

JULY / AUGUST 2009

IOWA OUTDOORS

THE DNR'S MAGAZINE OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



IN THIS ISSUE:
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NATURE AND HUMANS FIND THEIR OWN GAIT AT THE NATURAL GAIT

CABIN FEVER

If camping in the Yellow River State Forest is too chilly this time of year, then the nearby Natural Gait resort is your place for a cozy weekend that is all about you.

Owners Howard and Donna Bright bought a chunk of land along the Yellow River more than 20 years ago. "For the Woodland people, this was holy land," Bright says simply, spreading his hands to indicate the forested ridgeline where most of his cabins sit, and the clear trout stream below, where a fishing line looks big as baling wire.

Standing on nearly 400 acres, the resort is horse-friendly, like most of this area, and includes the Brights' wildflower seed company, Ion Exchange. The cabins aren't the light version found in most resorts, either. Their thick timbers, wood-burning stoves and reclaimed lumber and barn pieces are as comfortable as they are beautiful, jutting from a lovely landscape in a way that begs for steaming coffee on the porch, or a rowdy round of cards at night.

If you stay at the Ion Inn, the original lodging next to the Brights' house, you can wake up, cross the gravel road and start fishing first thing in the morning.

"A lot of the time, when man comes in, he destroys the very thing he came to see," Howard Bright says. "That didn't happen around here."

A typical fall morning at the Natural Gait unfolds atop a high ridge, in a cabin overlooking farmland and streambeds. The sky will turn pink, and then purple, and so on, until a full electric blue illuminates the bright beauty of fall.

This is the kind of day that'll convince you how important it is to get grounded in the land before you have to entertain all those relatives at Thanksgiving, and then, seemingly minutes later, at Christmas.

So whether it is before the holidays or if you need a rest afterwards, get out there, if only to hunker down in a cabin, its chinks lined by thick rope so the drafts can't diminish the efforts of a thick, popping fire in the stove.

Have a good time with your friends or a quiet, relaxing, more intimate time with that special person in your life. Dip into the treasure chest of nature that Allamakee County offers.

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BETHANY KOHOUTEK works as a writer and editor in Des Moines. She and her husband plot adventures grand and small (many involving food and travel) from their home near Madrid. She snaps photos to document their escapades. bethanykohoutek@gmail.com



SAM SAMUELS lives in Vermont and studied writing at the University of Iowa. His articles have appeared in *Smithsonian*, *Sierra*, *Discover* and *Real Simple* magazines. Each year he teaches at the Iowa Summer Writing Festival.



JENNIFER WILSON is a travel and features writer based in Des Moines. She is spending 2009 in Europe for her upcoming book, *Touching Up My Roots*, which tells the story of what happens when she and her family move back to the ancient mountain village in Croatia where her great-grandparents emigrated from—a land virtually untouched by time since they left 100 years ago. Follow their journey at touchingupmyroots.com.



When he's not braving the backroads of Iowa, **MIKE BUTLER** dodges falling silver maple tree limbs in the front yard and paddles whitewater streams in the basement of his Des Moines home. Keep up with his travels and travails at web.mac.com/michaelabutler

IOWA OUTDOORS

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DNR MISSION

To conserve and enhance our natural resources in cooperation with individuals and organizations to improve the quality of life for Iowans and ensure a legacy for future generations.

EDITORIAL MISSION

We strive to open the door to the beauty and uniqueness of Iowa's natural resources, inspire people to get outside and experience Iowa and to motivate outdoor-minded citizens to understand and care for our natural resources.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Keepers of the Land program matches volunteers with natural resource service needs statewide. Give back to Iowa's lands, waters and skies. Call 515-281-0878 to match your interests with needs or visit www.keepersoftheland.org.

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Contents

JULY / AUGUST 2009

ABOUT THIS PHOTO

Few places in Iowa are as remote—yet geologically exquisite—as Gitchie Manitou State Preserve, located in the farthest corner of northwest Iowa. Gitchie Manitou means Great Spirit, Great Force of Nature, God, the Creator of all things and the Giver of Life—sometimes translated as the Great Mystery. And that it is. The preserve is home to displays of pink quartzite outcroppings, roughly 1.6 billion years old and about three times as old as the next oldest exposed rock in the state. Early geologists surmised the rock had been slowly lifted from the earth. It's now known that layers that once blanketed this bedrock have long since eroded away.

ABOUT THE COVER

We here at *Iowa Outdoors* are going to let you in on a little secret. You don't have to travel hundreds of miles and spend a week's pay to have a fun-filled family vacation. Look inside at our vacation Iowa feature—Bargain in Your Backyard—for two dozen local options to famed, high-dollar travel destinations.



FEATURES

28 Hallowed Prairie

How to manage a prairie cemetery has residents of a tiny eastern Iowa township divided.

STORY BY SAM HOOPER SAMUELS PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH

36 Speaking Up For Earth

Former Iowan James Hansen—the Paul Revere of global warming—was championing the fight against green house gases before it was even cool.

STORY BY MINDY KRALICEK PHOTOS BY STUDIO Z

40 Fishing The Thermocline

Fishing the dog days of summer can be a challenge. Learn how to read the water and put more fish on the line.

STORY BY MICK KLEMESRUD PHOTO BY STUDIO Z

42 Reliving The Adventure of Tacitus Hussey

Meet Tacitus Hussey—one of the great early leaders of conservation in Iowa—and relive his epic 1892 adventure down the Des Moines River.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN WENCK

50 Outdoor Bargains in Your Backyard

Discover 24 Iowa getaways that will make you feel like you've embarked on a faraway vacation.

STORY BY JEN WILSON

Contents

JULY / AUGUST 2009

DEPARTMENTS

9 *Together*

Who will win between Iowa and Illinois in a tug-of-war across the Mighty Mississippi; get inspired and create your own masterpiece sand art.

13 *Plyth Busters*

Is burning waste really an issue in rural areas? What's the low-down on cyanobacteria?

14 *Outdoor Skills*

Maintain the perfect Dutch oven cooking temperature and keep grilling essentials handy and dry. Learn to keep camping grub and drink bone-chilling cold for days.

15 *Admiration & Legacy*

Meet the people saving Lake Darling, a Des Moines man who has adopted 20 miles of public trails and an Iowa walleye club that is hooking kids on fishing.

16 *Lost In Iowa*

Get rocked in the rustic and remote Gitchie Manitou State Preserve, or spend a quiet getaway at Prairie Rose State Park.

58 *My Backyard*

Save money and reduce carbon emissions without giving up hobbies. Tune in to TV recycling to keep toxic metals out of landfills.

60 *Wild Cuisine*

Serve up this Asian variation on an Iowa classic—catfish. Make the perfect shore lunch.

66 *Flora & Fauna*

Find out where this relative of the jellyfish—named after a monster of Greek myth—lurks.



BACKGROUND AND BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTOS BY TOM KNIGHT; TOP AND MIDDLE RIGHT PHOTOS BY CHUCK CRECY

ACTIVITIES, TIPS AND EVENTS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

TUGFEST 2009 IOWA vs. ILLINOIS



It's state versus state. Mano a mano. Iowa versus Illinois. Illinois leads the "bitter" rivalry 12 games to 10. Can Iowa rebound and regain some swagger?

No, it's not a March Madness matchup or a fall gridiron battle. It's much more important than that. It's the 23rd Annual Tugfest, a three-day bash centered around one of the oldest forms of recreation and exercise—a grand old tug-of-war. The matchup pits the fine folks from LeClaire, Iowa against the scallywags of Port Bryon, Ill., (hey, this is an Iowa-based magazine), and it rests squarely at the top of your must-do list this year.

Set for Aug. 13-15, the weekend celebration has caught the attention—and airtime—of the Montel Williams show, the Discovery Channel's Wreckreation Nation and the Public Broadcasting Service. The highlight, of course, is

the famed contest between teams from Iowa and Illinois tugging it out across the Mighty Mississippi—in front of some 35,000 onlookers cheering on their "home" team. The 2,400-foot, 750 pound rope spans America's biggest river and is anchored by 11 teams on each side—10 male teams and one female team.

The main attraction is nestled nicely between a one-price-rides-all carnival on the LeClaire levee near the Quad Cities Thursday night, to live music that wraps up the fest at midnight Sunday. In between, there are fireworks, food, crafts, a parade, kids' games and a 5K run/walk. No one goes away from this family getaway disappointed, except of course the "losing" team.

For more information about Tugfest, go to www.tugfest.com; 563-289-3946.

BACKGROUND AND BOTTOM RIGHT PHOTOS BY TOM KNIGHT; TOP AND MIDDLE RIGHT PHOTOS BY CHUCK CREECY



GET INSPIRED BY THE SAND ARTIST OF MCGREGOR

A simple and fun campground activity for kids or serious artist alike.

Time, talent and patience beyond measure can turn simple sand into coveted folk art. The outstanding practitioner of the craft was Iowan Andrew Clemens (1857-1894) who gathered sand from bluffs along what is now Pikes Peak State Park in eastern Iowa. He painstakingly separated the sand into piles of 42 colors, dried them and ground them into fine grains.

What he did next is so remarkable that his works are highly prized today, some selling for more than \$12,000 with others valued at \$35,000. Working in a cramped position with his head just above the level of the table, he moved sand grains into position with sharpened sticks to create intricate patterns of flowers, steamboats, the state flag, eagles and other shapes.

Clemens, a deaf-mute caused by encephalitis at age 5, helped support himself by selling his art for 50 cents to \$8 to tourists and river boat passengers along the Mississippi River bluffs. He appeared at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. His largest pieces took a year to complete.

"I've never seen anything comparable to his work. Everything else looks amateurish," says Michael Smith, chief curator at the state historical museum in Des Moines, where you can view several of Clemens' works on permanent display.

Clemens placed empty glass bottles upside down and removed the bottoms. He may have slightly dampened the powdery sand to help it stick to the glass, but no one knows for sure. He built the designs in layers, packing sand as he went along. The images were built upside down and when finished, the bottom was corked, sealed with wax and the bottle set upright.

MAKE YOUR OWN ART!

Let sand art master Andrew Clemens be your inspiration and keep occupied at the campground by creating your own sand art.

Tired of dropping \$5 a shot on those carnival sand art booths? Make your own for just pennies apiece and discover a great family project. Kids will have hours of fun designing their own art, and parents won't break the bank doing so. Here are four ways to make colored sand art using inexpensive, readily accessible household items. In addition to the materials below, you'll need containers with lids. Baby food jars, glass bottles or see-through plastic containers work great. Get creative and spend time at the campground making your own sand art.

DIFFICULT

Take a hike along rock outcrops and collect sands of varying shades and hues. Then do what sand art master Andrew Clemens did—pulverize them into super-fine grains.

EASY

What you need

Sand
Food coloring
Bowls, bags or cups

Use separate bowls for each color. Add sand and just enough water to cover. Apply generous amounts of food coloring and stir. Once you have reached the desired color, drain excess water and dump sand on paper towel to dry.

EASIER

What you need

Salt
Colored chalk
Cheese grater

Add salt to a bowl. Place grater over bowl and grate chalk. For darker hues, add more chalk.

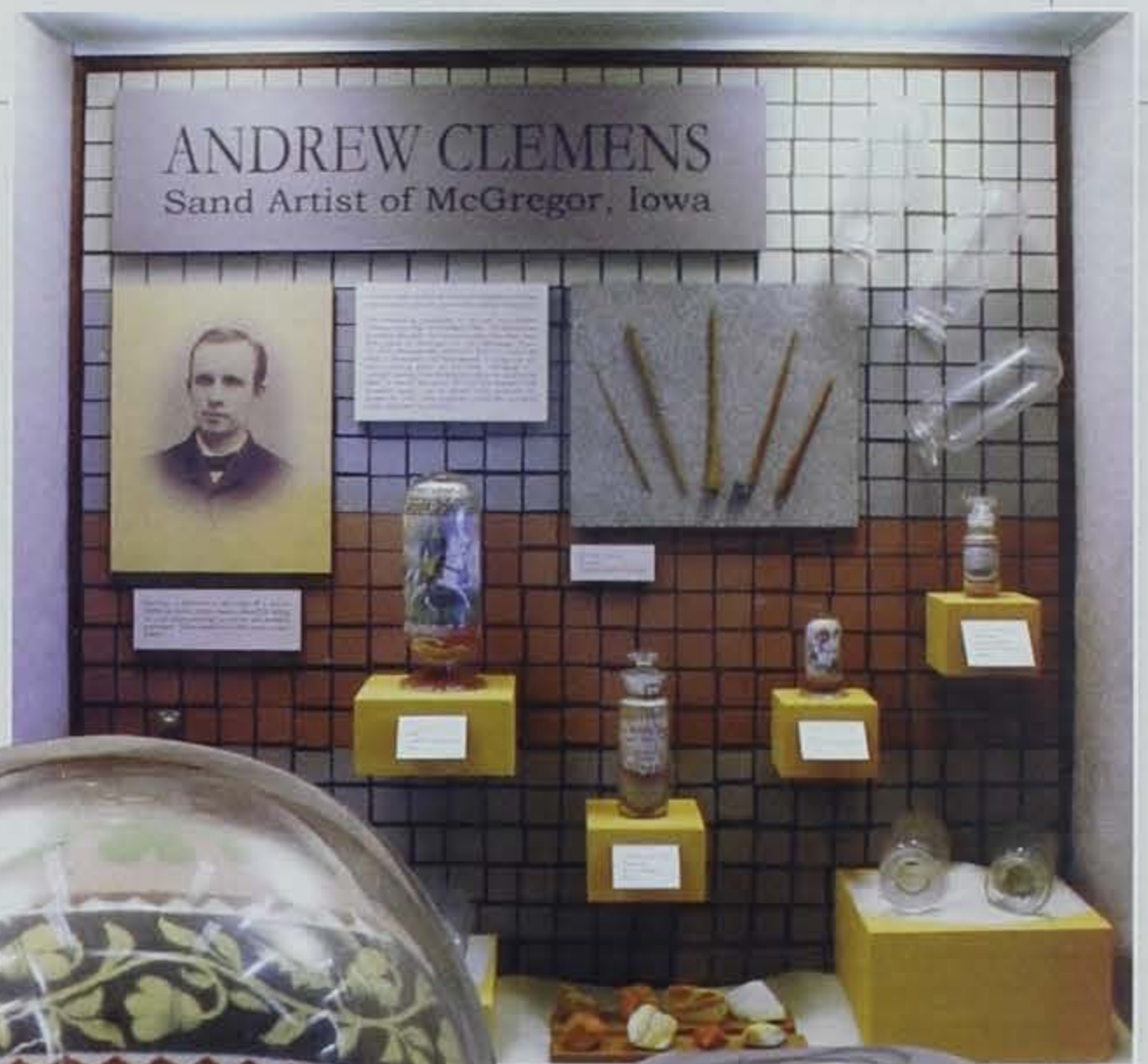
EASIEST

What you need

Sand
Powdered paint

Mix powdered paint with sand. Add sand, one color at a time, to container. Experiment with peaks and valleys for more interesting looks.

Children will enjoy filling clear glass bottles with colored sand, ground chalk or powdered paint to make interesting patterns, layers and shapes. Let them dream of becoming the next Andrew Clemens.





OUTDOOR BILL OF RIGHTS

BY TIM LANE

Did you hear about the latest proposition out of California? The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism has established a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights outlining a fundamental list of experiences every Californian could benefit from and should engage in before high school. This list does not involve agents, reading for parts, surfing or a BMW. It is, in short, a very practical list of basic experiences.

They believe every child should have the opportunity to discover the past, splash in water, camp under the stars, play in a safe place, explore nature, learn to swim, follow a trail, catch a fish and celebrate their heritage.

I have my own life list, but maybe it is more important to help kids create their own (The California one seems to have a very adult bias towards learning, safety and heritage). Now that more than 10 percent of our youth are addicted to video games, according to an Iowa State University study, and fewer are venturing outside, it may be worth putting "eating too many s'mores" on the list of suggestions. I propose that our version include knowing how to ride a bike, learning to swim, floating down an Iowa river, skipping rocks, visiting parks, building sandcastles and knowing what poison ivy looks like.

I have no problem with heritage and history, but the greatest deficiency seems to be in the area of outdoor fun, and I certainly don't want California to have the corner on good ideas. And this is a good idea! The Centers for Disease Control, The Trust for Public Land and others point out that any effort to enact the above list contributes to children that are healthier, do better in school, have better social skills and lead more fulfilled lives.

More fulfilled lives may be more relevant than fun-filled or even healthy lives. There is a hypothesis that humans are biophiliacs, or a species that needs nature to thrive and one that suffers in its absence. We are products of ancestors that survived only when nature provided, and the current higher costs for living by the riverside, mountains or lakefront isn't a random coincidence, it is part of our genetic core.

Psychologist Peter H. Kahn Jr. provided colleagues who were shunted away in windowless offices at the University of Washington with 50-inch HDTVs showing nature scenes. They liked the views, but when recovering from stressful situations, the sets were no more helpful than staring at a blank wall. On the other hand, these same employees responded with quicker heart-rate recovery when provided an actual window and greenery.

It is unfortunate that thousands of Iowans will get no closer to many of the listed items than when visiting Camp Crystal Lake courtesy of a Friday the 13th film. There is great consternation and teeth grinding over our economic woes... yet there are treasures that abound all around us... memories, laughter, natural highs and a healthier life. I move we move! Is there a second?

Tim Lane is the fitness consultant with Iowa's Dept. of Public Health. A marathoner, former National Ski Patrol director, climber and volleyball coach, he has cycled across America and is a regular on RAGBRAI. He helped design and promotes Live Healthy Iowa.

But Why?

Helping adults answer children's nature questions

BY A. JAY WINTER

A. Jay Winter educates up to 20,000 Iowa children each year as the DNR's training specialist at the Springbrook Conservation Education Center.

Why do snakes shed their skin?

- CONNOR IN GUTHRIE CENTER

All animals shed their skin. Some just do it in more grandiose (and visible) style. While humans shed millions of skin cells every day, snakes and other animals shed a layer of skin in one continuous piece, a process called ecdysis, which occurs between four and 12 times a year.

Why? Two reasons. First, while the snake's body continues to grow, its skin does not. Kind of like when humans grow out of their clothes. A roomier skin layer is generated, and the old layer is discarded. Secondly, shedding, or sloughing of the skin, removes harmful parasites.

How it happens is even more interesting than why. Just prior to shedding, the snake's skin begins to turn bluish, and its eyes become opaque, hindering vision. Within a few days, the snake will rub its head on something abrasive—like a rock—to tear open the outer layer. It then works on the tear, crawling through tight quarters, sliding out of the skin, leaving the old skin inside out much like a child peeling off a sock. The process can take from days to a couple weeks, depending on size, body condition and environment.

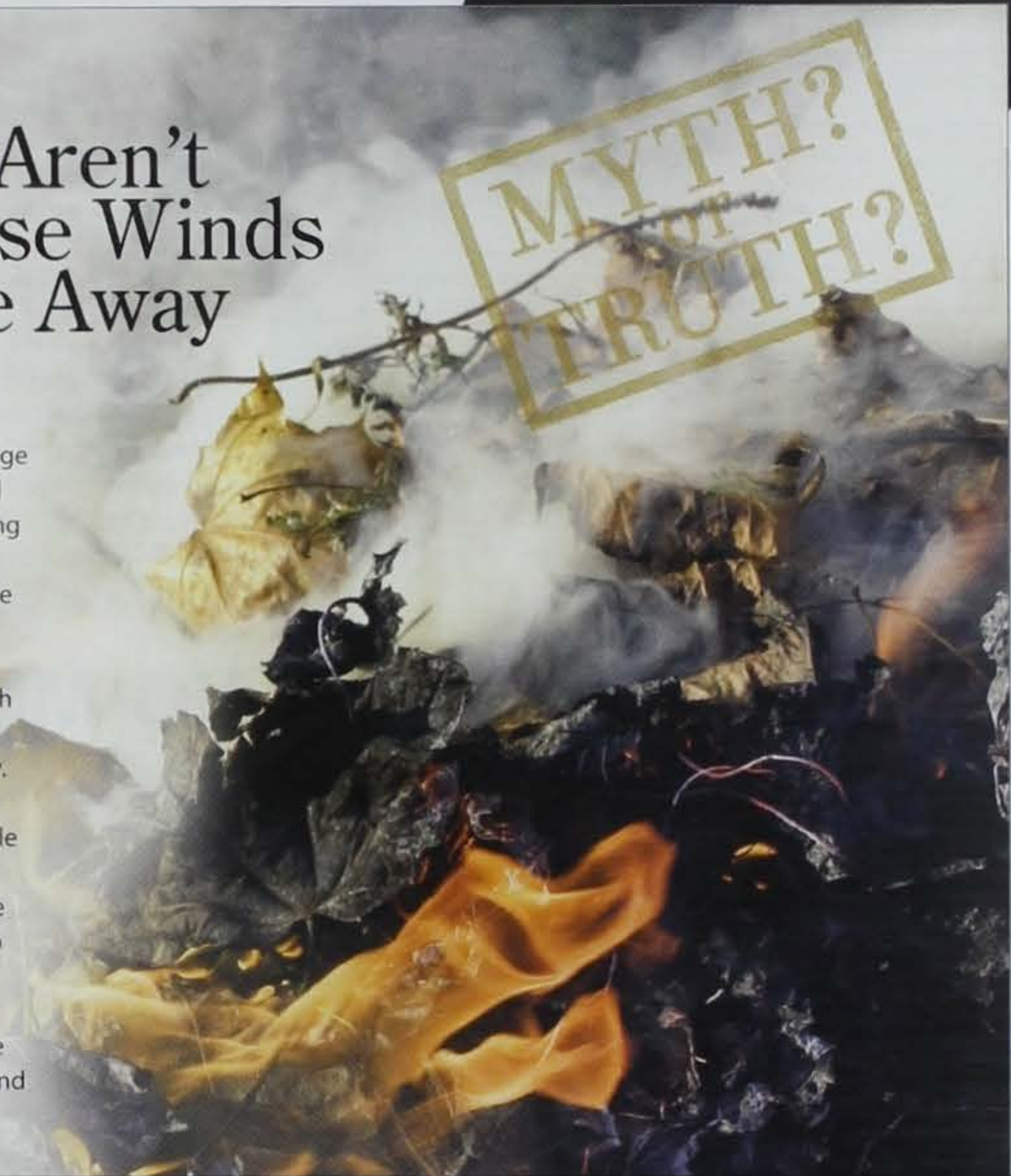
It's critical that the snake remain undisturbed during this process. Snakes have eye caps instead of eyelids, and if these thin layers of skin do not properly shed, blindness can result. Remaining skin can also harbor parasites, possibly leading to disease and bacteria. The intact segments can also restrict blood flow, potentially leading to the loss of body parts, and in extreme cases, even death.



Rural Burn Bans Aren't Necessary Because Winds Carry The Smoke Away

What goes around comes around. Even if you and your neighbors somehow manage to avoid breathing in microscopic smoke particles and poisons that can damage lungs, the nervous system, kidneys and liver, there is still much to be concerned about. Toxic pollutants—including dioxins—released into the air by burning trash fall back to the earth as particles or in rain drops that contaminate water and plant surfaces. The weather that carries off your smoke particles will deposit them somewhere else and remain on crops and grazing areas. The World Health Organization says 90 percent of human dioxin exposure comes not through inhalation, but from the food supply.

Instead of burning trash, buy products with less packaging. Compost vegetative wastes such as vegetable scraps, leaves and grass clippings. Add the compost to lawns and gardens. Call local garbage haulers for service options or bring waste to the local transfer station. Drop off recyclables at a community convenience center or materials recovery facility. Check with the local landfill about items accepted. Permitted landfill operations take precautions to protect the surrounding air, water and land from contamination.



Ask The Expert *Meg in Mills County asks.... What is cyanobacteria?*

BY SHELENE CODNER

CYANOBACTERIA

THE SCUM OF THE EARTH, OR FUEL OF THE FUTURE?

It is nearly 3.5 billion years old, can manufacture its own food through photosynthesis and may someday be used as a renewable fuel for your vehicle. "It" is pond scum, or cyanobacteria, the blue-green algae (which is really not a true algae but an algae impersonator) whose blooms take center stage in Iowa's recreational waters from around June through October.

Cyanobacteria is the Cher of the plant world—not because it has been around for billions of years, but because it is highly adaptable to a changing environment and constantly reinventing itself. It has had a tremendously important gig throughout Earth's history. In addition to being the original producer of plant life on Earth, it is responsible for the mixing of gases that make up our atmosphere. Before that time, the atmosphere had a very different chemistry, unsuitable for life as we know it today.

On a sour note, some species of cyanobacteria

produce hazardous toxins whose concentrations in certain recreational waters have been off the charts and sometimes considered harmful to humans and animals. In addition, when the blooms die they sink to the bottom of the body of water and release toxins as they decompose. This toxic release wreaks havoc on aquatic habitats. (Advisories are issued on those few times when human health could be affected.)

However, The Beat Goes On, and cyanobacteria is making a comeback. It's becoming a hit with researchers and may someday top the charts over corn and soybeans as a renewable fuel source. But don't plan on filling up at your local lake or pond soon. Although research began in 1978 using cyanobacteria in the production of renewable fuels it was abandoned more than a decade ago because it didn't appear to be an economical alternative to petroleum. Due to the ever increasing cost of petroleum fuels and the detrimental effects of fuel emissions, researchers are once again turning to this oldie but goodie.

← GOT A QUESTION? Send to: ASKTHEEXPERTS@DNR.IOWA.GOV →

LEAF BURNING PHOTO BY ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

TIPS, TRICKS AND MUST-KNOWS TO ENHANCE YOUR OUTDOOR FUN



PERFECT DUTCH OVEN COOKING TEMPERATURE

To maintain a 350° F Dutch oven cooking temperature, use two briquettes for each inch of oven diameter. (A 12-inch oven uses 24 briquettes.) How many coals go on bottom versus on top depends on the cooking method. For simmering soups, stews and other liquid dishes, place two-thirds of the total briquettes on bottom and one-third on top. For dishes that rise—like cakes, cookies, breads and biscuits—reverse the order. For meats, vegetables and other baked meals, place half the briquettes on top, the other half underneath.

NO-MESS-CHARCOAL

Keep your camp grilling supplies handy and dry by storing them in a lidded 5-gallon bucket. Store a chimney starter loaded with charcoal or a partial bag of charcoal in the bucket with lighter fluid, matches and newspaper on top. The bucket keeps the essentials dry, in one location and keeps the car clean enroute to the campsite. Store it outside, out of sight under a picnic table or near the camp grill.



Don't Blow Cold Cash on Ice

Keep items cold and quench thirst by using plastic milk jugs or 2-liter bottles for ice blocks. Wash empty jugs and fill with water, leaving 3 to 4 inches of room at the top for expansion, and place in freezer. They keep longer than ice cubes and provide super-cooled drinking water at campsites or in the field. Use several ice cream buckets filled two-thirds-full to make perfect sized ice blocks for 5-gallon water jugs. Loaded with ice, the jugs stay cold for several days.

Find a volunteer project or post your own event at www.keepersoftheland.org or call 515-281-0878.

Admiration & Legacy

BY JESSIE ROLPH BROWN PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH

SAVING LAKE DARLING

FRIENDS OF LAKE DARLING, BRIGHTON

Washington County group achieves lofty goals to enhance state park

What started as a nickel here and there to help the local state park quickly grew into a million-dollar effort, thanks to the Friends of Lake Darling. Formed by a dozen people in 1999, the group collected pop cans to help with maintenance at the Washington County park. When they learned the lake's poor water quality kept visitors away, hurting the region's economy, the friends group set its sights on changes. They joined with the Lake Darling Watershed Project to spread word about water quality, and dreamed up a four-season lodge and day-use complex. In just one year, the friends group raised almost \$1.1 million for the facilities. "They really got into it with both feet," says Stan Simmons, who heads the watershed effort. "They've been a valuable part of keeping water quality info in front of the community." The lodge, plus a shelter, playground and shower building, opened last summer. It's now the go-to spot for weddings, reunions, meetings and parties. "It seemed a little lofty, but we put that to the test," says Fay Vittetoe, the group's vice president, of the effort. "The public has really supported it, and the popularity of the lodge is proving itself." Local businesses are benefitting from the increased traffic, she says. Water quality continues to improve with watershed and restoration projects, and the friends group has new goals for cabins, fishing jetties and upgrading the park's electrical system. "As we look at where we have to cut back, we feel fortunate to have the Friends of Lake Darling and the passion they bring into improving, protecting and taking ownership of our park," says Ranger Jeff Hildebrand.



FROM LEFT, FRONT: Bud and Elaine Pitt and Sandy and Ron Scott. BACK: Jeff Hildebrand, Tom Basten and Merrill Lucas.



