

Slow ride! Take it easy!

Foghat announced as headlining act for Tama-Toledo RAGBRAI

NEWS CHRONICLE

In keeping with the retro 1970s theme and the 50th anniversary of the Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa — better known as RAGBRAI — a band responsible for one of the defining rock anthems of that era will be the headlining act in Tama-Toledo on Thursday, July 27.

The British band will probably always be best remembered for "Slow Ride," a hard rocking ode to taking it easy immortalized in the classic film "Dazed and Confused," but they also achieved great success with their cover of Willie Dixon's "I Just Want to Make Love to You." Foghat hit the top 100 on the U.S. charts with eight other songs between 1973 and



1980, including a live version of "I Just Want to Make Love to You."

The band has since gone through several lineup changes but has

consistently continued to release new music and looks forward to rocking

for a capacity crowd in Tama-Toledo as the two small communities host

one of the biggest parties of the year.

More details about the concert will be shared with the public as they become available.

Painting the hills

Live from the Iowa Alps Art Show happening Sunday

MICHAEL D. DAVIS | CORRESPONDENT

This Sunday, something new is coming to our community, the Live from the Iowa Alps Art Show. At Windy Goat Acres in Chelsea, artwork by seven local artists will be installed throughout the grounds.

From sculpture to painting to sound installation, the artists have produced artwork that plays off of the Iowa countryside. The produced pieces will be placed around the farm, from amongst the trees and shrubs, to sitting in the open pastures.

Most of the artwork will stay outside for the month of May. Whether it's rain or shine or a bird flying overhead, the art pieces will be affected by all types of natural elements throughout the month. The public will be able to visit the exhibit throughout May at Windy Goat Acres by scheduling a visit to see the art for the first time or how it has been affected.

Joshua Cox is the man and organizer behind the art in the Iowa Alps. An artist himself, Cox studied at schools in Illinois, New York City and Boston. Mr. Cox has organized and produced similar exhibits in other states, but this is first one here in Iowa. A board member of the Arts and Culture Alliance for Marshall County, he has been working closely with Arts and Culture Alliance Executive Director Amber Danielson to cultivate an artist community here in the heart of Iowa.

Joshua and his wife Dawn Gettler are working together on a special art piece for the Iowa Alps Exhibit. The other artists that will be featured at the exhibit are Brittany Brook Crow and Rachel Buse from Des Moines, Kim Mills Hanken from Marshalltown, Stacey Lee Gee a University of Iowa graduate, and Alex McKenzie from Cornell College.

Many more exhibits and educational events for local artists are being talked about. The Live from the Iowa Alps exhibit is hoped to become either an annual or biannual event that will just keep growing and growing through the years.

So, this Sunday, May 7, if you are a fan of the arts or are just curious and wish to see something beautiful, head up to Windy Goat Acres between 1 and 3 p.m. I'm sure you can afford the price of admission, as it is free of charge.

SETTLEMENTS

Continued from Page 1

March. As part of each settlement, none of the ex-employees are eligible to be rehired, and the district "in no way admits any violation of federal, state, or local statute or ordinance or common law."

"To the contrary, the District expressly denies any such violation," it reads. "The parties agree that this Agreement and any payments or other consideration provided pursuant to it are to be considered strictly as a compromise and settlement of a disputed claim between the parties to avoid further controversy, litigation, and expense."

All of the agreements have been approved by the STC Board of Education, and the payments are covered through the district's insurance policy. Although Smith, who now serves as the Superintendent of the Waterloo Community School District, did not respond to multiple requests for comment, current STC Superintendent John Cain issued a statement on behalf of the district.

"As a District, we appreciate the opportunity to move forward in our mission to serve students and families," he said.

Cain was not employed by the district at the time the allegations were made. He did not respond to a follow-up email requesting details on how much STC spent on its own attorneys from Ahlers and Cooney who litigated the case.

For Bagnall, Frakes and Jantzen, the settlements represent the end of a painful ordeal that, as each admitted, caused

them a great deal of embarrassment. Frakes, who now works in the Marshalltown Community School District, had spent 10 years at STC before learning that his contract would not be renewed at the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year, and he was subsequently replaced by Mark Groteluschen, a former co-worker of Smith's from Muscatine. Jantzen spent 18 years with the district before she faced a similar fate when her contract was not renewed, and a younger replacement, Michelle Kalinay, was hired to take over her role.

