



Tuscola Review

Volume 5 Number 15

Est. 2017

Your locally owned community newspaper

March 9, 2022



Coffee & conversation

The Tuscola Chamber and Economic Development is inviting community members to their first networking event of the year, March 11, for Coffee and Conversation at Flesor's Candy Kitchen at 9 a.m. Learn more about the Chamber and how to get involved.

Rotary auction

The Tuscola Rotary's annual auction is Wednesday, March 23 at Ironhorse Golf Club. Registration starts at 5:30 p.m. with a meal for bidders at 6 p.m. There is no cost for the meal and the public is welcome to participate in the auction.

Retired teachers

The Douglas County Retired Teachers Association will meet at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 16, at the Smith House, 400 S. Main St., Tuscola. To attend, please contact Maribeth Opperman at 217-493-6727 or email denniscopperman@yahoo.com by Friday, March 11.

Pre-K screenings, Kindergarten signup

There will be a free screening for kids ages 2-5 as well as Kindergarten registration March 28-30 at Tuscola United Methodist Church, 901 N. Prairie Ave. For an appointment, call Terra Waldrop at 253-2712. The screening is provided by the Tuscola school district to give parents the opportunity to see how their children are developing in the areas of speech, language, concepts and motor skills. Vision and hearing screenings are also provided free of charge. The screening times are 12:30-7 p.m. March 28 and 29 and 9 a.m. till 3 p.m. March 30.

Save the date

The Tuscola Kiwanis' annual Fish Fry is 4:30-7 p.m. Friday, March 25 at 40 Martyrs School, 109 E. Van Allen St., Tuscola.

Spring musical

The TCHS Drama Club will present Descendants the Musical March 17, 18 and 19 at 7 p.m. and March 20 at 2 p.m. Tickets go on sale March 3.

Blood drives

Tuscola High School's honors choir is sponsoring a blood drive from 9:30 a.m. till 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 22, in the study hall at the high school, 500 S. Prairie St. To schedule an appointment, call ImpactLife at 800-747-5401 or use this link online: https://login.bloodcenter.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/103410. Masks and appointments are required.

Villa Grove High School will host a blood drive from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, March 11 at 400 N. Sycamore, inside the donor bus. To donate, contact Marci Howard at (217) 832-2261 or visit www.bloodcenter.org and use code 70131 to locate the drive. You may also call ImpactLife to schedule at 800-747-5401. Masks and appointments are required.

Library activities

StoryTime every Tuesday 10 a.m. on Facebook

Every Saturday is Tech Drop-In from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Come get help with your devices.

March 9, 4 p.m., Youth Bingo and 6:00 pm film discussion—The Master

March 17, 6 p.m., Cooking with Marla on facebook

March 21, 5 p.m., Crafter's Corner

March 29, 4 p.m., Chess Club

March 30, 6 p.m., Book Discussion-Satire



STUDENTS REHEARSE for The Descendants opening March 17 at Tuscola High School. From left are Elle Jones, Alexis Shinn, Blake Taylor, Olivia Wallace, Ashley Buck, Caleb Haste, Skylar Wilkins, Grant Kauffman, Reggan Smith, Gracie Johnson, Brady Urban and Kaleb Jeffers. Photo by David Porter.

A Disney musical coming to the Tuscola High School stage

The spring musical at Tuscola High School is a Disney show for the first time in the school's history, according to Director Johanna Steffens. The Descendant was adapted to the stage just a couple of years ago. Show dates are 7 p.m. March 17, 18 and 19 and 2 p.m. March 20. Reserved tickets may be purchased through the GoFan app. Tickets can also be purchased at the door.

All tickets are general admission (including reserved seats) and doors will open one hour before each show. Reserved tickets are recommended as large crowds are expected. There are more than 30 students in the production.

"This is my 30th show here at TCHS," Steffens, in her 16th year at TCHS said. "It doesn't seem possible. I have posters hanging in my office of all the shows I have directed here, and a few months ago, a student pointed out this will be my 30th." She said the posters are a nice reminder both for her and for the students to see the archive of the productions.

