



**13 June
2024**

Welcome to FREEPOD, a local news source for everyone in the Freeport area. This weekly podcast is brought to you by a large volunteer group dedicated to providing to objective, unbiased news specific to our community.

We're getting new listeners every week, and much of that is thanks to you. Please share about us on your social media and thank you for your enthusiasm – now here's local news you've been missing.

Father's Day 2024

Here is a friendly reminder from your friends at FREEPOD: This Sunday, June 16th is Father's Day! Don't worry, though...you still have time to find just the right way to celebrate the Dads in your life.

Area recreational organizations, eating establishments, and other businesses have great ideas for you! Fitness Lifestyles of Freeport is offering facials and massages at special prices for the holiday;

- If golf is on the agenda, our local golf courses have great day packages and other options, including gift certificates to their pro shops and pubs and grills for snacks or full meals. You could also head to the brand new Wing It! Mini Golf Course at Krape Park, an 18-hole miniature golf course that features natural landscaping with native plants, interactive art displays, and is accessible to individuals in wheelchairs. All ages are welcome, with \$6 admission for youth 17 and under and \$7 for adults 18 and older. Wing It! opens at noon.
- Another fun option is a ride on the Silver Creek and Stephenson Railroad of Freeport, which will be open both Saturday and Sunday and also will be hosting an antique tractor pull on Sunday. The golden age of railroading had an unsung hero in the numerous branch-line trains that tied the small towns of what was once a more rural America to each other and the outside world. You and your Dad can experience branch-line railroading in a 1912 steam locomotive that takes riders on a three-and-a-half-mile round trip excursion into history. Tickets are \$8 for adults, \$2 for kids under 12, and you can even get a \$20 ticket to ride in the engine's cab. Rides depart at 11:00 a.m., noon, and on the hour between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. at 2954 S. Walnut Road in Freeport.
- And don't forget that a mini-vacation at the movies is a good choice -- the Lindo Theatre has several blockbusters on-screen right now to entertain you both, including the action thriller *Bad Boys: Ride or Die*, starring Martin Lawrence and Will Smith, and the latest installment of the *Planet of the Apes* movies, *Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes*.

And while gifts are great, just spending time together is always a great way to celebrate the day. Whether it is grilling out together, heading to the park for a walk or a pickle ball game, or an extended phone call, take the time to celebrate your father or other fathers in your life this weekend.

United Way Day of Action

United Way's Day of Action is partnering with Highland Community College Servant Leaders from surrounding school districts and workplace volunteers for a day of action next Thursday, June 20th!

Day of Action 2024 is for nonprofits who have a project that could use some helping hands. United Way of Northwest Illinois connects eager volunteers ready to make an impact with 10 nonprofits throughout our three-county region.

If you're ready to roll up your sleeves and dive into meaningful projects that benefit our community, you can still register to be part of this inspiring day of service. There's still time for nonprofits to submit their projects too! Just fill out the form for either at the United Way's website, www.uwni.org/day-action or get in touch with Connie Kraft, United Way director, director@uwni.org. Let's come together to create positive change!

Oakdale Tabernacle update

The Oakdale Tabernacle -- which just a few years ago was in a state of decline and close to being demolished -- is undergoing renovation and repairs, thanks to the "Save the Tabernacle" committee, local volunteers, and generous area businesses. In fact, this historic structure is now hosting events. Its first rental, appropriately, was a Methodist church service on May 19th, which included four congregations. Since one of the original uses of the tabernacle was for summertime revivals and the United Methodist Church once owned the tabernacle, this milestone event served as an appropriate kickoff to a new life for this building.

A lightning strike destroyed the original structure in 1915. Today's tabernacle replaced that structure, and was built using steel bridge girder construction. It is the last of its kind in Illinois, and has been awarded the "Most Endangered Historic Structure Status" through Landmarks Illinois.

Renovations continue today. A new finial was recently put in place thanks to Loescher Heating and Air Conditioning, which donated the hand-crafted piece. Koertner's Kustom renovated the cupola, adding to the building's historic flair. And additional updates are planned, including rebuilding the stage and repairing the siding.

Leaders of the "Save the Tabernacle" group believe the unique structure, which is located just off Baileyville Road in Freeport at the Oakdale Nature Preserve can be used for theatre, music festivals, scouting events, nature-themed events, flea markets, weddings, and other activities, just as it was before 2015.

Though the building is owned by the Freeport Park District and located on park property, the Save the Tabernacle group leased it from the park district for 20 years starting in August of 2021. Anyone who wants to help maintain the tabernacle, fund additional renovations, or rent the space should contact Joe Kanosky at 815-656-0513.

New business: Bespoke

When Linda Foat of Freeport (pictured below) sold her vast collection of costumes of the business Camelot Costumes after 40 years of costuming the community of Freeport, she decided to take her sewing talents to a new venture called Bespoke, which offers custom designs, tailoring, and alterations at the business connected to her home.

“Things changed. I got tired,” Foat said. “Then I thought of Bespoke, a name for a one-of-a-kind tailor business. I have the building, and I still like to create things. I wanted to turn my costume room into a sewing room.”

Since this past February, Foat and two others have been creating unique designs as well as altering wedding dresses and other types of clothing. Her business boasts a French theme, including a showroom with a sitting area, dressing room, and full-length mirrors. Kathleen Williams and Irene Moore rent space from Foat, and most recently designed and created a mother-of-the-bride dress. Foat said she herself plans to concentrate on creating costumes, which she recently did for a regional high school.

