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**NEWS-DEMOCRAT**



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Members of the Collinsville High School Class of 1970 listen to President Mike Ray talk on Sept. 16 about an iron Kahok statue in the school library that the class donated more than 50 years ago.

# Donated sculpture is legacy of Collinsville's Class of 1970

BY TERI MADDOX  
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Officers for Collinsville High School's Class of 1970 wanted to use their funds to leave a lasting legacy when they graduated, so they decided to commission an artist to create a statue.

President Mike Ray began the process like any teenager might have done in those days: He consulted the Yellow Pages.

Ray ran across an ad for Emma "Dale" Drulis, a St. Louis artist who specialized in metal-working.

"She was famous at that point, but it was unbeknownst to us how famous she really was," said Dr. Ray, now 70, an orthopedic surgeon who lives in Naples, Florida.

Ray recently traveled back to Illinois for the class's 50th reunion, which had been delayed two years by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the activities was a statue rededication on Sept. 16.

The nearly 5-foot-tall iron statue is an abstract depiction of a "Kahok," a member of a fictional tribe of American Indians that has served as the



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Mike Ray, president of Collinsville High School Class of 1970, and other officers commissioned a St. Louis artist to create an iron Kahok statue more than 50 years ago. He now lives in Naples, Florida.

school's mascot since the 1920s.

The statue was first installed in the library at the old Collinsville High School building on Vandalia Street. It was moved two years later to the library of the current building on Morrison Avenue.

"They wanted something that was going to last and not be out in the weather," said class member Cynthia Bohnenstiehl, 70, of Collinsville, a retired communications specialist who

was a Student Council member and Cheer Club president in high school.

### CANDY SALES AND CAR WASHES

The Class of 1970 accumulated funds through candy sales, car washes and other fundraisers. By the time they were ready to graduate, they had about \$500 to spend on their gift to the school.

Dale Drulis was the wife of former NFL player Chuck

Drulis, who was serving as a defensive coach for the St. Louis Cardinals football team.

Dale Drulis already had created a large hammered-copper relief sculpture for the main entrance of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. It depicts a running back, blocker and tackler. Legend has it that her husband and sons Chuck and Kerry served as models.

Ray remembers calling Drulis on the phone to arrange for a meeting between her and several Class of 1970 officers.

"She was intrigued by our thoughts, and I think out of the goodness of her heart, she took it on," he said.

"The only requirements we had is that 1) we didn't want a stick figure and 2) we didn't want a cigar-store Indian. Other than that, we gave her artistic license. It was up to her what she wanted to do."

Ray and another group of students went to pick up the statue at Drulis's art studio in an old warehouse near the St. Louis riverfront. They rolled it out on a dolly and loaded it onto a pick-up truck.

SEE SCULPTURE, 3A

## CDC rates no state counties at high COVID community level

BY MEREDITH HOWARD  
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For the first time since May, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rated zero Illinois counties at a high COVID-19 community level in its Thursday update.

The federal agency put 20 counties at a medium level, including Union, Johnson, Alexander, Pulaski, Massac, Hardin, Cumberland, Coles, Douglas, Champaign, Ford, Marshall, Peoria, Fulton, Mason, Tazewell, Henderson, Whiteside, Carroll and Lake.

Last week the number of counties at high had fallen drastically, from 20 to three.

The CDC's COVID-19 community levels are updated Thursdays and based on metrics from the past seven days, including new hospital admissions per 100,000 people, average percent of staffed, inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients and new cases per 100,000 people.

The agency advises people in high community level areas to wear a mask indoors and on public transportation, and people at a higher risk of severe illness should consider precautions in medium level areas.

### NEW BOOSTER SHOTS IN ILLINOIS

While COVID-19 case rates are down in many areas in the state, Illinois Public Health Department officials cautioned residents to stay vigilant in a Sept. 30 emailed statement.

"It is encouraging to see the large number of Illinoisans who are taking advantage of the added protection offered by the new bivalent boosters," IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra said in the email. "And while the case rate has been declining, this is not the time for anyone to let their guard down."

"As we head into fall and face a potential surge in new cases, I urge everyone who is eligible to contact their healthcare provider or local pharmacy to get the updated booster AND their flu

SEE COVID-19 DATA, 3A

# Biden heading to Puerto Rico, Fla. to see hurricane damage

BY MATT VISER  
The Washington Post

President Joe Biden is planning to travel to Puerto Rico on Monday and to Florida on Wednesday to tour hurricane damage in two places that have been significantly affected, the White House announced late Saturday night.

