



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Villa Park Review

The Great Western Trail starts in Villa Park—on the west side of Villa Avenue. The photo shows the recently built arch on Villa Avenue, just north of Pioneer Garden and Feed. The crushed limestone trail follows 12 miles of abandoned railway corridor between Villa Park and West Chicago. Jan Fiola, Villa Park's director of economic development, spearheaded the project to build the arch, which she described as the Gateway to the Great Western Trail.

Village earns budgeting recognition award for the 25th straight year

The Village of Villa Park has received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its fiscal year 2017 annual budget. This is the 25th consecutive year that Villa Park has achieved this recognition.

According to GFOA, the award "...represents a significant achievement by the Village, and reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting."

The Certificate of Recognition for Budget Presentation was presented to Villa Park Finance Director Kevin Wachtel.

"I commend Kevin and the finance department for their hard work in ensuring our budgeting process always runs smoothly and effectively," stated Villa Park Village President Albert Bulthuis in a release issued by the village. "We are one of only 133 government entities in Illinois—out of over 7,000—to achieve this recognition annually. Additionally, the village annually receives GFOA's Audit award. Only 110 Illinois governments won both awards this past year."

In winning the awards, the Village had to satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation. These guidelines are designed to assess how well an entity's budget serves as a policy document, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device. Villa Park's budget documents were rated "proficient" in all four of these categories, and within fourteen mandatory criteria within the categories.

There are over 1,600 participants in GFOA's Budget Awards Program. The most recent Budget Award recipients, along with their corresponding budget documents, are posted quarterly at www.gfoa.org. GFOA notes that "...award recipients have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provide an excellent example for other governments throughout North America."

Veterans can get free legal support services

To better serve Illinois heroes, the state has formed the first-ever statewide legal assistance hotline and coordinated network of legal support services for military personnel, veterans and their families.

State Sen. Tom Cullerton (D-Villa Park) is helping spread the word about the Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network (IL-AFLAN) to ensure DuPage County residents take advantage of free legal services.

"Our nation's heroes have served our country with honor and dignity, and it is now our time to ensure they have access to the necessary resources to be successful," Cullerton said. "Our veterans and service men and women should not have to jump through hoops to receive assistance. This one-stop hotline will offer them direct support and point them to attorneys in their area who will provide comprehensive and free legal assistance to give them better access to services and benefits for which they qualify."

The free services will be readily available for military members and families who need assistance with free legal help for urgent family, housing and consumer problems as well as possible discharge upgrades and benefit appeals.

"Illinois is home to nearly one million veterans and active duty service members. We have a responsibility to protect their rights much like they have fought to protect our rights," said Trish McGill, U.S. Army veteran and chair of the Illinois Access to Civil Justice

Council. "The Illinois Armed Forces Legal Aid Network will help our veterans and service members resolve their legal problems and preserve their health, safety and financial independence."

Cullerton advocated for House Bill HB 3933 in 2015, which created the Illinois Access to Civil Justice Council, whose first duty was to create and develop a statewide military personnel and veteran legal assistance network.

The free hotline number is 855-452-3526 or 855-IL-AFLAN. The hotline is staffed by attorneys Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and serves as the starting point to connect to IL-AFLAN's network. The network will offer legal advice and brief services and then help connect veterans and military members to legal aid providers near their community. Nine organizations across the state have received grants to provide legal aid services as part of the IL-AFLAN.

While a few other states have veterans legal aid initiatives, Illinois is the largest state to combine a hotline with a legal help provider network.

Cullerton urges local attorneys looking to offer pro bono assistance to contact any of the nine organizations that are part of the network and say that they want to help with IL-AFLAN.

Area residents can visit www.SenatorTomCullerton.com or call his Villa Park Office at 630-903-6662 for more information on IL-AFLAN.

New arch marks beginning of the Great Western Trail

The Great Western Trail begins on the west side of Villa Avenue in Villa Park. The Village of Villa Park recently erected an arch—the Gateway to the Great Western Trail.

The arch is located just north of Pioneer Garden and Feed; 118 S. Villa Ave.

"When I first started working in Villa Park four years ago, I couldn't find the beginning of the Great Western Trail that everyone told me started right on South Villa Avenue," said Jan Fiola, Villa Park's director of economic development. "Once I realized it wasn't the alley next to Pioneer Garden and Feed, I

was amazed that Villa Park hadn't celebrated the beginning of this awesome 12-mile recreational trail."

