

VOLUME 1, No. 2

# the PEORIAN



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# the PEORIAN

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Cover Image illustrated by Ken Clubb  
See how he did it at [ThePeorian.com/Cover](http://ThePeorian.com/Cover)



# FROM THE EDITOR



First, let me say I am not a fan of decorating for Christmas before Halloween is over and we came perilously close by putting out our second issue of *The Peorian* at the beginning of November with Santa Me on the cover.

But considering this issue covers November and December both, it was the only time we could do any stories about the holidays and the only time I was going to let some illustrator make me look like a buffoon. I mean, if they needed a model for the Santa drawing, they had to pick the biggest gut — I mean, guy — in the office?

Well, I have to tell you, that illustrator, Ken Clubb, is brilliant. Not only do I not look buffoonish in the cover illustration, he made me look better than I do in real life.


Ok, ok, I know. That isn't all that hard to do and in all actuality I am somewhat a buffoon, but he really did a wonderful job on the illustration, helping to get people into the holiday spirit — not only of our staff but, we hope, our readers as well. Thank you, Ken.

(By the way, those other guys on the cover are Kevin Kizer of *Kizer: Party of Four* and Stuart Clubb, Ken's son and one of our artists here at AdCo Advertising Agency. They look better than they do in real life, too.)

Second, I want to tell our readers we are not taking an editorial stand on shopping only local stores or not shopping on the Internet. It would be rather hypocritical for some of us at *The Peorian* to do so.

Rather, in this edition we are letting readers know that they can find anything they need in the Peoria metropolitan area. During tough economic times, that can be important.

Please note I said they can find anything they need in central Illinois. But many people have preferences for things they cannot get here and it is always nice to have options.

Paul Gordon is editor of *The Peorian*. He can be reached at 692-7880 or [editor@thepeorian.com](mailto:editor@thepeorian.com) 



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# Peoria Girl Eases Silent Film Stars into the Talkies

## Brush With History... Peorians in the National Spotlight

By Dr. Peter J. Couri



1931 with Spencer Tracy in "Quick Millions"

**H**er dad was a set designer at the Main Street Vaudeville Theater in the early 1900s Peoria.

When the magnificent vaudeville palace named the Hippodrome opened on Jefferson Street in 1913, Mr. Churchill became its first manager. His little 3-year-old daughter, Marguerite, never missed a performance.

The family home was on Barker Avenue, and when it came time to send her to Whittier grade school, precocious Marguerite could not be held down. Bill Adams wrote in the Peoria Journal Star, "The first day, she came home making spitballs. The second day, she learned to say 'darn,' and the third day, she got the mumps. So her father and mother decided she had had education enough for a 4-year-old."

At one matinee, a comedy was playing and they needed a little

black boy in the second act. Marguerite's dad grabbed her out of the audience, smeared her with blackface makeup, and shoved her on stage. A star was born.

In 1920, Marguerite's father died and her mother took her to New York City to attend the Theatre Guild Dramatic School. By the time she was sixteen, she was starring in many Broadway productions. Her dramatic talents were so brilliant that few

members of the audience or theater critics could guess her age.

When talking motion pictures became a reality in 1927, Hollywood agents rushed to New York to sign the very best Broadway talent for the new talkies. Fox Movie Studio signed Marguerite and cast

her in her first movie "The Diplomats" in 1929. Critics hailed her not only for her ravishing beauty, but haunting seductive voice.





It was becoming apparent that many of the male silent film stars were not transitioning to the talkies well. Marguerite was cast in Fox's big movies to coach, teach, and carry the stars. Will Rogers, Paul Muni, and Spencer Tracy all had their first talking picture successes with her.

But Marguerite's biggest challenge came in 1930. John Wayne had just been cast in his first starring role in Raoul Walsh's "The Big Trail." He was the talented stuntman and the studios were trying to mold him into a leading man. Now considered one of the earliest great classic westerns, the movie bombed at the box office. John Wayne always spoke highly of Marguerite for her patience and kindness though.

In 1931, she starred with George O'Brien in "Riders of the Purple Sage." She always said the stage was her true love. In 1932, she left Hollywood briefly to go back to Broadway to star in Kauffman & Ferber's classic "Dinner at Eight." But a love that kindled for George O'Brien would not die, and she returned to Hollywood to marry him in 1933.

Marguerite Churchill starred in 25 films. She died peacefully in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, in 2000. Peoria's Hippodrome Theater, which would later be renamed the Rialto Theater, had helped motivate and fashion one of the world's greatest cinema stars.

**P**



With Will Rogers in "Ambassador Bill"

## YES, THEY SAID THAT... QUOTES FROM FAMOUS PEORIANS

By Dr. Peter J. Couri



Many people have said that Richard Pryor hated his hometown. Yet he made his childhood and early experiences the backbone of his stand-up career. His own words tell how he really felt in his heart:

"When I went back to Peoria [in 1985], it was the first time I'd ever really been back, in a sense, because everything seemed so small, and all the old places were gone. They gave me a key to the city.

Yeah, a little key. It's mine, man. No, you can't have it neither, that belongs to Richard. His people gave it to him, thank you. That meant a whole lot to me. More than I can say."


Richard Pryor (1940-2005)  
Stand-up comedian,  
actor and social critic  
*US Magazine*  
June 16, 1986

## WALKING TOUR

# Peoria's Surprising Architecture

Upcoming issues of *The Peorian* will feature walking tours of Peoria's more interesting areas. This issue is the first of three parts about Downtown Peoria.

By Dr. Peter J. Couri



**F**rench explorers settled among the native peoples here in 1691 to start Illinois' oldest European settlement. The French villages here lasted for 120 years until the French and native peoples were forcibly removed by American soldiers during the War of 1812. The American soldiers then built Fort Clark in 1813. You can walk one block south of Main Street to Liberty Street where a pavilion containing a historic marker commemorates the founding of Fort Clark with French, British, Spanish, and American flags flying.

Our tour begins here at...

### 1. JOHN SCHWAB'S GROCERY & BEER SALOON (RIVERFRONT VISITORS CENTER) 110 N.E. Water Street

Main Street and the River has always been the main boat landing for Downtown and it is here you will find the Riverfront Visitors Center. It is the oldest commercial building left in Downtown Peoria and is an excellent example of early American architectural style.

During the 1850s, Peoria absorbed a large number of German immigrants. One of them was John Schwab and he built this building in 1852 as a grocery on one side, a beer saloon on the other. He and his daughters lived in the upper stories. You could purchase a dish of ice cream for 15 cents or get a beer for a nickel.

Proceed up Main Street... and you can see the construction of Museum Square where the new Caterpillar Visitor Center and the Peoria Riverfront Museum with its planetarium and large screen theater will be a welcome addition to the vibrant central city. Their abstract designs of shimmering silver metallic sheets and glass panes will make them instant landmarks.

Continuing at Main and Adams is...



1





## 2. CATERPILLAR WORLD HEADQUARTERS 100 N.E. Adams Street

Caterpillar is the world's leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, diesel and natural gas engines, industrial gas turbines, and diesel-electric locomotives. It is a Fortune 100 company with over 200,000 employees worldwide.

They have been located in the Peoria area since 1909. Their modern-style world headquarters was opened in 1968. The pristine limestone reflects other surrounding buildings, including the courthouse, which were all part of what was called the "Downtown Renaissance" of the 1960s, where whole blocks of old buildings were cleared for urban renewal.

The main lobby is richly appointed with travertine marble, woodbury granite, and safari granite. The peaceful formal gardens around the building were designed by Thomas Church. Around them flags fly from many of the nations that manufacture Caterpillar products.

Cross Adams St. to the...



## 3. PEORIA COUNTY COURTHOUSE & PLAZA 324 Main Street

This entire block has always been the Peoria County Courthouse block since the first Peoria streets were laid out by William Hamilton, Alexander Hamilton's oldest son in 1825. A two-story courthouse with four massive pillars was built in 1832. Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas spoke from its balcony many times.

In 1876, a grand Venetian-style courthouse was erected with a massive bell and clock tower. You can find the bell resting in the plaza now and the clock will be keeping time in the new history museum. This courthouse was demolished in 1962 to give rise to the modern limestone structure you see today. Lady Bird Johnson dedicated the courthouse plaza by planting a cherry tree in 1965 as a major part of her American beautification project.

The Civil War memorial in the plaza was designed by Peoria born sculptor Fritz Triebel. The artistry of the sculptures on the memorial is considered some of the finest in the nation. The bronze soldiers are defending the flag with the valor and the horror of war vividly portrayed. The classic heroic figure of "History" writes "We write on page of granite what they wrought on field of battle." Atop the granite shaft of the monument sits "Old Abe the War Eagle." Old Abe was the mascot of the 8th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment and they never lost a battle with him there. Old Abe visited Peoria in 1866 and was paraded up and down the streets to much fanfare for three solid hours.

Cross Main St. to the... *Tour continued on next page.*

# WALKING TOUR

## 4. CENTRAL NATIONAL BANK BUILDING (SOUTH SIDE BANK) 103 S.W. Adams Street

The Central National Bank Building is a textbook example of the Chicago School of Architecture as well it should be because it was designed by famous Chicago architect Daniel Burnham. He was the architect of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the urban designer of the Chicago Plan for Lake Shore Drive and Grant Park in 1909.

He built Peoria's Central National Bank building in 1914 with his classic Renaissance revival style. Notice the beautiful terra cotta cornices and the acanthus leaf design moldings lining the roof.

Next door is the...



4

## 5. APOLLO THEATER 311 S. Main Street

The Apollo Theater began showing silent movies in 1914. At the time, there were 14 major theaters in Peoria where stage shows and vaudeville enjoyed much success. The Apollo became the first Peoria theater devoted solely to motion pictures. It closed in 1958 and the ground floor was demolished for a parking deck. In 1990, attorney Tom Leiter discovered the balcony was in fine shape and had it restored into a small theater which still delights audiences today.

Walk down the block and cross Jefferson St. to the...



5

## 6. PEACE & HARVEST STATUES 401 Main Street

Watching over the Becker Building plaza are two 8 foot limestone statues called Peace and Harvest. They were sculpted by Peorian Mary Andersen Clark in 1939 as part of the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project. The art-deco style male figure is "Peace" and woman figure is "Harvest" and they express the artist's love of Midwestern values. They are the largest and considered the finest outdoor WPA sculptures in the nation.

Cross Main St. to the...



6

## 7. PEORIA LIFE INSURANCE BUILDING (COMMERCE BANK BUILDING) 416 Main Street

Built in 1920, this skyscraper is sheathed in white terra-cotta, with classical embellishments, majestic American eagles, and sentinels guarding the entrances. But it is the lantern tower atop the building that gives Peoria its distinctive skyline. It was placed there to guard against a new and growing problem in 1920 - low flying bi-planes.

Continue walking up Main St. to...



7





8

## 8. MADISON THEATRE

### 502 Main Street

This is Peoria's last remaining grand theater. It was designed by Peoria architect Frederick Klein in 1920. He built grand ornate theater palaces across the Midwest. The Madison is considered his masterpiece. The Italian Renaissance inspired exterior with its white terra cotta relief gives way to a refined understated interior of gold and cream details inspired by the palaces of England. The auditorium ceiling is an exquisitely beautiful dome of concentric circles, garlands, and rosettes.

Notice the delicate art nouveau medallion, commonly called the "Madison Maiden," that overlooks the Main Street side, and the modern mural painted on the Madison Street side which is a tribute to jazz music.

Cross Main St. again to the...

## 9. HOTEL PERE MARQUETTE

### 501 Main Street

The Hotel Pere Marquette has been a Peoria landmark since the day it opened in 1927. The brick hotel has a strong classic Greek-Revival style with decorative stone animals and the head of Father Marquette above the entrance. He was the first French explorer to visit Peoria in 1673.

The grand lobby is elegant and dramatic due to the marble staircases and finely detailed plaster elements. The architect was Horace Trumbauer of Philadelphia. He recruited America's most renowned muralist at the time, George Mathews Harding, to travel to Peoria and paint two murals for the hotel.

One mural, that hangs above the elevators in the main lobby, is of Father Marquette and Louis Jolliet arriving by canoe in 1673 to interact with the native peoples and claim Peoria for the French.

The second mural is in the domed Cotillion Room. It depicts French explorer LaSalle leaving France in 1684 on his ship "The Joly" for his second trip to America. Scholars marvel at the how accurate every detail in the mural is due to Harding's intelligent research.

At the corner of Main & Madison, there are two walking trip detours. Detour One will have you continue walking north up Main Street. Detour Two will have you waking down Madison toward Sacred Heart Church and the Peoria Civic Center. They will appear in future issues of *The Peorian*. **P**

9



# CHARITABLE GIVING



## A Very Giving Community

Local charitable giving remains strong during holidays despite economic woes

By Paul Gordon

It's that time of year where almost every door of every store finds a red kettle manned by a bell ringer. Christmas is a time for giving.

It is also, however, a time when the needs of the less fortunate seem accentuated and when the economy is down, as it has been in central Illinois the last few years, the number of those in need increases.

Luckily, say those in the area that run charities, Peoria is a very giving community. "This city, this area never ceases to amaze me, the way it will open its hearts and wallets for those in need. It really is an amazingly giving community," said Phil Jordan, director of marketing at the Journal Star and in charge of the

newspaper's annual Journal Star Christmas Fund.

The Christmas Fund is money collected by donations, named or anonymous, that is used to pay for food baskets and toys and other items. The Journal Star accepts letters from people asking for food or toys for their kids or requests for the items for somebody else, then works with the Salvation Army to make sure they get distributed.

Jordan said he has evidence that giving does not decrease when the economy turns sour: The amount collected by the Journal Star Christmas Fund in 2009, the worst year for the recession, set a record. "It's because people who were able to give knew there were others who were hurting, even more than normal, and they wanted to help," he said.

Not surprisingly, he added, he has noticed an uptick in the number of requests for food baskets and toys. "It has stayed up there the last couple years," he said, noting the fund paid for 5,285 food baskets each of the last two years. He expects it will be about the same again this year.

The fund pays for about 1,700 backpacks filled with toys and games for children that are given out at special events.

Jordan said the Journal Star considers the Christmas Fund "the community's project. The community gives us the resources; all we do is facilitate it."

He cited the efforts of the owners of Lindy's grocery in Washington for procuring the meat for the food baskets at their cost, getting it packaged through

volunteers, then helping deliver them.

"We get a lot of help for this project. Every year the community comes through like a champ," he said.

Those were similar to sentiments expressed by Michael Stephan, president of the Heart of Illinois United Way.

"Charitable giving is always very strong during the holiday season. I think it's those who can help showing their appreciation for others," he said.

Last year the annual United Way campaign saw a slight increase in giving from 2009 – from \$8.6 million to \$8.7 million – but Stephan is not ready to predict how this year's campaign, which is about halfway finished, will end. That's partly because of the economy and the fact 45 of its partner agencies have sustained \$9.4 million in state and federal funding cuts the last two years. Because of that many have had to increase the number of fund raisers.

"This, of course, is all coming at a time when demand on these agencies is increasing because of the economy. There is a real stress right now on agencies that provide health and human services," he said.

Still, Stephan said, he doesn't doubt the community will come through. "This community, I have found, is very giving. People want to help the less fortunate when they can. But at the same time, in this world of being able to get information about anything you want people are becoming more and more astute about their



charitable giving.

