

## **Press Clippings 12/11/2018**

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### **Early contenders file in several Kane County school board races**

**By: Susan Sarkauskas and Madhu Krishnamurthy**

Kane County will have several contentious school board races this spring.

Leading the field of candidates who submitted petitions on the first day of filing Monday are seven hopefuls for four 4-year terms on the Elgin Area School District U-46 board.

Candidates are incumbent school board member Jeanette Ward of St. Charles, who is running for a second term, John Devereux of Bartlett, who was appointed to the board in June, Eva Porter, Daniel Hancock, Tina Rio, Kathleen Thommes of Elgin, and Ina Silva-Sobolewski.

Terms are up for board members Sue Kerr and Phil Costello, both of Bartlett. Costello earlier announced he would not seek re-election.

In Algonquin-based Community Unit District 300, incumbents Stephen Fiorentino of Algonquin, and Joe Stevens of Pingree Grove, and Leslie LaMarca of Pingree Grove, and Nancy Zettler of Algonquin have filed for four seats. Board members whose terms expire in April include Susie Kopacz of Hampshire and Kym Garcia of West Dundee.

Four candidates have filed for three 4-year terms on the St. Charles Unit District 303 school board. Incumbent Kathleen Hewell filed to serve another term. Newcomers Jillian Barker, Rebecca McCabe, and Garrett Seaman also are seeking seats. Terms for board members Nick Manheim, serving his second term, and Lori Linkimer, serving her third term, expire in April.

The Geneva school board will have new members in the spring, because at least two incumbents are not seeking re-election.

Mary Stith and Kelly Nowak confirmed Monday they are not running. Stith has been a trustee since 2003, and served several years as board president. Nowak joined the board in 2007.

Three 4-year terms are available. Jessica Breugelmanns is the only one who filed Monday.

In Batavia Unit District 101, where three seats are available, incumbent Chris Lowe filed for re-election. Also vying are Scott Naylor, Erin Meitzler, Christopher John Solfa and David Niekamp.

Incumbent Melody Saperston of North Aurora, who was appointed to the West Aurora District 129 school board this year, is running for a full 4-year term, as is Joe Grisson of Aurora. Four, 4-year terms will be on the ballot.

In Burlington-based Central Unit District 301, incumbents Eric Nolan, Laura Rabe and Mitchell Penar, all of Elgin, are running for reelection with four 4-year seats up.

Alex Arroyo, an incumbent, is running for the East Aurora District 131 board. Candidates will be running for four 4-year terms.

Megan Junk of Sugar Grove, who was appointed to the Kaneland Unit District 302 school board this year, filed a petition for a full 4-year term. Kaneland has four 4-year terms up.

Filing ends Monday, Dec. 17. The election is April 2.

## **Planetarium Group finds a star in U-46**

**By: Elgin Area Community Unit School District 46**



- Peggy Hernandez, U-46 planetarium teacher, is named a Fellow of the Great Lakes Planetarium Association.

As the Elgin Area School District U-46 planetarium teacher Peggy Hernandez has helped introduce thousands of students to the science and wonder of the universe, her work with a professional organization has earned her some well-deserved recognition here on Planet Earth.

Hernandez was recently named a Fellow of the Great Lakes Planetarium Association, a professional organization dedicated to supporting astronomy and space science education through planetaria.

Hernandez joined GLPA in 2009, the first year she was named to teach at the U-46 Planetarium, which was built in Elgin in the 1960s as an addition to the historic 1909 Elgin Watch Factory observatory building.

"Peggy's knowledge of Earth and space science is dwarfed only by her incredible ability to engage each and every visitor," said Deb Perryman, the U-46 coordinator of K-12 Science and the Planetarium. "She is one of the most talented educators I have ever had the pleasure of working with. Clearly she has impacted those beyond U-46 as evidenced by this honor from the Great Lakes Planetarium Association."

GLPA members work in public and private schools, universities and museums, and the group supports space science education through conferences and publications. The Fellow award recognizes a member's professional status and significant contributions.

Hernandez was honored in October at a GLPA meeting in East Lansing, Michigan. She currently serves as the education chair of the GLPA executive committee, and she has often been a presenter at the group's events.

Each school year, Hernandez interacts with about 16,000 U-46 students who make class field trips to the planetarium to learn the science behind the stars and planets. She also makes presentations to Scouting groups and members of the public who can tour the facility on select dates throughout the year.

Hernandez had been a longtime U-46 science teacher at Canton Middle School in Streamwood and Eastview Middle School in Bartlett when she accepted the planetarium teaching job. She discovered her own interest in the cosmos through an astronomy course in college. As a middle school teacher, Hernandez organized popular stargazing programs for her students. When the planetarium position opened, it seemed like a natural fit.

"For me, it's been the perfect storm. I love it!" she said.

But Hernandez said she felt like "a deer in the headlights," after first taking over at the planetarium. The GLPA provided her with resources and practical teaching tips that helped her grow as an educator, she said.

In addition to her professional development with the GLPA, Hernandez has completed the training and additional study required to become a National Board Certified Teacher. The voluntary program certifies teachers who have, through rigorous and comprehensive additional training, reached a high level of competence.

On any given school day, Hernandez operates the planetarium projector while teaching three to four sessions for up to eight classrooms of students of varying age levels. U-46

teachers sign up at the start of school year to bring their students to one of Hernandez's programs, and the list fills quickly. This year, 692 teachers registered.

The planetarium is first and foremost a classroom, but there are regular chances for the public to tour it and the observatory at 312 Watch St.