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WAUKEGAN D60

# 6 candidates vying for 3 board seats

By Steve Sadin  
For News-Sun

With six candidates running for three seats on the Waukegan Community Unit School District 60 Board of Education, a trio formed a slate running on shared values while the other three are bound together through endorsements toward each other.

Incumbents Lucy Leguizamo and Rick Riddle along with first-time board candidates Carolina Fabian, Kherushana Hanna, Chris-

tine Lensing and Randy Sobecki are competing for the three available positions in the April 4 general election with different approaches to schooling.

As Sobecki, Lensing and Hanna got to know each other as they campaigned and spoke regularly at school board meetings, they decided to run together as a slate, something their campaign signs around the city indicate.

"We believe each one of us brings something different to the table and, as we got to know each

other, we realized we have a meeting of the minds on our views in the campaign," Sobecki said.

Though Riddle, Leguizamo and Fabian are not running as a slate, they have long-standing relationships with common values. Fabian said she is endorsing Leguizamo and Riddle, while Riddle endorses the two of them.

"He believes education is a way to elevate people in society. He's always looking for ways to serve," Fabian said of Riddle. "She's always working on projects for the board,"

she added about Leguizamo. "She started a STEM fair. She bought uniforms for kids when they had to wear them."

While Sobecki, Riddle, Lensing, Hanna and Fabian are actively getting their message to voters, Leguizamo is not campaigning. She said in an email she could not answer questions "due to health-related issues." She has made no public endorsements.

Board of Education President Brandon Ewing read a letter from Leguizamo at the Feb. 14 board

meeting where she apologized for her absence, and asked for "privacy for myself and my family during this time so we can focus on our health and well-being."

"Those of you who know me, know I take my responsibility to my board membership and my duties to the community seriously," Ewing said, reading Leguizamo's letter. "Unfortunately, I've experienced a medical emergency that I must attend to."

Turn to Board, Page 2



Ivy Hall district manager Dominique Moses holds a shirt sold at the dispensary. STEVE SADIN/NEWS-SUN

# Waukegan's first cannabis dispensary opens its doors

'You get a great vibe when you come here'

By Steve Sadin  
For News-Sun

Walking into Ivy Hall — Waukegan's first cannabis dispensary — after clearing security, a potential customer passes a couch, lounge chair and small coffee table before approaching a wall displaying numerous products, including edibles, flower, oils and more.

Greeted by an agent in charge, or budtender, equipped with a tablet to help assist people with additional product information, customers like Angel Boyd of Beach Park begin to peruse.

"I'm looking around to find

some oils," Boyd said, as she looked at a variety of product mock-ups on display. "There's a lot of variety."

Ivy Hall opened Friday morning at 996 Waukegan Road near the Fountain Square shopping center with a complement of workers selling not only cannabis products and accessories, but clothing and giftware.

"We want to give customers a luxury shopping experience that's very boutique-like," Ivy Hall district manager Dominique Moses said, describing what the company labels a "sensory dispensary."

"It's a concierge level experience," she said.

Moses said the experience may begin with a stop at the terpenes bar on the right, just before the large display wall. Terpenes are the active ingredient in cannabis, and they can have a variety of scents which customers can smell.

"It's what gives you that euphoric affect," she said. "They are in all the different forms of products like flower cigarettes, oils, edibles and tablets. They're made by the cultivators," she added, referring to licensed Illinois growers.

Six different scents of terpenes were on display. Moses said customers can experience the

scents as they decide which products they want, and how it will affect their senses. It is like purchasing incense.

Along with the budtender giving them information, Moses said customers can use their cell phone to scan the QR code on the product package, which connects them with the company website.

Though the packages are real with items inside which might feel like a gummy or other product, Moses said there is no actual merchandise inside. The customer does not get that until they receive their product after it is retrieved by an employee in a secure storage area.

Turn to Dispensary, Page 2

LAW & ORDER

# Boy injured in parade shooting honored

'Cooper's strength and courage ... has been astonishing and inspirational'

By Clifford Ward  
For News-Sun

Cooper Roberts, the young boy who was paralyzed in the mass shooting at Highland Park's Fourth of July parade, was recognized by the Brennan Rehabilitation Foundation at the group's annual meeting on March 19.

The foundation named Roberts, 8, one of the winners of its Socrates Award, which recognizes perseverance in the face of spinal injury.

The award comes with annual financial grants to help with the cost of equipment, prescription drugs and in-home care.

"Cooper's strength and courage in facing his resulting paralysis, and through numerous surgeries toward recovery, has been astonishing and inspirational," the foundation said in August, when it announced the award.

Chicago police Officer Danny Golden, who was paralyzed when he was shot while breaking up a fight on July 9, was also recognized.

The Brennan Rehabilitation Foundation, which is in Lake Forest, is "committed to helping individuals, who have suffered cervical spinal injuries causing physical and cognitive disabilities, and their families and communities, by providing financial resources to help ensure a continuum of rehabilitation resources and provide opportunities for individuals to ultimately reach optimal health and independence."

**Chase case update:** The Winthrop Harbor teen girl who police say drove over a Waukegan man, leaving him in critical condition, and then led them on a chase that ended near Rosemont remains in custody at the Lake County

Turn to Ward, Page 2

# Conservatives are targeting suburban school boards

Local elections becoming political battlegrounds

By Dan Petrella  
and Rick Pearson  
Chicago Tribune

Two years ago, at the urging of her teenage daughter, clinical psychologist Donna Marino ran for school board in far west suburban Oswego, thinking her background in mental health could help students recover from the isolation, stress and trauma brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the actions taken to slow its spread.

But less than a year after winning election and being selected by her peers to chair the board, Marino abruptly quit. She said she feared for her and her family's mental and physical health following threats

from some parents opposed to the district's continued masking mandates as well as how culture, race and sex education were being addressed in the classroom and in books in Oswego's elementary and high schools.

"I was excited to be able to contribute that mental health lens after all our children have been through. I wanted to be a catalyst for rebuilding our community and crossing that divide. I had high hopes. But I underestimated the severity of that fracture," Marino wrote in her resignation letter when she stepped down from the board of Oswego Community Unit School District 308, recounting how she'd been called a "coward,"

"F---n scum," a "low IQ knuckle dragger and worse."

"Unfortunately, the vitriol, politics and threats on myself and my family have taken its toll and is just not something I am willing to live with," she wrote. "I know that bullies will feel they have won, but they lost big time by not having me on the board to defend their children. The only way they do win is if I allow them to take away my joy, the safety of my family, and allow their abuse into my life."

Marino's experience reflects how, at one of the most divided times in recent history, school boards across the country have become targets of both the ire and political ambitions of conserva-

Turn to School, Page 2



Parents Eleanor McNear, center, and Molly Wallace, right, challenge District 200 school board candidate David Sohrmer's religious agenda referenced in his opening and closing remarks during a candidate forum on March 2 at City Hall in Wheaton. School board candidate Spencer Garrett, second from left, and Sohrmer's wife, Julie, listen to the conversation. SHANNA MADISON/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

