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Issue 26

FBLA Does Well at State

by Elizabeth Bernabe
News writer

On March 25-26, LHS members of Future Business Leaders of America finished successfully in state for the second year in a row. The FBLA State Leadership Conference in Decatur, IL offered 28 Lemont competitors 23 categories to compete in.

Competing with over 1,000 other students from various chapters in Illinois, members participated in activities and events dealing with business, with Seniors Danny Banas and Krystian Paszek both winning state championships for the second time.

FBLA co-sponsor John Aspel revealed, "We were pretty happy." The club did better this year, getting 9 top-five finishes compared with only 4 from last year.

FBLA worked hard to acquire the wins. FBLA President senior Danny Banas said, "[FBLA has] been preparing for this for 3 or 4 months now."

Aspel added, "[FBLA co-sponsor Bill Mondrella and I] offer [students]...study sessions, if they choose to... we also put all of the chapter exams on our local chapter website."

When asked about the best part of the competition senior Damen McDermott, who competed in the Accounting category, happily replied "probably seeing different people and making new friends."

Banas stated, "I'm ecstatic. We got five first place finishes...in our third year of having this chapter...It's just a great success."



FBLA state competitors

photos courtesy of Google

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TOM-TOM STAFF

News:

Dylan Blaha
Brittany Baldwin
Caroline Celis
MorganMcPartland
Erin O'Connor
Elizabeth Bernabe

Features:

Andrea Earnest
Rene Tovar
Lindsay Simonetta
Maddy George
Michael Gaytan
Bridget Carr
Katelyn Bittke
Mallory Christine

Editorials:

Kelly Lyons
Annie Lillwitz
Maribeth Van Hecke

Design Assistants:

Mary McKevitt
Alexis Caspers
Haley Haase

Features Editor:
Andrea Earnest

Sports Editor:
Gregg Husa

News Editor:
Dylan Blaha

Design Editor:
Rachel Hunter

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Kelly Lyons

Journalism Advisor:
Sean Clark

Head Editor:
Dylan Blaha

Sports:
Gregg Husa
Kyle Griffin
Ryan Peraino
Ian Stratta





Illinois Abolishes Death Penalty

by Dylan Blaha
Head Editor

On Wednesday, March 9, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed legislation to abolish the state's death penalty. This news left some feeling victorious, while others showed great dissatisfaction.

"I have concluded that our system of imposing the death penalty is inherently flawed," stated the governor after the signing. Quinn, a long supporter of the death penalty, recently expressed concern over the threat of executing innocents on death row.

Since the nationwide reinstitution of the death penalty in 1977, Illinois has executed 12 men, while exonerating an astounding 13 men via DNA evidence.

"Since our experience has shown that there is no way to design a perfect death penalty system, free from the numerous flaws that can lead to wrongful convictions or discriminatory treatment, I have concluded that the proper course of action is to abolish it," Quinn said.

Risk of Killing Innocents

Since the death penalty's second coming in 1977, Illinois has exonerated more previously-convicted men than it has put to death, including Anthony Porter.

In 1999, Porter, convicted for a double homicide in 1982, was less than 48 hours away from execution when the Illinois Supreme Court granted him a reprieve.

Due to his low IQ, the court initially gave the reprieve to provide time to explore the question of Porter's intelligence and comprehension of the consequences. However, during that time period, Northwestern University Professor David Protess, private investigator Paul Ciolino and a team of journalism students investigated the case and established Porter's absolute innocence.

Gary Gauger, another wrongfully-convicted man, spent 20 months in county jail and 22 months in

"I have concluded that our system of imposing the death penalty is inherently flawed,"

Statesville prison before being freed of all charges.

After learning of the death penalty's abolition in Illinois, Gauger told the Northwest Herald, "The greatest benefit is that it places a higher value on human life and demonstrates that as a society, we can aspire for higher morality than an individual might be able to muster on their own."

According to Innocenceproject.org, "Seventeen people have been proven innocent and exonerated by DNA testing in the United States after serving time on death row. They were convicted in 11 states and served

a combined 209 years in prison – including 187 on death row – for crimes they didn't commit."