Fiola discussed the issue with Villa Park Village Manager Rich Keehner, who suggested that she come up with a design and work to build a gateway to the trail. Fiola worked with Eagle Scouts to raise money. She also reached out to contractors to volunteer their time, supplies and equipment. Phil Greco—owner of the Odeum, Bruce Campbell with PEP Industries and Joe and Julie with Area Equipment were prominent contributors to the project, said Fiola.

The steel and brick columns with an ironwork archway were completed in the last month. Benches, garbage cans and bike racks have also been added to the area, which is near five new butterfly way stations that were recently planted along the trail. Another Eagle Scout is completing the priming of the 450-foot wall that will have a mural painted on it next spring.

"This area has been totally transformed and become a major hub and activities and events for Villa Park," said Fiola. "I am proud of the results and how everyone came together to make this project a success."

District 45 Foundation announces fundraising totals from first 45Fest

The District 45 Foundation announced that its inaugural 45Fest, which was held in October, netted a total profit of over \$37,000, with \$20,000 of that total collected prior to the event in the form of sponsorships and donations. These funds will be put to good use by the Foundation next spring when grants are awarded.

The District 45 Foundation for Excellence is a non-profit organization that raises funds to support the enrichment of the educational opportunities for the students in District 45. Last spring, seven grants were awarded for the 2017-18 school year and the Foundation provided generous funding for two 21st century learning classrooms.

The seven grants awarded by the foundation included:

- Utilizing Technology in Music—Connect+ Pro headphones will extend the use of music in the Schafer School General Music classroom.
- You Can Do the Cube—Rubik's Cubes with 40 STEM/STEAM lessons and curriculum will engage Schafer students in solving problems through puzzles.
- Makerspace Club—A Place to Explore, Create and Collaborate—Makerspace Club will meet weekly to expand student creativity and problem solving skills in the Makerspace at North School.
- Awesome Author Study of Bruce Hale—Award-winning children's book author Bruce Hale will Skype with Schafer second graders to increase writing and reading engagement. Each student receives a book and authors a book.
- Experiences to develop language and background knowledge—Trips to the Kohl's Children's Museum and the Lincoln Marsh will build background knowledge, vocabulary and

hands-on play experiences while incorporating common core standards as well as the next generation science standards for Stevenson School first graders.

• Summer Reading-Lunch Bunch—Schafer second-, third- and fourth-grade students will develop a love of reading by having books and fun literacy activities put in their hands to read and then meet at the park for sharing their reads.

• Jefferson Middle School PE Choice Program/Heart Rate Monitors—The most efficient and up-to-date heart rate monitors, will allow

the Jefferson Physical Education (PE) teachers to implement the "My PE Choice" program, which helps students to lead physically active lifestyles.

District 45 staff members will be invited to apply for the 2018-19 Foundation grants next spring. The grants will be awarded prior to the end of the current school year, so planning can be done over the summer.

The success of 45Fest gives the foundation the opportunity to greatly enrich the education programming in the District 45.

Villa Park briefs

Concerts at Willowbrook next week

Willowbrook High School's music department will hold two holiday concerts next week. Both concerts will begin at 7 p.m. in the school's auditorium. The concert on Tuesday, Dec. 12, will feature pieces performed by Percussion Methods, Freshmen Band, Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble. The concert on Thursday, Dec. 14, will include performances from Beginning Choir, Guitar Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Beginning Mixed Chorus, Treble Choir and Concert Choir. Tickets for each concert are \$3 for adults, \$2 for students and senior citizens. Admission is free to residents with a Senior Gold Card, and to children 12 and younger who are accompanied by an adult.

