



Journal Entries

Kiwanis fish fry

Tuscola Kiwanis Club will be hosting a driv-thru only fish fry on Fri., Mar. 24 from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Cemetery cleanup

Tuscola's cemetery semi-annual cleanup will begin on March 27. Decorations not placed in containers will be picked up that week.

Senior citizen event

Family service senior resource center van trip to the cross, March 29 for Douglas County residents aged 60+ transportation provided, you will be responsible for the cost of the lunch. Please ahead of time to a reserve a seat. 217 599 1324.

Easter cantata

Easter Cantata will perform on April 2 at the First Christian Church at 4 p.m. The cantata will feature the Living Last Supper by Ruth Elaine Shram and a brief tribute to former VGHS band director Ken Krejci.

Tuscola annual easter egg hunt

Tuscola's annual Easter egg hunt will be held on Sat., Apr. 1 at North Ward Elementary School. Registration is from 9:00 to 9:25 a.m. the first egg hunt will start at 9:30 a.m. Bring your own basket! For children ages 2 through 10.

Save the date

Spring Citywide garage sales will be April 21 and 22. Deadline for being included on the map is Thurs., April 13. A form will be available in future editions of The Journal and on our Facebook page. The map will be published in our April 19 edition.

CTDL & Korner Beehive bingo

Camargo Township District Library and the Korner Beehive are partnering to offer Bingo the first Wed. of every month from 1 to 2 p.m. for anyone over 50. No cash but a lot of fun prizes to give away!

Listening ear ministry

Come worship with us! Listening Ear Ministry every Wed. at 6 p.m. at Murdock UMC. Also visit our facebook page Listening Ear Ministry Ted Shearer.

Tuscola Public Library events

- Travel Club: Tulsa, Olka. March 28, 5 p.m.
- Book Discussion: The Road, March 29, 6 p.m.

Correction

We didn't use the correct spellings for some names in last week's paper. Cheerleaders Lanie Yantis, Lilly Kurtz, and Rylie Vanausdol were spelled incorrectly. We also misspelled Karson Jeffers in a photo of the Grease performance.



RACHEL RAY PHOTOGRAPHY celebrated the opening of the new downtown studio on March 14. Left to right; Bert Ray, Monica Cruzan, Rachel Ray, Mayor Dan Kleiss, Miss Tuscola 2022 Reagan Smith, Junior Miss Tuscola Emma Spillman, Miss Moultrie-Douglas County Julia Kerkhoff, and Little Miss Tuscola Collette Pflum stand together during the ribbon cutting. Submitted photo.

Villa Grove plans to have Community Center survey

During the Villa Grove city council meeting on March 13, Director Surowka stated that she would be surveying the council, citizens of Villa Grove and city employees about the best uses for the community center. She also said she was working on marketing the center and updating pricing for support opportunities for the center. There will be another campaign to generate support for the center and its services from businesses and the community in the near future.

The Council approved the minutes of the Feb. 27 regular city council meeting, the minutes of the Feb. 27 closed session, and the financial reports for Dec. 31, 2022, and Jan. 31, 2023. The council also approved the cash balance report for the month ending February 23, 2023, which showed a balance of \$5,971,675 Also included in the consent agenda was a request for payments in the amount of \$145,838 The motion passed unanimously.

Next, the department chairs made their reports. Administrator Jacki Athey said the engineering bid for the Front Street Bridge is in. She also said that the final audit numbers for 2022 were in, and that the city attorney met with the IML about an insurance claim for the damage done by the recent winds to the roof of the Zest For Life Center.

Chief Robert Rea noted that the new squad car was in service, and would have city markings put on it soon. He also noted that his officers had had "a couple of busy weeks" and therefore had earned

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VG BOE approves solar energy implementation

By Gabriella Agius

The Villa Grove Board of Education met with QFB Energy on March 20 via Microsoft Teams to discuss revisions to the solar energy project. The new arrays will be on both ground and roof locations. Most of the arrays will be on the FFA plot near the baseball field, with precautions being taken to ensure foul balls will not damage the arrays. Roof arrays will be placed on the portion of the roof above the new gym. This was done to ensure the arrays would not need to be removed when roof repairs are done. Additional roof arrays are able to be placed later, with components being integrated in the initial placement to ensure capability.

QFB also discussed utilizing a 15 year lease option. This was the best option for the district. No up-front capital will be required, the first payment not being due until a year in. Payment for the project will come from the savings the district gets through the implementation

of solar energy. Over 25 years, the district will save roughly \$1.25 million by implementing solar energy. Because of their good credit, the district was approved for the lease application.

