

Naperville author wins writing prize

Selected by Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project

By Tess Kenny
Naperville Sun

Naperville author Angelique Burrell is the winner of the 2023 Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project.

Burrell, selected from among three finalists, won the statewide writing competition for her debut novel, "A Mark in the Road."

"I'm astounded," Burrell said Tuesday, just after hearing the news. "Certainly, I was honored to be nominated, but winning was just beyond all of my expectations. I'm so completely shocked."

Established in 2013, the Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project is a celebration of self- or indie-published authors across the state. It was started by a group of librarians in northern Illinois who wanted to demonstrate how important self-published books can be in the lives of readers.

Library professionals still run the contest today.

Every year for the past decade the project has enticed Illinois writers to submit their books to be evaluated by a panel of volunteer librarian judges. The venture is also coordinated in collaboration with the Illinois Library Association and the Reaching Across Illinois Library System.

When Burrell first heard that she was named a 2023 finalist this month, she said she couldn't believe it.

"I was thrilled and so honored because it is difficult to be a writer when you're putting something out there, and there's that idea of rejection and (whether) people are going to like it — there's all of that self-doubt that goes into it," she said. "So it was just uplifting to find out that I was a finalist."

Burrell, a longtime resident of Naperville, has dabbled in writing for most of her life. For years she scratched her passion for writing in the classroom. A high school English teacher for the past three decades, Burrell has long shared her love for writing with her students.

But about 10 years ago she decided she was going to focus on her craft and write a book. That's how "A Mark in the Road" began.

Published in October, "A Mark in the Road" is a young adult thriller. It tells the story of 18-year-old Mason, who can see the stories behind skid marks left in the road, Burrell said.

"If he goes over them, (what happened) plays out in his mind," she said.

The book follows Mason as he goes on a cross-country road trip from Naperville to Nevada, and the stories he sees along the way.

The concept was inspired by

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Pepe's Mexican Restaurant had operated at 1270 E. Chicago Ave. on Naperville's far east side since 1977. With its closure, the restaurant owners are eyeing a new future as a drinks-only spot dubbed "The Can." **MATT ROCUSH**

Naperville to get new and updated businesses

Fifth Halsted Street Deli, Pepe's reincarnation as 'The Can' and pickleball facility planned

By Tess Kenny
Naperville Sun

Naperville's ever-changing business scene will see a few new faces — and changes — over the next couple of months, including another Halsted Street Deli location, the grand opening of nine freshly built pickleball courts and a re-imagined version of the now-closed Pepe's Mexican Restaurant.

Pepe's, which shut its doors after 46 years in Naperville earlier this month, is on track to reopen as a bar-only business at 634 E. Ogden Ave., where Miss Kitty's Saloon is located. Last week, the Naperville City Council granted the owners of the former Naperville Pepe's a Class C tavern license for their new enterprise.

"It's nice to know that we have the support of the city and the council, that they want to see us continue on," co-owner Matt Rocush said.

Rocush, who co-owned Pepe's for the past eight years with his wife, Sandy, and friend Rod Peterson, said that with their tavern license approved, the next step is formally purchasing their new space. The owners are in the process of acquiring Miss Kitty's, according to Rocush.

"We are currently working on the legal documents, the purchase agreement and the lease," he said,



The Picklr, a Utah-based pickleball chain, soon will have a location at Naperville's Fox River Commons shopping center, bringing as many as nine new indoor pickleball courts to town. **AUSTIN WOOD**

adding that both are "basically a formality at this point."

Once the acquisition is finalized, Rocush hopes to have Pepe's new iteration up and running by mid- to late February.

"The Can," short for cantina, will just be a bar to start, no kitchen. There may, however, be live entertainment, Rocush said.

And looking ahead, owners are still committed to building out a

conster ride."

"Just seeing (Pepe's) slowly dismantled is sad. But again, there's a big part of us that's excited to do this new venture," he said.

Two new tenants for CityGate Centre

Halsted Street Deli & Bagel is opening its fifth Naperville spot next month at the CityGate Centre off Route 59. The new location will be housed on the first floor of the multiuse campus office building at 2155 CityGate Lane.