Willowbrook students' art on display at Funky Java from Dec. 13-20

Artwork created by Willowbrook High School students will be displayed from Dec. 13-20 at The Funky Java Coffee House, 40 S. Villa Ave., Villa Park. An opening reception will be held at Funky Java from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

Police announce Thanksgiving enforcement numbers

The Villa Park Police Department conducted seat belt enforcement from Nov. 17-27 as part of the nationwide "Click It or Ticket" mobilization. Villa Park police joined other state and local law enforcement agencies across Illinois to issue citations to unbuckled motorists in an effort to reduce traffic fatalities. During the 10-day period, the Villa Park Police Department issued five seat belt citations, 38 cell phone citations and nine speeding citations. Additionally, the department issued 10 uninsured motorist citations and arrested six drivers with suspended or revoked licenses. Police also made one drug-related arrest and issued one citation for illegal transportation of alcohol. While the "Click It or Ticket" mobilization period has ended, police will continue to look for unbuckled motorists. "If you or your passengers are caught not wearing a seat belt, you will be cited for the violation," said Villa Park Police Sgt. James Cihak. The "Click It or Ticket" mobilization was made possible with federal highway safety funds administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Youth theater group performs holiday production Dec. 16-17

The Saint Genesius Productions youth theater group will perform "The Story of Holly and Ivy" on Saturday, Dec. 16, and Sunday, Dec. 17, at Montini Catholic High School. Saturday's show times are 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday's performance begins at 2 p.m.

Twenty-five students from local Catholic grade schools and religious education programs have joined together to create this holiday performance.

"The Story of Holly and Ivy" is about wishing. Ivy, Holly, and Mrs. Jones each have one powerful Christmas wish. Ivy, an orphan, wishes for a real home and sets out in search of the grandmother she's sure she can find. Holly, a doll, wishes for a child to bring her to life. Mrs. Jones wishes more than anything for a child. Can all three wishes come true? This festive tale is filled with the warm glow of Christmas spirit. The play has been adapted by Saint Genesius alumna Emily O'Brochta and Saint Genesius Artistic Director Sara Corkery from Rumer Godden's classic children's book by the same name.

Tickets cost \$8 and can be purchased at the door, or ordered online at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3172246>.

To learn more, visit stgenesiusproductions.com.

Saint Genesius Productions, founded in 2010, was created to bring the experience of professionally produced children's theater to Catholic grade school students throughout DuPage County. This volunteer-run youth theater group provides students in fourth through eighth grade with a performing arts education and the opportunity to appear in plays and musicals.

Sports

Glenbard East wins one of two home games

Rams bounce back from loss to Oswego East to beat Perspectives

Glenbard East's boys basketball team stopped a two-game losing streak with Friday's 61-46 home win over Chicago's Perspectives Charter School.

Senior James Peterkin scored a team-leading 18 points for the Rams in the victory, which moved the team's overall record to 4-2. Sophomore Alijah Nelson added 13 points, while senior Korvante Davis scored 11 points.

The Rams' previous game was a 77-62 home loss to Oswego East on Nov. 29. Davis sank three 3-point shots in the first quarter to help the Rams to a 28-13 lead after eight minutes. Oswego East rallied in the second quarter to take a 36-34 lead by halftime. The hot-shooting Wolves, who made 11 shots from 3-point range (four apiece in the second and third periods and three in the fourth period), increased their lead to 60-45 by the end of the third quarter. The lead ballooned to 77-52 late in the fourth. The Rams closed the gap with a late run that included 3-point shots by juniors Jake Huisman, Clay Kepuritis and Jackson Rozinsky.

Peterkin finished the night with 21 points, including a pair of 3-point shots. Senior Kenny Adams scored 11 points, while Davis contributed nine points with his three 3-pointers.

The Rams will open the Upstate Eight Valley Conference season with this Friday's game at South Elgin.

Warriors fall in overtime

The Willowbrook boys basketball team opened its West Suburban Gold Conference season with Friday night's 74-72, overtime loss at Proviso East. The Pirates scored the game's final basket on an offensive rebound as the four-minute overtime period expired. Proviso East outscored Willowbrook 9-7 during the overtime.

Senior Ethan Schuemer scored 23 points and grabbed 16 rebounds for the Warriors, who held a 32-23 lead at halftime and a 48-44 edge after three quarters.

