



15 years later
Montoya wins second
Indy 500 — Sports



DuPage County

Daily Herald

Crash claims
Nash, wife

Mathematician
was subject of
'Beautiful Mind'

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Monday, May 25, 2015

Big Picture • Local Focus \$1.00

PADDOCK PUBLICATIONS • 143RD YEAR • NO. 223

Walking to help end Crohn's, colitis

By SUSAN KLOVSTAD
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On the surface, Josh Berendt of Palatine is like any other 11-year-old boy. The fifth-grader enjoys Pokemon, video games and hockey. He also plays trombone and piano.

But Josh's world changed two years ago when he was

Caring in action

diagnosed with indeterminate colitis. A form of inflammatory bowel disease, it made Josh very sick, and it took doctors five months to figure out his diagnosis.

Adina Walters, a mother of three from Cary, was also very

sick, and in a lot of pain, for a long time before doctors diagnosed her with Crohn's disease.

Colitis and Crohn's are chronic diseases for which there are no known cures. To help raise funds for research, the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America sponsors the Take Steps for Crohn's and Colitis walks, which are two to three

miles in length and noncompetitive. Last year's walks, nationwide, attracted 70,000 participants and raised \$11 million, according to CCFA walk director Heidi Merritt.

In today's Neighbor section, Josh Berendt and Adina Walters, who will walk in the Take Steps event May 31 at the Naperville Riverwalk, share their stories.



Josh Berendt, 11, of Palatine, will be the Honored Hero on May 31 at the Take Steps for Crohn's and Colitis Walk in Naperville.

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MARNI PYKE

THE SUBURBS
 IN TRANSIT

Should Metra hit brakes on BNSF study?

In the same week that brought a preventable Amtrak crash and cuts to federal transit funding, Metra officials approved spending half a million to study an expansion of its BNSF Line into Oswego that may never happen.

Sound paradoxical? Wait, there's more.

Numerous drivers in Kendall County understandably would prefer to take Metra to work in Chicago than spend hours a day commuting. Trouble is they're outside of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties, where a sales tax is levied to subsidize Metra, Pace and the CTA.

That means the burden of coming up with millions to build new stations, a rail yard and more — plus cover daily operating expenses — is all on Kendall County.

Yet there's no official consensus or guarantee from local mayors or county leaders that Kendall will find the money.

The current Metra board didn't instigate the Oswego project. It goes way back to before the Highway Trust Fund was broke and earmarks were taboo.

During the mid-2000s, former House Speaker Dennis Hastert of Kendall County clouted an earmark worth about \$7.5 million for engineering studies and sent it Metra's way.

Fast forward to 2015. Consultants have burned through \$2.26 million of the pie and the project now stretches

See **TRANSIT** on **PAGE 9**

WHAT MEMORIAL DAY MEANS TO FAMILIES WHO MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE



PAUL MICHNA/pmichna@dailyherald.com

Michael and Jackie Gulczynski of Carol Stream lost their son, Lenny, at age 19 in 2008. Lenny died doing what he loved most: being a soldier.

Flags, people go away, but the pain remains

By JESSICA CILELLA
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Every Memorial Day, Michael and Jackie Gulczynski visit their son Lenny's grave, the dog tags of more than 20 of his fellow soldiers in hand.

They carefully hang each of the silver chains on a tree near the large, black headstone, their minds filled with thoughts of their son and what all the young fighters went through together in Iraq.

They sit together on the grass, reflecting. There are tears and laughs, good memories and bad.

Lenny, a 19-year-old private first class, died in September 2008 after being ejected from a Humvee in Baghdad.

A year later, the Gulczynskis, of Carol Stream, invited members of his Army platoon to a memorial service at the Wheaton cemetery where he is buried. They asked the men to bring along their dog tags, so

A Lake in the Hills man's plea that you simply say out loud the name of his son, a soldier killed in Afghanistan.

A Gurnee family, who lost their son in Iraq, wondering what our departed service people who were "doers, not talkers" might have done with the rest of their lives.

An Elk Grove Village family who only recently began to celebrate the life of their Marine son killed in Iraq "rather than mourn his death."

These are just a few of the suburban families who have lost loved ones in conflicts abroad. And this is what they wanted to share about what Memorial Day means to them.

Read more on Pages 4 and 5.

MORE ONLINE: A Carol Stream family says "Memorial Day is every day" for them, at dailyherald.com/more.



GEORGE LECLAIRE/gleclair@dailyherald.com
 Evergreen Cemetery in Barrington.

of barbecuing and watching military movies on TV for the Gulczynskis.

