



JULY 8, 2022

Kooojian



10 A SITE TO SAW
Chain saw artist sculpts first phase of OkoboTree project

12 SWINGING FOR THE FENCES
Fundraiser for Spirit Lake ball fields gets major boost

13 ROCKIN' RETRO
Ray Stevens laid down hits after '61 Roof Garden stop



Country recording artist
CALLISTA CLARK
 JULY 13TH | 7PM



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Friday (7.8)

Nebraska Showdown 7pm

Saturday (7.9)

Lonesome Losers 2:30pm
 Nebraska Showdown 7pm

Sunday (7.10)

Lonesome Losers 2pm

Wednesday (7.13)

FULL MOON Callista Clark 7pm

Thursday (7.14)

Big Nacho Karaoke 6pm

Friday (7.15)

Thrillbillies 7pm

Saturday (7.16)

Mighty Nish Band 2:30pm
 Thrillbillies 7pm

Tuesday (7.5)

Charlie Leissler 5pm

Wednesday (7.6)

Christopher John 5pm

Thursday (7.7)

Boon and Lambert 5pm

Friday (7.8)

Charlie Leissler 5pm
 Nick Hickman 9pm

Saturday (7.9)

Ryan Sather 5pm
 TBD 9pm

Sunday (7.10)

Boji Bill 5pm
 Karaoke 8pm

Monday (7.11)

Parker D & Boji Bill 5pm

Tuesday (7.12)

Tim Horsman 5pm

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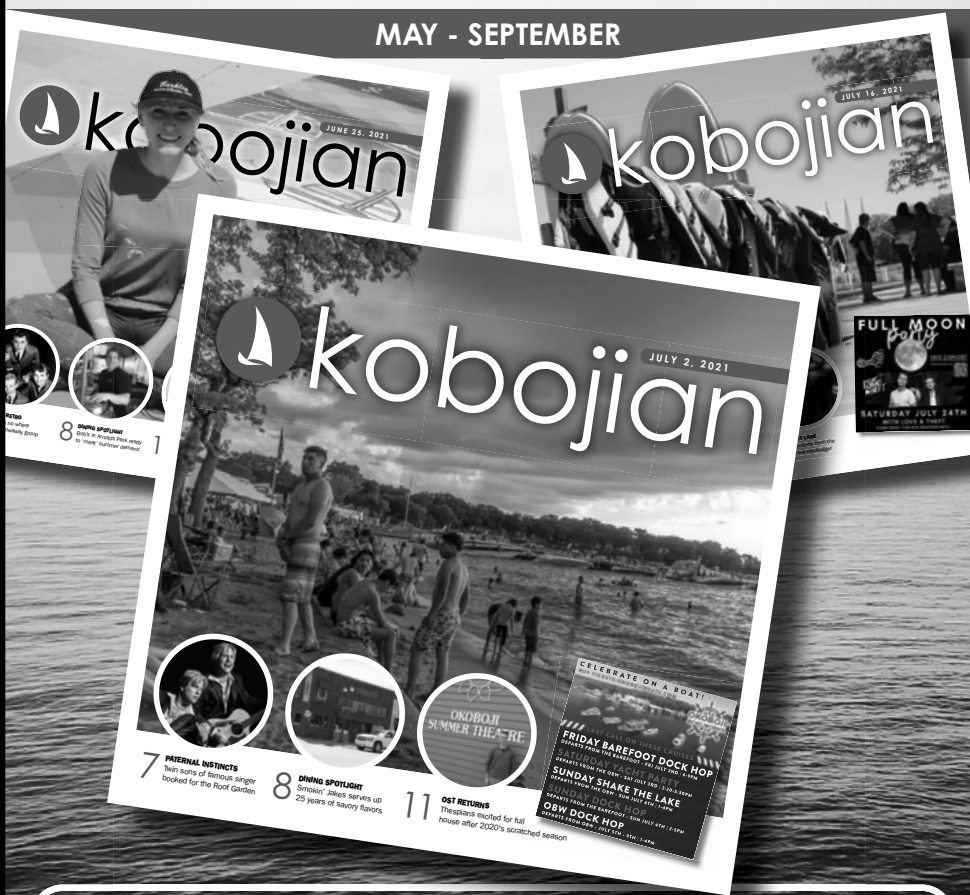
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 **Okobojian**
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ABOUT THE COVER: Photo taken by Seth Boyes

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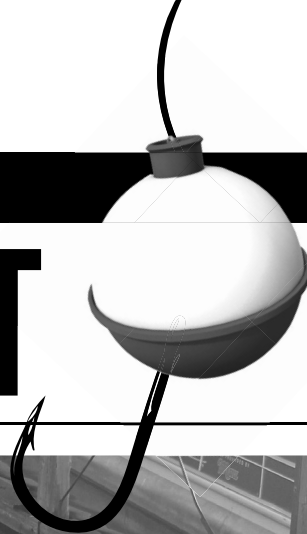
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NORTHWEST IOWA

FISHING REPORT



This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. The report below is from June 30, the latest report available at the time of publication. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840. Most area lake temperatures have warmed into the upper 70s-80s over the last week. This week's forecast calls for continued temperatures in the 80s. Water clarity is fairly good on most area lakes. Bass and panfishing are great on most lakes closer along weed lines in 10-15 feet of water. Most fish species are moving to deeper water as their spawning season ends. For current conditions, call the Spirit Lake District Office at 712-336-1840.

