

Spirit

fall · winter | volume four | issue two

Among Family

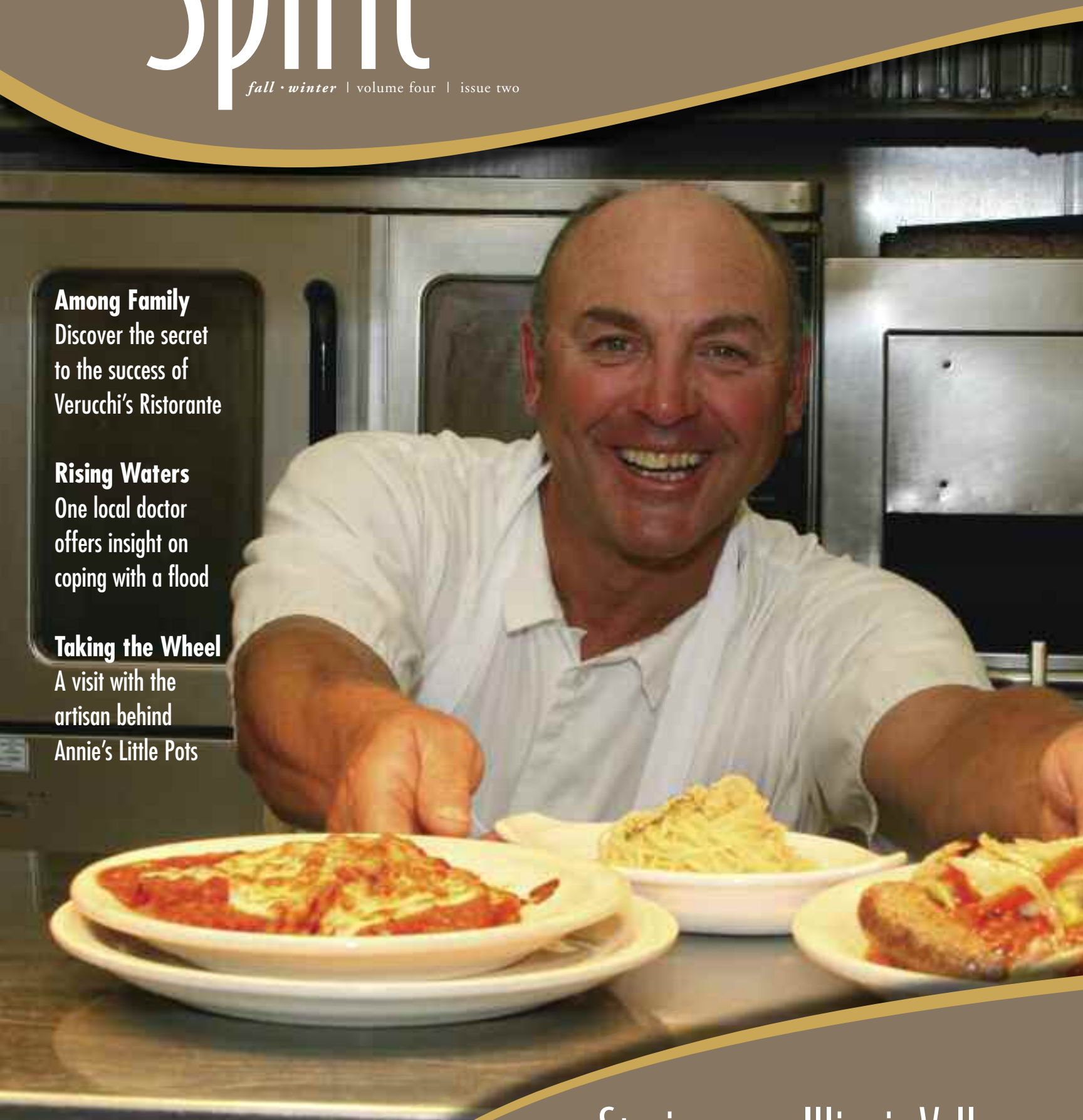
Discover the secret
to the success of
Verucchi's Ristorante

Rising Waters

One local doctor
offers insight on
coping with a flood

Taking the Wheel

A visit with the
artisan behind
Annie's Little Pots



Stories *of the* Illinois Valley

Introducing the Leading Edge in Diagnostic Systems

GE Lightspeed CT Scanner



Dr. Merle Piacenti and Dr. Steve Lukancic look forward to implementing the new patient-friendly CT Scanner at St. Margaret's Hospital.

“Our physicians will now see more, know more in less time.”



GE Lightspeed CT Scanner

This new equipment allows St. Margaret's physicians to obtain the information they need to diagnose symptoms such as chest pain and life-threatening illnesses, including cardiovascular disease and stroke. Our physicians will be able to routinely cover patient anatomy faster—whether it is imaging the whole heart and a single organ, or performing whole body trauma. This system can capture images of a beating heart and coronary arteries in just five heartbeats and an organ in one second, or assess whole-body trauma in ten seconds—more than twice as fast as conventional multi-slice CT scanners. This speed is helpful in reducing patient stress and anxiety.

St. Margaret's continues to keep patients' needs first by using leading-edge technology. Visit www.aboutsmh.org to learn more about how we're improving patient care.



St. Margaret's Health

St. Margaret's Hospital

SMP Health System

Fall Winter Spirit

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Contact St. Margaret's Health for further information.
600 East First St., Spring Valley, Illinois 61362
www.aboutsmh.org • spirit@aboutsmh.org



St. Margaret's Foundation Annual Artisan Showcase

Celebrations 150, Utica, Illinois

Saturday, November 22, 2008

Preview original fine art, sample local award-winning wines and micro-brewed beers. Enjoy a full buffet while listening to the sounds of the Wes Hausken Trio.

Event Begins: 6:00 P.M. ~ Oral Auction: 8:00 P.M.

Donation: \$75.00 per person

R.S.V.P.: (815) 664-1329

The proceeds from this evening will be used to assist St. Margaret's in the purchase of a Telemetry Unit to be used in ICU and Nursing Units.

Enjoy Spirit



Spirit of Wonder

As the days turn cooler, ushering in a new season, we marvel at the changes in our natural world. Sometimes we're reminded that nature is not always predictable, as evidenced by the torrential rains of mid-September that led to historic flooding throughout the Illinois River Valley.

In this issue of *Spirit*, you'll meet a flood veteran who recently joined the St. Margaret's Health family. Dr. Jeffrey Tanzi, DO, comes to us from Mason City, Iowa, which was inundated by flooding last June, leading to a disruption in both sewer and water service.

Elsewhere in this issue, we explore how the arts and the natural beauty of our area can delight and inspire. As you read through these pages, you'll see there are treasures to be found all around us, whether they are tucked into the pages of a great book, on display at a local museum, or wrapped in the toe-tapping beat of a bluegrass tune.

You'll get to know a carver of decoys, a potter and a falconer, among others, and take a trip down memory lane with visits to a long-gone rock 'n' roll hangout, a century-old movie palace and a family restaurant that's been an enduring community favorite.

As you gear up for a season of celebration, don't forget to take care of yourself. If you suffer from heartburn or know someone who does, take a few minutes to read our article about gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)—the right treatment can relieve symptoms and help reduce the chance of complications, allowing you to better enjoy holiday festivities.

Embrace the spirit of the season!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Muntz".

Tim Muntz, *President & CEO*



St. Margaret's Health

SMP Health System

600 East First Street | Spring Valley, Illinois | 61362 | www.aboutsmh.org

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Taking The Wheel

Potter Ann Dittmer finds joy in making and selling handcrafted goods.

Ann Dittmer has been crazy about clay since age 12, when she got her first taste of working with it in a YMCA class. It seems only natural that she's made a career of it, selling her one-of-a-kind creations, as well as the work of other local artisans, at her Princeton shop, Annie's Little Pots. "I am passionate about pottery," says Ann. "There is something so peaceful about sitting at the potter's wheel with the clay running through your fingers."

She earned a bachelor of arts in college and worked in graphic design and advertising for a time, but clay has remained her favorite medium of expression.

"It makes me settle back and reflect on the important things in life, without distractions," she says. "It reminds me that some things are out of our control. It is very humbling—things can go wrong, just like they do in life, but you can always go back and try again. And sometimes I just marvel at the results. It's healthy for my soul."

Her shop, located in a restored 1880's building, was not intended to be a gallery, where you look but don't touch. Connecting people with art is important to her, and that's why she chooses to work with mainly local artists. In addition to Ann's vases, bowls, jewelry and other pottery, the store features works by 20 other artists, whose specialties include everything from woodcarvings and metal sculpture to purses, jewelry and greeting cards. As an artist, Ann appreciates the beauty inherent in a pottery vessel or metal lawn ornament, but as a consumer, she values the practicality of a piece as well, so she aims to offer functional art.

"Not everyone wants or can afford a painting, but perhaps they can afford a pair of earrings that were made by a person from Princeton," she says. "We have items that are usable and that were made here."

To further awareness of the personal connection between artist and artwork, Ann hosts pottery classes for adults and children during the winter. "It's a learning process for the public, getting them to realize that

people still make things by hand,” she says, noting that art tends to get lost amid the array of factory- and machine-made products available today.

She especially loves offering children’s classes where she can witness budding imaginations take flight. “Children inspire and encourage each other—it’s the neatest thing,” she says. Her own children, 10-year-old twin boys, also enjoy playing with clay, and have created bowls, mugs and “all sorts of critters.”

Even as she juggles multiple roles as wife, mother, artist and businesswoman, she’s also active on the city’s tourism committee. “My goal is to have a successful business, but one business is not going to make a successful community,” she explains.

A move to an old farmstead near Putnam in the mid-1990’s and life changes that allowed her husband, Michael, to take over the family flooring business started Ann on the road to becoming an entrepreneur. She was helping her husband with bookkeeping and throwing pots in her garage until the couple purchased and restored a 19th-century building that had once served as a dry goods store. In 2004, they set up Ann’s shop on the main level and a flooring showroom in the basement. They enjoyed the restoration so much

they purchased a second building downtown, renovated it and leased it to another retailer.

Peering through the forest of garden stakes, colorful bottle creatures and metal art, visitors can spot Ann’s studio at the back of her store. It consists of a massive work table, three pottery wheels and antique desks and shelves full of orders in progress and even some of her sons’ miniature clay creatures waiting to be fired.

Not all of the items she makes will see a store shelf—some are too personal to let go, including an eye-catching vase she made to hold the roses Michael gave her on their tenth wedding anniversary. The vase was an expression of her feelings, “filled with whatever emotions were in me that day,” she says.

For Ann, creating from her own vision isn’t always enough—she wants materials that will function in her customers’ homes. So she fills custom orders, from fountains to spoon rests. “I get ideas from my customers all the time,” she says.

When she has no order to fill and no deadline to meet, she settles in at her wheel to just create and commune with her clay. “I feel at peace; I’m in a different zone,” she muses.





Keeping Things Strumming

Local musician and guitar repairman Terry Feldott enjoys sharing his love of music with others.

Though the name might suggest it's a dumping ground for strung-out instruments, the Guitar Junkyard in LaSalle is more like a guitar hospital, where proprietor Terry Feldott uses his healing touch to bring broken-down guitars back to life.

Terry, a professional musician for decades, got his start in the repair business while working behind the counter at an Iowa music store. Folks soon began to seek out his expertise because no other stores in the area offered such a service.

He was able to practice his trade as he moved from state to state before he settled in the area with his wife, Barbara Burton, an Illinois Valley native. "I would come to Illinois to visit my wife's family, and musicians would leave their guitars at the relatives for me to take back to Iowa," he says. "I had a reputation before I even moved here."

Terry carries only stringed instruments and supplies, and some materials here aren't even available for purchase. Terry's distinction is that he offers something not available within 60 miles—he knows guitars inside and out and has the skills to fix them.

