

Arcola to host historic military family between Villa Grove and Arcola football

On Sept. 22, When Villa Grove fans leave their home football field named 'Russ Ghere Field' on Friday night, they will travel to longtime county and conference foe Arcola and when doing so, they'll turn into Arcola High School's Thomas-Bradford Field off 'Ghere Brothers Memorial Highway' on Rte 133.

In Arcola, the Ghere legend is poignant and memorable and serves as the Arcola version of 'Saving Private

Ryan'. Arcola-born Roy & Lillie Ghere sent all 7 of their sons to fight in WWII. One son, Bobby, was killed in action in Germany in 1945. The other 6 brothers went on to become model citizens and community leaders. One of them, Russ, achieved great success as a coach at Villa Grove from the late 1950s to mid-70s. As high schoolers at AHS in the 30s and 40s, the brothers starred on some of the greatest Arcola

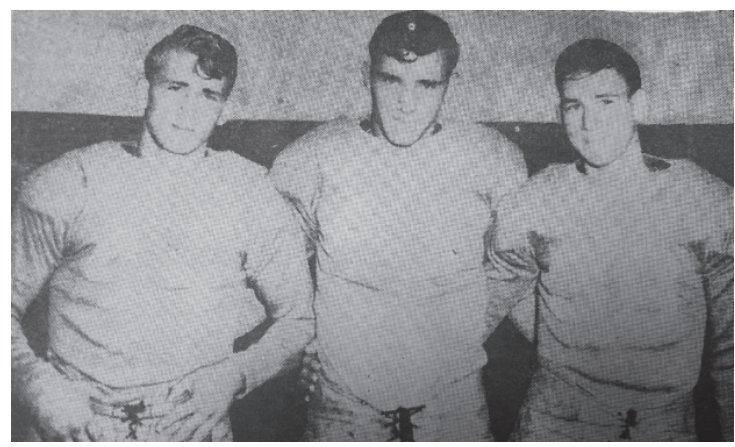
football teams ever to play.

Many of the children of the Ghere Brothers (and 10 sisters), their own children, and grandchildren are set to attend the Friday night game. The family will be escorted into AHS prior to the game to view the tribute to the Ghere Brothers in hallway between the Jr High and HS gymnasiums as well as view the graduation pictures of several generations of Gheres. The family will present

the game ball at the opening coin toss. An estimated 40 Ghere Brothers descendants are expected to attend.

VFW's from both towns will be participating in the presentation of the national anthem.

The game, unofficially titled the 'Ghere Bowl', is likely to begin presenting a traveling trophy honoring both towns appreciation for the Ghere Family.



Bobby, Harry and Russ Ghere, 1940. Submitted photo.

Housing

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and could have been more expensive, but he said he wants to be in line with local housing prices.

A person working full-time at Illinois' minimum wage of \$13 per hour would make \$27,040 per year, just below the maximum income requirement for a one-bedroom apartment.

Renters will have to pay

for electricity and gas, but water, trash and sewer costs will be covered under rent. Lamb said a regional management company will take care of the property's management. Lamb didn't specify which company, but said the company would be in charge, but he said they are experienced with low-income housing tax credit-funded properties.

Onsite laundry is available to renters through a communal laundry room in the pre-

vious management building. Lamb said they are still doing cosmetic renovations to the building, which should be finished by the first week in November. Laundry hook-ups are in each unit.

Meadow Green Giant LLC purchased the property after the Memorial Day weekend, according to Lamb. Renovation started the week after.

Lamb said renovations were done as needed and are mostly finished. Lamb said the goal is to finish up every-

thing by the end of the year.

Lamb said the units were neglected for about five years, but not everything had to be replaced. The simple construction of the units also helped with renovation efforts. Lamb said some units had broken windows or doors. Others had damaged roofs, which were covered with tarps. Structural issues like broken water heaters or other essential parts were replaced as needed.

Besides the damage re-

pair, the units received new appliances, countertops, freshly painted cabinets and walls and new flooring. The entire neighborhood now also has a newly paved parking lot.

Lamb said they have done some work on landscaping, trimming bushes and trees. He said the lawn, which has been overtaken by crabgrass, will be replaced over a several-year period as well.

Since many apartments have been vacant for the last

several years, a plethora of rumors have cropped up regarding the lesser-known neighbor in the southern part of Tuscola. Lamb said there have been rumors about squatters living in the properties, illegal drug production and even that the property was used to house illegal immigrants. Lamb assured rumors regarding the properties were false. The property was only in a dilapidated state because of long-term neglect.

Alderman

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I love the little community that we have, and I feel that we need to take care of each other."

One thing that surprised Wade when he first joined the council was the cohe-

siveness he has witnessed among his fellow council members.