"We have found that more and more we have to show accountability to people to show we are worthy of their charitable dollar. There is certainly nothing wrong with that. In fact, if we can show accountability and worthiness, we will get that charitable dollar," Stephan said.

Rich Draeger, assistant development director for the Salvation Army Heartland Division, also believes not-for-profits agencies in central Illinois are seen in a good light by area residents.

"I know this sounds cliché but I think a big part of it is that Midwestern, blue-collar thinking. People in this area appreciate those who work hard and feel for them when things are tough. They also appreciate those who are straightforward and trustworthy about the needs," Draeger said.

Charitable giving to the Salvation Army has remained strong, he added. Nationally it was up 3 percent to 4 percent in 2010 over 2009. "There are exceptions, of course, but non-profit giving in central Illinois has fared pretty well in the down economy," he said.

That includes donations to the Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign, which can be found across the country. In 2010, the kettles set out at 42 sites in Peoria, East Peoria, Bartonville and Washington – the towns the Peoria office takes care of -- took in \$273,000. That was up from \$265,000 in 2009. Pekin and Morton kettles are handled by the Pekin office, he said.

"It has remained steady in the 12 years I've been here. Any decreases have been more weather related than economy related," Draeger said. He said the most collected in the last 12 years was \$278,000 and the low was \$260,000.

This year the kettles will show up on Friday, Nov. 11. That isn't earlier than normal, Draeger said, in that they always make their appearance two Fridays before Thanksgiving.

The Salvation Army Tree of Lights Campaign begins that same day with a kickoff celebration at Four Points by Sheraton in downtown Peoria. The event also will celebrate the Salvation Army's 125th anniversary in Peoria.

"Last year was a tougher year for the Tree of Lights for a couple different reasons, so this year we're probably try a few new things to generate more interest," Draeger said.

When *The Peorian* went to press the details of those things had not yet been unveiled.

The Heartland Division of the Salvation Army serves 72 counties in Illinois and eastern Iowa. **P**

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## YOU CAN FIND IT HERE

Retailers say there is little need to leave Peoria area to shop

By Paul Gordon



**I**t always sounds good and noble when communities start “buy local” campaigns aimed at boosting sales for their locally owned retailers.

Such campaigns have been seen in central Illinois for years, particularly in the communities surrounding Peoria. Some shopping centers, such as the Metro Centre and Junction City in Peoria, pride themselves on being occupied by almost all local retailers.

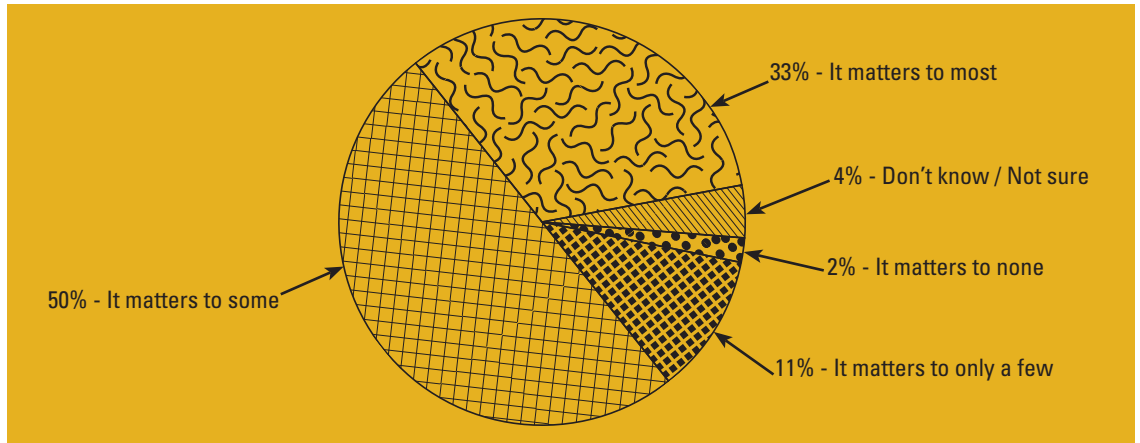
But do such campaigns really help? During the busiest shopping seasons of the year, including the holiday shopping season fast approaching, are these campaigns realistic?

First, there is evidence that “buy local” campaigns do help, according to the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. In each of the past four years, the organization said, a national survey of independent business found that those in communities with such

campaigns “have experienced markedly stronger revenue growth” compared with companies in areas that don’t have an ongoing campaign.

In 2010, the most recent survey showed, businesses in “buy local” communities had average sales growth of 5.6 percent, compared with 2.1 percent for the others. The survey was of 2,768 independent businesses, including retailers, service companies, restaurants and other small companies.

Do you think the fact that your business is locally owned and independent matters to your customers?



That survey, conducted after the 2010 holiday shopping season was completed, indicated the "buy local" initiative was a factor during that period between Thanksgiving and Christmas for independent retailers, who made up nearly half of all those surveyed. In fact, the survey showed, the gap was even larger: Independent retailers in "buy local" communities reported a 5.2 percent increase in holiday sales and those in communities without a campaign reported growth of 0.8 percent.

Further, among businesses that experience revenue declines in 2010, those in communities without a "buy local" campaign experienced a larger decline than those in "buy local" towns.

Nearly half of the respondents in "buy local" communities said the campaign brought them new customers and 55 percent said it improved the loyalty of their existing customers.

"The survey's findings suggest that more people are aware of and seeking out independent businesses," the ILSR said. "Nearly two-thirds of respondents said that public awareness of the benefits of supporting

locally owned businesses had increased in (2010), while 24 percent said it had stayed the same and only 3 percent said it had decreased."

Also, it said, far more people said it mattered to some or most of their customers that the business was locally owned and independent.

Stacy Mitchell, head of research for the ILSR, said campaigns that are not sustained long-term are not nearly as effective. Those that are, however, "they're the ones where it really happens. When local business alliances are formed by the independent business owners and they run the campaign, those are most effective. If it's started by an organization like a chamber of commerce, it has to make sure there is a lot of buy-in from the business community if it is going to work."

Mitchell said keeping a campaign going long-term is most effective "because there is a greater degree of visibility for the campaign and the businesses involved and there is the message being repeated over and over."

Mitchell said her organization looks for those types of established campaigns when it does

annual surveys to check their effectiveness.

There is a noticeable effect on holiday shopping, as well, she said. That's partly because gift items are the types of things that can easily be purchased any place. "With gift items there seems to be a lot more leeway for going to the independent retailers," she said.

But another reason, Mitchell said, seems to be one surrounding community spirit. "At Christmas or the holiday season there always is more community spirit, more appeal to doing things to support your community. If buy-local campaigns send out that kind of message, it hits home for a lot more people during that season," she said.

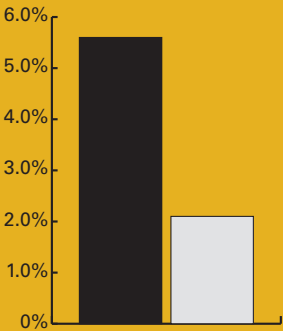
That support includes the fact that dollars spent with local retailers stay in the community and are re-spent in the community, whereas large department stores based outside the community send their receipts to the corporate headquarters where it then gets redistributed. The percentage of sales to those stores that stay in the community – largely in the form of wages paid the employees – is much smaller, Mitchell said.



# THE PRESENT

**Independent Businesses in Communities:** ■ with a “Buy Local” campaign. □ without a “Buy Local” campaign.

Average Change in Revenue in 2010



“When that kind of information is communicated, it makes a difference,” Mitchell said.

There are few items a person could not find in Peoria, either at an independent retail store, a so-called big box store, a strip center or big mall, said Eric Brinker, president of the Metro Centre, which boasts all locally owned independent stores or franchises among its 46 shops in the heart of Peoria.

“We don’t think there really is any reason to have to go outside Peoria for anything, whether it’s for holiday shopping or any time of year,” he said. “Of course there are going to be exceptions, but they will be few,” he said.

At Metro Centre a shopper can find shoes and clothes for any age group, food items and spirits (including restaurants), health and beauty items, services such as a travel agency, insurance and banking, and specialty stores that include unique gifts and artwork.

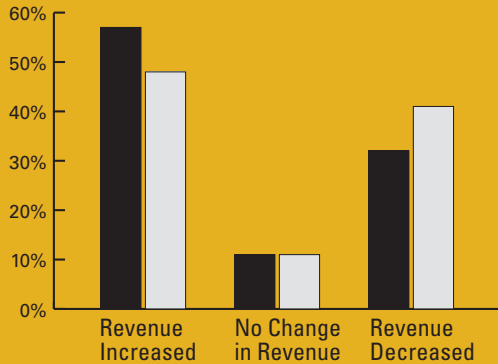
Brinker returned to Peoria from New York City to take over Metro Centre after its founder and his grandfather, Marvin Goodman, died in 2007. He stayed, he said,

because he knew Peoria was a small, big city. “Anything you could possibly want you can find here, whether it’s merchandise, entertainment or services. One of the things that drew me to Peoria is that you don’t feel disconnected here,” said Brinker, who is the son of former U.S. Ambassador Nancy Brinker and grew up in Dallas.

Les Morris, spokesman for Simon Property Group, the largest shopping center developer and owner in the country, agreed Peoria has a nice mix of independent and national retailers not atypical for a metropolitan area of 350,000-plus. But it has some things even higher-profile cities don’t have, he added.

“Take Jacksonville, Florida, for example. Bigger city, bigger profile, has an NFL team and hosted a Super Bowl. It doesn’t have a Macy’s store. But Peoria does, right there at Northwoods Mall,” said Morris, whose employer owns Northwoods as well as Willow Knolls Plaza in Peoria. “There aren’t many stores with a higher-profile name than Macy’s.”

% Reporting Revenue Growth or Decline in 2010

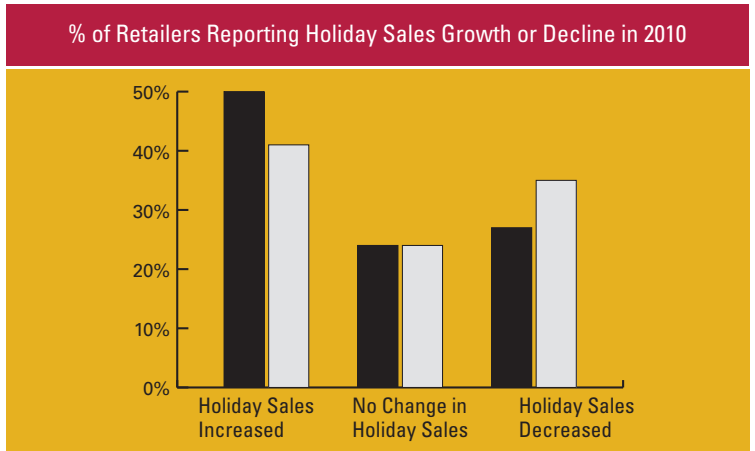


Often buy-local campaigns are started in small towns as an effort to get their residents to stay home, so to speak, to shop for what they need. Several central Illinois towns joined forces in the spring of 2010 in an initiative called We Are Retail Ready to let people know of the shopping and retail business opportunities available in the area about halfway between Chicago and St. Louis.

The effort was spearheaded in part by the Economic Development Council for Central Illinois and it put together profiles of the Peoria-area communities that have a good amount of retail, including Peoria Heights, East Peoria, Bartonville, Chillicothe, Washington, Morton and Pekin. Information on the demographics of the communities and the retail opportunities are included, as are maps. Profiles can be viewed at [www.centralillinois.org](http://www.centralillinois.org)

Several communities combined that campaign with more local efforts, such as coupons provided by the local chambers of commerce to local retailers. Some chambers help underwrite “hot

Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 2011 Independent Business Survey



deals” for some of their retailers to get people into the shops to buy something at a discounted price.

Morton offers coupons and hot deals, said Jennifer Daly, executive director of both the Morton Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council. She also was one of the leaders of the We Are Retail Ready campaign.

The “I Shop Morton” initiative began about a year ago and includes coupons to local retailers and independent businesses given to community newcomers. A holiday coupon booklet is being prepared that will soon show up in the mailboxes of every Morton household. So far, Daly said, there hasn’t been an effort to track the effectiveness of “I Shop Morton” because it takes time for people to use coupons. Tracking will be done soon, she said.

“These are things we feel are important because retail leakage hurts our independent businesses. But it takes communication, too. An awareness of the impact leakage can make may cause people to stop and think about going elsewhere to shop. A large part of

any type of buy-local campaign is awareness,” she said.

Daly acknowledged there are items some people could not find in Morton and that they need to look elsewhere. She also is quick to say she understands some have their personal preferences on where they shop for clothes and other items.

“We’re realistic, but we also know if there is a way to help our local businesses our residents should recognize what is available right here,” she said.

Likewise, Roberta Parks, president of the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce, said there is no point to demonize those who shop outside Peoria for some items, whether by choice or necessity.

“Everybody has their favorites and people are going to want to shop where they can get the full selection of merchandise a large department store offers but still want to find the unique gifts that a small, independent retailer is more likely to have. We’re lucky here in that we have that kind of mix, which a lot of cities our size can’t offer,” she said.

Parks said a new initiative aimed more at business-to-business sales is in the planning stages at the EDC and area chambers of commerce. Called “Buy CI” and likely to launch soon after the holidays, the idea will be to get businesses that purchase products outside the local area bring 5 percent of that buying back into central Illinois.

Daly in Morton said the program is modeled after the “Buy Into the Circle” campaign in Des Moines that is paying dividends after a couple years. “Businesses there signed a pledge and they’ve been able to quantify what it means to that area. We have a study here that we believe will show the impact will be significant, just shifting 5 percent back to the area. Even if buying local costs a little more, the overall benefits to the area are significant,” she said. **P**



## THE PRESENT

# Heart of Peoria

Metro Centre, local retailers thrive in the center of the city

By Paul Gordon

Life was good in Pottstown for Bob and Katie Barth. Their business, Pottstown Meat, was doing well, they could on occasion hang a 'gone fishin' sign on the door and "things were really pretty easy."

That's why he was reluctant to rock the boat when he was approached by Marvin Goodman about opening a store and deli in the Metro Centre, in the heart of Peoria.

Then, as it often does, life intervened.

"When Mr. Goodman (Metro Centre founder) first approached us we weren't really interested in changing anything. But then my son, who at the time was a CPA in Milwaukee and doing pretty well, dropped a bombshell on me," Barth said.

"He told me he wasn't really happy with what he was doing and he wanted to come back and get back into the family business.



I didn't expect that," Barth said about his son Jason. "I questioned him about it, talked about the long hours and hard work it is running a family business. But he grew up in it so he knew, and it was what he wanted to do."

So Pottstown Meat and Deli came to Metro Centre and the Barths intended to operate both

places, keeping the store in Pottstown open with Bob and Katie at one and Jason at the other. But when the economy tanked it became too difficult to operate both stores, so Pottstown became only the company's production center.

The Metro Centre store, meanwhile, grew. Bob said he believes being located in the very heart of the city has been a key factor. In five years at Metro business has close to doubled.

"Our hearts will always be in Pottstown," said Barth, whose grandfather started the business more than 100 years ago. "But it's here, too. We still have a lot of our old customers who come here now and we've gained a lot of new customers."



Jason Barth wraps an order for a customer

When Bremer Jewelry moved from University Plaza to its present location at 4707 N. University St. in 1999, being in the heart of Peoria was not just the chief consideration, said owner Ronda Daily. "It was the only consideration. We never thought about going anywhere else. We knew it would be incredibly important to stay in the heart of the city because our customers wanted us to be there," she said.

