

Top DuPage newsmakers of 2006

Posted Friday, December 29, 2006

Imagine you are asked to draw a single face to represent 2006 in DuPage County.

Well, you say, it should reflect the incredible kindness of those who help neighbors in need, who put themselves on the line for others, who are willing to make unfathomable sacrifices to benefit us all.

Still, be careful how strong you carve those lines, you say, because the same face also must show the greed of some and the evil of others.

There should be a sense of joy and accomplishment around the eyes, of course, but they should show sadness and pain, too.

Should the mouth be curved in a smile for those who have won success and acceptance? In a frown for those who have come under fire and sometimes tilted at windmills?

And what of the forehead? Wrinkled with age and worry? Smooth with the promise of youth and hope?

Imagine you are asked to draw a single face to represent 2006 in DuPage County.

It can't be done, you say. For all of our similarities, it is often our differences that define us.

Here then, are just some of our Faces of 2006.

Maureen Hayden

Addison's Maureen Hayden, a 27-year member of Wood Dale's Veterans of Foreign Wars Tioga Post 2149, was sworn in as the new statewide president of the Ladies Auxiliary group on June 25. Hayden, who was 18 when she joined the auxiliary in 1979 after years in the Junior Girls Unit, is Post 2149's first woman to rise all the way to the top of the state's ranks.

Quin Barclay

The then-senior was crowned the 12th Mr. Wildcat at Community High School in West Chicago last March. He won over the crowd with not only his school spirit, but his wicked guitar skills.

Irene Bahr

The Wheaton attorney was installed president this year of the Illinois State Bar Association. Her ascension marks the third time in the state bar's 130-year history that a woman made it to the top spot.

Reid Colliander

The Wheaton youngster didn't allow treatments for a brain tumor to slow his spirit. Buoyed with help from a loyal team of buddies, he organized a series of events to help fund pediatric brain tumor research, raising more than \$2,000 with Reid's Lemon-Aid Stand.

Rudy Giuliani

The former New York City mayor breezed into Lisle this July, trying to pump some air into the gubernatorial campaign of Judy Baar Topinka. He couldn't get her elected, but the charismatic Republican charmed a crowd of first-responders attending a workshop at

Benedictine University.

Thomas Kim

As the pastor of Roselle United Methodist Church, he shaved his head to match 7-year-old church member Logan Davenport of Hanover Park. Kim promised the haircut if his congregation helped raise \$1,000 to help Logan's family purchase a trained dog that will help with the boy's autism and Down's syndrome therapy.

Jeannette Pawula

This Bloomingdale resident and former Rolling Meadows High School teacher made it to the final six on "The Bachelor: Rome" with Prince Lorenzo Borghese before she was sent home.

Mike Cass

Illinois Martial Arts Hall of Fame welcomed Lombard resident Mike Cass. He began his martial arts training in 1975 and is a seventh-degree black belt.

Michael Swanson Jr.

Michael Swanson Jr. of Lombard earned his Eagle Scout award in January from the Boy Scouts of America. For the service requirement, Swanson created a reflection garden at the Fountain of Life Church in Lombard. Swanson also served as Assistant Scoutmaster of Troop 202.

John McCain

The Arizona senator popped into Addison in late October, stumping for 6th District Congressional Republican candidate Peter Roskam. The Vietnam War hero remained coy about his presidential aspirations.

Jeff and Tyanna Cannata

The Wayne Township couple were the lead plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit involving 80 families with polluted wells. The lawsuit filed in April alleges vinyl chloride seeped from the former Mallard Lake landfill nearby and into the aquifer.

Michael J. Fox

The Hollywood actor came to Wheaton in October to help out 6th District congressional candidate Tammy Duckworth's campaign and advocate on behalf of embryonic stem cell research. Fox, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, said embryonic stem cell research is a nonpartisan issue and urged the government to fund it.

Michael Formento

The Glen Ellyn businessman is back on the DuPage County Forest Preserve District commission after winning in the November election. Formento, who last served on the commission in 2002, spearheaded an effort to save the McKee house from demolition. The 1930s structure housed the district's first superintendent.

Patrick Collins

The Lisle native and Benet Academy grad led the team of U.S. attorneys who took on Illinois powerbroker George Ryan and won. The former governor was convicted in April of corruption charges.

