

## Pedestrian dies after being struck by a vehicle in Villa Park

Woman struck on Ardmore Avenue near Ridge Road; driver of vehicle cooperates with investigation

On Monday, Sept. 15, at approximately 5:49 a.m., an 82-year-old female pedestrian was struck by a vehicle in the southbound lanes of Ardmore Avenue, just south of Ridge Road, in Villa Park.

According to the Villa Park Police Department, the pedestrian was transported to a hospital and later pronounced deceased.

"The driver of the vehicle remained on scene, called 911, and fully cooperated with the investigation," stated the police department in its release about the incident. "Citations were issued for failure to reduce speed and no valid insurance. The driver is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law."

The DuPage County Coroner's Office and MERIT (Metropolitan Emergency Response and Investigation Team) were notified, and Villa Park police officers and detectives responded to the scene. The roadway was closed for approximately three hours during the investigation.

"Our thoughts and deepest condolences are with the family of the victim during this very difficult time," stated Villa Park Chief of Police Todd Kubish.

## NUHS Whole Health Center offers \$15 screenings during Health Fair Sept. 25, 26

Thursday, Sept. 25, and Friday, Sept. 26, National University of Health Sciences' (NUHS) Whole Health Center will offer \$15 screenings to new patients, aiming to improve the overall health and wellness of the local community.

This event is centered around making health care accessible to everyone while also increasing community health awareness and prevention.

Under supervision of NUHS clinicians, the clinic's chiropractic, naturopathic, acupuncture and herbal medicine interns diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions including back, neck, knee and shoulder pain, along with sciatica, hypertension, diabetes, thyroid issues, smoking cessation, allergies and stress.

New patients will be able to receive the following non-fasting health screenings: body mass index, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, postural analysis with foot scan, EKG, cholesterol and glucose screening.

"These cases highlight the real-world importance of such events, both for public health and for the educational development of our interns."

- Dr. Sonia V. Joubert

"This opportunity provides the community with access to healthcare services that can detect health issues and offer preventative care," Sonia V. Joubert, DC, ND, MSc, CKTP, NUHS Whole Health Center Attending Clinician said. "In Lombard, we have the unique advantage of incorporating three major clinical disciplines, offering a rich, multidisciplinary experience."

Conducted by NUHS for the past several years, this local health fair has proved

to be beneficial both for the public as well as for university clinic interns.

"Participants receive important health insights, while interns apply their clinical skills in a real-world setting. This creates a mutually beneficial experience," Dr. Joubert said. "In past events, we have even identified serious health concerns during screenings, such as Ramsey Hunt Syndrome and Atrial Septal Defect. These cases highlight the real-world importance of such events, both for public health and for the educational development of our interns."

The NUHS Whole Health Center offers this event three times a year: every spring, summer and fall.

The clinic will offer these services for just \$15 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Friday and 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday.

Call 630-889-6490 to book an appointment, as space is limited. For further inquiries, email Sonia Joubert, DC, ND, MS, CKTP, at sjoubert@nuhs.edu.

## Homeless man charged with string of business burglaries in Naperville

DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin and Naperville Chief of Police Jason Arres announced last week that a homeless man has been charged with six counts of burglary (Class 2 felony), all occurring at businesses in Naperville.

Prudencio Ugaban, 54, appeared in First Appearance Court where, as per state law, he was released from custody with conditions following his pre-trial detention hearing.

On Sept. 13, as a result of an ongoing investigation into a string of burglaries in Naperville, the Naperville Police Department took Ugaban, who was located inside a vehicle with a smashed

window in the 1500 block of W. Ogden, into custody.

Through further investigation, it is alleged that Ugaban committed the following burglaries from July 24 through Sept. 7:

- On July 24 at approximately 11:35 p.m., at the Spice Mart, 1552 N. Aurora Road.

- On July 28 at approximately 12:30 a.m., at the Marathon gas station, 991 W. Ogden Ave.

- On Aug. 15 at approximately 2:11 a.m., at the Spice Mart, 1552 N. Aurora Road.

- On Aug. 27 at approximately 4:35 a.m., at the Ogden Wine and Spirit, 1568 W. Ogden Ave.

- On Sept. 5 at approximately 4:59 a.m., at the Bombay Chopsticks, 1568 W. Ogden Ave.

- On Sept. 7 at approximately 2:10 a.m., at the Marathon gas station, 991 W. Ogden Ave.

