



BRIEFLY

DUNLAP

Nature Readers Book Club May 21

The Elkhart County Parks Nature Readers Book Club will gather to discuss “Diana of the Dunes” by Janet Zenke Edwards May 21 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Ox Bow Haus Shelter at Ox Bow County Park.

Offered the third Tuesday of every month, the Nature Readers Book Club offers participants the opportunity to enjoy nature-themed books through reading and discussion.

Upcoming selections for the book club include:

- June 18 – “Foxfire 3” by Eliot Wigginton

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. Register online at elkhartcountyparks.org.

Ox Bow County Park is located at 23033 C.R. 45 in Dunlap.

More information, including a schedule of upcoming events, is available at elkhartcountyparks.org, on Facebook @ElkhartCountyParks, or by calling the administration office at 535-6458.

ELKHART

Storm drain art project underway

Local artists are preparing to paint colorful and informative murals on sidewalks near storm drains in downtown Elkhart. This storm drain art project has two main goals — the beautification of select storm drains and increasing public awareness about how pollutants get into local waterways.

Since placing a call for artists earlier this year, the city officials have selected eight murals to be completed by the end of May. The theme of the project: “Our rivers are a resource worth protecting” will focus on the importance of protecting local waterways from pollutants that flow into storm drains, city officials said.

The murals will be at the following locations:

- Main Street, in front of Hopman Jewelers,
- High Street, near the Elkhart Public Library,
- Second Street, near the Elkhart Public Library,
- Second Street, near the Elkhart Parks Department,
- NIBCO Parkway, near the NIBCO Water and Ice Park,
- Marion Street, near the Midwest Museum of American Art,
- Waterfall Drive, near the intersection of Lexington Avenue; and
- Waterfall Drive, between High and Franklin streets

In preparation, artists have already begun applying a base layer or primer that will help the rest of their paint stay in place once applied. City officials said, the projects will be marked with safety cones to alert the public to possible wet paint and to help people avoid stepping in the middle of a work in progress.

In total, the city received 26 mural submissions from 16 artists. This creative community project is made possible through local storm water fees, business donations and the time and talent of local artists.

Additional information regarding the artists and their murals will be available online at www.StormDrainArt.org in the coming weeks.

LAGRANGE

Library to host ‘A Conversation with Bill Kenley’

Bill Kenley will speak at the LaGrange County Public Library at 1 p.m. May 18. The conversation with the Eugene & Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Award honoree is part of the Novel Conversations Speakers Program, sponsored by Indiana Humanities with support from The Glick Fund, a fund of the Central Indiana Community Foundation.

Kenley is an award-winning English teacher at Noblesville High School and author of “High School Runner (Freshman),” a fictional love letter to high-school cross-country running. “High School Runner (Freshman)” is Bill’s debut novel and first in a series of four planned books highlighting the protagonist Sherman Kindle’s journey through school and the lessons he learns through running. Kenley is himself an avid runner with multiple Boston Marathons under his belt.

The event is free and open to the public. The library is located at 203 W. Spring St.

To learn more about the upcoming conversation with Bill Kenley, visit www.lagrange.lib.in.us

YOU SHOULD KNOW ...

GREG AND JULIE BAUMGARTNER

Heart attack a ‘wake-up call’ for couple

SHEILA SELMAN
THE GOSHEN NEWS

Part 2 of 2

Greg and Julie Baumgartner of Milford are prime examples of the benefits of the work-based program Get Fit Get Healthy offered through Goshen Health.

Greg, 65, had been part of Get Fit Get Healthy at Jayco for several years. On Jan. 31, 2018, Greg had a heart attack. “At that point, you begin to think about a lot of things you hadn’t thought about before and obviously health was one of those,” he said.

Once he recovered and got back to work, Greg was put on a program at Goshen Heart & Vascular Rehab Center. He went through 12 weeks of afternoons of treadmills, ellipticals and bicycles to get back into shape.

But also, at the same time, he said, when that organized exercise and getting healthy thing comes to an end, “you have to take it the rest of the way yourself.”

He had to take a look at his diet, exercise — everything about his life health related.

By that point, Greg had been with Get Fit Get Health for some time but he knew he had changes to make. “My weight was about 40 pounds more than now, my cholesterol was real high and had been that way for years,” he said. In the process, he worked on his weight and exercise.

But not without his wife Julie, who at 67 admits she was overweight and could get a bit winded while playing with their grandchildren.

“Greg had been a member before I was,” she said. In December 2017, Greg signed Julie up for the program without telling her. “I was not really happy,” she said. “I didn’t want to go in and meet some slender young thing and be overweight and tired.”

But Julie acquiesced and, “As it turned out, our counselor, Britany Bronkema, was wonderful and encouraging,” she said.

When Greg had his heart attack then it 2018, “It was a wake-up call,” Julie said. “We immediately began to make changes. The truth is, it’s about like what you read: we ate a lot less, got rid of junk food, Greg started exercising more. When you feel better, there’s an incentive to do more.”



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

FROM LEFT are Jeff Norment, Get Fit Get Healthy; Greg Baumgartner; Julie Baumgartner; Kristin Hicks, Get Fit Get Healthy; and Joel Conrad, Get Fit Get Healthy.

It’s that attitude of change that earned the couple Get Fit Get Healthy’s Most Improved award at the program’s banquet earlier this year. “(The heart attack) was the kick in the pants we needed,” she said.

Julie ended up losing about 65 pounds.

“It affected the both of us,” she said. “The better we felt and looked, the easier it was to stick to a regimen.”

The couple cut their portions in half and kicked junk food out of the house. “We don’t follow any diet program religiously,” Julie said.

However, every day Greg goes to work with almond and Brazil nuts in his lunch and a piece of fruit to eat with his sandwich.