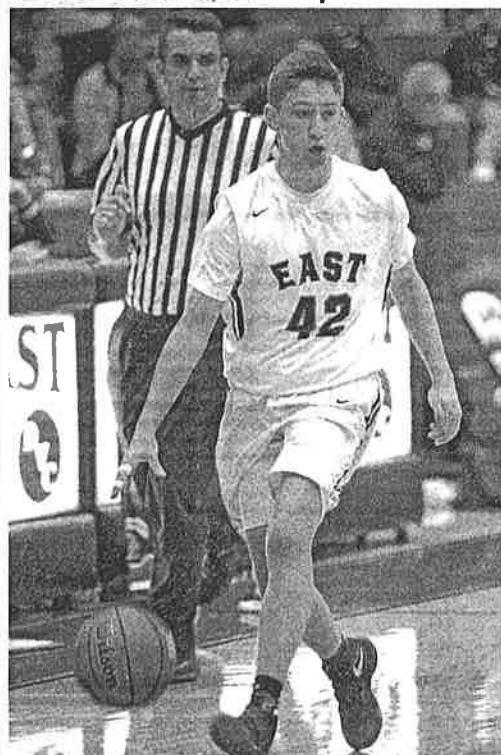


Schuemer also handed out six assists. Junior Matas Masys scored 19 points, while senior Matt Myers tallied 14 points. Myers made eight of nine free-throw attempts.

Willowbrook's record fell to 4-1 with the loss. The Warriors opened their season by winning four straight

games and claiming the title at Stagg High School's Thanksgiving tournament.

Willowbrook will play its first home game of the season this Friday. The Warriors will battle District 88 rival Addison Trail in a conference contest.



The Glenbard East boys basketball team played two home games in three nights last week. The Rams lost a Nov. 29 game against Oswego East, falling 77-62. Pictured during that game are senior Kenny Adams (No. 3—above left) and junior Clay Kepuritis (No. 42—above right). The Rams held a 28-13 lead after the first quarter, but the visiting Wolves stormed back to take a 36-34 halftime lead. Two nights after losing to Oswego East, the Rams beat Chicago's Perspectives Charter School 61-46. That victory gave Glenbard East an overall season record of 4-2. The Rams will kick off their Upstate Eight Valley Conference season with this Friday's game at South Elgin.

Improved Broncos win tourney, fall to St. Ignatius, Carmel

By Mike Sandrolini
LOMBARDIAN-VILLA PARK REVIEW STAFF REPORTER

The Montini Catholic boys basketball team cruised to the championship of the Battle for the Ridge tournament in Niles during the week of Nov. 20-25, going undefeated and winning its four games by an average of 38.5 points.

"That was a really, really good feeling (to win the tournament)," said Montini head coach Daryl Thomas. "It was good for the kids and good for their mental state and confidence."

The Broncos hoped to build on this title when they hosted St. Ignatius and Carmel in nonconference games Friday and Saturday evening. Although they came up short in both contests—losing 73-64 and 66-65, respectively—there's reason for optimism that the 2017-18 Broncos will be competitive and successful.

On Friday, the Broncos battled back from a 43-29 deficit early in the third quarter and cut St. Ignatius' lead to 62-61 with 2:55 to play on a steal and three-point play from guard Anthony Thompson. However, the Wolfpack later took advantage of Montini foul trouble, sinking 17 of 21 at the free throw line during the fourth period to seal the victory.

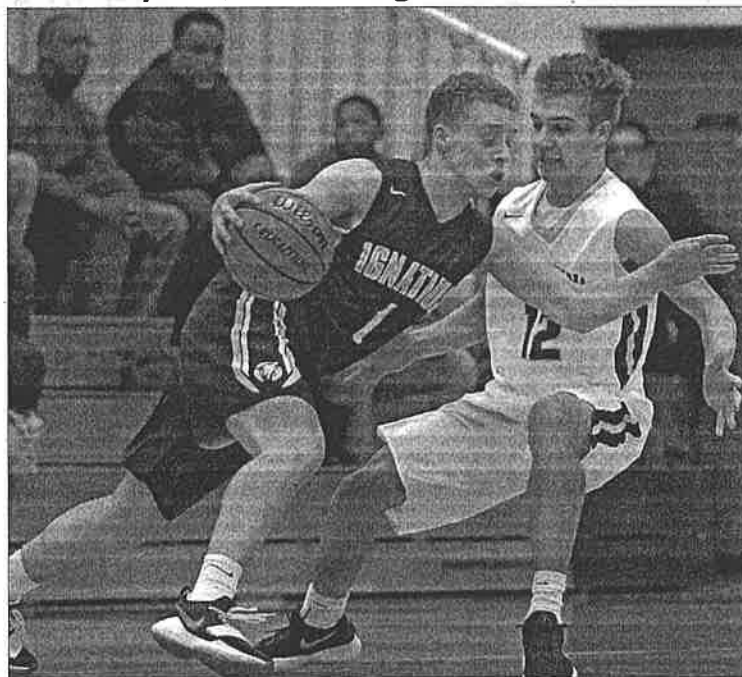
On Saturday, Montini survived a furious Carmel comeback in the second half during which the Corsairs grabbed the lead in the fourth quarter. The Broncos regained the lead, but Carmel tied it at 65-65, setting up a game-winning free throw for the Corsairs in the closing seconds.