The Junkyard caters to professional musicians who understand that Terry's aim is to keep them in tune and on the road, so repairs are done with little delay. Fame has touched Terry twice. He repaired Pete Townshend's guitar but lost out on a free backstage pass because he was playing a gig of his own. And he and the bluegrass band he performed with at the time recorded an album with legendary mandolin player Jethro Burns (half of the Homer and Jethro duo).

Terry can play nearly every stringed instrument, including banjo, guitar, dulcimer and others, with the exception of the harp. He was exposed to music at an early age by his mother, who played the



Austin McKee (center photo) builds a custom guitar at Guitar Junkyard.

piano, but it was a Cub Scout event he attended at age 8 that really piqued his interest. A guitarist performed Hank Williams tunes for the scouts and Terry remembers thinking it was “really cool.” His parents purchased a guitar for Terry to share with his two brothers, but he was the only one to stick with it.

In addition to making music, he also enjoys teaching others to play and repair their own instruments. He’s found that helping others not only nurtures his spirit but also hones his musical skills. “Every musician’s quest is to be the best at whatever instrument he plays,” says Terry.

Visitors to Terry’s shop, located in the former Larson’s plumbing and hardware store, get to view a museum of sorts—instruments hang from the ceiling like large mobiles, rock posters line the walls, and shelves are full of vintage console radios and dusty amplifiers spanning much of rock music’s history.

Terry treasures the vintage guitars displayed in his shop not because they have a rock-star pedigree (they don’t), but because they hold personal meaning. “I picked it up because I enjoyed it,” he says of each item in his collection. “It might have been something I wanted as a kid and couldn’t afford, so now that I’m older, I can. Or it was something I bought broken and put back together.”

Another thing that sets the Junkyard apart is the presence of Austin McKee, who builds custom guitars in the back of the store. Players will pay a few thousand dollars to play a McKee original—to hold a guitar neck that fits just so in the palm of a hand or to admire turquoise or pearl inlays set against gleaming ebony or other specialty wood. “I had two guys waiting (to buy a guitar) before I’d even made one,” says Austin, who has sold 25 of his custom creations.

It was Terry who encouraged Austin, once a customer, to seek a career as a luthier (maker of stringed musical instruments), and he’s been a fixture at the Junkyard since his graduation.

It’s evident that Terry has an abiding love for music and enjoys sharing that love with others—in fact, his latest dream is to create a children’s museum devoted to the evolution of music and stringed instruments.

The concept is similar to that of facilities in Chicago and South Dakota and will allow children to experience instruments through touchable and playable musical exhibits and educational workshops. “If you don’t get to see and play an instrument, you don’t know whether you will enjoy it and want to play,” he says. “Kids might be familiar with guitars, but they don’t think about zithers, ukuleles or autoharps, or the thousands of other different instruments.”

Backed by a grant from the Carus Foundation, Terry, who has a degree in anthropology, recently gave presentations on music and instruments at area elementary schools. The positive response inspired him to pursue a permanent venue, hopefully in LaSalle. He plans to call the museum The Stringed Instrument Museum for the Performance of Luthiery Education—“SIMPLE” for short.

In addition to fixing guitars and encouraging the next generation of musicians, Terry still enjoys performing. His latest gig is as banjo player with the Henry Torpedo Boys, who can be seen routinely at summer brown-bag lunches in Henry, and at local jams. “Music is a part of the beauty of life that transcends politics and religion. I’ve always loved that aspect (of it),” says Terry, adding, “And music makes people happy.”



Good Sport

A writer with local roots compiles a book highlighting athletes and coaches who value their faith more than fame.

Veteran sportswriter Mike Sandrolini knew from experience that there was much more to sports than the championships and scandals that make the headlines, so he put together an inspirational book that spotlights the lesser-known victories of sports personalities whose faith has allowed them to triumph in the face of adversity.

His book, *All the Good in Sports: True Stories that Go Beyond the Headlines* (Regal Books, 2007), features 25 stories about contemporary athletes and coaches that share how their relationship with Christ has helped them through life's challenges, both personal and professional.

Some of those featured in the book include Tony Dungy, Albert Pujols, Mary Lou Retton, Matt Hasselbeck, and Paul Azinger. Whether they focus on professionals or amateurs, athletes or announcers, struggles with addictions or battles with cancer, the stories share one commonality: "They all center around each athlete's faith in God," says Mike.

A man of faith himself, Mike credits God for prodding him to write the book, which he hopes will uplift and encourage readers with its message of perseverance and trust. "Athletes and coaches, despite the fact that they make more money than us, are human beings and they go through the same struggles," he says. "These stories show how faith carries them through or helps them cope. All are professing Christians, but that doesn't insulate them from everyday life."

Mike has honed his craft as a writer, editor, reporter and columnist for more than two decades. His work has appeared in four Chicago-area newspapers, as well as magazines, such as the basketball

magazine *SLAM*, *Basketball Digest*, and the *Chicago Bear Report*. He also writes for Christian publications, including *Sports Spectrum*, which he describes as "a Christian *Sports Illustrated*."

Though he's now a resident of Glen Ellyn, one of Chicago's western suburbs, Mike grew up in Peru, where his parents, Ray and Donna Sandrolini, still reside. As a young boy, he eagerly read the sports sections in each of the daily newspapers his parents subscribed to—the *Chicago Tribune* and LaSalle's *News Tribune*. Eventually, the *News Tribune* would provide his entrée into sports journalism—he worked there during his days at Illinois Valley Community College and after graduating from Illinois State University in Bloomington.

A 1977 graduate of LaSalle-Peru High School, Mike says his interest in sports started early. "I pretty much grew up athletic—playing various sports," he says, noting that baseball and hockey were among his favorites.

He recalls winter afternoons spent passing the puck on the "slough" of the Illinois River. "There wasn't a rink for 60 to 80 miles, so my buddies and I would shovel snow off the ice to play hockey," he says.

That interest led to his first foray into writing, a hockey article for the "Teen Trib" section of the *News Tribune*. "I started developing an interest in writing in high school and it just became a passion," says Mike. "In the beginning, I wasn't the best, but I kept working at it."

In those days, the sports coverage was all about the games and the athletes' achievements on the court or field of play. Today, however, the sports section often reads like the pages of a supermarket



Mike Sandrolini, formerly of Peru, stands in front of Soldier's Field.

tabloid—
plastered with news of
the latest scandal, whether it's
substance abuse, dog fighting, or worse.

Mike says that he tries, whenever possible, to seek out things that are upbeat and inspiring when writing. "If you look hard enough at anyone, whether they are a businessperson in the community or an athlete, you can always find and accentuate the positive," he says. "There is so much sad, negative news—particularly with the Internet and 24-hour media coverage—and I think people are tired of it."

One story, in particular, touched his heart and sparked the idea that became his book. In 2004, he interviewed Doco Weseh, a soccer standout for Judson College in Elgin, Illinois, who had just been named Chicagoland Collegiate Athletic Conference Player of the Year. The young athlete had survived a harrowing childhood in Liberia before coming to the United States with a Christian missionary family.

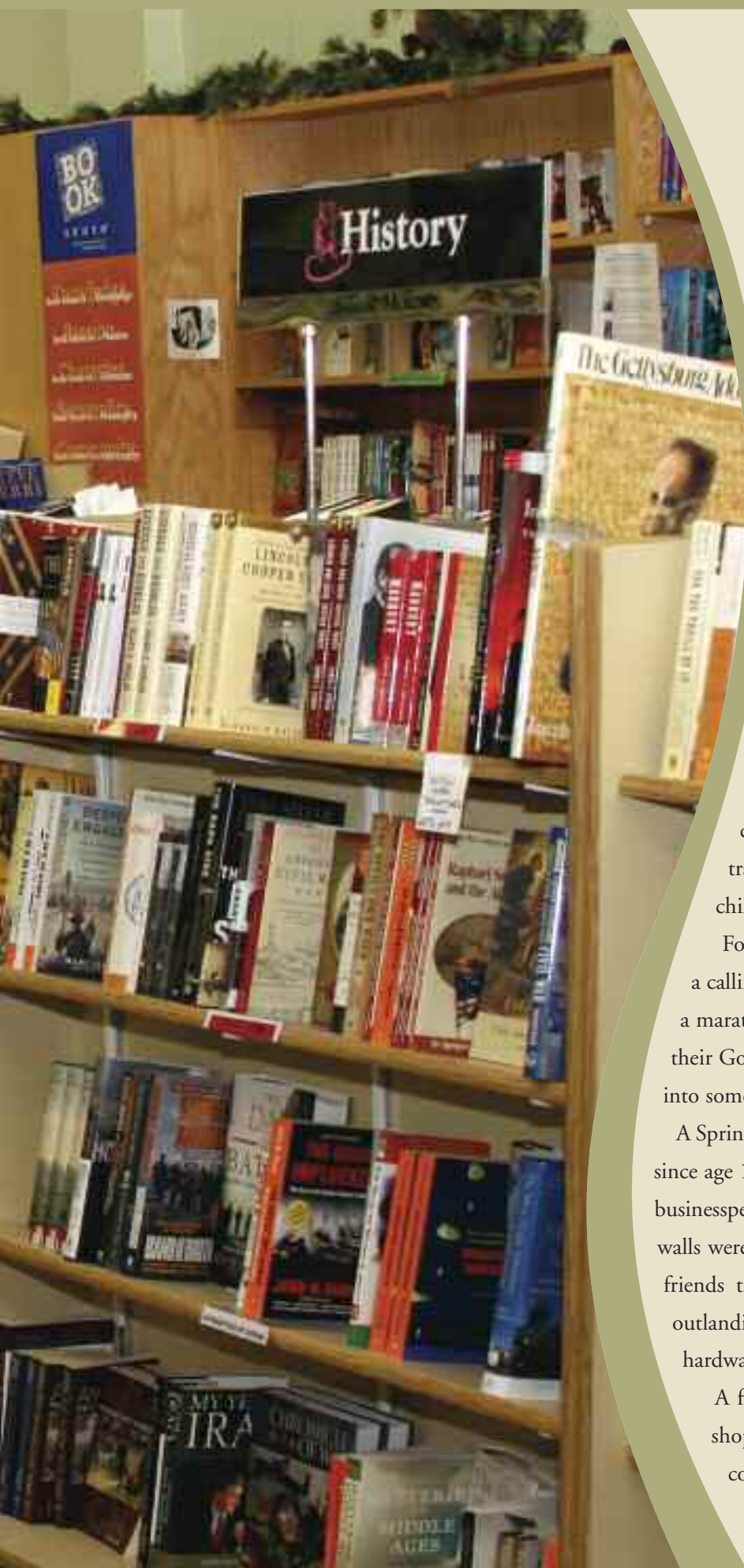
When Doco was just 10, his country was in the midst of a civil war. As rebel troops invaded the capital, Monrovia, on Christmas Eve 1989, Doco and his schoolmates knew they would be forced to join the army, so they fled into the jungle and ended up living there and in refugee camps for nearly a decade. A strong faith in God sustained the boy through the hardship, disease and death that surrounded him as he struggled to survive. "His story was just so compelling and moving," says Mike.

Reflecting on Doco's amazing journey, Mike decided to scour back issues of *Sports Spectrum*, where he found a treasure trove of other stories he felt would make for an inspiring book. With input from the magazine's editors and his publisher, Mike began putting together *All the Good in Sports*, eventually selecting 25 stories from back issues of the magazine and penning a fresh introduction for each one.

In addition to writing, Mike enjoys playing drums on Sundays at his church, Willow Creek/DuPage in West Chicago. "I've been a drummer since the sixth grade," he says. "It's a neat way to help out around the church. I am very privileged to work with a group of talented musicians who really have a heart for God."

