

## Press Clippings 12/08/2021

### ---Kane County Chronicle--- Ran on 12/07/2021 100 high school students' photos go on exhibit in Batavia

By Brenda Schory

Photos represent 10 themes – from nature to architecture



Linear Energy, a photo by Batavia High School senior Allison Treger will be one of 100 student photos in a free exhibition 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at the Batavia Fine Arts Centre, 1250 W. Wilson St., Batavia. (Provided)

BATAVIA – One hundred contest-winning photographs by Kane County high school art students will be on display in an exhibition from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at the Batavia Fine Arts Centre, 1250 W. Wilson St., Batavia.

The exhibition is free and open to the public.

The Kane County Regional Office of Education hosted the 10-week contest which began in September with different themes for each, spokesman Wyatt Murphy said.

The top 10 student photographs for each week's theme will be featured.

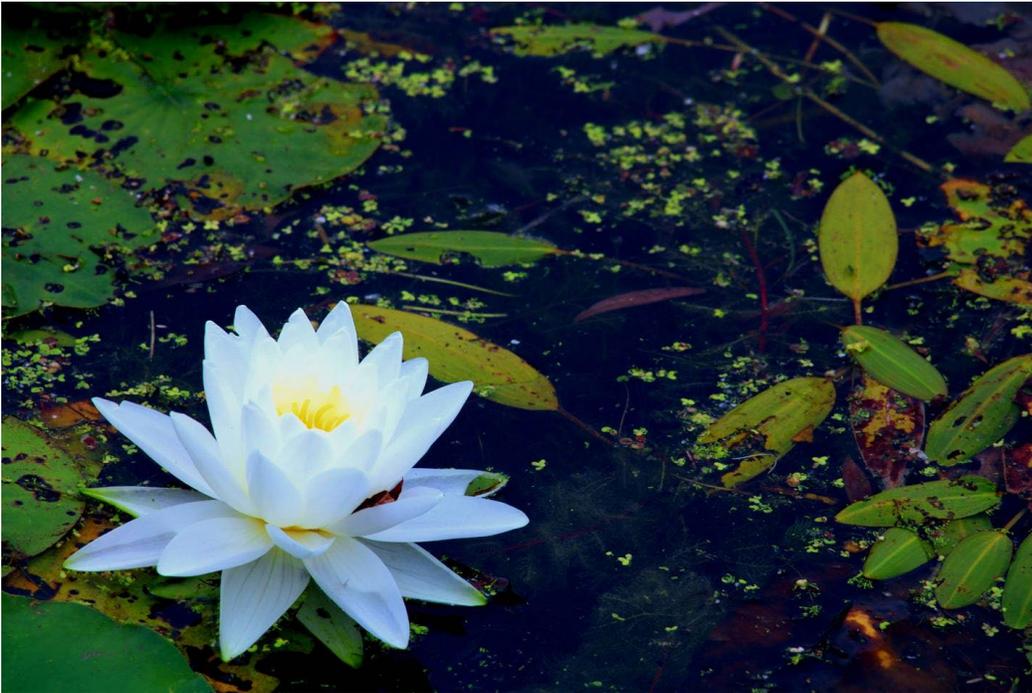
The themes were nature, architecture, still life, perspective, texture, use of light, portraits, holiday, photo manipulation and artist's choice, Murphy said.

The office received 180 entries each week of the contest, with the office's former spokeswoman Molly McQueeney judging, Regional Superintendent Patricia Dal Santo said. McQueeney has a graphics art background which qualified her to judge, Dal Santo said.

"We started it (the contest) a few years ago in an effort to recognize kids' photography," Dal Santo said. "It's grown every year."

Now the competition has been expanded to include private high schools, she said.

“Last year we did it virtually for the pandemic. We are very glad to be able to do an in-person one, though modified this year,” Dal Santo said, as those who attend are asked to wear masks. “And we served refreshments in past. We’re not going to this year.”



