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Times-Republican

YOUR LOCAL CONNECTION MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA

Monday, July 17, 2023

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Volunteers repaint arrow walkway through downtown alley



T-R PHOTO BY LANA BRADSTREAM

Volunteers donated time Saturday morning to repaint the arrow walkway in the alley next to Wax Xtatic on Main Street.

By LANA BRADSTREAM

TIMES-REPUBLICAN

As new artwork is placed around Marshalltown, efforts to maintain existing art are ongoing, and residents are not afraid to donate their time and efforts. Saturday morning, more than 12 volunteers showed up in the alley beside Wax Xtatic Record Audio Stereo Shop on Main Street to repaint the well-known arrow walkway.

Travis Hornberg, vice president of the Marshalltown Central Business District (MCBD) and the design chair, said the alley is well-traveled, so touching up the artwork is important for the downtown.

"We're bridging the gap from the Church Street parking lot, which is a huge investment for the downtown," he said. "We have ample parking. We want to spread the word about that parking and it gives people a safe place to park, where they can feel welcome and walk right into the downtown."

Besides serving as a colorful walkway for people, Hornberg has seen people utilize the benches in the alley, eating snacks and drinking beverages. Future artistic plans for the walls of the alley is something Hornberg said has been discussed. He mentioned possibly opening

PAINT | A3

Farmers learn about native prairie flowers during field day at Minerva's Meadows



T-R PHOTO BY LANA BRADSTREAM

On Sunday afternoon, Kurtis Kettler shows attendees at the Practical Farmers of Iowa field day how he creates essential oils with the lavender he grows on Minerva's Meadows — a 10-acre organic, no-till farm near State Center.

