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Birthplace of Johnny Gruelle, creator of Raggedy Ann & Andy



ARCOLA RECORD-HERALD

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Volume 157 — Number 19

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

Chatter BOX

Homecoming entries

The Arcola High School student council is accepting registration forms for float entries in this year's homecoming parade. The parade will be on Thursday, Oct. 5, and will start at the school and end downtown at the intersection of Main and Locust streets. Contact Braden Phillips, Ava Simpson, Julissa Galaviz, Bailey Hendrix, Mr. Craig, Mr. Boyd or the high school office at Arcola High School by 3 p.m. on Wednesday, September 20, for parade entry forms. All floats or walkers must be registered and all floats must meet the guidelines. Floats should be at the parade lineup on Arcola Avenue no later than 12 noon on the day of the parade. See form on page 4.

City sets Trick or Treat hours

Trick-or-treaters will be able to enjoy a bucket full of candy a little bit sooner this year.

Arcola City Council set trick-or-treating hours from 6-8 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 28, three days before Halloween on Tuesday. Alderman Brent Budd made the recommendation, saying it's easier for school staff and parents to have trick or treating on a Saturday instead of a school day.

The Council approved an ordinance to declare a 2009 Ford Expedition, 2013 Ford Taurus and 2014 Chevrolet Tahoe as surplus property and authorized vehicle sale. City Attorney Andrew Bequette said that the city no longer needed the vehicles.

Alderman Scott Hensley was the only alderman with a report for the Council during the five-minute-long meeting. The police, ordinance and enforcement committee met at 6:30 p.m. before the regular meeting and discussed personnel matters in a closed session.

Senior potluck

Arcola Seniors are invited to attend a potluck lunch at the Arcola Senior Center on Sept. 15. Lunch will begin at 11:30 am. Seniors may bring a dish to share.

Distinguished Alumni banquet

The Oct. 14 Distinguished Alumni Banquet will honor William Robert "Bob" Fortney (1944), Virginia L. Fortney (1952), John Virgil "Jack" Fishel (1956), John G. "Corky" Clark (1962) and Dennis R. "Denny" Thompson (1968). Banquet meal reservations are due Sept. 30. Banquet sponsorships received by Sept. 22 will be included in program booklets, banquet PowerPoint presentation, on the Arcola Alumni Association website and in Arcola Record-Herald advertising. Reservation and sponsor forms are available at Yoder's Homestead, Arcola First Bank, First Mid-Illinois Bank & Trust, on the Arcola Alumni Association website at www.arcolaalumni.org or by calling Sue Stout at 217-840-6605.

Citizen of the Year Bench dedication

All are invited to the dedication of the Arcola Rotary Citizen of the Year bench at the Arcola Gazebo on Oak Street. The dedication will take place at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16. Please RSVP Dolly Herschberger at 217-519-2696 or D.Climaco@gmail.com if you plan to attend. Cake and drinks will be provided at the pavilion afterwards.

Blood drives

D&M Woodcrafts will host a community blood drive with ImpactLife, the provider of blood components for local hospitals. The blood drive will be 2-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 421 E. County Road 200N, inside D&M Woodcrafts. To donate, please contact Marlin Schrock at 217-268-3266 or visit www.bloodcenter.org and use code 71155 to locate the drive.

Central Wood will host a Community Blood Drive with ImpactLife on Monday, Sept. 18. The donor bus will be at 220 E. County Road 200 N, Arthur, IL from 2:30 to 7 p.m. To schedule an appointment, call Willard Miller at 217-543-2662.



SEN. CHAPIN ROSE showed up at the Lawn Rangers' gathering to present a Senate certificate to the Monahan for their century of business. From left are Kevin Monahan, Sen. Rose, Tim Monahan and Pat Monahan. Photo by David Porter.



RISING STAR Alex Miller headlined Sunday's show during the Broom Corn Festival. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



THE POMPEYO FAMILY dog show delighted Broom Corn Festival attendees young and old. Photo by Nancy Rairden.



MAYOR JESUS GARZA showed everyone how it's done, winning the National Broom Sweeping contest by sweeping up 1.85 pounds of seed. Photo by Nancy Rairden.