The deli will be open 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Halsted has locations all over the Chicago area. Founded in 1988, the deli is well-known for its sub sandwiches. Other menu items include homemade soups, wraps, bagels and salads.

In addition to the deli, the CityGate Centre is also welcoming Apotheco Pharmacy to its business roster next month. Apotheco is a dermatologic pharmacy with locations across 16 states, including two in Illinois. It plans to add another at Suite 127 of 2155 CityGate Lane.

Construction underway at the Picklr

Save the date: Naperville pickleballers will have nine new

Turn to Businesses, Page 2

Metra changes include bike policy, low-income program, more

By Sarah Freishtat
Chicago Tribune

Metra riders are in for a slew of changes in February.

New fares will be taking effect, along with changes to the way riders can buy tickets. A program that cut fares on lines to the south and southwest suburbs will end, replaced with a new program for low-income riders. New policies will guide riders who want to bring bikes on trains.

The changes are coming as the commuter rail agency faces ridership that has continued to lag since the pandemic upended traditional commuting patterns. In November, before the end-of-the-year holidays, the average number of weekday riders reached 57% of

pre-pandemic levels. Like the region's other transit agencies, Metra faces a looming financial cliff when federal pandemic aid runs out, which the agency has projected will be in 2026.

Here's what's in store for Metra riders, beginning Feb. 1.

New fares

Among the biggest changes riders will encounter next month is a new fare structure. Laid out as part of the agency's 2024 budget, it includes fewer fare zones across the Metra system and is intended to be simpler for new riders.

Metra fares have traditionally been divided into zones, meaning the farther a passenger rides the more they pay. Under the

new structure, Metra's traditional 10 zones will be reduced to four. Downtown stations will make up one zone, and other stations will be categorized into the remaining three zones based on their distance from downtown, service and ridership.

Trips that start and end outside downtown will cost a flat \$3.75, as Metra looks to attract more non-traditional-commuting riders. Prices for trips to and from downtown will depend on the number of zones traveled.

None of the new fares will be higher than pre-pandemic prices, Metra has said.

As Metra makes the transition, monthly passes for February will

Turn to Metra, Page 3



A sign at Union Station on Jan. 17, 2024, announces an upcoming new Metra fare structure. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**



Health coach offers ways to utilize Blue Zone habits



Donna Vickroy

The Blue Zone lifestyle isn't a new discovery. But the diet, which is embraced by the world's longest-lived people, is enjoying renewed interest in America for several reasons.

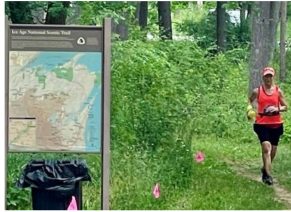
For one, it's January and tradition dictates we repent for all the joy we experienced in December and that contrition begins with an overhaul of our eating habits.

Secondly, who isn't disturbed by what seems like a barrage of revelations about how horrible the American diet is on a human body.

Dan Buettner, a National Geographic explorer and journalist, first coined the term "Blue Zone" in 2004 while investigating longevity in Japan.

You can read more about it at www.bluezones.com.

According to the site, Buettner noticed nine lifestyle similarities among the people who live in Ikaria, Greece; Okinawa, Japan; Nicoya, Costa Rica; Sardinia, Italy; and Loma Linda, California. They move naturally.



Naperville resident Karen Wick, a health coach and fitness expert with Endeavor Health Fitness Center in Woodridge, says it is easy to incorporate the principles of Blue Zone living into your lifestyle if you start small and build slowly. **KAREN WICK**

Their days are dotted with work in the garden, the yard or the house as opposed to a timed workout in a gym.

They have purpose, a reason to get up in the morning. They relieve stress through prayer, napping, remembering ancestors and even happy hour.

They abide by the 80% rule, which means they stop eating when their stomachs are almost full. They also eat their smallest meal in the late afternoon or early evening and don't eat the rest of the day.

Beans and plant-based foods are the cornerstone of their diets. Meat is eaten sparingly, on average five times a month.