As for the future, he says he'd definitely like to work on more books, but right now he's busy promoting this book through author appearances and book signings, as well as working as a sports editor at Suburban Life Publications and as a freelance writer.

Mike is gratified by the positive response *All the Good in Sports* has received, but not entirely surprised. "I think people are looking for stories like this, given all that's going on today," he says.



Never-ending Stories

Local independent booksellers nurture a love of reading and community.

A common passion unites Julia Messina, Eileen Fesco and LuAnn Salz—all three women are independent booksellers, dedicated to sharing the joy of reading.

As Eileen, owner of the Book Mouse bookstore in Ottawa, puts it, “What could be better than to pick out whatever books you want (to sell) and talk to other people about books?”

From its wide, windowed storefront on Ottawa’s main commercial corridor, LaSalle Street, Book Mouse dispenses a traditional mix of fiction, nonfiction, personal improvement and children’s books, along with material by local authors.

For Eileen, who grew up in LaSalle, it’s more than a business, it’s a calling. “To be able to help people learn about another culture; run a marathon; understand depression; develop a closer relationship with their God; fly with a dragon . . . to be able to put just the perfect book into someone’s hands is uplifting and soul-gratifying,” she says.

A Spring Valley native, Julia had dreamed of owning her own bookstore since age 16. “Most of my friends wanted to be lawyers and teachers and businesspeople. I said that I wanted to own a bookstore in a café whose walls were surrounded by great works of art,” she says. At the time, her friends thought the idea of combining a bookstore and café rather outlandish—one of them even quipped, “Why don’t you add a hardware store to the joint, too?”

A few decades later, her dream became reality. Julia modeled her shop, Common Grounds Book Café in Utica, after 1960’s coffeehouses as well as European piazzas. More than a decade

spent living in Italy taught her to appreciate what she calls the “slow life,” a philosophy that encourages people to relax and take time to gather and converse with others over a cup of freshly brewed coffee. The store offers an unusual but successful blend of political authors and children’s fare. Staging local musical acts and expanding to the outdoor courtyard in fine weather enhances the experience. “I wanted my bookstore to be a place for interaction,” she explains.

LuAnn’s store, Green River Books, located just north of the courthouse square in Princeton, was reborn in 2008, supplanting a general-interest selection with children’s books and educational toys.

LuAnn, who grew up in Magnolia, has received a good response to her decision to take her store in a new direction. “No matter what the economy is like, people always seem to find value in reading to children and in educational toys,” she says.

Eileen, Julia and LuAnn believe much of their success is based on a single premise: They can cater to a customer with friendly personal service on a scale the chain bookstores can’t offer. “We provide service and care about what people need,” says Julia.

Providing customers with the ability to special-order any book they like allows the stores to specialize rather than offer a general selection. “It can be difficult, if not impossible, to supply every subject that people want, so it’s better to specialize and order what they want—as long as they know they can get it here,” LuAnn says.

But all three booksellers have found that it takes more than mere pages to draw customers. Special events, unique merchandise and an enticing environment bring people in and inspire them to linger. “If you don’t do events, people aren’t going to be curious enough to come in,” says Julia.

Under Eileen’s direction, the Book Mouse regularly hosts exhibits showcasing the work of local artists, book signings, and book club discussions. Local authors account for several of the store’s top sellers. “I knew I wanted to do community events,” says Eileen. “Bookstores are closing right and left, unless they can show they provide a value to the community.”

LuAnn agrees that author appearances and book discussions can be a boon to business because they help link authors and their audiences. As the wife of author Trey R. Barker, she has experienced



Julia Messina - Common Grounds Book Café



LuAnn Salz - Green River Books



Eileen Fesco - Book Mouse

this from both angles. “The reader and the author walk away with a special bond,” she says.

She has also had success with larger events—a few years ago, she plunged Princeton into the Harry Potter craze by conjuring up Festival 9¾ (a reference to a significant train platform in the books). In 2007, the one-day fest of themed children’s activities drew a throng of 9,000 downtown.

While she realizes that many readers probably shopped the discount chains for the books on which her festival was based, LuAnn insists that’s not the point. “It’s about throwing a party and having fun.”

These store owners are also committed to supporting their communities at large. “A business isn’t just about making money. It’s a connection with your community,” says Eileen, who has hosted voter registration drives and supports local charities. “It’s important to do what you can as a merchant to give back,” adds LuAnn.

The community gives back to them as well. As Julia says, “Being a bookseller nurtures my spirit by allowing me to share in the lives of the people who walk into my shop. Discerning the tastes and interests of my customers makes me extremely happy.”



Great Fall Reads

Julia Messina, of Common Grounds Book Café, recommends the following:

- *Maybe Be Rain*, by Father Bernard Horzen (memoir of beloved St. Bede monk and teacher)
- *Ghosts of the Illinois Canal System*, by David Youngquist (strange happenings surrounding the I&M Canal)
- Anything from the Images of America series

Like several other businesses in Utica, Common Grounds Book Cafe was flooded in September when the Illinois River overran its banks. As the waters receded, owner Julia Messina's determination to reopen as soon as possible rose. "Like the Phoenix, we shall rise again and keep selling good books and coffee!" she promises.

She also encourages readers to check out the list of local authors at the store’s web site, www.cgbookcafe.com.

Eileen Fesco, of Book Mouse, recommends these books, which have been popular with her customers:

Nonfiction:

- *The Last Lecture*, by Randy Pausch (a dying professor’s advice for the living)
- *Chicago Tavern: A Goat, a Curse, and the American Dream*, by Rick Kogan (the story of the Billy Goat tavern)
- *Marley and Me: Life and Love with the World’s Worst Dog*, by John Grogan (due out in theaters Dec. 25; a family’s adventures with their mischievous dog)

Fiction:

- *The Shack*, by William P. Young (a doubting man encounters God after experiencing a painful loss)
- *The Miracle at St. Anna*, by James McBride (in theaters now; African-American soldiers trapped behind enemy lines in Tuscany during World War II)
- *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle: A Novel*, by David Wroblewski (a mute boy and three yearling dogs run away looking for a better life in Wisconsin)

St. Margaret's Hospital Events



SCREENINGS/CLINICS

2008 Public Flu Shot Schedule

Flu shots will be available beginning late October through November at various locations throughout the Illinois Valley. For more information, call 815-664-1613.

Cholesterol Screening

St. Margaret's DeAngelo Resource Room:

Second Wednesday of every month, 7-9 a.m.

Second Saturday in October, January, April and July, 7-9 a.m.

Free Blood Pressure/Blood Sugar Screenings (every month unless otherwise indicated)

- DePue Library, second Tuesday, 8:30-9:30 a.m.
- Hennepin Bank, first Thursday, 8:30-10 a.m.
- HyVee, second Monday, 9-10 a.m.
- Ladd Bank, first Wednesday, 10-11 a.m.
- Liberty Estates, second Thursday, 9-10 a.m.
- Oglesby Library, third Thursday of odd months, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Putnam County Senior Center, second Tuesday, 10-11:30 a.m.
- St. Margaret's DeAngelo Resource Room, first Wednesday of odd months, 7-9 a.m.
- Wal-Mart, third Wednesday, 9-10 a.m.
- YMCA, fourth Tuesday, 8-10 a.m.

CLASSES

(All classes are held in St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room, unless otherwise noted.) To register for classes, call 815-664-1613.

Babysitting Clinic

Friday, Jan. 2, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Diabetes Education Classes

November 3, 10, 17, 24

January 5, 12, 19, 26

Classes meet once a week for four weeks. Different topics will be covered each week. Each participant receives a free glucometer. For more information, please call 815-664-1613.

Week 1: Overview of Diabetes, Complications and Monitoring

Speaker: Pat Schummer, RN, MS

Week 2: Nutrition and Diet

Speaker: Marilyn Csernus, MS, RD, LDN

Week 3: Medications

Speaker: St. Margaret's staff pharmacist

Stress Management

Speaker: Jan Seaborn, LSW

Week 4: Exercise and Activity

Speaker: Candy Ference, exercise specialist

Foot, Skin and Oral Care Speaker:

Pat Schummer, RN, MS

Medication Review Program

Discuss all types of medication with Doctors of Pharmacy on the fourth Tuesday of every month, from 11:00 a.m.-noon. Call 815-664-1613 for more information.

CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

Prenatal/Lamaze Classes

Classes meet for four consecutive weeks from 6:30-9:30 p.m. and start on Nov. 3. They are held in St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room.

Sibling Classes (for 3- to 8-year-olds whose mom is expecting a new baby)

Class is held on Saturday, Dec. 6, 10:00 a.m. in Room 309, St. Margaret's Hospital.

ABC Prenatal Classes (for pregnant women in their first and second trimester of their pregnancy).

Class is held on Monday, Dec. 8, 6:30 p.m. in St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room.

To register for all childbirth preparation programs, call St. Margaret's Family Birthing Centre at 815-664-1345 or 815-223-5346, ext. 1345.

SUPPORT GROUPS

(All support groups meet in St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room, unless otherwise noted.)

Alzheimer's Support Group "Care Partners"

Second Tuesday of each month, 5:30 p.m.

Behavior Disorders Support Group

Second Tuesday of each month, 6:30-8 p.m.

Grief Support Group

Third Tuesday of each month, 6-7 p.m.

Parkinson's Support Group

First Monday of each month, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Rebound (Breast Cancer Support)

Third Monday of each month, 7-9 p.m.

Turning Point (HIV/AIDS Support Group)

Third Wednesday of each month, 6 p.m.

Location not disclosed for confidentiality purposes. For more information, please call 815-664-1613.

Visions (Blind and Visually Impaired Support Group)

First and Third Thursdays of each month, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Auxiliary Bake Sale

Monday, Nov. 3

St. Margaret's Upper Lobby

Girl Talk

Thursday, Nov. 13

St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room

Call 815-664-1613 for reservations.

St. Margaret's Gift Shop

Christmas Open House

Sunday, Nov. 16, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

St. Margaret's Foundation Gala & Artisan Showcase

Saturday, Nov. 22, 6:00 p.m.

Celebrations 150 in LaSalle

All proceeds from this event will assist in purchasing capital equipment items for the hospital.

Call 815-664-1329 for tickets or information.

American Red Cross Bloodmobiles

Tuesday, Nov. 18

Tuesday, Jan. 13

Tuesday, Mar. 24

11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

St. Margaret's First Floor Presentation Room

Nut & Candy Sale

Tuesday, Dec. 16, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

St. Margaret's Lower Lobby

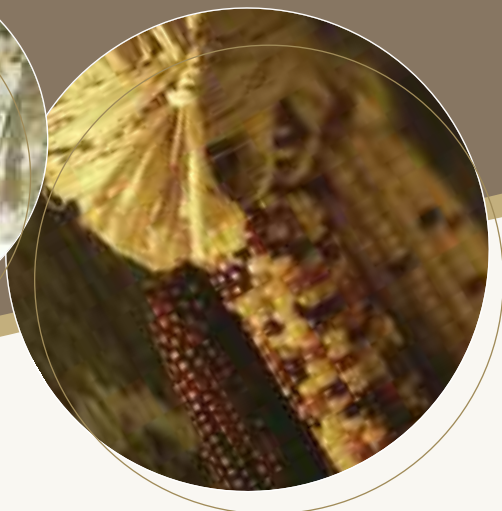
St. Margaret's Foundation Winter Dance Party

Friday, Feb. 6, 2009

Celebrations 150 in LaSalle

All proceeds from this event will assist in purchasing capital equipment items for the Hospital.

Call 815-664-7260 for tickets or information.



