



Villa Grove News

Serving Villa Grove, Camargo and the surrounding areas!

Vol. 111 No. 4

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Pages 8

Side Tracks

your express route to upcoming VG events

WE HAVE NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES! news@thevillagrove.com to submit your news related items and advertising@thevillagrove.com for all of your advertising needs!

5/4 Villa Grove VFW Loyalty Day Parade 10am Main Street, VG. Line up begins at 9am

5/7 VGHS Honors Banquet

5/8 VG School Early Dismissal 1:30

5/8 VG Booster Club 6pm

5/9 Spring JH & HS Choir Concert @ 7pm

5/10 Blue Devil Classic

5/11 VGHS Prom

5/12 Mother's Day

5/13 PTO Meeting @ 630pm

5/15 Motorcycle Safety Awareness Seminar from 10am-1pm at Villa Grove Senior Center

5/17-18 Villa Grove Town Wide Garage Sales 5/18 VFW Annual Rummage Sale @ VFW Hall 8-2

5/18 Countryside United Methodist Church Flea Market 7am-2pm

5/18 Camargo Township District Library Kids Prom for Pre-K - 3rd Grade 6-7pm

5/20 Villa Grove School Board Meeting @6pm

5/22 VGHS Finals Periods 1, 2 and 3

5/22 Villa Grove School Early Dismissal at 1:50 and 2pm

5/23 Villa Grove School 8th Grade Promotion

5/27 Memorial Day

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

VFW 44th Annual Loyalty Day Parade Saturday, May 4

Along Main Street, Villa Grove

Line up at 9:00am • Parade begins at 10:00am

Tri-City: Taking Root for the Future

On January 28, 1969, oil from a platform located just six miles off the shore of southern California began to hemorrhage crude oil. A short time later, the gooey, sticky tar-like substance began to wash up on the pristine southern California beaches.

At the time, this oil spill was the largest in US history, and killed an estimated 9000 shore birds. The tragedy so moved congressman Gaylord Nelson that he decided to organize a series of "teach-ins", modeled after the ongoing Vietnam War protests. Nelson, along with co-chair, Congressman Pete McCloskey and Harvard professor Denis Hayes, who served as national coordinator, very pragmatically picked April 22nd, 1970 as the date because it was after spring break and before finals, guaranteeing student buy-in. Word of the event spread quickly, and by the time April 22nd arrived, more than 20 million Americans participated in Earth Day events, and this eventually led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency.

By 2000, the number of participants had swollen to 500 million people over 184 countries, and next year, in light of the 50th anniversary of the event, that number is sure to grow.

Locally, there are always myriad examples of folks who are doing their part for the environment.

John Schweighart is the kind of guy who seeks solutions when he hears about issues that others have. So it was that when he heard of a local man who wanted to get rid of some trees on his property, he had just the that some local folks had some trees they were looking to be rid of, he had just the solution. As a board member of Tri-City Country Club, he knew that the course had lost several trees to disease and insects over time and could use some new growth. So, with the help of Brad Johns, a Tri-City member who happened to love trees and who was in possession of a tree spade, he set about to find a mutually beneficial solution. Thus, over the course of two years, over 30 trees were transplanted from where they were

unwanted to where they could thrive. I recently sat down with John and Brad to catch up on how and why it all came about.

John, how many trees have you planted?

<JS> Over the course of the last two years, it's been 32 trees.

How did this come about?

<JS> There was a farmer who was clearing out some trees near Tuscola and I got wind of that. Darren Gilles mentioned that I might want to reach out to his cousin Brad Johns. We worked out a deal with Brad and got the trees for free, so we decided to roll with that. It probably hasn't been done in twenty years, and we had some Ash trees that were dying, so we decided it would be a good time to replace the dead ones and fill out the course a little bit.

<VGN> Brad, you're a member here as well? So, you were willing to give of your time and equipment?

<BJ> Yes, I'm a member.

Why do you have a tree spade?

<BJ> I had trees at a farm that I raised. I like trees and I bought a bunch of trees twenty



John Schweighart and Brad Johns, with one of the trees they recently planted. Photo by Tony Hooker.

years ago and planted them. To be honest with you, it was really for fun. I was selling some trees and putting them Cont. pg. 2

April Douglas County Agriculture: It Is Not Too Late To Plant

I can't report any progress in fieldwork since the last column. I understand there has been some work in scattered locations around the state but we have not turned a wheel. Each time we are close to being dry enough to go another rain comes through. The pattern seems to be that we have two or three warm windy days that do a lot of drying but then have another inch of rain. It is sleeting after an inch of rain as I write this and we are back to square one.