Henry Hyde

After decades in power, the renowned Wood Dale Republican is calling it quits. Hyde was first sworn into office in 1975. The iconic U.S. representative and chairman of the International Relations Committee leaves a colorful legacy including quarterbacking the impeachment of President Clinton, and supporting an assault weapons ban.

Jesse Alcozer

The Elmhurst resident suffered back-to-back blows in late 2005 when his son, Christopher, died in the Iraq war and his rental house burned down. To make matters worse, protesters picketed Christopher's funeral. Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn helped organize a press conference for the Alcozer family in early January, appealing to the public for assistance to help them get back on their feet after the fire.

J. Peter Sartain

The Joliet Diocese's new spiritual leader was welcomed in a June ceremony amid much pomp and circumstance. The bishop told his enthusiastic congregation that "The task for us is to give ourselves to God." Sartain was born in Memphis and last served as bishop of Little Rock, Ark.

Peter Roskam

The Republican attorney from Wheaton gathered a grassroots following that pushed him over the top in the tightly fought 6th Congressional District race. Roskam's hard work and polished presence allowed him to hold fast against a Democratic tide, providing one of the few GOP bright spots on election night. The state senator will be sworn in Jan. 4, replacing his hero, outgoing U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde.

Tammy Duckworth

The wounded Iraq war helicopter pilot won many hearts in the 6th Congressional District but not enough to buck a longstanding Republican trend. Democrat Duckworth, who lost both legs in a grenade attack, received 49 percent of the votes to state Sen. Peter Roskam's 51 percent. She'll still be in the public eye, however. In November, Gov. Rod Blagojevich appointed the Hoffman Estates resident as his new director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Gwen Henry

The former Wheaton mayor, county board member and county forest preserve commissioner officially became county treasurer on Dec. 1 when she replaced John Novak, who retired from the position after 29 years.

Jeff Redick

One of the newly elected DuPage County Board members, Redick, a political newcomer, upset longtime District 2 representative Irene Stone during the Republican primary. The 37-year-old attorney from Elmhurst then bested Democrat Elizabeth "Liz" Chaplin during November's general election.

Robert Heap

Heap bid farewell to the county board seat he held for 16 years — but not without some controversy. Some municipal leaders got upset when they learned the DuPage County Emergency Telephone System Board that Heap chaired wanted to hire him as a project manager. The 50-year-old Naperville attorney said he turned down the offer, which would have paid him \$750,000 in salary and benefits over four years.

Grant Eckhoff

The county board member lost the GOP primary to newcomer Jerry "JR" McBride only to edge out a long list of hopefuls and be placed on the fall ballot to fill a vacancy created by the death of former county board member John Noel. Then the 47-year-old Wheaton attorney completed the political comeback by defeating Democratic challenger Richard Dunn during the general election.

William Maio

The former DuPage County board member had his name immortalized in his hometown of

Itasca. Maio's ex-colleagues on the county board in August agreed to rename a stretch of Prospect Avenue as the Honorary William J. Maio, Jr. Highway. The public recognition for the 61-year-old came nearly a year since he resigned his elected post to become a county employee. He works in the circuit court clerk's office as its chief compliance officer.

Michael Connelly

He successfully made the transition from Lisle Village Board to the county board by narrowly winning a four-way District 5 race in the GOP primary. But with Joe Wozniak coming in second place to Connelly by only 69 votes, Wozniak demanded and was granted a recount. It didn't change the outcome of the election. Connelly officially took office in December.

Irene Stone

After losing the Republican primary to a political newcomer, longtime county board member Irene Stone shocked the GOP faithful by endorsing Democrat Elizabeth "Liz" Chaplin for her former District 2 seat. However, it didn't help Chaplin enough to overcome Jeff Redick during the general election. Stone officially retired on Dec. 1 from the county board seat she held since 1986.

Ashlee Simpson

Fans wondered if she'd make good on her promise to milk a cow at the annual DuPage County Fair last July. She didn't deliver, but put on a solid show.

John Madormo

This North Central College professor sold a script for his film, "Coach Dracula," last fall to Dog & Rooster Productions in Studio City, Calif. Though no release date is set, pre-production was scheduled to start last November.

