

Retired teacher ready to write a tip book for new teachers

BY MARILYN THOMAS
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After 18 years in a classroom, Mary Carvlin, who retired from James Hart School, is thinking about writing a book – a primer for new teachers sharing all her first-hand knowledge.

Carvlin said teaching “takes a lot of experience, but I also think it could be taught better” than it is in teacher preparation classes. “I would like to be a teacher/coach or write on what they don’t tell you – lots of tips.”

It won’t be a hard project for Carvlin. She made a career as a freelance editor/writer for many years until 9/11. The historic event caused a slowdown in publishing and writing opportunities. At that point, Carvlin said she “started subbing and decided to look at teaching options.” A special alternative certification program at Governors State University helped her make the transition.

Carvlin taught in Riverdale the first three years of her teaching career before moving to District 153 as a Spanish teacher. She’s taught the introductory Spanish class. It’s been fun, but Carvlin wishes learning a foreign language was made available from kindergarten on.

“A lot of studies show children who are bilingual develop extra capacity in their brains the way they bounce back and forth with the concepts. Our students need more language-learning concepts,” she said.

One of the things Carvlin’s writings would point out to prospective teachers is teaching takes a lot of effort.

“For people who aren’t in the profession, they need to understand what the challenges are and make decisions with full knowledge and I don’t think they get the whole picture because people gloss over the difficulties. You get that Pollyanna notion that



Mary Carvlin

teaching is ‘I love kids,’ ‘I’m a good person’ and it’s mothering,” she said.

“I think people are under-prepared for the actual physical challenges of the day-to-day, but they also might not realize that one of the great things about teaching is it’s never dull. Every day is different. Kids are constantly changing, and it can be a lot of fun that way.”

Carvlin says the other most difficult thing is all the rules from the district, plus the county, state, and federal governments that mandate and dic-

tate what teachers can do in the classroom.

“That can be really frustrating to navigate, but when you become an experienced teacher you learn what the priorities are. You have to develop a sense of priorities and be able to tune out minor hassles and stand your ground,” she said.

The role of the classroom teacher is to teach and develop a rapport with students to encourage them, but the other factor is classroom discipline. It’s like having two occupations, she said.

Carvlin doesn’t have a set agenda for retirement. Her writing will happen at her pace. She intends to improve her Spanish and may in the near future take a trip to Mexico, but generally she’s happy to have time to spend with her two infant grandchildren and her parents who are now in their mid-90s.

Ice arena contracts approved

BY MARILYN THOMAS
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The Homewood-Flossmoor Park District board approved three contracts for various phases of work to get the H-F Ice Arena, 777 Kedzie Ave. in Flossmoor, back in operation by the end of the year.

The ice arena was shut down in November 2021 when the refrigeration system failed. Despite staff’s best attempts, the dated system couldn’t be repaired.

At a special meeting Tuesday, June 3, commissioners reviewed bids for concrete, masonry, steel, excavation/demolition and site utilities and approved three of the bids. All the work is for a new equipment building that will house the mechanicals for the refrigeration system.

The commissioners approved a \$2.9

million contract for a new refrigeration system on March 29. It was the first item approved so that the equipment could be ordered.

“In an effort to expedite the project and reduce lead times, the construction project was broken down into several bid packages,” Debbie Kopas, parks executive director, told commissioners.

The board approved a contract with Elliot Construction for \$174,960 for concrete work.

The board also approved a contract with Lozich Masonry LLC for \$169,000.

K & K Iron Works LLC won the bid for steel for the building at \$93,730.

The ice arena project is being financed by a \$5.5 million 25-year general obligation bond purchased by Capitol One Public Funding LLC with an interest rate of 3.84%.



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