

Columns



Devilettes help students purchase prom dresses

Being a Villa Grove Devilette has always been about more than just dancing. It's been about commitment to each other and to excellence, to be sure, but there has also always been a commitment to helping within the community, through anti-bullying campaigns and other acts of charity and kindness. Recently, coaches Sarah Bouton and Maddison Perkinson, along with the Devilettes, have expanded that outreach to include Project Prom, where young ladies from the community and surrounding area can come and select a Prom Dress, for free. I recently caught up with the coaches, along with Devilettes Paisley Teter and Dakota Byers,

to dig a little deeper into the project.

The project started as kind of a divine inspiration, according to Bouton. "My husband and I were driving home after church one day and I was filled with an urge to serve more in the community. I knew prom was coming up and that a lot of people aren't able to attend prom because of certain financial situations, so being able to hold something like this, where people can come and find something for free, is nice!"

An added bonus is that this gives the young ladies an opportunity to provide a service to their community, which they seem to enjoy.

As with any undertaking of

Hook, Line and Sinker

By Tony Hooker



this size, one person can't do it alone, and in fellow coach Maddison Perkinson, Bouton has found the perfect partner.

"I like to help and organize. I just enjoy it. I love helping with the pageant, dance, project prom, anything that gives back to the community that built me," Perkinson said when asked about her involvement.

The project, which is in its first year of existence, has gotten off to a good start as far as dress donations go, having received somewhere between 44 and 47 gowns of all styles in their initial season.

Both Coaches were excited about the variety of dresses that are available. "We have a wide selection here," Bouton

emoted. "From ball gowns to short dresses." Perkinson was even more effusive in her praise of the choices on hand. "There are definitely some new ones here," she exclaimed. "I also think a lot of them are pretty timeless, even if they choose to wear them for something other than prom."

The coaches were recently given permission to expand the offering to other communities, and so they are planning on having a second opportunity for young ladies to say yes to their dress and they're hoping to get the word out. The event is now open to anyone who finds themselves in need of a dress for prom. "People in Champaign and Urbana who are in need can come down,"

Perkinson stated. Bouton added that she would love it if that were to happen.

The Prom Project, which is looking to continue after this year, is still happily accepting dress donations, and is hoping to expand their offerings in the future. "I would definitely like to get it out there more and make it where not just Villa Grove, but other communities are participating and donating, making it grow over the years," Perkinson said.

Good people doing good things for others. It's what makes the hearts of small towns beat, and this is just one more example. The Prom Project will be open in the new gym at Villa Grove School on April 4, from 5-7:30 p.m.

What happened to 'civil' in our civilization?

It was pretty quiet in the cigar shop in the late afternoon one day last week. Everybody had pretty well upset each other to the point that everyone just sat there brooding.

It all started over some TV actress who said something somebody didn't like. Then people criticized her, and her supporters didn't like that.

"She has the right to say what she wants," Mitch declared, to which Alan said others have a right to criticize. Paul, who knows it all, started a dissertation on social decorum as he rubbed the briar bowl of his pipe in his typically snobbish fashion.

Alan started swearing at Paul. Paul kept on with his sermon but at a higher pitch and more decibels. He objected to Alan's choice of words, so Tristan, who doesn't usually say anything, said maybe Alan doesn't like Paul's tone and

Ramblin' Man

By David Porter



that yelling was just as offensive to some people as swearing and maybe more so.

Then came the debate about what speech is constitutionally protected and what isn't. What is racism and how do you define white supremacy. There were comments about the rights of an individual and the rights of one's employers. That brought in the whole NFL taking a knee discussion and a reference to the Kim Davis situation a while back — she

was the Kentucky clerk who wouldn't let gay people get married in her county.

More yelling. More swearing. It looked like it might break down into a free-for-all. I thought Big Vince might come out of his chair and break people apart.

I just sat there and minded my own business like I always do. And if you believe that, I have some beachfront property in Arizona I'd like to sell you.

The temperature in the

room went up so much the smoke alarm sounded and we thought the sprinkler system might come on. That might have been the best thing that could have happened at that point.

Just when I thought the pandemonium might turn into all-out war, Preacher Dan walked in. He observed the room for a moment or two and then took out a whistle from his pants pocket and blew it loud and long. "I'm declaring a time-out," Dan said.

Everybody settled back down in their leather chairs and stared at the walls. I'm pretty sure Preacher Dan felt pretty good about blowing the whistle on us. But that's not what did the trick.

Unbeknownst to Dan, James had slipped in behind him and that pretty much took the wind out of everyone's sails.

James is black and the

whole to-do was about racism and something ugly the actress had said regarding a black person. Funny how all the people supporting her right to say nasty things about a black person didn't seem to want to have that conversation in front of one. If you're not comfortable discussing your thoughts on race in front of a person of color, maybe you ought to look for other thoughts.