Gary Sinise

The star of "CSI: New York" traveled to Wheaton last summer and played in the pouring rain with his Lt. Dan Band at Cantigny Park. The show raised money for the not-for-profit Operation Support Our Troops Illinois, Inc.

Open Road Toll lanes

Love the convenience or hate the construction, which started early this year, this major change on the tollways affected thousands of DuPage County drivers every day.

Hailey Zito

At age 3, she was named the overall winner of New Star Discovery's Most Beautiful Baby regional contest last March at Stratford Square Mall in Bloomingdale. The event was held in 35 cities across the country.

Jesse McCartney

After high fan demand, the pop prince performed for the second consecutive year at the 2006 DuPage County Fair. Although his show did not sell out, fair organizers are not ruling out booking him again in 2007.

Cory Viger

The Bloomingdale resident won \$1,500 on Friday the 13th last October after entering a drawing held by Stark Realty at Bloomingdale's annual Septemberfest. He won just in time to repair his home's deteriorating roof.

Laura Martindale

When the Roselle woman graduated from Lake Park High School last June, she asked for books in lieu of gifts. She received approximately 120 and then donated all of them to not-for-profit Metropolitan Family Services in Wheaton.

George Bakalis

The strict but compassionate circuit judge stood out again for being fair, independent and well-versed in the law. He is presiding over several high-profile cases, including that involving convicted killer Brian Dugan for the 1983 murder of 10-year-old Jeanine Nicarico of Naperville.

Robert Berlin

The prosecutor had a busy year with several high-profile cases, including two murder trials, while also supervising the juvenile division. His name often comes up as a state's attorney hopeful should his boss, Joe Birkett, retire.

Joe Birkett

The DuPage County state's attorney celebrated a milestone with his 25-anniversary as a prosecutor. He lost a bid for lieutenant governor on a ticket with running mate Judy Baar Topinka, but won points with his party for answering their call to help. Midway into his third term, he may announce next summer if he'll seek a fourth term in 2008.

Joseph Imesch

Despite turmoil over his handling of sex abuse allegations, the Joliet Diocese bishop left content with his management during the past 26 years. He announced his retirement in May while introducing his successor, Bishop James Peter Sartain, who had overseen the much quieter Little Rock, Ark. diocese for the past six years.

Bruce Malkin

The West Chicago police commander led the DuPage County major crimes task force through its busiest year while investigating murder and mayhem.

Melanie McCarthy

Shannon Derrick

After her daughter's new iPod Nano was stolen June 6, Aurora mother Melanie McCarthy sued the family of the girl who had borrowed it to get them to pay up. The highly publicized dispute — which nearly landed on the Judge Judy TV show— was settled out of court Nov. 9 when the other side donated a used iPod.

Mark Prior

Though it was far short of a perfect game, a Will County judge gave this Cubs pitcher a win in a May 4 ruling in a lawsuit related to a chaotic autograph-signing event in Naperville that left a few kids in tears. The judge ordered Prior to pay back nearly half of his earnings to Just Ducky Too for unsigned merchandise, but he sided with the pitcher that he wasn't a poor sport and never agreed to all that the store hyped.

Ralph Russo

This Bartlett man inspired thousands during the August PGA tournament in Medinah for his courage fighting Lou Gehrig's disease while working tirelessly as the event's marketing director.

Bob Thomas

A Kane County jury awarded this Illinois Supreme Court chief justice \$7 million in a Nov. 14 verdict in his libel trial against the Kane County Chronicle and former columnist Bill Page. Thomas also is a Wheaton attorney.

Judge Perry Thompson

The DuPage County judge's July 25 ruling in an Addison murder trial so infuriated

prosecutors, they began replacing him in more than 40 percent of the felony cases assigned to his courtroom. A Jan. 2 hearing is set to determine if they overstepped their authority.

Michael A. Wolfe

The DuPage County criminal prosecution chief put serial killer Paul Runge on death row after a six-week trial. Wolfe received a national award for his dedication and integrity. In addition, the career prosecutor secured lengthy prison terms for a violent Warrenville home invasion. He also is handling the prosecutions of two heartbreaking crimes: Brian Dugan for the 1983 Jeanine Nicarico murder and Neil Lofquist, who is accused of killing his daughter in Clarendon Hills.