“I like this new venture because there is a niche for it. New clothes can be expensive. Alterations can help extend the life of any wardrobe and so far things are going well,” Foat said.

Bespoke can be reached at BespokeCamelot@gmail.com or 815-656-9729. Appointments are required.



New Fire Department equipment

The Freeport Fire Department recently was awarded a \$25,000 grant which Fire Chief Scott Miller said will help buy a new compressor to fill the air tanks firefighters use at a fire scene.

Miller said the previous compressor was 24-years-old and no longer met current required standards. The money comes from the Office of the Fire Marshal and will help fund a partial amount of the total cost of the new compressor, which is just over \$60,000. The remaining funds will come from the City's Fire Capital Improvement Fund.

Benefits of Trees

Trees are an important part of our planet's ecosystem, as Native Americans noted in the adage "Trees breathe in what we breathe out. We breathe in what trees breathe out. We are all connected."

The World Health Organization, hundreds of peer-reviewed science journal articles, and many other national and international agencies all agree that trees save lives. This is true especially in urban areas.

Trees promote physical health by purifying air and providing green spaces for exercise and recreation. A recent article in the journal *Nature* reported that a community with sparse tree cover has 190 more deaths and 30,000 more doctors' visits annually than in neighborhoods with an abundant tree canopy. Other research has demonstrated that spending time in wooded areas reduces stress and help promote mental wellness.

Shade trees reduce cooling costs in the summer and evergreens provide noise mitigation year-round; both increase property values and make neighborhoods more visually appealing and encourage civic pride. Trees also help to control storm water and create animal habitat for birds and pollinators.

Additionally, trees sequester the carbon that we produce through manufacturing, transportation, cooking, agriculture and other human activities. In one year, one mature tree will absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen in exchange.

Whenever trees are removed for utility easements, housing development, or damage from storms, cities should be encouraged to plant at least one tree for every one that is lost. Competitive "Urban and Community Forestry Grants" are available annually for communities through the US Forest Service. The State of Illinois has a Forestry Assistance Program to provide technical and financial assistance to build communities' capacity to improve and maintain the health of trees and other related natural resources.

Tree-lovers, go out and hug your trees!

Freeport Park District Executive Director leaving

Ron Schneider recently announced his resignation as the Executive Director for the Freeport Park District to pursue a new employment opportunity.

Schneider is leaving the Freeport Park District after serving the District for over 20 years including the last four years as Executive Director. Among his many accomplishments, he led the District through many park enhancement projects including grant-funded improvements to Oakdale Nature Preserve Park, construction of pickleball courts in Krape Park, redevelopment of the new mini golf course, and earning the Park District Distinguished Agency Accreditation.

Dana Stewart, President of the Freeport Park District Board of Commissioners states that they will certainly miss Ron's leadership and vision but that they are confident that the transition will be smooth and seamless when he leaves on June 26. The Park Board of Commissioners appointed Bruce Cubberley to serve as Interim Executive Director until they complete a search for their next Executive Director.

Cubberley has more than 35 years of extensive hands-on field experience. For the last five years he has been the Superintendent of Parks and Natural Resources for the Freeport Park District. Bruce earned a

Bachelor of Science in Ornamental Horticulture at Purdue University and a Master of Science in Landscape Horticulture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Looking at the week ahead...2024 Music Under the Stars begins Sunday

Join the Freeport Concert Band for their first performance this Sunday, June 16th at 7:00 p.m. at the Koenig Amphitheater, often also called the Krape Park Bandshell.

The concert will be performed in memory of Lois Thrasher. Sunday's conductor will be Chip Braker, will include a tuba solo by Arnie Rosen, and , the evening's vocalist is Kevin Jensen. This concert is sponsored by Angela-Damin Jewell Insurance. The next concert will be in two weeks on Sunday, June 23rd.

We hope you'll enjoy this excellent concert band, and FREEPOD thinks this would be another great way to celebrate Father's Day!

Until next week...

As we round things up, take a moment to enjoy Dairy Month in June! Stephenson County is the second largest dairy producing county in Illinois -- so be sure to toast our standing with a dairy product you love, from ice cream to a cheeseburger. If you're lactose-intolerant, you can still be proud of Stephenson County's dairy status – an oat milk smoothie would demonstrate solidarity just fine.

We also want to remind you about next week's in-depth interview that will be posted at noon on Tuesday, June 18th. FREEPOD host Becky Connors of TimBeck2 is interviewing Nicky Arn, President of the Freeport Concert Band. They'll talk about the success of the Band over the years and the season ahead for summer concerts at Krape Park. You won't want to miss it!

If you haven't yet subscribed to FREEPOD through the podcast platform of your choice, please visit our website at www.freepod.org for super-easy instructions on how to do it so that you'll never miss notification of a new in-depth interview or our regular Thursday newscasts. It will also be posted on the FREEPOD website for a limited time, as are all our previous newscast episodes.

With that, time's up for this week but tune in again next week for more about Freeport businesses, City plans and progress, area rewards and recognition, local impacts of state and national news, and more.

As we say each week, FREEPOD couldn't come to you without the help of many local supporters. We're especially appreciative for the Mass Communications Department at Highland Community College for producing this podcast as well as our many liaisons and reporters for the time they volunteer to bring the news to you. Thank you, Highland and Team FREEPOD!

If you have story suggestions or would like to donate to support FREEPOD (now tax-deductible), visit our website at www.freepod.org.

Listen next week for more news you've been missing!