreed changes must be made. Tremendous pressure was put on the sheriff to enforce current speed limits that can be exceeded by over 20 mph. Both the sheriff and the transportation department recommended a reduction in the speed limit. The county committee did not act on a reduction in speed limit, opting to wait until the plan is completed before determining what the speed limits should be.

Pressure must be maintained to follow the recommendation of the sheriff and the transportation department to reduce speed limits. Comparable roads to Randall which are less congested and less dangerous, are 45 mph. For example, Kirk Road, which is controlled by Kane County; Route 59 from Route 64 to I-90, which is controlled by IDOT; and Stearns Road, east of Route 25, which is controlled by DuPage County, are all four lane highways with less dangerous design and congestion. They are all 45 mph.

A major step forward has been accomplished by gaining commitment from the sheriff to better enforce existing speed limits. The key will be ongoing execution of this commitment. The professionals believe that even an enforced 55 mph is still too high and should be lowered. Our elected county board members should make that a reality.

**Stephen D. Cole**
St. Charles

2-13-04 Beacon News

# State's attorney candidate Barsanti boasts law-enforcement endorsements

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County state's attorney candidate John Barsanti has received the support of area law-enforcement officials, including East Dundee Police Chief Joe Pena and the Kane County Sheriff's Fraternal Order of Police.

Barsanti, a St. Charles Republican, touted the latest round of endorsements during an event Wednesday in Geneva.

Pena said the endorsement comes partly out of his 28-year relationship with Barsanti and partly out of his confidence in the former prosecutor's skills.

"He's an up-front, honest, hard-working guy," said Pena. "I think he has the credentials and the professionalism to move that office forward and do a good job."

In addition to his role as police chief, Pena carries strong support among the Latino community in north Kane County and with area Republicans. He is currently the chairman of Elgin state Rep. Ruth Munson's campaign for re-election.

During his event, Barsanti also unveiled his endorsements from the St. Charles Police Patrolman's Association and police chiefs Chuck Budde from the Kane County Forest Preserve Police, James Montalbano from Sleepy Hollow and Tom Atchinson from Hampshire.

He also has been endorsed by David Ackemann, Gary Johnson, Robert Casey and Robert Morrow, the last four state's attorneys to serve in Kane County prior to incumbent Meg Gorecki. Gorecki, whose law license is under suspension until June because of an ethics violation, is not seeking re-election.

"I am both humbled and pleased with these endorsements," Barsanti said in a prepared statement. "I look forward to maintaining a cooperative relationship with the county's law-enforcement agencies when I am elected state's attorney."

Barsanti also has the endorsement of Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey, though he must share that with his fellow GOP candidate and St. Charles city attorney Tim O'Neil. Ramsey said either would make a good state's attorney.

O'Neil announced a round of endorsements several weeks ago.

Joe Rago and Michael Leuer, both of Geneva and both former prosecutors, are also in the running for the March 16th Republican primary. Renee L. Robinson, of Aurora, is the lone Democrat seeking the state's attorney's office.

F3

2-13-04 Daily Herald

# State ready to remove Batavia north dam

## Close city council vote gives state the green light

By Gala M. Pierce
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

With a Batavia City Council vote of 8 to 6 Thursday, representatives from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources feel they can proceed with a modified plan to remove the Challenge dam.

The DNR plans to confirm the plan with the park board before moving forward.

But the decision came after three hours of contentious debate, during which officials questioned each others' integrity.

"That was ugly," councilwoman Nancy Vance said after the special meeting Thursday to decide the fate of the 1911 north dam.

Vance — along with aldermen Forrest Nelson, Cathy Barnard, Alan Wolff, Chuck Beckmann and Eldon Frydendall voted against Dick Hart's motion to accept the state's proposal.

"As somebody who plans to be here for 50 years, I'm not sure I'm ready to make a decision that changes the entire character of our city," Wolff said.

The state's plan involves removing the dam and pool by retaining the foundation of the current structure and installing a series of stone or rock structures, called riffles, about 6 inches high that would create mini-pools down the Fox River.

That plan also involves enclosing Depot Pond, which would require an electric pump to maintain it at a cost of $4,400 a year for the city.

Hart, as well as aldermen Dave Brown, Lisa Clark, Tom Schmitz, Jodie Wollnik, Linnea Miller, Jim Volk and Mary McCarter voted yes for the

See DAM on PAGE 14

## Dam: Pressure on city for decision

*Continued from Page 1*

state's $9 million-plus plan.

Volk said while he's in favor of preservation, he does not support a dam that has outlived its original purpose of producing energy for the adjacent Challenge complex.

The decision follows an original vote of 11-2 in July 2002 when the park board endorsed a half-height proposal. That decision was halted when Batavia voters, in an advisory referendum, said they wanted to keep the dam.

Arlan Juhl, acting manager of the division of planning in the DNR office of water resources, warned before the vote, his superiors might pull the project from the table if the city did not move forward with a decision in the next 30 days.

He also addressed concerns about whether or not the state could fund it.

"Projects that get done are the ones where local decisions have been made and plans are ready to go," Juhl said. With the vote, the state could finish engineering plans in a year's time.

# Kane gets lift from refinancing boom

## $3.6 million surplus in budget reported

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter

Although some Kane County departments and offices exceeded their budgets, the county's finance director reported Wednesday that underspending by a few, combined with a major revenue windfall from mortgage refinancing, resulted in a $3.6 million general fund surplus for fiscal year 2003, which ended Nov. 30.

The year "ended up better by about $1 million" compared with what Finance Director Cheryl Pattelli had projected in October when she forecast a $2.6 million surplus.

The exact surplus will not be known for about two months, pending completion of the fiscal 2003 audit, she said.

But even with some outstanding bills and with added costs incurred from a new labor agreement, "It will probably end up being less than [$3.6 million] but not much," Pattelli told the County Board's Finance Committee.

More than $2.5 million of the surplus can be attributed to the greater-than-expected revenue generated through the county recorder's office.

Recorder Sandy Wegman had estimated 2003 revenue from document-recording fees to be about $3.4 million but ended the year with revenue of $5.9 million. Much of the increase was the result of fees for mortgage refinancing.

According to Wegman, the office recorded an average of 904 documents a day in fiscal year 2003, compared with 688 a day in 2002. More than 1,000 documents were recorded on many days, she said.

With interest rates stabilizing and the rush to refinance slowing, the money refinancing produced has run its course, Pattelli said.

"That game is over," said committee member Don Wolfe (R-Elgin).

Board Chairman Mike McCoy (R-Aurora) said he expects to recommend that the surplus be used for capital and transportation projects rather than to offset operating expenses.

Pattelli warned against allowing the surplus to cover overruns by some departments.

"Overruns should still be a concern," Pattelli said.

The 2003 budget figures attest to the fiscal soundness of the county's government, said Doug Weigand (R-Batavia), committee chairman.

"We are in good shape," Weigand said.

# State's attorney hopeful picks up endorsements

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Decades worth of top prosecutorial experience and law enforcement leadership lined up behind Kane County state's attorney candidate John Barsanti Wednesday, endorsing him as the lawyer with the best background for the job.

"The key word here is experience," said Gary V. Johnson, who served as state's attorney from 1988 to 1992.

Johnson's endorsement was in line with nods from former Kane County state's attorneys Robert Casey, Robert Morrow and David Akemann.

Morrow, Johnson and Casey are serving as Barsanti's campaign chairmen.

Barsanti of St. Charles is running against three other lawyers — Michael Leuer of St. Charles and Tim O'Neil and Joe Rago, both of Geneva — seeking the Republican nomination on March 16.

The primary winner will face Aurora Democrat Renee Robinson in the November election for the right to succeed incumbent Meg Gorecki. Gorecki, who is now serving a four-month suspension of her law license, is not seeking re-election. She defeated Akemann in 2000.

Beyond legal colleagues, Barsanti, who served as an assistant under five state's attorneys before Gorecki, announced endorsements from three area police chiefs and six police officer groups.

"He's an honest individual," said East Dundee Chief Joe Pena. "He'll do the right thing."

Kane County Forest Preserve Police Chief Chuck Budde and Hampshire Police Chief Tom Atchenson also offered endorsements, as did officer groups from St. Charles, Batavia, Carpentersville, Gilberts, South Elgin and the Kane County sheriff's office.

Barsanti said he was honored to have the support of so many law enforcement agencies.

"These are the people the state's attorney is going to be working with the next four years," he said.

"I am very pleased these guys are here."

2-13-04 Daily Herald

# Aunt Mary's Storybook Project coming to Kane County Jail

2-13-04 Chronicle

## *Program helps keep mothers, children in touch*

GENEVA — When a mother goes to prison, usually it is her children who suffer most. Maternal imprisonment affects future generations because children's psychological health and sense of family is severely damaged by the separation from their mothers.

About 25,000 children in Illinois are separated from their mothers each year because of incarceration.

Aunt Mary's Storybook Project is working to make a difference by providing books that help both parent and child learn and grow together.

Aunt Mary's Storybook Project is named after Mary Best, a schoolteacher from Brimfield, Ill., who died in 1986 and left a healthy inheritance to her three nieces. One of them, Jana Minor, had been volunteering in prisons for 20 years. The sisters decided to use Aunt Mary's money to found Companions as an extension of her work. The Storybook Project debuted in Chicago at Cook County Jail in 1993 as a way to give incarcerated mothers more contact with their children. Supported by grants and donations from private individuals, it has inspired similar programs in more than 20 other states.

Soon Aunt Mary's Storybook project will be available at the Kane County Jail.

With the help of a trained volunteer, the incarcerated mom chooses a book that is age appropriate for each of her children, the mother then audiotapes a personal message as well as the reading of the books for her children. The books and tapes are sent to the children by the volunteer on behalf of the mother.

The books available from which the inmates can choose include a selection of award winning titles as well as books that offer a diverse and wide ranging look at many cultures. In this way, the mother can choose a book that fits her child's experiences, fears, joys and family situations. Since all of the books are gifts to children who many times have very few books, companions provides only new books.

Volunteers and donations of *new* books are always needed.

For information, call (888) 993-6246.

## Held accountable

Shame on the Kane County Board and the 16th Judicial Court for allowing Meg Gorecki to keep her job after her recent misconduct. We all make mistakes in our lives and as adults, we all must be held accountable, especially elected officials. It's time Gorecki face her mistake like any of the rest of us hard-working people of Kane County. She must resign and show integrity and respect to the people of Kane County who elected her. Anything else would be unacceptable!

## Won't be paid

If I have to read one more story about Meg Gorecki and her little slap-on-the-wrist punishment, I will scream. We had to hear her whine for four long years, and then she gets this nothing suspension. Thumbs up to some of the Kane County Board members for having the guts to vote a vacancy. The only admirable thing I can say is that she declined to be paid while on suspension. Maybe there is a conscience in there after all.

## Only four months

I'm so glad that Meg Gorecki only got four months. She wasn't the one that should have been punished. It was the ones asking for the special favors.

2-12-04 Beacon News

...wer to your long term care needs.

2-12-04 Daily Herald

# Choose trail option that omits Gill land

In an unusual split vote last month, the Kane County Forest Preserve Commission authorized condemnation of the 1-acre Gill family property north of St. Charles to "preserve the integrity of the Fox River Trail."

At about the same time, the forest preserve district announced the purchase of 53 acres of the Arthur Andersen property that surrounds the Gill property.

The district now owns sections of the Fox River Trail along the Fox River immediately north and south of the Gill family homestead known as Foxpatch.

With the construction of about 1,400 feet of new trail through the former Andersen property, the district now can link up north and south sections of the Fox River Trail.

The scenic new trail section would bypass Foxpatch on a gentle grade less steep than other sections of existing trail. Construction of the new trail section is estimated to cost less than $90,000 and would eliminate any need to acquire the Gill property by power of eminent domain.

Acquisition of the Gill property through condemnation in the courts could take years and cost Kane County taxpayers between $500,000 and $1 million. Also, rerouting the trail would help solve the district's difficulties in leasing the existing trail property from the Gill family.

The original 15-year lease expired in August 2000, but the district has failed thus far to honor the terms of the lease and return the property to the landowners.

In negotiations for a new lease since 2000, the parties have been as close as a few hundred dollars per month in rental fees. But they have been unable to come to agreement on the lease amount or legal assurances for adequate trail maintenance, security, liability insurance and other lease provisions.

Foxpatch has been a home to the Gill family for four generations, and family members have vowed to go to court, if necessary, to defend their ancestral home on the Fox River.

However, Gill family members also have repeatedly stated their support for the Fox River Trail, including its integrity and safety where it crosses their property.

In November, district Executive Director Jon Duerr announced the closure of the roughly 200-foot section of the Fox River Trail crossing Foxpatch. Yet the trail remains open and access is unrestricted.

Unfortunately, this part of the trail is in very poor condition today due to river erosion, damaged boundary fencing, downed limbs, etc. Repair of the trail is the responsibility of the district, whose lack of maintenance of the trail may be putting the safety of trail users at risk.

Now, however, the district has the opportunity to reroute the trail away from the high erosion, high maintenance zone on the Gill property river frontage.

The cost would be only a fraction of the cost of acquiring the Gill property.

Clayton Gill
Formerly of St. Charles
Madison, Wis.



JONATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey apologizes during a Saturday news conference for an officer error that resulted in the wrongful release of a county jail inmate Friday for the second time in less than a month.**

# Ramsey rips jail staff, budget in prisoner releases

2-15-04

**By David Garbe** Beacon News
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey said Saturday he is responding to the two recent mistaken releases of prisoners from the county jail with a staff "shake-up" and "disciplinary action" against specific officers.

At a press conference Saturday morning, Ramsey said human errors, not lax policies, are to blame for two incidents in which inmates were wrongly released from the jail.

Ramsey apologized to the public and said he takes full responsibility for his staff's mistakes.

Still, he said, such human errors would be less likely if the Kane County Board provided money to hire more staff and to expand the jail's capacity.

Ramsey said there are 21 officers spread over three shifts at the jail's booking department, and those officers are responsible for the 18,000 to 20,000 prisoners who pass through the jail every year.

"If I could, I would probably double that (number of officers in the booking department)," Ramsey said.

Friday's incident began at about 5 a.m., when a female inmate at the jail on Fabyan Parkway here was released mistakenly. The inmate, 35-year-old Marceah Spikener, of Aurora, left the jail but attended a scheduled appearance in court of her own volition.

Officials at the jail realized their mistake at about 5 p.m. and apprehended Spikener in Aurora at 7:30 p.m. Ramsey said Spikener was unaware her release was a mistake and would not be charged with any wrongdoing.

A similar incident occurred Jan. 29, when an inmate named Juan Ramirez was released after pretending to be another inmate with the same name who was scheduled to be released that day. Ramirez

❖ *Turn to* **RAMSEY, A2**

## RAMSEY

*From Page A1*

was found in Elgin and taken back into custody within hours of his release.

All inmates in the jail wear a bracelet with photo identification, Ramsey said, and officers are supposed to confirm each released inmate's identity and record before opening the gates.

"If the employees had just done what they were supposed to, this never would happen," Ramsey said.

He said Spikener's release was the result of two mistakes. First, an officer typed incorrect information into a computer file that said Spikener was supposed to be released Friday. Second, the officer who supervised her release failed to follow procedure, which requires a check of the inmate's paper records.

The mistaken releases of Spikener and Ramirez occurred under the watch of different jail officers, Ramsey said. He said the officer directly responsible for Friday's mistaken release has held the job for about three years.

Ramsey said about half of the 21 officers in the jail's booking department are being re-assigned as a result of the earlier incident.

Friday afternoon, the jail employees' union filed a grievance in response to the transfers, which Ramsey said he denied. He said the grievance is now "working its way through the union system."

Ramsey said he is "in the process of determining disciplinary action to be taken" against the officers responsible for the mistaken releases. When asked if anyone had been fired in connection with the incident, Ramsey said, "Not yet."

Friday, Ramsey received preliminary results from the internal investigation conducted after the release of Ramirez. Ramsey said the sheriff's office is conducting another investigation into Friday's mistaken release.

"We will review, yet again, all of our procedures to see if there isn't something else that can be done," Ramsey said. "If there is, it will be done."

Ramsey was quick to add that these mistaken prisoner releases are more than random slip-ups.

"There are contributing factors in these incidents: namely overcrowding, understaffing and underfunding," he said. "You cannot work people at the pace and under the conditions we have here for year after year without some sort of proper relief."

Ramsey said the jail has been operating above its prisoner capacity for all 30 years he has been working for the sheriff's office. The jail is designed to hold 398 inmates; it is currently holding more than 500.

The County Board is examining options for expanding the county jail's capacity.

An initial plan called for building a 200-bed addition to the existing jail. In January, a consultant recommended that the county drop the addition plan and build an entirely new jail facility at the Kane County Judicial Center.

Neither County Board Chairman Mike McCoy nor the board's Corrections Committee Chairman Karen McConnaughay could be reached for comment late Saturday.

2-15-04 Chronicle

Kane County Faces

# Burgess places kids on top of her priorities



**One of Lindsey Burgess'** many projects is collecting books for the children's waiting room at the Kane County Judicial Center.

Bob Gerrard — Chronicle photo staff

By GAIL JARDINE
Shaw News Service

"I know how much power a group of women can have," said Lindsey Burgess of Geneva. "I feel we're a force to be reckoned with. If you want something done, you can do it. It's just a matter of getting people involved."

Burgess has proven this throughout her life, from her earliest days in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she was born and grew up, to her efforts to open a children's waiting room at the Kane County Judicial Center.

"I've lived a charmed life," she says, "so it's my responsibility to be out there helping others."

Even during her school years, Burgess was a volunteer in projects to aid the mentally and physically handicapped on her own and through the service club at her school.

While working as a paralegal, she gave her time and talents to support the Cincinnati Art Museum and the Cincinnati Zoo.

"I was just one of a group of young working people getting together to try to make a difference, and having fun doing it," she said.

Burgess met her husband Tom, a fourth generation Geneva resident, while visiting Tucson, Ariz., for a friend's wedding.

The Burgesses were married and, briefly, they lived in Coloma, Wis., near The Dells, where Tom had a business. However, they soon moved back to Geneva, where they ran a Christmas tree retail business. The couple sold supplies to Christmas tree growers and lawn and garden centers that sold Christmas trees.

"It was really a year 'round business; Tom went to a lot of trade shows," Burgess said.

Burgess worked part time until she had her second child, then became a stay-at-home mom. The Burgesses sold the business five years ago. Tom now builds industrial condominiums.

See FACES, page 2

**Help a child:**

- Donated books should either be new or in good condition. For information, call Burgess at (630) 847-1747.
- Volunteers are needed to help in the child's waiting room. For information, call (630) 232-3954.

# Faces

Continued from page 1

## A place for children

Relieved of business obligations, Burgess plunged into community work.

She joined the Junior League of Kane and DuPage Counties, a philanthropic organization devoted to aiding children at risk in the community. She helped tutor at Glenwood School for Boys and supported the school's Game Nights. She also read to the children at Elgin Crisis Center.

Recently, the league helped establish a children's waiting room at the Kane County Judicial Center.

"There was no place for the children, so they were brought into the courtroom with their parents," Burgess said. "Imagine watching your parents go through a divorce in court, or watching your father being taking away to jail. The parents aren't here for just traffic court — they're here for bad stuff.

"It is amazing that this could be happening in today's world. We're not talking about one child a week; we're talking about up to 20 children a day."

When the league learned about the situation, its members were anxious to help build a place for children to stay while their parents are in court.

"The people in the courthouse and the bar association have been trying to get this done for years," Burgess said. "It's taken four years to accomplish it, but now the room is there, and the children are using it."

Space was found, and the league contributed $20,000 for the project. Members also painted and furnished it in time for its Jan. 5 opening.

Burgess is now in charge of collecting books from the community for the room. Each child receives a book as he/she leaves.

"At first, we tried to obtain new books from the community, but we need so many, we are now collecting gently used books," Burgess said. "Schools often have book drives, and members of the community are always calling me to give me books."

## Helping the community

Another group dear to Burgess' heart is the Geneva Mother's Club.

"We raise money to distribute among many community charities," she said. "We give a little money in a lot of places. If there is a need when someone is sick, or someone dies in the community, we help out. We've supported Glenwood School for Boys and Lazarus House, among others.

"One of our major programs is awarding college scholarships for Geneva High School students. We will give $12,000 in continuing education scholarships this year."

*"I've led a charmed life, so it's my responsibility to be out there helping others."*

Lindsey Burgess
**Community volunteer**

The club hosts two major fundraisers each year. In the fall, there is a craft show. Burgess was in charge of the bake sale at the show this year.

In the spring, the club puts on a fashion show. This year, the event, "Spring Into Giving," will be at Eagle Brook Country Club on April 25. Fashions will be by Karizma and Zinnia's.

Other club projects include ringing bells for the Salvation Army at Christmastime and collecting food twice a year for local food pantries.

## Family time

Burgess' son, Bradley, 6, is in first grade at Coultrap School this year, and she is getting involved with the PTO. She is home room mother for Bradley's class.

Lauren, 4, is in preschool at Kensington School.

When time allows, the family enjoys bike rides.

They also love the Fox River, as evidenced by the home they recently built. When they first came to Geneva, they purchased a small older home on a lovely river lot. After a number of years, they tore the house down and built their current home which they moved into last May.

"Every minute of every day is full, but there is a special satisfaction in getting involved with philanthropic activities," Burgess said.

"It makes you feel good, you make friends, you help the children who need it most.

"There are children who need help right here in our community. My heart goes out to these kids. Little moments can be very touching — like when I was reading to the children at the Elgin Crisis Center and this little boy just came over and hopped into my lap.

"It's so stimulating to be at a meeting and listen to what some women are doing. You realize how much you can do and what a difference you can make."

*If you know someone who should be featured in Kane County Faces, send your story idea to Gail Jardine c/o Lifestyles, 1000 Randall Road, Geneva, IL 60134 or e-mail lifestyles @kcchronicle.com.*

# Coroner's office to go paperless

2-14-04 Chronicle

## *Executive Committee gives nod to automated database system*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Coroner's office will go paperless May 1 after an automated database system received a positive review Friday from the Executive Committee.

Because the program's only cost will be monthly wireless service charges that will be absorbed in the coroner's annual budget, no vote was needed for a group of private technology firms to begin setting up an automated data base system for the office Monday.

Kim Gumino, senior account executive for CDW-G, the government arm of Computer Discount Warehouse, said there is not an automated database for a coroner's office anywhere in the country. CDW-G, Business Systems Engineering Inc., Toshiba and Sprint developed the database.

The companies will provide hardware and software valued at $94,000 to the county at no cost. The companies benefit by being able to show other government agencies and private firms how the database operates.

The coroner's office will benefit because it will be able to fill out one form that will migrate to the 23 different forms that must be completed when someone dies.

Currently, the investigating deputy must fill out each form individually.

"That in and of itself will save a tremendous amount of staff time," Coroner Chuck West said.

Finance Committee Chairman Douglas Weigand said steps toward automation often do not save money and sometimes end up being more costly than the processes they replaced.

The ability to prove a cost savings will help the companies sell the program to other agencies, Gumino said.

Because of that, proof of the labor cost savings will be documented in press releases, streaming video and on a Web site, she said.

The first year, the only cost to the county will be $2,160 for nine months for six wireless cards that will transmit data to the office.

Costs the second and third years will be $9,730 for each year, which includes $2,880 for 12 months of wireless service and $6,850 for maintenance.

The coroner's office will receive the six laptop computers. Also, the county receives six Logitech pens that contain cameras and central processing units that record what has been written and can be downloaded to the data base.

The county will keep the hardware even if it drops out of the program, Gumino said.

The hardware alone will provide a savings to the county because the office was scheduled to receive new desktop computers this year.

See PAPERLESS, page 2

## Paperless

Continued from page 1

Documents that the coroner must fill out at the time of death include death scene investigation reports, toxicology reports, pathologist reports, reports of death resulting from fatal car crashes, a list of personal effects, medication and pharmaceutical inventory, death certificates, burial certificates and crematory certificates.

County officials will decide in a year or two whether to expand the paperless concept to other departments such as transportation and health.

Gumino said she did not know how much it would cost to outfit those departments with the technology. Each department's program would have to be figured individually because of the different services they provide and the number of employees.

2-17-04 Beacon News

# Weisner defends timing of resignation



Mayoral candidate Tom Weisner says his decision to leave the city had nothing to do with the recent boil order.

## During water crisis: Call center was running well, mayoral candidate says

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — Mayoral candidate Tom Weisner is defending his decision to resign from City Hall during the water-boil crisis, saying he left oversight of the city's customer-service center in good hands after the initial flood of calls subsided.

Weisner, who left his job Thursday as Aurora's director of community services and outreach, has been criticized by his opponents for jumping ship during an emergency. The Customer Service Center, which runs the 264-INFO line that took thousands of calls after the boil order was issued, is within Weisner's department but has its own manager.

Weisner said he worked with call center manager Cecilia Soto the first day of the boil order and through the first weekend to establish emergency operations, but Soto managed the center from that point on with very capable staff members under her.

"I didn't leave my position in such a way to leave that part of the city operations that I dealt with in any sort of hindered condition," Weisner said Monday. "I think what we find is that (the call center) was one of the bright spots in the problems that arose last week."

The other mayoral candidates have tried to turn Weisner's decision into a political advantage, accusing him of abandoning the city during a time of need, regardless of whether he left a capable manager in charge.

"It doesn't erase the fact that he is her boss," said candidate Bill Wyatt, echoing statements made by fellow mayoral contenders Richard Irvin and Angel Hernandez. "He quit at a time when the city was on alert."

❖ *Turn to* **WEISNER, A2**

## WEISNER

*From page A1*

Weisner dismissed his opponents' criticism, saying they would find a way to speculate on his resignation whether it happened last week or sometime in the future. Weisner said he always had planned to step down at some point and focus on his campaign for mayor in spring 2005.

"I will leave the negative speculation to my opponents, because I want to get my positive message to the public," Weisner said.

### E-mail to aldermen

In an e-mail written to aldermen two days before his departure, Weisner defended himself from accusations that he did not call the aldermen to let them know about the water contamination. Some council members felt they were not contacted quickly enough.

Weisner wrote that he had the responsibility to "optimize the city's ability to take calls from the public" and construct messages to place on cable Channel 10 and the city's Web site. During the first weekend of the boil order, the city answered between 11,000 and 12,000 calls at various locations.

Throughout that first weekend, Weisner said he was helping to schedule volunteer call-takers, updating information to give to the public and coordinating with other call centers.

The Customer Service Division should not have been expected to contact aldermen about the situation, he said.

"Let me say quite clearly that, while I think it is important that aldermen be kept informed during situations like the one we experienced Friday, that simply could not be one of my functions, nor will it be in the future," Weisner wrote in the Feb. 10 e-mail, which was obtained Monday through the Aldermen's Office.

The memo apparently further strained a relationship between Mayor David Stover and Weisner that had been growing tense as Weisner started to become serious about his run for office.

"It was apparent that conflict would develop as Tom's vision for the city may have differed with Mayor Stover's, and it apparently came to a head," said Alderman Chris Beykirch, 8th Ward. "It's obvious that there's a growing rift between Tom and the mayor."

Weisner said the letter was simply an e-mail to aldermen explaining a situation and responding to a question.

Stover said he could not comment on personnel issues.

"Unfortunately, I am at a disadvantage," the mayor said in a statement. "Due to privacy laws, I am unable to discuss Mr. Weisner's work record or work performance."

# Error frees 2nd inmate at Kane jail

Associated Press

An inmate in the Kane County Jail has been mistakenly released, the second time such an error has happened in a month and the fifth time in four years, authorities said.

"I am truly outraged and embarrassed at the lapses in judgment of my officers," Sheriff Ken Ramsey said during a news conference Saturday.

While Ramsey said he will "not rest until this problem is rectified," he said the problem is exacerbated by jail overcrowding, understaffing and a lack of funding.

Marceah Spikener, 35, of Aurora mistakenly was set free around 5 a.m. Friday, and authorities didn't realize the mistake until 12 hours later.

Ramsey said Spikener, jailed for violation of probation on a drug charge, was not a threat to the public and appeared on her own for a scheduled court date Friday, where a judge officially released her.

Sheriff's deputies did not realize she had gone to court and apprehended her in downtown Aurora late Friday.

They released her after determining she had appeared before the judge.

Friday's incident is under investigation.

2-16-04
Chicago Tribune

(rellevay) to a special school [illegible]

2-16-04 Beacon News

## Cooperation brings power to people

ComEd has decided to back off on a proposal to install a high-voltage power line, with all of its 80- to 120-foot towers, along Randall Road after several area communities and private citizens objected. A new plan would extend present lines to get power where it is needed. The utility will host an open house later this month to explain the new proposal. We give a **THUMBS UP** to ComEd for listening to people's concerns and responding in a cooperative manner.

2-17-04 Beacon News

## Movie night

The past few Tuesday nights Bill Wyatt has sponsored Classic Movie Night at the Paramount Theatre, and it was absolutely fabulous. I can't tell you how much fun my daughter and I have had by watching those movies. It's just so much fun, and I hope he gets elected mayor of Aurora.

**Eileen McNellis,** *Oswego*

Chronicle 2-14-04

giant bonos.

## Dictionary time

Meg Gorecki needs to look up two words in the dictionary: integrity and honor. It appears that she possesses neither. How sad.

## Be a good girl, Meg

Is anyone else out there as weary as I am, opening the *Chronicle* day after day and seeing the headlines, stories, not to mention the same photo of Meg Gorecki, time after time after time. Enough. She has a four-month suspension and will go sit in a corner like a good little girl. She's perfectly capable of atoning for her big mouth and getting on with her job. Keep up the good work and get on with your job, Meg.

## County board insult

Thank goodness that both Meg Gorecki and Mike McCoy are not running for re-election. Meg reminds me of one of my grandchildren who did not get a toy from the store. She was wrong. She should stop challenging everything and accept her punishment. What bothers me is the fact that she initially lied about the matter. Once a state's attorney has been caught lying, how can people ever trust this public official again? The county board then allows her to return after her suspension. I cut the names out of the *Chronicle* on Feb. 3 so I know who not to vote for. Now, to make matters worse, Mike McCoy wants to pay Gorecki's benefits while she's on suspension, comparing Gorecki's suspension to a woman on maternity leave and a woman who had an aneurysm. What a slap in the face to females and those who are handicapped in health matters. If the county board allows benefits to be paid to Gorecki during the suspension, they should all look for something else to do and resign from the board. On the Chicago Police Department, health benefits stop for anyone on suspension over 30 days. I am sure the same goes for city workers. The suspension is aimed as a punishment, not a leave of absence.

## Gorecki indefensible

I'm concerned about the *Kane County Chronicle's* coverage of county issues. Mr. Page seems to deal more with personalities than issues. Meg Gorecki was the chief law enforcement officer in Kane County and she broke the law. I don't understand the defense of her in Mr. Page's articles. When is a law a law? Do we even know when a law is a law anymore? I got a notice that my dog's registration in Kane County is due along with the rabies even though I got a three-year rabies shot and should not have a notice yet. They want me to come in and pay $8 for another registration tag for my dog. If I do not, they will try to find me and take me to court. However, you could be an illegal alien. You do not have to register yourself. Nobody is going to bother you. When is a law a law and when is it going to be enforced?

# Sheriff upset; Kane jail lets inmate go by mistake again

**By David Garbe**
STAFF WRITER

2-14-04 Beacon News

GENEVA — Authorities at the Kane County jail discovered Friday morning they mistakenly had released a female inmate. It was the second such incident in the last month.

The prisoner, Marceah Spikener, 35, was located and taken back into custody at 7:30 p.m., Sheriff Ken Ramsey said.

He added that, after her mistaken release, Spikener appeared as scheduled for a court hearing Friday of her own volition. Spikener was in jail for a 2002 violation of probation on a drug charge.

"I am outraged as much as the general public in this breach of security and trust," Ramsey said in a statement issued about Spikener's release. "I am angry and embarrassed that this incident happened. I will do everything in my power to see that it doesn't happen again."

He scheduled a meeting of his entire command staff for this morning.

Friday's accidental release was a repeat of a similar incident on Jan. 29, when an inmate named Juan Ramirez was released from the jail after he pretended to be a different prisoner with the same name.

Ramirez also was apprehended within hours of his accidental release. Ramirez was being held in the jail on charges of battery to a child.

Sheriff Ramsey attributed the escapes to jail staff not following proper procedures, as all inmates are required to wear identification badges.

"A similar mistaken release incident occurred at the Kane County jail in August of 2001 because of a miscommunication with another police agency.

In August of 2001, another miscommunication resulted in a prisoner being released from a state jail when he was supposed to be transferred to the Kane County jail. Both inmates were quickly recaptured.

# Coroner's office to go digital in Kane

2-14-04 Chicago Tribune

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter

A consortium of technology companies was cleared Friday to use the Kane County coroner's office as a model for how other paper-laden government agencies can make the transition to the digital age.

On Monday the group will begin installing a fully electronic database system for the coroner's office.

"The goal here is to take Kane County paperless," said Kim Gumino, an executive with CDW-G in Vernon Hills, a lead member of the roughly half-dozen suppliers and manufacturers that joined to make the offer to Kane.

Of the more than 20 county departments surveyed by the group, "The coroner had the greatest and most significant need," Gumino said.

In exchange for installing the estimated $100,000 system, the group will be permitted to publicize the pilot project and to tout it as a template for other government units. Gumino said she expects Kane's system to be fully operational by May 1.

"Kane will be a significant case study," she said. "It doesn't get any more state-of-the-art than this for zero dollars," she told the County Board Executive Committee.

Coroner Chuck West said the offer couldn't be better timed for an office that is as chronically short on funds as it is long on paperwork.

"We've been trying for three years to resolve the problem of replacing a (record-keeping and data storage and sharing) system that was obsolete 12 years ago," he said.

# Fox Valley in 60 seconds

2-17-04
Daily Herald

**Memorial service today:**
A memorial service is scheduled to be held today for Robert R. Hinkle III, 34, of St. Charles, who died Friday in a fire at his home. The service will be at 10 a.m. at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in downtown St. Charles. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Cooks Manor, 124 Sangamon St., Chicago. For more information, call Yurs-Wittenberg Funeral Home of Geneva, (630) 232–7337. Hinkle is survived by his parents, Robert and Patricia Hinkle, a brother, Eric, and a sister, Jennifer.

**Davoust earns endorsements:**
Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey and county board Chairman Mike McCoy announced Monday they support Mark Davoust to represent District 14 on the Kane County Board. McCoy, who is not running for re-election, said in a statement released by Davoust's campaign that Davoust "has taken the time to educate himself on the issues." Also endorsing Davoust: county board member John Hoscheit, St. Charles Township Supervisor Jerry Swanson, Geneva Township Supervisor Pat Jaeger and Geneva plan commissioner Doug Cuscaden. Last week Davoust was endorsed by the mayors of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia. He faces Arney Silvestri in the March 16 Republican primary for the county board seat, which represents parts of St. Charles and Geneva townships. The winner will face Democrat Elaine Stern in November.

**Home invasion arrests:**
Two Aurora men have been arrested in connection with a home invasion that occurred Dec. 29 in Aurora Township, according to the Kane County sheriff's office. Tony A. Childress, 20, and Merrill A. McGhee, 23, both of 1412 Jericho Circle, each were charged with two felony counts of home invasion. About 10:10 p.m. on Dec. 29, deputies responded to a residence on the 500 block of Beckwith Avenue. Two men had knocked on the front door of a home and, after a resident answered, one of the men hit the resident on the head and an arm with a pipe, while the other man pointed a handgun, police said. Then, the men rummaged through the home before leaving with about $100 cash, police said. An investigation led to the arrests of Childress and McGhee, who remain in Kane County jail. Bond was set at $300,000 for Childress, who will appear in court Feb. 25. Bond was set at $325,000 for McGhee, who is scheduled to appear in court March 5.

**Why Elgin's water is safe:**
Both Elgin and Aurora supply their residents with water drawn from the Fox River, but only Aurora last week faced serious bacteria problems that required people to boil their water before drinking it. So why didn't Elgin have the same trouble? According to Larry Deibert, Elgin's water department director, the city last week did notice elevated levels of ammonia in the water it was taking from the Fox River. But he said Elgin quickly added more chlorine to the water supply to neutralize the negative effect excessive ammonia can have on overall quality. Deibert said such fluctuations in the water's chemistry are common and typically don't threaten the water supply. He said Elgin responded to the higher levels of ammonia, which can be harmful in large doses, so service to houses and businesses never was affected. Elgin has not issued any alerts about its water and has not required residents to boil their water recently. In addition to providing water to its own residents, Elgin supplies water to Sleepy Hollow and parts of Bartlett.

"Our aim:
To fear God,
tell the truth
and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

# Opinion

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M. EIL

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2-14-04
Daily Herald

# Saturday Soapbox

*Some opinions require lots of words and elaboration. Some don't. This is Saturday Soapbox, briefly stated commentary from the Daily Herald's editors.*

**Get ready for gridlock:**

Not that drivers need a study to tell them this, but gridlock is in the immediate future of the Tri-Cities area of St. Charles, Batavia and Geneva. Kane County's 2030 transportation plan recommends widening Route 64 to six lanes, routes 47 and 38 to four lanes and Fabyan Parkway to four lanes west of Randall Road. Right. The cost of the county's anti-gridlock projects is in the neighborhood of $2 billion. And how much is the county planning to spend on transportation in the next 20 years? $300 million. Need we say anything more?

**Trickle-down effect:**

First, the state of Illinois raised taxes on gambling casinos to 50 percent. Still unable to balance its budget, it raised that amount to 70 percent a year later. Is it any wonder, then, that the Grand Victoria casino is seeking relief wherever it can find it? It is appealing its property tax assessment in the hope of reducing its tax bill. If it wins that appeal, the city could lose $600,000 per year and a school district that has been waiting out a TIF district would lose as well. Thank the legislature for putting the city and casino at each other's throats and for helping undo the benefits the original gambling legislation was designed to address.

## Our View

**Numbers tell story**

2-15-04 Chronicle

Kane County Notebook

# Budget 'excess' is good and bad for the county

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

As with most things in government, the county's budget surplus is not exactly what it seems to be.

While having more money than expected can be a good thing, not accurately projecting revenue has the effect of depriving some offices and departments of money for their own programs.

Of course, it is impossible to predict outside forces, such as the low interest rates that encouraged many homeowners to refinance, which brought in $2.5 million more than expected.

Also, some of the offices over spent their budgets in 2003. (There is a difference between "departments" and "offices" — department heads are appointed by the county board chairman. The heads of offices are elected by the voters)

For example, Sheriff Ken Ramsey's public safety budget — this is police protection, the road deputies and investigations — was overspent by more than $1 million. The jail budget was overspent by $754,000.

Ramsey's budget was artificially low in 2003, and for 2004 received 14 percent and 20 percent increases in both budgets.

Still, it has to be a concern when some of the offices are spending more than they are given.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy noted that the only department under his control that went over budget was Information Technologies, and that is because of the crying need for updates in the county's computer systems.

The IT department was $30,395 over its $1.7 million budget.

Offices over budget include the sheriff, the coroner ($14,817 out of a $537,000 budget), the state's attorney ($266,316 out of $3.4 million), county clerk ($8,866 out of $627,544), circuit clerk ($106,489 out of $3.4 million).

The state's attorney's and circuit clerk's offices brought in more revenue than their budget overages.

***

The Illinois State Geological Survey honored three Kane County officials with the survey's Outstanding External Cooperator Award: McCoy, Development Department Executive Director Philip S. Bus and Water Resources Department Director Paul M. Schuch.

According to the ISGS, the award was presented for significant support of research by the agency and by the Illinois State Water Survey to provide a scientific basis for water resources planning in Kane County.

Faced with significant population growth and potential shortages of water, the three men secured $1.8 million to map the county's groundwater resources.

***

The Kane County Democrats are having their annual Harry S. Truman dinner at 4 p.m., Feb. 22 at Walter Payton's Roundhouse 295 N. Broadway (Route 25), Aurora.

Guests will be Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn, Secretary of State Jesse White and state Rep. Linda Chapa-LaVia, D-Aurora.

Tickets are $50 each or a table of 10 for $500. Information is available by calling (630) 544-4478

"Our aim:
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tell the truth
and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

# Opinion

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2-15-04 Daily Herald

# It's time for Kane board to earn raises

## Our View

A future Kane County Board is getting a raise. But is the raise deserved?

In a proposal passed Tuesday, a county board member's salary will increase by $500 per year, to $17,500 by 2007. A board member now earns $15,500 annually, plus $30 for every meeting he or she attends. The salary increase for county board chairman also was part of the package approved last week. The winner of the November contest for chairman will earn $82,000 as of Dec. 1, with annual $1,000 increases in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

In debating the raises, some board members argued that because these were future raises — the board earlier granted raises through 2005 — the increases were for the "board seats," not necessarily the "board members" sitting in those seats currently. True enough, but most will be serving when the raises kick in.

There are likely many who would argue that the current board doesn't deserve a raise, based on its stewardship of county finances. While we might concur, we instead prefer to issue a challenge to the future county board: Show us results.

Board members could start by finally getting the county's financial house in order. For years, the county's finances have been a guessing game. Board members argue they control the fiscal horsepower, yet every year the county's departments overspend. And every year the board treats department heads like delinquent teenagers ticketed on a joy ride — chewing them out for their actions but ultimately covering their butts. This year is no different.

When last year's spending plan was discussed in January 2003, county officials warned department heads — most of them elected officials — against spending beyond their budgets as they had in prior years. Because of tight finances and tax caps, it wouldn't be covered, they warned.

But 11 county departments overspent those 2003 budgets anyway. The sheriff's office and corrections department spent about $1 million more than the $9.1 million it was budgeted. The circuit court clerk's office was $106,000 over its $3.5 million budget.

Despite those warnings of January 2003, the county covered overspending thanks to millions in tax income, user fees and fines it hadn't anticipated. That is extra public money that could have been used to help build a new jail or fund much-needed transportation projects.

If the county board wants to earn its future pay raises, it needs to stop the financial shell games that go on every year. If, as department heads and the board chairman allege, the board is out of touch with the real costs of operating the county, then the board needs to work with elected officials and nonelected department heads to set realistic spending guidelines. Beyond that, board members must force county department heads to live within those budgets by cutting expenses rather than running deficits.

Using unanticipated taxpayer money to cover financial mismanagement is not good public stewardship. But if the future board can get the county to live within its financial means without new taxes and fee increases, then the raises they granted themselves in February 2004 will come as recognition and reward for a job well-done.

# Employee error sends inmate out of jail early

2-19-04 Chronicle

*Spikener found in Aurora, released after court appearance*

## Court date mistaken for release date

By PAUL ROCK
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Sheriff Ken Ramsey said he is outraged about an inmate escape from Kane County Jail on Friday morning and is blaming an employee error.

Marceah Spikener, 35, became the second inmate in three weeks to leave the jail ahead of schedule.

Spikener was let out of the jail at 5 a.m. after a corrections officer looked up her file in a computer and mistook the female inmate's court date for her release date.



Spikener

Ramsey said the officer should have checked the inmate's paper file first.

Spikener was in jail for a 2002 probation violation on a drug charge and would have been released after an afternoon court appearance.

"I am outraged as much as the general public in this breach of security and trust," Ramsey said. "I am angry and embarrassed that this incident happened. I think it's safe to say, every employee in the jail has no doubt that what was done was unacceptable and will not be accepted."

After appearing at Judge Jim Doyle's drug court Friday afternoon, Spikener went to Aurora and was apprehended while walking downtown at about 4:30 p.m.

Corrections officials did not know she was missing until late Friday afternoon, Ramsey said.

Spikener later was released after Doyle told Ramsey that he would have released her anyway. Ramsey said the mistake was not her fault.

"I let her go once Judge Doyle told me it was OK," Ramsey said. "She was released, thanked for her cooperation and given my apologies."

Spikener faces no other charges, Ramsey said.

The more pressing matter was the mistake that corrections officers made.

Ramsey expressed outrage at the latest escape, the second since late January.

Inmate Juan L. Ramirez walked out of the jail Jan. 27 by pretending to be a different inmate with a similar name. He was apprehended seven hours later.

Ramsey said discipline would be handed out after an investigation is completed.

While Ramsey accepted "full responsibility" for his employee's mistake, he said overcrowding and understaffing in the jail have contributed to the escapes.

"My employees are pushed to the max, have more work than they should be expected to do, and they are pushed to do too many things," Ramsey said. "It's a fact of life, if you keep pushing things as much they have, things like this happen."

# Boil order over

■ **Drink up:** Officials believe high ammonia level in the Fox River diluted chlorine that keeps tap water safe

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

2-16-04
Beacon News

AURORA — By about 4 p.m. Sunday, Aurora city officials were trying to forget about this time, and look forward to next time.

The next time, that is, that ammonia levels in the Fox River rise high enough to affect the chlorine levels used by the city to help turn river water into safe drinking water. Officials are fairly sure that is what forced the city Feb. 6 to order all city water for consumption purposes be boiled for five minutes.

**Inside**

■ What to do to get home water back to normal. Page A6

The order was lifted about 2:30 p.m. Sunday.

Because those ammonia levels are likely to rise again sometime, the Water Department is ready to make adjustments.

"We can't control the ammonia in the Fox River," said Arnie Eggleston, superintendent of the water treatment facility. "There was a spike in a 24-hour period, and we don't even know how high it went. But now we can adjust the levels of chlorine in the water when this happens."

"The equipment is already installed," said Robert Rieser, public works director. "It's now on an alarm basis, if the pre-chlorine levels ever get to where they were again. We've added more telemetry, more equipment, more diagnostics, to prevent this from ever happening again."

### AOK for third straight day

So it was that the second largest city in the state breathed a sigh of relief and took a big, deep drink. It happened after the third consecutive day of test results showed no contamination of the city's water supply.

The order was issued after tests showed the presence of E. coli bacteria in the water supply. Since then, no tests have shown the presence of this potentially harmful bacterium. City officials took the advice of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to wait for that third day before declaring an end to the boil order.

"I agreed with the EPA's assessment to make certain the water supply was safe," said Mayor David Stover. "I appreciate everyone's patience in the city of Aurora."

❖ *Turn to* **BOIL, A6**

## BOIL

*From page A1*

City officials believe the high level of ammonia in the Fox River combined with the chlorine and lessened the chlorine's effectiveness in killing bacteria, according to Eggleston. But during this past week, officials said they examined every part of the water system, including the clearwells, where treated water is stored before being disseminated for drinking, and the carbon filters. One clearwell was taken out of use and inspected for leaks by a diver, and all the carbon filters were changed.

"Any part of the system that was suspect was taken out of the loop," Rieser said. "To minimize the possibility of anyone getting infected, we took 500 samples, which is way more than we would normally take."

Aurora officials said the other city that takes drinking water from the Fox River — Elgin — also experienced higher than normal ammonia levels and increased its chlorine level by 35 percent. Aurora officials said Elgin workers helped Aurora pinpoint what happened. Rieser said the situation that caused the problem took a short time. But the boil order lasted as long as it did because the city had to purge its system of infected water, which took about four days.

"We have 500 miles of water mains," he said. Also, it takes 24 hours to get the results of every water test taken.

Rieser said the "hard work" by city employees at the treatment plant "probably saved a real crisis."

### No illnesses reported

Mary Lou England, Kane County Health Department director, agreed, saying a survey of hospitals and doctors showed there was no illness connected to the water supply situation.

"It just didn't occur, with all the work done on the technical side," she said.

England also said she doubts there will be any long-term effect, or any future illness that could be incubating.

"I don't foresee that," she said. "The shutdown was quick enough."

Health Department officials on Feb. 6 began contacting restaurants about the situation. England said within two hours, officials from the Kane, DuPage, Will and Kendall health departments had notified more than 500 restaurants about the boil order.

She said within the first 24 to 36 hours, every restaurant had been inspected and taken some kind of action.

Most of them stayed open, using bottled water and soda, and boiling water. Stover conceded the boil order was an "economic hardship" for business. He said the city estimated about 20 percent of the restaurants closed down that first night, although most of them reopened during the week.

One that stayed open was Mayberry's Pancake House, on North Lake Street. Manager Patrick Hasapis said the boil order was a hardship "at first."

"But like anything else, you adjust," he said. "We had to do whatever we had to do."

Still, when informed the boil order was over Sunday afternoon, his first reaction was caution. His first move was to use the telephone to call the Health Department and get confirmation.

For some businesses, it was an opportunity to help. City officials said Sparkling Spring, Dominick's and Meijer donated bottled water and helped make sure senior citizen facilities and the schools had enough.

### More inspections planned

Stover said inspection of the water treatment facility is not finished. He promised during the next four weeks city officials would "go back and re-examine everything." He said after that, a full report would go to the City Council, making its way through the committee process.

"We want to get closer to what happened," the mayor said. "We are almost sure, but not 100 percent positive. There will be a lot that will follow, a lot that we have to deal with.

"It was a difficult thing for us to go through. But at the end of the day, what we witnessed was the city coming together."

## Getting water back to normal

How to turn the water back on, according to the Kane County Health Department:

- Building owners should flush water lines by allowing both the hot and cold water to run for three to five minutes at each fixture.
- Clean all faucets and aerators on those faucets.
- Dispose of all ice cubes made with old tap water.
- Replace or clean filters on faucet filtration systems or whole house filters, following manufacturer's instructions.
- Be wary of possible scams by addressing additional questions to the health department, or to a licensed plumber.

# Candidates for county board chairman address Geneva business forum

2-14-04 Chronicle

## *McConnaughay, Meadath both unopposed in primary*

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Democratic candidate for Kane County Board chairman said he does not like the way county government is run.

"The county board has made me mad over the years," said Tom Meadath, a St. Charles resident whose campaign against Republican Karen McConnaughay will begin in earnest after the March 16 primary.

"Government should run like a well-oiled nonprofit organization," Meadath said.

Meadath made the remarks Friday morning at a Geneva Chamber of Commerce business forum.

McConnaughay, a county board member from St. Charles, said the county's role is changing.

"The county needs to view its role differently," she said. "We need to provide regional leadership."

The forum was an opportunity for business leaders and chamber members to ask questions of the two candidates. Neither faces primary opposition.

Meadath said he would bring county board members together to curb political battles. He touted his business experience.

He said board members must refocus priorities and work together.

"If you are elected, your primary focus should be that job," he said. "We have got to stop this partisan fighting. That is not representing the people."

McConnaughay said the root of the problem is money.

"The elected officials don't trust the county board," she said. "It has more to do with communication. That is a fairly easy thing to fix."



McConnaughay



Meadath

Both candidates spoke on a handful of local issues.

Meadath said he supports a municipal broadband utility, which would encourage competition and help lure businesses to the Tri-Cities.

"You've got to have broadband," Meadath said. "Most residents are stuck with dial-up. Most businesses don't have the opportunity to have that."

McConnaughay proposes creating several commissions and committees to tackle economic, transportation and development issues.

"We need a much stronger economic development group," she said. "The board members' job is to work more closely" with the county's municipalities.

In hindsight, McConnaughay said the county should have developed a secondary road system to ease congestion in the commercial corridor along Randall Road.

"Growth caught up with us when we weren't looking," she said.

She urged school districts to become more involved.

"They are not as active in the process as they should be," she said. "Schools need to be an active participant from the beginning."

Meadath said it all comes down to cooperation and communication.

"If we are not talking, we are not getting things done," he said.

2-14-04 Daily Herald

# Chairman contenders differ on road fees

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*


Karen McConnaughay


Tom Meadath

Now that the primary is out of the way — at least in this race — the two candidates for Kane County board chairman wasted little time Friday making their case for the November general election.

During the first Democratic-Republican debate of the Kane County election season, the county's newly imposed road fee system showed a clear contrast between hopefuls Karen McConnaughay and Tom Meadath.

"I support the impact fee," said McConnaughay, a St. Charles Republican and 12-year veteran of the county board. "But not the fee structure."

The system, designed to raise money from developers for future county transportation projects, has drawn harsh criticism from some — particularly from Tri-Cities leaders — who say it's unfair.

Critics, including McConnaughay, who voted against the system, say the use of eight zones based on development planning areas causes too much inequality in the fees. The results mean an office building or restaurant in the Tri-Cities could pay thousands more in road fees than one in Elgin or Aurora.

Meadath, a St. Charles Democrat making his first run for political office, defended the fee system, pointing out that whatever money is paid in the Tri-Cities stays to be spent in those communities. "I believe the impact fee formula is fair," he said. "Each area gets their fees back. It's not like it's going to be taken away from them."

Meadath disputed any suggestion that the higher fee would drive any developer away from central Kane County and reminded critics that the formula can be changed.

"This can be revisited every year to make an adjustment," he said. "But you've got developers clamoring to get in here and that's not going to change."

