



The JOURNAL

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Journal Entries

Camargo Woolly Worm Festival

The Camargo Woolly Worm festival will be Saturday, Oct. 7. The festival will have lots of fun, free events: Aikman wild-life show, magician, balloon twister, bingo for adults and much more.. All events are held at Opal Thompson Park in Camargo.

The coloring page needs to be submitted by Oct. 2. Anyone home schooled that would like to enter the woolly worm coloring contest please contact Pam Sigler: pamsigler@gmail.com

PrimeTimers

PrimeTimers will be having a fall gathering at Walnut Point at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 12. Join for lunch at the Lazy Day Cafe and then some games and fellowship. Please call First Christian Church 217-253-2394 to RSVP by Oct. 9. This is for anyone in the community age 55+.

Craft Bazaar

Villa Grove VFW Auxilliary is hosting a craft vendor event from 8 - 2 p.m., Oct. 14 at the Villa Grove VFW Hall

Blood Drives

Tuscola United Methodist Church will host a community blood drive 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 19 at 901 N. Prairie St., inside Fellowship Hall.

Tuscola Moose Lodge 729 will host a community blood drive 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 20 at 807 E Southline Rd, inside the banquet room.

Tuscola Community High School will host a community blood drive 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. on Oct. 25 in the Study Hall of the high school at 500 S. Prairie Street.

Potential donors must be at least 17 years of age (16 with parental permission form available through www.bloodcenter.org) and weigh more than 110 pounds. A photo I.D. is required to donate. To donate, please contact ImpactLife at 800- 747-5401 or visit www.bloodcenter.org and use code 71203 to locate the drive.

Family Service zoo tour

Family Service-Tuscola Tours is inviting Douglas County residents age 60 and up to join them Oct. 5 for a fun trip to Scoville Zoo. Zoo train rides and food items will be available for purchase. Van transportation is provided by Family Service. Seating is limited, Call Connie at 217-898-3321 or 217-599-1324 to reserve your spot!

Dine with a Doc

Dine with a Doc will be on Thursday, Sept. 28 at 11:30 a.m. At the First Christian Church in Tuscola. The guest speaker will be Molly Bailey, OT. She will be speaking on occupational therapy. Come enjoy a free lunch and listen to Molly Bailey speak. Please call 217-253-2394 and let Shelley know how many are coming. This is open to the public.

Class of 2027 fundraiser

A trivia night fundraiser "Boos and Brews" for the class of 2027 will take place at 7p.m. Oct. 13 at Forty Martyrs at 201 E. Van Allen St. in Tuscola. There will be a cash bar, silent auction, raffles, a wine pull and side games as well.



THE TUSCOLA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI from 1983 (left) and 1988 (right) wave to the crowd during the Sept. 22, Tuscola Homecoming Parade. The 1983 class float played music from large speakers as they drove down Main Street. Photos by Dominik Stallings.

K-Kids brighten Tuscola School Board meeting Wienke back to address press box flaws

By David Porter

The Tuscola School Board had more visitors than usual when half a dozen fourth-grade girls from North Ward Grade School attended to tell the Board about the Kiwanis-sponsored K-Kids Club. The Kiwanis Club sponsors youth clubs in all three schools.

The club does public service projects and focuses on positivity and reinforcing good behavior.

Mark Sweeney addressed the board as the new president of the teacher's union. He stressed his goal of working with the administration, the Board and staff to reach common objectives.

Stan Wienke, former head football coach and athletic director, was back for the second month to

address his concerns about problems with the new outdoor athletic facilities.

He praised the district for making improvements and said they "look really nice." Last month, he focused on the new bleachers saying that 14 percent of the spectators in the new bleachers can't see the new scoreboard and parts of the field.

This month, he addressed visibility issues with the new press box.

Following last month's comments, Superintendent Gary Alexander produced an hour-long video pointing out positives with the new bleachers and press box. Wienke said the video helps prove his point that people working in-

side the press box can't see what they need to without leaning forward and even leaning out the windows.

He said the workers should not have to remove windows and lean forward or walk around the room to see what they need to. He said one of them became upset at a recent game because he nearly dropped a window that could have landed on a fan.

He said there are huge flaws with the new press box and that the district needs a plan to fix them. He asked who designed the layout and about the process. He said the public deserves an explanation.

Being over budget doesn't mean the district has to "accept things that are less functional or put in the

wrong place."