Moratorium

More than a decade ago, former Illinois Governor George Ryan placed a moratorium on executions out of concern that innocent people could be put to death by a justice system that had already wrongly condemned 13 men.

After placing this moratorium, or legally authorized postponement, Ryan stated that although he was a longtime supporter of the death penalty, the rising number of exonerations changed his mind.

Before leaving office in 2003, Ryan placed a "blanket commutation" on all 167 death row inmates' sentences, converting them all to life without parole. Much like Quinn, Ryan received great favor and opposition for this decision.

Abolitionists express support

The American Civil Liberties Union swiftly supported Quinn's recent actions to ban the death penalty, calling it a "historic stand."

"Executions in this country are carried out as part of an unequal system of justice, in which innocent people are too often sentenced to death and decisions about who lives and who dies are largely dependent upon the skill of their attorneys, the race of their victim,

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their socioeconomic status and where the crime took place,” John Holdridge, director of the ACLU Capital Punishment Project, said in a statement issued after Quinn’s announcement.

“Such arbitrary and discriminatory administration of the death penalty, which comes at an enormous financial cost to taxpayers, is the very definition of a failed system, and the state of Illinois is to be commended for ending it.”

Fifteen off death row

In Nov. 2009, jurors condemned Brian Dugan to death for the rape and murder of Tom Nicarico’s young daughter. At the time, Nicarico believed his family’s lengthy wait for justice finally ended.

However, after Quinn signed new legislation to abolish the death penalty, Dugan’s sentence was commuted to life without parole. Nicarico, among others, met this news with anger.

“It’s not just the murder of my daughter,” he told the *Chicago Tribune*. “He murdered two other people’s daughters and attacked others. This man earned it, and he’s not the only one on death row who earned it.”

Nicarico was not the only person to treat the death penalty’s abolition with distaste. Edward Tenney, who killed 63-year-old Karen Bond’s son Jerry Weber in 1992, also faced the death penalty before his sentence was commuted.

“I was really looking forward to sitting in the front row while they executed [Tenney],” Bond stated. “Now the taxpayers of Illinois have to pay his room and board.”

Andrew Urdiales, one of the 14 men cleared from death row, was convicted and sentenced to death in 2004 in the shooting and stabbing of a 21-year-old Hammond woman. Although he no longer faces the death penalty in Illinois, he is currently on trial for the deaths of five California women.

Although Dugan, Tenney and Urdiales, all convicted murderers, had their death sentences commuted, they still face life in prison without parole. They obviously deserve punishment for their crimes. The biggest remaining question: Is life without parole enough?

Opposition

While many abolitionists and exonerated former inmates support the ending of Illinois’ death penalty, several prosecutors and the Fraternal Order of Police spent great time lobbying to keep it. According to them, reforms passed after Ryan’s moratorium improved the system and they believe the threat of execution deterred crime.

State FOP president, Ted Street, thinks execution should remain a potential punishment in “extreme cases, such as the killing of a police officer or a child. Street also argued that the threat of the death penalty helped police officers obtain a suspect’s cooperation.

“The criminal, when they know their cooperation in an investigation will yield that case not being forwarded to the death penalty, they might be more cooperative. And we’ve seen that many times,” Street told CNN.com.

Besides Street, state Sen. William Haine opposed repeal; the Democrat said he wanted Quinn to push for a statewide debate and a referendum voted on by all citizens.

“This removes a remedy of the people of Illinois for great and evil acts of a unique kind: wanton cruelty, terrorism, rape and murder, the butchery of small children, mass murder,” Haine told CNN. “It removes a remedy for the community to seek the penalty of death in which someone forfeits one’s life for these great wrongs committed to innocent people.”



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Future Impact

Rick Prangen, an LHS Social Studies teacher, told the Tom-Tom that he finds it hard to decide whether Quinn made the correct decision. "I've gone back and forth... Anytime you remove something like that, the option goes away completely," he said.