Alcohol intake is moderate, if at all, and usually enjoyed with company.

Most belong to a faith-based community. They put family first, keeping aging parents and grandparents close.

They have strong social networks. With the help of scientists, Buettner has linked the Blue Zone lifestyle to better health and longer lifespans than experienced in most of the world. He has published many books, articles and recipes on the subject.

Karen Wick, of Naperville, first read about the Blue Zone movement 15 years ago. The health coach and personal trainer for

Endeavor Health Fitness Center in Woodridge, which is part of Edward-Elmhurst Health, said, "It's rotating back into our mindset. But the focus now seems to be on improving quality of life as we get older."

"And that's precisely why Wick likes it.

"I work with a lot of people over 60 and, I'm telling you, you can still get stronger, you can still get healthier, regardless of your age," she said.

For her 63rd birthday last year, Wick ran a 63-mile ultra-race through the forest.

Granted, most middle-agers wouldn't be able to touch that but, Wick says, there are plenty of ways to incorporate the simple eating and exercise habits of people who live in the Blue Zones.

"Keep it simple," she said. "Blue zone eating is not complicated eating." She suggests starting with one meal in which all of the components are single, uncomplicated foods, such as plain rice, perhaps with plain vegetables or fruit, and simply prepared fish.

Move away from processed foods and fast-foods, she said. Enjoy more meatless meals.

"Start to change your tastes so you're not craving

salt, sugar and fat all the time," she said.

"It is the job of some scientists to engineer food so we can't stop eating it. Look at potatoes versus potato chips. You can eat three bags of potato chips, but you're not going to eat three potatoes," she said.

"There are ingredients in processed foods that keep you wanting more."

Eating processed foods, Wick said, can cause inflammation, high blood pressure, high blood sugar and high cholesterol. "And then you don't feel good and because you don't feel good, you're not going to move as much. It's a vicious cycle."

People who live in Blue Zones, Wick said, don't have the diabetes and dementia, to name a few maladies that many Americans have.

And, yes, she added, it is possible to become addicted to good food. "As you get away from salt, sugar and bad fats, your taste buds change. People start craving salads and vegetables. People laugh but it's true."

Exercising naturally can be a challenge in a society that is driven by automobile travel and conveniences.

Because we're not task driven, Wick said, we need to exercise intentionally, dividing our workouts into cardio, strength training

and stretching.

Cardio, she said, benefits your heart and mind. Strength training helps with mobility, posture and bone strength. Stretching enables you to maintain mobility as you get older, she said.

"When you stop moving, everything slows down," Wick said.

Lastly, Wick said, remember, "It's never too late to start. There are so many simple things you can do regardless of your age. Get a chair and do 15 stand and sits, for example. Do push-ups off a wall."

In addition to more years, the Blue Zone lifestyle can help you reap more joy, Wick said.

"Try to surround yourself with people who have similar goals, who want to be more healthful," she said. "That's why the gym can be a community. People hold you accountable."

And they can help cheer you on.

"I have a guy who's 81 and just learned how to swim. He's fired up and looser," she said. He's an inspiration to others too.

Donna Vickroy is an award-winning reporter, editor and columnist who worked for the *Daily Southtown* for 38 years.

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BRIDGE

Neither vulnerable, East deals

North			
♠	8 6 3 2	♥	A 10 6 2
♦	A 3	♣	9 5 2
West			
♠	A 9 7	♥	Void
♦	9 4 2	♣	K Q J 8 7 6 4
South			
♠	K 5 4	♥	K Q J 9 8 5
♦	K 5	♣	A 10

The West hand was a little heavy for a pre-emptive bid, but his partner was a passed hand and he wanted to put extra pressure on his opponents. It worked! A mildly aggressive raise by North led to a final contract that seemed to depend on East holding the ace of spades. That was more likely than usual after the pre-empt by West, but

South played carefully so that he did not have to depend on that.

