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# Just the Facts

Tuesday, March 5, 2018

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!

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## Flags fly in Hoopeston Area High School parking lot in show of student-led patriotism

On February 21, Hoopeston Area School Board heard comments about two teachers who refused to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The next day, and every day since, a group of students wheeled into the high school parking lot with American flags displayed on their trucks and cars. And every day since, the group of young men uses their time before school putting small flags on the vehicles of anyone who requests one.

On Wednesday, Ethan Larkin, Brady Moore, Chaz Landers and Drew Johnson - later joined by Devan Thomas - were at it again. A bag of 100 small flags - and a bag of zip ties - at the ready, the group spent the better part of 45 cold



Student vehicles at Hoopeston Area High School are decorated in various sizes of flags as a show of patriotism in the wake of two district teachers refusing to stand for the daily Pledge of Allegiance.

minutes placing flags on vehicles as students entered the parking lot.

Not all students want a flag, but that does not faze the group. "Have a good day," one tells the driver of a car that will go flagless that day.

But several students do, and the boys happily oblige, usually zip tying them to antennas. A car without an antenna momentarily proves challenging until the driver opens the sunroof and a flag is inserted before the sunroof is closed again.

It's a show of patriotism," said flag-shorts-wearing Drew

Johnson of the activity which counterbalances "people who won't stand for the flag and don't respect it."

The students said a male teacher who was not standing for the Pledge now is, but a female teacher still is not. The before-school activity will continue "until she stands or is no longer with us," Johnson said.

Thus far, it is only students who have requested flags, but the group understands the predicament staff may be

See **FLAGS** on other side

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## From the Blotter

Amber N. Pocica, 29, of Hoopeston, was ticketed following an accident at 10:08 a.m. Sunday.

Police said Jennifer Garrison, 34, of Hoopeston, in a 2004 Jaguar X-Type, was eastbound on West Orange and slowed to turn south on Third Ave., when she was struck by Pocica, in a 2013 Chevrolet Malibu.

Pocica was charged with operating an insured vehicle and released on a notice to appear in Vermilion County traffic court. Due to damage, her car was towed from the scene.

No tickets or injuries were reported in an accident at 12:30 p.m. Sunday at West Elm and South Sixth Ave.

Police said due to snow, Kayla R. Goble, 16, of Rankin, lost control of the 2019 Chevrolet hatchback she was driving and struck a stop sign.

## Court Dispositions

February 7

Chrystal Weigand, Hoopeston, pleaded not guilty in two cases of general nuisance; trial March 7.

Duane J. Wishba, Manteno, failed to appear for unlawful acts constituting disorderly conduct, found guilty by default, fined \$200; status check March 7.

Arizona Harwood, Hoopeston, pleaded guilty to battery fined \$200 status check March 7.

Jacqueline Ashby, failed to appear for owner's duties, found guilty, fined \$210; status check March 7.

## Weather

Chance of flurries today. High 23. Tonight, partly cloudy. Low 11. Tomorrow, sunny. High 29, low 18.

## Classifieds

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## Flags continued from other side

in if they support the flag project.

Pointing out what they believe to be hypocrisy, the youth say the board will not do anything about teachers not standing, due to First Amendment rights, but then teachers are told not to speak to the media or the public about the issue. They agree teachers should not give their stance on it in class. "But if they want to give a personal statement, that should be ok," said Brody Moore.

There has been a little bit of pushback against the students. A day or two earlier, "some kid was revving his engine and (dean of students Landon) Hawkins said 'shut 'em off,' to Chaz Landers, believing it was his engine being revved. A school employee allegedly reached into the truck to shut it off.

Landers denied revving his engine, but said it was running. "We live in the Midwest. It's cold out."

Students had been backing their vehicles in the last row of the parking lot to display their flags. "I guess we were in the wrong because the lines are angled," Johnson said. On Tuesday, an announcement over the school's public address system reminded students that the lot is striped for angled parking. Wednesday, each driver properly backed his vehicle into an angled spot.

A more spontaneous display of national spirit was shut down the previous week. The students said after their lunch, they go to the auditorium to wait for the lunch period to end. While there, some sang Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA, but, they said, they were made to quit.

The boys are getting support from some members of the community. Some motorists honked as they drove past the school Wednesday. Terry Buhrmester added a flag to his truck, then drove through the parking lot. The group cheered. "He's a legend," one of them said.

Across the street, Tammy Whitlock-Tetzloff, keeping warm in a flag-design coat, waved a large flag as she videoed the goings-on in the school parking lot.

On Thursday, several more motorists with flags drove by the school in support.



Ethan Larkin, Brady Moore, Chaz Landers and Drew Johnson gather Wednesday morning in the Hoopeston Area High School parking lot, waiting to place flags on students' vehicles.

As the clock ticked past 8 a.m., another cluster of cars pulled into the parking lot, driving down the last row in order to get a flag. The group jumped up to accommodate them. "Alrighty," Johnson said. "let's flag 'em up!"