Water Lily, a photo by [South Elgin High School student Zuzanna Ratajczak](#), one of 100 student photos in a free exhibition 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at the Batavia Fine Arts Centre, 1250 W. Wilson St., Batavia. (Provided)

First-place students’ photos will be printed on canvas, and the other nine for each theme will be printed on photo paper and matted for them to take home, Dal Santo said.

The office keeps a framed copy of each photo and rotates a display of them throughout the year, she said.

### **---The Examiner of Bartlett--- 12/08/2021**

#### **District U-46 tax levy being finalized for vote**

**By Seth Hancock; Note – this story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin**

The [Board of Education in School District U-46](#) is set to finalize a property tax levy hike with a vote on a certificate of tax levy and an accompanying resolution scheduled for its Monday, Dec. 13 meeting.

The items were presented at the Nov. 15 meeting. The board has already unanimously approved, under the Nov. 1 consent agenda, a determination of tax levy and a levy resolution.

“The tax levy resolution is an annual resolution needed to allow administration to file the certificate of tax levy,” said Dale Burnidge, director of financial operations. “The certificate lists the levy amounts requested for each fund.”

The items must be filed by the final Tuesday each December with the clerks of Cook, DuPage and Kane counties.

The certificate represents the corporate and special purpose levy which is set at \$300.2 million, a 2.5 percent increase from \$292.8 million. The district expects \$297.9 million, however, as the district defensively levies “to insure receipt of all property tax dollars to which the District is entitled,” the Nov. 1 determination states.

The funds included in the certificate are the educational (\$191.6 million), operations and maintenance (\$40.3 million), special education (\$37.5 million), transportation (\$9 million), social security (\$6.1 million), tort (\$5.4 million), municipal retirement (\$5.3 million) and fire prevention and safety (\$5 million).

The total levy presented on Nov. 1, including the debt service levy, is set to increase 2.2 percent from \$335 million to \$342.4 million which is the largest allowed under law. The debt service levy is expected to slightly drop from \$42.28 million to \$42.23 million.

The levy comes after the board approved a \$61 million increase in spending in this year’s budget while enrollment dropped for the seventh straight year, losing 533 students (1.5 percent) to a total of 36,090 according to numbers presented on Nov. 1.

The levy is determined by the Consumer Price Index (1.4 percent) and Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV), where the district estimates property values increasing from \$5.4 billion to \$5.6 billion. However, the levy is set at an EAV of \$5.7 billion as the defensive levy.

## **---The Examiner of Bartlett--- 12/08/2021**

### **NIU education contract positioned for U-46 vote**

**By Seth Hancock; Note – this story also ran in The Examiner of South Elgin**

The **Board of Education in School District U-46** is set to vote on a \$500,000 contract with Northern Illinois University at its upcoming meeting on Monday, Dec. 13.

The item was presented on Nov. 15. The contract, if approved, would be funded initially through the education fund with the nation’s taxpayers reimbursing it through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds.

The contract is to get 35 paraeducators learning behavior specialist (LBS1) licenses, a special education endorsement, by June 30, 2023.

“This will be the initial contract with Northern Illinois University for the Licensed Educators’ Accelerated Pathway (LEAP),” the proposal states. It’s an 18-month contract.

The proposal adds: “The need for special educators is expected to grow nationally by 6 [percent] from 2014- 2024 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016- 2017). In Illinois, the Educator Supply and Demand 2016 annual report, indicates Special Education teaching positions are the most common positions to go unfilled. Over 476 LBS1 positions are currently unfilled in Illinois. U-46 has also experienced challenges in filling Special Education positions with approximately 10 more positions continually vacant. This cohort will support efforts to grow

our own special education teachers by providing the opportunity for paraeducators to acquire the necessary endorsement.”

Paraeducators who receive the LBS1 endorsement must commit to five years with the district in a LBS1 position, the proposal stated.

“School District U-46 will increase the number of teachers with the LBS1 endorsement to successfully fill vacant Special Education positions and plan to fill future positions vacated due to retirement and attrition,” the proposal states.

## **---The Examiner of South Elgin--- 12/08/2021**

### **Elgin resident serving aboard Navy assault ship USS Essex**

**By Megan Brown, Navy Office of Community Outreach**

An Elgin native is serving aboard USS Essex, a U.S. Navy Wasp class amphibious assault ship.