"We are so excited to be performing a Disney musical," she said. "Anyone who knows me well knows my family loves everything Disney. And although I love the classic fairytale musicals, I thought it would be fun to do something completely different. Hannah Church, our choral teacher, agreed." The show features the same beloved characters and hit songs from the popular Disney films, she said. While kids are sure to enjoy it, Steffens said "parents will also enjoy the show and appreciate the message."

She said this show has been a little more difficult with the set and costumes. "I like to make things our own while still keeping what the audience hopes to see. There are 18 set changes, which can be tricky on your small stage." She said the crew has gotten creative and is using smaller pieces to represent the scenes versus the larger set pieces used in the past.

Costumes also have a certain ex-

pectation, she said, when it comes to a Disney production. "It has been a journey, but we are almost there and I think it is going to be a really fun look, both on stage and on actors."

She said lighting and sound has also been a challenge. In a perfect world, all the actors would be wearing mics, she said, but the school's sound board won't accommodate that many microphones. "We are kind of creating a mic map of who passes off their mic and when. The music will also be playing through the soundboard."

Choreography has been the most fun, Steffens said. "Skylar Wilkins, a senior dancer, has helped a great deal as well." She said the original movie "is full of very skilled choreography. We have tried to improvise and include as much as we can on our small stage. Either way, it has given us lots of laughs since most of the cast hasn't been part of a show with this much dancing."

Early quarantines and snow

days made scheduling rehearsals difficult. "I know the kids will pull through with a fabulous show. ... It always comes together. Trying something new is always a challenge, but it is always worth it."

She said she hopes the district will address the limitations of the stage in the near future. "I am proud we are able to see continued success as a fully self-funded club, and we are extremely thankful to live in a community that continually donates and supports our program," Steffens said. "Students who have chosen to spend their high school career in drama, music and/or the arts deserve the same attention to their facilities that other programs are given," she said. "I feel it is my duty as the drama director and teacher of the arts to continue advocating for this program and the students in it."

She added that she's appreciative of the support shown by the principal and school board members who have visited the set.

Madigan indicted on 22 public corruption counts

By JERRY NOWICKI
PETER HANCOCK
BETH HUNSDORFER
& GRACE KINNICUTT
Capitol News Illinois
news@capitolnewsillinois.com

SPRINGFIELD - Longtime Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan was indicted Wednesday by a federal grand jury on 22 counts for allegedly using his position as the top House Democrat to solicit "personal financial rewards" for himself and his associates, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Northern District of Illinois.

The former leader of the Democratic Party served as Illinois House speaker for all but two years from 1983 until his unseating in

January 2021. Throughout that time he was widely viewed as a more powerful political force than anyone in the state, including its governors.

Now, Madigan, 79, is accused of "nearly a decade" of running "a criminal enterprise whose purpose was to enhance Madigan's political power and financial well-being while also generating income for his political allies and associates," according to a news release from the Chicago-area U.S. attorney's office.

"The indictment alleges a long-term, multifaceted scheme to use public positions for unlawful gain, including no-show or low-show jobs for Madigan's political work-

ers and private gain for Madigan himself," U.S. Attorney John Lausch, whose office led the investigation, said at a news conference. "The schemes describe involvement of a leader of state government, one of his close confidantes, top management of a large public utility, consultants and others."

Madigan's longtime confidante, Michael McClain, whose home was raided by the FBI in May 2019 in what was one of the first public acts of a long-running federal investigation, was also named in the indictment.

McClain, who was at one time a lobbyist for utility giant Commonwealth Edison, "carried out illegal activities at Madigan's behest," ac-

ording to Lausch's office.

Madigan, widely known as the state's most careful politician, famously avoided use of electronic communications such as email and cellphones.

Lausch did not directly answer a question as to whether wiretaps were used in investigating the ex-speaker.

"We use all the investigative tools that we can...Those aren't spelled out specifically in the indictment," he said. "But what you do have are words that are used in conversations. You do have words that are used in documents or on emails that are spelled out

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THE ILLINOIS COUNCIL of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM) Regional Math contest was held Saturday, Feb. 26. These five students placed first in the Calculator Team competition and should be headed to the state competition in April. From left are Andrew Bennett, Catie Gibson, Liam Hetland, Logan Wallace and Rajan Patel. Submitted photo.