



3 Page Edition

Saturday's Events - August 24

Sangamon River Music Festival

- 10 a.m. - Parade
- 11 a.m.-11 p.m. - Booth Vendors & Food Court Open
- 11 a.m.-10 p.m. - Carnival Rides \$20 Armbands
- 11 a.m.-10 p.m. - Free Shuttle Rides from IGA Grassy Parking Lot to Festival
- 11 a.m. - Waldo the Clown Show "Jesus, Our Best Friend" at New Beginnings Church
- 11:30 a.m. - The Ronald McDonald Magic Show at the Masonic Lodge
- Noon - Registration for Cornbelt Fire Department "Water Ball"
- Noon-11 p.m. - Lion's Club Beer Tent Open
- Noon-1:30 p.m. - Big Daddy Weave (National Gospel)
- 1 p.m. - Cornbelt Fire Department "Water Ball"
- 1-5 p.m. - Bingo at the Community Bingo hosted by The Glenwood
- 2 p.m. - Waldo the Clown Show "Stuff Only Jesus Can Do" at New Beginnings Church
- 1:30-3:45 p.m. - Radio Station Live Feed (WBGL & Illini Radio)
- 3:45-4:15 p.m. - Work In Progress
- 4:30-5 p.m. - Broadway Riot
- 5:40-7 p.m. - Up Shot
- 6 p.m. - Duck Race launch at bike path bridge
- 6-8 p.m. - Bingo at the Community Bingo hosted by The Glenwood
- 7:45-9:15 p.m. - PopRocks
- 10-11:30 - Matthew Curry & The Fury

Monday's Events - August 26

- 9 a.m-1 p.m. - WELCA Sew Day at Mahomet Lutheran Church
- 11 a.m.-Noon - Museum Mondays: Hand Tool Day at Museum of the Grand Prairie
- 4:30 p.m. - MSJH softball at Argenta-Oreana
- 6:30 p.m. - Mahomet Lions Club at Mahomet Lutheran Church

Band Together 4 Music gives young musicians opportunities

By Dani Tietz
MahometDaily.com

Ally Sussman believes the opportunity to play an instrument should be available to every fifth grade student who wants to be in band.

Ally, who enjoyed band as a fifth grade student, started Band Together 4 Music as a sixth grade student in the Mahomet-Seymour School District. Now in the fourth year, the program collects gently used instruments to donate to students who cannot afford to purchase or rent an instrument.

Used instruments can be dropped off at the Mahomet Public Library or the Mahomet IGA.

Ally raises money to have the instruments repaired and cleaned through the Music Shoppe. They are then given to Band Director Michael Stevens to distribute to the students who want to participate in band. The process is completely confidential.

"Only half of my (fifth grade) class joined the band," Ally said. "Some kids were not interested, but I thought maybe some kids did not join the band because they could not afford an instrument. I didn't want anyone to miss out on joining the band."

The Mahomet-Seymour School system requires students to have an instrument to join the band. They provide a rental system through the Music Shoppe.

As a fifth grade student, Ally talked to her mother, Ann, about possible Bat Mitzvah project. Mitzvah is a Hebrew word which means "A good deed."

Ann was instrumental in teaching her daughter what it means to give to others. As a small child, Ally donated birthday presents, such as food and books to local organizations.

As Ally became a teenager, Ann encouraged her independence by fostering an environment where Ally could put together a project like Band Together 4 Music. Ann helps Ally with the bookkeeping, finances and she drives Ally where she needs to go.

Both Ally and Ann enjoy the time they spend together on this project.

When Ally showed excitement in the instrument project, she proposed the idea to Stevens, who while delighted, did not want Ally to become discouraged if the project did not

take off.

Stevens donated the first two instruments to the program.

"When you pick something you want to do, whether it's work or volunteer, something you believe in, it's easy to do it," Ann said. "And I give her a lot of credit. She's always been this way, wanting to share what she loves with other people."

Since June 2011, Ally has raised nearly \$1,000, with 100 percent of the money spent on instrument repairs.

A total of 18 instruments have been collected in three years. Twelve have been repaired and donated.

When Ally notifies Stevens of a donated instrument, he gives her a priority list based on the instruments the school has and the amount of money she has for repairs. If the school already has a clarinet, Stevens may tell her to repair the trumpet.

In the beginning, Ally held a garage sale to raise money. This summer, the Mahomet Happy Helpers 4-H club supported Band Together 4 Music by manning a fundraising booth at the IGA.

"I was so happy to get their support," she said. "They raised enough money to repair one instrument. One more student will have access to an instrument this fall because of the Mahomet Happy Helpers 4-H Club."

Ally's friends, Lauren Bode and Chloe Becker help her at an informational table when the fifth grade students select their instruments.

In a short period of time, Ally has to let all fifth grade students know about the program. Within the first couple weeks of school, students are introduced to band, and asked to choose an instrument.