By LANA BRADSTREAM

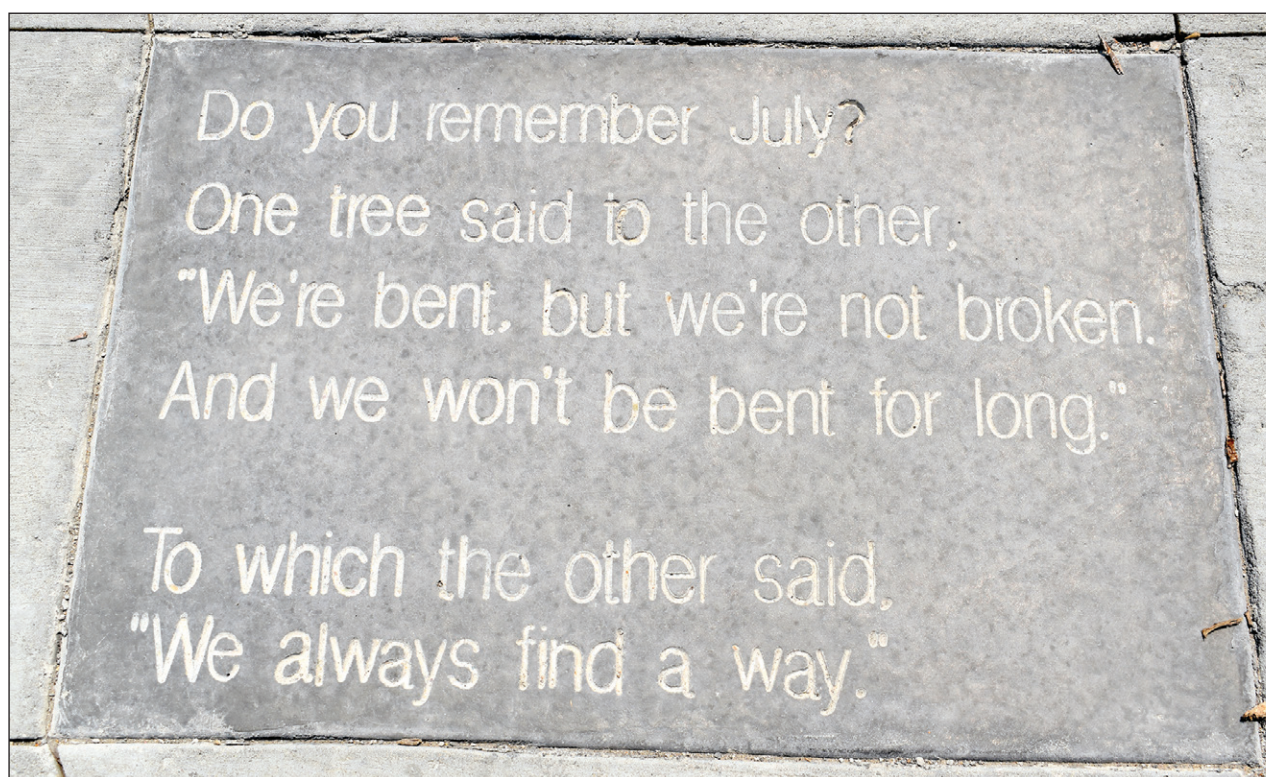
TIMES-REPUBLICAN

STATE CENTER - Close to 60 members of Practical Farmers of Iowa spent part of the afternoon on Sunday at Minerva's Meadows, a no-till, organic 10-acre farm owned by Hannah Scates Kettler and Kurtis Kettler. While there, the crowd learned ways to incorporate native plants into their farms.

During the Elevating Prairie Plants on a No-Till Flower Farm Field Day, attendees gazed upon a two-acre

FIELD | A3

The healing power of art



T-R PHOTOS BY ROBERT MAHARRY

At top, the new "Resiliency" mural at the Anson Park shelter by artist Sasha Primo showcases the cleanup efforts in the aftermath of the devastating EF-3 tornado on July 19, 2018 and the subsequent derecho on Aug. 10, 2020. At bottom, a poem by Akwi Nji in the Veterans Courtyard Pocket Park shares a similar theme but from the perspective of trees.

Murals, poetry projects installed around Marshalltown in aftermath of tornado

By ROBERT MAHARRY

TIMES-REPUBLICAN

(Editor's note: This is the fourth in a series of stories looking back at the July 19, 2018 EF-3 tornado leading up to the fifth anniversary, but also looking forward and detailing rebuilding and revitalization efforts since then.)

It's often true that the worst circumstances help artists create some of their most memorable and meaningful works — "Guernica" is a prime example — and with almost five years now past since an EF-3 tornado ripped through the heart of Marshalltown, it's safe to say the community is experiencing something of a Renaissance.

The evidence is all over town, with almost 30 mu-



A special commemorative series celebrating 5 years of continuous growth after the July 19, 2018 EF-3 tornado

murals (including "Resiliency" at the Anson Park shelter, which directly references the aftermath of the storm), sculptures and a

poetry project at the Veterans Courtyard/Pocket Park in partnership with Cedar Rapids-based Akwi Nji. Arts+Culture Alliance

Executive Director Amber Danielson has been the public face of the art revival locally, and she's proud of all the progress she's already seen but hopes to keep the momentum intact going forward. "Shortly after both natural disasters and amidst the pandemic as well, everyone turned to art in some form. I think the natural disasters in particular opened up an opportunity for Marshalltown to recover in a more creative way, and the art that has been installed since the tornado has been an opportunity for the community to feel more pride and more hope in the recovery and redevelopment efforts," she said. "Especially just with the nature of the tornado, there's still spaces

ART | A3

Central Iowa Fair wraps up with bull riding event



T-R PHOTOS BY LANA BRADSTREAM

Another fun-filled week at the Central Iowa Fair came to an end on Saturday night with a bull riding event and music from Bon Jecci to wrap up four days worth of activities at the fairgrounds. At top left, Sage Vance from Nebraska completed his eight-second ride on War Crimes and received 87 points. Vance won the event in the championship round with a score of 88.5. At top right, Jarrett Evans rides the bull he drew Saturday night. Evans did not stay on for the full eight seconds. At bottom right, local cowboy Ethan rides a bull as long as possible during and walks away a winner. Between the qualifying and championship round, a smaller contest featuring three local cowboys was held in which they rode younger bulls at the same time. The goal was to stay on the bull the longest to win. See more photos from the fair on Page 6.