EAST LAKE OKOBOJI — Lake temperature is in the lower 80s. The water level is level with crest. Fish are moving shallower post-spawn. Trolling has been working very well. Find crappie and yellow bass in 10-16 feet of water. Try fishing weed lines where there is new vegetation growth. Black Crappie — Good: Best bite is in 10-15 feet of water along weed lines. Bluegill — Good. Walleye — Fair: Try spinners, crankbaits and long and shallow shad raps in the main basins. Best bite is an hour before and after sunset.

LOST ISLAND LAKE — Fishing/trolling is getting more difficult as aquatic vegetation reaches the surface in many places. Black Crappie — Fair. Walleye — Slow: Try trolling crankbaits or with lindy rigs off weed lines. Best bite is an hour before and after sunset. Yellow Perch — Fair.

LAKE MINNEWASHTA — Bluegill and crappie fishing has been good; some sorting may be needed. Black Crappie — Good. Bluegill — Good.

SILVER LAKE (DICKINSON) — The late afternoon bite has been fair. Many anglers are targeting fish schools during the day. Vegetation growth is making fishing more difficult in many areas. Walleye — Fair: Try spinners, crankbaits and long and shallow shad raps.

SPIRIT LAKE — Water temperature is in the upper 70s. The lake is 7 inches below crest. The walleye season is open. Black Bullhead — Good: Try fishing the northern grade of Spirit Lake. Black Crappie — Fair: Use a tube jig and bobber. Bluegill — Fair. Walleye — Good: Use spinners, crankbaits and long and shallow shad raps; try to find weed lines. Yellow Perch — Fair: Many perch can be caught but may need to be sorted for size.

WEST LAKE OKOBOJI — Water temperature is in the upper 70s. The water level is even with crest. Many fish are moving deeper post-spawn. Rocky points and areas with new vegetation growth have seen the most success. The walleye season is open. Black Crappie — Fair. Bluegill — Fair. Largemouth Bass — Fair. Smallmouth Bass — Fair. Walleye — Fair: Try fishing off points by trolling crankbaits or with lindy rigs.



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CAMPUS HOTLINE

Doris Welle | Staff Writer



Those of you who read last week's Campus Hotline remember seeing a picture of the **Harmony Club Orchestra** from Sheldon back in 1935. I wondered if anyone would recognize some of the band members. One of the comments I received noted that Ronald Langley went on to play in the **Lawrence Welk Orchestra**. Thanks for mentioning it.

Kelley Zinge is back in town. The former Okoboji Summer Theatre student and later director of their Boji Bantam Theatre, she is bringing a musical she wrote nine years ago to the OST stage. "Purely Patsy Cline" brings Patsy back to earth to tell us her stories and sing her songs. Zinge is a very talented artist with an outstanding voice. She has been touring constantly with her one-woman show, and now we get the chance to see it. Zinge is also bringing her own band

to perform with her. They have not been to Okoboji before, so it will be interesting to hear their perspective on this weeklong adventure for them. Zinge's show runs July 19-24. Welcome back Kelley!

Another famous international star is returning to the area. **Dean Torrence** of Jan and Dean fame was here in 2015 when he and his late partner were inducted into the Iowa Rock 'n Roll Music Association Hall of Fame. I remember him as gracious, somewhat quiet and very talented. He is bringing his band, all members of various well-known groups such as the Beach Boys, to put on the Jan and Dean Beach Party in the Roof Garden on July 29. That should be a fun show; especially for those of us who love the music of the '60s and '70s.

Brent and Brenda Tewes welcomed his sister Jo, her husband Grant and kids from Peoria, Illinois, for a few days in the area. Their teenaged children really

enjoyed the boating and other fun things to do around here. I had not seen them in a few years, so the kids being in the mid to late teens was a shock to my system. The Tewes live on the harbor at the north end of West Lake Okoboji, so they had a spectacular view of the fireworks on the Fourth of July for their guests to enjoy.

For all you karaoke fans out there, **Jason Grinnen** will be back at his post with B & J Karaoke in a couple of weeks. He had to undergo some surgery and is now home from the hospital. He told me he must take it easy for at least two weeks before he can get back at it again. We all wish him a speedy recovery.

If you have a reunion, family party or special event coming up this summer, let me know. You can email the information to doris@dickinsoncountynews.com or give me a call at 712-320-2850. Have a safe week!

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE GREAT EVENTS

July 8 — LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

10-11 a.m. The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs
Boji Bantam Children's Theatre
Okoboji Summer Theater

July 8 — LIVE MUSIC

5-9 p.m. Funset Sunset with Charlie Leissler
Nick Hickman — all day
The Gardens

July 8 — OUTDOOR EVENT

Noon to 4 p.m. OBW Dock Hop
Okoboji Boat Works

July 8 — LIVE MUSIC

1 p.m. Kick
8 p.m. 40 Oz. to Freedom
Okoboji Store

July 8 — OUTDOOR EVENT

5-6:15 p.m. Siesta Cruise — Family Friendly

July 8 — OUTDOOR EVENT

6-9 p.m. Barefoot Dock Hop
Okoboji Boat Works

July 8 — LIVE MUSIC

6 p.m. Murphy's Law
The Ritz

July 8 — OUTDOOR EVENT

7-10 p.m. OBW Dock Hop
Okoboji Boat Works

July 8 — LIVE MUSIC

7 p.m. Nebraska Showdown
Barefoot Bar

July 8 — LIVE MUSIC

7:30 p.m. Night Ranger
Roof Garden Ballroom

July 8 — LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

8 p.m. Pump Boys and Dinettes (musical)
Okoboji Summer Theatre

July 8 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. The White Keys
Captain's Getaway

