

Family looking for answers in death

Hit-and-run crash claimed woman's life

By Olivia Stevens
DAILY SOUTHTOWN

Mariyah Ford's family members say they lost an enthusiastic, deeply caring and determined future phlebotomist Monday, when the 20-year-old from Sauk Village was killed in a hit-and-run crash on Illinois Route 394 in Lynwood.

Ford spent the weekend with her aunt, Tanisha Dennis, as the nearly inseparable duo attended joint hair and nail appointments in preparation for a Thornridge High School class reunion event Sunday.

"She picked out my outfit the whole weekend," Tanisha recalled on Thursday.

They were driving home from a reunion after-party when their vehicle ran out of fuel, and they began walking to a gas station near Illinois 394 at Joe Orr Road when Ford was hit, she said.

Tanisha said in the days following, she's been haunted by the sound of her niece's body sent flying after being hit by a vehicle on the expressway.

"It makes it worse, because I hear the falling," she said. "I keep hearing it."

Christina Dennis, Ford's mother, says she's hoping that telling her daughter's story will aid the Illinois

State Police investigation into the hit-and-run crash.

"There ain't nothing like her — she was my first baby, the original one," Christina said. She would stand behind me and fight the world if we needed to."

"I want the person who hit my baby to come forward and turn himself in," she said.

State police said they responded to the crash early Monday and took Ford to Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn, where she was pronounced dead by 3 a.m. Officers shut down the interstate, reopening it at about 4 a.m., they said.

The investigation is ongoing,



Tanisha and Christina Dennis, aunt and mother of Mariyah Ford, hold up a collage of photographs of Ford before she was killed Monday in a hit-and-run crash. **OLIVIA STEVENS/DAILY SOUTHTOWN**

See **DEATH** on Page A2



Catherine Kruse pens a letter to the future as part of an American 250 event Wednesday with the Green Hills Public Library. **JESSE WRIGHT/ FOR THE DAILY SOUTHTOWN**

Palos Hills, Hickory Hills residents share hopes, fears

Time capsule letters written for future

By Jesse Wright
FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Letters to the future were written this week in Palos Hills.

The Green Hills Public Library District asked community members to ponder their lives, their pasts and write their hopes, their news, their habits and even their favorite slang and media from today, all to be bottled up in a time capsule and opened in 25 years.

The project was part of the library's America 250 celebra-

tion on the 250th birthday of the United States and a way to preserve a bit of local concern, hope and habit, said Olivia Mullenax, the adult programming librarian.

"We wanted to bring everyone together and have a chance for the community to be reflected in the celebration," Mullenax said.

About a dozen people turned out to Amos Alonzo Stagg High School Wednesday to do some reflecting, along with Palos Hills Mayor Gerald Bennett and Hickory Hills Mayor Mike Howley. Later, the classic rock cover band Blackberry Jam played a set.

Mullenax said there's no date yet on when the library will seal the capsule, so if anyone would

like to drop a letter by the library, they still can. She said some people have also asked the library if they can donate things for the time capsule.

"I had someone from the Palos Hills horse association ask if they can donate horse equipment," she said.

It's all welcome. The whole idea is mostly to reflect the today's community in a quarter century.

"I think the purpose of the library is to bring our community together and have it reflected, and we wanted to do that with the time capsule," she said.

One resident, Laura Lipkie, said she was excited to drop off a letter and said she's looking forward to being around in 25 years to open

the capsule.

"Twenty-five years from now I want to know what I was like 25 years ago," she said. Lipkie said she's mostly hopeful for the future.

"I am hopeful," Lipkie said. "I am hoping to be a grandma. I have two daughters and I wish I had a son so I'm hoping to have a grandson."

Lipkie is also a nurse and said the hard times of COVID 19 are still strong memories with her, so she included those thoughts. She said she is hopeful that's not forgotten or diminished in 25 years.