Ugaban's next court appearance is scheduled for Oct. 14 in front of Judge Joseph Bugos.

As conditions of his pre-trial release, Ugaban is to have no contact with and refrain from going to Ogden Wine and Spirit, any Marathon gas station, any Bombay Chopsticks and any Spice Mart.



SUBMITTED PHOTO: Rock Valley Publishing

## Willowbrook student honored

During its Sept. 18 meeting, the DuPage Area Occupational Education System (DAOES) Board of Directors named Willowbrook senior Isabel Weaver as a Technology Center of DuPage (TCD) Student of the Month for September. Weaver is pictured (center) with TCD Nursing Assistant Training Program Coordinator and Instructor Laurie Bartels (left) and District 88 Assistant Superintendent for College and Career Readiness Yvonne Tsagalis (right). Weaver is a student in TCD's Nursing Assistant Training Program. Bartels nominated Weaver for the Student of the Month honor. "(Weaver) frequently enriches classroom discussions by sharing both her own experiences and insightful stories from her sister's work in the ER," Bartels said in her nomination of Weaver. "She arrives each day full of energy, positivity and a genuine desire to learn and support others. (Weaver) often takes the initiative to assist instructors and classmates, always ready to lend a helping hand. Her compassion, enthusiasm and team spirit brighten the classroom environment and reflect the core qualities of an exceptional nurse."

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# Rams manhandle Elmwood Park 49-0

Six first-half touchdowns lift Glenbard East to 42-0 halftime lead; Rams will play homecoming game this Friday

Glenbard East's football team began its Upstate Eight Conference East Division season with Friday's dominant 49-0 win at Elmwood Park. The Rams improved their overall season record to 3-1 with the victory.

Glenbard East scored six touchdowns in the first half of Friday's game to take a 42-0 halftime lead over Elmwood Park, which fell to 0-4 overall and 0-2 in the division. The lead of at least 40 points led to a running clock throughout the second half.

The Rams scored their first touchdown of the game on senior quarterback Michael Nee's 16-yard pass to junior Jaiden Javier. Junior Moises Velazquez added the first of his seven extra-point kicks of the night to give Glenbard East a 7-0 lead.

Junior Montii Perry of the Rams returned two punts for touchdowns later in the first quarter. Perry's 48-yard punt return for a score helped Glenbard East boost its lead to 14-0 with about five minutes left in the opening quarter. Perry returned another punt 65 yards for a touchdown with about one minute remaining in the first quarter. Velazquez then added the extra-point kick to move the Rams' lead to 21-0.

Nee tossed a 7-yard touchdown pass to senior Henry Benka early in the second quarter to account for Glenbard East's fourth touchdown of the game. Senior Kedrick Dennis delivered a 1-yard touchdown run with less than six minutes to play in the second quarter to help the Rams raise their lead to 35-0.

Nee threw a 36-yard touchdown pass to senior Muhammad Musleh with 38 seconds left in the first half. The extra-point kick from Velazquez increased the lead to 42-0.

Glenbard East senior Mike Orive returned the second-half kickoff 75 yards for a touchdown for the Rams' seventh and final touchdown of the game. Velazquez added the extra-point kick to close out the scoring.

Nee completed five of seven pass attempts for 117 yards and three touchdowns. Dennis ran for 55 yards and a touchdown on just three carries.

The Rams will play their homecoming game this Friday, when they will face Ridgewood in an Upstate

Eight East contest in Lombard. The Rebels of Ridgewood slipped to 1-3 overall and 0-2 in the division after their 66-20 loss at West Chicago.



SAM MAERCKLEIN PHOTO  
Rock Valley Publishing

**Glenbard East's football team improved to 3-1 overall and 1-0 in the Upstate Eight Conference East Division following Friday's 49-0 victory at Elmwood Park. The Rams scored six first-half touchdowns against the overmatched Tigers to take a 42-0 halftime lead. The lead of at least 40 points triggered a running clock throughout the second half. Glenbard East junior Montii Perry (No. 1 - above) returned two Elmwood Park punts for touchdowns during the first quarter. Perry is pictured while returning a punt 48 yards for a touchdown with about five minutes remaining in the opening quarter. He returned another punt 65 yards for a touchdown with about one minute left in the quarter. Glenbard East led the Tigers (0-4 overall and 0-2 in the division) 21-0 at the end of the first quarter. Senior quarterback Michael Nee threw three touchdown passes for the Rams during their decisive win over the Tigers. Glenbard East will play its homecoming game this Friday. The Rams will face Ridgewood (1-3 overall and 0-2 in the division) in an Upstate Eight East matchup in Lombard.**