FORGING A FOREST TRAIL

BILL SCHAEFER, DES MOINES

Retired professor adopts hiking trails at Stephens State Forest

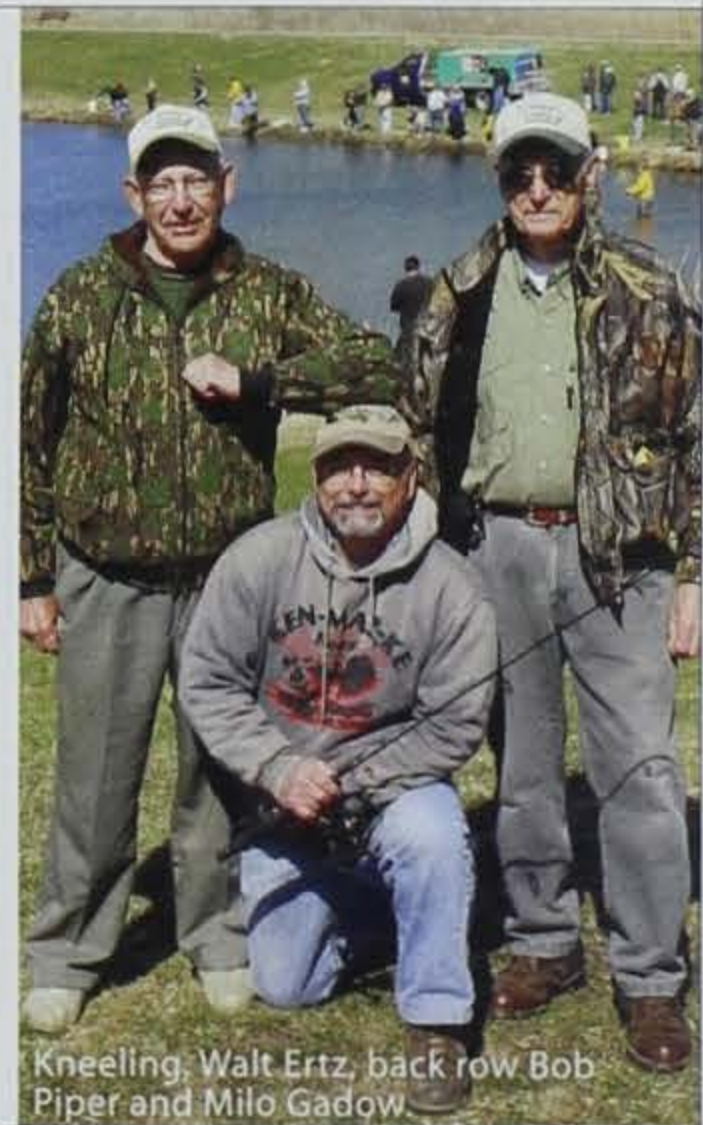
The trails at Stephens State Forest weren't exactly picture perfect when Grand View University photography professor Bill Schaefer started hiking there in the early '90s. He had just bought 10 acres in Lucas County and was exploring the forest that borders his land on three sides. When he learned that the forest didn't have the funds or the folks to keep trails mowed, he offered his help. Since 1995, he's been using his tractor and brush cutter to mow trails, and he cleans up debris after storms and takes care of three campsites. What started as about 10 miles of trails under his watch has grown to 20 miles, thanks to his efforts with the local foresters to add jaunts. The recently retired Schaefer, who lives in Des Moines, retreats to his cabin often to enjoy the quiet beauty of the forest. "I'm down there throughout the year and get to see the beauty of the place," he says. "I call my wife and say, 'you wouldn't believe how beautiful it is right now in front of my eyes.'" In addition to the 20 hours or so he volunteers a week on the trails in the Woodburn Unit of the forest, he also donates some of the nature photos he shoots along the trail to the foresters. "Bill is a friend and advocate for Stephens. His appreciation for nature and his surroundings is evident in his photos and in how he spends his free time," says Jessica Flatt, forester at Stephens. "He makes the trails easier to identify, safer for users and more aesthetically pleasing."

PROTECTING FISHING'S FUTURE

CEDAR VALLEY WALLEYE CLUB, CEDAR FALLS

Fishing club gets kids involved, improves walleye habitat and water quality

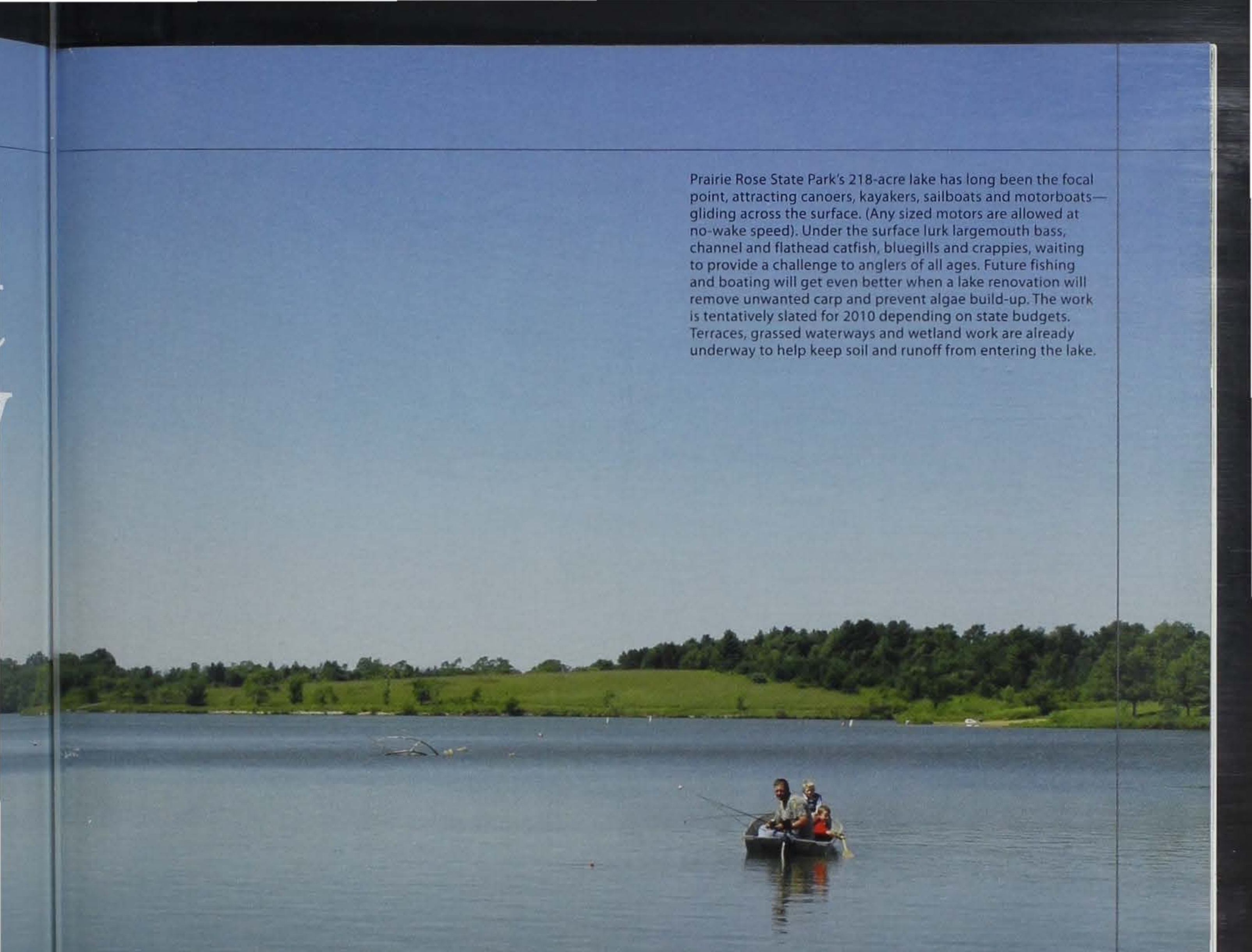
A whopper of a walleye hanging on the wall may be reward enough for some anglers, but for the Cedar Valley Walleye Club, the real prize is watching kids get hooked on the sport. Formed in 2003, the club of about 60 meets to fish, share tips, compete in tournaments and give back to the community. The club helps out with kids' fishing programs at George Wyth Memorial State Park and at the Outdoor Journey for Girls camp, and works with local Boys & Girls Clubs. They also team with the DNR and City of Cedar Falls to hold family fishing days at Prairie Lakes Park. "It's to get the kids familiar with the outdoors. We need to get the kids interested," says Milo Gadow, a club member. "It's a great thrill to watch these kids get a fish." To protect the resource for these future anglers, the club focuses on improving walleye habitat and water quality. They've helped the DNR sink trees at George Wyth and some members participate in the DNR's annual river cleanup, Project AWARE. The club also stocks walleyes in Cedar Valley lakes to help build populations. "They have a civic attitude," says DNR Fisheries Biologist Dan Kirby. "It's not just about catching fish, but giving back to the community and helping the future of fishing." Protecting the resource is also important, leading the club to help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a project to increase pocketbook and black sandshell mussels, which help filter river water for better water quality. "They go beyond just walleyes," says George Wyth Park Manager Lori Eberhard. "They're so willing to help with whatever we need."



Kneeling, Walt Ertz, back row Bob Piper and Milo Gadow.

Romantic Retreat or Family Getaway

Southwest Iowa's Walnut and Elk Horn area, with its mix of nature and quiet solitude, awesome antiquing, Danish eateries and vinyard, is a romantic getaway. And a great place for kids, too.



Prairie Rose State Park's 218-acre lake has long been the focal point, attracting canoers, kayakers, sailboats and motorboats—gliding across the surface. (Any sized motors are allowed at no-wake speed). Under the surface lurk largemouth bass, channel and flathead catfish, bluegills and crappies, waiting to provide a challenge to anglers of all ages. Future fishing and boating will get even better when a lake renovation will remove unwanted carp and prevent algae build-up. The work is tentatively slated for 2010 depending on state budgets. Terraces, grassed waterways and wetland work are already underway to help keep soil and runoff from entering the lake.

WHEN SUMMER IS OFF-SEASON

For decades, this park's scenic 218-acre lake has been a magnet both for serious anglers and families who want to introduce kids to the thrill of fishing. But the lake, especially with its new jetties and fish-cleaning stations—plus the opportunity to plain-old boat and swim and sunbathe—puts a lot of Friday night through Sunday morning pressure on the campgrounds. If you can bend your weekend over Sunday afternoon to Monday, however, you'll enjoy a fairly private 422-acre playground. Prairie Rose has long been a favorite meeting spot for Central Iowans who have friends in Omaha or Council Bluffs.

To get to Prairie Rose, leave Interstate 80 at Walnut (exit 46) and head north. The eight-mile road rolls through hilly farmland and has a hypnotic effect, especially if you crank down the windows or the convertible top. Don't be surprised if you cruise by the park's entrance and have to perform a turnaround.

Prairie Rose's 77 recently remodeled campsites are roomy enough for the big rigs and are tiered into

a hillside for privacy and unobstructed lake views; eight sites have full hookups. Couples will also want to consider renting one or both of the park's camping cabins, situated in a cul-de-sac across the lake from the campgrounds. The cabins are nicely furnished with beds, a futon, microwave oven and dorm fridge. They share a primitive, but new, restroom. For purists, mature hickory trees shade Prairie Rose's 18 secluded tent sites, which are also served by a primitive restroom. (Keep in mind that it's easy to hike, bike or drive to the RV campground's gleaming shower and restroom facility.) Book the cabins and half the campsites in advance at reserveiaparks.gov or 877-427-2757.

Once you're settled in, stroll or pedal the park's paved roads in the evening and explore the seven miles of easy trails. If you've brought a canoe or kayaks, take a sunset spin around the lake. After the sun goes down on a clear moonless night, you'll be tempted to reach up and pluck stars out of the sky. Bring field glasses for gazing.

If camping doesn't appeal, think of Prairie Rose as a day-use area and check into other lodging options.

Lost In Iowa



LEFT: Spend the day shopping, sight-seeing or visiting the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn—the largest rural Danish settlement in the U.S. In nearby Walnut, (designated Iowa's Antique City in 1987) you might find that vintage duck decoy or ancient fishing lure at one of the 15-plus antique stores along the strip.

The AmericInn (americinn.com; 800-396-5007) offers 30 comfortable and wired rooms—including several suites with whirlpools—in the heart of Elk Horn, six quiet miles north of Interstate 80 off exit 54. Bed and breakfast fans should visit the Country Inn in Walnut (clarkscountryinn.com; 712-784-3010), a beautifully maintained 1912 Arts and Crafts-style cottage with three cozy upstairs bedrooms. Retired teachers Ron and Mary Lou Clark have been charming discerning guests for many years with great stories and divine breakfasts.

IOWA'S ANTIQUE CITY

Passionate antiques hunters all around Iowa and neighboring states flock to Walnut (iowasantiquecity.com) every chance they get. For good reason. This small town is home to 250 friendly dealers who open individual shops or mall spaces every day except New Year's, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Allow an hour or two to explore their wares, and you'll likely come home with a vintage country sign or an artful duck decoy that will look perfect in your kitchen or den. The annual Antique

Walk and Show, held over Father's Day weekend, attracts 50,000 extra browsers to this part of southwest Iowa. The yearly Antique City Car Show also draws a crowd on the first Sunday of August.

HEART OF DANE COUNTRY

In the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century, grim political and economic conditions in Denmark brought waves of new immigrants who fanned out over the Midwest to claim 160-acre homesteads and form settlements such as Elk Horn and nearby Kimballton. Danes here conversed in their native tongue all the way up to World War I, when it became unpatriotic to speak anything other than "American." Happily, they clung tightly and enduringly to their rich heritage of arts and crafts, and food.

Immerse yourself in the culture at the Danish Immigrant Museum (danishmuseum.org; 712-764-7001), a few blocks west of downtown Elk Horn on Washington Street (also known as County Road F58). Period furnishings and tools paint a picture of Iowa frontier life.



Lost In Iowa



“My life is a lovely story, happy and full of incident.”

—Hans Christian Andersen



Prairie Rose attracts more than 100,000 visitors every year, not just for the camping (20,000 camping nights annually), but also swimming, boating and basking away the day at the beach. **RIGHT:** Make sure to stop at the Danish Countryside Wines & Vines, about a mile east of Elkhorn, and tour the winery and sample one of 16 wines made onsite by Al Petersen.

Indulge your inner builder at the huge LEGO station and peek at Victor Borge's first piano. The museum celebrates the centennial of the beloved entertainer's birth this year.

In 1975, Elk Horn farmer Harvey Sornson undertook a quixotic quest to import an authentic windmill from the motherland. He and other boosters raised thousands of dollars to buy an 1848 structure from a private owner in Norre Snede, dismantle it, and ship it to the Hawkeye State. (The Danish government subsequently passed a law forbidding more windmill exports.) When you tour Danish Windmill on Main Street (danishwindmill.com; 712-764-7472—also an Iowa Welcome Center), you'll see numbered tags on the wood beams and a scaled replica that helped volunteer workers put the 60-foot-high, 3-D puzzle back together. In the store, shop for dolls, dinnerware and other gifts. A two-pound sack of stone-ground wheat from the mill makes an interesting souvenir.

If the trek up and down the windmill makes you hungry, you're just a few steps away from Danish Inn (712-764-4251). Its evening buffets (Tuesday–Saturday; 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.) are legendary and feature a revolving

selection of succulent prime rib, sirloin steaks, broasted chicken and ham. Sundays (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.) are even more special, when young owners Don and Jan Larsen present a Danish smorgasbord. The steam table creaks under the weight of homemade meatballs, fried chicken, beer-battered shrimp, roast pork stuffed with prunes and apples, and sides of creamed peas and red cabbage. Leave room for a slice of layer cake.

Two miles north of Elk Horn on State Highway 173, Kimballton has several antique shops worth rummaging through. A small city park contains a nicely done replica of Copenhagen harbor's little mermaid on the rock—a tribute to Danish author Hans Christian Andersen.

A mile or so east of Elkhorn off of F58, Al Petersen carries on his family farm's long tradition in a 21st century way with Danish Countryside Wines & Vines (danishcountrysidewinesandvines.com; 712-764-2991). He and his wife, Carol, planted three acres of grapes on high sunny ground in 2001, intending to sell to other vintners. But after the first harvest, he had just enough juice leftover to make a five-gallon batch of homebrew. "I got

Lost In Iowa



hooked. I fell in love with the challenge of making wine.”

Today, the Petersens coax 1,000 or more cases of wine per year out of their vines and welcome visitors to a barn that has been remodeled into an inviting tasting room and gift shop. Enjoy a light, dry glass of red or white on the patio or balcony—a perfect way to wind down on a balmy summer afternoon.

CALL OF THE WILD

Canada geese and other waterfowl like to nest and sunbathe in the summertime at Nishna Bend Recreation Area’s 37 acres of wetlands, restored from past mining operations and located just southeast of the town of Corley at U.S. Highway 59 and F58. Stop in at the Nature Learning Center, where naturalist Christina Groen will show off her recently acquired pair of rehabilitated eagles. This 80-acre area (which doubles as headquarters of the Shelby County Conservation Board; <http://conservation.shco.org>; 712-744-4203) features a hiking trail, arboretum, and plantings of short and tallgrass prairie. At Petersen Nature Preserve, which

borders the Elk Horn Recreation Area (south of F58 along Yucca Road, then Yellow Wood Road) you can hike through 40 acres of majestic oaks and meadow. Both recreation areas provide solitary camping options.

Shelby County also manages the little-known and hard-to-find Dinesen Prairie, a lovely 21-acre virgin garden of wildflowers that includes the rare prairie orchid. To find the preserve from Prairie Rose, take County Road M47 north, go three miles past State Highway 44, and turn left (west) at Nishna Avenue. Head north again on Orange Road, and west again on 1400th Street (M36), where you’ll see a sign for the entrance.

Central Iowans should consider taking the Western Skies Scenic Byway back home. That’s a grand name for State Highway 44, but this stretch of less-traveled road between Panora and Logan (and down U.S. Highway 30 to the De Soto National Wildlife Refuge) lives up to its name with larger-than-life vistas. At Panora, take State Highway 4 south to Stuart and join I-80. You’ll have the sun and wind at your back and good memories pushing you forward. 🐾

RECLAIMING A LAKE

The DNR tentatively plans to drain Prairie Rose's focal-point lake next year due to an unwholesome buildup of carp and algae. Ranger Michelle Reinig says it's cheaper and more effective to drain the lake and restock it than it is to try to partially remove carp or to eliminate the destructive fish by chemical means. (Carp by their nature wreak havoc on water quality by stirring up sediment and preventing desirable aquatic plants from taking root.) Biologists know more about watershed management today than they did 50 years ago. Prairie Rose's lake restoration will take a watershed approach, making changes to the land to prevent sediment, excessive nutrients, and carp from entering the lake again. Success at other impaired lakes around Iowa bodes well for Prairie Rose. The lake will bounce back better than ever as a renewed haven for panfish and birds.

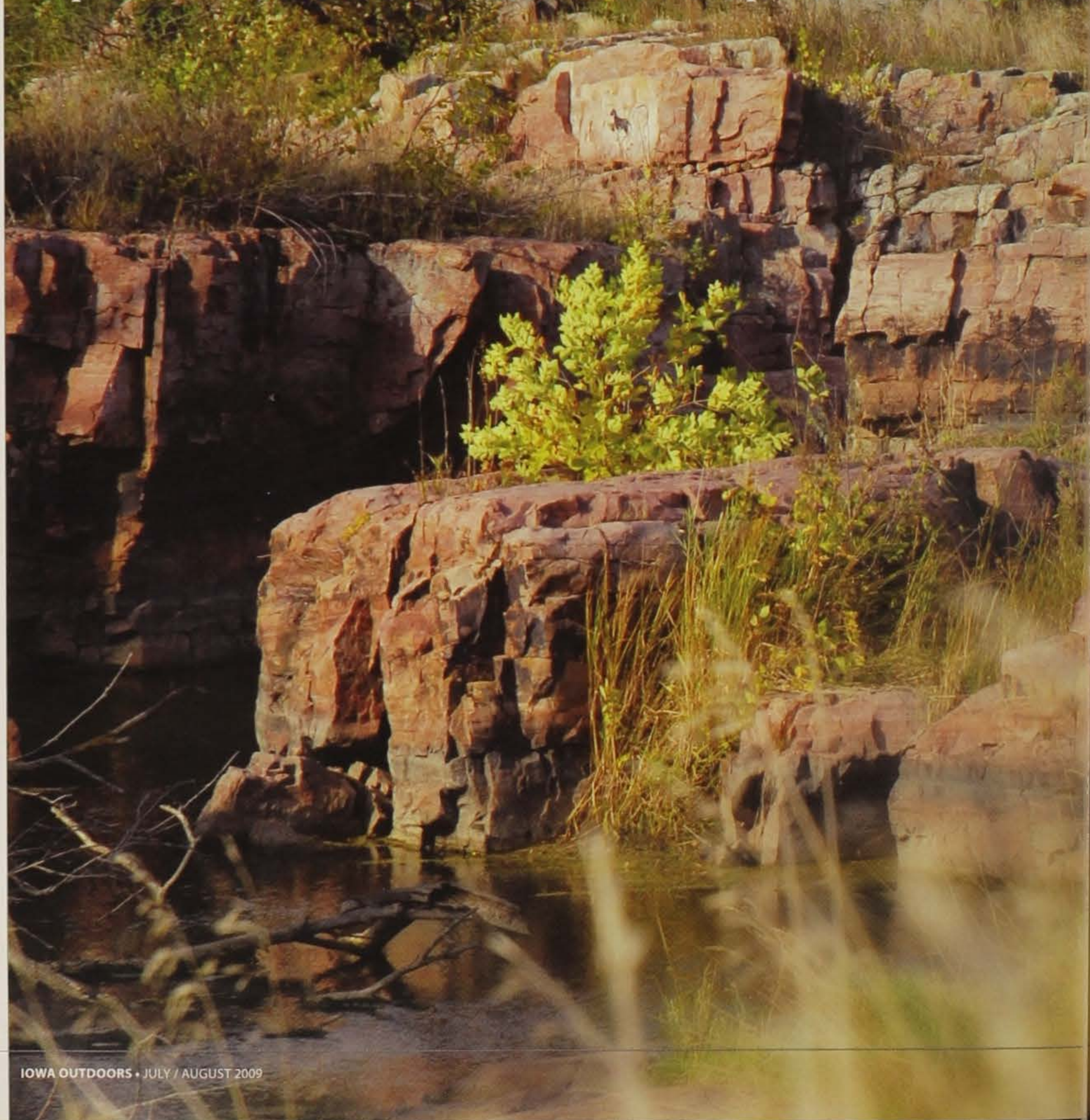
Snuggled in a region of scenic hills, the 422-acre Prairie Rose State Park is one of the most attractive outdoor recreation areas in western Iowa. Located about six miles east and three miles south of Harlan, the park got its name from the now defunct community of Village of Prairie Rose, which once was located nearby.



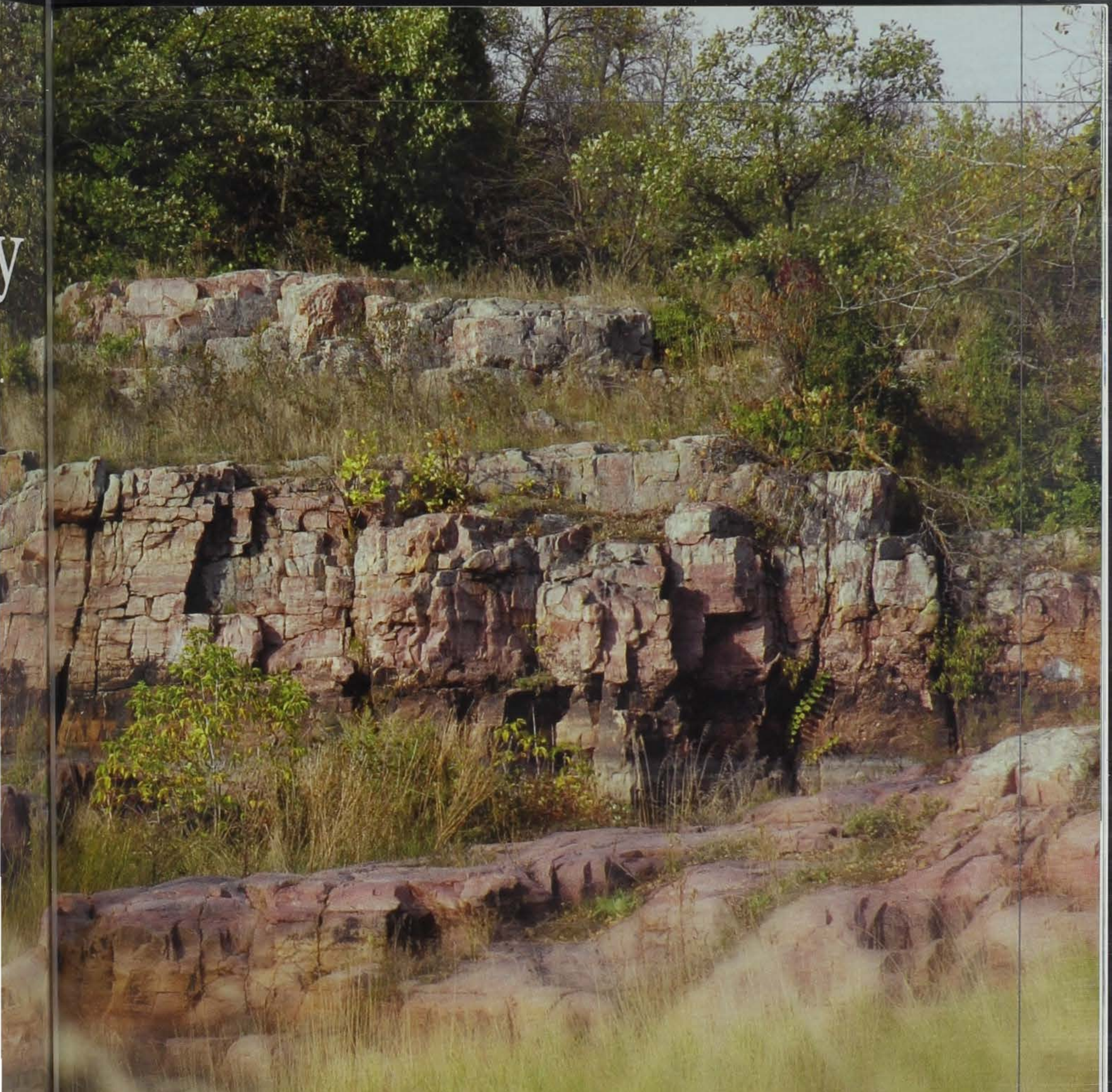
Walnut is just south of I80 on M47.

Hike with the Great Spirit in Lyon County

Get lost in the very tippity-tip of northwest Iowa and experience rocks so old, the wind has polished them.



y



If rocks normally don't get you too excited, they will at Gitchie Manitou State Preserve—about the most remote place in Iowa where it looks like you'll fall off the map. (Have no fear, civilization is nearby in Sioux Falls, S.D.)

ELDER ROCK

Pink quartzite outcrops are the thing to see here. They give the place a way different look than the rest of Iowa

and for good reason. These rocks are 1.6 billion years of age, the oldest exposed rock in the state—three times riper than the next oldest found in eastern Iowa, says Ray Anderson with the DNR geological survey bureau.

Early geologists pondered these unusual rocks and thought they had slowly been lifted above the surface. It's now known that all the other layers that once hid this formation eroded away hundreds of thousands of years ago, leaving this knob of battleship-hard rock.

Lost In Iowa *Hideaways*



"This Sioux quartzite is one tough rock, resistant to weathering," says Anderson. It didn't yield to a half-dozen continental glaciers. Its sand grains are so tightly cemented together by silicon dioxide that they are non-porous and don't break apart in freeze and thaw cycles like other rocks. It doesn't erode and isn't affected by pollution. The time-worn rocks have been exposed so long they're polished *by the wind*.

"That's another thing that is pretty cool," says Anderson of the process known as ventifaction. Basically little wind-blown particles of dust slowly sandblasted a smooth polish on the rock, the effect of sitting outside for several hundred thousand years.

Because the pink to reddish rock is so tough, it continues to be widely quarried in adjacent South Dakota and Minnesota for concrete. "A lot of roads in the region have a pinkish cast to them," says Anderson.

Eons earlier the rock was used by 55-foot sea lizards. Chunks of it were found 400 miles away in western Kansas with the remains of a monasaur, an air-breathing, ferocious marine predator that lived when the area was an ancient inland sea. The quartzite rocks were gobbled up as gizzard stones to help grind up and digest its prey.

