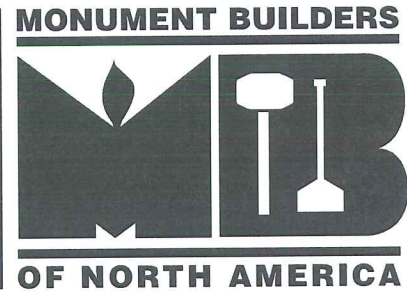


ASPIRE TO SUCCESS



MBNA's Aspire Awards were created to recognize monument builder companies that have drawn favorable attention to their companies, and in turn, to the industry through their specialized marketing and/or public relations campaigns.

All MBNA members in good standing are invited to submit entries for the **2009 MBNA Aspire to Success Marketing & Public Relations Contest**.

Any publicity you've received during the contest year (November 1, 2008 through November 1, 2009) is eligible. This includes coverage by newspapers, magazines, television, new acquisitions, celebrated anniversaries or testimonial letters.

Up to three (3) winners will be awarded the handsome granite MBNA Aspire Award, a tall, polished trophy that adds elegance and interest to any member's lobby or bookshelf. Honorable mention entries will receive a certificate of merit suitable for framing. All winning entries will be featured in *MBNews*.

ENTRY FORM

Deadline to submit material is November 23, 2009.

2009 MBNA Aspire to Success Marketing and Public Relations Contest

Name: Lisa Troost
Company Name: Peter Troost Monument
Address: 4300 Roosevelt Rd.
City: Hillside State/Prov: IL ZIP/Zone: 60162
Phone: 708-544-0916 E-mail: lisa.troost@troost.com

Tell us about your marketing and public relations success:

- Detail your experience. Use a separate piece of paper. It can be one item or event, or multiple events, or a year-long ad campaign.
- Please attach any photographs, clippings, brochures, letters or invitations that relate to your entry. We need original photographs (prints or electronic), but please photocopy your clippings, letters or invitations if you need them returned as we cannot return the material. *Photos can be black and white or color.*

Events should have taken place between November 1, 2008 and November 1, 2009. Deadline for receipt of materials at MBNA Headquarters is November 23, 2009. Materials may be submitted on-line or by postal service.

If you have questions or need additional information, contact MBNA headquarters at (800) 233-4472 or via email at info@monumentbuilders.org.

2009 MBNA Aspire Award Application

Submitted by: Peter Troost Monument Company

Date: August 10, 2009

Contact Info: Lisa Troost

4300 Roosevelt Road

Hillside, IL 60162

Phone: 708-544-0916, ext. 30

Email: lisa.troost@troost.com

Faced with sagging sales in a tough economy, our management team brainstormed on how we could turn things around. Hence, the "Recession Headstone" was born. The products offered as part of the Recession Headstone campaign were essentially odd-size pieces that ended up here one way or another over the years, granites that are no longer quarried and memorials that already had designs on them. We priced these at about a 20%-30% discount off our regular full priced merchandise as a way to help put purchasing a memorial within reach of more customers and as a way to move some inventory that would otherwise be here until it turned to dust.

To help publicize this new offering, the enclosed press release was distributed to the major Chicago newspapers, The Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun Times, as well as several smaller suburban papers, on Monday morning, May 18th, 2009. We used various headings in the subject line of the press release email to increase the chances that someone would actually read it. Those headings included things like "A Deal Before Dying," "Recession Reaches Into the Grave," and "A Deal to Die For." You may think we have no shame, but it worked!

That afternoon, I received a call from a Sun Times reporter who read the press release and wanted to do some fact checking and gather a bit more information. On Tuesday morning, May 19th, 2009, a short story ran on page 3 of the Sun Times about our Recession Headstone promotion. A copy of the article is enclosed. That evening, the number of hits on our website doubled.

The next morning, Wednesday, May 20th, 2009, Dick Johnson, a reporter with NBC News in Chicago, called regarding his interest on doing a more extensive piece on the Recession Headstone program. I spoke with him for about 10 minutes and the conversation ended with him asking if he come to the store with a crew in about 2 hours to do some interviews. We were happy to oblige!

The enclosed DVD is the piece that ran on NBC's 5 o'clock news program. The piece ran again on the 5am news the next morning. NBC was also kind enough to post the story and video on their website. Given the population of the Chicago metropolitan area, it's safe to say that hundreds of thousands of people heard the name of our company that day. When Googling "recession headstone" later in the week, the story and video were also found on the NBC website for Portland, Maine. A print out from that website is enclosed.

We are happy to report that during the week after receiving this priceless publicity, we were overrun with customers. We had about 80 customer visits during the next seven days at our Hillside location alone and customers continue to come in asking about the recession headstones. To date, we estimate we have made about 60 "Recession

Headstone” sales. All are sales we would likely not have made without this special promotion and the publicity that went along with it.

While the Sun Times article and television piece were the main publicity sources, I’ve also enclosed a copy of an article and photo that appeared in a suburban newspaper called The Doings. It’s possible additional newspapers picked up the story and we were just not aware.

Given the success of the campaign in Chicago, we recently submitted a similar press release to the main newspaper servicing Freeport, IL, where we have a retail store. Freeport is about 85 miles from Chicago. Their newspaper is called the Journal Standard. A story on the company and the “Recession Headstone” ran on the front page!