Community Calendar of Events

FINE ARTS

Second Sunday Lecture Series
Nov. 9
Hegeler Carus Mansion, LaSalle
815-224-5891

**212 Shines—
A 40th Anniversary Revue**
Oct. 17-19, 24-26
Stage 212, LaSalle
815-224-3025

Book Mouse Toddler Time
Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20
Book Mouse Bookstore, Ottawa
815-433-7323

**Human Element
Live Entertainment**
Oct. 18
August Hill Winery, Utica
815-667-5211

**Music at Hegeler
Carus Mansion**
Oct. 24, Nov. 28
Hegeler Carus Mansion, LaSalle
815-224-5891

Sandwich Antiques Market
Oct. 26
Sandwich Fairgrounds, Sandwich
815-786-3337

Holidazzle

Nov. 6-9, 13-16, 20-23, 27-30, Dec.
4-7, 11-14, 18-21, 25-28
Follies Theatre, Utica
815-667-7008

**Old-Fashioned
Hegeler Carus Christmas**
Dec. 11-14
Hegeler Carus Mansion, LaSalle
815-224-6543

Holidays at the Museums
Dec. 14
Mendota Museums
815-539-3373

**Holiday Craft Show and
Flea Market**
Dec. 14
Bureau County Fairgrounds,
Princeton
815-875-2905

**Old-Fashioned
Christmas Service**
Dec. 14
St. Peter's Danish Evangelical
Lutheran Church
815-454-2850

Godspell
Jan 30, 2009
Stage 212, LaSalle
815-224-3025

Moon Over Buffalo

April 17, 2009
Stage 212, LaSalle
815-224-3025

FESTIVALS

Nouveau Wine Celebration
Nov. 20-23
August Hill Winery, Utica
815-667-5211

Light Up Streator Festival
Nov. 29
City Park, Streator
815-672-2055

PARADES

Veterans' Day Parade
Nov. 11—Peru

Christmas Parades
Nov. 30—Oglesby
Dec. 6—Downtown Peru
Dec. 6—Streator
Dec. 6—Princeton

Pearl Harbor Day Parade
Dec. 6—Water Street, Peru

OUTDOOR FUN

Canal Boat and Trolley Tour
Oct. 24, 31
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica
800-868-7625, ext. 386

Trolley Fall Colors Tour
Oct. 20, 25, 27
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica
800-868-7625, ext. 386

Fall Colors Weekend
Oct. 18-19
Starved Rock State Park, Utica
815-667-4906

Canal Connection 10K
Nov. 2
Utica
815-223-8988



29th Annual Turkey Trot

Nov. 27
Holy Family School, Oglesby
815-223-7922

Holiday Lights in the Park

Dec. 6
Knudson Park, Marseilles
815-228-0238

Sled Dog Demonstration and Awareness

Jan. 11 and Feb. 7
Starved Rock State Park
800-868-7625, ext. 386

Eagle Watch Weekend

Jan. 24-25
Illinois Waterway Visitors Center,
Ottawa
815-667-4054

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Flu Clinics

Oct. 18 - Midtown Clinic, Peru, 10a - 2p
Oct. 23 - Liberty Village, Peru, 1-3p
Oct. 24 - St. Magaret's Hopital, 9-11a
Oct. 25 - St. Magaret's Hopital, 8-11a
Oct. 27 - St. Magaret's Hopital, 9-11a
and 5-7p
Oct. 27 - Spring Valley High Rise, 1-3p
Oct. 28 - Oglesby Library, 10a - Noon
Oct. 29 - HyVee, 10a-2p
Oct. 30 - HyVee, 10a-2p
Nov. 4 - Granville Bank, 10a-Noon
Nov. 5 - McNabb Fire Dept., 1-4p

Utica Fire Dept. Fish Fry

Oct. 28, Nov. 25
Utica Fire Station
815-667-4113

Christmas in the Valley

Nov. 8
Spring Valley
815-664-2753

Large Indoor Winter Garage Sale

Nov. 8
Bureau County Fairgrounds,
Princeton
815-875-2905

Knights of Columbus Pancake Dinner

Nov. 30
K of C Hall, Utica
816-667-4745

Christmas at the Weber House

Dec. 1-31
Weber House and Garden, Streator
815-672-8327

Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 14
Dickinson House, Oglesby
815-883-3389

Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 20
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica
800-868-7625, ext. 386

MORE FUN

Overnight Paddle Wheel Boat Excursion

Oct. 20-21, 27-28
Spirit of Peoria
800-676-8988

Business Gifts Showcase and Open House

Nov. 1-10
August Hill Winery, Utica
815-667-5211

Dolly's Day Out Party

Nov. 6
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica
800-868-7625 ext 386

Santa's Surprise Workshop

Dec. 6
Ottawa Scouting Museum, Ottawa
815-431-9353

New Year's Eve Party-Only Package or Overnight Package

Dec. 31
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica
800-868-7625, ext. 386

Bridal Expo

Jan. 4
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica
815-667-4211

Teddy Bear Tea

Feb. 7
Starved Rock State Park Lodge, Utica
800-868-7625 ext 386

Spring Valley Boosters Father/Daughter Dance

March 2009
Tickets include: Music, refreshments
& photo.
All ages welcome.
For more information go to:
<http://www.spring-valley.il.us>

Cabela's Masters Walleye Circuit Tournament

March 28th & 29th
Barto Landing on the Illinois River
Route 89, Spring Valley
For more information go to:
<http://www.masterswalleyecircuit.com>

LIVE MUSIC

Uptown Playlist Theater

Fred Eaglesmith
Oct. 28 7:30 p.m.
Advanced tickets available at
Uptown Grill
Visit www.uptowngrill.com for new
shows offered monthly or call
815-224-4545.

Harding Jam Session

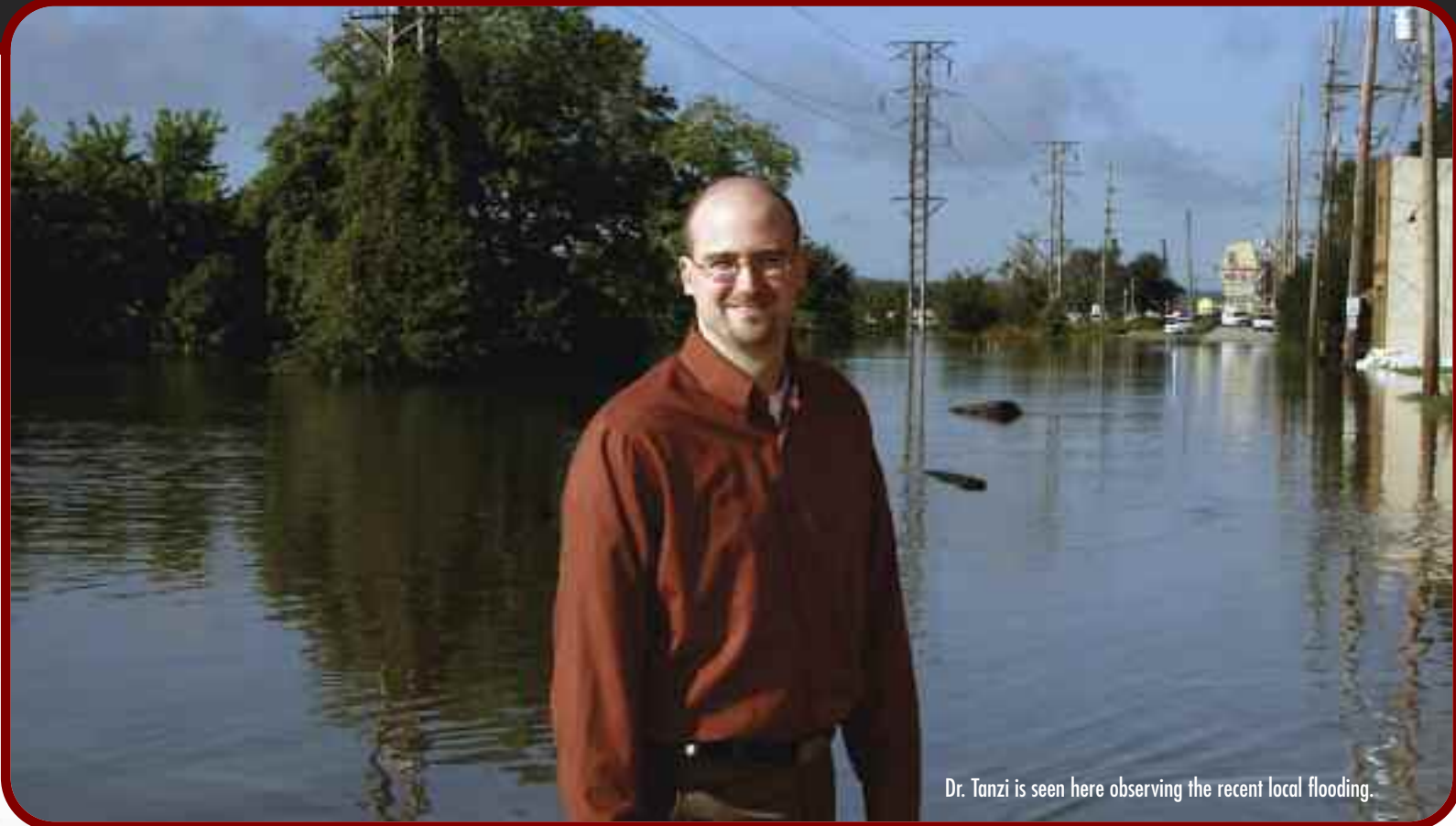
Harding Community Center
First Saturday of every month 6:30 p.m.
September - May
Free admission



Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it,
and if I were a bird, I would fly about the earth
seeking the successive autumns.

—George Eliot





Dr. Tanzi is seen here observing the recent local flooding.

Rising Waters

Working at an Iowa hospital during this summer's floods, Dr. Jeffrey Tanzi gained a new appreciation for emergency preparedness.

During late May and early June, heavy rains soaked Mason City, Iowa. On June 8, the Winnebago River, which meanders through the town, crested at a record 18.57 feet. As it spilled over its banks, it flooded homes and businesses, forcing some residents to evacuate and causing the closure of the city water treatment plant.

Dr. Jeffrey Tanzi, DO, who recently joined the St. Margaret's Health staff as a family practice physician at the Midtown Clinic in North Peru, found himself in the midst of the crisis. As the chief resident at Mercy Medical Center, he was on call when the flooding was at its worst. "That Saturday night, we had extensive rain, and we were hearing rumors that the river was getting too high," he recalls. "I lived across the street from the hospital and my neighbor called to tell me they were about to shut the city water off."

"A lot of people in town left," says Tanzi. "A major portion of the town had significant damage from the river. It's a river town and part of it was destroyed."

The events set the 200-bed hospital's disaster plan into motion, which included provisions for keeping the air conditioning and boiler running and

the speedy delivery of bottled water and portable toilets. Once things were in place, the hospital offered the use of bathroom facilities and bottles of water to community members. "Obviously, a hospital is a site that people will come to (in times of crisis)," explains Tanzi.

"You don't realize how many ways people are affected—we had one patient come to us because she had lost all her diabetes medication, and we had patients we couldn't discharge because they had lost their homes and had nowhere to go."

Though all elective surgeries were canceled, patients were still coming to the emergency room with illnesses and injuries, some of them caused by the aftermath of the flooding, including people who were hurt when their basement walls collapsed as they tried to pump out floodwaters.

"We still had to provide emergent care for things like heart attacks, appendicitis, and obstetrics," says Tanzi. "There were (pregnant) women who delivered during that time."

Staffing was not a problem because hospital clinics were closed Monday and the doctors scheduled there were told to report to the ER instead.

The sewer system was shut down for two days and the water was off for four days. “The hospital had to meet more stringent criteria for ensuring the water was safe, so it was five days before the water was tested and clear,” says Tanzi, who quickly tired of sponge baths and alcohol-based hand-sanitizer.

All the restaurants in town were shut down; even the hospital cafeteria was very limited in what they could serve. Even fountain drinks were not available because the dispensers required carbonated water. “By the third or fourth day, the pickings were pretty slim,” says Tanzi.