She said she's already met younger nurses who weren't in

See **TIME** on Page A3

Tinley Park continues plans for gas station

191st and Harlem site gets approval

By Evy Lewis
DAILY SOUTHTOWN

The Tinley Park Village Board voted Wednesday to move ahead with the development of a Gas N Wash gas station at 191st Street and Harlem Avenue.

The board unanimously approved two resolutions advancing the development.

There are three Gas N Wash stations in Tinley Park, according to a report from the Plan Commission, including one at the corner of Harlem Avenue about half a mile south of 191st Street. The proposed development at the southwest corner of the intersection would be the fourth.

The new gas station would have 18 fueling stations, a car wash and a 10,049-square-foot convenience store space, according to the report.

The gas station would be part of the Brookside Creek Retail Center development, directly south of the existing Brookside Marketplace, which hosts retailers Target and Best Buy.

Some neighbors objected in December to both the gas station and a planned McDonald's, expressing particular concerns about the lights and noise that would be generated by 24-hour businesses.

The Plan Commission report said while, due to the nature of the development, the gas station would be brightly lit, the convenience store building and a heavily landscaped area to the west would block the impact of light for neighbors.

STORM CLEANUP

Village officials also urged patience regarding the progress of cleanup from last week's storm, which saw tornadoes confirmed in Homewood, Orland Park and

See **GAS** on Page A2

Homer Glen man charged in Darien home invasion

Denied release before trial by judge

By Alicia Fabbre
FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A Homer Glen man charged with home invasion in Darien was denied pre-trial release Thursday after an appearance before a DuPage County judge.

Michael Lahey, 32, of the 13000 block of Maverick Trail, is charged with two counts of home invasion, aggravated fleeing and eluding a police officer and misdemeanor theft following Tuesday's break-in, chase and subsequent barricade situation at his home.

DuPage County Judge Joshua Dieden granted prosecutors' motion to deny pretrial release.

Lahey has a history of mental illness and his parents told officers he had been off his medication since March, prosecutors said. Lahey, who told investigators he believed the Darien home belonged to his grandmother, broke into the residence and threw glass at the homeowner, causing a significant injury to his arm, prosecutors said.

During the course of the argument, Lahey also accused the homeowner of stealing the home from his grandmother and threw a stool at him, prosecutors wrote in a motion seeking to deny pretrial release.

The homeowner was able to

escape and alert nearby roofers to call authorities. When police arrived they saw Lahey driving his Ford Bronco at a high rate of speed. During the ensuing chase, his car jumped a curb, drove through a parking lot and reached speeds of more than 75 mph.

Prosecutors said Lahey also sped through a construction zone, with workers present, and drove into oncoming traffic on multiple occasions.

When they reached Will County, officers broke off the chase out of safety concerns and alerted authorities of the incident. Members of the DuPage County MERIT Swat and Will County Sheriff's SWAT teams responded to Lahey's residence at 6:54 p.m. after obtaining a search

warrant.

Lahey kept authorities at bay for hours before being taken into custody later that evening. He damaged a police drone used during the standoff. SWAT teams also broke multiple windows and used gas to subdue Lahey.

Lahey has other outstanding criminal charges including two recent charges in Will County on charges of aggravated battery to a police officer and another for violating an order of protection, court records show.

The Darien homeowner told investigators he received stitches for his winjuries and said he has had trouble sleeping at night since the home invasion, and is uncertain if he will be able to return to

his home.

"The type of aggressive, unpredictable and violent behavior that shattered an innocent man's sense of safety and security in his own home and sent him to the hospital with serious injuries, as alleged in this case, has no place in civilized society and will not be tolerated in DuPage County," DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin said. "The victim in this case has a long road to recovery ahead of him and I wish him well as he recovers both physically and emotionally."

Lahey's next court date is scheduled for Aug. 31 before DuPage County Judge Mia McPherson.

Alicia Fabbre is a freelance reporter for the Daily Southtown.