The response to our little press release was more than any of us could’ve hoped for. I would be remiss if I didn’t mention that my learnings from a previous MBNA seminar where Jeff Crilley spoke about how to get free publicity were instrumental in the success of this campaign. He explained how to get the attention of news reporters who receive hundreds of press releases everyday and talked about how to time your press release for the best results. Thanks, MBNA!



PETER TROOST MONUMENT COMPANY

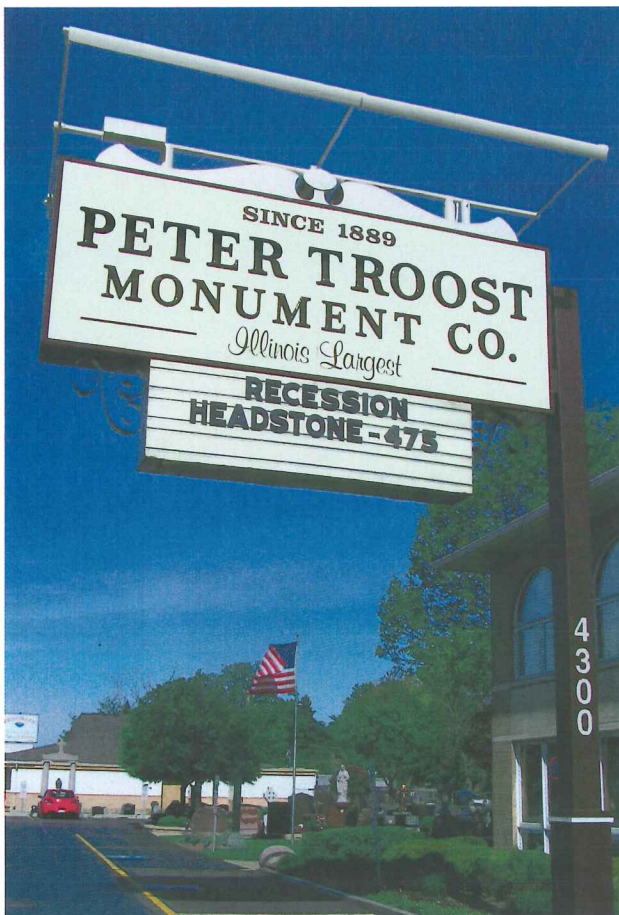
4300 Roosevelt Road
Hillside, IL 60162
Phone (708) 544-0916
Fax (708) 544-0979

Press Release

Contact: Lisa Troost
Phone: (708) 544-0916, ext. 30

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2009



In this economy, everyone is looking for a bargain, dead or alive. A local company put the message shown in the enclosed photo up on their marquis about one week ago. This marquis message has brought more people into the store during that time than any other message displayed in the last five years, proving that everyone these days is interested in a good deal.

With most headstones costing between \$600 - \$1000, salespeople at Peter Troost Monument Company were noticing more and more customers asking for less expensive headstone options. In response to that, the company has come out with a low price offering which it is advertising on its store sign.

For more information, contact Lisa Troost,
at 708-544-0916, ext. 30.

Press release sent to newspapers.

LET'S GO HAWKS

COMING TOMORROW!
FREE HAWKS CHEER CARD!
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE BLACKHAWKS WITH OUR COLOR CHEER CARD - FREE AND ONLY IN THE SUN-TIMES

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES
\$1 FOR MESS
ONE LUCKY SUN-TIMES READER WILL WIN AT LEAST \$7,000!
FIND OUT HOW ON PAGE 16

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

75¢ CITY & SUBURBS • \$1 ELSEWHERE | LATE SPORTS FINAL | TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009 | suntimes.com | MORE | 77° 53° | Page 30



Gov. Quinn said 14,300 teachers would lose their jobs in a "doomsday" scenario if his tax hike doesn't pass. | AL PODGORSKI/SUN-TIMES

QUINN: PASS MY BUDGET OR ELSE

PAGE 10

METRO



Accused nun wears habit to trial

Sister Marie Marot (left) is charged in a fatal 2007 accident in Elgin.

