



# The JOURNAL

HAPPY Father's Day

Serving Tuscola, Villa Grove, and surrounding communities.

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## Journal Entries

### United Methodist Church events

The TUMC TBS is June 20-22 from 6-7:30 p.m. Theme for this year is "Pets Unleashed: Where Jesus Cares FUR You!" Join for three nights of Faith and Fun with snacks, games, prizes, Bible Stories, pets and music. June 22 Pauly's BBQ Food Truck will be in the church parking lot.

### Flag retirement

TK Martin Post 10009 is performing a flag retirement ceremony at 6 p.m. at Erwin Park on June 14. The Auxillary will be handing out free hot dogs at 5 p.m. on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### Dine with a Doc

Senior Education Ministries, Inc. in partnership with the Tuscola Community has scheduled: Dine with a Doc Tuscola on the 4th Thursday of every month (except November and December when the program will be on 3rd Thursday due to the holiday) from 11:30a-1:30p at the Tuscola First Christian Church located at 100 Church St. Tuscola

### Family Service

#### Senior Resource Center

Family Service Resource Center invites residents of Douglas co. age 60 and up or those with a disability to join us for "Expressive Arts" on Wed. June 21, at 1 p.m. at the Newman Regional Library, 207 S. Coffin, Suite D.

### Recovery-oriented education

Upcoming topic: Pathways to recovery, discussions may include medication, assisted treatment, twelve steps programs and more. June 21 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Camargo Township District Library.

### Story time

Camargo Township District Library will be holding story time every Thurs. from 3:30 to 4:30.

### Blood donation

Tuscola Methodist Church is hosting a blood drive with ImpactLife on June 27 from 9a.m. - 1 p.m. at the Fellowship Hall at 901 N. Prairie St.. Appointments require, call 800-747-5401 to make an ap- pointment.

### Contact

If you have any information you would like included in Journal Entries or would like to submit a photo to the community page, please send an email to dominik@thetuscolajournal.com

## Tuscola Pool slated to open next week Tuscola City Council approve \$3.4 million bid for new facilities

By David Porter

Fingers crossed, the Tuscola swimming pool at Ervin Park could open next week. Mayor Dan Kleiss said the replacement parts for the main pump could be here by the end

of this week. It will take about three days to make repairs and fill the pool with water.

Drew Hoel, city administrator, said the pump repair is expected to cost about \$11,000.

While the pool opening is highly anticipated by the city's youth, bigger news from Monday's Tuscola City Council meeting is the awarding of a \$3,443,409 contract for a new fire station, street shed and fir-

ing range (for police training). The Council unanimously approved the bid from Wohltman Construction in Effingham despite costs nearly double early estimates.

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## Saving the Embarras: Protecting 1.5 million acres

By Brenda Koenig

Tucked into the southwest corner of the University of Illinois's Urbana-Champaign campus, just beyond student housing and mostly hidden by roadside grasses, a ditch runs along a solar farm and through research farmland. This is the humble beginning of the 125-mile-long Embarras River, which drains over a million and a half Illinois acres into waterways that flow into the Gulf of Mexico.

The Embarras river is home

to colonies of the endangered Indiana brown bat and the northernmost, and only, population of harlequin darters (a small, colorful, ray-finned fish). A band of the Miami Tribe, the Piankashaw, built a major settlement at the mouth of the Embarras on the Wabash River in the 1600s. And in the 1700s, George Rogers Clark and his army followed the Embarras to the Wabash to Vincennes, securing the territory for the American side in the Revolutionary War.

But today this river is in trouble.

According to the 2022 Embarras River Watershed Management Plan, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency identified 245 of the 482 river miles in the Embarras watershed as "impaired." Lauren Spaniol, resource conservationist for the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District, notes this is typical of agricultural watersheds in the state, where "most water quality issues come from nitrates, phosphorus, and sediment."

In other words, while a small amount of the river's pollution comes from urban runoff (which can contain oil, grease, pesticides, and salt among other things), a larger problem is that farmers up and down the river apply fertilizers to their fields or raise animals nearby. Rain and snow send the fertilizer and manure (or "nutrients") into the river, causing environmental and human health issues down-

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## Drag show supports GSA club members

By Dominik Stallings

Tuscola's GSA [Gay Straight Alliance] booster club put on its second annual drag show, "Queens in the Corn," at the Tuscola Community Building June 10. Four performers and two amateurs took to the stage with much delight from the tightly packed hall.