A Naperville, Illinois, native, Tanzi decided on a medical career as a high school senior because he liked biology and new technologies. “I liked that medicine is a constantly evolving field,” he says.

He earned his undergraduate degree from Northern Illinois University and received his DO from the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Midwestern University in Chicago. Though he’s experienced a variety of challenges thus far in his medical career, this was a first. “I’ve seen flooding, but not to that extent,” he says. “I have never been in a situation where the city water was shut down; usually you hear of a boil order or something like that.”

The experience left him with an appreciation for the forces of nature. He advises others to have a plan for protecting themselves and their families in the event of a flood or other natural disaster. “I learned how

important it is for a hospital, or anyone, really, to have a plan for preparedness,” he says. “Most of the time it will not happen, but when it does—the planning pays off.”

What is a DO?

A doctor of osteopathic medicine, or DO, is a physician licensed to perform surgery and prescribe medication. Like an MD, an osteopathic physician completes four years of medical school and can choose to practice in any specialty of medicine after completing a two- to six-year residency in that area and passing the board certification exams.

What makes osteopathic medicine different is that it takes a holistic approach to healing, rather than focusing on one system or body part. Toward that end, osteopathic physicians receive an additional 300 to 500 hours in the study of hands-on manual medicine and the body’s musculoskeletal system. You’ll find DO’s practicing in nearly any health-care settings, from community clinics and private practices to academic medical centers. For more information, check out the American Osteopathic Association web site, www.osteopathic.org.

Before the Storm

Protect Yourself against Weather Disasters and Other Emergencies

Like the Boy Scout motto advises, it’s good to be prepared. Here are some things to do ahead of time to get ready for an emergency situation:

- Put together a disaster supply kit, including bottled water, nonperishable food, hand sanitizer, prescription and over-the-counter medications, first-aid supplies, extra clothing and other essentials. You may want to pack it all in a storage tote or create an emergency bag for each family member. For a more detailed list of items to include, visit www.redcross.org.
- Make a plan—determine a safe room (a basement or interior room with no windows), decide where family members will meet if you are separated, establish an out-of-town contact to check in with, and let everyone know where the disaster supply kit will be stored.

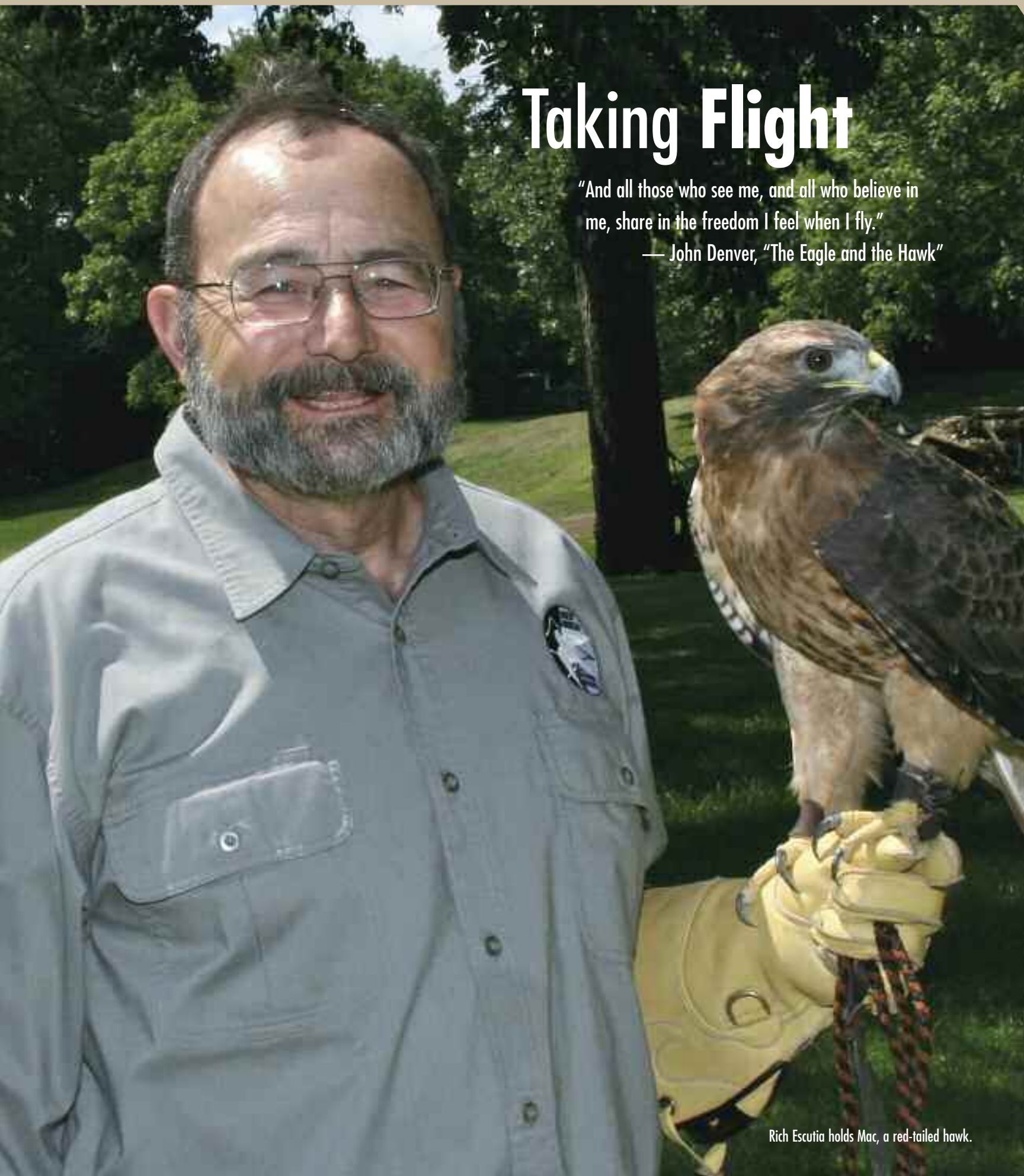
- Photograph or videotape your home and its contents for insurance purposes. Make sure to store these items elsewhere so they are not lost if your home is damaged or destroyed.
- Don’t forget to plan for your pets—try to find an emergency shelter that accepts pets and make sure they are up to date on all vaccinations and medicines, such as heartworm pills and flea and tick treatments.
- Obtain cash (credit cards and ATM’s won’t work if there’s no power) and gas up your vehicle.
- Listen to emergency announcements and follow directions. You may want to invest in a weather radio. There are some available that operate via solar power, hand-crank or battery, which gives you several options in the event of a power outage.

St. Margaret’s has long had an emergency plan in place and conducts regular practice drills to ensure it can quickly be put into action, if needed.


Taking Flight

"And all those who see me, and all who believe in me, share in the freedom I feel when I fly."

— John Denver, "The Eagle and the Hawk"



Rich Escutia holds Mac, a red-tailed hawk.



Watching a bird of prey soaring through the air is captivating, but imagine the thrill of forging a partnership with such a powerful and graceful creature. As one of a few hundred falconers in the Illinois Valley region, Rich Escutia of Ottawa has been able to do just that, training and hunting game with his two winged partners—Mac, a red-tailed hawk, and Harris hawk Cazadora (Spanish for “female hunter”). “It’s amazing to be part of something that’s totally free,” he says.

Rich, 60, happened upon falconry after his son, Benjamin, then 12, became enthralled with the Jean Craighead George classic, *My Side of the Mountain*.

Sam, the book’s young hero, runs away to the Catskill Mountains in New York, where he lives under a hollow tree and traps or fishes for food and fashions clothing from animal hides. He captures and trains a baby hawk to hunt for food.

Benjamin, with his Dad Rich’s consent, began the apprenticeship process leading to owning and training his own raptor. Rich was soon fascinated as well, viewing it not only as a fun activity to share with his son, but also a way to maintain close ties during the tumultuous teen years.

“It can be hard to relate to a teenager, but this was something we could learn together,” says Rich. “He could see that what was required of him was required of me too, and if he got chewed out for doing something wrong, so did I.” As Rich recalls, Benjamin got just a bit of satisfaction out of the fact that Dad had to retake a written test that Benjamin passed on his first try. Benjamin, now 25, is a geologist working in Seattle, Washington, with an environmental group.

As Benjamin climbed the ranks in falconry expertise, Rich noticed his son maturing. “He has a respect for nature. He was caring for the welfare of a wild animal. He was doing all this, not just talking or reading about it. Neither of us would hunt any other way, we’d never shoot a gun at something. But (through falconry) we can become part of something wild as it hunts for its food. That’s amazing!”

In the field, the trainer and hawk are partners, with the human flushing out the game for the hawk to capture. Some birds of prey hunt from a perch, surveying the terrain from a branch until they spot rabbits, mice or squirrels, and diving to the ground to capture them. Others swoop in from the air, disabling a smaller bird in flight and dropping to the kill. The falconer recalls them with a whistle or meat lure.

Licensed falconers can snare their birds humanely in the wild or purchase them from breeders. Long hours of training are required to get the bird to trust and to respond to a lure. Many a falconer out for his first flight has said a little prayer of thanks when the bird returned to his fist, after watching it soar far out of his reach.

“You never take the wildness out of a bird,” says Rich, who notes that his affection for his hawks is not reciprocated. “My birds might have a respect for me . . . but they don’t love me back. They tolerate me.”

Falconry is highly regulated, Rich says. The birds, as a protected species, must be registered with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the federal Fish and Wildlife Service. And humans still need to get hunting licenses and hunt in season. Off-season, Rich supplements his birds’ diet with quail he raises.

Civilization continues to encroach on the birds’ habitat, making good hunting fields hard to find. Rich chooses to hunt, with permission, in industrial parks and some cemeteries.

Rich’s birds are housed in a backyard aviary. Though raptors can be returned to the wild at any time, they usually live longer in captivity because trainers offer a consistent food supply and provide medical treatment for their injuries. It was due to falconers’ efforts, Rich says, that endangered species, such as peregrine falcons, were revived.

Rich encounters fellow falconers at national or regional meets through organizations such as the Great Lakes Falconry Association. On days off from his job as director of the Ottawa YMCA, Rich also joins others for day hunts.

When he retires, he plans to focus on falconry full-time. “It’s a lifestyle, a daily process,” he explains. “You develop a relationship to the birds. You start to feel so responsible after awhile. The birds become so much a part of your life.”



Just Ducky

Joe and Donna Tonelli share a passion for handcarved decoys and other hunting and fishing collectibles.

A love of the outdoors brought Joe and Donna Tonelli together, so when Joe, a hunter and fisherman, began collecting antique and vintage duck decoys several decades ago, Donna developed an interest in the wooden waterfowl as well, eventually carving decoys of her own and writing about decoys and their makers in magazines and collectors' guides.

"I think they're beautiful, three-dimensional sculptures," says Donna, who is especially fascinated because decoys weren't made to be set on a mantle and admired. "They are a functional folk art form. The art is found in the carver's ability to capture the essence of the waterfowl. His decoys become his interpretation of what he sees when he watches a flock in their natural habitat. Like an oil painting, you need to stand back and try to imagine a decoy in a natural environment to truly appreciate it."

The couple's passion for outdoor sports is evident throughout their Spring Valley home—vintage hunting prints hang from the walls, and waterfowl and fish decoys and boxes of game calls line the shelves, tables and desks and even peek from the kitchen cupboards. In addition to collecting the paraphernalia, they also enjoy participating in the sports, and manage a hunting lodge in South Dakota. "Hunting and fishing is our life," says Donna.

As newlyweds and the young parents of three children, in the 1960's, Joe and Donna combed the region for decoys, sometimes knocking on the doors of the carvers themselves. They would often purchase a sack full of decoys, later selling off all but the best to other collectors to help finance their collecting. "If we got a call (that someone was willing to sell decoys) we'd pack the kids in the car and head to Michigan or Wisconsin," Donna recalls, shaking her head now at the notion.

