

## South County SPOTLIGHT

St. Patrick Catholic Charities - Tolono IL Free Food Pantry Every Monday from 5-6:30 and Friday 9-10:30 -Located at the Parish - providing Fresh produce, meat and pantry items. Serving all of Champaign County

The Giving Place is open every Wednesday from 4pm-6pm in Tolono to help families in need with food items.

3rd Thursday of every month - Tolono Fun Day Committee meet at 6:30 @ Police Station

VFW of Villa Grove Bingo Every Friday Night @ 7pm

1/23 Tolono Lodge Breakfast from 8am-Noon

2/7 Village of Sidney Board Meeting @7pm

2/11 Daddy-Daughter Sweetheart Dance @ St. Thomas More HS from 6:30-8:30, all are welcome 217-202-0998 or leibach@gmail.com for more information

2/15 Unity Music Boosters Meeting @ 7pm in the Band Room at UHS

Puzzle Swap at the Tolono Public Library District January 24th-January 29th

2/26 Unity Music Boosters All Out A Capella Annual Fundraiser at 4pm and 7pm @ UHS

If you have an upcoming event that you would like to see featured in Spotlight email us at: jamie@thetuscolajournal.com

## Heritage Band Chorus Director Lee Nominee for NFHS Award



Band/chorus director Justin Lee is the IHSA nominee for the NFHS Outstanding Music Educator Award. Only one educator may be nominated from each state.

About Music Association Outstanding Educator Awards

One nominee per state is accepted for this award, and the nominee must be endorsed by the state association office. Criteria for evaluation include: organization and continuance of an activity program, significant and ongoing contributions to the field, years of both curricular and co-curricular service, contributions to the profession both in and out of the state.

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leader and advocate for high school athletics as well as fine and performing arts programs. Within our 51 member state associations (including Washington, D.C.), we serve 19,500 high schools and more than 12 million young people.

The NFHS writes playing rules for high school sports and provides guidance on a multitude of national issues. We offer online education courses for high school coaches, officials, students, parents, and speech and music leaders through the NFHS Learning Center. We showcase high school sports and performing arts online

through the NFHS Network. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that all students have an opportunity to enjoy healthy participation, achievement and good sportsmanship in education-based activities.

The public sometimes abbreviates the full legal name of the National Federation of State High School Associations as NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HIGH SCHOOLS™. While not as accurate a description of our mission as the full legal name, the abbreviation aligns with our acronym ("NFHS") and suggests our mission of service to the high school community. We are proud to answer to whichever name the public may choose to call us.

The NFHS promotes amateur sports participation and athletics programs at the high school level. In addition, the NFHS provides leadership in the field of high school athletics/activities administration, establishes rules and regulations for the sanctioning of high school athletics/activities events, and formulates model rationales for high school eligibility rules for use by high school athletics/activities administrators.

## Town Spotlight: The True Story of How Philo Became the Center of the Universe

The Center of the Universe Margaret Miles Khachaturian,

Our Village History, Philo 1875-2000

It was Thanksgiving of 1969 and the Narbey Khachaturian family was in India where Professor Khachaturian was serving as a consultant to the U.S. Agency for International Development, for the advancement of the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur.

Teenagers Greg and Jon were attending the American International School in New Delhi and had brought a friend, Bill Stollberg, home for the holiday. Mary and Steve were living at home on the IIT campus. We took Bill to Bitur, a place by the Ganges River that was of significance to the Indian people.

It was so significant, in fact, that there was a small shrine-like area that sheltered a plaque that read Bitur – The Center of the Universe.

Oh, that is not true, the boys

told their friend. PHILO is the center of the universe!

It became a family joke and years later Bill came to Philo to visit because he said he had to see this center of the universe for himself.

When Steve Khachaturian was introducing himself to his WLRW audience, he said he was Stevie Jay from Philo, the Center of the Universe. The comment then became a beyond-family joke and when Steve began his talk show on radio station WDWS, he referred more frequently to Philo as the Center and more of the story was told.

It seems that at Bitur seventeen years earlier, Greg had quickly figured that if you drilled a hole through the globe you would come out in Philo. Jon further opined that indeed, it would come up right under the water tower.