The county board can decide to modify the system. State laws say it can be changed no more than once every 12 months.

Beyond the fees, both candidates answered other questions posed by audience members at the forum put on by the Geneva Chamber of Commerce. Topics touched on the county jail's overcrowding problem, future energy needs and the internal struggles of the county board.

It was the first time the candidates had met each other and put them at odds long before most political watchers expected. The decision last month by county Treasurer David Rickert to drop out of the chairman race eliminated the need for a GOP primary. So as the other county races intensify leading up to the March 16 election, McConnaughay and Meadath get a jumpstart on the more partisan politics.

2-17-04 Daily Herald

# Geneva aims to lessen impact of new housing plan

By Garrett Ordower
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

As a retooled plan for the 1,200-acre Grand Prairie development makes its way to the Kane County Board, Geneva school officials will be working to make sure they don't end up on the losing end of this proposal.

The plan shelved in late January would have drained up to $5.5 million from the district over 10 years, according to a study recently completed by Northern Illinois University.

"Obviously, we have a keen interest in how Grand Prairie proceeds," school board president Dean Kilburg said.

The plan for 1,800 homes on the area along the southern edge of Route 38 between Brundige and Harley Roads would have hurt Geneva schools because they would have to absorb the bulk of new students.

However, the plan would bring in $7.9 million to St. Charles schools because that district would have gained 500 "active adult" residences and their tax dollars without any students.

Kaneland schools would have lost about $460,000 if the development went ahead.

As Geneva's district explores ways to lessen the financial impact of the upcoming proposal — expected to have around 1,100 homes — it might look to a special taxing district.

"That would result in the residents of these new developments carrying a greater burden of the building requirements," Kilburg said.

The taxing district, usually known as a special assessment area or special service area, places a tax on a particular area for a given period of time, often about 30 years.

Usually, the device is used to fund road improvements or provide for upkeep of a development's common areas.

The county board would have the ultimate say on whether a special assessment area could be used to generate more money without affecting those already in the district.

Peter Brennan, the general counsel for one of the developers, Town & Country Homes, said they would be open to discussing such an arrangement.

He also said the impact on Geneva schools would be lessened by the new proposal simply because it includes fewer homes, though he would not specify how many.

Geneva resident Bob McQuillan raised the issue of Grand Prairie and a special assessment area at last week's school board meeting.

Since the district already will ask residents to approve a 35 cents per $100 of equalized assessed valuation hike next month, he said the district should get an early start on making sure taxpayers don't get hit again as Grand Prairie develops.

"There are other ways to get funding for schools other than going to the current taxpayers," McQuillan said.

# Sheriff: 'I take full responsibility for employees'

2-15-04 Chronicle

## *Ramsey says overcrowding, underfunding contributed to mistaken release of prisoner*

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Sheriff Ken Ramsey apologized Saturday for the early release of a second inmate from the Kane County Jail, although he partially blamed the county board.

Ramsey used a press conference to publicly take full responsibility for the actions of a jail booking officer who mistakenly allowed an Aurora woman to walk free Friday before her scheduled release.

The security breach is the second such mistake in the last three weeks that has freed an inmate early.

But before a corps of reporters, Ramsey chastised the county board for chronically underfunding the jail and contributing to a dangerous "pressure cooker" environment that is ready to explode.



Ramsey

"I take full responsibility for each and every one of my employees and I assure you that I will not rest until the problem is rectified," he said. "There are contributing factors in these incidents, namely overcrowding, understaffing and underfunding. The county board must accept some of the blame for creating and then allowing to continue the environment that breeds just these types of problems."

County board Chairman Mike McCoy rejected Ramsey's suggestion and said it was the sheriff who fought the board earlier this year and halted a proposed 200-bed addition to the jail.

See RAMSEY, page 2

# **Ramsey:** Sheriff wants jail work to start

Continued from page 1

"I am not surprised that he would blame it on the county board," McCoy said. "I agree that we need additional beds immediately. We had a project going forward that would be almost completed by now, but then the sheriff rejected that in favor of another plan."

Ramsey's public apology came a day after Marceah Spikener, 35, was mistakenly released from jail around 5 a.m. A booking officer freed the woman after reading a computer file showing that her release date was Friday.

But Spikener's paper inmate file showed that she was supposed to be held until she appeared at a drug-court hearing later in the afternoon. The officer never checked the paper file, which Ramsey said violates procedure and might trigger disciplinary action.

"It was not a breakdown or failure of policy or procedures," he said. "It was totally human error."

Spikener did appear at court on her own, but was taken into custody later in the evening after the mistake was found. She was released late Friday after a judge confirmed that she appeared in court.

The mistaken release is the second such incident in the last three weeks that resulted in the premature release of an inmate. In late-January, an Elgin gang member used a confusion in names to leave jail early.

Juan L. Ramirez, 21, pretended to be another inmate with a similar name scheduled to be released. He fled before jail officials realized the mistake. He later was found after a tip led police to an Elgin apartment, where he answered the door when police knocked.

"Both of these recent errors were because an employee did not follow established proper policies and procedure that are already in place," Ramsey said. "If the employees had just done what they were supposed to do, none of this would have happened."

Ramsey, however, said the errors also are due in part to overcrowding at the jail, a lack of staff and lack of funds. The jail was designed to hold 398 inmates, but currently holds 520.

Ramsey said he has 21 booking officers to deal with 18,000 to 20,000 prisoners that come through the jail each year. He estimates that he needs double the amount of staff to handle the inmates and said he wants a new jail.

"Chairman McCoy stated in June of last year that the sheriff's office has been underfunded. That has to change," Ramsey said. "It only has been about a year that I have had a corrections committee and chairman that were willing to work together with my staff and me toward solutions."

At Ramsey's urging, members of the county's Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee scraped a $12 million, 200-bed addition to the jail in February 2003 that was set for construction.

Instead, the panel and Ramsey are pushing for a larger complex possibly near the county judicial center that would accommodate more than 200 additional beds, which Ramsey said would be a long-term solution.

McCoy said the board is doing everything possible to fund corrections in the county. This year's budget includes a 17 percent increase in funding.

"We did everything we can to give them as much as we can, but it is never enough," McCoy said. "It is not our job to run the jail. We (county board) are used to being blamed on management issues."

Ramsey said his goal is to have ground broken this year on a new jail.

2-15-04 Daily Herald

# Another inmate mistakenly released



MARY BETH NOLAN/DAILY HERALD

"If my employees are so incompetent that they have to have someone looking over their shoulder for every move they make, then I have to get rid of them," Sheriff Ken Ramsey said Saturday.

## Last probe just finished, angry sheriff promises new one

By Sarah McCammon
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

After yet another mistaken release of a Kane County jail inmate, a livid Sheriff Ken Ramsey vowed Saturday to solve the problem that's let five inmates go free since late 2000.

"I am truly outraged and embarrassed at the lapses in judgment of my officers," Ramsey said during a news conference. "I take full responsibility for each and every one of my employees and assure you I will not rest until this problem is rectified."

Yet Ramsey also said the problem is exacerbated by jail crowding and not having enough employees or funding to do the job.

His angry words came a day after an employee error resulted in the early release of an inmate from the Geneva jail. It's the second time in a month that has happened and the fifth since December 2000.

Marceah Spikener, 35, of Aurora mistakenly was set free around 5 a.m. Friday, and authorities didn't realize the mistake until 12 hours later.

Ramsey said Spikener was not a threat to the public and appeared on her own for her scheduled court date Friday, where Judge James Doyle officially released her. She had been in jail for a 2002 violation of probation on a drug charge.

Sheriff's deputies did not realize she went to her court date and apprehended her in downtown Aurora around 7:30 p.m. Friday. They released her after determining she had appeared before the judge.

An employee mistakenly had listed Friday as Spikener's release date rather than her court date in a computer record, Ramsey said. The employee responsible for releasing Spikener failed to check her records to confirm she was due to be let out, he said.

The mistake comes on the heels of a Jan. 27 incident when a different employee mistakenly released an inmate with a name similar to another man scheduled to be released.

Ramsey said Friday's incident is under investigation. A preliminary probe into the January gaffe recently was completed. He said he will review the results and consider what disciplinary action should be taken in both cases.

"It's going to be fair but it's going to be thorough, and employees will be disciplined where it's called for," he said.

In January, 21-year-old Juan

See INMATE on PAGE 17

## Inmate: 50 more officers needed, sheriff says

*Continued from Page 1*

Landre Ramirez of Elgin, who was being held on aggravated battery charges, was released instead of another man named Juan Ramirez.

The employee involved in that incident failed to check the man's file to confirm his identity, Ramsey said.

Ramirez was recaptured early the next day and later charged with felony counts of escape and forgery in connection with his release, authorities said.

After that incident, 17 employees in various departments were shuffled to different positions, a move that will take effect Feb. 22.

No one has been fired in connection with either incident, but Ramsey said dismissal is a possibility.

"If you're the booking officer it's your job to check to make sure it's done right," he said. "If my employees are so incompetent that they have to have someone looking over their shoulder for every move they make, then I have to get rid of them."

The county also was involved in mistaken releases in May 2002, August 2001 and December 2000.

All three inmates eventually were brought back into custody.

Those incidents prompted the imposition of stricter inmate release policies at the jail.

Ramsey said he plans to review the jail's policies and procedures to see if they can be improved. But he said existing procedures, if followed, would have prevented the inmates from being released.

"Both of these recent errors were because an employee did not follow the proper procedures that are already in place," he said. "If the employees had just done what they were supposed to do, this never would have happened."

Ramsey said he also believes overcrowding, understaffing and a lack of funding have contributed to the problems.

"You cannot work people at the pace and under the conditions we have here for year after year without some sort of proper relief," he said. "They are literally working nonstop."

The jail was designed for 398 inmates but currently holds more than 500 and has had as many as 700 at one time.

Ramsey said he hopes to see ground broken for a new correctional facility this year and to hire more officers to staff the jail.

"We have 106 and what we really need is about 156," he said. "It is very dangerous. It is unsafe. It's a pressure cooker and the lid's ready to blow off."

# State senators foresee Illinois 'debt meltdown'

2/16-04 Beacon News

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

If a family had the equivalent of an entire year's salary in credit card debt — and was just spending its paychecks — the family would be on its way to some serious debt trouble, according to state Sen. Chris Lauzen.

Watching Illinois' budget process unfold, Lauzen, R-Aurora, said he sees the same problem on the horizon for the state.

"This state is about five years away from a complete debt meltdown," he said. "It's no different than a family too deep in debt and close to the point where I'd say they're dead meat."

Lauzen launched a criticism of Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich and his administration during a press conference recently in his Aurora office, saying their money borrowing practices are "irresponsible."

The state took out $10 billion in new bonds last year, adding to $9 billion of existing debt. Lauzen said having $19 billion borrowed with $26 billion in revenues is itself a problem — although not as big a problem as the fact none of it will be repaid until 2033.

He called the system "backloaded" and supplied figures showing that no payments on the debt will be made while Blagojevich is in office.

"We're spending it, not paying it back, and pushing it off on a generation 20 years away," he said. "I'll be dead by the time this debt is paid off."

### Reform bill pushed

Lauzen is one of three local senators who collaborated on a bill they hope will bring reform to the borrowing process. Steve Rauschenberger, R-Elgin, and Pam Althoff, R-Crystal Lake, are among the bill's co-sponsors.

Senate Bill 3097 pushes a handful of reforms for the state's borrowing process.

The governor would be forced to have "level payments," meaning payments on the debts would have to be made while he is in office, under part of the legislative proposal, Lauzen said.

"He'll have to take his medicine while he's with us," he said.

When Jim Edgar was governor, Lauzen said, he borrowed $6 billion and paid back $6 billion. George Ryan borrowed an extra $6 billion but paid back only $3 billion while in office, leaving Blagojevich to deal with the $9 billion debt, he said.

"But this guy borrowed $10 billion and won't pay back any while he's in office," Lauzen said.

In addition, the governor would not be allowed to have "debt holidays," Lauzen said. That refers to governments borrowing money to make payments on existing debt.

The bill would require competitive bidding for bond issues, which, Lauzen said, would reduce the fees paid to the companies that issue the bonds.



State Sen. Chris Lauzen says Illinois is too deep in debt.

Lauzen compared the borrowing to every man, woman and child in Illinois having put $1,000 on a credit card. At the 5 percent interest rate under which the state has borrowed, each $1,000 will cost $4,300 at the end of 30 years, he said.

While admitting the proposed bill wouldn't change everything overnight, Lauzen said it would shorten the period of time it would take to repay the loan — meaning the hypothetical $1,000 would be paid back in 25 years rather than 30 years, costing $3,300 instead of $4,300.

### Consideration unlikely

Rauschenberger said he doubts the bill even will be debated on the Senate floor, predicting that it will be bottled up in committee by the General Assembly's Democratic majority.

"I am hoping this will sensitize the public," he said. "It's also telling Gov. Blagojevich that he should at least be held to the same standards as other governors."

He said borrowing is pushing all the problems into the future.

"His people just want to get through the next election without raising taxes," he said. "It's very shortsighted."

Rauschenberger said small children in Illinois will grow up and have to pay for Blagojevich's debt. Future governors will have to grapple with the payments, either by making dramatic spending cuts or raising taxes.

"You can do what you want with the money we're spending today," he said, "but let's not obligate future generations to deal with our problems."

**"This state is about five years away from a complete debt meltdown. It's no different than a family too deep in debt and close to the point where I'd say they're dead meat."**

*Chris Lauzen, state senator*

2-18-04 Beacon News

# McCoy: Jail snafu not a funding issue

**■ Inmates wrongly freed:** Kane County Board chairman responds to sheriff's complaints

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — A $9 million budget increase over 10 years should be enough.

That is the feeling Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy, R-Aurora, said he had when he heard criticism this past weekend of board funding of the Kane County jail.

McCoy responded to comments from the weekend by Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey, who said lack of funding to hire enough corrections officers contributed to the atmosphere that caused the wrongful release of two prisoners in the past several months.



County Board Chairman Mike McCoy says Sheriff Ken Ramsey's inmate problems aren't funding problems.

Ramsey criticized his own employees for setting the prisoners free by mistake but also said, "There are contributing factors in these incidents:

❖ Turn to JAIL, A2

## JAIL

From page A1

namely overcrowding, understaffing and underfunding."

McCoy said budgets for the sheriff's office and the jail have increased more percentage-wise than any other county budget, more than the jail population and more than the county's population overall.

"I'm just saying you can't blame the board for guys getting out of jail," McCoy said. "By saying we're underfunding the jail, it's like saying we're ignoring the need."

McCoy released a graph and budget breakout Tuesday that showed county funding for adult corrections went from about $5 million in 1994 to $14 million in 2004.

The budget at the jail last year was more than $12 million, but McCoy said the sheriff outspent that by almost $1 million. That's why, for 2004, McCoy set the budget at $14 million.

"It will be pretty hard to outspend that budget," McCoy said.

Included in the 2004 budget are six new corrections officers positions. That is a partial fulfillment of Ramsey's request for 12 new officers, a standing request he has made for several years.

The budget figures McCoy released did not include $2.4 million spent in 1997 for a 96-bed jail addition, about $500,000 spent on design development for a 400-bed addition and $12 million set aside for construction of a 200-bed jail addition. Plans for any additions, or the possibility of a new jail, are in flux right now as a consultant studies the future of the jail.

"It just seems we can't throw enough money at the jail," McCoy said. "And it doesn't seem to do any good when we do throw money at it."

Ramsey said over the weekend that the jail has been too small, and the county has struggled with funding, for 30 years.

But McCoy said he mainly wanted County Board members who are newer on the board to understand how much money the county has put toward the jail.

"It is by far the department that's gotten the most increase," he said.

Last Friday, a female inmate at the jail on Fabyan Parkway here was released mistakenly because of a paperwork problem. The woman was apprehended that evening.

A similar incident occurred Jan. 29, when an inmate was released after pretending to be another inmate with the same name who was scheduled to be released that day. That inmate also was taken back into custody within hours of his release.

Jail employees will be disciplined because of both incidents, Ramsey said.

2-18-04 Daily Herald

# City to build a nature center

By Tom O'Konowitz
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

In less than a year, Elgin could get its first nature center.

City officials are pushing forward with plans to build a nature-education facility at the Hawthorne Hills Park, on Elgin's west side just north of Route 20 and just east of Randall Road.

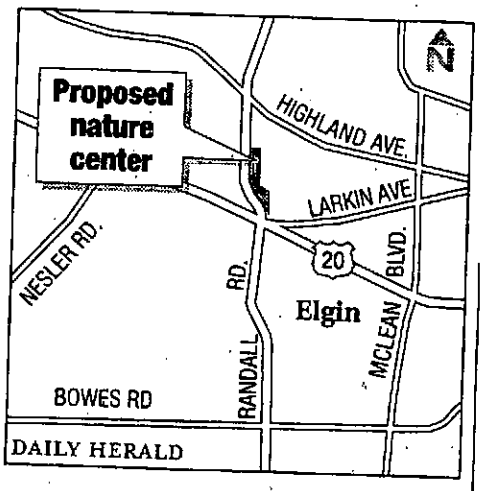
To cost slightly more than $1 million, the Hawthorne Hills project is being funded in part by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, which awarded Elgin a $400,000 grant it must match.

The nature center, which would be 4,600-square-feet, would include a classroom, displays about nature, kitchen facilities and interpretive signs to teach people about the environment around the center.

The center, located at the headwaters to Otter Creek, also would have a mezzanine area and large windows overlooking the Hawthorne Hills Park ponds, according to Jim Bell, Elgin's parks superintendent.

Also as part of the nature center project, Elgin will restore some of the natural habitat around it and add walking trails, boardwalks, a fishing pier and an amphitheater.

The center would be an ideal place for students and Elgin residents to experience nature and learn about it. Classes could have field trips there and youth groups could camp in the nature center.




The Hawthorne Hills Park also features large oak trees — some of the biggest in Elgin, Bell said. The surrounding trails will give residents a good view of them, as well as the park's ponds.

"What we're trying to do is give people a sense that you're lost in the woods — enjoying the woods — in nature," Bell said. "It's a beautiful site."

Bell said the trails will be positioned in such a way so as to serve as a buffer between the nature center, its parking lot and the nearby Country Knolls neighborhood. He said city officials worked with neighbors and environmental activists in planning the project.

3-18-04 Chronicle

# Attorney poll rates judicial candidates

## *Hallock scores higher than primary opponents*

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A poll of attorneys ranked Kane County Judge James C. Hallock higher than his two Republican primary opponents, according to the Illinois State Bar Association.

The results of the judicial advisory poll gave Hallock the recommendation of licensed attorneys in the 16th Judicial Circuit, who also approved of circuit judge candidates Robert L. Janes and Robert B. Spence.

The three associate judges seek the GOP nomination in the March 16 primary to occupy the circuit judge seat vacated by retired Judge Pamela Jensen in Kane County's divorce court.

Hallock received more than a 91 percent rating in all categories on the approval poll, which included such factors as integrity, impartiality, legal ability, temperament, court management, health and sensitivity.

Among 249 ballots returned, Spence received ratings that ranged from 94 and 81 percent in the categories, while Janes was ranked between 96 and 77 percent, the poll shows.

The statewide advisory poll was conducted by mail and sent to bar association members in the circuit or district holding judicial elections. Attorneys were asked to respond only if they could give a fair opinion of the candidates.




The poll was mailed to 820 attorneys in the 16th Judicial Circuit, which covers Kane, Kendall and DeKalb counties. The results were released Tuesday.

The candidates are recommended based on whether surveyed attorneys agreed the candidate met the acceptable requirements for the office and answered "yes" to 65 percent of the questions.

Associate judges serve four-year terms and do not oversee felony cases unless authorized by the Illinois Supreme Court. They are appointed by circuit judges, who are elected to six-year terms.

Hallock, of Elgin, presides over drunken driving cases. Spence, of Batavia, was appointed to finish Jensen's term after he lost the 2002 election. Janes, of St. Charles, presides over traffic and misdemeanor violations.

The winner likely will face Democrat Shari Goggin-Ward in the November general election. She does not have a primary opponent and was not rated in the attorney poll because of a lack of results.

2-18-04 Daily Herald

# Planner gives update to N. Aurora

## *Official 'energized' by county's 2030 plan*

By Denise Perry Donavin
*Daily Herald Correspondent*

Janice Hill, executive planner with the Kane County Planning Division, appeared before the North Aurora planning commission with an update on the county's 2030 plan.

With enthusiasm she outlined the highlights of the new county booklet, "Renaissance of the Urban Corridor."

The urban corridor is defined as municipalities along the Fox River from Algonquin in the north to Montgomery in the south. Their renaissance, the county hopes, is "downtown revitalization, neighborhood preservation, redevelopment and infill development."

Hill pointed out that a picture of the new North Aurora Library graced the booklet's cover. North Aurora's library design, central location, and impact on the revitalization of Route 31 are acclaimed in the booklet, but residents were disappointed that Hill did not mention those during the meeting.

"This study is one of the most exciting things I have ever done," said Hill, "I looked at the urban corridor and found examples of the most extraordinary planning and did a write-up on it. The purpose is to energize each other and share ideas throughout the corridor."

Each write-up consist of color photos, descriptions and sidebars on the smart growth principles displayed by the community and the lessons learned from their experiences as well as funding sources.

"It is an exciting time for North Aurora," said Hill, "since we are involved in both the Critical Growth and Urban Corridor areas (of the 2030 plan). We are about to add an additional 100,000 to 150,000 people to the urban corridor alone."

An example of the transformation of Route 31's urban corridor from residential to commercial followed Hill's presentation.

Scott and Jackie Novicki presented a request for a change in zoning from residential to business for a house at the corner of Oak and Route 31. They plan to operate a dog grooming business.

Plan commissioners were primarily positive while expressing concerns about parking.

There was no public comment during the hearing at the meeting, but neighboring homeowners said afterward that Route 31 is bottlenecked throughout the day and traffic will be a concern.

2-18-04 Beacon News

# Farm family wants to build center for special needs kids

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — A longtime family farmstead in Big Rock Township might have new life as a recreational, therapeutic and residential home for special needs children.

Members of the Kane County Board Development Committee Tuesday received a concept plan for such a facility for the approximately 59-acre McCannon farm on the northwest corner of Raymond and Dugan roads.

The plan shows most of the area, about 43 acres, would be a residential development with single-family homes. Another 8 acres would be for water detention.

But the 5.45-acre farmstead, which includes farm buildings and a residence, would become a facility for recreational and therapeutic programs "for people with unique needs in communication, behavioral, social and emotional challenges," according to a development staff memo.

Ted McCannon, who owns and lives on the farmstead, said his idea grew out of his experience with his own special needs child, who attends school at Little Friends in Naperville. The family has had students from Little Friends out to the farm for activities, and wants to formalize the arrangement.

"The rural setting can be kept, so these children can continue to come out and enjoy the rural atmosphere," McCannon said.

If plans are approved, the residence will become a permanent home for his child and for other special needs people. The residence and the farmstead will be held in a trust, to be established in the future, he said.

The facility would be supported by future private endowments, including one from the McCannon family, and federal and state funding.

McCannon said the facility will be open to community organizations in the Big Rock area as a gathering place. His plan envisions organizations such as Scouts, 4-H and other youth groups using the facility.

"We would like to give something back to the community," he said.

Kane officials said the development fits the area, which is considered rural residential, an infill between rural and more urban uses. McCannon said he sees it as being a "buffer" between Sugar Grove and the more rural Big Rock.

County officials have recommended a number of conditions, many of which were suggested by other governmental agencies in the area, but said the committee should encourage the plan. The review comments will be addressed when the proposal comes back for preliminary planning.

2-18-04 Beacon News

# Batavia Chamber speaks out against county fees

**By Jan Ramming**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

BATAVIA — The Batavia Chamber of Commerce gave Mayor Jeff Schielke its support in his fight against the Kane County Board's new transportation impact fees.

Batavia businessman Anthony Cvek addressed the City Council this week with a resolution by the Chamber officially opposing the new fees.

"It is our position at the Chamber of Commerce that the ordinance and the fee structure as approved by the County Board are inherently unfair," said Cvek, adding that the board "missed their mark, and the fee structure needs to be looked at."

The mayor thanked the Chamber of Commerce for its support.

"I think the more voices that join in on this call will help bring about reconsideration by the Kane County Board," Schielke said.

The County Board passed the new impact fee ordinance last month despite objections from Schielke, Mayor Kevin Burns of Geneva and Mayor Sue Klinkhamer of St. Charles.

The Tri-Cities mayors objected to the higher fees to be charged to developers in Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles, compared to other areas.

Batavia city attorney John Noble said that the county may have used old data and survey information in formulating the fees. Schielke vowed to explore the legality of the new fees.

"Mr. Noble and Mr. (Chuck) Radovich, city attorney for Geneva, have been meeting with some regularity on this issue, and we have concurrence with St. Charles," Schielke said. "Hopefully, whatever is going to happen here will be a joint action."

Schielke said that the attorneys have requested technical assistance from specialists in the transportation planning field. He said he would like them to analyze and propose some modifications to the formula used to impose the new fees.

"Hopefully we will go back to the board with some proposed alterations to the ordinance and ask for their reconsideration," he said.

"I've been encouraged in this situation by some members sitting on the County Board and some who are running for the County Board to try these means first.

"If we don't get any satisfaction, we will pursue other means."

"Our aim:
To fear God,
tell the truth
and make money."

H.C. Paddock
1852-1935

# Opinion

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2-18-04 Daily Herald

# Ramsey should stick to hard line

Faced with yet another mistaken release of a jail inmate by sheriff's department personnel, Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey at least got his response half-right.

"I am truly outraged and embarrassed at the lapses in judgment of my officers," said Ramsey, after Marceah Spikener of Aurora was mistakenly released last weekend from the Geneva jail. "I take full responsibility for each and every one of my employees and assure you I will not rest until this problem is rectified."

Exactly the right approach, had he stopped right there. Given this latest erroneous release was the second in less than a month and the fifth since December 2000, one might imagine Ramsey would be concentrating on that poor performance, not making excuses. And to an extent, he has. An investigation of the erroneous release last month prompted Ramsey to order a department revamp that will take effect Sunday.

But Ramsey didn't stop with his promise to eradicate the erroneous release problem. As he has been wont to do for years, he followed that promise by offering up an excuse we believe Kane

## Our View

Manpower problems are an excuse Kane County residents find of little comfort when reading of another inmate released erroneously.

County residents find of little comfort as they read about another inmate who was freed and shouldn't have been. That excuse is, of course, lack of manpower. A lack so serious, according to Ramsey, that he took time out in the middle of his press conference on his department's mistakes to demand 50 new people.

We hope it was just his frustration showing because a demand for 50 new people when some of the ones you've got aren't doing their jobs properly is going to be a very difficult sell. And it prompts us to remind Ramsey that he must be a boss first and an employee advocate second if he expects employees to meet his expectations.

Yes, the county faces a serious jail problem, but it appears to be moving with some unity and, for the first time, toward a long-term solution. And Ramsey has cried "wolf" so often on manpower problems that few are inclined to listen, especially when the new cry follows what Ramsey himself admits was ineptitude on the part of employees.

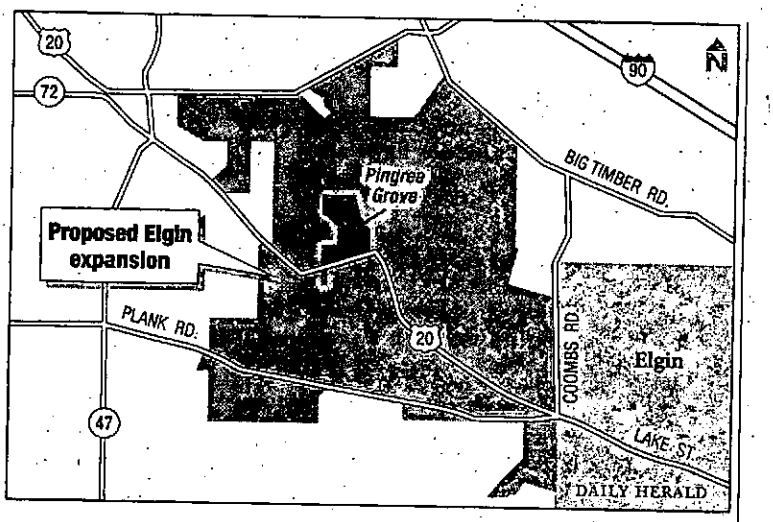
He needs to be taking a hard line with his employees about following prescribed procedure, for their own and the public's safety. He needs to work to ensure the manpower he has is properly trained, used and disciplined. And he needs to spend as much time convincing them that they have a job to do despite the difficult fiscal realities as he does convincing them all problems are manpower-related.

Members of the public understand the stresses of reduced manpower because most of them live it every day themselves. But they also understand they elected Ramsey to lead the sheriff's department, to be the boss.

And leadership doesn't include tolerating serious mistakes like these or a continuous refrain of excuses from the man who is ultimately responsible for the people who made them.

2-18-04 Daily Herald

# County sides with Elgin against Pingree Grove




By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

There's a reason the story of undersized David slaying big Goliath resonates throughout the centuries.

It's because the little guy normally doesn't win.

For the most part, that goes for fist fights, political battles and even, as the leaders of tiny Pingree Grove now would say, in land development races.

Pingree Grove — the minute northern Kane County community trying to grow a bit mightier — took a knockout punch from the giant city of Elgin Tuesday that could end the small enclave's plans.

The Kane County Board's development committee recommended amending an imaginary line on the development planning map that would allow Elgin to expand west and literally envelop Pingree Grove, resulting in the tiny hamlet becoming a mere island surrounded by Elgin.

If the recommendation gets approved next week by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and the Illinois EPA, the decree could put an end to the village's plans to grow over the next 20 years from a 120-person town to a full-blown suburb with 19,000 residents.

"We might as well fold up and go home," said village President Verne "Bud" Wester following Tuesday's vote.

At the technical level, the county committee recommended allowing Elgin to expand its facility planning area to the west. These types of planning areas govern the construction of sewer and water systems.

They are not zoning areas, traffic plans or even regulations that allow or prohibit annexations. They are simply the boundaries that limit expansion of the plumbing that forms the backbone of any incorporated development.

But with developers, pushed on by Elgin leaders, ready to put thousands of homes on the edge of Pingree Grove, the change in the planning areas is the only thing Elgin needs to start its annexation march west.

To hurry all this along, this month the Elgin planning commission gave approval to preliminary plans from developers that together would bring about 4,000 new houses to the area west of Elgin and just south and east of Pingree Grove. The planning commission has recommended approval of the projects by the Elgin city council, which is expected to annex the subdivisions into the city next week.

Luring Sho-Deen Inc. and Crown Community Development developers away from Pingree Grove and to Elgin, city officials have said they believe, should help the city's quest to win its turf battle with Pingree Grove.

Elgin leaders say they are working in the best interest of the county, its current and future residents, and its water supply.

"Today this really is about infrastructure and room for administration," said Elgin City Manager David Dorgan.

Elgin officials say they have the capacity in their city sewers and wastewater treatment plant to handle the new homes and business to be built around Pingree Grove.

Plus, they say, Elgin draws its water from the Fox River and will not need new deep or shallow wells to take from limited ground water.

"That benefits everybody," said Elgin Mayor Ed Schock.

County Development Director Phillip Bus agreed with that assessment in his recommendation to the committee to allow Elgin to head west.

He called Elgin's "ability to produce drinking water an overriding factor" in the debate.

In the end, county board members agreed, but some on the development committee didn't appreciate the quickness with which all of this came together. Some also didn't like the fact the county was giving in to Elgin's quest for expansion.

"It puzzles me that we are letting them take Pingree Grove, but they won't follow the 2030 plan," said Barb Wojnicki, a St. Charles Republican.

Her comments referenced the changing shape of the county's land management plan that acts as a guide to future development.

Board members felt siding with Elgin's desire to surround Pingree Grove should buy the county sway in eventually stopping the city's growth.

"This is another lost opportunity here to use some leverage," said John Hoscheit, a St. Charles Republican.

In terms of predicting growth, the northern half of the county — primarily the areas in the sight lines of Hampshire, Huntley, Pingree Grove and now Elgin — have been urban sprawl battle grounds. It's an area of the county that stands to become home to 100,000 new county residents in the next 25 years, according to Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission figures.

What kind of addresses those people have remains a topic of debate.

Tuesday's recommendation provided some direction for the Pingree Grove-Elgin conflict, but other growth fights remain.

The county did not sign off on allowing Elgin to continue west, on the far side of Pingree Grove along a path toward Route 47. A plea to add more area to the city's facility planning area farther west was turned down.

Also, an ongoing battle between Hampshire and Huntley over property south of I-90 that both towns claim was put on hold. The county recommended waiting another 90 days before voting on planning area expansions for those two cities.

The hope is, Bus said, that the communities will work out some sort of agreement between themselves.

• *Daily Herald staff writer Tom O'Konowitz contributed to this report.*

# Squabbling limits OK for sewer, water additions

## *Officials: Elgin, Pingree Grove, Hampshire, Huntley must settle boundaries first*

2-18-04 Chronicle

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County officials on Tuesday recommended that four municipalities' requests to expand their ability to extract drinking water and treat sewage be limited.

The Development Committee accepted a staff recommendation that the facility planning area requests by Huntley, Hampshire, Pingree Grove and Elgin be limited until the municipalities can agree on boundaries.

A facility planning area is a term for large lots of land for which a municipality provides drinking water and sewage treatment.

Tuesday's four requests comprise more than 20,000 acres that are expected to be home to nearly 100,000 new residents in the next 30 years. They represent the largest FPA request in county history.

"What we're trying to do is make some sense out of this," Development Department Executive Director Phil Bus said.

Tuesday's action sends a recommendation to the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, which then makes a recommendation to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

Bus said the four requests came at the same time because NIPC recognizes the area as prime for development, and because the FPA requests overlap in at least three areas.

Representatives from all four municipalities spoke in favor of their requests and took the opportunity to blast neighbors they see as encroaching on their future.

Pingree Grove, whose 2000 census showed 124 residents, was the big loser when committee members approved Elgin's request to surround the village and extend west of Route 47. Elgin's request would consume an FPA already approved for the village.

Jim Bassett, a management consultant who serves as Pingree Grove village manager, called the area the "heart and soul" of the village.

"We've had developers beating down our doors for five years," Bassett said.

NIPC projects Pingree Grove's population to explode to nearly 17,000 residents by 2030.

The committee sided with Elgin because the city has extra capacity in its sewage treatment plants and has authority to withdraw an additional 40 million gallons of water per day from the Fox River.

Under Pingree Grove's 3,875 acre FPA request, a land application system would treat sewage and water would be extracted from deep wells.

Bassett said the village has been

See REQUESTS, page 2

### Public meeting

• NIPC will conduct a public meeting on the FPA requests at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Tuesday at its headquarters, 222 S. Riverside Plaza, Chicago.

## Requests

Continued from page 1

unsuccessful in its negotiations to buy water and sewer service from Elgin.

"The proposals by others would actually drop wells and affect other municipalities such as St. Charles," Elgin City Manager David Dorgan said, referring to Pingree Grove's FPA request.

Elgin's population, currently at 100,000, is expected to grow to 162,000 by 2030. The city's FPA request totals 8,435 acres.

Relations between Hampshire and Huntley are no more friendly than those between Pingree Grove and Elgin.

Huntley's request is for 800 acres to the south and east of the village. Hampshire's request calls for 7,011 acres. The two requests overlap in an area between Interstate 90 and Big Timber Road.

The committee followed the staff's recommendation to postpone for 90 days a decision on the contested area to allow the two villages to work out their differences.

The villages are embroiled in a lawsuit concerning their 1993 boundary agreement. The suit was sparked over the two villages' plans for development.

Huntley's 2000 population was 5,730, and projections show the village with a population of 44,435 in 2030.

Hampshire's 2000 population was 2,900 and is expected to grow to 20,393 in 2030.

NIPC will conduct a public meeting on the FPA requests at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Tuesday at its headquarters 222 S. Riverside Plaza, Chicago.

# Bid to close youth home draws local disapproval

3-19-04 Beacon News

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

SPRINGFIELD — Local lawmakers said they were surprised and disappointed in a cost-savings plan outlined in Gov. Rod Blagojevich's budget proposal that would close a youth detention center in St. Charles.

Blagojevich proposed to close the Illinois Youth Center, one of several correctional facilities targeted in the governor's speech Wednesday.

"Prisons ought to be built or operated when you need them to house inmates, not because it's the only thing people are left to rely on when it comes to economic development," the governor said in his speech.

The governor's office believes shuttering the facility, which houses 425 juveniles, can save the state $11.7 million.

Sen. Chris Lauzen, R-Aurora, said closing the facility will cost 327 jobs for the area.

"That means the lives of 327 families will be impacted," he said. "You can look at this as an economic impact, but you have to look at what these families will have to deal with."

Lauzen and State Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia, were not told of the announcement until recently and were taken by surprise.

"I want to know what kind of back-room politics they used to make this decision," Lauzen said.

Tim Schmitz said he was shocked to hear about the closing.

"It was just two years ago we were talking about closing Valley View," another juvenile detention center, he said. "At the time, I asked them about (the Illinois Youth Center), and they said it would be in the long-term plan."

Schmitz, who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, said he will ask a lot of questions

❖ *Turn to* **HOME, A2**

## HOME

*From Page A1*

about the closure.

"I want to know if this is really going to be saving money or not," he said. "Are we going to just close it for a while? Who knows."

The closing shouldn't have an effect on other area correctional facilities.

The budget proposal calls for the state to continue the reopening of the Sheridan Correctional Center as a prison-based, drug-treatment facility. Blagojevich's office said the prison could house up to 1,300 inmates and would cost the state $25.5 million to operate.

In addition to the Illinois Youth Center closing, Blagojevich proposed eliminating 2,000 vacant state jobs and offering early retirement to an additional 2,000 employees, moves that would cut the state work force to about 59,000. He also wants to close a prison in Vandalia and a mental hospital in Tinley Park and open unused parts of other correctional facilities.

2-19-04 Daily Herald

# State's attorney candidate wins Birkett endorsement

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Bringing a major political and legal name to his camp, Kane County state's attorney candidate John Barsanti will receive an endorsement today from DuPage County State's Attorney Joe Birkett.

Birkett, a former attorney general candidate and top prosecutor in Illinois' second-largest state's attorney's office, is expected to make a formal announcement at 5 p.m. during a Barsanti fund-raiser in Aurora.

"I have known John for more than 20 years," Birkett said in a written statement.

"He is a good friend and his experience both as a prosecutor and as a private attorney sets him apart from the other candidates.

"His vision and enthusiasm will invigorate the Kane County state's attorney's office."

Barsanti, a St. Charles Republican, is seeking the GOP nomination for the state's attorney job against Tim O'Neil, the St. Charles city attorney; Joe Rago, a private lawyer based in West Dundee, and Michael Leuer, a lawyer and consultant with IBM in Chicago.

The winner of the March 16 primary is expected to face Renee Robinson, an Aurora Democrat, in the November general election.

Incumbent Meg Gorecki, who is serving her four-month law license suspension handed down for ethics violations, is not seeking a second term.

Barsanti's chief rival, O'Neil, said his campaign is not concerned with endorsements coming from across the county line.

"I don't find it surprising that someone from outside of the county would endorse John," O'Neil said.

2-19-04 Beacon News

# Kane County seeks to demolish properties

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Kane County officials want to demolish an abandoned Moecherville house that they consider a potential hazard.

The Kane County Board Development Committee this week recommended demolishing the house at 606 S. Kendall St. in Aurora Township. Officials said the house has been unoccupied for at least four years, and has been deteriorating during that time.

"It's open, and animals live in there," Steve Brown, a Kane County assistant state's attorney, said. "The owner lives in the neighborhood, and has not responded to any of our attempts to communicate with him. He's acting as though he is abandoning it."

State law allows the county to take down nuisance and dangerous properties, but it must follow a court process, Brown said. The county will file to have the property demolished and notify the property owner. The owner may appeal. The county will hire an appraiser to get an official opinion on what the property is worth.

"This property will probably be worth more once the building is demolished," Brown said.

Sometimes, filing for a demolition petition will push an owner to fix up a given property, Brown said, and that's what county officials are hoping for in the 34W000 block of Fox River Drive, Dundee Township, which has been deteriorating for years.

Development Committee members recommended the state's attorney's office move to demolish the house, which still is habitable, but the property itself has become a dumping ground for everything from garbage to an inoperable van, Brown said.

He said that, by threatening demolition, the county will say, in essence, fix the building up or we will tear it down.

2-19-04 Chicago Tribune

# Geneva courthouse needs plan, judge says

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

If Kane County is committed to using its 112-year-old courthouse in downtown Geneva for the next two decades or longer, a ranking member of the county's judiciary recommended Wednesday that a comprehensive plan for using the landmark be crafted and followed.

"As a senior judge, I'm concerned about the building's future," said Michael Colwell, presiding judge of the Circuit Court's Civil Division, based in the four-story building.

"I would urge all of you to stop by and take a look," Colwell told members of the County Board's Administration Committee in a rare courtesy call.

If the fast-growing county plans to use the old courthouse for the next couple of decades, Colwell said it requires "some forethought and planning."

Notwithstanding the extraordinary effort by the county to preserve the historic character of the courthouse, built in 1892 at a cost of $195,000, Colwell said its long-term use mandates review of some existing layout and structural deficiencies.

The courthouse has undergone a series of renovations, in the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s.

A new judicial center, where all criminal cases are heard, was opened in St. Charles in 1993, but civil cases are heard in the old courthouse. Colwell said it was his belief that the county eventually planned to provide space for all the courts at the judicial campus on Illinois Highway 38, west of Randall Road.

The Administration Committee, which is headed by board member Paul Greviskes (D-Aurora), has oversight for management of all county-owned property and buildings.

Colwell explained that his appearance was prompted by a series of operational miscues and unannounced projects at the courthouse dating to May 2002 that, he said, at times have disrupted court business.

Colwell cited as an example the recent remodeling of the building's jurors' room that included installation of a drop ceiling and new lighting. The project was begun, he said, without consulting the court and without regard for its potential impact on the trials scheduled for the same period.

"It hit us like a freight train [having] two jury trials going on and no lights," said Colwell.

"Hopefully, it won't happen again," he said, while politely reminding the committee that the judiciary was not a department of the county, but a separate branch of government.

Committee member Gerald Jones (D-Aurora) said Colwell's remarks, while understated, would not being taken lightly.

# Judge tired of courthouse's dilapidation

2-19-04 Daily Herald

## *Official pushes to repair Geneva facility*

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

A senior Kane County judge said the county's old courthouse is in need of major repairs and encouraged local leaders Wednesday to consider consolidating the court system in one place.

"I am very concerned about the future of that building," said Judge Michael Colwell, a former chief judge and 20-year veteran of the bench, referring to the courthouse at 100 S. Third St. in Geneva. "We are going to have to face up to the fact that major work needs to be done."

Colwell appeared before the county board's administration committee saying ongoing repairs have disrupted the courthouse and the people who work there.

He used a steady stream of repair examples as a way to highlight the structural challenges facing the building, which opened in the 1890s. One example occurred last year when a toilet came off the wall while a juror was sitting on it.

Colwell said the ongoing issues make it logical for the county to at least consider a long-term goal to bring the courthouses back together. The county has two main courthouses — the old Third Street courthouse and the 11-year-old judicial center in St. Charles.

But such a change isn't on the radar, right now.

"My impression is that we will be using the old courthouse for the next 20 to 25 years," said Paul Greviskes, an Aurora Democrat and chairman of the county board's administration committee.

Colwell described efforts dating back to the planning period for the county judicial center on Route 38 in St. Charles, which opened in 1993. He referenced master plans that were conceived to bring the court system — including the civil court operations based in Geneva — to the new judicial campus.

"That plan seems to have been abandoned," Colwell said.

Moving out of the Third Street courthouse is highly unlikely. It is home to the civil division of the Kane County state's attorney's office, has storage space for the coroner's office, and

See **COURT** on **PAGE 9**



## **Court:** County has other building priorities

*Continued from Page 1*

serves as the venue for coroner's inquests and much of the county's civil proceedings.

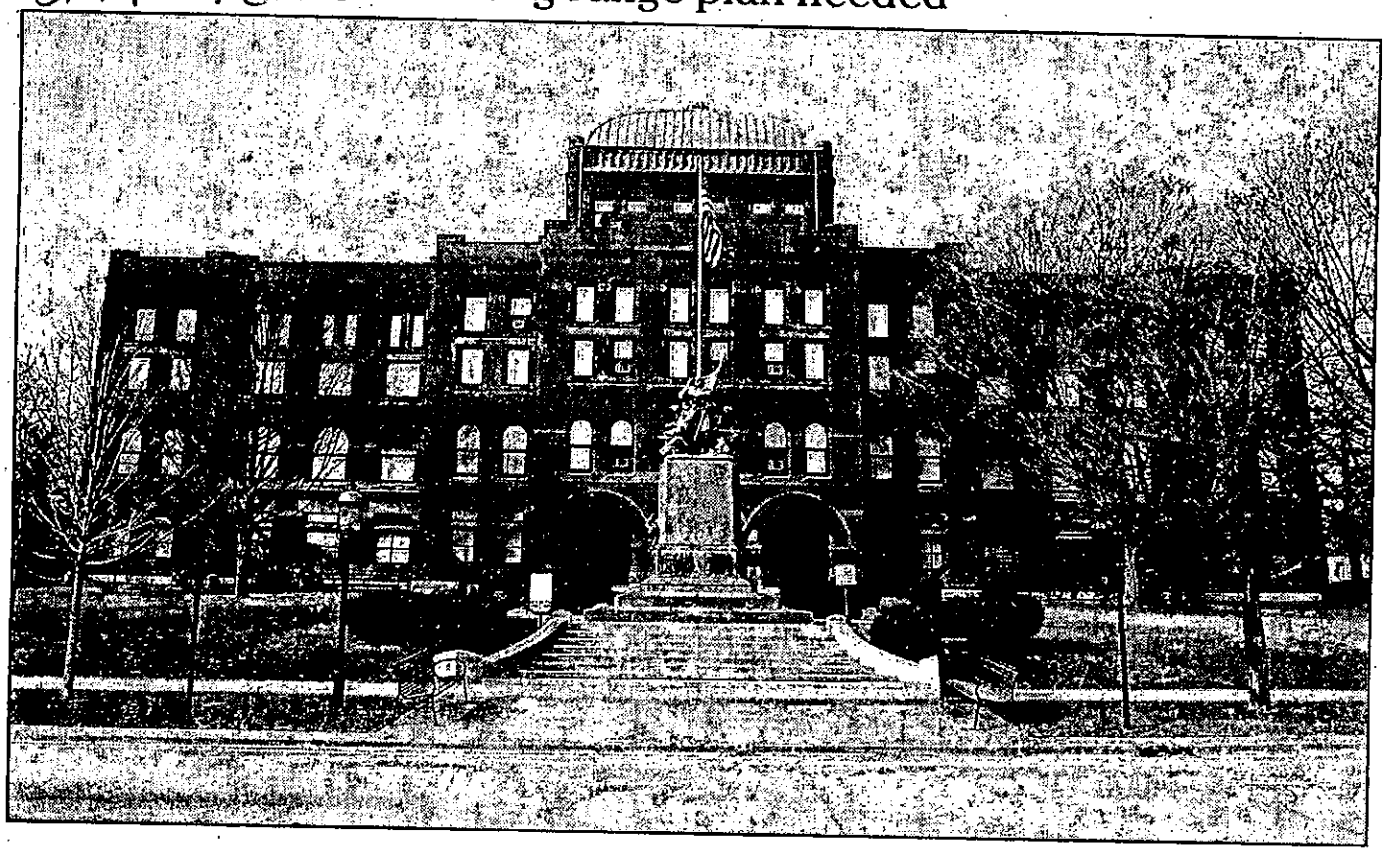
County building priorities heavily favor a new jail and even a coroner's office. The jail's development has been under consideration for years and Coroner Charles West has been working on options for his department for most of his term.



LAURA STOECKER/DAILY HERALD FILE PHOTO

**A Kane County judge says a steady stream of repairs, such as this masonry work done in 2002, indicate the county needs to plan for the long-term repair of the old Kane County Courthouse in Geneva.**

2-19-04 Chronicle Long-range plan needed



Chronicle file photo

**The historic Third Street** courthouse in Geneva, built in 1892, is expected to continue to house Kane County's civil court system. Despite maintenance concerns at the courthouse, county board Chairman Mike McCoy said the county's top building priority is the jail.

# County to stay in old courthouse

## *Maintenance issues need to be addressed*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County's civil court system will stay at the historic Third Street courthouse for the foreseeable future.

With the jail expansion, the animal control facility and the coroner's office upgrade project in various stages of planning, officials said consolidating civil courts with the criminal courts at the judicial center would be too expensive.

Administration Committee Chairman Paul Greviskes, D-Aurora, said he expects the old courthouse to be open for another 25 years.

"I think it's a long-use building," Greviskes said.

Judge Michael Colwell on Wednesday told committee members of maintenance problems in the 1892 courthouse.

"One of the toilets fell off the wall when a juror was sitting on it, much to her chagrin," Colwell said.

Colwell, a judge in Kane County for 20 years, reminded board members of the long-range plan for the judicial center in St. Charles developed in the late 1980s that called for the court system and circuit clerk's office to be at Peck Road and Route 38 in three phases.

The county board built the judicial center in 1992 as Phase I of the project.

Kane is one of the few counties in Illinois to have its criminal and civil courts in two locations and the circuit clerk's office at a third.

"It's very confusing to the public," Colwell said.

County board Chairman Mike McCoy said Phase 2 of Judicial Center project was estimated at one time to cost $20 million.

"It would be more now, probably $30 million," McCoy said.

The 2004 operating budget for the old courthouse is $289,557.

McCoy said the county's No. 1 building project is the jail.

In May 2001, the county moved its circuit clerk's office to the old Montgomery Ward building on Randall Road in St. Charles, meaning that it is unlikely the office will move any time soon.

If the civil courts are to remain at Third Street, the county board needs to develop a long-range plan for maintaining it, Colwell said.

"It needs to be addressed in an intelligent manner. As senior judge, I'm very concerned about the future of that building," Colwell said.

Colwell also asked for better communication between the maintenance staff and the building's occupants.

He recounted an occasion when, without any notice, maintenance workers came in to install a drop ceiling in a courtroom, leaving the court without any lights.

"My judges went crazy," Colwell said.

Central Services Director Larry Briggs said he tries to schedule work when it is most convenient.

"We have to think of doing things after hours and on weekends," Briggs said.

Briggs said he would make sure that he communicated with the court administrator when new projects are to be scheduled.

2-19-04 Daily Herald

# State's attorney hopefuls discuss their priorities

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

To add focus to localized quality of life issues, Kane County state's attorney candidate John Barsanti said he would assign an assistant state's attorney to each township to hear and collect law enforcement complaints directly from residents.

"Every neighborhood in this county has the right to have its law enforcement issues heard," Barsanti said Wednesday at a candidate forum hosted by the Township Officials of Kane County. "The state's attorney's office needs to be accountable to every law enforcement issue we can."

Barsanti said 12 of his top assistants would have the task added to their regular duties and act as a contact for residents. Residents could contact those assistants to report lower-profile, but still problematic, crimes such as a neighbor regularly speeding through city streets.

The priority of issues important to small, rural communities wasn't lost on rival state's attorney candidate Tim O'Neil. He used the forum to stress the office's role as adviser to the county board, something O'Neil thinks is vital in helping county board members deal with continued residential growth.

He pointed to his experience advising the city of St. Charles and its city council in forcing developers to pay more money to schools and cities when new houses are built.

"I am best suited on both the criminal side and the civil side to fight crime and advise the county board on how best to proceed," O'Neil said. "I want to continue that work for my county."

Barsanti, O'Neil, West Dundee attorney Joe Rago and lawyer and IBM consultant Michael Leuer are seeking the GOP nomination for the state's attorney's office in the March 16 primary election. The winner will face Aurora Democratic attorney Renee Robinson in the November general election.

Outside the state's attorney race, Republican and Democratic candidates seeking the jobs of county recorder of deeds and county board chairman spoke at the township officials forum.

In his remarks at Wednesday's forum, Rago stressed his desire to create a identity theft task force in the office.

He called such crimes "economic violence" and said fighting the trend is the most important role the state's attorney can have in the 21st century.

2-19-04
Chronicle



**Bill Page**

# It's the system, not the staff

In the past few weeks, two inmates have been mistakenly released from the Kane County Jail. Both incidents are under investigation, but the truth of the matter is the only real surprise is these things don't happen on a daily basis. No single person should be blamed for these foul-ups; the fault lies more in the system than those who have to deal with it.