**Emily Steinway** is a **2006 Elgin High School graduate**, a 2010 graduate of Aurora University and a 2019 Middle Tennessee State University graduate.

“My title is the FUN BOSS,” said Steinway. “I work for the Department of the Navy and I deploy with the ships. I run the Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program aboard the ship. This program entails providing fun, morale-boosting events for the crew while at the home port and out to sea. These programs include BINGO, sports events such as dodgeball, arts and craft nights, cooking classes, book clubs, karaoke and much more. We also provide leisure and cultural events while visiting foreign ports.”

Steinway served in the Navy for four years from 2012 to 2016.

“I always saw the benefits of the MWR program and the positive experiences it gave active-duty members,” said Steinway. “I knew that after my active-duty time, I wanted to be a part of the great program.”

According to Steinway, the values required to succeed in the military are similar to those found in Elgin. “My family has always been active in my hometown specifically through the American Legion (Post 57), our church, high school, sports teams and the local parks department,” said Steinway. “These connections truly inspired me to not only join the military but also support the military in my current role. My desire to serve my country came from the values that my parents taught me and the connections from the American Legion. The value of sports and leisure that I learned while working for the Elgin Parks Department and local sports teams fueled my passion.”

Homeported in San Diego, USS Essex is the second ship in the Wasp-class of multipurpose amphibious assault ships and the fifth ship named for Essex County, Massachusetts. Essex was a 1000-ton ironclad river gunboat of the U.S. Army and later U.S. Navy during the American Civil War.

According to Navy officials, amphibious assault ships are designed to deliver U.S. Marines and their equipment where they are needed to support a variety of missions ranging from

amphibious assaults to humanitarian relief efforts. Designed to be versatile, the ship has the option of simultaneously using helicopters, Harrier jets, and Landing Craft Air Cushioned, as well as conventional landing craft and assault vehicles in various combinations.

“I enjoy the different sailors and Marines I interact with on a daily basis,” said Steinway. “We are in this together and fighting for a bigger cause. I am also able to interact with the crew on a personal level, as far as seeing how their family is doing and how they are doing. Also, I bring fun to the ship. We are always having a good time and enjoying the adventure!

Though there are many opportunities to earn recognition in the Navy, Steinway is most proud of receiving the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal while on active duty.

“Since being active-duty military, I am proud to have earned my master’s degree,” said Steinway.

Steinway is part of a service tradition providing unforgettable experiences through leadership development, world affairs and humanitarian assistance. Their efforts will have a lasting effect around the globe and for generations of sailors who will follow.

“Serving in the Navy and for the Navy means a lot to me,” said Steinway. “Each day sometimes feels the same for many sailors and Marines. I am the person that gets to add fun, joy or new experiences to their life and it is an honor. I am able to focus on how to make someone’s day better and more enjoyable. When people are away from their families during the holidays, I am able to provide them with events that may hopefully take them away from the stress and sadness. I value my job greatly and it’s an honor being able to serve the people who are protecting the country.

**---Daily Herald--- 12/08/2021**

## **Boys’ Basketball: Larkin’s late run beats Bartlett**

**By Craig Brueske**

Trailing Bartlett 51-46 with 3 ½ minutes remaining, Larkin's basketball team saved its best for last, relying on pressure defense to help fuel a 15-3 run that turned the game around Tuesday night.

The Royals (6-1, 2-0) rallied to win the Upstate Eight Conference contest, 63-58, in Elgin.

"I don't like to use the term, 'winning ugly,' especially against good teams, but I think we just grinded out a win," said Larkin coach Deryn Carter. "It was kind of what you would expect. I think they're (the Hawks) one of the best teams in the area, and I think we're one of the best teams in the area.

"It was a heck of a high school basketball game."

Senior guard Damari Wheeler-Thomas, who finished with a game-high 29 points, 7 steals, 4 rebounds and 3 assists, keyed the Royals' frenetic final 3-minute surge.

