


St. Anthony Youth Group
TACO NIGHT 
 Saturday, May 17 4-7 p.m.
 St. Anthony Parish Hall
 \$2 each or 3 for \$5
 with Mrs. P's homemade tortillas & salsa!
 Proceeds to fund work camp trip to Bluffton, S.C.

Sand Volleyball Leagues now forming!

- Must be 21 years old
- 4 person team (2 men, 2 women)
- 10 week leagues start June 4

Wed. night league contact Jodi Coon,

**Second
 Chance
 Saloon** 
Pool Tournament
 Saturday, May 17 2 p.m.
 \$5 entry fee. Prizes 1st & 2nd


**Tacos are
 back!**
 Thursday
 3-8 p.m.
**\$1 beer
 V.F.W.**

Lourdine Florek
 owner/publisher

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Tearful mother shares story of missing son, Ryan Katcher

"We just want the boy home."

Linda Katcher Griffith has been hoping for that since Nov. 5, 2000, when her then-19-year-old son, Ryan Katcher, was discovered missing from the Oakwood area.

Griffith told her story, often through tears, at Monday's Hoopeston Neighborhood Watch meeting.

Ryan, a University of Illinois student, was home for the weekend on Nov. 3, 2000. It was like many other Fridays, when Ryan came home "with a big bag of dirty clothes and an empty stomach," Griffith said. Saturday, went to a party on Henning Road where he reportedly became intoxicated. A friend later reported that he dropped Ryan home at about 2 a.m.

He and his black Ford R1-150 truck have not been seen



Linda Katcher Griffith breaks down while telling the story of her missing son, Ryan, at Neighborhood Watch Monday.

R1-150 truck have not been seen since.

Griffith, who works in the emergency room department at a Danville hospital, got a call from Ryan's girlfriend, saying the young man had not attended church that morning. Griffith didn't think anything of it and told the girl Ryan had probably gone fishing with his best friend.

Ryan had still not returned when Griffith finished work. She called his friend and learned they had not gone fishing. "If Ryan wasn't with his best friend, wasn't with his girlfriend and wasn't with his family, where could he be," she wondered.

Wonder turned to worry and Griffith called the Vermilion County Sheriff's Department. "The were wonderful," she said. While many police agencies wait 24 hours, especially in the case of missing people over age 18, the sheriff's department immediately began searching, as did Ryan's family.

A grid search was done in the Oakwood area "in hopes that we could find a boy who was drunk and stupid, but we couldn't find him."

The search expanded to the U of I. Students there were helpful in searching and distributing posters and putting them on buses. A pizza company near the university immediately put Ryan's photo on delivery boxes to get the word out about the missing young man.

Griffith said university officials were not as

**So many selections
 Cemetery Memorial Day**
 Saddles for monuments, hanging baskets, vases, silk bushes, shepherd's hooks and other things.
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**Hoopeston Youth Football
 Golf Outing**
 Sunday, May 18 Hubbard Trail
 8:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.
 4 person scramble Both shifts still
 open
 \$45/person Scratch & Peo-

Hoopeston Rock Service

Rock: ¾" 1¼, 2". Plus landscape rock, pea gravel, sand, road pack. Delivery/spreading available. Hours by appointment.

Rich Stipp, owner
(217) 283-5492



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Spring Specials
just in time for Memorial Day**



**Hoopeston
Memorials**

Open 9-5 Mon.-Fri.

Healthcare Education Opportunity

Certified Nurse Aide (C.N.A.) Program

starts June 2, 2003

Classes held weekdays from
8 a.m.-4 p.m. for 3½ week at
Hoopeston Regional Health Center

Applications accepted through
May 15 and are available at:

**Hoopeston Community
Memorial Hospital**
701 E. Orange, Hoopeston, IL

helpful.

See RYAN on other side

Ryan continued from other side

“They didn’t want to be tainted by something like this,” she said.

Initial efforts were expanded. Fifty-four poster-size bumper stickers were placed on McLane’s semis and 500 more were taken to a Teamsters convention in Las Vegas for national distribution on trucks.

