

# Opinion

6A - Monday, September 26, 2022

A GRACE FILLED JOURNEY • by Mary Herschelma

## Help Make HHS Accessible For All



When I think back to my high school days, I tend to think fondly, focusing on what I enjoyed, rather than things I struggled with.

And I think that it's okay to look back at the happy memories that helped to shape us into who we are today.

I think about playing the editor's wife in the *Little Shop of Horrors* operetta, playing the piccolo in the marching band and earning the MVP trophy my senior year on the tennis team. By the way, Kyle keeps that trophy on the piano in our living room as our family's greatest sporting achievement. Maybe Charley can out-rank me one of these days.

I have fond memories of chemistry experiments with Mr. Reeves, earning an A on my research paper with Mrs. Hewitt and making some of the best friends a girl could ask for. In fact, when our daughter Grace died, my fellow classmates from 1998 made a wonderful donation to INAD research in her name as well as a special gift to our family.

Looking back on my time as a Hiltopper, I do have fond memories of a beautiful campus and a great experience.

However, I also think the 102-year-old main building has outlived its useful life. There's no doubt the campus is pretty and historic. But our students deserve better.

And it's time we did better for them.

Elevator or not, the main building to our high school is not equally accessible to all students that will walk through its doors.

I speak from experience. While Grace was a frequent visitor to sporting events in the gym, it was always easy to get her in by the ramp, although there's no accessible seating inside.

And other buildings are much more complicated when it comes to accessibility. One year, the wrestling coach invited Kyle to bring our

family to their banquet in the cafeteria (which sits in the lower level of the library building). Yes, there is an elevator in that building. But the banquet was after hours and there wasn't a key to the elevator. It was pouring down rain and without much of a plan, we left her seat in the van and Kyle carried her to the basement where she sat on my lap the entire time.

Grace was little enough to be carried, so it wasn't a huge issue, but it is a problem.

Another time, we were asked to make a presentation to one of the science classes about genetics. That classroom is on the third floor in the main building, which if you can't use the stairs is only accessible by elevator. But here's the thing with the elevator: it's located near the former art room, and also requires a key to have access. Knowing this, we coordinated a plan ahead of time to have someone meet us from the main office by the elevator, as the main office is not accessible without using stairs.

Unfortunately, Grace won't ever get to roam the halls of HHS as a Hiltopper. But I will continue to advocate on her behalf and the behalf of students like her.

Every single student that enters the halls of our beautiful high school should have equal access to the opportunities that lie within.

It's time to do better for ALL the students at HHS and vote yes for the new building referendum in October. It won't raise taxes, and for students like Grace, it would open a whole new world of opportunities.

Charley started kindergarten this fall, and I have no idea what things she will be interested in someday. I may be a tennis mom or a choir mom or even a STEM mom. But whatever the case, I hope to be in the front row cheering on whatever she endeavors.

We have a perfect opportunity this November to vote for a better future for all our students, and we owe it to them to make it happen.

IMAGINE HILLSBORO CHECKS IN • by Lucas Altenberger

## Imagine Gets Ready For Busy Fall



Welcome back to Imagine Hillsboro Checks In. If this is your first time joining us, welcome! This column features a bi-monthly update regarding all things Imagine Hillsboro. Fall is here, and believe it or not, we actually might have an even more jam-packed fall than we did summer. Let's jump in.

Farmer's Market season came to a close on September 17. This season, customers enjoyed a rich variety of fresh eggs, jams, flowers, lip balms, baked goods, art, clothing, accessories and more. If you didn't get your fill of markets this season, you are in luck! On Saturday, Oct. 1, the Hillsboro Harvest Market will take place on the Historic Courthouse Square. You can expect many of the same goods, plus a variety of foods and fall-themed items. The newest accessory trend, permanent jewelry, will be brought to Hillsboro by Blackboard Mercantile. During the Harvest Market, we will also have the Chalk of the Town event. Come see main street brought to life with chalk by local talent. If you are feeling artsy, but chalk isn't your favorite medium, we will also have pumpkin painting available.