The president, who will be joined by first lady Jill Biden, has spoken repeatedly about the devastation from the hurricanes

— first when Hurricane Fiona hit Puerto Rico nearly two weeks ago and then in recent days as Hurricane Ian made landfall in Florida — and his desire to visit each place.

"Our hearts ... are heavy," Biden said of hurricane damage on Saturday night, speaking in remarks at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Phoenix Awards. "We owe Puerto Rico ... a lot more than they've already gotten."

He said the nation would do "whatever it takes to help search

and rescue, recovery, and rebuilding."

"It's going to take a long time, so we cannot tire," he said. "Whatever it takes, I mean it, whatever it takes."

It will be Biden's first trip as president to Puerto Rico.

It is unclear whether on his trip to Florida the president will meet with Gov. Ron DeSantis, who has been a political adversary but also someone he has spoken to several times amid

SEE BIDEN, 2A



AMY BETH BENNETT South Florida Sun Sentinel/TNS

Local muralist Candy Miller, left, embraces Ana Kapel, manager of a gift shop, at the site of what used to be the store on the island of Fort Myers Beach, Florida, on Friday. President Joe Biden intends to tour areas Wednesday in Florida damaged by Hurricane Ian.



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# Ukraine presses counteroffensive; Russia attacks with drones

BY JON GAMBRELL  
Associated Press

## KYIV, UKRAINE

Russia attacked the Ukrainian president's hometown and other targets Sunday with suicide drones, and Ukraine took back full control of a strategic eastern city in a counteroffensive that has reshaped the war.

Russia's loss of the eastern city of Lyman, which it had been using as a transport and logistics hub, is a new blow to the Kremlin as it seeks to escalate the war by illegally annexing four regions of Ukraine and heightening threats to use nuclear force.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's land grab has threatened to push the conflict to a dangerous new level. It also prompted Ukraine to formally apply for NATO membership, a bid that won backing Sunday from nine central and eastern European NATO members fearful that Russia's aggression could eventually target them, too.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced Sunday that his forces now control Lyman.

Russia's military didn't comment on the situation in Lyman on Sunday, after announcing Saturday that it was withdrawing its forces there to more favorable positions.

The British military described the recapture of Lyman as a "significant political setback" for Moscow. Taking the city paves the way for Ukrainian troops to potentially push



A destroyed bridge across the Siverskyi-Donets River is seen Sunday in the recently liberated town of Sviatohirsk, Ukraine.

farther into Russian-occupied territory.

In southern Ukraine, Zelenskyy's hometown of Krivyi Rih came under a Russian attack by a suicide drone that destroyed two stories of a school early Sunday, said Valentyn Reznichenko, governor of Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region.

Russia in recent weeks has begun using Iranian-made suicide drones to attack targets in Ukraine. In southern Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said Sunday it shot down five Iranian-made drones overnight, while two others made it through air defenses.

Russian attacks also targeted the city of Zaporizhzhia, Ukrainian authorities said Sunday. And Ukraine's military said Sunday it carried out strikes on multiple Russian command posts, ammunition depots and two S-300 anti-aircraft batteries.

The reports of military activity couldn't be immediately verified.

Ukrainian forces have retaken swaths of territory, notably in the northeast around Kharkiv, in a counteroffensive in recent weeks that has embarrassed the Kremlin and prompted rare domestic criticism of Putin's war.

Lyman, which Ukraine recaptured by encircling Russian troops, is in the Donetsk region near the border with Luhansk, two of the four regions that Russia illegally annexed Friday after forcing what was left of the population to vote in referendums at gunpoint.

Russian officials released limited information about military activity in what the Kremlin still refuses to call a war. They routinely claim that Russia exclusively targets Ukrainian military forces, the foreigners supporting them or Western-supplied weaponry.

Putin frames the Ukrainian gains as a U.S.-orchestrated effort to destroy Russia, and last

week he heightened threats of nuclear force in some of his toughest, most anti-Western rhetoric to date.

Recent developments have raised fears of all-out conflict between Russia and the West.

The leaders of Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania and Slovakia issued a joint statement backing a path to NATO membership for Ukraine, and calling on all 30 members of the U.S.-led security bloc to ramp up military aid for Kyiv.

German Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht, meanwhile, on Sunday announced the delivery of 16 wheeled armored howitzers produced in Slovakia to Ukraine next year. The weapons will be financed jointly with Denmark, Norway and Germany,

Russia on Sunday moved ahead with steps meant to make its land grab look like a legal process aimed at helping people persecuted by Ukraine, with rubber-stamp approval by the Constitutional Court and draft laws being pushed through the Kremlin-friendly parliament. Outside Russia, the annexation has been widely denounced as violating international law.