That move occurred before the retail explosion to Peoria's far north or along the riverfront in East Peoria, but it would not have mattered, Daily said. "That explosion didn't hurt any of us here because this is a great part of the city and University and Glen is just about the busiest intersection in the city. It is so centralized here and we're not really mall people," she said.

Daily said she believes jewelry stores are, for the most part, destination stores rather than retailers that count on browsers becoming buyers. That's especially true for those who want a jeweler they can commission to do custom-made pieces, as Bremer has always done.

"A lot of our customers are bridal, so they are younger people who will first do a lot of research on the Internet and decide then where to go," rather than window shop and hope they spot something they like, she said.





## THE PRESENT

Restaurants are often destination points, as well, and that's why being in the heart of Peoria has been a good thing for The Fish House at 4919 N. University St., said general manager Justin Waldschmidt, son of restaurant founder and owner Gary Waldschmidt.

"This has always been one of the busiest intersections and corridors in the city and we thought it was important we have that kind of traffic while still being close to residential areas. It has worked out great and business is still very good," Waldschmidt said.



"When people are deciding where to go, they know they don't have to go very far in any one direction to get here and this is familiar territory."

"We still pull people from all over the area because of our reputation and quality, but the people in the heart of the city are our regulars and always come back," he said.

Much has stayed the same at The Fish House since it opened Jan. 2, 1976, including most of the menu, he said. "Our customers know what we have, they know our employees and our employees know them. We have three employees here who have been with us since the day we opened almost 36 years ago. That's almost unheard of in the restaurant business," Waldschmidt said.

Like Pottstown Meat and Deli and Bremer Jewelry, the holiday season is busy for The Fish House. It opens its fish market at the rear of the restaurant every day between Thanksgiving and New Year's and it sells a lot of party trays along with gift certificates.

Being in or near the heart of the city appealed to Marvin Goodman so much he built an entire shopping center in that location in the mid-1970s. The Metro Centre not only has expanded since then, it is thriving, with almost all locally owned tenants among its offerings.

Eric Brinker, the grandson of the late Goodman and now Metro Centre president, said there is little doubt in his mind



Justin Waldschmidt, whose father Gary Waldschmidt founded the restaurant in 1975

the center's location is the reason. "It's really the anchor to the city and it's critical for it to stay vital. The largest population density in the city lives within three miles of Metro Centre," he said.

"My grandfather was always proud of the fact he could say we were in the heart of Peoria. He knew that's where the action was. It's still that way, for the most part. It's easy to get here and it's pretty much the same distance and travel time from any place in town," Brinker said.

"We have very strong tenants and we are full. There's not much turnover here," he added.

Brinker said Metro Centre has a lot of specialty retailers, the kind that are more destination stores than places people browse. While Metro welcomes browsers and certainly gets its fill of them on weekends, it gets shoppers who are coming for a certain store. Not only is it important they can get there easily, but it's a shopping center where shoppers can park right in front of their destination. "That's a big deal in bad weather, especially in the cold when people are Christmas shopping," he said.

Brinker and the other retailers in the heart of Peoria have had to deal with road reconstruction the last few months as the city rebuilds the intersection of University and Glen and some of those streets leading to the intersection.

That intersection averages more than 46,000 vehicles through it each day.

The construction was completed earlier than originally planned and the retailers say it didn't hurt business much but they are ready for it to finish before the holiday traffic gets started.

"We get a lot of younger customers who are looking for wedding jewelry and they are not put off by the construction. Then again, not many customers are if our store is where they want to go. As long as they can get here, that's all they care about," Daily of Bremer Jewelry said.

Waldschmidt at The Fish House said there have been times when the construction caused some customers to go elsewhere for dinner, especially those evenings when the city was doing paving work. "It's going to be beautiful now that it's finished and it will help with the holiday season coming," he said.

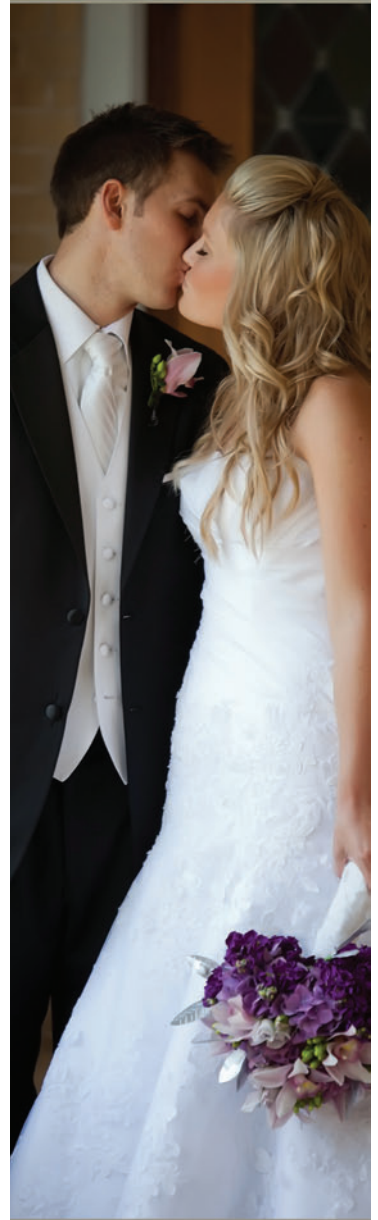
Brinker said he believes the construction work will also draw more retailers and restaurants to Metro Centre and the heart of Peoria. "Even more than it already was, it will be the place to be in Peoria," he said.

He said the city's decision to spend millions of dollars to rebuild that intersection and make it better for traffic and safer for vehicles and pedestrians shows it also believes it is a critical part of the city.

"The city did a great job with it and with keeping us informed along the way. A person always feels better when driving on new roads and it makes the surroundings seem better and newer, also. That can't do anything but help all of us," Brinker said.

"People complain about the city a lot, but I think it should be commended in this case." **P**

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# Centers of Activity

Area malls and shopping centers ready for holiday shoppers

Paul Gordon



**Y**ou won't find many retail store brands more well-known than Macy's, if for no other reason than the popularity of the movie "Miracle on 34th Street" that featured the store, its Thanksgiving parade and its Santa.

You also won't find too many cities the size of Peoria with a Macy's Department Store, but Northwoods Mall has it as one of its three anchors and it helps bring in shoppers from miles around, said Bob Schertz, director of marketing for Northwoods.

"There's no question that Macy's is a very big draw for us. During the holidays it gets even bigger as people will drive quite a ways to come to Macy's at Christmas," Schertz said.

"But you know what, we have such a great mix of tenants right now — including our other anchors Sears and J.C. Penney — people just want to come here to shop. Our traffic is very good, whether it's the holidays or not," he added.

Northwoods, which is owned by Simon Property Group, has mostly national retail tenants with the exception of the many kiosks that dot the middles of both levels of the mall. Many of those are locally based entrepreneurs, some just starting out, Schertz said. While the mall as a whole is nearly 100 percent leased, all kiosks space is leased for this holiday season, he added.

For Northwoods, the holiday season officially kicks off Nov. 4,

with Santa Claus arriving on Nov. 5 to hear the wishes of boys and girls. Many stores, however, have already started their holiday seasons as far as decorations are concerned.

“It does seem like it gets earlier every year, but these stores are pretty savvy and they want to take advantage of when people are spending money. People are out there spending right now,” Schertz said.

That was the case, for the most part, during the recession, as well, he said.

“Northwoods did really well during the recession, even during the worst part of it. We had sales gains during the holiday season even then,” he said.

Northwoods opened in 1975 but went through a multi-million dollar renovation about six years ago. “This place is in great shape. We are still attracting top-flight tenants and again, we have a great mix. We like where we are right now,” Schertz said.

Aside from the anchors, other tenants among Northwoods’ 90 stores include Abercrombie & Fitch, Aeropostale, Bath & Body Works, Express, Kay Jewelry, Finish Line, Foot Locker, Maurices, Radio Shack, Rogers & Holland Jewelers, Smo-King Pit, Spencer Gifts, Victoria’s Secret and Wet Seal. For a complete list, including hours of the mall as well as the individual stores, go to: [www.simon.com](http://www.simon.com)



J.C. Penney Christmas display



# THE PRESENT



On up U.S. 150 from Northwoods is Peoria's other mall, the Shoppes at Grand Prairie. An open-air mall that the developers refer to as a "lifestyle center," the Shoppes sport four anchors, with Dick's Sporting Goods, Bergner's, Old Navy and Jillian's. There are another 64 specialty retail stores, eight of which are locally owned and operated, said Dawn Shipman, general manager of the mall.

The Shoppes have had a couple hits in recent years when two of its larger stores — Linens n' Things and more recently Border's — closed because their parent companies went bankrupt. The local stores were doing fine, Shipman said. In fact, the Peoria Borders ranked among that chain's top performing stores.

But the Shoppes have been able to keep tenants coming in, she said. Earlier this year Charming Charlies, a large fashion accessories boutique, opened its first store between Chicago and St. Louis. Soma Intimates, a boutique offering intimate apparel,

opened as well, helping to fill a niche the Shoppes had been lacking, Shipman said.

On the restaurant side, Osaka Hibachi and Sushi Bar opened recently.

In the spring, Shipman said, Designer Shoe Warehouse will open.

While nothing is scheduled to replace Borders as yet, Shipman said there is a lot of interest in the site "and I don't think it will be that much longer before we'll be able to announce a new tenant for that space."

Otherwise, she said, "Things are fantastic out here. We're all gearing up for the holiday season and we're going to have more entertainment for our customers."

That includes the Shoppes' official holiday season kickoff on Nov. 12, which the mall calls its "Day of Giving." People who bring a toy for Toys for Tots or gently used clothing for the Salvation Army or food for local food banks will be given wristbands that entitle them to discounts at mall stores.

At 5 p.m. that day Santa will arrive in a horse-drawn carriage, followed by the Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

"It's always an exciting day here. It's almost like a Normal Rockwell setting," Shipman said.

Other tenants at the Shoppes at Grand Prairie include Chico's, Jos. A. Bank Clothiers, Johnny's Italian Steakhouse, Coldwater Creek, Aeropostale, Banana Republic, Charlotte Russe, the Dress Barn, Eddie Bauer, Willet's Wine and Yankee Candle.

For a complete list and hours go to [www.shoppesatgrandprairie.com](http://www.shoppesatgrandprairie.com).

Surrounding the mall are several other retailers, large and small, national and local. They include Furniture Row, Rave Motion Pictures, Gordman's, Jones Bros. Jewelers and Golds Gym. Restaurants include Buffalo Wild Wings, Tilted Kilt, Famous Dave's, Starkbucks, Steak n' Shake and Longhorn Steakhouse.



The Peoria area is home to many other smaller shopping centers that have mixes of national and local retailers. They include:

- Sheridan Village, at Sheridan and Lake, the city's oldest center (opened in 1954), is home to Bergner's, HyVee, CEFCU, Ing's China Express, Baskin Robbins and Weight Watchers.
- Evergreen Square, also at Sheridan and Lake, is home to Kmart, Kroger, Shoe Carnival, TJ Maxx and Office Depot.
- Willow Knolls Shopping Center, at Willow Knolls Drive and U.S. Route 150. Also owned by Simon Property Group, tenants include Kohl's, Sam's Club, Burlington Coat Factory, Willow Knolls 14 cinemas and several restaurants.
- Glen Hollow Shopping Center, Big Hollow Road and Glen Avenue, tenants include Target, PetSmart, Lowe's, Best Buy, Barnes & Noble, Shop n' Save.
- Westlake Shopping Center, Lake and Sterling Avenues, tenants include Fresh Market, Guitar Center, Arby's, Five Guys Burgers and Fries, Toys R Us, Babies R Us, Ruby Tuesday and Chuck E. Cheese.
- East Court Village, Pekin. Tenants include Bergner's, Big Lots, Hobby Lobby, Payless Shoe Source and Rue 21.
- Morton Plaza, Morton. Tenants include Kmart, Kroger, Hallmark and Dollar Tree.
- Riverside Center, East Peoria. Tenants include WalMart, Office Max, PetSmart, Bass Pro Shops, Lowe's, TGIF. **P**

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# At the Junction

City's oldest shopping destination has some of its most modern flair

By Paul Gordon

**I**ts very first enterprise may be gone, but Junction City shopping center is doing as well as it ever has and boasts some of Peoria's newest retail.

And while it has grown by about 30,000 square feet in the past four years, Junction Ventures LLC owners Alexis and Elizabeth Khazzam aren't content to stay with what is there, said Chuck Hollis, CEO of Junction City.

"We're still planning and deciding what will be best on some of the property here, including that acreage south of 309 and to the east of the center. And the corner property (of Knoxville and Prospect) has had some interest but we and our co-developers (D. Joseph & Associates) are being patient. We are committed to

putting just the right tenant there to fit in well with the great things we already have going," Hollis said.

That corner held Vonachen's Junction, later called Vonachen's Old Place, and was co-founded by Pete Vonachen and Pauline Jacquin in 1956. Within two years the rest of the shopping center was being built in a style and color to evoke the feeling of a turn-of-the-century Main Street.

Since the Khazzams acquired it in January 2006 from the Siegrist family the original shopping center has undergone a multi-million dollar makeover, with new tenants who were already successful elsewhere and relocated.

The Khazzams then made a trade with the state of Illinois on some property so they could get their hands on the Illinois Department of Transportation warehouse next door. The idea was to convert that warehouse into usable retail space, something Hollis said met with skepticism.

"People said, 'it can't be done, it can't be done.' Well look at it now. It got done," he said, noting that all but one 1,300 square-foot space is leased with the restaur-

ant 309 and Farrell's eXtreme Body Shaping fitness center being the largest of the tenants.

Almost all of Junction City's tenants are local, in fact. Only Farrell's eXtreme, the Benjamin Edwards brokerage office and Sweet CeCe's are not locally based and the latter has a local franchisee.

They succeed at Junction City because of the location along one of the city's busiest roads on Knoxville Avenue and, Hollis said, because of the support they get from Junction Ventures. "Location and support are the keys to the success because we are very involved with the success of our tenants," he said.

"Another thing to consider, though, is that the tenants are good business people. They understand the dynamics of this area. They know the economic conditions better than national retailers and they can move on it when the time is right instead of waiting for somebody else to make the decision. That's why they succeed even when they don't have the national platform or corporate backing of the national retailers," Hollis said.



Junction City is more than 90 percent leased, with some office space in the Town Hall just south of the main shopping center still open. "That's a nice number to have, especially considering our make-up is almost all local. That tells me the local economy is doing ok," he added.

Hollis said it is significant that the Khazzams took on the warehouse space and the Town Hall space and did renovations and looked for tenants during the worst part of the last recession. "Our business plan, which includes a fair price for good real estate and the support we give our tenants, is working."

Hollis said people tend to forget that the main part of the shopping center was in need of renovations and that other parts of the property were in bad shape, including the now-vacant land that held the Grandview Hotel.

"We accomplished a lot of things people didn't think we could do and Junction Ventures did it without public money. This is a private investment, 100 percent, which we think is worth noting," he said.

Future growth is planned, as Hollis mentioned before. But other than to say a boutique hotel is still being considered where the Grandview once stood, he won't discuss specifics.

