

Press Clippings 12-09-20

---Daily Herald--- 12/09/2020

Movement and memory

U-46 dual language teacher uses brain breaks to make remote learning easier

By: Madhu Krishnamurthy



Zuni Bloomer, fifth-grade dual language teacher at Timber Trails Elementary School in Hoffman Estates, teaches remotely while surrounded by her collection of books and materials.

Zuni Bloomer believes in starting the school day on a positive note.

Affirmations and movement are a big part of how she engages her students.

“In class, we start out with a positive affirmation video. We listen, repeat, recall and do a movement along with each phrase, (such as) ‘I make each day better than yesterday,’” said Bloomer, 45, of Elgin, who teaches a fifth-grade dual language class at Timber Trails Elementary School in Hoffman Estates.

Originally from the Dominican Republic, Bloomer has taught preschool through high school for 14 years, nine at Elgin Area School District U-46.

As schools pivoted to remote learning due to the pandemic, Bloomer aimed to create a less stressful online classroom environment focused on being “safe, respectful, and responsible.”

“The first week of school in class we created expectations of what that looks like during distance learning, which we revisit as needed,” she said.

“We watch funny videos to take brain breaks throughout the day, guided dance, exercise, games or share jokes. We also make up silly songs to the tune of popular songs, such as singing ‘Let it load, let it load’ to the tune of ‘Let it go’ when our screen is taking a long time to load.”

A key teaching strategy Bloomer uses is the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach, coordinating a physical activity with oral language. Students use facial and body expressions to make relationships with language. It’s a time-honored method to teaching language, she said.

“For example, we were talking about hyperbole and we said that is an exaggeration ... we make like voices ... we involve the whole body into it,” she said.

“We use that particular strategy to get everybody involved doing those movements, and it helps them remember and make a connection with the topic or the words that we’re particularly learning at the moment.”

Bloomer’s teaching philosophy is to make learning fun and creative for students.

“I believe in creating a relaxed environment when you’re going to teach,” she said. “Especially now that we can be very tense, or things might be happening at home and you might not be in the environment that is maybe suitable for you at the moment.”

After struggling herself with learning the online platform used for teaching, Bloomer sought to make it easier for students and parents to navigate.

“I wanted to make it look kid-friendly, so when they go to my homepage it will be welcoming for my students and it will be easy for them to manage,” she said.

With the challenges of Zoom learning, Bloomer sets aside time for movement breaks during transitions, allowing students to step away from their computers. At times, she has them run around the house or do jumping jacks.

In fifth grade, dual language is taught 50% in Spanish and 50% in English.

Bloomer teaches six weeks of language arts in Spanish, then switches to six weeks in English. Social studies and science are taught in English and math is taught in Spanish.

U-46’s dual language program prepares students for bi-literacy and competency in English and Spanish starting in kindergarten through 12th grade. Data shows dual language students in second through eighth grades outperformed the nationwide norm in reading and math.

“They develop a sense of cultural awareness, they are increasing their cognitive and problem-solving skills, (and) protecting their brains against Alzheimer’s and other cognitive impairments,” Bloomer said.

“Students in our dual language program come from beautiful, multicultural diverse backgrounds. I have seen how challenging it is for some families that do not speak the language. We always encourage families to support their children in the language they know and let us do the rest in the classroom, where the magic begins to happen.”

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The



Examiner

of SOUTH ELGIN

Volume 16
Number 31

"IF I WERE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT A NEWSPAPER OR A NEWSPAPER WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO CHOOSE THE LATTER." THOMAS JEFFERSON

50 cents
December 9, 2020

Tidbits column:
Technology conflict
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Village reduces
liquor license costs
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Well pump work order ratified by village board

By Frank Muisenga Jr.

A \$25,650 work order for Layne Christensen Company, Aurora, for well number three rehabilitation was unanimously approved by trustees at the Monday, Dec. 7 Village Board meeting. The meeting was conducted remotely due to COVID-19.

According to Director of Public Works Mike Millette, Utility Services Manager Dan Mann, on Oct. 5, noticed the well was not bringing water

to the surface.

"Superintendent Mann, and his operators, were hearing some noises that made them think there was something wrong down at the bottom where the impeller is, so we contracted with Layne to pull it, to take a look at it, and indeed there's a gap of about an inch and a half," said Millette. "So, that was causing not full push with there being a gap. It was not efficient as it could be."

On Oct. 13, a \$22,097 phase one inspection proposal with Layne Christensen was signed by Village Administrator Steve Super.