That type of local history makes for something to think about when sitting on the rocks and pondering geologic time.

From 1890 to 1920, the land here was quarried, resulting in Jasper Pool. The preserve was established shortly afterward to protect the rock from ending up as paving material.

PRAIRIE GLORY

Gitchie Manitou, a 91-acre preserve with a Sioux name meaning "Great Spirit" or "Great Force of Nature," contains prairie with more than 130 plant species and 17 conical mounds that dot the southern portion of the preserve. Porcupine grass, prairie dropseed, big and little bluestem and leadplant can be found along with species rare this far east, such as blue grama, buffalograss, fameflower and western cliff fern. Among the rocks, look for Whitlow grass, tumblegrass and rock spikemoss.

In the 1880s, stagecoaches en route to Sioux Falls crossed the Big Sioux River, which forms the state line. The river, prairie and floodplain plant communities make for diverse birdwatching.

"If I had to escape from civilization, this is where I'd do it," says Rob McManus, who lives near the Twin Cities but plays a week or two each month for the South Dakota Symphony. "I've been going there five years," says the prairie enthusiast. "The trail loops make for easy walks in an afternoon before rehearsal."

In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps built a stone shelter, now in ruins. "The ruined shelter is really interesting. There are springs popping out of the shelter back wall, which is built into the rock. It drips and makes a cool place on a sunny day," says McManus.


It's the driest area of the state, so look among rock outcrops for brittle cactus and sand cherry.

"There is an air of mystery about the place," says McManus. 🐾

TRAVEL TIPS

Restaurants, lodging and camping are in nearby Sioux Falls, S.D. Or stay at Lake Pahoja in Lyon County with efficiency cabins, large campground, fishing and a swimming beach all managed by the Lyon County Conservation Board ([712-472-2217](tel:712-472-2217); www.lyoncountyiowa.com).





The Rochester Cemetery is one of the few remaining original prairie remnants in the state. Some feel it's a rare glimpse of the Iowa that settlers found abundant, a cherished botanical marvel worth protecting. (Only one-tenth of 1 percent of Iowa's original prairies remain). Others see it as a disgrace to those buried there. Differing views have area residents divided.

Hallowed Prairie

*Managing a rural, country cemetery has
an eastern Iowa community divided*

BY SAM HOOPER SAMUELS PHOTOS BY CLAY SMITH

It would be hard to find 14 acres of Iowa land that mean as many different things to different people as the Rochester Cemetery. Depending on who you talk to, this township burial site is:

A disgrace, a shamefully neglected tangle of brush growing over ancestral graves, obscuring and sometimes damaging the stones.

A visual wonder, putting on a dazzling annual display of wildflowers that draws a steady stream of visitors. People come from miles around each Mother's Day to marvel at the cemetery's dense carpet of shooting stars, one of the prettiest of prairie plants with its explosive rosette of half a dozen blooms turning their faces downward, their petals thrown back upward like the blazing trail of the heavenly body from which they get their name.

A historic site where visitors can see the graves of some of the earliest settlers in the area, dating back to the 1830s. According to local lore, the mother of the Divine Sarah Bernhardt, the fiery French stage actress of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is buried here.

A rare and precious patch of native Iowa prairie, one of the last and most spectacular living remnants of the vast, variegated prairie that once carpeted the state, of which now less than one-tenth of 1 percent remains.

A family plot, where parents, grandparents and earlier ancestors lie beneath the sod.

A political hot potato, the zone of clashing opinion and controversy.

An ecological time bomb, where invasive plants like garlic mustard, poplar and day lilies encroach on native ones so rapidly that without proper management, they threaten to choke off the native plants forever.

A sanctuary for some of the stateliest white oak trees anywhere in Iowa.

"What makes this beautiful is the swell and the swale of it," says Pete Kollasch, a remote sensing analyst for the Department of Natural Resources who has walked and studied the Rochester Cemetery since the 1970s. "The oaks, the wildflowers."

On a hot July day, as Kollasch leads me through the filigreed metal gates of the cemetery, it looks like no other burial ground I've ever seen. For one thing, as Kollasch points out, it isn't flat. We expect our cemeteries to be level, but the surface of this landscape rolls like the ocean in a storm. It's also untidy. Instead of tombstones laid out in straight rows, with neatly trimmed paths leading mourners easily to their loved ones, these graves are haphazard, scattered, far apart, hard to find and sometimes overgrown with tall grasses. Here and there, a small enclosed family plot hides among the plants, sometimes almost impossible to spot through the thick vegetation that grows up through the fencing.

One thing is certain. This cemetery is wild.

"This is one of the gems," says Kollasch as we happen across a small woody shrub, now a few weeks past blooming but known for its showy white blossoms. "This is New Jersey tea. Any time you see it on a prairie, it's a pretty good indication it's never been plowed." Early farmers who first broke the tough prairie sod were surprised that even on Iowa's relatively treeless landscape, plants like New Jersey tea and its stout roots wrought havoc on their plow blades.

"Settlers called it rupture root."

Although Kollasch has trod the cemetery frequently

and for decades, on this particular day it still surprises him. In many ways, prairie is the opposite of farmland. On a farm field, the plants are all of one kind; on a healthy prairie, a tremendous variety of plants grow side by side. Some biologists use the number 150 as a rule of thumb; the mark of a thriving, diverse prairie is one where you can find at least that many different kinds of plants growing. The Rochester Cemetery is home to at least 350 different plant species.

"This one is fun," Kollasch says, pointing out a cluster of flowers of five petals with a light lavender tinge to them. "This is called wild petunia.

"And that," he says as we pass a grave festooned with bunches of primary-colored artificial blooms, "is *Florus plasticus*."

Which brings us to the problem of the Rochester Cemetery. It is a rare and especially healthy patch of native prairie. But it is also a working cemetery. Any resident of Rochester Township may be buried here free of charge. And while nature enthusiasts revel in the cemetery's wildness, some residents whose forebears are interred here would prefer to see their family plots in a tamer setting.

So who truly has the right to determine the fate of this patch of land? Naturalists, some with Ph.D.s, many from the more urban centers of Iowa City and even farther away? Or a local resident with a lifelong attachment to this place, whose own family makes up about 10 percent of the dead here?

Managing the cemetery is the job of Rochester's four township trustees. The job pays \$10 per year. The trustees make sure the township is provided with ambulance and fire service. They are empowered to step in when neighbors have a fence dispute. And they are charged with mowing the cemetery. This last task turns out to be a highly controversial one.

Right now, the cemetery is mowed once or twice a year. According to naturalists, that's not a bad arrangement for maintaining a healthy prairie remnant. Before settlement by farmers, a prairie like this would have been laid low on a pretty similar schedule by bison and prairie fires, important parts of the life cycle of the prairie. The mowing doesn't exactly replicate the action of those historical phenomena, but it's close. Some invasive plants that would have been stopped by fire aren't as well controlled by the occasional mowing, and so the cemetery has more oaks than a pure prairie would, as well as incursions by sumac and other weedy plants. Families that want their plots mowed more frequently may do it themselves. Indeed, walking around the cemetery I come across quite a few neatly trimmed family plots, where people have clearly mowed around the stones

more often, leaving a trim, lawn-like island in a sea of taller grasses. On the whole, though, the once or twice a year mowing keeps most of the cemetery looking like a prairie.

For some citizens, it's not enough. They'd like to see the entire cemetery managed more like, well, a cemetery.

In August 2006, 110 citizens of Rochester and the surrounding area signed a petition and sent it to the Rochester township trustees: "We would like to have our cemetery mowed, not rough mowed once or twice a year." The petition went on to express a strong sentiment that the cemetery "is our cemetery, not a wild flower bed or open prairie for strangers and out-of-towners. There is an area of prairie grass and wild flowers at Herbert Hoover Library for them. We would like the wild flower sign removed so our cemetery can be our cemetery again." The sign in question, posted prominently at the cemetery's main entrance, says, "Do not disturb wild flowers, plants or property."

Botanists believe that there really is no comparison between the prairie at Rochester Cemetery and that of Hoover Library. The library prairie is a small area of reconstructed prairie, and reconstructions generally cannot approach the biological diversity or the deep roots of historic prairies like the cemetery.

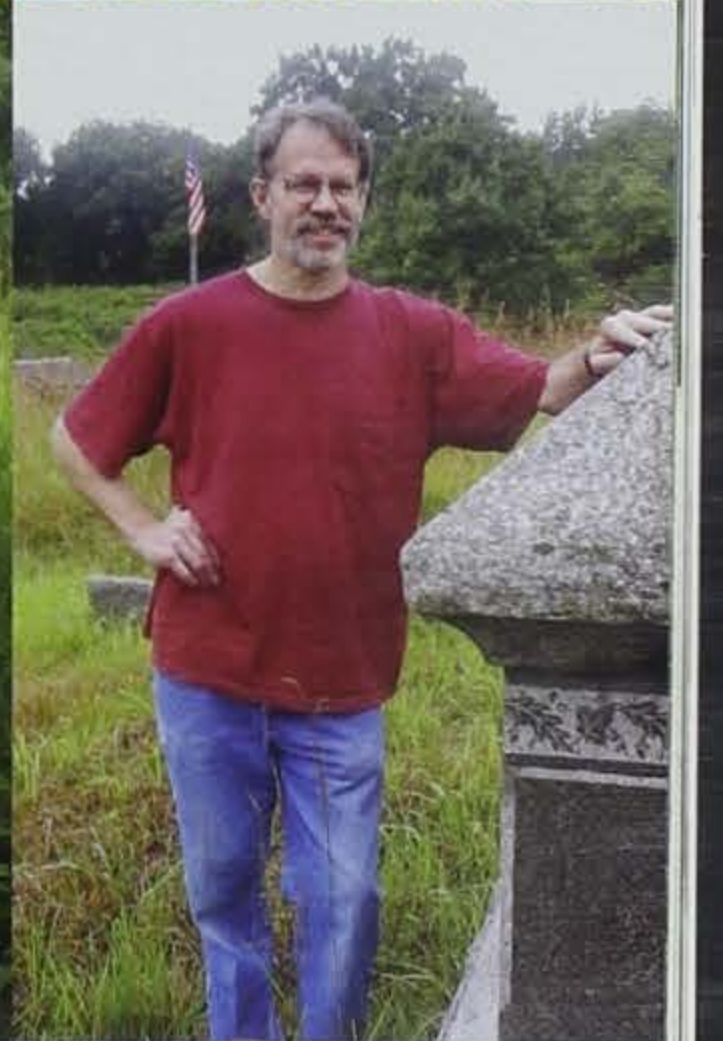
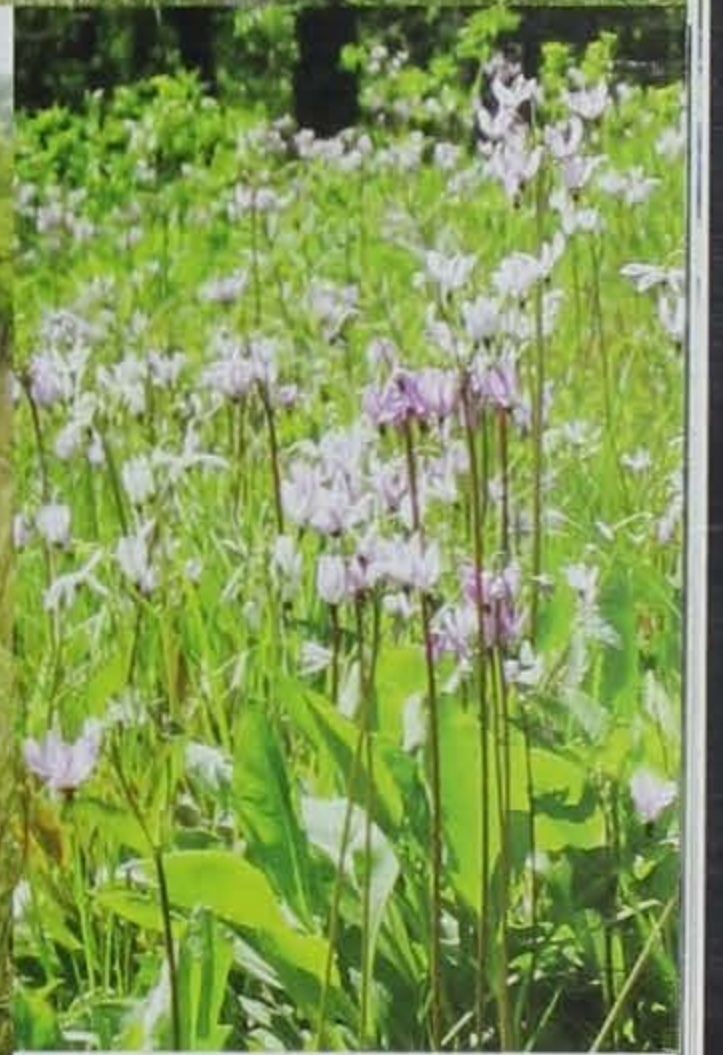
After the petition, the 2006 township trustee election became a heated race over the cemetery. Trustee John Zaruba and township clerk Lynne Treimer, who serves as trustee by virtue of her role as clerk, were defending their seats. Running opposite them were Darrell Gritton and Joanne Williams, who led the movement for a more traditional cemetery-like treatment of the land. In most years, the hardest part of a township trustee election is finding people willing to take these onerous posts: suddenly that year, the elections were hotly contested.

It would be easy for a naturalist to simply gloss over the controversy, to paint it in black and white. To say, some folks want this to be a manicured lawn, while others want to preserve a vital wilderness. In truth, it is not that simple.

Williams and Gritton lost that election, an outcome that left the cemetery looking wild. But talk to Williams, and it is hard to picture anyone who feels more deeply about Rochester Cemetery and its well-being.

"I've been going to that cemetery ever since I was a little girl," says Williams. "So I have a lot of memories. When I walk around, and see what they have let it become, it's really sad."

Williams's father was a real-estate broker in the area. Before that, her ancestors began settling in Cedar County in the 1840s. Her parents are buried in Rochester Cemetery. So are their parents. There are about 700 graves in the cemetery. Williams, being an avid genealogist, has identified 70 of her own family members there, going back to her great great grandparents. So who truly has the right to determine the fate of this patch of land? Naturalists, some with Ph.D.s, many from the more urban centers of Iowa City and even farther away? Or a local resident with a lifelong attachment to this place, whose own family

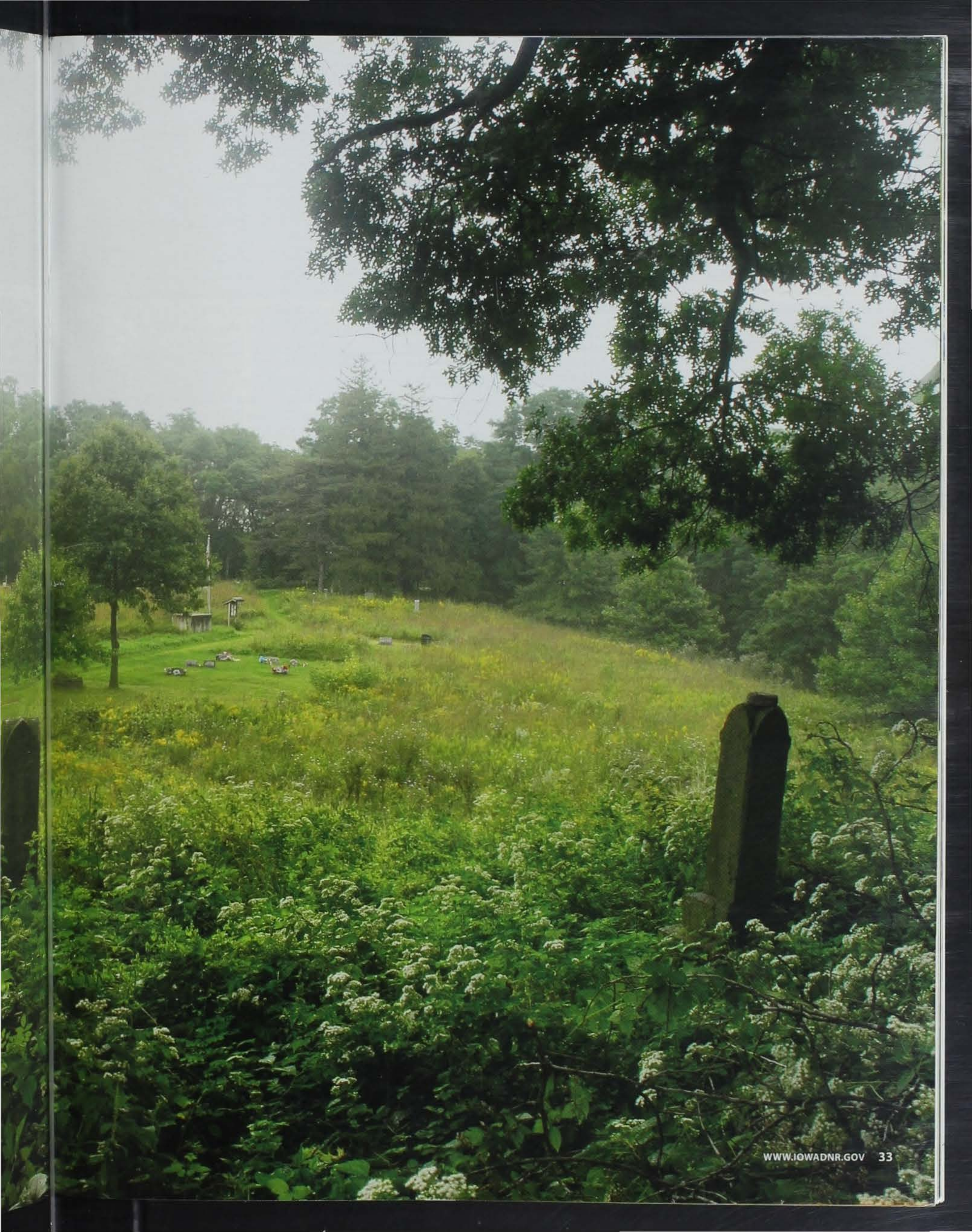


Rochester Cemetery attracts naturalists, biologists and wildflower viewers, including University of Iowa Associate Professor of Biology Diana Horton, center, who has lead plant tours and has advocated for and helped manage the cemetery for years. A main draw, according to DNR remote sensing analyst Pete Kollasch (far right), is the blankets of shooting star (above Kollasch) that appear every spring. Experts say a prairie containing 150 different plant species is rich, healthy and diverse. Rochester Cemetery has 350. Some view the wildflowers as showy harbingers of a given season; others, see them as weeds that have no place in a cemetery.





Residents of Rochester Township are about as divided on how the cemetery should be maintained as the cemetery itself. While some headstones are hidden among the wildflowers and prairie grass, others stand out prominently on well-manicured, lawn-like islands.



makes up about 10 percent of the dead here?

"There was a tour out there not long after my father passed away, and I was visiting his grave," says Williams. "They walked right on it. I was sitting right there. They walked right on it. They laughed, they were extremely disrespectful. They just need to learn it's a cemetery, and there are people who go out there for that reason."

On the day of my visit, there is no shortage of sightseers. Walking along the paths, I see families and other groups of hikers who have come to enjoy the sights.

"I run into people from all over..." Kollasch says. "From Virginia, from Ontario." Perhaps some of them, trying to get a closer look at a prairie flower, stepped on a grave. It's easy enough to do, in that tangle of graves and plants. I may have stepped on one or two myself.

John Zaruba is one of the trustees who won that election, keeping his seat and keeping the cemetery in its current condition. Midway through my tour of the cemetery, he joins Kollasch and me, offering a glimpse into his land stewardship beliefs.

"I've lived in the township since 1950," says Zaruba. "I started farming in 1950. I raise corn and beans. I raised hogs and cattle. We had them on timothy, clover, alfalfa. A five year rotation. We made hay. Then two years corn, one oats, and one pasture."

If you were looking for an actor to play an Iowa farmer for a movie, you couldn't find one who looked the part better than Zaruba. Beneath his worn straw hat, his skin is browned and worn by decades in the fields. On one burly forearm, barely visible against the dark tan, is a tattoo of a horseshoe with a ribbon woven through it. 1945. A good luck charm. His overalls, threadbare but still sturdy, have a small label identifying them as Key Imperials, "The Aristocrat of Overalls."

"I'm in charge of the flag," Zaruba says. "It goes up May to Armistice Day. And I keep the dumpsters dumped out."

"What amazes me is how big these trees are," he says.

The white oaks are indeed a showpiece of the cemetery. Being a 170-year-old cemetery has helped the oaks grow to gargantuan dimensions.

A prairie offers a different view in every season of the year, as the various plants flower and die away in procession. For winter visitors, it is the oaks that afford the most awesome view. The fallen leaves reveal the stunning architecture of these massive trees, with side branches the size of ordinary tree trunks.

For fun, Kollasch paces under the crown of one of the giant oaks to estimate its diameter. Its shadow is about 100 feet across. The dripline, the line between the two farthest points directly underneath the canopy, is 80 feet across. Under the vast shadows of these trees lie whole separate miniature ecosystems, not prairie, but patches of oak savanna in the protection of the trees.

Under the umbrella of this particular tree is also the Danfeldt family plot, a tidy set of graves in the shade.

"We had one oak die," Zaruba says. "The sawmills don't want to mess with it. I got the wood. It lasted me three years."

From his years of working the land, Zaruba knows this area is sandy. The rolling hills of the cemetery are actually sand dunes. Prairie plants have extremely deep, tough roots, which make the dunes stable. Ordinary grass would probably not hold the dunes in place against erosion.

"Honestly," Zaruba says, "if you tried to mow these sand hills, you'd have gullies."

On the whole, in his taciturn way, Zaruba seems satisfied that he remains one of the trustees in charge of this special place. About that election, all he'll say is, "It was two to one. It told us that they want it the way it is."

There are encouraging signs that the two sides of the controversy, so opposed during the election, are finding common ground.

"I think that both sides should compromise," Williams says. Indeed, a group calling themselves the Friends of Rochester Cemetery, mostly consisting of naturalists from outside the township, have started, with permission, to hold garlic pulls to try to keep that most invasive of plants at bay. And during the floods of 2008, when nature threatened everyone in the area, bygones quickly became bygones. Zaruba's daughter's home was lost to the flood, but not before a group of family and neighbors spent two days sandbagging to try to save the property. Zaruba was there, working alongside his former opponent Gritton.

"Gritton worked with me," Zaruba says. "Along with prisoners from the Tipton jail. There were no words."

Zaruba, he will not be interred at Rochester Cemetery.

"My wife didn't want to be buried here," he says. "She didn't want snakes running over her." Instead, the Zarubas have picked out a plot at nearby Pee Dee Cemetery. On our way out of town, I ask Kollasch to take me there.

Pee Dee is a total contrast to the Rochester Cemetery. It is a large, level, perfect rectangle of manicured grass, carved right in the middle of a cornfield. The tall corn stalks form a solid wall around the edges of the cemetery. Inside, the graves are lined up in rows as straight as the corn.

A polished stone already marks the place where Zaruba and his wife will spend their piece of eternity.

ZARUBA

John A. Joyce A.

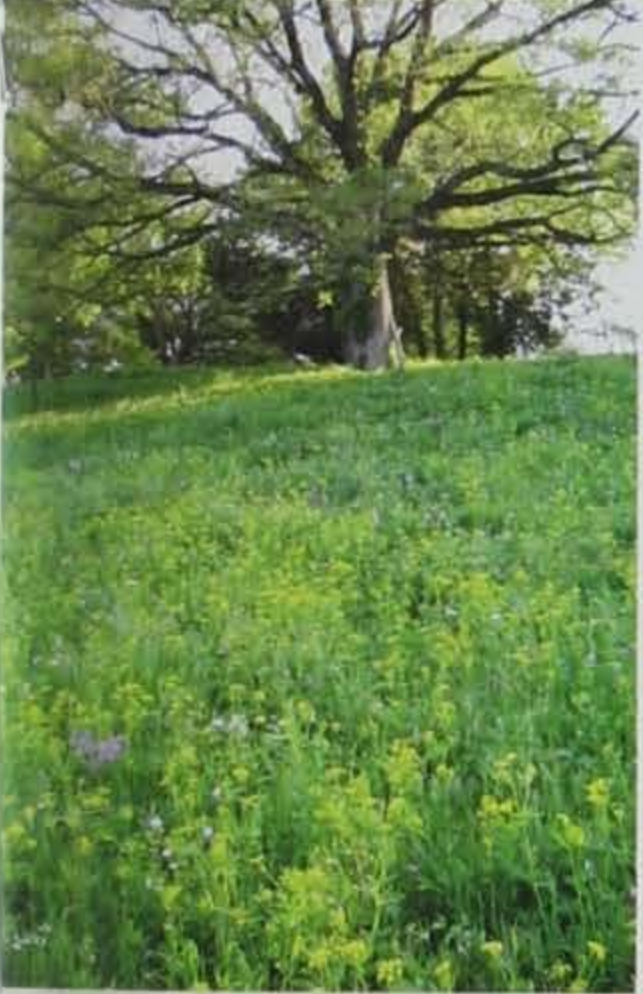
1927 - 1931 -

Parents of Raymond - Diana - Bruce

It's everyone's choice, where they want to be buried. For me, I can't help thinking that I would like to go someplace like Rochester Cemetery. Maybe Walt Whitman had it right when he said, in his poem "Song of Myself," that the best we could hope for after death was simply to decompose and let the body rejoin the cycle of life, growing back in the form of plants.

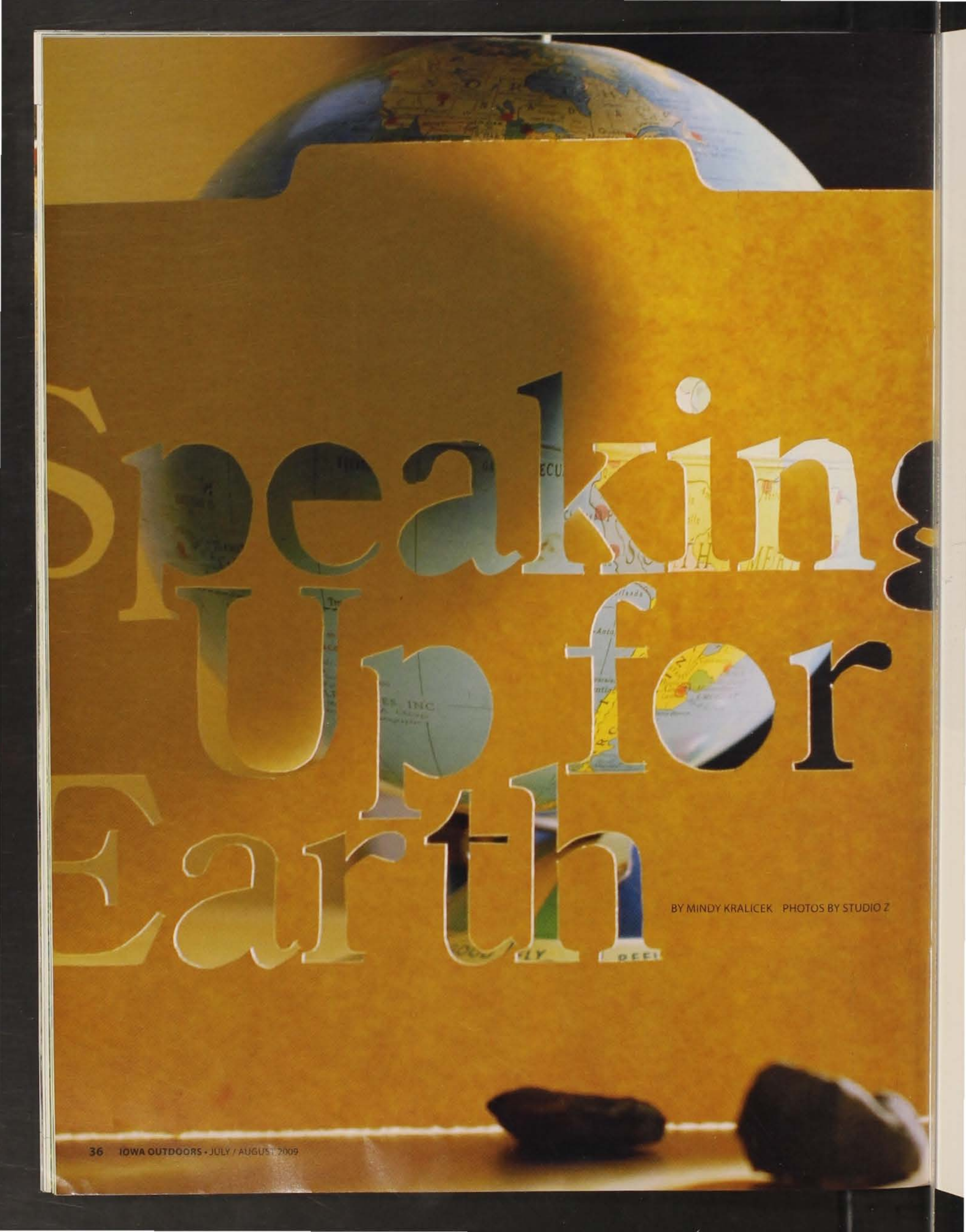
"I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love, If you want me again look for me under your boot-soles."

