



# Villa Grove News



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## VG Readies for 2nd Annual Celebration of Freedom

By Tony Hooker Staff Writer

What could be more American than baseball, ice cream, a parade, Lemon Shakeups and BBQ?

The answer is not a lot, and Villa Grove's Celebrating Freedom 2019 event is out to prove it by having all of these things, plus a whole lot more.

The event, to be held on July 7, is sure to be a fond nod to Villa Grove's past, when everyone would gather at Henson Park for a full day of festivities. I recently had a chance to catch up with several of the catalysts for the day's events and they filled me in on what's happening.

The Villa Grove State Bank, as always, has stepped to the fore and will be providing Ice Cream for the kids (and the kids at heart). You can also get "the scoop" as they will be providing ice cream scoops as well as a continuation of their centennial celebration.

For many years, Steve Lundquist has been entertaining audiences with his Mr. Steve's "balloons, magic and more." He recently took time out of his busy schedule to answer a few questions.

What is it that we can expect from you on July 7 at the Celebration of Freedom?

I would say you can expect a lot of fun, both for kids and for parents!

You do magic tricks, is that right?

I do mostly music, a little bit of magic and ballooning, and

for this event I'll include a few contests like a twist contest or a "Name that Tune" contest, and parents will be able to win things for their kids.

How long have you been doing this sort of show?

I've been doing this for 28 years.

What prompted you to start this show?

Well, I've always been kind of a ham! <laughs> I was in youth ministry for about eight years, and it came to a point where that was no longer going to be viable and I started working for another company for about a year, and then I won a Karaoke Contest back in 1990 or 91, and that was sort of the impetus for getting started. I had still been writing music for the church that I had been going to for the kid services, and the pastor said "Man, this stuff is pretty good, you should do something with it," and so I did. Twenty-eight years later, I'm still picking and grinning.

Where is home for you?

Rockford, Illinois.

I'm to assume that this is your full-time career. This is what you do?

Yes, there's been a couple times over the past twenty-eight years that I've had an advertising business for about three years, and I was also an on-air promotions director for a radio station for about 3 years, but all along I've kept doing Mr. Steve.

How did you come to find Villa Grove, a little town



about 2-1/2 or 3 hours south of Rockford?

I do a lot of cold calling, and I believe that's how I got there, or your library might have gotten my name from someone else. I've been doing this a long time, and libraries talks. If they find someone that they like, they usually share it with other libraries.

How did you come to perform at our Celebration of Freedom?

The mayor of the town was there, and we started talking and I told her what a great facility that was, right there

in the center of town, being brand new. We started talking about that a little bit and then she asked me if I was available and I told her I was. She called me a week or two after that, and it came to be.

Does it hold special meaning to you since it's an Independence Day event?

I'm very patriotic. On my magic box, I have an American flag. My colors are basically red white and blue. I have a star jacket that I wear sometimes. During my show, I might have kids come up, so I can ask them questions about our flag and if they get they questions right, they win something. I was old enough to go to Viet Nam, but I didn't get drafted. So, whenever I see anyone who has served our country, I always say thank you. Not enough people say thank you to those who insure our freedom.

I think that for this generation, serving our country is somewhat lost. They don't understand the sacrifice that families make.

Is Magic something you've always been interested in?

Yes, but that's just a small part of what I do. My show is sort of a variety show. I'm called the "Master Facilitator of Fun." It's really the audience who are the stars, because I'm asking them to do things. They do things and have fun, and it's nice for the kids to see their parents up there having fun, maybe wearing a goofy hat or a balloon hat, or participating in the twist contest.

Is there anything that you would like to add?

It's an honor to be a part of your celebration.

Bud's Barbeque has made a name for themselves on the local festival and fair circuit, and they're excited to add

Villa Grove's Celebrating Freedom festival to their schedule. I was able to catch up with them to learn a little bit about the business.

How long have you had BBQ food truck?

About 28 years. I've been in the food business for about 28 years, and I've had the food truck for about 5.

Where is your home base?

I'm based in Danville?

How did you come to be a part of Celebrating Freedom 2019, here in Villa Grove?