Millette said Layne Christensen staff recommended well rehabilitation after inspection since multiple parts were broken. Work costs are estimates, but the \$25,650 was not budgeted in Fiscal Year 2021.

"Unfortunately, it is unbudgeted, per se, but we do have certain amounts of money in our operating budget to cover things like this, so we estimate that this will have a net negative impact of \$7,000 on the water sewer fund operating budget as of this time. That's aside from any other savings we might have through the rest of the year," Millette said.

U-46 remote learning set at least until mid January

By Seth Hancock

Despite the data showing improvements, School District U-46 will remain in distance learning for all students through winter break.

Superintendent Tony Sanders made the announcement last week. In a statement, he wrote that "metrics have improved slightly in recent days" but the decision was made because the state is reporting new cases and local health departments are proclaiming, with no evidence, to "expect another surge" because citizens may have acted like free people for Thanksgiving. "I would rather err on the side of caution for the safety and well-being of our families and staff, while also recognizing that families need time to plan for this shift," Sanders wrote. "The last thing I want to have happen is telling you all the night before in-person instruction is scheduled to start that we are again postponed."

According to Sanders, prekindergarten through sixth grade students as well as specialized student services are planned to return for a hybrid model on Jan. 11, 2021 and middle and high school students on Jan. 19, 2021.

Sanders said there would be "targeted opportunities for small group in-person instruction from [Jan. 4 to 15]" for struggling secondary students.

Josh Carpenter and Lela Majstorovic, assistant superintendents, also re-

leased a statement for high school families last week stating: "As we review student grades, we have a number of students who are currently failing one or more classes."

The decision comes as pressure has mounted from parents who want a return to in-person instruction.

"Seeing school continue to be full remote was disappointing, but honestly not a surprise," mother Dawn Martin told *The Examiner*. "Many districts opened in August, knowing that classes would likely be remote over the winter. The frustration with U-46 is that they waited until November to try to open schools."

Martin added: "As far as second semester, I believe younger students will likely be in buildings. However, our middle and high school students have yet to even see a plan for their return. It is difficult to have much faith these students will see a building this school year. My question then becomes what will U-46 do to support these students going forward with the educational gaps created and additional mental health struggles. Older students do not have time to "catch up" down the road."

Martin is a member of a Facebook group, ReOpen U46 Schools, which has organized an email campaign to board members and administrators as well as some rallies.

Trustees approve well tank work payment

By Frank Muisenga Jr.

At the remotely-held Village Board meeting on Monday, Dec. 7, trustees unanimously approved a \$52,600 payment to Era Valdivia Contractors, Inc., Chicago for Well #12 ground storage tank rehabilitation work.

"If you recall briefly, in the late winter period when we were doing our rehabilitation work on Well 12, we found that the lining of the clarifying tank was peeling off of the concrete and we had that evaluated by Engineering Enterprises, one of our consulting engineers, that came up with a direction that we could recoat most of the concrete and overlap the existing coat and we'd be fine," said Director

of Public Works Mike Millette.

Millette also said the village has been waiting on final payment paperwork from Era Valdivia.

"The work was done, it's been done for quite some time," Millette said. "We're not entirely sure what was the challenge with Valdivia on getting some of their paperwork lined up and into us, but they have finally done so and here is the payment for the work."

On May 4, the board approved a tank rehabilitation proposal with Era Valdivia for \$55,600, according to Millette.

The certification for payment, indicated that a change order decreased the original contract by \$3,000.

Annual TIF payments approved by village board

By Frank Muisenga Jr.

The remotely-conducted Monday, Dec. 7 Village Board meeting saw trustees unanimously approve an annual Village Center and La Fox Street Corridor TIF (tax increment financing) district (TIF 1) disbursement of \$518,048.

According to Director of Community Development Nancy Hill, the project payments included are \$191,387 for River Place townhomes, \$150,890 for River Crossing condominiums, \$83,538 for Waters Edge apartments, \$57,320 for Panton Mill Station and \$34,913 for Marison Mill Suites apartments.