He comes home from work every day, knowing that Julie will have a meal on the table with the correct portions and they do not eat after 7 p.m.

Greg said he calls Julie the food police and a nagger, but in a loving way. He gave up soft drinks and now drinks green tea.

“I send him every day with iced green tea — that was a huge change in his diet,” Julie said.

And when their friends ask how they’ve managed to lose weight, Julie half-jokingly

replies, “Deprivation.”

Greg said he has never felt hungry or anything like that. What he was doing was mindless eating.

“Once that’s to the front of your mind that you’ve got a problem with cholesterol and fat, once you’re thinking about it,” he said, “it’s more of a bad habit that got broke rather than deprivation.”

Julie said their Christmas gift to each other this year was a treadmill.

“We find that we have a lot more energy,” she said. “It’s really a delight to be able to play with our grandchildren — we have 10 grandchildren — and not be winded anymore. We chase them around the yard. ... It’s kind of fun feeling.”

Julie also found she actually enjoyed shopping for clothes. “It’s life changing,” she said of the weight loss. “I used to be out of breath walking from one end of our house to the other.”

Taking care of others had distracted Julie from her own health.

“We refocused on ourselves,” and she learned that was perfectly OK to do.

They also don’t beat themselves up. If they are at a birthday party and want a piece of cake

or pizza, they eat it. But it stops there.

Julie added, “We are not the poster children. You are never going to see us in Spandex. We are going to be as healthy as can be and love life.” They park their car as far away as they can when at the grocery store and walk or make a point to make multiple trips up and down the stairs.

Greg said, “At 65, I’ve been at the job for 16 years and would like to do it for another five years minimum. ... You can’t do that if you can’t walk or you feel bad all the time. That’s another big incentive. You just don’t want to come to retirement age and be disabled or have so many aches and pains you can’t get around.”

Companies interested in more information about Get Fit Get Healthy can visit <http://businesshealthadvantage.com/> or call 574-535-9166.

Sheila Selman is regional editor/digital content editor for The Goshen News. Contact her at 574-533-2151, ext. 311, at selman@goshennews.com and follow her on Twitter at @sselman_TGN or on Facebook at Sheila Selman Journalist.

Small trees, steps now will grow into a greener future

Last Saturday, Trees For Goshen volunteers planted 33 trees around Goshen. We started on the north end of town in the blocks around Walnut Park, digging holes and tucking in redbuds, serviceberries, honey locusts, American plums and swamp chestnut oaks. From there we moved south into the East Lincoln Crossroads neighborhood, putting in hazelnuts, scarlet oak, tulip trees and more American plum. We ended up along South Third Street planting river birch, a catalpa, oaks and serviceberries.

The trees we planted are not huge at this point, most of them were in 3-gallon root containers, and about 4 feet tall. So they were easy to move around, didn’t require a lot of digging and therefore didn’t take long to plant. Underground utilities were located a week ahead so that we could be sure not to plant on top of gas or water or sewer or electric lines. With 18 volunteers working together and divided into two working groups, we were finished with the task by noon.

The three neighborhoods where these trees were planted were chosen by Trees For Goshen because their existing tree populations are aging and because of openings that can receive trees now. Residents were contacted, and those who responded were helped



Aaron Sawatsky-Kingsley
NATURALIZED MID-AMERICAN

to select trees, which were planted in various spots in their property. A contribution from residents to help pay for these trees is encouraged, though not required. Additionally, there were several residents from outside these three neighborhoods who ordered trees, picked them up, and planted them on their own.

In some ways this is a very modest kind of planting event. Not quite three dozen small trees stuck in the ground. It will be several years before they begin to branch out significantly, and more years yet before they are large enough to create real canopy, real shade. But this is the way all trees grow, and this is the way that any project begins. A little bit here, a little bit there, a bit more over on that side, a few more people catch on, and then slowly something builds which interests more and more folks, which they discover fits their character, and from which they derive benefits.

That’s part of what I found myself thinking about Tuesday night at the City Council meeting, as Youth Caucus members presented their environmental resolution. There were a lot of big ideas in this document, representing a lot of hard work of their own and hard work which many people around the world have been engaged in for years. Each aspect of that work required little steps along the way. Each bit of knowledge and understanding required new relationships and new perspectives. Each bit of research required small questions, and hard questions, and wrong questions, and right questions, in order to get to the big questions, in order to approach the big answers. Each action required a bit of trust, and a willingness to try again, in order to craft proposals for the next action, which demonstrate how something can be done, and even why something should be done.

Often, it takes the keen minds and fresh eyes and direct words of young people to crystallize and catalyze action, which the rest of us are slow to take. The youth finished their presentation. Lots of people spoke in support. The City Council voted in favor. The time has come to acknowledge the slow, painstaking work, and the momentum that has gathered around it, and which was brilliantly shown to us: we

have to accept responsibility for adapting to a changing world.

Trees are both a functional and symbolic way to take responsibility. Their presence sequesters carbon dioxide, removes airborne pollutants, reduces energy consumption, lowers temperatures and captures precipitation. At the same time their beauty and persistence inspire us to patience and generosity. The Youth Environmental Resolution included Goshen’s 45% tree canopy goal because of the direct way in which planting and caring for existing trees can positively impact our climate now and in the future, and can positively impact the way we operate in the world now and in the future. Trees are among the cheapest and easiest ways to reshape our environment. And they love to grow here. We are incredibly fortunate.

The little trees planted a week ago are small steps taken toward our proposed canopy goal and the benefits it will generate. Those small steps are preceded by many before — small trees growing today in the company of older ones, which, with our help, will blossom into a mighty future forest, one tree at a time.

Aaron Sawatsky-Kingsley is Goshen’s urban forester. He can be reached at aaronkingsley@maplenet.net or at 537-0986.