



\$1.00



Side Tracks

your
express
route to
upcoming
VG events

Douglas County Retired Teachers Luncheon
11/15 at 11:30am @ Smith House in Tuscola.

VGJH BBB @ Arthur
11/16 at 6 pm

VG PTO movie night
Little Gym 11/17 @ 6:30 pm

VGUMC at Murdock Food Bank 11/17, 2:45-6 pm

VGJH GBB @ IESA Regional Tourney 11/18-11/22 @ Salt Fork

Camargo Victory Church Food Drive 11/19-11/26

Community Thanksgiving Service @ Cornerstone Baptist Church
11/19 @ 7 pm

2017 Tri City Country Club Annual Members Meeting
11/20 @ 7pm
Clubhouse Dining Room

VGH BBB @ Cerro Gordo Turkey Tourney
11/20 -11/24

VG School Board MTG
11/20 @ 6 pm

VGH GBB @ Tuscola
11/21 at 6 pm

VG Schools Thanksgiving Holiday NO SCHOOL
11/22-11/24

HAPPY THANKSGIVING from the staff of Villa Grove News! 11/23

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING FESTIVAL
11/25 from 3-7 pm

If you have an upcoming event that you would like to see featured in side tracks, email us at vgnews@mchsi.com or call us at 832-4201

AF Antronics: Homing in on Villa Grove location

Growing up in Minnesota, and working on his master of divinity degree, Loren Anderson had hardly heard of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, let alone Villa Grove. I spoke with him recently about how he found his way to Villa Grove, about the business he's hoping to grow, and about many other things, including the "cool" building, the former First National Bank on Main Street, that he now calls home.

Are you planning on moving here? (into the loft apartment on the second floor)

Yes, I'm planning on moving with my daughter.

Let's start at the beginning. How did you come to relocate to Villa Grove?

I earned a Master's of Divinity Degree, and I was going to be a minister, but that career never came to be. In my first career, I was a professional musician.

What instruments did you play?

I played drums. And piano a little bit, too. That was my first career. I travelled around the world, doing that. I was playing in this jazz club in St. Paul, and this guy kept coming in there. I'm shy, and he's shy and finally after I broke the ice, I found out that we were working for the same defense contractor. We didn't really like our jobs and one time he said 'My parents have this business in Champaign-Urbana. I said, "Where's that?" <laughing> My parents want me to take it over. So, I said "Let's go take a look at it," and that was in 1989. Now, 27 years later, here we are.

Do you still play?

I gave that up when I moved here and began my career. I was working for a family business, and that can be tough when you're not a family member. You're never a partner. I did that for 27 years, and I saw that because I wasn't a family member I wasn't going anywhere and I decided to find something else. I got a job at MTD, and when I told him, he basically said "Do you want the company?" His family wanted to sell the company to me, but he gave it to me against the other family members who were shareholders. I thought I could do all the things I always wanted to do, and so it

became mine in December of last year.

What is the name of your company?

AF Antronics. It was named after his parents, Alice and Fred Ore.

Do you wish to go into detail about what AF Antronics does?

We build one third of a telemetry package. We build the antenna that picks up the signal and there are other companies that build the radio and the transmitter, and there are other people who build the transmitter, which a lot of people think of as the collar that goes around the animal. We build one third of the tracking package, the least expensive part. This one is for something called "Project Lifesaver" which is a company that uses telemetry equipment to track people with Alzheimer's.

I've seen the picture of the gentleman from Africa holding one of your antennas in the shadow of Mt. Kilimanjaro. It's quite impressive.

Yes, that picture was in national geographic. About fifty years ago, it was a rite of passage for those people to kill a lion. Their culture did a one eighty, and instead of killing one, they adopt one and protect it, and we were there at the very beginning, in 1975.

Rob's dad, Fred Ore, founded the company and started selling those out of his home in 1975.

Do you turn the metal here yourself?

I make everything. I buy the raw materials and make it. I was busy making stuff last night! I've been making them for 27 years. A lot of people grow up wanting to be a fireman or something, but I always wanted to make a living standing on my feet all day in a pile of aluminum shavings! <laughs>

Yes, but you're your own boss and you're doing something worthwhile.