Petersen Health Care plans to build a senior living center on the eastern edge of the Junction City property is on hold, but Hollis said he couldn't comment beyond that.

Junction City has also become home to more events the last few years, including the Junction City Holiday Walk, the sixth annual one scheduled for Friday, Nov. 4 with festivities planned from 4 to 9 p.m. **P**

Junction City Shopping Center  
5901 N. Prospect Road, Peoria  
Owners: Junction Ventures LLC  
Retailers include:

- Bare Belly Boutique
- Pooch Couture
- Random Clothier
- Asia Grill
- Butcher Block Steakhouse & Grill
- Cyd's Gourmet Kitchen
- Tavern on Prospect
- Evolution Wine & Spirits
- The Bronze Frog
- Design Plus
- LS Home
- Exhibit A Gallery
- Diva Studio
- Sweet CeCe's
- Belle Mie
- Stork Snapshots

For more information:  
[www.newjunctioncity.com](http://www.newjunctioncity.com)  
or call (309) 740-0808



# ONLINE SHOPPING

## An Unlevel Playing Field

By Paul Gordon

**B**rick-and-mortar stores are still alive, but online shopping continues to grow.

The cover of *Time* magazine on July 20, 1998 probably alarmed an awful lot of people, particularly those in the business of retail development.

The cover showed the founder of Yahoo, Jerry Yang, on a surfboard in bare feet easing out of a computer screen across a key board.

The headline screamed “KISS YOUR MALL GOODBYE” with a subhead that said “Online shopping is faster, cheaper and better.”

To borrow — and paraphrase — a line from Mark Twain, “The reports of brick-and-mortar retail death are greatly exaggerated.”

However, is it just a matter of time before that bold prediction of 13 years ago finally comes true? If so, probably not for a long time even though Internet shopping continues to expand every year, said Les Morris, spokesman for Simon Property Group, which owns Northwoods Mall, Willow Knolls Plaza and many other retail venues nationwide.

“I can tell you the Simon properties are doing very well. Occupancy and sales have both been up. Second quarter sales were up 9.4 percent over the second quarter of 2010. I would say mall shopping is far

from dead. In fact I would say it’s thriving. We’re seeing real growth,” Morris said.

There’s no question, however, that Internet shopping also is growing. On Cyber Monday last year — the name given to the Monday after Thanksgiving because it is the largest single Internet shopping day of the year — sales topped \$1 billion. It was the first time in history that Internet shopping reached that mark in a single day, according to comscore.com, which has been tracking Internet shopping for more than a decade.

Comscore.com said Internet sales were \$32.6 billion total for the holiday shopping season — Nov. 1 through the end of the year — in 2010, a 16 percent increase from the previous year. By contrast, it was about \$6 billion in

1998, helping to prompt that *Time* magazine prediction.

It is expected to experience similar growth this year, according to the National Retail Federation.

For all the bravado that malls and shopping centers are still strong, retailers acknowledge they are taking a hit in sales at those centers because of the ease of shopping online. Another issue — and a big one for retailers — is that most online sales are made without a sales tax being paid.

“There is not a level playing field when it comes to competing with the Internet and we’re competing with it every day. It’s not fair, pure and simple,” Morris said.

He said Simon Property Group supports the Main Street Fairness Act that will proposed in



This is the cover of *Time* from July 20, 1998, when the magazine noted that with the rapid growth of online shopping, the days of brick-and-mortar retailers might be numbered.

Congress by Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin. The act would charge a sales tax on all Internet sales, regardless of the state where they originate or whether the company has a physical presence in any certain state.

"That would be great for the independent businesses if Congress would pass that bill," said Stacy Mitchell of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. "Companies and websites like Amazon pose the biggest threat to the independent retailers. Their growth curve has been tremendous and last year there was a noticeable uptick in the effect shopping online had on independent retailers.

"We try to emphasize in buy-local campaigns to think about the money coming back into a community from retail sales. With online shopping it's practically zero," Mitchell said.

Eric Brinker, president of the Metro Centre in Peoria, said there are few ways for a retailer to fight back. "We can't hide behind the fact people are going to buy online. It's easier, there's usually no sales tax, you can find anything on the Internet. What we have to do to compete is offer great customer service," he said.

Brinker cited a personal example, saying he chose to spend a few more dollars for a sweater he wanted by going to Bushwacker, a store in the Metro Centre, because he knew the staff there would give him great service before and during the sale. "I could have bought it online, but to get the service I wanted it was worth it to spend a little more," Brinker said.

When he proposed the Main Street Fairness Act, Sen. Durbin – who will formally introduce the bill next spring – said his intention is to level the playing

field between online and bricks-and-mortar retailers by allowing states to require sellers to collect sales taxes that are already owed under current law regardless of whether the seller has a physical presence in the state.

"Why should out-of-state companies that sell their products online have an unfair advantage over Main Street bricks-and-mortar businesses here in Springfield?" Durbin said when announcing the bill while in Springfield in August.

"The Main Street Fairness Act doesn't ask anyone to pay a single penny more in taxes. Instead, it would help governors and mayors collect taxes that are already owed," he said. "Between 2009 and 2012, states across the country, including Illinois, are expected to lose as much as \$37 billion in uncollected state and local taxes on internet and catalogue sales. From 2005 to 2010 the state of Illinois estimated it lost \$153 million each year."

According to Durbin's office states now cannot require sellers to collect sales tax in states unless they also have brick-and-mortar stores or other physical presence in the state. The burden falls to consumers who are required to report to state tax departments any sales taxes they owe for online purchases. As a result, local retailers are at a competitive disadvantage because they must collect sales taxes while out of state retailers, including many large online and catalog retailers, in effect give their customers a discount by collecting no state or local sales taxes.

"Why should consumers face the burden of reporting all of their online purchases? Main Street retailers collect sales taxes on behalf of consumers. Why

shouldn't online retailers do the same?" Durbin said.

Last spring the Illinois General Assembly adopted legislation, also called the Main Street Fairness Act, to require online retailers who own warehouses, factories or maintain affiliate companies in the state to collect sales taxes on purchases made by Illinois residents.

The act does not impose a uniform state sales tax, but requires the seller to collect the sales tax for all purchases based upon where the buyer is located. **P**

#### **According to Durbin's office the Main Street Fairness Act:**

- Certifies the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement, a comprehensive interstate system to streamline and harmonize sales tax rules and administrative requirements;
- Provides states with the clear authority to require all retailers to collect sales taxes;
- Does not create a new tax, but provides a necessary tool to collect an existing tax in a simple and fair manner;
- Releases consumers from tax remittance obligations;
- Treats all retailers with equal sales tax collection responsibilities; and
- Reduces collection costs and provides compensation for all sellers required to collect sales taxes.

The Main Street Fairness Act is supported by the National Governors' Association, National Conference on State Legislatures, National Retail Federation, International Council of Shopping Centers, and Retail Industry Leaders Association, Durbin's office said.



# Goin' Fishing & Hunting

Now in its third generation of ownership, the Presley family has been baiting lines for 65 years

Paul Gordon

Scott Klasing, who manages the firearms section of Presley's Outdoors in Bartonville, shows off the hundreds of rifles, shotguns and other firearms



It once had one of the best, most descriptive names of any independent retailer anywhere – South Side Worm Ranch.

The Presley family has since moved from Peoria's south side to a larger space in Bartonville and calls the store Presley's Outdoors.

But now in its third generation of ownership, the family hasn't changed what it does best: Provide hunters and fishers from central Illinois and all over with the best possible equipment for their needs with top-notch service honed from knowledge about what they sell.

"We'll have people drive 100 or 150 miles to get things they can't

find anywhere else. They know we can usually get it for them and if we can't, probably nobody can," said Tim Presley, company president whose father Bob founded the store on Southwest Adams Street in Peoria.

"Because of that, because we know our products and because of the service they get from us they keep coming back," he said.

Presley's Outdoors now is at 1510 W. Garfield Ave. in Bartonville in a 30,000 square-foot store, triple the space of its original store, which allowed it to offer amenities such as an indoor archery range.

It also expanded what it offers the outdoors sports enthusiasts, from air guns and ammo to

archery and fishing equipment; from camping gear and clothing to firearms and hunting gear; from muzzleloaders to decoys. More than 15,000 items are available at the store.

"We have people drive from all over for something as seemingly simple as shotgun shells because we have the best brands and put the right price on them. The same with all the game calls. With those, people want to come in and hold them and hear them, try them out. They can do that here," Presley said.

They can't do that online, a segment of business the Presley family got into a couple years ago if for no other reason than to keep paced with the competition.



Presley's Outdoors also carries hundreds of duck and goose decoys at its store in Bartonville, where the business - originally called South Side Worm Ranch when it was on Southwest Adams Street in Peoria - moved because it needed more space

"We do a pretty good business with online sales, but then again we get a lot of people in here who saw something on the Internet but wanted to come in and see it instead of buying it online," he said.

Other things the enthusiast can find at [www.presleyoutdoors.com](http://www.presleyoutdoors.com) include a calendar that lets one know about state Department of Natural Resources hunting and fishing licensing and regulations and the dates for the various hunting and trapping and waterfowl seasons.

It also keeps one up to date about upcoming fishing, hunting and archery tournaments - including the tournaments it sponsors itself, like Presley's

Midwest Open, an indoor archery tournament now in its fifth year, on Dec. 3 and 4.

Presley said his store does good business at Christmas for several reasons, including the fact a lot of hunting seasons occur around holiday times. Also, he said, "it really is more of a man's store, so a lot of women will come in for things for their husbands or boyfriends."

Or gift cards. Presley estimated 60 percent to 70 percent of the store's total sales at holiday time is in gift cards, which always get redeemed at Presley's Outdoors.

Hunting equipment sales remain strong, he said, but he added that fishing business lost ground the last couple years.

"Nobody really seems to know why," he said.

Presley's Outdoor has had bigger national competitors come into the area in recent years, the most recent being Bass Pro Shops. Presley didn't want to say much about it, though.

"We're holding our own very well," he said. **P**

Presley's Outdoors  
1510 W. Garfield Ave., Bartonville  
(309) 697-1193  
[www.presleyoutdoors.com](http://www.presleyoutdoors.com)  
Hours: Daily 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Offers hunting, fishing and archery equipment and other items for the outdoor sports enthusiast.



## SPECIALTY RETAIL: BOOKS



# Bucking the Trend

Trading law books for novels, Mary Beth Nebel shows small, independent bookstores still have a place

By Paul Gordon





**W**hen Mary Beth Nebel left a career as a lawyer to open an independent bookstore in Peoria Heights a little over five years ago, she wasn't thinking about bucking any trends.

She just wanted to do something she loved.

"I just really wanted to try this. I have always loved books and the concept of a bookstore as a community meeting place to talk about books, to share ideas and to share knowledge while enjoying a glass of wine ... well, it just really appealed to me. So that's what I did," said Nebel, who owns I Know You Like A Book at 4707 N. Prospect Road in Peoria Heights.

"I'm glad I did it, so far anyway," she said, laughing. "No, even when it has been a struggle because of the economy, I'm glad I did it. I've learned a lot and met some great people. It's fun."

Nebel acknowledges small, independent bookstores seemingly were crushed by big box stores when they started selling books and by the likes of Barnes & Noble and, until recently, Borders. But she said she has been affected more by the growth of electronic readers such as the Kindle and Nook - with which a person can read any book - than by the big stores.

"I think the growth of those will level out. But they're out there and now they're developing them for children. I can't understand parents who would want to put yet another screen in front of a child's face.

"To me, a book is not just a visual thing. It's emotional, it's an escape, it's comfort. There is comfort in holding a book in your hands as you lose yourself in the words," she said. "Some people just don't seem to realize the value of a book."

Nebel found others felt the same way when, as an attorney heading the law division for RLI Corp., she would dine with other attorneys. "These were some of the best legal minds in the country. And when I would ask if any of them had read a good book lately or what they were reading then, we would have the best conversations. It was something really special," she said.

She left RLI when the Peoria-based specialty insurance company went through some changes but didn't want to stay in the practice of law after more than 20 years. "It was time for a change. At times I miss practicing law, I guess, but not enough to go back. I left that career because it was time," she said.

The first thing she did? "I went and bought a book on how to open a bookstore," she said. Then, using her own capital, opened the store in the Heights, which she said "is a great place to be" for a specialty retailer.

At the same time, business is best when the weather is good and there is foot traffic through the shopping district of Peoria Heights. "Business has been slow. Between the economy and the weather this year, it has been slow. But I am starting to see an uptick in sales, so I'll be ok," she said.

She will continue her mixture of new and used books - she sells a lot of classic novels - while allowing book clubs to use her wine bar for discussions and hosting open book chats there. She also will continue showcasing local writers and hosting book signings when she can.

As the holiday shopping season approaches she feels excitement building in Peoria Heights. "They do a lot of special things around Christmas and the holidays here. It's always a good selling season for me and the other merchants here," she said. **P**



### **I Know You Like A Book**

4707 N. Prospect Road, Peoria Heights.

(309) 685-2665

Hours: Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Owner: Mary Beth Nebel

Offers new and used books, a children's book section, classics, fiction and non-fiction, books on local history, books by local authors and a wine bar.

SPECIALTY  
RETAIL:  
REPURPOSING



# Going Green

You just never know where that cool product at Re- came from

By Paul Gordon



Store owner Nancy Martin is quick to say she doesn't sell used goods; rather, she sells new items made from previously used items.



**T**he green movement isn't passing Nancy Martin by. In fact, she's ahead of the curve in this race to sustainability.

Now if only others would discover her quaint little store tucked at the back end of Metro Centre in Peoria.

Re- is the name of the store Martin started five years ago under the name of Second Chances in Washington. She moved to Metro Centre to be part of an exciting community of merchants for which being local is important.

"I'm glad I made the move because as the green movement continues to grow I feel people will be able to discover us here and what we have to offer. Once they see these things, they are amazed. It's fun to see their reactions," Martin said.

Anything from household items to jewelry, purses and bags and coffee mugs can be found at the store, as well as many other items.

Martin is quick to point out what her store sells, either at retail or on consignment, are all new items, not used items. It's just that the items are made from

recycled and reclaimed products.

"People think the merchandise is used and that can be a turn-off. The stuff from which the merchandise is made was previously used for something else, but when you consider the unique things you can do with it, the possibilities are endless," she said.

Hence her store's motto: reclaim, re-purpose, re-think.

Martin said she learned in childhood how to make do with what she had, taught by her Depression-era parents that one doesn't always need new things. She said she became creative in re-using things and added she has always been one to recycle.

But it wasn't until she spotted purses made from old license plates at a place in Pittsburgh, PA - that included a purse made from an Illinois plate - that she began thinking about doing more re-purposing herself. "Then I started thinking that it would be neat to have all kinds of those things for sale under one roof," she said in explaining her decision to open her store.

"Then the green movement started taking off. Before that green was just a color. Now





people are starting to think about sustainability more and to see the value is recycling and re-purposing old things," Martin said.

"I do like to think I'm ahead of the game here, but I'm still waiting for others to catch up. Business isn't terrible, but it could always be better, you know?"

When she first started the store, Martin relied on finding things herself to sell, things other people were making and trying to find a vendor to sell them. She has since started going to gift shows to find items and talk with the makers of the items before deciding whether to put them at Re-. Her first gift show was in New York City three years ago and it included a "sustainability fair" that highlighted people who re-purposed things.