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Art

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in the community where you can still visually see the impact from. So I think that just naturally created a sense of, like, not feeling hopeful for the future and visual sadness.”

Nancy Adams, who serves on the Fisher Art Committee and is widely known as one of the most enthusiastic boosters of the arts in Marshalltown, shared her own reflections and remarked on how the experience of living through the storm differed for different people.

“There was an objective truth to the tornado. It was an EF-3, lasting ‘this many minutes — cutting a swath this wide’ — but the experience of the tornado was subjective. I remember, those first few days, friends speaking of the disconcerting, relentless sounds of chainsaws and generators, while others grieved the utter lack of birdsong; were unsettled by the unnerving quiet. It struck me that these divergent experiences were based on a single shared truth; the devastating loss of so many of our trees. And it underscored the importance of perspective,” she said. “In the weeks that followed, I was comforted and uplifted by the brightly colored, knitted covers that blanketed some of our downed trees, by the murals on the sides of buildings and the Marshalltown Strong messages on downtown storefronts. I admired those who could find and express hope. And though art is the result of a highly individualized process, it has the capacity for connectivity. Always, when creating, the artist works from their own perspec-

tive. They decide what to highlight, celebrate, distort, omit. When creating in the aftermath of trauma or disaster, they’ve the opportunity to gain some sense of control over that which happened, and that can be deeply healing.”

Although the idea had already been hatched, there were no murals completed in Marshalltown before the tornado, which hit three days before the annual art festival was scheduled to be hosted downtown for the first time.

Danielson admitted there was hesitancy to push forward with the program in the immediate aftermath of the tornado due to concerns of whether it was “too soon,” but they ultimately decided, about a year later, it was needed more than ever. The first one went up on the wall of La Salud in November of 2020, and they’ve moved at a breakneck pace adding to the portfolio since then.

“I think the tornado — this is true for the community, but also very true for the Alliance — it provided us opportunities to really evolve as an organization alongside the community needs because after the natural disasters, the community needs transitioned tremendously,” Danielson said. “So I think it was an opportunity for us to grow as an organization alongside the community and maybe transition some of the things that we’ve been doing for a while to better serve the more necessary desires of the community and needs of the community. So I think the mural program was just one of those examples.”

In the fall of 2021, the Alliance held community engagement sessions for the

Arts and Culture Master Plan, which was adopted by the city council earlier this year, and Danielson said she consistently heard that seeing the murals helped many residents regain pride in their community for the first time since the tornado and subsequent derecho in August of 2020.

“So I think that, for us, confirmed that even amidst trauma and destruction, that art really has the power to bring people together and heal in a way that a lot of outlets are hard to provide,” she said. “So since then, now, when we’ve ever been hesitant on ‘Is it too soon?’ We usually go for it because that’s usually the moment that people need it the most.”

Now that the poetry installation at the Pocket Park is wrapped up and the neighborhood mural project has been completed in partnership with Argentinian artist Sasha Primo, Danielson isn’t sure what will come next, but she’s confident her organization will continue to evolve, thrive and put the “Marshalltown mark” on future projects and initiatives.

“When we hired someone to help us just to really think about what (a mural program) could look like for Marshalltown, we set ourselves up to do — literally, the narrative in the program says (this) — two to three a year, so I think if you would’ve told us you’re gonna do 28 in 2 ½ years, I would’ve said ‘No way, that is crazy,’” she said. “But I think the momentum was just natural. It was just kind of like this natural ripple effect of the community desiring more, and we didn’t really have to work that hard to find the spaces because they just kind of re-

vealed themselves either through a redevelopment area or someone reaching us and saying ‘We want one too.’”