Intense water searches were done, and another is scheduled in the near future which will use more sophisticated equipment than what was available when Ryan disappeared. Griffith said she has talked with psychics who say Ryan is around water. V o l u n t e e r s searched in the air, on horseback and on four-wheelers but no sign of Ryan was ever discovered.

Griffith established a website - www.findryan.com, which has become “a monster,” she said. People have contacted her saying disturbing things about her, her deceased husband, her current husband, her daughter and her son.

In fact, rumors abounded. Ryan’s father died from cancer about a year before his disappearance, fueling speculation that Ryan ran away. “We had a horrible life and she should have run away but I don’t think he did,” Griffith said.

Also disturbing are things people have said, not knowing Griffith was near. “Old people who couldn’t hear very well would say loudly, ‘they’re not going to find that boy,’” she said, her voice cracking.

Ryan’s information was included on the Nation’s Missing Children Organization, one of the few sites that also includes pictures and data of missing adults. “Just because you’re over 18 doesn’t mean you

want to be missing,” Griffith said.

The Kristen Modaferi Foundation included Ryan’s information in a fundraising cookbook. Proceeds from the book are given to families of missing people to defray the cost of printing “missing” posters.

The fear of a missing child is one most parents know, Griffith said. “You know when you’re at a carnival and you turn around and your child isn’t there, that fear you have? I have that every day.”

She credits God with giving her the strength to go on. “I have lots of faith and it’s my faith that gets me through this,” Griffith said. “I know God has a reason for this. Wherever he is, he knows I’m still looking for him. I know if he can’t be in my arms, then God’s got His arms around him.”

Ryan is one of more than 97,000 adults in the U.S. who have active missing cases, said Hoopeston Police Chief Mark Drollinger.

For more information on Ryan or other

Obituaries

PRUITT - Dorothy Pruitt, 78, formerly of Hoopeston, died at 3 a.m. Saturday, May 10, 2003 at Asta Health Care Center, Paxton. Graveside services will be at 10 a.m. Friday at Floral Hill Cemetery. There will be no visitation. Brown-Alkire Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Weather



Chance of thunderstorms today, tonight and tomorrow. Highs near 69, lows near 50.

For current weather conditions, call **(217) 283-**

Benefit

for the family of Ed Botkin
starts at 2 p.m. Saturday, May 17
Second Chance Saloon

Cake walk, raffle, door prizes, 50/50
Chicken or rib dinner by donation
Music by Touch of Blue
Auction featuring NASCAR items, stained glass, theme baskets, wood crafts

Summer Bowling Leagues are now forming!

Thursday Night 9 Pin Mixed 4 person teams start May 29. For info, call Leona York, 283-6803 or Pla-Mor Lanes, 283-5195.

Friday Night 9 Pin Mixed, 4 person teams start June 6. For info, call Pla-Mor, 283-5195.

Classifieds

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Having out of town visitors? We have two brand new 1 bedroom furnished apartments available by the night or by the week. TV, phone, utilities included. (217) 283-7996.

AUCTIONS

Thinking of having an auction?
Go to www.jonwitvoetauctioneer.com or call (217) 748-6289!

CARD OF THANKS

Thank you to everyone at Maple School for the Spring Fling donations for Andrew Myers.

The parents of Andrew Myers

CHILD CARE

Responsible 13-year-old would like summer babysitting job. Please call Eliza at (217) 283-7068.

Mother of 1 will babysit in my home. References available. (217) 748-4274.

HELP WANTED

Someone to help with yard work. Call (217) 283-6455

HOUSES WANTED

Family needs 3 bedroom home to rent in Hoopeston. (217) 283-7829

MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE

Schwinn recumbent exercise bike. Good condition. \$100 OBO. You pick up. (217) 283-4045.

Twin box spring and mattress w/frame, only used once, \$100; maple dresser, \$60; antique round oak table w/leaves, 6 matching carved back chairs. Call Lana, (217) 283-9734 after 5 p.m.

Two recliners, very nice, one rocker/recliner, one wall hugger, lamps, paintings, occasional chair. (217) 283-6082

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