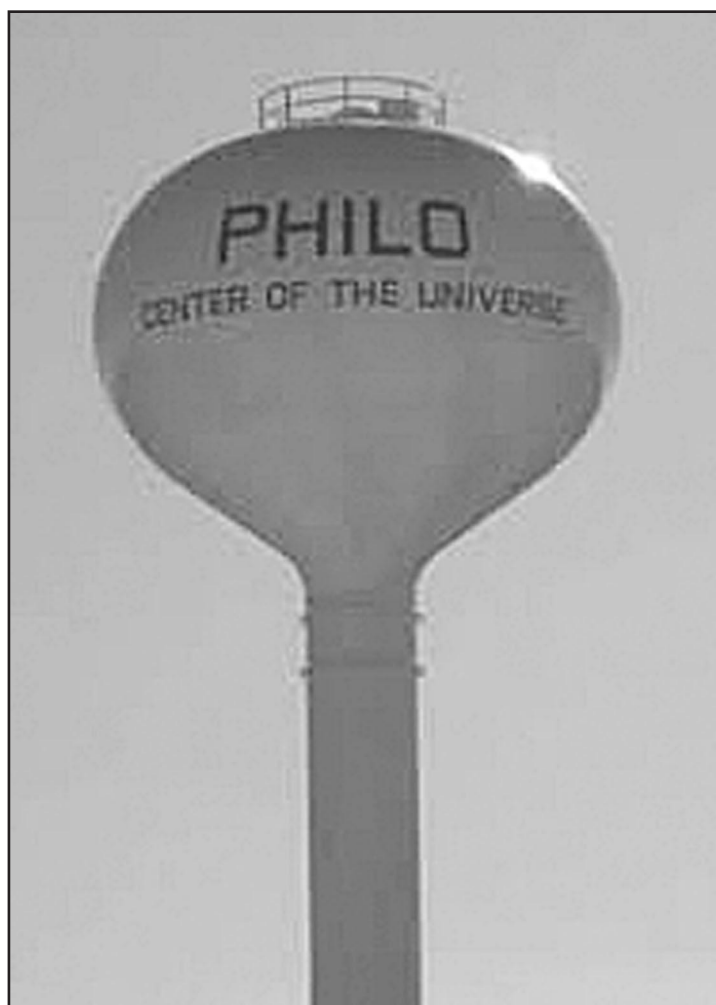
When the Philo Village Board voted to have this geographical news painted ON the water tower, Steve was so surprised that he impulsively said, on the air, that he would broadcast a program from the top of the tower. When the

day came, people brought lawn chairs and were sitting along the sidewalk on the east side of the bank as Steve climbed the ladder.

It was on June 7, 1987 and the area was in a state of severe drought. Steve had been up there for only half an hour when it began to rain, necessitating his descent, for which he was very glad. Since that was the only time it rained that whole month, people were suggesting he go up there again, an idea he enthusiastically vetoed.

In 1992, the Philo Women's Club had shirts and caps made with the Center of the Universe declaration and the committee for the quasiquintennial in August of 2000 followed through by having a logo designed by Paul Buhnerkemper to be printed on dozens of celebration souvenirs.

There have been books published proclaiming this amazing fact, including one by CBS correspondent Bill Geist. He suggests that the residents claim that Philo is the Center of the Universe but



they are just kidding. Originally wrote by Margaret Miles Khachaturian.

## Unity Girls Basketball Senior Night Eight Outstanding Seniors Honored

Unity Girls Basketball (16-4, 4-0) had a great Senior Night on Thursday, January 13 as the team defeated Rantoul 37-8.

The Rockets were led by Seniors Maddie Reed 13 pts, Taylor Henry 8 pts, 4 rebs, Bridget Henry 3 pts, 3 rebs, Hailey Flesch 1 pt, 3 rebs. Underclassmen Lauren Miller, Raegan Stringer and Katy

Moore each had 4 pts. During the night eight Unity Seniors were honored: #4 Hailey Flesch, daughter of Rich and Kim Flesch; #5 Gracie Renfrow, daughter of Liz and Chad Eaton and Chris Renfrow; #12 Erika Steinman, daughter of Kent and Julie Steinman; #15 Madeline Reed, daughter of Matt and Michelle Reed; #21 Savannah

Alagna, daughter of Dave and Amanda Alagna and Danielle Alagna; #23 Taylor Henry, daughter of Jason and Cindy Henry; #24 Calli Chandler, daughter of Brian and Jamie Chandler and #34 Bridget Henry, daughter of Brad and Mary Beth Henry. (Photo on Left) Senior girls honored during the January 13 Senior Night were present-

ed with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Front row (left to right) Calli Chandler, Gracie Renfrow, Madeline Reed. Back row (left to right) Hailey Flesch, Savannah Alagna, Coach David Ellars, Erika Steinman, Taylor Henry and Bridget Henry. Photo provided by Diane Ducey.



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