He added that he wouldn't think advertisers on the new scoreboard would be very happy that so many spectators can't see their ad.

Board President Bob Devlin responded to the comments saying that the improvements were over budget and that the district was up against a deadline to get the work done before the first home game.

He said one spectator commented that he thought the drink rail, which Wienke had criticized was the "best seat in the house." He suggested that people "don't stand where you can't see."

He acknowledged that the improvements are not perfect.

See BOARD page 10

Foundation problems rise costs for Tuscola street shed

By Dominik Stallings

Foundation work for the Tuscola street shed and firing range will return to the original, more costly plans due to ground conditions. The change order from Wohltman Construction will cost an additional \$129,865 for the city.

"We tried not to incur this cost, but it happened anyway," said Tuscola Mayor Dan Kleiss at Monday's Tuscola City Council meeting.

City Administrator Drew Hoel said contractors stopped work halfway through the foundation construction due to the subsurface conditions. The new street shed is being built on top of an old fill site, so a stronger foundation is needed. The city's architects and

engineers won't be able to ensure the building is up to code otherwise.

"Not excited about it and certainly disappointed, but there's no other options," said Hoel.

In other news, the Council approved an amendment to Clark Dietz's engineering agreement for the Downtown Alley Improvements project for \$105,540. The amendment includes cost overruns for landscape, architect, electrical and temporary construction easements in the design phase and materials testing and observation in the construction phase. The amendment also includes costs for lighting. Hoel said the actual engineering makes up

about \$62,000 of the cost.

The Council approved a purchase agreement with Brown Equipment Company for a sewer cleaning and hydro excavation truck. The new truck costs \$414,259 and includes a trade-in of the existing truck. According to Hoel, the city received \$90,000 for the trade-in and the city allocated \$405,000 in the equipment replacement fund for the truck.

Hoel said Coe Equipment quoted a similar machine for slightly cheaper, \$403,419. However, the truck from Brown is available immediately and includes a few more options. A pinch roller for the hose reel would be a \$6,000 add-on, he said.

According to Hoel, the Coe truck

has a delivery time of 12 months, during which the city would have to make some necessary maintenance on the existing truck.

"It's well worth seeing the truck in action," said Kleiss. "It's a very handy piece of equipment, very handy for the employees and community in general."

Hoel added that the current truck is the most used equipment in the city's arsenal. A combination sewer truck can clean sewers and excavate dirt to expose underground pipes and cables.

The Council approved a preliminary engineering and construction guidance agreement with James E.

See COUNCIL page 2

Howards discuss their selection as Homecoming Grand Marshals

By Tony Hooker

When the 2023 Villa Grove homecoming parade kicks off next Friday, a pair of familiar faces will be seated in places of honor as the Grand Marshals. Josh and Marci Howard, life-long Villa Grovians, will be at the helm.

For the Howards, whose families go back at least three generations, (more on Josh's side) Villa Grove homecoming has always been a big part of their life, according to Marci.

"We met in high school. I'm older than him, and went to homecoming together after I had graduated, during his senior year," she related.

Of course, for Marci, her connections to the school are quite a bit more intimate as she's the most senior faculty member on staff.

"This is my twenty sixth year," she responded when asked how long she had been teaching. "It's changing now. I love it, but it's a lot harder," she stated.

For Josh, Villa Grove schools played an integral role in his career as well.



Josh and Marci Howard

"I've been a superintendent with Petry Kuhne for about 10 years now," he related. "I got my start in Mr. Sergeant's Building and Trades class."

For Marci, it seems that the event has grown since her time wandering the halls of Alma Mater.

"It was big, but it wasn't like it is now. We built floats, we went to

the game and we had the dance, and that's about it," she noted.

The Howards' connection to Villa Grove's homecoming didn't end with their personal high school experiences, however, as two of their three children were heavily involved in Student Council, which led to Marci becoming advisor for the group for three years.

"The girls (twin daughters Lydia and Alexa) were on student council so I was the advisor for three years," she noted. "They were both partly in charge of it, so they were highly involved."

Over time, some of the homecoming traditions have evolved, as Marci was quick to point out.

"The week before, they decorate the hallways and then they have lunch games throughout the week," They're decorating their floats and they'll have powderpuff football and macho volleyball. The bonfire, with all the games, is a lot different now, also."

One thing that hasn't changed, according to the Howards, is the students' excitement about

See HOWARDS page 2

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