After assisting on Jamarion Stubbs' 3-point basket that cut the Hawks' lead to 51-49, Wheeler-Thomas sank a pair of free throws to tie it at 51-all.

A basket by Fernando Perez (13 points, 7 rebounds) put Larkin on top to stay at 53-51 with 1:58 remaining, and 10 seconds later, Wheeler-Thomas' steal and layup made it 55-51.

Bartlett center Conrad Luczynski converted a 3-point play to trim the Royals lead to 57-54 with 57 seconds left before Wheeler-Thomas added 5 free throws over the next 46 seconds to put the game away.

"We were locking in on their guards and just playing our game," said Wheeler-Thomas, who scored 21 second-half points, including 11 in the final quarter.

"I needed to be more aggressive for my team. It's fun bringing the defense. Everybody gets riled up -- I love it."

Carter also loved watching another signature performance from his standout guard.

"He's just a special kid who doesn't quit and just keeps grinding," the coach said of Wheeler-Thomas, who contributed 7 points, an assist, a steal and a blocked shot during his team's late comeback.

"You get used to it, but you don't stop appreciating. We're glad he's on our side."

Wheeler-Thomas' effort helped offset a 21-point night from Hawks guard Jacob Magnanao, and a 10-point, 21-rebound, 8-blocked shot performance from the 7-foot-3 Luczynski.

"That was just phenomenal defense," Hawks coach Jim Wolfsmith said of Wheeler-Thomas.

"He got after it. He's not reaching too much -- he's just always in your way."

Bartlett led by as many as 11 points at 46-35 late in the third quarter before Larkin tallied 6 points in the final 5.2 seconds to draw within 46-41.

"I thought we did a good job of handling their pressure for 28 minutes," said Wolfsmith. "At the end of the third (quarter) and then in the fourth (quarter), we gave them that momentum."

Stubbs finished with 11 points, including a pair of second-half 3-pointers, while Jakob Blakley added 8 points and 6 boards for the Royals.

"It puts us one (game) ahead in the conference so it's a huge win," said Carter.

**---Elgin Courier News--- 12/08/2021**

## **Wheeling, dealing and winning: North Dakota State recruit Damari Wheeler-Thomas tallies 29 points and 7 steals as **Larkin** stops **Bartlett****

**By Paul Johnson for the Aurora Beacon-News**



**Larkin's** Damari Wheeler-Thomas (10) works around **Bartlett's** Kelton McEwen (2) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

In his fourth season as **Larkin's** point guard, senior Damari Wheeler-Thomas tries to put into practice what coach Deryn Carter continually preaches.

Carter always tells his team things could come down to three or four key possessions in close games. Wheeler-Thomas has turned that into an art form for the Royals.

With Larkin trailing **Bartlett** midway through the fourth quarter, Wheeler-Thomas took over Tuesday night, propelling the Royals to a 63-58 victory in an Upstate Eight Conference showdown.

He fed Jamarion Stubbs for a 3-pointer. Then a steal led to two free throws. After Fernando Perez Jr. gave Larkin (4-1, 2-0) the lead with a layup, Wheeler-Thomas sent the crowd into a frenzy with a steal and a layup.



H. Rick Bamman / For the Beacon-News **Larkin's** Damari Wheeler-Thomas (10) scores on a fast break against Bartlett during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

The North Dakota State recruit finished it off by shooting 5 of 6 from the free-throw line and blocking a shot down the stretch.

Wheeling, dealing and winning.

“All those moments are what it’s all about,” Wheeler-Thomas said. “It’s all fun, playing good defense, everybody gets all riled up. I love it.”

Carter is used to seeing performances like that from Wheeler-Thomas, who scored 21 of his game-high 29 points in the second half and ended up with seven steals.

“He’s special,” Carter said. “North Dakota State got a steal. They’re a good program, but he’s just a special kid that doesn’t quit.

“You get used to it, but you don’t stop appreciating it. He’s a heck of a player and we’re glad he’s on our side.”



