



Voyager



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't is the season for Stroll on State

Vikings participate in 5th annual city event, contribute to record crowd of 82,500

Olivia Hagerty
Editor-In-Chief

'18

Rockford's Stroll on State Festival, presented by Illinois Bank & Trust, celebrated its fifth anniversary this year, and many Guilford students took part in the event. This year the event expanded its hours, beginning with the Dasher Dash 5K Run at 8:00 a.m. and continuing into the evening until 9:00 pm. Guilford students gathered to watch the lighting of the Christmas tree, listened to local performers sing carols, and caught up with old friends.

"It was good for Rockford because it really showed the good side of it since there is a lot of

negativity and violence here," said Rachael Gray, sophomore. "Everyone was so friendly and you felt welcomed. We all came together and had a good time."

To start one of downtown's biggest days of the holiday season, Stroll on State partnered with Fleet Feet Sports to create the Dasher Dash 5K holiday themed race. Starting at the UW Health Sports Factory, the race course took the runners all through downtown Rockford, crossed four bridges, and ended at the finish line on Grove Street where runners enjoyed some holiday snacks. Guilford Cross Country runners helped volunteer at the race. Keegan Strand, senior Cross Country runner, helped out with timing and assisting the runners.

"Rockford Fleet Feet believes it is important to get the younger population mixed into big events

so they asked the team to volunteer," said Strand. "Fleet Feet is a great organization. The run was a success and because of it in my opinion made our community closer."

Guilford's Acapella team, The Sharp Harmonics, performed for their third year at Stroll on

State, but this year in City Hall. Joel Cordonnier, sophomore member of Acapella team, enjoyed singing with his team at a new location this year.

"We sang in the balcony of City Hall which was a first," said Cordonnier. "Stroll on State allows us to enjoy the holidays as one. We enjoyed singing there because of the reactions when people heard us; it's wonderful."

Another Guilford group that helped at the event was National Honors Society. Students volunteered to get their makeup done professionally, dress up, and participate in the parade. Roxanna Ramos, senior NHS member, had an amazing time being a part of the parade that made people excited about Christmas, especially the kids.

"It was a great experience," said Ramos. "I am glad I got to make so many kids to continue to believe in the spirit of Christmas!"

This year Stroll on State had events and activities for people of all ages. The reimagined parade began at three o'clock. Partnering with The National Electrical Contractors Association and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 364, the goal of this year's parade was to help cover more of the downtown and "super-size" the march. It began at the Rockford Public Library and ended at North 3rd Street. The



NHS members volunteer and dress up for the holidays downtown. Olivia Runne/PHOTO

parade featured festive floats, high school marching bands, and local businesses; it even had new surprises like the 30 feet tall festival balloons.

"We want to create community traditions and provide a fun event for Rockford," said Andrea Cook, Marketing and Communications Manager for Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We joined many forces to create unforgettable attractions and make the fifth anniversary big."

Organizers—including sponsors and vendors—began planning for this year's Stoll on State immediately after the 2016 festival. The event featured ice skating, wagon rides, live performances, s'mores, and even Santa himself.

"I personally love music, so I liked the performances and I go every year to see my dad sing on stage," said Parker Pelley, sophomore. "It's a really good event and it's cool to see everyone come together."



Kay and Rachel Gray promote Movieland, one of the many attractions at the city event. Bingley/PHOTO

GUN CONTROL: TRIGGERING THE NATION

The nation divides after recents events involving the argument for gun control

Magnus Swanson
Reporter

'20

The issue of gun control and gun violence continues to be a controversial issue in Rockford, and in Illinois as a whole. According to the Chicago Tribune, recently at Mattoon High School in Illinois a student attempted a shooting, but failed as a nearby teacher subdued him. He managed to fire a few shots but no one was injured.

According to the FBI, roughly 60% of all guns in Illinois come in—either legally or illegally—from out of state. According to Business Insider, only 26.2% of the Illinois population are legally registered gun owners, almost 10% less than most of the states that border Illinois, with the exception of Missouri.