July 9 — OUTDOOR EVENT

7:30 a.m. to Noon. Farmers Market
Dickinson County Fairgrounds

July 9 — GOLF TOURNAMENT

Colton Baschke Charity
Emerald Hills Golf Course

July 9 — OUTDOOR EVENT

BRASL (Bike Ride Around Spirit Lake)
Spirit Lake Chamber

July 9 — OUTDOOR EVENT

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Farmers Market in

the Park
Arnolds Park Amusement Park

July 9 — OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT

9-10 a.m. The Studio Yoga and Barre
Arnolds Park Amusement Park

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

9 a.m. to Noon. She's With Us
Arnolds Park Amusement Park

July 9 — LIVE EVENT

10-11 a.m. The True Story
of the Little Pigs
Boji Bantam Children's Theatre
Okoboji Summer Theater

July 9 — LIVE EVENT

10:30-11 a.m. Saturday Morning Stories
Dickinson County Nature Center

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

11:30 a.m. The Okoboji Masters Choir
Iowa Rock 'n Roll Museum Patio

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

1 p.m. Kick
8 p.m. 40 Oz. to Freedom
Okoboji Store

July 9 — OUTDOOR EVENT

2-5 p.m. Barefoot Dock Hop
Barefoot Bar

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

2-6 p.m. The Mellow Dees of Okoboji
Round Lake Vineyards

July 9 — OUTDOOR EVENT

2:30-5:30 p.m. Millers Bay Yacht Party
Okoboji Boat Works

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

All Day. Nick Hickman
5-9 p.m. Funset Sunset with Ryan Sather
The Gardens

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

2:30 p.m. Lonesome Losers
7 p.m. Nebraska Showdown
Barefoot Bar

July 9 — LIVE EVENT

4:30 and 8 p.m.
Pump Boys and Dinettes (musical)
Okoboji Summer Theatre

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

6-8 p.m. Charlie Roth
Little Swan Lake Winery

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

7:30 p.m. '90s Rock Show
Preservation Plaza

July 9 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. The White Keys
Captain's Getaway

July 10 — GOLF TOURNAMENT

Parent/Child Scramble
Brooks Golf

July 10 — OUTDOOR EVENT

1-4 p.m. OBW Dock Hop
Okoboji Boat Works

July 10 — LIVE MUSIC

1 p.m. Anthony Koester Band
Okoboji Store

July 10 — LIVE MUSIC

2 p.m. Lonesome Losers
Barefoot Bar

July 10 — LIVE MUSIC

2-6 p.m. Michael Hope
Round Lake Vineyards

July 10 — LIVE MUSIC

4-6 p.m. Rick Ayres and the
Jazzed Up 6tet
Little Swan Lake Winery

July 10 — LIVE MUSIC

5-9 p.m. Funset Sunset with Boji Bill
The Gardens

July 10 — LIVE EVENT

6 p.m. Pump Boys and Dinettes (musical)
Okoboji Summer Theatre

July 10 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. Ventura Boulevard
Captain's Getaway

July 11 — OUTDOOR EVENT

7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Birding on the Green
Dickinson County Nature Center

July 11 — LIVE MUSIC

5-9 p.m. Funset Sunset
with Parker D & Boji Bill
The Gardens

July 11 — LIVE MUSIC

7 p.m. Dick Bauman Big Band
Pomerantz Hall
Pearson Lakes Art Center

July 11 — LIVE MUSIC

7:30 p.m. Songwriters Workshop
with Surf Zombies
Majestic Pavilion

July 12 — LIVE MUSIC

5-9 p.m. Funset Sunset with
Tim Horsman
The Gardens

July 12 — LIVE MUSIC

7-9 p.m. Jazzed Up Big Band of Okoboji
Roof Garden Ballroom

July 12 — LIVE MUSIC

7:30 p.m. The Everly Set
Pearson Lakes Art Center

July 12 — LIVE EVENT

8 p.m. An Inspector Calls (mystery)
Okoboji Summer Theatre

July 13 — OUTDOOR EVENT

7:30 a.m. to Noon. Farmers Market
Dickinson County Fairgrounds

July 13 — GOLF TOURNAMENT

Iowa Electric Coop
Brooks Golf

July 13 — OUTDOOR EVENT

10:15 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Nature Explorers
Living Things in the Environment
Dickinson County Nature Center

July 13 — OUTDOOR EVENT

10:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Nature Tots
Things with Wings
Dickinson County Nature Center

July 13 — OUTDOOR EVENT

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Wild Wednesday: Chemical Reactions
Iowa Lakeside Laboratory

July 13 — LIVE MUSIC

5-9 p.m. Funset Sunset with Ryan Sather
The Gardens

July 13 — LIVE MUSIC

6-8 p.m. The Senders
Spirit Lake VFW

July 13 — LIVE MUSIC

7 p.m. Full Moon Party
Callista Clark
Barefoot Bar

July 13 — LIVE MUSIC

7:30 p.m. Forever Simon and Garfunkel
Pearson Lakes Art Center

July 13 — LIVE EVENT

8 p.m. An Inspector Calls (mystery)
Okoboji Summer Theatre

July 13 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. Michael Handler Trio
Captain's Getaway