**Larkin's** Jamarion Stubbs (5) drives against **Bartlett's** Jacob Magnanao (23) during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

Bartlett (4-3, 1-1) led the majority of the first half in taking a 27-25 halftime lead. Jacob Magnanao scored 13 of his team-high 21 points in opening 16 minutes.

That helped the Hawks make up for the production lost by the absence of three-year starter Ian Smith from the lineup.

“Not having Ian hurt,” Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith said. “I thought Jacob did a nice job in his stead offensively, scoring the ball.”

Conrad Luczynski, a 7-foot-3 senior center, was held to one field goal attempt in the first half for Bartlett.

His presence was still felt on the offensive end with his spacing and passing, however.

“He’s a great passer, so they used him in the high post,” Carter said of Luczynski. “It was their pressure release, which was a great thought on their part. We couldn’t do anything against it.”

Luczynski got going offensively in the second half, which helped Bartlett extend the lead. A 9-0 run, keyed by Luczynski’s first seven points of the game, gave the Hawks a 42-33 lead.

“I thought Conrad had a really good second half,” Wolfsmith said. “He had a quiet first half. I thought they did a really good job pressuring our guards so we didn’t have any easy feeds to Conrad. I thought he did a much better job in the second half being strong.”

Wheeler-Thomas got Larkin back into the game in the latter stages of the third quarter. He scored six points in the final seconds to cut the deficit to 46-41.



**Bartlett's** Keegan Kunzer (24) deflects the ball into his face as **Larkin's** Fernando Perez Jr. (1) tries to make the steal during an Upstate Eight Conference game in Elgin on Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021. (H. Rick Bamman / The Beacon-News)

“We did a good job for 28 minutes of handling their pressure,” Wolfsmith said. “The end of the third and the middle of the fourth, we gave them their momentum.”

Luczynski finished with 10 points, 20 rebounds, eight blocked shots and five assists.

“There’s not much you can do around the rim with him there,” Wheeler-Thomas said. “You can’t just go to the rim against a guy like that. You have to find a way around him. More floaters, pullups, make him work.”

Perez scored 13 points and Stubbs added 11 for Larkin.

Bartlett won the conference in the spring, so Larkin was happy to deliver the opening salvo of this season.

“It’s definitely big that we could come back and get it,” Wheeler-Thomas said.

## **---The Examiner of Bartlett--- 12/08/2021**

### **Hawks open UEC effort by dominating Wildcats**

**By Seth Hancock**

The **Bartlett boys’ basketball team** dominated in its Upstate Eight Conference opener, a 65-28 win, over West Chicago, Thursday, Dec. 2 at Bartlett.

Senior center Conrad Luczynski, towering over opponents at 7-foot-3, scored 10 of his game-high 16 points in the first half as Bartlett built a 30-14 lead. He added six rebounds and pair of blocks and assists.

Sophomore Kelton McEwen added 14 points as the Hawks look to defend its UEC title from last year.

“We came from a tough loss against Geneva, but I think we came out ready and dominated the game. We weren’t losing this game, that’s for sure,” Luczynski said. Bartlett, now 3-2 overall, lost two straight entering the game.

McEwen said: “Going into the first conference game, we wanted to come out strong. Coming off a conference championship last season, a lot of teams are coming after us. We’ve just got to come out and play good each game.”

Bartlett led 51-25 by the end of three quarters and allowed just three points to West Chicago in the final frame.

“I thought our defense was really on point tonight, and that was really what we’ve been working on the last couple days,” said Bartlett coach Jim Wolfsmith.

The Hawks entire team contributed with every player putting points on the board.

With teams contending with Luczynski's size, the depth of the Hawks provide plenty of options on any given night.

Wolfsmith said: "One of the things I love about this team has been the fact that they're so unselfish. We'll get 30 buckets, and we'll have 25 assists. They want to pass the ball, they want to find their teammates.... I do think that multidimensional talent is going to carry us offensively as long as we stay patient and find the open man."

Against Geneva, the Hawks dropped a tough nonconference game 57-51 on Tuesday, Nov. 30 at Geneva. Luczynski (18 points, 11 rebounds) and sophomore Nathan Searce (15 points, five three-pointers) led the effort.