



Birthplace of Johnny Gruelle, creator of Raggedy Ann & Andy

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Chatter BOX

Dessert concert set for Feb. 25

The Arcola bands dessert concert is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Feb. 25 in the junior high gymnasium. Doors open at 6 p.m. Performing will be the fifth and sixth grade bands, junior high band, drumline, high school concert band and a special guest, the high school choir.

Chocolate retreat for women March 4

Walnut Grove, southeast of Arcola, is hosting a "Café Chocolat" women's retreat March 4. "Come experience this cozy and decadent getaway to be restored and refreshed in your relationship with the friends around you and with Jesus. Together we will delight in God's extravagant grace through a study of the miracles of Jesus, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. March 4. And yes, there will be chocolate," organizers said.

There is no cost to attend, but participants are asked to bring a salad to share. The event is limited to 25 participants. To register, call the church office (217-856-2155) with name and phone number by Feb. 19.

Quilters unite

Quilters are invited to gather Friday afternoons at 1 p.m. in the Arcola Center to share their time and mutual interests with other quilters. For info, contact 217-417-1388.

New office numbers

Better Newspapers Inc., which owns the Arcola Record-Herald, is consolidating offices. For news and advertising, please call our Tuscola office at 217-253-5086 or our Arthur office at 217-543-2151.

City Council, School Board hold Tuesday meetings

Fiber optic cable, surplus TIF funds on city's agenda

Both the Arcola City Council and School Board have meetings scheduled for Tuesday evening, Feb. 21, due to the President's Day holiday on Monday.

The School Board meeting is a special meeting to interview an assistant principal candidate and discuss filling teaching positions.

The city's budget and finance committee meets at 6:45 p.m. Tuesday to discuss surplus tax increment financing (TIF) funds in TIF districts 1 and 6.

The full Council then meets for its regularly scheduled meeting at 7 p.m. The first item under consideration under new business is to receive the Tourism Advisory Committee's annual report.

The Council also is expected to vote on a road improvement resolution and a right-of-way permit application from Campus Communications Group for installation of fiber optic cable.

Arcola families host three foreign exchange students

By Dominik Stallings

Arcola has three foreign exchange students this year — Martina Domingo, Alessia Luciani and Alessia Menoud. All three have lived in Arcola with different host families for the last six months. Each of them had to overcome some of the challenges living here, but now they have formed some of their own perspectives on rural living.

Domingo is a 17-year-old senior from the Catalonia autonomous community in Spain and lives close to Barcelona.

Luciani, a 17-year-old senior, stems from Italy's capital city, Rome.

Menoud, while 16 years old, is also a senior. She was born in Brazil but grew up in Bulle, Switzerland.

"Some things are the same in the movies. The busses, houses and cheerleaders," said Luciani. However, a lot of the media surrounding the U.S. culture creates different expectations for visiting students. Some are high, and some just simply differ.

"It's been so fun. It's like discovering a new culture and new people and everything is so different. It's a way to learn new things," said Domingo. In Spain, she lived with her father and younger sister. Now she's living with Sarah and Tamee Osborne and living with much younger sisters.

"It's been different to relate to people that are younger and do family activities. It's more fun, but it's also more difficult," said Domingo. "I'm never bored there!" Menoud's host parents are Paula and Kenneth Reveal. In Switzerland, she grew up with her mother since her parents divorced. She said her hosts are very nice, but it's different to live with them and it can be hard for her to relate to them. Naturally, she tries to spend time with the friends she's made at school so far.

Luciani lives with Angie and Glen Miller and has been learning more about the different lifestyle people have in Arcola and the surrounding area. She's been used to living in Rome for 17 years and has gotten used to her lifestyle there.

"I'm, like, noticing the difference, but it's not a problem. Everyday life is different. You go to school and then do activities. There's a lot of stuff to do after schooling," said Luciani.

The three students said they were interested in participating in school sports before coming to the U.S. In their home countries, they have after-school sports programs, but they aren't associated with the schools.