She also hopes that anyone who’s interested in art can find something they enjoy in Marshalltown’s public art portfolio, from more literal and self-explanatory works like the postcard mural at Thompson True Value or a patriotic mural honoring veterans at the VFW Hall to the abstract like the one on 13th Street or “Perspective” on the wall of the Orpheum Theatre.

“I think they’ve done a really good job of trying to balance the portfolio to have something for everyone because we recognize that visual art in particular — all art — is subjective, and not everyone will like everything,” Danielson said. “Not everyone listens to the same music. Not everyone likes to look at the same art, and so I think that’s something that we’re just always keeping in perspective.”

Local artist and lifelong Marshalltonian Kim Mills Hanken is excited by all of the recent developments and optimistic that the surge of creativity will continue for years to come.

“In the aftermath of two devastating storms, what has risen from the ashes is our beautiful public art program. Art is transformational. Even if one is not aware of the power behind the art, its effect is happening,” Hanken said. “With transformation there is hope, and with hope there is healing. That is why our public art program has been a tremendous catalyst for our community’s repair and renewal.”

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Paint

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the area up as a venue for concerts and they would be interested in visiting with artists and business owners about murals.

“One of the biggest things of the art is to make Marshalltown welcoming,” Hornberg said. “A lot of tourists come downtown just to check out the murals. When you put a piece of art up, we can cut down on the graffiti, make it beautiful and have people take pride in the community.”

One of the people who appeared on Saturday morning was Rhonda Spellman, owner of Nourish Healthy Weight and Wellness Center. She wanted to get ideas for possible artwork for her business.

“I think this is fantastic,” she said. “I’m really big into colors. I love the colors. I love it’s drawing people in to more artistic venues and I think that is what we really need to be more aware of. Marshalltown has a lot to offer and this is just one of them.”

Another volunteer was Andrina Helgerson of the MCBDD.

“I think this has been really fun,” she said. “We had a slow start, but I think it’s going to pay off and look really great.”

For future art projects, Helgerson said she would like to see art students from Marshalltown Community School District and Marshalltown Community College create something to showcase downtown. That way, she said they will feel more involved.

One such student who was repainting the arrows was Finley Judge, 12. She said her father, Wade Judge, is the art teacher at Marshalltown High School.

“He asked me if I wanted to help, and I like painting stuff,” Judge said. “I thought it would be nice to get out and help with something that would be improved. I’m glad I got this opportunity to help.”

About one-fourth of the way through the project, she said the mural already looked a lot better, and added she was happy to see the number of people volunteering. The enthusiasm for the number of volunteers was echoed by Helgerson.

“I think we’ve had a lot of progress downtown with all the murals,” she said. “I’m just excited to see so many people out here volunteering. I’m happy to see we had a good turnout and I’m excited to see it when it’s done.”

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2023 Iowa State Fair new foods list announced

TIMES-REPUBLICAN

DES MOINES — Sixty-four of the best crazy, zany, delicious, on-a-stick and more foods will make a debut at the 2023 Iowa State Fair. Typically, this coveted list of new foods is held and released later in July, but this year, in celebration of National Fair Food Day, the entire list of new foods has been released.

On July 18 at 1 p.m., join the Facebook livestream to see which foods will be named the top three new food entries to be voted on by Fairgoers during the Fair.

2023 New Food List: (Banh Mi) Vietnamese Sandwich, (Café Muoi) Salted Coffee, A-Hootenanny Ice Cream, Amish Do-

nuts, Apple Pie Cookie Ice Cream, Bacon and Sweet Corn Lobster Rolls, Bacon Cheddar Pretzel Dog, Bauder’s Cherry Dream Ice Cream, Berry Bowl-Frozen Sorbet, Birch Beer Soda, Blueberry Mini Donuts, Bubble Tea, Bucket of Soda, Buffalo Chicken Bacon Ranch Fries, Burrito Bowl, Butterbeer Ice Cream, Byrd Dawg Crispy Chicken Sandwich, Caramel Apple Cake Pops, Catfish in a Boat or on a Stick, Chicken Salad Hoagie, Chopped Brisket Sandwich, Chopped Italian Chicken Hoagie, Chopped Italian Ham Hoagie, Chopped Italian Roast Beef Hoagie, Citrus Boost Energy Drink, Cookie Dough Sundae, Cotton Candy Art, Cotton Candy Cheese Cake, Craft Link on a Stick,

