



Auto Club
see page 8

The Voyager

Homewood-Flossmoor High School
Volume 47 Issue 9
March 24, 2006
999 Kedzie Avenue
Flossmoor IL, 60422



Classroom Controversy
see page 14

The New Neighborhood Watchdog *Sexual offenders monitored in H-F Community*

LIZ PALMER
STAFF WRITER

Many websites now offer information about sexual offenders living in local communities. Sites such as *familywatchdog.us* and *isp.state.il.us/sor*, the Illinois State Police database of registered sex offenders, provide personal descriptions, pictures, and convictions of past sexual offenders.


"Information about sex offenders has always been available at local police stations, but now the websites are helping spread the knowledge to more people," said Flossmoor Deputy Chief Michael Pulec.

The Illinois State Sex Offender database allows people to search by name, county, zip code, or city for sex offenders in their area. The search yields results of all the registered offenders in the searched city or county. By clicking on details you can see the offender's personal information such as height, weight, birth date, and the crime for which they were convicted.

Once a person is convicted of a sex crime, they must register yearly with their local police station. By registering, they are giving their information so people in their community can be aware of what they have done and their location relative to other members in the community.


"The community needs to be aware of the people around them. By having this information available, they can be more careful or let their children know to be cautious," said Pulec.

There are different criteria and groups that sexual offenders are divided into. The majority of sex offenders fall under the criminal sex offender category. These people were convicted of crimes and must register once a year for ten years. Sexual predators are people who were judged to be sexually violent in a court of law. These



Conviction:
Aggravated criminal sexual assault

Distance from H-F:
2.87 miles



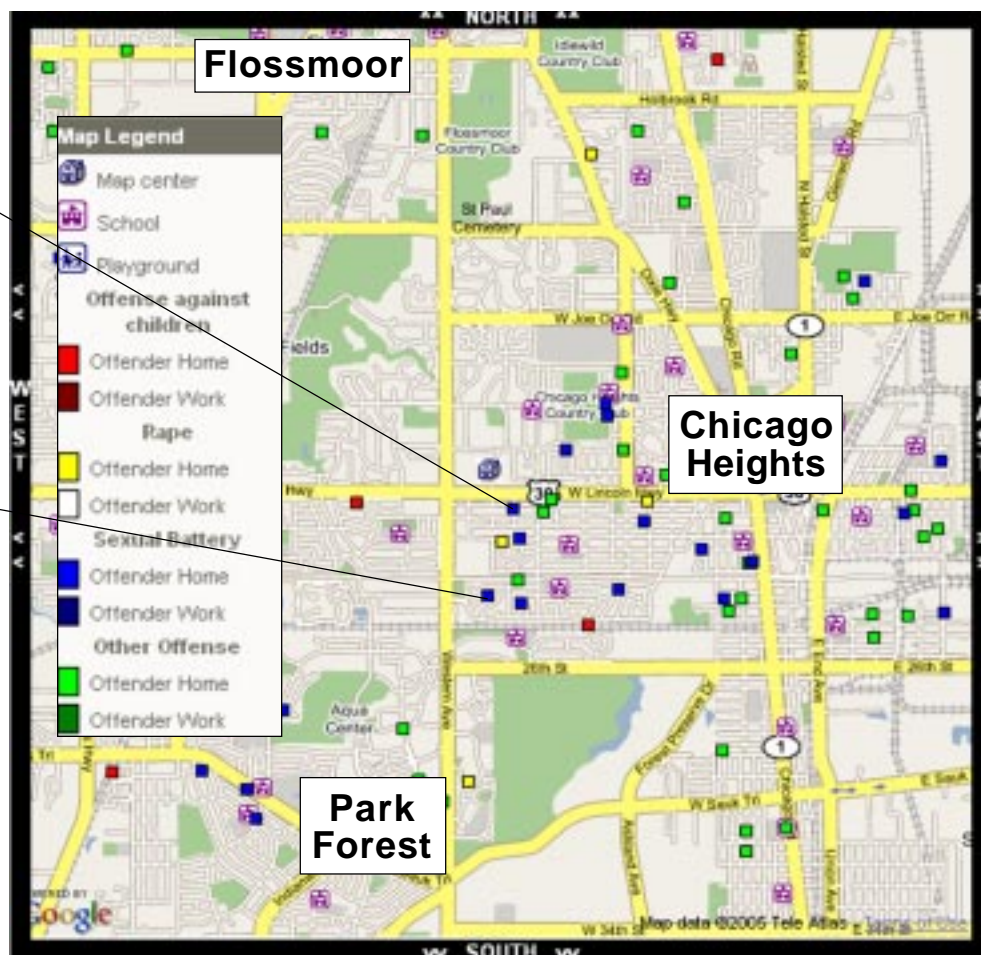
Conviction:
Aggravated criminal sexual assault

Distance from H-F:
4.86 miles

people must register annually for the rest of their lives. Sexually dangerous people are people who have been convicted of sexual offenses and may suffer from a mental disorder. These people must register every 90 days for the rest of their life after being convicted.