It seems old Walt wouldn't even have minded the odd traveler stepping on him now and then. 🐾



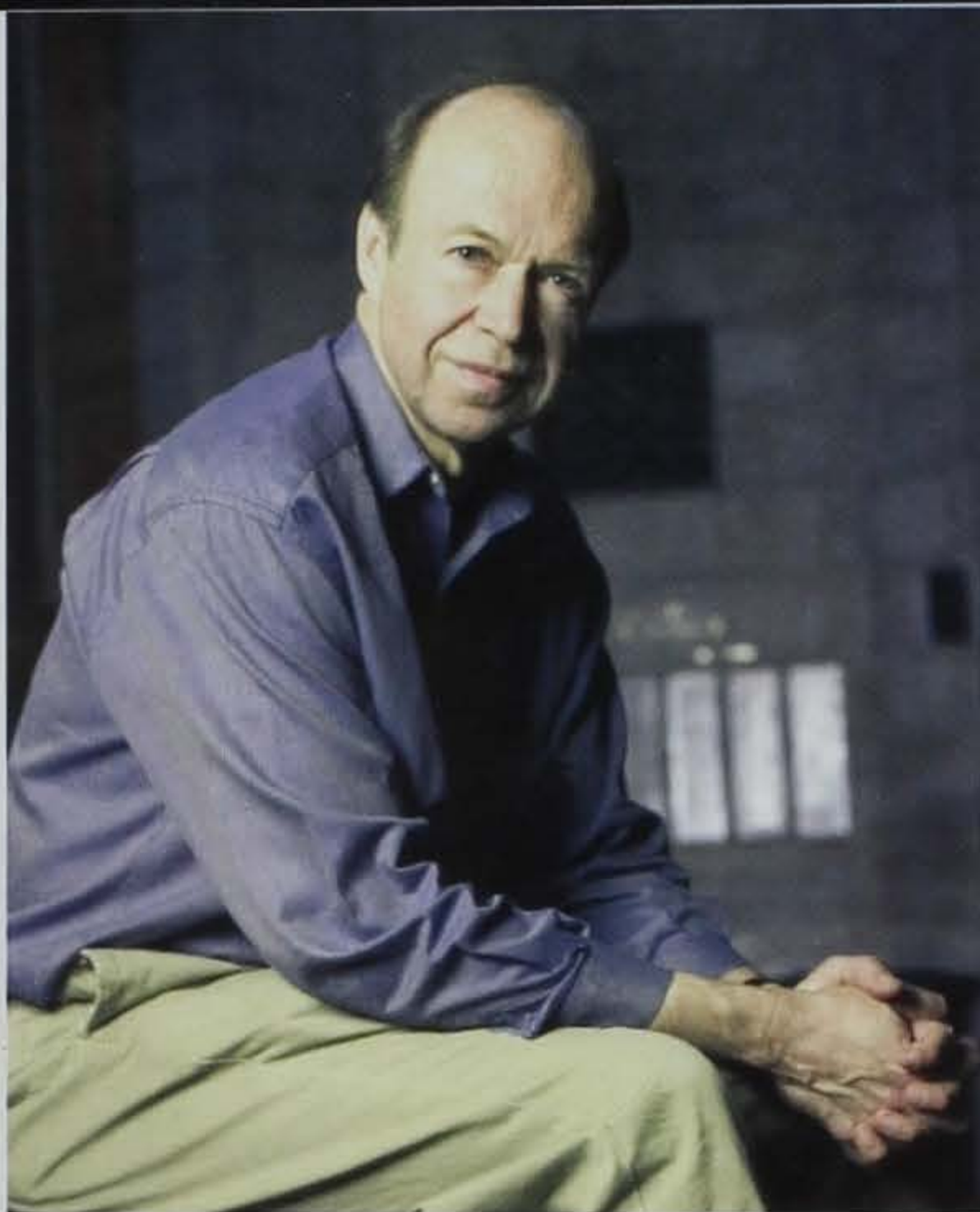
Rochester Township trustees including John Zaruba (left), mow the cemetery twice a year, which allows native prairie plants to thrive and helps knock back invasive species. Some who prefer the more uniform, manicured look of a regular cemetery are welcome to provide their own, more routine upkeep.





Specialkinning Up for Earth

BY MINDY KRALICEK PHOTOS BY STUDIO Z



See why an Iowan's interest in Venus space missions became a quest to curb climate change

Called the “Paul Revere of global warming” for his warnings to Congress about the effects of greenhouse gases on Earth’s climate, Dr. James E. Hansen has been director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York City since 1981. He was raised in Denison, Iowa, and earned degrees in physics, mathematics and astronomy from The University of Iowa. Since joining the space agency in 1967, he has directed efforts to simulate the global climate on computers at the Goddard Institute. In 1988 he testified before the U. S. Senate stating, “The greenhouse effect has been detected, and it is changing our climate now.” Every month Hansen’s lab takes the Earth’s temperature, monitoring 10,000 temperature gauges around the planet, and every year the average temperature rises.

Q: *Remembering back to your childhood in Denison, what experiences helped form the person you are today?*

A: Oddly, although I was not athletic, I especially remember coaches: Mike Potratz and Bob Leahy, who was also my math teacher, and also my physics teacher, Mr. Heinselman. Mike Potratz was our coach in freshman basketball. I remember him telling us about butterflies in the stomach, telling us that they were normal and we could ignore them because soon after the game started they went away. When I have butterflies in my stomach before important talks, his advice comes back to me.

Q: *How did your upbringing affect what you’ve done with your life, what you value, what you believe is possible?*

A: The most relevant “upbringing” was what I absorbed by osmosis at The University of Iowa, specifically in the

environment that Professor James Van Allen created in the department of physics and astronomy.

As a young man I received some advice from a very authoritative man who spoke in a gruff voice from deep in his throat. Don Hunten was the principal force behind a spacecraft mission designed to go to the planet Venus. I had been fortunate to propose and have accepted an experiment to be included on that mission.

However, in the five years that it took to build the spacecraft I became more interested in planet Earth, in building a climate model to understand the effect of human-made carbon dioxide on climate. So I asked his advice about whether I could resign as a principal investigator on the Pioneer Venus mission and work full time on the Earth’s climate.

I remember his advice as four gruff words: “Be true to yourself.” At the time I didn’t know what that meant. Be true to yourself? Venus or Earth? I was not about to ask him to explain.

I’m still not sure what Don Hunten meant by “be true to yourself.” Perhaps he wanted me to think, to be sure that whatever I did was consistent with values I would like to have.

Q: *What led you into climatology?*

A: My aim, after getting initiated in science at Iowa, was planetary studies. But in 1975, when it became clear that human-made chlorofluorocarbons might destroy stratospheric ozone, I proposed to make a climate model out of our Goddard Institute weather model. The next year, with a paper that we published in *Science*, we showed that several other human-made gases would also affect Earth’s climate. I realized then that our own planet, because it would be changing before our eyes, was even more interesting and important than the other planets. I ended up resigning as the principal



investigator for the experiment I had proposed for the Pioneer Venus spacecraft.

Q: *What are scientists' responsibilities beyond communicating scientific findings?*

A: As Richard Feynman [American physicist known for expanding the theory of quantum electrodynamics for which he won the Nobel Prize] articulated so well, we must always be skeptical about our conclusions and re-examine them as new data becomes available.

Q: *Is there a point of no return for catastrophic climate change and what is that?*

A: There are different points of no return for different phenomena. One that concerns me most is the stability of ice sheets, especially West Antarctica. If it begins to collapse, it could reach a point that we cannot stop complete collapse, with resulting sea level rise of about 7 meters (23 feet). Another obvious point of no return is

extermination of species—there is no coming back from extinction.

Q: *You've been quoted as stating a dangerous concentration of carbon dioxide at 450 parts per million may be the tipping point, maybe lower. If we are at 383 ppm now, how high could this number reach with what is in the "pipeline," even if worldwide reductions occur by 2010?*

A: Even if we slow emissions at the maximum rate, which would require a moratorium on new coal-fired power plants, we will pass the 400 ppm level and we almost surely will exceed the "dangerous" level. However, a brief excursion above the dangerous level is tolerable. The things that we will need to emphasize to begin to draw down CO₂ are better agricultural and forestry practices, which will increase storage of carbon in the soil and biosphere. Iowa can play a major role in this, and farmers should be compensated for practices that store carbon in the soil. For example, I will be writing about "biochar" in the near future, which can enrich the



productivity of soil and store a tremendous amount of carbon. A complement to a carbon price or tax should be a payment to farmers whose practices reduce the amount of CO₂ in the air.

Q: *What do climate models predict for climate change in Iowa?*

A: The greatest impact may come from greater extremes of the hydrologic cycle, more intense rain and floods, on the one hand, but also stronger droughts and fires, though we don't have enough forest in Iowa for local fires to be an important factor.

Q: *Iowa's greenhouse gas emissions are higher in methane, 11 percent, and nitrous oxide, 14 percent, than other states. What should Iowans be concerned about?*

A: These represent opportunities to help stabilize climate. There are ways to reduce these that make sense and make money.

Q: *What projects would you like to see happen in Iowa to reduce greenhouse gases?*

A: Iowa could become a leader in renewable energies. It should be science-based. It is going to be realized within a few years that we will need to find ways to draw down atmospheric CO₂. Iowa can be a leader in this. There is going to be tremendous opportunity for economic revival here, and not only for agriculture. Iowa has always been good about educating young people, but then loses many of them to other states after their schooling is completed. If Iowa decided to emphasize renewable energies and agricultural practices that help solve the climate problem, it would create a large number of good jobs. Combined with the fact that it is a good place to raise a family, it is obvious that Iowa has great potential, if politicians would only recognize it.

Plans to build coal-fired power plants, in contrast, boggle the mind. 🐷



Fishing the The

BY MICK KLEMESRUD PHOTO BY STUDIO Z FISH ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAYNARD REECE

Back in early May, the air was warm and the water was churning in Iowa lakes. Crappies were in tight to shore, ready to drop their life-giving bundle of eggs, and bluegills were just a cast away waiting for their turn. It was spring, the spawn was on and panfish were taking just about anything hook, line and sinker. Anyone could catch fish.

But in the summer, water temperatures and oxygen levels change. Use these tips to learn to read the water, and keep your live wells and stringers full.

Beginning in late May through mid-June, a layer begins

to form in lakes that influences how people fish during the summer. The layer, called the thermocline, is a natural barrier between warm water in the top of the water column and cold water in the bottom. These warm and cold layers do not mix.

Cool water is heavy and sinks to the bottom of the water column. The lack of mixing with surface waters prevents new oxygen from entering this cool water and over time, organisms use up most of the oxygen. By mid-summer, the oxygen levels below the thermocline fall to the point where fish cannot stay for long. Fish concentrate in the warmer, oxygenated water, but will



Thermocline



typically stay as close to the thermocline as possible, since it has the cooler temperature and sufficient oxygen.

Typically, a thermocline forms in lakes deeper than 10 feet, including farm ponds. Other factors can also influence where the thermocline is established. For example, a turbid lake may have a thermocline at five feet while a clear lake thermocline could be at 16-plus feet.

"Some of today's high quality, high resolution depth finders will show a fuzzy line which will be the organisms and other materials that will identify where the thermocline is and show you at what depth to fish," says Chris

Larson, supervisor for fisheries in southwest Iowa.

"At times you can catch fish all day as long as you are looking for suspended fish," Larson says. "But fish tend to be more active early and late in the day during the summer."

In the fall, when the surface water temperature cools to the point where it is colder than the water below it, it sinks to the bottom and the lake turns over. Fish then use the entire water column. This usually happens over the course of a few days from late September to mid-October. 🐟

→THE←
RIVER BEND
AND
OTHER POEMS.

TACITUS HUSSEY.

Tacitus "Tac" Hussey (1832-1919)



In his 1896 book, Tacitus "Tac" Hussey recounts a seven-day paddling trip from Humboldt to Des Moines on the Des Moines River. Hussey, a prominent Des Moines leader, champion of conservation, avid riverman and expert archer, believed in outdoor fitness, walking more than 12,000 miles in eight years. He inspired thousands to flock to the rivers. **BELOW.** The "First Annual Tac Hussey Float" re-created the 1882 river journey made by Hussey. The crew includes (back row): Al Donaldson, Bill Denton, Rick Rummel and Ron Jacobson. Front row: Adrienne Adams, writer John Wenck, John Garton and Rick Deitz.



GROUP PHOTO COURTESY ANA DONALDSON

Reliving

THE GREAT ADVENTURE OF

Tacitus Hussey

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN WENCK

The Saturday morning sun reflected off the parade of canoe- and kayak-topped vehicles crossing the bridge to the Humboldt access on the west side of the Des Moines River. One by one they rolled in until the lot was full. After loading dry bags full of gadgets, gear and stores into kayak hatches and over canoe gunwales, the 13 adventurers were ready to launch on what leaders of the trip coined the "First Annual Tacitus Hussey Paddle"—a 135-mile, seven-day excursion re-enacting an 1892 trip taken by Des Moines pioneer Tacitus Hussey and his pal Walter Weatherly.

Found on the dusty shelf of a used book store, Hussey's 1896 green, cloth-covered book titled *The River Bend and Other Poems* inspired the 2008 journey. Inside, old photos of paddlers in decked canoes were interspersed with folksy poems written in the vein of James Whitcomb Riley, but the last 13 pages contained an essay titled "A River Idyl," that detailed the adventure of Hussey and Weatherly on a Des Moines River much wilder than it is today.

Both parties enjoyed the high bluffs, rocky outcroppings, timbered ridges and boulder-strewn waters between Humboldt and current day Dolliver State Park. Hussey, however, reports numerous rapids above Fort Dodge, but only a few were encountered in 2008. A reason for this inconsistency could be that the upstream pools created by the Cornbelt power dam and the large Fort Dodge hydro dam, both of which were built after Hussey and Weatherly's journey, are concealing some of the natural rapids the two adventurers encountered.

Dams in Hussey's day were small timber dams that powered grist, saw or woolen mills. But dams, whether small or large, impede fish. Poor fishing in the Des Moines

River led Hussey in the 1880s to champion a fish passage at the well-known Meeks Brothers Dam in Bonaparte. For 16 years anglers, with Hussey at the helm, tried through lawsuit and legislation to force a fish passage. In 1902, a law condemning a portion of the dam for a fishway finally passed. However, high waters that year, followed by heavy ice out and flooding the next blew a hole in the center of the dam. To paraphrase Hussey, "Nature did in two years what we'd been trying to do for 16."

What endears us to him today? Why follow the path of his paddle? Perhaps it's his forward thinking in a time when smoke stacks spewing black smoke into the air was a sign of progress. In a time when few considered it important to document history, he had the foresight to save articles, photographs, programs, manuscripts and letters he later donated to the historical library before his death. In a time when dynamite and poison were used to harvest fish from rivers and lakes, he wrote editorials chastising the Iowa Fish and Game Commission for not enforcing fishing laws and encouraged fellow anglers to turn in the law breakers. He pushed for river improvements and recreational opportunities when few were doing so. But more than likely our affection for a river man like Hussey stems from the strong connection he felt toward Iowa rivers and their greenways, a connection that is slowly being re-established.

It's hard not to notice contrasts between the historic and modern-day excursions. Since cars were extremely rare, Hussey and Weatherly hitched a ride from Des Moines to Humboldt on the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad with their boats and gear loaded in the baggage car. They each carried 75 pounds of cargo, and didn't rely

on shuttles. Stores included bacon, milk, eggs, and bread, which required them to replenish ice along the way. When out of milk, they ventured across fields and prairies to acquire it from farmers. They relied on fish they caught from the river for their supper—no colorful foil-wrapped granola bars for snacks, no pizza and beer joints to visit, no suntan lotion and no bug spray. The two slept between wool blankets atop air cushions inside their wood canoes with canvas draped over the masts. They carried camp axes and a gun, and had one set of clothes to last them the duration of the trip.

The modern day adventurers, however, drove to Humboldt in private vehicles and shuttled between developed accesses, slept in ultralight nylon tents, under shelters, in motels and even a bed and breakfast one evening. They were clothed in neoprene or warm-when-wet tops and bottoms, waterproof jackets with Gore-tex cuffs and collars and water shoes. The legs of the route were pre-paddled in the months leading up to the event by trip leader Al Donaldson, who plotted the course using a GPS unit, and with the help of his wife Ana, kept track of weather forecasts and water levels during the trip via wireless Internet and laptop computer. All felt safe and in good hands, but perhaps the sense of adventure was muted a little by such thorough and careful planning.



7369 Thompson's Bend, Union Park, Des Moines, Ia. (circa 1905-1910)

Hussey notes on the first page of his essay that "a cruise down an unknown river...gives one an opportunity to get away from the busy haunts of men and have a chance in the quiet of the woods, by great shadows of overhanging cliffs, or on the sweet-voiced river, to think." Hussey was a newspaper man and book binder by trade, but his passion for rivers comes through in his poetry, which he suggests was mostly written while in his canoe or along the banks of the place he immortalized in his writings: "Thompson's Bend"—so named because Alfred McFarland Thompson, prior to Iowa becoming a state,

staked claim to 1,400 acres of land on the east bank of the Des Moines River just upstream of Center Street Dam where the river bends to the west.

When Des Moines and Polk County celebrated their semi-centennial in July 1896, Hussey led a boat parade on Thompson's Bend. Eight canoes, 40 row boats and seven excursion steamers churned upstream in formation from the dam to the remaining undeveloped acres of the Thompson property, which was dedicated that day as Union Park. Thousands lined the banks to watch the parade, and an estimated 20,000 attended the celebration. Two years prior, the water level was reduced to an unnavigable depth because of a dam breach. Hussey sought money from ice house owners and others to repair the dam, and as a result of his successful leadership, the city named the area above the dam "Lake Tac Hussey."

Driven by a keen interest in Des Moines River history, Hussey researched and wrote about the flood of 1851, later published in the "1902 Annals of Iowa." He also wrote about the history of steamboating on the Des Moines River, as well as other articles about local history. Hussey's book, "Reminiscences of Early Des Moines," includes a descriptive play-by-play account of the newly arrived immigrant Jules Parmalee's struggle to land a large northern pike caught on artificial bait below the Center Street Dam in 1860 (Hussey notes it was the first time artificial bait was used for angling there).

Hussey, born in Terre Haute, Ind., in 1832, moved to Des Moines not because of a desire to leave, but out of obligation to his homesick brother Warren, who requested his company in 1855. Within two years of his older brother's arrival, Warren went from a drugstore clerk to banker, left Iowa, became a gold broker, mine owner, land agent, and with partner Charles Dahler, opened several banks in the western states. By 1871, Warren was considered the wealthiest man in the U.S.

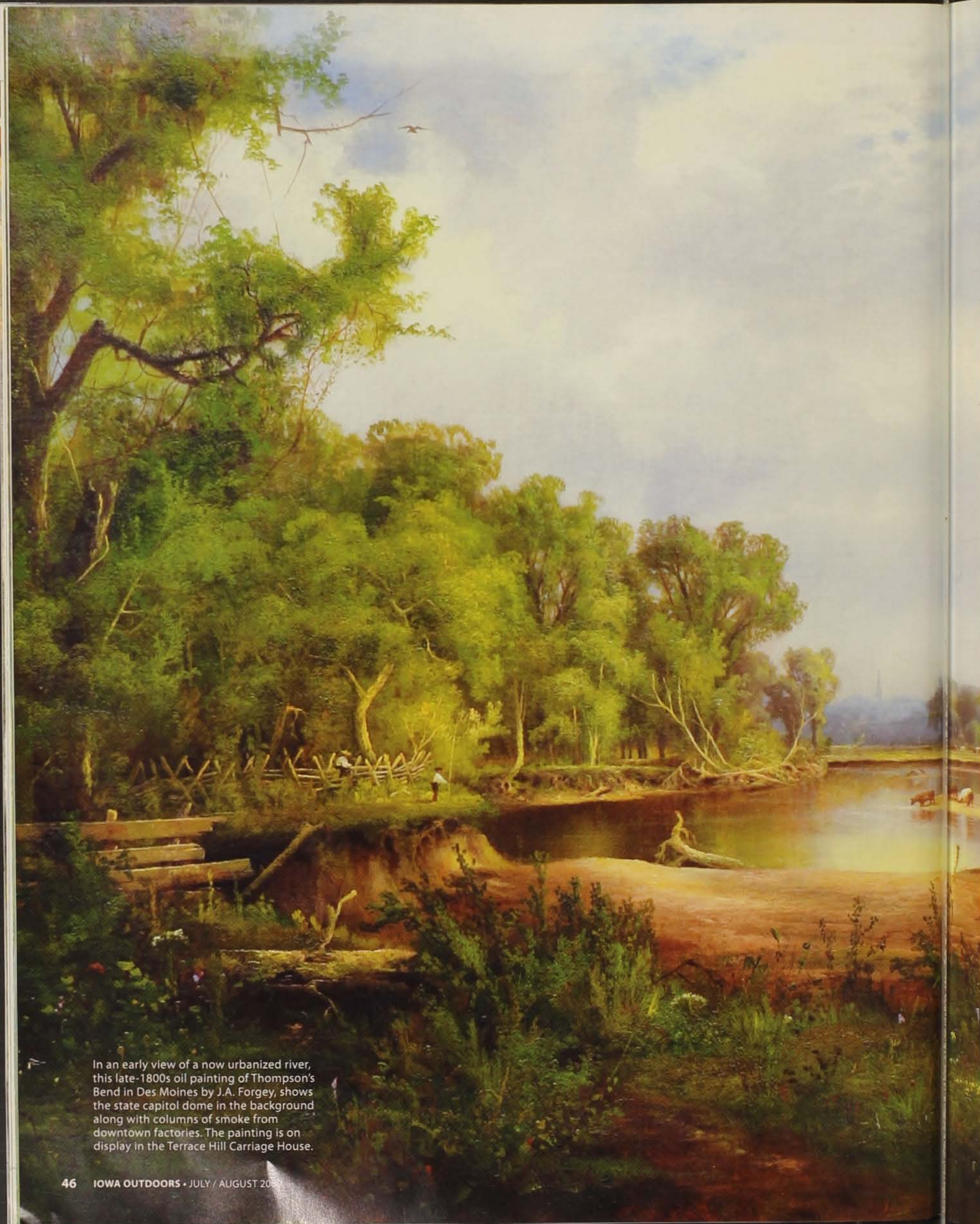
Tacitus, on the other hand, remained in Des Moines until his death in 1919. His leadership in several service-oriented groups, such as the Pioneer Club, the Commercial Club, Izaak Walton League and Old Settlers'

group is a legacy to the city. His pride for his adopted state and his pride for his country led him to write two popular songs, "Iowa Beautiful Land" and "Country, Oh My Country." "Iowa Beautiful Land" was adopted as the state song in the early 1900s and remains so today. His path in life may not have met with the monetary success of his brother—indeed, newspaper clippings hint at financial troubles encountered with his business. But when it came time for him and his wife to enter the Home for the Aged, the people of Des Moines stepped up and covered the cost of their stay.



LEFT: In the late 1800s, rowing upstream for an afternoon picnic, then floating back to town under a full moon was a popular activity. Victorian fashion demanded such efforts in corsets, dresses and coats and ties. Hussey, standing with hat, fought for fish ladders on river dams, and his newspaper editorials called for conservation. BELOW: Miss Allie Wyngate flies the flag of the American Canoe Association and the Des Moines Canoe Club in the late 1800s. Behind her a windmill tower provides power for two farms along Thompson's Bend, upriver from the present day Botanical Center north of downtown Des Moines. BOTTOM: Hussey and wife Jennie paddle in 1899 just north of downtown Des Moines along the newly dedicated Union Park, an event that drew 20,000 spectators and filled the river with boats.

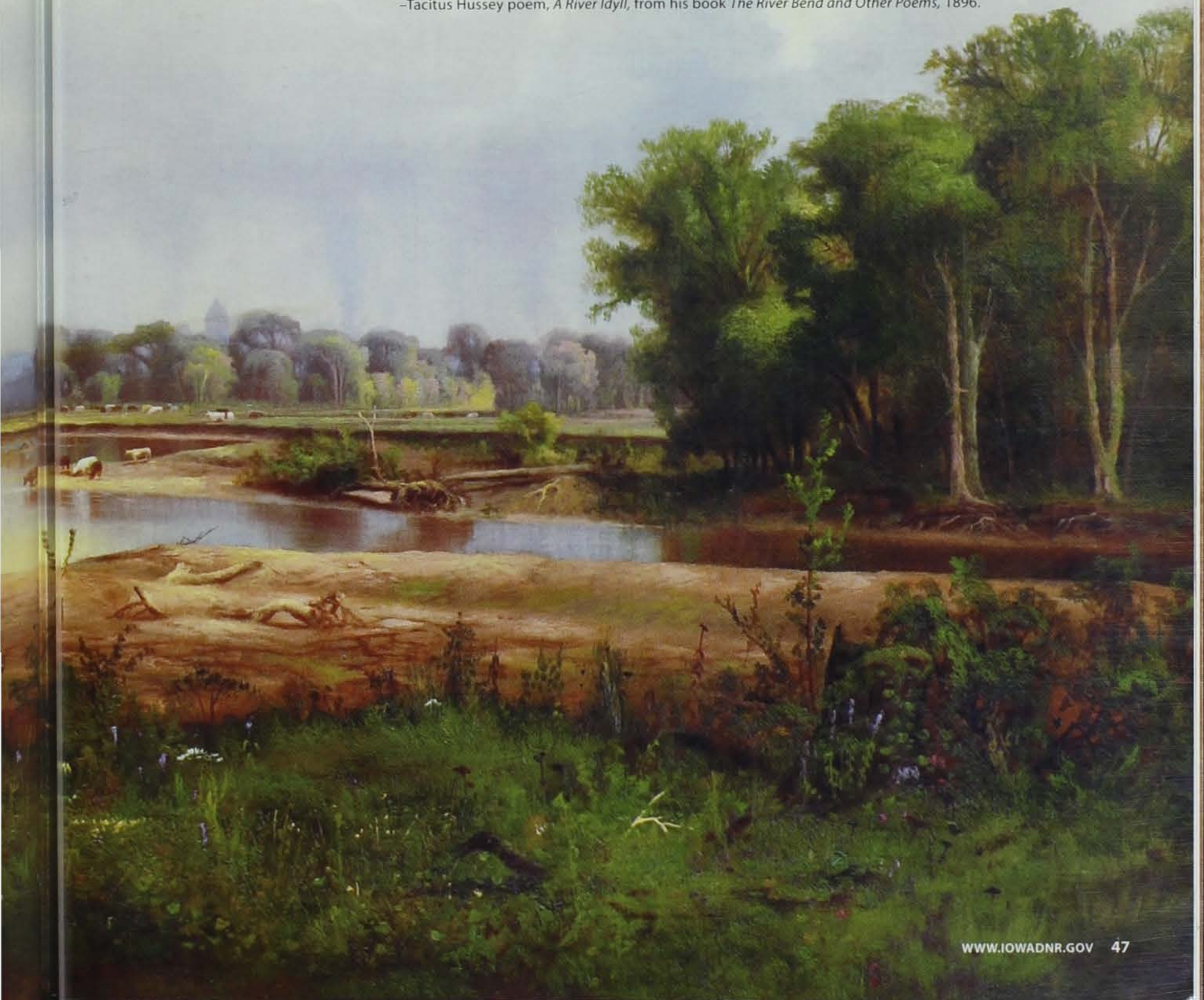




In an early view of a now urbanized river, this late-1800s oil painting of Thompson's Bend in Des Moines by J.A. Forgey, shows the state capitol dome in the background along with columns of smoke from downtown factories. The painting is on display in the Terrace Hill Carriage House.

“How sweet it is, to idly float
On waters strange, in sun and dew:
To hear the wild bird’s joyous note,
While cruising, in a staunch canoe.
What Joy to follow Nature’s bent,
Where roses wild, perfume the air;
To mingle with grape blossoms scent,
And breathe in Nature everywhere!”

—Tacitus Hussey poem, *A River Idyll*, from his book *The River Bend and Other Poems*, 1896.