They were not alone in their interest—it was during this time that decoys began migrating from the duck blind to the living room, as collectors began to take a real interest in these hunters' tools as folk art, flocking to auctions and exhibitions and meeting to swap information as well as decoys. "You'd buy some, but mostly you'd trade," says Joe of those early days.

During the years since he started collecting, Joe has acquired a nearly encyclopedic knowledge of the art form and has become a recognized authority in the field, something Donna has drawn upon when crafting her articles for *Decoy Magazine* as well as the three collectors' guides she's penned for Schiffer Publishing: *Top of the Line Fishing Collectibles* (1997), *Top of the Line Hunting Collectibles* (1998), and *Fish and Fowl Decoys of the Great Lakes* (2002).



Besides relying on her husband's knowledge of decoys, Donna has done extensive research, ferreting out property, birth and other records to trace the carvers and collectors who created or acquired the masterpieces of form and function.

Many carvers of the past lacked formal art training, but as hunters and observers of wildlife, they knew their quarry. "These were men who crafted a working tool that could be tossed into the water to attract waterfowl within shooting range of the hunter," she says. "The carver was attempting to create the illusion of a flock of birds on the water. Not only did the decoy need to give off the illusion of a live bird—it needed to function."

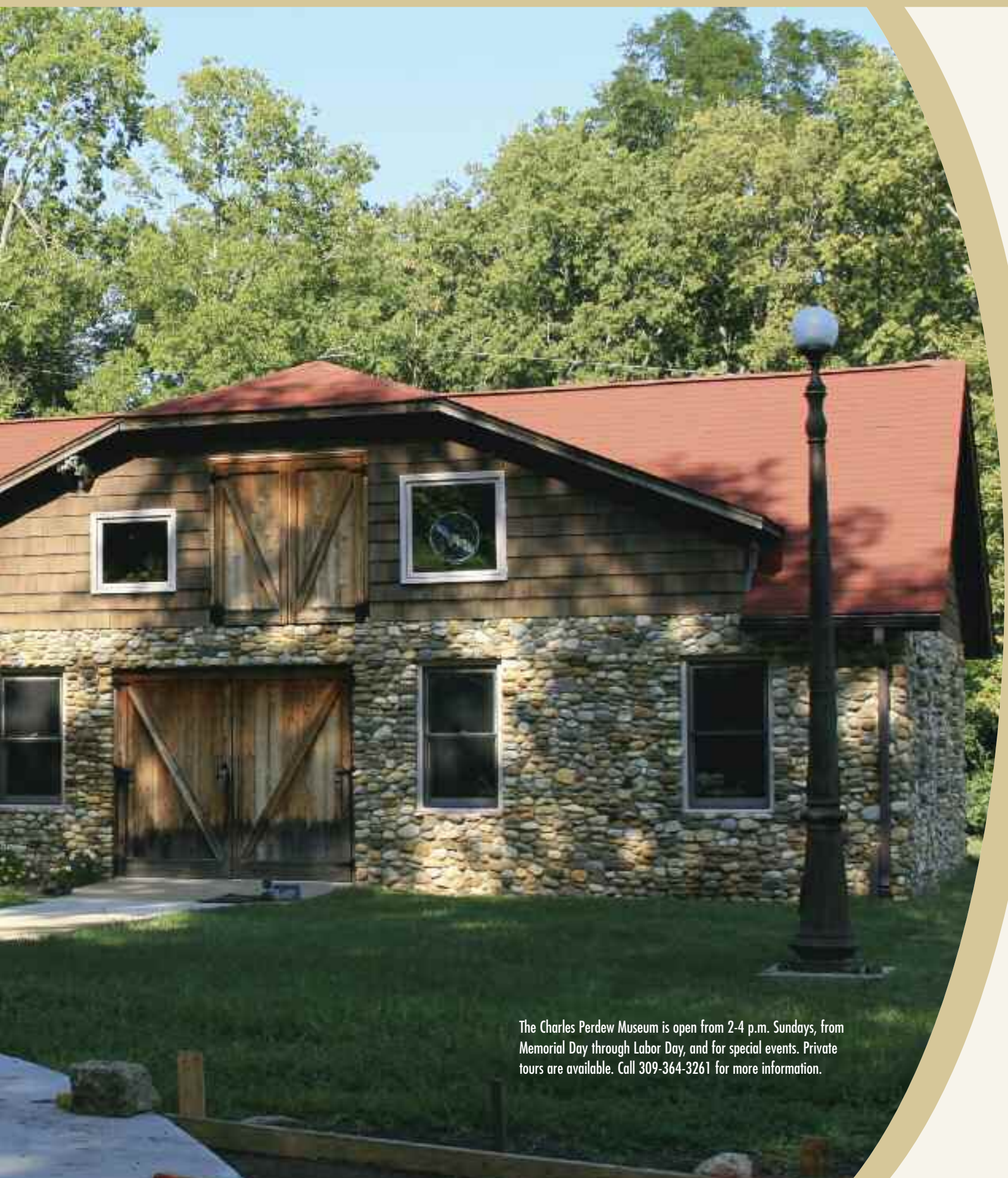
Her own experience has also given her an understanding of the carver's craft—when Joe purchased the materials to try his hand at carving, it was Donna who became intrigued.

Though she became adept at coaxing feathered creatures from blocks of wood, winning competitions and selling enough to pay the grocery bills, she quit carving after a few years to focus on other things.

Donna's writing and research offer a glimpse into a vanished way of life—after World War II, decoys were machine-made of synthetic materials, which were lighter and easier to carry. Craftsmen carvers faded into the woods and glens from which they had emerged.

Donna is determined to prevent their stories from fading into obscurity. In fact, her next book will focus on the craftsmen behind the decoys rather than the creations themselves. "The men who carved are dead, and for most of them, if they hadn't made a duck decoy, no one would have known them," she says. "They weren't the banker, the lawyer or the doctor, whose history is documented."





The Charles Perdew Museum is open from 2-4 p.m. Sundays, from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and for special events. Private tours are available. Call 309-364-3261 for more information.

Folk-Art Hero

Henry museum celebrates the creativity and craftsmanship of famed decoy carver Charles Perdew.

At the turn of the century, gentleman hunters from Chicago and the East Coast traveled to the Illinois River Valley's hunting clubs, where waterfowl was abundant, and they relied on local men, like Charles Perdew of Henry to supply their "rigs" (about two dozen decoys) and repair them at the end of a season.

To the hunters who valued the clarity and reliability of his hand-carved duck calls and the realism of his decoys, Charlie was a master craftsman, but sometime mid-century, the value of his masterpieces shifted from functionality to folk art, and modern collectors happily fork over thousands of dollars for a piece.

Visitors to the Charles Perdew Museum in Henry have the opportunity to get a glimpse into the life and carving career of this acclaimed artisan.

The museum is located on the site of his former backyard workshop, which had fallen into disrepair before it was rebuilt by the museum association in 2001. The nearby house, which Charlie built for himself and his wife, Edna, is still a work in progress, but the association hopes it will someday house a city history museum.

The workshop contains some of Charlie's tools and several pieces of correspondence with the sporting goods stores he supplied, such as Eddie Bauer, Abercrombie & Fitch and Von Lengerke & Antoine of Chicago.

It also houses examples of Charlie's mechanical genius. He fashioned eyeglasses for both himself and Edna, made toys for his grandkids, built his own bike, and made and played his own violin. He even whittled the patterns for car engine parts, had them cast in a foundry and assembled them into a car himself. "Anything they needed he made," says Pat Selquist, a Perdew relative who is active with the museum.

Before the days of synthetic materials and assembly-line products, decoy carvers like Charlie crafted their wares by hand over hours and months. Locals knew Charlie as fiercely independent, quirkily eccentric and notoriously reclusive. According to decoy authority Joe Tonelli of

Spring Valley, Charlie was unmatched for versatility, carving decoys, duck and crow calls and breathtaking miniature duck figurines and pins that he often gave as gifts.

Charlie was born in 1874 near Henry, and, like most area boys, learned early to hunt and fish. He married a local girl, Edna Haddon, to whom he was married for 60 years, until his death in 1963. Edna died in 1974. The couple had one son, Haddon.

Edna was not only Charlie's partner in life, she was his partner in craft—after he carved the decoys, she brought them to life with her artful brushwork, mixing her own paints and using a technique to feather the colors. With a tame duck as a model, she even determined that a mallard drake's white band does not circle the neck. "She always complained that other painters didn't get it right," says Pat.

Edna also loved doing portraits and scenes in watercolors and oils. Some examples of her work hang in the museum.

From the wide front porch of the home they built on the bluff, the Perdews could work on decoys while gazing down at their beloved Illinois River. After supper, Edna painted while Charlie carved heads for the decoys he made in his shop during the day.

Charlie always had a waiting list for his decoys and calls, sold individually to hunters who showed up on his doorstep and en masse to the sporting goods outlets. "Charlie never did anything in a hurry," Pat chuckles, pointing to some museum displays of letters from those he supplied, urging the hasty delivery of his products.

Charlie sold his rigs to hunters for about \$36, his "fancy" duck calls (carved with scenes) for \$10, his crow calls for 75 cents and his average duck calls for \$2.50—a far cry from the five- or six-figure prices some of his work now fetches.

He would not be surprised, believes Pat. "He kind of knew the quality of his own work," she says. "He told us, 'Hang on to everything I give you.'"





More than Just Heartburn

Facts about Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease

Most of us have had the occasional case of heartburn, perhaps after an overindulgent meal, a spicy snack or a late-night dinner. However, if you find yourself downing antacids on a frequent basis, you should check in with your doctor—chronic heartburn can be a symptom of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), which, if left untreated, can result in serious complications, including cancer.

This disease can affect people of all ages and seems to be on the rise. “We’re seeing an increase of this not only in our practice, but throughout the U.S.,” says gastroenterologist Geetha Dodda, MD. “More than 60 million American adults experience occasional reflux, and 25 million people suffer daily reflux.”

What is GERD?

Reflux happens when the muscle connecting the stomach and esophagus relaxes or does not close properly. When this occurs, the contents of the stomach rise up into the esophagus. You’ll hear the condition called “acid reflux” because digestive acids rise up along with the food. When the stomach acid touches the lining of the esophagus, it sometimes produces a burning feeling in the chest or throat, hence the term “heartburn.”

Reflux that occurs more than twice a week for more than two weeks is considered GERD. In addition to frequent heartburn, other symptoms of GERD can include:

- Belching • Regurgitation • Chest discomfort after eating • Difficulty swallowing • Coughing, wheezing, asthma or sore throat

Appointments can be made with Dr. Edward Doran and Dr. Geetha Dodda by calling their Peru office at 815-223-1666.

Though it is not always clear why some people develop GERD, obesity, pregnancy and smoking can be triggers. In addition, many people over the age of 50 have a condition called hiatal hernia, which can be a contributor to GERD.

How Is GERD Treated?

GERD is a chronic condition and symptoms are treated in one or more ways, including lifestyle changes, medications and, in some cases, surgery.

The following lifestyle and diet changes may reduce symptoms:

- Stop smoking.
- Steer clear of foods that worsen symptoms, including fatty or fried foods, whole milk, peppermint or spearmint, citrus fruits and juices, drinks containing caffeine or alcohol, and tomato-based foods, like spaghetti and pizza.
- Lose weight, if needed.
- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid lying down for three hours after a meal.
- Raise the head of your bed 6 to 8 inches by attaching wood blocks under the bedposts.

Dr. Dodda estimates that about 40 percent of GERD symptoms can be corrected by lifestyle modification, but the remainder will require medication or surgery. There are numerous medications currently available, including those that decrease acid production and some that help strengthen the lower esophagus.