Michael, who also served in the Army, said it held

copies could be made and brought to the gravesite twice a year: on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

"When I hear that sound of all those dog tags hitting each other, they're together," Jackie said.

During the rest of the year, when the dog tags aren't on display, the family makes sure an American flag is always near the grave. They say that isn't necessarily the case for other veterans though.

"The flags will go away (after Memorial Day) and the people will leave and the pain is still there," Jackie said of what Gold Star families go through. "We deal with this every day."

For years, Memorial Day was mostly a day

See **MEMORIAL** on **PAGE 4**

Iraqis showed 'no will to fight'

Defense secretary on how Islamic State took Ramadi

By KEN DILANIAN
 AP Intelligence Writer

WASHINGTON — The Islamic State group's takeover of the provincial capital Ramadi is stark evidence that Iraqi forces lack the "will to fight," Defense Secretary Ash Carter said in a TV interview that aired Sunday. The harsh assessment raised new questions about the Obama administration's strategy to defeat the extremist group that has seized a strategically important swath of the Middle East.

Although Iraqi soldiers "vastly outnumbered" their opposition in the capital of Anbar province, they quickly withdrew last Sunday without putting up much resistance from the city in Iraq's Sunni heartland, Carter said on CNN's "State of the Union."

The Iraqis left behind large numbers of U.S.-supplied vehicles, including several tanks, now presumed to be in Islamic State hands.

See **FIGHT** on **PAGE 6**

Sing and rejoice



JOHN STARKS/jstarks@dailyherald.com

Senior members of the Varsity Singers perform Sunday at the Neuqua Valley High School graduation, held at Convocation Center at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. See pictures from other area graduations on Page 3.

More graduation photos online

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Memorial: Stories from four suburban families

Continued from Page 1

a little more significance for him, as he grew up taking drives to the cemetery with his father, also a veteran, on Memorial Day. He tried to teach his kids the importance of the day, but it has never held as much meaning as it has since Lenny's passing.

"Memorial Day is every day," Michael said, adding that Lenny is the first thing on his mind each morning and last thing on his mind before he goes to sleep. "It's always there."

Lenny, a 2007 Bartlett High School graduate, loved being a soldier. He had a big smile and hearty laugh, but he was very serious about serving his country, Michael said.

Lenny's younger brother, Mike, wants to follow in his footsteps. He will be heading to West Point this fall, a decision he made after being



PAUL MICHNA/pmichna@dailyherald.com

Michael and Jackie Gulczynski display in their home some of the Army coins that were owned by their son, Lenny.

accepted to Loyola University, where he was set to play volleyball. The

reason, in part, is because he wants to honor Lenny.

"When he told me he was going to try to get into West Point, I told

him he would make me the proudest mother," Jackie said. "And then it kind of hit. I can't get past him going to school because I can't think about that. I can't think about what could happen. And I would hope God wouldn't be that cruel to me, to us."

Michael and Jackie said their hope is that people across the country take just a few minutes today to really reflect on the sacrifices soldiers like Lenny have made for their freedom, along with the pain their families have to live with every day.

"These guys are real people. Their names are in stone, but there's a face behind that name, and there's a story behind that person and there's a family that's hurting," Jackie said, choking back tears.

"On Memorial Day he's got a face, he's got a name. Take a second to remember that."



BOB SUSNJARA/bsusnjara@dailyherald.com

Kirk Morris of Gurnee has a room in his house dedicated to his Marine son, Geoffrey, who died in 2004 in Iraq at age 19.

Wondering what might have been

BY BOB SUSNJARA
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Passage of time hasn't made Memorial Day easier for Gurnee resident Kirk Morris, whose 19-year-old son Geoffrey died from injuries received from hostile fire in Iraq's Al Anbar province in 2004.

Morris said he's found his emotions on Memorial Day are similar to those experienced by other Gold Star families.

"It doesn't get any easier," he said. "And it's really hard to put your finger on or get your head around it if you haven't been there. And I think, really, that's what it

is. I've lost my grandmother, I've lost my father, I've lost a lot of family members. And I think you kind of accept that circle of life. You're not happy about it and it's awful and there are people that think about their deceased mom and dad. But I think because of age and the circle, we get that.

"When it's your son or daughter that made the decision to be something and do something and then they die in that service — and the violent way in which they died — there's always those thoughts in the back of your head, that had they survived, because they were doers and not talkers, what would they

have done with the rest of their lives?"

Geoffrey Morris graduated early from Gurnee's Warren Township High School in January 2003. He enlisted in the military six months later and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marines Division, I Expeditionary Force.