September saw the return of the #ShopHillsboro Moonlight Madness Bed Races. Main street was treated to an evening of fast-paced beds and fun costumes. Congratulations to our repeat champions from *The Journal-News*, and to our "best dressed" costume prize winners, the Bed Breakers. See a full write-up in the Monday, Sept. 19, edition of *The Journal-News*.

Congratulations to Cassie Malloy, new director of the back-to-school store. Cassie is a wife, nurse, and mother of four here in Hillsboro. We are very excited to have you on board, and to see where you take this program.

Imagine Hillsboro is planning a new type of event to be held on Saturday, Oct. 15: our inaugural "Shake the Lakes 5K: Fun Run & Walk". Runners of all ages will start and end at Lake Glenn Shoals South Marina, with a nice

view of Sherwood Forest en route. Participants with a sweet tooth will be happy to hear there is a build-your-own candy bag station waiting for them at the finish line. Individual tickets are \$20, and "family passes" are available for families of four for \$40. Children 10 and under are free. Register now at [imaginehillsboro.com/events-registration](http://imaginehillsboro.com/events-registration).

The Education committee's Spooktacular Golf Scramble will be making a return next month. On Saturday, Oct. 22, join us at Indian Springs Golf Course for a few frightening rounds of golf. Shotgun start will be at 10 a.m. A four-player team is \$280, and three sponsorship levels are available (Hole, Team, and Platinum). There is still plenty of time to register your team, become a sponsor, or both at [imaginehillsboro.com/events-registration](http://imaginehillsboro.com/events-registration).

The Bicentennial and Smithsonian Committee continues to meet regularly to usher in Hillsboro's 200th birthday. If you are interested in helping with these developments, please contact Terri Casey at [bicentennial2023@imaginehillsboro.com](mailto:bicentennial2023@imaginehillsboro.com).

The volunteer committee recently completed the repair of Hillsboro's welcome sign on the east side of town. Volunteers have also done some power-washing recently on the fence on the southeast side of Lincoln Square, and the curb in front of the Orpheum Theater. Staining and painting are slated to occur in the near future. We are always looking for more volunteers to help out! Reach us at [contact@imaginehillsboro.com](mailto:contact@imaginehillsboro.com).

Looking ahead to November, we will have one more #ShopHillsboro event this year. Keep your eyes peeled for more information on the #ShopHillsboro Small Business Saturday event scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 26.

To close out, let's do another activity.... The first five readers to bring this copy of Imagine Hillsboro Checks In to the Imagine Hillsboro booth at the Harvest Market (Saturday, Oct. 1) will get a prize and a shout-out on our social media pages! See you then.

Joe's Corner

by Joe Rollins



CONSERVATION CONVERSATION • by Gabe Osborn

## Starting The Conversation

Hello readers, my name is Gabe Osborn, and I am the Resource Conservationist with the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District. This is the first edition of a monthly column where I hope to share with you the latest news in soil and water conservation efforts at the local, state and even national levels.

To start off this month's edition, I'd like to introduce myself. I was born and raised in Montgomery County, and currently reside in Coffeen. Both sides of my family were involved in agriculture, with the Osborn side of my family farming for six generations in Butler Grove Township, just north of Hillsboro. I always had a love of the outdoors and agriculture as a child, but I really began to appreciate agriculture during my involvement in FFA while attending Hillsboro High School. During my time in FFA I held many leadership positions including chapter president and secretary, as well as Section 19 treasurer and reporter. Some of my favorite FFA contests included agronomy, ag mechanics, and public speaking. After graduating from Hillsboro in 2014, I attended Lake Land College in Mattoon where I graduated with an associates degree in agricultural business in 2016. Following college I moved back to Montgomery County, working in the agricultural field most of my time since college, most recently I was the farm broadcaster for WSMI from November 2018 until February of this year.

In my role now as Resource Conservationist for Montgomery County, I will be responsible for promoting practices for the wise use of natural resources within the county. Some of those responsibilities include promoting Arbor Day, Earth Day, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resource's tree program with county elementary students, the county land use judging contest for the four county FFA chapters, as well as assisting the Montgomery County Natural Resource Conservation Service office with planning, surveying, designing and reporting of conservation practices.