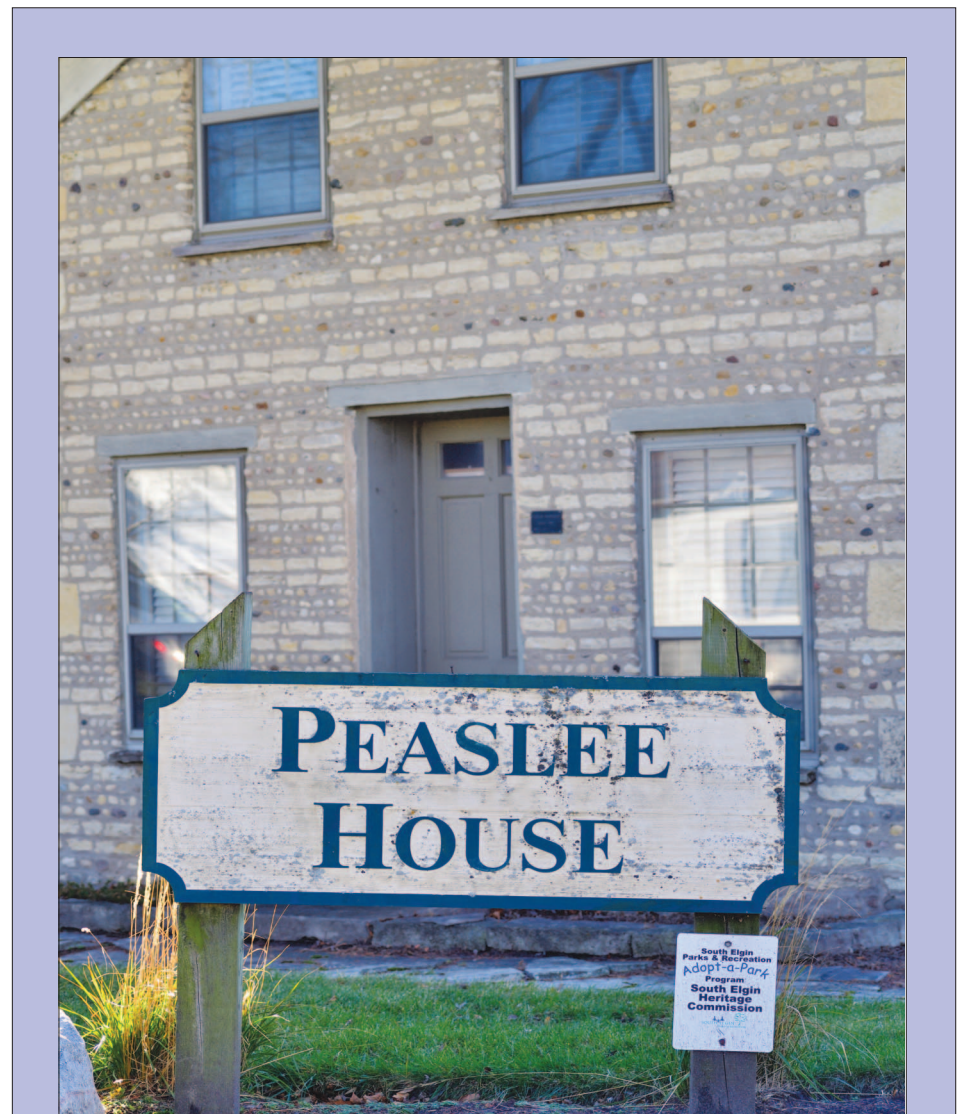
"It's based on outstanding agreements that the village has to reimburse those developers for certain eligible project costs that were necessary in order to make the TIF redevelop-

ment project happen, and so, there's money designated in our budget every year to make these reimbursements, and this is that annual payment of those expenses," said Hill.

Unpaid TIF 1 totals are \$2.5 million for Panton Mill, \$2 million for River Place, \$1.6 million for Marison Mill, \$1.5 million for River Crossing and \$56,172 for Waters Edge, according to village TIF payment documents.

TIF 1 funds will be received and paid until Dec. 31, 2026, according to Hill.

"The village is obligated to make payments on the various redevelopment projects through the end of the TIF," said Hill via email. "Any outstanding dollar amounts owed at the end of the TIF are forgiven by agreement with the developers and will not be paid."



Local landmark

The Peaslee House, a village landmark, was built by master stone cutter James Peaslee and his carpenter brother sometime during the 1830s or 1840s. A precise date is unavailable due to conflicting documentation dates. The village purchased the property in 1999 and currently it houses Heritage Commission artifacts. A more detailed story about the history and future of the home will be featured in an upcoming edition of *The Examiner*.

(Examiner photo by Bruce Leighty)

Committee discusses resubdivision proposals

By Frank Muisenga Jr.

At the remotely-conducted Committee of the Whole meeting on Monday, Dec. 7, the village board discussed proposed resubdivision and variations at South Elgin Crossing, 424 to 432 Randall Road.

