



Villa Grove News

Serving Villa Grove, Camargo and the surrounding areas!

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Side Tracks

your express route to upcoming VG events



Villa Grove COMMUNITY Vacation Bible School
Villa Grove First Christian Church 7/8 - 7/12

VGFB 7 on 7 @ GCMS
7/12 at 6 pm

Camargo Township Library
Friday Fun Day 7/13 from 10-11

VG UMC Finance Committee mtg 7/18 @ 7 pm

Villa Grove City Council meeting
7/23 @ 6 pm

VGFB 7 on 7 @ Unity
7/25 at 6 pm

Villa Grove Schools Registration 8/1 & 8/2

Villa Grove Planning & Zoning Committee Meeting
8/1 @ 6 pm

Villa Grove AG DAYS
August 3rd, 4th & 5th

VGJH SB vs Paris Mayo
8/4 @ 10 AM

VGJH SB @ Urbana
8/10 at 4:30 pm

VGJH SB vs Mattoon
8/13 @ 4:30 pm

Villa Grove City Council meeting
8/13 @ 6 pm

VGJH BB @ ST Matthews
8/15 at 4:15 pm

VGH Golf @ Okaw Valley
8/16 at 4 pm

VGJH SB @ Gibson City
8/16 at 4:15 pm

VGJH BB vs ST Joe
8/16 @ 4:30 pm

Villa Grove Schools First day of student attendance
8/17 1 PM dismissal



Weather no obstacle for Freedom Celebration

By Tony Hooker
Staff Writer

A summer storm, blowing through at exactly the wrong time, was one of few blights on an otherwise promising first time event as the Celebration of Freedom took place on July 1 at Villa Grove's Richman Park.

A host of volunteers did their best to get the inaugural event off the ground, and indeed, three of the four main events were completed without a hitch. Somewhere around fifty young ball players braved the hot temps to put on a show for their fami-

lies at the coach pitch tournament. Three Villa Grove teams, along with a team composed of players from several area towns competed, and it's a fair bet to say that all the competitors had a great time extending their season for another few games. From my vantage point, the teams appeared to be well coached, with the proper emphasis being balanced between teaching the fundamentals of the game and winning and fun was had by all.

The love of country shined brightly as 29 brave contestants entered their bikes,

wagons and scooters in the Patriotic bicycle parade and decoration contest. By the time the sparkling, shining, red, white and blue festooned vehicles had passed in review and the judges' votes had been tallied, Rylan Lake was voted the winner, with the team of Aim & Addie Wilson finishing second. Jessie Faith's patriotic bike was good for third place, but all the participants had fun and got Colonel Klink's bounce house tickets for their efforts.

Garrett and the Geezers, quickly gaining a strong following based on their eclectic

sets and solid musicianship, were just beginning to get rolling when the weather set in, but those in attendance enjoyed their initial offerings.

Finally, the fireworks. Because of the complexity of Melrose Pyrotechnics shows, they have to be set up hours in advance, and according to the technicians at the show, aren't safe to unload after being primed. Ultimately, the rather controversial decision to light them off in the rain was made, but according to those in the know, they would have to have been shot off

regardless of the presence of an audience, and for many the experience of watching them during a steady rain was a new one.

The event, dedicated to our men and women in uniform, both past and present, wasn't without its glitches. No event of this size ever is, but it certainly seems worthy of another attempt in 2019. Let's see how big the event's organizers, along with the city of Villa Grove, the Villa Grove Chamber of Commerce and VG Summer Recreation, can grow this event.



Picture Above: These beauties discovered that one way to beat the heat was with a sweet treat. In this case, snow cones from the VGH Football Cheerleaders. Photo By: Tony Hooker



Picture Above: Four Teams braved the heat to participate in a coach pitch tournament at the Villa Grove Celebration of Freedom, held on July 1 at Richman Park. Photo By: Tony Hooker



Freedom Fest Bike Parade was a huge success with 29 patriotic participants. Judges Jackie Wells, Elizabeth Hamilton, Thomas Roy, and Tricia Floyd, along with Miss Villa Grove, Courtney Howard and Jr. Miss Villa Grove, Morgan Smith, had a difficult time selecting the best entries. All photos by Elizabeth Hamilton



Picture Above: Auto enthusiasts got together to enjoy good food, good fellowship and some fine looking automobiles at Redline Auto Sales cruise in on July 1. Photo By: Megan Happ



Picture Above: Garrett and the Geezers, performing in the shadow of Old Glory at the Villa Grove Freedom Celebration on July 1. Photo By: Tony Hooker



Picture Above: These lovely ladies from the Pentecostal Church took a break from selling pies and other goodies to pose for a snapshot at the Villa Grove Freedom Celebration on July 1. Photo By: Tony Hooker



Second Annual Steam Threshing Show set at Amish Heritage Center

The second annual Steam Threshing Show will be held on August 3-4 at the new Illinois Amish Heritage Center three miles east of Arthur, Illinois. Times will be 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The 2018 show will be centered around harvesting and threshing oats rather than wheat. The oats will be cut and bound into sheaves by a horse-drawn mechanical binder two weeks before the event after which the sheaves will be stacked into shocks for drying in the field. On the day of the event, they will be loaded onto horse-drawn wagons and transported to the threshing machine which will separate the grain from the chaff and straw. The grain

will be directed to a bin and the straw will form a hay stack that will continually grow with each new round of threshing.

The threshing process will be done using antique farming equipment. Other antique and vintage agricultural equipment will also be on display. Farm equipment demonstrations will feature a John Deere stationary hay baler, old engines and steam engines, a grist mill, field demonstrations of plowing and disking, with Belgian horses and the old methods of threshing grain by hand with flails and a fanning mill. Blacksmithing will also be demonstrated, as well as goat milking and butter churning. All demonstra- Cont. pg. 2

Illinois Master Naturalist Program Launched Locally

Dave Shiley, Extension Educator-Local Food Systems and Small Farms

September 11, 2018 will be the first day of class for a new group of University of Illinois Extension volunteers in Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Moultrie and Shelby counties. While the Illinois Master Naturalist program is not new for the University of Illinois Extension, it is new for U of I Extension Unit 19.

In Coles County and the

others in our Extension Unit, the Illinois Master Gardener program has trained volunteers to disseminate research based horticultural information to residents in the area for many years. The Illinois Master Naturalist program is very similar, but the focus of outreach by volunteers is environmental stewardship.

The program is designed to educate and train a corps of volunteers to provide support in the conservation, manage-

ment, and interpretation of the area's natural resources in collaboration with local partners.

The training provides science-based educational opportunities that connect people with nature and help them become engaged environmental stewards. The initial 40 hours of training will be presented at Douglas-Hart Nature Center through sessions that include lecture, discussion, and hands-on

activities. Training will be every Tuesday, from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm, beginning September 11, 2018 through October 23, 2018. An additional orientation and introductory meeting is scheduled on August 28, 2018 at 6:00 pm.

With the help of local experts, University of Illinois Extension provides the educational support for the program, while volunteering is typically coordinated through local partners. In our Extension

Unit, program partners currently include Douglas-Hart Nature Center, Grand Prairie Friends, and the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District. Volunteer Master Naturalist service projects may include wetland, forest, and prairie restoration; fish, wildlife, and plant inventories; environmental education programs for youth and adults; and interpretive tours at the visitor center. The list of volunteer Cont. pg. 2