Tinley Park charges girl in rape hoax

Heather Krieger told police she was raped Sunday while returning home from the South Side Irish St. Patrick’s Day Parade. But the more police interviewed her, the more they realized the details of her story weren’t adding up. It turns out, police say, the 19-year-old made up the story because she had been drinking and was afraid to go home to her parents.

- READ MORE, A3

600 acres in flames

Blazes strike Southland, three of them in forest preserves

The cause of the fire that destroyed up to 600 acres at the Orland Gladden, a 600-acre preserve that native plants and groundbirds call home, is under investiga-

tion. It took 10 firefight-

ers from 11 depart-

ments to control the blaze. Meanwhile, fire-

fighters tried to con-

trol brush fires at Cranberry Slough and at Swallow Cliff.

- STEPHANIE GERRING REPORTS, A5

Marian students back in school

A move to pull nearly 500 students from classes at Marian Catholic High School last week might not have been popular, but it appeared to have been effective.

All of the students who were held on as school authorities were curious or have a payment plan, in place and are back at the Chicago Heights school, Marian president Joanne Hibling said.

A large part of the $60,000 in unpaid tuition was paid through donations to the school’s emergency fund.

- READ MORE IN GONZALES REPORT, A5

ATTACK OF THE KILLER POTHOLES

Orland Park tire dealer’s graveyard of busted tires indicates what a bad season it’s been for drivers. - TRIDGELL, A3

Gov. Quinn committed to third airport plan

Budget likely to include millions to purchase land near Peotone.

- KADNER’S COLUMN, A2

SOUTHTOWNSTAR.COM | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2009 | 75¢

MIDLOTHIAN SOLDIER KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN

Barbara Abeyta remembers the day her son, her only child, Christopher Abeyta, left for Midlothian Township High School to tell him he was enlisting in the Illinois National Guard.

He said in 2006, in his home in Midlothian, a little condo just off 17th Street, with his recruiter and laid out his plan to enlist. He wouldn’t have to go to war, he was told. He wouldn’t even have to leave the state unless he wanted to.

“I remember the day they were at my kitchen table, and I told them, ‘This is my only one, he isn’t going to go to war, right?’” and they said, ‘Oh, no, ma’am, he won’t leave the state unless he wants to,’ which they feel (about me) I was naive. OK,” she said through tears. The day the Guard publicly released the news that her son had been killed Sunday in Afghanistan along with three other American troops.

Abeyta had survived a year in Iraq and was on his second deployment in outer Afghan, in the region that borders Pakistan. While the vehicle he was rid-

ing in hit an improvised explosive device set by the Taliban. He had been provid-

ing security for the coalition sent to rebuild the war-ravaged nation’s infrastructure — its damaged roads, hospi-

tals and schools. He was serving in a region where violence flared up recently as the Taliban rallied against a recent surge of internation-

al troops.

“It’s crazy, I didn’t worry as much as the time he was in Iraq because I figured, he’s coming home. He’s coming home again. You still dread that’s going to happen in the back of your mind, but he’s coming home, you think.”

Because he made it home once before, she said.

Family mourns Guardsman, 23

He was always a top-notch student. He was so task- and goal-oriented. That’s why he was such a good person for the service.

- READ MORE ABOUT SGT. CHRISTOPHER ABETYA IN LAUREN FITZPATRICK’S REPORT, A3

Visit Southtownstar.com for... Photo gallery: South Side Irish St. Patrick’s Day Parade

ABOVE: Paul and Barbara Abeyta, of Midlothian, talk about their son, Illinois Army National Guard Sgt. Christopher Abeyta (center), 23, who was killed in action Sunday while serving in Afghanistan, BELOW: Barbara and Paul Abeyta talk outside their home with friend Jon Minews, 25, about Christopher Abeyta. PHOTO BY JEFF REEDSON — SOUTH TOWN STAR

Cardinal Fitness

$10 TO JOIN! Thru March 23rd!
ONLY $9.95 MONTH!