Though you can buy many of these medications without a prescription, you should always check with your doctor before starting or adding any medication. They can help you determine what is best for you, which may be a combination of medicines.

Surgery may be an option when medicines and lifestyle changes don't control GERD symptoms or, for younger patients who are facing decades of drugs and discomfort.

What are the complications?

If GERD is left untreated, the refluxed stomach acid can damage the lining of the esophagus. This can result in bleeding or ulcers. The

damaged tissue can also scar, narrowing the esophagus and making it hard to swallow.

In some cases, the cells lining the esophagus become abnormal and start to resemble cells from the intestine. This condition is known as Barrett's esophagus. Doctors believe that most cases of esophageal cancer begin in this tissue. The condition should be monitored periodically to make sure the tissue does not become precancerous. "Only a trained eye can detect Barrett's esophagus or early cancer," says Dr. Dodda, who notes that state-of-the-art diagnostic testing is available at St. Margaret's.

Esophageal cancer can be another complication of untreated chronic reflux. Smokers and those who suffer from reflux disease have double the risk of esophageal cancer than the average population. A family history of upper gastrointestinal or throat cancers also increases risk.

While all cases of esophageal cancer cannot be prevented, the good news is that lifestyle changes and obtaining treatment for GERD can go a long way toward reducing the chances.

"Occasional heartburn is okay, but if it becomes more consistent, it should be checked out," says Dr. Dodda. "Not all patients go into these complications, but even one cancer prevented is a big deal to me."

For more information about GERD, visit the web site of the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse at www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov.

Kids and GERD

GERD isn't just for grown-ups—it can affect kids, too. In infants, it can cause vomiting and fussiness after feeding. These symptoms may be worse if a baby is laid down in a crib or car seat after eating. Older kids and teens may complain of heartburn or stomach and chest discomfort. Because the complications can make eating uncomfortable, GERD can interfere with proper nutrition. Most kids outgrow GERD, but some cases require treatment. If you are concerned that your child may be experiencing symptoms of GERD, talk with your doctor. With proper diagnosis and treatment, he or she can get relief from symptoms and avoid longer-term health problems.



Sweet Harmony

Musicians share camaraderie and creativity at monthly bluegrass jam sessions.

Folks pull a lot of strings to get into the Harding Community Center on the Saturday nights it hosts the monthly bluegrass jam. If an instrument can be plucked, strummed, bowed or picked, it'll find its way to this little brick building.

By 7 p.m., vehicles parked there outnumber Harding's cluster of houses. Inside, the air vibrates with the guttural throb of a bass fiddle, the plink of mandolin strings, throaty chords from a guitar or two and soulful vocalizations.

The coffee is hot and the atmosphere is warm. Musicians mingle with ease, catching up on family or musical activity since they last met. Ask anyone what brings them, and keeps them coming back, and the answer is like a song refrain: Nice, friendly people.

"This is just as good music as you get in Nashville," says Rich Mileham, who provides the onstage sound equipment and was one of a trio responsible for resuscitating the jam 12 years ago after it relocated from Grand Ridge. "People enjoy it – they come for the quality of the show. It's been 9 degrees below zero out there and people still showed up."

While performers onstage entertain a rapt audience in the auditorium, practices are going on throughout the building in the most unlikely of places—over the kitchen sink or in the bathroom hallway. Ensembles blend, break and re-form. This is bluegrass at its soul: improvised and imperfect, but sincere.

The jam draws audience and musicians from as near as Ottawa and LaSalle and as far as Iowa and Indiana. Some nights, 60-70 musicians line up at the sign-in sheet to jockey for their 15-minute sets. "We never know who'll show up," says Rich. "The youngest player we've had is probably 3 or 4, and the oldest, in his 80's."

Arnold Lampkins is a regular performer at the jam, and his wife, Pauline, is a regular listener. Arnie's legs may not work

as well as they used to, but his fingers remember the chords. Seated in a corner of the auditorium, Arnie can't be still. His gnarled fingers lovingly stroke his guitar's strings, picking up the tune being played on stage and carrying it down the room.

"We keep coming back. I love to play and sing, and you see so many good people here," says Arnie, 83, who's been playing guitar for nearly 70 years. "It's hard to put into words. It's just something I love to do. I never did get good (professional) but I got good enough to play with different people. People tell me I sound like Bill Monroe," he says proudly, invoking the name of the legendary father of bluegrass.

Looking down at his hands, the retired tool company foreman from Sycamore wonders aloud how much longer he can continue playing. But his worry seems groundless when he takes the stage a few minutes later, settles into a chair and lays his canes out of sight. Onstage, Arnie's strong Monroe-twang blends into harmony with his female lead as they plead for a lost love. Nights like this "keep him going," says Pauline.

Bluegrass is both mournful and upbeat, as evidenced by song titles ranging from "Man of Constant Sorrow" to "Sunny Side of Life."

"The songs we sing, there are lessons in them," observes Mary Krasko of Princeton, who enjoys performing and listening. "We sing a lot of things about how we lived. Music is very healing. My parents are both gone, and it brings happiness into my life."

For Mary, the music recalls life growing up on her family's farm near Tiskilwa. When she inherited her father's banjos, Mary, who played piano, picked up a book and taught herself to play the banjo. Her husband, Richard, is a supportive presence in the audience.

Like the Kraskos, Annie Koehler surfs the jams within a short driving distance from her home in Sugar Grove. Bluegrass is never far away, and you can find jams in Ottawa, Triumph, Princeton, Streator and Lostant.

Something of a midlife crisis drove Annie, a retired tractor-trailer operator, to bluegrass. "Instead of whining and crying about turning 60, I decided to learn how to play the mandolin," says the Harding crowd-pleaser.

The show starts to taper off around 9 p.m., but musicians like to stay and jam afterwards. Few of them count on music for their

livelihoods, though the Harding jam can boast some regular performers who do, such as hammered dulcimer artist Sherri Farley of Somonauk and singer-musician Ashley Lewis of Sandwich.

Ashley's mother, Jan, was a regular in Grand Ridge and helped bring the jam north. She helps arrange for the hall rental, serves up home-baked goodies and watches her 20-year-old daughter hone her performing skills.

"I saw so many musicians that needed an outlet and communities that wanted to watch," says Jan of her decision to help out. "I think this is a really good community event to donate your time to. My grandparents lived in Kentucky, and this is the kind of music I heard at the Baptist Church. My grandma would sit on the front porch and sing gospel songs. This music is real special to me."

The Harding Jam continues the first Saturday of each month from September to May (with a break for summer). Admission is free, but donations are accepted to help pay for refreshments and hall rental.



Individual music styles blend together when musicians jam with each other.



Classic Cinema

Streator's Majestic Theater offers moviegoers a glimpse of the past with today's latest features.

Since its opening 101 years ago, the Majestic Theater in Streator has entertained generations of area residents with vaudeville acts, live shows and motion pictures. Over the years, the theater had its ups and downs, opening, closing and changing owners numerous times, but manager Kyle Mitchell, who took the helm in 2007, hopes to restore the place to its former glory and attract patrons with ambience as well as onscreen action.

The first step was the restoration of the marquee. The 1921 marquee is the theater's regal signature, and Kyle feels it's an essential part of the building's character. "When you walk under the marquee at night, it's all part of the experience of coming to the movies," he enthuses.

When he first turned on the marquee lights, however, they fluttered weakly and blew circuits. Eighty percent of the lights needed rewiring. "I remember how little of it did work, but I could see the potential and how fantastic it could look," says Kyle, who hopes to someday complete the project by restoring the vertical neon stripes that backlight the marquee.

The age and appearance of the building gives Kyle an opportunity few other theater managers have, he says. "We can escape to a different era, which a lot of theaters can't do."

Inside, lovers of nostalgia can still enjoy 1930's-style atmosphere, Art Deco decor and balcony seating, but they will also appreciate a modern concession stand, cup-holders on the main floor seats and first-run blockbusters on the screen.

The balcony is also a novelty, compared with the stadium seating in today's theaters. "We introduce a whole new generation to the balcony," says Kyle. "We have 12-year-olds asking what a balcony is, and then going 'whooooaaa' when they see it. Older patrons tell us they experienced their first kiss up there."

Over the years, the Majestic has had a varied history. When it opened in 1907, vaudeville headliners like Groucho Marx, Jack



Benny, Ed Wynn and Sophie Tucker lit up the stage with live comedy and musical acts. But, the theater's fortunes mirrored those of vaudeville, and it closed in 1927. Nine years later, it was reopened, and then closed again in 1955. In 1968, it was revived as part of the Kerasotes movie theater chain and expanded into the adjacent building, which became the Granada Theater. By the time the Majestic was shuttered in 1995, the building had deteriorated badly.

Streator native Tim Burke, whose grandfather had been a projectionist at the theater, saved it from the wrecking ball in 1997 and briefly reopened it in 1998. Kyle, one of Tim's longtime friends and colleagues, had helped him work on renovating the theater over the course of the last decade and grew to love the place.

When Tim, who now lives in California, asked Kyle and his wife, Cindy, to manage the place, they quickly agreed, moving to Streator from Flagstaff, Ariz., where Kyle had been managing another theater.

The Mitchells had decades of theater experience—Kyle began his career as an usher when he was 16, and he and Cindy met while working at a theater.

At the Majestic, Cindy manages the staff and the books, and is vigilant about keeping the theater clean. She's likely to be found inside the booth dispensing tickets to moviegoers. Two of the couple's children help out as well, 19-year-old Jaimie, who assists her

mom with managing staff, and 11-year-old Anthony, who helps with odd jobs. Oldest son Christopher, 21, is finishing up college at Arizona State University.

In addition to offering entertainment, the family makes it a point to support their new community—they sponsored a food drive in which patrons could exchange nonperishable items for free popcorn. The event generated about 3,000 pounds of goods for the local food pantry.

Though he hasn't finalized a lineup yet, Kyle hopes to revive the Majestic's days as a live venue. He believes the theater can sparkle again with small concert events in addition to its cinematic offerings.

Until then, each night before the curtain parts to reveal the screen and the movie trailers begin, Kyle steps before the footlights to welcome patrons, remind them about being courteous and unveil coming attractions. It's a personal touch he's carried over from his Flagstaff theater.

"I love running my own theater," says Kyle. "When people come out to a movie, they are out for a good time. They're not in bad moods." Kyle's fondest moments are sitting in the dark projection booth and listening to the audience respond to what's happening onscreen, from the laughter of amused children to the gasps of astounded adults. "There's something about entertaining hundreds of people that's fulfilling," he says.



The Verucchi family consists of daughters (L-R) Paula Tomsha, Beth Yerly, Mary Hueser, Barb DeAngelo and Tricia Carls, Mom Bea Verucchi and son Dick Verucchi. (Not pictured are sons Arthur, Jr. (Buzzy) Verucchi, Tom Verucchi and daughter Joanie Crump)

Among Family

Delicious dishes and a close-knit clan keep folks coming back to Verucchi's Ristorante.

The history of Verucchi's Ristorante in Spring Valley is intertwined with the history of the Verucchi family, which is well-documented by the gallery of photos that line the dining room walls. Customers bask in the familial warmth as they dine on delicious pasta, fried chicken and other specialties of the house. Over the years, it's become a place where the community comes to celebrate, whether it's a town-wide festival or a wedding, birthday or anniversary.

The births of Buzzy and Bea Verucchi's 10 children not only kept St. Margaret's obstetrics unit busy, but also guaranteed a steady workforce for the restaurant, which was started by Battista and Elizabeth Verucchi nearly a century ago.

The kids understood from an early age that they were expected to help out, and many of them still do.