After offenders are convicted, there are many restrictions and laws they must follow. One of the most important laws is that all offenders must live at least 500 feet away from any school, day care facility or public park. Sexual offenders also cannot pass out candy or open their doors to children on Halloween. If these restrictions are not followed or the offender does not register at their specific time, it is considered a felony, and they can be arrested.

"There are two sexual offenders, one sexual predator, and one sexually dangerous person in Flossmoor. If any more were to move in, we would let the community know



either through the website or by going door to door," said Pulec.

There are many ways the police can monitor the offenders. If the offender falls under the sexual predator or sexually dangerous person category, they may have a GPS device attached to them so they can be tracked when they leave the house. "We try to do anything we can to prevent further crimes. We monitor sexual predators, and sometimes officers will go to the offender's house to check on them. If they are not

home, we leave a notice that we were there and to contact us. We also enforce the registration rules," said Pulec.

Now that the specific information is available on the internet, many more people will have access to it, and communities will be more knowledgeable about the people living around them. "I absolutely feel these websites have made people more aware of their surroundings and will hopefully prevent further crimes from occurring," said Pulec.

Weather causes mistake in SAT scores for students

ALLISON BIVIN
STAFF WRITER

For many students, college planning is a part of their high school career. The SAT brings fear to various teenagers because it can play a major part in college admission decisions. Earlier this month, the College Board, who conducts the SAT, announced that 4,000 students' test scores were erroneous with 600 students earning different scores than they deserved because of a scanning error. They believe that rain caused the mistake since the scantron tests soaked up moisture, causing the pencil markings to shift.

The students' scores were said to be off by less than 100 points by the College Board. However, a spokesman for the Montgomery County Public Schools, Brian Edwards, believes that the scores of 30 students were affected by at least 100 to 130 points.

The mistake was noticed when students decided to challenge the SAT because they believed they had scored better. "The story here is not that they made a mistake in the scanning and scoring, but that they seem to have no fail-safe to alert them directly and immediately of a mistake. To depend on test-takers who

challenge the scores to learn about system failure is not good," said the Dean of Admissions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Marilee Jones, to the *New York Times*.

When the College Board noticed the mistake in the SAT, students were informed through e-mail and were allowed to re-take the test. The new scores were sent to the students and the colleges which they applied to, but the applications were not. "No applications were drastically effected, although students who were not involved with the SAT mistake may have been denied once SAT changes were made," said H-F Guidance Counselor Paige Dague.

No H-F students were affected by the SAT mistake. However, if students at H-F were affected, their high school counselors would be in direct contact with the colleges they had applied to.

Frustration has risen with the College Board since the incident, concerning whether or not the mistake had been caught in time. According to *collegeboard.com*, the mistake was caught before final decisions were made and no applications were effected, but others disagree. "In my opinion, it should have been caught sooner and should not have been caught by kids," said Dague.

Local bus stops may relocate to avoid sex offenders' houses

SARA MCKEE
STAFF WRITER

Homewood's School District 153, which includes Willow School, Churchill School, Millennium School and James Hart, trustees are attempting to change bus stops currently located on Maple Road, in Homewood, near a house of a registered sex offender classified by the State Police.

Other bus stops in the area have been relocated to pick up students directly in front of their homes rather than stops down the street closer to sex offenders homes. In Flossmoor, a neighborhood watch and village investigations were initiated promptly when an offender moved to the area and trustees wonder why Homewood does not react similarly.

According to Homewood Police Chief Larry Burnson, schools receive a list of all registered sexual offenders in the area to create safe bus stops, and administrators in District 153 were repeatedly asked by police to consider changing the location of these bus stops.

"[The school officials] looked at that route again. Some of those stops have been informally moved to directly in front of the

students' homes. Hopefully this will resolve the issue," said Homewood Village Manager Mark Franz to *The Star*.

After meeting with Homewood School District 153 Superintendent Dale Mitchell, it was said that the district may officially change the location of the bus stop. "We are going to make good, conscious decisions," said Mitchell to *The Star*.

Though trustees are worried about the bus stop placement other parents and officials assure there is no danger. "There are only four sexual offenders in the Flossmoor area and not many more in the surrounding areas. The reason one bus stop was changed was because it was directly in front of the sex offenders house. It is very important to keep the kids safe," said Flossmoor Deputy Chief Michael Pulec.

Other schools in the area are also changing their bus routes to accommodate student safety, including H-F, which recently made a route change after locating another sexual offender in the area.

"The most important thing is to keep kids out of danger. We want to be sure nothing will happen to them," said Pulec.