The primary responsibility our corrections officers have is to make sure the jail facility runs smoothly and safely. There is more than enough to do simply keeping up with the day-to-day duties involved in the care and feeding of 500-600 guests of the county. However, these same officers also must keep track of bond calls, court appearances, and judges' orders for each inmate and they must do so with inadequate staffing and while using antiquated equipment. It's a recipe for trouble.

Hundreds of prisoners are processed through the jail every week; each with their own set of circumstances. Many are there pending trial, some are serving sentences, others are somewhere in between. The paperwork an average inmate generates in court orders alone is mind-boggling; motions, bonds, trial dates, sentences — even such mundane things as allowing an inmate phone calls can create a snowstorm of three-part forms.

It is up to officers at the jail to make sure every one of those orders is carried out, but too much of that paperwork is often hastily written, hard to decipher instructions from the court. Given all the obstacles, what should be talked about is not how two inmates were released by mistake, but how efficiently the officers handle thousands and thousands of inmates every year.

Unfortunately, but hardly unexpectedly, these two rare mistakes have become fodder for the political gristmill. To suggest, as one elected official apparently did, that this might not have happened if an ill-advised addition to the jail had been allowed to proceed is neither logical, nor fair. Nor is it fair to come down to hard on an overworked, shorthanded jail staff. The problem lies within a system that is almost guaranteed to fail occasionally, and it will take hard work, not political posturing to fix it.

* * *

Every time I think there isn't room for another business on Randall Road, six more appear out of nowhere. The hottest spot for this kind of growth is Geneva Commons, where, in addition to every possible frou-frou store under the sun, it looks like a mile long stretch of restaurants just opened.

It doesn't seem possible we have the population to support all these ventures, so where are all the shoppers and diners coming from? Part of that answer can be found on the east side of St. Charles and the empty storefronts of Charlestowne Mall.

When Charlestowne opened in the early 90's it was referred to as "The New Mall," to differentiate it from the little collection of stores that made up the St. Charles Mall on the city's west side. In short order Charlestowne outdrew the "old mall," and the place was abandoned. Charlestowne attracted its fair share of shoppers, but it never seemed to draw the kind of crowds that now flock to South Randall. Stores came and went, and it always felt as though there was something missing from the retail mix.

The arrival of the upscale Von Maur store was heralded as a major step in rejuvenating the mall, but whatever gains might have occurred have been lost by the continuing exodus of Charlestowne stores to Geneva Commons.

I don't claim to be an expert in the economics of these things, but it doesn't take a genius to figure out that one retail area's success usually comes at the expense of another's. Where retail goes, sales tax dollars follow, so at least a portion of the tax money Geneva gets from the Commons is revenue that had previously gone to St. Charles.

Geneva no doubt lost tax dollars when Charlestowne opened, or when Batavia started developing their stretch of Randall years ago. So in a way, the Commons is a balancing of municipal accounts as much as anything else.

This will be the case until something bigger and better is built — and you know it will. Then the fickle public will abandon the Commons and flock to what is trendy and shiny. Who knows? Maybe it will be a "new mall" in St. Charles.

*• Do you have a Guest View? Mail to Guest View, Kane County Chronicle, 1000 Randall Road, Geneva, IL 60134, or e-mail to editorial@kcchronicle.com.*

# Elgin tries to block tax relief for casino

## City says it could lose $600,000

By Richard Wronski
Tribune staff reporter

2-20-04 Chicago Tribune

Elgin could lose $600,000 in annual property-tax revenue if the Grand Victoria Casino succeeds in reducing the assessed value of its property along the Fox River.

Already smarting from the loss of an estimated $3.6 million in casino revenue this year, Elgin officials are fighting the casino's attempt to get tax relief.

The Grand Victoria is challenging a $9.4 million assessed valuation placed on its pavilion and parking structure for 2002. The figure is about one-third of the properties' market value of about $28 million, according to the Elgin Township assessor's office.

Grand Victoria wants the assessment lowered to just under $1.4 million, which would reduce its tax bill for 2003 from $800,000 to about $200,000, officials said.

The Kane County Board of Review rejected Grand Victoria's request to reduce the assessment, but the casino has taken the issue before the state's Property Tax Appeal Board, where it will receive a hearing.

Grand Victoria is entitled to challenge its assessment, like any property owner, officials said. The difficult part comes in determining the correct value of the property. Although the 95,000-square-foot pavilion and three-deck parking garage are subject to property taxes, the casino itself—a riverboat—is not.

A key fact in the assessment dispute is that the garage and pavilion are on land Grand Victoria leases from the city. Elgin Township Deputy Assessor Mark Rajcevich said his assessment is based on the 1994 construction cost of the facilities, which were $12.9 million for the pavilion and $6.5 million for the garage.

Like many other properties, Grand Victoria's assessments have grown steadily each year, Rajcevich said.

"The assessment just reflects the current market value of the property," he said.

Grand Victoria argues that the pavilion and garage are worth less than the township's

PLEASE SEE CASINO, PAGE 9



# CASINO: Grand Victoria disputes value of its property

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

assessments because the land is owned by the city, officials said. Casino representatives did not respond to requests for comment.

Most of the Grand Victoria property taxes pay for the riverfront-development part of a tax-increment financing district, said Jim Nowicki, Elgin's fiscal services manager.

With a tight city budget—the general fund projects $64.8 million in revenue against $63.8 million in costs—officials say they have no choice but to oppose the Grand Victoria's effort to cut its taxes. The city has hired attorneys to contest the casino's appeal.

James Chipman, executive director of the state Property Tax Appeal Board, said no date has been set for the hearing because of Elgin's request to intervene.

A reduction in Grand Victoria gambling revenue is already forcing Elgin to cut money for dozens of community programs and projects. For 2004, riverboat revenue is expected to drop to $17.5 million from $21.1 million in 2003, according to budget figures.

Officials said the chief culprit is an increase in the top state tax rate on casino revenue from 50 percent to 70 percent, which went into effect in July. During the final six months last year, Grand Victoria paid $118 million in taxes, $28 million more than the same period a year earlier.

Tom Swoik, executive director of the Illinois Casino Gaming Association, a trade group, said he was unaware of other casinos seeking to appeal property-tax assessments but added that casinos are no different from any business trying to save money.

"I think all riverboat operators owe it to their shareholders to do what they can to reduce costs," Swoik said.

*Freelance reporter Amanda Marrazzo contributed to this report.*

## Casino bidders lose a partner

A partner in one of the seven companies vying for the state's final casino license has withdrawn from the bidding process, the Illinois Gaming Board announced Thursday.

Gambling tycoon Steve Wynn and Wynn Resorts Limited are no longer in partnership with Midwest Gaming & Entertainment LLC, which is headed by developer Neil Bluhm, in a $360 million bid to build a casino in Des Plaines.

"Wynn Resorts did not have the same commitment to the project as Midwest Gaming ... Midwest Gaming's primary focus is the Chicagoland market," Bluhm said in a statement.

Seven companies competing to build in Rosemont, Des Plaines, Waukegan, Country Club Hills and Summit have submitted bids for the license, now held by the bankrupt Emerald Casino.

2-29-04 Daily Herald

# Animal activist fights on one step at a time

BY GARRETT ORDOWER
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

**Sunday spotlight**

Long before Steve Hindi became known as an animal protector, he was known as an animal killer.

He had the ultimate fish tale: He caught a 7½-foot-long, 230-pound Mako shark.

His story spread quickly, courtesy of a write-up in the New York Daily News.

He caught it in a boat smaller than the fish itself, wrestling his way to fame off the coast of Long Island during five trying hours in 1985.

But the attention he received from that one fight would be nothing compared to the hundreds of press accounts that would focus on Hindi in the years to come.

Those closely involved in the polarizing animal rights debate disagree on everything about Hindi — from whether his tactics are effective to whether his statistics are accurate.

But no matter what they think of Hindi, they can't help but think of him because he keeps popping up. It's an odd list of activi-

See **STEPS** on **PAGE 7**



Steve Hindi

# Steps: Activist seeks to change perceptions

Continued from Page 1

ties for a man who once grabbed headlines by bringing a shark close enough to his bass boat to shoot it in the head with a .357-caliber Magnum.

Who would spend weeks in the McHenry County jail after flying an ultralight aircraft into a flock of hunted geese.

Who's hated by bullfight and rodeo organizers the world over and even helped get Pepsi to withdraw its sponsorship of bullfights.

Who helped bring an end to bloody pigeon turkey shoots, where the animals were used as little more than paper targets.

Who helped change how Cook and DuPage counties trap and slaughter deer.

Who shifted the attention of larger groups to the toothless agreements designed to stop the killing of cats and dogs for food in Korea.

Who now has his sights set on stopping Cavel International from building the third horse-slaughtering plant in the nation, right in his backyard in DeKalb.

What's most noteworthy about his fight, other than where it started, is how he's done it.

While many animal rights groups rely on traditionally influential techniques — most notably finding strength in numbers — Hindi's fight has mirrored his "Old Man in the Sea" tale.

A lone man in a small boat, he fights desperately against a force far stronger than himself. His usual method of attack takes him around the country to covertly shoot video of animal abuses and then broadcast those videos on a specially equipped truck that now has 100-inch screens.

That struggle has taken its toll, most noticeably by breaking up his marriage.

When asked about his fight with the shark 18 years ago, Hindi pauses for a second and calls his efforts "misguided."

There's a lot of people who would have preferred his energies stayed that way.

"I used to hunt and fish," Hindi said. "I enjoyed the chase. I enjoyed the challenge. Now this is my hunting. Instead of hunting defenseless animals with overpowering weaponry, we hunt with our video cameras."

## Horse slaughter

Right now, Steve Hindi has his energies trained on Cavel International, the horse-slaughter plant that burned down in DeKalb two years ago.

The Belgian-based company's plans to rebuild have been the subject of intense controversy, as the plant itself has been since its opening in the 1980s. Hindi is just one voice among many, but with his images, his opinion is one of the most graphic.

Until it burned, Cavel was one of three such facilities in the country that slaughtered horses for human consumption, the other two being in Texas.

While not legal for consumption in the United States, horse meat has a market in Europe and Canada. And horse meat does find its way into pet food in a process that comes through rendering the carcasses of dead horses.

On a sleek-looking iMac in his Elburn home, Hindi replays covert footage of a horse-slaughter plant that an associate shot in Texas.

The horse stands half-obscured by a metal sheet as a worker comes at it with a bolt gun. The gun, the same device used to render cows unconscious, should drop him with one hit.

But horses are not cows. Their longer necks and different skull shapes prove difficult. They dodge the gun. Little pieces of skull get driven into the brain, eventually knocking the horse out so it can be hung by its back legs and its throat slit.

"They are very intelligent, very aware animals," Hindi said. "They can feel death. They can smell blood."

Though graphic, the video doesn't seem to faze Hindi. Over the coming months, he will see this hundreds of times.

While many animal rights groups use their voices as their weapon, Hindi uses technology, specifically video.

He's traveled to Springfield to show this video on the 100-inch screens in front of the statehouse.

He'll continue to show it to anyone who will watch. His group, Showing Animals Respect and Kindness, or SHARK, is a small one, a dozen people at most, but members get a reaction by bringing these harrowing images of a flailing, dying horse to the public.

"When we take a position on something, we're serious about it," Hindi said.

Those methods have distinguished Hindi and SHARK from almost the entire world of animal rights groups, according to Merritt Clifton, editor of the Clinton, Wash.-based animal welfare newspaper Animal People. They have shown the power that technology can have in such a fight.

But many — even some within the animal rights community — just plain disagree with both Hindi's targets and his methods.

Donna Ewing, founder and president of the Barrington-based Hooved Animal Rescue and Protection Society, and Hindi have had a longstanding feud.

She said horse slaughter actually helps horses avoid dying slowly while their owners neglect them and that the images Hindi shows are taken out of context.

She also agrees with many rodeo groups that the traditions of the sport do not actually hurt the animals and that it's even necessary for society that people learn how to lasso animals.

"(Hindi's method's have) raised an awareness that people should clean up their acts," Ewing said. "But I think they've gone too far and I disagree with using emotionalism and taking things out of context to get their point across."

One method Hindi doesn't use is violence. When contacted, Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association spokeswoman Leslie King declined to comment on him as an individual but said he was an "animal activist," many of whom are considered domestic terrorists by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Rumors continue to swirl on the Internet about the still-unexplained Easter 2002 fire that burned Cavel to the ground. Investigating agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, suspected arson but eventually said any evidence was too damaged by the blaze to be conclusive.

In 1997, a Cavel plant in Redmond, Ore., was destroyed in a blaze for which a group claimed responsibility.

But Hindi insists that using violence is just as bad as abusing animals, a much different view than some animal rights groups, like the Animal Liberation Front.

"The biggest lie told by a component of our side is that we have the right to use violence because they use violence," Hindi said.

## A radical life change

"From my perspective, I think Steve Hindi has out-achieved any other person in the cause," Animal People editor Clifton said.

Clifton fielded Hindi's first phone call and has seen him through the transformation from animal killer to activist.

In 1990, Hindi called the now-defunct publication Animals Agenda and said he was a hunter but wanted to save the sport by doing away with unsportsmanlike practices — specifically the Hegins, Pa., pigeon shoot.

It was there the year before that Hindi had his epiphany. A lifelong hunter, he stopped at the pigeon shoot on his way to the East Coast from Illinois for shark hunting.

But seeing thousands of pigeons released only to be shot seconds later at close range and then left for dead made Hindi start to think.

Luckily, the hunter got Clifton on the phone instead of an animal advocacy group.

His grand idea at the beginning: He wanted to hold a prize fight with the pigeon shoot organizer and the winner would decide the fate of the event.

"I didn't see the animal rights community going along with that," Clifton said. "It certainly was a novel idea."

Hindi's educational and attention-grabbing efforts, including video documentation, did eventually help lead to the defeat of the Hegins pigeon shoot, albeit 10 years later. The decision to finally put a stop to it came at the hands of the chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in July 1999. He called the event "cruel and moronic."

Hindi soon realized that aside from the close friends he swayed to the cause, other hunters wouldn't join him.

"That caused him to seriously reappraise the whole thing," Clifton said.

He also realized that since his views included ethical hunting, he didn't really fit in with any of the existing animal rights groups.

Finding himself in between the two worlds, he decided to found the Chicago Animal Rights Coalition and, later, SHARK.

But after starting his quest with the goal of bringing dignity back to hunting, Hindi soon went all out against the sport. He buried his hunting trophies and became a vegan, a dietary habit he has since dropped.

The radical life change led him to separate from his wife.

While still involved in conventional animal-rights protests, he traveled around the country and kept getting thrown in jail. To this day, he devotes much of his time to animal rights causes, including a two-week trip this month.

"It was the downfall of our marriage," ex-wife Jacquelyn Hindi said. "I was just thinking 'I'm raising these kids alone' and 'I'm out.' "

But as Steve took up animal rights activism, his ex-wife became more involved in Christianity. She learned to forgive him and support his cause.

"A lot of people will say animal activists don't care about humans, but that is not the case with Steve," Jacquelyn said. "He just feels this is where his calling is and this is where his drive is. He's a great person and a great father, too."

Jacquelyn and Steve live across town from each other in Elburn. They met when he came to this area from St. Paul, Minn., as an aspiring musician.

He came to Geneva and started working at Allied Rivet as a shipping clerk. He worked his way up to running the company.

Eventually her father loaned money to the newlyweds so they could buy the company from its owner and make a living running it, which they continue to do to this day.

In between Hindi's professional life and his animal rights activities, he has also gotten both a black belt in karate and his pilot's license. He has been an advocate for the homeless and ran unsuccessfully for the state House in a contest he lost 12 years ago to Tom Cross, now Illinois' House Republican leader.

Jacquelyn home-schools their youngest daughter, Eva, 13. They also have a 19-year-old, Meghan.

Compassion, she said, led Steve to take up this fight. Before he came to Chicago, he worked for United Cerebral Palsy and Union Gospel Mission in St. Paul.

"He's for the underdog," she said. "And animals tend to be. No one is standing up for them."

## Choosing targets

But aside from compassion, Hindi had other motivations to turn his life around.

In a 1996 article in Animal People, Hindi wrote, "I stole the lives of uncounted victims of many species."

As he found his place within the animal rights community, he didn't focus, as so many have, on ending animal slaughter altogether.

Instead, Hindi has found success focusing somewhat narrowly on pigeon shoots, bullfighting, rodeos and, now, horse slaughter.

"My feeling is that if you are going to make change, you make change in steps," Hindi said.

In one of his most infamous stunts, Hindi took a cattle prod to himself in front of the Kane County Board in July 1998 to protest the upcoming rodeo as part of the Kane County Fair.

He later described it as a "very, very hard slap" on the arm. Many of the videos lining the shelves in Hindi's study show these prods or similar devices being used to send rodeo animals into the hysterics that make for an entertaining show.

As Hindi watches these videos, he said he truly cannot understand how people feel it's acceptable to basically torture animals for amusement.

He asks a series of questions designed to make you get the point: What if I came up to your cat or dog and flicked it here, or flicked it there, or grabbed its tail and turned it around?

You get the picture, he says.

"This is the perverted rewriting of American history," Hindi said of the rodeos. "It's the opposite in every single way of what actually occurred out on the range."

When the rodeo animals get shocked and then struggle with bucking straps, they buck wildly, sending themselves into whatever is in their paths, gates and fences included.

Hindi said of the rodeo riders: "If someone slammed them into the gate, they'd be crying for their mothers. (These devices) drive them nuts."

If someone came up with the idea of rodeos today for the first time, Hindi said, they would be "crucified."

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association steadfastly denies that any of its policies allow for the harming of animals.

In a 20-page brochure titled "Animal Welfare," it explains everything from the care of animals to the safety of the prod.

"Consistent proper treatment of animals by PRCA members — in and out of the arena — has been well documented by veterinarians who have witnessed the health and condition of the animals first-hand," the brochure reads.

Hindi chose these particular issues, Clifton said, because many others wouldn't approach them. The vast majority of animal activists are women, Clifton said, and they tend to focus on women's issues like the wearing of fur coats, the testing of makeup on animals and the treatment of pets.

"There's been relatively little attention paid to men's issues," Clifton said.

The other reason he goes after these targets, Clifton said, is they influence cultural perceptions about animals.

"What rodeo is doing is glorifying animal abuse and making it acceptable," Clifton said.

## The decision is yours

Growing up in St. Paul, Hindi said he received mixed messages about how to treat animals and was encouraged in the family traditions of hur and fishing.

"Like most children, learned what we were tau setting aside whatever qua we may have felt," Hindi sa the Animal People essay. ' mother raised us to care for and dogs, and we regularly in strays, despite housing ject rules, which forbad However, we were told that had no feelings, and we ki them with abandon."

He went on to describe ting the heads of carps v rocks. One time he stuffe M-80 firecracker into the gi a suffocating carp, lighting waterproof fuse and relea him.

"Seconds later the w erupted in a red spray," H wrote. "When the muddy w cleared, we saw the carp's h blasted away from his body."

Hindi said he killed bec he was taught it was OK, ev he was put off when his behavior took it to that extre

While initially he though could keep some of the fa traditions, he soon decide would have to shed the prac entirely.

"I've really come to have of distaste for the words 'tr tion' and 'culture,' " Hindi sa

When he began to feel about hunting, after the Hegins pigeon shoot, focused mainly on the ca that teach tradition trur thought.

"It's animals for entert ment, animals being abuse people's enjoyment and tal children," Jacquelyn Hindi "(At the pigeon shoot) they these young kids, 9, 10, wringing the heads off pige and wiping the blood on t shirts."

By showing others wha believes is the truth of ani treatment divorced from product it's trying to sell — the entertainment of the ro or the meat of a horse — hopes to change the way ot treat animals and help th avoid all that comes with kill

"What we have to do is t people see and make up th own minds," Hindi said. "Th a very American way of do things."

Limited time only!

2-28-04 Daily Herald

# Elgin continues to reinvent itself

By Tom O'Konowitz
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*



DAVE TONGE/DAILY HERALD

**Elgin Mayor Ed Schock, described by some as the city's visionary, says the future will bring thousands of new houses to the cornfields near Bowes and Randall roads.**

When Elgin officially incorporated as a city 150 years ago today, there wasn't much to the tiny town on the Fox River.

It had been a village just one square mile in size, with some 2,000 people, mud streets, a rented municipal hall, a couple of schoolhouses, a single police officer and no fire department. Elgin served mostly as an agricultural and marketing center for other cities in the region.

Clearly, a lot has changed since the city of Elgin's incorporation on Feb. 28, 1854.

The Elgin of today counts among its population more than 100,000 people representing dozens of cultures. It offers a wide range of amenities including a world-class orchestra, a riverboat casino, parks and pools, a library, churches, hospitals, restaurants and a top-of-the-line recreation center.

Elgin today calls on hundreds of police officers and firefighters to protect its residents, and thousands of local workers keep the town's service and manufacturing industries thriving.

And just as so much has changed in the past century-and-a-half, local leaders predict the city surely will change as drastically and frequently in the years to come. But they seem confident the changes mostly will be for the better, and veteran Elgin Councilman Robert Gilliam anticipates that the city's transformation should be so great that the Elgin of today will be a faint memory in 10 years.

Despite the vast differences in Elgin past, present and future, many agree a constant has been the loyalty of the residents of those who call it home.

"People who live in Elgin have tremendous passion and commitment to their city — unlike any I've ever seen," Mayor Ed Schock said. "Elginites are really committed, very loyal to their city. They're a rare breed."

## City to watch

Schock likes to call the Elgin of 2004 a city in the suburbs, offering its diverse pool of residents the best of what cities can offer.

"I think Elgin is an incredibly exciting place. It has a certain uniqueness that differentiates us from the average suburbs," said Schock, a retired teacher and elementary school principal who has called Elgin home for all of his 57 years. "It was a great place for me to grow up as a kid. It was a great place for me to return after college. And Elgin is a great place to live and raise a family."

At 150 years, Elgin offers its residents and businesses a combination of attractions and amenities you can't find elsewhere.

Illinois' largest and most state-of-the-art municipal recreation facility, The Centre, sits in the heart of Elgin, drawing hundreds of people of all ages each day. The Grand Victoria Casino, the busiest in Illinois, attracts visitors from all over the state. And the largest traditional movie screen in the Midwest opened this week on Elgin's west side.

"There's always things you can complain about in a city, but we've done pretty well making Elgin a good place for people to live the past 150 years — more so than a lot of other cities," said E.C. "Mike" Alft, a former Elgin mayor who has lived in the city for 54 years and has written a dozen books about its history. "Elgin has a lot to offer. It's more than just a suburb."

## Much has changed

Pioneer brothers James T. and Hezekiah Gifford arrived in what now is known as Elgin via the Fox River in 1835. James Gifford decided to set up a town near where the Kimball Street bridge now stands because of its river access and location directly between Chicago and the important mining town of Galena.

While Elgin attracted about 2,000 residents in the following two decades, it wasn't established as a city until 1854.

Local historian Alft, who has compiled the most thorough accounting of Elgin's past, says that townspeople in the 1850s wanted their tiny village recognized as a city so they could control the schools and the sale of liquor. And in 1854, the people got their wish, receiving a charter, getting official boundaries that covered four square miles and swearing in trustees.

Originally, Elgin served mostly as an agricultural processing center with most residents working in flour mills, a woolen mill, a distillery, a tannery and dairy farms. The city's numerous dairy farms and the opening of Gail Borden's milk condensing plant in the mid-1860s made Elgin the dairy capital of the country.

The young city also became home to the Elgin National Watch Co., established in 1864, and subsequently became one of the region's more important industrial centers. The watch factory employed thousands and produced more than 50 million Elgin watches in more than 100 years of existence.

But the Elgin of today no longer resembles the picture of its agrarian infancy or its industrial adolescence.

The Elgin of 2004 still has manufacturing plants and distribution centers, but it's more service oriented today — with its mental health center, two hospitals, stores and restaurants, counseling centers, casino and social service agencies.

"The Elgin of 2004 is not the same as Elgin of 1950, which isn't the same as Elgin of 1850," Alft said. "The name is the same and the place is the same, but the people are different and they are different communities."

2-28-04 Daily Herald

# Kane court clerk hopefuls differ on Spanish use

By Lisa Smith
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*


Sue Norris


Deb Seyller

Individuals appearing in court have the right, by law, to request a court-appointed translator during proceedings.

But people not fluent in English might have a difficult time obtaining basic information from the Kane County circuit court clerk's office, which does not always have a Spanish speaker available to answer questions.

"English is considered the court's official language," Clerk Deb Seyller said.

Her challenger in the March 16 primary election, Sue Norris, said the clerk's office, the official record-keeper of all court documents in the 16th judicial circuit, needs to add a Spanish option to its automatic telephone system to service the needs of the county's growing Hispanic population.

"If you have to have an automated system where you can't identify a language barrier, then you should have — in Kane County in this day in age — an option for people who feel more comfortable listening to their prompts in Spanish," Norris said.

It's not that easy, Seyller contends. Having a Spanish speaker — as opposed to a legally qualified translator — available to circuit court users could expose the circuit clerk's office to legal liability issues if ideas are not translated correctly.

"I would have to have a state's attorney's opinion on it," Seyller said.

Three members of the office's criminal team speak Spanish and are available to answer questions when they are not in court, she said.

There are no automatic Spanish options on either of the telephone systems of the circuit clerks in DuPage or Lake counties, but, like in Kane, a caller can request a Spanish speaker if one is available.

At the Cook County circuit clerk's office, callers can ask a live operator for a Spanish, Polish, German, Russian, Greek or Hindi translator.

Those translators are certified as bilingual speakers and are paid an additional stipend for their translating duties, said Bryant Payne, spokesman for the office.

A training project is under way to teach all "front line" employees some foreign languages and sign language, Payne said.

"They won't be fluent, but they will be able to welcome a customer until an interpreter is able to service them," said Bryant Payne, spokesman for the office.

Cook County has 11 times as many Spanish speakers as Kane, but the group comprises nearly the same percentage of the population — 20 percent — in both counties, according to the most recent U.S. Census figures.

There are at least 80,000 Spanish speakers in Kane County, and nearly 40 percent don't speak English very well, according to the census.

Norris said a Spanish telephone option is long overdue.

"What happens is people get discouraged and don't show up or don't follow through and go some place else like the state's attorney's office or police department," Norris said.

# Work set for Fabyan bridge, Orchard

2-28-04 Daily Herald

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Drivers who use Orchard Road in southeastern Kane County can expect big delays starting this spring and, a few months later, the same will go for those dependent on the Fabyan Parkway bridge to get over the Fox River.

A $13.5 million expansion of Orchard Road between Prairie Street and Indian Trail Road is largest of Kane County's 10 major construction projects set for the 2004 season.

County engineer Carl Schoedel said transportation officials are working on a public information campaign to inform drivers about the project, its expected delays and possible alternate routes.

The project, funded by county and Aurora money, will add a lane in each direction along the 2.2-mile stretch. It includes a complete resurfacing, additional turn lanes, intersection improvements and three new traffic lights.

Construction is set to begin in spring and won't be completed until next year.

**2004 county road construction projects**

- Huntley Road and Square Barn Road intersection improvement, $350,000
- Walker Road bridge over Coon Creek, $75,000
- Randall Road over Union Pacific railroad, $500,000
- McLean Blvd. between Hopps and Bowes roads, $5 million
- Fabyan Parkway bridge over Fox River, $2.2 million
- Keslinger Road bridge over Blackberry Creek, $1.5 million
- Randall Road bridge over Mill Creek, $75,000
- Orchard Road from Prairie Street to Indian Trail Road, $13.5 million
- Granart Road bridge, $2 million

Source: Kane County transportation division

In the center of the county, the resurfacing of the Fabyan Parkway bridge in Geneva is expected to begin in September and will reduce the overpass to one lane in each direction during most of the work.

County engineers say two, separate 5-day complete closures will be needed to finish portions of the required concrete work. Those closures, predicted to come between late September and November, likely would start at 7 p.m. on a Friday and continue through the following Wednesday.

Detours to the Route 56 bridge in North Aurora and Route 38 bridge in Geneva would be used during the closures — one bridge for each direction.

Other major projects include the $5 million widening of McLean Boulevard from south of Hopps Road and north of Bowes Road in South Elgin, which will begin this fall, and the $1.3 million expansion of the intersection of LaFox Road and Route 38 in LaFox. Turn lanes and a traffic light will be added. Construction starts this spring.

2-28-04 Daily Herald

# 3 seek nomination to run for county recorder position

ELECTION2004

The Daily Herald sent questionnaires to each of the three candidates in the race for the Republican nomination for a Kane County Recorder. Here are their responses to selected questions.



Daniel Gurbal

**Daniel J. Gurbal**, 53, of Geneva, is a real estate researcher. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 2191 and St. Peter Catholic Church in Geneva.



Donald Rage

**Donald J. Rage**, 46, of Sleepy Hollow, is owner and president of Rage Management. He was a member of the Kane County Board from 1994 to 2002; Republican precinct committeeman from 1996 to present; Dundee Township Republican Chairman from 2002 to present; member Kane County Board of Review from 2002 to 2004. He also has served as community: chairman of Three Rivers Boy Scout Council; president of the Sleepy Hollow School parent-teacher organization; and a member St. Catherine of Siena Church.



Sandra Wegman

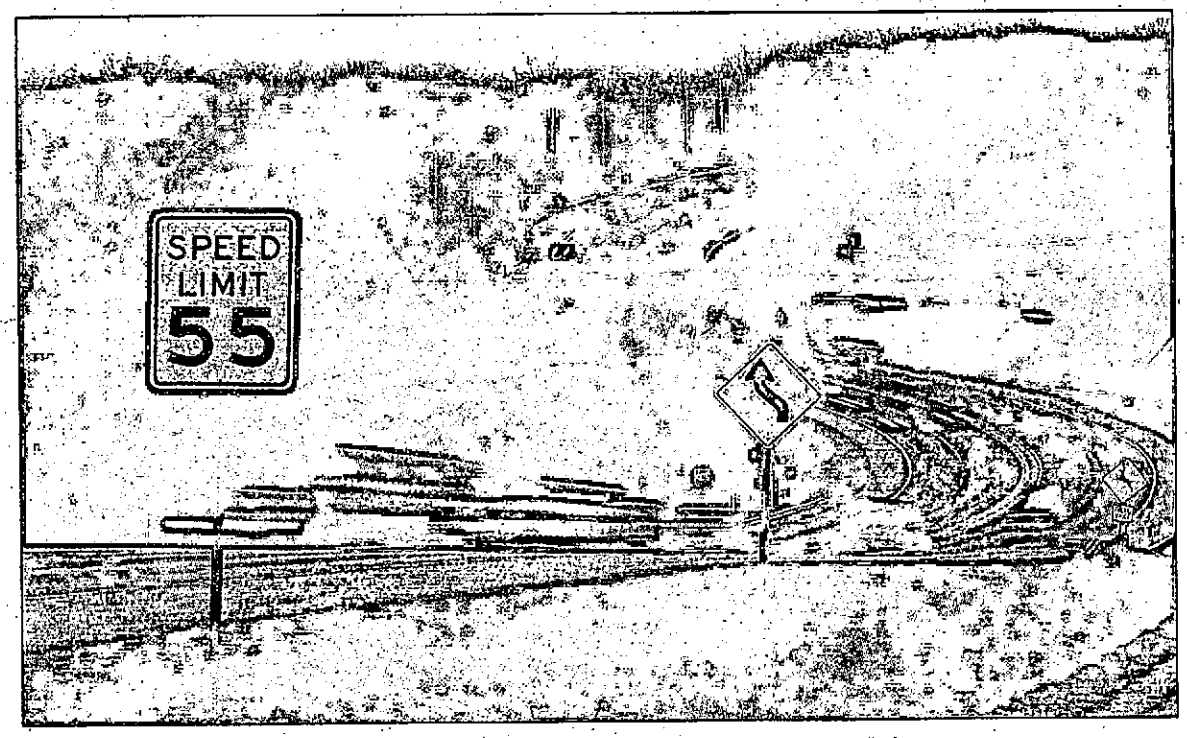
**Sandra Wegman**, 60, of Elgin, is the incumbent Kane County Recorder. She has served 11 years as Gail Borden Public Library trustee, in second 6-year term, and as a Republican precinct committeeman for two years. She is a participant in Muscular Dystrophy Association day; former Elgin Rotarian; volunteer for Neighbors of South East Elgin Unity Day; volunteer for Grant Park Neighborhood Association Unity Day; and guide for Gifford Park Housewalk

**Q.** Why are you running for this office, whether for re-election or election the first time? Is there a particular issue that motivates you, and if so, what? What will be your main priority?

**Daniel Gurbal:** I believe I have something to give an office that is in dire need of someone who has knowledge and experience to share. I have made a good living for the past 30 years in the title research industry. I have used the recorder's office on a daily basis for most of that 30 years. I have taken a certain

See **ELECTION** on **PAGE 3**

# County OKs Randall improvements




**A number of residents** have expressed the need to reduce the speed limit on Randall Road between Red Haw Lane and Crane Road in St. Charles. A Kane County Board committee on Friday voted to install a raised median on the road and to lower the speed limit to 50 mph.

Wayne Ratzlaff — Chronicle photo staff

2-28-04
Chronicle

## Raised median, lower speed limit planned for S-curve

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Board's Transportation Committee voted Friday to spend $250,000 to install a raised median on the Randall Road S-curve in St. Charles.

The committee also voted to lower the speed limit to 50 mph from 55 mph between Red Haw Lane and Red Gate Road, the only stretch of Randall that still has a 55 mph limit.

Friday's decisions were the second set of safety improvements directed at a dangerous stretch of Randall Road. The first, approved at January's committee meeting, focused on raising public awareness of the dangers on the S-curve.

Residents and students and teachers from St. Charles North High School have been lobbying the county board to improve Randall Road safety since the death of North senior Samantha Joos, who was killed in November 2003 when her car crossed the center line during a storm.

"This section of Randall is very unique in nature," Kane County Transportation Division engineer Steve Pasinski said.

That stretch of Randall Road follows an S-curve as it dips into a steep ravine, then rises up an equally steep hill.

At the January committee meeting, St. Charles North senior Katie Venegas and sophomore Emily Zepeda presented board members with the signatures of 200 people seeking improvements.

Venegas and Zepeda attended Friday's meeting again, along with senior class President Niropa Kartha and driver's education teacher Steve McInerny, to support the safety improvements.

"Sam Joos's death still resonates in our school and in the surrounding community," Venegas said.

The median will be nine feet wide and have 9-inch-high curbs.

Pasinski said construction bids will be accepted in March.

To squeeze the median into the 4-foot-wide flush median, the four 12-foot-wide lanes will be reduced to 11 feet, and the 8-foot-wide shoulders will be narrowed to 7.5-feet wide.

The narrower lanes allow KDOT to install the median without using more land, and Pasinski said that will have an added safety benefit.

See RANDALL, page 2

### Safety concerns

• Residents, along with staff and students at St. Charles North High School, lobbied the county board for the Randall Road improvements after North senior Samantha Joos died in an accident on the S-curve in November 2003.

FINAL EDITION

2-29-04 Beacon News

# Kane seeks mental-health court

## Officials say special treatment needed for special situations

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Although he saw about 200 defendants at his most recent Drug Court call, one defendant really stuck out for 16th Circuit Court Judge James Doyle.

He was acting strangely, hitting himself. Doyle asked the young man, a substance abuser, to roll up his sleeves.

"He had been self-mutilating . . . " Doyle said. "But this is common. In the Drug Court, we are seeing so many mental-health issues. We go from bipolar, to depression, to schizophrenia. The cases are all mixed up with substance abuse; then we have to unravel them."

Which is one reason Kane County officials are pushing more and more for a separate mental-health court, similar to Doyle's Drug Court and the Domestic Violence Court run by the 16th Circuit.

While there are no solid figures to back up just how many prisoners who go in and out of the Kane County jail have mental-health issues, Jim McKnish, an Aurora-based business owner who is Illinois president of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), estimated those numbers between 16 to 20 percent.

National statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice say 20 to 25 percent of the male jail population across the country is mentally ill. It's 30 percent for women.

Part of the problem in that mental illness is not easily diagnosed. Dr. Tim Brown, chief psychologist at the Kane County Diagnostic Center, said it's not the big cases that cause the problem.

"It's the great uncle who's weird," said Brown "Everything's fine until he pushes a nephew and hurts him — and he gets arrested. These are the nightmares for law enforcement and the jail. The guy gets incarcerated — and for a long time. And that makes it a Catch-22."

### Special situations

Experts acknowledge the more the system treats mentally ill perpetrators like other criminals, the less successful it is. That's why more people across the country are calling for specialized courtrooms to deal with these cases.

DuPage County already has announced the beginning of the first mental-health court in Illinois, and

❖ *Turn to* **COURT, A2**

## tornerecord

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## recentdeaths

Obituaries / Page A8

**Carlson, Ruby Marguierite,** 72, Plano
**Erickson, Dorothy K.,** 79, Plano
**Rieckert, Phyllis M.,** 72, Aurora
**Scarpelli, Col. (Ret.) Sylvio "Sam,"** 85, Sandwich


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# COURT

*From Page A1*

Kane County officials are studying the possibility of starting one of their own.

Officials see it as a way of monitoring cases better, diverting people from the jail who do not need to be there, cutting down on the number of repeat offenders and slashing costs of both incarceration and courtroom time.

It also is just a better way of helping those who are mentally ill.

"It's not only the cost of jail, but, when they're in jail, they don't get what they need," says McKnish. "It can lead to crisis. Then, they may need to be hospitalized."

McKnish is part of a task force formed about three years ago which is looking into developing the Kane County mental-health court. That group about a year ago was turned down for federal funding. McKnish said officials intended to fund 50 such courts across the country but wound up giving money to only 19.

There still is hope. A bill already has passed the U.S. Senate and is in the House to put $200 million toward funding for mental-health-court programs across the country. McKnish said Kane officials are in regular contact with the office of Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, R-Yorkville, about the bill.

In the meantime, Kane County has made strides in dealing with the mentally ill in its court system. The task force three years ago developed a protocol for the 16th Circuit on how to deal with these cases, which has provided opportunity for some diversion programs.

Also, the state's attorney's and public defender's offices have used an informal protocol for years to work out some cases involving mental-health issues.

But there are plenty of cases that slip through the cracks because it is difficult to monitor them after they are adjudicated.

"These can tear your (probation) staff up, because these people don't know wrong from right," said Jim Mueller, Kane County Court Services director.

### Classic example

Mueller said a mentally ill person in a state facility often will get treatment there that involves medication. While the person takes the medication, he feels better and eventually is released. But sometimes, after that, the person think he's doing fine, doesn't need the medication and stops taking it. Before long, that person could end up back in the court system.

McKnish said that is why, in addition to a special court call, more "support housing" is necessary as a place to send these people while on probation.

"There is a 60 to 90 percent recovery rate, depending on the illness, with medication," McKnish said. "Without meds and supportive housing, we won't get anywhere."

Aurora experienced an extreme version of that situation in 1996 when Jerry Piazza, a diagnosed schizophrenic who refused to take his medication because he didn't believe anything was wrong with him, killed his father and brother at the family home on Prairie Street in unincorporated Aurora.

At the time, there was an outstanding warrant for his arrest stemming from an earlier domestic-violence

also stipulated that he must report to the Kane County Diagnostic Center.

Although he showed up, he refused to cooperate. When he failed to keep his last appointment, a warrant was issued for his arrest. Officials had been unable to serve the warrant before the murders took place.

"Not all cases end up that tragically, but that was a classic example," Brown said.

The theory behind a mental-health court is that such cases likely would be monitored closely. It is a judicial philosophy known as "therapeutic justice," which is the same philosophy behind the drug court.

"If you violate probation, you get jacked into court real quick," Brown said. "You have a consequence immediately. The punishment is directly tied to what you did."

Jerry Murphy, director of the Kane-Kendall 708 Mental Health Board, agrees.

"When someone is picked up, that's a good time to reason with them, because now they're in trouble," he said.

While everyone seems to agree a mental-health court is a good idea, it appears to be a ways off in Kane County. Brown said one major problem is lack of hard numbers, including costs for such a court and the percentage of jail population who are mentally ill.

Also, Kane County simply does not have enough judges to put one full time into a mental-health court.

Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio said the 16th Circuit already is down two judges from where it should be because of budget considerations — and would need yet another judge to run a full-time courtroom. Also, a judge assigned to mental-health court would need special training.

### A mess

Still, DiMarzio said he is "very supportive" of efforts to establish a mental-health court.

"Many criminal cases we see involve mental-health issues and problems," he said. "Our jails are not equipped to deal with that, personnel-wise."

Officials on the Kane County Board are hoping establishment of the new Justice Coordinating Council will help get the kind of numbers — both on jail population statistics and costs — needed to look at specialty courts. Board member Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, said the County Board could see a resolution seeking to establish the coordinating council as early as March.

"I don't think there's anybody who doesn't see the need," he said. "These people come in and out of the system. They are the toughest to deal with."

Board member Karen McConnaughay, R-St. Charles, chairman of the Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee and a candidate for board chairman, said "funding always is a question." She pointed out that specialty courts, for drugs, mental health and domestic violence, are the trend across the country.

"It may be that, in the final analysis, that is more efficient, more cost-effective," she said. "As a society, we need to begin addressing some of these issues from a different viewpoint."

McKnish believes establishing the mental-health court would be a step toward overall better treatment for the mentally ill, as well as cost-effective for taxpayers.

"There is no savings to doing nothing," he said. "It's time that we drew a line. We have to just stop dumping

2-29-04
Beacon News





PHOTOS BY JONATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Above: Artist Dr. Charles Smith talks with Leon Fox at the reopening Saturday of Smith's African-American Museum and Black Veterans Archives on Aurora's East Side. Below: Faces are set into the wall at the Charles Smith's museum as part of his 'Silent Faces' memorial to the underground railroad and its passage through Aurora.**

# African-American Heritage Museum reopens

**By Brian Shields**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

AURORA — It might be inappropriate to say Dr. Charles Smith came home triumphantly Saturday, because that would indicate that all of his work is done.

Smith, the founder of the African-American Heritage Museum and Black Veterans Archives on Aurora's East Side, celebrated the grand reopening of the art-covered home and grounds at 126 S. Kendall St. with a multicultural crowd of locals, out-of-towners, supporters, art students and history buffs.

Now that the museum has the recognition Smith and many others feel it deserved from the moment it was born in 1986, Smith is ready to go even further in educating African-Americans and others about the struggles and triumphs of black people in America.

As people milled around the yard and chatted on Kendall Street, Smith was about to start a tour of the outside wall, which depicts black history from its start in Africa through the Middle Passage which brought slaves to Jamestown, Va., in 1619 and beyond.

"(The museum) is never closed," Smith said. "All you have to do is drive by and see a finished piece in the yard, or a piece in progress. This is for people to be educated and see what we're all about."

Feb. 10, the Kane County Board approved a special-use variance for which Smith applied several years ago to bring the museum more into the mainstream.

There had been some complaints over the years from people who live in the mostly residential neighborhood about safety concerns, but Smith and others passionate about the museum's mission addressed those concerns while working with Aurora Township and Kane County on refurbishing the site.

Smith moved to New Orleans in 2002 and has established a similar museum there, but he still owns the museum and land in Aurora. Many of his pieces are meant to be displayed outdoors to change with the weather and time.

Many of Smith's pieces are on

❖ *Turn to* **MUSEUM, A7**



# MUSEUM

*From page A1*

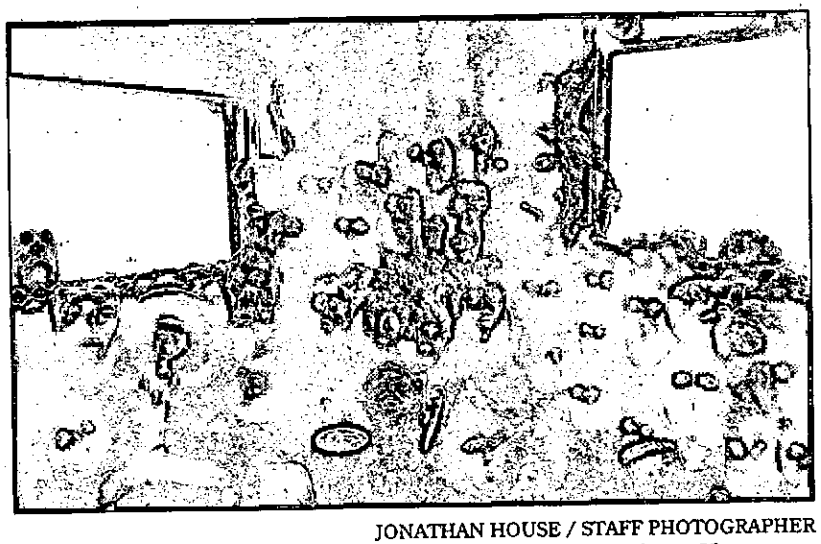
loan at museums throughout the country after being purchased by The Kohler Foundation of Wisconsin, with one exhibit slated for The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Roughly 500 pieces remain on the Kendall Street property.

A Vietnam veteran, Smith created hundreds of pieces symbolizing the struggles of black people. It includes exhibits depicting the earliest African-American experience, Smith said in a 1998 interview.

"It's one man's love for God, his culture and his people," he said.

Tim Long of Chicago, a project curator for the Chicago Historical Society, scanned the property from the front gate while Smith entertained his guests. Long said he was fascinated by the Catch-22 presented when pieces of self-taught art designed to change with time and the elements are then moved to museums for display.

"The thing for me is finding it wonderful, but also wondering how to preserve the pieces," Long said. "I like the fact of a person who is so consumed with creating new art."



JONATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Along one wall at Dr. Charles Smith's African-American Heritage Museum rests what he refers to as 'early childhood apprentice folk art.' The faces, he says, are a way for children to explore their creativity through interaction with the form and substance while visiting the Aurora museum and Black Veterans Archives.**

In the midst of posing for literally dozens of pictures and speaking with visitors, Smith presented a piece of art to Leon Fox, executive director of Gary, Ind.-based Live Up Art Inc.

Live Up Art is concerned with teaching art to children in the hopes of nurturing a passion for learning and life, according to Fox, and places such as the African-American Heritage Museum are vital tools in that task.

"The thing about 'Doc' is, he's doing what God wants him to do, and he's turning himself over to him," said Fox, who lived in North Aurora in the early 1970s and spent 30 years in Portland, Ore., before coming back to the Midwest.

"If every child is nurtured the way they are supposed to be, it would help the youth discover and cultivate themselves and their talents. And this can help children discover where they come from and instill pride in them."

Prominent politicians such as Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy and state Sen. Chris Lauzen attended the reopening, though neither went out of his way to tell people of their status as they took in the artworks.

McCoy drew special praise from Smith for his personal attention to the special variance issue.

It was a bittersweet day for Kevin Walls, a self-described historian and activist in Aurora. Walls said the city of Aurora can do more to embrace the museum, particularly as its works become more well-known throughout the country, and the site could become even more of a tourist attraction.

"I think this is another chapter in what needs to be done," Walls said. "I think the city also needs to come on board, and our elected officials need to recognize the African-American contribution to this city. We must come to grips with the past and work on our future."

Some of the final words came from Smith before he retired for the evening.

"This is just a glorious day for me. I've waited a long time for this," he said. "We've struggled for a long time, and we have to keep moving."

2-28-04 Beacon News

# Orchard Road project set to start in March

**■ Regional highway:** $13 million widening between Indian Trail Road and Prairie Street

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Construction is set to start in March on the almost $13 million Orchard Road project between Indian Trail Road and Prairie Street in Aurora.

The Kane County Board Transportation Committee Friday awarded a bid of about $12.9 million for the project to Harry W. Kuhn Inc., of Wheaton, the low bidder for the widening and reconstruction project.

The price is about $300,000 less than engineers estimated.

The project will widen to four lanes and reconstruct approximately 2.2 miles of Orchard, which will make the regional highway four lanes from where it intersects with Randall Road on the north end in North Aurora, to just past the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad underpass between Prairie and Jericho roads in Aurora.

There also will be new traffic signals where the road intersects with Illinois Avenue and Galena Boulevard.

County officials are unsure exactly when construction will begin in March. Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora, said there will be an informational session for the public at Washington Middle School sometime before construction begins.

The project is expected to finish during the summer of 2005, meaning the road will remain torn up during next winter.

During the course of construction, county transportation officials said they will issue a monthly newsletter to local and public agencies, updating the construction work. That is similar to what the Transportation Department did during the Orchard Road underpass construction project.

"We will have a public information push on that," said Carl Schoedel, of the Transportation Department.

While project cost was to be split evenly between Kane County

❖ *Turn to* **ORCHARD, A2**

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# ORCHARD

*From Page A1*

and the city of Aurora, it now appears the county will pay a little more. Wyatt Friday confirmed what Aurora officials have said that it looks like the city only will be able to come up with $5 million of the project.

"We'd like it if they could get to $6.5 million, but we'll see," he said. "It looks like we'll have to come up with the money."

He said he was unsure just where that money will come from in the county budget.

### 10 years planning

Still, Wyatt said county officials wanted to get the project bid and started. The county and city have had plans to widen Orchard Road to four lanes for years. Eventually, the road will be widened all the way to Route 30.

County and city officials have worked for 10 years negotiating designs and options with residents in the area. Late last summer, after meetings with residents throughout the different neighborhoods along the way, officials got a design with which residents said they were happy.

In addition to the roadwork, the design includes berms and 9-foot-tall fences in some places to contain noise.

Kane officials want the widening project to be as successful as the Orchard Road underpass has been. Officials were notified that the underpass won Project of the Year Award from the regional American Public Works Association and is now eligible for the national award given later this year.

# OFFICER

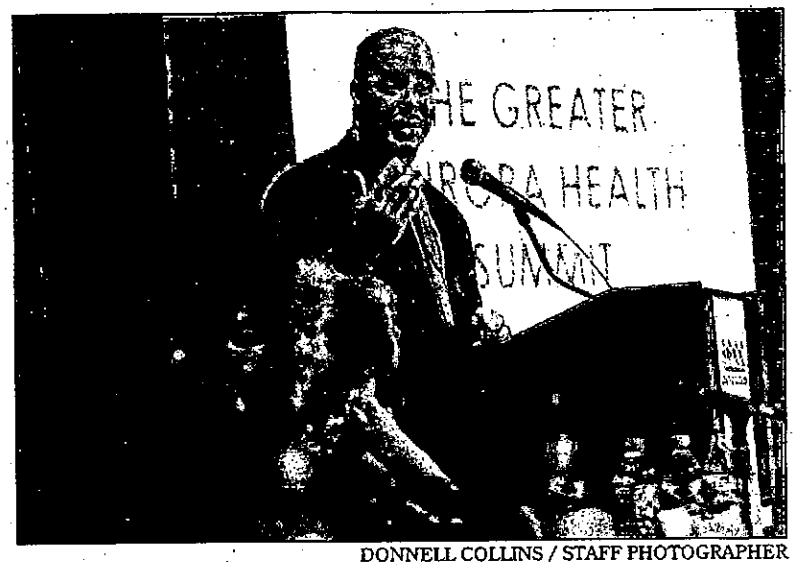
*From Page A1*

witnesses for both sides testified that tire marks showed no evasive-maneuver marks on the road — a fact that was difficult for the defense to overcome.

"There was no deer," Kendall County State's Attorney Tim McCann said in his closing arguments. "We know those accidents happen, but this is not the case."

*"Some days, you get a conviction, and you feel good, and it's all high fives. This is not one of those days. We had officers testifying against officers . . . it's tough. We work with these*






DONNELL COLLINS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Dr. Eric Whitaker, of the Illinois Department of Public Health, addresses the audience Friday at the Greater Aurora Health Summit, held at the Copley Theater.**

2-28-04
Beacon News

AURORA'S MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED

# Grant targets diabetes rate

## Special program: 34,000 people living in downtown, East Side in need of help

**By Marie-Anne Hogarth**
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — Provena Mercy Center has received a $500,000 grant through U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert's office to target the high rate of diabetes in Aurora through a special program with an emphasis on the Hispanic community.

The announcement was made by Mercy spokesman Michael Meyer at the end of the Greater Aurora Health Summit Friday, a discussion among more than 100 area health-care providers on how to best serve the city's medically underserved.

The event attended by Hastert also honored the Yorkville Republican for his commitment to serving this group.

The underserved in Aurora include some 34,000 people living in the city's downtown and near East Side, according to Kane County Chief Epidemiologist Uche Onwuta. The area is bordered approximately by Jericho Road to the south, Sheffer Road to the north, Kautz Road to the east and Highland Avenue to the west.

The area's population is 68 percent Hispanic, Onwuta said, and more than half of the low-income residents in the area are uninsured and not eligible for Medicaid. Often, this is for citizenship reasons, although community health centers like Aunt Martha's

❖ *Turn to* **GRANT, A2**

## forthe record

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■ The abbreviation for the Indian Valley Vocational Center was incorrect in a story Friday about construction of a new administration building for the Plano School District.