PAGE 2

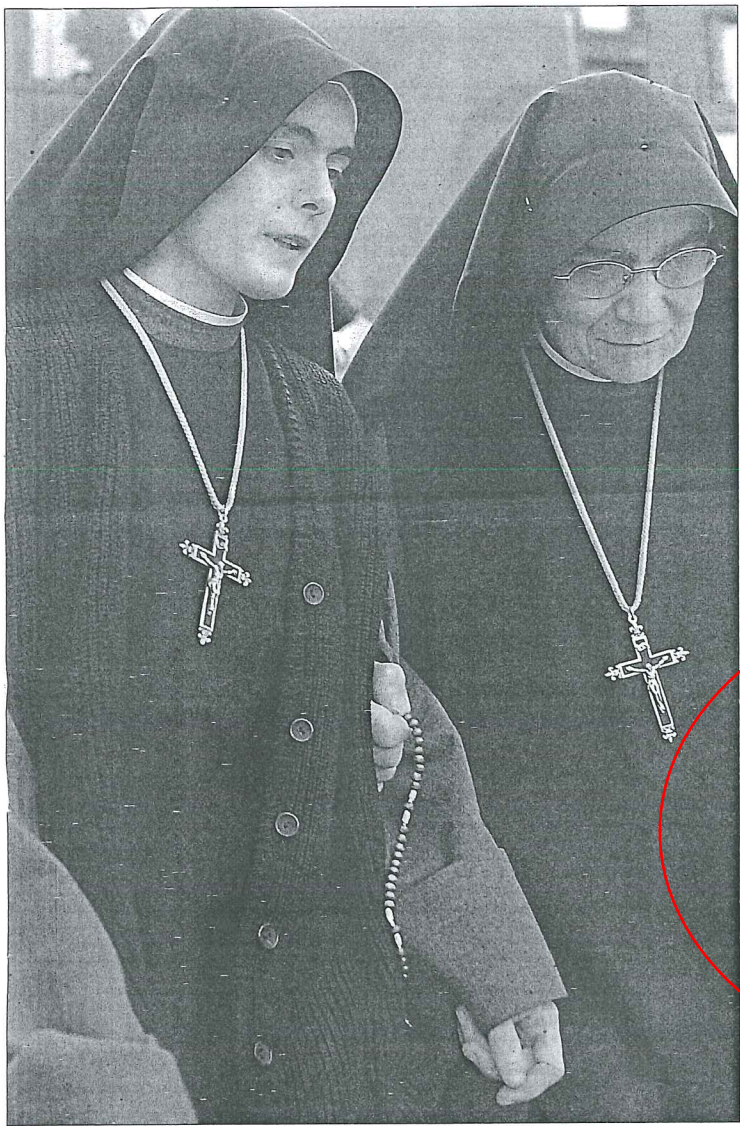
SHOWCASE



Who's going to win 'Dancing With the Stars'?

PAGE 20

chicago sun times article based on our press release. see next page.



Sister Marie Marot (left) is accused of causing a crash that killed a Carpentersville teen. | RICH HEIN-SUN-TIMES

Council mulls canceling parking meter contract

BY FRAN SPIELMAN
City Hall Reporter

Five months after privatizing Chicago parking meters with only five dissenting votes, the City Council took the contractor to the woodshed Monday amid accusations that it botched the transition, concealed problems and "stole" money from motorists who parked at improperly calibrated downtown meters.

The outrage was so great about a 75-year deal tied to a steep schedule of rate hikes that several aldermen believe there may be grounds to cancel the \$1.15 billion lease with Chicago Parking Meters LLC.

Never mind that a chunk of the money was used to balance the city's 2009 budget.

"You took my money, and you took the money of at least 5,800 Chicagoans. That's what you

did. And when you knew the meters did not work, you continued to take our money. That is fraud," said Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th).

Ald. Manny Flores (1st) urged the Law Department to investigate whether Chicago Parking Meters LLC violated the contract's severability clause by keeping the city in the dark.

Dennis Pedrelli, CEO of Chicago Parking Meters LLC, said the problem with 5,820 single-space meters stemmed from the "calibration technology of old-generation meters."

Once the company became aware of the problem April 13, decals were changed and a "programming solution" was implemented to credit four additional minutes per hour, Pedrelli said.

As for demand to terminate the contract, the contractor's attorney Jack Guthman said, "There are no grounds for cancellation."



STREETS & SAN: Daley plans shakeup. | Page 12

Gravestone discount a hit

BY FRANCINE KNOWLES
fknowles@suntimes.com

Department stores and car dealers aren't the only ones seeking to lure customers with bargain prices. One local headstone maker is seeking to woo recession-weary and price-conscious customers using the same strategy.

Hillside-based Peter Troost Monument Co.'s marquis informs passersby the company is offering recession headstones for \$475.

"We have had more customers coming into the store because they saw that message on the marquis than we've ever had off



Peter Troost Monument Co. says response to its marquis is great.

of any marquis message we've ever shown before," said Lisa Troost, president of the fifth generation family-owned business.

The least expensive headstone markers typically had cost between \$600 and \$1,200, according to Troost.

DISCOUNT EXPENSES NOT A NEW IDEA

Looking for discounts on graves during tough times isn't new. Temporary or rent-a-graves were sold in the Chicago area during the Great Depression, according to Metro Chicago Almanac. The graves were sold for 40 years, after which they could be used or sold by the cemetery again.

Thompson to Obama: Send Ryan home

Lawyers for former Gov. George Ryan will try once more to get a presidential commutation for their client.

"We filed one with President Bush and the minute we filed it, the Blagojevich [arrest] hit, so there went that," said former Gov. Jim Thompson, Ryan's main attorney. "President Obama knows Gov. Ryan."

Ryan and his wife, Lura Lynn, are in their 70s and ailing.

Commuting Ryan's six-year sentence to

time served would be appropriate, he said. "There's nothing gained by requiring him to stay in prison. ... I think a merciful president would let him come home."

"We'll present a petition to President Obama, recognizing that, at the moment, he has other things on his plate."