"I like that we didn't quit; we stayed with it," said Thomas, referring to Friday's defeat. "We battled and that's something we didn't do last year. At the same time, when you get down 15 or 16 (points) to a team like that it's going to be difficult to get back into it."

"We did some really smart things to get back into it and we did some really stupid things to let it get away. We have to do a better job of making good decisions in certain situations and defensively, one of the things that we've been really good at this year, we just kind of fell apart with."

The Broncos (4-2) got back into the matchup with an 11-2 run in the third quarter, and pulled to within five points of St. Ignatius three times. A Matthew Morrissey basket off a feed from Scott West with no time remaining on the third-period clock made it 51-46 St. Ignatius.

But foul trouble caught up with the Broncos in the final quarter. Four players fouled out, leaving the Broncos short-handed—especially up front.



Junior Scott West (No. 12) defends a St. Ignatius opponent. The Broncos fell to 4-2 with Saturday's 66-65 home loss to Carmel.

DINA KWIAT PHOTO Lombardian/Villa Park Review

Daily Herald

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So many College Achievers to catch up with

As we said to conclude last week's College Achievers column, there's more where that came from...

Helping Yale win its first outright Ivy League football title in 37 years, senior defensive back **Hayden Carlson** (Glenbard West) was a first-team defensive selection on both Ivy League and all-New England teams. Having played in all 39 of the Elis' games spanning four seasons and sharing the program's LoProto Award this season for passion and skill in the defensive secondary, Carlson led Yale in tackles each of the last three seasons. This year he made 63 tackles with a sack, 3 interceptions, a fumble recovery and 8 pass breakups.

Just a sophomore at Ball State, linebacker **Jacob White** (Hinsdale Central) was the recipient of the program's Dave McClain Leadership Award, named for the Cardinals' coach from 1971-77. A defensive captain, White led the Cardinals with 72 tackles, including 10 against Buffalo. He made at least 5 tackles in 9 of 11 games, not bad for playing the last nine games with a cast to protect a broken bone in his right hand.

Central College senior linebacker **Sam Norgaard** (Nequa Valley) made all-Iowa Conference first team with 107 tackles in only 8 games, including 22 against Coe College. He had 2 sacks, 4 interceptions, broke up 5 other passes and caused 2 fumbles. Headed to play in Saturday's Tazon de Estrellas (Bowl of the Stars) in Tijuana, Mexico, Norgaard's 13.4 tackles per game ranked fifth in Division III.

Winona State's 30-20 win over Bemidji State on Aug. 31 featured two of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference's top linebackers — both out of Addison. Winona State senior **Mike Imperiale** (Addison Trail) repeated as first-team South Division after making 46 tackles, 3.5 for loss; Bemidji State senior **Niko Daniello** (Lake Park) earned North Division honors with 82 tackles, 13 for loss with 4 sacks. Daniello wrapped it up last weekend in the annual FCS Bowl in Daytona, Florida.

When Millikin setter **Emily Mihalkanin** (Hinsdale South) earned only second-team College Conference of Illinois-Wisconsin (CCIW) in women's volleyball last year as a junior we about fell off our stool. She was first team this year, helping the Big Blue win a third straight conference title. The 2013 CCIW freshman of the year, Mihalkanin's 1,263 assists this season ranked fifth in Division III; overall she's second in Millikin history with



David Oberhelman
Sidelines

5,491 assists and fourth with 214 service aces. The biology major with a 3.77 grade-point average was 2017 American Volleyball Coaches first-team Midwest

region and honorable-mention All-America, and College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-District. In a five-game win over Hope she recorded 63 sets, 1 off Millikin's match record.

Leading Aurora University to a 26-8 record and their first appearance, and victory, in the NCAA Division III national tournament, **Katie Vondra** (Downers Grove South) became the first Spartan in the program's 42-year history to earn All-America notice. The junior outside hitter was a second-team American Volleyball Coaches Association pick after averaging 4.21 kills and 3.03 digs per set.

