

[potluck]

Trees of Knowledge

According to lore, Isaac Newton first contemplated the laws of gravity when he watched an apple fall out of a tree in his garden in Woolsthorpe, England. A seedling from that tree is showcased in the Living Heritage Tree Museum, a park on the northern shore of Storm Lake.

Many of the nearly four dozen trees in the park capture highlights of American history, including seedlings from trees that sheltered heroes of the War of Independence, the Civil War, and World War I. Other notable specimens include seedlings traced to John Chapman (aka Johnny Appleseed), Colonel Sanders (of Kentucky Fried Chicken), and the Ingalls family (*Little House on the Prairie*). And, of course, there is the American sycamore that was germinated in outer space during the *Apollo 14* moon flight in 1971.

The park, the inspiration of Mayor Wilbur Tucker, was established in 1987 with the volunteer support of a group that gathered the seedlings for the trees that populate the park. The park's continued appeal is due in large measure to the efforts of one young man, Darren Johnson. As part of his 2008 Eagle Scout Project, Johnson undertook a significant facelift of the park grounds and prepared a self-guided tour based on extensive historical research. — M.G.



COURTESY DARREN JOHNSON

For directions to the Living Heritage Tree Museum, as well as a downloadable MP3 guide to the history of each tree, visit www.heritagetreemuseum.com.



COURTESY JAMES MOORE

Broadcasting on Sunlight

KRUU in Fairfield (www.kruufm.com online and 100.1 on the local FM dial) was the first station in Iowa to broadcast using solar power. Donated solar panels and a small grant set the low-power station on a path to reducing its environmental impact, says station general manager James Moore. In addition to a solar-powered studio and transmitter, the station is installing energy-efficient windows and asthma- and allergy-friendly flooring. "We gained 15–20 percent in energy savings, but the solar panels are symbolic of a broader move in the direction of sustainability," says Moore. "KRUU is community radio at its finest — a tribute to a green-thinking community that is focused on what's possible." — C.B.

Cinema Under the Stars

Once upon a distant time, Iowa had dozens of drive-in movie theaters where previews began at dusk and feature films were shown against a backdrop of starlight. As the decades passed, rising property values and changing cinema tastes drove most of them out of business. Today five remain.

What's old is new: Three of those five have opened in just the past five years. "I loved going to the drive-in when my husband and I were dating," says Pam Kemp, who with her husband, Gaylord, opened Superior 71 Drive-In in Spirit Lake in 2008.

Kelly Daniels envisioned a family affair. "We wanted something fun to do with our kids." She and her husband, Shawn, opened the Grand View Drive-In in 2007 on 15 acres of farmland outside Grandview.

For those who haven't been to a drive-in of late, technology has affected that outdoor cinema experience. Instead of the clunky speakers that hang on your window (you remember them), your car radio broadcasts the film's audio. — M.G.

Drive-Ins.com lists 72 Iowa drive-in theaters; 67 have closed. These remain open:

61 DRIVE-IN

Maquoketa / 563-674-4367
<http://maquoketa.com/61drivein/>

GRAND VIEW DRIVE-IN

Grandview / 319-729-2929
www.grandviewdriveintheater.com

Sunshine Mine Drive-In

Centerville / 641-856-3402

Superior 71 Drive-In

Spirit Lake / 712-336-0700
www.superior71drivein.com

Valle Drive-In

Newton / 641-792-3558
www.valledrive-in.com