It was at such shows she found somebody in Seattle who finds used chopsticks, sanitizes them

and creates bowls and flower pots and many other items from them. She found people who will take old vinyl albums and make bowls and coasters and such from them.

Bicycle chains can be re-purposed into picture frames, candle holders and other household goods and give a unique look to your decor.

The things people will use to make purses and bags may astound you, particularly when you see how strong a whole bunch of gum wrapper chains stitched together can be. Ditto with old soda can pop tops.

You may not want to know, at least not without seeing it first, what some of the scratch paper pads Martin sells is made from. Trust us, it doesn't stink.

"Hey, anything can be recycled," Martin said. **P**

**Re-**  
**Metro Centre**  
 4700 N. University St., Peoria  
 (309) 691-7373

[www.metrocentreshop.com](http://www.metrocentreshop.com)  
 Offers variety of items, from household goods to jewelry to purses and more that are made from recycled items.





# A Passion for Fashion

Women's clothing store owner never Jaded about her business

By Paul Gordon



Peoria native Jade Venovich, shown here with one of her constant in-store companions

When Peoria-area native Jade Venovich got the chance to come home and pursue her self-professed “passion for fashion,” she jumped at it.

Five years later, business is good at Belle Mie, one of many locally owned specialty retail stores at Junction City Shopping Center at Knoxville Avenue and Prospect Road in Peoria.

“It was a lifelong dream of mine to own a high fashion clothing store. Fashion has always been my passion and now I am living that dream,” Venovich said

recently at the store while her two small Yorkies patrolled the premises – or sat on the lap of a visitor.

Venovich was in New York, working as a buyer in the household goods department of a large department store when she learned Miss Goody Two-Shoes was closing its store at Junction City.

Living in New York, the fashion capitol of the United States, had also been a dream, one she lived for two years. But coming home to open Belle Mie was an opportunity she could not pass on.

“It was a bold move,” she admits. “I think a lot of people, most people in fact, expected me not to make it selling this kind of fashion in Peoria. But I’m still here after five years and business is good.”

She averages 50 to 70 hours a week at the store, making sure everything is to her liking, because she has too much riding on its success.

Part of that success, Venovich said, is the fashion she is able to bring into the store or order for her customers if she doesn’t carry it in stock.



**Belle Mie**

Junction City Shopping Center  
 5901 N. Prospect Road, Peoria  
 (309) 693-7777  
[www.newjunctioncity.com](http://www.newjunctioncity.com)

Offers exclusive contemporary fashions carrying labels normally only found in larger cities.



Some of it is fashion and labels she doesn't think many others in Peoria could get and she attributes her ability to do so on the knowledge she gained working in retail in New York.

Some of the brands that can be found at Belle Mie include BCBG, Vince, Ella Moss, Joie, Alice & Olivia and True Religion.

"Belle Mie is Peoria's exclusive contemporary clothing store offering designers found only in the bigger cities," says the store's description on the Internet.

She describes her clientele as women who are fashionable and

fun, who know a good thing when they see it. "My customers become my friends and they know I will do what I can to get them what they want. That kind of service helps the business, of course, but it's also something I want to do for my customers," she said.

Her merchandise is pricey, Venovich said, but if people want the labels she offers they will pay for the name – and for the quality.

Venovich said she agrees with other Peoria-area retailers who believe there is no reason for

anybody to leave Peoria to shop, unless it's strictly something they want to do.

"Anything they need they can get here in Peoria. If its not in stock at a store, it can be ordered. Even people who own businesses here in Peoria still go to Chicago to shop and it can get frustrating. But again, it's personal choice," she said.

"But I promise you, I can get them what they want here." **P**



## SANTA CLAUS

# H O

# H O

# H O

Dick Hawley of East Peoria has been portraying Santa Claus for about 25 years



The beard is real, so is the spirit of this Santa portrayer

By Paul Gordon

**D**ick Hawley is 64 years old in age, but still a kid at heart. That's why, he thinks, he plays a pretty good Santa Claus.

"Not everybody can do this," the soft spoken Hawley said recently. "You have to really like kids plus you still have to be one yourself. I was always older for my age when I was a kid and now, I guess I'm making up for it. It's still fun, I still enjoy it. Otherwise, I wouldn't keep doing it."

A father of two with five grandchildren and one great-grandchild, Hawley said a

Santa Claus portrayer has to be a "people person" in general. "If you aren't it shows. And somebody who does it only for money is probably wasting someone else's money."

Hawley has been playing Santa Claus for about 25 years and has always used his real beard rather than a fake one. His hair was prematurely grey, then white at a young age.

He keeps it trimmed close the first half of each year, then begins letting it grow about the middle of each July.



A bass violinist for the Peoria Pops Orchestra, Hawley first started playing Santa when the orchestra needed somebody in the costume for its annual Christmas concert. "That's how it started and I actually started doing it at parties and daycare centers. I eventually had to start limiting myself because of work and such," said Hawley, a tooling specialist and trainer at Illinois Machine & Tool in Pekin.

"I never did it for money, though I was paid at times. But now I mostly do it for friends and special occasions and, of course, I still play Santa and sing White Christmas during the Pops' Christmas concert. That concert is scheduled for Dec. 4 at Five Points in Washington. Hawley will also be playing Santa at the Peorian's Santa Breakfast on December 17. (See page 55) Don't miss your chance to see him in action.

He also will occasionally portray Santa at nursing homes. It is there he gets the most abuse, he said, laughing. "Only a few times have I had a child really pull hard on the beard. They see it and they think I'm Santa. It doesn't dawn on them to question whether it's real or not. But the women at the nursing homes will ask if it's real, then yank good and hard on it," he said.

Often, Hawley said, he gets asked if he plays Santa Claus. "I always say 'no, I am Santa.' Talking to people has always come naturally for me, so talking to them as Santa and trying to convince them I'm the real thing is fun."

One of his favorite memories is from a time he went into a local Walgreen's store wearing a red Bradley University jacket. He said a couple children gasped and got quiet when he rounded a corner,

just knowing they were seeing Santa himself. "I got down on one knee and talked with them for a while, explaining that even Santa had to go to the drug store every so often," he chuckled.

"Just seeing kids light up like that when they see me is worth it. And everybody ... well, everybody becomes 5 years old again."

Hawley spent the early years of his life on a farm and grew up in Kempton, near Pontiac. The son of a preacher, his family moved to Peoria during his senior year of high school when his father became pastor of Northside Nazarene.

By then, he said, he already knew what he wanted in a wife and that he wanted children of his own. "Ever since I was about 10 years old I've been taking care of kids. I would help with them in church. And I really began

looking for a wife at about that age, or at least I started forming an opinion what would make a good wife and, especially, a good mother for my children," he said.

He married Carolyn nearly 45 years ago and said he would do it all over again. On occasion Carolyn will don her own costume and portray Mrs. Claus.

Other times you will spot the Hawleys at Bradley University basketball games. Around Christmas, Dick is usually wearing his Santa Claus costume, ho-ho-hoing and having fun.

"I admit, I still have a blast doing it, talking to the kids and seeing their reactions. I may have to cut back on appearance eventually, but I have no plans to quit doing it completely. Why would I?" **P**



**THE METRO CENTRE GIFT CARD**  
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## LITERARY REVIEW

"Arguably: Essays by Christopher Hitchens" is the celebrated writer's third "greatest hits" book. And – arguably – there is no living writer more deserving of having three such volumes published in his lifetime.

# ARGUABLY ESSAYS BY CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

By Kevin Kizer



**If** I were to compare Christopher Hitchens to one person it would undoubtedly be James Brown. Along with being a brilliant writer and polemicist, he also is the hardest working man in letters. Or maybe that should be The Hardest Working Man in Letters.

With more than a dozen books to his credit, Hitchens is a regular contributor to *Vanity Fair*, *The Atlantic*, *Free Thinker* and *Slate* (for whom he writes a weekly column). Oh, did I mention, the man has Stage 4 esophageal cancer for which, as he wryly notes often, "there is no Stage 5"? Recently, when receiving the Richard Dawkins Award at the Texas Freethought Convention, Hitchens said, "I'm not going to quit until I absolutely have to." Ladies and Gentlemen, the God-

father of the Essay, the Hardest Working Man in Letters, Christopher Hitchens!

The topics in "Arguably", which has been described as having the size of a paving stone or a great ingot, run the gamut from the international issues (North Korea, Iraq and Iran – rightfully boasting of being the only Western journalist to have visited the so-called Axis of Evil) to literary subjects (Mark Twain, Upton Sinclair, Graham Greene, et al) to social topics ("Why Women Aren't Funny") and beyond.

Over his 40 year career Hitchens has been witness to many events and conflicts around the world. He has used his writing to speak for the oppressed, bring attention to important issues and expose a few sacred cows which turn out to be not so sacred after all. And it's clear after plowing

through all 788 pages of "Arguably" that no one wields the essayist's pen (keyboard?) as powerfully as Hitchens.

Some might complain that "Arguably" is merely a reissue of his essays over the last decade – "nothing new here, just move on." While the former may be technically correct, there are 107 reasons why the latter admonition should be ignored. These essays have been consolidated together and republished because Hitchens is a brilliant writer and, most importantly, the way he writes makes his work imminently re-readable. Do not move on. Stop and spend some time with this book. And the relatively short essay format – anywhere from three to 15 pages per – makes it perfect for the busy reader.

The assertion of “brilliant writer” certainly requires a bit of backing up as it’s a term that is (sadly) casually bandied about nowadays. Hitchens is a brilliant writer in that he communicates his ideas intelligently and cleverly, and presents them in an interesting and surprising way. As someone who has been reading Hitchens for well over a decade, that’s what stands out to me – his re-readability. And it doesn’t matter the topic – from “manscaping” and waterboarding to religion and fascist regimes. He stakes out a claim and then sets out to defend in a vigorous manner with some wry, clever humor thrown into the mix. Since Hitchens himself has a love for great and classic literature, it often finds its way into his work to further illuminate and add depth.

Hitchens also defies mold or form. Just because you read his arguments and opinions on one subject doesn’t mean you can predict what those arguments and opinions will be on another, which is why he has been confounding journalists and pundits for the better part of three decades. He defies stereotype in a world where stereotypes, i.e. short, terse descriptions, are the norm. For decades he was the “darling” of liberals and progressives because he took aim at characters like Kissinger, Reagan and

Ollie North. But then he took aim at Bill Clinton and was for the Iraq War, even advising the Bush administration to a certain degree (after all, he was one of the few Westerners who actually knew firsthand and understood the region). So he was embraced by the right-wing media and attacked – with surprising venom – by some liberals and progressives.

These supposed inconsistencies actually serve to mask the fact that Hitchens is incredibly consistent. He is an advocate for science, free thinking, freedom for and from religion and working to end regimes that subjugate portions (if not all) their constituency. And there’s something else he – what I like to call his finely tuned bullshit meter. Seen through that light, it shouldn’t surprise anyone when the targets of his attacks don’t follow a strict ideology pattern. That’s why he can go after both Clinton and Kissinger (and Reagan and Kennedy). That’s why he can support the liberation of Iraq while harshly criticizing the Bush administration on nearly every front.

Deep down though, I think of Christopher Hitchens as a people person. Seriously. He’s visited nearly every state in the U.S., reported from dozens of countries, covered revolutions first-hand, traveled to third-world countries many reporters wouldn’t dream

of visiting and he allows his home address and phone number to be public information. The man has seen a lot in his life and has never been one to back down from a good fight.

Even on those rare occasions where I don’t necessarily agree with Hitchens, it’s the unique and – it bears repeating – interesting way he writes that keeps me (and millions of others around the world) coming back. I catch myself re-reading sentences or whole paragraphs not always because of the point he is making but because of the way it’s been made. It’s something unique. It’s something rare. It’s something – Hitchens. **P**

“Arguably Essays”  
By Christopher Hitchens  
816 pg. Twelve  
\$18.75

To see the latest literary article visit:



[www.thepeorian.com/literarea](http://www.thepeorian.com/literarea)

#### **HITCH BITS** (HERE’S JUST A SPRINKLING OF WHAT WE ARE CALLING OUR FAVORITE “HITCH BITS”)

“...the UN secretary general, that scintillating figure known in song and story as Ban Ki-moon...”

“Probably no two words in our language are now more calculated to shrivel the sensitive nostril than ‘socialist realism’.”

“Even as I was grazing on the easy slopes of this book...”

“...I had sent Terrorist windmilling across the room in a spasm of boredom and annoyance...” re: Gore Vidal’s novel Terrorist

“...this Grassy Knoll enterprise...” re: 9/11 conspiracy theories

“...the Potomosexual genre...” re: novels about Washington DC

“...(his) lamentable inability to write about sex, along with his insistence on trying to do so.” re: novelist Evelyn Waugh





## What's NEXT?

Peoria NEXT enters new phase with new director, updated approach

By Paul Gordon

**T**here are four areas where Peoria and its business community excel — medical, manufacturing/materials, clean technology and food products/safety.

It is in those areas that Peoria NEXT, which has entered its second decade, will focus its energy in its next phase of strategic planning, said Jim McConoughey, president of the Heartland Partnership, which includes Peoria NEXT.

Indeed, the 130 businesses Peoria NEXT help start and grow in its first decade fell within those four areas.

Now, with new leadership bringing expertise that will focus on developing those areas further and building on the strength of the area's skills and abilities, the future looks bright for the organization that has been about the future since it was launched Sept. 11, 2001.

"Our third five-year plan will be taking what we know and what we have established in the community and leveraging it out to the rest of the country and the world," McConoughey said. "We have identified the four disciplines we've been really good at, things we've been doing here for 100 years at least, and we will focus on those and build on those strengths."

Peoria NEXT, he added, will focus its resources and energy on those four areas of concentration and will "closely monitor developments in each of those fields, looking for viable applications within and across each discipline."

Peoria NEXT recently announced it will merge with one of its original partners, Biotechnology Research and Development Corp. Dr. Grant Brewen, the BRDC president and CEO, will be the chief operating officer of

Peoria NEXT. He replaces Kyle Ham, who left to become chief of staff for Illinois Treasurer Dan Rutherford.

With Brewen working on the operational structure of Peoria NEXT, Dr. Peter Johnsen, former head of the National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, or what is better known around here as the Peoria ag lab, will work as the subject matter expert for the medical discipline.

With Caterpillar Inc. in its front yard, Peoria is well versed in global operations. With technology as it is today Peoria NEXT should have a global vision for the companies it helps to start and grow, McConoughey said. It recognizes it must "cast a wider net" and make itself and what it provides known well beyond the Peoria city limits or even the Illinois borders.



Showing off Peoria innovation from the past while looking to the future, the Duryea automobile conceived and built in Peoria well over a century ago is housed at the Peoria NEXT Innovation Center in Peoria.

Peoria NEXT was founded to focus on developing small businesses, with the Peoria NEXT Innovation Center acting as an incubator. Fourteen agencies came together to start Peoria NEXT and they explored best practices used by organizations worldwide. But rather than be like everybody else, it wanted to jump ahead, McConoughey said.

Peoria NEXT set out to establish five-year strategic plans, with the first five years focusing on changing the culture of the community to give small business more of a role in the area's economic development. The second five years was demonstrating how to get that done.

McConoughey likened the first 10 years to the 1960s and 70s when a set of the Encyclopedia Britannica was in every living room. "Everybody then was getting basically the same information. We don't need to read from the same book any more; we can be more organic and move forward on our own," he said. "With instant communication now, everybody can participate. It's an exciting proposition."