Five of the six Verucchi daughters still contribute to the business: Paula Tomsha manages the restaurant, Tricia Carls manages the finances, Beth Yerly supervises cleaning and handles catering setups, and Barb DeAngelo and Mary Heuser, who hold outside jobs as receptionist and first-grade teacher, respectively, still work weekends. The sixth, Joanie Crump, graduated from waiting tables to being a homemaker.

"It's amazing we can all work together and still speak to one another," says Barb. "But we all pull together."

Bea, now in her 80's, still arrives daily to help make the sauces, and she remains a steady influence and a pillar of faith for her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Except for Jack, who tended bar and was a backbone of the restaurant until he died in 2002, the boys grew up and out of the restaurant. Dick

became a musician and teacher. Tom trained as a chef—the only Verucchi with formal restaurant training—and is a restaurant administrator in Colorado. Arthur “Buzzy” Junior went into marketing.

The entire Verucchi clan gathers at the restaurant for annual celebrations, including Thanksgiving and Christmas, when it’s closed to the public. But family members don’t need a special occasion to drop in. “It’s a gathering place,” says Mary. “Sometimes I come in just for a cup of coffee and a slice of bread. When we get home from vacation, we don’t go home and unpack. We come here.”

Fried chicken has been a staple at the restaurant ever since Mama and Papa Verucchi expanded their saloon into a small diner. “They probably fed everybody on this end of town,” reminisces Bea. In the early days, customers seldom paid cash, and Mama kept accounts on index cards.

Under Buzzy’s direction, beginning in the early 1960’s, the restaurant grew by leaps and bounds. He expanded dining space and services and installed one of Spring Valley’s first drive-thrus to dispense carryout chicken. The Verucchi name appeared everywhere, including on a parade float, which proclaimed the family’s Italian heritage with a rocking gondola and gondolier, flaming torches and flowing fountains. Later, an antique car would carry a fedora-wearing “Godfather” and his henchmen who dispensed gift certificates or wine. “We made a lot of people smile,” recalls Buzzy Jr.

Buzzy was always working on new marketing ideas, including creating a mobile restaurant to take to festivals or fairs. Special events, including family celebrations, also enticed customers to visit. Crowds streamed into Mama Elizabeth’s 83rd birthday reception to pay tribute to Buzzy’s mother, a woman they knew either personally or through her iconic newspaper ads. Headlined “Mama Says,” the ads featured quips dreamed up by Buzzy, who didn’t know Italian. “He would find an Italian word and stick it in,” says Dick. “Mama had no idea what she was saying,” adds Bea. Readers ate it up, and couldn’t wait to see what Mama would say next!

In 1992, a plan to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ voyage with an Italian buffet turned instead into a farewell tribute to Buzzy, who died earlier that year. It would be the last time the family hosted that event.

Since then, Buzzy’s children have carried on the family legacy, continuing to adhere to their father’s philosophy that there should always be family in the dining room. “Customers love it when you tell them there is family on the floor,” says Barb.

Dick believes the atmosphere of caring created by their close family ties has been a key to the restaurant’s success. “I think the restaurant was a metaphor for the security this place brought,” he reflects. “No matter where you went or what you did, you were never broke or without something to eat.”

Barb remembers her father’s generosity when she went back to waitressing after the death of her husband, Jimmy, in 1983. He always gave her extra money, over and above the tips she made. “I felt I was always taken care of,” she says. “When I lost Jimmy, all I had was here and the family.”

That giving spirit continues to this day. “We don’t care about what we take in as much as what we give out,” says Barb.





Arthur (Buzzy) Verucchi at the Les-Buzz Ballroom



Rock 'n' Roll Memories

Co-owner's children recall the heyday of the Les-Buzz Ballroom.

In the mid-1950's, the Les-Buzz Ballroom in Spring Valley was THE place to rock 'n' roll! When they weren't skating the fox trot around the roller rink, teens far and wide shelled out \$2.00 or \$2.50 a person to hear the hottest teen idols and pop artists on the planet.

Les-Buzz, located at the corner of Routes 6 and 89, was aptly billed as "The Place Where All the Name Bands Play." It attracted stars, stars-on-the-rise, singing actors and boy bands—many of them packaged in a "dance party" lineup that offered multiple acts for the price of one ticket.

"What you saw on 'American Bandstand' is what you saw here," remembers Dick Verucchi, whose father, Arthur "Buzzy" Verucchi, put the "buzz" in the ballroom. "We were growing up at the same time rock 'n' roll hit," recalls Dick. "We were experiencing what the whole country was experiencing. It was not just on the East or West Coasts—no one had anything on us."

Buzzy Verucchi handled the promotion while his brother-in-law, Les Dhesse, made sure the utilities stayed on and the roller skates were repaired. Within a year after the 1949 opening, Les and Buzzy started booking musical entertainment, and the Les-Buzz would take its place among the premier ballrooms in the area.

In early 1950's, entertainment at the ballroom reflected parental tastes, with big bands headed by the likes of Louis Armstrong, Count Basie and Duke Ellington. Other headliners included Gene Krupa, Stan Kenton and Guy Lombardo. "Dad grew up seeing the dance halls, and they all used orchestras. He carried on what he saw," Dick explains.

"Gonna rock 'n' roll as long as the band's gonna play"

—Fabian, "Turn Me Loose"

Buzzy's transition from the Big Band sound to crooners like the Four Aces to rock 'n' roll was seamless. He had a gift for knowing what his audiences liked. "His mind never stopped with ideas and how to promote them," Dick says.

Venues like the Les-Buzz were the bread and butter of stars in the early years of rock 'n' roll. Arena and stadium shows were still years away, so recording stars like Buddy Holly, Fabian and Frankie Avalon built their fan base through such appearances, often spending grueling weeks being bused from town to town for one-night gigs.



Dick and his sister Barb DeAngelo were the oldest of Buzzy's brood, which would eventually expand to 10 children. The budding teens were in a prime spot to witness and enjoy the phenomenon that was Les-Buzz. Dick, who would become a professional musician, soaked up the musical atmosphere.

"They call it a teen-age crush. They don't know how I feel."

—Tommy Sands, "Teen-Age Crush"

Barb was a starry-eyed ingénue enthralled by the teen heartthrobs. While waiting on and busing tables at the restaurant, she could swoon over the latest visiting heartthrob, such as Bobby Darin and then-girlfriend Sandra Dee, and revel in the touch of a napkin or cup which had brushed the lips or chin or fingers of her latest idol.

Sometimes the Verucchi kids came along to pick up the entertainers. On a car ride back from a Chicago airport where they'd picked up Fabian ("Tiger" and "Turn Me Loose"), Barb was in heaven. "I was in eighth grade, and my cousin was older, in high school. Fabian sat in the back seat in the middle of us, and leaned his head on my shoulder. She was so jealous!"

Buzzy had announced Fabian's appearance in the *LaSalle News Tribune*, and the entourage arrived to find the place packed with frenzied fans. "People were crowding in, shaking the car. Girls were screaming. It was scary," Dick remembers. The star had to be escorted to the door of the building by men who elbowed a path through the crowd.

Despite his children's pleas, Buzzy never booked Elvis (he cost too much, while an act such as the Everly Brothers could be booked for a mere \$300). Still, the impressive roster of stars included Fats Domino, Danny and the Juniors, Bill Haley, Bobby Rydell, Freddy Cannon, Dion and the Belmonts, and others.



"The reason we got so many bands was that Dad would never say no to the booking agents," says Dick, noting that, while some stars appeared on Saturday nights, others performed on Tuesdays or Wednesdays as they passed through town en route to another show.

To advertise upcoming concerts, Buzzy would pile his children in the Les-Buzz mobile, a station wagon emblazoned with the ballroom's name and rigged with loud speakers, and parade through LaMoille, Amboy, Mendota and other area towns. Those trips remain one of Barb's favorite memories.

"We'd go to businesses, restaurants or taverns in that community and drop off posters. I liked it because we always got a candy bar out of it," says Barb.

**"Donna, where can you be? Where
can you be?"**
—Ritchie Valens, "Donna"

The Winter Dance Party of 1959, set to arrive in town February 7, was a much-anticipated event that would bring Buddy Holly ("That'll Be the Day") to town for the second time, as well as Ritchie Valens ("Donna" and "La Bamba") and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson ("Chantilly Lace").

"My best girlfriend's name was Donna, and I kept telling her Ritchie Valens had written the song just for her and I would get her in to meet him and tell him who she was," says Barb.

Dick, who admired Holly for his innovative style as a writer and performer, had met him when he appeared at Les-Buzz in 1958. Twelve-year-old Dick was waiting on the steps leading up to the organist's room, where performers waited to make their entrance. Fate, in the form of a can of soda, stepped in.

"The manager was bringing a Coke to Buddy, and I said I'd take it up to him. Buddy Holly was talking to his manager and holding his guitar. I handed him the Coke and he said, 'Thank you.' He had a nice smile."



**"That'll be the day when you say goodbye.
That'll be the day when you make me cry."**
—Buddy Holly, "That'll Be the Day"

But Holly never made a return trip to the Les-Buzz. He, along with Valens, The Big Bopper and the pilot of their small aircraft, was killed February 3, 1959, in a crash near Clear Lake, Iowa. It was four days before they were to appear in Spring Valley.

Dick heard the news when he woke up that morning. "It was a school day, and that was all anyone could talk about," he recalls. Instead of meeting Valens, Barb and her friend Donna had the priest say a special Mass for him and his friends.

The Winter Dance Party arrived at Les-Buzz on schedule with a new lineup that included Frankie Avalon ("Venus"). Holly was buried that day.

"I remember seeing Frankie Avalon and the Crickets (Holly's band) with their heads bent over photos of Ritchie and The Big Bopper that they had taken in one of those photo booths before they left Clear Lake," says Dick. "The mood was very somber that night."

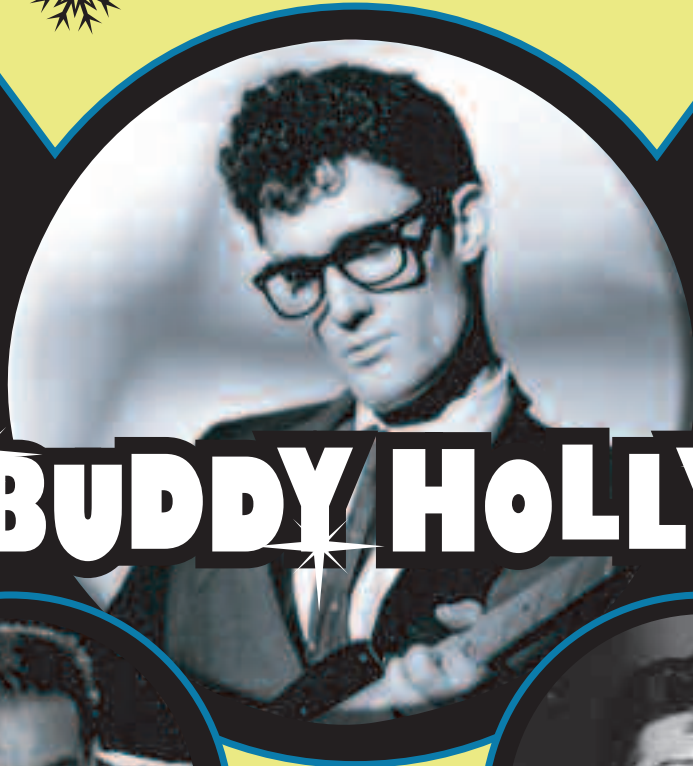
Likewise, an era ended for Spring Valley when Les-Buzz closed in 1961. Buzzy turned his attention to his family's tavern and expanded Verucchi's Ristorante into an iconic eatery. The ballroom building was sold and eventually was destroyed by fire, but for many who were teens during the hotspot's heyday, it will always be remembered as the place where they learned to rock 'n' roll.



Louis Armstrong was one of the many notable musicians who performed at Les-Buzz Ballroom

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