

Things You Should Know May 26, 2010

Elgin Teachers Association Members Agree to One Year Contract

School District U-46 and the Elgin Teachers Association, today announced the details of a tentative one-year agreement reached earlier this month. The announcement comes the day after the union's 2,500 members voted to accept the contract.

[For more information click here](#)

Eastview Students Learn From a Pro



It is one thing when your teacher gives tips about writing better stories and tells students how important it is to keep a writer's notebook. They can discuss how the notebook will help improve writing if students jot down ideas and topics they might want to write about. It is an assignment, something to do for class - but it is a much different thing when an honest to goodness author pulls his pad out of paper with his writing notebook out of his back pocket!

That is exactly the experience the students in several classes at Eastview Middle School had. It started when the librarian, Stacey Jones, was relating information about the book *Columbine* to students. One student said his uncle had written a book on *Columbine*. The course of events ended with his uncle, David Cullen, the author of *Columbine*, dropping by for a visit with students when he was in town.

Students were able to ask Cullen about the writing process and how he determined what to write. They learned how nonfiction is written but an author who succeeded in doing it. Students felt better about editing their work when he shared that his 1,000 page manuscript became much smaller with editing.

It was a valuable experience for students to see the connection between what they learn in the classroom and know it is truly a part of a real writer's workshop.

Two Bartlett Seniors Earn Scholarships for Newspaper Work

Two U-46 students earned scholarships from the Northern Illinois Newspaper Association (NINA).

Allison Prang was named the 2010 Northern Illinois High School Journalist of the Year which earned her the NINA first-place scholarship award. Allison is not only the editor of the Bartlett High School paper, *The Hawk Eye*, she also writes a column for the Bartlett Examiner and is a correspondent for *The Daily Herald*.

Her fellow reporter for the Bartlett High School paper, Kourtney Liepelt received the third-place scholarship based on her work as a reporter and editorial/opinions editor for the paper.

Allison and Kourtney also shared their skills with young writers at Spring Trail Elementary School where they helped their young staff of fourth – sixth graders start a school newspaper. Their message to their group was clear. "It is your paper, now what are you going to do with it? Aside from teaching

them the basics of journalism, it has also been challenging to teach them to use their voices and opinions,” according to Allison.

Congratulations to these two students. Jill Flanagan is their faculty advisor at The Hawk Eye.

Learn more on the [NINA web site](#).

The Observatory Schedules Final Family Night of the Year

The U-46 Observatory was just a part of history for many years. For many years it was the odd little building students went to watch the star show, but this year it has seen a rebirth.

The Observatory celebrated its 100th anniversary in style. There have been visits from a former student who now works for NASA in Mission Control. There was the big open house and a number of star shows for the community and employees that have allowed hundreds of community members to experience this unique environment.

Friday, June 4th (last day of school) at 6:00 pm is the last 09-10 family sky show at the planetarium. The show is free and open to families. Please remember children must be accompanied by an adult. The 45 minute show includes a brief history of the building and then "the summer sky" under the stars. Parking is available in the lot at National St. and Raymond St.

The excitement about the U-46 observatory has even captured the attention of WGN news. They will be sending meteorologists out to visit during early June!

Quilts for Comfort

An unlikely match has helped a third grade class at Sheridan feel a little more comfortable. The students in Ms. Bialas class received quilts made for them by a group of quilters who met on the internet. Ms. Bialas' mother is a member of the group and during an online chat last fall the topic of upcoming charities was discussed. She suggested her daughter's third grade class. The idea was met enthusiastically and the fun began!

The students are familiar with the story of the quilt their teacher's mother made for her. According to Ms. Bialas, "My mom made me a special quilt one of the years that I attended college. The kids know about it and they have seen and used it a few months ago. The kids would use it when they were independently reading on the carpet."

The quilt each child received was personalized based on a survey that the children completed this past November with their favorite colors, sports, holiday, etc. This unique gift will be cherished by the students for years to come thanks to a generous group of quilters.

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