Crunch Cool Ranch Pickle on a Stick, Deep Fried Bacon Brisket Mac-N-Cheese Grilled Cheese, Deep Fried Strawberry Shortcake on a Stick, Deep Fried Sweet Corn Nugget, Dill Pickle Flavored Cheese Curds, Dough Crazy (Chocolate Chip, Cake Batter, Brownie Batter, Brookie, CC Dough w/o CC, Monster, Cherry Chocolate Chip, Cookies and Cream) Sweet Stick, Fried Caramel Apple Cow Tail, Grilled Shrimp on a Stick, Grinder Ball, Hot Stuff Grilled Cheese, Iowa Sweet Corn Sundae, Iowa Twinkie-Jalapeno Filled with Pulled Pork, Corn and Cream Cheese, Wrapped in Bacon, Smoked with Sweet and Sticky BBQ, Finished with Ranch, Korean Bacon Egg Dog, Korean Egg

Dog, Lamb Gyro Salad, Made from Scratch Bacon Maple Monkey Bread, Orange (with Peppermint) Sipper, Orange Float, Orange Slush, Orange-Frosty, Oreo Brownie Blast, Peanut Butter Cream Donuts, Pop Corn Shrimp, Pork Belly Pinwheel, Raspberry Chipotle Grilled Cheese, Shrimp Ceviche, Shrimp Poke Bowl, Shrimp Tacos, Soft Serve Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Sundae, Southern Fried Corn on the Cob, The Oeey Goey All American Grilled Cheese, Ube Funnel Cake, Walking Banana Dessert, Walking Smores Dessert, Walleeye in a Boat or on a Stick.

Follow the livestream on July 18 at 1 p.m. at: www.facebook.com/iowastatefair

DeSantis would consider Reynolds as running mate, calls Trump’s attack on her ‘out of hand’

TIMES-REPUBLICAN

ANKENY — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Saturday he would consider Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds as a potential running mate, should he win the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, and dismissed former President Donald Trump’s recent complaints about her as “totally out of hand.”

“Of course,” DeSantis said when asked whether he would consider the second-term Republican. “I mean, she’s one of the top public servants in America.”

Trump last week criticized Reynolds, immensely popular among the state’s GOP base, for her seemingly cozy relationship with DeSantis while stating her public neutrality as the lead Republican figure in the state that hosts the lead-off presidential caucuses in less than six months.

Reynolds has appeared

with other GOP White House prospects, but has moderated conversations with DeSantis and his wife Casey DeSantis, while also attending Trump’s first campaign event in Iowa last March.

DeSantis noted that he and Reynolds banter over their similar records, and the playful rivalry between the two states, where conservative policy has moved swiftly this year.

Notably, Reynolds was greeted with a sustained standing ovation when she appeared at a presidential candidate forum Friday, attended by DeSantis and five others, and signed a strict abortion ban before the audience of roughly 2,000 Christian conservatives.

“Anybody who is a Republican who is trying to denigrate her is way off base on that,” DeSantis told reporters, after headlining a fundraiser in suburban

Des Moines for U.S. Rep. Zach Nunn.

On Trump’s social media platform Truth Social, the former president took credit for opening the governorship to Reynolds, who stepped into the role after Republican Gov. Terry Branstad became U.S. ambassador to China during the Trump administration.

“Now, she wants to remain ‘NEUTRAL.’” Trump wrote, adding he would not invite her to his campaign events.

Trump is scheduled to be in Iowa Tuesday to participate in a town hall-style event with Fox News Channel host Sean Hannity.