Prangen also acknowledged that prosecutors already complained about the abolition because it "hampers their ability to get convictions." Just as police officers threaten suspects with the death penalty to elicit confessions, prosecutors use it to force defendants to make plea bargains.

"I think an initial effect is the decrease in plea bargains," Prangen said, "Which means there will be more trials. It might make prosecutor's lives more difficult."

Many Illinois Republicans plan on introducing legislation to reinstate the death penalty for the "worst of the worst." One Republican, State Sen. Kirk Dillard, stated that he has already submitted legislation to return capital punishment.

According to Dillard, a majority of Illinoisans still believe the death penalty should be used for the worst in society.

"I think a compromise needs to be made to satisfy both sides," Prangen said. "However, it depends on how we define the 'worst of the worst.' The question is, what societal value do we use to decide that?"



This combination of undated photos provided by the Illinois Department of Corrections shows the last 15 inmates on the state's death row. Illinois abolished the death penalty Wednesday, March 9, 2011 and Gov. Pat Quinn commuted the sentences of all 15 inmates, who will now serve life in prison with no hope of parole. The inmates are, top from left: Rodney Adkins, Teodoro Baez, Dion Banks, Joseph Bannister, David Damm; middle from left: Brian Dugan, Eric Hanson, Anthony Mertz, Gary Pate, Daniel Ramsey; bottom from left: Paul Runge, Cecil Sutherland, Edward Tenney, Andrew Urdiales, Ricardo Harris.

Editorials

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So You Wanna Be the Next

by Kelly Lyons
Editorials Editor

“Miss Jail?”

Pageant queens are typically hardworking, poised people often interested in scholarship and helping others. So you would think that convicted killers wouldn't be given the chance to enter the pageant circuit, right?

Wrong. Prison beauty pageants have become more and more popular over the past few years. Women prisoners model clothing and swimsuits they are provided with and also participate in other events such as interviews and talent competitions. This may be normal protocol for any other pageant girl, but why are these criminals given the chance to shine?

According to aol.com, inmates at Recife prison in Brazil can enter to be one of twelve selected competitors in the “Miss Jail” pageant. The chosen contestants are judged on “beauty, general knowledge, and good behavior.” Sure, this is one way to attempt to reign in bad behavior behind bars. However, the winner is also awarded a \$1,000 cash prize.

Because most prisons run on taxpayers' money, giving that much money to a criminal is in poor judgment. It's almost as if the convicted women are being rewarded for breaking the law.

Although I can't vouch for how brutal jail is, I think it's safe to say that it's no walk in the park. However, the thing about jail is that each and prisoner earned her sentence. Why should these criminals

be given luxuries after committing some crime that gets them thrown behind bars in the first place?

As stated by aol.com, residents in Recife prison are troubled by daily violence and brutality. The pageants are apparently efforts to calm down some of the prisoners. However, instead of spending money on clothing and prizes, more funding could go toward prison guards and security. This way, prisoners would not be given perks they probably don't deserve.

Beauty pageants normally promote education, scholarship and service. Expanding the contests into jails sends a horrible message to girls everywhere. Winners of pageants are usually selected because they are good people who the judges believe will be a good influence and make changes in the world. These are traits that aren't typically exuded by many jailbirds.

Whether or not this trend will last, no one can tell. However, it's starting to become a bit troubling how fast this idea is spreading. Besides Brazil, prisons in Russia, Lithuania, Columbia and the city of Rio de Janeiro have followed suit with “Miss Jail” and have started holding their very own beauty pageants.

So if you ever end up in jail, let's just hope you're lucky enough to be imprisoned somewhere where you can be crowned the next “Miss Jail.”

Photos courtesy of Google



Feature 7

Too Cool to Win \$500?



by Maddy George
Features writer

Are you too cool to care? Are you sick of stereotypes and petty high school drama? Then express yourself in either written or video form and you could win big!

Moxie is hosting a contest in honor of those talented kids who are sick of negative influences in their lives and just want to express their uniqueness in a positive way. New Boyz is teaming up with Moxie to promote their new album “Too Cool to Care” and to celebrate the independence and creativity of kids around the country.