## recentdeaths

Obituaries / Page A8

**Janney, William H.,** 75, Montgomery
**Smith, August W. Sr.,** 77, Leland
**Tannenbaum, Harry J.,** 93, North Aurora

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## GRANT

*From Page A1*

Youth Services, the Visiting Nurse Association and Community Health in Partnership are not allowed to discriminate for residency issues.

While there is no data for the "medically underserved area," Onwuta said, health statistics for the Kane County portions of Aurora showed high rates of diabetes there.

Mortality rates for diabetes were higher in Kane portions of Aurora during 2001 — the latest year for which state data is available — than they were in the rest of Kane County or even the rest of the nation.

Diabetes hospitalization rates also skyrocketed here in 2000 to well over Kane County, state and national numbers, although a year later they were down again.

Mercy's program comes from an effort initiated by Companeros en Salud — along with former Mercy President and CEO Jack Barto — to stem this epidemic, Meyer said. In particular, the program would address diabetes in a language and cultural way to the Hispanic community.

Efforts are under way to hire a bilingual nurse educator who would launch the program, possibly as soon as spring, Meyer said. The hospital still hasn't received the funds, although a spokesman for Hastert confirmed they were earmarked.

Also, there are plans for a site at Mercy and one also to be determined within the community. There have been discussions with St. Nicholas Church, although the program may end up elsewhere.

Mercy is in talks with potential partners in the diabetes initiative.

"We can't get enough people at the table discussing diabetes," Meyer said. "It is an epidemic with roots in our lifestyle."

Meanwhile, Friday's summit showcased the city's already established community health centers — Aunt Martha's Youth Services, Visiting Nurse Association and Community Health Partnership — serving patients regardless of their ability to present an insurance card.

The summit's organizer, Kane County Health Department Personal Health Director Theresa Heaton, said there was great hope because in the last two years, the VNA and Aunt Martha's both added primary-care services, increasing access to care for the underserved. Community Health Partnership already provided these.

Still, once these centers operate at full capacity, Heaton said, projections are that they will serve only 40 percent of the population's needs unless current funding levels are changed.

Also cited in Onwuta's health and disease profiles were numbers indicating a high rate of cancer.

Malignant neoplasms, a category including a number of different cancers, was the leading cause of death in Aurora in 2001, the epidemiologist said, whereas it was heart disease in the rest of Kane County. Breast cancer mortality rates in Aurora also were higher that year than they were in the rest of Kane County or the nation.

While such statistics don't necessarily reflect the large medically underserved area here, Heaton said, access to primary care means that diseases get treated soon, complications and hospitalizations are prevented, and premature deaths can be minimized.

*Onwuta's statistics referring to Aurora are based on the Kane County portions of the city.*

3-1-04 Beacon News

# Democrats in Kane set sights on more gains

## ■ **Candidates forum:** County demographics are turning in their favor, leaders say

**By Linda Girardi**
BEACON NEWS CORRESPONDENT

With the election season in full swing, Kane County Democrats say they don't intend to let go of their foothold in county elected offices.

The Aurora Township Democratic Central Committee on Sunday sponsored a candidates forum in a conference room at Provena Mercy Center Hospital.

County Board candidate Paul Greviskes, who represents Aurora's near West Side, said when he first started serving in 1990, the final vote of the Kane County Board always ran 6 to 20 in favor of the other party.

"We changed it because Republicans were fractured and we had the ability to affect the outcome and it's been that way ever since," he said.

Greviskes, an attorney, is unopposed in the March 16 primary.

With the strength of two Democratic representatives on the county's executive committees, Greviskes said Democrats have been successful in enacting programs that otherwise would have fallen by the wayside.

"There are programs Republicans would never have funded," Greviskes said, referring to an intensive health care program for young single mothers.

There are two Democrat candidates vying for the County Bard seat in District 4. The candidate who wins in this month's primary

❖ *Turn to* **DEMOCRATS, A2**

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Vol. 157 / No. 72

# DEMOCRATS

*From Page A1*

will face Republican incumbent Penny Cameron.

Bonnie Kunkel said her experience as a practicing attorney and years of volunteering have given her insight about the issues facing residents, many of them struggling with real life problems.

"I've heard the stories but it's not enough — you have to listen and act," Kunkel said, adding the county's growth and fiscal issues need to be addressed.

When asked why she was unsuccessful in her last attempt, Kunkel said it's challenging to run in a predominantly Republican county.

"If we can't out spend them, we can outwork them," she said. "I promise to work harder to win."

Her primary opponent, Frank Craig, whose profession is in the global travel agency industry, said the county must attract corporate businesses.

"We need the types of businesses that bring real jobs and real benefits and ease the property tax burden on residents," Craig said.

Tom Meadath, also running for Kane County Board, is unopposed in the March 16 primary.

"We can do business as usual or stop the uncontrolled growth, rising taxes and increasing unemployment rates and give government back to the voters," he said.

Meadath, a Vietnam War veteran and owner of a Web site design company in St. Charles, said 28,000 people in Kane County are unemployed and thousands are living below the poverty level. He said the solution is to recruit new businesses to the county.

Meadath also urged voters to check the facts.

"An informed voter is a nightmare to the Republican party," he said.

Meadath will face Republican Karen Steve-McConnaughay in November.

"If you look at the poor performance overall of the County Board, I don't consider that a recommendation," he said. "If she wants to exhibit leadership, why hasn't she done so by now? I consider her part of the problem, not a solution."

Coroner candidate Robert Moore opened his remarks on the lighter side, by saying Quincy from the television show wasn't the coroner.

"The guy with the mustache who was always giving Quincy a hard time was the coroner," Moore said, adding it's that toughness that he would bring back to the office.

"The coroner is the chief investigative officer in cases of murders and suspicious deaths. He needs to be an investigator," said Moore, who once served as a U.S. Army military policeman and has 15 years in law enforcement.

Moore said he would enhance existing programs to reduce drug trafficking and usage, abuse and neglect of children, drunken driving and suicide programs instituted by Mary Lou Kearns and advanced by David Moore.

He pledged to work cooperatively with members of the County Board, law enforcement, schools and municipalities to educate and reach out to residents. "Our current coroner has paid lip service or ignored these programs," Moore said.

Renee Robinson, who is running for Kane County state's attorney, said she was the first African-American woman to prosecute cases in DuPage County. She now practices law in Aurora.

"We need to bring integrity and accountability back into law enforcement," Robinson said.

Michael Lowery, a staff psychologist for the state-run Elgin Mental Health Center, said he believes he can transfer his experience of serving as a civil servant to the office of Kane County recorder.

Lowery proposed to cut costs and increase efficiencies in the office and update existing technology.

"I plan to first reduce waste in the budget," Lowery said.

Democrats say they are hopeful about the prospects of once again holding the county's key offices. At one time, Democrats held countywide offices for clerk, sheriff and coroner.

"The demographics of the county are changing," Greviskes said.

The forum's moderator was State Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia, D-Aurora.

"I am encouraged we'll get the representation that directly reflects the demographics of the area," she said.

*An inconspicuous turn off Route 72 in Rutland Township is, now officially, a rustic treasure*



DAVE TONGE/DAILY HERALD

**Bob Conro has dedicated much of his life to preserving Thurnau Road in western Kane County near Hampshire. The road is still gravel and was the main highway before Route 47 took over.**

2-29-04 Daily Herald

# The long road back

BY AMY. E. WILLIAMS
*Daily Herald Correspondent*

It's easy to pass up.

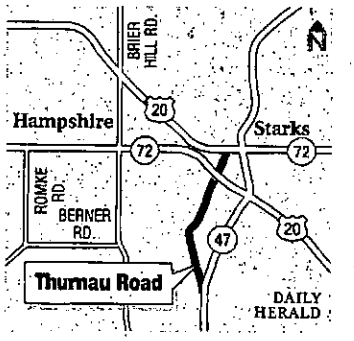
If it weren't for the tavern kiddy corner from the start of Thurnau Road, you might just breeze on by along Route 72, never guessing the gravel path is the beginning of one of the most scenic drives in Kane County.

There are no signs directing you to go down the mile and a half of dirt-and-gravel road, or hints of what lies over the shallow hills or around the gentle curves.

But Thurnau Road is something Kane County Board members don't think you should pass up. As such, they recently declared it the county's first Rustic Road — giving it landmark status because of its natural and historic significance that protects it from knee-jerk changes.

Thurnau, pronounced "Turner" by locals, sits at the southwest end of Rutland Township, intersecting with routes 20, 72 and 47.

The road meanders by now-dormant farm fields, a scattered few century-old houses and barns hidden in clusters of Burr Oaks, and a cemetery that is home to four Civil War veterans.




It's a sparse and quiet refuge

See **SCENIC** on **PAGE 9**

# Scenic: Road appeared on 1860 maps

*Continued from Page 1*

from the new development swallowing up the area's landscape.

The only new growth Ruth Ann Kowalski says she sees from her horse farm is the spring foliage.

Though her property is only minutes from some of the newest homes in the Hampshire, Huntley and the Elgin area, it's as if none of that exists from Kowalski's sanctuary along Thurnau Road.

If she looks in the right direction, she can see cars speeding along Route 47. On some nights, especially Fridays, those cars take Thurnau Road as a shortcut to the Old Starks Tavern, she said.

But still, Kowalski said, there is never so much traffic that she doesn't feel free to gallop along the road on one of her horses.

"It's not all the hustle bustle junk of the real world," she said. "It's off the beaten path. It's the country. It's not paved. It's rustic. It's wonderful and it absolutely should stay that way."

Bob Conro, who lives in Hampshire and has farmed corn, beans and alfalfa along Thurnau Road for years, led the charge to designate it as rustic.

"I didn't want to freeze it in time," the 77-year-old Conro said. "I know you can't do that. I just wanted the designation so other people could enjoy it like we do."

Chief to the designation is that the road's characteristics are protected. For example, they feel the gravel surface should be maintained, mature trees should be protected and the agricultural land should be preserved.

The designation also states that changes, such as the removal of healthy trees, alterations of the existing topography, new access points along the road and new development, first need to be reviewed for appropriateness by the county.

County officials also intend to install signs marking the road where it intersects with major thoroughfares to encourage drivers to go off and see the land that development forgot.

Well, mostly forgot. Over time, Conro said, some of the historic buildings along the road have been lost. But locals say the flavor of the road remains unchanged from its earliest days — and that's what they want to keep.

Their descriptions are backed up by early Kane County maps that show characteristics of the land that still exist today, including the road's curves, a pond and the sea of trees.

The road appears on maps as early at 1860. It is one of the oldest roads in the township and originally served as the main corridor for the early Starks settlement, named after E.R. Starks, who owned much of the land adjoining the road.

For some time Thurnau Road was part of Route 47. In 1935 the path of the original Route 47 was changed, and Thurnau Road was named for the family that owned the property at the Route 72 intersection, county records show.

"There is so much history here. I want people to see the beauty of the road and to realize the historic significance," Conro said. "The crops, the scenery, the quietness — it's all beautiful and it is how it's been for years. People should see that."



DAVE TONGE/DAILY HERALD

**Bob Conro drives his pickup truck down Thurnau Road, Kane County's first landmarked rural road.**

2-28-04 Daily Herald

# Panel pushes lower speed on S-curve

## *County board's transportation panel also calls for median on Randall Road*

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Work to install a median between north- and southbound lanes of the Randall Road S-curve could be included in this year's construction season under the latest recommendation for improving the four-lane highway's safety.

At the continued urging of high school students and other residents, the county board's transportation committee Friday recommended the installation of a 9-foot-wide median and called for lowering the S-curve's speed limit to 50 mph from 55.

"I think installation of a barrier is key to slowing things down," board member John Hoscheit, a St. Charles Republican, said supporting the recommendation.

Improving the stretch of Randall Road between Silver Glen Road and Red Haw Road in St. Charles Township has become a public safety priority in the months following the November traffic death of St. Charles North High School senior Samantha Joos.

She was killed when she lost control of her car and crossed the center line while driving through the S-curve.

Since then, several North students and former St. Charles school board president Steve Cole have been pressuring the county to lower the stretch's speed limit and add other safety improvements.

Last month the transportation committee and later the county board approved installing new warning signs along the road. A speed limit change was not included in the first safety package.

After further study ordered by the committee, the safety recommendation from the county's transportation division expanded Friday.

Transportation engineer Steve Pasinski said the new plan calls

See **S-CURVE** on **PAGE 5**

## **S-curve:** Board pushes for traffic lights

*Continued from Page 1*

for a 9-foot-wide, 9- inch-tall concrete median to be built in center of the road. The project will shrink the width of the road's lanes and shoulder by several inches.

That engineering change should result in a "natural" reduction of speed, Pasinski said.

"And it should vastly reduce the chance of crossover accidents," he said.

The construction project could be ready for bid by March, he said. Estimates provided in earlier discussions show a median could cost between $225,000 and $250,000.

But a new median and speed limit might not be the only changes. Cole and even some board members — namely Karen McConnaughay and Barb Wojnicki, both St. Charles Republicans — want more traffic lights.

They point specifically to the dangers presented by limited visibility at the intersections of Bolcum and Randall roads and Crane and Randall roads.

"Please think of making some changes," McConnaughay said to the committee.

Transportation committee chairman Bill Wyatt, an Aurora Republican, said he expects the issue of new traffic lights on Randall to be discussed again next month.

2-28-04 Beacon News

# Fabyan bridge will be shut down in fall

## ■ September work?
Parkway improvements require 10-day closure

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — As Tri-Cities residents prepare for spring and summer, they can look forward to a nice headache in the fall.

That's when the Kane County Department of Transportation will close the Fabyan Parkway bridge over the Fox River for a total of 10 days. Work on the bridge is one of 10 major county transportation projects planned for 2004, totaling about $26.5 million.

The $2.2 million Fabyan bridge project will include replacing the deck surface and the modular joint and lights, and repairing the parapets.

Replacing the deck surface is the part of the project that will require closing the bridge.

The closing will be done twice, for five days, beginning at 7 p.m. on a Friday, and ending at 7 p.m. the following Wednesday.

The closings will be in late September or early October.

For the rest of the project, the bridge will be open to one lane of traffic in each direction.

Officials are starting the project in September to allow the state to finish planned intersection enhancements at Routes 56 and 25 in North Aurora. The Route 56 bridge over the river in downtown North Aurora is one of the possible detours for the Fabyan bridge, so Kane officials don't want both closed at the same time.

"We're trying to time it that way," said Carl Schoedel, of KDOT.

The other detour being considered is Route 38 through downtown Geneva.

"Of course, people are going to find their own routes," Schoedel said.

Among the 10 major KDOT construction projects for the year, the biggest will be the beginning of the $13 million widening of Orchard Road to four lanes, from Indian Trail Road to Prairie Street, in Aurora. The project is set to begin in March.

The second biggest project is the $5 million widening to four lanes of McLean Road in Elgin, from south of Hopps Road to north of Bowes Road. That work is not planned to begin until fall.

### Other projects

Other projects are:

■ $350,000 improvement of the intersection of Huntley and Square Barn roads in Rutland Township, to begin in the spring.

■ $75,000 repair and guardrail work on Walker Road, over the Coon Creek Bridge in Burlington Township, to begin in the spring or summer.

■ $500,000 deck repair, guardrail work and modular joint replacement of the Randall Road bridge over railroad tracks near Elgin, to start in the spring.

■ $1.3 million installation of turn lanes and a traffic signal at LaFox Road and Route 38 in Campton Township, due to start in the spring.

■ $1.5 million bridge replacement on Keslinger Road over the Blackberry Creek Bridge in Blackberry Township, due to start in the spring.

■ $75,000 bridge deck repair and painting of the Randall Road bridge over Mill Creek in Batavia, scheduled for spring or summer.

■ $2 million replacement of the Granart Road Bridge in Big Rock Township, due to start in fall.

The public can keep up to date on the progress of projects on the Internet, at www.co.kane.il.us/DOT, accessing the 2004 construction icon. Officials will have that information available beginning March 15.

# Tri-Cities will fight ComEd's new power plan

2-28-04 Beacon News

By Jan Ramming
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

The cities of Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles joined together to say that they have found "significant problems" with ComEd's new proposal for power line upgrades.

The cities maintain that ComEd's new plan just won't do the job.

ComEd recently announced it would withdraw its proposal to the Illinois Commerce Commission for high power 138KV lines on Randall Road from North Aurora to South Elgin in favor of a new plan that proposes upgrades to the existing 34.5 KV substation transmission system, using new technology.

A press release from all three cities Friday afternoon stated that ComEd's new plan does not meet the long-range capacity needs of central Kane County "and, from a reliability standpoint, puts the residents at risk of extended outages due to overloads of equipment and lines."

According to Batavia City Administrator Bill McGrath, the cities' reaction was "born out of complete frustration."

McGrath said the cities are upset that ComEd has made a study of extending power lines on the east side of the communities a low priority while at the same time asking to withdraw its petition to the ICC for the Randall Road 138KV lines proposal on the west side.

The cities together have paid ComEd a $25,000 deposit to do the east-side study. The study would help determine if a nonresidential, east-side route for 138KV high power lines would be a viable alternative.

The cities feel ComEd should redirect its efforts and money to an acceptable solution for 138 KV service to the region. Over the last several months, representatives from the Tri-Cities, as well as from North Aurora and South Elgin, have been involved in discussions with ComEd to find alternative solutions to the Randall Road proposal.

The utility's original petition to the ICC called for 16 miles of high power 138KV lines down Randall Road. That proposal met strong opposition from a local citizens group which questioned the safety and aesthetics of the lines.

"We don't know what all the alternatives are," said Larry Maholland, St. Charles city administrator.

Tim Lindberg, a spokesman for ComEd, said that the company is disappointed by the feedback from the cities.

"We had hoped that they would be more supportive of our proposal, since it would provide the same or better level of electrical service that customers in the area already have, without the visual impact of high voltage power line towers," Lindberg said.

"Despite our requests, the cities haven't provided us with information on concerns they have with the reliability of service our plan would provide," he said.

Maholland said 68 percent of the power outages in St. Charles last year were due to a weakness in the ComEd system. He said that his staff, some of whom have worked in the field for 20 years, see problems with the 34KV proposal.

"Our technical people look at it and say we're going to be worse off than we are today," said Maholland. "... We certainly don't want that.

"When we've looked at all the alternatives, then we can make a determination of what is the best alternative for us, rather than ComEd coming out and saying 'Hey, we've solved your problem with a 34KV system.' We're not sure that is the best system at this time. They made that claim without our input."

ComEd promised to have the east side power study completed and provided to the cities by March 19.

# Consultants push for higher speed on Galena

2-28-04 Beacon News

By David Garbe
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — A study of traffic patterns on the city's southwest side confirms many trends that area residents long have bemoaned.

The study, presented to the public at a neighborhood meeting this week, analyzed the volume, speed and destination of vehicles on the major streets west of downtown and between Galena Boulevard on the north, Edgelawn Drive on the west and Prairie Street on the south.

One problem the study highlighted was a tendency for drivers to use Downer Place as a major east-west thoroughfare rather than the four-lane Galena Boulevard.

The conclusion is part of an ongoing study into Aurora's traffic patterns being conducted by Civiltech Engineering.

Consultants from the company said Aurora had several options for shifting traffic off of Downer Place, including:

- Increasing the speed limit on Galena from 30 to 35 mph and lowering Downer's speed limit to 25 mph.
- Synchronizing the traffic lights on Galena and possibly adding separate left-turn lanes.
- Limiting the amount of traffic routed onto Downer from downtown Aurora's one-way street system, possibly even by eliminating the one-way system. That system will be examined in an upcoming portion of Aurora's traffic study.

Thursday's presentation was the first time Aurora officials had seen the study's results, and said they would examine their options carefully. The city will not take any action until 2005 at the earliest, officials said.

## Underused, overused

The data revealed that most streets in the area carry the amount of traffic for which they were designed. The exceptions were Galena, a major thoroughfare that tends to be underused, and Downer, a minor road with excessive traffic.

After measuring daily traffic volumes for five months, researchers found the busiest stretches of Galena carried an average of 16,200 vehicles per day.

A typical major four-lane road like Galena is expected to carry between 28,000 and 34,000 vehicles per day, said traffic engineer Bob Andres of Civiltech Engineering.

Downer's busiest stretch, between Randall Road and Elmwood Drive, carries about 5,300 vehicles a day. A residential secondary road like Downer should carry 2,000 to 4,000 vehicles per day, engineers said.

Out of all the traffic on Downer, the study showed that about 21 percent of westbound drivers and 39 percent of eastbound drivers were using the residential street as a high-speed route between downtown and the far West Side, in part to avoid the stop lights on Galena.

Another contributing factor to Downer's heavy traffic is the one-way street system in downtown Aurora, which dumps much of the west-bound traffic from the city's East Side onto Downer rather than Galena.

# State funding cut could slow area park development

3-29-04 Beacon News

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

Failure to fund a 17-year-old state of Illinois open-lands grant program could slow park and forest preserve development throughout the Fox Valley.

In his recent budget address, Gov. Rod Blagojevich suggested putting the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development, or OSLAD, program on "holiday." The move would save $34 million in the 2004 state budget.

But officials throughout Illinois have said it would impact land acquisition and development of park land. OSLAD is responsible for the purchase of 8,631 acres for parks, open space and natural areas across the state since 1986, some 1,860 acres in the past three years alone.

The program has funneled about $32.6 million into Kane, Kendall, DeKalb and DuPage counties since 1986. With most of that grant money matched locally, it has been a key source for funding land acquisition and development in the area.

"If the OSLAD program is eliminated or not adequately funded, it will take more years to open up some of this land to the public," said Drew Ullberg, planning director for the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

Most local park districts and forest preserves have not put together their OSLAD grant requests for 2004 yet, so it is hard to point to specific programs the budget cut will impact in the coming year.

Ullberg said Kane County most likely would have used an OSLAD request to develop the Pingree Grove marsh in the northern part of the county. OSLAD money went into purchase of that land.

In recent years, the district received $750,000 from OSLAD toward purchase of the Muirhead Springs Forest Preserve property, and about $1 million toward purchase of the Corron Farm property in Campton Township.

"We have very few preserves that are untouched by grants," Ullberg said. "State grant programs have been very generous to us in the past."

## Millions toward area parks

According to the Illinois Association of Park Districts, the Kane County Forest Preserve District has received $2.6 million from OSLAD since 1986.

Other Kane County entities to receive OSLAD funds include: the city of Aurora, $926,600; Batavia Park District, $836,500; Campton Township, $800,000; Dundee Township Park District, $1 million; city of Elgin, $1.35 million; Fox Valley Park District, $2.44 million; Geneva Park District, $879,200; and St. Charles Park District, $2.12 million.

In Kendall County, the Kendall County Forest Preserve District has received $618,900, and the Oswegoland Park District, $872,350.

Among the $15.3 million received in DuPage County since 1986, $1.9 million has gone to the Naperville Park District, and $804,200 has gone to the city of Warrenville and Park District combined.

DeKalb County has received $1.3 million from OSLAD.

## Local matching funds

Kane County Board member Jim Mitchell, R-North Aurora, who heads the Forest Preserve District's Land Acquisition Committee, noted that state grants usually are added to local money raised for land acquisition.

"We have probably taken the $70 million we raised through referendum (in 1999) and turned it into over $100 million," Mitchell said.

Ullberg said, in Kane, officials usually apply for two OSLAD grants each year, one for land acquisition and one for development.

The Illinois Association of Park Districts is lobbying hard for reinstatement of OSLAD funds. The association said that Blagojevich specifically mentioned OSLAD as an essential program when he campaigned in 2002.

"The OSLAD program has been essential for acquiring open space in Illinois' most rapidly developing cities and villages," said Ted Flickinger, the association's chief executive officer.

OSLAD is not funded by the state's general operating budget, but by the real estate transfer tax.

2-29-04 Chronicle

Endorsements

# Kane is one county

The most disappointing aspect of the 2004 primary election is easy to identify.

It is the continuing refusal of some county board candidates in Elgin and Aurora to recognize that their decisions affect everyone, not just the constituents on either end of the county. Some of these county board members — not all — more often view themselves as bookends on either side of central Kane County rather than public stewards for everyone.

In Elgin, Larry Wegman declined to take advantage of our opportunity to speak directly with voters. His assertion: that the *Kane County Chronicle* does not circulate in Elgin and therefore he need not speak to our readers nor our editors preparing for endorsements, according to the letter he mailed.

Why a public servant would refuse the opportunity to speak directly with Kane County taxpayers and voters is puzzling. But the decision also is rooted in a falsehood.

True, the *Kane County Chronicle* has yet to devote the same resources to the cities of Elgin and Aurora as we have to Central Kane County communities. Still, the *Chronicle* sells more than 100 newspapers each day in Wegman's district. Either the representative did not know this fact, which is public record and authenticated by an independent audit commission, or he chose to ignore it.

Either way, it is gravely disappointing.

Wegman did not return telephone calls so we could ensure that he had the correct information to make his decision. Nor did his Republican primary opponent, Jack Cook.

To be fair, the *Kane County Chronicle* only recently has expanded its horizons. Our focus once was primarily limited to Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles. Our editorial voice once recognized the invisible walls surrounding Elgin and Aurora.

But, as has been said, those days are over.

Those days had to end. Those days of "I'll worry about mine, you worry about yours" simply no longer serve Kane County residents.

Not too long ago, the mindset recognized an unstated divisiveness between the north end, the south end and the middle of Kane County. That divisiveness did not cripple the county because there still were enough one-lane roads and farmland to separate the communities.

No longer.

This is not attempt to embarrass or engender contempt for Wegman, Cook and others. Rather, it is a poignant reminder that Kane County has changed, and so must the views held by the county board and the Republican Party.

First, this type of approach to governance and politics is slowly eroding a once-solid base of support that Republicans not only enjoyed, but took for granted.

It still is a longshot that a Democrat will win countywide office. However, Democrats improve their odds year after year. The Democratic Party is gaining influence in Aurora and Elgin. Election victories — and not as many landslide defeats — offer crystal-clear evidence.

Second, problems once only associated with the blue-collar communities have been trickling into city halls in Central Kane County. There is a homeless shelter. There are drug arrests and treatment concerns. There are economic revitalization challenges.

Certainly, there are other examples.

Elected leaders in Elgin and Aurora need not be beholden to the interests of Central Kane County. Their duty to their constituency remains a priority. But the priority must not overshadow the needs of the entire county.

Those days have been over for quite some time. The refusal to recognize such change not only will affect government, it also will affect partisanship.

It is the thread pulling row-by-row at the Republican tapestry. Officials would be wise to stop pulling against each other, put aside differences inherent to a county that no longer exists, and begin to work for the benefit of the entire county and the entire Republican Party.

If, for no other reason, because the Democrats are waiting with smiles.

3-1-04
Chronicle

Endorsements

# Kane County Board

## Kane County Board District 10

Batavia voters choosing Republican ballots in Kane County Board District 10 have a clear choice for their county representative: Thomas Van Cleave.

Van Cleave is a proven public servant with a record of accomplishment. He leads a three-way race of Joseph Ferrone Sr. and Anthony Cvek.

Incumbent Douglas Weigand is not seeking re-election in the March 16 Republican primary.

Van Cleave is the current school board president, and critics have been quick to assail him with conflict of interest charges should he win election to the county board.

Such thought is utter nonsense.

To be sure, state law is unclear on when such conflicts occur. There also are conflicting legal opinions on the subject.

Conflict of interest situations really are a matter of common sense. They most often involve taxpayer money and serving two masters in the planning and decision-making process.

Van Cleave's position on the school board is voluntary. He is not paid. So there are no questions of Van Cleave receiving two salaries funded by taxpayers.

There also is no conflict regarding planning nor decision-making. As president of the school board, Van Cleave has the bully pulpit to set school the board agenda. However, he cannot make decisions by himself.

As a member of the county board, he also does not have sole decision-making authority. Further, his knowledge of finances and the pressure schools face with shrinking budgets and residential growth are in line with the challenges facing the Kane County Board.

Van Cleave's experience will benefit everyone.

Van Cleave also has been active in the community. He has been a strong member of the Batavia Chamber of Commerce, Batavia Rotary Club and the Batavia Plan Commission. All offer insight for difficult county board responsibilities.

His position to limit further curb cuts on Randall Road is long overdue. His support for additional transportation thoroughfares and improving current roads is tempered with the acknowledgment that both are difficult, volatile issues. He recognizes and is not afraid to say that the jail overcrowding issue is at a breaking point.

Van Cleave offers leadership and a clear vision for voters in Batavia and all of Kane County. He is strongly endorsed.

## Kane County Board District 14

It is not often a county board race attracts two, well-qualified political newcomers to an open seat.

That is the enviable position voters in District 14 find themselves, with businessmen Mark Davoust and Arney Silvestri seeking the post vacated by Kane County Board Chairman candidate Karen McConnaughay in the March 16 Republican primary.

The district, which includes parts of St. Charles and Geneva townships, faces unique challenges. Davoust is best equipped to represent the district and make decisions for the betterment of the entire county.

Silvestri is a custom-home builder and Davoust is vice president of Brasel Products.

Silvestri has been unfairly criticized as a developer. He is not. The man builds fewer than 12 custom homes each year. By Kane County's standards, that's not even the entrance to a small subdivision.

Brasel Products is a family-owned success story that manufactures cohesive tape products for clients around the globe. Sometimes we forget that such amazing stories are hidden here in Central Kane County.

Davoust and Silvestri hold similar views on the most pressing issues facing Kane County.

Both consider traffic a serious issue and support the Prairie Parkway.

Both support additional bridge crossings.

And both recognize growth is a critical issue.

Davoust earns our endorsement for a host of little reasons that, when added together, make him a solid choice.

Davoust announced his campaign early, but did not barrage the community with a lot of campaign hype. He quietly worked to develop grass-roots support. Those meetings have benefited him on the campaign trail. More important, the meetings provided an excellent opportunity to understand the every-day concerns of his district.

Davoust also offers a more in-depth analysis of the issues of the day. He offers complex answers to complex problems and understands that progress will not be made overnight.

At the same time, Davoust understands there is an urgency to Kane County's most pressing issues. Conversation and debate have occurred ad nauseam with regard to jail overcrowding, transportation gridlock and Fox River bridge crossings. It is time to act.

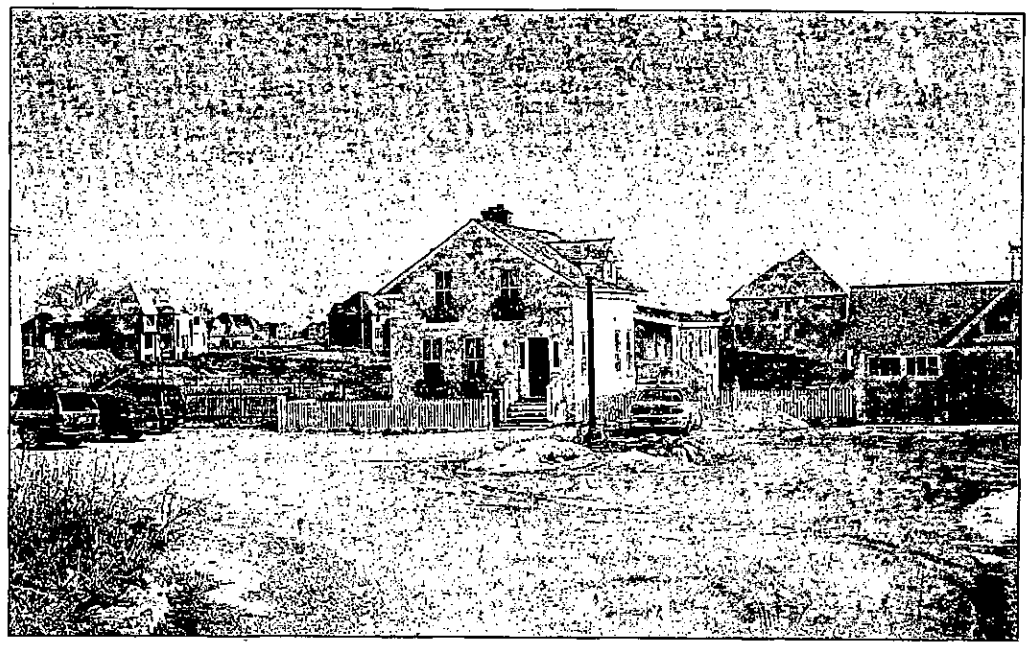
Finally, Davoust understands the art of communication. Sometimes a quiet man, Davoust understands when to coax followers to reach the right decision and when to lead them where they need to go. It is a subtle difference that will pay huge dividends as Kane County continues to grow.

Davoust is in the best position to bring reasoned action to the Kane County Board. He is endorsed.

3-1-04
Beacon news



# Cooking up plan to save history



DONNELL COLLINS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**The Beatty Homestead-Mongerson Farm property on LaFox Road in Campton Township is surrounded by development.**

## ■ Kane nomination: Former Mongerson farm vies for spot on Kane County register

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

Although the Beatty Homestead-Mongerson Farm property in Campton Township dates to the 1840s, things still are cooking out there.

Literally.

Penny and Dave Newkirck run the Country Garden Cuisine Cooking School on the property, which features instruction on dishes using herbs. Still, ever mindful of the historic nature of the site, the two have nominated their property for the Kane County Register of Historic Places.

If the 2.3-acre homestead, which includes two residences, a barn and a coach house, is included on the register, it will join nearby Garfield Farm in a kind of historic preservation corridor along LaFox Road — right in the midst of burgeoning subdivisions and commercial growth.

"It's quite a venture they have going out there," said Julia Evans, of the Kane County Development Department. She wrote up the nomination for the property, and recently presented it to the Kane County Board Development Committee. She wrote that the property "is a unique example of an early Kane County settler homestead."

### 1840s settler housing

"The dairy barn, reportedly the first structure built on the property, has been documented as one of the oldest structures in Campton Township," Evans wrote. "The collection of buildings exhibits high integrity and is an excellent example of 1840s, early settler housing."

Both residences on the property exhibit Greek Revival architecture, and Evans said both have a "high level of architectural integrity."

The Mongerson House is of frame construction with clapboard siding, set on a limestone foundation. It features double-hung and frieze windows. It is one of 33 homes of its type in Campton Township, according to Evans.

"The current owners have spent four years rehabilitating the house and have built an addition on the eastern wing of the house, which complements its original design," she wrote.

### Saved from demolition

The second residence is the James T. Durant House, another Greek Revival actually moved to the site in 1998 from its original site on Dean Street, near the LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve.

The cooking school operates in the Durant House. Evans said it is one of the few brick Greek Revival houses left in the county.

The outbuildings also have a high level of architectural integrity. The barn still has its original limestone foundation, and has had two additions done to it. The coach house, which was built in 1929, also has been rehabilitated by the owners.

The barn was built in 1833, on land given to John Beatty for his service in the French and Indian War. The residence was not built until the 1860s, but the barn makes Beatty one of the first settlers in Campton Township.

Beatty farmed the land for 70 years, before he sold it to the Mongerson family, which had the homestead and surrounding land for 100 years.

The Durant house was owned by James Durant, a St. Charles merchant, on the land near LeRoy Oakes. The house built by his brother, Bryant Durant, is the Durant-Peterson house, preserved in the LeRoy Oakes preserve. It is likely Bryant Durant also built his brother's house.

The Newkircks bought the house for $1 and moved it to their property in 1998. The previous owner was the Order of Felician Sisters, who were going to demolish it if a buyer could not be found.




# Kane OKs lower speed, median for deadly road

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter Chicago
2-28-04 Tribune

In response to residents' demands, Kane County officials Friday reduced the speed limit on a dangerous section of Randall Road and approved construction of a median where a teenage driver was killed in November.

Work on the road near St. Charles is expected to begin this summer. The County Board's Transportation Committee reduced the speed by 5 m.p.h. to 50 m.p.h. on the roadway's S-shaped curve and authorized installation of a 9-foot-wide, 9-inch-high curb and gutter center barrier along roughly 1,600 feet of Randall near Crane Road.

Residents had been pressing for a reduction to 45 m.p.h. A further reduction in the speed limit is possible, county officials said, pending a review after installation of the median.

The curve, which county engineers say is different than any other section of Randall, is between Silver Glen and Red Haw Roads.

According to recent county highway statistics, 26 accidents have occurred in the 3-mile-long area during the last three years. That contrasts with an average of about three accidents in other busy sections of Randall of comparable length.

Recent observations showed that 75 percent of the 40,000 vehicles a day that travel through the area exceed the 55-m.p.h. speed limit. The area features a steep downgrade and sight lines that tempt drivers to speed, according to county engineers.

Wegman, Republican, for Kane County recorder. I have worked with and known Sandy for many years. As recorder, she has worked hard for the people of Kane County.

As a county board member, I serve on the public service committee that oversees the recorder's office.

Under the management of Sandy Wegman, the office is a good example of how a county department should operate — excellent customer service, efficiency and consistently under budget.

In fact, the recorder's office is the only department in Kane County that has actually requested that its fees be reduced. As an attorney, the service I receive from the recorder's office is nothing short of outstanding.

As a result of the record number of refinancing and home sales in Kane County during 2003, the recorder's office recorded 223,000 documents, up 35 percent from the previous year. Sandy and her team have done an excellent job of keeping up with the additional workload without having to hire additional staff.

As a Republican, I can say Wegman represents and believes in the Republican principles of limited government, lower taxes, property rights and personal responsibility. Sandy is a dedicated public servant who actually puts service to the people of Kane County before politics and self-promotion.

Please join me in supporting her March 16.

John A. Noverini
Dundee Township GOP
Precinct 27 Committeeman
Kane County Board
District 23
Carpentersville

## Wegman the right choice for recorder

I am writing to endorse Sandy

3-28-04 Daily Herald

3-1-04 Daily Herald

# Barsanti easy choice for top prosecutor

A four-man GOP primary race to determine who will run in November to replace Kane County State's Attorney Meg Gorecki has been considered by many to be a two-man race since filings closed. For us, though, longtime Kane County prosecutor John Barsanti of St. Charles was an easy endorsement choice over any of his challengers, which include Tim O'Neil, T. Michael Leuer and Joe Rago, all of Geneva.

Barsanti's opponents have tried to malign him as a lieutenant for and clone of David Akemann, the state's attorney unseated by Gorecki. Barsanti did work for Akemann, but they have never been particular friends, nor run in the same crowds. Barsanti has worked for three different state's attorneys, Bob Morrow, Gary Johnson and Akemann, all of whom have endorsed him.

Barsanti is a professional and successful prosecutor who has earned the right to be the boss through 20 years of dedication to the Kane County state's attorney's office, often running the place for his bosses, and stints in the state appellate prosecutor's office. He is simply a prosecutor to the soles of his feet, a man who found the job so compelling he has never really been seriously lured by the better remuneration of private practice.

## Our View

**Barsanti has earned the right to be the boss through 20 years of dedication to the Kane County state's attorney's office.**

This is his life, not a stepping stone to some other dream. He's aggressive in the courtroom and somewhat arrogant — he would say confident, no doubt — outside it. But he has always been both accessible and passionately committed to protecting the public.

Barsanti supports the death penalty, but is nonetheless adamant about eliminating errors and flaws in any such cases that might arise in Kane County. He would implement protections — a death penalty decision committee, pretrial hearings on the reliability of jailhouse informants, jury instructions on sentencing alternatives and pretrial proof of a death penalty qualifying factor — whether or not legislation is eventually enacted to mandate them.

He has promised to reverse numbers that show the office's trial numbers and conviction rate have dropped since 2001, putting Kane County in the bottom 5 percent in those areas statewide. He also would immediately change what he calls a "the wildly inefficient" felony review system currently in place, a system that he says finds inexperienced young prosecutors stepping all over experience cops in the field.

Barsanti has the endorsement of nearly every police chief and union group in the county, except for Elgin and Aurora officers. And that's because his chief opponent, Tim O'Neil, just happens to represent those cities' police unions.

O'Neil would be a solid choice, too. He has been an assistant in the office and represents the city of St. Charles, so he knows the county system and many of its players. But his response during an interview with our editorial board was too often, "I agree with John." Why take the clone when you can have the original?

Neither Leurer nor Rago could offer enough substance and specifics to put them in the same league.

2-29-04
Beacon News

**William Keck**
*Sugar Grove*

## A vote for Janes

I am writing this letter in support of Judge Robert Janes. I believe he deserves your vote on March 16 for the position of circuit judge of the 16th Judicial Circuit.

I have never openly supported a candidate for office before or written a letter on a candidate's behalf. In fact, I am not related to Judge Janes, nor do I practice in front of him as an attorney. I was recently in front of him on a speeding ticket where I was a defendant.

Judge Janes made an intimidating experience bearable. He took the time to explain the court procedures to all of us, told us what our rights were and what options we had in court. I noticed that if someone had a question, he would take the time to answer the question.

Even though there were about 500 people on his court call, he made sure each one of us felt that we had our day in court. Judge Janes was and is the type of compassionate individual with the proper judicial temperament we need as a full circuit judge.

During the time I watched him, he gave out stiff sentences when warranted and gave breaks to the people when they were called for. In short, he was the true definition of a judge — fair at all times and made decisions as required. The circuit judges of the 16th Judicial Circuit should be proud that they appointed Judge Janes and now we should elevate him to full circuit judge by electing him on March 16.

**Alison Mason**
*Batavia*

...mment on the ...primary must be received by The Beacon News by Wednesday. The last date that letters about the election will be published is March 10.

## A vote for Rauschenberger

Government spending is out of control. It's time we start voting in real fiscal conservatives and voting out politicians who think the future will take care of itself.

That's why I am voting for Republican State Sen. Steve Rauschenberger for U.S. Senate. When Sen. Rauschenberger says he fights for lower taxes and less government waste, his record proves it. He has been on the appropriations committee in the State Senate for nearly his entire 11 years in Springfield. On Appropriations, Sen. Rauschenberger has worked hard to streamline, simplify, and shrink the state government.

Sen. Rauschenberger understands that when government wastes our dollars it hurts real people. He has worked for privatization and competition and he as publicly challenged politicians who take taxpayers for granted.

Please join me in voting for state Sen. Steve Rauschenberger for U.S. Senate on March 16.

2-27-04 Chronicle

# Kane officials 'doing their best' to fight sprawl

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

ELBURN — Kane County officials must remain vigilant to prevent valuable farmland from falling to urban sprawl.

"They are doing the best they can," said Richard Greene, associate professor of geography at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

"Kane County is in good shape," he said. "There are efforts being made to preserve land."

Greene made the remarks Thursday during a presentation on urban sprawl at the annual meeting of the Kane-DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District.

Greene's presentation was given at the district's annual meeting, which was held at Fishermen's Inn.

The Kane-DuPage district is one of 98 in the state. The districts were established in 1937 under the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Act. They are responsible for providing technical information on methods of soil and water conservation.

Greene uses global positioning and remote sensing technologies to research changes in land use that result from urban sprawl.

He applauded the county's 2030 Land Use Plan, which county officials use to plan for future development. The plan earmarks most of western Kane County for agricultural uses.

Greene also lauded the conservation district's Natural Resource Inventory reports that include a land evaluation and site assessment reports.

LESA reports use a scoring system to warn municipalities about land with natural features that need protection.

The reports are issued on all land slated for zoning changes. The advisory, nonbinding reports are used by zoning boards and planners to make decisions on land use.

About 240 were completed last year on land in DuPage and Kane counties, conservation district officials said.



McCoy

"A report may not stop a development, but it will make someone ask questions about how to preserve land," said Kevin Bohlin, the conservation district's chairman.

Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy attended Greene's presentation. He said Greene's assessment of Kane County's stance on development was on target.

"His research coincides with what we are trying to do," McCoy said.

McCoy said part of the success is because of the county's computerized maps, which county officials make available to municipalities for planning purposes.

"It is a step in the right direction," McCoy said. "We share all that data with all units of government."

Also on Thursday, the conservation district honored several residents for their commitment to water and soil preservation.

McCoy was honored for his efforts on the county board to preserve farmland. Geneva recycling coordinator Roger Morris was honored for excellence in recycling. Robert Lootens of Batavia was honored for his work to preserve and restore natural areas at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia and the late John Biddle of Elburn received the 2004 Dick Young Award for his lifetime of dedication to natural resources.

2-27-04
Chronicle

# Forest preserve stupidity

To the Editor:

I have never written a letter of complaint before to any of the elected officials in this country, maybe that's a good thing and maybe its not.

But after reading the *Kane County Chronicle's* article on Feb. 20 about the Forest Preserve asking David Peterson of Geneva to stop plowing the snow on the Fox River Trail, I felt that I needed to start opening my mouth and begin complaining.

What in the world are those guys thinking? Here is someone doing something constructive with his own time for the good of the community, he's not harming anyone or anything by doing this. And everyone who uses the path benefits from it. What is the difference between Mr. Peterson plowing part of the path and a community group cleaning the side of a highway? Which would be considered more dangerous? Personally, I think cleaning the highway would be the more dangerous of the two choices. I mean after all, what are the odds that Mr. Peterson is going to get run over by a woodchuck? I could be wrong, but I don't recall any wooden cross makeshift shrines on the side of the Fox River Trail marking the site of a fatal accident.

Unless of course there are plans for the Forest Preserve to start plowing the path with some fossil fuel burning engine every time it snows, I think they should apologize to Mr. Peterson for their momentary slip into stupidity and let him plow to his healthy heart's content.

**Mike Buban**
Batavia

2-27-04 Beacon News

# Tree-protection ordinance taking root in Geneva

**By Louise Brass**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Geneva certainly likes its trees — so much so, that trees are the centerpiece for the city's official logo.

Now, thanks to a tree preservation ordinance scheduled to go into effect May 1, Geneva's trees are in line for a new level of protection.

When the ordinance becomes effective, tree removal permits will have to be obtained before a structure or addition is built, if the owner wants to cut down a tree to make way for the project.

Trees on property 1.5 acres or larger may not be removed without a permit and a professional forester's analysis of the situation.

Tree removal permits will be required on any size lot if the removal is related to a building permit request.

Property owners will pay the tree removal review application fee, which varies from $50 — if connected to the construction of an irrigation system, a garage, tennis court, shed, driveway, patio or deck, or swimming pool — to $250 for a new principal building or the demolition of an old building. The tree review fee for additions will be $75.

Violators would be subject to a $200 fine.

Some city officials fear the ordinance is too restrictive and puts a tree's right to life before a homeowner's right to build on his property.

The ordinance allows an applicant to request in writing to amend the determination in certain circumstances.

2-27-04 Beacon News

# Kane Dems rally around candidates

By Daniel Duggan
STAFF WRITER

ELGIN — Nearly 60 Democrats packed the basement of a church here Tuesday night, rallying around the party's lineup of candidates for the March and November elections.

"We've got 17 candidates — this is pretty close to a record," said Mark Guethle of North Aurora, chairman of the Kane County Democrats.

During the event, hosted by the Elgin Township Democrats, the party's candidates for countywide and local offices in upcoming elections had a chance to start rallying local supporters.

Michael Noland, a Democratic candidate for state representative for the 43rd District in Elgin, stressed the need to build the local party.

"It's the growth industry in politics here," he said.

Tom Meadath, running for the Kane County Board chairmanship, talked about the need to bring more jobs to the county.

"We are swiftly becoming a bedroom community, where everyone lives and nobody works," said the St. Charles resident. "In a bedroom community, who pays for the services? You and me — the homeowners."

He vowed not to privatize county jobs, criticizing the practice of hiring outside corporations to run local facilities, such as the Kane County Jail, rather than local employees.

"Republican proponents say it saves money, but that's a lie," he said.

Coroner candidate Robert Moore of Aurora, state's attorney candidate Renee Robinson of Aurora, recorder candidate Michael Lowery of Aurora, and County Board candidate Elaine Stern of St. Charles were among the speakers at the event.

## Aurora forum Sunday

On Sunday, the Aurora Township Democratic Central Committee will sponsor a Democratic candidates' forum from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the McAuley Room of Provena Mercy Center, 1325 N. Highland Ave. in Aurora.

Candidates for the 16th Circuit Court, Kane board chairman, coroner and recorder, and County Board Districts 4, 6 and 8 are expected to attend.

The forum is open to the public.

For information, call David Moore at (630) 896-0710.

2-27-04 Daily Herald

# Neighbors offer ideas for Fabyan Parkway

By Gala M. Pierce
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Drivers ignore the speed limit and tailgate on Fabyan Parkway. That's what some Batavia residents said. Others said making a left-hand turn is near impossible and, the traffic creates too much noise.

More than 120 residents attended the Kane County Division of Transportation's open house Thursday.

Batavia set aside $25,000 for the county to help initiate a feasibility study of the stretch between Kirk Road and Western Avenue in spring 2002.

County officials are in the process of identifying possible improvements to Fabyan for the short- and long-term, although funding has yet to be allocated for any project.

The county may take immediate measures to make a smoother road by resurfacing and grinding some areas. Long-term projects include widening Fabyan Parkway to include a turn lane in the middle, proposed between 2005-2015, or even creating six lanes of traffic in 2025 or beyond.

Currently, about 28,000 to 35,000 vehicles use Fabyan daily, and the county projects the number to climb to 60,000 by 2025.

John and Gail Carroll and nBryan Peterson, who all live on Winnebago Trail, are concerned about noise at the Carriage Drive intersection.

"You can't even enjoy your

See **FABYAN** on **PAGE 8**

# **Fabyan:** Noise, speed issues raised

*Continued from Page 1*

back yard in the summertime because of the noise," Peterson said.

The three suggested a fence to buffer the noise from the traffic, installing guardrails and a center turning lane and enforcing the current 40 mph speed limit.

Avanella Jeffers, who lives on Surrey Road, favors reducing the speed limit to 35 mph from Kirk to Randall roads.

Blackhawk Drive resident Richard Vance thought the county identified too many traffic signals, but liked the idea of realigning the Route 31-Fabyan intersection.

County officials don't anticipate any immediate decisions.

"I think we're going to discuss this further with the cities involved and try to develop a strategy," said Tom Szabo, a traffic engineer with Kane County.

# Peck Farm recognized for excellence

2-27-04 Chronicle

*National article, state award boost local profile*

By BRENDA SCHORY
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Peck Farm Park received state and national recognition for excellence this fall and winter.

The Geneva Park District's premier historic farm and nature center won the Outstanding Facility and Parks Award this year from the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association for its new exhibit, the Sensory Gardens and Butterfly House.

To visit the butterfly house, visitors passed through a 7,100-square-foot area of sensory gardens, raised garden beds designed to encourage visitors to use their senses of sight, sound, touch and smell.

The house provides an enclosed environment where visitors can mingle with butterflies.

In November, the park was featured in Landscape Architecture Magazine, a publication of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

"With 378-acres of former farmland and wetlands soon to be surrounded by Chicago sprawl, Peck Farm connects suburbanites with the largely forgotten ecology and agriculture that sustain them," Frank Edgert Martin wrote in an article called, "Farming a New Frontier: Peck Farm Park Tells a Story that Most Suburbs Choose to Forget."

Noting the park's other awards, Martin called it "one of the most unusual multi-use parks to emerge on America's automotive fringe. Peck Farm is a rare remnant of prairie surrounded by a sea of growth, and a vessel of memory."

Peck Farm Manager Michael Kirschman said Peck Farm had an outstanding season of recognition.

"They did a good job of looking at the greater issue of suburban sprawl and open spaces and saving some of that heritage," Kirschman said.

"It really lifts Peck Farm to the national level. It is next to a feature article about the Colorado Rockies. It brings us to a level where we are getting on the national scene," he said.

See FARM, page 3

## Farm details

- Framed copies of the article about Peck Farm Park in Landscape Architecture are on display at the Geneva Park District Community Center, 710 Western Ave., or at the Orientation Barn at Peck Farm Park, 38W199 Kaneville Road. Back copies of the magazine are available by calling its Back Issues Department at (800) 787-5267.
- This year's butterfly house volunteer training is from 1 to 3 p.m. May 15 at Peck Farm. Because of its great popularity, the butterfly house will be open an additional six hours a week. Hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. For information, call Peck Farm Park at (630) 262-8244.

## Farm

Continued from page 1

The award for exhibits that opened last year also is significant, Kirschman said.

"It was great to see we are kind of holding our own, setting our standard above and beyond what other districts are doing," Kirschman said.

Steve Thomas, who works for the Westmont Park District and serves on the Outstanding Parks and Facilities Awards Committee, called it "a very important award" that boosts Geneva's profile.

"Awards are not only published in our statewide magazine, it is listed at the annual conference," Thomas said. "Illinois is the leader in parks and recreation in the nation, so not only does Illinois know but others would know about Peck Farm's state award. It was a worthwhile project for their community."

The butterfly house exhibit was successful its first year, Kirschman said.