July 14 — LIVE MUSIC

5-9 p.m. Funset Sunset with
Charlie Leissler
The Gardens

July 14 — LIVE MUSIC

5:30-7:30 p.m. Paper Moon
Minerva's Patio Party

July 14 — LIVE MUSIC

6-8 p.m. Jeremy DeWall
Round Lake Vineyards

July 14 — LIVE MUSIC

6-8 p.m. Adam Layman
Little Swan Lake Winery

July 14 — LIVE MUSIC

6-8 p.m. Rock the Roof
Mogen's Heroes
Roof Garden Ballroom

July 14 — LIVE MUSIC

8 p.m. Ryan the Pianoman
Okoboji Store

July 14 — LIVE EVENT

8 p.m. An Inspector Calls (mystery)
Okoboji Summer Theatre

July 14 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. Michael Handler Trio
Captain's Getaway

July 15 — OUTDOOR EVENT

6-9 p.m. OBW Dock Hop
Okoboji Boat Works

July 15 — LIVE MUSIC

7 p.m. Thrillbillies
Barefoot Bar

July 15 — OUTDOOR EVENT

7-10 p.m. OBW Dock Hop
Okoboji Boat Works

July 15 — LIVE MUSIC

7:30 p.m. The Lettermen
Roof Garden Ballroom

July 15 — LIVE MUSIC

8 p.m. Damon Dotson
Okoboji Store

July 15 — LIVE EVENT

8 p.m. An Inspector Calls (mystery)
Okoboji Summer Theatre

July 15 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. — 1 a.m. Joystick
The Gardens

July 15 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. Tom's Top 8
Captain's Getaway

July 15 — LIVE MUSIC

9 p.m. to 1 a.m. Joystick
The Gardens

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7/26 Neil Dover

Country

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8/10 | Gary Lewis & The Playboys

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8/17 | The Buckingham

60's & 70's Pop

8/24 | Crazy for Patsy Cline

Patsy Cline Cover

8/30 & 8/31 | Hotel California

A Salute to the Eagles

9/7 | The Hit Men

Classic Rock Supergroup



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Saturday, August 6th



9am-4pm | Preservation Plaza | Arnolds Park, IA

Overlooking beautiful West Lake Okoboji, this event features handcrafted works of art from artists throughout the Midwest. Categories include sculpture, pottery, glass, drawing, painting, photography, print making, folk art, mixed media & more. There are also hands on art activities for the kids.

FRESH, FROM SCRATCH LEADS TO LONGEVITY FOR THE COFFEE SHOP

Doris Welle
Staff Writer

Using fresh ingredients to make delicious menu options has proven successful for Terry and Timmy Pope. They opened The Coffee Shop and Cafe in downtown Milford in October of 2013.

“We will be starting our tenth year of business this fall, and that is gratifying for us,” Terry said. “The time has gone by quickly.”

Along with her sister Gina Patton, the Popes make everything from scratch.

In addition to the quality of the food, The Coffee Shop has a vintage atmosphere which provides for relaxed dining. The location on the corner of Highway 71 and 10th Street in the center of the business district is ideal for easy access.

Timmy is of Sicilian lineage and is also a retired chef from Las Vegas. He created the Italian Catering Menu which has proven very popular.

“Our American catering menu is gaining in popularity as well,” Terry said.

The Popes shop locally for most of their ingredients.

“We have an extensive garden in our backyard, plus we shop at the farmers market and our meats come from Sunshine (Foods),” she said. “We do as much locally as we can.”

“Since we specialize in fresh produce, our menu does not include fried foods like hamburgers,” Terry said. “Our lunch specials change daily, depending on what is fresh.”

The Coffee Shop and Cafe opens at 7 a.m. Monday through Saturday. Closing time is 3:30 p.m. except Saturdays when the doors are shut at 2 o’clock.

Breakfast is the most popular section of the menu and is served from opening time until 11 a.m.



“We serve from the breakfast menu all day on Saturday,” Terry said, noting that the grande burritos are the most requested breakfast item.

Terry bakes lots of pies; strawberry rhubarb being the most requested during the summer months. At Christmas time, sour cream raisin and German chocolate hit the top of the charts and pumpkin is a favorite all year long.

“If someone wants to buy a whole pie, I suggest they call their order a day or two in advance,” she said.

There are also freshly baked cinnamon and pecan rolls, brownies, muffins, coffee cakes and scotcheroos.

The Popes have a busy catering schedule but also offer in-house parties.

“We hold private parties here at night but need a minimum of 25 people to make it work.”

Diners can also avail themselves of items to take home such as honey from Boernsen Bees of Ocheyedon, flavors of jams and other specialty items.

With the shortage of workers in the area this summer, the Popes and Patton are grateful to have been able to add

Riley Boltz to the staff for the season.

“After all those years in Las Vegas, I was glad to return home to Milford 10 years ago,” Terry said. “My husband had never lived in a small town, being from the East Coast, but he likes it here. We like living in a rural setting with friendly people and a small town atmosphere where everyone helps everyone else.”

Terry and her sister Gina are the daughters of the late Lincoln Guthrie. They display some of his prize possessions for their customers. His early 1920s radio, a delicately carved end table and a vintage trunk are among the items adding to the vintage decor and charm of the cafe.

Anyone interesting in booking the cafe to cater an event can visit coffeeshopmilford.com to see the full menu and give them a call at 712-291-6278 or stop by to place an order.

“We offer pick up or delivery only,” Terry said. “We just don’t have the staff to serve at a party or banquet.”

Winter, summer, spring or fall, The Coffee Shop and Cafe is the place to enjoy eating fresh foods, made from scratch in a calm, inviting atmosphere.

food & fun

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AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE



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Photo by Tom Gustafson

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PROJECT TRANSFORMS DEAD TREE TRUNKS INTO PUBLIC ART

Seth Boyes
News Editor

A trio of trunks have been transformed into outdoor public sculptures as part of an effort to repurpose dead trees in the Lakes Area. The nonprofit Spirit of Okoboji's OkoboTree project hired Des Moines chain saw artist Gary Keenan to sculpt the first three trees included in the project.