Like Frakes, Bagnall worked at STC for a decade, but unlike his two former colleagues, he found out sooner — in December of 2019, to be exact — that his contract would not be renewed. Nonetheless, he was still allowed to finish out the school year, working until June 30, 2020, when he was replaced by Anthony Jahr.

All three of the individuals hired to replace the trio were under the age of 40, and Groteluschen and Jahr have since moved on to other jobs.

"Shocked is an understatement," Bagnall said. "When I had that conversation where (Smith) said 'I haven't decided whether I'm gonna keep you or not,' it's like, where did

that come from?"

Bagnall said he had never been written up for any disciplinary reason during his tenure, and Frakes and Jantzen both said their lone separate disciplinary incidents had occurred under a previous superintendent.

As they noted, Bagnall, Frakes and Jantzen had little in common other than age — they were all 55 or older at the time their contracts were not renewed. Jantzen and Bagnall barely knew each other as they worked in different buildings, but both said they were told they weren't "good fits" for their positions with the district.

"Everybody thinks we're all together, (but) it really isn't one case. It's three separate cases," Bagnall said. "But I think if there's a takeaway I want of my case, it's that it wasn't necessary... We got a settlement. I got a settlement. I would rather be teaching or being a principal at the school. I miss the school. I miss the people that I work with. I miss my students, and the money does not make up for that. I was gonna retire there, and the fact that that was taken away from me. I am angry and hurt, and there's not any amount of money that can replace that."

Heading into the 2019-2020 school year, Frakes

had mentioned the possibility of retirement but had not formally made a decision, and he spoke of feeling embarrassed but unable to change the outcome once Smith and the board opted not to renew his contract.

After his employment at STC came to an end, Frakes spent a month as the assistant manager at a convenience store in Brooklyn before taking a position with Four Oaks Family Connections and then getting back into education with the GMG school district before accepting his current position as a behavior interventionist at Marshalltown. Although he's moved on and stayed involved in education, he still wishes the process would have played out differently.

"Me as an administrator, when I was working with a teacher or something like that, you want to consider other factors. Their family (and) other things are involved, and it affects more than just that person," he said. "And I don't think any consideration was given to that."

Bagnall said he was never given a concrete reason for his termination, but when he went to file for unemployment, it was reported he had violated school policy and would be ineligible for the benefits. When he appeared at a hearing on the

matter, no evidence was presented against him, and he was granted unemployment.

When he filed the lawsuit against the district, he received a new explanation as to why he was fired. The third and final reason he was given, in Bagnall's words, was that he had been accused of racial profiling, a claim he vehemently denies.

"That was a bridge that you can't unburn, and so there was no turning back after that," he said. "I still haven't been given a straight answer."

Jantzen was never given a letter to inform her that her contract wouldn't be renewed, and she said Smith refused to put anything in writing regarding her employment status.

Although Smith has since left STC to take on an administrative role at a bigger district and two of the five current school board members came on after these events unfolded (Clint Werner was elected in November 2019), Bagnall, Frakes and Jantzen were all in agreement about hoping the leadership will follow proper policies and procedures and stick to "finding out the facts" before they make personnel decisions in the future.

"They should've been asking a lot more questions than what they did. They just took his word for it," Jantzen said. "I feel

like (Smith) just kind of dumped it on the school, and he's getting off scot free. That's the part that upsets me because it was basically him that instigated all of this."

In Bagnall's words, the decisions that ultimately led up to the lawsuit and settlement were not an "Oh, my bad," but rather a serious misstep that should serve as a lesson for the parties involved.

"Everybody thinks we were in it for the money. It has nothing to do with that. It has everything to do with protecting our integrity, and, if given the opportunity, I'd love to be back at the high school," he said. "It wasn't that I was married to education. I was married to Tama. I wanted to be here, and that was taken away from me. That's just what I have to live with."

He added that he would've relished the opportunity to take the case to court and make all of the depositions and testimony public.

"That's the only way that people can be accountable, and that's the biggest issue I have is there's no accountability," he said. "The district gets to sign a piece of paper saying we didn't do anything wrong, but we paid you \$1.1 million or whatever it is... That makes a lot of sense."

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