A core of 75 volunteers donated 1,182 hours from June through mid-September. It attracted 17,062 visitors who paid slightly more than $12,000 in donations.

Kirschman said the discrepancy between the $1 per person donation and the head-count of visitors is because some were in-camp programs at the farm.

Visitors came not only from the local area, but from Lombard and Oak Park. And after they looked at the butterfly house and Peck Farm's 1869 farm house, they looked for other things to do in Geneva, Kirschman said.

"We are staying ahead of the trends. We were recognized by our peers, and it is nice to know that. We're not just doing status quo things," Kirschman said. "We're taking it a notch up."

2-27-04
Beacon News

# County official will turn herself in

**■ Checking it out:** Karen McConnaughay wants to have firsthand look at booking, monitoring

By Steve Lord
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Karen McConnaughay is in a mood to sign up for things lately.

The St. Charles Republican County Board member and Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee chairman — who also is a candidate in the upcoming election for Kane County Board chairman — told members of her committee Thursday she is going to spend a Friday night in booking at the county jail.

Spurred on by reports of how difficult things can get in booking, and by recent incidences of prisoners mistakenly released from the facility, McConnaughay said she could "see first hand just how stressed they are in booking."

McConnaughay said she also volunteered to be connected to the Court Services' electronic monitoring program for a weekend.

Court Services officials came to Thursday's meeting prepared to put a bracelet on McConnaughay that would, for three days, monitor when she came and went from her house.

But McConnaughay delayed her hookup, saying she did not realize she could not be on the program with functions such as phone mail, call-waiting or computer DSL on her phone line. McConnaughay pledged to take part in the program at some point.

"I'll do it for three days, unless I can't stand it," she said. "We're going to try a few things to try and throw them off, see how they handle it."

Court Services Director Jim Mueller welcomed the challenge. He said having a board member hooked up will bring attention to a program he supports as a cost effective alternative to sending someone to jail.

In January, Mueller released a study that showed that since December 1992, when the program started, electronic monitoring saved Kane County about $7.4 million. That is money that would have been paid to keep those offenders in jail.

Since December 1992, there were 2,142 people in the program, and 79 percent completed it successfully.

Although McConnaughay did not get hooked up Thursday, Mueller and John Owens, who supervises the electronic monitoring program, were able to show off the relatively inexpensive bracelet that attaches to a participant in the program. The bracelet is a constant companion during the time in the program. Owens said it even is waterproof, so participants can shower with it on.

"This basically lets us know when you leave and when you come back," Owens said.

"I'm never going to be able to tell you this equipment can put you out of the jail business," Mueller told committee members. "But we've had good success with people on the program."

2-27-04 Daily Herald

# Two seek GOP nod for county District 14

The Daily Herald sent questionnaires to each of the two candidates in the race for the Republican nomination for an open Kane County Board seat for District 14, Arney Silvestri and Mark Davoust, both of St. Charles. Here are their responses to selected questions.



Arney Silvestri



Mark Davoust

**Q.** Why are you running for this office, whether for re-election or election the first time? Is there a particular issue that motivates you, and if so, what? What will be your main priority?

**Davoust:** I am running for this office because I believe that I can make a difference for the citizens of District 14.

I feel that I have the ability to understand issues and concerns and act on these in a way that will serve my constituent's interests. Being a resident of the 14th District, these are not only my constituents, but my neighbors and friends.

My main priority is making certain that the citizens of the 14th District and of Kane County generally continue to enjoy the remarkable lifestyle to which we have become accustomed.

Virtually all of the top issues in this campaign stem from the growth that we are experiencing. Accordingly, any meaningful decisions that we make must incorporate a long-term strategy.

**Silvestri:** As a 30-year resident of the district, who has deep roots and pride in the community, I want to do my part in maintaining the excellent quality of life that has been a part of this community for so long.

My main goal would be to open communication channels within the county so that we all may better understand each of the issues that we are faced with. This will help us to collectively solve problems in a more efficient manner.

**Q.** Tell us what contributions you would make. Describe any shortcomings in the current county board that you would help remedy and explain how.

**Davoust:** One of my contributions to the county board will be bringing my business

See **ELECTION** on **PAGE 3**

# Election: Roads, growth, jail are top issues facing county.

*Continued from Page 1*

background to work toward building a consensus, while seeking innovative solutions to the area's problems. I will try to act on these matters in a timely fashion so as to raise the level of efficiency in county government.

**Silvestri:** Through the streamlining of county government, I would like to make the county more fiscally responsible and budget conscious, while raising the level of county services offered to the public.

One way to accomplish this is to involve county officials and employees, such as department heads, the sheriff, the state's attorney, the auditor, and the treasurer in the budget process. When we involve these people we will be able to get a better view of each department and of the necessary expenditures for those departments, as well as expenditures that simply need to be cut.

**Q.** The jail remains a serious problem for Kane County. What do you see as solutions, both short- and long-term? Since a solution could involve renovation, addition or replacement, or all of the above, how would you propose such work be financed? Who should be involved in helping shape jail decisions?

**Davoust:** The Kane County Jail has been overcrowded virtually since the time it was built. That condition has not improved over the years and we are now faced with a jail that is not only too small, but one that may be nearing physical obsolescence.

The preliminary report by Voorheis-Robertson submitted to the Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee on Dec. 8 confirmed these suspicions. Adding on to the existing jail may not be the best option for our taxpayers. You wouldn't ask a surgeon to attach a healthy limb to a cadaver.

Kane County has budgeted in excess of $2 million for 2004 to send our inmates out of the county for housing. This is a waste of our valuable resources. We need to engage in long-term planning that will accommodate our corrections needs now and for the future.

No one wants to finance a new jail — but it needs to be done. I am not yet on the county board or on the corrections committee, but my first thought would be to look at the priorities within the existing budget for funding.

Decisions regarding our jail should have input from our sheriff, state's attorney, public defender, judges, and county board members.

**Silvestri:** A short-term goal is to look into the prisoner-swapping program currently in use. By working with the sheriff and correctional department we need to identify the programs current inefficiencies and see if there is a more cost-effective way to accommodate all the county prisoners. Another short-term solution would be to add temporary mobile jail space within the existing sheriff's compound.

A long-term goal will be to finalize plans for additional jail space to not only match current needs but future needs as well. One possible solution for financing the jail would be to issue long-term bonds and enact a special assessment over an extended period of time.

Unfortunately, there is no easy solution to raising money that doesn't hit us all in our pockets. However, by lengthening the payment of the bonds this would help minimize the burden on the individual taxpayer.

Another possible funding source would be to raise current fines, court costs and fees. Jail decisions need to be addressed by the sheriff, the state's attorney and the county board.

**Q.** Transportation problems are growing with every new day. What role should the county play in addressing those problems? Would you support an increase in the county gas tax to expand the county's construction efforts or provide the local share in state and federal projects? Why or why not? Where should county focus the money it does have for roads?

**Davoust:** Transportation problems are indeed an issue of great concern within our district and Kane County.

The county should take a leadership role in addressing transportation problems. We are fortunate to have Speaker Hastert in our corner with regard to bringing much-needed funds for infrastructure to Kane County.

We should continue to study the proposed Prairie Parkway and continue to move forward on the proposed bridge projects. It is likely that we will need two additional bridges to serve the transportation needs of Kane County; a local bridge at Red Gate Road and a regional bridge farther north, perhaps at Stearns Road.

Funds and support have already been garnered for these projects and it is time to stop talking about building a bridge and actually make concrete movements toward doing so.

**Silvestri:** The county needs to identify current transportation problems, then work toward a comprehensive plan to solve these problems.

As I see it, the county needs to focus on better east-west traffic flow. This can be accomplished by insuring more Fox River crossings. Second, the county needs to create better north-south traffic flow by making improvements to problem areas on Randall Road.

I would also like to begin the preliminary stages for the construction of the Prairie Parkway because this will be a vital access way for major north-south traffic flow in the future. I would support an increase in the county tax simply because if you look at the counties that currently enacted the gas tax, gas is no more expensive in those counties than here in Kane County.

**Q.** Can the longstanding financial dispute between the county board and elected department heads be resolved or is it a conflict inherent in the system? Explain. Are the problems more the result of department heads who lack fiscal discipline or board members who refuse to acknowledge their decisions on labor contracts have broad effects on departmental budgets? Explain. How would you work to fix this conflict?

**Davoust:** There is a certain amount of conflict inherent in a scenario in which elected officials such as the sheriff, coroner, clerk or recorder are required to present and justify their budgets to an authorizing body such as the county board. That being said, I believe that the important thing is for the county board and department heads to agree on common goals and strive to achieve these goals together.

**Silvestri:** I believe that it is imperative to work with elected department heads to resolve budgetary issues. County board officials and county department heads need to realize that they are striving to solve the same issues.

County board members and most county employees live here in the county. Therefore, by not showing fiscal discipline, they not only hurt the public they hurt themselves as well. This fact, coupled with my drive to resolve conflict, I am confident that we can work toward accomplishing a better sense of teamwork within the county.

**Q.** How can the county best address its growing cost of health care and pension benefits?

**Davoust:** The county must conduct itself as all responsible businesses must do. They must comparatively shop for benefit packages and if possible, may consider pooling in order to get the best possible pricing from insurers. The cost of insurance is soaring but county employees must have insurance coverage. We need to find a balance between the benefits to be offered and the cost of such coverage.

Similarly, pension benefits are necessary to keep good employees in the service of the county. We must be competitive in benefit packages with the private sector. We must invest our funds wisely with an eye to long-term growth so that our pension program will be fully funded as our employees retire.

**Silvestri:** As someone who has not seen the current health-care and pension programs, I do not have a solution for this particular issue at this time.

However, it is imperative that we review the current programs and insure that the county is receiving the best possible benefits for the dollars it is currently spending.

**Q.** What is the biggest problem the county faces in the next few years and how would you address it?

**Davoust:** The biggest problem that the county faces is continued growth. It is from continued growth that problems regarding transportation, education, public safety and utility needs arise.

We cannot stop the growth that has come and will continue to come to Kane County. We live in a wonderful place and others want to share our lifestyle. Therefore we must guide future growth and seek long-term solutions to growth problems and concerns.

**Silvestri:** The most pressing issue this county faces is its growth. More and more people are realizing what I have known for 30 years — Kane County is a great place to live.

As the population of the county continues to grow this directly affects every other issue that we deal with. The need for more jail space, increased traffic congestion, more solid waste at the landfills and budget problems are all due to the increase in population.

Growth is necessary for our local economy and the structure of our communities. This is why I feel that it is vital to work on growth in the county with a sensible, controlled growth plan. This can be accomplished by working with municipalities, townships, the county, the schools, developers and the public on future development.

As someone with deep roots and pride in our community, along with a strong construction background, I feel I can help facilitate this type of a growth plan for the future of Kane County.

Aurora 3-1-04 Beacon News

## Virgil roads need help

On March 16, the residents of Virgil Township will be asked to vote on a tax referendum for the township road district. This referendum is two-fold. First, you will be asked if the present tax rate on .165 should be increased to .330, and second, shall the extension limitation be increase from 2.4 percent to 198.1 percent for the 2004 tax levy year.

Although 198.1 percent seems too high, it does reflect the way we report our figures to Kane County. The current levy is 102.4 percent, with the increase it would be 198.1 percent, a difference of 96 percent.

We, as the Virgil Township trustees, believe that this tax increase is necessary to continue to maintain the 20 miles of gravel roads and 10 miles of blacktop roads within the jurisdiction of the township. Increased population and traffic has taken its toll on our roads as we all experience every day.

The township has continually been on the financial short end if you compare Kaneville Township (tax rate of 0.3938/$5,082 spent per mile), Big Rock Township (tax rate of 0.4091/$7,153 spent per mile), Burlington Township (0.3402/$10,404 spent per mile) and Virgil Township at 0.01873 and $2,998 spent per mile of road. You can see easily how we have fallen behind.

We have worked diligently in the past and continue to do so to keep costs within the township as low as possible. When it comes to spending your money, we are very frugal. But we have come to the realization that we must step up and ask for this increase to keep our township roads travelable for ourselves and future generations.

We can only do that with your help and ask you to vote yes on both questions on the ballot on March 16. Thank you.

**Don Castenson, James Diehl, Peter Fabrizius and Mary Kahl**
*Trustees, Virgil Township*

**What need for gay marriage?**

*Casual comments, questions, smiles a*
3-1-04 Beacon News

# COMPLAINTS AND CRITICISM

## Don't condemn

I was reading Openline that says "Why condemn for bike trail?" I also agree that Kane County is wrong. They are like a bunch of Nazis to come in and condemn a man's property for a stupid bike trail, when really no one uses it that much. They have enough things that we need to do — like repairing our roads and taking care of things, instead of taking people's property for stupid bike trails. The Kane County Board should be ashamed of themselves.

## Waste of tax dollars

So Meg Gorecki got four months suspension — big deal. Kane County should be ashamed of themselves for taking so long at taxpayers' expense to get this resolved. Four years was a long time. It's too bad the taxpayers can't get some of this money back that was spent on this wasted piece.

2-28-04 Beacon News

# Panel recommends Randall median

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA – A Kane County Board committee Friday recommended building a barrier between the four lanes of traffic on the Randall Road S-curve north of Red Haw Lane in St. Charles.

The barrier will be 9 feet of concrete, 9 inches tall.

Steve Pasinski, of the county Department of Transportation, said the barrier certainly should cut down on incidents in which cars cross into oncoming traffic and also should slow down traffic as it comes upon the S-curve.

"This should vastly reduce the chance for across-lane accidents," Pasinski said.

Pasinski told Transportation Committee members that because the S-curve also dips, the section of road is wide open. Drivers from either direction can see the entire road, encouraging them to drive faster, Pasinski said.

He said the median should give drivers "a natural tendency to slow down."

The S-curve has been a place of several serious accidents, most recently where a St. Charles North High School student was killed. Residents and school officials in the area have been appealing for several months to the Transportation Committee to make changes to the road design. Many of those people made their appeal again Friday.

Committee members agreed to some of the changes. Last month, the committee agreed to better signs and warnings along the highway but stopped short of lowering the 55 mph speed limit there to 45 mph and building a median.

Friday, committee members voted to build the median and to lower the speed to 50 mph. Committee members pledged to monitor the speed-limit situation in the future.

The cost of the median is estimated at $225,000.

Transportation Committee Chairman Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora, said committee members next month will review options for traffic signals on Randall at Bolcum and Crane roads.

2-29-04 Chronicle

## Endorsing Wegman

To the Editor:

I am writing to endorse Sandy Wegman, Republican, for Kane County Recorder. I have worked with and known Sandy for many years. Sandy as Kane County Recorder has worked hard for the people of Kane County.

As a county board member, I serve on the Public Service Committee. This committee oversees the recorder's office. The recorder's office under the management of Sandy Wegman is a good example of how a county department should operate — excellent customer service, efficient and consistently under budget. In fact, the recorder's office is the only department in Kane County that has actually requested that its fees be reduced.

As an attorney, the service I receive from the recorder's office is nothing short of outstanding. As a result of the record number of refinancing and home sales in Kane County during 2003, the recorder's office recorded 223,000 documents, up 35 percent from the previous year. Sandy and her team have done an excellent job of keeping up with the additional workload without having to hire additional staff.

As a Republican, I can say that Sandy Wegman represents and believes in the Republican principles of limited government, lower taxes, property rights and personal responsibility.

Sandy is a dedicated public servant. Sandy Wegman is a public servant who actually puts service to the people of Kane County before politics and self-promotion.

Please join me in supporting Republican Sandy Wegman for Kane County Recorder on March 16.

**John A. Noverini**
Republican Precinct Committeeman
Dundee Township Precinct 27
Kane County Commissioner District 23

**Fence Post**
Daily Herald

## We shouldn't punish bike-path hero 2/26/04

I am disappointed that the Kane County Forest Preserve has told Dave Peterson to stop plowing a 16-inch-wide path on the Fox River Trail.

The author of the article referred to Peterson as a legend, I think of him as a *hero*. When winter brings snow, the trail is no longer enjoyable to walk, bike or jog because of the freeze-thaw cycle. As a result, the trail becomes underutilized.

My suggestion to the forest preserve is to let Peterson continue his good Samaritan plowing, and the forest preserve post signs that read, "Travel at your own risk." There have been and will be accidents that occur on the trail. I learned the hard way that when biking over the wooden bridge after a rain you have to slow down.

Someone said, "Lawyers and judges make cowards of all of us." I know that when all you consider is the negative, very little is accomplished. Perhaps some forest preserve funds could be relocated to keep portions of the trail plowed during the snowy months and therefore utilize the trail to its fullest.

To Peterson (whom I didn't know until this article), I am sorry he has been asked to stop. One phrase I am sure of is, "No good deed goes unpunished."

Brian Kay
Geneva

## Jobs *always* lost if productivity rises

In Burt Constable's Feb. 19 column, his opening paragraph said, "Factory productivity edges up, but the nation still has lost more than 2.2 million jobs." This is an oft-repeated line by journalists. I am always curious about what people think an increase in productivity means.

It means that the same amount of goods and services have been produced by fewer people, so obviously any increase in productivity is going to bring about an equivalent loss of jobs. It is an immutable law of economics.

Dale A. Dopkins
Hampshire

## Batavia officials honor 'Fox' legacy

In the late 1960s to early 1970s, an individual known as "The Fox" participated in a campaign to halt the pollution of the Fox River. "The Fox's" actions brought national attention to the river. Over time, the Fox River got cleaner with passage of the Clean Water Act and actions of concerned citizens.

Today, the Fox River faces different threats than the ones "The Fox" tackled. The watershed's human population is growing rapidly. In Kane County, the population is expected to grow 71 percent between 2000 and 2030. Rapid population growth and urban development brings more storm water to the Fox, tearing up stream banks. Increasing the amount of sewage wastewater results in higher levels of nutrients that, in turn, increase the susceptibility of the river to algae blooms and subsequent low dissolved oxygen levels.

Dams impound the river, degrade habitat and reduce water quality. Most alarmingly is that in our lifetimes, we have seen the elimination of freshwater mussel species from the Fox River.

I ask that we reflect on the vision of "The Fox" for a clean river, and ask "What is our legacy to the Fox River in the next half-century?" When they voted to remove the north dam in Batavia in mid-February, members of the Batavia City Council and park board have chosen a legacy of a free-flowing river filled with clean water and high-quality habitat.

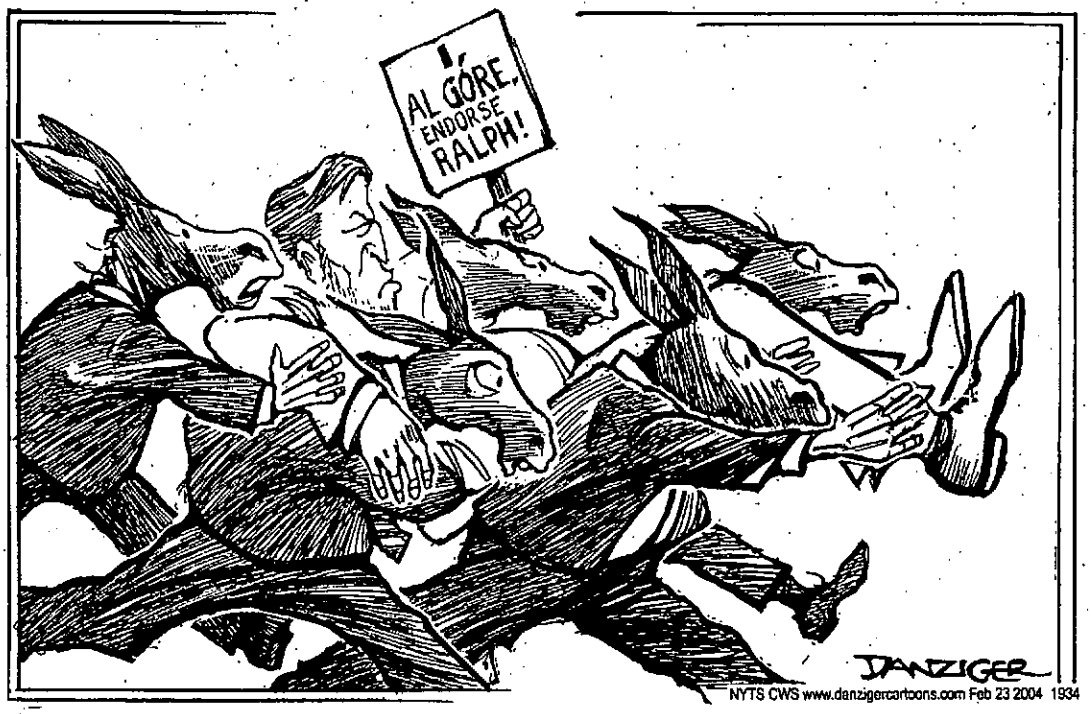
Members of the council and board should be commended for their vision, leadership and commitment to improving the condition of the Fox River.

David J. Horn
Aurora

## Election deadline

All letters related to the March 16 primary must be received by 5 p.m. March 3 to be considered for publication.

Democrats Rush Out Their Secret Weapon Against Nader Candidacy



chronicle 2/20/04

## Wegman for county recorder

To the Editor:

There are two reasons people choose to run for office, only one is for public service.

Sandy Wegman is a dedicated public official of good character whose motivation is to serve the Kane County public well. She is exactly the type of leader that our elections are designed to select.

Kane County voters should be proud of their selection in the past election of the best and brightest.

Sandy Wegman is the current and excellent Kane County recorder and has earned re-election.

**Cheryl Puhl and six others**
West Dundee

# Aurora receives IEPA violation

**■ Procedural step:** City has 45 days to respond on water contamination

Beacon

**By Dave Parro**
STAFF WRITER 2/20/04

AURORA — The city received an official notice this week from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, outlining how the contamination of municipal water earlier this month violated environmental laws.

The violation notice, sent Monday, said Aurora violated the Illinois Environmental Protection Act when high levels of total coliform bacteria were found in the city's drinking water. The contamination prompted a boil order Feb. 6.

City spokesman Bill Catching said the notice is part of official procedure and sets up a time line for a response.

"Obviously, we had a boil order and violated EPA standards," Catching said.

IEPA officials have given Aurora 45 days to give a written response to the violation, including an explanation of what was done to correct the problems. The IEPA then will review the response and accept or reject it in 30 days.

Aurora could face penalties for the violations.

"Due to the nature and seriousness of the violations cited, please be advised that resolution of the violations may also require the involvement of a prosecutorial authority for purposes that may include, among others, the imposition of statutory penalties," wrote Michael Garretson, acting manager of the Compliance Assurance Section, IEPA Water Bureau.

# Kane prosecutor hopefuls set their courses

*From death penalty review to a gang unit to Net fraud, candidates unveil platforms*

Daily Herald

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer* 2/26/04

Kane County State's Attorney candidate John Barsanti wants to create a death penalty decision committee that would make recommendations about seeking capital punishment in certain cases.

"The state's attorney is the only person that can determine to seek the death penalty or not," Barsanti said. "I'd like to have a committee of people from outside the prosecutor's office, maybe with a different perspective about this, saying how that discretion should be used."

Barsanti, a death penalty supporter, sees such a specially appointed committee as a way to ease concerns over perceived injustices in the capital punishment system and how it is applied.


John Barsanti


Michael Leuer


Tim O'Neil


Joe Rago

The committee idea is partially inspired from a 2-year-old state death penalty commission report requested by former Gov. George Ryan, who placed a moratorium on executions before leaving office. Similar recommendation and review panels exist in the state's attorneys' offices in Cook and DuPage counties.

Without an incumbent in the race for Kane County state's attorney, each of the four men seeking the Republican nomination for the job has come out casting himself as the one most qualified to lead the office in a new direction.

Individually, the four former assistant state's attorneys have no shortage of proposals for new programs, specialty prosecution teams or priorities.

Joe Rago of Geneva has prioritized creating a unit in the office that would combat identity theft and Internet fraud, two crimes he calls "economic violence."

As his first order of business if elected, Tim O'Neil of Geneva said he would bring back the office's gang unit.

Michael Leuer of Geneva says he would step up use of asset forfeiture powers that allow authorities to take possession of homes, cars, money and other valuables belonging to criminals in certain cases.

Since entering the race last summer, Barsanti of St. Charles has kept death penalty reform at the top of his list. Seeing other state's attorneys struggle with decision on whether to seek death is one factor behind his proposal to create a review

See **HOPEFULS** on **PAGE 8**

# **Hopefuls:** Conviction rate lags behind state

*Continued from Page 1*

committee.

Such a committee would be voluntary and likely consist of a retired judge, a former prosecutor, an outside law enforcement official and various other community members, Barsanti said. The panel would make sentence recommendations in death penalty-eligible cases.

"In the end the decision would be mine, but we need to open this process up to more information," Barsanti said.

Aside from that committee, Barsanti also has plans to form a cold-case unit to explore unsolved or unresolved cases and a reorganization of the office's felony review team, the group that authorizes charges against suspected criminals.

## Rago's ID theft unit

Representing the most focused proposal in the field, Rago has pushed his identity theft task force as proof he has the vision to lead the office that his rivals do not.

In fact, Rago has chastised his opponents for not paying attention to the issue.

"These identity theft cases are going to rise dramatically," Rago said. "We need a task force within the state's attorney's office that is going to be dealing with this."

Rago points to statistics illustrating a growing number of such victims and the need for local law enforcement to be ready for more Internet crime. A January 2004 report to the Federal Trade Commission showed Illinois had 9,792 victims of identity theft in 2003, putting the state ninth in the nation.

Rago wants to assemble a team of financial crime experts to track and prosecute the growing number of local cases.

"I am going to have a program to deal with this so every one of us will feel safe to shop online," Rago said. "This is the future and we have to deal with it now."

## O'Neil's gang unit

O'Neil has vowed to restore the county's gang violence unit, dissolved in 1996.

"There is really specialized training that goes into gang prosecution," said O'Neil, himself a former gang violence unit member as a prosecutor.

Giving a gang shooting case to an inexperienced assistant state's attorney is "a recipe for disaster and a disservice to the citizens," O'Neil said.

Under his plan, O'Neil would take two of the four assistants working in the felony review unit — the group that authorizes charges against suspected criminals — and assign them to gang cases.

O'Neil, like the other candidates, said he would shuffle the felony review system so that the task of authorizing charges would be shared throughout the office and not just be the job of the same four assistants.

O'Neil has promised to personally visit every school in the county so he can listen to teachers and parents and take their recommendation for anti-crime programs. He also is promoting stronger prosecutions against criminals who commit crimes against senior citizens.

## Leuer's new goal

A Leuer administration, the candidate said, would focus most on convicting violent criminals. As part of that, Leuer said he plans to take greater advantage of the office's power to seize property from convicted criminals.

Beyond that, Leuer isn't calling for new units or programs.

Instead, he is setting ambitious goals that include raising the office's felony jury trial conviction rate to 90 percent.

"They are losing more trials and the number of convictions is going down," Leuer said. "It has never been where it should be."

The office had a 53 percent conviction rate in 2002, the latest numbers available, according to the state supreme court's Annual Report of the Illinois Courts. The state average is 80.6 percent.

To fix that, Leuer said he would seek out more experienced prosecutors for the office and implement new training programs to get the best out of the office's assistant state's attorneys.

And that doesn't necessarily mean expensive hires either, Leuer said. With proper training and mentoring, young assistants can and will excel in the office, he said.

"Most successful prosecutors are the ones right out of school," he said. "The young prosecutors are the hungriest and work the hardest."

# Aurora casino owners miss cut

*Board picks 3 other finalists for open state gaming license*

Beacon

By Mike Ramsey
COPLEY NEWS SERVICE 2/21/04

CHICAGO — The owner of Aurora's Hollywood Casino, who offered to build a casino and turn it over to Illinois government, did not make the cut Wednesday to compete in an auction next month for the state's 10th and unused riverboat license.

Instead, the Illinois Gaming Board announced three other finalists from seven original proposals submitted Jan. 19.

They are: Harrah's Entertainment Inc. and S-L Partners, a venture involving Springfield developer Bill Cellini that would operate in Waukegan; Isle of Capri Casinos Inc., which plans to build in Rosemont; and Midwest Gaming, which would build in Des Plaines.

"We have given a great deal of weight and consideration to all of the proposals," Gaming Board Chairman Elzie Higginbottom said during a special meeting in Chicago.

He would not take questions from reporters, including why the board passed on Penn National Gaming.

The Pennsylvania-based owner of Hollywood Casino had offered to buy the gaming license for $506 million, then build a Rosemont casino and turn it over to the state in exchange for a long-term management contract.

The unprecedented plan drew wide attention but also controversy about whether government should directly control a casino instead of simply collecting gaming revenues.

"We really don't know" if the idea was too hot to handle, Penn National spokesman Eric Schippers said. "If you look at the uniqueness of it, that may have obviously been a factor."

Waukegan Mayor Richard Hyde was pleased that his economically struggling city on the north lakefront stands a chance to land a casino.

The three finalists will offer detailed public presentations Monday and compete in an auction process that is scheduled to conclude with the March 15 announcement of a winner.

"It's just like playing in the National Football League when you're going for the Super Bowl," Hyde told reporters. "This is step number one, where you have to win that division first, and then the next one comes up on the 15th of March."

Also shut out of the auction were two proposals that would have brought gaming to Chicago's southern suburbs, where leaders also sought a casino for economic reasons. Legislation introduced in Springfield would create a new license for that region.

"I think there'll be more opportunity down the line," said Gary Grasso, an attorney with Southland Development Group, which proposed a casino for Country Club Hills. "The Southland needs this economy, needs this boost, and we'll just keep at it."

Gov. Rod Blagojevich is depending on a lucrative sale of the 10th license to help balance his budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. The license is tied up in the bankruptcy of Emerald Casino Inc., and the auction is part of a settlement to

❖ Turn to CASINO, A2

## CASINO

*From Page A1*

pay off creditors and shareholders while giving the state a major cut of the proceeds.

The three finalists had offered the highest bids after Penn National. Harrah's and S-L Partners originally offered $375 million for the license; followed by Midwest Gaming, $360 million; and Isle of Capri Casinos, $351 million.

The proposals are expected to change as the auction unfolds.

"It's up there pretty high right now," Waukegan's Hyde said of the Harrah's bid, "and I don't know exactly how much higher they're willing to go, although I do know they've got the money."

2/26/04 METRO Tribune

# DuPage to consider impact of razing dams

By Lynn Van Matre
Tribune staff reporter

DuPage County Forest Preserve District commissioners could eventually find themselves dealing with the removal of aging dams, an issue that has sparked debate in recent years in Kane County and elsewhere.

Because of what district project engineer Ross Hill termed "an odd convergence" of events, including two independent reports by environmental groups, four out of six dams in area preserves are expected to come under scrutiny.

They are the Warrenville Grove dam in Warrenville and McDowell Grove dam in Naperville, both on the West Branch of the DuPage River; the Churchill Woods Lagoon dam in Glen Ellyn, on the river's East Branch; and Graue Mill dam on Salt Creek in Fullersburg Woods in Oak Brook.

The district also has dams at Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve in Darien and Oak Meadows Golf Course in Addison. Ranging in height from about 4 feet to between 6 and 7 feet, most of the structures were built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

In an informational presentation at this week's Forest Preserve District planning session, Hill told commissioners that although there is no reason the district would be required to remove the dams, doing so could reap environmental benefits.

According to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the dams at Churchill Woods and Fullersburg have been identified as significant sources of dissolved oxygen impairment due to trapped sediment, causing problems for fish and other aquatic life, Hill said.

Another study, this one by the Naperville-based Conservation Foundation, concluded that dams on the DuPage River are detrimental to recreational canoeing, fish habitat, microinvertebrates and the aquatic environment in general.

John Oldenburg, district manager of grounds and natural resources, noted that if the district decided to remove the McDowell Grove and Warrenville Grove dams, the optimum time would be after a thorium cleanup to be carried out by the Kerr-McGee Corp. as part of a settlement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The massive cleanup is expected to involve the removal of contaminated and non-contaminated sediment from pool areas upstream from both dams, Oldenburg said.

Though dam removal proponents cite significant environmental benefits, dam supporters in Kane County and elsewhere have argued that evidence of habitat improvement is largely anecdotal and that dams can contribute to an area's scenic charms and community character.

The issue remains under consideration by commissioners.

Also this week, Deborah Jan Fagan, DuPage County trail system coordinator, provided commissioners with an update on the proposed East Branch DuPage River Greenway Trail.

A joint project involving area municipalities, park districts, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Forest Preserve District and several other agencies, plans call for the 32-mile north-south trail to connect 11 communities in central DuPage County.

As proposed, it also would provide links or connections to nine DuPage forest preserves, several regional trails, a half-dozen community bikeway systems and the Morton Arboretum's new visitors' entrance at Park Boulevard in Lisle.

Fagan said that a trail feasibility study launched last March is expected to be completed in the next few months. No cost estimates were available for the project, which is expected to be completed over 8 to 10 years.

"We're not looking at something that will be built in the next year or so," Fagan said.

CAMPAIGN 2004

# Kane board member faces rival a 4th time

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter 2/26/04

The matchup in one of the four primary contests for Kane County Board on March 16 should seem familiar to some voters.

The Republican contest in District 20 in Elgin will mark the fourth time since 1996 that incumbent Jack E. Cook, 79, has faced Larry Wegman, 61.

Cook is the only incumbent in three board primaries on the GOP ballot. Kane Democrats have one primary contest. In all, there are 13 Kane Board seats in even-numbered districts up for election this year.

Wegman has consistently reduced his loss margin to Cook from about 320 to fewer than 100 votes in his 2002 attempt. Cook, a retired pharmacist, has been a board member since 1990. In his dual role as forest preserve commissioner, he served as commission president from 1994 through 2002.

Despite his leadership role, Cook says his struggle to retain the County Board seat

PLEASE SEE BOARD, PAGE 8

## BOARD:
# Elgin district turning more Democratic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that his late father held before him for 16 years has been due in part to his lackluster campaigning and to the changing, compact district's increased tendency to vote Democratic. In the November 2002 general election, he came within about 60 votes of being defeated.

This time, Cook said he is making a concerted effort to expand his organizational strength and is "taking the advice of people who I should have listened to before." Cook's successful campaign to greatly expand the Forest Preserve District's open space, while generally well received, has prompted Wegman to charge that he has shortchanged his own district.

"You can't put a forest preserve where there is no room to put one," said Cook. In lieu of that, Cook said he has lobbied successfully for county riverboat grants and helped guide the Forest Preserve District's cooperation with Elgin in an effort to preserve and restore natural areas along the city's riverfront.

"Beyond that, there is nothing," argued Wegman.

Cook countered: "When you're elected, you do the best you can for the entire county, not just your district. I know I'm bragging, but I'm one of the most respected board members there."

Wegman has owned various construction and glazing businesses. He is a former township official and a member of the Elgin Planning Commission. In addition to challenging Cook, Wegman failed in a 1994 bid to win nomination over former longtime Clerk Lorraine Sava. His wife, Sandy, is Kane County recorder.

"Jack will not be re-elected. I've been down the road before, and I know pretty well how Jack handles a campaign. And I know how this [Elgin] district has changed. It's, in my mind, a flip of the coin between Democrat and Republican," Wegman said. "I was asked to do this one more time because I think people were looking down the road to November."

The expected Democratic push for president in Illinois, he said, demands a GOP board candidate who will "knock on doors and work real hard to stop the tide, and Jack doesn't have a history of that."

"He only wanted one more term two terms ago, and here we are," Wegman said.

Democrat Marlena Fox, an Elgin businesswoman, is unopposed in her bid to challenge the winner of the Cook-Wegman contest in November.

The lone Democratic primary is in District 4 in Aurora, where attorney Bonnie Lee Kunkel and businessman Frank Craig are competing. Longtime incumbent Republican Penny Cameron is unopposed in the GOP primary. Howard Katz, a Democrat from Batavia, is unchallenged in District 10. Democrat Elaine Stern of St. Charles is running without opposition in District 14.

The decision of board member Douglas Weigand (R-Batavia) not to seek re-election has prompted three Batavia Republicans to seek the nomination in District 10.

They are Thomas Van Cleave, Anthony Cvek and Joseph Ferrone Sr.

# County Board chairman candidates kick off political debate season

By Rita Hoover
Staff writer

2/26/04
Republican

Tom Meadath, a St. Charles Democrat and new on the political scene, took a major stand by supporting a county-imposed impact fee system that has caused mayors in the Tri-Cities to consider legal action to fight it.

Meadath stated his opinion at Kane County's first political debate of the 2004 election season, sponsored by the Business Issues Committee of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce Feb. 13.

Meadath is running for Kane County Board chairman against St. Charles Republican Karen McConnaughay, who has been a member of the County Board for the last 12 years.

Neither candidate has opposition in the Tuesday, March 16, primary election. They will face off in the November general election.

McConnaughay, who voted against the impact fee, said she supports the fee, but "not the fee structure."

The fee system is meant to fund future county-based transportation projects by imposing fees on developers.



Karen McConnaughay



Tom Meadath

It has been criticized for making the Tri-Cities a more expensive development option among the eight zones designated by the county.

"I support the impact fee as it stands," said Meadath, a Vietnam War veteran and former IBM executive. "The formula is based on the amount of road use in each area. Since the Tri-Cities carry the most traffic, their fees are higher," he explained.

Meadath said, if elected, he also would focus on eliminating "in-fighting" between the County Board and various department heads, citing his years of "team building" experience in the corporate world.

Friction has been most reported in the county's criminal justice system, but McConnaughay stated she feels that friction is diminishing.

"The county has begun to operate in a more sophisticated way with organizations beginning to cooperate with one another," she said.

McConnaughay is the chairman of the county's Corrections and Rehabilitation Committee. She and her husband, John, own a small retail business, Geneva Homeworks, and own Trends and Concepts Inc., an architectural design business.

Meadath, a member of the St. Charles Chamber of Commerce and the Sierra Club, owns Superior Online Solutions Inc., a local Web site design company with his wife, Carol.

# Leuer cites county's 'substandard' felony conviction rate as reason to seek office

**By Eric Walter**
Staff writer

Republican 2/26/04

Geneva resident T. Michael Leuer believes the Kane County State's Attorney's Office can do better on convicting felons, one of the reasons he decided to run for the county's top legal post.

Leuer will go up against Republicans John Barsanti, Joe Rago and Tim O'Neil in the Tuesday, March 16, primary for Kane County state's attorney.



T. Michael Leuer

Leuer, 41, a former Cook County assistant state's attorney, cited statistics given by Barsanti that the office's felony conviction rate hovered between 50 and 70 percent.

"That's a substandard conviction rate, in my opinion," Leuer said. "There's no reason the Kane County State's Attorney's Office should have a substandard conviction rate. It should be on par with the national average of 90 percent."

O'Neil disputed the figures, saying that he doubted the rate could be that low.

Although the Kane County State's Attorney's Office does not keep statistics, Bob Berlin, first assistant state's attorney, said the conviction rate is considerably higher.

"It's much closer to 90 percent, if not higher," he said.

Statistics from the Annual Report of the Illinois Courts, released by the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, showed that 1,683 of 2,450 defendants were convicted of felonies in Kane County during 2002 — a 69 percent conviction rate. The AOIC is the administrative arm of the Illinois Supreme Court.

Berlin disputed the statistics, saying that they may not count convictions based upon cases where defendants pleaded guilty to lesser charges than were originally filed.

Still, Leuer believes more can be done to improve the conviction rate, including reviewing all felony cases before determining whether to bring them to court.

"I won't let a case into the system until I'm 99 percent sure we can get a conviction," he said.

Leuer was critical of his opponents, two of whom — Barsanti and O'Neil — have received endorsements from police unions. Police are more concerned with making arrests than whether cases will be prosecuted, he said.

Leuer also plans to focus on prosecuting violent crime, especially anything gang-related.

Leuer has worked for IBM Inc. for the past three years where he helps manage personnel and develop business strategy. He is a 1985 graduate of Notre Dame University in South Bend, Ind., where he earned an accounting degree. He is a licensed certified public accountant.

Leuer graduated from Loyola University School of Law in 1988 and served in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office for the next eight years.

He became corporate attorney for the Moose International fraternal organization before joining Sikich, Gardner & Co., an Aurora-based accounting company. He attended night school at the Kellogg School of Management, earning his master's degree in business administration in 2000.

Leuer and his wife, Jill, live in Geneva with their four children: Emma, 6; Matt, 4; and twins Jack and Sara, 1.

# Senior citizen housing project study delayed

Republican

**By Rita Hoover**
Staff writer 2/26/04

Geneva Township Supervisor Patrick Jaeger convinced Geneva aldermen Feb. 23 to postpone choosing a company to perform a market research study for a proposed senior housing project.

Jaeger told aldermen at a Committee of the Whole meeting that one of the three companies that has submitted a proposal for the study, Palantine-based Blair Minton & Associates, operates a senior housing facility in Batavia.

"I really don't care who does the study," Jaeger said, but he added the study must be "rock solid" for investors.

City Administrator Phil Page said the city does not see a conflict of interest.

"We didn't feel there was (a conflict) or we wouldn't have advanced it," Page said. He added the Batavia facility, Heritage Woods, is a supportive care facility, unlike the independent living facility envisioned for Geneva.

Last year Geneva Township officials decided to take preliminary steps toward an affordable senior housing project development in conjunction with the city of Geneva. The city and township have agreed to split the cost of the study.

The Geneva Township Board agreed to study options for financing and to conduct preliminary talks with the city to consider an 8.5-acre, city-owned parcel on Lewis Road for the development. The land is already annexed to the city and is zoned for multifamily use.

Blair Minton submitted a proposal for the study at a cost of $5,000, which was less than the bids submitted by Chicago-based Appraisal Research and Schaumburg-based Tracy Cross & Associates.

According to city documents, the Township Board Feb. 19 recommended either Appraisal Research, which submitted the second lowest bid at $7,500, or Blair Minton. But the board made the recommendation contingent upon Blair Minton making a presentation to the Geneva City Council.

The issue may be brought up at the next Geneva City Council meeting Monday, March 1.

# Will candidates be able to walk the walk on promises?

Republican 2/26/04

**Kane County Political Roundup**
by
**Eric Walter**



A number of candidates for Kane County offices in March talked the talk during a meeting of the Township Officials of Kane County Feb. 18. But it will be interesting to see if they can walk the walk if their parties give them the nod next month.

## Playing to the crowds

In what was an apparent playing to the audience, state's attorney candidate John Barsanti (R-St. Charles) made a pledge to make the office more responsive to the needs of townships. That pledge was assigning an assistant state's attorney for each township, so officials and residents would know exactly who to call if they had questions or concerns.

One of Barsanti's opponents, Joe Rago (R-Geneva), said afterward that he would take a "flexible" approach to the situation, knowing that some communities have larger police forces and smaller ones might need additional resources.

"My preference is to have the prosecutors in the courtroom," he said.

At a candidates forum in Hampshire last month, Barsanti also promised to reopen the case of Greg Sears, a Hampshire police sergeant who was shot and killed while on duty in 2000. The county tried Sears' longtime friend, John Carroccia of Rockford. The jury found Carroccia not guilty.

Barsanti's opponents haven't exactly jumped on the bandwagon to reopen the Sears case. But Rago and the other Republican candidates for state's attorney, Geneva residents Tim O'Neil and T. Michael Leuer, have said every case should be considered if a request is made to reopen it.

## Following in her footsteps?

Democratic state's attorney candidate Reneé Robinson of Aurora told those gathered at the Feb. 18 meeting that she got into the race "because I believe there needs to be changes to government," including making it more accessible to the people.

It is her hope to become Kane County's first African-American state's attorney. Robinson was DuPage County's first African-American prosecutor.

## Chairman candidates debate?

County Board chairman candidates Karen McConnaughay (R-St. Charles) and Tom Meadath (D-St. Charles) almost found themselves in the middle of a debate, as a representative of Kane County recorder candidate Donald Rage asked questions to stall for time.

The woman, who did not identify herself, worked her cell phone furiously late in the presentations, apparently talking with Rage who was running behind schedule.

She first asked McConnaughay for clarification on her stance that local school districts need to be involved in countywide planning as well as how transportation fits into development.

McConnaughay, who has presented her platform of inclusion since her announcement last September, said, "We need to do a better job of opening our books and bringing everyone to the table."

After further prompting from the woman, McConnaughay expressed her belief that transportation issues are driven by development, not the other way around.

When township leaders turned to end the meeting, the woman quickly pointed out that Meadath was present and asked that he be allowed to address the same issues.

Meadath's response, long enough to allow Rage to arrive, is also the same answer he's given since he announced his bid for County Board chairman: "We have to quit building nothing but houses. You have to recruit companies."

2-24-04 Daily Herald

# Elburn radium removal plan almost set

By John Johnston
*Daily Herald Correspondent*

Elburn is close to making the water safer without breaking the bank.

The town expects to finalize and vote on its contract with Water Remediation Technologies, a company that would remove radium from the water, by the March 15 board meeting.

The committee of the whole agreed Monday that it would like to pay for the set up of the filtering equipment, which will cost the town about $575,000.

By paying up front, the town will get a better rate from WRT on the filtering, and save the town between $250,000 and $500,000 over the life of the 20-year contract. According to representatives of WRT and Elburn, the contract is about 90 percent done.

Under the up-front paying plan to install the equipment, the filtering process will cost $.49 per 1000 gallons cleaned of the low-level radioactive element.

If the town paid for the process upon delivery of the clean water, the price would be $.84 per 1000 gallons for the estimated usage of the year of delivery.

Mayor James Willey said that the water bills are not the only cost that the committee is trying to keep under control.

Ron Dollar, vice president of marketing for WRT, said his company would use a process called Z88 that scrubs the radium into a sand-like compound. Dollar said Z88 removes the radium instead of sending it to sewage that could be released back into the environment, which could lead to future cleaning costs. Dollar said the sand would be shipped to a storage facility in Washington State.

At about $1.7 million, Z88 costs about a third of the next-cheapest alternative, ion exchange.

Trustee William Grabarek said Z88 also does not alter the characteristics of the water, such as taste or salinity, like ion exchange does. Z88 is considered acceptable by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which mandated the removal of radium by December 1, 2005.

The committee said it had the money to pay for the set up costs, and will not need to take a loan from the IEPA.

2-24-04 Daily Herald

# County state's attorney's race heats up

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

With just three weeks until election night, Kane County state's attorney candidate Joe Rago went on the attack against the race's front-runners, saying that one of the hopefuls represented the failed ideas of the past.

"Are we going to go back to the past or go to the future," Rago said, during a fiery closing statement at a candidates forum in Elgin Monday.

Rago's comments were aimed at candidate John Barsanti.

"(Voters) didn't like the 20 years of experience that Mr. Barsanti is talking about," Rago said. "Mr. Barsanti represents a failed, tired old administration that was voted out of office."

The comments referenced the narrow defeat of Barsanti's old boss, former state's attorney David Ackemann in the 2000 GOP primary when Barsanti served as his top assistant.

Ackemann lost the primary to Meg Gorecki who went on to be elected state's attorney. She is now serving a four-month law license suspension for ethics violations and is not seeking a second term.

But Barsanti wasn't the only target Monday in the four-person race for the GOP nomination to state's attorney. A representative of candidate Michael Leuer, who didn't attend the forum due to a family commitment, went on the attack against candidate Tim O'Neil.

"Mike doesn't have any political ties or ties to law firms in Kane County," said Leuer campaign adviser John Zahm.

Zahm went after O'Neil's experience representing various public bodies and officials, including Kane County Sheriff Ken Ramsey, questioning whether O'Neil could be fair and objective if accusations of public corruption surfaced during his administration.

O'Neil, too, made his own comments criticizing Barsanti, taking him to task for working as a defense attorney, representing the criminals a state's attorney would try to put away.

Overall, however, the attacks came from Rago and the Leuer camp against the perceived front-runners, Barsanti and O'Neil. Both O'Neil and Barsanti took the change in tone as a sign they are pulling away from the others.

"We are targets," O'Neil said, adding that it's not a concern to him because his message is reaching voters.

Barsanti took a similar tact, saying the accused conflicts of interest are baseless. Throughout the state, he said, former prosecutors turned defense lawyers run for state's attorney, often getting support from other lawyers when they do.

2200 Point Blvd *Hours:*

2-24-04 Beacon News

# North Aurora creates 1.5% tax on utilities

**■ Sunset clause:** Levy to expire in '07; revenue will help pay for road repairs

By David Garbe
STAFF WRITER

NORTH AURORA — Homeowners and businesses in the village will be seeing a 1.5 percent increase in their utility bills this June.

Monday night, village trustees voted 4-2 to tack a 1.5 percent tax onto all gas, electric and telephone bills in the village. The tax money will be spent catching up on road repairs that have been put off for years.

Trustees had been debating about the tax since last year, when it became clear the village would not be able to afford many road repairs within its current budget.

Staff prepared new budget projections for Monday's board meeting, which showed that increases in revenue would probably eliminate the road repair shortfall by 2007.

The new budget projections also showed a 1.5 percent utility tax would probably be enough to cover the shortfall, rather than the 3 percent that was originally planned.

That information was warmly received by trustees, who included had hoped to include a "sunset clause" in the tax ordinance. The tax they created Monday is set to expire on April 1, 2007.

"(The utility tax) is a very conservative and customized plan to fit our needs," said Village President Mark Ruby, who had strongly advocated the tax. "I think we are doing the right thing. I think the community will benefit."

"Without this tax, we will never catch up" on road repairs, said Jim Bibby, village engineer.

Even with the support of Ruby and village staff, the tax came close to not passing.

Trustees Dale Berman and Mark Guethle both voted against it, saying the village should not increase taxes without getting permission from residents through a referendum. Illinois law requires most taxes to be approved by voters, but utility taxes are exempt.

Berman also said the village should not raise any taxes until it has made decisions about other major costs the village will have to face, including the North Aurora Activity Center and the construction of a new police station.

Berman said if the village is going to raise taxes, it should make a single large tax increase to cover all necessary projects at once, rather than creating several small ones to cover each single project.

Ruby said that decisions about complex problems like the Activity Center and police station projects will take months to reach, and the road repairs could not wait that long.

Trustees Max Herwig, John Hansen and Paul Shoemaker voted for the tax, as well as president Ruby. Trustee Mike Herlihy was absent.

The utility tax is expected to reap about $280,000 per year, all of which will be used only for road projects. Without the tax, the road repair budget was projected to come up short by at least $200,000 per year.

North Aurora residents can expect to see the tax on their utility bills beginning in June.

2-24-04 Beacon News

# Sugar Grove to brighten village with wildflowers

**By Linda Girardi**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

SUGAR GROVE — The village hopes to add color along highly traveled highways with dashes of prairie wildflowers.

The village has accepted an invitation from Illinois' first lady, Patti Blagojevich, to be among the first 35 communities in Illinois to participate in the Illinois Wildflower Initiative.

"We've been talking about finding the resources to enhance our gateways into the community and give Sugar Grove a better feel," Trustee Mari Johnson said.

Members of the Village Board initially expressed concerns on the availability of state funding as well as the state's ability to keep its promise and continue its support, after the village had made its commitment to the program.

They pointed out that the village is still waiting for $100,000 in Illinois First funds.

Under the Wildflower Initiative program, Sugar Grove will receive a $35,000 grant and $5,000 in each of the two following years. For its share, the village must contribute $5,000 in matching funds.

Public Works Director Tony Speciale said the Illinois Department of Transportation would manage the program.

Speciale said he plans to meet with a landscape consultant to assist the village in identifying high profile areas and types of plantings. He said the plan must be submitted to IDOT for approval.

"Our hope is to have our plan submitted to the state by the end of March," Speciale said.

Speciale said soil preparations would be necessary prior to planting wildflower seeds.

Potential planting areas include Route 56 at Interstate 88 and Route 47 at Cross Street. Other considerations are the Route 30 and Route 47 interchange.

The program would dovetail with the village's plans to widen and beautify the Route 47 corridor, village officials said.

2-25-04 Daily Herald

# Aurora's concentrating on cause of bad water

## *State-ordered review of what caused 9-day boil order in the city gets under way*

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

As the city of Aurora begins a state-ordered review of what contaminated the city's water supply, sparking a 9-day boil order, Kane County health officials said Tuesday no illnesses were reported during the incident.

"The illnesses were not there, which is good," county health department Administrator Mary Lou England said. "It went well."

England said the county's emergency response program was put into action as soon as a water problem was discovered the night of Feb. 6 and worked just as it was supposed to.

County and city officials divided notification duties to prevent widespread sickness. The city notified residents of water problems and the county reached more than 340 restaurants, medical facilities and other agencies or businesses it licenses.

"We did a full-court press immediately," England said.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency issued the boil order Feb. 6 after tests showed E. coli bacteria in the water.

High levels of ammonia in the Fox River, one source of the city's water supply, are thought to be the cause, city and state officials said.