George Ryan

Abdon M. Paladick

YESTERDAY'S TOP 5 MOST VIEWED STORIES AT SUNTIMES.COM

1. Woman found dead in driver's seat
suntimes.com/news/metro
2. Woman found dead with belt around neck
suntimes.com/news/24-7
3. Fans still buzzing about Cutler trade
suntimes.com/sports/football/bears
4. Argument over game sparks food fight
suntimes.com/news/24-7
5. Madigan denies involvement in hirings
suntimes.com/news/watchdogs

ON PAGE 22



Roger Ebert at Cannes: Never before have a man and woman inflicted more pain upon each other in a movie

Gravestone discount a hit

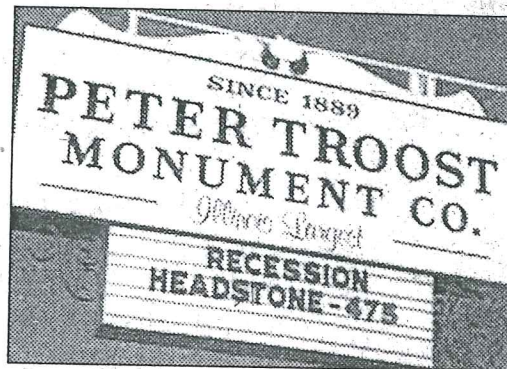
BY FRANCINE KNOWLES

fknowles@suntimes.com

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The Doings

ELMHURST
WWW.PIONEERLOCAL.COM

THIS WEEK

SPORTS

TROPHY WORTHY

York boys gymnasts earn third place at state

PAGE 46

SCHOOLS



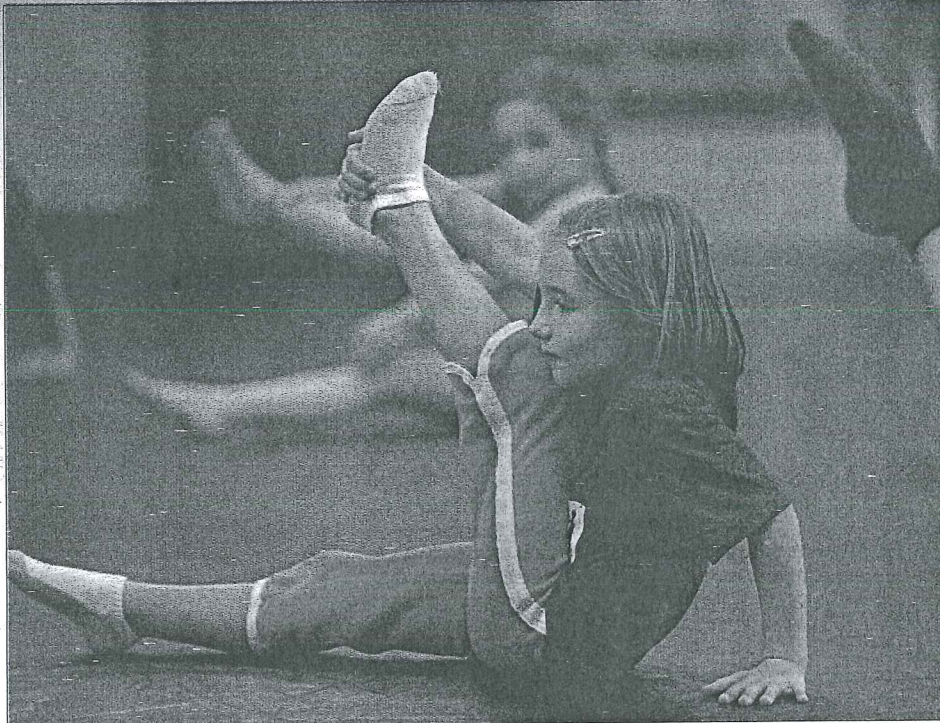
GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

Elmhurst resident Jeanette Hachmeister receives Golden Apple

PAGE 33

Inside!

Lake Geneva
Today's
New Homes



STEPS TO A CURE

Danielle Stockwell, 6, of Elmhurst, stretches out during the Dance for Life fundraiser held at the DeForest Dance Academy Sunday. The event raised \$665 for Relay for Life, which benefits the American Cancer Society. More photos at www.pioneerlocal.com/elmhurst. (Jerry Daliege/ For STNG.)

LISA KLETT
225 N GENEVA AVE
ELMHURST IL 60126-2913
#605913 C001 0000142
*****CAR-RT LOT**C-001

**READ TO YOUR CHILDREN.
WITH YOUR CHILDREN.**

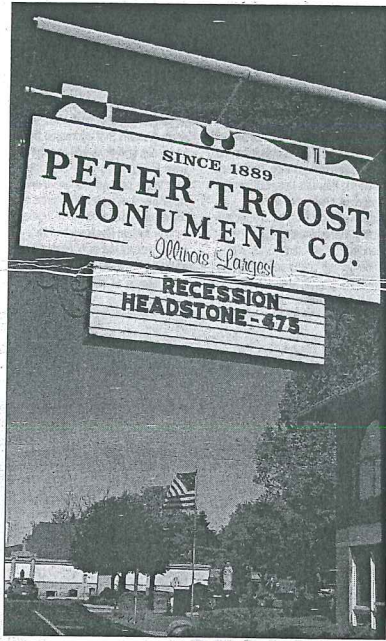
SHARE THEIR GROWTH
SHARE THEIR JOY
SHARE THEIR IMAGINATION
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY
SHARE THE WORLD

TOGETHER

PIONEER PRESS

Local paper that also
picked up press release. See
next page.

Sign of the times The message on Peter Troost Monument Company's marquis has brought more people into the Hillside store than any other sign displayed in the last five years, proving that everyone these days is interested in a good deal. Lisa Troost is an Elmhurst resident.