Beginning of construction could take up to six months. QFB will audit the property very soon in order to begin the process of an interconnection agreement with Ameren.

The Board approved giving Superintendent Carol Munson the authority to execute official contracts with QFB Energy to implement solar energy at the district.

The Board was addressed by the School Improvement Committee, composed of Callie Parr, Lindsey Wells, Eric Brooks, Melissa Morrow, and Bryan Murawski. The Committee's goal is that "students exit Villa Grove High School with the core skills, critical thinking, and resilience they need to successfully enter the college/career training they have identified as their next step."

Committees within School Im-

provement are Core Skills (Math, ELA/Reading, Science/Social Studies), Resiliency, Critical thinking, and Career path.

The Math committee determined that the best way for improvement would be to utilize a new curriculum. The district hopes to provide consistency across grades. Four teachers piloted the "My Math" curriculum and had good experiences.

The ELA/Reading committee created grade level entrance expectations and exit goals as well as working with upper and lower grade levels to align goals.

The Social Studies/Science committee determined that reading comprehension was the most important priority. They decided to work with ELA/Reading to accomplish this.

The Resilience committee worked to address falling academic performance and attendance. The committee decided that increasing student school buy-in would help

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Shimmer and Sheek opens new downtown Tuscola location

By Dominik Stallings

Shimmer and Sheek celebrated the opening of their new storefront location at 101 N. Main St. in Tuscola on Tuesday, Feb. 14.

The boutique carries women's clothing and caters to all ages, with tops, jeans, dresses, and jewelry. One of the co-owners, Taylor Reifsteck, said that they focus on casual, everyday wear, rather than high-end fashion. Taylor said the business tries to find affordable yet trendy fashion pieces.

The store also carries Illini merchandise and also tries to find clothing in the Illini colors for fans who want to support their college team without any logos.

"That's the draw of being a boutique. Finding the unique and different pieces,"

Taylor and her mother, Jennifer Reifsteck, are co-owners of the

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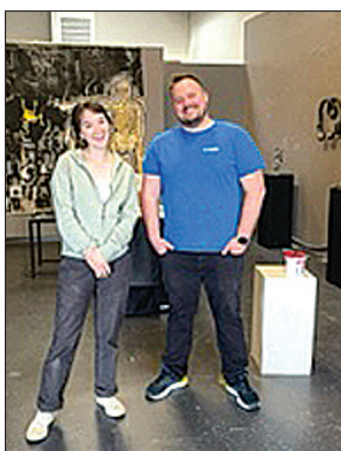
SHIMMER & SHEEK BOUTIQUE celebrated their new downtown location March 14. Left to right, Junior Miss Tuscola Emma Spillman, Miss Tuscola Reggan Smith, Little Miss Collette Pflum, Taylor Reifsteck, Mayor Dan Kleiss, Jennifer Reifsteck and Miss Moultrie-Douglas Julia Kerkhoff stand together during the ribbon cutting. Submitted photo.

Vault Gallery to open 'Figures and Fables' show this month

By Dominik Stallings

The Vault Gallery is hosting the show opening for "Figures and Fables" on March 25 from 3-5 p.m. The show features work from Joe Nivens and Grace West. Both artists have connections to Tuscola and will have their work on display until April 15.

"The show is a mix of things. There are a few puppets in there, a few small sculptures, metal casts and a few larger-scale puppets as well, and a



Grace West and Joe Nivens

small diorama piece," said Nivens.

The mixed media sculpture artist and animator said his work is all influenced by his background in animation and stop motion. He experiments with different materials and techniques. Niven's side of the gallery doesn't have one cohesive theme but is rather a retrospective of his work.

West graduated from Unity highschool in Tolono in 2018. She completed her Bachelor

of Fine Arts at Eastern Illinois University in studio art with an emphasis in painting and a minor in art history in 2022. She is currently enrolled in the graduate program in Painting at the Eastern Illinois University Department of Art and Design. West's works intertwine the concepts of figure and communication. She researches different ways to present the figure within primarily feminine topics.

West experiments with

utilizing everyday objects to discuss personal issues. Emotional words such as "shame," "forgiveness," and "acceptance" are used transparently. According to West's artist statement, the figure is rendered honestly and beautifully whilst dealing with body insecurities instigated by societal standards.

Nivens went to school in Tuscola from his middle school years to his junior year in High School. He later gradu-

ated from Interlochen Arts Academy in 2007. Joe completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts in 2012. He then completed his Master of Arts from Eastern Illinois University in 2017 and then his Master of Fine Arts (MFA) was completed from Louisiana State University in 2021. Joe teaches animation at the LSU College of Art & Design in the Digital Art program.

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