We came down to Villa Grove for the town wide rummage sale, and we had such a great response, a great reaction. People kept asking us to come back and we hadn't had time. We were over in Newman doing their town festival, and a lady told me about it.

Does the fact that it's an Independence Day celebration make it a little special for you?

Oh yeah. We're going to see fireworks 5 times this week! On July 3rd, we'll be in Marshall. We'll be in Homer on July 4th, and then we'll be down at your place. On June 28th, we'll be in Avon, Indiana for their fireworks.

Is this your full-time gig, or is this a side job?

This is my full-time job.

What interested you most in cooking?

I've always loved to cook. My father did it for years, and then he passed away and I took over the family business.

How many events will you go to in a year?

We start the first weekend in April, and we go every weekend until the last weekend in October.

You're dishing out a lot of 'Que, eh?

Yessir. We work almost every day during the summer.

What's your Cont. pg. 8

## Council Moves Closer to Reaching Agreements With City Staff

The Villa Grove City Council met for a regularly scheduled meeting on June 24th, with all council members, plus mayor Cassandra Gunter in attendance.

After roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance, the council approved the minutes from the June 10 regular meeting and the closed session minutes from June 10 unanimously.

The council then approved claims for payments in the amount of \$182,474.56.

Next, Mayor Gunter called for reports from the Committee as a whole and they are as follows:

Bruce Allen wanted to offer thanks for all who helped with cleanup days, and also mentioned the 2019 Freedom Celebration but deferred to Mayor Gunter on that issue.

Derek Johnson also mentioned the cleanup days, expressing amazement at the amount of materials that were disposed of, efficiently.

Alderman Griffith mentioned that some attention was needed by streets and al-

leys regarding an East Walnut residence.

Aldermen Blaney, Hooker and Garrett had nothing to report.

Mayor Gunter then began her report by stating that the ambulance consortium was waiting on approval from two communities, but that it was looking to be moving forward with or without them. She also mentioned that Fehr-Graham had hosted a luncheon and open house at the new Water plant for the community.

Next, in public comments, after being reminded that the council would take no action based on his statements, Andrew Kiser spoke about his issues with one of the city councilmen.

After public comments, the city moved to approve a quote for \$1200 from Thomas Electric for the installation of weather vanes atop the public safety building.

The council also approved a quote from Hohulin fencing for a fencing project behind

the water plant, with all in favor save Garrett, approved the IEPA Highway Authority Agreement for 10 East Monroe street, approved the promotion of a part-time seasonal employee to full-time, and approved the hiring of a full-time Public Works employee, with both hires effective July 1.

The council then moved to closed session, for approximately 90 minutes, and upon coming out of closed session, moved to approve Ordinance no. 2019-MC08, which authorized the mayor to execute the collective bargaining agreement between the city and Teamsters Local 26 for the public works and administrative staffs. The council also approved Ordinance no. 2019-MC09, granting the mayor authority to execute the employment agreement between the city and the position of Director of Public Works.

The council then moved to adjourn at approximately 8:40 pm.

## That's a Wrap: Another Successful Fun Filled Summer Reading Program



The Final week of Summer Reading at Camargo Township District Library. The kids enjoyed walking down to Harrison Park and enjoying fun and educational activities brought by the Terre Haute Children's Museum.

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!

- 7/3 VG Planning and Zoning Meeting @ 6pm
7/4 Independence Day
7/7 Annual Villa Grove Freedom Celebration @ Richman Park. Fireworks at dusk.
7/7-7/11 VG Community Roar VBS @ Villa Grove United Methodist Church 6:30-8:30
7/7-7/13 Moultrie Douglas County Fair
7/8 Camargo Board Meeting @7pm
7/8 VG City Council Meeting@ 6pm
7/13 Douglas County Museum Reptiles and Amphibians 12pm
7/15 VG School Board Meeting 6pm
7/16 - 7/20 Mattoon Bagelfest @ Mattoon Peterson Park
7/19 - 7/27 Champaign County Fair
7/22 VG City Council Meeting@ 6pm
Aug. 2-4 VG AG Days
8/3 DCRT Meeting 1-? @ Austin Apgar Farm
8/7 VG Shool Year 2019/2020 School Registration from 8-4
8/8 VG Shool Year 2019/2020 School Registration from 12-7

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