Grant Lillard (Hinsdale Central), a senior center-back for NCAA Division I runner-up Indiana University, was selected First Team All-America by the United Soccer Coaches Association. Starting all 25 games for the Hoosiers, the unanimous Big Ten defensive player of the year helped Indiana lead the nation with 18 shutouts, 7 goals against and a .260 goals-against percentage. He scored twice on 5 shots, both game winners. Among three finalists for the Hermann Trophy to be awarded Jan. 5, Lillard hopes to be the Hoosiers' sixth Hermann winner on a list that includes former Waubonsie Valley boys soccer coach Angelo DiBernardo. Lillard's Indiana teammate and former Hinsdale Central pal, junior **Andrew Gutman**, is a second-team United Soccer Coaches All-America pick, First Team Big Ten. Though a defender, Gutman finished second on Indiana with 18 points on 7 goals and 4 assists.

Trinity Christian's **Jessica Bianchi** (York), a junior forward on Trinity Christian's women's soccer team, earned USCA All-America honors within the National Christian College Athletic Association. Bianchi, the Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference player of the year with a league-high 33 goals, 12 assists and 78 points in 22 games, ranked fifth in the NAIA in points and goals and tied for sixth in game-winning goals, with 8. A repeat NCCAA All-America and 2015

honorable mention, in three seasons at Trinity Bianchi has racked up 157 points.

Northwestern junior defender **Kayla Sharples** (Naperville North) earned first-team all-Big Ten in women's soccer. Starting with her header goal in the Huskies' season-opening 1-0 win over DePaul, one of 11 shutouts, Sharples scored 3 goals with 3 assists and notched 2 game-winners while starting all 23 games and playing all 2,146 minutes.

Augustana sophomore **Anna Fank** (Wheaton Warrenville South), first-team all-CCIW soccer, was named the Vikings' defensive MVP. Moving from forward, she helped limit CCIW foes to a goal a game and overall opponents to 0.97 goals a game. Fank also scored 3 goals.

Joining her as first-team CCIW were Elmhurst junior defender **Annalisa Lappo** (York) and Carroll senior midfielder **Sabrina Georgeff** (Nequa Valley). Lappo helped Elmhurst hold foes to 15 goals and 0.90 a game, the Bluejays' second lowest total in history; Georgeff's 12 goals tied for Carroll's team lead.

The CCIW men offered repeat first-team selections **Max Carey** (WW South) of Wheaton and **Nick King** (Downers Grove South) of Elmhurst, both seniors. Carey led the Thunder with 17 points on 8 goals and an assist; King, a three-time first-team pick, started all 18 games with a 1.52 goals-against average and 5 shutouts.

Missouri S & T midfielder **David Murphy** (Naperville Central) earned College Sports Information Directors Association Division II First Team Academic All-America this fall. Owning a 4.00 GPA in mechanical engineering, the senior scored 7 goals with 5 assists, his scoring percentage of .159 leading all Miners with at least 20 shots.

Waubonsie Community College sophomore forward **Reuel Erastus-Obilo** (Waubonsie Valley) was the Illinois Skyway Conference player of the year and midfielder **Luis Correa-Cabral** (West Chicago) earned National Junior College Athletic Association Division I third-team All-America honors. The duo led the 17-6-1 Chiefs to their first appearance in the national tournament. Erastus-Obilo tied for ninth in the country with 58 points on 23 goals and 12 assists; Correa-Cabral 12th with 53 points on 20 goals and 13 assists.

Getting a little ahead of ourselves season-wise, this one's too good to wait: Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, held its 21st annual "Silent Night" event Friday, against

Great Lakes Christian College. In this celebration Taylor students — pajama-clad dating to the 1980s but now wearing all sorts of zany costumes — remain silent until the 10th point is scored. They then erupt madly and storm the court in loud celebration. Played the Friday before finals week, at the end of the game students sang "Silent Night" before exiting to enjoy a Christmas party in the commons. In front of a standing-room crowd of 2,187 fans at Odle Arena, Taylor junior forward **Jake Heggeland** (Wheaton North) went to the free-throw line with the Trojans sitting at 9 points. He made that first shot, then turned heel and jogged off the court as the students exploded and cascaded out of the bleachers. Heggeland, who averages 14.5 points, 6.6 rebounds and 1.5 blocks a game, was named Taylor's athlete of the week. A video tweeted by Taylor University of him making the free throw to trigger the celebration has been viewed more than 33,000 times. Aided by Heggeland's 23 points, 7 rebounds, 3 blocks and 2 steals, Taylor beat Great Lakes Christian 97-84 to improve to 21-0 in Silent Night games.