It is not late for planting yet but we have gotten accustomed to being able to run in early April. Historically, early May was considered the ideal time to plant corn and planting soybeans was somewhat of an afterthought when you had finished corn. Soil temperature was more important than the calendar in the days before the seed treatments we use now. Cold soil, various

diseases and insects all prey on the planted seed. Warm soil let the seed germinate quickly and not linger in the ground exposed to the various dangers. Treatments protect the seed in cold conditions and preserve the seed viability until warmer weather. Seed corn has been purchased with seed treatment on it all of my farming career but it is a relatively new concept to treat seed beans. We plant in soil temperatures that were not considered by the generation of farmers before us and get very good results. More than a few farmers are planting soybeans as they plant corn or even before they start on corn since research shows a very good response to early planting of soybeans

The grain markets are not concerned that the calendar is moving on to late April with only minor planting progress. The usual comment

is that farmers have a lot of big equipment and can plant these crops quickly. We can make quick work of planting but more than a couple of drying days are needed for us to start. Last month I talked about the very small amount of fieldwork done last fall. We can adapt in some cases and change our approach to planting but mostly the tillage and fertilization not done last fall will have to be done this spring.

We have been going over all of our equipment readying it for the rush to come. One of our Tuesday morning marketing committee attendees said he wished he knew what the first two breakdowns would be. That way he could address them ahead of time. Nothing is more disappointing than sitting idle waiting on the weather and then breakdown when you do get a chance to work. Often the complexity

of our implements mean we can't fix them ourselves and you are stuck waiting on a repairman while watching the neighbor make fast progress next to you. We have replaced a couple of tires on a field cultivator so we wouldn't have trouble with them later on and are having a leaking hydraulic cylinder from another tillage tool rebuilt. Hopefully, preventive maintenance will keep us in the field long before the first breakdown slows us down.

We plant mostly crops that have been genetically modified to resist or tolerate insects, disease or herbicide. There are currently ten of these modified crops. Eight would be considered food crops. This list does not include oranges but I read recently that genetic modification may what save oranges as a food crop. Citrus greening disease, carried by a tiny fly is devastating Florida orange groves. The oranges on infected trees turn hard, green and useless. The tree itself will eventually die. Other efforts of control like killing the flies or quarantining the areas with the disease have failed. Genetic modification so the trees can resist the disease looks like the only method left. Some source of resistance to the disease from another plant will likely be incorporated into orange trees genetically. Testing will begin to determine how effective the resistance is and how it affects the fruit and trees.

The article I read about citrus greening actually dealt more with the possible consumer acceptance of a genetically modified orange. A University of Illinois professor of Agricultural Communications participated in a study of the consumer view of genetically modified crops. Half of the people in the survey were positive about genetically modified food and another 37 percent were neutral on the matter. The article thought most people assume the acceptance level is lower than the survey found because those who do not accept genetically modified crops are

more vocal than those who approve or accept them.

The vocal opponents of genetic modification often complain there is not enough testing of these new plants. The testing of genetically modified crops is exhaustive and great care is taken in the testing process. When a company develops a new modification or event, they are also required to develop a test to detect the presence of that event. Unapproved corn plants are placed in plots with large isolation areas around them to prevent pollen drift out of the plot. The combines used to harvest the plots are equipped with grinders to destroy the grain as it is harvested. That way a stray kernel can't grow next year or the grain can't be accidentally hauled to the elevator and enter the supply stream. Testing of other crops is no less careful. Not until the government approval of a particular genetic modification will corn or soybeans or oranges be allowed into the food chain.

We really hope to be out on the roads moving from shop to field to field soon. Please be aware of farm machinery when you travel. Our implements are large, slow and not all that maneuverable. Top speed for a tractor and planter is something less than 20 miles per hour. Traveling 55 down a country road, you will close on a farm implement more quickly than you think possible. If that farmer is getting ready to turn across traffic into a field entrance you can't even see, a driver can soon be in a situation with no good alternative. Most farm equipment has warning lights and turn signals. Please be aware of those when you are out and about this spring.

Thank you for reading about Douglas County Agriculture this month and, again, watch out for us on the road.

Larry W. Dallas
President
Douglas County Farm Bureau

2019 Villa Grove Royalty



2019 Royalty! Junior Miss: Maci Clodfelder. Little Miss: Avery Lake. Miss: Samantha Stevens