McConoughey said the four disciplines that Peoria NEXT will focus on are natural for this area.

- NEXT Medical will take advantage of this area's strong health care community, with three top hospitals, the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria, the Cancer Research Center and developments in medical equipment.
- NEXT Clean Technology will tap into the area's growing expertise in cultivating renewable energy sources and meeting ever-changing regulations.
- NEXT Food Products/Safety will use the presence of the ag lab, one of its founding partners, to continue finding ways to develop food safety and food products.
- NEXT Manufacturing/Materials will tap into what Peoria is best known for, including founding partner Caterpillar, to help solve problems and find innovations to use in all fields of study.

In a brochure about the next steps for Peoria NEXT, the organization states that "The world will never run short on problems — or the talents of creative individuals who diligently search for solutions. Peoria NEXT is poised to transition innovative concepts into applications that hold potential for worldwide change."

It invites that "inquisitive scientist who dares to wonder how far-reaching a discovery could be" and the entrepreneur "longing to take an idea from infancy to adulthood" and investors "willing to back the next big idea" to join the effort.

McConoughey said the Peoria NEXT vision is that by 2015 "our regional economy will be more diversified and be a desired location for new technology-based businesses."

With the groundwork already laid and that to be coming in the next five years, he added, "we will be more than ready." **P**



# ARTIST IN RESIDENCE



The Peorian cannot thank Ken enough for the cover illustration for this issue.

Put a pencil or brush in Ken Clubb's hand and magic happens.

By Paul Gordon

**I**t is art in its purest form. "I'm not one of those people who lives or dies by his career. I have too many other important things in my life for that to be the case. But I will say, there is nothing else I want to do or can ever imagine myself doing," said Clubb.

"In that regard, I have been lucky in that I have been able to make my passion my career," he

said. "There are a lot of really talented people out there who have not been able to do that."

Clubb, 60, a Peorian since he was a child, is an illustrator and a commercial artist who does freelance work with pencils and water colors. He also teaches part-time in the graphic design department at Illinois Central College, including a class in water color painting.



His work can be seen in several places around Peoria, including the portraits of the Alwan family that hang at Alwan & Sons Meat Co., the banners that hang from light poles along the riverfront and billboards for Goodwill Industries. The mural painted on the wall of the cafeteria in Caterpillar Building KK in East Peoria is his, commissioned by the company.

As long as he can still get freelance commissioned work, that's what he plans to do. It wasn't always that way, but like many artists industry changes cause life changes.

"I've been doing art almost as long as I can remember, since I was in grade school. So it seemed natural to me to teach it," he said.

He went to Western Illinois University and earned his bachelor of arts degree in art education, taking advantage of a state program in place at the time where some could go to college tuition-free to become teachers. However, so many took advantage of the program there became a glut of teachers and Clubb was unable to find a teaching job.

After two years working at Commercial National Bank, set-

ting up charge accounts, Clubb was hired by Thomas S. Klise Co. in Peoria, a firm that made educational and religious film strips for schools. He did the art work for the film strips.

He found himself out of work in 1989 when the company ceased production because of industry changes. Schools didn't use film strips any more.

So Clubb and his best friend, David Seay, who works at Multi-Ad, opened a freelance studio together and Clubb has been doing that full-time ever since.

While he has tried to adapt to life changes when needed, such as taking on part-time teaching work to supplement his income, there is one thing Clubb hasn't done. Not yet, anyway.

"All my work is still by hand. I'm just old school, I guess. I probably should have integrated computers into work before now, but I haven't," he said, adding he is learning now how to do that while teaching at ICC. That doesn't mean, however, he will use it when he gets commissioned to do artwork.

His first client as a freelance illustrator was Shooting Times magazine, formerly published by

the Journal Star. But that magazine and its sister publications were sold and production was either shut down or moved.

It also was indicative of the industry changes Clubb battles now as he hopes for more freelance work. Namely, many publications now get their art from the Internet or use computer-generated art rather than illustrations done by hand.


Clubb said he doesn't necessarily feel he was born decades too late for his craft. But he said there was "a golden age of illustration" early in the last century. "Illustrators were practically revered because of that they could do. But then photography kept getting bigger and bigger, then the computer age took over," he said. "It used to be a picture didn't lie. Now, because of computers, you're not always sure what picture you can believe."

He hopes to be able to retire some day and if he does he would like to get into three-dimensional sculpting. "I like the idea of doing something and let people find the treasures inside it," he said.

*Continued on following page*



Mixed media  
painting for  
"Purple Max"  
awards at  
Western Illinois  
University in 2009



He also would consider doing what he terms "gallery art," with water color being his primary medium and drawing a secondary form.

His need for income — he and his wife Froncie raised three sons and now have four grandchildren — is why Clubb remained a commercial artist rather than a gallery artist. "A commercial artist is someone who has already sold

his work, even though he has to do what the person who commissioned him wants. A gallery artist can do whatever type of art or subject he wants, but he then has to sell it. I would like to be able to do that someday, probably in retirement," he said.

"I can't retire yet but it helps that I do enjoy what I'm doing."

Ken Clubb can be reached at [kenclubbillustrator@gmail.com](mailto:kenclubbillustrator@gmail.com)

## KEN CLUBB ILLUSTRATOR

Editor's note: In each issue of *The Peorian* we will profile a member or two of the area's arts community, which could be a writer, painter, illustrator, musician or actor. If you know of such a person you'd like to see included here, let us know at [editor@thepeorian.com](mailto:editor@thepeorian.com). **P**



# Daddy's Actin' Funny

By Lois J. Funk

Daddy's actin' funny 'cause it's Christmas time again;  
For weeks he hasn't shaved the pure white whiskers from his chin;  
His cheeks are getting rosy and his hair's turned snowy white;  
And he brought home a big black pair of boots the other night.

Now Daddy has to leave, but he'll be back on Christmas Day;  
For some odd reason I don't know, he always goes away  
Just 'fore Santa gets to our house every Christmas Eve.  
That's why I think my daddy might have something up his sleeve.

Daddy's getting chubby, but he's jolly as can be;  
And when he laughs, his belly shakes; it's quite a sight to see.  
And when his eyes get heavy, and Daddy starts to doze,  
He mumbles in his sleep about a reindeer and a nose.

Now Daddy dropped a letter (guess his pocket has a hole);  
It was addressed to Santa Claus, in care of the North Pole.  
I don't know where it came from, but I know come Christmas dawn,  
Daddy's boot prints will be mixed with funny hoof prints on our lawn.

Now I don't know what's going on, and Mommy will not say,  
But Daddy's beard will be coal black again come Christmas Day;  
And I'll watch Mommy help him shave the whiskers from his chin.  
Yep, Daddy's actin' funny 'cause it's Christmas time again.



Lois J. Funk was born and raised in Pekin, IL. She has been a member of the Peoria Poetry Club since 1989. Her work has appeared a wide range of publications, and she has published five chapbooks: *Mother's Hands*, 1994; *Father's Hands*, 2003; *Mother's Hands II*, 2003; *Sisters*, 2003; and *Grandma's Hands*, 2005.



NOT FOR PROFIT

# Boys & Girls Club: Fill the Treasure Chest

By Paul Gordon

When Robert Ballard goes exploring off the coast of Italy in November, he may not find treasure. But he will be helping to create treasure for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Peoria.

Dr. Katy Croff Bell, chief scientist of Ballard E/V Nautilus Exploration Program, will be the featured speaker at the Boys and Girls Clubs' annual Fill The Treasure Chest Dinner on Nov. 12 at Mt. Hawley Country Club. During the program that night, she and dinner guests will chat live with Ballard and the crew of the Nautilus while it sends its robotic vehicle Hercules to the ocean floor, said Lesley Matuszak, executive director.

The children served by the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Peoria already got to experience lives chats with the Nautilus more than a year ago when it sent Hercules exploring off the coast of Istanbul. Amy Sickinger, the club's program coordinator, was aboard the Nautilus at the time.

"Our goals this year is to show other things we do at Boys & Girls Clubs to try and get the kids immersed in activities that are different than they are used to, things like science and technology activities that otherwise might not be attainable to them," Matuszak said. "This will certainly do that."

Ballard, who discovered the

wreckage of the Titanic in 1985 and other famous ships later, kind of adopted the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Peoria in 2010 through a connection with Caterpillar Inc. He uses Caterpillar-made thrusters on the Nautilus and came to Peoria and toured the B & G Clubs, Matuszak said.

Ballard offered then to have a club staff member come to the University of Rhode Island for training and then to be on the Nautilus during the Istanbul exploration. Sickinger was picked by Matuszak because of her relationship with the kids of the club.

"Because of that, Amy and Bob Ballard were answering our kids' questions over the Internet in real time, which was regular hours here and the wee hours of the morning there. It was an experience for everybody," she said. "That's why he said he would do it again the night of Fill the Treasure Chest."

Fill the Treasure Chest is the top fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Peoria, even though it is only in its ninth year. Matuszak started it the year she came on board at the Clubs and it now raises more than \$80,000 each year.

"When I came here the Clubs didn't have very many vehicles in place for raising money. We needed to find a way to showcase our children and to get our civic

and business leaders interested and involved. We also needed a venue for rewarding those who give of themselves to our effort. We called it Fill the Treasure Chest because to us, that means filling our kids with hope and opportunities," she said.

Awards that will be presented are the Caterpillar Childrens Charities Award, which Matuszak said is the club's flagship award and one that is recognized by the National Boys & Girls Club; the What Matters Award that recognizes a Heart of Illinois United Way agency for its work for the Boys & Girls Clubs; the Nick and Dr. Sandra Adkins Community Education Award and the Pat Sullivan Community Service Award.

Matuszak said award recipients are not those who give the most money. "It recognizing those who give of themselves, their time and effort. I'll gladly accept a check from them if they want, but that's not what these awards are about," she said.

The chief sponsors of the dinner are Joe Van Fleet of Van Fleet Law Offices and Lee Graves, president of ELM LLC and the chairman of the board for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Peoria.





Also, Matuszak said, Dr. Norman Johnson and his wife Brenda celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in October and asked those who attended a party in their honor to make a donation to the Boys & Girls Clubs in lieu of gifts.

Tickets for the dinner are \$150 each and tables of eight, 10 or 12 are available. There will be a silent auction and a raffle, as well. The dinner will be dishes from Northern Italy.

Other fund raising events for the Boys & Girls Clubs include the annual Fourth of July Family Fest. Each year Pat Sullivan, owner of Kelleher's Irish Pub and a long-time club director, closes off the street and parking lot in front of Kelleher's on Water Street. Families and friends then rent spaces in the lot where they can put chairs or tables and relax while waiting for the fireworks to start. Vendors sell food and drinks and live music plays throughout the evening. Last summer the event raised more than \$60,000.

Each August the Clubs host a golf outing, raffles for Valentine's Day (cash prizes) and St. Patrick's Day (a trip for two to Ireland) and in April Wayne Baum hosts a Movie Extravaganza, which has a theme and guests are invited to dress in costume to fit that theme. Food and drink are provided. **P**

## Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Peoria

### Who We Are

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Peoria is a local affiliate of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America — the nation's oldest and largest organization. With more than 3,400 local clubs in all fifty states, more than 4 million children are served annually by Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

### Our Mission

It is our primary mission to enable all young people, especially those in at-risk circumstances, to realize their full potential.

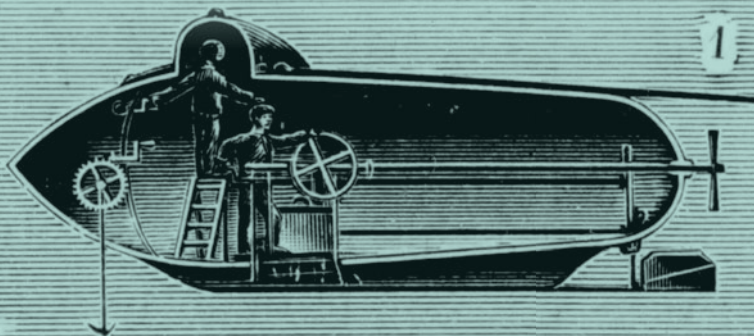
### By the Numbers

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Peoria currently gives support, guidance and hope to 1,500+ youths ages 6 to 18 years old.

### Our Programs

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Peoria offers several programs for the youth it serves.

For more information  
Administrative office:  
806 E. Kansas,  
Peoria IL 61603  
(309) 685-6007  
[www.bgcpetoria.org](http://www.bgcpetoria.org)





NOT FOR PROFIT

# 60 Years of Making a Difference

Peoria Friendship House needs help to keep helping others

By Paul Gordon

For 60 years the Peoria Friendship House of Christian Service has been striving to make a difference in the lives of men, women and children who need clothes on their back and food on their plates.

But as the economic downturn continues, despite assurances of financial experts that the recession has ended, the agency that serves the two poorest Census tracts in Peoria sees its own needs growing, as well.

Friendship House needs money for its programs and food for its pantry so it can keep helping the city's Near North side for another 60 years, said Executive Director, Dr. Barbara Hartnett.

"Not-for-profit agencies get more business rather than less during tough times. We're no different. All of us are in the same boat. That's why we need those who can still help to step up some more," she said. It doesn't help, she noted, that the agency — like many in Peoria — is awaiting promised funding from the state and federal governments.

November is a big month for Friendship House, especially this year with a brunch scheduled for



Nov. 6 at 11:30 a.m. at the Hotel Pere Marquette.

The brunch is a celebratory event meant to recognize the agency's volunteers and supporters, but it also will be a fundraiser as Friendship House is seeking sponsors. Tickets are \$50 each or tables for \$1,000.

Then, throughout the month of November the agency's annual Stuff-A-Bus campaign, in conjunction with Kroger and CityLink, will be held. The bus will be parked at CityLink and donors are asked to bring canned goods and non-perishable items.

The Stuff-A-Bus campaign has long been a key event for Friendship House, but this year the need is greater than ever before, Hartnett said. "In years past we would get a bus filled and it would bring in enough food to last us for nine months. Last year, we only made it through February," she said.

That's not because giving was down, she added, but need and demand were way up. They still are and the shelves at the Friendship House pantry are getting bare.

"We have seen some people come to our food pantry (for food) who just two years ago were among our biggest donors. That is very sobering. Everything a person has can be lost or taken away so fast when times get bad," she said.

There also has been growth in the number of people who attend the agency's Sunday Blessing Soup Kitchen each Sunday, the number of get clothes from its Daily Threads Thrift Closet and personal hygiene kits.

Normally, 98 percent of the homeless population is male, she added. "Nowadays we are seeing entire families living under the bridge. It is very sad.

Three years ago we served a total of 35,000 meals. In 2010 we served about 53,000 meals, many of them to children. How can they be expected to do well in school when they are hungry?

"I have to say, though, that when it's magic, it's magic. When we see we have done something that really makes a difference in someone's life, we remember why we are here and we keep going," Hartnett said.

Money that comes in to Friendship House is used to fund all its programs, she said, and donors can choose where their money is used. That includes another key program for the agency, Dress For Success, in which women are given clothes and other needed items to wear for job interviews or new jobs. Hartnett said the program remains a bright spot

for Friendship House as it still averages better than 50 percent placement rates for its clients who use the Dress For Success program.

Volunteers are also key to Friendship House being able to reach those in need and luckily, that has improved the last few years. In 2009 volunteers served about 123,500 hours; in 2010 it reached 140,000 hours, she said. Most of it is through the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) of Peoria and Tazewell Counties.