ESO's new home Carrie Savikis, Suzanne Mauszey and Carolyn Ubrlaco welcome visitors to Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra's new performance venue, Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church, on April 19. More than 500 community members attended the event, which included live performances from Maestro Stephen Alltop, orchestra principals Rika Seko and Jeffrey Panko, guest organist Margaret Wilson, and the Raven Quartet. ESO begins its season Oct. 17, with "Rhapsodies in Blue."



Bible Buddies Fifth-grader Brittany Becker and her Bible Buddy, preschooler Iris Hessling, exchange gifts at a reception in the basement at Immanuel Lutheran Church and School in Elmhurst. Bible Buddy Sunday was celebrated May 3 at the 11 a.m. contemporary worship service. The mentoring program pairs preschool children with students in third, fourth and fifth grades. Students meet weekly throughout the school year to read Bible stories and complete projects together.

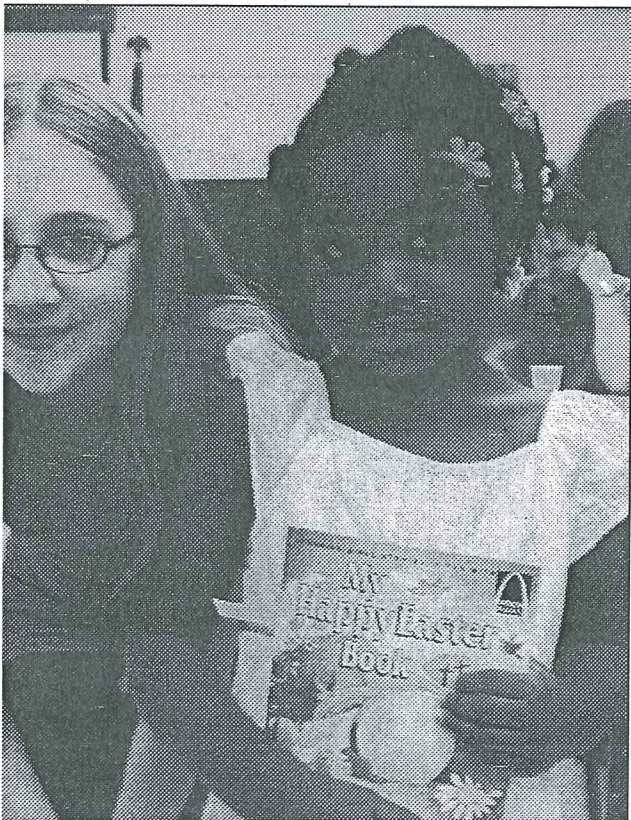
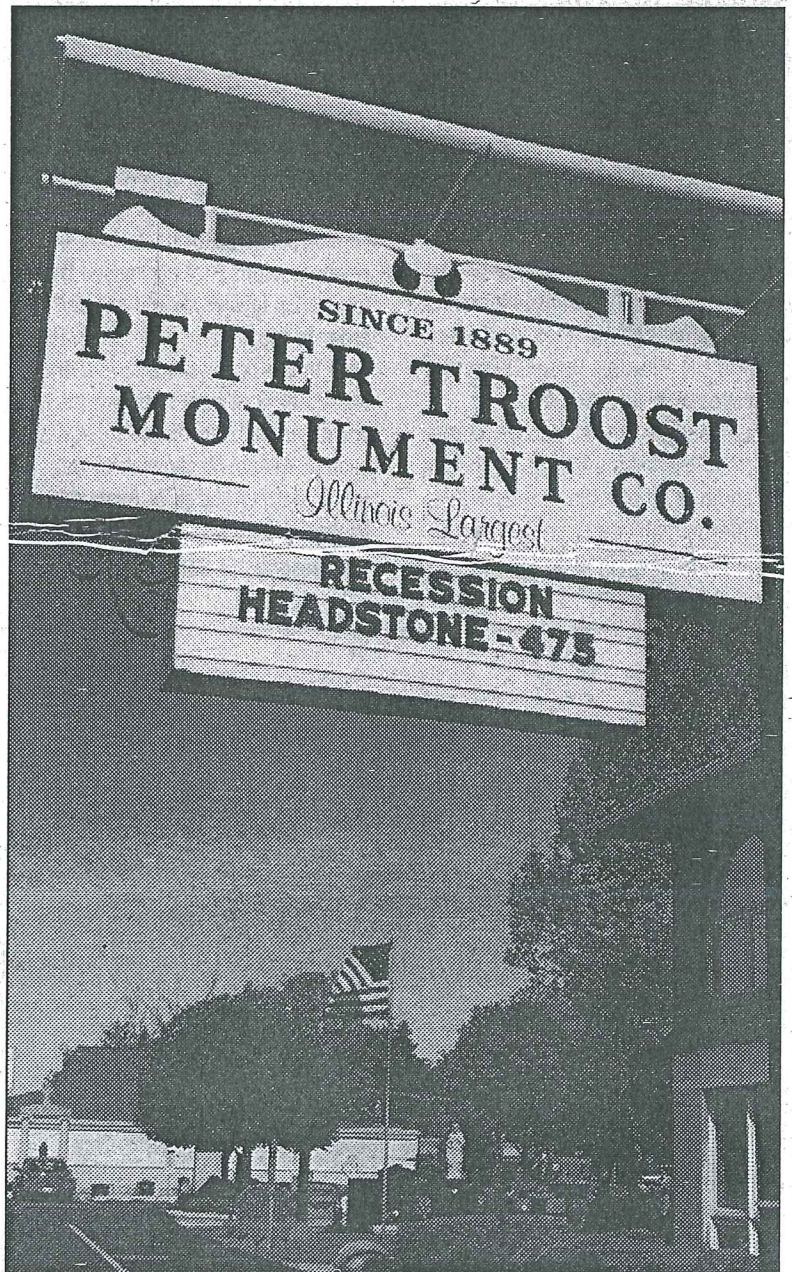


Nick Scardon, a third-grade student, and his Bible Buddy Ryan Turner, meet for refreshments after the service.