"You may more commonly recognize this as the shopping center with Best Buy, PetSmart and Staples amongst other tenants and property owners in that shopping center and subdivision," said Director of Community Development Nancy Hill. "Essentially, what is happening here tonight is the applicant (EIG Elgin, LLC) is looking to subdivide what is known as lot three of the subdivision into two separate lots of record so that the tenants have separate ownership."

Hill said the petitioner also requested two variances with regard to increasing lot coverage and eliminating frontage along a publicly dedicated

and maintained street. The planning & zoning commission voted 5-1 to recommend approval of the requests at its Nov. 18 meeting.

Village President Steve Ward said he noticed commission Chairman Brian Carlson opposed the requests. What was his concern?

Hill said Carlson was not in favor of setting a precedent in providing variations to the Unified Development Ordinance.

Trustee Scott Richmond asked is future resubdivision likely to occur?

"Not at this time," said attorney Caitlin Paloian, representing EIG. "There's no intention of further resubdividing at this time. This is purely market driven."

Trustee Greg Lieser said he does not have a problem with the requests. But if another resubdivision is requested later, why not now since the process involves staff time?

"I personally don't have a problem with this," said Ward. "We all probably knew at some time this was going to happen anyway with any big developer. We'll probably see, as Trustee

Lieser was saying, at a later date, market driven, we may see the separation of Staples and PetSmart or whatever else also. We'll cross that bridge when we get to it."

Split board vote ratifies liquor license discount

By Frank Muisenga Jr.

A 5-1 trustee vote approved a 50-percent liquor license renewal discount ordinance for 2021 class B and C holders on Monday, Dec. 7 at the Village Board meeting. Trustee Jennifer Barconi cast the lone dissenting vote. The meeting was conducted remotely due to COVID-19.

According to Village Administrator Steve Super, at the Nov. 2 and 16 village board meetings, the board discussed the liquor license discount since restaurant and bar businesses have suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Quite a bit of discussion," said Super. "Staff [has] prepared an ordinance that would approve a 50-percent discount for license renewal fees for pouring licenses B and C. Most of the liquor license holders to date have paid, so we would be refunding anything you would approve tonight."

Qualifying license holders added up to 33, which totaled \$50,400 in license fees, according to the ordinance.

"I will vote yes on it but I'm not happy about giving money away to multi-million-dollar and billion-dollar corporations where they can help franchisees out on their own like Red Robin, Chipotle and some of those other big ones, but I will vote yes for the locals," said Trustee Mike Kolodziej.

The costs per license class are \$1,800 for B-1 and C-1, \$1,500 for B-2 and \$1,200 for B-3, according to the ordinance. The discount is a one-time refund because indoor service, capacity and entertainment were limited due to enforced state COVID-19 mitigations.

While Barconi did not say why she dissented at the Dec. 7 meeting vote, at prior meetings she indicated a preference for the deferment of license fees instead of discounts.

List of varied expenses approved by U-46 board

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in School District U-46 unanimously approved, \$168,970 in expenditure items at its meeting on Monday, Nov. 16 which was held electronically due to COVID-19 regulations.

Included was an item presented and voted on the same evening for technology tools with a total cost of \$113,170, which will come from the education fund.

The tools include Pear Deck (\$67,000) which is "an interactive presentation tool used to actively engage students in learning," according to the proposal, and Edpuzzle (\$46,170), a "web-based interactive video and formative assessment tool."

The proposal states that the tools were first used in March when the district went to distance learning and they were initially offered for free.

"Some services were no longer going to be offered for free and teachers who have been using them were going to lose their work," the proposal states. "Additionally, many schools and even individual teachers were submitting

requests to purchase individually at a higher cost as they didn't want to wait to access the full range of services or risk losing work."

Also approved was a contract, costing \$55,800 (education fund), with Illinois State University for so-called "school culture improvement" at Elgin High School and Streamwood's Sunnydale Elementary School.

"School District U-46 has a commitment to ensuring inclusive school cultures for all staff and students in our district," the proposal states. "Illinois State University Professors, Dr. Pamela Hoff and Dr. Beth Hatt, will collaborate with the leadership of School District U-46 to incorporate a needs assessment and subsequent professional development grounded in identifying and mitigating equity traps."

The materials that will be used state that the government schools have a "moral imperative" to shape public opinion regarding issues like race and gender.

Also unanimously approved was \$6.4 million in itemized bills.

