



# BELLEVILLE NEWS-DEMOCRAT

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When travelers pull off Interstate 70 into the small Bond County community of Pocahontas, they have two questions: "Where's the bathroom?" and "Is Gretchen Wilson really from this town?"



## GRAMMY NOMINEE GRETCHEN WILSON DOES 'POCAHONTAS PROUD'

People visit town to ask about star of country music

BY TERI MADDOX  
News-Democrat

Pocahontas hasn't changed much since one of its former residents took the country and western music world by storm.

There still are about 750 people, three motels, three taverns, three antique shops, three restaurants, two gas stations, a grocery store, an elementary school, a doctor's office, a real estate office, a bank and a post office.

But in the past 11 months, the quiet village between Highland and Greenville has become known all over the world as the hometown of the "Redneck Woman."

"I get people coming off (Interstate 70), and they have two questions," said Natasha Scott, 26, a cashier at Stevenson's gas station. "Where's the bathroom?" and "Is Gretchen Wilson really from this town?"

Wilson, who lived near "Pokey" as a child, was a virtual unknown until last March. That's when Epic Records released her single, "Redneck Woman," which stayed at the top of Billboard's country singles chart for six weeks.

Wilson's album, "Here for the Party," has sold nearly 3 million copies, making her the top-selling debut artist of any genre for 2004. The Country Music Association gave her the prestigious Horizon Award in November. A week later, she was named Breakthrough Favorite New Artist at the American Music Awards.

Please see WILSON, A3



STEVE NAGY/News-Democrat

Gretchen Wilson is up there with the town's Indian princess namesake when visitors enter Pocahontas.



STEVE NAGY/News-Democrat

Pocahontas' Stevenson BP service station co-owner Kenny Stevenson chats with part-time cashier Tiffany Ferrell of Highland on Thursday. The store sells "Hell, yeah" T-shirts, a yell heard at Gretchen Wilson's concerts.

### Gretchen Wilson at the Grammys

Show time: 7 p.m. Sunday on KMOV-TV, Channel 4.

**Wilson's nominations:** Best New Artist (all genres), Best Country Album ("Here for the Party"), Best Country Song ("Redneck Woman") and Best Female Country Vocal Performance.

**Another metro-east nominee:** Belleville native Jeff Tweedy and his band Wilco's album "A Ghost Is Born" is nominated for Best Alternative Music Album. Read more about Wilco on Sunday in Lifestyle.



JESSICA BALADAD/For the News-Democrat

Chuck Helwig pours a microbrew in a test lab at his home in east Belleville.

## Microbrewer set to revive old tradition in Belleville

Delayed plans moving again

BY SCOTT WUERZ  
News-Democrat

BELLEVILLE — After seven years of planning, Chuck Helwig is finally ready to put the city back on the map as a brewery town.

Helwig originally planned in 1997 to open the Robin's Beak microbrewery pub and restaurant at 127 Mascoutah Ave. But his wife was expecting at the time and his daughter was suffering from serious health problems, so he put his dream project off.

"Family is the most important thing," Helwig said. "So we had to focus on our priorities. Now that has all settled down and we're ready to go."

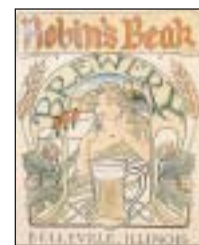
Helwig plans to invest nearly \$1 million in renovating his building, constructing a wing where his copper brewing kettles will sit behind display windows, and demolishing an old house to make room for a parking lot.

The business — named Robin's Beak because it sounded like an old-fashioned pub and because Helwig thought it sounded "quirky" — will be a tribute to Belleville's heritage as a brewery town.

"We're going to cut out the floor on the second level, and the walls and the ceiling will have murals of Belleville at the turn-of-the-century," Helwig said. "There were 40-some-odd breweries in Belleville over the years. I've studied everything about them that I can find."

The city's last major brewery, which made Stag beer, closed in 1988.

Please see BREWER, A2



The logo for Chuck Helwig's proposed brewery in Belleville.

### Coming Sunday



**WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?** We received more than 200 photos in our favorite dog photo search. Check out the best in Lifestyle.

**SOMEONE'S PLAYING HOCKEY:** Two metro-east hockey players — one from Maryville, one from Belleville — are making their marks in the NCAA Division I ranks. In Sports.

## Police now probing origin of slot machine, handguns

Investigation's focus: role of auxiliary unit

BY MIKE FITZGERALD  
News-Democrat

EAST ST. LOUIS — Acting Police Chief Marion Hubbard is investigating the origin of handguns and a slot machine that the head of the police auxiliary unit booked into evidence more than a week ago.

Hubbard said he has ordered Carl Brinkley, the auxiliary unit's head, to submit a report on the firearms and the slot machine.

"If we find out any discrepancy regarding any evidence

that was turned in, an investigation will be conducted in regards to it," Hubbard said.

Brinkley, a retired East St. Louis Police officer, could not be reached for comment.

Hubbard said he did not know how many guns were turned in by Brinkley, nor could he describe them.

"We're just starting an investigation in regards to it, and I'm waiting until we get all the facts in there," Hubbard said.

The auxiliary unit consists of unpaid volunteers who normally help full-time commissioned police with support

Please see POLICE, A2

## Controversial SIUE poster coming down

Campus newspaper responds to protest

BY COURTNEY RAKERS  
For the News-Democrat

EDWARDSVILLE — Controversial student newspaper rack displays at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville advertising the film "Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle" will come down Monday after weeks of debate.

"Our final decision is to remove the poster," said Tyler Bennett, editor of the student newspaper, The Alestle. "We are going to go ahead and take them down Monday morning."

The displays are locked, and the next opportunity The Alestle will have to remove the posters is Monday.



ZIA NIZAMI/News-Democrat

One poster was replaced Friday with this poster in the SIUE university center.

The poster depicts a bare-breasted woman partly covered by two "Harold & Kumar" DVDs she is holding in front of her chest. Her pants are unzipped. The poster is displayed

Please see POSTER, A2

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E CLASSIFIED

### LOTTERY FOR ILLINOIS

Pick 3-Midday: 0-2-8 Pick 4-Evening: 5-9-4-7  
Pick 3-Evening: 5-3-6 Little Lotto: 12-18-21-27-38  
Pick 4-Midday: 5-5-8-1 Jackpot: \$16.5 million

MEGA MILLIONS Game 6-14-21-24-50 Mega Ball: 28 Jackpot: \$50 million

### FOR MISSOURI

Pick 3-Midday: 4-3-8 ; Evening: 1-9-0  
Pick 4-Midday: 4-7-4-5 ; Evening: 0-4-3-9  
Show Me 5-Midday: 2-23-31-32-35  
Show Me 5-Evening: 1-12-20-25-35