Chari-Tea begins at Elmhurst Academy Elmhurst Academy's second annual Mother-Daughter Chari-Tea benefiting DuPage County Family Shelter Services was held April 19 at Twinkle Teas in Wheaton. Girls were pampered with make-up and manicures, participated in stuffed animal making and decorating, and enjoyed yummy tea and treats. Donations were made to DuPage County Shelter Service for victims of domestic violence.

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ESO'
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HIGH: 83° LOW: 68°

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AUGUST 28, 29 [Learn More](#)

The Deal of a Lifetime

Headstones go on sale at local monument company

By **PEGGY CASSIDY**

Updated 5:24 PM CDT, Tue, May 19, 2009

[BUZZ UP!](#) [TWITTER](#) [FACEBOOK](#)



As prices on practically everything are going up, it's hard to pass up a good deal.

At least that's what **Lisa Troost**, of **Peter Troost Monument Company**, says.

The Hillside-based company, located near Queen of Heavens Cemetery on West Roosevelt Road, is currently advertising a discounted "Recession Headstone" for \$475.

"We've had more customers coming into the store because they saw that message on the marquis than we've ever had off of any marquis message we've ever show before." Troost, who is president of the fifth generation family-owned business, [told the Sun-Times](#).

Well, there's one thing you could check off the "to-do" list.

Copyright SunTimes
First Published: May 19, 2009 8:16 AM CDT

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WE CARE ABOUT OUR
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Check It

1 of 12

MikkiD | Jul 29 at 12:10 PM



This pretty much sums up my philosophy this week.

9 comments | [SHARE](#) | 89%

5 hours ago

Obama in Mexico: Three Amigos Will Take on Swine Flu

President Obama is set to conclude a speedy two-day summit with Mexico and Canada with a joint plan to combat the spread of swine flu.

posting on NBC Chicago website after piece ran on the evening news.

Aug 5, 2009

2 hours ago

Aug 5, 2009



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Monument Maker Coping With Recession

Posted By: Ken Christian, Information Center Content Manager • 7 days ago

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#1 Rule to Build Muscle
Learn how a student gained 10 Lbs. of muscle by obeying this one rule. [Learn more](#)



DON'T Pay For White Teeth
Learn the trick, discovered by a mom, to turn yellow teeth white w/under \$10. [Learn more](#)



CHICAGO (NBC) -- A Chicago area tombstone maker is offering the deal of a lifetime. Unlike the casket business, where even Costco now sells them, cemetery monuments are still so labor intensive that discounts are rare.

Lisa Troost is the fifth generation to run the family monument company, taking over for her father Frank after a career in finance with GE.

It's a handy background for the toughest economy this century-old business has ever experienced.

Hers is a dying business, not just figuratively but literally.

People are living longer and more want to be cremated and not have a headstone.

Combine that with the recession and the business is down between 10 and 20%.

Lisa says she realized it was time for creative marketing.

"Our sales people said they kept getting more and more calls for people wanting discounts and payment plans," she said.

After deciding to slash new prices, in came new customers.

Among them was 81-year-old Corinth Hicks, who had not yet bought headstones for two daughters who died before him.

He saved \$800 and found a little joy in an often somber and now distressed business.

Troost Monument reports it will try to keep its Recession Headstone deal going as long as possible.



A Chicago area tombstone maker is offering the deal of a lifetime.



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Pays off your mortgage in the event of your death. Get a free quote!
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Destroy Yellow Teeth
Read the trick, discovered by a mom, to turn yellow teeth white!
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NBC

In your voice

READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY

Posting on NBC website in Portland, ME.

More Watercooler headlines



Conan Starts Monday! 2 hrs ago

One Winning Jackpot Ticket Sold In Powerball Game 4 hrs ago



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Learn How a Mom Combined 2 Products to Easily Get Rid of Her Wrinkles.

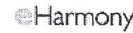
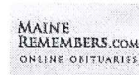
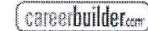
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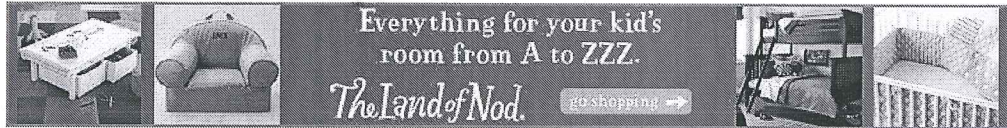
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Main Office and Manufacturing Plant:

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Hillside, Illinois 60162
708.544.0916
800.564.8212
toll free

[Web site en Español](#)
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Click on Pictures to Enlarge. [Click Here to view Entire Gallery](#)

"The marker and monument are beyond my greatest expectations. I want to thank each and every one involved in this very emotional task."