Friendship House also offers After School Program for students kindergarten through 8th grade, giving them a safe place to go after school with snack and tutoring. Summer camps also are available.

The Hispanic Outreach program provides services to help that segment of the population become viable citizens of the community, there are health fairs and free tax assistance and Christmas programs.

"We've made it 60 years through perseverance and faith. We are faith based and we get support from churches and through the faith of the people who support us, help us and work for us. We need that faith today more than ever," Hartnett said. **P**



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## THINGS WE love...

"I like FOLEPI. When I was little, we used to go to this farmhouse in Nebraska that went crazy with Christmas lights, but it doesn't exist anymore. It was very nostalgic when we saw the Winter Wonderland the first year we moved to Peoria. Now we go every year."

*Megan Valentine, Peoria*

For more "Things we love..." or to add your own, visit [ThePeorian.com](http://ThePeorian.com)



# NOT FOR PROFIT EVENTS

## STUFF THAT BUS!

Throughout November the Peoria Friendship House conducts its annual Stuff-A-Bus campaign, by which it collects canned food and non-perishable items to use in its food pantry. The bus, the use of which is donated by CityLink, is parked at the downtown bus transfer center. CityLink and Kroger are the chief sponsors of the event.

For more information go to [www.peoriafriendshiphouse.org](http://www.peoriafriendshiphouse.org)

## DANCING WITH THE PEORIA STARS

Watch local celebrities dance with dance specialists from Body Fitness, Peoria Latin Vibe and The Tap Shack in a fundraiser for CASA — Court Appointed Special Advocates, at the Par-A-Dice Hotel in East Peoria. Local celebrity judges will rate the dances and encourage audience participation. The black-tie event also includes a silent auction with hors d'oeuvres and music. Tickets are \$150.

For more information call (309) 669-2939.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Peoria Friendship House is celebrating 60 years of "making a difference, one person at a time" with a 60th Anniversary Brunch at 11:30 a.m. Nov. 6 at the Hotel Pere Marquette. The organization will present awards and honor the organizations that have helped with Friendship House programs, including CityLink and Kroger, the Employers Association and Maui Jim, among others. Tickets are \$50.

For more information go to [www.peoriafriendshiphouse.org](http://www.peoriafriendshiphouse.org)

## FILL THE TREASURE CHEST

The annual Fill the Treasure Chest dinner, the chief fund raising event for the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Peoria, is scheduled for Nov. 12 at Mt. Hawley Country Club. The theme this year will be "Explore Great Futures" and will include a live stream to the Nautilus exploration ship anchored in the Mediterranean Sea.

For more information call (309) 685-6007, ext. 112. Corporate sponsors are welcome.

## FESTIVAL OF TREES

The Festival of Trees, an annual event to raise money for the Crittenton Center of Peoria, is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Dec. 3 and 4 and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 5 at Expo Gardens, 1601 W. Northmoor Road in Peoria. The Corn Wolves will present a family concert from 5 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 3 and there will be a Kids' PJ Party with Santa from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 4. A family lunch is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Dec. 5. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children and seniors and children under 2 are admitted free. Sponsors include Lite Rock 107, WEEK-TV, WHOI-19, My 59, CW4, Adams Outdoor Advertising, Spot On energy, Heartland Bank & Trust, Hoerr Nursery and Bob Lindsay Honda/Acura.

For more information call (309) 674-0105.

## EASTER SEALS TRIBUTE

Helen & Jerry Stephens will be honored at the Easter Seals of Peoria 21st Annual Tribute Dinner, scheduled for 6 p.m. Nov. 4 at the Par-A-Dice Hotel Casino in East Peoria.

For more information call Joette Blakesley at Easter Seals, (309) 686-7755, ext. 2286.

## JA HOLIDAY AUCTION ONLINE

The Junior Achievement of Central Illinois Annual Online Holiday Auction kicks off Nov. 1, giving participants a chance at items ranging from electronics to lifetime experiences. The auction ends Dec. 4 at 10 p.m. with the proceeds to assist with JA programs. The organization is accepting items to be auctioned as well as cash donations at [www.bidding-forgood.com](http://www.bidding-forgood.com) or [juniorachievement.biz](http://juniorachievement.biz). Sponsors also are being sought.

For more information call Jenny at (309) 682-1800.





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# THE PEORIAN of the YEAR AWARD

In April of 2012, the Peorian of The Year award will be given to a person who is playing an important role in the present and future of the Peoria area.

- Nominations are being accepted online at [ThePeorian.com/award](http://ThePeorian.com/award) until December 31, 2011. Community voting runs from March 1 until March 31, 2012.
- Finalists will be selected by *The Peorian* editorial board and highlighted online, in the magazine and on the TV show.
- The winner will be announced at the annual The Peorian of The Year luncheon held in April, which will feature a nationally prominent speaker as host.
- A gift of \$10,000 will be presented to a local registered not-for-profit organization chosen by the winner.

For details and a list of complete rules visit [www.thePeorian.com](http://www.thePeorian.com)



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**THE PEORIAN**

# SANTA BREAKFAST

Saturday, December 17, 2011

Seatings 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.



It's a perfect chance for families to get together and have breakfast with our Santa, featured on page 38. There will be storytelling, music, cookie decorating, photos with Santa and great food. The first breakfast begins at 9 a.m., followed by a second breakfast at 11 a.m.

\$10.00 for adults, \$25 per child  
For more information or online registration visit  
[www.thepeorian.com/santa](http://www.thepeorian.com/santa)



# WHAT'S MY STUFF WORTH

With Dan Phillips



It is common today to find different types of small machines just inside the entry vestibules at grocery stores or pharmacies, machines that give out gum balls or little trinkets, usually for a quarter or two. Some are gaming machines in which you try your skills at nabbing something of value with a crane. They've been around for years.

They also have evolved through the years, first becoming popular in the early part of the 20th century when small gaming machines — known as “trade stimulators” — would take pennies and give out an item in the slot where the penny landed.

The idea was to attract and keep customers in the grocery, drugstore or even bars where the machines could be found.

Some trade stimulators were made in Peoria and a few are still around, such as the one owned by Julie Russell, owner of AdCo Advertising Agency who comes from a family of collectors of antiques, including toys. She has a trade stimulator manufactured around 1890 by Field Manufacturing Corp. of Peoria.

The machine, with a dovetailed oak case in a die cast frame, still has its original operating parts, including the wheel on the side the person turned to see if their coin landed in a slot that contained a prize of some sort.

The machine remains in good condition for something more than a century old, said Dan Phillips, antique expert and former owner of Illinois Antique Center. Even the Field Manufacturing label on the side of the machine is the original.

Phillips explained that trade stimulators reached their peak of popularity after World War I, when disposable income was scarce and people could win something for as little as a penny. Most were destroyed during prohibition along with other gaming devices and few remain today.

Phillips estimated the trade stimulator would sell for \$1,100 to \$1,500 and would be considered a “cross-collectible” in that it could sell in different categories, including gaming devices or even in Peoria history.

Another set of toys Russell asked Phillips to assess was a pair of canaries. These were not the feathered kind; rather, these are made of brass. But with a bit of water and breath control, they can be made to sound like the real deal.



The birds in this instance are called Victory Canary Songsters. The small brass birds are attached to a small vessel in which water is stored, then a person blows into a rubber tube to cause the toy to chirp like a canary.

Also known as “water warblers” and “nightingales” the history of these toys can be traced about 1,000 years, when the Chinese made them out of clay, Philips said. Many were made in England and the Russell collection is from the French variety, Julie Russell said, patented in 1880.

Philips estimated the value of the canary that was still in its box at \$35 to \$100 and the other at \$25 to \$35. Both, he said, are still in good shape even though neither still has its original rubber tube.

Finally, all of us at one time or another have played with

mini-pinball games, where the object is to shoot a small ball up a chute and try to get it to land in a certain hole to score points.

The Russell collection includes one called “Happy Tappy” and it was made in Minneapolis by Taplin Toys Incorporated. The object is to take 10 shots to try and get five balls into the eyes, nose and teeth of a clownish face called Happy Tappy. Point values are assigned each space with 100 points per turn being the maximum.

Happy Tappy was made in the 1960s, one of many toys made by the company and the type of toy a person might find in a “dime store” such as a Ben Franklin, Philips said. He estimated this one, still in working order and in a box in good condition, might sell for \$10 to \$15.

Philips and his wife Kim recently closed the Illinois Antique Center but continue to assess items and to do estate sales. He will evaluate items for *The Peorian*, if people want to write to him at [www.thepeorian.com](http://www.thepeorian.com) and give detailed descriptions or send digital photos of the item.

Philips said he will likely advise having an appraiser actually see and touch an item, something he is willing to do by appointment.

Got old stuff? It may (or may not) be worth something. Email [editor@ThePeorian.com](mailto:editor@ThePeorian.com) if you think you have something of worth.

**P**



# Let it Snow

by Lindsey Avena



It's that time of the year again. The air fills my lungs and you can almost feel the return of winter. Little snowflakes populate the ground and it makes us eager. It makes us feel more alive.

We've waited for this season to come around for what seems like forever. It is a break from the sadness that fills our heart.

I like to think of snowflakes as actual living, breathing things. It's almost as if they contain more spirit in them than we do ourselves. They make us fall. They make us ache. They make us feel something we haven't felt for a long time. So, when that feeling washes away, what are we to do? What are we to say?

The brilliant sun is buried beneath all the clouds in the sky. It comes out momentarily to show us it's alive, only to go away. The smell of snow fills the air as we all still patiently await its arrival.

Faded Christmas lights fill my neighborhood. My house is the only one without them. We don't care much for the holidays. We only care for what they bring us, like a break from all of the schoolwork that has clouded up my mind.

The lovely sound of Modest Mouse fills my room, drowning everything else out. For a moment, I consider not answering the phone. Why would I? I see who it is and Little Motel suddenly no longer matters. I don't remember much from this phone call. My entire mind went blank after I hung up the phone, almost as if I didn't exist at all. I do remember certain words pushing through my ears.

"Lily... we're getting married... I know it's a little late to tell you... I can't think about your mother anymore... I never meant to hurt you."

I wanted to reverse time. I wanted to pretend this never happened, but it did. He "never meant to." Emptiness fills me and I want to sleep. That's all I can think about. The great thing about sleep is that there's not much to worry about, except your dreams haunting it. You're almost completely safe. I didn't have the choice. I had to wake up from this nightmare that was trailing behind me.

"Lily, come downstairs." My mother called for me. I went down the stairs almost eager for her to say something that would drown out my negativity. "We're having Christmas dinner at home this year. I need your help cleaning up." So I helped. I listened. My patience ran thin but all I could do was listen. Minutes passed, hours, days, and I still felt nothing. I couldn't feel anything. I was worn out beyond belief. Before I knew it, Christmas had rolled around and I had nothing to say.





Every year my mother woke me up to open presents. I really didn't care about them anymore, but I knew it made her happy to think she made me happy. It's not that she didn't; I appreciated her gifts, her thoughts, and her love. I am 17 years old. I don't care about much except for money, angst, and boys.

She stood behind me as I gently removed the gifts from the paper. She had so much love in her heart. She got me a book I had wanted for a long time, a new laptop and a curling iron, but that wasn't all. She also got me a locket that had my initials engraved on it. Inside was a picture of my entire family. It made me smile. I hadn't smiled in a long time. We hugged.

Guests soon began arriving for dinner.

"You look beautiful!" "Lily, how old are you now? You look great!" "Your mother must be so

proud." Beautiful words filled the house and I was grateful to know people with lovely hearts existed. I was tired, but I was grateful to be surrounded by my family. I wanted more than anything to talk to one person, but I didn't get the chance.

The doorbell rang and my mother asked me to get it. The door opened and I was shocked to find that my best friend standing in front of me. I hadn't seen her since I was 13.

"Elizabeth..." She hugged me. She was my cousin. She was my best friend. She knew everything there was to know about my heart. I heard my mother behind me saying, "Merry Christmas." I had gone from feeling empty to feeling complete in only a few seconds. Tears filled my eyes and I looked behind Elizabeth and saw it was snowing.

I was happy. So was everyone around me.

Let it snow.

Editor's note: Each issue *The Peorian* will reprint original stories written by area students, age 5 on up, to showcase their talents and encourage them to keep writing. We encourage teachers and students to send us stories to [editor@thepeorian.com](mailto:editor@thepeorian.com). Parental permission is required before we will reprint a story. This issue we feature a fictional short story by Lindsey Avena, a junior at Peoria Heights High School and a member of its Writing Club sponsored by teacher Annie Wyman. **P**



# Brrrrr!!! Winter's Coming!

Realtors say it's time to get your house ready for cold weather

By Cathi Hawkinson

**F**all cleaning may have been a thing of the past, but it shouldn't be.

Taking care of your home, especially before cold weather hits, can only help protect you and your home's value, says the Peoria Area Association of Realtors.

Below are common sense precautions you can take now before the onset of another Illinois winter:

## Winterize Your Home

- Check shutters, siding, and other exterior materials to ensure they're secure. High winds, ice and moisture from snow storms can easily unravel elements that are loose.
- Be sure that gutters are clear of debris.
- Caulk drafty windows and apply weather stripping to doors. Both are inexpensive home improvements that can keep heat in your home.

## Watch Your Roof

- Consider roof heating cables to prevent ice dams on roofs and in gutters. They emit a low level of electric-powered heat and prevent ice from blocking gutters and downspouts. These cables can also help prevent accumulating snow from putting damaging weight on the roof.

- Well-ventilated attics, which release warm air and melt ice, can also reduce the risk of ice dams.

## Winterize Pipes

- Be sure your pipes, especially those exposed or in unheated areas like crawl spaces, are wrapped in insulation to prevent freezing and bursting.
- Learn where your water shut-off valves are so you can turn off the water supply in case of a leak.



### Trim Tree Branches

- Keep trees trimmed and remove those that are weak to prevent them from falling on or near your home. Branches that overhang roofs or areas where you park a car represent a risk to structures, vehicles, and people.
- Tree trimming and removal can be dangerous so don't attempt it on your own unless you are experienced.

### Protect Yourself

- Shovels and rock salt are a must after a major snow storm. Stock up early in the season, as these items tend to be in short supply before a well-publicized storm.
- You should also have enough fuel to maintain heat in your home for an extended period of time. Also have a backup heating source such as firewood for a working fireplace or a generator to power heaters in case of power failure.
- Keep extra blankets, warm clothing, and enough food and water to sustain your family in case of a power outage. And, always have a transistor radio with fresh batteries on hand to keep you updated on news and information.

The Global Warming Solutions Group of Central Illinois offered tips, as well, on its website: [www.gwsolutionsgroup.com](http://www.gwsolutionsgroup.com).

### They include:

- Install a programmable thermostat if you haven't already. When you are away all day, there is little reason to keep the thermostat set at the same temperature that you do when you are at home. Set the thermostat lower during those hours and raise it up when you return.