Keenan crafted the three sculptures in as many days last week — the first to the north of Isthmus Park in Spirit Lake, the second at Iowa Lakeside Laboratories and the third in Orleans south of the intersection of 125th Street and 253rd Avenue. Each location so far is near a segment of the Dickinson County trail network.

OkoboTree Marketing Director Kathy Fahy said the project is aimed at providing another attraction for the Lakes Area. Organizers hope to develop a digital “Treesure Map” for the public, showing the locations of each sculpture.

“It’s sad that we have these old trees in our area that are either getting hit with a blight or a disease, and we’d like to be able to give some of these expired trees news life if you will by doing some sculptures with them instead of just cutting them down,” Fahy said.

Keenan has been carving for about 22 years now. He first tried his hand at chain saw carving after a friend mentioned the exhibited carvers at the Iowa State Fair. Keenan felt confident he too could sculpt chain saw art and — while his friends weren’t initially convinced — he put chain saw to log and came away successful.

“It was crude and slow, but I was intrigued with the process, and I started playing around with it on weekends and it just started taking off,” he said.

The artists said his neighbors were likely irritated by the noise while he practiced in

the driveway, but it led to some sales, which led to commissions, which then led to his first trunk sculpture. Trunk carving now make up the bulk of his work — which has taken him everywhere from California to England.

The designs obviously tend to be vertical, and Keenan said he has to keep not only a sculpture’s structure in mind, but also its scale from the viewer’s perspective — working several times his subject’s normal size.

The artist said he typically uses three different sizes of saws. Smaller saws allow for more shaping and detail, he said, but even those can only take him so far, and he has a number of power tools, sanders and other equipment on hand.

“I quite often take an oxyacetylene torch and do some shading with that,” Keenan said, adding that the torch can give sculptures a greater sense of dimension and realism.

Keenan said he’ll also guide the OkoboTree committee on preserving the sculptures with an outdoor sealer. The sealer will protect the wood from moisture and the sun’s ultraviolet rays — which he said will bleach and dry the wood, causing cracks. While he noted the underground roots will be more vulnerable, Keenan said a well-cared-for trunk carving can potentially be removed from its base and displayed elsewhere.

OkoboTree hopes to identify several more trees yet this year to include in the effort, according to Fahy, and possibly commission them to be sculpted yet this summer or fall if all goes well. The deceased trees must meet certain criteria to be considered for the project, but anyone with suggestions for a trunk to carve or an artist for the job can contact the nonprofit through okobotree.org.

Those interested in sponsoring a sculpture or otherwise donating to the project may also do so through the website.



(Above) Des Moines chain saw artist Gary Keenan plied his tools to the trunk of three different dead trees in the Lakes Area last week. Keenan’s creations are the first in what local nonprofit Spirit of Okoboji hopes will be a growing number of sculptures made from deceased trees around the community.

(Left) Keenan crafted three sculptures in as many days — the first to the north of Isthmus Park in Spirit Lake, the second at Iowa Lakeside Laboratories and the third in Orleans south of the intersection of 125th Street and 253rd Avenue. (Photos by Seth Boyes)

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• Sunday Indoor Worship 9:30 a.m.

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10 a.m. Sunday: In-person and live on Facebook
Messages may be heard at our website:
gracelutheranspiritlake.org
Email: gracelc05@yahoo.com
712-336-2446

■ IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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LITTLE LEAGUE RENOVATION PROJECT GETS MAJOR FUNDING BOOST



Seth Boyes
News Editor

Officials with Spirit Lake Youth Athletics announced plans in early May for a major renovation of the three baseball fields near Spirit Lake Schools.

At that time, organizers said more than half of the \$370,000 needed for the project had been raised, and the efforts got a major boost recently with a \$10,000 grant from State Farm via local agent Scott Trautman. Officials gathered at the fields for a check presentation the night of June 29, which marked the final regular season game for the community's baseball and softball programs.

SLYA officials planned to begin renovations at the season's end and complete the work before the 2023 season begins.

Trautman learned about a month ago that he had been selected to distribute the \$10,000 as part of State Farm's Outstanding Community Engagement Program — the company is giv-

ing away \$1.6 million nationwide to celebrate its 100th anniversary. Trautman explained the funds were to go to a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, and his office wanted the \$10,000 grant to have an impact on a current ongoing project in the local community. He said a number of employees in the office have children in the Little League program or who otherwise use the fields, and Trautman himself has been a sponsor of Spirit Lake Youth Athletics for approximately 10 years.

"I have a hard time saying no if it's related to children, because I just think it's so much fun to help and be a part of stuff that kids are involved in," he said.

Promotional materials for the field renovation's fundraising campaign — dubbed the Triple Play Project — noted the fields are now decades old and experiencing drainage issues and other problems.

"A small amount of rain can make the fields unplayable," the campaign information said.

Plans call for improvements to the fields themselves as well as fencing, water service,

sprinkler systems, dugouts, electrical systems and other changes. A number of local businesses — everything from area banks, restaurants, service clubs, marinas and vehicle dealerships — have donated to the cause so far.

Trautman feels the improvements will not only invite area youth to play baseball, but attract parents as well and build community interest in the sport.

"When you look at what attracts children to be active, today we have so many resources — be on a computer, be on a phone, be on an iPad, sit at home — I think kids, when given the opportunity to be outside and be active with friends, will do it more often than we think," Trautman said. "More importantly, I think you'll find more kids will end up on the baseball field on their own on a Saturday, playing ball with their friends, which I think is even better than the structured stuff."