"We all want what's best for the community. There's nothing that Villa Grove couldn't take care of. I think the people that we have on the board are wonderful people. You guys have been here for a while, and I'm brand new, so I just might

bring a few new ideas to the whole group," he stated.

To Lorenz, the people of Villa Grove are of paramount importance.

"I think taking care of the community, taking care of the people that live here is the most important thing. We're close to Champaign, and it's getting too expensive to live (there), so people are

coming here to find affordable housing and we have to have things for them to do. I think we need to take care of the existing businesses that we have, so we don't lose them, while trying to attract new ones," he exclaimed.

Lorenz was quick to point out that children are our future, and that we need to ensure that there are a vari-

ety of activities available to them.

As for new businesses, Lorenz has an idea of the type of new business he is working to attract in the future.

"Villa Grove is so ag related. I wish we had a business in town that was ag related and would come in and help Villa Grove blow up!" he enthused.

Finally, he noted that the new subdivisions that are in the works will be a main part of his focus as an alderman.

"I think the new subdivision project is important because it will give us an opportunity to bring new, young families to town by providing affordable new housing," he noted.

Hall of Fame

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I have been blessed to be able to travel all around the United States and world teaching. I've had the pleasure of teaching in Japan, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Canada and Mexico. I have served on the Board of Directors of the Illinois Prairie State Chiropractic Association since 1987 and served 16 years on the Board of Directors of the International Chiropractors Association. I have been blessed with many awards over the years but the most important being Faculty of the Year at Palmer College of Chiropractic numerous times, Chiropractor of the Year two different times for the Illinois Prairie State Chiropractic Association and Chiropractor of the Year for the International Chiropractors Association.

Steve Hilgendorf

My volunteering for the Tuscola community all started in the fall of 1977, when Bob Hastings asked me if I would help keep the football stats. I agreed, and from there I moved on to also keeping the basketball stats as well. I keep Tuscola's football stats, the away team's stats, and the score book for away basketball games. I need to thank Greg for putting up with me during all our travels for all these years, Ryan Hornady and the committee for nominating me, and my wife for allowing me to attend all these sporting activities.

In 1979, I became a part owner of the F. H. Jones Lumber Co. and felt I needed to be more involved in the community. I served as a volunteer for the Tuscola Fire Department for 20 years. I was an engineer, bookkeeper and an officer. I have served as the chairman of the City Planning Commission for over 30 years. I served as a starting member and officer of the TCDC and TEDI. I was also a member of the Chamber Board as well as a past president and office holder of the Tuscola Ambucs. I was a member of the PrairieLand Pride playground committee and was very involved in the planning and construction of the playground. I was on the First-Mid Bank Advisory Board. I have served as the Tuscola Township Supervisor since 1989. I helped re-

model the press box and put up the football lights which are now coming down in the present remodel. I was also a member of the IHSA Sportsmanship Advisory Board and the IHSA Track Advisory Board.

It was only natural that my volunteering would include my church and family. As a member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tuscola, I have served as the chairman, a board member, and on various committees, such as the Men's Club, connected with church activities. As my boys got involved in sports, my participation grew as well. I volunteered to coach Little League, Bidy Ball, JFL, and Travel Basketball. I kept the score book for all their Junior High School basketball games. I volunteered at local track meets for several years which eventually led to me becoming an IHSA Certified Track Official for the past 30 years.

As the boys went through High School, I watched them play football, basketball, track and baseball while keeping their stats or the books for their sports. I had a front row seat to watch Joel play in the 1A football state championship game. Though they didn't win, I still feel they were arguably Tuscola's best football team. Jacob played football, basketball and baseball. It fills me with pride to know I was there helping the coaches, again with a front row seat, when Jacob scored his 1,000th point, was first team in all three sports and now keeping stats for him as the JV coach and part of the coaching staff for the team that earned third place at the State Farm Center this year in basketball. I have seen a lot of great football and basketball games over the years and watched several individuals who made a real impact on Tuscola sports. I was there when Steve Bates turned the corner and outran the defenders to score a touchdown on his way to his 2,000 yard rushing season and still there when Jalen Quinn became the all-time leading scorer in basketball with over 2,300 points. Being a volunteer has allowed me to be a part of so much of Tuscola's growth and development over these past years. I have enjoyed so many highlights of our town and they have all provided me with many lasting lifetime memories and I hope there will be many more in

the years to come.

Greg Hastings

Greg Hastings, TCHS Class of 1972, has been a Tuscola resident since he was three months old. For the majority of his childhood, his family lived in Hillcrest Subdivision where his love for sports developed. At that time, Hillcrest Subdivision was mainly open fields perfect for the neighborhood wiffle ball, basketball, football and whatever games they created. The new driveways and cul-de-sacs were perfect for playing basketball. Greg played high school basketball and ran track. He also played Little League summer baseball.