- Caulk your exterior windows. Every few years remove old, cracked caulk around your windows and re-caulk to tighten up the air seal.
- If you have a fireplace that you do not use, have it closed up to prevent the hot air from escaping up the chimney!
- Electrical outlets along outer walls of the home typically do not contain any insulation. For a few dollars, you can purchase a pack of foam insulators that sit directly behind the cover plate of outlets and wall switches.
- Replace dirty furnace filters and sealing air ducts can save as much as 10 percent on your heating bills.
- If there are rooms in your house that you do not use, then why pay to have them heated with the rest of the house? By closing the vent and sealing the door, you can avoid paying to heat unused space.
- During the day, open the curtains and allow the sun to warm the house. Be sure to close them at night to help insulate the room from cold creeping through the windows.
- Be sure furniture and curtains are not blocking the airflow from registers. **P**

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# Winter Blues

SAD can affect anyone,  
but there are ways to fight it

By Dr. Joy Miller

**F**or many Americans the winter season signals the loss of sunlight and the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder, also called SAD for short.

Misunderstood by many people, Seasonal Affective Disorder is a clinical disorder, characterized by moderate depression, pronounced fatigue, lethargy and a general sense of heaviness. These symptoms usually begin somewhere around October and begin to dissipate in late March or April.

The cause is simply the lack of sunlight.

If you suffer from these winter-time blues, you are not alone. It is estimated that there are over 34 million SAD sufferers in America today, with women sufferers outnumbering men four to one. Research tends to imply that 2 percent of our population suffers severely with SAD and about 10 percent of our population suffers from moderate to mild symptoms. Across the world, incidences increase with the increased distance from the equator.

But not all sufferers have identical symptomology. All sufferers report mild to severe depression, but some note excessive eating and weight gain. Others report an increase in the craving of carbo-

hydrates in their diets, while others discuss fatigue, which tends to be worse in the afternoon. Some sufferers note feeling hopeless and sad, while others report an increase in crying or excessive sleeping and napping.

There are those who doubt the disorder of Seasonal Affective Disorder and believe it is a new catchphrase for those who are lazy or lack taking action during the winter months. However, researcher Dr. Alfred Lewy first discovered depressive symptoms during the fall and winter in 1845. His discoveries were brought to light (sorry for the little pun) in the mid 1980s when it was discovered that bright light released melatonin into the body, relieving the symptoms of depression. Typically, the depression or winter blues are lowered when bright light exposure enters the eyes.

First, it is helpful to decide if you are feeling down because of Seasonal Affective Disorder or if you have other reasons for your depression.

The cyclical nature of SAD is its easiest identifier. Do you usually feel happier and more upbeat in the summer? Do you start feeling gloomy as fall arrives, dreading the coming winter? Does your

energy level seriously drop as the thermometer falls? Finally, does your weight go up regularly every winter only to then drop in spring and summer? If you answer yes to these questions there is a very good chance you have SAD.

But there are some simple techniques that will minimize the symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder:

- **Direct sunlight:** The first suggestion for treatment is absolutely free! One of the simplest solutions is to incorporate more time outdoors during daylight hours. Rain or shine try to gain exposure to the sun for at least 30 to 45 minutes every day, even if the sunlight is filtered or indirect.
- **Light treatments:** Light boxes or full spectrum bulbs are commonly available at many stores or healthy living catalogs. The light bulbs are less expensive than light boxes (generally costing \$300) and generally are not as effective; however they do offer a low cost option for treatment of light exposure. Research indicates a 70 percent success rate for light therapy, with the



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highest response from those who utilize a light box versus light bulbs. Typically sufferers sit in front of the light box or bulb for 30 to 45 minutes each day and require 2500 lux exposure.

- **Water:** Research indicates increasing water intake will lower the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder. Try to drink 8 to 10 glasses of water a day (and no—you won't float away!)
  - **Exercise:** Establish a daily exercise program and try to work out in the mornings or early afternoon. Late night exercise tends to affect sleeping patterns and encourages sleeplessness.
  - **Diet:** Research suggests an increase in complex carbohydrates such as pasta, potatoes and bread. These foods tend to aid in the production of serotonin and decrease the symptoms of depression.
- **Medication:** Today there are numerous medications that are extremely effective in minimizing the effects of Seasonal Affective Disorder.
  - **Counseling:** Therapy can be extremely effective in combination with all the other techniques mentioned in this article. Counseling is beneficial in learning to deal with the depressive symptoms and learning means to change thought patterns and behaviors that add to the burden of depression.

Hopefully these suggestions will be helpful for those of you who suffer from SAD. But I've always thought it might be helpful for the City of Peoria to purchase a giant spotlight that could be shown on our city during the day. Surely the bright light would decrease many sufferers' symptoms and relieve those winter blues. Maybe I'll call the Mayor and see what he has to say about this idea.

In the meantime, maybe I should just go outside for a while and take my dog for a walk in the sunlight. **P**

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## Nov. 4

### *Sixth Annual Holiday Walk*

The Sixth Annual Holiday Walk at Junction City will be 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the shopping center on Prospect Road at Knoxville Avenue. Festivities include pictures with Santa, free carriage rides, live music, letters to Santa, hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and treats in each of our unique shops.

## Nov. 5

### *Cross country runners at State!*

The 2011 IHSA State Cross Country meet will be at Detweiller Park, 8327 N. Galena Road. Team and individual champions will be crowned in three classes.

## Nov. 6

### *Annual sports auction and card show at Riverplex*

The Peoria Park District will host the 14th Annual Sports Auction & Card Show from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the RiverPlex. All proceeds benefit youth sports in Peoria. Admission is \$1 for adults and free for kids ages 12 and under. Tickets are available at the door.

For more information, contact Scott Loftus at 681-2868 or visit [www.peoriaparks.org](http://www.peoriaparks.org).

## Nov. 8

### *Bradley, Wooster play in exhibition*

The Bradley Braves will play in their first game at Carver Arena in 2011-2012 when they play College of Wooster in an exhibition game. Tipoff is 7 p.m. Tickets on sale Nov. 7 at 10 a.m., \$8, \$14, \$20, \$30 and \$35.

## Nov. 10

### *Mannheim Steamroller The*

Christmas Music of Mannheim Steamroller by Chip Davis will be presented at 8 p.m. in the Civic Center Theatre. Tickets on sale now, \$49.50, \$59.50 and \$74.50.

## Nov. 11

### *"Annie" opens at Peoria Players*

Peoria Players Theatre's production of the family favorite musical "Annie" opens 10-show run at 7:30 p.m. at the theatre. Directed by Mary Ellen Ulrich, this Tony Award-winning Broadway musical features little orphan Annie and the memorable tunes "It's a Hard Knock Life," "Easy Street," and "Tomorrow."

Performances are 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 11, 12, 16, 17, 18 and 19. There will be 2 p.m. matinees on Nov. 12, 13, 19 and 20. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$12 for patrons 18 and under. Tickets for the Wednesday, November 16 performance are only \$12 for all ages.

To reserve tickets with a Visa or Mastercard, call the box office at 688-4473 or use the convenient PayPal option on our website, [www.peoriaplayers.org](http://www.peoriaplayers.org).

### *"Angels in America: Perestroika" opens at Corn Stock*

The second part of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," "Perestroika" continues to tell the story of the characters unveiled in "The Millennium Approaches," performed at Corn Stock last spring.

"Perestroika" will be performed at the Winter Playhouse at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 11, 12, 18 and 19 and at 2:30 p.m. on Nov. 13.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for students. They can be reserved by calling 676-2196.

### *JULEP's Closet opens at RiverPlex*

The annual fundraiser of the Junior League of Peoria will be Nov. 11 from 5 to 8 p.m., Nov. 12 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Nov. 13 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the RiverPlex. It is the city's largest sale of quality new and used merchandise, with proceeds used to fund Junior League projects.

## Nov. 12

### *Young Frankenstein presents two shows*

"Young Frankenstein," the smash Broadway hit, will play two performances at the Civic Center Theatre, at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tickets on sale now for \$39, \$49 and \$59.

*Biennial Vintage Style Show* The fifth biennial Vintage Style Show, titled "A Passion for the Arts," will be presented by the Peoria Historical Society at Four Points by Sheraton in downtown Peoria. The boutique opens at 10 a.m., the luncheon is at 11:30 a.m. and the style show is at 12:30 p.m. Tickets \$35 or \$30 for members.

This show spotlights historic Peoria women active in the arts, portrayed by Peoria-area women who are also actively involved wearing vintage clothing and costumes appropriate to their eras.

For more information call (309) 674-1921.

### *Bradley women battle NCU*

Bradley University's women's basketball team will open its regular season against Northern Colorado University at 2 p.m. Renaissance Coliseum. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students.

## Nov. 13

### *Disney Live! At Civic Center*

Disney Live! will present Three Classic Fairy Tales in the Civic Center Theater at 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tickets on sale now, \$18, \$25, \$40 and \$52.

### *Bradley opens regular season*

Bradley Braves open their 2011-2012 regular season against the University of Missouri, Kansas City at 4 p.m. in Carver Arena. Part of the 2011 Chicago Invitational Challenge. Tickets go on sale Nov. 7 at 10 a.m., \$8, \$14, \$20, \$30 and \$35.

**Nov. 15**

*Bradley women host Eastern Illinois*  
The Bradley women will host Eastern Illinois University at 7 p.m. at Renaissance Coliseum. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students k-12.

**Nov. 17**

*Love the dance?*  
In Love With The Dance will be presented in the Civic Center Theater at 7:30 p.m. Tickets on sale now, \$29, \$39 and \$49.

**Nov. 18**

*Chamber Thanksgiving Luncheon at Embassy Suites*  
The Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce 36th Annual Thanksgiving Day Luncheon will be at 11:45 a.m. Friday, Nov. 18 at the Embassy Suites and Riverfront Conference Center in East Peoria. Community Narrative will be given by Ed Rapp, Group President and CFO of Caterpillar Inc., and the Tom Connor Award for Community Service will be presented. Tickets are \$45 for members and \$65 for non-members. Tables of 10 can be purchased, as well. For more information go to [www.peoriachamber.org](http://www.peoriachamber.org)

*Cake Boss at the Civic Center*

The Bakin' with the Boss Tour with Buddy Valastro: The Cake Boss will be presented at 7:30 p.m. in the Civic Center, Theater. Tickets on sale now, \$25.75, \$35.75, \$47.75 and \$75 (VIP meet and greet).

**Nov. 19**

*Bradley takes on North Dakota*  
Bradley Braves battle the University of North Dakota at 7 p.m. in Carver Arena. Tickets on sale Nov. 7 at 10 a.m., \$8, \$14, \$20, \$30 and \$35.

*Team Beachbody comes to Peoria*  
Team Beachbody Super Saturday, featuring M.J. Durkin and Shaun

Thompson, will be presented in the Peoria Civic Center Ballroom, beginning at 9 a.m. To register and for more information, visit <http://davidkernlyons.com/events>.

**Nov. 21**

*A Symphony Thanksgiving*  
The Peoria Symphony Orchestra will present a Concert of Thanksgiving at 7 p.m. in the Civic Center Theater. Tickets on sale now, \$25 - \$60. Call 309-671-1096.

**Nov. 22**

*Braves play Wofford*  
Bradley Braves will play Wofford University as part of the 2011 Chicago Invitational Challenge at 7 p.m. in Carver Arena. Tickets on sale Nov. 7 at 10 am, \$8, \$14, \$20, \$30 and \$35.

**Nov. 25**

*Santa Claus is coming to town!*  
The 124th Annual Santa Claus

Parade, the longest running holiday parade in the country, will step off in downtown Peoria at 10:15 a.m.

*Yule Like Peoria*

Yule Like Peoria, the annual walk around Downtown Peoria, with events, refreshment and sightseeing, will begin at 6 p.m.

**Nov. 26**

*Festival of Lights in East Peoria*  
The annual Festival of Lights Parade of Lights will start at 5:45 p.m., with about 20 lighted floats making the three-mile trek through downtown East Peoria.

**Nov. 28**

*Bradley women host UWM*  
Bradley University's women's basketball Braves will host Wisconsin-Milwaukee at 7 p.m. at Renaissance Coliseum. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students k-12.

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**Nov. 29**

*Oak Ridge Boys back in town*

The Oak Ridge Boys Christmas Show is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. in the Civic Center Theater. Tickets on sale now, \$37, \$45 and \$52.

**Dec. 2**

*"Plaza Suite" at Corn Stock*

"Plaza Suite," the comedy in three acts, will be performed at Corn Stock Theatre's Winter Playhouse at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 2, 3, 9 and 10 and at 2:30 p.m. Dec. 4. Three different directors will guide the show, which is actually a different play in each act. Directors will be Jen Whitmore, Alex Larson and Howard Gorman. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for students and can be reserved by calling 676-2196.

*Joseph and his coat at Eastlight*

"Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" will open its 21st season at Eastlight Theatre at 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 2, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10 and at 2 p.m. Dec. 4 and 11. Tickets are \$17 and can be purchased online at tickets.eastlighttheatre.com.

*Trans-Siberian Orchestra in concert*

The Trans-Siberian Orchestra will present two concerts in Carver Arena, at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tickets on sale now, \$31, \$39.50, \$49.50 and \$59.50.

*Winter Wonderland opens in East Peoria*

FOLEPI's Winter Wonderland, a two-mile drive through electric park featuring lighted displays and floats from the Parade of Lights, opens at 5 p.m. It continues nightly through Dec. 31. Cost is \$10 for cars and family vans, \$20 for limos, RVs, extended vans and mini or party buses and \$150 for full-size buses.

**Dec. 6**

*Braves take on Northeastern*

Bradley Braves battle Northeastern University at 7 p.m. in Carver Arena. Tickets on sale Nov. 7 at 10 a.m., \$8, \$14, \$20, \$30 and \$35.

**Dec. 17**

*The Peorian Presents: Santa Breakfast*

Seating at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Reservations can be made at [www.thepeorian.com/santa](http://www.thepeorian.com/santa)

*Bradley women host Big 10 foe*

The Bradley women's basketball team will host the University of Iowa at 7 p.m. at Renaissance Coliseum. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students k-12.

**Dec. 20**

*Braves play Western Carolina*

Bradley Braves play Western Carolina University at 7 p.m. in Carver Arena. Tickets on sale Nov. 7 at 10 a.m., \$8, \$14, \$20, \$30 and \$35.

**Dec. 21**

*Bradley women host Western Illinois*

Bradley's women's basketball team will play Western Illinois University at 7 p.m. at Renaissance Coliseum. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students k-12.

**Dec. 29**

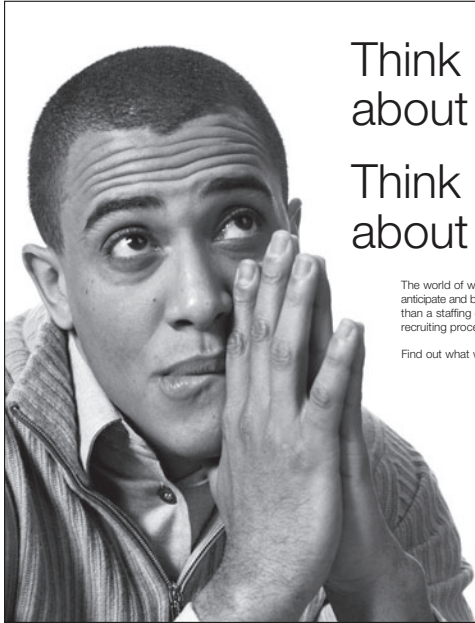
*Bradley women open conference season*

Bradley women's basketball will open its conference season with a 7 p.m. contest against Missouri State at Renaissance Coliseum. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students k-12.

**Dec. 31**

*Bradley women host Wichita State*

Bradley women's basketball will host conference for Wichita State at 2 p.m. at Renaissance Coliseum. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for students k-12.



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