Though the baseball fields are on property owned by Spirit Lake Schools, Trautman — who also serves on the Spirit Lake School Board — explained there's no formal relation-

ship between the Spirit Lake Youth Athletics and the district. Rather, the district reached an agreement with the city of Spirit Lake several years ago, which Trautman said has allowed necessary work on the field to move more quickly.

The city previously owned the almost 9-acre property on which the ball fields stand, and the district took ownership of the fields in 2019, after giving the city an 8.6-acre lot about half-a-mile south of the ballfields. The swap allowed the youth athletics to work directly through the school district, rather than the Spirit Lake City Council and parks board.

Trautman noted several improvements have taken place on that side of the school's campus in recent years, including the addition of tennis and pickleball courts on its southwest corner. He said the baseball field renovations fit well with the overall efforts for promoting public use in that area.

"I think it just attracts people to participate, and that's that lasting impact that I'm excited about for the Little League and for the kids," Trautman said.

ONE OF THE TRULY BIG STARS PERFORMED AT ROOF GARDEN

Tom Tourville
Okobojian Contributor

There are stars and then there are STARS. The Roof Garden Ballroom welcomed to its stage one of the biggest stars in pop, country and comedy music in October of 1961. This man has won 10 Grammys and has received gold records for hit after hit. He owned his own television show, built and ran two amazing live theaters and was inducted into the country, Christian, songwriter, Nashville music, Georgia music and Atlanta music Halls of Fame.

How's this for hits: "Gitarzan," "The Streak," "Everything Is Beautiful," "Misty," "Ahab The Arab" and "Shriner's Convention." He has recorded for Capitol, Prep, NRC, Mercury, Warner Brothers, Barnaby, Curb, Monument and MCA Records.

You might have guessed his name by now, but his real name is Harold Ray Ragsdale. OK, he changed his name for the stage; including his appearance at the Roof Garden, to simply, Ray Stevens.

Often, we forget who came and performed for us at our Roof Garden Ballroom. Some of the biggest stars of the '50s, '60s, '70s and '80s stood tall in front of us while leaving us music memories.

Ray Stevens was born Harold Ray Ragsdale in Clarksdale, Georgia, in 1939. By high school he was leading one of the hottest rock bands in Georgia, the Barons. After high school he was off to Georgia State University where he was majoring in music. At age 18 he was signed to his first recording contract — with Capitol Records no less. His first record of note was "Silver Bracelet." Because of that hit, Stevens was signed to NRC Records to be a studio musician, song writer, music arranger and vocalist. Why? It paid more money than working for Capitol Records. Wow, did Capitol ever goof up!

But Stevens liked recording songs and the amazing fame that came with that. In 1961 he would go on to record with Mercury Records. His hit at that time was "Harry The Hairy



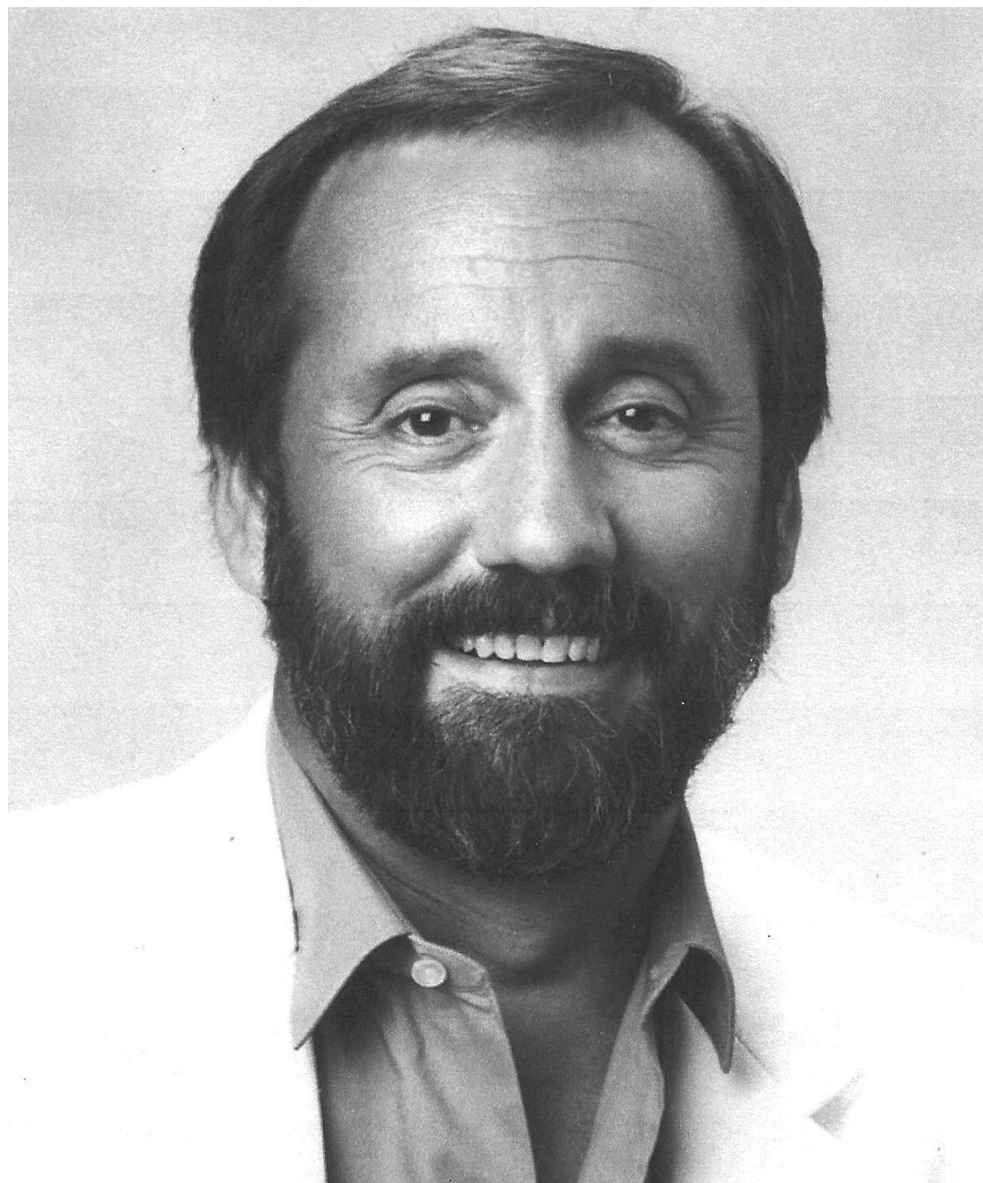
Ape," and he came to the Roof Garden while the song was charting. It was in 1962, while still recording for Mercury, he hit it big with "Ahab The Arab" which reached No. 5 on the Billboard charts.