Reynolds, elected in her own right in 2018 and easily reelected last year, has been mentioned as a potential 2024 running mate, though Iowa GOP insiders have suggested the former state senator and rural county treasurer has been

ambivalent about the role.

DeSantis, who campaigned in Iowa Friday and Saturday, said voters approached him to express dismay at Trump’s criticism of Reynolds.

It struck a chord with Ryan Frederick, a western Iowa county GOP chairman who attended a gathering of about 50 Republican activists at a pizza restaurant in Winterset Saturday morning.

Frederick, who is leaning toward supporting DeSantis said, “At least, I don’t have to worry about him trashing Kim Reynolds.”

“If you’re a party loyalist, that’s a big deal,” Frederick added.

Later Saturday in Tennessee, DeSantis faced a muted audience as he touted his accomplishments as governor and promised to offer the United States a “fresh start” should he be elected president.

Field

CONTINUED | FROM A1

prairie strip covered with mowed native grasses and flowers. Hannah said they are in the process of transitioning those two acres to prairie. It will be a couple years before the native flowers are blooming, as the transition is really slow.

“We wanted to show you guys super-beginning-prairie,” she said, laughing.

The Kettlers spread the prairie flower seeds by hand in the spring for the first time, and keep the area mowed to prevent weeds from taking over. Those steps will be repeated a few times.

“We mow it down to prevent the weeds from developing seed heads,” Hannah said. “As the prairie plants, undoubtedly in there because I’ve seen them, are focusing on their root system. That’s the work they are doing right now.”

Kurtis said they learned the flower seeds like cooler temperatures initially and will more likely seed again in the fall. By also seeding in the fall, it will help reduce the number of birds who were feeding on it.

“Probably December, right before the ground freezes,” Kurtis said.

Hannah said the cold temperatures are necessary in order for the seeds to germinate. She said they cannot be thrown out in the spring and expect anything to grow. Luckily, Hannah added they kept the seeds in the fridge for months before planting. She also added the seeds require well-draining soil.

Some of the seeds the Kettlers have planted include astors, prairie clover, varieties of coneflower, rattlesnake master black-eyed Susan and the popular prairie blazing star.

“Fun fact, and one thing that got us started on prairie flowers,” Hannah said. “Prairie blazing star is the number one flower import from Holland. Knowing that and that people are going goo-goo-ga-ga over it in the New York area, let’s not undersell ourselves, Iowa. We can do that here.”

She said they will continue to seed as much as

they can, starting with the two acres. Hannah added they are learning and since there are other ways to establish prairie, they might discover easier ways.

“It’s all kind of trial-and-error,” she said. “But the intent is to have this whole space dedicated to prairie.”

A question was asked how often the seeds are raked. Kurtis answered the native seeds should not be raked.

“You want them to sit on top,” he said.

The husband and wife team encouraged the crowd to ask any questions, which they were more than willing to answer. An inquiry of what they plan to do with the two acres of prairie once the flowers have matured was thrown out. Hannah said she likes to share.

“Anticipating there will be mowed areas, there will be pathways,” she said. “Maybe a solar fountain.”

“Don’t encourage this,” Kurtis told the attendee, drawing laughter from the crowd.

After the presentation on the prairie strip, Hannah and Kurtis led everyone to their commercial flowers where lavender is grown, along with what is used to create bouquets - cornflowers, yarrow, dahlias, daisies and more. Kurtis told them about the type of lavender that seems to thrive in this Iowa climate - a type called “phenomenal.”

That part of the field day brought the event almost to an end. Kurtis wanted to demonstrate how he creates essential oils with lavender. He explained the distillery set-up he put together. He was only able to take the crowd through part of the steps, as distilling essential oil is an hour process. However, the outside air was filled with the scent of lavender and attendees inhaled the fresh oil collected in a vial.

Hannah and Kurtis thanked everyone for coming to their farm, provided cookies and homemade lavender honey popicles and answered any further questions.

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