"Drag is a form of art and entertainment that has been around for hundreds of years ... it can also be affirming and family-friendly ... It's a positive way for us to express ourselves," said Ainslie Heilich, a local, transgender businessman who hosted the event along with Michelle Dellorso from the GSA

booster club. The drag show and the "Pound the Pavement for Pride 5K color run/walk earlier in the day" helps fund activities and scholarships for the GSA club.

Dellorso said the booster club has been able to provide three scholarships so far. They also have provided clothing for students who

are interested in participating in the drag show, taken them to the pride parade in Champaign and had several speakers address the middle school and high school clubs.

"The main thing to raise money is the drag show and the race and

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Guests at the Queens in the Corn drag show hold their phone lights and glowsticks during Karma Carrington's drag performance on June 10. Proceeds from the show and the Pound the Pavement for Pride 5k Race/Walk go to benefit students in in the Tuscola GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) clubs. Photo by Dominik Stallings.

## Camargo Township District Library goes fine free

By Gabriella Agius

Camargo Township District Library will no longer charge late fees on most of their items, and will also allow patrons to return any lost items with no charge until the end of June 2023.

This new policy will apply to all items, only excluding DVDs.

Although there will no longer be fines for late items, the library will still have policies in place to ensure items are returned. Materials subject to late fees can be renewed up to three times, with a two week allowance to return after the third renewal. Once the two week period is up, the item will be considered "lost."

After an item is put into lost status, patrons will have forty-five days to return the item. After forty-five days, patrons will need to pay for the cost of the item.

If patrons have an item in lost status, they will be unable to check out any additional items.

Library Director Jackie Wells and

the Library Board had many reasons for implementing a "fine-free" library policy; the biggest reason being that fines could be a barrier for community members. This new policy will make it a welcoming environment to those in the community who may not

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## Three Villa Grove locals to receive Eagle Scout designation

Tony Hooker

Nationally, only three to five percent of all boy scouts earn the highest rank, the Eagle Scout designation. That's why when three scouts from one troop earn the designation at the same time, it's a pretty big deal. That's what's happened in Villa Grove's Troop 50, and here are the stories of the three young men, Ethan Carroll, Jace Bennett and Ryker Reyling, who are on the verge of earning the designation.

All three young men chose worthy Eagle projects that will benefit the city far into the future.

Ethan built memorial day crosses for display on the graves of veterans to honor their service to our country, Jace built a gaga ball pit

at Harrison Park, and Ryker made a flag retirement box, where old and torn flags can be dropped off for proper retirement at a later ceremony.

Their reasons for choosing their particular projects were different, but in the same vein, wanting to give something back to the community.

"I think that veterans deserve the utmost respect, even after they've passed, and when it was said that we did not have enough crosses to represent everyone, I knew I was gonna do what I could to help that," Carroll said when asked how he chose the project.

Bennett, on the other hand, was inspired by his first trip to Scout summer camp, at Camp Drake.

"It came to me the first time I went to summer camp, seven years ago. I had just seen this game for the first time, and I was playing it with other scouts and learning it and I thought, 'This is really fun. Too bad we don't have one in Villa Grove.' I thought that I should build one for my Eagle project someday."

Reyling's decision was a bit more pragmatic. "In Villa Grove, we haven't had a place for dropping off old flags except maybe the VFW, and now I built one right there on Main Street."

Of course, the monetary and time commitments were different for each project, but the scouts had family, each other, and the other members of their troop

to lean on for support and assistance. "I spent maybe 10 total hours on the construction of the crosses, and then the time it took to place them on the graves. Other scouts and my family were very helpful in the completion of my project," Carroll stated.

Jace, on the other hand, said that his project came together pretty quickly. "The process was actually pretty quick. Getting the material and permission and confirmation took a while. We fundraised enough money at our Korner Beehive fundraiser to pay for most of it. Then I used some money from my scout account to pay for the rest."

For Ryker, the time com-

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JEREMY BENNETT, Jace Bennett, Ryker Reyling, and Ryan Reyling stand behind the GaGa ball pit at Harrison Park. Photo by Tony Hooker.