Lenny Radtke (Glenbard North) is long out of college by now, but on Oct. 21 the old footballer was inducted into North Central College's Athletic Hall of Fame. The 2006 Cardinals graduate earned three straight first-team CCIW honors including 2004 defensive player of the year, and earned All-America designation from four organizations. A linebacker, Radtke's 152 tackles as a senior stands as North Central's single-season record, as do his 466 career stops. After helping the Cardinals reach the Division III playoffs for the first time in 2005, he played first in the Aztec Bowl then was one of only three Division III players to play in the Hula Bowl, typically a Division I all-star game.

Another new hall of famer, on Thursday **Jane Trzaska** (Glenbard South) was inducted into Armstrong State University's (Georgia) hall for her softball career from 2014-17. The 2017 Peach Belt Conference pitcher of the year among more than a dozen honors for athletics and academics, Trzaska is ranked top-nine among Pirates pitchers in wins, innings pitched, strikeouts and winning percentage while also hitting .312 with 20 doubles, 21 home runs and 115 runs batted in.

One more thing: Congratulations!

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Getting up again is half the battle

By CHRIS WALKER
Daily Herald Correspondent

Girls gymnastics

A gymnast doesn't endure the same pain that a teammate does during an injury, but that doesn't mean they're on cloud nine either.

While they're suddenly worrying about their fallen teammate, they've got to regain their focus because now it's their turn to compete.

Just ask Jessica Houghton about it.

The Waubonsie Valley/Metea Valley co-op senior found herself with such a challenge on Wednesday night. Visiting DeKalb/Sycamore co-op was en route to an easy victory and would win convincingly, 141.3 to 127.85 but there still was pressure on Houghton to perform after Kaitly Stocco fell hard off the balance beam.

"The first thing to go through my mind when Kaitly hurt herself was shock and if she was OK," Houghton said. "Then, before I knew it, I had to find my focus and compose myself while I'm thinking about how she's hurt and whether she's going to be OK. I just had to keep going and finish my routine."

Despite the circumstances Houghton seemingly made it look easy, posting a team-high 8.55.

"It was pretty solid," she said. "I still had a few wobbles, but I had a higher score than last time and I added a back handspring, which was very nice."

Houghton also led the team on floor with an 8.5.

"I've been working on my tumbling skills," she said. "Overall, it was a better routine than before."

Marisa Cruz continues to focus primarily on her form when competing on bars. She scored a 7.8 to pace her team.

"It's all about the form for me than the big skills," she said. "I scored lower than usual, so it was an average routine for me. I need to work on more consistent execution."

Waubonsie Valley/Metea Valley co-op's strongest event continues to be vault. Its five gymnasts all scored at least an 8.7 with Melissa Martin leading the way with an 8.85.



MARK BLACK/mbblack@dailyherald.com

Thalia Bowen of the Metea Valley/Waubonsie Valley co-op competes on the vault against the DeKalb/Sycamore co-op.

She finished with a 31.4 in the all-around.

"In practice I had worked on raising the vault to get higher and have more time to plan my landing," she said. "The repetition on it in practice has helped me and it showed tonight in my score."

Thalia Bowen led the team in the all-around with a 32.1.

"I think this was one of my higher all-around scores of the season," she said. "Bars continues to be a struggle, but I'll continue to work on it."

With the busy holiday season and finals upcoming, coach Phil Gilmer knows his gymnasts are being stretched to the limit, so he's not overly pushing them. So far he's been pleased with how well they've stayed focused while making gradual progress toward one of the team's goals of surpassing a team score of 130.

"I think if we would've hit beam we probably could've broken a 130, but it's tough to watch a teammate fall. They pushed through it and handled it well," he said. "They've got a lot going on right now so I'm asking them to go out and compete, have a good time and hope for the best."

"In the long run we want to be healthy at the end so for now the biggest thing is teaching these girls teamwork, coming together and stepping up as leaders and they've done a really good job of that."

Lancers win again

By ORRIN SCHWARZ
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Girls basketball

Just another quality victory for Lake Park this season.

someone up if someone's not playing well. That's one of our