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS  
Rock Valley Publishing

Willowbrook's football team slipped to 1-3 overall and 1-1 in West Suburban Gold Conference play following Friday's 34-23 loss at Downers Grove South. One photo (top left) from the game shows senior Jaylen Griffin making a 9-yard touchdown reception to give the Warriors a 6-0 lead in the first quarter. Another photo (left) shows senior quarterback Jahonise Reed flying toward the goal line on a successful two-point conversion run that gave Willowbrook a 17-14 lead in the third quarter. One more photo (above) shows junior Josiah Marlowe (No. 8) making a long gain on a fourth-quarter reception. Marlowe scored Willowbrook's second touchdown of the night on a 50-yard catch in the third quarter. The Warriors will play their homecoming game against conference rival Hinsdale South this Friday in Villa Park.

## Warriors lose conference battle at Downers Grove South

Mustangs win back-and-forth conference meeting to post first victory of season

The Willowbrook football team dropped to 1-3 overall and 1-1 in West Suburban Gold Conference play following Friday's 34-23 conference loss at Downers Grove South.

The Warriors held a 17-14 lead in the middle of the third quarter, but Downers Grove South scored a touchdown late in that quarter to take a 21-17 lead. The Mustangs, who improved to 1-3 overall and 1-1 in conference play with Friday's win, partially blocked a Willowbrook punt in the middle of the fourth quarter. The blocked punt rolled out of bounds at the Warriors' 1-yard line. Downers Grove South scored a touchdown on the next play and added the extra-point kick to take a 28-17 lead.

The Warriors scored a touchdown with less than six minutes to play to trim the Mustangs' lead to 28-23. Downers Grove South quickly responded with a touchdown to take its 34-23 lead.

Willowbrook took the opening kickoff in Friday's contest—Downers Grove South's 2025 homecoming game—and drove inside the Mustangs' 5-yard line. The Warriors tried to run the ball into the end zone on a fourth-and-goal play from the 3-yard line. Downers Grove

South made a defensive stop to end Willowbrook's drive.

The Warriors found the end zone later in the first quarter, when senior quarterback Jahonise Reed fired a 9-yard touchdown pass to senior Jaylen Griffin. The extra-point kick from junior Ben Swanson gave Willowbrook a 7-0 lead with about two minutes left in the first quarter.

Downers Grove South delivered a 21-yard touchdown run with about 11 minutes remaining in the second quarter. The extra-point kick evened the score at 7-7.

The Mustangs took the lead with a 6-yard touchdown run with 50 seconds left in the first half. The extra-point kick raised Downers Grove South's lead to 14-7.

The Mustangs quickly regained possession with an interception, and drove near the Warriors' goal line in the closing seconds of the half. Willowbrook's defense made a goal-line stand at the end of the first half, leaving the Mustangs with a 14-7 halftime lead.

The Warriors scored the first points of the second half on a safety. On a fourth-and-long play from their own 10-yard line, the Mustangs snapped the ball over their punter's head

and out of the end zone for the two-point safety, which cut Downers Grove South's lead to 14-9 with 10:11 to play in the third quarter.

Willowbrook took the lead a couple of minutes later on a 50-yard touchdown pass from Reed to junior Josiah Marlowe. The Warriors then lined up for a two-point conversion play, but a penalty drove them back five yards, to near the 8-yard line. Reed scrambled on the ensuing attempt and dove toward the goal line for a successful two-point run that moved Willowbrook's lead to 17-14 with about eight minutes left in the third quarter.

The Mustangs regained the lead on a 1-yard touchdown run with 1:34 to play in the third quarter. Downers Grove South made the extra-point kick to push its lead to 21-17.

A good punt from the Mustangs pinned the Warriors at their own 3-yard line with less than nine minutes to play in the game. Facing a fourth-and-eight from its own 5-yard line, Willowbrook attempted a punt. The Mustangs partially blocked the punt, which rolled out of bounds at the Warriors' 1-yard line. Downers Grove South scored on a 1-yard run on the next play, and added the

extra-point kick to take a 28-17 lead with 7:41 to play.