School considers collections alternative

The Arcola school district is considering a policy change in an effort to collect unpaid student fees. Board members met in committee Sept. 5 to discuss that issue and several others.

Superintendent Dr. Tom Mulligan said the district has greatly reduced fees for students. Most of the outstanding debt comes from unpaid meals. Mulligan expressed frustration because in many cases the family would receive free meals if they would simply fill out the necessary paperwork. The district would then be reimbursed for the meals while the family would owe nothing.

Instead, some families just refuse to pay the bill, he said, which contributes to a deficit budget for the meal program.

When asked, Mulligan said the parents don't even have to prove their income. They have to declare their income but aren't asked to prove it. Only a handful of applicant incomes must be verified for

the district to retain its reimbursement status.

It's not a lot of money, Mulligan said, and the district usually writes it off at the end of the year. But it would take little effort on the part of the parents to fill out a form that would allow the school to get reimbursed while the parents would still pay nothing.

When asked whether a language barrier contributed to the problem, Mulligan said no. Not many of the past due accounts are for Hispanic families, he said.

An alternative, Mulligan said, would be to file a letter with the state comptroller. If that was done, the state would withhold tax refunds from people owing money to the school district and would divert the payment to the school.

The parents would first receive a letter informing them that the debt would be reported to the comptroller to give them an opportunity to pay it. Lucas Shonkwiler, Board president, said that if the

district goes that route, they would need to follow through with it.

He added that the proposed policy change could be an incentive to get people to fill out the paperwork for free or reduced meals. It could be explained to them that the school could not file their name with the state if their kids are receiving free meals.

The consensus in committee was to change the policy to allow the district to use the comptroller's office for collections.

Mulligan noted that the district could use a collection agency but would have to pay an agency a large percentage of the debt collected.

In other business, the committee briefly discussed starting a student ambassador program. A student would be selected to attend School Board meetings and to give input from a student perspective. They would receive copies of the Board packets but would not sit in executive (closed) sessions or have voting rights.

Mulligan said he'd like to pilot the program in January.

The committee also discussed a request to use the school for a new 4-H club. However, the University of Illinois Extension office, which oversees the 4-H program, wants an agreement that would shift liability to the school.

Mulligan commented that there is some question about liability anytime the district waives the fee for use of the school campus.

He said there's case law that suggests that if the fee is waived, the district is assuming financial responsibility and thus liability for the organization using the facility. He said the Board may want to adopt a policy that would require a nominal fee for any use of the campus to minimize the school's liability.

It was suggested that the 4-H program would need to agree to the school's policy rather than the school adopting the university's policy.

Arcola senior earns academic honors From College Board national program

Bianca Arguelles, a senior at Arcola High School, earned academic honors from the College Board National Recognition Programs. These programs celebrate students' hard work in high school and showcase their strong academic performance. The academic honors for rural area, Black, Indigenous, and/or Latino students are an opportunity for students to share their strong academic achievements with colleges and scholarship programs that are seeking to recruit diverse talent.

"We're thrilled to celebrate Bianca for her accomplishments! She is a hard working student who excels in so many aspects to make our school a great place," said Nick Lindsey, principal at Arcola High School. "There's so much that

makes our students unique, and receiving this honor reinforces this as an asset for their future."

The criteria for eligible students include:

- GPA of 3.5 or higher.
- PSAT/NMSQT or PSAT 10 assessment scores that are within the top 10% of assessment takers in each state for each award program or earned a score of 3 or higher on 2 or more AP Exams in 9th and 10th grade.

• Attend school in a rural area or small town, or identify as African American/Black, Hispanic American/Latino, or Indigenous/Native.

Eligible students are invited to apply on BigFuture during their sophomore or junior year and are awarded at the start of the next school year in time

to share their achievements in high school as they plan for the future. At the same time, colleges and organizations using College Board's Student Search Service™ can connect directly with awardees during the recruitment process.

"It's becoming increasingly hard for students to be 'seen' during the college recruitment process. We're exceptionally proud of the National Recognition Programs for celebrating students who are at times overlooked but have shown their outstanding academic abilities," said Tarlin Ray, senior vice president of BigFuture® at College Board. "This is a benefit not only for students but also for colleges and universities committed to recruiting diverse and talented students."



Bianca Arguelles