Ann Banfield

Baylie Owen

Glenbard East High School teacher Ann Banfield helps raise money for research into pseudomotor cerebri, a rare brain disease that affects her and friend Baylie Owen. Owen started a Web site where she could sell beaded bracelets she makes to fund research.

Richard Gaines

Professional dancer Richard Gaines, who broke into the business in Michael Jackson's "Thriller" video, choreographed a routine based on that dance for the marching band at Glenbard East High School. In just two days, he taught the band how to dance Thriller-style in formation and on the football field.

Alan Bolds

Wheaton Councilman Alan Bolds bested his peers during the annual DuPage County Mayor's hog and cow calling competition, claiming top honors in the hog calling while Warrenville Alderman Matthew Wiesbrock was the first-ever recipient of the cow-calling honor.

Ann Riebock

New Glen Ellyn Elementary District 41 superintendent Ann Riebock submitted a \$37,325 bill to the district to cover her moving costs, including her Realtor's commission. Riebock subsequently withdrew her request after it was made public and returned the reimbursement.

Wajeesh Bakhsh

Stephen Tillman

Glenbard West High School classmates and friends Wajeesh Bakhsh and Stephen Tillman both scored a perfect 36 when they took the ACT test last spring.

Shawn Finnen

Meg Sisk

Jenny Henske

Francisco "Franke" Vazquez

Matthew DuBois

A group of students at the Technology Center of DuPage last spring took top honors in the nation for their ability to cook outstanding food under pressure, winning more than \$300,000 in scholarships to culinary schools. The team included Shawn Finnen, Carol Stream, Glenbard North; Meg Sisk, Lombard, Glenbard East; Jenny Henske, Carol Stream, Glenbard North; Francisco "Franke" Vazquez, Carol Stream, Wheaton North; and Matthew DuBois, Woodridge, Downers Grove South.

Erin Pelz

Zahir Wahali

Michelle Jacobs

Three Glenbard North High School students went to the U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala., last summer after their essays on the privatization of space travel were selected from entries submitted across the nation. Erin Pelz, Zahir Wahali and Michelle Jacobs won all-expense paid trips to spend a week at the facility.

Kristen Bowen

Bowen, 14, of Villa Park, was struck and killed by a train in February trying to cut over the railroad tracks instead of walking at a crossing. Since Kristen's death, her father, Ray Zukowski of Lombard, has mounted a regional railroad safety campaign that's led to increased awareness of the issue and a commitment by two villages to build safety fences along nearby Union Pacific rails. In Villa Park, Jim Davis teamed with Village President Joyce Stuepegia to push for railroad safety. Davis' work led to his appointment in November as a Villa Park trustee.

Jason McDermott

Jason McDermott, a convicted felon with ties to Villa Park Village President Joyce Stuepegia, was arrested during a traffic stop in late August after showing state police an ID that said he was the deputy mayor of Villa Park. No such position exists. What does exist is McDermott's history of latching onto politicians, impersonating them and trying to take their money. And, according to many witnesses, McDermott ran Stuepegia's campaign under a fake name and later pretended to be her son, Sean.

John Correll

John Correll began his new job as superintendent of Salt Creek Elementary District 48.

Michael Fortner

Fortner spent his last year as West Chicago mayor by shepherding several major companies into the DuPage Technology Park and overseeing the last stages of thorium removal from the city. In November, voters made his bid for 95th District representative successful. Fortner resigned Dec. 4. A special election in April will determine who will replace him.

David Sabathne

Sabathne, executive director of the West Chicago Chamber of Commerce, took a controversial step this year by organizing a trip by several West Chicago businesses to China. During the trip, to take place in early 2007, representatives will investigate ways to enrich their businesses using Chinese labor or by tapping into the country's growing markets. Sabathne believes local companies must meet the growing Chinese phenomenon, rather than be overcome by it.

Tony Reyes

Reyes, president of the West Chicago Community High School District 94 school board, attempted to reduce a \$1.4 million deficit this year with daring decisions. Under heavy fire from the community and teachers' union, Reyes' board moved to fire staff and increase class sizes to reduce expenses. In all, 13 teachers, six assistant coach positions, and one nurse were fired.