The contest will run from Apr. 4 to May 16 with winners being announced on May 22. A cash prize of \$500.00 will be awarded to each of the three winners of their specific category.

Since 1997, Moxie has been providing high schools across the nation with free music that teachers can include in their curriculum. They decided to team up with New Boyz, the band responsible for the 2009 hit song, “I’m a Jerk”. The duo is determined to spread the message that teens should embrace their own uniqueness to every high school across the country.

Moxie and New Boyz are not only promoting the contest, but promoting teens’ individuality and self-confidence as well.

So if you’re too cool to care about bullying, peer pressure, body image, underage drinking and violence, express how you feel in written and video form and send in your submissions at gomoxiefeedback@gmail.com



Photos courtesy of Google



LOCAL OPPORTUNITY Takes Off

by Mallory Christine
Features writer

A unique opportunity for high school students soars overhead!

A&M Aviation, an FAA certified flight school located at Clow Int'l Airport in Bolingbrook, is offering the grant for students to obtain a free Private Pilot's license. Acting as a contest, requirements are simple and surely worth the shot. Students interested must submit a winning essay and pass a physical exam for a Class III medical certificate.

On a frugal note, A&M and Clow's free grant is worth about \$5000, which will delight any students interested in getting their Private Pilot's license (and their parents too). Private Pilot's licenses will be obtainable at Bolingbrook's Clow Int'l Airport from June 1 until Aug. 31, 2011. Applications are available at www.aandmaviation.com.

But this golden opportunity for kids geeked up about aviation is just one of many.

The EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association), an organization that supports the "spirit of aviation" through various programs, sponsors one of Clow's pride and joys – the Young Eagles program. In Young Eagles, kids ages 8-17 can receive free airplane rides, courtesy of one of many FAA licensed pilots present. Held every second Saturday of the month from April to October, any children interested get to experience their world from up above.

Want other ways to land into aviation with a local edge? Bolingbrook's Clow Int'l Aiport is holding a 12th Annual Cavalcade of Planes on June 4 and 5, which gives families the opportunity to discover the world of flight for a cheap fee.

Sponsored by Bolingbrook, Clow's Cavalcade includes the various displayed planes and helicopters, Parachute Club of parachute jumpers, appearances from the EAA War Birds, restored WWI planes, beer garden, live music, food and more. Also included will be a photo contest which students can apply for at www.illinoisaviationmuseum.org.

Prizes for both the Private Pilot's license and photo contest will be given at the Cavalcade on June 5. For any other information, go to www.bbcLOWairport.com.

For the rare and the proud aviation geek, these opportunities are worth boarding for. Next up: working towards a Private Pilot's high school parking permit.



Photos courtesy of Google

See ad on next page

Feature 9

12th Annual CAVALCADE of Planes

At Bolingbrook's Clow International Airport
Sponsored by The Village of Bolingbrook

JUNE 4th & 5th
Bring the Family!



- ▶ Open for public display at 10am – 4pm
- ▶ Planes arriving in pattern for display starting at 9am with "War Birds" arrivals throughout the day
- ▶ Photo contest pictures on display – winners announced Sunday at 1pm (see website for details)
- ▶ Airplanes on display – Cessna, Piper, Diamond, Beechcraft, Cirrus, NEW Light-sport aircraft (LSA) on display
- ▶ See how inexpensive flying can be! First ever used plane display and sales
- ▶ Parachute Club jumps throughout both days
- ▶ Display at museum of WWII planes
- ▶ A&M Aviation flight training grant winner announced Sunday at 1:00 pm
- ▶ Restaurant open at 7am / Museum at 10am
- ▶ Food & refreshments starting at 11am.
- ▶ Beer Garden 11am – 5pm. Live music by the band – *Girl Next Door*.
- ▶ Vendor tents and much more!
- ▶ Cavalcade Entry is just \$3 – 18 and under just \$1 – children under 5 are FREE!