Reed connected with senior Otis Powell on a 6-yard touchdown pass with 5:36 left in the game. Reed threw an incomplete pass on the two-point conversion try, leaving the Mustangs' lead at 28-23.

Downers Grove South broke a run of about 60 yards on its ensuing possession. That run, along with a Willowbrook penalty for a horse-collar tackle on the play, pushed the ball to the Warriors' 4-yard line. The Mustangs finished the drive with a 1-yard touchdown run with 4:29 to play. Downers Grove South missed the extra-point kick, leaving its lead at 34-23.

Willowbrook's last offensive drive ended with a missed 46-yard field-goal attempt with 1:28 to play. The Mustangs then picked up a couple of first downs on rushing plays before running out the clock.

The Warriors will play their own homecoming game this Friday. They will face Hinsdale South (1-3 overall, 1-1 in the conference) in a West Suburban Gold Conference matchup in Villa Park. The Hornets dropped to 1-1 in conference play after their 21-7 home loss to Addison Trail.

# Lawsuits pile up as Illinois lags on reforming tax sale laws

## Illinois is the only state that has yet to reform its tax sale laws after the Supreme Court found unconstitutional a process that can cost homeowners their residences

By Sidnee King Pineda  
ILLINOIS ANSWERS PROJECT

A little-known practice that lets private investors extract millions in equity from Illinois homeowners is under mounting legal fire after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional, leaving some counties potentially on the hook for millions of dollars in damages.

For decades, county treasurers in Illinois have collected unpaid property tax bills by selling the debt to private in-

vestors. If homeowners behind on their taxes fail to repay the debt plus interest, those investors can get the deed to their homes. In those cases, the homeowners lose the entire value of their residences, even though they often owe only a fraction of that amount.

In 2023, the Supreme Court ruled that such actions are unconstitutional. A Minnesota homeowner argued that Hennepin County violated her Fifth Amendment rights by taking her home and pocket-

ing more than the \$15,000 she owed in back taxes. Following the ruling, states rushed to reform their laws to avoid legal fallout.

All except Illinois, where serious efforts continue to flounder in the statehouse as competing special interests clash over the best route to reform.

The price tag to homeowners losing their property is high. California-based researchers tracking tax sale practices nationwide determined that investors in Illinois took in \$148 million more than they were initially owed when they bought unpaid taxes, from 2014 to 2021.

Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas is facing three lawsuits in federal court over the issue, including in a class-action lawsuit, in which attorneys argue there are 1,700 homeowners who improperly lost their home equity through tax sales.

Last fall, a federal judge allowed to move forward a lawsuit by suburban homeowners against officials in eight Illinois counties, citing a loss of

millions of dollars in home equity in tax sale seizures.

This spring, many of those same officials sued the state of Illinois which, they say, left them vulnerable to litigation because they haven't reformed the law.

Amid the flurry of the lawsuits, tax attorneys held meetings at the Chicago Bar Association to discuss the potential upending of their industry. They worried that the window to limit the legal and financial fallout was rapidly closing. Or that it had already slammed shut.

"I think we're out of time," said meeting leader and long-time tax deed lawyer, Terry Carter, who represents both homeowners and investors.

There is little remedy for homeowners when they lose their homes as part of the tax sale. They can sue the county treasurer and try to show they weren't at fault. But even when homeowners succeeded in court, it did them no immediate good. In 2022, Illinois Answers found that hundreds of families who won compensation through Cook County's

indemnity fund had waited an average of seven years for their checks. The fund was insolvent.

Since then, little has changed, according to records from the Cook County treasurer's office. In fact, the wait time to get paid is even slightly worse.

Pappas has acknowledged that the process is slow and harms families with few assets beyond their home equity, but the fund still owes more than \$33 million to homeowners. More than 270 households are in limbo, waiting an average of four months longer for judgment payouts than in 2022, when Illinois Answers first reported on the fund's insolvency.

What has changed is the mounting legal pressure on Pappas and other treasurers to get their tax sale processes changed, given the Supreme Court decision.

"We were hopeful states would act quickly," said Christina Martin, the attorney who successfully argued the Supreme Court case. "But many, including Illinois, have

resisted meaningful reform." Springfield lawmakers have failed to act in the most recent legislative session, as interest groups vied with competing proposals.