Ally will speak at an informational parent meeting Thursday night in the Lincoln Trail gymnasium. She will also collect donations at the meeting. While instrument donations are important, monetary donations also help bring the instruments to standards so students can use them.

"If I were ever in that position, I would want someone to help me," she said. "And I just know I'm going to make someone's life better."

Last spring, Ally talked to 100 members of the University of Illinois band about her project. She also presented her website to a Students Involved in Technology Conference, and talked to the Mahomet-Seymour Band Boosters.

The website does not take much maintenance, although



Photo submitted

Ally Sussman recently dropped off a clarinet and tenor saxophone to Mahomet-Seymour Band Director Michael Stevens. Her project Band Together 4 Music has collected 18 instruments for fifth grade students in three years.

Ally updates it regularly when a new instrument is donated.

"I've learned that I can manage lots of different things," Ally said. "I had more school work (as an eighth-grader), a play, basketball and track. I had to learn how to balance everything."

As an eighth grade student at Uni High, Ally sent out a school wide email to parents, students and staff about the project. That afternoon, a trumpet was donated.

She wants to collect three or more instruments each year.

Ally plans to continue Band Together 4 Music until she graduates high school. Because the project does not require a lot of daily attention, she hopes to continue the project through college.

"When she puts her mind to do something, she works hard and makes it happen," Ann said. "She's not following in anyone's lead, she figures it out and makes it happen. There are no barriers."

To find out more about Ally's project, go to bandtogether4music.weebly.com.

Dani Tietz can be reached at DaniTietz@MSTNdaily.com

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- Sunday:** Sunny, with a high near 87. South wind 3 to 7 mph.
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Mussel survey educates volunteers, organizers

By Dani Tietz
MahometDaily.com

The Upper Sangamon River Conservancy and local volunteers scooped through a section of the Sangamon River in the Lake of the River Bend Forest Preserve Saturday morning during the annual mussel survey.

While event organizers expected to find more mussels, this year 23 volunteers spent two half-hour sessions in the river pulling out 169 mussels. They found a total of 10 different species, including the Fawn's Foot mussel, which has not been identified in that area before.

During last year survey with 22 volunteers, the group found 325 mussels and 15 different species at a Lake of the Woods site.

Event organizer Bruce Colravy said the mussel population may have decreased in this area due to the drought last year.

"Some of the areas we were searching might have gone totally dry," Natural History Survey mussel researcher Steve Buck said. "Mussels are prone to droughts. Last year's drought was probably the worst in 30 years."

When the Natural History Survey did a four-man-hour search close to the same area, they found 10 species. The group on Saturday account for a 12-man-hour search

Buck said in his study, he is looking at the effect of droughts on mussels. He's found some of the species can burrow in deeper to survive several weeks or longer when they clam up.

Another reason for lower numbers could have been most of the surveyors were in a very gravelly area. Inexperienced volunteers may have had trouble finding the mussels. When Colravy moved downstream, he found as many in the last five minutes as in the first 55 minutes because it was sandier in that spot.

When the survey cycles back to the same area in three years, they will be able to analyze the data retrospectively.

If the Mahomet area does not suffer from another drought for three years, they will be able to compare the findings and circumstances to this year's findings.



Photo by Dani Tietz | MahometDaily.com

Volunteers waded in the Sangamon River Saturday during the Upper Sangamon River Conservancy mussel survey. In an hour, 23 volunteers found 10 species in 169 mussels.

The survey measures the amount of mussels found, the number of species found, the sex of the mussels and the variety of age groups. They also measure their length and width.

This year, very old mussels and very young mussels were found, which means they are reproducing.

Buck identified the mussel species and talked about their characteristics to the crowd of volunteers. While many mussels can be identified from the outside, he showed the crowd how to open them up and identify them from the inside. He also talked about the history of the mussels in this area.

"Some of these mussels have stayed in the same spot for 15 years and never moved until today," he said.

While some mussels die from physical conditions, many fall to droughts, and others are eaten by otters or raccoons.

"It's been great to have the reintroduction of the river otter, but it's been tough on the mussels," Buck said.

Raccoons also prey on the mussels in shallow water. They can bite through thin-shelled mussels but carry the thick-shelled ones near a tree and put them into a midden pile. They will wait a few days until the mussels die in the heat. When they open they can eat them.

Native Americans also stockpiled mussels for the winter months. With a tough, leathery texture, the Native Americans did not like to eat them, but they were protein. They made rock corrals to store the mussels in so they did not have to get into the cold river.

Buck said mussels are one of the most endangered groups of invertebrates. A quarter of the 300 species in North America have become extinct. The other half are locally extirpated, species of concern or in decline.

Colravy said with understanding of the river habitat, more people will care about taking care of the water.

"Part of it is to introduce people to the river, so they can learn about the function of it," he said. "As people become more knowledgeable about the river, hopefully they will see its value and want to protect it. Most people who come are surprised at what they find in the river. It's part of what's going on there all the time that they don't normally see."