"Typical crimes are committed with stolen registered firearms," said Officer Robert Washo, Guilford police officer.

In recent years, Illinois has loosened its policies on gun control. Chicago had an outright ban on handguns from 1982 until 2010, before the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional, according to National Public Radio. One year before the law was removed, there were 449 gun homicides. A year after the ban was lifted, the amount of homicides dropped to 433, not much but still noticeable. This suggests a slight decrease in homicides after gun control was removed. To legally sell guns, a seller is required to have a federal firearms license, but a 2015 study by the University of Chicago suggested that only 11% of guns crimes in Chicago were purchased through federally licensed gun dealers.

"Gun control has to become a national issue," said Mr. Mrizek, criminal law teacher. "That's the reason why guns come into Illinois from states with weaker gun laws. (In the

case of the Mattoon High School student) the student that attempted the shooting aimed at other students before he was taken down by his teacher. All he got was aggravated battery with a firearm."

Other countries have attempted to control gun ownership, with varying levels of success. For example, the crime prevention research center shows a gun ban was imposed in Ireland in 1972. A year before the ban took effect, there were only 0.3 gun homicides per 100,000 people. One year later, there were 1.6 homicides per 100,000. From then on homicides in Ireland grew drastically. However, Japan has had a complete ban on weapons since 1958 and its proven to work. In fact, Japan has limited its gun homicides down to 10 or less a year.

"(In Illinois) there is a waiting period when buying a gun that lasts about two to three days," said Aaron Johnson, junior. "They also do a background check. I think they should make the checks even more rigorous because of these shootings."

The Second Amendment was adopted December 15, 1791. The Founding Fathers created it for the defense against tyranny in the name of freedom. The United States had just secured its freedom from England and didn't want to suffer another despotic government created by ourselves. The Second Amendment states, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." However, gun ownership and gun violence, as seen here in Rockford as well as the nation as a whole, remains a controversial topic.

"The reason there's so many shootings is a social one," said Officer Washo. "The majority of gun owners are good people. Guns are just like drugs, hard to control."

Local & Chicago Winter Events

Olivia Loner
Reporter

'20

**Due to printing schedule the Tour de Frost event has passed.*

Fifth Third Bank Winter Wonderfest at Navy Pier: The 17th annual Winter Wonderfest will take place December 1st-January 7th. This event has Chicago's biggest indoor winter play-ground, that includes 170,000 square feet of rides, giant slides, skating rinks, and many holiday decorations on display. People who attend this event can skate on the Chicago Blackhawks ice skating rink. Tickets range from \$19-\$27 and the tickets include a ride on the Centennial Wheel at Navy Pier.

Festival of Lights, Rockford Illinois: This event is a state-line family tradition since 1989, presented by the Rockford Fourth of July Committee and the Rockford Park District. The festival is open 5-10 pm, November 25th- December 25th. In the festival, they have mailboxes where children can leave letters for Santa. If there's a return address, Santa will write the child back. The event is free to get in, but donations are accepted to make this tradition possible each year. The festival is located at Sinnissippi Park, 1401

North Second Street.

Tour de Frost, Rockford Illinois: The 8th annual bicycle race will take place in Rockford on December 2nd. It is presented by Team Fur Bandit at the Vitamin Shoppe. Registration is \$35 online or \$40 the day of the race. It is a 20 mile bicycle



Juniors, AJ Pruit, Brianna Widell, Nate Geschel, Maggie Torris, Daniella Blanco, Carson Masters at festival of lights Brianna Widell Facebook/PHOTO

ride around Rockford that has fun little stops along the ride, like at the Olympic Tavern and at the Rockford Bicycling Company. The race ends at Oscar's Pub and Grill, where the participants are treated to a pizza party. The Team Fur Bandit works with the Fish-Abled foundation to help people in need around the holidays.