South won the opening club lead with his ace and drew trumps in three rounds. He then cashed the king of diamonds and led a diamond to dummy's ace. South led a club from dummy to his 10 and West's club. West continued with the queen of clubs, but instead of ruffing, South elegantly discarded a low spade! West now had a choice between leading a spade or yielding a ruff-suff. Hoping that his partner held the king of spades, West led the ace of spades and South quickly claimed his contract.

This was a beautifully played deal. It was possible, of course, that East started with a doubleton of clubs and could win the second round of clubs, but South would still have a chance to play East for the ace of spades. The given play cost nothing and it turned a 50 percent contract into a sure thing.

— Bob Jones
Tribune Content Agency

The bidding:
East South West North
Pass 1♥ 3♣ 3♥
Pass 4♥ All pass
Opening lead: King of ♠

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For the first time since it was established 2½ decades ago, Tricoci Salon & Spa has revamped its 1512 N. Naperville Blvd. location in Naperville. **TRICOCI SALON & SPA**

Businesses

for Villa Park and Mundelein.

Naperville in particular, however, has been on the Picklr's radar for some time. "We've been working on getting a facility open and ready in Naperville for a while," Picklr co-founder Austin Wood previously told the Sun. "We were hearing about a lot of people playing pickleball there but that there weren't enough courts for the area. Plus, Chicago's the windy city. It's cold. All those we'd like to see components get in the way of playing outdoors."

Naperville Picklr memberships are now on pre-sale. The first 150

members to sign up will get a discounted rate of \$109/month or \$1,049/year, and the first 100 members to sign up will receive Picklr gear.

Tricoci Salon & Spa renovation
For the first time since its inception in 1998, Tricoci Salon & Spa in Naperville has a new look.

After two and a half decades, Tricoci recently revamped its 1512 N. Naperville Blvd location, the Chicago area-based company said in a news release last week.

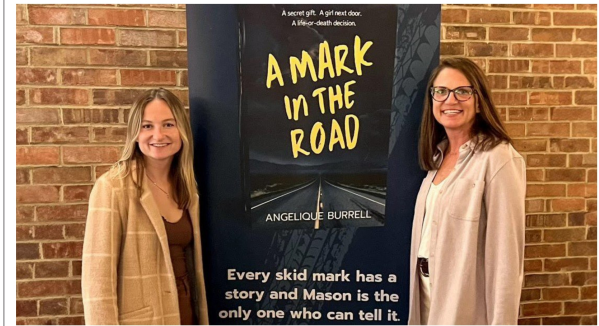
"We're thrilled to unveil the reimagined Tricoci Salon & Spa in Naperville," general manager Brit-

tany Edgecombe said in the release.

Highlights include a new retail space and express beauty stations catering to clients pressed for time. "Our goal," Edgecombe said, "was not only to design a beautiful space for our clients and team members but to create an environment that resonates with the pulse of the Naperville community."

"The redesigned interior, expanded retail space and innovative new services all contribute to an elevated experience for our valued Naperville clients."

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Naperville author Angeliou Burrell, right, and her daughter Hadyn stand in front of a poster for her book. Burrell is the winner of the 2023 Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project. **ANGELIQUE BURRELL**

Author

from Page 1

Burrell's own road trips with her family.

"Our trips... were kind of the fuel for it and just kind of created the story," she said. "I crafted a lot of it while we were driving, just in my mind while we were on the road."

Burrell said her debut novel was made possible

by her publisher and her agent, but also the support she's received from friends and neighbors, one of whom helped design the cover of "A Mark in the Road."

A few weeks ago Burrell was featured in a local author showcase at Anderson's Bookshop in downtown Naperville. Burrell's book is now available at Anderson's as well as the Naperville Public Library.

"It's been a group project, I would say," she said. As the winner of the Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project's 2023 competition, Burrell will receive \$2,000 and the opportunity to promote her book at Illinois public libraries.

Burrell said she didn't even know about the prize. She was just happy to win. "Getting anything else is just a bonus," she said.

Accolades aside, Burrell said what makes this honor especially rewarding is it's an affirmation as much as it is an award.

"It definitely gives kind of a new sense of energy to my writing," she said, "to maybe just trust myself a little bit more... It helps me remember that it's OK to be me as a writer."

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