- Cathy Gilliam

[Read More Testimonials...](#)


Complaint Free Award:
2006, 2007, 2008



- Getting Started
- Planning Ahead
- How Your Memorial is Made
- How Your Mausoleum is Made
- Special Offers
- Locations
- Guarantee
- Words of Comfort
- FAQ
- Blog
- Monuments with Prices

For five generations, families have trusted Peter Troost Monument Company to create timeless tributes, custom granite and bronze memorials that are as unique as the people they honor. We take the time to know each customer and listen to your loved one's life story. Then, we craft a memorial that meets your special needs and transcends the ordinary. That's why our memorials have exceeded expectations for over 100 years.

At Peter Troost Monument Company, experience, artistry, and trust define who we are. Our [award-winning design staff](#) can help you express individuality through distinctive products and unlimited design possibilities. Our experienced craftsmen then create your product with care in our state-of-the-art manufacturing plant. Because we select only the finest materials and [guarantee](#) quality, Troost memorials offer superior value.


Recession Headstone
\$475.00
For more information, call **800-564-8212**


Visit our new Outdoor Memorial Garden

Troost family members and employees have delivered exceptional products since 1889, making us one of the most established, trusted monument companies nationwide. With [28 locations](#) in five states, we're also the largest family-owned monument company. We also offer special products and services for various industries and community projects. Please visit [Monuments with Prices](#) and our [Galleries](#) for examples of our work.

Experience.


WINNER!
Illinois Family Business of the Year!
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Home page of our website - keeping the Recession Headstone campaign alive.

AUGUST 1
SATURDAY
2009



Mostly cloudy,
50 percent chance
of rain, storms

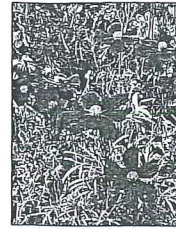
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FORECAST, A2

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Vol: 163 No: 188

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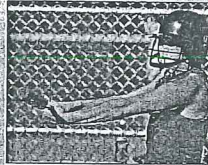


Garden in BLOOM

The legacy of
the Taylor's
'plantation'
in Freeport
HOME & GARDEN,
A9

Daily updates at www.journalstandard.com

INSIDE TODAY SPORTS



SOFTBALL:
Freeport black,
orange win

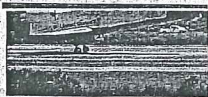
STORY, B1

YOUR NEWS



20-SOMETHING: Sara
Stephenson STORY, A3

BUSINESS



**Shuttle, 7 astronauts
land safe** STORY, A8

NEWS & RECORD

Obituaries on A4

Kenneth L. McLain, Freeport
Douglas A. Spencer Jr., Largo, Fla.
Roy E. Vincent, Freeport
Eldon B. Zink, Savanna

WHAT'S FOR SALE

Check out the
Hot Wheels
IN TODAY'S CLASSIFIED SECTION

TODAY'S SMILE

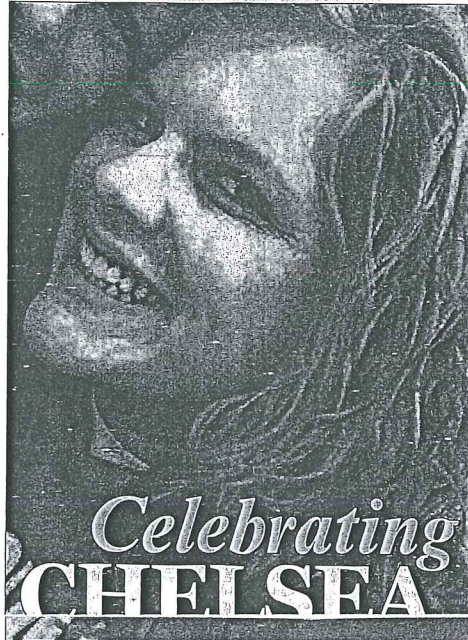


"I'm smiling because I still got to go
swimming even when it rained."
— Cade Voss, 9

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MEMORIES



Chelsea Lea Toot, 1992-2009.

Celebrating CHELSEA

BY TONY CARTON
For The Journal-Standard

ELIZABETH — There was a noticeable gap in the dance line during the musical numbers at the Jo Daviess County Fair Queen competition Thursday night, and a breach in the menu at the McDonald's in Galena where folks used to come in and order a McDouble with a side of Chelsea.

There will be an empty space in the human pyramids built by the River Ridge High School cheer squad during the 2009-2010 football and basketball seasons and there will always be a hole in the hearts of the hundreds of folks touched by the

passing of 17-year-old Chelsea Toot. Toot died tragically in an automobile accident on Illinois Route 84 just north of Savanna Monday afternoon, July 27, and by Tuesday evening, hundreds of Chelsea's friends began gathering near her Elizabeth home. As night fell, they lit candles celebrating her life. There were songs and candles and stories and more candles; laughter and love and still more candles, and Chelsea was on everyone's lips.

The town ran out of candles, but there was no shortage of love. Luminaries lined the road and the driveway leading to the

CHELSEA, page A2

RECESSION HEADSTONES

A grave sign of the times

Economy means fewer can afford monuments

BY JEFF MONTGOMERY
jmontgomery@journalstandard.com

FREEPORT — Annette Moreno had grown tired of watching the same scene play out.