Meanwhile, international concerns are mounting about the fate of Europe's largest nuclear plant after Russian forces detained its director for alleged questioning.

The International Atomic Energy Agency announced Sunday that its director-general, Rafael Grossi, would visit Kyiv and Moscow in the coming days to discuss the situation around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Grossi is continuing to push for "a nuclear safety and security zone" around the site.

FROM PAGE 1A

# COVID-19 DATA

shot. These vaccines are especially important for those most vulnerable to severe illness, such as those individuals over 50, those with underlying medical conditions, and those who are immunocompromised," he continued.

IDPH reports health care professionals have administered 493,000 bivalent booster shots since federal authorities approved them, including 137,000 doses in the past week. About 4.4% of people who are eligible for updated booster shots have received them so far, according to IDPH. The bivalent booster vaccination rate is 10% for Illinois residents 65 years and older.

## COVID-19 IN ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ACROSS ILLINOIS

IDPH has reported 10,945 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases since Sept. 23, the lowest weekly number of new cases recorded since April 8.

While case rates are down in St. Clair County and statewide, the county's rate of new COVID-19 hospital admissions increased over the last week.

The statewide daily case rate is 12.3 per 100,000 people, IDPH reported, down from 19.5 last week. Intensive care unit availability has stayed the same week-to-week at 19%, according to IDPH.

The seven-day rolling number of hospital admissions is 78, compared to 98 last week, and IDPH reported 64 weekly deaths statewide.

St. Clair County's daily case rate is 10.3 per 100,000 individuals, and IDPH reported 25% of the county's ICU beds are

available. The seven-day rolling number of hospital admissions in St. Clair County is one, and IDPH reported one weekly death in the county.

The CDC reported St. Clair County's weekly case rate was 90.88 per 100,000 population, and there were 5.2 COVID-related hospital admissions per 100,000 people in the county, compared to 4.1 admissions last week.

The federal agency also reported 2.9% of staffed inpatient beds were in use by patients with confirmed COVID-19 as of Thursday.

St. Clair County's weekly case rate is down 24.36% from last week, the CDC reported, and test positivity decreased by 1.95%, while the rate of tests performed dropped by 15.8%.

As of Thursday night, IDPH reported 899 people in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19, including 130 in ICUs and 31 patients on ventilators.

You can find COVID-19 testing and vaccination information online in St. Clair County.

*Note: Some CDC data, such as test positivity rates, the number of tests performed and total case rate, update on different days. IDPH data and CDC data may not update at the same time, so metrics may vary across agencies.*

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An abstract iron statue of a Kahok Indian has been displayed in Collinsville High School libraries for more than 50 years. The Class of 1970 commissioned St. Louis artist Emma "Dale" Drulis to create it.

FROM PAGE 1A

# SCULPTURE

Some of the students rode back to Collinsville in the truck bed, holding onto the statue. That was legal in those days.

"That night, Mike had a graduation party at my parents' house," said Mike Ray's brother, Don Ray, 68, a defense contractor at Scott Air Force Base who lives in O'Fallon.

"They put a blanket down on the dining room table, and they put a piece of plywood down and they put the statue on it so everyone could see it. Even the lady who made the statue showed up. She sat on the couch and talked to my mom."

## PLAQUE FOUND DECADES LATER

The Class of 1970 also had a metal plaque made for the statue's pedestal in the library. But it disappeared in the 1980s, so they had to get a replacement.

The original plaque resurfaced two years ago, almost as if on cue for the planned 2020 reunion and rededication.

A man who was renovating a house he had

bought in Caseyville apparently found the plaque in a box in the attic. He posted a photo on Facebook, hoping to reach someone who knew the story behind it.

Mike Ray's brother Scott Ray saw the Facebook post and told Don Ray, who contacted the man, drove to his house and retrieved the plaque. It was in perfect condition.

"Who knows how it got there or how long it was in the box," Don Ray said. "It was probably just someone doing a prank or just trying to be ornery, and they picked it up because they could."

"I knew what my brother Mike did to get this

statue made and get this plaque generated. It meant a lot to him."

More than 150 people attended the Class of 1970 reunion dinner Sept. 17 on the Edwardsville campus of Lewis & Clark Community College. An estimated 25 had gathered in the Collinsville High School library to rededicate the statue.

Bohnenstiehl sees the 1970 commission as an early sign that many of her classmates would become respected citizens and accomplished professionals in a variety of fields.

"Even back then, I could see that I was among leaders, and I was not wrong," she said. "These people went on to do great things."

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