By the fourth day of their journey, the Hussey re-enactors were finding campgrounds under water and overflowing river banks. Little did they know the continuous rains they encountered were the beginning of a historic flood event.

Despite the rain-swollen river, the Hussey re-enactors saw plenty of wildlife and were awestruck by the steep rock bluffs of Ledges State Park downstream of Boone. The fragrance of wild grapes and the colorful wild roses Hussey so often spoke of in his writings were abundant, as were other wildflowers. A fawn was spotted on one of the islands. Raptors, water birds, shorebirds and migrating warblers were observed along the way.

In 1892, Hussey and Weatherly encountered a hunter led by blood hounds on the trail of a wolf, enjoyed the repetitious calls of the whip-poor-wills, and drank "sweet water" from the "famous Willow Spring" near Corydon—now submerged under the vast expanse of Saylorville Reservoir. Although no whip-poor-wills were heard and wolves have long been extirpated from Iowa, the modern day adventurers were pleased with the abundance of wildlife they encountered.

First annual Tac Hussey Float members between Humboldt and Fort Dodge on the Des Moines River in 2008.



After arriving back in Des Moines at Thompson's Bend, Hussey writes "we tread the noisy streets—ten times more noisy by contrast with a week of quietness, yet with a happiness that even a knowledge of accumulated work piled before us cannot take out of our hearts." Hussey's love of paddling inspired the residents of Des Moines. He founded the Des Moines Canoe Club in 1895 and led the push to build a floating boat house that could shelter 30 canoes. In 1881, before the popularity of canoeing, Hussey and Weatherly navigated row boats from Humboldt to Des Moines. Rowing upstream from Thompson's Bend to one of the popular

spots along the river for a picnic, then floating back in the moonlight, was a favorite Victorian pastime for Des Moines residents. Hussey plied his craft on many Iowa rivers and lakes in his day, including the Raccoon and Cedar rivers, as well as Okoboji and Spirit lakes. His canoe was on display in department store windows, and he was often observed paddling on New Year's Day and during flood events. One newspaper account noted he was the first canoeist of the city.

When the modern-day adventurers arrived in Des Moines at Prospect Park, they donned party hats and attached balloons to their vessels in preparation for their approach to Thompson's Bend. Following an ice cream social and program celebrating the life of Hussey at historic Union Park, a few drove to Woodland Cemetery to pay respect to the man. Engraved on his headstone in large letters, an epitaph read, "loved and honored by all."

There was likely a strong connection to rivers in Victorian Iowa. Most early settlers rode on a steamboat at some point on their way to Iowa and depended on rivers to power grist mills for food. Rivers were the corridors of commerce before the railroads and highways. A popular

pastime in Des Moines—spring through fall—included gathering at the river's edge to watch steamboats arriving. An 1865 Des Moines newspaper article noted that hundreds would gather in spring to watch chunks of ice float downstream and crash against bridge piers. Many early buildings in downtown Des Moines were built facing the river—The old Des Moines Public Library is a lasting example. Despite the ever present threat of typhoid fever, early residents still swam in the rivers. Bath houses and early versions of swimming pools dotted river shorelines before cement swimming pools were built. In winter, ice skating was a popular sport on the rivers, and ice houses were busy harvesting blocks of ice to meet the demands during warmer months.

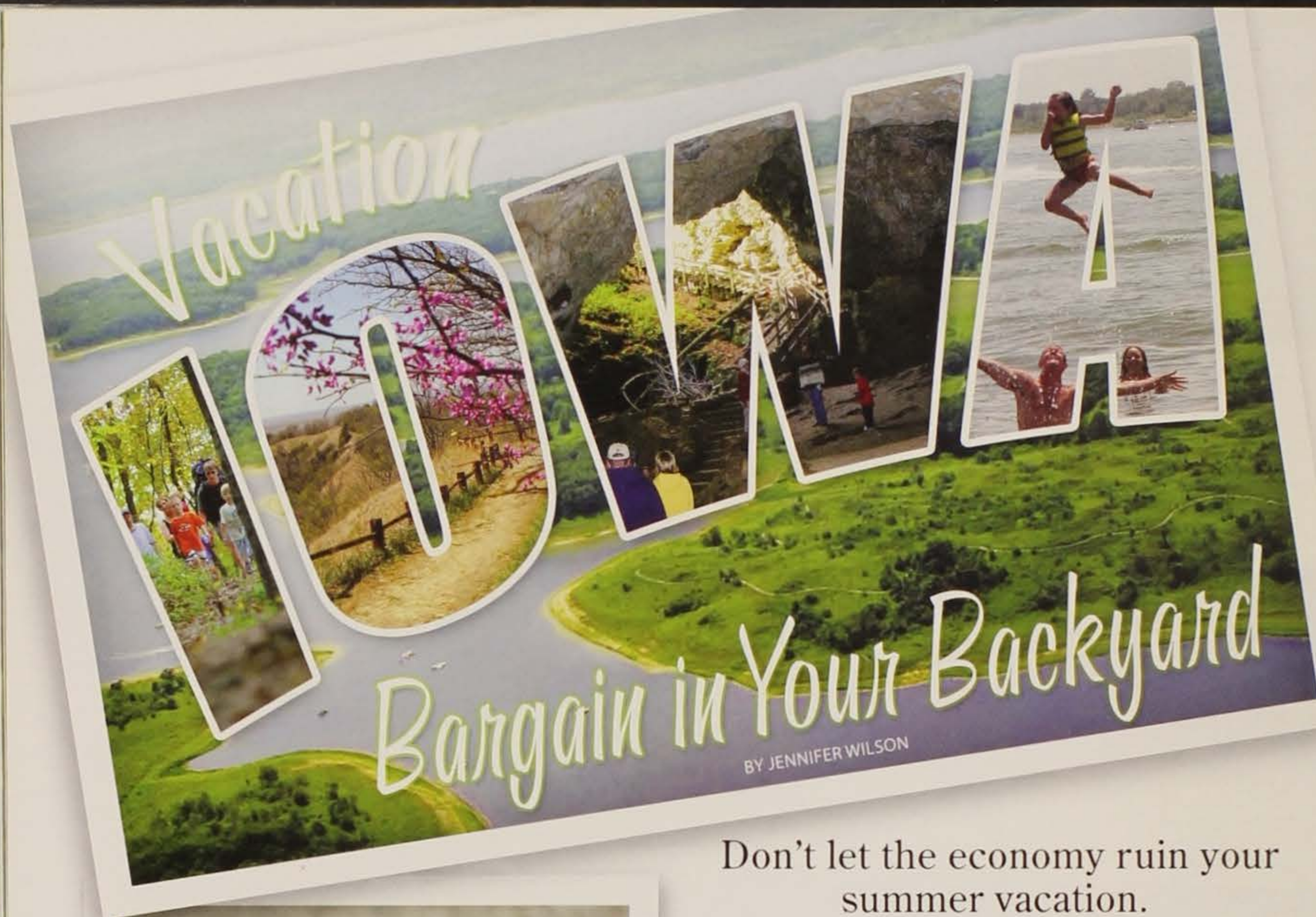
Over time, our dependence on rivers lessened and with this our appreciation of them seems to have waned. But today Iowans are beginning to recognize the intangible benefits that come from spending time within their state's living green corridors. Currently, five recreational trails snake through the area between Thompson's Bend and Saylorville Lake, where paddlers, rowers, power boaters, anglers, walkers, runners, hikers, cyclists, bird watchers, wildlife viewers and others enjoy a rare slice of quiet greenway positioned just north of a busy urban center. But as Hussey recognized, there will always be a need to protect and preserve these areas. 🐾

RIGHT: Tacitus Hussey, in dark hat, shown later in life. He cited outdoor exercise as a secret to staying fit and active while aging. MIDDLE: River swimming, water slides, steamboat rides and afternoon rowing were popular activities in Victorian-era Des Moines. Hussey helped popularize the city river corridor with actions and inspiring words. BOTTOM: Adrienne Adams of Fort Dodge and Al Donaldson of Cedar Falls paddle past Ledges State Park on a week-long trip recreating Hussey's 1892 trip.



BATH HOUSE, DES MOINES, IOWA. 604





Don't let the economy ruin your summer vacation. Use these 24 **IOWA ALTERNATIVES** to popular family getaways to save some cash.

Dear Iowa Outdoors Reader,

We've said it all along, and we stand by it still: You don't have to leave the state for a memorable vacation. Especially if your budget is tight, staying in-state gives you the pleasure of knowing your home more deeply. It also means freedom from that sinking queasiness of post-vacation credit-card statements.

In fact, we bet there's an Iowa equivalent for every \$10,000 outfitted uber-adventure featured in rugged outdoorsy supermarket magazines. And you won't have to mortgage the house to get there. Read on, and you'll see what we mean.

Miami Beach, FLORIDA

If you love the bustle of Diddy-caliber crowds, head to *Gull Point State Park Beach in Okoboji*. Of Okoboji's five swimming beaches, Gull Point is the most happening (712-337-3211).

"The scene at Okoboji varies from family-oriented and laid-back to Cancun spring break," says Tim Richey, park manager. Fishing, skiing, boating and scuba diving amp up lake recreation, which is supported by golf, shopping, open-air dining and a lively bar scene. Central Iowans can get a similar fix at *Big Creek State Park* (515-984-6473).



Whitewater Rafting, COLORADO RIVER

When Webster City's Briggs Woods County Park gets three to five inches of rain, Briggs Falls starts running. The one-third mile stretch of stream located in the northeast corner of the park drops about 60 feet total, a fairly short run with a number of eye-bugging ledges that plunge paddlers headlong into cold water (515-832-9570).

"The middle ledge, hands down, is the most fun," says Nate Hoogeveen, DNR river programs coordinator.

A straight-through paddle would probably last five minutes, but when it's running, schedule a half-day there. Use the creekside trail to hike back to the top of the run, kayak on your shoulder, and do it all over again. "It's almost like a toboggan run," says Hoogeveen.

This is a Class III whitewater rapids, and you need appropriate whitewater skills, boats and gear. Hoogeveen recommends getting involved with other paddlers such as the ISU Canoe/Kayak Club (www.stuorg.iastate.edu/isucanoekayak), Central Iowa Paddlers (paddleiowa.org) or the Iowa Whitewater Coalition (iowawhitewater.org).

Old Faithful Lodge, YELLOWSTONE

Okay, you probably should get to Yellowstone once in your life. But after you've seen the geyser, you're good, and the next family vacation is just as easily spent at Honey Creek Resort State Park, Iowa's own icon-in-training.

This southern Iowa recreational playland is designed specifically to help visitors dig into the state's natural wonders, complete with an architecturally impressive lodge. Old Faithful might have a few years on us, but a visit to Honey Creek in its infancy makes you part of our history (1-877-677-3344; honeycreekresort.com).

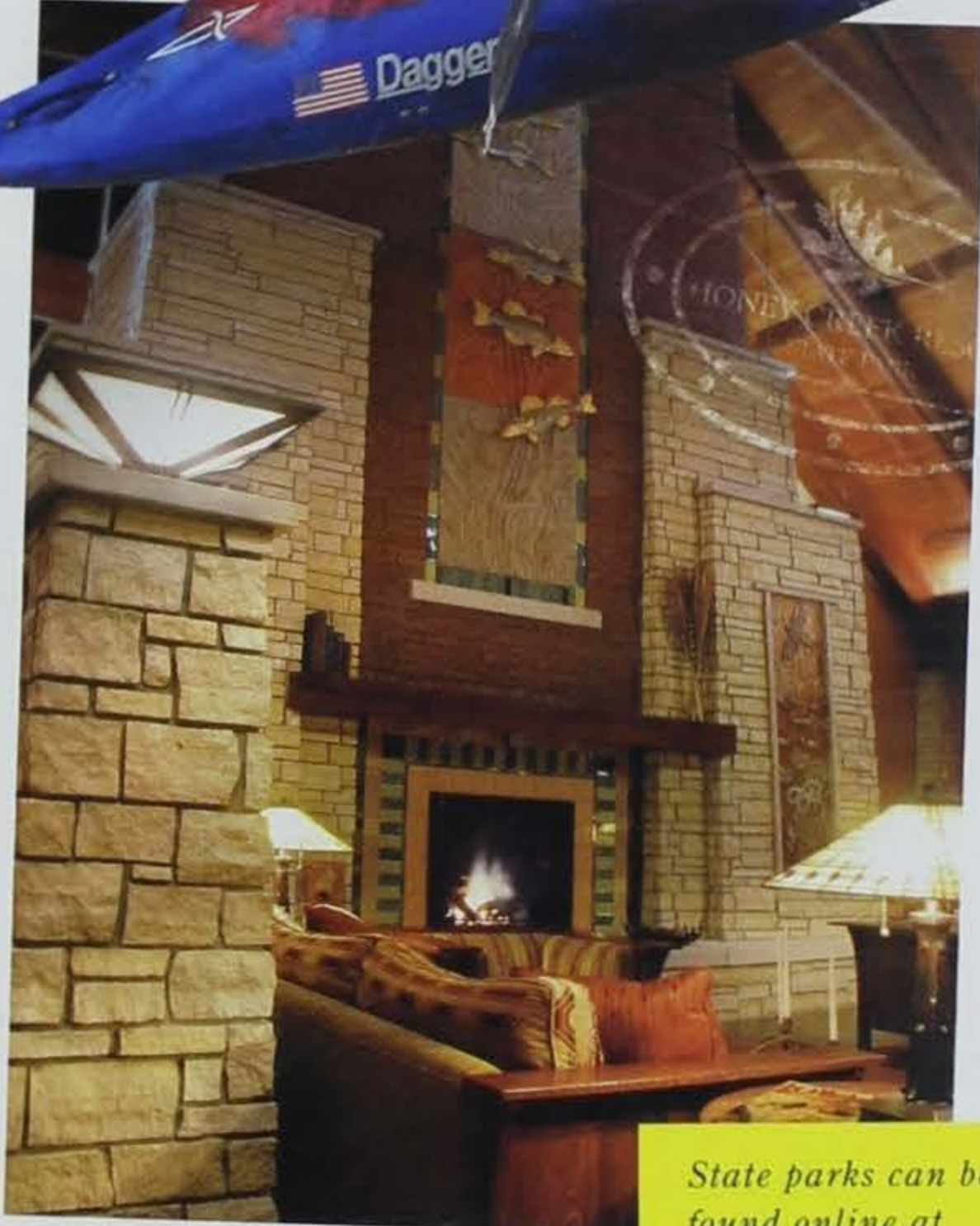
Windmill Watching, HOLLAND

You don't need to a passport to view the Intrepid Wind Farm in Sac and Buena Vista counties, in northwest Iowa. The 107 wind turbines power some 43,000 homes. To get your full-on Dutch fix, visit the Orange City Tulip Festival next spring (712-707-4510; octulipfestival.com).

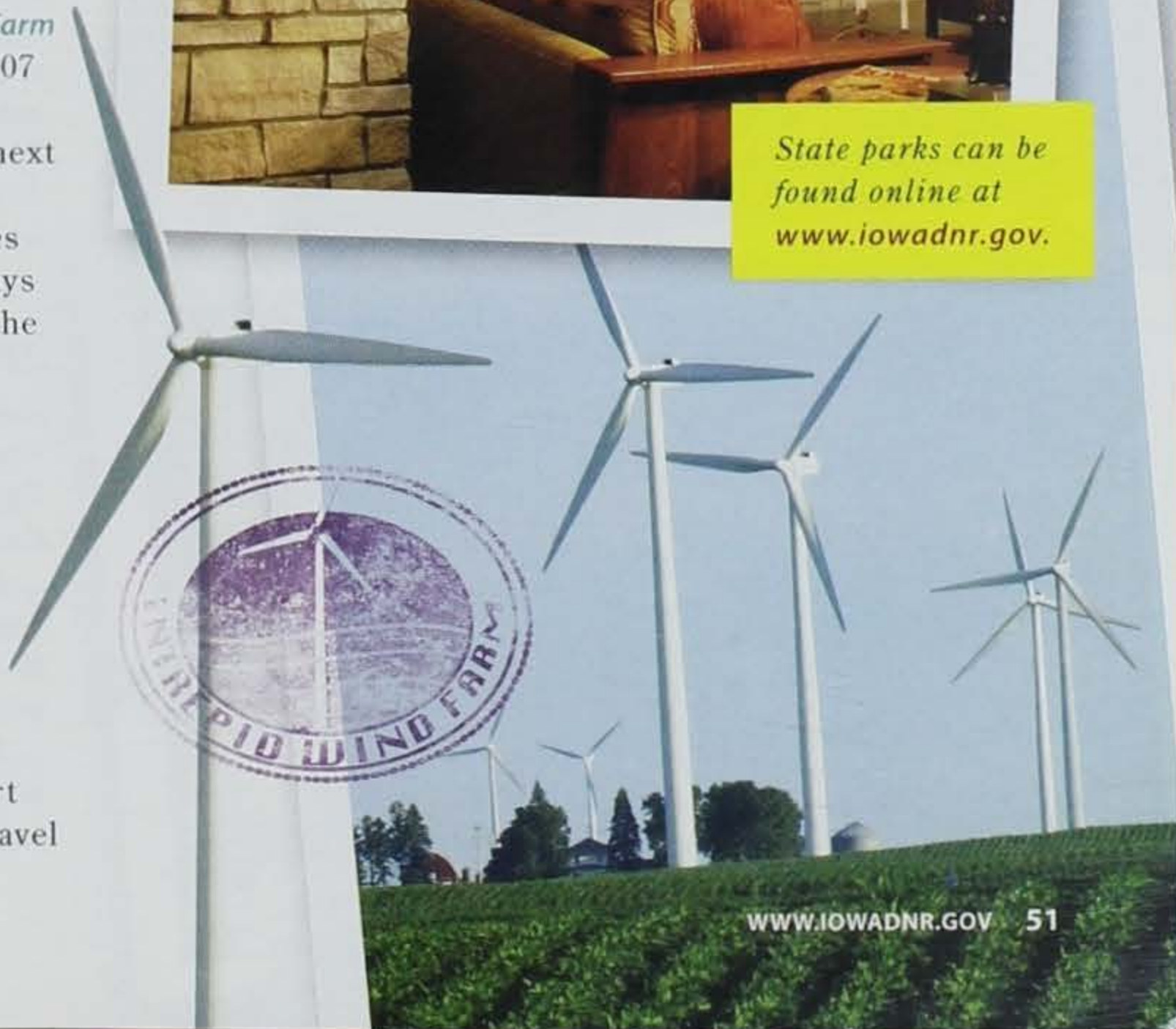
"I was so stunned by the beauty of the wind turbines that I had to pull off the highway to take a picture," says Holli Hartman of Denver, Colo., who passed through the area on a recent drive to her hometown of Algona. "I thought, 'This must be what it's like in Holland.'" (midamericanenergy.com/wind/html/resource5.asp; orangecityiowa.com).

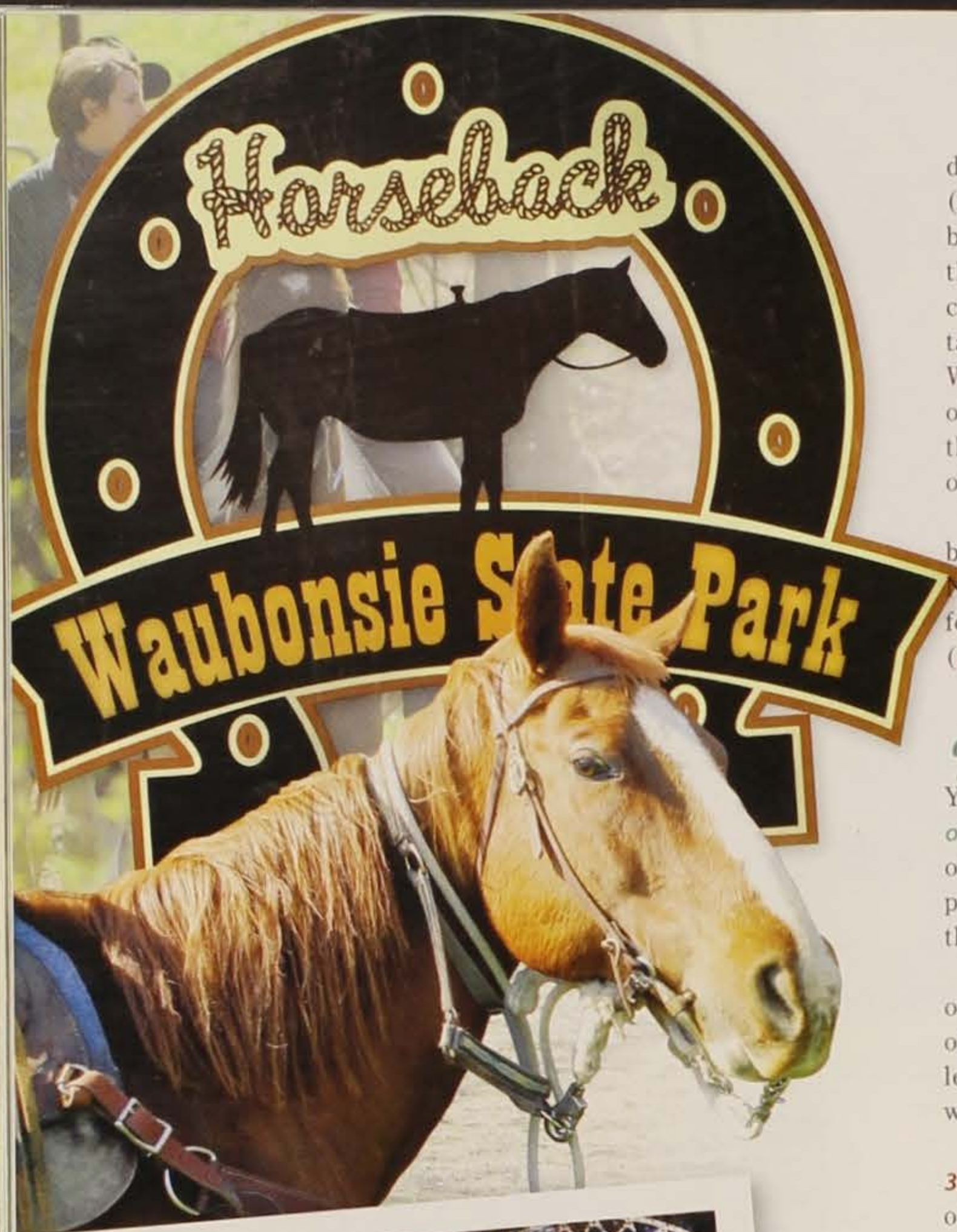
Rocky Mountain Dude Ranch, COLORADO

The family farm isn't that far out of Iowa's collective consciousness that we find 5 a.m. chores retro or charming. But horses? We miss horses. And that's part of what makes Waubonsie State Park our new favorite travel



State parks can be found online at www.iowadnr.gov.





destination. It only has eight miles of equestrian trails (compared to *Brushy Creek in Webster County*, which has 50), but this park has so much potential, it'll soon be one of the stars of the parks system. Each of the 32 equestrian campsites has a holding pen or a hitch rail, plus picnic tables and fire rings. But it's the location that makes Waubonsie so great. The switchbacks and lush canyon of its Loess Hills setting make the trail a real heart thumper. If you don't bring your own horses, hire those of local cowboy and trail guide Alan Driever (402-297-3279).

Waubonsie just added 646 acres and several cabins by acquiring an adjacent Girl Scout camp (712-382-2786). Nearby Sugar Clay Winery & Vineyards is good for tasting, with occasional live music on weekends (712-628-2020; sugarclaywinery.com).

Yurt camping, MONGOLIA

Your experience in *Cerro Gordo County's McIntosh Woods on the banks of Clear Lake* won't be worthy of an episode of *Bizarre Foods* like a visit to China might be, but that's probably a good thing. The benefits of yurt camping are the same no matter where you rest your head.

Many acres of Clear Lake are undeveloped, particularly on its northwest corner, called *Little Lake*. The peninsula of McIntosh Woods is an ever-changing montage of water levels, wind and cloud movement, perfect for fishing, wading, photography and star gazing.

We'll let park manager Tammy Domonoske (641-829-3847) speak for her yurts, which are the favorite feature of many repeat customers. An increasingly popular alternative to camping that's still cheaper than a motel, yurts are a growing trend for families and those who don't like the hassle of tent set-up:

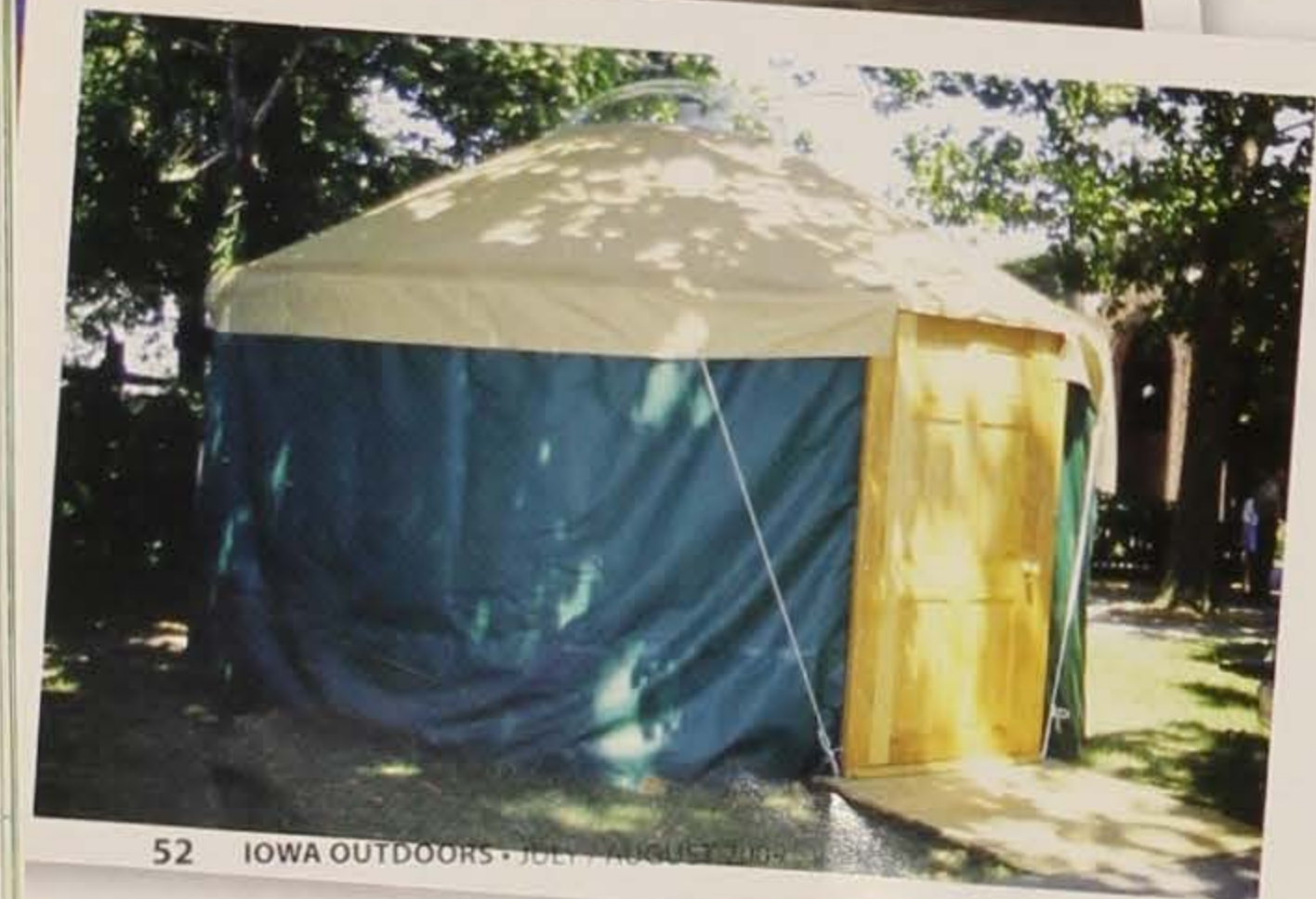
"Through the clear acrylic dome, one can view the night sky, relax on the shores of Clear Lake, and observe many amazing summer sunsets off the deck or from inside the yurt. The shade of oak trees and the lake breezes provide visitors with a cool stay. Visitors are surprised when they step inside the yurt itself, into a sheltered circle that feels warm, open and free. The apex at the top shows shadows of clouds moving past, tree branches swaying in the breeze and birds cruising overhead. Moonbeams blanket you at night, and the rain may tease, but does not gain entry."

Mauna Kea Observatory, HAWAII

Palisades-Dows Observatory, just southeast of Palisades-Kepler State Park, (319-848-2068; cedar-astronomers.org) near Cedar Rapids is the obvious go-to here. But we also like to step off the beaten path.