A few years after high school graduation and studying printing at Southern Illinois University, Greg took a position at the Tuscola Review newspaper as job work printer. He also assisted his father in taking statistics for basketball and football stories. Eventually the high school coaches started using their statistics as the official statistics for the high school.

Greg and his family, Jan Schweighart (class of 1972), Mindee (class of 1991) and Aaron (class of 1995) moved into a house in Parkview subdivision in 1979 which became their home for 30 years. Greg volunteered to serve on the Tuscom Little League Foundation. He spent countless hours preparing for games and grooming the Little League diamonds, which was only a few minutes from his home. He attended many games and would keep the statistics for the game if needed. Tuscola Little League sponsored two state Little League tournaments. For their work on the tournament, Greg, Duff Hoel and Dave Lohr were awarded Chamber of Commerce Volunteers of the Year.

Greg also coached a Tuscola girls' summer softball traveling team, which included his daughter, Mindee. The brown minivan racked up countless miles going to games, hauling equipment, snacks, water and players all over the area.

During the winter time, Greg volunteered to coach bidy basketball. He coached for approximately 10 years. He was very excited to coach his son, Aaron, during bidy basketball. When Aaron started school-sponsored sports, Greg was at every

game, though it was sometimes hard to keep the statistics and watch his son play.

For his work for the American Business Club, he was awarded the Ambuc of the Year in 1995 - 1996.

Since the mid-70s, Greg has donated his time and talent to keep statistics for the high school football and basketball teams. When Greg's father retired, he and Steve Hilgendorf (Class of 1973) continued to keep stats for the newspaper and school. They have attended games in freezing cold weather, snow and rain. According to Ryan Hornaday, Greg and Steve have volunteered for over 12,000 hours and counting (they are not planning to retire). Greg is currently retired and spends his time landscaping and gardening.

Dr. Brian Harris

I was born and raised in Tuscola and greatly benefited from growing up in a small town. My parents and grandparents ran a small business - Lloyd Oil and Auto Parts for which I contributed to the family business. I also worked other part time jobs mowing yards and was a lifeguard at the Tuscola Pool in high school. Each of these experiences contributed to the hard work it took to launch me into my career as a lifelong educator. I really enjoyed working with people...especially kids. I believe that public education is the cornerstone of our democracy and as a small-town kid, education was my ticket to being able to lead and be influential in the big picture to benefit all students. I am a proud alumni of the TCHS Class of 83! After graduation I attended The University of Illinois where I earned a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education in 1987.

I began my career as a high school social studies teacher in Waterman, Illinois. While enjoying teaching in the classroom I was also interested in educational leadership and obtained my Education Administration Masters degree from Northern Illinois University in 1991. My first leadership role was as a middle school Assistant Principal in Yorkville, Illinois where I was also the Varsity Girls Basketball coach at Yorkville High School. As my career progressed, I worked as Assistant Principal and Principal for middle schools in Barrington and Mt. Prospect,

respectively, while obtaining my Ed.D. (Doctor of Education) from Northern Illinois University in 2001. My dissertation was titled, "A Comparative Analysis to Determine the Congruency among the Statutory Requirements for Teacher Professional Development in Illinois and the other North Central Association States with the Optimal Process for the Professional Development of Teachers." This research contributed to professional development of teachers for many years in professional journals and workshops.

My wife - Carol and I live in St. Charles, Illinois since 1995 and raised our two children - Matthew and Brooke. During this time, I worked as the Principal at Haines Middle School in St. Charles and was eventually promoted to various Assistant Superintendent roles in St. Charles for a total of 12 years. I guided the K-12 curriculum, successfully negotiated several labor contracts, oversaw day-to-day operations for K-12 education for over 14,000 students.

In 2010, I was named Superintendent of Schools for Wheaton Warrenville CUSD #200 where I spearheaded a technology initiative and capital development plan to improve classrooms for 21st century learning, among several other initiatives while managing a budget of over \$170 million. In 2014, I became Superintendent of Schools in Barrington CUSD # 220 where we implemented several innovative learning programs focused on student college and/or career readiness. During my time as Superintendent in Barrington we were recognized with multiple awards as one of the highest performing school districts in Illinois and across the country. While Superintendent of Schools in both Wheaton and Barrington, I was active at the local, state, and national level in several professional organizations which expanded my educational leadership impact and reach to countless students in Illinois and across the country.

At the state level, I was President of the Large Unit District Association (LUDA) for two years (2017-2019) and a member of the organization for 15 years. LUDA represents the 50 largest school districts in Illinois and effectively leads and influences educational policy