Robert LaDeur

Warrenville Police Chief LaDeur announced his resignation in August after 29 years of work in the city's police department. LaDeur, chief since 1985, was only the fifth person to hold the position since Warrenville's incorporation. He will step down on Jan. 3, making way for Elmhurst Detective Commander Ray Turano, who has 30 years of law enforcement experience and was named to the post in November after a four-month national search.

Bob Adams

Dirk Enger

As co-directors of the Midwest Shelter for Homeless Veterans, Adams and Enger spent many months finding an appropriate location for a shelter that would serve a large portion of the homeless population. They testified at both the national and state level for funding needed to open the shelter, and convinced the necessary people that their goal was worthy. The shelter is set to open by the end of 2006.

Lori Most

Some 13 years after she was killed by a train while taking a shortcut home from school, the Wheaton Park District and other units of local government built a pedestrian bridge over the tracks to make sure it would never happen again. The bridge will bear Most's name.

Wheaton-area leadership

Just about every leader of public bodies either retired, announced their retirement or resigned in 2006. Mayor Jim Carr, Wheaton Warrenville Unit District 200 Superintendent Gary Catalani and Wheaton Park District Executive Director Rob Robinson all announced they were cashing it in at some point in 2006.

Brad Ogilvie

Brad Ogilvie founded the Mosaic Initiative in Wheaton with Cathy Hetrick, director of the group. Their goal is to promote measures and practices that prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. They held the first World AIDS Day prayer breakfast Dec. 1 in Wheaton.

Glennette Tilley Turner

The well-known authority on the underground railroad became Wheaton's Citizen of the Year for 2006. She also published a new book, "An Apple for Harriet Tubman."

Tim Hetzner

As president of Lutheran Church Charities in Addison, Tim Hetzner oversees an agency dedicated to assisting those in need. He is the videotaped presenter of Cover to Cover Bible Study, available across the U.S. at churches and via the Internet from September to May. He includes video that he taped while in Israel in August 2006.

Steven Bob

The rabbi celebrated 25 years at Congregation Etz Chaim in Lombard.

Hugh Hill

The Naperville resident and 50-year member of Ss. Peter and Paul Church shared his views about how his 34 years as political editor of Channel 7 news affected his faith during a program in February at his church.

Ruth La Sure

Barb Retelny

La Sure, of West Chicago, and Retelny, of Glen Ellyn, traveled to Uganda to learn about the needs of the people and report back to churches here.

Alice Teisan

The Wheaton resident helped provide bicycles for Hurricane Katrina victims as executive director of His Wheels International.

Olive Fleming Liefeld

The Lindenhurst woman joined others from Wheaton College in January for a preview of "End of the Spear," a full-length movie about her first husband, Pete Fleming, who was murdered while serving as a missionary in Ecuador 50 years ago. Three of the five slain missionaries, Jim Elliott, Nate Saint and Ed McCully, attended Wheaton College.

Alexa Scimeca

The 14-year-old Addison girl placed first in the ladies division of the 2006 Morges Cup, a figure skating competition in Switzerland.

Gary Schira

Bloomington Police Chief Gary Schira retired after 26 years and took the top cop job in Batavia. Veteran commander Tim Goergen was tapped to replace Schira in May.

John Geils

Bensenville Village President John Geils racked up nearly \$80,000 in legal bills for the libel lawsuit he filed against his mayoral opponent, John Wassinger, the day before the April 2005 election. Some of those bills were paid by the village itself until legal experts advised Bensenville officials that using public funds might not hold up in court if challenged.

John Pohl

Michael Campbell

Wood Dale police officers Pohl and Campbell received one of the department's highest honors on June. They were honored with the Wood Dale Police Department Lifesaving Award for their role in an April 23 house fire. Both officers responded at about 5:45 a.m., seconds before Wood Dale firefighters, to a house fire at 185 Forest Glen Road. Homeowner Christine Fintikis, her two adult daughters and the family dog had climbed out a second-story window and onto the roof. Pohl and Campbell rescued an elderly grandmother from the basement.

Kathie Pierce

The former special education teacher and the Bensenville high school's current principal accepted an offer by the Fenton High School District 100 school board to replace superintendent Alf Logan at the end of the school year.