Pappas and a group of housing advocates, suggest overhauling the state's tax sale system entirely, creating an auction where properties are sold, not just delinquent tax bills. Another camp, led by attorneys representing homeowners, recommend creating a state equity fund rather than relying on counties to pay homeowners through indemnity judgments. And tax buyers, whose influential lobbyists had beat back reform efforts for decades, are failing to find legislative support in Springfield.

Meanwhile, a coalition of longtime tax buyers sued Pappas and other treasurers, claiming the tax certificates they had purchased were now all but worthless in the eyes of the law.

"This is a crisis, and something needs to be done," said Rep. Will Guzzardi, who sponsored a reform bill.

## Bronco turns in record-setting effort

Senior Charlie Paciga of the Montini Catholic boys golf team set two program records during the Broncos' appearance at a recent two-day invitational at Weaver Ridge Golf Club in Peoria. Paciga, who is a Villa Park resident, made seven birdies and an eagle while posting an 18-hole score of 69 on the par-72 course during the first day of the invite



CHRIS FOX PHOTO Rock Valley Publishing

on Sept. 12. In addition to setting a new program record for lowest 18-hole score, Paciga set a new Montini boys golf record for most birdies or better in a single round with his seven birdies and one eagle. "It was fun," said Paciga of his special round. "On the first tee shot of the day, a 280-yard par-4 over water, I topped it into the water with a 3-wood." Paciga then re-teed and drove the green on his third shot. Paciga shot a 37 on his first nine holes of the round, then fired a 32 on the next nine holes to earn his score of 69. He made his eagle by holing a shot of about 40 yards on a par-4 hole. Paciga shot an 18-hole score of 76 in his second round of the event on Sept. 13. He tied for first in the invite's individual standings with his two-day total of 145. Paciga is pictured during the Broncos' home meet against DePaul College Prep at the Village Links of Glen Ellyn on Sept. 18. He shot a team-best nine-hole score of 39 on the first nine holes of the Village Links' 18-hole course. Seniors Finnegan Grimes and Liam O'Dea posted scores of 43 for Montini in the meet against DePaul, while junior Johnathan Doering and sophomore Joe Cipriano turned in scores of 44. Montini senior Patrick Thompson shot a 45. DePaul defeated the Broncos 160-169. Earlier this week, Montini played in the Chicago Catholic League (CCL) Championship at Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont.



CHRIS FOX PHOTOS Rock Valley Publishing

## Busy week for Warriors

The Willowbrook boys golf team began a full week of action by competing in the 11-team West Chicago Wildcat Invitational at St. Andrews Golf and Country Club on Monday, Sept. 15. The Warriors placed sixth in the team standings of the invitational. Willowbrook seniors Jonnie Gosmire (above left) and Charlie Roelle (above - second from left) both shot 18-hole scores of 80 on the par-71 course. Senior Matt Ciesinski fired an 88 for the Warriors, while junior Kyle Yopchick carded a 90. On Sept. 16, Willowbrook defeated Hinsdale South 150-160 in a West Suburban Gold Conference dual meet at the Warriors' home venue—Sugar Creek Golf Course in Villa Park. Gosmire and senior Bob Biggs (above - third from left) both turned in nine-hole scores of 37 on the par-32 course. Roelle and senior Ben Rattana (above right) each contributed scores of 38 for the Warriors. Gosmire, Roelle, Biggs and Rattana are pictured during last week's victory over Hinsdale South. On Sept. 17, Downers Grove South defeated Willowbrook 132-146 in a conference dual meet at Sugar Creek. Roelle shot a nine-hole score of 34 for the Warriors. Yopchick fired a 36, while Biggs and Gosmire both turned in scores of 38. The Warriors, who finished their conference dual meet season with a 4-2 record, played their fourth competitive event in as many days on Sept. 18, when they battled at their annual Ryder Cup Quad at The Preserve at Oak Meadows in Addison. Each of the four teams at that event consisted of three two-player duos. Each duo played a two-man scramble. Addison Trail won the event with its total score of 109. Glenbard North (110) finished second, while Willowbrook (113) placed third. Morton (121) finished fourth. The Warriors' duo of Yopchick and junior Ryan Franz shot a nine-hole scramble score of 34 on the par-36 course. Biggs and Rattana teamed up to shoot a 36. Juniors Cooper Coulter and Leo Vassolo shot a 43. Earlier this week, Willowbrook competed in the West Suburban Gold Conference Meet at Prairie Bluff Public Golf Club in Crest Hill.