In that vein, *Whiterock Conservancy, a nature preserve in Coon Rapids* with on-site lodging, is likely the darkest sky in Iowa, with less than 10 yard lights to contend with on 4,300 acres of contiguous ground for stargazing and night hiking.

Those brave souls who explore Whiterock at night might encounter fox or coyote, or perhaps a spooked doe and her twin fawns, says Executive Director Tolif



Hunt. They'll be deafened by the chorus of frogs. An assortment of owls call to mark out territory or locate a mate. Salamanders come out for the rare terrestrial stroll.

A night hike under the stars forces us to give up part of our human dominance of the land, says Hunt.

"Being alone in the environment during the night sacrifices one of our most relied upon senses, our eyesight, forcing us to realize that sometimes we are just as fragile as any part of the environment, from baby birds to rare orchids: We humans are vulnerable to the elements, too. Although in Iowa you have little to fear—there are no macro predators left—so walk with a light heart, dear night hiker!" (712-684-2697; whiterockconservancy.org).

Shedd Aquarium, CHICAGO

We can't promise sharks, but sturgeon can get more than 10 feet long, and they look cooler. See them at *The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque*, which actually scored higher than Shedd in the 2008 TripAdvisor Top 10 Aquariums ranking. Its expansion begins this summer into the former Diamond Jo Casino riverboat. The new Great Rivers Center will tell the story of America's rivers through more great interactive exhibits (563-557-9545; mississippirivermuseum.com).

Leech Lake, MINNESOTA

Hark; the fishermen yearn for the walleye! Unfortunately, a tricked-out trip Up Nort' is gonna cost way more than mounting the trophy it scores you. And when you fish far away, you lose the flexibility of canceling for a better weekend if your destination's fishing report is tepid. So we've scouted one of Iowa's top walleye destinations for you, located at the swank, yet reasonably priced, *Honey Creek Resort State Park*. (1-877-677-3344; honeycreekresort.com).

"Rathbun is the most significant walleye fishery south of I-80 in Iowa," says Mark Flammang, DNR fisheries management biologist. "Each year, anglers harvest about 5,000 walleyes."

In fact, 2005 was a record year at Rathbun, with the walleye harvest ranking higher than 75 percent of all walleye lakes in the world. "That's no small task!" adds Flammang, who says walleye range around 15 to 21 inches, with most around two pounds.

His advice for anglers: Don't be afraid to fish shallow. Flammang has pulled decent-sized fish from four feet of water. And ask at the local bait shop about current sweet spots of lake habitat.

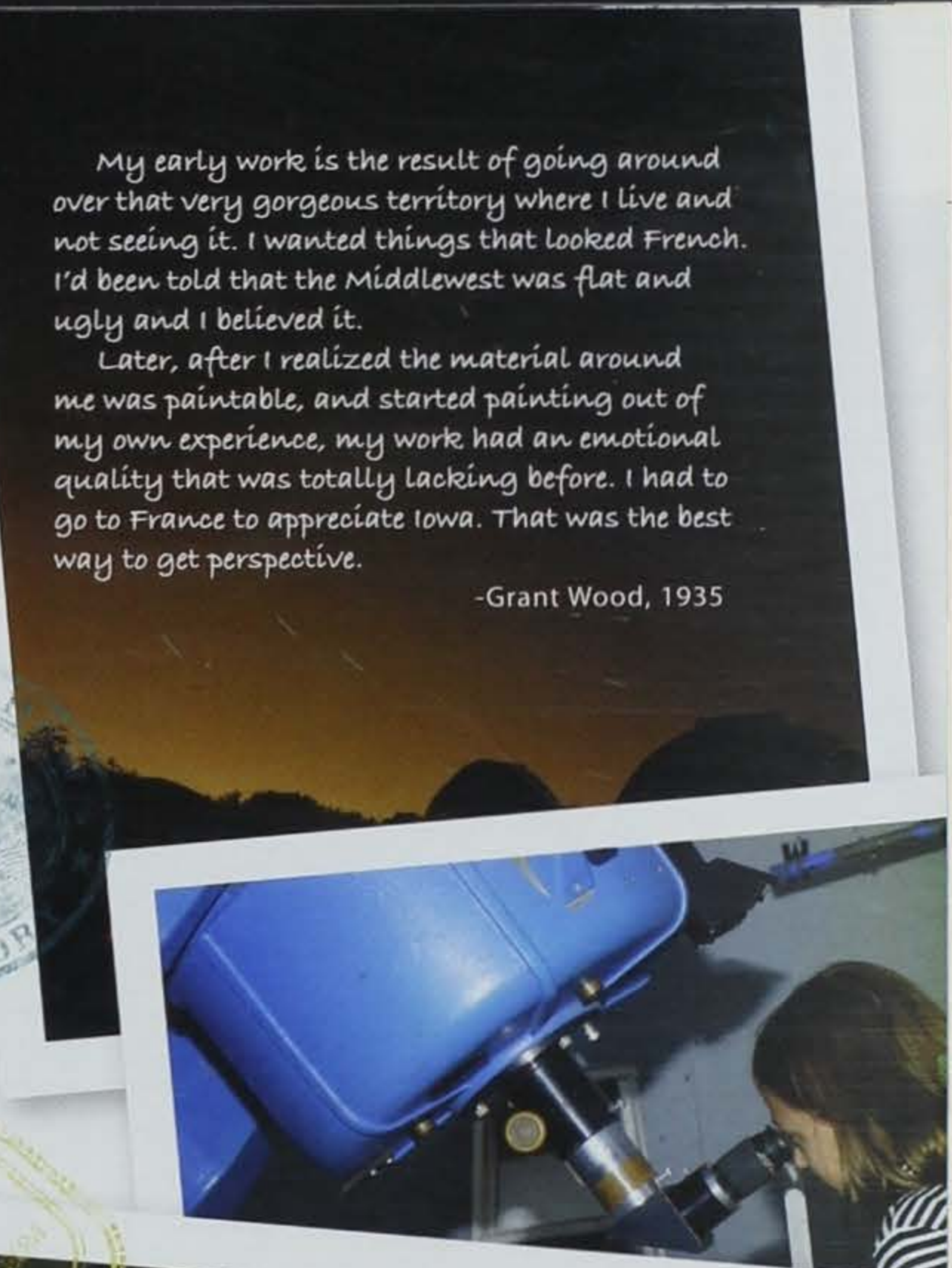
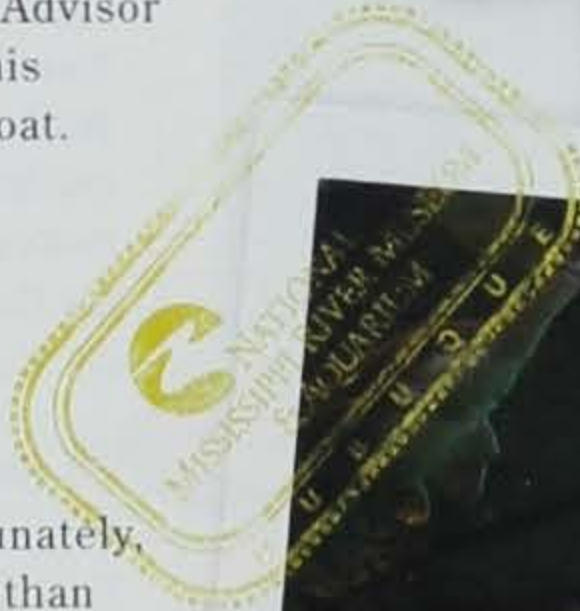
If you're looking for the atypical walleye bite, Rathbun is it. Though late May to early August is most productive elsewhere, the hottest time at Rathbun is right in the middle of summer.

"Most anglers think of walleye as a cool-weather species," says Flammang. "Rathbun walleye seem to disagree."

My early work is the result of going around over that very gorgeous territory where I live and not seeing it. I wanted things that looked French. I'd been told that the Middlewest was flat and ugly and I believed it.

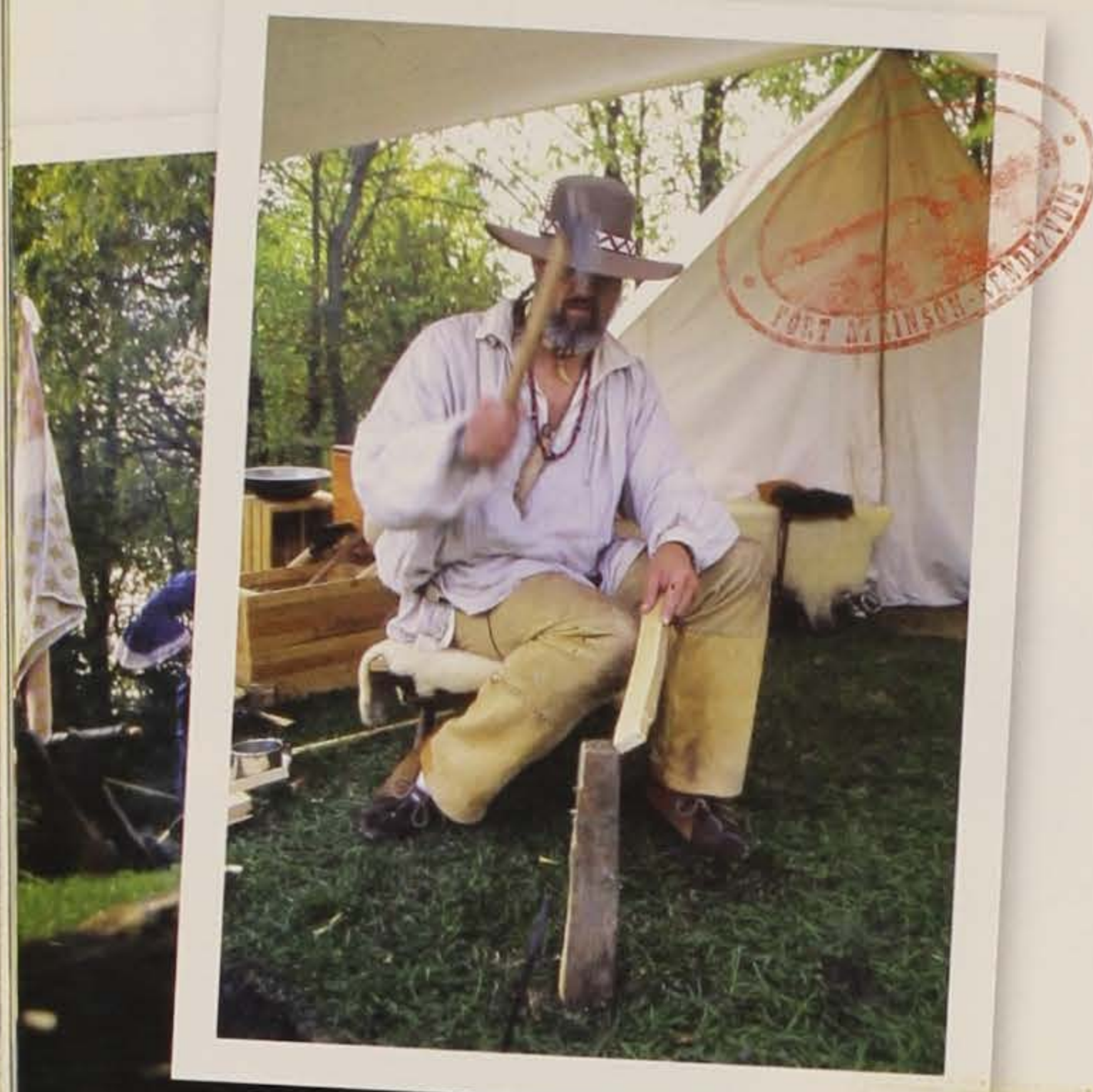
Later, after I realized the material around me was paintable, and started painting out of my own experience, my work had an emotional quality that was totally lacking before. I had to go to France to appreciate Iowa. That was the best way to get perspective.

-Grant Wood, 1935



HONEY CREEK RESORT
STATE PARK

ON RATHBUN LAKE



Deadwood, SOUTH DAKOTA

Another heavily marketed stop on the tourist circuit, Deadwood is the former site of a seedy subculture of gamblers, prostitutes and miners looking to raise a little hell on the day off.

Rent the HBO series if you want to get the idea, and then spend the last full weekend of September at authentic *Fort Atkinson State Preserve* in northeast Iowa, which has hosted an annual rendezvous since 1977.

The event recreates life on the 1840s Iowa frontier with buckskinners, open-air cooking, U.S. Army dragoons, black powder shoots, craftspeople, contests and demonstrations. Originally built in the 1840s to keep the Winnebago on neutral ground and to provide them with protection, Fort Atkinson has a relatively peaceful history. And the demonstrations of everyday frontier life are a lot more realistic than a shoot-out with Wild Bill Hickok (www.iowadnr.gov; 563-425-4161).

Mountain Biking, MOAB, UTAH

Avoid the hype, and head to *Lake Manawa State Park in Council Bluffs*. The professionally designed technical courses attract mountain bikers from the tri-state area. With 72 camping units and 1,529 acres, it makes a great weekend destination for the biking crowd (712-366-0220).

Coney Island, NEW YORK

If it's a waterside boardwalk with a storied history that attracts you, try *West Lake Okoboji's Arnolds Park*. What began as a water toboggan slide by a smart developer in the late 1800s has blossomed into a 21-acre lakeside attraction of beaches, rides, shopping and dining, best seen from the upper reaches of a Ferris wheel.

And we're just guessing on this, but we doubt if Coney Island could live up to Arnolds Park's motto of "Good Clean Fun" (712-332-2183; arnoldspark.com).

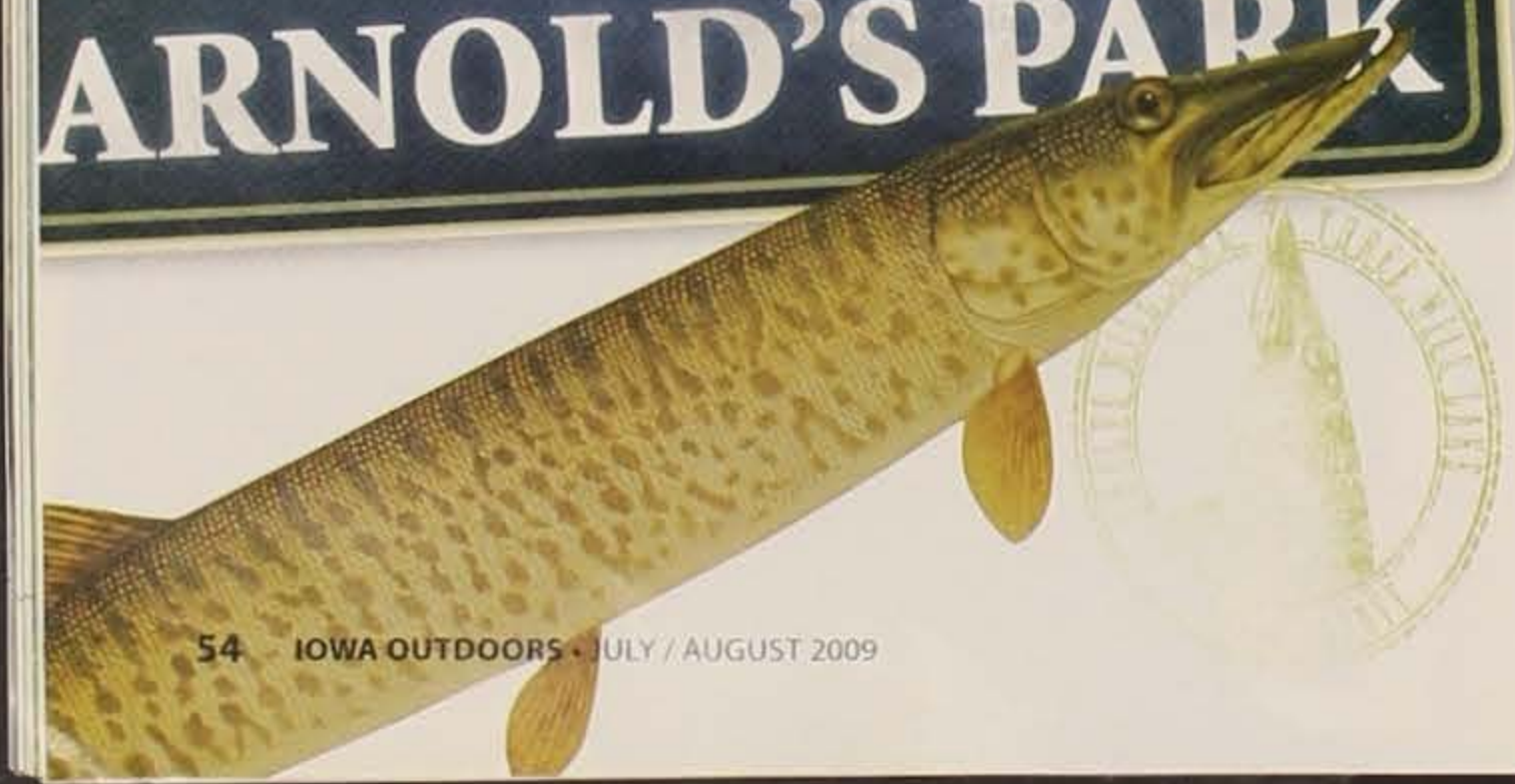
Lake of the Ozarks, MO/ARK

For an angler's weekend away, sometimes bigger isn't better.

"The reservoirs in Arkansas are huge and it's sometimes difficult to find the good fishing, or even where you are on a map," says Chris Larson, fisheries supervisor for southwest Iowa. "*Twelve Mile and Three Mile lakes in Union County*, just a mile apart, offer excellent fishing with plenty of fish habitat to explore."

A bit more about *Three Mile Lake* (641-782-1755), which built its reputation on being consistent for bluegill, largemouth and smallmouth bass and walleye. Three Mile is the only southwest Iowa lake where muskie lurk, and the lake also supports a growing hybrid striped bass or "wiper" fishery. Year-round, overnighters will find eight camping cabins and a large building available for rent as a lodge, plus a heated fish cleaning area.

Twelve Mile Lake is undergoing a rebirth after offering



some of the state's best fishing through the 1990s. Three years ago, it was drained to revitalize its fishery. Once the lake refilled, the DNR stocked larger fingerlings than usual to jumpstart the population, improved water quality and added fishing jetties for shore access and fish-attracting structures to get fish closer for shore angling.

"If this year's ice-fishing pressure was any indication, Twelve Mile is back and will resume its place as the top fishery in southwest Iowa for walleyes, largemouth bass and bluegills," says DNR information specialist Mick Klemesrud.

For bass fishing, *West Lake in Osceola* is considered one of the best. Popular on the tournament circuit, it remains difficult for land-bound anglers due to an undeveloped shoreline, save for a casino on the northeast side whose owners just filed for bankruptcy.

Carlsbad Tavern, NEW MEXICO

Rather than driving 18 hours to this baking-hot desert location, head to east-central Iowa's lush *Maquoketa Caves State Park*. Its petite size, small caverns and a gorgeous campground ringed by old-growth trees make it perfect for families. Bring headlamps for the kids, and let them explore on their own. A couple miles away, Bluff Lake Catfish Farm is one of those hole-in-the-wall vacation finds for dinner, where Mom and Dad can snag a cold one while the little ones watch the pond for the daily special (563-652-5833).

Fishing the chalk streams of ENGLAND

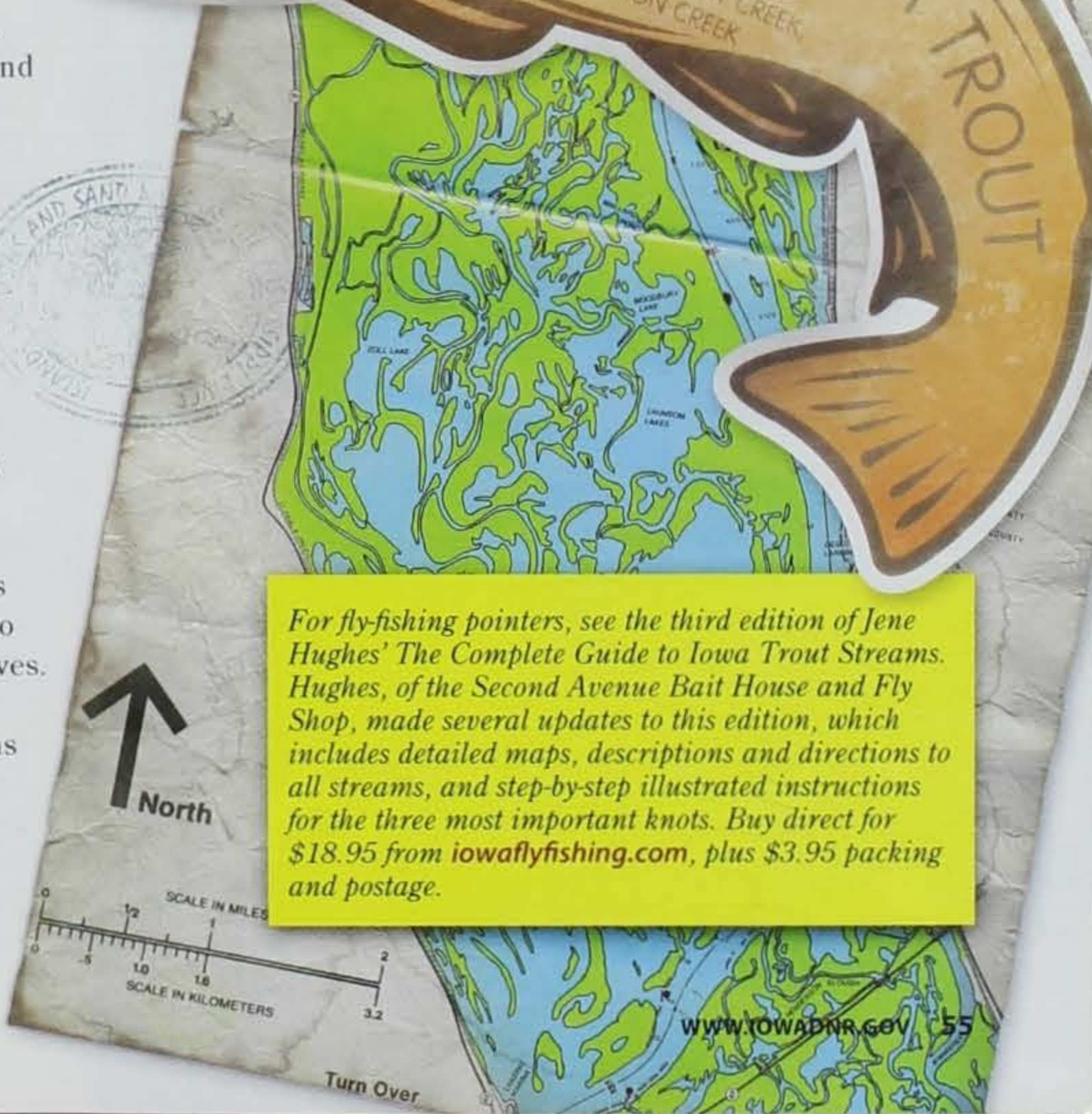
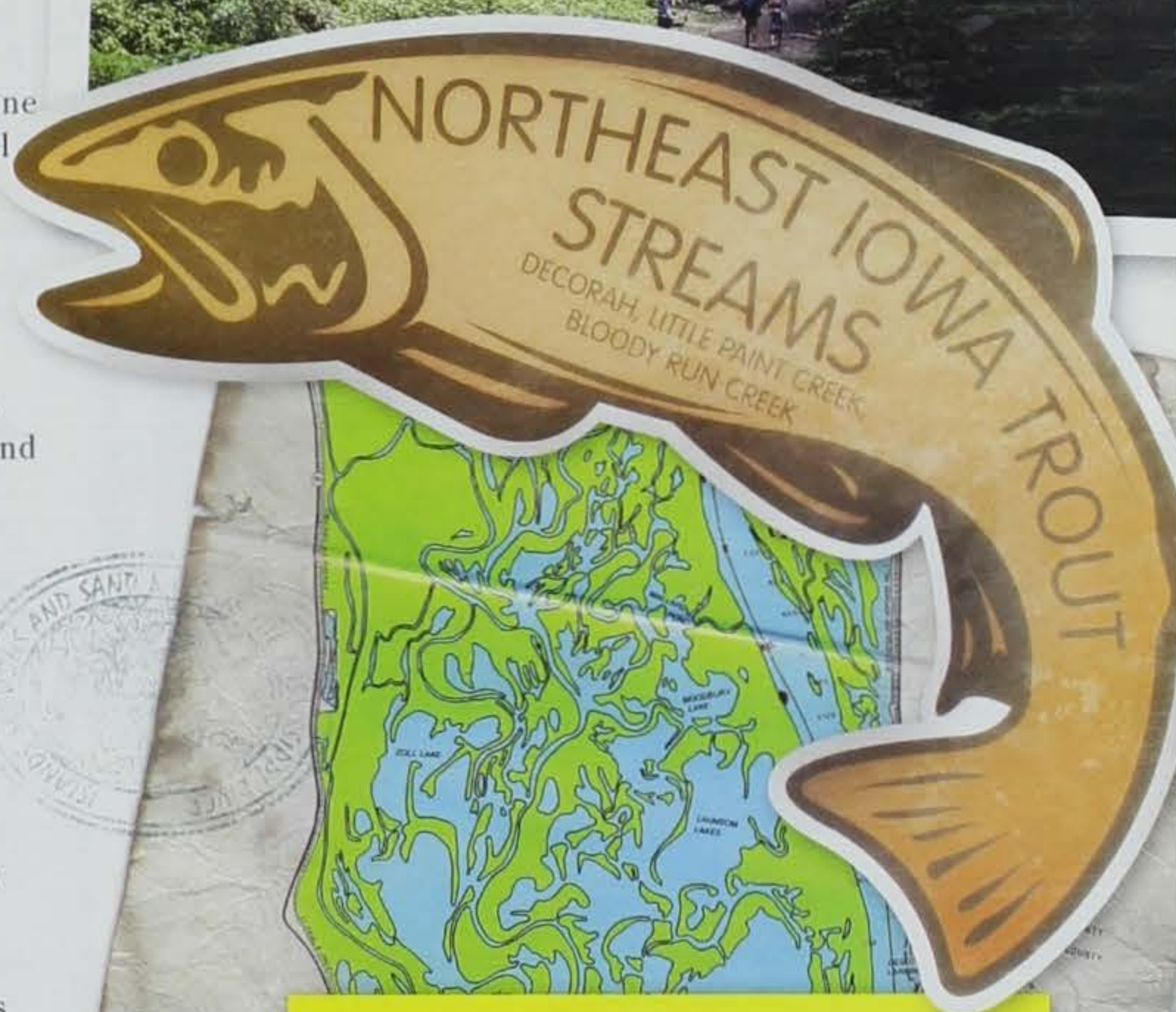
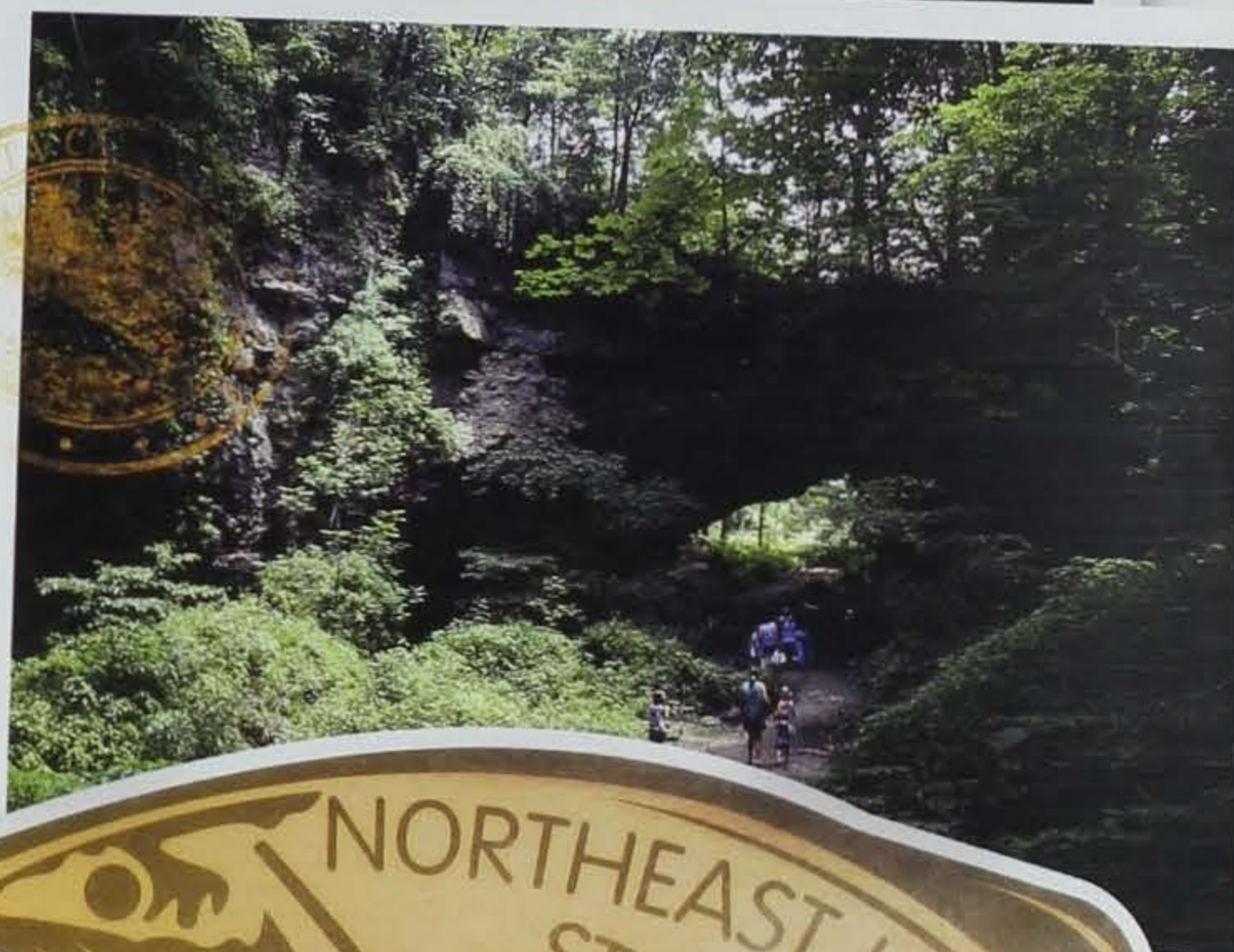
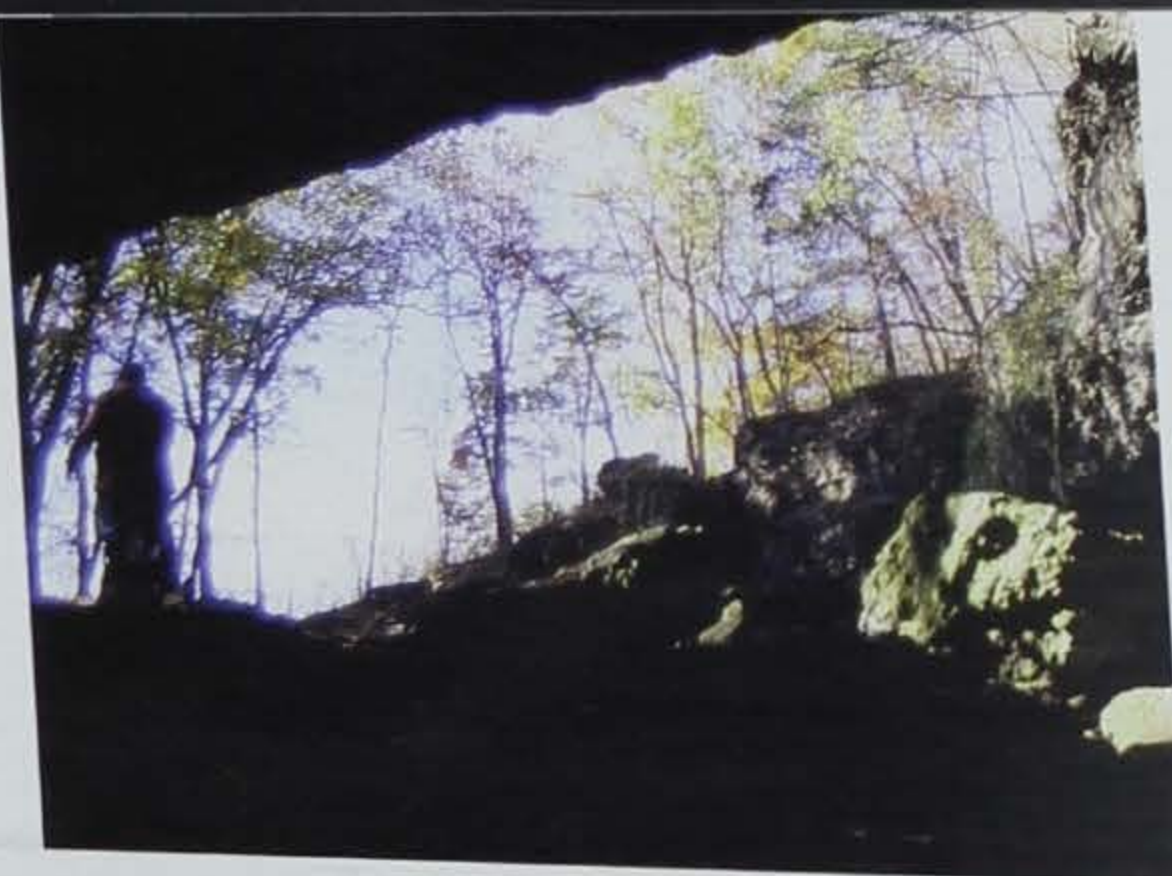
The difference here is money. Big money. The dollar is still fairly weak against the pound, and fishing in England levies a hefty fee on anglers. Save the dollars and head to the trout streams of northeast Iowa. To find 50-plus streams, order the DNR trout map and guide for \$2 (iowanaturestore.com; 866-410-0230).