As the economy worsened, she encountered more and more people who could not afford a monument for family members. The development was bad for business and even worse for the customers.

"It is painful for many families struggling financially to not be able to put up a memorial

SIGN, page A2



ANNETTE MORENO OF FLACHTEMELER MONUMENTS SHOWS THEIR HEADSTONES THAT ARE PRICED LOWER FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIFFICULTY AFFORDING THEM IN THE RECESSION.

SPOKESPERSON

The IRS warns of fraud

Officials: Taxpayers should beware of schemes related to first-time homebuyer tax credit

BY TRAVIS MORSE
tmorse@journalstandard.com

FREEPORT — Internal Revenue Service officials are warning taxpayers to beware of fraud related to the first-time homebuyer tax credit, and say that people should always make sure the information on their tax returns is accurate.

"We encourage anybody to claim any credit or deduction they are eligible for," said Sue Hales, an IRS spokesperson. "However, we also want to let them know we have seen some fraud related to the first-time homebuyer credit and that people should beware of any schemes out there."

The first-time homebuyer credit was originally approved in 2008, and was then modified this year to cover homes purchased in 2009. For the 2009 version of the program, qualifying homebuyers are eligible to claim up to \$8,000 in available tax credit related to the purchase of their first home.

According to Hales, a purchaser must qualify as a first-time homebuyer, which refers to someone who has not owned a primary residence in the past two years.

Different rules apply for homes bought in 2008. With the 2009 program, homebuyers do not have to pay the credit back unless they sell the house or move during the first three years after the purchase, Hales said.

As of mid-July 2009, more than 1.1 million

FRAUD, page A4

STEPHENSON COUNTY

County looks at new plant on area site

Federal funding sought to use for assessment work on possible food processing plant

BY TRAVIS MORSE
tmorse@journalstandard.com

FREEPORT — Stephenson County is requesting federal funding to use for environmental assessment work on an area site that could eventually be home to a new food processing plant, according to County Board Vice Chairman Jim Graham.

Details are scarce on the project at this point, but Graham said the funding in question would assist the food processing company with completing assessment work to address environmental issues at the site.

"It's been on our radar screen for a year, maybe longer," Graham said of the food processing plant initiative. "It's more of a start-up business. They need assistance and this grant, these brownfields dollars, will help them get over some of these EPA hurdles."

Officials are not releasing details on the location of the site, other than to say it is in a "rural village" in Stephenson County. This project would not be part of the Mill Race Industrial Park outside Freeport.

In a recent monthly chairman's report, Coun-

COUNTY, page A4



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RECESSION HEADSTONES

A grave sign of the times

Economy means fewer can afford monuments

BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

jmontgomery@journalstandard.com

FREEMONT — Annette Moreno had grown tired of watching the same scene play out.

As the economy worsened, she encountered more and more people who could not afford a monument for family members. The development was bad for business and even worse for the customers.

“It is painful for many families struggling financially to not be able to put up a memorial



STEFANIE WEISS / THE JOURNAL-STANDARD

Annette Moreno of Flachtemeier Monuments shows their headstones that are priced lower for people who have difficulty affording them in the recession.

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	Home	Mail	Mail
Wks delivery	routes	delivery	delivery
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26	90.90	97.40	110.30
52	175.90	188.90	220.60

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CIRCULATION

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SIGN

continued from A1

for their loved one," said Moreno, the manager at Freeport's Flachtemeier Monuments.

Seeking a solution to the frustrating trend, Moreno implemented a concept that had proven successful in other parts of Illinois.

Flachtemeier Monuments began offering reduced-price monuments — unofficially referred to as "recession headstones" — at the beginning of July. And the idea has started to take off.

Freeport resident Don Blasing is just one of many people taking advantage of the unique offer.

Blasing's brother died at birth in 1929, and Blasing had long wanted to provide a marker for him. But he never found himself in a position where he could afford one.

Blasing came to Moreno seeking a way to honor his brother that was not cost-prohibitive. He ultimately found an option that he could afford.

"It is very helpful," Blasing said. "You don't have to go with some big, expensive marker."

A Final Tribute

The concept of a "recession headstone" originated in the Chicago suburbs.

Lisa Troost, the co-owner of more than 20 monument businesses in Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa, had noticed a steep decline in sales during the re-

cession. Looking for a way to reverse the trend, Troost implemented a plan that would offer customers headstones at a reduced price.

"We got a really good response," Troost said. "It was more than we were anticipating."

Some of the discount headstones are slightly smaller than the typical product. Others are created with "obsolete inventory" (colors of granite that are no longer quarried). Still, the items carry the same guarantee as the business's regularly-priced monuments.

Troost, whose business is affiliated with Flachtemeier Monuments, thought the concept may have a similar impact in Freeport. The conditions, after all, were certainly ripe for a change.

"The memorial business is not recession proof by any means," Moreno said. "My business has been down by about 20 percent."

A headstone generally costs anywhere between \$1,000 and \$2,000. Flachtemeier's headstones, however, now start at under \$700, more than 30 percent below the typical starting price.

The promotion has boosted sales for the Freeport business. More importantly, it has offered an attractive alternative for local residents like Blasing.

"Purchasing a memorial is often the last thing a person does for the deceased," Moreno said. "It's a way of paying a final tribute to the person."

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