It wasn't until 1966 when Stevens would move over to Monument Records, and the hits would come back in a big way when "Mr. Businessman," and "Have A Little Talk With Myself," were released. Then he hit it big with "Gitarzan" and it was a Top Ten hit for Stevens along with being awarded a gold record as well as two Grammys.

While he wasn't recording his own hits, he would write songs for Dolly Parton, Ronnie Dove, Brenda Lee, Brook Benton, Patti Page and Dusty Springfield. Ray was at the top of his game.

By the '70s, Ray was back in the studio working with different artists as well as continuing his recording life. I know he worked with Ronnie and the Daytonas at some of their recording sessions. As for his own recordings, he hit it out of the park with his recording of "Everything Is Beautiful" in 1970 which won Ray another Grammy and went to No. 1 on the charts selling well over one million copies and going gold.

Between 1973 and 1974, he was working on various Nashville TV shows and took the fad of streaking and turned that fad into another



er No. 1 gold record, "The Streak." He won another Grammy for the release of "Misty," that he put out in 1975.

The music scene was changing quickly in the '90s, so Ray took on one of the biggest challenges of his life. He built his own "Ray Stevens Theater" in Branson, Missouri. How could the show not do well with Ray's catalog of monster hits to perform from. While at his theater, he tapped into the next new trend, music videos.

Ray has continued to release records and videos all the way to today. He sold his theater in Branson in 1993 and would open a new theater in West Nashville called the CabaRay Theater in 2018. In 2014 Ray would publish his own autobiography, "Ray Stevens' Nashville."

In October of 1961, the Recording Stars Dance Party Tour arrived at the Roof Garden Ballroom. It was a star-laden package show and was headlined with Bobby Vinton and Tony Orlando. It used New York's Prep Tones to back all the artists. The idea was to have a set of headliners and then some "one hit wonders" on the show. The "one hit wonders" for this tour included: Janie Grant, Ral Donner and some young guy from Georgia named Ray Stevens. If we had only known.

I so hope you were one of the lucky ones to have paid the \$1 to get in. It gives me chill bumps just to think about it.

UNTIL NEXT WEEK
TAKE CARE & REMEMBER THE MUSIC

MOWING

R. Aubrey La Foy
Okoboian Contributor

We live on Emerald Hills Golf Course, and the most noise we hear are the fellows mowing the fairways and greens. What a contrast mowing is compared to the mowing when I was a youth. My dad was very proud of our home in Milford and mowed our yard with a push mower. He won several years for having the “best lawn in Milford.” Later on it became my task to push the reel mower around the yard. Our first cottage at Terrace Park was mowed by a reel mower but later on we obtained a power mower with a gas engine.

Money was scarce in The Depression years, but lawns still needed mowing. I was fortunate to have several lawns to mow and was paid the large amount of 25 cents. Wow! Twenty-five cents would buy a lot of candy or whatever. The chief problem with the reel mowers was they needed to be sharpened periodically, otherwise they didn’t mow very well. Several men in our community set up shops in their garages dedicated to sharpening the reel mowers. The price was one dollar but, considering you only received 25 cents to mow a lawn, it was high. Mowing was hard work but was good for building your muscles.

I recall that lawns needed mowing because if you left them too long the grass made it tough to mow and do a good job. We didn’t have much with which to do trimming like the weed eaters of today but used hand operated shears, and they were tough on hands. We also had clippers to trim bushes. Maintaining a nice lawn required a lot of physical labor.

Establishing a lawn prior to the advent of sod was a time consuming operation. We purchased a lot at Terrace Park in the early 1950s and built a cottage. We purchased several loads of black dirt and spread it around with a shovel and a wheelbarrow. After we had it spread, Connie’s father sent their hired man Paul from the farm with a drag to smooth it out. The trip was 22 miles from Wallingford to the Lakes and back but Paul thought it was a blast. After it was all nice and smooth and



Lawn mowers of the White House grounds, 1918.

level we broadcast the grass seed on the surface then used garden hoses, sprinklers and water. Before that summer was over, we had a nice established lawn but it needed to be mowed with the reel mower. It is much simpler today with sod being used, and we can have a lawn overnight.