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, MINNESOTA

An outfitted trip to the Boundary Waters is considered a Midwest wilderness rite of passage, but what is more iconic to the Midwest than the Mississippi River?

Hundreds of islands, sloughs and sand bars make for life-changing paddling near Lansing on Pool 9, where bluffs bristling with trees might shelter anything from warblers to osprey to a peregrine falcon shooting like a missile as it dives. It's a mysterious, primordial feel that you won't find in an upland lake area, tying you to the ancient Woodland Indians who dwelt upon these banks. And the Great River Road travels alongside, so you don't have to portage your boat, either. Your back will thank you later.

Friends of the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge (friendsofuppermiss.org).



For fly-fishing pointers, see the third edition of Jene Hughes' *The Complete Guide to Iowa Trout Streams*. Hughes, of the Second Avenue Bait House and Fly Shop, made several updates to this edition, which includes detailed maps, descriptions and directions to all streams, and step-by-step illustrated instructions for the three most important knots. Buy direct for \$18.95 from iowaflyfishing.com, plus \$3.95 packing and postage.



Bison-watching at Yellowstone National Park, WYOMING

The largest reconstruction of tallgrass prairie ecosystem in the United States, *Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge*, has a herd of bison 56 strong, as well as 18 elk (515-994-3400; tallgrass.org). The Nature Conservancy just started a bison herd, grazing 28 woolly behemoths on the 3,000 acres of *Broken Kettle Grasslands Preserve* north of Sioux City (712-568-2596; nature.org).

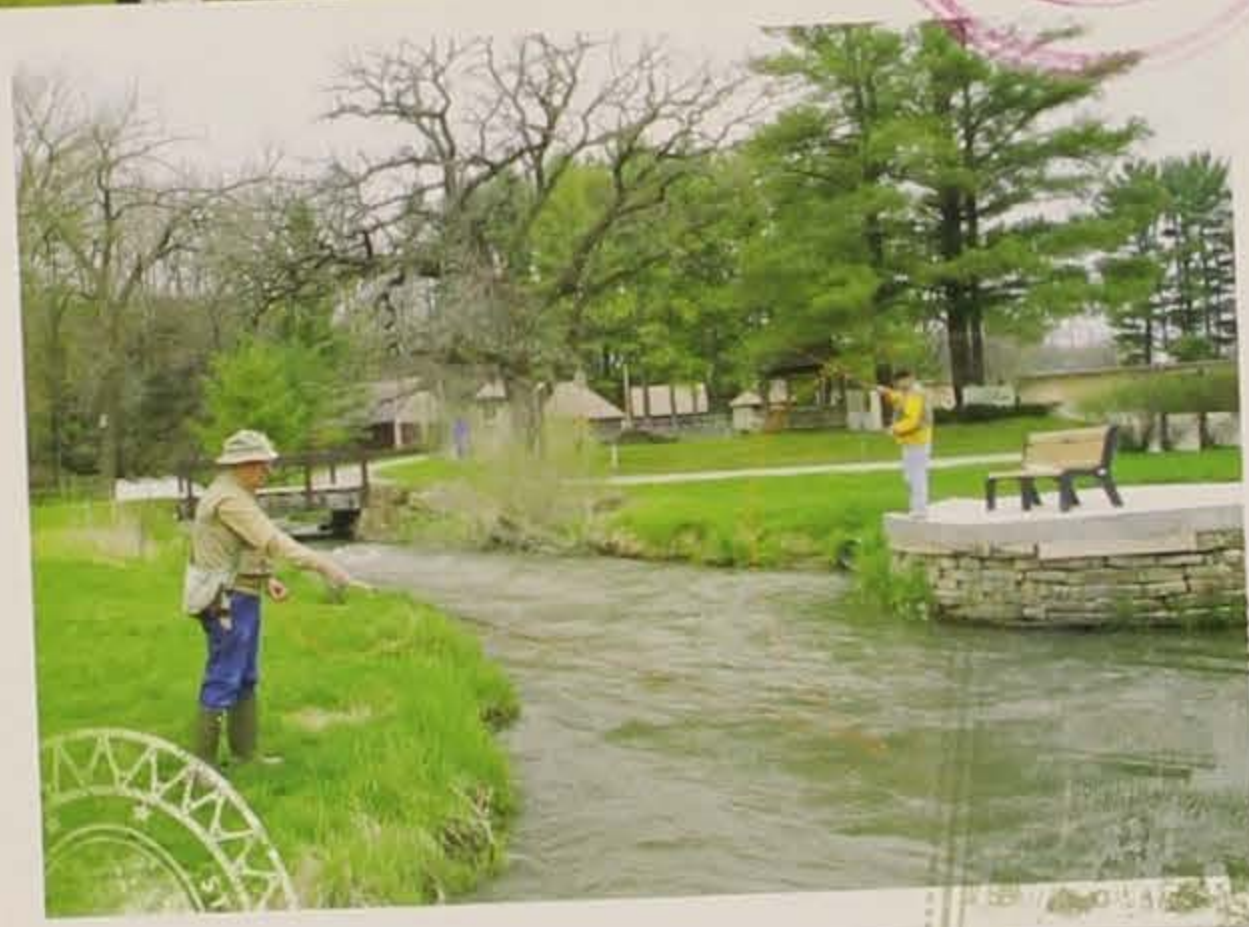


Golfing at Pebble Beach, CALIFORNIA

Greens fees at the famous Pebble Beach courses run about \$500. That doesn't even include a cart.

We won't say that *Honey Creek Resort's* golf course, *The Preserve*, rivals Pebble Beach. But for a few hours' drive, you can play 18 holes with big water views, and overnight just steps away at the lodge. Greens fees run \$30 to \$50, depending on the time of the year.

That includes the cart, friends. (641-724-1400 for tee times. [Http://honeycreekresort.com/](http://honeycreekresort.com/)).



Root River Trail, LANESBORO, MINNESOTA

Popular for trout fishing, biking, tubing and paddling, Lanesboro's idyllic small-town atmosphere has an Iowa mirror, and it's called *Decorah* (563-382-2023; trailsofwinneshiek.org).

The northeast Iowa city is working on a 12-mile *Trout Run Trail* that similarly leads people to scenic trout streams and several campgrounds. Take a tour of Decorah's trout hatchery en route.

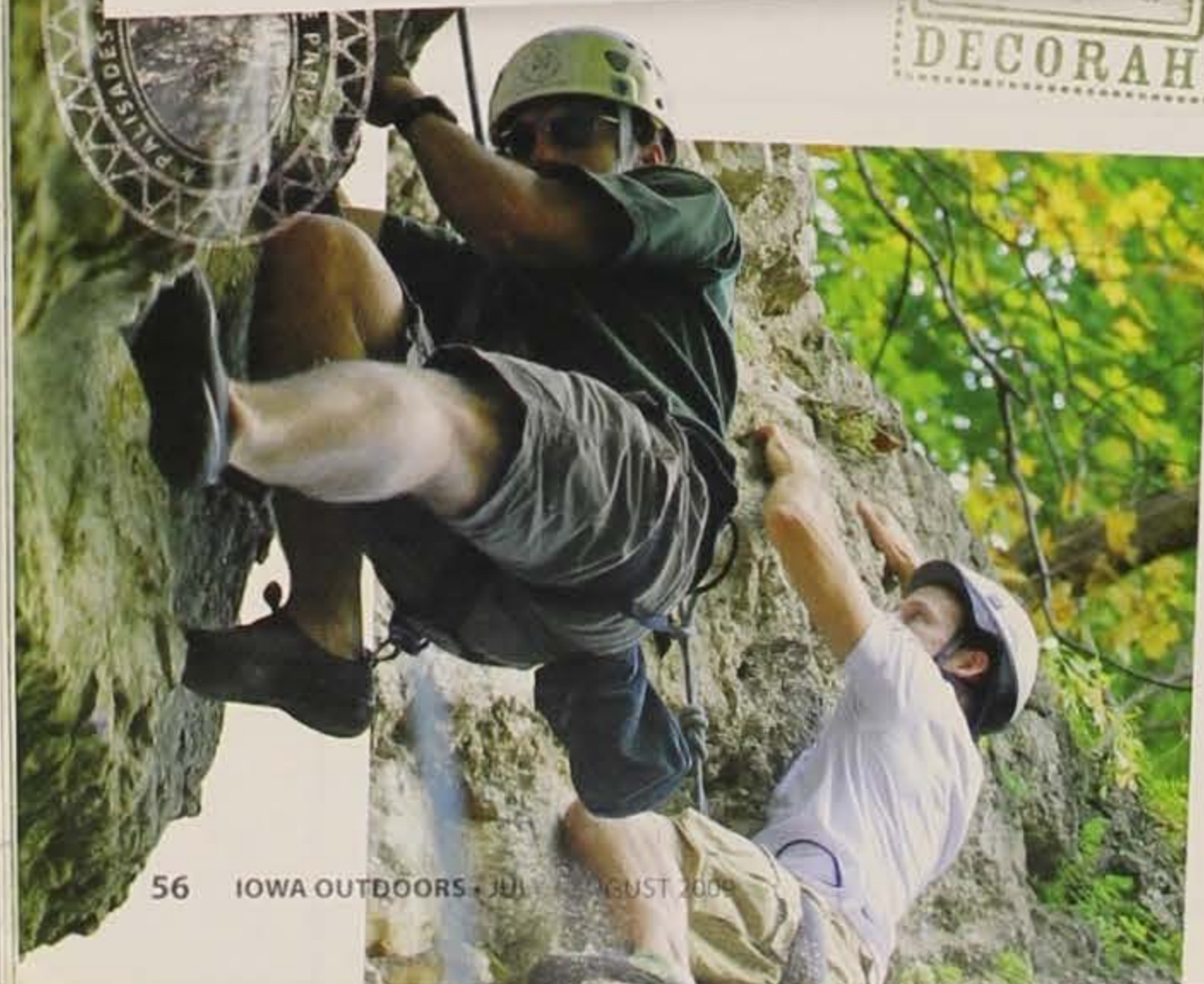
Rock Climbing Devils Tower, WYOMING

Just as the Wyoming destination had cultural and spiritual significance to American Indians, so the presence of burial mounds along the deep ravines and river bluffs of *Palisades-Kepler State Park* tell us that it, too, was a favorite among indigenous people.

Palisades-Kepler's cliffs also make it one of Iowa's top rock-climbing areas. Park ranger Jim Hansen and his crew help make the sport safe and accessible—stop by the ranger's office before climbing to check in.

Dave Patton, assistant director of the University of Iowa Recreation Services, says that Palisades holds the majority of Iowa's climbing history. "Royal Robbins climbed here," he says. The poet Carl Sandburg visited regularly in the 1920s and 1930s.

Patton's Touch the Earth Outdoor Rental Center is 3,500 square feet of tents, sleeping bags, kayaks and lots of other great gear needed to create your own adventure. It is part of the Hawkeye Tennis & Recreation Complex located off Prairie Meadow Drive in Iowa City, west of The University of Iowa Hall of Fame, east of the Hawkeye Storage Lots and north of Hawkeye Drive apartments



(319-335-9293; www.recserv.uiowa.edu/programs/TTE/index.html). For information on Palisades-Kepler State Park, easily one of Iowa's most breathtaking, call 319-895-6039.

Frank Lloyd Wright House, CHICAGO

Had you known him, you may have called architect Frank Lloyd Wright a control freak. He wanted to dictate not only the style of his home designs, but what went into them, from furniture to fabric. In that spirit, one may say that his house southeast of Independence, now run by the DNR for tours, is one of his most complete designs. Overlooking the *Wapsipinicon River near Quasqueton (Buchanan County)*, nearly everything in the *Walter Residence* bears Wright's imprint. He designed the furniture and tile, selected carpets, chose draperies and even picked out accessories. Learn more about Cedar Rock on the parks webpage or call (319-934-3572; iowadnr.gov).

COOL FACT: The indoor plants in this summer house need no watering; they're rooted into the bedrock of the limestone cliff upon which it perches.

Lake of the Woods, MINNESOTA/CANADA

Out-of-state licenses, gas money, and a lot of windshield time to get there. Those three good reasons, just off the top of our collective heads, to grab an old pair of tennies, load up the canoe and work your way along the *Wapsipinicon River* for walleye and northern pike. Also, we just like the name, which is Ojibwe for "*river abundant in swan-potatoes*," another word for wild artichokes, which were once found near its banks. Buy licenses online at iowadnr.gov.

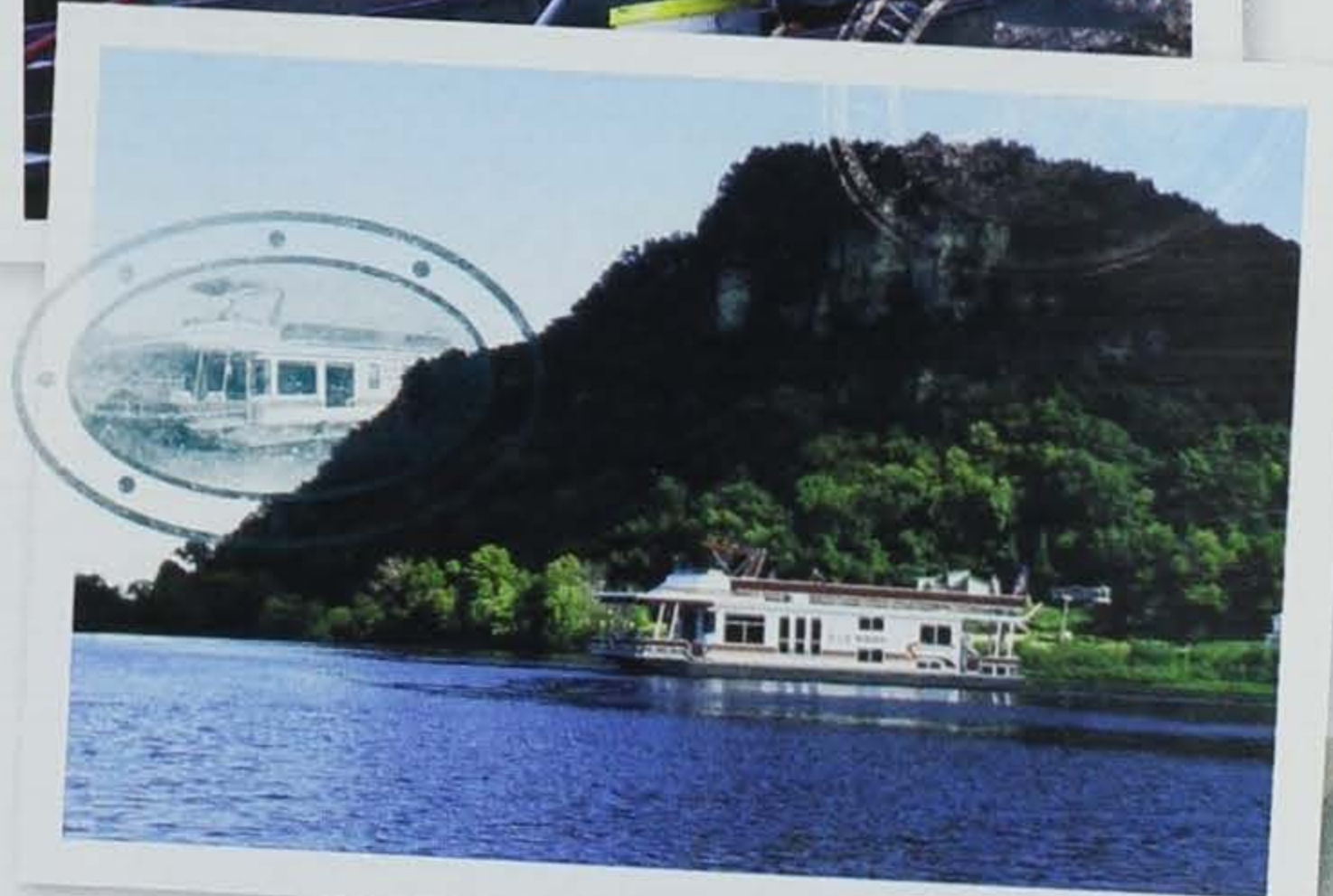
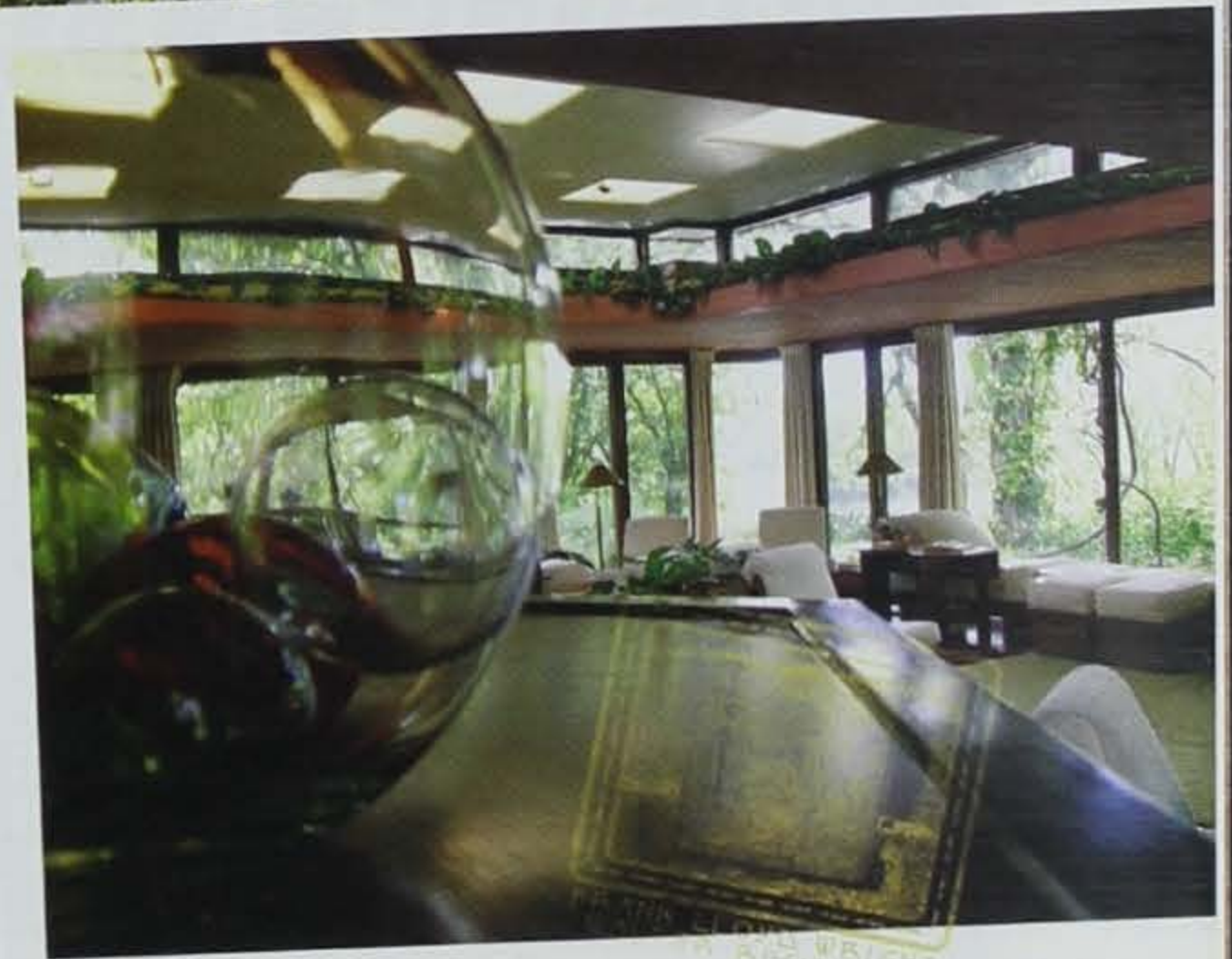
Houseboating Lake Powell, ARIZONA AND UTAH

Overnighters choose houseboating on this Colorado River reservoir on the Arizona-Utah border, characterized by deep sandstone walls, because of tight restrictions on camping in the surrounding Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

Same with overnighters on the *Mississippi River*, where camping is free but not always comfortable, especially on wild and undeveloped shoreline. From a *houseboat*, you can appreciate from a cozy distance this wily basin that supports 25 percent of all fish species in North America, including the paddlefish, which existed during prehistoric times. The river valley itself is the superhighway of migrating waterfowl—40 percent of North America's population, and 60 percent of its bird species. *S&S Houseboat Rentals in Lansing* (800-728-0131; ssboatrentals.com).

Atlantic Ocean Sailing Regatta

Clear Lake hosts sailboat regattas from July through September, (800-285-5338) and *Okoboji* hosts regattas in August. (*Clear Lake Yacht Club* clyciowa.com; *Okoboji Yacht Club* o-y-c.org; 712-337-0121). 🏠



OUTDOOR FUN WITHOUT THE DRAG

Tips To Keep The Good Times Rolling and Reduce Carbon Emissions

A lot of Iowans lead active lifestyles and depend on roof racks and vehicles to haul bikes, kayaks and camping gear. But just how much extra fuel is burned by keeping roof racks in place when not needed, adding extra drag to their car? And, more importantly, can removing the racks save money and reduce carbon footprints?

THE BASIC SCIENCE

It turns out that air drag is the single largest factor affecting fuel consumption while driving on level ground at normal highway speeds.

The faster you go, the worse it gets, because drag increases exponentially with speed. Driving twice as fast quadruples drag, and the amount of power required to overcome that resistance increases by a factor of eight (cube law: $2^3=8$).

Don't believe it? Think about what it feels like to stick your hand out the window at 80 mph versus 40 mph. At the higher speed, you're paying to overcome the added resistance by burning more gas.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

To improve your vehicle's aerodynamics, the primary solutions are to decrease speed, reduce the frontal area and decrease turbulent airflow.

Fortunately, there are easy ways to boost mileage and save money. Simply pay attention to the air flowing around your car. Here are some tips:

Your Speed

While 55 mph may be too slow for some drivers, staying in the 60-mph range could save quite a bit of money. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, driving at 80 mph is equivalent to adding roughly \$0.80 per gallon to the price of your fuel versus driving at 60 mph.

Roof Racks

Racks are great for getting weekend gear to the campground or river, but costly on the daily commute. It's best to use them when you need them and take them off when you don't. I've got my swap-time to less than five minutes.

Most sources claim roughly a 5 percent drop in fuel economy from roof racks; from personal experience, I've measured about a 10 percent drop. If you take the racks off of the car for half of your driving, you'll save an average of 15-30 gallons of gas per year. If you swap them 12 times per year, that can work out more than \$100 per hour for your efforts. Who knew aerodynamics could be so lucrative?

If that sounds like too much of a hassle, a wind-deflecting fairing for the front rack costs about \$50 and will do a good bit to reduce drag and noise. The wider the fairing the better; try to find one that smoothly bridges the gap between the windshield and the front bar.

A model that improves efficiency by even 3 percent will pay off the investment in a year of average driving (assuming 15,000 miles per year, 27.5 mpg, \$3.50 per gallon).

Other Options

Any time you have the option of carrying gear behind your vehicle rather than on top of, do it.

Trunk-mounted bicycle racks are typically less expensive, and offer substantial savings compared to carrying your bike on the roof.

On a recent 440-mile road trip, I found that having one bike on top of my car cut my mileage by 25 percent. That meant I burned almost 4 gallons of fuel just to move the bike.