Glen Ellyn dogs

Glen Ellyn Park District officials tightened the leash on four-legged animals after an aggressive dog bit and injured another at the dog park, located at the intersection of Spring Avenue and Route 53. Although many objected to new rules, which included a one-strike-and-you're-out policy and a non-resident fee of \$175 for the first dog and \$50 for the second, board members stood their ground.

Tom Roman

Roselle Police Chief Tom Roman retired in April to embark on a new career in commercial real estate for a Glendale Heights firm. He was replaced by James Kruger in July. Kruger came to Roselle from Winfield, where he had been police chief for the past two years.

Bob O'Connor

Itasca Sgt. Bob O'Connor, a 25-year veteran of the force, took over as deputy chief in October. He replaced former Deputy Chief Rusty Votava, who resigned in June.

Tim Grasso

Hanover Park resident Tim Grasso, owner of the Pizza Cottage in Roselle, lowered his cholesterol 14 points, from 207 to 193, in just a month by adding three-quarters of a cup of oatmeal to his daily food consumption. He took the "Quaker Oatmeal Smart Heart Challenge"

and became one of less than a dozen challenge-takers nationwide who were contacted by Quaker Oats after hearing their success stories. He taped a commercial for the company.

Harry Paney

Harry Paney, an 80-year-old Itasca resident, spent more than a hundred hours taking photographs of every Itasca police department employee. The photographs were later turned into the department's new 2006 Cop Cards.

Ramya Kukkapalli

Ramya Kukkapalli, weighing 7 pounds and measuring 19 inches, was born around 6:45 p.m. Tuesday at the Mobil gas station at Bloomingdale Road and North Avenue in Glendale Heights. Her parents, Shyam and Sreelakshmi Kukkapalli of Addison, were on their way to the hospital, but the baby couldn't wait.

Grace and Sireny

Grace and Sireny, Itasca's famous swans, did not produce offspring this year. Their caretakers at Spring Brook Nature Center said the act of mating itself wasn't the problem. They suspect that fertility could be an issue.

Denise Hibbard

Hibbard, a junior at Lake Park High School in Roselle, became Roselle's 2006 Rose Queen in May. The 16-year-old from Roselle started flying airplanes in her early teens. She has been to Civil Air Patrol boot camp and plans to attend the University of Illinois and major in Aviation Human Factors.

Candace Gadomski

Gadomski, a guidance counselor and dance team coach at Lake Park High School in Roselle, was inducted into the Illinois Drill Team Association Hall of Fame in April. The Carol Stream woman was inducted because she has been an active member of the association for more than 10 years and has gone above and beyond in terms of service to the organization.

Robert Krilich Sr.

Krilich was released from prison after serving nine years for a federal racketeering and bribery conviction. The courts found in 1995 that he rigged a hole-in-one contest at Krilich's Country Lakes Golf Course in Naperville to deliver \$40,000 to then-Oakbrook Terrace Mayor Richard Sarallo's son. The money was a bribe to help secure \$135 million in tax-exempt loans to finance the never-completed Royce Renaissance development.

Aiham Alsammarae

The Oak Brook man was named electricity minister in the interim Iraqi government, but was imprisoned when he was accused of "financial mismanagement." His family says he was imprisoned for urging the Iraqi government to find peace with minority groups in the country.

Tiger Woods

One of the few professional golfers whose name non-golfers will recognize won the PGA Championship at Medinah.

Allie Pleiter

The Villa Park mom released her seventh book, a Christian chick-lit novel called "My So-Called Love Life."

Katherine McDonald

The daughter of Mike and Christine McDonald of Carol Stream ushered in 2006 at Central DuPage Hospital — the first baby born in the county this year.

Immortalized

The fiberglass pooch, part of the "Lombard Unleashed" public art display was first stolen from his spot in front of Lyon Foot and Ankle Clinic, then returned, then smashed.

Dr. Doug Johnson

The neurosurgeon on staff at Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield and a Marine reservist who volunteered to go to Iraq convinced the hospital to donate \$25,000 worth of medical supplies to the Iraqi people.

Hersh and Mike Khetarpal

The couple from unincorporated Carol Stream has spent much of the past year trying to convince DuPage County leaders that their home doubles as a Hindu spiritual teaching center. They are still waiting for a final ruling.