In my free time I am the current president of the Hillsboro FFA Alumni chapter, a mem-

ber of the Montgomery County Farm Bureau Young Leaders, a Coffee volunteer fireman, and a league bowler holding a 195 average. When I'm not busy with all of that, I'm in the process of rebuilding a 1972 Chevrolet C10 pickup truck.

That's enough about me, but there is plenty to share with you about the ongoing projects we have going at the Soil and Water District. Currently the district is working with the City of Hillsboro on a plan to facilitate future improvements to the watershed plan for Old Hillsboro Lake and Lake Glenn Shoals. This project is in the very early stages, but is expected to improve the lake for both water consumption, and for recreation. We at the district are proud to be on board with this project.

Later this week on Thursday, the Soil and Water District will be holding the old annual tradition of a county land use contest for the four Montgomery County high schools' FFA chapters. In a land use contest, students will enter a three to four foot deep "pit" dug in the ground where they will judge the soil by their physical characteristics. From there students can make educated decisions on how well the soil drains naturally, wind and water erosion, and even how the land can be farmed. Students will then be rewarded for their knowledge of the soil on a team and individual basis. We will post the results following the contest, so stay tuned for that.

Finally, the SWCD is also currently taking orders for our Fall Fish Sale. We are selling a variety of fish for pond stocking, including fathead minnows and grass carp for pond maintenance. Also, we are offering other species including channel catfish, largemouth bass, regular and hybrid bluegill, and redear. Order forms can be picked up in person in the office at 1621 Vandalia Road in Hillsboro, or online at [www.montswcd.com](http://www.montswcd.com). Orders for grass carp are due by Monday, Oct. 10, with all other species orders due by Monday, Oct. 17. The pickup date will be Thursday, Oct. 20, at 8 a.m. at the Hillsboro Township shed at 9056 Illinois Route 127 in Taylor Springs, just south of the nursing home.

LETTERS to the editor

## No CO2 Storage In Montgomery County

Carbon dioxide pipelines and storage will be a safety hazard should it enter and be stored in Montgomery County. The plans of Heartland Greenway were stated in the Montgomery County Board meeting on Sept. 13.

Heartland Greenway's representative, Mr. Jim Prescott, presented the proposed development to establish carbon dioxide storage and pipeline development (CCS) on 2,000 acres of leased land, three purchased injection sites, possible 9-11 well sites and more possible expansion in Montgomery County.

CO2 is transported under extreme pressure in a concentrated, critical liquid state. This is a definite safety threat if a leak or rupture occurs.

CO2 is denser than air and will blanket the area surrounding the leak. This odorless asphyxiant is dangerous to anyone encountering it.

Sartartia, MS, experienced a rupture of a CO2 pipeline that blew a 40-foot hole in the area as the pipeline unzipped in February 2020. Two hundred people were evacuated and many were treated at the hospital. CO2 is toxic and can smother life if it pushes oxygen out of the area. Emergency personnel have a very difficult challenge to rescue residents exposed to CO2.

Does Montgomery County want to accept the threat of exposure to an asphyxiant, diminished farmland production, and the loss of property rights (eminent domain) so

that Heartland Greenway gains profit? CCS profits are paid for from our federal taxes that are misdirected to supposedly fight against climate change.

Our neighboring Christian County has fought against CO2 storage in their area due to the known likelihood of safety risks, farmland damage, aquifer contamination, and their determination not to be a toxic garbage depository. Many other counties in Illinois do not accept the safety risks of CCS.

Please look over the Coalition to Stop CO2 Pipelines web site (<http://noillinois-co2pipelines.org>) and decide for yourself.

Mary Ellen DeClue  
Litchfield

# The Journal-News

The Newspaper of Record for Montgomery County

Looking for a nice place to live, or have a place to rent that would make an excellent home?

Meet Selma.

Selma can help you find qualified folks who are eager to have a look at your rental, or she can help you find just the place you're looking for.

Put Selma to work for you.

visit [thejournal-news.net](http://thejournal-news.net)  
or call 217-532-3933 today

# SELMA CAN RENT THAT