In the early 1970s, we moved to Pocahontas Point on West Lake Okoboji. The house had been built in 1897, and the lot was pie shaped with 125 feet of lakeshore and 35 feet in the back. It had many oak trees and a wonderful view. The lakeshore was a jungle, and we had it landscaped but it was still a good slope down to the water. Mowing that sloop was a challenge and, when the acorns fell, it was dangerous to mow and not slip on them. We solved that problem by attaching a rope to the mower and pulling the mower up and down the slope — hard work and thankfully only needed mowing about once after the acorn harvest. Where there is a will, you find a way.

I was always curious driving around the country going past cemeteries. They were fenced, including gates. It was kind of a joke

to say the people buried in those cemeteries were fenced in knowing full well that was not true. Several years ago I chanced upon a photo of sheep grazing on the White House lawn eating the grass or “mowing” the lawn, and it dawned on me that was why cemeteries were always fenced. I learned later that prior to Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) herds of sheep were placed in the cemeteries to trim the grass.

Today it is still a chore to keep cemeteries looking nice but, with power mowers and grass trimmers, it is can be done. Labor is a problem today and woe to a sexton who doesn’t do a good job. Cemeteries contain much of our past history, and we honor ancestors buried there. I don’t know if you have ever been to Arlington National Cemetery, but it is a heart-felt experience to watch the changing of the guard at the tombs of the Unknown Soldiers and view the rows and rows of crosses marking each grave. I have seen military cemeteries in Holland and France and was so proud and honored by how well kept they are. Beautiful!

We wintered in Arizona for more than

20 winters, and it was nice but we missed the green. Our lawns were rocks, and the only thing we had to do was keep the weeds out. Some people even raked their rocks to make them look nice, but I never did. In our complex at Leisure World, the early homes and yards were grass. It attracted the Midwestern crowd but required lots or irrigation. The golf courses were irrigated; the fairways were green and required a large number of workers.

The equipment provided today is very extensive to keep your lawn and property — hedge trimmers, leaf blowers, string trimmer and the Grasshopper riding mower. It is quite evident when we drive cross-country and see the well-manicured lawns and hedges. I would have loved to have some of those machines when I was a youth.

Today we live in Emerald Meadows townhouses, and the lawns are mowed and kept up for us, plus the trimming is taken care of and the leaves are blown off our deck. I miss the ability to do all that beautification, but time marches on and, of course, no sheep in the cemeteries.

OST SHOWCASES MEGA TALENT, FUNNY LYRICS AND MUCH MORE

Doris Welle
Staff Writer

“Pump Boys and Dinettes” has it all. The set is awesome, the talent in the five-person cast is over the top and the music’s lyrics bring joy and laughter along with some poignant moments.

We, the audience are visiting a little gas station and diner on Highway 57 somewhere between Frog Level and Smyrna. Set designer AJ Hansen did a spectacular job as we were immediately taken back to the ‘50s in rural America.

Adding to our enjoyment was the band. All four musicians were right there, center stage for the entire show. They blended in so well with the story the singers/actors were trying to tell. Tom Andes is the musical director and

piano man. He was in his element at last night’s opening. He hammed it up and sang along with much enthusiasm. I believe I remember the cast calling him Bill during the show but — Bill or Tom — he was fun to watch.

Joining him in the band were Greg Forney on drums, Tim Schumacher on guitar and Dalton Peterson on bass. They are all fine local musicians and did a great job.

Directing an OST production for the first time, Pennsylvania native Alison Morooney had five people to work with who could sing and dance magnificently. She took their talents and blended them together; giving us a really fun musical experience.

The three “mechanics” who only like to work on cars after a few beers, were so fun to watch. They all three sing extremely well. Tyler

Breeding played Jackson. It is obvious he has spent time working out and was easy on our female eyes. L.M. was played by Hunter Semrau. He has all the dance moves anyone could imagine, plays a mean piano and brings out many chuckles all night long. It was really fun to watch him tap dancing on the counter in the diner. Zeke Bocklage has the role of Jim. His voice is sweetly strong, and he is such fun to watch. Both Bocklage and Breeding play the guitar during the show too.

Now, across the street at the Double Cupp Diner, we find the Cupp sisters. Prudie (Reagan Grisolano) and Rhett (Betty Kay Merkle) are waitresses. They sing and dance delightfully and harmonize their awesome voices well. They may be third-year students at Stephens College, but they held their own with the interns and pros on that stage. You could not tell who were pros and who were students or interns.

You must be sure to listen to the lyrics of these songs. Each tells a story. All the anglers in the Lakes Region will be amused at “Fisherman’s Prayer.” The song “Tips” reminded us, thanks to the Cupp sisters, how impor-

tant it is to leave a tip when you have finished dining. “The Night Dolly Parton Was Almost Mine” was done by Semrau. It was hilarious.

Being a former farmer, I loved the song “Farmer Tan.” So did a farmer friend of mine sitting two rows ahead of me. Right B.T.? I promised him I would not tell anyone about his farmer tan. My lips are sealed.

When the cast began singing “Closing Time,” and the sign in the window was flipped from OPEN to CLOSED, we in our seats were far from ready for the show to be over. “Pump Boys and Dinettes” is fun from the first song to the last and there are 20 of them. Thanks to the cast and crew for a most enjoyable evening. The oldest person in the audience was 97-year-old Aubrey LaFoy, and some of the youngest were in their teens. No matter what age, they all clapped, smiled and laughed all night long.

I also would like to send a thank you out to the utility people who got our power back on so we could see the show and arrive safely, thanks to working traffic lights.

The musical runs through Sunday evening. I highly recommend this one.



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