Laura Ramey

The Carol Stream woman's house was struck by lightning late on Memorial Day and caught fire hours after firefighters forced the family to seek shelter elsewhere. Her family is still sharing a Glen Ellyn hotel room while the house is rebuilt.

Chris Kaucnik-Syphens

She opened Heidi's Brooklyn Deli this summer. It's Winfield's first new town center business in decades, in the village's first town center building development in decades.

Frank Saverino

This summer, the Carol Stream trustee announced his bid to replace longtime (and possibly retiring) Mayor Ross Ferraro. Ferraro has said he's "98 percent sure" he won't run again.

Yvonne Petit

The Carol Stream woman organized a second annual 5k run in honor of her teenage son, who drowned last year in a retention pond after an underage drinking party. She's organized a local group to keep teens away from alcohol.

Jerrod Goebel

The Carol Stream firefighter returned to work this spring nearly a year after a Memorial Day crash that killed his wife and left him in a coma.

Mike Wenz

Jake Lindhorst

The two DuPage County men were cited in the 2007 Guinness Book of World Records for visiting 30 Major League ballparks in 29 days.

Kristina Pszotka

In January, Pszotka, of Glen Ellyn, didn't mind getting her hands clammy and dirty as she became the Technology Center of DuPage's first female to compete in the Chi-Town Teardown Pit-Crew Competition in Chicago. The school, located in Addison, had four other students place ninth in the competition. Pszotka has dreams of becoming a mechanic.

Rob Federighi

Lights, Camera, Fraction, a math game show featuring Addison Trail students, was created by Rob Federighi, an Addison Trail graduate, as a pilot show. The Jeopardy-style show featured former students Jae Tae Lee, Greg Formosa and Katie Pope. Lee won. No word yet if the show aired on either the Discovery Channel, Learning Channel or the Game Show Network.

Rebekah Stathakis

Stathakis, an Addison resident, wished upon a star as she headed to Florida along with dozens of others to vie for the Disney Teacher of the Year Award. Forty-four teachers nationwide were nominated for the award. Stathakis, a Spanish teacher at Butler Junior High School in Oak Brook won \$10,000 in cash and \$5,000 for the school.

Linda and Mike Ruggero

The Ruggeros had more junk than they had bargained for after more than 20 years of accumulating dressers, clothes and other stuff in their garage in Addison. Nonetheless, they won the NBC5 garage makeover contest where volunteer workers organize their garage and show the family how to keep it clean.

Casey and Fran Gaik

After claiming harassment by police and village officials, the Gaiks won a \$2 million lawsuit settlement with the village of Oak Brook after filing the suit in 2005. Named as defendants were Sgt. Randy Mucha, former village prosecutor Joan Mullins, the police department and the village. Now the Gaiks, who even told their story to Geraldo Rivera on Geraldo-at-Large, are trying to move out of town.

Wilbur

Four year-old Wilbur, a Maltese, was put to rest four days after a coyote streaked through his Glen Ellyn yard. When Wilbur's owner Chuck Stefani came into the scene, the coyote dropped him in the bushes and ran off.

Kerin Motsinger

The Park View Elementary School teacher was speechless after she learned she won the \$25,000 Milken National Educator Award at the Glen Ellyn school. One hundred teachers nationwide receive the award. Motsinger was one of two in Illinois.

Five Corners

The long-awaited and long-delayed Five Corners construction project in Glen Ellyn began and was completed in 2006. The area now serves as a traditional four-way intersection and village officials now call it Stacy's Corners.

Robert Mullany

Mullany, 37, an 11-year veteran of the Glendale Heights Police Department, was diagnosed with stomach cancer in January and passed away in July. He is survived by his wife, Stephanie, and six children ages 3 to 14.

Gary Webster

After 20 years on the job, former Glen Ellyn Village Manager Gary Webster, 60, retired in June. Current Village Manager Robin Weaver took over Webster's gig after 15 years in Roselle.

Daisy and Jesse

Hurricane Katrina survivors Daisy and Jesse, both 2, traveled all the way from Louisiana and ended up at the Glen Ellyn Animal Hospital along with 60 others. All dogs found their happy endings once they were placed in foster homes.