*GIRL
NEXT
DOOR*



Late 60s Vintage Authentic Huey Gunship Helicopter



For more information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Joe DePaulo at:

(630) 378.0479

www.bbolclowairport.com
www.illinoisaviationmuseum.org

Subject to weather participation in the event of inclement weather, it is at the discretion of Bolingbrook's Clow International Airport management to postpone any event.

Clow International Pkwy (just south of Boughton) • Bolingbrook, IL

Sports

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March

Madness

by Kyle Griffin
Sports writer

Another NCAA tournament is over after Connecticut defeated Butler in the national championship game making it one of the most unusual tournaments ever. A devastated Butler team was left in shock after losing its second consecutive NCAA championship game.

The Butler Bulldogs were the underdogs again this year, but that didn't stop them from returning to the final four. They made an incredible run upsetting top-seeded Pittsburgh in the 3rd round and defeating Florida in the Elite 8. Their underdog story left many fans in awe for the second year in a row.

The Connecticut Huskies won their first national title since 2004, making it coach Jim Calhoun's 3rd national title. The Huskies defeated some tough teams on the road to the final four including San Diego State and Arizona thanks to their key player Kemba Walker.

Walker was one of the hottest players in the tournament, averaging just over 23 points a game. "UConn would have never won the championship without Kemba," said college basketball fan, Mike Lambert.

As in every tournament, there were records set, Cinderella stories and upsets. Ohio State, the number one seed team, was defeated by Kentucky in the Sweet Sixteen. Ohio State wasn't the only number one seed to fall.

Kansas fell to VCU, the eleventh seed, in the Elite Eight, while Duke was defeated by Arizona in the Sweet Sixteen. The highlight of the tournament was VCU advancing to the Final Four.

According to ESPN.com, VCU was projected to lose their first game against Georgetown. However, after defeating Georgetown with ease, VCU went on to face higher seeded teams in all of their games. Although VCU lost in the semi final, they certainly exceeded expectations.

"VCU made watching the tournament interesting and exciting," said college basketball fan, Lukas Siliunas.

With all the crazy upsets, fans' brackets were made in to a disaster. Few were lucky enough to have a decent bracket filled out. "By the time the 2nd round was over, my bracket was a complete disappointment," said college basketball fan, Matt Black.

Speaking of disappointment, many fans were upset with how some things played out in the tournament. This was the first time the Final Four did not include a number one or two seed team. Most fans had these better teams going to the Final Four and "it was upsetting to watch a number one seeded team fall early in the tournament," said Lambert.

Until next year, UConn is the national champions of college basketball.



Photos courtesy of Google



Sports

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by Ian Stratta
Sports writer

Boys

Tennis Team

DOMINATES



The LHS boys tennis team added to its success this season last Tuesday with a win against TF South.

The varsity squad won each of its five matches of the day. Teams of senior Matt Andrejko and senior Jordan Houser, senior Dylan Matthews and junior Tom Folliard, and junior co-captains Ankit Amlani and Luke Wittingham all won their doubles matches. Also, junior co-captain Jon Pacheco and sophomore Alex Vasic each won their singles matches.

So far this season, the team has had its ups and downs. They only have a 4-4 overall record. However, they do have an impressive 2-0 conference record. The captains have about an average record. Pacheco (6-2) and Wittingham (2-0) have each done well while Amlani (3-4) and junior Josh Young (3-7) both have room for improvement.

Head coach Jon DeGuzman said, "I think our team is doing extremely well. We are currently on a four match winning streak."

Team captain, junior Jon Pacheco is not happy with how he, personally, has performed stating that he has not been, "playing the best that I know I could be." However, he is optimistic about the team's performance overall saying, "We have had some hard teams to go up against and we did our best and we learned what we have to do to improve."

DeGuzman added, "I'm very happy with how we are performing. However, we are always looking forward [to the end of the season] because we have sectionals and state then."

Tuesday marked a peak in the team's success, though the season has just begun; that leaves much room for improvement for a very young team.

Photos courtesy of Google

TF South