On Tuesday the IEPA sent a violation notice to the city that requires the city to investigate and correct the causes of the boil order.

At this point, the city has hired Vernon Hills-based Weston Solutions Inc. to do an independent review. Stephen Ryan, a Weston project engineer, said his job will be to review an internal city report analyzing the circumstances that led to the boil order.

The company expects to confirm or refute the conclusions of the city report. Depending on that report and those conclusions, the company's role in a broader investigation of the city water system may or may not expand, Ryan said.

The IEPA violation notice requires the city to develop a plan to prevent such conditions from occurring again. A written response from the city must be delivered to the IEPA within 45 days.

At the county level, England said officials from the city and Kane and DuPage counties plan to create a report reviewing the emergency response.

2-25-04 Beacon news

# Kane health department to screen refugees

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA – The Kane County Health Department will aid in the relocation of foreign citizens given refugee status by the U.S. government.

The department will get a federal grant to do health screenings of refugees, checking particularly for tuberculosis and hepatitis, according to Claire Dobbins, Health Department administrative services director. Dobbins said the U.S. government has told the county it could handle as many as 400 people a year.

"We're real excited," she said. "It's really kind of a neat story."

The government confers refugee status on people seeking to relocate to the U.S. while retaining the citizenship from their home country. It often is related to people leaving bad social or political situations.

The refugees Kane County will be seeing have been brought to the U.S. by World Relief of Wheaton, an organization charged with assimilating the new people into American society.

Because some of them will be relocated to Kane County, World Relief wanted a screening site in Kane, Dobbins said. Currently, World Relief is relocating many Bantus from Somalia, although the refugees could be from anywhere.

"It just depends on what the government is doing at that time," Dobbins said.

Dobbins said taking part in the refugee program will give Health Department employees more experience at spotting and treating infectious diseases.

"It's really a good fit for us," she said.

The grant is not a specific amount; the government will reimburse Kane County on a case-by-case basis.

# Boil order tested Health Department

2-25-04 Beacon news

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — Make no mistake about it, the recent boil order issued for Aurora's drinking water supply was a real emergency.

That, at least, is the way officials at the Kane County Health Department viewed it.

Mary Lou England, Health Department director, told members of the County Board's Public Health Committee Tuesday the boil order gave the department a chance to "open up our emergency preparedness program." Officials got to test emergency procedures under real conditions.

In particular, it tested how quickly the department could mobilize its notification process, particularly to public places such as restaurants, and its surveillance and monitoring of medical facilities.

England pronounced both successful. She said when the 10-day boil order was issued Feb. 6, Health Department officials began contacting restaurants. Within two hours, officials in Kane had notified more

❖ *Turn to* **BOIL, A2**

## BOIL

*From Page A1*

than 300 restaurants about the boil order. Combining the other counties in which Aurora extends — DuPage, Will and Kendall — more than 500 restaurants were contacted.

England said within the first 24 to 36 hours of the boil order, every restaurant had been inspected and had taken some kind of action.

"We coordinated with the city of Aurora, the counties, the EPA, to insure all the restaurants knew what their requirements were," said Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, Public Health Committee chairman. "We had employees make more than 340 phone calls."

Board member Dorothy Sanchez, D-Aurora, said she noticed many restaurants closed on the Friday the boil order was issued, and some stayed closed during the weekend. Fred Carlson, environmental health director, said that was after the Health Department called them, "a lot initially could not deal with" what they had to do.

Many chain restaurants got orders from their corporate offices to shut down, said Cindy Gross, epidemiologist with the Health Department. But they re-opened when they realized how to deal with the problem.

But Sanchez was concerned with many of Aurora's Mexican restaurants which are run by Spanish-speaking owners.

Carlson said the language barrier caused problems at a few restaurants, but they were quickly taken care of by bilingual employees at the Health Department.

England said the office quickly mobilized to monitor medical facilities, such as hospitals and clinics. That monitoring showed no illness related to contaminated water.

Michael Isaacson, who heads up emergency response planning for the department, said while response went well during the boil order, the situation pointed up the need for good planning.

Along those lines, he said the department is reaffirming its emergency planning for senior citizens with the help of the American Red Cross. Both entities will be distributing for free a booklet titled *Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors.*

The booklets are available through senior service agencies, or by calling the Health Department at (630) 208-3801 or the Red Cross at (630) 443-8844, ext. 20.

# Elgin set to decide on major growth

2-25-04 Chicago Tribune

By Richard Wronski
Tribune staff reporter

The transformation of thousands of acres of open land in northern Kane County into thousands of rooftops is expected to move closer to reality Wednesday when Elgin considers a major step in its ambitious plan for western expansion.

The 1,500 acres being considered for annexation comprise three major developments that would bring more than 4,000 housing units into the city.

"This is the largest single annexation in the history of Elgin," City Manager David Dorgan said.

It also would open the way to more expansion and the fulfillment of predictions that Elgin's population will grow from about 98,000 to more than 160,000 people over 25 years.

But with Elgin poised to move west, environmental groups and others worry about the effects of widespread development.

More than 100 people—officials, residents, developers and environmentalists—attended a hearing Tuesday before the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, where communities offered their visions for the future of open land in Kane County.

As community officials extolled the merits of their plans, environmentalists and

PLEASE SEE **ANNEX**, PAGE 7

## ANNEX:

# Environmental impact worries some critics

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

others worried that unless extra care is taken, large-scale developments like those proposed for Elgin, Hampshire, Huntley and Pingree Grove could taint the region's waterways and deplete the aquifer that supplies drinking water.

The Illinois chapter of the Sierra Club, for example, said development will affect the Tyler, Hampshire and Eakin Creeks, which empty into the Kishwaukee and Fox Rivers, including increases in wastewater discharge and pollution that runs off from increased areas of pavement and rooftops.

"We cannot develop these areas as we have areas farther to the east," said Cindy Skrukrud, clean-water advocate for the Sierra Club. "History shows us that conventional development will degrade the quality of water resources."

NIPC is reviewing information on "facilities planning areas" that communities have staked out for their development plans, looking over how they plan to provide water and sewers to those areas.

NIPC's recommendations will be forwarded to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which has final approval.

Mayor Ed Schock told NIPC that Elgin was the most qualified municipality to provide wastewater treatment and potable water to parts of Kane County it seeks to annex and develop.

"The city has the technical, administrative and financial resources and capabilities to handle this important task," Schock said. "The city can serve the area in question without depleting groundwater supplies, a critical concern of Kane County and surrounding communities."

Kane County officials support most of Elgin's plans to extend services westward. The County Board Development Committee's recommendation last week envisioned Elgin virtually surrounding tiny Pingree Grove.

The annexations expected to be approved at the Elgin City Council meeting at 7 p.m. would extend the city from the county's northeastern line well into the open farmland to the west.

The plans include a 195-acre Wyndham Deerpoint Tall Oaks subdivision, a 577-acre Crown Community Development project known as the Highland Woods and a 780-acre Sho-Deen Construction Co. development called Pingree Creek.

One key piece of property to be annexed is a 300-foot-wide corridor of land known as the Meier property south of U.S. Highway 20 at 3400 Nesler Rd. The property will not be developed now but creates a link between the other properties and Elgin's current boundary.

Sho-Deen's 2,729-unit Pingree Creek development has become a battleground between Elgin and Pingree Grove. The development was proposed to be within Pingree Grove, but Sho-Deen changed its mind and has petitioned the courts to disconnect 150 acres from the village in favor of annexation to Elgin.

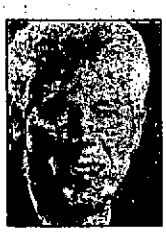
Officials said Sho-Deen cast its lot with Elgin because the city offers more municipal services than Pingree Grove, with a population of 124.

2-25-04 Daily Herald

# Candidate says he can hold 2 offices

## *Batavia school board member's run for county board questioned by opponent*

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*



Tom Van Cleave



Anthony Cvek

Anthony Cvek thinks Tom Van Cleave, one of his opponents in the race for the District 10 Kane County Board seat, needs to make a choice.

In Cvek's opinion, Van Cleave should stay on as the president of the Batavia school board or turn all his focus to contributing to the county board.

There is no room for doing both, legally or practically, Cvek says.

Van Cleave doesn't see it that way.

Should he win election to the county board, Van Cleave says he has no plans to give up his school board seat. In fact, Van Cleave said he doesn't even rule out running again when his current school board term expires next year.

"The school board is not something I've just been asked to do. It's a passion," said Van Cleave, who was first elected to the school board in 1990. "I'd like to do both."

Van Cleave says there is no state law that prohibits a school board member from serving on a county board.

Van Cleave and Cvek, along with Joe Ferrone, are seeking the GOP nomination to succeed Doug Weigand in District 10, which includes all of Batavia. Weigand, a Batavia Republican, is not seeking re-election.

Cvek considers Van Cleave's school board future a major issue in the race and one that is clearly defined based on at least two rulings from the Illinois Attorney General published since July 1971.

In the most recent case, then-Attorney General Roland Burris in 1993 said "the two offices are incompatible."

In that opinion, Burris points out that no constitutional declaration or even state law prevents a school board member from being seated on a county board.

That's the same sentence that Van Cleave, who has sought out his own legal counsel on the matter, points to as some of the basis for his belief that he can hold both seats.

Van Cleave said he respects the attorney general's writings but emphasized it is "just an opinion" and not an established state law.

"I am not going to break the law," Van Cleave said.

Still, the positions are on a 20-page list maintained by the Attorney General's office and the Illinois State Board of Edu-

See **CHALLENGE** on **PAGE 11**

## Challenge: Cvek stresses potential conflict of interest

*Continued from Page 1*

cation spelling out incompatible public offices.

According to the both agencies, a school board member cannot also serve as a mayor, city council member, a tax assessor or a regional superintendent of schools.

The lists are a compilation of attorney general opinions dating back to 1971.

Melissa Merz, a spokeswoman for Attorney General Lisa Madigan, would not comment on the Van Cleave situation.

Burris' opinion goes on to explore the potential conflicts of interest that could arise between the two offices. A portion of the argument concerned the state revenue sharing act and explored potential conflicts when the county board could give money to local school districts. "A conflict could arise between a dual officeholder's duty as a county board member to determine how county funds should best be spent to serve the needs of the county," the Burris opinion says, "and his or her duty as a member of a board of education to provide for the revenue necessary to maintain the district's schools."

Periodically, in Kane County, school districts are recipients of casino tax grants awarded with the approval of the county board.

In Batavia, Cvek points to October 2002 when the Batavia school board accepted $20,000 in riverboat funds given to support a broadcasting class at Batavia High School. But that grant first was given to Batavia Access Television, and then BATV presented the cash to the school board.

Kane County finance director Cheryl Pattelli said county-to-school district transactions in the form of grants or developer-paid land cash deals are "rare" but do happen.

For example, in the past six years, grant money has been awarded to Dundee-Crown High School, the Kaneland school district and Elgin Community College.

2-25-04 Chicago Tribune

# Aurora to be monitored in wake of boil order

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter

Kane County health officials plan to keep close tabs on the Aurora area during the next six months for any illness related to the water contamination problem that led to a citywide boil order this month.

Although there have been no reports of any suspected illness related to contaminated water, health officials told the County Board's Public Health Committee Tuesday that monitoring in Aurora will continue until late summer. The Aurora boil order was in effect Feb. 6-15.

The boil order appears to have worked, they said.

"The illness was not there—which is the goal, the absolute goal," Mary Lou England, Health Department executive director, told the committee.

Although monitoring is scheduled to continue for a while, "By the end of March or April, we should be able to say that 'nothing happened' or 'something happened,'" said Health Department epidemiologist Cindy Gross.

"Fortunately, we have no confirmation of illness that can be directly linked to the water," Gross said.

Aurora's water problem provided the state's second-largest city, the county and other agencies with what England called "a wonderful opportunity to practice emergency preparedness."

"Each time we practice this, we will get better," she said.

"The drills this department engaged in paid off. Everyone did exactly what needed to be done," said Michael Isaacson, the Health Department's emergency response coordinator.

"This situation allowed agencies to run through many of the same procedures that would be utilized in the event of bioterrorism," he said.

It proved that "this community can respond to keep people safe," he said.

Aurora had urged residents and businesses to boil water after tests showed the presence of E. coli bacteria and fecal coliform bacteria.

The city is continuing to investigate, among other things, whether higher levels of ammonia in the Fox River, which feeds into the Aurora water system, might have contributed to the presence of the bacteria.

2-25-04 Chronicle

# Health department to immunize refugees

GENEVA — The federal government will pay the Kane County Health Department to immunize refugees against tuberculosis and hepatitis.

Administrative services director Claire Dobbins said the department will be reimbursed for its services under a grant from the U.S. Department of Human Services.

"This is a perfect project for Kane County," Dobbins said. "We're building our communicable disease program."

Only those people granted official refugee status by the State Department will be eligible. That means about 400 people a year, she said. Currently, Somali Bantus are the largest single group of refugees in the county, but all those with refugee status will be eligible.

The Wheaton-based World Relief Organization assists refugees with settlement in the United States. The organization will provide the health department with names of those seeking to move to Kane County.

*— Kane County Chronicle*

2-25-04 Beacon News

# Elburn trustees OK 40-acre development

**By Linda Girardi**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

ELBURN — Village trustees have withdrawn their objections to a residential development outside the corporate limits after successfully negotiating a 1.25-acre site for a shallow well to meet future growth needs.

Plans for Blackberry Ridge, comprised of 40.8 acres south of the Hughes Creek Golf Course and north of Smith Road in rural Kane County, falls within Elburn's 1.5-mile municipal planning jurisdiction.

Village Administrator David Morrison said the well site would not be developed for at least 10 years.

"It's important to lock down the area as water resources becomes more scarce in Kane County," Morrison said, adding employees from the Illinois State Geological Survey discovered the "ideal" location while conducting a study of potential future well sites for Elburn.

"It will be a high-volume shallow well that will be very beneficial to Elburn," Morrison told members of the Village Board. "It was necessary to negotiate this now."

Martin Farm Partners proposes building 17 single-family houses on estate lots, with 16 acres dedicated to open space.

Originally, the housing density was twice that, village officials said.

"We might not drill for 20 years but we will have the land set aside," Mayor Jim Willey said of the future well site.

He said there would be a long-term regional benefit to the planning, with residents benefiting from walking trails and passive recreation along the Blackberry Creek wetlands.

2-25-04 Chronicle

# Kane surveying senior citizen agencies

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Following on the heels of the recently completed senior citizen survey, the county health department is contacting agencies that serve the elderly to learn their needs.

Health department Executive Director Mary Lou England said the survey has just begun, but two issues have surfaced: The agencies are seeing their funding reduced while the senior citizen population increases.

"Those are the major issues," England said.

The results of the survey will be presented at the March Public Health Committee meeting, England said.

Bette Schoenholtz is executive director of Senior Services Associates, one of the agencies that was surveyed.

"That tells a good story about how everyone is struggling. There are so many issues coming together at once that it is really critical that we address them," Schoenholtz said.

The survey of senior citizens and senior citizen agencies was planned last year as way to provide better services to the elderly.

At the same time, there is a proposal to put a referendum on the November ballot asking voters to approve a quarter-cent tax increase to provide seniors with more services.

A quarter-cent tax increase would cost the owner of a $250,000 home $20 a year.

If voters approve the referendum, the health department would be responsible for administering the estimated $2.4 million that the tax would generate.

The county board would need to adopt a resolution authorizing the referendum. Data from the two surveys will be used to convince the board of the need for more services for seniors.

2-25-04 Chronicle

# Brochure spells out steps for seniors in emergencies

## *Information available at Red Cross, health department*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A brochure from the Fox River Chapter of the Red Cross will help senior citizens prepare for a disaster.

The brochure is available free from the Red Cross and the Kane County Health Department.

The information was put together by the Rochester-Monroe County (New York) Chapter of the Red Cross after an ice storm brought the region to a standstill, said Kay Catlin, development director for the Fox River Chapter.

"It is our contribution to the safety and welfare of Kane County seniors," Catlin said.

The brochure lists items that should be kept on hand in the event of a disaster, such as food, water and a battery-powered radio.

The brochure recommends preparing for a disaster that requires evacuation and one that would require residents to remain in their homes, or "shelter in place."

Seniors and their families should read the brochure together so that they have a family plan, Catlin said.

Brochures are available by calling the health department at (630) 208-3801 or the Red Cross at (630) 443-8844, Ext. 20.

The information also is being distributed to park districts, townships, the Salvation Army, nursing homes and assisted living centers.

# Boil order let county open 'full-court press'

2-25-04 Chronicle

## *Health department used its emergency response plan*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — When the city of Aurora found contaminants in its water supply Feb. 6, Kane County health officials went to work.

Employees, who minutes earlier were planning their weekends, stayed at the office Friday night calling and faxing the 350 restaurants, taverns and other establishments that use the water supply with details about the boil order and how to operate without tap water.

"We opened our full-court press," said Kane County Health Department Executive Director Mary Lou England.

"This was not just a small little boil order. We had to sit there and think 'Who are we missing? Who are we missing?'"

The boil order gave the health department an opportunity to implement its emergency response plan developed over the last two years with federal bioterrorism grants, England said.

Emergency response coordinator Michael Isaacson said the terrorism drills and planning sessions conducted with area emergency personnel over the last two years helped with the boil order.

Isaacson said he has worked closely with officials from municipalities, Kane County Office of Emergency Management, the Red Cross, fire departments, police departments, sheriff's office and hospitals on emergency plans.

"We have relationships with all these people," Isaacson said.

Kane's health department had to work with its counterpart in DuPage because Aurora has at least 135 businesses in that county that serve water to the public, said environmental health director Fred Carlson.

The nine-day boil order began Feb. 6, after tests showed the presence of E. coli bacteria in the city's water. The next day, the water again tested positive for E. coli.

Further testing found no E. coli but did find total coliform, a bacteria present naturally in the environment and used to indicate that other, potentially harmful bacteria might be present.

Throughout the ordeal, there were no reports of illness.

Epidemiologist Cindy Gross said surveillance will continue for another six months.

See BOIL, page 2

## Boil

Continued from page 1

But, she added, "By the end of March or April we will be able to say 'nothing happened' or 'something happened.'"

Most restaurants, especially those owned or operated by national chains, closed immediately Friday if they were unable to make arrangements for bottled water.

"The corporations were unwilling to take the risk" of lawsuits, Gross said.

In addition to supplying water, the restaurants and taverns had to buy hundreds of pounds of bagged ice to continue in the business Carlson said.

"It's their bread and butter, and we're very sensitive to that," England said.

# Batavia attempts to allay fears about proposed TIF district

Daily Herald

BY JOHN JOHNSTON

*Daily Herald Correspondent* 2/20/04

Batavia city administrators and representatives from the Teska community planning firm did their best to calm fears about a proposed tax increment finance district this week.

People were concerned that, among other things, the TIF district would raise taxes or line the pockets of developers during a meeting Tuesday night.

Assistant administrator for Batavia Randy Recklaus said the TIF district would not raise taxes but would reallocate them to help fix the problems in downtown infrastructure that are keeping businesses out.

The boundaries would fall roughly south of Wilson Street and north of Union Avenue, going between two and four blocks east and west of the river. Currently the growth in property value for the proposed TIF district is about one third of that in the rest of Batavia.

TIF districts work by freezing the property taxes that go to various taxing districts, including schools and the library, at the level they were at when the TIF district is implemented. As taxes rise, the additional funds would be reallocated to redevelopment efforts in the TIF district, such as property demolition, new sidewalks and new water mains.

Recklaus said TIF district revenues also would be used to add parking, improve facades of buildings and help change buildings intended for industrial use to be converted to commercial use. He added that no money from the TIF district can go to developers for projects that do not benefit the public.

Representatives from Batavia said a developer could receive TIF district money if he or she replaced a water main or repaved a street.

The proposed TIF district would encompass 140 principal structures, including 48 residential units, over a 103-acre area.

If passed, it would be the third TIF district for Batavia. The only operational TIF district, located just north of the proposed third TIF district, has seen the property value go up and has generated more than enough money to make payments on a start-up bond the city passed, Recklaus said. He said he does not know if the new TIF district would need a bond.

Recklaus said anyone who has questions should come to the community development office at 100 N. Island in Batavia.

# Aurora police sting finds most businesses meeting liquor laws

Beacon 2/20/04

AURORA — Twenty-six of 32 businesses targeted in an Aurora Police Department sting over the weekend refused to sell alcohol to underage police cadets.

The police Special Operations Group and Community Oriented Policing units staged the details.

On Friday, local police and the Illinois State Police Alcohol Countermeasures Enforcement Team sent an underage police cadet to attempt to purchase alcohol at 29 businesses. Twenty-five of the 29 denied the sale. The following evening, a solo operation by Aurora police netted two of three business which sold alcohol to the cadet.

During Friday's operation, police said visited Club Boleros in the 2100 block of East New York Street at both 7:30 and 11 p.m. Officers said they found that admission was being charged for party that had been booked there; several patrons under the age of 21 had access to a bar area; and there were no food menus or tables set up — all of which violate conditions required under the club's liquor license.

No arrests were made, but officers said they forwarded their findings to the city clerk's office.

Also on Friday night, clerks at Fox Food and Liquor in the 1600 block of Montgomery Road; Foremost Liquors in the 100 block of West Galena Boulevard; and Pizzeria Uno in the 900 block of North Route 59, all sold alcohol to the underage cadet, police said. Nita R. Patel, 46, of the 2899 block of Shelly Lane, Aurora; Khaled N. Selaiman, 26, of the 2000 block of Fox Pointe Drive, Aurora; and Terri Ann Seifert, 35, of the 26100 block of Renwick Drive, Plainfield, were charged with unlawful sale of alcohol to a minor.

On Saturday, the police cadet was allowed into the Alamo nightclub in the 2400 block of Church Road. Although she was not served alcohol, her admittance is against local ordinances, police said. A doorman at the business, Carmello J. Perez, 43, also of the 2400 block of Church Road, was charged with allowing an underage person to illegally enter a place where alcohol is served.

Later in the evening, a bartender at El Rodeo nightclub, Juan Castenada, 27, of the 1100 block of Grove Street, Aurora, was charged with selling alcohol to the cadet.

The businesses which refused sale to the underage cadet include:

- Northgate Liquors, Mobil Gas, Murphy's and Randall Liquors 2, all on North Lake Street.
- Chris' on Hill Avenue.
- Jewel/Osco and Aldi's on West Galena Boulevard.
- Club Gala on East Galena Boulevard.
- Randall Liquors on North Randall Road.
- Delray Farms on North Union Street.
- La Valita 2, Fox and Hound, Aldi's and Aurora Express Mart on East New York Street.
- La Aurora Cigar and the Lamplighter on West New York Street.
- America's Brewpub and the Shore Club on North Broadway.
- El Palenque and Twin Liquors on North Farnsworth Avenue.
- Jay's Food Pantry on Montgomery Road.
- Cub Foods on South Constitution Drive.
- Aldi's on Ogden Avenue.
- Applebee's and TGI Friday's on Route 59.
- Hooters on Fox Valley Center Drive.



**Bill Page**

Chronicle 2/22/04

# Democracy by the numbers

A friend and I were having lunch the other day, and our conversation eventually turned to politics and the upcoming primary election.

We reviewed most of the contested races, discussed the various personalities and made predictions about the outcomes. In other words, we engaged in our favorite sport. But I doubt it's a sentiment shared by many others.

After we were through dissecting every possible political issue, my friend paused and asked, "How many people do you think really care about this stuff as much as you and I do?"

Then he added, "How many do you think even care who is on their city council or represents them on the county board?"

He also could have said "Or knows who any of them are?"

The sad truth is most people in this area don't know, and don't care to know anything about their government — local, county, state or national. The proof is in the voting records, and flipping through those is enough to make me very depressed.

First, you should know that the people who are registered to vote represent only about half of those who are eligible to cast a ballot; the other half apparently can't even be bothered to take the 10 minutes necessary to register.

Those who do register appear on a database maintained by the county clerk. Among other information, it shows who in Kane County is registered and in what elections they have voted. Because these lists are assembled by precinct, it's fairly easy to learn who votes and who doesn't. In case you're wondering, the answer is more don't than do. Which means the majority of registered voters choose to stay home on Election Day.

The easy answer to my friend's question seems to be that very few people care who represents them, no matter what the governmental entity. To put the whole matter in rough math, assume there are 200,000 people eligible to vote in Kane County. Assume 100,000 have registered. Only 40,000 of them will bother to vote in this primary. That means someone running for countywide office can win with the support of just over 20 percent of registered voters, 10 percent of eligible voters.

It wouldn't matter if only10 percent of the citizens of Kane County ever had a gripe about taxes or roads or crime, but that just isn't so. Griping and moaning about government and politicians is something 100 percent of the people do 100 percent of the time. Everybody it seems has a complaint and a better way to solve Kane's problems — too bad only a fraction care enough to really do something about them.

I don't kid myself that anything I write will inspire people to get off their duff on Election Day; you either believe in a participatory democracy or you don't. What I can't figure out is what non-voters tell their children. Do they say it doesn't matter? Do they tell them their vote won't make a difference? Or do they tell them the truth, which is they are just too lazy to be a good citizen.

* * *

I've really got to stop saying yes to every request, but it's too late to back out on my latest lapse in good judgment. And it's a cold and wet lapse, at that.

Frequent readers will know I'm a big fan of the Special Olympics, and some of you donated money just last month when I sheared off my beard to raise a little dough for the cause. I should have quit while I was ahead, but no, I have to try and top that stunt with a plunge into Lake Michigan on March 6.

It's all part of a Special Olympics event, and the deal is real simple: you pledge money; I go jump in an icy lake. To spice this up, I've challenged Dave Janusch of the St. Charles Police Department that I can raise more than he and his department can. Dave and several fellow officers will be jumping in, too, so this is a serious bet.

Call or write me with your pledge, and don't be stingy. This may be your only chance to see me take the flying leap you've always wished for.

■ *Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.*

# Crowded Kane jail sees a bit of relief

2/24/04 Tribune

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter

The Kane County Board's hiring of two public defenders last year has expedited criminal cases, helped ease jail crowding and saved the county about $5,000 a day, the county's chief judge said Wednesday.

Meeting with the County Board's Judiciary Committee about a year after he gained approval to spend $102,000 in 2003 contingency funds for additional public defenders, Kane County Chief Judge Philip DiMarzio said the board's decision was cost-effective.

That, said DiMarzio, is reflected in the easing of the jail crowding since the two new attorneys began work last April. Although not the only reason for the decreased population, the court's increased ability to expedite cases for jailed defendants has helped stem crowding, he said. A decline in the crime rate also contributed, he said.

The 400-bed Kane County Jail in Geneva routinely had a daily inmate population of 600 or more a year ago, said DiMarzio. Since then, the daily population has declined and hovers around 500, he said.

DiMarzio said housing 100 fewer inmates is saving the county about $5,000 a day.

He said the two public defenders that the board authorized are assigned to high-volume courtrooms that have a direct impact on jail population.

"I do not anticipate the downward trend to continue," said DiMarzio, noting that jail overcrowding is and will continue to be a problem that Kane must address.

"We have done as much as we can," he said.

"The jail still far exceeds capacity," he said.

DiMarzio told the committee to expect a request from the court next year for more judges and support staff.

"We are stretched as thin as we can be stretched," said DiMarzio, now in the second year of 2-year term as chief of the 16th Judicial Circuit.

# Firefighters in Hinckley seek station

Beacon

**By Dan Waitt**
STAFF WRITER

2/20/04

HINCKLEY — Equipment storage, increased training requirements and logistics are among the issues driving the Hinckley Fire Department's request for more space in a March 16 referendum.

Fire officials say the department has outgrown the outdated the 40-year-old station at 130 N. May St., and is renting space a half-block away. The department wants to bring all its equipment, offices and training facilities under one roof.

The fire district will ask voters to approve a property tax increase of about 11 cents per $100 of equalized assessed valuation. The owner of a house valued at $150,000 would pay an additional $56 a year in property taxes if the measure is approved.

"We're not looking to build a Taj Mahal," Fire Chief Jay Van Landuyt said.

The Hinckley Fire Protection District stores six vehicles in tandem fashion at the May Street station. The building originally was designed to hold three trucks.

The fire department leases space about a half-block north of the fire station to store a snorkel truck, hold training classes and house administrative offices.

A private residence stands between the storage building and Hinckley Fire Station, which also houses firefighter's gear, hoses and emergency equipment.

The department has acquired a 3½-acre parcel on North Sycamore Street that would allow for a new station and for expansion — something not feasible at the current site.

"We want to plan and build for the future," said Joe Herrmann, emergency medical services coordinator for the department.

The fire district serves about 2,500 people in a 65-square-mile area that includes the village of Hinckley, all of Squaw Grove Township and half of Pierce Township.

Many state requirements for handling hazardous materials and procedures for cleanup didn't exist when the station was built, Van Landuyt said. There is no shower facility in the fire station, and the only decontamination device is a slop sink.

Since there is no parking space on the station property, firefighters must find spots along May Street to park their cars when a call comes in. Members of the team assigned to the snorkel truck must grab their gear in the main station and make the half-block sprint up May Street to board that truck.

Fire district officials hope the required wording on the ballot will not confuse voters. The ballot will read: "Shall the extension limitation under the property tax extension limitation law for the Hinckley Fire Protection District be increased from 2.4 percent to 60.264 percent for the 2003 levy year?"

Larry Haler, chairman of the Friends of the Hinckley Fire District, said the group plans a door-to-door campaign on March 6.

# How GOP board candidates feel about LaFox development

Daily Herald

2/26/04

BY GALA M. PIERCE
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Although Republican county board candidates approve of the headway made on the proposed Grand Prairie subdivision, some think the plan needs further tinkering.

Developers and LaFox residents are close to reaching an agreement for about 1,100 homes on a 1,200-acre site along the southern edge of Route 38 between Brundige and Harley roads. The proposal, which will be resubmitted to the county in the coming weeks, also encompasses a town center component with retail shops.

With input, representatives of the Lombard-based Town & Country Homes and the North Aurora-based Wyndham Deer point reduced the number of homes by 2,000. Now, the plan corresponds to guidelines outlined in Kane County's 2020 land-use plan.

"I'm encouraged because it sounds like it's coming down in density," said Mark Davoust of St. Charles Township, who is vice-president of a Batavia cohesive gauze manufacturing company.

He and Arney Silvestri, a custom home builder who lives in St. Charles, are vying to represent the portion of St. Charles and Geneva townships that make up the 14th district on the county board. Davoust also has building experience, having worked as a contractor for four new homes in the area.

Both agree the scaled-down plans mean the development is heading in a good direction.

The dialogue between developers and residents shows a concern for planned growth, Silvestri said.

That's the kind of relationship developers and builders need to have with a community," said Silvestri, whose Geneva company builds an average of 10 homes a year.

Candidates for the 10th district, which covers mostly Batavia Township and a small section of Geneva Township, think the plan could be further modified.

Joseph Ferrone of Batavia, who works as a transportation manager with a Lombard trucking company, doesn't object to the plan if the residents give their consent. However, he dislikes any plan that compromises open space.

Although developers have altered plans, there could be more cooperation between the affected parties, Batavia businessman Anthony Cvek said.

"There's going to be some impact on the schools," said Cvek, who owns a remodeling company in Batavia. "That needs to be taken into consideration. All too often you see situations where the school board is the last one to be involved in the process."

An earlier incarnation of the plan would negatively impact the Geneva and Kaneland school districts and benefit St. Charles schools. The developers have significantly modified the plan since then, and the impact on surrounding school districts has not been determined.

Candidate Tom Van Cleave of Batavia, who has 20 years experience on the Batavia Plan Commission, thinks the number of houses should be scaled down even more. The Batavia school board president favors the mixed-use development with both houses and commercial businesses, but awaits more concrete details.

"We've got to hit a balance of residential versus commercial or industrial," he said. "I haven't seen the numbers, but I would guess that a high-density development would skew the numbers way over on the residential side."

*Daily Herald staff writer Lisa Smith contributed to this report.*

# Embarrassment of riches

## *Recorder candidates differ on how to spend the office's money*

Daily Herald

By Garrett Ordower.
*Daily Herald Staff Writer* 2/26/04

With the flurry of housing activity during the past few years the Kane County recorder's office coffers have grown to more than $1.86 million, and one of the main responsibilities of the recorder will be spending it.

Every time the recorder's office receives a document, it charges a $25 fee. Of that, $4 goes to an automation fund for improving the functioning of the office.

With 233,000 documents processed last year and a six-week lag time before certain records can be accessed, none of the three candidates for the GOP nomination disputes that the office can be improved.

But the incumbent and her two challengers differ on how it should be done.

The automation fund needs to be spent, candidate Don Rage said, so that the office can cut down the amount it collects from property taxes and increase efficiency through the purchase of new technology.

He notes the recorder's office underestimated the amount it would collect in fees by $1.65 million last year, causing the county to ask taxpayers for more than it needed.

"That's the only office that helps fund other offices in the county," Rage said.

Recorder Sandy Wegman said that during her first three years in the role the office spent almost its entire automation budget but that the increase in documents recorded from 90,000 in 2000 to 233,000 last year could not have been predicted.

The office must work out its budget six months in advance of knowing its revenues, Wegman said.

She has plans to spend about $1.2 million of the automation fund on upgrading servers and backup systems, implementing a disaster recovery system and replacing current storage systems.



Dan Gurbal



Don Rage



Sandy Wegman

Wegman balks at spending all the money just because it's there, but she said if she had known about the increase in documents she would have budgeted closer to $1.5 million rather than $1.2 million.

"I'm not going to stock up on computers here because we have the money," Wegman said. "Technology changes too quickly for that."

One of the largest investments of the office recently has been a new "cashiering system," where documents are entered in part as soon as they are received.

But that very system is what Rage and candidate Dan Gurbal both have the most problems with.

The main problem, Gurbal said, lies with the receiving system not being integrated with the storage and retrieval systems, which receive acclaim from those who, like him, use them every day.

Information entered inconsistently by employees who aren't properly trained for the systems they're using is also part of the problem, Gurbal said, along with not verifying the information.

"The financial quality of the real estate records is in jeopardy," said Gurbal, who runs a title research business. "If things don't change at the recorder's office, I'll have to change my line of work because of the liability that comes with those errors."

Gurbal would spend the money in the automation fund to mesh the receiving system with the storage and retrieval systems. He'd also specialize employees and spend money on job training to make sure data gets entered consistently and correctly.

Gurbal doesn't have any estimates as to how much his objectives would cost, but he said working with the consultants who developed the storage and retrieval systems would shed light on that.

Rage, on the other hand, wants an entirely new software system to be used with the existing hardware so that it can quickly turn entered documents into retrievable documents. He also thinks the system can be hooked up with the individual assessor's offices to speed up the tax cycle.

"What we have to look at is technology changes day by day and how we can make this quicker, more efficient and reduce the cost of operating the office," Rage said.

He also wants records to be accessible to the public over the Internet. Rage said that in talking with consultants he believes the software for this project can be paid for with less than 20 percent of the $1.86 million in the automation fund.

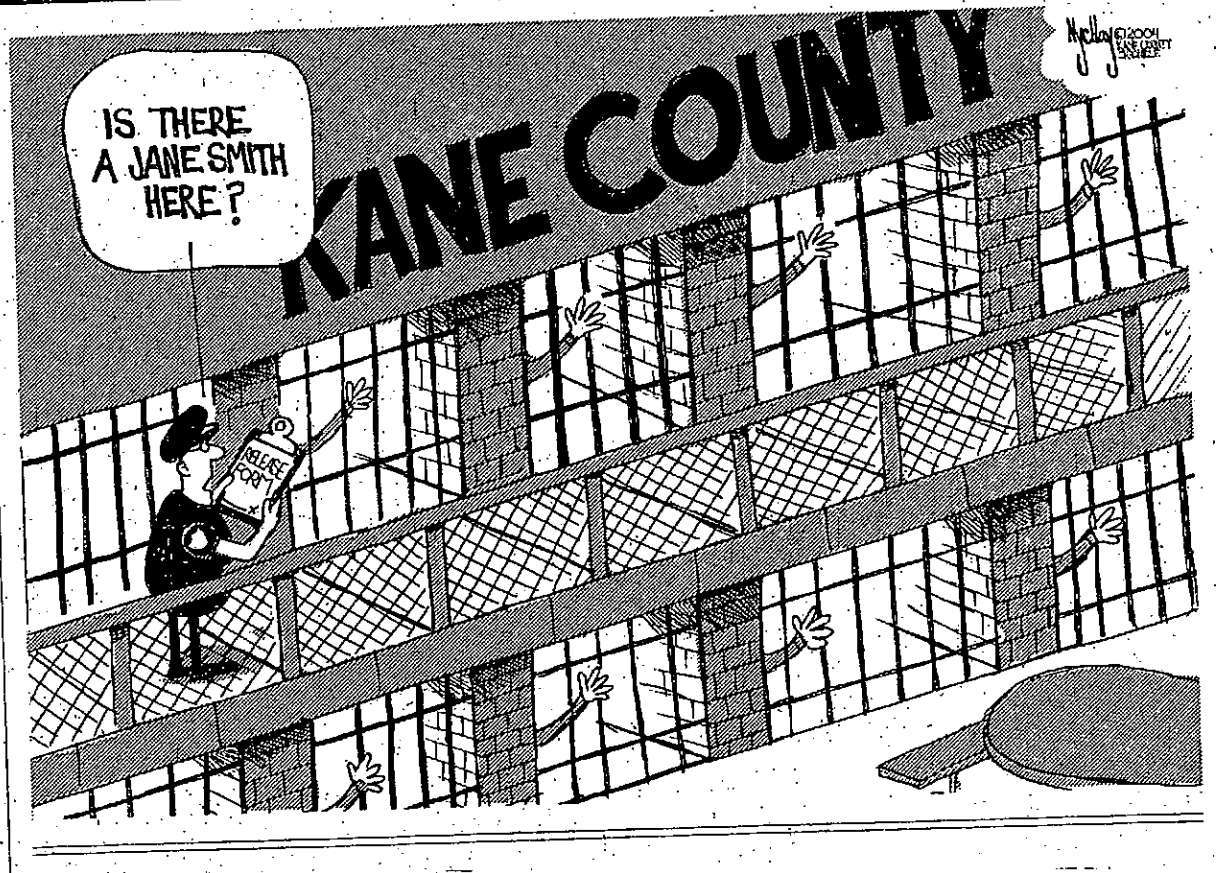
He would spend the rest on terminals for the system at each assessor's office and a new scanning machine.

"That would be very nice, but it's not going to happen," Gurbal said of the integrated system.

Wegman also disagrees with Rage's plan for an entirely new system.

"I'm not going to replace an entire system when we have a new one in place," Wegman said.

2-22-04 Chronicle



# Boil order: Review is on agenda

2-24-04 Beacon News

By Dave Parro
STAFF WRITER

AURORA — A study of the city's water contamination and subsequent boil order will review Aurora's findings to make sure they are complete and stand up to technical scrutiny.

The independent review, to be done by Weston Solutions for around $10,000, will be discussed and voted on today by the City Council. The scope of work will include a review of Fox River and treatment plant water quality data, as well as looking at the operational side of the plant.

Weston will also review and comment on Aurora's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

In addition to the review of city data, Weston Solutions will also try to answer a list of questions submitted by aldermen. Many of them came from constituents, including community groups and organizations and ward committees.

"The questions that have come in from the aldermen tend to be redundant," said Alderman Chris Beykirch, chairman of the City Council Buildings, Grounds and Infrastructure Committee. "The number of questions to answer really aren't all that broad."

Among the most common questions are:

- What was the cause of bacteria contamination?
- Where did the high levels of ammonia in the Fox River come from? Were they natural or the result of illegal dumping?
- How do other water treatment plants, such as the one in Elgin, handle the same contamination challenges? What might they be doing better than Aurora?
- Should Aurora change how it routinely tests water samples? Should the treatment process be altered at any point?
- How do we prevent this from happening again?

Stephen Ryan, senior project manager with Weston Solutions, said the effectiveness of the review will depend largely on how well the city has compiled data. Incomplete records will delay the review, which could be done in as little as 21 days.

Aurora water officials have been compiling data since the boil order was issued Feb. 6 and hope to finish their internal review this week.

Ryan said his company's review will consider mechanical failures at the plant, including the possibility of equipment malfunctions; and whether anything was done different than normal operationally, such as chemicals being added at the wrong time or in insufficient amounts.

2-24-04 Chronicle

# Elburn residents to see more savings on radium removal

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

ELBURN — Residents will see an even lower water rate hike because of the village's ongoing analysis of zeolite filters to remove radium from Elburn's water.

On Monday, trustees agreed to pay up front about $550,000 in construction costs. In doing so, the village will not have to finance the improvements.

The savings could be between $40,000 and $60,000 per year, village officials said.

The savings would be passed on to Elburn residents through smaller water rate hikes.

"I think we did the right thing for Elburn," Village President James Willey said. "There were significant savings."

Removing radium from drinking water is a mandate by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which requires all municipalities to comply with new water quality standards.

Radium is a naturally occurring radioactive material found in most deep wells around northern Illinois.

After considering several methods, the village last month decided to hire Colorado-based Water Remediation Technology to implement a zeolite filtering process.

The cost to the village will be about $1.15 million, down from estimates as high as $9 million for various other radium removal methods.

Last year, Elburn officials seriously considered using a method called ion exchange.

The method would have cost roughly $4.5 million plus another $500,000 in chemical costs to implement.

Residents' water rates will go up to pay for the zeolite method, but village officials have declined to release exact numbers until a contract is worked out with WRT.

Under the contract, the village would pay WRT about 49 cents per 1,000 gallons of water treated.

That is about $97,000 per year based on Elburn's annual water use of 116 million gallons, village officials said.



Willey

WRT's method involves sending water through pipes and filters made of the mineral zeolite. Radium is trapped by the filters.

Elburn's radium level is about 20 picocuries per liter, which is well above the EPA's 5 picocuries per liter limit.

In July 2003, a test run by WRT lowered the village's radium level to less than 1 picocurry per liter.

WRT Vice President Ron Dollar said his company's business is booming now that more communities are aware of the removal process.

"With new technology, most municipalities are very conservative," Dollar said. "A number of people take a wait-and-see attitude."

In 1976, the federal government approved the Safe Drinking Water Act, but radium restrictions did not take effect until 1991 and 1996.

Municipalities technically have been in violation since then, but the EPA has not enforced the regulations.

Also on Monday, village trustees discussed switching from quarterly to monthly water billing.

"(Residents) are asking for monthly billing," Village Administrator David Morrison told trustees.

Making the switch would require a slight rate increase in addition to costs incurred to remove radium, but just how much is uncertain.

"Those costs could be rolled into their bills," Morrison said.

2-24-04 Daily Herald

# N. Aurora approves utility tax

## *Proceeds to help fund street program*

BY DARRYL MELLEMA
*Daily Herald Correspondent*



Dale Berman



Mark Ruby

North Aurora's village board ensured that its road reconstruction program would have full funding when it Monday approved a 1.5 percent tax on village gas, electric and telecommunications utilities.

Gas and electric are currently untaxed. Telecommunications in the village is currently taxed at 0.5 percent and this will be increased to 2 percent. Collection of the tax is to begin immediately and last until April, 2007.

"This (tax) is designed so it can finance our road program and keep it going with other financial resources," Mayor Mark Ruby said. "And it is designed to fade away."

Trustees Max Herwig, John Hansen and Paul Shoemaker joined Ruby in voting for the tax. Mark Guethle and Dale Berman voted against the increase.

Actual impact on each resident was left unknown, partly because area utilities had not responded by Monday to board inquiries about their current revenues, Hansen said. Hansen prepared the figures the board used in making its final decision.

The village projects $280,500 per year in utility tax revenue. The village will also allocate 30 percent of $1 million projected auto mall revenue to street construction. In addition, all revenue generated by the village's 0.5 percent sales tax will be applied to the project. This is estimated to be $396,000 per year.

Put together with motor fuel tax revenues and other funding sources, the village projects that it can now afford street reconstruction plans ranging from $1.4 million to $2.6 million over the next 10 years.

Village engineer Jim Bibby said Monday's action solves the village's longstanding problem in catching up with its rapidly deteriorating streets.

This year's list of 2004 road projects was also approved at Monday's meeting. These projects include Adams Street between Oak Street and John Street, along with the entirety of Lynn Street, Farview Street and Hillside Street.

The list of proposed reconstruction projects increases in coming years under a plan previously approved by the board.

"Without this, we would never catch up," Bibby said. "We have large subdivisions that need to be done in their entirety starting after 2008-09."

As the board sought to solve one of its largest budgetary issues, the village is moving closer to finding a village

See **TAX** on **PAGE 7**

## **Tax:** List of 30 applicants has been narrowed to four people

*Continued from Page 1*

administrator who will handle many budgetary issues in the future.

Ruby said the original list of roughly 30 applicants has been narrowed to four who will receive interviews. The first interview is Thursday, Ruby said, with the fourth on March 3.

"We have some strong candidates and I am encouraged by that," Ruby said.

Ruby said two finalists will return for interviews with the entire village board. He said the board could be presented with a name for approval as the new administrator within one month. "It all takes time," Ruby said. "It's all about how fast we can get back with the finalists and then making the decision."

2-24-04
Chronicle



**Bill Page**

# Politics, pets and subtle threats

Three weeks from today is the primary election, and with it the first stage of this year's political marathon will end. What started as early as last June will be winnowed down to the two major party candidates who'll face each other in the November general election.

There's little mystery who'll be the Democratic candidates, but that's not so on the Republican side. Nowhere is this truer than in the battle for the Republican nomination for Kane County state's attorney.

Although there are four men running for the Republican nomination —: John Barsanti, Tim O'Neil, Mike Leuer and Joe Rago — in reality the contest is between Barsanti and O'Neil. They are the two who've lined up the endorsements, who've raised the money and who have the best organizations. They also are well-respected by people in the criminal justice system and have deep connections to the community. All of which ironically creates a huge problem for many voters.

The dilemma facing Republican voters on March 16 is that both Barsanti and O'Neil are well qualified for the job, and choosing one over the other is extremely difficult. With just a few weeks left before the election, this race has no clear leader and looks to be a nail-biter all the way to the end.

The difference between the two — and there is a difference — is not in qualifications but in how each will run the office. Barsanti and O'Neil have distinctly different management styles and prosecutorial priorities. Each also has his own reorganization plan, so no matter which candidate wins, major changes loom on the horizon for the department.

This is too tough a race to handicap because Barsanti and O'Neil match up so well with qualifications and experience, and either one would make a good state's attorney. My prediction that is the winner is decided by less than 300 votes — and I have no clue which way those votes will fall.

* * *

Under the heading of "I didn't even know it was a problem," comes the news that our state lawmakers have cleared the way for people to set up trust funds for their pets. Now Fido and Spot can be guaranteed their kibble long after you've taken that final walk with the little plastic bag — and presumably your kids now have one more reason to contest your will.

As I said, I never realized this was a problem, but apparently there's just a whole bunch of pet owners who wanted this legislation. And there was absolutely no opposition to the bill either; it sailed through both houses in record time.

It's sure nice to see our elected officials spending their time on pressing issues like this, instead of wasting their days on the state budget, the health-care crisis or underfunded schools. I'm glad they can come together to ensure that Grandma's gerbils will always be well cared for, even if they don't seem as concerned for her grandchildren.

* * *

The effort to pass the school referendum is well under way in Geneva, and with it comes the first of the subtle threats and odd "facts."

There already is a list of programs to be canceled if the referendum doesn't pass, with special education singled out for some reason. What a nice touch — and totally uncalled for. If the referendum is good for the community, then proponents should stick to that positive message.

Threatening to cut programs for the most helpless of the students is no way to build support.

The odd fact being presented is that the present site of Geneva's middle school is "centrally located." This is part of the push to build the second middle school on the same campus, which may or may not be a great idea, but claiming that the far western part of town is "central" stretches credulity.

I'm sure the folks who live east of the river, as used to being ignored by the powers-that-be in Geneva as they are, would disagree with the "centrally located" assessment, as would anyone looking at a map.

Again, a positive message devoid of hyperbole and threats will go a lot farther with voters than what's being put out in Geneva today.

■ *Bill Page lives in St. Charles and writes about local issues on Tuesday and Thursday. Calls and e-mails answered at (630) 584-0809 or wpage@mediawerks.org.*

# Kane closer to higher clerk fee

2-24-04 Chronicle

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Public Service Committee voted Monday to raise Kane County clerk fees, including the cost of certified copies of marriage, birth and death certificates.

Certified copies of vital records currently cost $5. The fee increase would raise the cost of birth and marriage certificates to $11 and death certificates to $13.

The fee for vital records copies includes $2 for the clerk's automation fund.

If approved by the county board, the fee increase would help bring revenue in line with the cost of providing the service.

However, some committee members see the move as another tax increase. John Noverini, R-Carpentersville, said the fee increase is unnecessary because the county ended 2003 with $3 million more than it expected.

Noverini said taxpayers get hit twice, once when they pay their property taxes and again when they pay the fees.

The main reason for the county's higher-than-projected revenues in 2003 came from the plethora of homeowners who refinanced their home mortgages because of low interest rates, County Clerk John Cunningham said.

Jack Cook, R-Elgin, said the county cannot count on "found revenue" in the future.

The fee increase proposal was initiated by Cunningham, who commissioned a study of the fees charged and the work involved in performing the services for which fees are charged.

Issuing certified copies of vital records, such as death, marriage and birth certificates, canceling tax sales and issuing certificates of redemption brought in $361,037 in revenue last year, but cost the county clerk's office in staff time $783,843.

The study found the greatest disparity between the service cost and fee income is in canceling tax sales. The county charges a $3 fee, and the paperwork involved costs the county in staff time $69.31.

2-24-02 Chronicle

# Election system changes might cost up to $5M

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — A special committee will be formed to determine what type of election system to buy and where the money will come from to finance it.

Kane County Clerk John Cunningham said Monday that he expects a revamped election system to cost from $3 million to $5 million.

"I would ask this committee to work with my office to come up with a program we can work with," Cunningham said.

Under the Help America Vote Act, election officials across the country are required to update their systems by November 2006. The update was mandated to prevent the kind of fiasco that happened in Florida during the 2000 presidential election.

In 2000, questions were raised about the accuracy of votes cast, and Al Gore's campaign charged that several votes cast in his favor were not counted. After weeks in the courts, during which the outcome of the presidential election was in question, it was determined that George W. Bush won Florida by just more than 500 votes. The victory in Florida gave Bush the presidency.

The new law does not prohibit the punch-card system, which Kane uses and was the system in Florida that caused so much controversy. However, the HAVA law's requirements make it obsolete and most officials are moving away from the 30-year-old technology.



Cunningham

Cunningham said Kane is the last remaining Chicago-area county to use the punch-card system.

"We have been served very well by the punch cards," Cunningham said. "We are a little behind the collar counties."

One of the problems with HAVA is its uncertainties. For example, Cunningham said no one has provided a definitive answer if electronic voting systems will be required to provide a paper receipt to the voters.

If the law is interpreted to require the paper voting receipt, the electronic system will need printers, Cunningham said.

Under HAVA, Kane will be eligible for $682,560 in federal funds, which will be doled out in proportion to the number of precincts under the clerk's jurisdiction.

Because Congress approved HAVA before the county split four precincts last year, Kane's share will be based on 216 precincts instead of 220.

HAVA also requires election officials to accommodate visually impaired voters by the November 2006 election.

The visual accessibility requirement could be met by a direct recording device or touch screen system. These machines could be used by voters with normal sight and would cost $10,000 to $15,000 per precinct.

Multiple machines would need to be purchased for each precinct to allow more than one person to vote at a time.

Cunningham made his remarks at Monday's Public Service Committee meeting. Chairman Robert McConnaughay, R-Geneva, suggested he make the same presentation March 3 to the Executive Committee.

DeKalb, DuPage, McHenry and Lake counties have converted to optical scan voting systems.

# North Aurora approves 1.5 percent utility tax

2-24-04 Chronicle

## *Money to go for road repairs*

By ERIC SCHELKOPF
Kane County Chronicle

NORTH AURORA — Utility customers will see their bills increase slightly starting in April.

Village President Mark Ruby and trustees on Monday voted 4-2 to approve a 1.5 percent utility tax to help catch up on road repairs.

The utility tax will be in effect until April 2007.

Voting "yes" were Ruby and trustees John Hansen, Paul Shoemaker and Max Herwig. Voting "no" were trustees Dale Berman and Mark Guethle.

Trustee Mike Herlihy was absent.

Ruby had been pushing the utility tax idea as a way to catch up on road repairs. The utility tax is on a resident's telecommunications (telephone), gas and electric bills.

Because the village already collects a .5 percent telecommunications tax, the telecommunications tax will increase to 2 percent.

