



Villa Grove News



Serving Villa Grove, Camargo and the surrounding areas!

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Side Tracks

your express route to upcoming VG events

VG Booster Club mtg 01/09 @ 6:00 pm

VGH GBB @ Pal-Hut 01/10 at 6:00 pm

VGJH VB vs St Thomas 01/10 @ 6:00 pm

VGH BBB vs CGB 01/11 @ 6:00 pm

VG Devilettes and Jr Devilettes @ Clinton Competition 01/12

VGH GBB @ LOVC tourney at Martinsville 01/12-01/17

VGH BBB @ Judah 01/12 at 12:00 pm

VG PTO Mtg 01/14 @ 6:30 pm

VGJH VB @ Bement 01/15 at 6:00 pm

VGH BBB @ Chrisman 01/15 at 6:00 pm

VGJH BBB @ Shiloh 01/15 at 6:00 pm

VGJH BBB @ Okaw Valley 01/15 at 6:00 pm

VG SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT DAY 11:30 AM DISMISSAL 01/18

VGH GBB LOVC tourney final 01/19 @ ALAH

VGH BBB @ LOVC Tourney(Cumberland) 01/19-01/26

VG Deviletter @ IHSA Sectional (Mascoutah) 1/19

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



City Council Talks About Senior Center Attendance

By Bill Price Staff Writer

Mayor Cassandra Eversole-Gunter called to order the December 26, 2018 regular session of the Council meeting with roll call and four alderman were present, two alderman and two junior alderman were absent. Led by the Mayor the Pledge Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Gunter then asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of Shirley Jones who became the third victim of the tragic accident that occurred December 7, 2018. Shirley was the wife of John Jones whose life was claimed in the accident along with

Kristen Trudeau who was the Peace Meal Program Director at the Senior Center. The community will miss all three.

The members proceeded with the approval of the minutes for the December 10, 2018 meeting and the approval of the of the last Closed Session minutes held November 26, 2018.

The Council unanimously approved the Claims for Payment of \$76,932.29 and the Financial Statements for the month ending November 30, 2018.

Mayor Gunter then awarded the 2018 volunteer of the year award to Bill Koss. The award is a token of the city's

appreciation to Bill for all the hard work.

The next item on the agenda are the committee reports.

• Administration and Risk Management-Chair Blaney-nothing to report.

• Community development-Chair Johnson-nothing to report

• Emergency Services-Chair Leon-Discussed some of the details and regulations of the need to purchase turn-out equipment. The grant request relevant to this equipment was not available to the Fire Department. This is following the consensus obtained in the last meeting for \$7875 from Garner Sales

• Franchise Development-Chair Stipp-absent

• Public Works-Chair Allen-nothing to report

• Senior Center-Chair Griffith-absent

Alderman Blaney took the opportunity on the Senior Center front to extend an invitation to seniors to take advantage of the Peace Meal program offered by the center. She wanted to bring attention to those who would need transportation to contact the center for assistance. Additionally, new programs and activities will be coming forth in the new year. She called upon everyone to be aware of the need to find ways to

increase attendance at the Center in order that this very important program will continue.

Alderman Allen announced that there would be a Chamber of Commerce dinner at which the guest speaker would be former representative Tim Johnson. Also the coming AG Days event and that these two functions would be addressed with more details later.

Mayor Gunter announced there was no necessity for an Executive Session and the Council moved to adjourn.

Villa Grove Post Office: Still delivering

By Tony Hooker Staff Writer

Although the Postal Service has no official motto, the words "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds" still ring true. I thought it would be fun to find out a little bit more about the sheer numbers of items that the post office handles during the holiday season, but more importantly, what keeps them going during those long, hectic days leading up to Christmas. Post office spokesperson Tim Ratliffe was kind enough to take time out of his crazy day to answer some of my queries.

How big, in relation to the other local post offices is Villa Grove? Does it handle a similar amount of mail?