On vehicles equipped with hitches, using a rear-mounted cargo box in place of a rooftop box will save lots of gas—and be easier to access.

If you have a rooftop box, for the sake of your wallet and the planet, take it off in between uses.

Most importantly, though, enjoy the time outdoors!

Aaron Westgate is a former special aide to Rocky Mountain Institute co-founder and Chief Scientist Amory Lovins.



TURN YOUR TV INTO A RERUN

BY BRIAN BUTTON

Call the Baywatch lifeguards to save us from a Hawaii Five-O-sized wave of waste. With the conversion to digital television broadcasts, millions of older analog televisions are needlessly headed for the landfill, creating a mess not even Sanford and Son could clean.

Through recycling, those old sets can become their very own rerun, providing the lead, plastic and other materials needed to create newer television sets while keeping hazardous materials from clogging landfill space.

"That also saves greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating the need to mine and smelt new metals to produce new products," says DNR environmental specialist Susan Johnson. She says a TV can contain 10 pounds of lead, plus mercury, arsenic and cadmium.

"By choosing to recycle a TV instead of putting it on the curb where it will end up in a landfill, Iowans can be proactive in keeping hazardous materials out of the environment," says Johnson. If landfilled, those heavy metals can contaminate land and water resources, posing a potential threat to human health and the environment.

TIPS FOR NEW TELEVISION SET PURCHASES

Televisions that meet the fall 2008 Energy Star specifications are up to 30 percent more efficient than conventional models. If all televisions sold in the United States met the Energy Star requirements, the energy savings would be about \$1 billion annually and greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by the equivalent of about 1 million cars. Ensure the Energy Star label is on that new TV model before you buy.

GET INVOLVED

To tune in to the nearest of 130-some permitted sites that accept televisions for recycling, visit www.iowadnr.gov/waste/recycling/tvrecycling.html or call Susan Johnson at 515-281-7982. Recycling fees, if any, vary by facility. Call ahead for hours and cost information.





Three Flavors Catfish



Three Flavors Catfish



Scott and Fawn Soulinthavong

At Fawn's Asian Cuisine in Des Moines, spouses Fawn and Scott Soulinthavong serve dishes reflective of their diverse family heritage. Outgoing Fawn knows customers by name and augments their fresh cuisine with herbs and local produce, even using exotic herbs grown at home. Nuoc mam, or fish sauce, is vital to make three flavor sauce and adds a rich depth of flavor. Visit an Asian grocery to buy a bottle.

Use deceptively simple techniques to create complex tastes and textures. HEALTHY, COLORFUL AND SAVORY, BATHE YOUR NEXT CATCH IN THESE DISTINCT FLAVORS.

Freshwater fish plays an important role in Asian cuisine and restaurant owner Fawn Soulinthavong has many unique methods to prepare fish and gladly offers advice to her patrons. From a summer fish salad to a light meal of fish spring rolls or grilled stuffed fish, Fawn has versatile sauces to fit whatever is biting for anglers.

Any fish substitutes well in these dishes for crisp fried whole catfish. The fish can also be grilled or broiled.

"The sauces are easy to make. They can be made ahead and taken along on camping trips," says Fawn.

To Prepare Fish: Score with knife on both sides in a diagonal crosshatch pattern every inch. Cut halfway to bone. Heat oil to 350°F. Fry fish 10-15 minutes or until crisp, but do

not overcook. Place on paper towel to remove excess oil. Line a serving plate with shredded lettuce. Place fish on top of lettuce and add stir-fried vegetables.

Sweet, salty and sour, this dish is delicious. Serve with basmati rice or long-grain jasmine rice.

THREE FLAVOR CATFISH

- 1-2 pounds whole fish
- Vegetable oil for deep frying
- ¼ small head lettuce, shredded
- ½ cup sliced green and red peppers
- ¼ cup chopped green onion
- ¼ cup sliced white onions

Three Flavor Sauce

- ¼ cup hot water
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon MSG (optional)
- 2 tablespoons Asian fish sauce (Nuoc Mam)

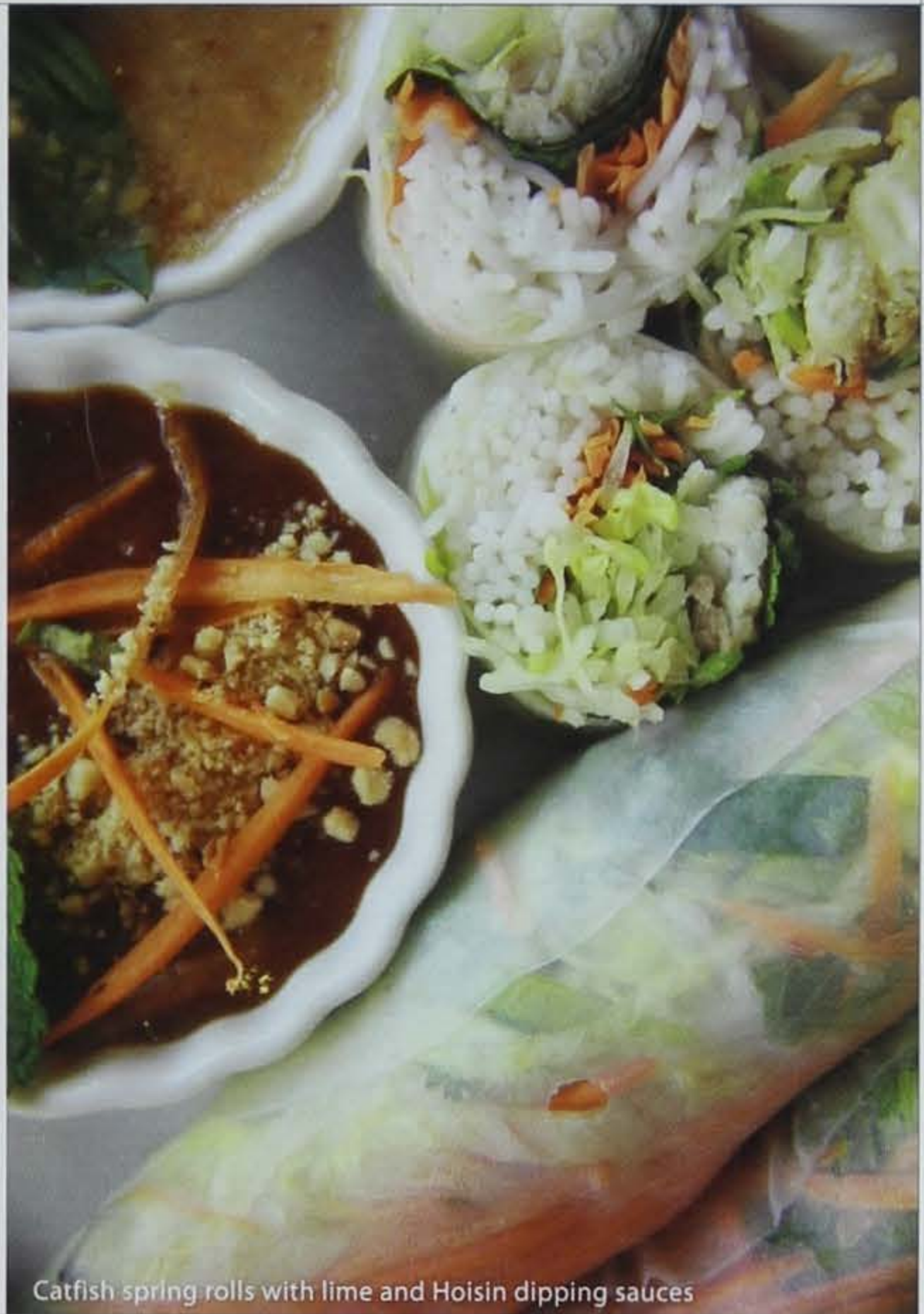
- ½ tablespoon fresh squeezed lime
- 1 stalk green onion chopped (optional)
- 1 tablespoon sliced cilantro
- 1 tablespoon fried, chopped onion

Dissolve sugar and MSG in water. Add remaining ingredients. Pour over fish and rice or serve on side.

CATFISH SPRING ROLLS

- 10-15 ounces catfish fillets
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ head shredded lettuce
- 1 medium carrot, shredded
- ½ cup fresh mixed mint, cilantro, basil
- 1 bag rice stick noodles (vermicelli)
- 6 round rice paper wrappers (22-25 centimeter or 10-inch size)

Bring a pot of water to boil, add



Catfish spring rolls with lime and Hoisin dipping sauces

noodles and cook for 10 minutes. Turn off heat, and with lid on, let rest for 2-3 minutes. Drain and blanch with cold water, then set aside for 15 minutes.

Lightly coat catfish on each side with cornstarch, cook in frying pan with olive oil on medium heat on both sides for 10 minutes or until lightly crisp.

Lime Dipping Sauce

- ½ cup crushed peanuts
- ¼ cup hot water
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon MSG (optional)
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Asian fish sauce (Nuoc mam sauce from an Asian grocery store)
- ½ tablespoon fresh squeezed lime juice

Dissolve sugar and MSG in water, add

remaining items. Serve with rolls.

Hoisin Dipping Sauce

- ½ cup hoisin sauce
- 1 tablespoon tamarind paste
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons water

Mix until smooth and serve with rolls. Dip single sheets of rice paper into pan of lukewarm water until soft. Place on a flat surface. Place 1/3 cup noodles onto lower third of paper, an inch from edge. Add 1/3 cup lettuce and 1-2 pinches of carrot, cilantro, mint and basil leaves. Add a small, thin strip of fish. Take bottom of sheet and pull up and over half of the ingredient pile. Push the ingredients down, then fold an inch or two of the right and left sides of wrapper towards center.

Roll up, tucking tightly with fingers as you go.

TOMATO CATFISH

- 1-2 pounds whole fish
- Vegetable oil for deep frying
- ¼ small head lettuce, shredded

Tomato Catfish Sauce

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon MSG (optional)
- 2 medium fresh tomatoes, chopped
- ½ cup green and red peppers, chopped
- ¼ cup sliced, white onions
- 2 cloves chopped garlic or ½ teaspoon of minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon oyster sauce
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- ½ tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon sesame oil
- ¼ teaspoon white pepper

Wild Cuisine *Kitchenside*



Fawn washes catfish with baking soda to improve the taste. She grills cleaned and scaled whole fish quickly on each side, then wraps them in foil and removes from the heat to let them steam several minutes. The skin and bones easily peel away, leaving moist, tender fish. Her sauces are so renown, that local anglers are known to buy them by the gallon to take on fishing trips.



Tomato Catfish

Tomato Catfish

Cook fish in same manner described earlier. Any vegetables are good to stir fry, so reap summer's bonanza and use fresh local or garden-grown veggies. Heat olive oil and garlic in frying pan or wok on medium heat until garlic is golden brown. Add tomatoes and fry until soft. Add rest of ingredients but save the sesame oil and white pepper and add just before turning off heat.

GRILLED OR BAKED STUFFED FISH

Whole crappies, carp or other fish

2 stalks lemongrass

2 cloves garlic

¼ cup ginger

3 onions

½ teaspoon each salt and pepper

Tablespoon fennel

Fresh basil leaves

Another simple recipe for the campground, the ingredients can be prepared in

advance or chopped up at the picnic table. Scale fish and rinse the cavity clean. Peel off tough outer layer from lemongrass and discard. Use a food processor to chop lemongrass, garlic, ginger, onions and fennel.

Rub fish cavity with salt and pepper. Stuff the cavity with chopped items and basil leaves. Score fish on outside, making diagonal cuts every two inches. Fish can be grilled, steamed or baked. Serve with rice and the grilled fish sauce below.

Grilled Fish Sauce

2 parts soy sauce

1 part lime juice

Mix soy sauce and lime juice in a two-to-one ratio to desired quantity. Use for the stuffed fish or with summer salad recipe.

SUMMER SALAD WITH FISH

Grilled, steamed or baked freshwater fish

Shredded iceberg lettuce

Croutons

Package vermicelli noodles

These noodles puff up immensely when deep-fried in hot oil. Follow cooking directions on bag. Break fish apart into small pieces. Toss lettuce, fish, croutons, noodles and sauce together. Use either grilled fish sauce, three flavor sauce or lime dipping sauce on salad.

Fawn's Asian Cuisine

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Shore Lunch

Golden brown fish fillets. Crispy fried potatoes. Rich, savory baked beans. This is traditional shore lunch, friends, and you won't find the details in a fancy French cookbook. This is where good friends meet, world problems are solved and the palate is treated to the most agreeable unification of ingredients since beer and pizza. It beats a cold ham sandwich anyday.

Shore lunch is what you make it. Go simple or jazz it up. Prepared fish coating, canned potatoes or store-bought baked beans will fill the void, but for something a little extra special, make it from scratch.

Make easy breading by combining equal parts flour and cornflake crumbs, generously seasoned with your favorite herbs and spices. For texture and sweetness, add an equal part cornmeal.

Potatoes can be pre-boiled or baked to speed cooking. Add onions, green or red peppers, Lawry's Seasoned Salt and butter for American fries that will have your partners asking for more.

Canned baked beans are great, and can be heated right in the can, negating the need for a saucepan. But for better beans try this recipe, easily pre-made and reheated onshore. These beans need nothing else, but for the true carnivore, add six slices of crumbled, cooked bacon.

BAKED BEANS

4 cans pork and beans, drained

½ cups ketchup

½ cups brown sugar

½ cups white sugar

dash of ginger

Liquid smoke to taste

1 tablespoon butter on top

Mix and bake at 275° for 2 hours.

Homemade Deep Fryer

No room for cast iron? Cook in a can. Take one or two 2-pound metal coffee cans and punch two holes on side of the open end. Tie a wire coat hanger into the holes to make a bail handle. Fill can half-full with Crisco for frying fish. Put just enough in the second can to fry potatoes. Cap. There's no spilling, and the Crisco can be used several times.

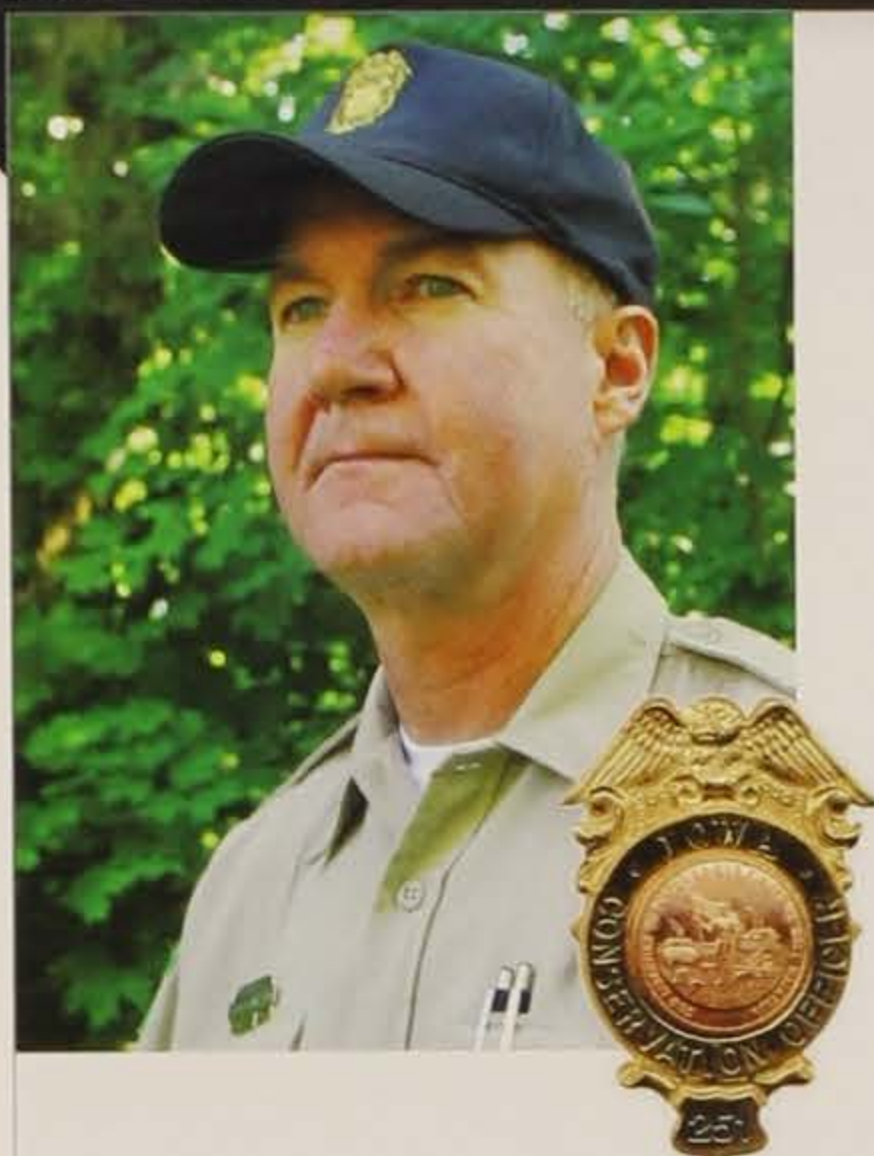
Be a good Scout

Pack out what you pack in. Avoid toxic emissions and toxic ashes by not burning plastics. Leave no trace—police the area for any litter, making sure to completely extinguish and bury campfire ashes.

What You Need

1 to 2 frying pans, small bottle cooking oil, fish coating-store bought or homemade, potatoes, onions, peppers, baked beans.





Waterlogged

Sometimes working on the water leaves me, well, speechless. Another day working the lake last summer made me wish that sometimes people would take another moment to think before they go out.

It was a hot, muggy Iowa day. Had I not been working, I probably would have headed for the water myself. There was a cloud bank building off to the west, but the day was relatively calm, and I took a spot in line waiting for my turn at the boat ramp. That in itself can be a spectacle, as people who don't spend much time on the water line up to retake Backing 101, snaking side-to-side down the ramp repeatedly. But, hey, we all have to learn.

After all these years, I've pretty much got my routine down before I even get in line. I've checked the drain plug, released my tie downs and stowed my gear onboard. It doesn't take me much time to coast down the ramp, jump out and release the winch, pull the boat off the trailer and tie it off to the dock, and head back for the parking lot. I've learned from my share of dropping wheels off the ramp, leaving tie downs still attached, forgetting the drain plug or the myriad other things all boaters have either done or will do at some point. Don't you hate learning by doing?

That particular day everything was going as planned. I started my outboard and pulled away from the ramp. I cruised off shore and turned, waited, and watched as some personal watercrafts buzzed up and down the shoreline. I kind of figured what would happen next, and, sure enough, it did. One of them sped between shore and the 300-foot marker, shooting a rooster tail while waving at his friends. He made his turn and saw me waving back—with my blue light flashing.

Motioning for him to pull up beside me, I checked his safety equipment, and asked him the question for which I already knew the answer. "Do you know what that buoy is for?" I asked, pointing at the bobbing white and orange pylon.

"Uh, not really," he answered. He must have missed that part on the personal watercraft certification test I thought. So I started to refresh his memory of the 10-mile-per-hour speed limit between the buoy and shore. "You were going way too fast," I said.

"Oh, I didn't know that. Thanks, I won't do that again," he said as he pushed away from my boat and reached over to start his engine.

"Please shut your engine off. I'm afraid we aren't done yet." I asked him for some identification, which I well knew was likely not in his possession. A few minutes later I collected his signature and sent him back out on the water. I wasn't trying to ruin his day, but, hopefully after that he wouldn't be the next personal watercraft vs. fixed object accident report I would have to fill out.

I made a circle around the lake. I noticed some people fishing within a no wake zone where they were more sheltered from the waves kicked up by passing water skiers. I noticed a couple of anglers on a two-person fiberglass bass boat. You've probably seen them. They're





those shallow draft fiberglass platforms with a couple of rigid seats sitting high above the platform. Usually designed for an electric motor, they are great for going into backwaters and fit in the back of a pickup.

But they aren't the most stable craft out there. I decided I would come back later to check fishing licenses, and I made another pass around the lake "showing the flag" among the personal watercrafts and the waterskiers, just to let them know I was out there.

While cruising into a dock for a break, the sky began to darken. That front was moving in. The wind had picked up very quickly. The waves were turning to white caps, and some were taking the hint and heading for the boat ramp. I made another pass to see if anyone was having trouble, and I could see something bobbing in the waves. I got out my binoculars to look closer. Sure enough, the bass boat was out there, and it was obvious the water and the weather was more than it and its electric motor could handle.

Pushing the throttle, I cut through the waves and pulled up beside them. They had taken the smartest route, staying close to shore, but they were having a rough go of it. With what little freeboard their boat had, it was easy for me to see all their gear below their seats, and life jackets were not part of it. "Pretty rough out here," I said, "Looks like you're having some trouble."

"Yeah, this came up pretty quick," they said.

"Look, I'm worried about you capsizing. I'm going to get on the windward side of you to break the waves a bit. You stay close to shore, and I'm going to make sure you get back."

"That would be great. Thanks," they said.

I opened a hatch and pulled out two life jackets. "One more thing, I notice you don't have any of these," I said as I handed them over to them. They took them, and they looked like they thought it wasn't so great that I had noticed.

It was slow going but we hugged the shore and made our way into the ramp. "When you get your boat loaded, come over and talk to me," I told them. I tied up to a dock and wrote up the citation while I waited. They loaded up and brought my life jackets back to me.

"I'm sorry, but you have to have a life jacket for everyone on board. I'm afraid I just don't give any breaks for that. You have two violations here, but I'm going to just write you one," I explained to the boat operator.

"I'm sorry," he said, and I told him no apology was necessary and sometimes mistakes are made. "We just went out fishing and forgot them."

I understood, but as I headed back for the boat ramp to escape the storm, I thought how a calm, sunny day turned the other way. The water leaves very little room for error and sometimes when you forget that, the water only takes a split second to remind you. 🐼

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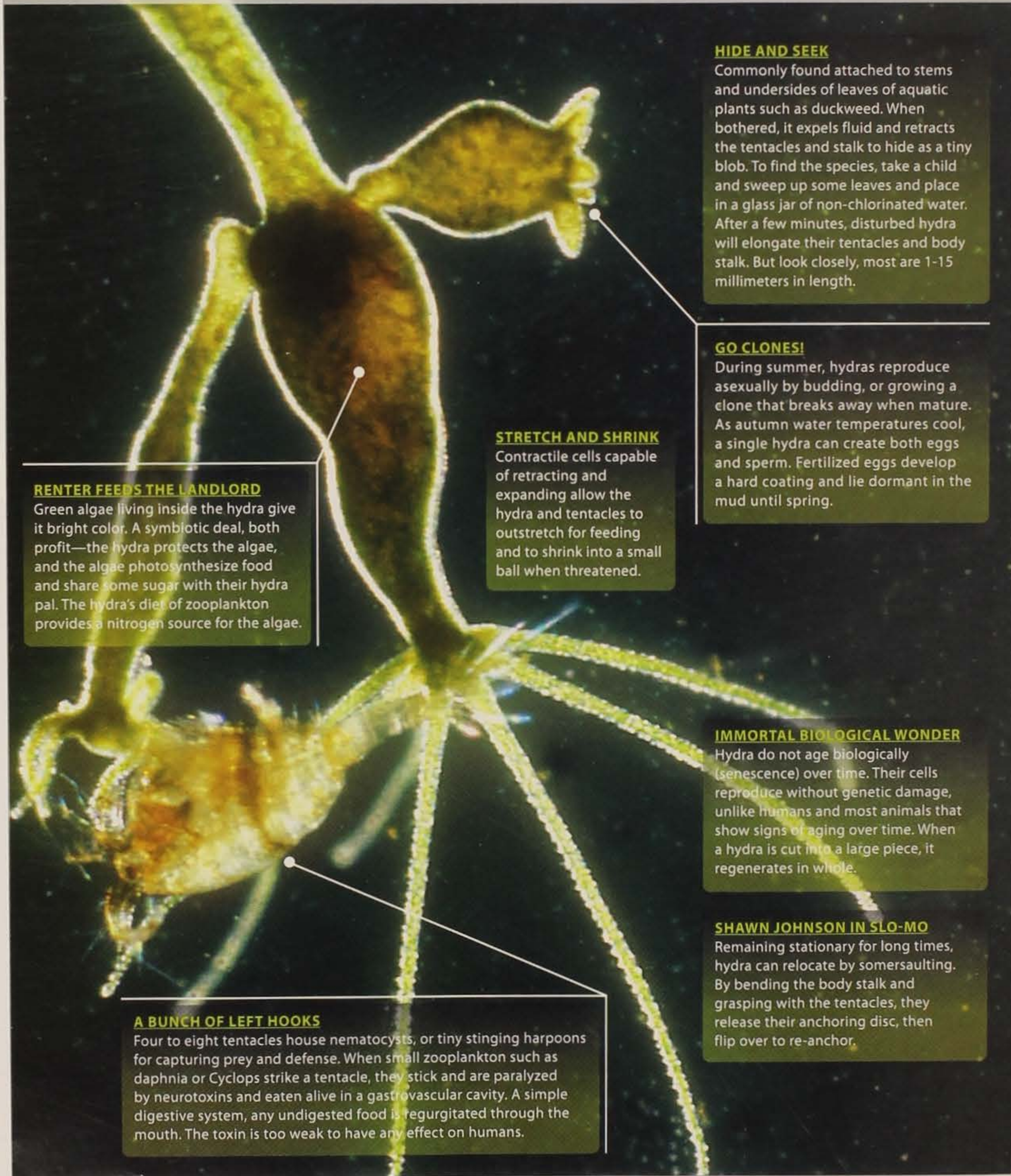
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THE GREEN HYDRA (*Hydra Viridis*)

Hydra viridis is found in water bodies. Named after the nine-headed, poisonous monster of Greek myth that could re-grow a head cut off by Hercules, hydra are relatives of coral, sea anemone and jellyfish. Once mistaken for plants, these simple animals have many covetous features—they regenerate lost parts, clone themselves, use poison, their tenants feed them and they don't age. The hydra makes myth reality.



RENTER FEEDS THE LANDLORD

Green algae living inside the hydra give it bright color. A symbiotic deal, both profit—the hydra protects the algae, and the algae photosynthesize food and share some sugar with their hydra pal. The hydra's diet of zooplankton provides a nitrogen source for the algae.

STRETCH AND SHRINK

Contractile cells capable of retracting and expanding allow the hydra and tentacles to outstretch for feeding and to shrink into a small ball when threatened.

HIDE AND SEEK

Commonly found attached to stems and undersides of leaves of aquatic plants such as duckweed. When bothered, it expels fluid and retracts the tentacles and stalk to hide as a tiny blob. To find the species, take a child and sweep up some leaves and place in a glass jar of non-chlorinated water. After a few minutes, disturbed hydra will elongate their tentacles and body stalk. But look closely, most are 1-15 millimeters in length.

GO CLONES!

During summer, hydras reproduce asexually by budding, or growing a clone that breaks away when mature. As autumn water temperatures cool, a single hydra can create both eggs and sperm. Fertilized eggs develop a hard coating and lie dormant in the mud until spring.

IMMORTAL BIOLOGICAL WONDER

Hydra do not age biologically (senescence) over time. Their cells reproduce without genetic damage, unlike humans and most animals that show signs of aging over time. When a hydra is cut into a large piece, it regenerates in whole.

SHAWN JOHNSON IN SLO-MO

Remaining stationary for long times, hydra can relocate by somersaulting. By bending the body stalk and grasping with the tentacles, they release their anchoring disc, then flip over to re-anchor.

A BUNCH OF LEFT HOOKS

Four to eight tentacles house nematocysts, or tiny stinging harpoons for capturing prey and defense. When small zooplankton such as daphnia or Cyclops strike a tentacle, they stick and are paralyzed by neurotoxins and eaten alive in a gastrovascular cavity. A simple digestive system, any undigested food is regurgitated through the mouth. The toxin is too weak to have any effect on humans.



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Megan holding a
pallid sturgeon

FACT: Biology majors can
study everything from
fish and wildlife to plant
ecosystems to human
medicine

After a snorkeling trip during her freshman year of high school, Megan Thul thought that she might like to study fish. As a Biology student at Iowa State University, she was convinced. With the help of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Megan had the opportunity to study pallid sturgeon in the Missouri River. She worked to re-establish this endangered native species. With this experience on her resume, Megan hopes to begin her career on the water.

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Andrew Clemens, "The Sand Artist of McGregor" created this image from 42 shades of sand grains during the late 1800s. His works are on display at the State Historical Museum in Des Moines. Many works took a year to complete, pushing each sand grain into place in a glass bottle using sharp sticks. Inside, see how to make simple kid-friendly sand art, a perfect campground activity.

