

# Shanks family of Villa Grove celebrates with open house on July 11

Sid and Marty Shanks of Villa Grove have two big reasons to celebrate – this summer marks their 65th wedding anniversary and their 50th year in the pizza business. The Shanks', who married on July 8, 1956 in Waveland, Indiana moved to Central Illinois with their five children in 1965 where Sid pursued a new job at Magnavox. With five young kids at home, Marty had been working multiple part time jobs including making pizza dough for one of the first pizza restaurants in Champaign/Urbana. When the Magnavox plant in Urbana closed a few years later, Sid and Marty took the opportunity to try something they had always wanted to do – be in business for themselves while creating a family-friendly restaurant and a place for young people to gather.

"I went to the bank in Villa Grove and asked how much they would lend me to start a pizza restaurant. I basically had no assets so I was told that they could only loan me \$3,000," stated Sid. Shanks has joked for many years that the bank didn't want his wife, kids or the dog as "assets." The Shanks' were up for a challenge and took on the difficult task of buying equipment, renting and renovating a building, fur-



nishing it and purchasing inventory for their opening night...all within the \$3,000 budget.

Opening day for Blue Devil Pizza in April 1971 was staffed by the entire Shanks family and one other paid employee, Mary Piercy. Villa Grove residents welcomed the business with open arms. The line at the door on opening day stopped only after all their inventory for making pizzas was exhausted. Sid said later that he thought he'd ordered enough for a

week's sales.

For several years, the restaurant was staffed primarily by the Shanks family. Mark Shanks, the youngest of the Shanks children, was eight years old when he started working in the pizza business and continues today to be a key player in the success of the business. All of the Shanks' children and several grandchildren have worked in the businesses. Over the years as the business grew, many Villa Grove youth worked



part time jobs at Blue Devil Pizza. It was also the popular place for teens and families, with long waits for tables after sporting events.

Building on their success in Villa Grove, they grew the business by opening restaurants in other small Central Illinois communities. They eventually incorporated and became Pizza Man, Inc. After several years as an independent, they teamed up with the Monical Pizza Corporation and began converting their locations to Monical's franchises. Today, the company operates five franchises in small

communities throughout Central IL, will sell over 7 million dollars in pizza this year and employs almost 200 employees.

The pizza business has been very successful for the Shanks family and they have given back to the communities that they serve, donating to churches, schools, feeding sports teams, etc. "Dad always taught me that if you are good to the community, it will be good to you and that business strategy is still serving us very well today," stated Mark Shanks. Marcia Riggs, the Shanks' oldest daughter said, "Working in a fam-

ily business teaches you structure, time management, customer service and instills a great work ethic which is invaluable." Riggs is a NICU nurse at Carle Hospital. Their other children include Mike (Cathy) Shanks, a mechanic with the State of IL, Sharon (Dave) Jackson who recently retired as the Manager of the Heart Center at Sarah Bush Lincoln and Mark who helps Sid and Marty run the corporation and manages the Shelbyville Monical's. Their son, Steve Shanks, deceased, also worked in the business and later for a restaurant supplier.

Sid and Marty have often expressed appreciation for all the support that they have been given in the communities where they have served pizza for the past 50 years. To celebrate the anniversary of their 50 years in the pizza business and their 65th wedding anniversary, the Shanks children are hosting an open house at the Monical's Pizza in Villa Grove on Sunday, July 11 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. If you are unable to attend, send your well-wishes to: Monical's Pizza, Attn: Sid and Marty Shanks, 102 N. Sycamore, Villa Grove, IL 61956.

## Douglas County Board extends COVID emergency declaration

By Kendra Hennis

The meeting of the Douglas County Board was called to order at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, June 16 with all members present.

In addition to approving the consent agenda and presented resolutions, the board received reports on the state of Douglas County from RCP coordinator Joshua Taylor-Thomas and Douglas County Health

Department Administrator Amanda Minor.