"It's more fun. It's a way to go to high school and makes it more fun to go to school," said Domingo.

All three of them were involved in volleyball during the fall. Now Domingo and Menoud are involved with cheerleading. Menoud also tried out basketball



FROM LEFT, Martina Domingo, Alessia Luciani and Alessia Menoud pose. The three are foreign exchange students attending Arcola High School this year. Photo by Dominik Stallings.

"It's been so fun. It's like discovering a new culture and new people and everything is so different. It's a way to learn new things."
— Martina Domingo

but decided to stick with cheerleading.

None of them plan to participate in spring sports for now. They want to focus on spending more time with their friends and also some studying for exams in their home countries. Menoud said it is harder for them to participate as well since it's their first time trying out different sports. Locals have been playing volleyball or other sports for a longer time so that can be a little frustrating.

For them, sports are an important tool for making friends and meeting new people. It wasn't easy making friends when they first came to Arcola. Menoud thought it would be easier to make friends, but found that people seem not to know how to interact with the exchange students. She thinks that it's, in part, the language barrier, but also simply cultural differences. She explains that relationships and the way they do things are simply different.

After six months of living in Arcola, the three of them found friends and social circles.

Besides sports, academics are quite different for the three of them. All of them agreed that

school is easier in the U.S. Except for American history, of which they know very little.

Some of the subjects taught now in Arcola were already taught to them two years ago. The decrease in intensity has been welcomed by the three of them. Even better, they get to have a study hall. Neither Domingo or Luciani have study hall classes in their countries.

When they heard that Arcola offered classes that teach cooking, the three of them were quite excited. They don't have the opportunity to learn cooking in classes at home. Food is quite important to the three of them, Luciani and Domingo both miss the cooking of their home countries, but they were able to recreate some dishes. They all had to get used to different meal times. In Spain and Italy, all the meals are pushed back a few hours later than in the U.S. Breakfast at 11 a.m., lunch at 3 p.m. and dinner around 8 or 8:30 p.m. Domingo said she would usually be taking a nap at 5 p.m. instead of eating dinner. Menoud noted that restaurants close very early, around 9 p.m. here. In Switzerland, that would be considered very early.

Domingo said that in Spain, school tends to be more strictly focused on academics. It's less ceremonial than in the U.S. as well, with less focus on graduation ceremonies and school events.

The three students had different expectations of what homecoming was. Domingo thought it would be a huge dance with a lot of people, but in reality, the dance was a bit disappointing. Luciani spoke to other students who mentioned the same thing, but she still wanted to go since she had never experienced a homecoming dance.

All three of them, however, were surprised by homecoming week and all the other activities besides the dance. All three enjoyed dressing up each day and decorating floats for the parade. They also enjoyed powderpuff football and tailgating. All the things they didn't have expectations for were the most enjoyable experiences.

The girls were also able to experience Chicago and a few other larger cities and saw more of the U.S. The three of them will also go to New York in March.

They have four more months in Arcola until they return home. The seniors will also be allowed to partake in graduation and receive certificates. Domingo will take exams when she returns home in order to receive higher education. She plans to study art and graphic design when she goes to university.

Luciani will have to take one more year of high school. She plans on going to University as well but is still undecided about what to study.

Menoud said that in Switzerland, students have the choice of going to university after high school, or going into a vocational school with an apprenticeship. She plans on going to university as well and will have to take an exam, called matura to test her beforehand.

Menoud noted that universities in Switzerland are different. You can get more specialized training if you plan on becoming a doctor or lawyer, but otherwise, the education is more generalized and similar to a liberal arts degree in the U.S.

Besides their New York trip, the girls will have a prom to look forward to.

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Meet the SBL cardiology team at the SBL Heart Center. We are pleased to bring these great minds together to care for the cardiovascular needs in our community.

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Pictured left to right
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B. Lakshminarayanan, MD
Michael LaMonto, DO
Advanced Practice Provider
Allyson Gough, APRN
Interventional Cardiologist
Dean Katsamakis, DO