"A lot of kids are not sure what they want to do with their life or how they want to go forward," Morris said, "but he ... made a decision early in his life to say, 'My country needs me. I'm the best I'm going to be and I will go here.' Now, unfortunately, it didn't turn out the way any of us wanted it to be."

'We survivors want to hear our loved one's name'

BY ELENA FERRARIN
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Jim Frazier wants you to say his son's name — Jacob "Jake" Frazier. And the names of all the other servicemen and women killed in combat like the 24-year-old U.S. Air Force staff sergeant from St. Charles who died 12 years ago in Afghanistan.

Why? Because saying their names is a way to keep their memories alive, he says.

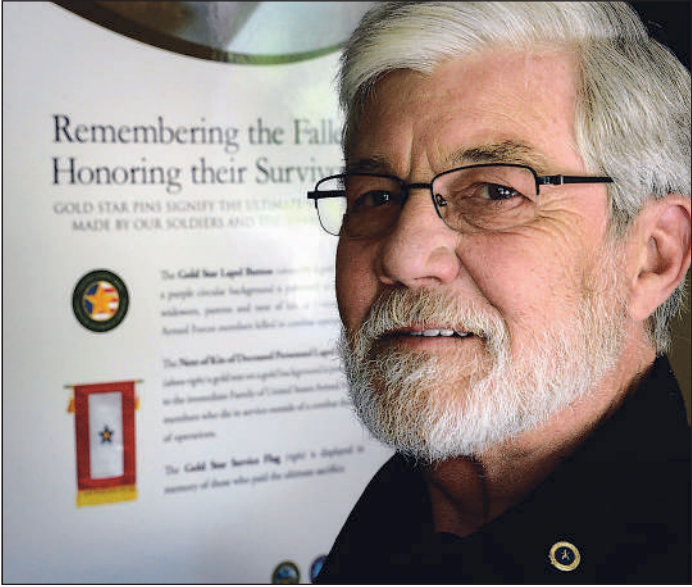
"Just saying, 'I'm sorry for your loss' is fine, but if you want to have a connection with these families, ask them their loved one's name, how old he was, where did he go to school," he said. "We survivors want to hear our loved one's name. When somebody is talking to me about my son, I want them to say his name. I want his name used. That also says their spirit is still alive, because he's being remembered."

Jim Frazier, who now lives in Lake in the Hills, has worked for the last five years as the U.S. Army's survivor outreach services coordinator for northern Illinois.

As cathartic as the commemoration may be for families who come together, people must remember that it's all about the fallen, he says.

"It's not about Jim Frazier — it's about a 24-year-old man who gave up his life and the thousands of others who have done it also. That's what Memorial Day is about. It's not about us."

Beyond the short-term assignment of a casualty assistance officer, survivor outreach services didn't exist when Jake Frazier, the first Illinois Air Force National Guardsman killed in action,



JOHN STARKS/jstarks@dailyherald.com

Jim Frazier of Lake in the Hills helps families who have lost a member in the military in his job of "survivor outreach services" for Illinois Joining Forces.

died in 2003. The St. Charles post office on Randall Road was named after him three years later.

Jim Frazier's job now is to ensure the families of those killed on active duty have long-term support, ranging from practical things like getting benefits, to the emotional complexity of living life after such tremendous loss.

"A lot of times things are described as 'being able to move on.' We don't like that — at all," he said. "There is a connotation that we're moving on without them and leaving them behind, therefore forgetting about them. That doesn't work."

"It's learning how to live with that hole in your heart," he said. "The scar tissue over the years builds up, but it's still there."

And yet, Jim Frazier says, he's happier than ever.

"I am a consequence

of it, and I also think I am extremely lucky. Somebody is going to say, 'How can you be lucky when you lost your child?'" he said. "OK, I can't change that. But going forward, I am very lucky that I get to participate, and hopefully help others traveling down the same crappy road. And maybe make it a little less crappy for them."

DuPage County Daily Herald

FOUNDED 1872

— 847-427-4333 —
DUPAGE COUNTY DAILY HERALD (USPS 032020) is published daily in Naperville by Paddock Publications Inc., 155 E. Algonquin Road, P.O. Box 280, Arlington Heights, IL 60006. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington Heights, IL, and additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DAILY HERALD, P.O. Box 280, Arlington Hts., IL 60006.

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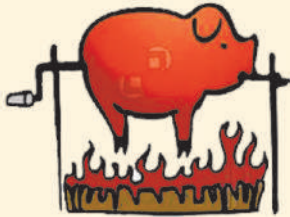
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