However, the tax is expected to have a minimal impact on most homeowners. For example, a resident who has a monthly heating bill of $150 would see an additional $2.25 tacked onto their bill.

"I think we are doing the right thing. I think it is a minimum disruption to the community as far as cost," Ruby said.

But Berman and Guethle said residents should have the chance to vote on whether they wanted a utility tax.

Berman said the board also needs to look at other uses for the utility tax, such as paying for a new village complex.

"We have several opportunities in the village that need solutions," Berman said.

Herwig also said the board needs to address other pressing issues such as a new police station and the fact that the Fox Valley Park District in May will end its programming at the village-owned Activity Center.

"I would like to know where the money will come from," Herwig said. "I think this is a good start, but we really need to start planning."

The utility tax is expected to generate $280,500 in 2005 for road projects.

Although the tax will end in April 2007, it will generate $93,500 for fiscal year 2008.

2-24-04 Chicago Tribune

# Search is on for funds to upgrade Kane voting

**By William Presecky**
Tribune staff reporter

Although the November 2006 general election is a long way off, Kane County's chief election official called on county commissioners Monday to begin immediately to respond to a federal mandate to upgrade the voting system with the next two years.

An estimated $683,000 in federal assistance is expected to be available to Kane to help it supplant its current punch-card system with technology such as optical-scan voting, said County Clerk John "Jack" Cunningham. But an additional $2 million to $4 million will be needed to complete the upgrade, he said.

"It's not good news, but it's something we are going to have to do," he said while making a request that a special subcommittee be formed to work with him to assist the change.

"We're a little behind the rest of the collar counties" in complying with the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002, Cunningham told the board's Public Service Committee.

With no apparent source of revenue available to underwrite the cost, Cunningham said, "We should start moving now" to settle on a upgraded system and develop a plan for securing the additional money to pay for it.

Cunningham said legislation is pending that would allow Illinois counties to levy a special property tax to be used solely to cover election costs. Its fate was uncertain, however, he said.

He said he will suggest that the County Board earmark $1 million of a projected $3.5 million budget surplus for 2003 budget to upgrade the voting system.

"We're forced to do it," Cunningham said. "I'd like to start as quickly as possible."

Meanwhile, the Public Service Committee recommended that Cunningham be allowed to increase the fees his office charges.

The aim of the proposed increases, which Cunningham said are projected to raise an additional $250,000 to $300,000 annually, is to bring the fees for marriage licenses and birth certificates, for example, closer to what it costs to issue them.

A marriage license would be increased to $18 from $15, under the proposed fee schedule. A recent fee study calculated that the actual cost to the clerk's office to issue an original marriage license is $19.07.

# Study could reveal future of Teeple Barn

2-20-04 Chronicle

## *Restoration expected to cost $450,000*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Agriculture and architecture history buffs will learn in two months whether the future of Illinois' only 16-sided barn is assured.

Kane County Forest Preserve officials on Thursday established a subcommittee to study the possibility of taking possession of the historic Teeple Barn and then leasing it to the nonprofit AgTech to operate it.

"It gives us a basis for us to know how much (money) we need to raise," said forest preserve President John Hoscheit.

The forest preserve district will not spend money on the project but only serve to hold title to the land. Funds raised will come from private donors, Kane County Farm Bureau Director Steve Arnold said.

However, donors are unwilling to come up with the money unless the barn has a secure future. That is where the forest preserve district comes in.

The Matsushita Electric Corp. of America owns the land at the southeast corner of Randall Road and Interstate 90 where the barn is located. Matsushita is willing to break off the four-acre lot on which the barn is sited and donate it to the district or other nonprofit agency.



**Hoscheit**

At Thursday's Utilization Committee meeting, Arnold presented commissioners with a detailed budget of the building's renovation and operating costs.

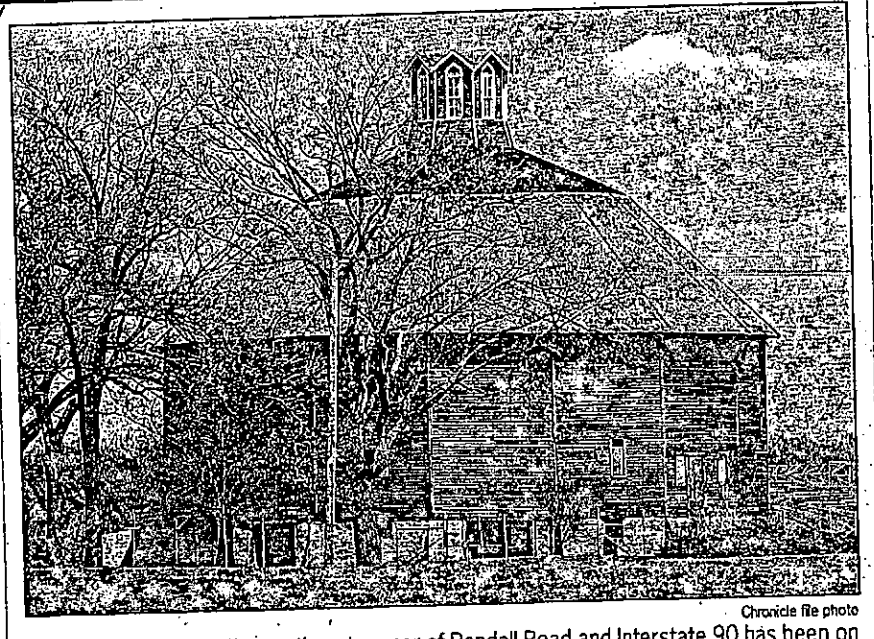
Committee Chairman Jan Carlson, R-Elburn, appointed Dan Walter, R-South Elgin, Ken Griffin, D-Aurora, and himself to the subcommittee that will attempt to negotiate an agreement between AgTech, the farm bureau, Matsushita and the district.

The subcommittee is scheduled to report back in 60 days.

Arnold said AgTech has received a $149,000 matching grant from the National Park Service's Saving America's Treasures Program.

AgTech will receive the money and Matsushita will transfer title to the property only if another $149,000 is raised by 2005.

See BARN, page 2



Chronicle file photo

**The Teeple Barn at** the southeast corner of Randall Road and Interstate 90 has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978. Kane County Forest Preserve officials on Thursday established a subcommittee to study the possibility of taking possession of the barn.

## Barn

Continued from page 1

The budget developed by city of Elgin preservation specialist Sarosh Saher shows that AgTech expects the restoration to cost $450,000, of which $303,967 is actual renovation costs and $150,000 will be health and life safety improvements.

Building costs will be less through in-kind contractor donations and volunteer work.

Operating costs, including a $5,000 annual allocation for painting the barn on a five- to seven-year cycle, will be $10,500, of which $2,000 will be donated by the farm bureau.

The circa 1885 Teeple Barn originally was used for a dairy farm. It has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978.

# Geneva man clears the way

2-20-04 Chronicle

*Forest preserve asks him to stop plowing trail*

By DAN CHANZIT
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — It takes more than a little snowfall to stop David Peterson from peddling his bicycle to work.

The 44-year-old Geneva resident pulls a homemade snowplow behind his bike to ensure his return tip from the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia will be easier.

Peterson, an electrical engineer, built his plow of plywood, steel and wheels. The contraption, which cost about $20, folds up behind the rear wheel of his bicycle.

"It was a simple problem," he said. "We have all these great bike paths. When we get dumped with snow, all of the sudden, you can't use them."

This week, Kane County Forest Preserve officials asked Peterson to stop plowing the path between Geneva and Batavia. They said his plowing is a liability issue.

Peterson scratched his head and wondered why no one has said anything to him until now. He has been plowing the path for the last three winters.

"I wear a bright orange jacket," he said. "If they wanted to catch me, I figured they would have done it before now."

Fellow bikers, cross-country skiers and joggers seem to be applauding his work. Last week, Peterson said one jogger told him where he missed a spot.

"No one has complained to me, and that wasn't even a complaint," Peterson said. "I told the guy that I'd clear the spot I missed on my next pass."

After a heavy snowfall, it takes two or three passes with the plow. One morning this winter, Peterson said it took him nearly three hours to plow the path.

"I left at 6:30 a.m. and got to work at about 9 a.m.," he said.

Some residents who live near the path have helped shovel the highly traveled sections. Peterson appreciates the help. His ride to work is seven miles, two of which are on the bike path.

See PLOW, page 2



Robert Barcroft — Chronicle photo staff

**Kane County Forest Preserve** officials want David Peterson of Geneva to stop plowing the Fox River Trail. Peterson has been clearing a path with a plow pulled behind his bicycle.

## Plow

Continued from page 1

"He tries to follow up after every snowstorm," said Geneva resident Gary Ross, a coworker who also rides a bike to work. "He pulls the plow behind his bicycle. It's just like he's pulling a sled."

### Safety concerns

According to forest preserve counts, about 2.3 million people use the county's 85 miles of bike paths every year. With all that traffic, forest preserve officials said they do not want any trouble.

Officials said they fear for Peterson's safety, even though state law holds path users responsible for their own actions.

"We're not supposed to be liable," forest preserve spokeswoman AnnMarie Fauske said. "But there are people out there who have tried to buck the system."

The logic is the same reason the forest preserve prohibits ice fishing. People have to take responsibility for their actions and use common sense, she said.

"We've tried to warn people," she said. "You have to be careful."

Peterson said his work makes the path safer for everyone. Bikers and joggers stay on the paved parts. Skiers stay on the snowy parts.

Since he started plowing, Peterson said he has noticed sets of tracks are more separated.

"The skiers have thanked me for giving the joggers a place to run," he said.

Forest preserve officials said they appreciate Peterson's work, but they insist that he stop.

"We've thanked him for his willingness to plow," Fauske said. "It's a nice gesture."

Now, Peterson faces a warning ticket or a citation by forest preserve police if he continues, she said.

Fauske welcomed Peterson's volunteerism but suggested other opportunities.

"We have a number of programs for people to get involved with all year round," she said. "There are many volunteer activities."

Peterson said he wants to plow the bike path. He hopes to reach a compromise that will allow him to continue.

He said he suggested that forest preserve officials post signs to let users know that some sections are plowed by volunteers. That way, people will know to look for icy spots.

Peterson said he is willing to sign a waiver to make it clear that he knows he is plowing at his own risk.

"Hopefully we can work something out," he said. "I'm just trying to do something nice."

2-22-04 Beacon News

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Orchard underpass dangerous

What a wonderful new underpass on Orchard Road. It is beautiful, yet due to the city allowing it to be two lanes both ways under the bridge, rather than barricade the outer lane each way, we are going to see a certain death from the road rage you see every day.

Speed limit means nothing here. People will pull out of lane to race ahead of you, just to put on the brakes and force you to stop to let them in. They have been seen to run red lights at Prairie to get ahead of you, nearly causing accidents that at these speeds could be deadly and involve a lot of cars.

I wish to plead with the city to block those lanes to slow the traffic down, prevent accidents, and to eliminate someone getting shot or their car run into from the guy who is so rushed that he has lost his ability to drive with common sense.

Want proof of this tragedy about to happen, drive out there for a look at 7 a.m., noon, or from 4 to 7 p.m. If you are not almost run over or in an accident, or have someone blow their horn at you or flash his lights, then you have missed the fun ... until someone dies or is severely injured.

**Roger D. Light**
*Aurora*

2-21-04 Chronicle

# County approves plan for facility for special-needs children

## *Retreat would be built in Big Rock*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — County officials have approved a concept plan for a residential retreat in Big Rock Township for special-needs children.

Ted McCannon wants to develop 59 acres at the northwest corner of Raymond Road and Dugan Road, of which 43 acres would be devoted to residential use.

McCannon told members of the Development Committee members that his daughter is a special-needs child who attends Little Friends School in Naperville.

His goal is to provide a similar facility on McCannon Farm Acres.

"We feel in some way that we can give back to the community," McCannon said. "These are all special needs children.

The purpose of the farm would be to allow the children "to enjoy the rural atmosphere of Kane County," he said.

McCannon proposes a change in zoning from farming to planned unit development.

The concept plan stage is the first step in the development process.

McCannon will provide more detail in his proposal when it reaches the preliminary plan stage.

McCannon described his plan as being "a facility for recreational and therapeutic programs for people with unique needs."

2-23-04 Beacon news

# City slates meetings on special tax, roads

**By Jan Ramming**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

BATAVIA — The city will host two public meetings this week at City Hall.

At 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, there will be a special City Council meeting with a public hearing regarding the proposed third Tax Increment Financing district for the city.

The district would be established to cover downtown areas not currently within the existing TIF districts. The new district would be set up primarily to promote redevelopment and growth in old industrial sections of the city south of Wilson Street.

Thursday, the Kane County Division of Transportation is having a public information meeting. Residents are invited to review the county's roadway improvements study for Fabyan Parkway from Western Avenue to Kirk Road.

Two meeting times are scheduled: 5:30 to 7 p.m. for residents of areas located west of the Fox River; and 7:30 to 9 p.m. for those east of the river.

Residents are invited to come in at any point during their meeting times to review exhibits and discuss the project with county staff.

Staff members from the Kane County Division of Transportation and their consulting engineering firm will be available to answer questions.

The county is proposing changes to Fabyan to improve safety and traffic flow. One alternative that is being evaluated is to widen Fabyan to provide a center turn lane.

New traffic signals are being proposed for intersections at Van Nortwick Avenue, Allen Drive, Nagel Boulevard and Kingsland Drive.

The county also is proposing to close public access to Fabyan at the intersections of Carriage Drive, Thoria Road, Surrey Road and Heather Lane.

2-23-04 Beacon news

THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

# Farm family's generosity a loving tribute

Much of the McCannon farm in Big Rock Township is likely to be a housing development, but Ted McCannon has other ideas for the 5.45-acre farmstead itself. McCannon proposes to create a new recreational, therapeutic and residential home for special-needs children. The facility would be supported by future private endowments, including one from the McCannon family, together with federal and state funding. Kane County officials have been encouraging about the project, and we add our **THUMBS UP.** It's hard to imagine a more meaningful and generous initiative from a private citizen.

## Child Advocacy Center merits approval

After almost a 10-year effort, and with funding from three grants already lined up, Kane County will be able to build a new Child Advocacy Center in Geneva. A new design by architect Terry Adams has addressed concerns of the Geneva Historic Preservation Commission. The CAC houses offices for state's attorneys who prosecute sexual abuse cases, and is designed to be a comfortable environment for the children who are brought there for interviews. We give our **THUMBS UP** to the plans for this valuable facility, and urge the Geneva City Council to approve the needed zoning.

2-22-04 Beacon News

# Sugar Grove continues to expand

## *Supermarket could be next addition*

**By Linda Girardi**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

SUGAR GROVE — Significant progress in commercial development and plans to upgrade water services are all in this village's future in 2004.



**Sugar Grove Village President Sean Michels**

Construction has started behind Village Hall for Sugar Grove's second deep well, providing residents with quality drinking water.

Village President Sean Michels says the infrastructure improvements are significant.

Not only will the well place Sugar Grove within state Environmental Protection Agency regulations but it will also provide quality drinking water. The ion-exchange system would remove naturally occurring radium from the public water supplies and soften what typically can be hard water.

"This has been part of our master plan for the village's water system," Michels said, adding a $300,000 federal grant through House Speaker Dennis Hastert's office will partially fund the project.

"We will be able to make the improvements without increasing residential water rates," Michels said.

The collection of developer impact fees have also made it possible for the village to make the capital improvement investments, Michels said.

Within the next couple of months, the village is expected to release results of a study evaluating the village's water needs.

Sugar Grove is also in the process of updating its comprehensive land use plan.

"It's really the backbone for future planning," Michels said.

Michels said the village is also hoping for passage of a federal transportation bill that would provide funding to widen Route 47.

"In anticipating the amount of development coming in and around Sugar Grove, we're devoting considerable time on a transportation plan so we have major collector roads to handle the traffic," he said.

And Sugar Grove will continue to see new residential growth.

Settler's Ridge, a 1,200-acre parcel located south of the village and on the east side of Route 47, is in the development phase. On the west side of Route 47 and south of Prairie Street, developers have acquired 900 acres for another new subdivision.

Michels said the village has an estimated 2,500 acres of residential development in the planning stage, which at total build-out will mean an additional 5,000 homes in the community.

Sugar Grove is awaiting certification of a 2003 special census placing the village's population at 6,000.

"We've heard from commercial developers that with the quality of the new homes, the village can anticipate significant retail in the near future," Michels said.

To this end, plans for a Jewel supermarket were to come before the village's Plan Commission this month. The grocery chain has targeted the northeast corner of Galena Boulevard and Route 47.

"We're excited about this. Residents we hear from really want to be able to shop locally," Michels said.

2-23-04, Daily Herald

# Kane board candidates split on impact fee plan

By Lisa Smith
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Most of the Republican candidates for seats on the Kane County Board agree with the current board's assertion that making developers fund road projects is a good idea.

What they can't agree on is how to do that.

Mark Davoust and Arney Silvestri, who are vying to represent the portion of St. Charles and Geneva townships that make up the 14th District, said the fee structure approved by the county board in January punishes the Tri-Cities because developers would pay more to build there than in Aurora or Elgin, for example.

The disparity results from a complicated formula that takes into account road usage and location, distance traveled and development cost.

"It creates competition between communities," said Silvestri, a custom home builder who lives in St. Charles. "That's not good for development. We're all in Kane County together here."

A disparity might be inevitable regardless of what formula is used, suggested Davoust, vice president of Brasel Products, a cohesive gauze manufacturing company based in Batavia.

"I would have liked to have seen it come out so the Tri-Cities didn't quite carry as much of the brunt of it," said Davoust, who lives in St. Charles Township. "But even if we were able to devise a more equitable scheme, that doesn't mean (the fees) won't be higher in the Tri-Cities than other areas."

Davoust suggested perhaps more research could have been done to minimize the disparity.

"It may have needed a little more work done with a focus on trying to make it a little more equitable," he said. "You have to draw a line somewhere."

But Davoust also acknowledged that he has not done enough research to suggest a viable alternative to the plan, which Tri-Cities mayors have threatened to challenge in court.

Silvestri criticized how county officials divided land based on planning areas that were not intended to serve as the basis for applying transportation fees.

He suggested road-specific divisions so that, for example, Randall Road developers would be charged the same amount throughout the Fox Valley because that particular corridor is prime real estate.

"They (county board members) need to go back and look at the application of the formula," Silvestri said.

Candidates for District 10, which includes much of Batavia Township, were divided on the issue.

Both Tom Van Cleave, president of the Batavia school board, and Anthony Cvek, legislative liaison for the Batavia Chamber of Commerce, criticized the fee structure, while Joseph Ferrone, transportation manager at a Lombard trucking company, supports it.

Ferrone said it might slow down commercial growth, which he views as a good thing.

"If they (businesses) don't have the money or the impact fees, they can go somewhere else," Ferrone said.

But Van Cleave called on the board to revisit the formula used to develop the impact fee.

"It's just flat out unfair," he said. "I still don't have an understanding on why they made it so different from community to community."

Cvek brought the issue before the Batavia chamber, which passed a resolution opposing the impact fee.

"I think the ordinance that you've seen approved sets the precedent for bad public policy-making," Cvek said.

Incumbent county board member Jack Cook, who represents northeastern Elgin in District 20, voted with the majority to approve the new fee structure.

He said charging developers keeps the burden off taxpayers.

"It's better for the developers to pay, or they'll just take all their money and run," Cook said.

Cook said construction of new houses will have a significant impact on area roads so "it's almost essential" that developers contribute to maintaining them.

Cook's challenger in the primary race, Larry Wegman of Elgin, could not be reached for comment Friday.

But in a previous interview he said county and municipal officials should continue evaluating the system.

• *Daily Herald staff writers Gala Pierce and Tom O'Konowitz contributed to this report.*

# Rauschenberger's earned our vote

To the Editor:

In any election, it's good to have a choice. This year, there are some good people running for U.S. Senator for the State of Illinois.

Among them are millionaires and business people with no legislative experience; well meaning and used to controlling their own destiny. It gives them a visible level of self-confidence.

There's also one proven Republican legislator who has conquered the challenges of understanding complex public issues, negotiating positive solutions and leading legislators to agreement. His confidence comes from years of serving an entire state's destiny.

Like the other candidates, Steve Rauschenberger speaks with conviction and confidence. But unlike the other candidates, he also speaks with a vital combination of intense legislative experience, seasoned wisdom and hard-earned respect for his proven track record as our State Senator.

Steve has delivered what others can only hope to deliver. Steve has already earned the widespread support of other Illinois lawmakers who know the demands of leadership and have seen his wise and reasoned action firsthand. His endorsements from other knowledgeable public servants continue to accumulate. As an elected county official myself, I have grown increasingly impressed with his viable solutions to complex problems.

Perhaps one of his "endorsements" should be that George Ryan banned him from the governor's mansion because he challenged the governor's misuse of our tax dollars. Today, that stands as quite a compliment.

Steve has unmatched experience as Chairman of the Appropriations Committee for Illinois' multi-billion dollar budget. We need a true conservative with his incomparable budget savvy in Washington.

At such a crucial time for our nation, we can't afford to rely on inexperience and promises to battle the demands and complexities of Washington.

There will be many expensive ads and commercials that hope to convince us they have what Steve Rauschenberger has already demonstrated. Steve's popularity comes from his hard work, his integrity and his skills in leading our state, not from his checkbook.

Steve has the legislative experience, maturity and balance that will serve us well in Washington. He's battle-tested and he's earned widespread respect for his experienced, insightful leadership.

He's also earned our vote.

We need Steve Rauschenberger as our next U.S. Senator.

**Dan Walter**
Kane County Board Representative
South Elgin

2-23-04
Chronicle

# Gold star for understanding FPAs

Anyone who actually read the story out of the Development Committee on Feb. 18 about "facility planning areas" all the way through gets a gold star.

A municipality's FPA is the chunk of land it controls to provide drinking water and sewer services to its citizens ... yawn, right?

Those residents who shudder at the thought of every major roadway in the county being congested, of another 300,000 residents in Kane County and the idea of citizens trying to pay to keep the criminal justice system, the school systems and every other system in fairly decent working order would do well to pay attention.

Eighty percent of the expected 300,000 new residents coming to the county in the next 30 years will reside in the municipalities. To accommodate all these new folks, most of the towns and cities will have to expand their FPAs.

The Development Committee recommends for or against the requests, as does the Northeast Illinois Planning Commission. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency makes the final decision.

The FPA requests from Hampshire, Huntley, Pingree Grove and Elgin last week comprised 20,000 acres and was the largest single request ever in Kane County. The committee approved of most of it and recommended against some of it. It seemed no one was happy when it was all over.

If the IEPA agrees, the action by the committee just opened the doors to 100,000 new residents into those four communities.

Watch for more FPA stories coming in the future.

***

## Kane County Notebook

Judge Michael Colwell's concerns about the historic Third Street courthouse are well taken. The old building is showing its age and the mechanical areas of the building have some catching up to do.

Colwell, like many involved in the judiciary, would like to see all the courts concentrated at the Judicial Center, but that's not likely to happen any time soon.

So, it means the old courthouse needs to be kept up.

When the courthouse opened in the 1892, it was the pride of Geneva and the whole county. Folks don't get all misty eyed over public buildings the way they once did.

Up near the top of the four-story atrium is one of the best-kept secrets in county government. There are hand-painted murals depicting scenes from all the county's townships.

The county board has debated back and forth whether to spend money on refurbishing the murals. They are a nice little art treasure and a slice of history, but no one has decided if they're worth spending six-figures on, especially when toilets are falling off walls with jurors sitting on them.

***

Jack Cook, R-Elgin, recently was presented with a 15-year Service Award by the Illinois Association of Park Districts and Forest Preserves.

Cook became forest preserve president in 1993, where he served for eight years.

Cook was president at the time the 1999 $70 million open-space referendum passed by a two-to-one margin, which has led to the district adding more than 4,000 acres to the system. Land that was purchased met the requirements of preserving native wetlands, woodlands and prairies, expansion of existing preserves, flood control protection and the acquisition of new preserves.

Cook also is the chairman of the Illinois Prairie Trail Authority, a group charged with oversight to the Prairie Trails in Kane, DuPage, Will, Kendall and McHenry counties.

***

Speaking of the $70 million bond referendum, the bonds will be refinanced at a lower interest rate.

District President John Hoscheit said the refinancing will save $1.77 million.

"It does not provide any money for the district, but (it will mean) a reduced levy to the taxpayers of Kane County," Hoscheit said.

2-21-04 Daily Herald

# Technology at issue in circuit clerk race

By Lisa Smith
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*



Sue Norris



Deborah Seyller

Walk into the Kane County circuit clerk's office and you can instantly view court records with the touch of a button.

Deborah Seyller, whose job it is as the elected clerk of the 16th judicial circuit to collect and maintain court records, wants the technology to go much further. She envisions a "paperless court system" where attorneys will be able to view documents from remote locations — which she claims would save both time and money.

"It'll increase accuracy," said Seyller, of Plato Township. "It should speed up the courtroom and increase efficiency."

Seyller, who is running for re-election after seven years in office, also has a plan in place to better integrate information with police to eliminate redundancies in the filing system, and she wants to offer more court services online, such as the ability to pay traffic tickets.

Seyller does not have a timeline to get the system up and running.

But her challenger, Sue Norris, supervisor of the Aurora and Elgin branch courts and the state's attorney's liaison to the clerk's office, accuses Seyller of pursuing technological improvements at the expense of her duties.

"Technology is a great tool, but it is not the end-all, be-all," said Norris, an Aurora resident. "My opponent is high into technology, but in the pursuit of being the first paperless court system, we're losing sight of the basic responsibilities of the office."

Norris, who has worked in the court system for 36 years, said she often finds errors in records and required information missing from files.

"I'm spending more of my day fielding problems with record-keeping and other basic issues," she said. "They're just not being done."

But Seyller said the office had a 99.1 percent accuracy rate in 2003.

"That's not to say we couldn't improve," she said.

Seyller also pointed to a recent thank-you note she received from the Department of Justice, which had requested stacks of records from the office, commending her and her 108 employees for their prompt and courteous service.

In Norris' eyes, an entirely electronic court system could present too much room for errors or tampering.

"I'm not willing to say this is something we should seek as vigorously as we are," she said.

But Seyller said it has much support in the Kane County legal community.

"Judges are behind the electronic court system. They requested it," Seyller said. "Local prosecutors and assistants are looking forward to it."

2-21-04 Daily Herald

# Man told to stop clearing bike trail

By Garrett Ordower
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

By day, Dave Peterson works with diagnostic multiplexers and beam shakers to maintain the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory's antiproton source.

But at dawn and dusk the Geneva resident drags a homemade snowplow behind his daughter's Pacific Electra mountain bike, clearing a 16-inch wide section of the Fox River Trail as he rides to and from work in Batavia.

Because he rides at a time when few are watching, he's become something of a local legend the last two winters, a Bigfoot.

"It's one of those weird things that has touched a nerve with a lot of people," Peterson said.

A whole lot. In fact, many of the path's regulars have come to expect it to be clear — and that has put Peterson's plowing on hiatus.

The county has asked him to stop because if there's an expectation that the trail will be plowed, there's a greater chance for litigation, said Kane County Forest Preserve District operations supervisor Pat McQuilkin.

"If a person falls, you are more liable than if you had never plowed at all. Crazy world," wrote AnnMarie Fauske, the district's community affairs director, in response to a letter to Peterson. "Unfortunately, the times we are in allow for a much more litigious environment than common sense would dictate."

Peterson started commuting to work on the trail nearly 20 years ago from his Geneva home.

His bicycling saves Peterson 3,500 miles of driving a year. But it's more than that. He's seen large wading birds like the Egret and Great blue heron return to the river's edge. He's also come close to getting run over by a deer, had a goose fly into the side of his head and seen the temperatures dip to 12 below.

Still, he hasn't missed a day of biking in 2½ years, Peterson said.

"Riding to work is much more enjoyable than (driving) on Kirk

See **PLOW** on **PAGE 5**



**Continued f**



# Plow: Man says he'll stop

*Continued from Page 1*

Road. It's so much more peaceful to do that," he said.

Peterson got the idea of a bike plow this winter when snow forced him to ride along Route 25 and "scurry like a scared rabbit."

He started with a baby-stroller-like push plow, but that proved too labor intensive so he eventually worked out the riding plow.

Its V-shaped body rolls on three wheels while a scraper gets to the snow below it, clearing most of the path.

Although compelled to work on the bike plow for his own use, Peterson also wanted to find a way he could help the public good.

Peterson regularly sees people using the trail, such as factory workers riding on the path from Aurora to their jobs in the Tri-Cities.

"There are people out there who need to use sidewalks and bike paths, people who have no alternatives," Peterson said.

Peterson recently noticed a strange wheel track in the snow, and finally figured it was made by a homeless person pushing a shopping cart.

"There is something I can do here," Peterson said. "I can use my skills as an engineer to make life easier for the little old ladies who walk on the path."

But the forest preserve worries that if they take a wrong step and fall, those little old ladies might decide to sue.

McQuilkin noticed the path being cleared during his trail inspections and told his workers to look out for whomever was doing it.

When two maintenance workers saw Peterson this week, they told him he needed to stop.

A shocked Peterson wrote a detailed letter to forest preserve president and county board member John Hoscheit, explaining the importance of the trail for commuters and his situation.

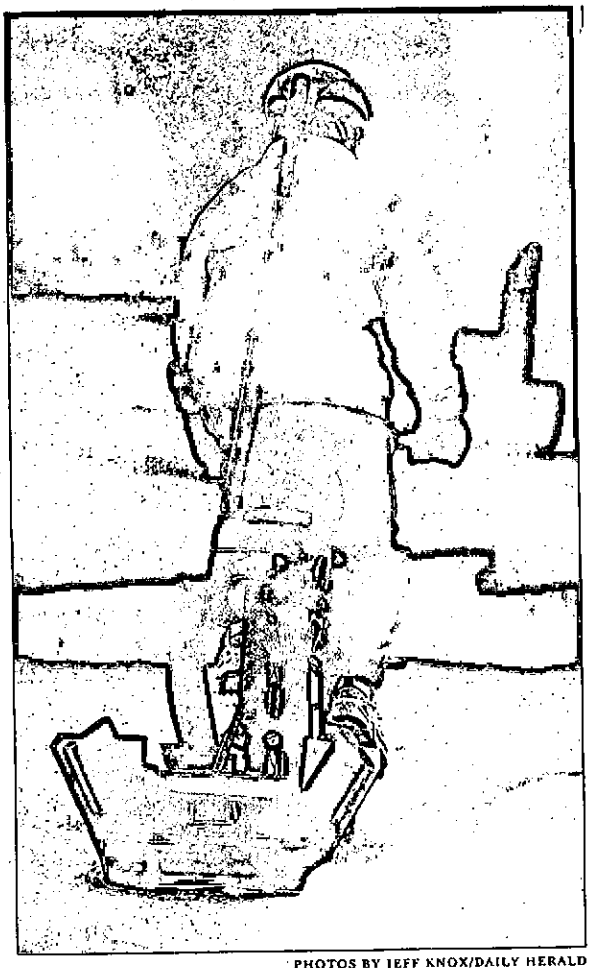
The forest preserve quickly replied that, while a "wonderful gesture ... your act of kindness may also be open to legal issues should someone fall after your care."

Lawsuits along trails are not unheard of.

The district was sued by Janet Mull after a September 1999 fall on a rut in the Great Western Trail. Though she won at trial, the verdict was reversed the state's Second District Appellate Court in March 2003, largely because of a state statue that says "neither a local public entity or public employee is liable for an injury caused by a condition of ... any hiking, riding, fishing or hunting trail."

For now, Peterson said he'll have to quit plowing.

"It's disappointing," Peterson said. "I think the county has knocked down the hornet's nest. I'm not sure what's going to happen."



PHOTOS BY JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

**Dave Peterson, an engineer at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, custom-built his bike-mounted snowplow to help himself and others navigate the snowy Fox River Trail in winter.**

2-22-04 Beacon News

# YWCA extends reach into community

AURORA — The YWCA of Aurora was founded in 1893 and became a charter member of the YWCA of the USA in 1906.

Betty Reed is executive director. Terri Hoehne is president of the Board of Directors, which governs the not-for-profit corporation and social service agency.

Its first facility was built at 31 W. Downer Place in 1911. The agency moved to its current facility at 201 N. River St. in 1985.

The Fitness Center and Lydia and Malcolm Jones Child Care Center were added in 1992 and 1997, respectively.

The YWCA of Aurora houses a full-service health and fitness facility, with fitness wing, indoor pool and a number of all-purpose activity rooms.

The other wing is the Child Care Center, with a capacity for 83 children ages 2 to 12.

The YWCA also provides on-site and off-site after-school programming in Aurora area elementary schools and maintains the Grand Boulevard Youth Center on the near East Side.

In 2003, the YWCA opened a new Youth Drop-In Center at the Jericho Circle Housing Development on the West Side of Aurora. The YWCA provides health and fitness, aquatic, day care, and youth activities programs and is sponsor of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Annual special events include the YWCA Week Without Violence, the new Juke Box Friday Night and the YWCA Women of Distinction Recognition Luncheon.



**The 2003 YWCA Women of Distinction, from left, Mary Lou England, nominated by the Kane County Health Department; Kay Hatcher, nominated by Senior Services Associates; and Dr. Diane Homan, nominated by Rush-Copley Medical Center.**

The YWCA is a United Way agency.

In April, the YWCA USA will be introducing a new branding strategy and logo that will be implemented by all of the local affiliated YWCAs. This came out of the reorganization of the national YWCA, and local affiliates now have more regional and grass-roots representation. YWCA Aurora is now a member of the new regional configuration, the Great Lakes Alliance of YWCAs.

A new event, A Picnic for Peace, was held in Philips Park last year and was attended by more than 800 people. It was the collaborative effort of more than 20 area government, school and social service agencies.

The 2004 event again will feature the picnic and should bring greater non-violence and drug-free community educational opportunities.

In partnership with West Aurora schools, the YWCA developed programs at Nicholson, Hall and McCleery schools that build on innovative ways of reaching and engaging students after school hours to extend their learning.

On the East Side, the YWCA has been working with the School District at Hermes, Bardwell and Rollins schools.

The YWCA also began offering joint programs with its historic counterpart, the YMCA, in 2003.

The 17th annual Women of Distinction Recognition Luncheon, co-hosted by Old Second National Bank and Rush-Copley Medical Center, will be held May 6 at Long Island Sound. Tickets are $45, and reservations may be made through April 30 by calling the YWCA at (630) 896-8588.

Nomination forms are available at the YWCA for:

- Women of Distinction nominees (Deadline March 22).
- YWCA Equity Award for self-nominated for-profit and not-for-profit businesses and organizations that have worked to advance women and minorities in the workplace (Deadline March 22).
- YWCA-Aurora University Rising Star professional enrichment scholarship for students 21 or older (Deadline March 15).

The YWCA is conducting an 18-month Social Entrepreneur Project, partially funded by the Illinois Facilities Fund, to review its current program and to explore innovative and entrepreneurial programming ideas and venues for the future of the YWCA Aurora.

The YWCA of Aurora's mission speaks to the "empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of racism." It is a membership organization, and all of the YWCA programs are developed and conducted with the mission in mind and with the intent of serving the needs of its members.

The organization stresses quality, nondiscrimination and affordability when it provides programs.

2-21-04 Chronicle

## Election checklist

### Candidates

**Auditor**
(i) William Keck (R)

**Circuit Clerk**
Sue Norris (R)
(i) Deborah Seyller (R)

**Coroner**
Stan Hickrod (R)
(i) Charles West (R)
Bob Tibalti (R)
Robert Moore (D)

**County board chairman**
Karen McConnaughay (R)
Thomas W. Meadath (D)

**Recorder**
Dan Gurbal (R)
(i) Sandy Wegman (R)
Michael Lowery (D)
Don Rage (R)

**State's attorney**
John Barsanti (R)
Michael Leuer (R)
Tim O'Neil (R)
Joseph Rago (R)
Renee Robinson (D)

**County board, District 2**
(i) Mary Richards (R)
Roland Schuetz (D)

**County board, District 4**
(i) Penelope Cameron (R)
Bonnie Lee Kunkel (D)
Frank Craig (D)

**County board, District 6**
(i) Paul Greviskes (D)

**County board, District 8**
(i) Rudolf Neuberger (D)

**County board, District 10**
Howard Katz (D)
Anthony Cvek (R)
Joseph Ferrone (R)
Thomas Van Cleave (R)

**County board, District 12**
(i) John Hoschelt (R)

**County board, District 14**
Elaine Stein (D)
Mark Davoust (R)
James Neuman (R)
Arney Silvestri (R)

**County board, District 16**
Michael Kenyon (R)

**County board, District 18**
(i) Donald Wolfe (R)

**County board, District 20**
(i) Jack Cook (R)
Larry Wegman (R)
Marlena Fox (D)

**County board, District 22**
(i) Jackie Tredup (R)
Edward Rzeppa (D)

**County board, District 24**
(i) Margaret Sclafaro (R)
Hollie Kissane (D)

**County board, District 26**
(i) Jan Carlson (R)

(i) — incumbent
(D) — Democrat
(R) Republican

VOTE Q+A

2-22-04 Chronicle

# County seeks input on center-turn lane for Fabyan

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

Kane County transportation officials will seek public opinion on the potential for a center-turn lane on Fabyan Parkway between Kirk Road and Western Avenue.

The public is invited to a two-part meeting Thursday at the Batavia Government Center, 100 N. Island Ave.

The first part of the meeting begins at 5:30 p.m., during which officials will solicit opinions on the roadway west of the Fox River. The second part begins at 7:30 p.m., during which opinions of Fabyan Parkway east of the river will be taken.

Opinions gathered will be included in a feasibility study on safety improvements for Fabyan Parkway between Kirk Road and Western Avenue.

That stretch has the most access points of any major county highway, Transportation Director Paul Rogowski said.

A center-turn lane would make left turns into the driveways and cross streets safer and eliminate backups on Fabyan Parkway.

Rogowski said there is no money allocated for design or construction.

Other options for the road are closing certain side streets or limiting drivers to right-in, right-out turns.

The intersection of Fabyan Parkway and VanNortwick Avenue was the scene of a fatal accident several years ago that involved a driver attempting a left turn.

### Public meeting

- Residents are invited to a two-part meeting on a proposed center-turn lane on Fabyan Parkway from Kirk Road to Western Avenue. The meeting is **Thursday** at the Batavia Government Center, 100 N. Island Ave.
- **5:30 p.m.** to discuss roadway **west of Fox River.**
- **7:30 p.m.** to discuss roadway **east of Fox River.**

2-22-04 Chicago Tribune



# Open land funds face budget ax

## Nature program would lose grants

By Michael Hawthorne and Trine Tsouderos
Tribune staff reporters

Conservationists and outdoors enthusiasts are vowing to fight Gov. Rod Blagojevich's proposal to eliminate state grants that help buy land for new playgrounds, soccer fields and ball diamonds.

The last remnants of the state's natural heritage also would take a hit in Blagojevich's latest spending plan, the advocates say.

To help balance the budget, Blagojevich wants to eliminate money to preserve endangered patches of prairies, woodlands and wetlands. About 50 field biologists and other state employees who watch over natural areas would lose their jobs.

In his budget speech last week, Blagojevich said he wants the programs to take a one-year "holiday," which would save about $30 million. But conservationists and park district officials say the budget cuts would be a major setback in the state's efforts to provide open space and protect natural areas.

"This is an incredibly shortsighted decision," said Stephen Packard, Chicago region director of the Audubon Society. "Who is going to be there now if somebody drives an off-road vehicle through a nature preserve or a developer tries to mark plus-300-year-old trees for cutting?"

Blagojevich said the cuts reflect the state's woeful financial condition. Faced with a $1.7 billion deficit for the budget year that begins July 1, he said the decision is an example of his efforts to change a political culture in Springfield that assumes government programs are safe from scrutiny.

"This is $30 million we can invest in health care, or $30 million we can spend on schools," Blagojevich said Fri-

PLEASE SEE LANDS, PAGE 6

# LANDS: At least 50 staffers may lose jobs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

day at a meeting with the Tribune editorial board. "Just because things have been done a certain way doesn't necessarily mean that's the right way."

Blagojevich wants to tap funds for state grants that local communities match with their own money to buy land and develop parks. More than $197 million has been doled out in the last two decades through the program, which since the early 1990s has been financed by a cut of the state tax on home sales.

Less than a month ago, the governor boasted in a press release that the latest round of grants would enable park districts to acquire another 1,000 acres. The projects range from $1.1 million for the Chicago Park District to buy an acre and a half at Sangamon and Adams Streets for a softball diamond and playground, to $20,100 for a new playground in Albany, a village along the Mississippi River north of the Quad Cities.

Those grants will be spent. But the wish lists of park officials across the state may have to be stashed away for a year.

"It's an extreme disappointment," said Ted Flickinger, president and CEO of the Illinois Association of Park Districts. "We want people to have a good quality of life, and parks are a big part of that."

During his 2002 campaign for governor, Blagojevich lamented that Illinois ranked 46th among the states in the amount of preserved open space.

"We need to act aggressively to make sure that future generations of residents across Illinois will be able to enjoy the beauty of nature and recreational opportunities without having to drive far away to enjoy natural resources in our state," he said in a pre-election interview for the park association's newsletter.

More alarming to conservationists is Blagojevich's proposal to eliminate funding for the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, a state panel that in the last 40 years has protected about 85,000 acres in 93 counties.

The commission, a bipartisan advisory group appointed by the governor, estimates that a quarter of Illinois' endangered animals and plants live and grow in nature preserves. Many of the tracts are privately owned areas that have been given state protection from development.

"When a piece of property comes on the market, you have to act soon," said Joyce O'Keefe, associate director of the Openlands Project, a nonprofit preservation group.

Among other things, a lack of state funding could delay completion of a handful of preservation projects in the works at the Cook County Forest Preserve District, including the Wentworth Prairie in Calumet City and the Spring Lake Greenway in Barrington Hills. Blagojevich's spending plan also would cut the jobs of state biologists and support staff who help protect endangered species and natural areas.

When an invasive plant, insect or animal invades a nature preserve, the biologists typically are called out to fight them, said Packard, who once oversaw preserves in northeastern Illinois. Those people likely will have to find new jobs if the General Assembly endorses the governor's idea.

"They can't afford to take a holiday, as the governor describes it," said Jonathan Goldman, executive director of the Illinois Environmental Council. "It could take years to rebuild these programs."

During the early years of the programs, funding battles were routine because advocates had to vie with other interests seeking a chunk of the state's general fund. Securing half of the take from the state's real estate transfer tax, which charges a dollar for every $1,000 in home value, made it easier for park districts to plan future projects.

With the state facing another budget deficit next year, some lawmakers say they may not be able to save the programs this time.

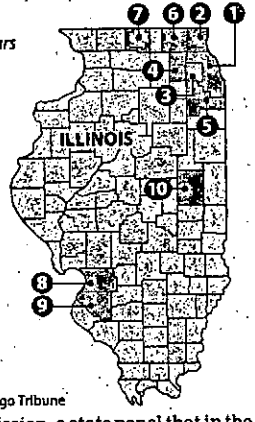
"I anticipate widespread opposition from across the state," said state Sen. Jeffrey Schoenberg (D-Evanston). "But local park districts have to recognize that when the governor says we are nearly broke, he's not talking about somebody else."

## Governor proposes halting open space program

To help balance the state's budget, Gov. Rod Blagojevich has proposed taking a break from a program that provides counties grants to buy land for public parks and open areas. Since the program began in 1986, the state has secured 8,631 acres of open space.

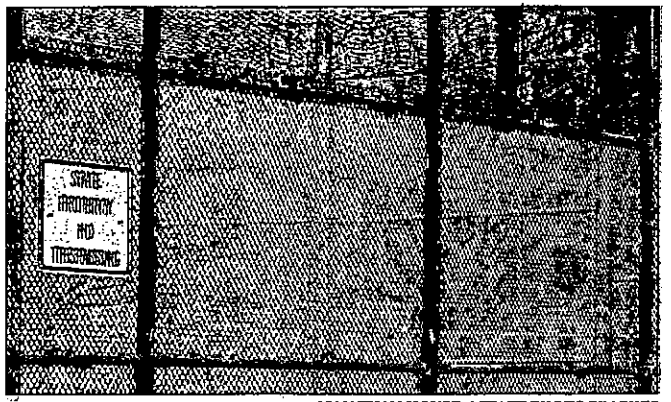
**COUNTIES WITH MOST GRANTS**
*Totals for 1986 to 2004, in millions of dollars*

| RANK/COUNTY | GRANT |
|---|---|
| 1 Cook | $62.3 |
| 2 Lake | $17.0 |
| 3 DuPage | $15.3 |
| 4 Kane | $14.3 |
| 5 Will | $12.5 |
| 6 McHenry | $9.9 |
| 7 Winnebago | $5.6 |
| 8 Madison | $4.8 |
| 9 St. Clair | $3.4 |
| 10 Champaign | $2.8 |




Source: Illinois Association of Park Districts · Chicago Tribune

2-21-04 Beacon News




JONATHAN HOUSE / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Barbed wire and tall fence surround the rear entrance of the Illinois Youth Center-St. Charles, which Gov. Rod Blagojevich would close at the end of this year in St. Charles.**

# Judge decries plan to close youth center in St.Charles

**By Brian Shields**
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON NEWS

ST. CHARLES TOWNSHIP — The judge who heads the 16th Circuit Court's Juvenile Division is decrying Gov. Rod Blagojevich's decision to close the Illinois Youth Center-St. Charles.

Earlier this week, Blagojevich said he would close the IYC-St. Charles, among other facilities, in order to save $11.7 million for the cash-strapped state. The Youth Center, on Route 38 west of Randall Road, will close Dec. 31.

Department of Corrections spokesman Sergio Molina said Friday the more than 400 youths who are either permanently housed at the 100-year-old St. Charles facility or are there temporarily before being placed in other youth centers will be relocated.

The department plans to open another 180 beds at its 2-year-old Kewanee facility. Other juvenile detention centers are based in Joliet, Harrisburg, Chicago, Murphysboro and Warrenville.

"There are a number of different facilities where they can be placed, and we will evaluate where we can place them," Molina said.

❖ *Turn to* **CENTER, A2**

## CENTER

*From Page A1*

Judge Thomas Mueller, who presides over the 16th Circuit Juvenile Division, said he thinks closing St. Charles is a mistake which will increase the hardships on inmates' families, the court system and the Department of Corrections.

Mueller said area families will have to travel an increased distance to visit inmates if St. Charles is closed. Many young offenders from Cook, DuPage and Kane counties end up being placed at St. Charles, at most an hour's drive to get to necessary hearings and evaluations by the court.

If St. Charles is closed, the Corrections Department will have to spend more to transport juveniles longer distances, he said.

The next closest facility, in Joliet, has fewer than 100 beds and is reserved for some of most violent offenders; Chicago is minimum security; Kewanee is 135 miles southwest of Chicago; and both the Murphysboro juvenile boot camp and IYC-Harrisburg are about 350 miles due south.

"I didn't even think they could be talking about closing IYC-St. Charles because it's the major facility for juvenile corrections," Mueller said of the all-male facility. "Every boy is sent to St. Charles first, where the diagnostic evaluation is done, before they are permanently placed."

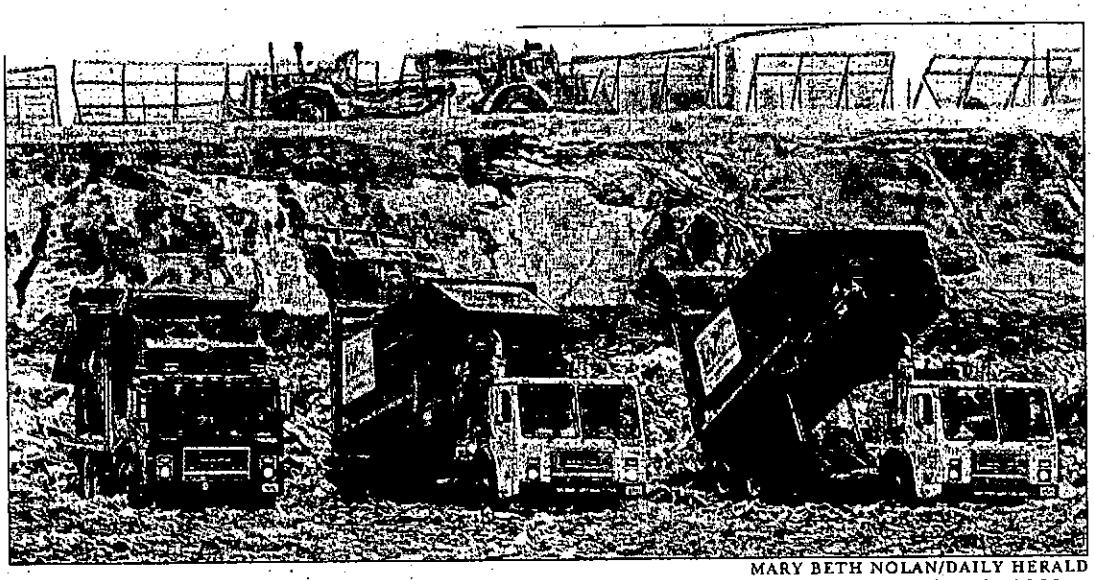
"If the purpose here is to save money, I have a hard time understanding how retrofitting other buildings and adding on to them to move the kids will save the state money," Mueller said.

Molina said it is too early to speculate what the state might do with the 125-acre St. Charles complex, which will celebrate its 100th anniversary in December before closing. It is possible the site will be offered for sale to an agency which wants to run a similar program, he said, but it is not known if it ever will be used again by the Department of Corrections.

Molina said the agency will attempt to fit most of the more than 300 displaced employees from St. Charles into an anticipated 850 Corrections vacancies throughout the system.

He said there has been a "misunderstanding that all of the employees will lose their jobs."

Most of the employees are covered by union contracts, and the Corrections Department has job vacancies at other facilities, Molina said.



MARY BETH NOLAN/DAILY HERALD

More than 1.1 million tons of garbage were disposed of at Settler's Hill landfill in Geneva in 2003. The facility is scheduled to close in December 2006. 2-21-04 Daily Herald

# Why your trash bills will keep climbing

## As end nears for local landfills, more and more suburbs are getting out of the trash business, leaving no place for your garbage to go

BY PATRICK WALDRON
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Every week it's the same tired task.

You gather up the garbage bags from around the house and dump them into a bigger can for easy deposit at the end of the driveway.

The next morning a truck comes by, empties that can and drives away.

Where it goes, to many of us, isn't a concern.

"It's an interesting thing," said Bill Plunkett, spokesman for Texas-based Waste Management Inc. "The public takes for granted the infrastructure and services available to move its waste."

That could be because garbage typically isn't a major expense in the average household. In Wheaton it costs $24.35 per month to use a 98-gallon garbage can on wheels. In Schaumburg, garbage pickup costs you $13.79 per week. In Batavia, it'll cost you $5.50 for five 15-gallon bags.

**Page 8**

• Settler's Hill environmental management director's next task will be to design 10 holes for golfers on the landfill.

But those costs are slowly on the rise, many industry officials say, in part because relatively low-cost landfill space close to Chicago area homes is rapidly disappearing.

In fact, a recent Illinois Environmental Protection Agency study says the metropolitan area has an average of five years of capacity left — the same area that produces more than two-thirds of the state's 15.4 million tons of garbage a year.

As the local landfills fill up, private garbage companies are attempting to replace them with transfer stations, smaller centralized distribution centers where neighborhood garbage trucks cart trash for eventual transportation to distant landfills. Dozens already exist in the area.

But the extra costs of long-hauling trash to various sites, trips that use more gas and more paid hours, will eventually creep into the price of a home's trash collection.

"The farther we need to go,

See **TRASH** on **PAGE 8**

Small French Console
..... from $299



heart chest pain, rash, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, constipation, gas, upset stomach, heartburn, fatigue, chest pain, flu, muscle/joint pain or weakness, muscle cramp, localized pain, headache, dizziness, sleep disturbance, depression, and/or nervousness, urinary problems, common cold, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, upper respiratory infection, and vision disturbance. In addition, the following side effects have been reported in less than 1% of PRAVACHOL-treated patients in long-term trials: certain skin problems such as itching, rash, hives, dryness, and hair loss, loss of sexual function or drive, decreased



FM

# From garbage trucks to golf

## *County's environmental manager to oversee course construction at Settler's Hill*

By Patrick Waldron
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Legendary golf pro Jack Nicklaus and Kane County's environmental management director Tim Harbaugh don't have much in common.

Then again, they both have dangled their feet in the world of golf course design.

Of course while Nicklaus draws up designs for the next major PGA Tour stop, Harbaugh has more modest, par-3 aspirations.