To me, the real promise and growth opportunity for my company is going to be with the aging population of this country. On November first, the State of Illinois passed what's called a silver search, which is sort of an Amber alert for seniors who wander off. As a matter of fact, this antenna is going to be given to the Douglas County Sher-



Pictured Above: Loren Anderson of AF Antronics displaying his latest creation

iff's Office. They're already involved in Project Lifesaver.

How did you come to Villa Grove?

It's funny, when I first decided, people said Villa Grove? It floods. It has trains, but it's really starting to grow on me. I grew up in a town just like it, and to be honest the flooding in Tuscola is just as bad, but all you hear about is Villa Grove. When I got the business, I got everything but the real estate. They sold the building to Terminix almost immediately, and so I've been leasing from them. This place, which is such a cool building, was on the market and the price was right, so here I am, and truthfully, at a fraction of the cost of what I was paying them.

Are you looking to expand employee-wise?

Yes. I currently have one full time employee, and I'm looking to add more. I was advised by my attorney to go through express personnel services, due to liability, and so that's what I've done. I'm also looking to collaborate with Paul's, the machine shop here in town, on some things. It's so important to me to keep as many things local as we can.

What's with the signs? (two older, rusty oil and gasoline advertisements)?

When I came here in 1989, we were in a two-car garage in White Heath and our business expanded until we had to build a factory, so we built a three thousand square foot factory in Urbana. It had cinder block walls and we had

to cover them with plastic because of overspray from the drill presses. When I came here, I wanted the drill presses against this exposed brick wall, but I didn't want to put plastic up again. I went to antique shops and bought those and it will take care of the overspray issue. It looks cool, too! I have a total of 11 drill presses. I haven't brought them all out yet.

This works well for you because you'll be living up above. Are you one of those creative types who might come down at two in the morning if the muse hits you? Are you one of those types?

Oh yes. I'm one of those

types. I only worry about the noise I generate.

Is it noisy?

It can be.

Is there anything you would like to add?

My daughter, who's sixteen, has her own company, and I think it would be nice to repurpose the front of this space as a retail space for her clothing business. Additionally, my son, whose 12, is a talented artist, and I can see perhaps purchasing one of the other spaces that are available here as a gallery for his work. This place is really growing on me. It reminds me of my hometown.

DAR announce this years Good Citizens

The Stephen A. Douglas Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution would like to announce this year's selection of Good Citizens. Each year since 1937 the Stephen A. Douglas Chapter, DAR has recognized the outstanding high school senior of each of our county's schools who most closely represents the qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism. The DAR Good Citizen Program reflects two of the missions of the National Society which are education and patriotism.

Selected for the DAR Good Citizen Award is Camille Klopffleisch from Arcola, Abigail Duzan from Arthur Lov-

ington Atwood Hammond, Kayla Thurston from Shiloh, Sydney Hoel from Tuscola, and Madeline Shunk from Villa Grove.

The Piankeshaw Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution recognizes the SAR Good Citizen Award. Selected this year is Quinten Helmuth from Arcola, Kolby Rickman from Arthur Lovington Atwood Hammond, Matthew Rideout from Shiloh, Jacob Craddock from Tuscola, and James Gulick from Villa Grove.

The DAR/SAR Good Citizens, families, and friends will be honored February 17, 2018 at a luncheon at the Villa Grove Methodist Church.

Winner of Villa Grove State Bank Pumpkin weight guessing contest



Pictured Above: Zeva Kirkman. Winner of the pumpkin weight guessing contest at Villa Grove State Bank

Locals work together to relocate Elves' House just in time for Tree Lighting event on Main Street



L-R Cassandra Gunter, Spenser Eversole, Clayton Hudson, Julie Woller, Jack Jones, Phil Jones and Will Jones. Philip Jones used his Caterpillar end loader to move Everleigh Hudson's Playhouse to Villa Grove to accommodate the elves that will be coming to town on November 25 for the Community Christmas Tree Lighting Festival.