I'm not trying to preach at you. That's Dan's job. And, I have to say, there were points made on both sides of the argument. The liberals were just as offensive as the conservatives and the conservatives were just as sensitive about it as the liberals. We all have our differences of opinions, but we have a lot in common, too.

I've always said that I think the answer to most problems is almost always somewhere in the middle. People seem a

bit less willing to bend these days.

I went over and sat down next to James. I took a cigar from my stash and handed it to him.

"What's this for?" he asked.

I just shrugged my shoulders. "No reason," I said.

I haven't been back to the shop in a while. I hope things have cooled off a bit. Maybe basketball can help take our minds off our social, cultural and political differences. Sure, the conversation will still be divisive but hopefully more good-natured.

© Copyright 2023 by David Porter who can be reached at porter@ramblin-man.us. Remember when we used to be able to disagree and still be civil toward each other? Maybe we can get back to that someday.

Try these recipes for this Easter holiday

I am already thinking ahead to what I want to serve for Easter dinner. As much as I like to vary the side dishes, I always bake a ham, and I always fix the ham the same way. I found this recipe in a magazine years ago, and it has become a family favorite. The glaze adds a great flavor without overwhelming the flavor of the ham. I printed this recipe several years ago, but I think it's worth running again for all you newer readers.

Country Style Ham

- 5-6 lbs. ham, butt end
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 12 oz. apricot preserves
- 2 Tbsp brown or Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 20 oz. sliced pineapple in natural juice

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Lightly score the ham and place cut side down in a 9x13 pan. Cover with foil, bake for 1 hour.

Drain the pineapple, reserving 1 tablespoon of the juice. Chop up two slices of the pineapple, set aside. Melt the butter in a small saucepan, add onion and cook until tender. Remove from heat. Stir in apricot preserves, mustard, brown sugar, chopped pineapple and the reserved 1 Tbsp pineapple juice. Mix well.

After one hour of baking, drain juice from the ham. Pour the apricot glaze all over the ham. Arrange pineapple slices on and round the ham, using toothpicks to secure. Bake for one more hour. Two times during the baking, spoon the sauce over the ham.

Let stand at least ten minutes before slicing.

I love Lemon Meringue Pie and I think it makes a wonderful dessert after Easter dinner. I found this recipe years ago in a cookbook, and while it takes a bit more work than most

recipes for meringue pies, it is well worth the effort. The extra steps make a meringue that clings well to the filling, does not shrink and cuts beautifully. You can use your favorite pie crust recipe or a store bought pie crust. I usually make this pie the night before because it does take some time, but I do think it's best eaten the day you make it.

Lemon Meringue Pie

- Pastry for one crust pie, baked
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 4 tsp cornstarch
 - 1/2 cup cold water
 - 4 large egg whites
 - 1/8 tsp salt
 - 3 large egg yolks
 - 1 1/2 cups sugar
 - 1/3 cup plus 1 Tbsp cornstarch
 - 1 1/2 cups water
 - 3 Tbsp butter
 - 2 tsp grated lemon peel
 - 1/2 cup lemon juice
 - 2 drops yellow food coloring, optional
- Preheat oven to 350 de-

Let's Cook

By Linda Hoskins



grees. Mix the 1/2 cup sugar and 4 tsp cornstarch in a small saucepan. Stir in 1/2 cup water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until mixture thickens and boils. Boil and stir for 1 minute. Remove from heat and let cool completely. (can place in the freezer for 10 minutes to cool quickly).

While the sugar mixture is cooling, beat egg yolk with a fork in a small bowl, set aside. In a 2 qt sauce pan, mix 1 1/2 cups sugar and 1/3 cup plus

1 Tbsp cornstarch. Gradually stir in 1 1/2 cups water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until it thickens and boils. Boil and stir for 1 minute.

Stir at least half the hot mixture into the egg yolks, stirring well, then pour that back into the pan. Boil and stir for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in butter, lemon peel, lemon juice and food color if desired. Press plastic wrap onto the surface to prevent a tough layer from forming. Set aside.

Beat the 4 egg whites and 1/8 tsp salt in a large bowl with an electric mixer on high speed just until soft peaks begin to form. Very slowly beat in the cooled sugar mixture while beating on high until stiff peaks form.

Pour the still hot lemon mixture into your baked pie shell. Spoon the meringue mixture to hot lemon filling. Spread over pie, being sure to seal the edges to the edge of the crust. Bake for 15 minutes or until meringue is lightly browned. Cool away from a draft for two hours. Then refrigerate until ready to serve.

If you have a recipe to share, please send to letscook!@heraldpubs.com or mail to Mascoutah Herald, PO Box C, Mascoutah IL 62258. Thanks and Happy Cooking!