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MahometDaily.com**

Local woman's passion for desserts growing

By Dani Tietz
MahometDaily.com

Julie Arie's baking career began when she watched Minnie Driver and Nicole Kidman eat her cookies in the green room at the Screen Actors Guild Awards.

"One year I bought cookies into the office," Arie said. "I just messed around with a recipe I had, added stuff to it, and I brought them into the office. Our executive producer came to me and told me to bring them to the green room during the show. I had this surreal moment of watching Nicole Kidman say, 'These are the best cookies ever.'"

From there, Arie, who works for a company that licenses footage for awards shows, such as SAG and the Emmy's, out of Los Angeles, started delivering cookies and milk to people throughout L.A. with her business partner.

While in L.A., she also made sugar cookies dipped in white chocolate for a charity, which landed her in the Bon Appetite magazine. With 400 orders of sugar cookies, a friend and two kitchens, they baked, packaged and shipped the cookies.

Arie looks at the opportunities she had in L.A. as learning experiences.

"I don't think of (my business) as a failure because I learned so much of what not to do," she said. "But I also learned that I was right about what I make. People love it and they will buy it."

When her husband's, Tim, grandmother died, the

couple took the opportunity to move back to Bondville and live in his grandmother's house. Arie is able to continue her job in L.A. while working in Bondville. She travels back for the award shows.

After working in the Hollywood industry for 15 years, Arie still receives requests for her cookies, even while she is living in Bondville.

A year and a half ago, Arie found an old ice cream truck on Craigslist. She talked the price down, drove to Indiana to pick it up, and since then has been working on fixing up it up as East Central Illinois' first dessert food truck.

The pink Sweetie Sweets truck will make its first appearance on Saturday at the Urbana Farmers Market. While Arie would love to have a storefront, she feels the food truck gives her mobility to move from town to town, fill catering orders and be involved in the community.

Initially her plan is to start slowly. The truck will be open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, cruising through neighborhoods, at the farmers market or the University of Illinois Football games.

Sweetie Sweets will also be part of the Champaign food truck program, which gives them locations to park in Champaign or on campus.

"Our mission is to have everything baked fresh in small batches, just like your mom's kitchen," she said. "A lot of the recipes I have were my husband's mom and grandmother's recipes. We're tried and true, nothing fancy."

Sweetie Sweets will start off with a lava brownie, a salted caramel brownie, and five cookies. Her cornerstone cookie which started everything is a chocolate chip toffee cookie, which is very thin. It is crispy on the outside with oozy chocolate on the inside.

She will also have a regular chocolate chip, a sugar cookie and an oatmeal chocolate cherry chunk cookie. Cinnamon rolls will also be available at the farmers market. Although Sweetie Sweets is not a cupcake business, she will also have a chocolate, vanilla and banana with chocolate topping available.

With the truck she hopes to deliver to classrooms or meetings in surrounding towns, including Mahomet. Julie and Tim continue to work full-time jobs, so they want to take the business slow, not making the same mistakes as before, and to allow the communities dictate where they are needed.

Because they bake everything daily, and community is so important to the Arie's, when the day is done, they will donate their leftover goods to the shelters. She wants to start a birthday cake program for children in shelters and programs, along with buy local ingredients.

And Arie does not just want to bake cookies, she wants the truck to be fun.

"We want to have Show Tune Thursday where if you come and sing, you get a cookie," she said.

She also did a lot of research for the truck design. Without being too over-the-top, Arie chose pink because the research she found said pink reminds people of home, comforts and treats.

"I want people to eat our food and be like, 'My grandmother used to make this,'" she said. "I want them



Photo by Dani Tietz | MahometDaily.com

The pink Sweetie Sweets truck, which has been remodeled in Mahomet all summer, will be open for business Saturday at the Urbana Farmers Market. Cookies, brownies, rice krispie treats, cupcakes and cinnamon rolls will be available.

to be reminded of comfort, home and good feelings."

Growing up in Las Vegas, Arie's mother did not like to cook. She taught herself to cook through Christmas dinners, potlucks and baking cakes for friends.

While she studied to be a hairstylist and an actress, she learned from cookbooks and successful handed down recipes.

Arie wishes she would not have wasted time so she could have learned the trade in culinary school, but she realizes the experiences she had in acting have made her who she is today.

"I never would have done any of the other things if I went to culinary school," Arie said. "This is part of what make me good at what I do. I can work with crowds. You're never going to learn the finessing part in school. How to interact with people. They teach you the how to. You have to stamp your own personality on it."

Arie said this business model would not have worked in L.A. She feels blessed to be here in this community, working with and making decisions with her husband.

As the business grows, she hopes to fulfill mail orders. "Instead of me working for Hollywood," she said. "I want them eating my cookies."

To find out the location of Sweetie Sweets go to @sweetiesweetscu on Twitter.

Dani Tietz can be reached at
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