The Villa Grove Postmaster Laura Gardner oversees some smaller post offices

as well. There are five local post offices and that makes Villa Grove a main hub for the smaller offices in that area. One of the main differences this year, for Villa Grove and for most offices, is that parcel volume has been increasing every year. That is one of the main growth areas for the post service. Everyone is ordering things online now and that includes holiday gifts. This was the first year that the Villa Grove post office did Sunday parcel deliveries for the five Sundays before Christmas, just to handle the load because so many parcels were coming through the system, just to make sure we were keeping up with customer demands.

How many staff members are employed at Villa Grove?

There are seven employees at Villa Grove. There are two letter carrier routes and one rural route. There are other



The front of Post Office on Main Street in Villa Grove. Photo by Tony Hooker

employees that help sort the mail and distribute it to the

employees, plus help at the customers at the counter.

How many packages did the Villa Grove office handle this season?

In terms of a local number, that information is considered proprietary, but I can tell you that nationally, the busiest mail week was the week of the seventeenth through the twenty third, and that week, 200 million packages were estimated to be delivered during that one week. If you combined all the packages and cards during that one week, that number would have been nearly two billion pieces of mail.

I know you can't speak in specifics, but can you talk about a percentage increase in the number of pieces of mail that is handled locally during the holiday season at Villa Grove?

Some of those numbers are still coming in, but I can say that nationally, we experienced a growth of between fifteen and nineteen percent in parcels delivered. What is kind of unique about Villa Grove is that some of the employees there also live

there. They are a part of the town and they have a lot of local knowledge. Sometimes people are only mailing things once a year and it will come in without the proper address. Sometimes we'll get cards that are sent with only a name and a town without a certain address. Because employees have been here a long time, the postmaster, for example, has been here 15 years, and so they have a lot of local knowledge and most times they're able to get it delivered to the right person. The employees have an amazing connection to the people they're serving in Villa Grove. The postmaster there at Villa Grove said it best when she said "It's not just a job, it's a service." The employees take a great sense of pride in the service they provide. Everyone knows that they work at the post office so then they'll ask for information or ask them for help. In some ways, they're still providing work and services even if they're off hours. It's an amazing service that we provide, knowing that you can put a stamp on a piece of mail

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2018 Christmas Lighting Winners Announced



Annual Villa Grove Christmas Lighting Winners. Photo Above: 209 W. Wilson wins best overall. 12 Henson: best use of lights. 206 Spruce: best Christmas theme. 110 Hickory: most religious. 19 Hancock: prettiest decorations. Photo courtesy Tony Hooker.

Douglas County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarships Available

The Douglas County Farm Bureau Foundation is a private foundation dedicated to the youth of Douglas County. Up to \$2,000 in scholarships are available to assist students pursuing a college degree in Agriculture. Interested students may apply each year for consideration.

Applicants can receive up to one award per year of school; however, the applicant must re-apply every year.

Applications are now being accepted at the Douglas

County Farm Bureau for consideration and are due by Friday, February 22, 2019. Applications are available at the Douglas County Farm Bureau office or on their website, www.douglascfb.com under the Foundation tab.

Successful applicants will meet the following requirements:

- Enrolled in an Agriculture related field of study.
- Completed one semester of college course work.
- Submit a copy of college

transcript

• Submit a letter of application telling about yourself (500 word maximum)

• Parent or applicant must be a member of the Douglas County Farm Bureau

For more information about Douglas County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarships, contact the

Douglas County Farm Bureau office at 217-253-4442 or at douglasmgr@douglascfb.com.

Signs of the Season

By Jim Balmer



Steady Rain Fall Caused Mild Flooding around Front Street Bridge in Villa Grove, IL. Photo by Jim Balmer. To comment on any of the photos featured in Signs of the Season email us at vgnews@mchsi.com or send a letter to Villa Grove News PO Box 20, Villa Grove IL 61956. Comments may be published in future editions of the newspapers.