His big project is to supervise the design and construction of 10 new holes on top of the soon-to-close Settler's Hill landfill he has overseen for the past decade. "Obviously that's going to be fun," he said, grinning at the prospect.

It's also going to be a change from what Harbaugh has been doing.

He was hired 10 years ago to run the county-owned landfill in Geneva.

But today, garbage makes up less than 20 percent of his job description.

Away from Settler's Hill, Harbaugh has spent years developing and updating the county's storm water management plan, which aids in development of flood-safe subdivisions, oversees a dam removal project, is rebuilding a thousand car public parking lot and consulted on a now-abandoned proposal for a garbage transfer station near South Elgin.

Designing a golf course is a long way from hanging off the side of a garbage truck, the place Harbaugh started his professional career 18 years ago.

The 39-year-old St. Charles man went to the University of Illinois to study agricultural engineering but just before graduation in 1986, he met an on-campus recruiter from the garbage hauling company BFI Inc.

Just like that he was in the garbage business, a field he really has never left.

"I was sent to Houston," Harbaugh said. "The second day I was in a the back of a garbage truck."

But driving trucks and picking up trash bags wasn't his trade.

Most of Harbaugh's jobs had him running a half dozen landfills in Houston, San Antonio and New Orleans.

It's a business full of intricate planning and stringent environmental regulations. And unlike what you see in Hollywood, the trucks rolling in and out everyday come in with few surprises.

But on occasion, Harbaugh said, the circumstances do come together to give everyone something to talk about.

In December 1987 while working in New Orleans, Harbaugh said a fire destroyed a warehouse and the company decided to throw away everything that had been stored inside it. A while later, in rolled truckload full of liquor — stacked in cases and unopened.

"We would have been very careful with all that," Harbaugh said, remember how his colleagues talked about "gently" dumping the load.

But local laws dictated that containers full of liquids couldn't be dumped at a landfill.

"They had to go someplace else," he said, still looking disappointed.

By 1993, Harbaugh was back in the Midwest consulting on a landfill project in Peoria.

That's when he learned of the job at the county's department of environmental management.

For the first few years it was all solid waste, what the experts call garbage.

Then the docket started to expand and Harbaugh built up a team that included the new storm water management division, plus recycling and landfills groups.

"We all have our pieces," Harbaugh said.



MARY BETH NOLAN/DAILY HERALD

**In the next few years, Kane County's environmental management director Tim Harbaugh will oversee the transformation of Settler's Hill landfill into Geneva's newest nine holes of golf.**

"We are getting out of the garbage business." **Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy**

# Trash: Landfills started in I

Continued from Page 1

the more it costs," said Randy Salmaich, a district manager for Arizona-based Allied Waste Industries Inc.

Today the average cost of hauling garbage is about $35 a ton, Plunkett said. But in some areas where landfills are scant like New York City, that figure is double, he said.

"The Chicago region has enjoyed remarkably low rates for the service it is receiving despite the fact capacity is diminishing and prices are rising," Plunkett said.

Local competition among nearly a dozen haulers, including Waste Management Inc., Allied Waste Industries, and Oynx Waste Services, has kept the prices relatively consistent. That same competition has made predicting future prices difficult.

In many cases, three or more companies will go after contracts in the same city. The competition isn't keeping prices from increasing, but officials say it is minimizing those raises.

Fox River Grove residents had to take a 3 percent increase when the city renegotiated in 2003 with Waste Management. In Wheaton, the news was worse when garbage prices went up 25 percent last year.

Jumps like those, experts predict, likely will be a matter of course in the coming years depending on market conditions.

## Long hauls, big bills

Unlike a generation ago, trash these days doesn't go to a local city dump a few miles away.

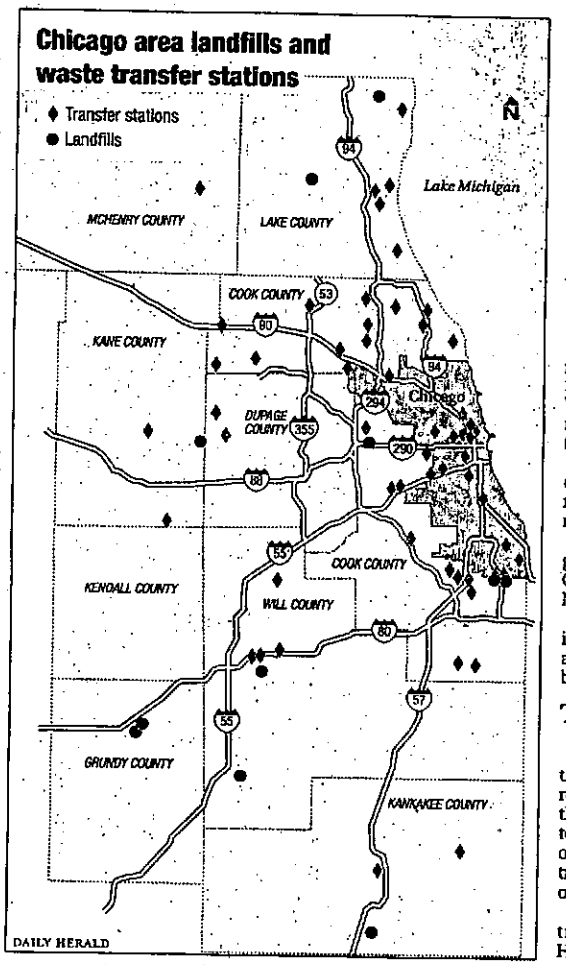
And more and more, it isn't even going to a regional landfill located down the road.

Take Settler's Hill landfill in Geneva. It took in nearly 4.3 million cubic yards of garbage in 2002, with more than half of that coming from other counties, said Tim Harbaugh, Kane County's director of environmental management. At the same time, 40 percent of Kane County's garbage went out of the county.

For the next three years, larger percentages of Kane County garbage will go to Settler's Hill as the facility reaches its capacity and closes.

But after that, the county's garbage — and the companies that pick it up — will have to find someplace else to dump.

Officials say those places will be larger dumps like the Livingston Landfill in downstate Pontiac, which is more than three times the size of Settler's Hill.




Just as the closure of local landfills forced the city of Chicago and Cook County to use landfills to the west or out of state, Kane and eventually other collar counties will have to look another way as well.

Fifteen years ago, Illinois had more than 100 operating landfills, said Dave Walters, a waste management manager with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

By the end of 2002, that number dropped to 51.

Those remaining landfills now have 13 years of capacity remaining on average, and dumps in the Chicago region — which includes Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, Kendall, Grundy and Kankakee counties — have five years of capacity, according to a landfill study released by the state EPA in late December.

The capacity number is generated by taking the total volume of garbage being produced each year and dividing it by the remaining landfill space.

Plus, the number of operating landfills in that Chicago region has dropped to 11. And five of those will close by 2005, state figures show.

That means the area's 11 million tons of annual garbage soon will have to go somewhere else.

The state EPA's most recent report says 74 percent of the region's trash went to four local landfills — Settler's Hill in Geneva, the Onyx landfill in Zion, the EnvironTech landfill in Morris and the Countryside landfill in Grayslake.

Settler's Hill is set to close in 2006, when half the region's active landfills will be closed. EnvironTech, Countryside and Onyx have at least nine years left.

But since it takes three to five years to build and open a new landfill, establishing new dumps in the Chicago area before existing capacity runs



The pending closure of Settler's Hill landfill in Geneva in 2006 and other area landfills is forcing garbage haulers to spend more money to send trash farther away.

MARY BETH NOLAN/DAILY HERALD

# Kane County in 1960s

out is unlikely, the report says. Plus, because of public concerns, finding an acceptable site for the project would be difficult at best.

DuPage County's last landfill closed in 1999. McHenry County does not have a landfill. Cook County has only one long-term landfill left in its borders.

The region's only new landfill opened in Joliet last month but is accepting trash solely from Will County.

Kane County has been home to large landfills since the early 1960s when most of the areas garbage went to the Elgin Landfill, the Tri-City Landfill and Woodland Landfill. All three are now closed, as is Midway Landfill, located next to Settler's Hill.

After Settler's Hill closes, county leaders say there will not be a new local dump to replace it.

"We are getting out of the garbage business," Kane County Board Chairman Mike McCoy said.

Instead, Kane County is looking toward transfer stations, just as other collar counties have before it.

## The next city dump

With a population of more than 8 million in the Chicago region generating 67 percent of the state's garbage, millions of tons of trash are being sent out of the area by way of nearly 60 transfer stations and thousands of trucks.

Kane County is home to three transfer stations today, and Harbaugh says leaders are encouraging more as the best method to keep costs down.

Without cheap access to nearby landfills, competition among transfer stations and the private companies that operate them is the only way to slow price increases, county officials say.

According to the Illinois EPA report, the Chicago region had 59 active transfer stations moving 5.7 million tons of garbage in 2002. By comparison, Settler's Hill Landfill accepted 1.3 million tons of garbage in 2002.

For example, if Onyx Waste Services had a transfer station and Waste Management did not, that could mean higher prices for Waste Management because of larger transportation expenses.

If one company had to raise rates to cover the increases, that could drive customers away.

"If they want to double their prices while the other doesn't they are going to lose," Harbaugh said.

That means more transfer stations in the suburbs. Today, Cook has 43 such stations, with Will and Lake counties being home to four each and McHenry County one.

But building and running transfer stations represents yet more costs.

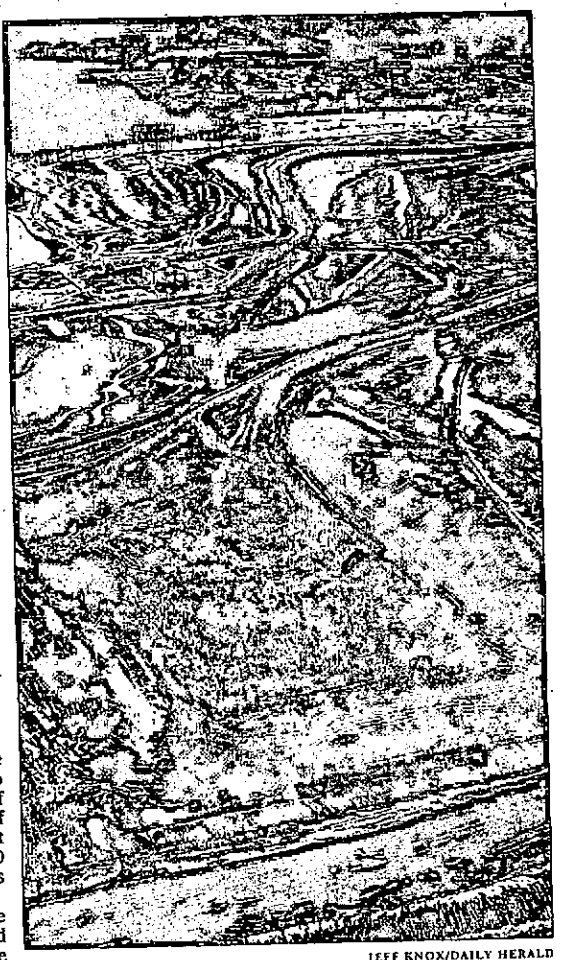
And getting a transfer station sited and built is arguably more difficult than a landfill.

Last year resident opposition derailed a plan to build a transfer station near South Elgin, and just this month the DuPage County board bowed to complaints against a transfer station in West Chicago.

Unlike landfills, haulers want transfer stations in centralized and overdeveloped areas near major roads. Landfills are typically much larger and built in less developed areas.

But even if enough transfer stations are approved and competition remains healthy, prices will rise.

"Sooner or later they are going to raise their rates," Harbaugh said. "It's not going to be seen in 2007, but I do think you are going to see it over time."



JEFF KNOX/DAILY HERALD

**The Settler's Hill Landfill in Geneva, one of dozen landfills left in the Chicago area, will close in 2006. According to the state, the region has about five years landfill capacity left although it produces more than two-thirds of the state's garbage.**







# Three seek GOP nomination for recorder

## Daniel J. Gurbal

• 53 years old

• 901 Longmeadow Drive, Geneva

• Occupation/employer: CEO, manager, Gurbal's Pro Search Inc., Geneva

• Education: Graduate, East Aurora High School 1968; Waubonsee Community College, various non-degree classes in business, real estate law and electronics.



Gurbal

• Residence in district: Born in Aurora, have lived in Geneva-St.Charles for 30 years

• Previous elected positions: none

• Community involvement: I am a member of St. Peter Catholic Church, Geneva; Knights of Columbus Council 2191; past president, Geneva JCs; charter member, Geneva VFW.

1. A growing population would continue to be served by adequate, accurate and time-effective recording. Additional fees should not be needed as the fees charged have never been out of line with the industry needs; although the service in recent times has been less than what is expected.

2. The preservation of historically accurate records is important. While many of today's questions of land use, division, size and restrictions are often related to what happened years ago. The importance of accurate and complete records of today's transactions will be just as important if not more important to the future.

3. I would work toward having functioning systems that work together in all three areas, recording, storage and retrieval, as the top priority. The current storage and retrieval system, which has been used for the past 12 years, is a shining example of state of the art computerization. It was built with the needs of the people who would input to it, as well as those who would retrieve information. The current recording system however has limited functionality, flexibility or adaptability to the rest of systems (employee or customer) of the office. Combined with the non-verification of document information being inputted; the return of documents the day after recording and scanning; (if there is a scanning error on a signature page or any other page, it is lost to history because it is out of the office before the error will be found) the integrity of the office, both currently and historically is being endangered.

4. I have had no experience with the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meeting Act and have no opinion regarding them at this time.

## Donald J. Rage

• 46 years old

• 65 Katrina Lane, Sleepy Hollow

• Occupation/employer: Owner/president, Rage Management, Inc.

• Education: Loyola University, DePaul University, Mundelein College, real estate courses and continuing education for salesman and broker certification



Rage

• Residence in the district: 18 years

• Previous elected positions: Kane County Board, precinct committeeman

• Community involvement: Member, St. Catherine of Sienna Church; PTO president, Sleepy Hollow Elementary School; parent computer aide, Sleepy Hollow School; chairman, Boy Scouts Three Rivers Council; sports coach, various Dundee Park District sports teams; volunteer, Dundee Township Historical Society; former member Kane County Board; Dundee Township Republican Party chairman; member Kane County Board of Review for property tax assessments.

1. The recorder's office is a public service office. The documents that are recorded in this office are the property of the people who pay to have their documents recorded. We should do everything possible to make it easier for the people who want to view or copy these documents at the lowest possible cost. I would explore putting these documents on the Internet to allow the public access from their homes, business, government buildings or libraries. You can charge a minimal fee for these services and still cover the cost of running the office. The federal courts allow you to view bankruptcy files at 7 cents per page. I would implement a similar program for the people of Kane County.

Will more money be needed? Absolutely not. When I served on the Kane County Board, the recorder had to report to the Public Service Committee, of which I was a member. I questioned the current and past recorders' plan for this money and nothing has been done. As of Dec. 31, 2002, there is $1.7 million in the recorder's automation fund with no plan on how to spend this money.

No funding sources are needed.

2. Keeping up with the technology. Kane County is faced with a continual growth explosion. Transportation and jail issues.

Technology will be the easiest to address. The recorder's office is the only office I have seen in my 17 years in government that makes a profit. We not only will be able to stay on top of technology, we will be able to create systems that will benefit the residents of Kane County.

Transportation already is addressed through the GIS charge that the recorder's office charges for each document that is recorded. This can be expanded to give residents access to traffic jams, road construction or other issues that affect residents while using the county roads.

At this time, I do not think the recorder's office can support the jail problem.

3. I will find a way to use the $1.7 million that currently sits in the recorder's automation fund to reduce the taxes every property owner in Kane County has to pay. I have worked on this on the county board level and will be able to do the same in this office.

The recorder's office will become a user-friendly office. You will be able to access the office through the Internet. Property owners will receive the deeds to their home returned within one week of recording.

I will explore the possibility of using senior citizens to work part-time in the office so they can afford their high cost prescriptions and taxes.

4. These rules, like any other rule imposed by government, are the minimum. When you build your house or do an addition, you must follow the code. That is the minimum requirement you must meet.

Government is the people. Those who serve are only there for a short time. As much information as possible must be shared with the public.

The only time the public should not have access is issues that involve individual privacy, employee discipline, litigation or other sensitive issues that could jeopardize an individual's privacy rights.

### Kane County Recorder of Deeds

Dan Gurbal of Geneva, Donald J. Rage of Sleepy Hollow and incumbent Sandy Wegman of Elgin seek the Republican nomination for Kane County Recorder. Michael Lowery of North Aurora is unopposed for the Democratic nomination.

The questions

1. As the county's population continues to grow, how will you serve new residents? Will more money be needed? If so, what funding sources would you consider?
2. Other than growth, what are the most pressing issues facing Kane County? How will you address them?
3. What measurable goals will you set to be accomplished in your term?
4. The state of Illinois provides basic rules that govern how meetings can be conducted and what information can be made available to the public. These rules are contained in the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act. Do you believe these acts should be viewed as the minimum that must be done or that maximum that must be done?

## Sandy Wegman

• 60 years old

• 38 River Bluff Road, Elgin

• Occupation/employer: Recorder, Kane County

• Education: Chancellor's Certificate in comprehensive public administration, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

• Residence in district: Have lived in Kane County since 1980.



Wegman

• Previous elected positions: Gail Borden Public Library trustee, second six-year term.

• Community involvement: Former Elgin Rotarian, NOSEE Unity Day volunteer, Grant Park Neighborhood Assn. Unity Day volunteer, docent at Gifford Park Historical Housewalk.

1. Because the duty of the recorder's office is to maintain the land records for the county, the office is constantly upgrading and implementing new hardware and software to better serve all of the citizens of Kane County. During the past three years, the recorder's office has managed an unprecedented volume of documents. In fiscal 2000, the office recorded 90,000 documents. In fiscal 2003, the office recorded 223,000 documents. The budget for the recorder's office is just under $900,000, and the revenue generated by the office and returned to the county is just under $6 million.

The recorder's office has recently implemented a new computerized cashiering system, and tied it to our records storage system, replacing the old manual cash registers. This allows us to instantly access information that had to be manually researched before this. This new cashiering system also allows us to mail back documents in 12 business days. However, a copy of the recorded document is available immediately. Additionally, this system expedites our county functions.

For the past three years, the recorder's office not only has stayed within budget, but actually returned money to the county. The Legislature also has designed an automation fund specifically for the automation of the recorder's office. Through proper planning and budgeting, the recorder is able to upgrade and implement new hardware and software to meet the growing needs of Kane County without dependence upon the county general funds. Therefore, the needs of the office should be met with the available funding source.

2. As the county continues to predict a tight fiscal picture, it is important to continue to establish a working budget and stay within it. While the county has difficulty meeting the needs of those offices which have life safety issues, the recorder's office has no such life-safety issues but rather manages public records.

3. Allowing the public access to records over the Internet.

Replacing our antiquated scanning system with a faster, more reliable one.

Implementing a new, state-of-the-art data storage system which is faster, more reliable and more capable than we have ever had.

4. I believe that these acts should be viewed as the maximum that must be done. The public has the right to know how its money is being spent and what actions are being taken on its behalf. As a trustee for the Gail Borden Public Library, I have demonstrated that I believe that the people's business should be conducted in view of the people. As recorder, I have on several occasions been contacted by members of the media seeking information that is contained in the public records. On each occasion, either I or, at my direction, a member of my staff have provided the information without the red tape of a FOIA request.

# State grant to aid Fabyan garage preservation efforts

By Rita Hoover
Staff writer

2-19-04
Republican

The Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois announced recently that it has awarded a $5,000 Endangered Building Grant to the Friends of Fabyan preservation group to assist the effort to save the Fabyan garage, one of the last original buildings on the Fabyan estate, now owned by the Kane County Forest Preserve District.

The preservation council, which also has nominated the garage for its annual Ten Most Endangered Historic Places Program, issued a press release Feb. 12 announcing the grant.

"It's an important part of that site and I'm glad that it got the grant," said Jennifer Fisher, the council's director of preservation.

Darlene Larson, a member of Friends of Fabyan, said, "We are thrilled to get this grant. It gives us the support we need for the project."

Larson said her group has received letters of support from the historical societies of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia, as well as the Geneva Garden Club and Garfield Farm Museum.

## How to help

To send pledges to help save the Fabyan garage or for more information, write to Friends of Fabyan, P.O. Box 801, Geneva, IL 60134, or call 232-2378.

Keith Coryell, executive director of the Geneva History Center, said the garage "poses an interesting question as to whether it should be saved, but when viewed within the framework of the Fabyan complex, it certainly would be a shame to lose it." Coryell said the estate has already lost most of its original buildings.

The Kane County Forest Preserve District, which owns about 245 acres of the estate of Col. George Fabyan and his wife, Nelle, is considering demolishing all or part of the garage, built in 1912, located on Route 31 in Geneva, just north of Fabyan Parkway. The building once housed George Fabyan's automobile collection and provided chauffeurs quarters on the second floor. A combination workshop and pigeon coop is attached at the east end of the building.

In January, the Forest Preserve District Board gave the Friends of Fabyan until May to secure funds and apply for grants to pay for the building's restoration. An engineering firm hired by the board estimated the cost of restoration at more than $500,000, but Larson said that estimate is probably higher than necessary. The preservation group plans to get its own estimate, she said.

According to its Web site, the Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois is considered the state's leading voice for historic preservation and has 2,000 members statewide. Each year, the council brings attention to the plight of historic landmarks by compiling a Ten Most Endangered Historic Places Program, and the Fabyan Garage is one of 35 historic places nominated for consideration. The list will be announced in March, said Fisher.

2-19-04 Daily Herald

# St. Charles objects to closing youth center

By Lisa Smith
*Daily Herald Staff Writer*

Still reeling from the loss of more than 1,000 jobs in the past two years, local officials were stunned to learn Wednesday of Gov. Rod Blagojevich's plans to close one of the biggest employers in St. Charles — the Illinois Youth Center.

Losing the detention center, one of the top 10 employers in St. Charles, would be another blow to the city, which in the past two years also has seen General Mills and Arthur Andersen leave town.

Those two businesses together laid off nearly 800 workers in 2002, and cutbacks in other local businesses resulted in job losses for about 200 others that year.

"That will hit our economy,"

See **CLOSE** on **PAGE 11**



# Close: Land estimated to be worth $10 million

*Continued from Page 1*

said St. Charles Mayor Sue Klinkhamer. "It wasn't something I anticipated."

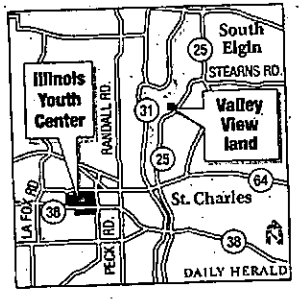
State Sen. Chris Lauzen, an Aurora Republican whose district includes St. Charles, called it "a terrible idea."

Neither Lauzen nor Rep. Tim Schmitz, a Batavia Republican, had heard of the plans until Wednesday.

"Why is it that these decisions are made in secret?" Lauzen asked.

By closing the Illinois Youth Center in St. Charles and other older prisons and moving inmates to other state facilities, the state can save $50 million, Blagojevich told lawmakers while outlining his budget proposal in Springfield Wednesday.

"We have old prisons in Illinois that are simply too costly to operate," Blagojevich said. "We have new facilities sitting vacant. Prisons ought to be built or operated when you need them to house inmates — not because it's the only thing people are left to rely on when it comes to economic development."




But a spokesman for union employees at the corrections center said Blagojevich's suggestion to transfer the 432 St. Charles inmates to the Kewanee facility 130 miles away — where only 146 beds are available — "doesn't make much sense."

"Something's not adding up," said Anders Lindall, a spokesman for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees council 31, which represents 325 of the youth center's 400 full-time employees.

The workers' contracts provide for job transfers if the facility does close, Lindall said.

But, he added, "We certainly don't want to see it come to that. We are absolutely opposed to closing St. Charles."

About 180 workers lost their jobs when then-Gov. George Ryan closed the Illinois Youth Center at Valley View two years ago to save the state an estimated $12.4 million.

Blagojevich also mentioned that facility during his address, saying the state should sell that 40-acre property in addition to closing the St. Charles center, a 100-year-old facility on 125 acres on Route 38 west of Randall Road, and downstate Vandalia Correctional Center.

The St. Charles property could be worth at least $10 million, said Bill Harrison, managing broker at Kettley and Co. Realtors in St. Charles, calling the figure a conservative estimate.

"It could be double or several times that amount," he said.

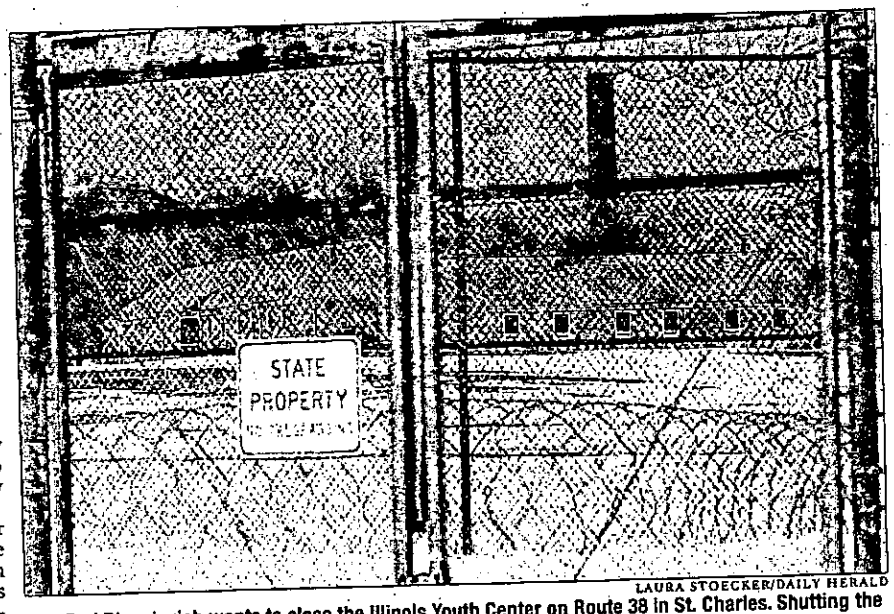
The smaller Valley View facility could be worth closer to $1 million, Harrison estimated.

Blagojevich did not suggest a timeline for closing the facilities.

The closest state juvenile detention centers still in operation include an all-female, 86-inmate capacity building in Warrenville, and a coed, 130-inmate facility on the west side of Chicago.

More than half the St. Charles inmates are from Chicago and the collar counties, Lindall said.

• *Daily Herald staff writer Leslie Hague contributed to this report.*




LAURA STOECKER/DAILY HERALD

**Gov. Rod Blagojevich wants to close the Illinois Youth Center on Route 38 in St. Charles. Shutting the 100-year-old facility and other prisons could save the state $50 million, he said Wednesday.**

# Forest preserve has its eye on youth center

2-19-04 Chronicle

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Gov. Rod Blagojevich's proposal to sell the shuttered Illinois Youth Center-Valley View property has Kane County Forest Preserve officials interested.

Two years ago, when then-Gov. George Ryan closed the Valley View facility, forest preserve President John Hoscheit said the district would be interested in buying its 40 acres.



Hoscheit

Hoscheit confirmed his interest Wednesday.

"If in fact the state is willing to sell it, we'd be interested," Hoscheit said.

The property is adjacent to the Tekakwitha Woods Forest Preserve, contiguous to the bike path and boasts frontage on the Fox River, attributes that make the property attractive to the district, he said.

Blagojevich's proposal came with little detail, such as a price or when the property would be put on the market.

"We haven't actually pursued the purchase. We haven't had any specific discussions," Hoscheit said. "We'd have to talk about price."

The property is in Hoscheit's district. He said residents will be affected whatever happens to the property, which is in what essentially is a residential neighborhood.

"We'd have to evaluate it from a zoning perspective," Hoscheit said.

Some funds remain from the $70 million open space referendum approved in 1999, Hoscheit said.

The Valley View youth home was built to house 228 juveniles, and its facilities still exist.

2-19-04 Chronicle

# Proposal includes shuttering St. Charles youth center

By HEATH HIXSON
Kane County Chronicle

SPRINGFIELD — Gov. Rod Blagojevich on Wednesday proposed shuttering the Illinois Youth Center-St. Charles to help plug a looming $1.7 billion state budget deficit.

Blagojevich rolled out the cost-cutting measure during his annual budget address to state lawmakers. He proposed a $43.5 billion operations budget plan that contains cuts and state agency consolidations.

See CENTER, page 6

## Center

Continued from page 1

The youth center proposal is part of a savings plan to shed the state's corrections system of older facilities. The inmates would be sent to a facility in Kewanee. About 306 employee positions are expected to be affected, state officials said.

The move surprised area state lawmakers who questioned why the facility would be shuttered and said they are concerned about the impact on employees.

A union official said the proposal does not make financial sense, and the union would fight to keep the facility open.

Blagojevich said the facility's closing and property sale, along with selling the Illinois Youth Center-Valley View property — Gov. George Ryan closed the jail in 2002 — and closing a downstate adult jail would save $50 million.

"We have old prisons in Illinois that are simply too costly to operate," Blagojevich told lawmakers. "We have new facilities sitting vacant.

"Prisons ought to be built or operated when you need them to house inmates, not because it is the only thing people are left to rely on when it comes to economic development."

The St. Charles youth center was opened in 1904 and is a general medium-security facility for juvenile males. Its capacity is 318, but the average daily population at the facility is 435 inmates, according to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

If lawmakers approve the proposal, the facility would close Dec. 31. Employees likely would be eligible for more than 800 positions expected to become vacant next year, said Sergio Molina, Department of Corrections spokesman.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 31, the union that represents employees at the youth facility, will fight the proposed closure, said Anders Lindall, union spokesman.

"We are certainly opposed to the plan," Lindall said. "We believe that any way you look at it, it does not make sense. You are talking about a facility that is already holding a third more youth inmates than its capacity."

Lindall said the proposal to shutter the facility would cause overcrowding at Kewanee, eliminate hundreds of jobs in central Kane County and force the parents of inmates to travel further to visit their children. Nearly 50 percent are from the Chicago area, he said.

Molina said the state plans to increase capacity at Kewanee by about 180 in the coming year. He said a combination of initiatives to lower the inmate population and inmates leaving the juvenile system would help capacity.

State Sen. Chris Lauzen, R-Aurora, said he would push to keep the facility open. He questioned how Blagojevich could say he would not balance the budget on the backs of workers but then propose shuttering the youth jail.

"I am distressed by that. I know that St. Charles property is valuable, but there are 327 full-time employees there," Lauzen said. "I do know what back room these decisions come out of. But they are certainly insensitive to the 327 families that will be affected. I don't believe you are going to save money, certainly not in the short term by relocating."

Rep. Tim Schmitz, R-Batavia, said that when IYC-Valley View was closed, corrections officials said the St. Charles facility was part of the state's long-term plans.

"I am actually very shocked because when (Valley View) closed two years ago, my next question was, what are our plans for St. Charles?" Schmitz said. "I think it is going to be a blow to the economy of the Tri-Cities."

Molina said the proposal was largely due to the long-term costs that would be needed to keep the facility open.

"Obviously, it was a difficult decision to make," he said. "But what we did was we took a look at all our facilities. What we did is that we looked at the capital expenditures that we will have to make at the facilities."

Lawmakers now will consider the governor's budget proposal.

2-20-04 Beacon News

# Kane seeks ideas for forest preserve

BEACON NEWS STAFF

BATAVIA — The Kane County Forest Preserve District will hold a public informational meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. March 11, at the Batavia Public Library, 10 S. Batavia Ave.

Officials will present the master plan for the Dick Young/Nelson Lake Forest Preserve in Batavia and Blackberry Townships. Forest Preserve developers want to hear from people about what they want developed in the preserve.

Oral and written comments and questions will be accepted by officials.

For directions on the meeting location, please call the Forest Preserve District at (630) 232-5980.

2-20-04 Beacon News

## Electionwatch

DuPage County State's Attorney Joseph Birkett endorsed **John Barsanti** in the race for the Republican nomination for Kane County State's Attorney in the March 16 primary.

Birkett said he recognizes in Barsanti the skills needed to take charge of Kane County's top law enforcement job.

*Local candidates are invited to submit items about endorsements, fund-raisers, debates, appearances or other campaign activities to Election Watch. Mail items to: Election Watch, The Beacon News, 101 S. River St., Aurora 60506. Fax (630) 844-1043. Or e-mail beaconourtowns@scn1.com*

# Joseph Birkett backs Barsanti

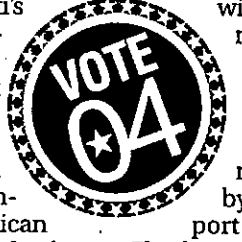
## *Leuer, Rago and O'Neil to face Barsanti for state's attorney*

2-20-04 Chronicle

By ADAM KOVAC
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — Kane County state's attorney candidate John Barsanti was endorsed Thursday by DuPage County State's Attorney Joseph Birkett.

Birkett said his support stems from knowing Barsanti for more than 20 years, adding that Barsanti's experience as a prosecutor and private attorney sets him apart from his opponents.




Barsanti, 52, of St. Charles, is in a heated four-way campaign for the Republican nomination in the March 16 primary. The race includes St. Charles attorney Tim O'Neil, and Joseph Rago and T. Michael Leuer, both of Geneva.

Barsanti, a former Kane County prosecutor, said he was humbled by the endorsement.

Birkett's nod is the latest ally for Barsanti, who on Feb. 11 won endorsements from four police chiefs in Kane County and several police unions. His supporters also include four former Kane County state's attorneys.

Barsanti and O'Neil are the front-runners in the primary, as the Rago and Leuer campaigns appear silent with four weeks remaining before the polls open.

O'Neil, the St. Charles city attorney, gained momentum last month by winning the support of the mayors of St. Charles, Geneva and Batavia. O'Neil also was endorsed by members of several public safety and labor unions.

The winner in the GOP primary likely will face Democrat Renee L. Robinson in the November election. Robinson, an Aurora attorney, does not have a primary opponent.

2-20-04 Beacon News

# County takes stand on north-end expansion

**By Steve Lord**
STAFF WRITER

GENEVA — A Kane County Board committee is supporting a series of recommendations for development of a huge swath of the northwestern part of the county.

The Development Committee endorsed recommendations on expansion of facilities planning areas, or FPAs, covering 20,121 acres — or more than 31 square miles — in the area of Elgin, Hampshire, Huntley and Pingree Grove.

In a memo to Development Committee members, Kane County officials said it could be the largest area of FPA amendments ever filed at once in the history of the Chicago region, and that it undoubtedly is "the largest FPA request in the history of Kane County."

Any municipality wishing to extend sewer service to a new area must file an amended FPA with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, which makes recommendations to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Having the ability to serve an area with sewer is one of the major precursors to being able to develop an area and annex it to a municipality. The IEPA has the final say on the amendments, but usually follows NIPC recommendations.

The Development Committee action Tuesday will serve as Kane County's recommendation to NIPC, which has scheduled a public hearing on the conflicting sewer expansion plans, from 2 to 5 p.m. and from 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Metropolitan Chicago Health Council.

Representatives for all four municipalities spoke at this week's meeting, and, when the smoke cleared, none of them was completely satisfied. Village of Pingree Grove officials left most unhappy, saying their village might be wiped out if NIPC and the IEPA follow the county recommendation.

The county, in essence, recommended support for Elgin to expand its FPA into the area between Elgin and Pingree Grove, even into the existing Pingree Grove FPA. Kane officials said only Elgin can guarantee sewer service and drinking water to that area. Pingree Grove officials pointed out that it was Kane County that created the Pingree Grove FPA in 1979.

"You created our current FPA, and if you vote for this recommendation today, you will take it away," Jim Bassett, a consulting engineer for Pingree Grove, said.

## Surround town

Bassett said Pingree Grove has tried several times to negotiate with Elgin to provide sewer and water to the town, but Elgin charges too high a price, so Pingree Grove officials had to provide their own services, Bassett said.

Pingree Grove officials have proposed a land application sewage treatment system to serve a proposed development in the expanded FPA area, but county officials are more concerned that soils in the area do not support Pingree Grove's plans to provide drinking water.

"We believe the ability of Elgin to serve the area with water helps the long-term stability of northern Kane County," Development Director Phil Bus said.

It was a potential for destroying Pingree Grove that most concerned county officials in voting for the recommendation. Board member Gerry Jones, D-Aurora, said he "would feel more comfortable about supporting Elgin" if Elgin and Pingree Grove could come to an agreement.

"I hesitate to allow Elgin to come in and take over," Board member Bill Wyatt, R-Aurora, said.

Board member John Hoscheit, R-St. Charles, said county officials should "support all municipalities, big and small.

"To have one completely surround and choke off another is hard to support," Hoscheit said, "but if (Pingree Grove) can't provide service to an area, you have to take that into account."

Still, committee members voted down an amendment to the county recommendations proposed by Jones to keep Pingree Grove's current FPA intact. The committee eventually approved the overall staff recommendations, with Jones' vote the only one against.

2-20-04 Daily Herald

# Charges increased in Karsch crash case

By Christy Gutowski
*Daily Herald Legal Affairs Writer*

A coroner's jury ruled Thursday the death of eccentric Fox Valley resident Sebastian Karsch was an accident.

But prosecutors meanwhile approved more serious charges against a man accused of driving drunk during the Nov. 11 crash that killed Karsch.



Sebastian Karsch



Matthew Wise

Karsch died of traumatic injuries after being struck at 8:36 p.m. while biking along North Avenue west of Prince Crossing near West Chicago. The driver, Matthew Wise, 25, of Elgin had faced misdemeanor drunken driving charges.

Prosecutors upgraded the charges to felony aggravated DUI after they said tests showed he had a .126 blood-alcohol level — above the legal threshold of .08 — while driving home that night.

Wise, who posted a $500 bond, does not have a criminal history. He declined to testify Thursday at the advice of his attorney, Bob Kleeman.

Wise is expected to be arraigned Monday before DuPage Circuit Judge Michael Burke. If convicted, he faces probation or between one to 12 years in prison.

Karsch, a 70-year-old St. Charles man, was well known for riding his bike with trailer in tow around the Fox Valley area.

He often collected boxcar loads of discarded goods. His penchant for junk sparked legal battles because of large piles on his properties.

Police often warned Karsch against riding his bicycle on bustling, dimly lit streets. They had stopped him dozens of times, often prompted by calls from motorists.

The night of the fatal crash was particularly foggy, officials said, and that stretch of the road did not have a shoulder.

2-20-04 Chronicle

## Business Scene



**Roald Haase**

# Field peas could boost Kane farms' bottom lines

**Ron Hagemann** has the seed of an idea.

The one-time Hampshire producer isn't out to upset the apple cart of Illinois agriculture — figuratively speaking, that is — but he believes that farmers have more weapons at their disposal than some might think.

Hagemann's Rochelle-based firm announced this week that it has contracts with Illinois farmers to raise field peas for export to Cuba. When I spoke to him, he said some of these contracts are with Kane County farmers.

In essence, field peas would provide an early spring crop for farmers, enabling them to have another cash crop for their land, or two crops a year on the same land. That's important, Hagemann said, in these days in which farm equipment and other materials farmers buy cost so much.

"We are at 15,000 to 20,000 acres right now (in contracts)," Hagemann said.

He added: "What we are doing is, by utilizing the same equipment (twice) over the same season ... it has a nice effect on profitability."

There are critics who see field peas as not viable in Illinois, particularly in the central and southern parts of the state. Hagemann begs to differ. He acknowledged it is a cool season seed crop, but said he thinks it will work statewide.

Asked about its potential viability in Kane County — where farmers not only contend with the usual weather problems but also intense development pressures — Hagemann said it should have good results here.

"Up here, it's a phenomenal crop," Hagemann said.

Asked what crop would be the second crop for the season, Hagemann suggested grain sorghum, which he said can be harvested within 70 to 80 days of planting.

"We should have no trouble running grain sorghum as a second crop," he said.

The idea of using farmland for something other than corn and soybeans isn't a new one, especially here in Kane County. In recent years, we have seen land owners utilizing fields for a variety of uses, including sod farms, tree nurseries and orchards.

There are also, of course, horse farms and many other rural uses for land that don't fit the traditional image of Illinois farmers.

Hagemann said he doesn't expect a wholesale conversion of farmland to field peas, which he said are in demand abroad. His company, **Risk Assurance Programs Co. LLC**, said field peas are in demand abroad as flour for snack food manufacturing or as split peas for direct consumption. According to the company, the hulls may be sold for cattle feed.

Hagemann said he's not asking for huge commitments in acreage from individual farmers. But as farmers get used to the crop, it may become something they increase in succeeding years, he said.

"I think if what we are seeing with producers who have used it in the past, you see what happens when you introduce a new crop ... (you) are going to try it a little bit, and if works well for you, you are going to expand it," Hagemann said.

To contact Hagemann, call (815) 561-9100: for information, check the Web site, www.focuslandmgmt.com.

■ *Roald Haase is the business editor. To contact him, call (630) 845-5348, or e-mail him at: rhaase@kcchronicle.com.*

2-20-04 Chronicle

# Setting the record straight

To the Editor:

It appears the Kane County Chronicle is at it again: allowing incorrect and damaging statements to be made about political candidates in Sound Off.

For the record, Arney Silvestri, candidate for county board in the 14th District, does not "build subdivisions" as was claimed in a recent Sound Off (Feb. 7). Arney is a homebuilder. He builds maybe a dozen homes a year. I don't think that qualifies as a subdivision.

Arney is not a real estate mogul or rich developer. He's a small businessman who works with his hands, building homes. Most of the homes Silvestri builds, by the way, are built for families who already live in the area, and are moving to a new neighborhood.

Again for the record, Silvestri's opponent in the primary, Mark Davoust, is also a homebuilder. He built a number of homes in Batavia and even last year was still at it, this time building a home in Elburn. Why is Arney's home-building business considered an issue when Davoust's is not? It is the same thing, isn't it?

Arney Silvestri has lived and worked in the 14th District almost his entire life. He is well known and well liked by the many people who have watched him through the years. He has my support, and the support of voters who want a representative on the county board that truly knows the area and the issues affecting the 14th District.

**Kent Barrett**
St. Charles

# Supports Rauschenberger

To the Editor:

Government spending is out of control. It's time we start voting in real fiscal conservatives and voting out politicians who think the future will take care of itself.

That's why I am voting for Republican State Sen. Steve Rauschenberger for U.S. Senate. When Sen. Rauschenberger says he fights for lower taxes and less government waste, his record proves it. He has been on the Appropriations Committee in the State Senate for nearly his entire 11 years in Springfield. On Appropriations, Sen. Rauschenberger has worked hard to streamline, simplify and shrink the state government.

Sen. Rauschenberger understands that when government wastes our dollars, it hurts real people. He has worked for privatization and competition, and he has publicly challenged politicians who take taxpayers for granted.

Please join me in voting for Sen. Steve Rauschenberger for U.S. Senate on March 16.

**William Keck**
Sugar Grove

# NOTICE OF GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that a GENERAL PRIMARY ELECTION will be held at all polling places in Kane County on

**TUESDAY, MARCH 16,2004**

2-20-04
Daily Herald

The Republican and Democratic parties will nominate candidates to the following offices:
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
UNITED STATES SENATOR
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS - 14TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE SENATOR - 28th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
REPRESENTATIVE IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY - 43rd, 49th, 50th, 55th, 83rd & 95th REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICTS
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES - 16th JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OFFICERS: AUDITOR
COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMAN
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
CORONER
RECORDER
STATE'S ATTORNEY
COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS - DISTRICTS 2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26

The Libertarian party will nominate candidates for the following office:
REPRESENTATIVE IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 95TH REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT

TO BE ELECTED: DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES TO THE NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTIONS
PRECINCT COMMITTEEMEN

The color of the Republican Primary Ballot is yellow.
The color of the Democratic Primary Ballot is green.
The color of the Libertarian Primary Ballot is salmon.
The color of the Nonpartisan Ballot is white

**Nonpartisan Propositions to be voted upon:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Batavia & Countryside Fire District Disconnection/ Annexation to North Aurora & Countryside Fire District | Disconnect a portion of the Batavia & Countryside Fire Protection District and Annex that portion to the North Aurora & Countryside Fire Protection District? |
| Hinckley Fire Protection District | Increase property tax extension limitation from 2.4% to 60.264% for 2003 levy year? |
| Hampshire Park District | Levy and collect a tax of .12% for the purpose of recreation programs? |
| Geneva School District #304 | 1.Issue bonds in the amount of $48,972,121 for building middle school and improving existing buildings<br>2. Increase tax rate from 3.08% to 3.43%? |
| Huntley School District #158 | Increase education fund from 3.45% to 4.00% on equalized assessed value? |
| Aurora Township | Raise State Income Tax for individuals who make more than a quarter million dollars per year? |
| Big Rock Township | Increase property tax extension limitation from 5% up to 39.55% for the 2003-2004 levy year? |
| Blackberry Twp Road District | Increase property tax rate from .1650% up to .3300% for road purposes? |
| Virgil Township | 1.Increase equalized assessed valuation on taxable property from .165% to a maximum of .330% for road purposes?<br>2.Increase the property tax extension limitation for road fund from 2.4% to 188.18% for the 2004 levy year? |
| Village of Barrington Hills | Adopt Article 3 of the "Illinois Pension Code" to create police pension fund? |
| Village of Burlington | Increase property tax extension limitation from 2.4% up to 125% for 2004 levy year? |
| Village of Carpentersville | Impose a surcharge up to $1.65 per month per network connection to improve 911 emergency phone system? |
| Village of East Dundee | 1.Increase the monthly surcharge for the 911 emergency phone system?<br>2.Shall the Village of East Dundee become a home rule unit of government? |
| Village of North Aurora | Shall the Village conduct future elections for all Village offices as non-partisan elections? |
| Village of Sleepy Hollow | Impose surcharge up to $1.65 per month per network connection to improve 911 emergency phone system? |
| Village of West Dundee | Impose surcharge up to $1.65 per month per network connection to improve 911 emergency phone system? |
| Oswego Public Library Dist. | Issue bonds in the sum of $16,500,000 to purchase sites for buildings and make additions and equip present buildings |
| Sugar Grove Public Library | Shall the extension limitation be increased from 1.9% to 76% for the 2004 levy year? |
| Town & Country Library | Shall the annual public library tax rate be established at .19% instead of .15%? |

Order of Ballot is President of the United States, United States Senator, Congressional offices, Delegates and Alternate Delegates, State Senators and Representatives, County offices, Judicial offices, Precinct Committeemen.
The polls will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

John A Cunningham

Dated: February 20, 2004

*John A. Cunningham*
*Kane County Clerk*

For election information call 630-232-5990

2-20-04 Chicago Tribune

# Kane forest study picks 11 homes to be razed first

By William Presecky
Tribune staff reporter

Eleven unsafe or surplus residences that the Kane County Forest Preserve District owns at seven sites could be razed as part of a plan to better manage the district's inventory of more than 300 structures.

The 11 homes, some of which are rented, are among roughly 40 buildings ranging from chicken coops and dog kennels to hog houses and silos that the district staff recommended Thursday be among the first to be demolished.

"These are buildings we do not see as needed or desirable," said Michael Holan, director of operations.

Holan and executive director Jon Duerr have identified nearly 70 structures, or about 20 percent of what the district owns, as potential demolition candidates. The district owns 44 residences scattered across its more than 12,000 acres.

Holan presented to the Utilization Committee a "Demolition List–Phase I," but President John Hoscheit (R-St.Charles) said he prefers to view the suggestions as "a preserve enhancement list."

"That's the perspective we have to look at," he said.

"I prefer us getting away from the building-maintenance business," said Hoscheit, who cited safety, security and maintenance of the structures as the basis for the recommendations.

In many cases, Hoscheit said, the intent of the proposed demolition is to eliminate the risk of vandalism and injury. Some of the targeted structures have no value to the district or will cost too much to restore and maintain.

Although the committee took no action, it authorized a call for bids to determine how much it would cost the district to do some or all of the disposal work identified as a priority.

Committee members agreed in general that the number of diverse structures acquired by the district when it greatly expanded its land holdings in recent years must be pared.

But some committee members, such as Commissioner Barbara Wojnicki (R-St. Charles), cautioned against moving too quickly to demolish at least one of the homes.

"It just doesn't sit well with me," Wojnicki said of the staff recommendation to demolish the Schweitzer residence at Illinois Highway 72 and Sleepy Hollow Road.

The residence was once home to Emily Schweitzer, a renowned breeder of champion Irish setters, who donated her 160-acre estate to the district 11 years before her death in 2001. The property includes a caretaker's house and kennels. The slate-roofed "main house" was described by Jan Carlson (R-Elburn), committee chairman, as "very high maintenance stuff."

Duerr said the district has had no success trying to entice a dog-related organization to take responsibility for the Schweitzer complex.

While it may not have historic significance, the complex is indicative of the property's heritage and razing it should not be a priority, said Wojnicki.

"We need to be very cautious when we look at this list,' she said.

"There are probably one or two buildings on here that will take a little more discussion," Carlson said. "We'll need to give them a little closer examination."

Other residences proposed for demolition are in the Big Rock, Bliss Woods, Buffalo Park, Fox River Bluff East, Fox River Shores and Nyman Forest Preserves.

2-20-04 Chronicle

# Forest preserve seeks to tear down 31 buildings

*Last year's study has found 67 buildings to be removed*

By TOM SCHLUETER
Kane County Chronicle

GENEVA — The Kane County Forest Preserve District will seek bids to demolish 31 houses, barns and sheds that it no longer needs in 12 preserves.

The demolition program stems from a study conducted last year of district buildings that found 67 of the 260 residences, shelters, restrooms, specialty buildings and barns owned by the district that should be removed.

"The sooner we reduce the risk to safety and of vandalism, the better off we'll be," said Michael Holan, director of operations.

The district first must learn how much it will cost to demolish the buildings. Money for the demolition will be put in the 2004-05 budget, which begins July 1.

Commissioners will weigh the cost of tearing the structures compared to maintaining them.

The Fabyan garage was not included in the bid requests at Thursday's Utilization Committee meeting.

The Friends of Fabyan hope to secure grants and volunteers to help save the garage on Route 31 in the Fabyan Forest Preserve. The committee voted last year to demolish it. The preserve later granted the building a reprieve until May to allow the group time to raise money to save it. A $5,000 grant was awarded last week.

Most of the buildings are unoccupied or unneeded. Some of the houses still have leases, and no demolition would occur until the leases expire.

However, some commissioners questioned the need to demolish all structures on the Schweitzer Forest Preserve, a 160-acre lot donated to the district two years ago by Emily Schweitzer.

"I think we have to be very cautious when we look at this list," said Barbara Wojnicki, R-St. Charles. "We don't want every forest preserve looking alike."

The Schweitzer property is unusual, not only because the land was donated but also because Schweitzer raised champion Irish setters and required that the property have a use for dogs in the deed.

See PRESERVE, page 3

### Next month

• Director of operations will speak at next month's meeting about which buildings will need to be maintained.

## Preserve

Continued from page 1

The house has a slate roof and copper downspouts. In the district's building survey, the main house, barn and "small wood building" are listed in fair condition, while the dog kennel is in good condition. The caretaker's house is the only structure listed in poor condition.

District Executive Director Jon Duerr said the deed contains no covenants requiring that the buildings be saved.

"She had no desire to see the house saved," Duerr said.

Some of the house's amenities, such as the slate roof, could mean the house would be removed for free by salvagers, Duerr said.

"I don't see that we're going to be in violation of any agreement," district President John Hoscheit said.

Holan said he is concerned about barns where district equipment is being stored. If one of the barns was set afire by vandals, $50,000 to $100,000 in equipment could be lost.

Holan will come to next month's committee meeting with a list of "key" buildings that will need to be maintained.

### Buildings to be demolished

Forest preserve buildings for which demolition bids will be solicited

- **Big Rock Forest Preserve:** rental house, rental house in Deer Valley Golf Course, barn, two hog houses, machine shed
- **Bliss Woods Forest Preserve:** house, three-car garage, chicken coop
- **Buffalo Park Forest Preserve:** house
- **Dick Young Forest Preserve:** two silos, concrete adjacent to shop, concrete from old farmstead
- **Fox River Bluff East Forest Preserve:** two houses, two garages
- **Fox River Shores Forest Preserve:** two houses
- **Muirhead Forest Preserve:** barn
- **Nyman Forest Preserve:** mushroom plant complex, two houses, metal building
- **Otter Creek Forest Preserve:** silo
- **Schweitzer Forest Preserve:** main house, caretaker house barn, two chicken coops, dog kennels
- **Tekakwitha Woods Forest Preserve:** barn and milk house, small barn
- **Valley View Farms Forest Preserve:** wood barn, metal barn