



RYAN CUSHMAN, commander of the VFW T.K. Martin Memorial Post 10009, salutes as a retired flag is burned while his daughter, Kenner, covers her heart. The VFW and the Boy Scouts performed the flag burning ceremony June 14 (Flag Day) at Ervin Park in Tuscola. Photo by Roberta Porter Brennan.



BOY SCOUT ETHAN BIALESCHKI, left, and Sean Patrick Conner, place a retired flag on the fire June 14 (Flag Day) at Ervin Park during a ceremony sponsored by the VFW. Photo by Roberta Porter Brennan.

Parents practice altruism for children's sporting events

By Margie Carter

True altruism is arguably impossible when it comes to human nature. The closest thing may be parents who volunteer during an event their child is participating in.

Many youth sports clubs are run by unpaid volunteers, more so in small towns. While it may seem that being involved at sport events ensures parents are present, the truth is that the duties can make it difficult to watch your child in action. Whether it's manning concessions at the diamond, reffing on the soccer pitch, or timing at a swim meet, it can be a balancing act to actually see your child at bat, make their best pass, or swim a PR.

The same was true this past weekend when the

Tuscola Torpedoes visited Crystal Lake Family Aquatic Center in Urbana. Originally scheduled as a home meet, Crystal Lake offered to host the meet during the Tuscola pool delay. The Torpedoes' admin board performed all the responsibilities of a hosting team when it came to meet preparations, and the team was adamant that they would provide the bulk of the volunteers, which is usually expected of the hosting team.

The Torpedoes took a proactive approach to their volunteer system this season with a mandatory training session for parents that covered every job involved in running meets. It made for more confident volunteers when it came to meet day. Part of the training included pointing out the



AMBER KNIGHT and Lora Witheft on Bullpen at the Tuscola Torpedoes meet. Photo submitted by parents.

jobs that required little to no standing, allowed more flexibility to watch certain events, and the tip to sign up early to have first pick.

Timers on Saturday from Tuscola included Helen Koch, Jordan Knight, and Marie Grant, with several others standing by as backups. Andrea Willmore kept up with getting Timer's and Official's sheets to the computer table as the Meet Runner.

Manning the Bullpen area, where swimmers line up to ready for their events, was Lora Witheft and Amber Knight. Awards and Ribbons were handled by Candi Thomas.

Officiating the meet, along with the Crystal Lake Officials, was Nick Carter. Announcing duties were taken on by Jason Rennett.

And doubling as the team "Wrangler" was Melissa Sanders, a position designed to keep the youngest athletes focused.

All positions are essentially to running a smooth meet for swimmers between the ages of 5 and 18-years-old. All volunteers had swimmers competing and would have liked nothing more than to sit in the shade, standing only to watch their child swim across the pool for less than 2 minutes at a time. Instead, some volunteers either missed portions of their swimmer's events or had to suppress their cheers of their child was in a different lane.

If altruism were truly possible, missing your child's sporting event to volunteer for the entire event should qualify.

2023 VILLA GROVE FREEDOM CELEBRATION

Firework Show provided by Melrose Pyrotechnics

Friday, June 30th

Villa Grove

Fun For The Entire Family!

Concessions will be available at the event:
Big Al's Shake-Ups * Buds BBQ
VGHS FFA Pork Chop Sandwiches & More

• Vills Grove Fire Department Touch a Truck

• Camargo Township District Library Children's Activity Table

• Kiddie Train Rides begin at 5pm

• Kiddie Tractor Pull 6pm

• 7pm Patriotic Bike Parade

• Fireworks at Dusk

• Villa Grove VFW Color Guard

Camargo Township Library Kids Activities

Kiddie Tractor Pull 6:00pm

Kiddie Train Rides through-out the evening

Patriotic Bike Parade : 7:00pm (line up begins at 6:30)

(3) Grand Prize Drawings for:

Family 4 pack of tickets to Holiday World!

Decorate your bicycle and parade around the park!

- Free event - Everyone is welcome to participate

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Get an up close tour with Villa Grove Fire Department Touch a Truck