Lightning strike creates emergency U-46 expense

By Seth Hancock

The Board of Education in School District U-46 unanimously approved, of an emergency proposal, presented and approved the same evening, at its meeting on Monday, Nov. 2 which was held electronically due to COVID-19 regulations.

The item was an emergency chimney repair at Elgin's Abbott Middle School, the repairs already having taken place between Sept. 21 and Oct. 26 by Jimmy 'Z Masonry Corp, Crystal Lake. The total cost was \$126,054 and will be paid for through the operations and maintenance fund.

"During a thunderstorm, the chimney at Abbott Middle School was struck by lightning, which caused considerable damage," the proposal stated. "Without performing emer-

gency repairs, there was an imminent risk of failure, including falling debris and damage to the physical structure of the building. This issue would also make it impossible to use the chimney to support the boilers' operation during the heating season."

The proposal added that "the storm caused substantial damage that needed to be fixed in order to address both a safety and operational hazard."

Sheila Downs, director of plant operations, said that the lightning strike took place at "the end of July" when asked by Sue Kerr, the board's president.

Abbott's chimney is 88 years old and was tuckpointed in 2015 during a larger capital project at the school. It was "in good condition prior to the storm," the proposal stated.

Letters

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da and using media to deliver the slime to the controlled masses.

Our nation's media is the poster child for such activity whether it be by print, air or social media. Exceptionally wealthy socialist extremists have found a base of operations set on the destruction of our nation through socialism by using the media as its progressive tool.

They have created a sadistic monster and have used their right under the First Amendment in doing so. These insurgents control elections nationally and locally. They cater to and brainwash the uninformed voter who watch and read their poison and do so without restrictions.

From writers, to reporters, to anchors, we have witnessed their mandate.... "toe the line, abide by our viewpoints or get replaced." To elected officials they demand, "go along with us or we will be sure you will never be re-elected." Their decree to every level of government "Conform or we will come after you and use the power of the (our) press and destroy you" And, so they do.

With those mandates, those elected on both sides of the aisle "toe the line," indeed. The only possible way to stop the

spread of this silent killer are TERM LIMITS. However and sadly, with a Trump loss and should the GOP lose the Senate races in Georgia, there is no chance in hell to ever get that done.

Believe it. Not just idol or sore-loser talk. This election was decided by the media and by corruption within the election process.

Thus, the media malady spreads its venom and continues to complete their mission in taking down these United States. Some of us may try to stop it by boycotting their regular and repeating sponsors, curtailing their revenue, and that would be difficult if not futile. The unlimited financial resources of the owners and controllers of the media will use their deep pockets to continue their movement and securing their intent to destroy democracy in this Republic.

To prove the point, you may further ask your local elected officials to propose term limits. See if they are willing to do so or if you can even get an answer from them on that topic. The results will either give you proof of this dreadful plot, or some slim hope that we can overcome.

I wish I had an answer or suggestion on how to stop this move to socialism and an even further deep state, but outside of total revolution, I do not. I hope someone does, or we have lost what we once had. Appears we are already well on our way to that end....

Jerry Marchese

Police Reports

Continued from page 3

of the 500 block of Horace, Elgin, was arrested for aggravated speeding. Mendoza was processed per department procedures and later released on an I-bond with a Dec. 29 court date.

★ At 5:14 p.m., police responded to the 200 block of Main for a report of possible compromise of complainant's personal information.

★ At 11:47 p.m., police responded to the 800 block of Voyager for a domestic. Brian A. Lehmann, 29, of the Voyager address, was arrested for domestic battery. Lehmann was processed per department procedures and transported to DuPage County Jail for bond call.

Monday, Nov. 30

★ At 9:05 a.m., police responded to the 1000 block of Dartmouth for a report of burglary to a motor vehicle. Complainant advised unknown offender(s) had entered his vehicle dur-

ing the night and made off with various tools and cash.

★ At 9:06 a.m., police responded to the 1600 block of Columbia for a report of a fraudulent unemployment claim being filed in complainant's name and using complainant's personal information.

★ At 10:02 a.m., in the vicinity of Illinois Route 59 and Auburn, Michael Noe, 34, of the 300 block of Chippewa, West Chicago, was arrested for failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended registration and driving while license suspended. Noe was processed per department procedures and later released on an I-bond with a Jan. 25, 2021 court date.

★ At 3:09 p.m., police responded to the 200 block of East Railroad for a report of a fraudulent unemployment claim being filed in complainant's name and using complainant's personal information.