

# Hook, Line and Sinker

With Tony Hooker

The ancient Greeks referred to this time of year as Dies Caniculares, because they associated this time of year with the star Sirius, the Dog Star from the Canis Major Constellation.

The dog days have indeed set in around these parts. Summer Rec baseball and softball are drawing to a close. School sports are in slow mode before practice will ramp up in earnest beginning the first week of August. Vacation Bible School sessions at area churches have drawn to their successful conclusions, for the most part and children have settled into their indolent summer routines by and large.

What this means for me as a newspaper man is that I have to dig deeply to find events that are worthy of being in the sidetracks or south county spotlight. Frankly, there's not a lot going on around our town for most of July.

It's a time of family gatherings and trips to the lake and

friendly arguments about the exploits of the Cubs and Cardinals, with an occasional Indians or White Sox or Dodgers fan being an outlier.

The MoDo county fair will be in full bloom by the time these words hit print, and myriad other county fairs and festivals will be ongoing for most of the next four to six weeks, if you're into that sort of thing. I am, but my waistline can only take so many foot long pronto pups, and I save those calories for Ag Days, the first week of August in Villa Grove.

Speaking of Ag Days, there are plenty of opportunities for folks to help out with the festival. Too often these days, people are content to sit on the sidelines and judge others rather than pitching in and making their opinions known. If you have an idea about Ag Days or the City Bonfire that's coming up in October, or November's Christmas tree lighting festival, let your alderman know.

Even if they're not directly involved, they'll know who is and they'll steer you in the right direction. Many hands make light work, always. Fresh perspectives sometimes rejuvenate old projects. Maybe you'll have an opportunity to make a lasting impact. Maybe you'll make new friends. Maybe you'll set a good example for someone who looks up to you. Maybe you'll learn a little bit about why decisions are made.

One thing is certain. It sure beats complaining on social media without even trying to make positive improvements, to my way of thinking.

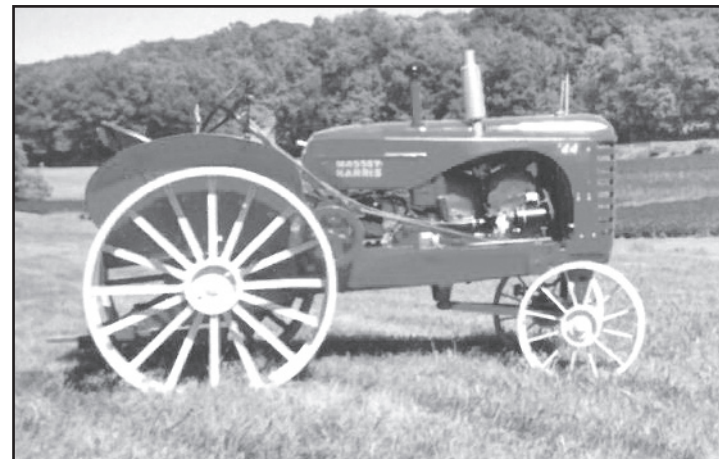
I hope that you all enjoy this month, named in honor of Julius Caesar. It won't be long before July's languid days give way to August's frenetic pace. Back to school. Pep Rallies, football games, volleyball matches and the inexorable march toward autumn and winter. I think it's time for a swim.

# Second Annual Steam Threshing Show set at the Illinois 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, including a 1924 steam tractor and threshing machine made by the Keck-Gonnerman Company of Mt. Vernon, Indiana. Other antique and vintage agricultural equipment will also be on display, including a 1954 Massey Harris model 44 tractor owned by Sam Miller, a 1931 John Deere D owned by George Kauffman, and many other antique tractors. 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 demonstrations will be "learn abouts" as they will be accompanied by explanations of the processes.

The event will once again feature a petting zoo including baby lambs, baby goats, a baby pony, baby calves, ducks, chickens, a peacock and other familiar farm animals. Visitors will also be able to enjoy pony rides, buggy rides and train rides. Other activities for children will include tug-of-war and the popular "quarters in a haystack." Pitching horse shoes and other activities will be available for the adults.

The 1882 Daniel Schrock house will be open for tours and various domestic activities and displays will be featured in the house. Tours will be conducted by Owen Schrock who grew up in the house and is a grandson of the

last owner of the house. Visitors can also see the progress being made on the restoration of the 1865 Moses Yoder house.

A food tent will serve meals and ice cream made by machines powered by early gas or steam engines. Vendors will also sell kettle corn, lemon shake-ups, crafts and other items of interest.

Admission price will be \$10 per person or \$20 per car or buggy load. All funds will go to the restoration of the historic Amish houses and the development of the heritage center. Everyone is welcome and invited to come out for a day of fun for the whole family at the Illinois Amish Heritage Center.

The Illinois Amish Heritage Center is located at 284 Illinois Route 133, three miles east of Arthur and one mile west of Chesterville, Illinois. For more information call Wilmer Otto at 217-721-9266, Bob Doan at 217-543-2232, or visit [www.illinoisamish.org](http://www.illinoisamish.org) or [www.facebook.com/Illinois-Amish-Heritage-Center](http://www.facebook.com/Illinois-Amish-Heritage-Center)

# Flea Market added to Apple Dumpling Festival This Year

By Doris Elmore  
Staff Writer

Have you ever thought about trying your hand at a flea market? For newbies and those more experienced, the Atwood Chamber of Commerce is adding a flea market to their festival this year. It will be located by Unity

Grain, east of Main Street on Central Street. Booths will be set up in the grass at Unity Grain. The flea market will be held on Friday and Saturday.

So many people like to have garage sales, so why not set it up as a flea market and join a group of other people with "treasures" to offer. This

is the first year the chamber has tried this venue and are in hopes it will spur the interest of not only local residents, but any one who has flea market items.

Those interested should contact Mike Drake, 871-2929 or Kris Issler at the First State Bank of Atwood, 578-2221.

# AG Days is Fast Approaching; Help needed

By Julia Hall  
The 40th Anniversary of the Villa Grove Ag Days is just around the corner on August 3, 4, and 5th. Plans are in place, schedules and flyers are hot off the press, vendors and entertainment contacted and scheduled. Now, it's just a matter of making it happen

smoothly for all participants! Additional "person"-power is needed and anyone who can contribute even just a little time before, during and after Ag Days is greatly appreciated. In addition to help in set up and clean up, specifically, we need help in managing the Cornhole/

Bags Tournament, helping with the site for the garden tractor racers & pullers, and other areas. Please message us on Facebook or contact Larry Hall (General Chairman) at 217-855-7779 or any committee member.

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