DCHD Administrator Minor stated that the health department continues to encourage those who have not to receive their vaccinations, noting that they are still having issues in some communities. Minor said that the health department was planning on an immunization clinic in the Arthur Amish communities next month, and that the health

department continues to hold weekly clinics. More information on those clinics can be found on the health department website or Facebook page.

RCP Coordinator Taylor-Thomas reported that the RPC currently has nine students enrolled in the work experience program at TCHS and that it is going well. He also said that the Douglas County Summer Meals program has started, with

pickup in local communities. More information on the program can be found on the DCHD Facebook page.

**The board also:**

- \* Approved the payments of the county's financial obligations.
- \* Approved the reports of fees of county offices.
- \* Approved Resolution 21-R-25 authorizing an agreement with the state of Illinois to deliver

WIOA on the job training in Douglas County.

- \* Approved Resolution 21-R-26 to award the road repair contract as submitted for section 21-00126-00-PV in the amount of \$12,430,896.24 to Beniach Construction Company Inc.

- \* Approved Resolution 21-R-27 to approve the supplemental resolution for maintenance under the Illinois Highway Code appropriating

\$17,250.00 of MFT funds for section 21-0000-00-GM.

- \* Approved Resolution 21-R-28, an extension of a declaration of emergency due to COVID-19.

- \* Noted that subcommittee report minutes would be available on the website following the meeting.

- \* Adjourned at 10:17 a.m. until the July 21 board meeting at 9 a.m.

## IDOT reminds public to stay safe around flood waters this storm season

The Illinois Department of Transportation is reminding the public to stay alert for potential flooding and anticipate that travel could be impacted with more rain in the forecast this week. The department continues to monitor weather conditions and will respond as necessary to flooding situations as they occur.

"A few inches of water might seem harmless but can be powerful enough to carry away a person or vehicle," said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. "Do not attempt to drive through flooded roads. Turn around, don't drown."

IDOT reminds motorists to take the following precautions:

- Even if water covering a road seems shallow, do not

attempt to cross it.

- Seek higher ground if your vehicle stalls in a flooded area. Do not attempt to push your vehicle out of the water.

- Anticipate longer driving distances and travel times to get to your destination if roads are flooded or closed.

- Follow any posted detours.

- Keep your cell phone charged.

- During inclement weather, ask yourself if your trip is necessary or could be postponed.

For regular updates on statewide road conditions 24/7/365, visit [www.gettingaroundillinois.com](http://www.gettingaroundillinois.com). You also can follow IDOT on Facebook and Twitter.



## Jonathan Creek Christian Church invites kids to Rocky Railway VBS

Jonathan Creek Christian Church at 1425 Jonathan Creek Road, Sullivan, IL invites children to Rocky Railway VBS: Jesus' power pulls us through.

A summer kids' event called Rocky Railway VBS will be hosted at Jonathan Creek Christian Church from July 12 to July 16 2021. At Rocky Railway, kids discover through life's ups and downs that Jesus' power pulls us through. Kids participate in memorable Bible learning craft activities, sing catchy songs, play teamwork-building games,

take part in one of a kind Bible Adventures, collect Bible Memory Buddies to remind them to trust Jesus, and test out Sciency-Fun Gizmos they take home and play with all summer long. A light meal will be provided also. Plus, kids will learn to look for evidence of God all around them through something called God Sightings. Each day concludes with the Rock Wrap-Up that gets everyone involved in living what they've learned. Family members and friends are encouraged to join in daily for this special time

at 7:45 p.m. of Rocky Wrap-Up. With the offerings the kids bring each night the kids at Rocky Railway VBS will join a mission effort to provide an extra gift for the Compassion Children the church supports. This helps provide food, education, clothing and learning about Jesus. Rocky Railway is for kids from 3 years old (must be potty trained) to fifth grade and will run from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. each day. For more information call Cindy at 217-620-0810.

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