

The OREGON OBSERVER

Locally Grown



by Jim Byrne

Books & Cards
815 N. Main St., Oregon
(608) 835-3191
M-F 8:30-8:00, Sat 8:30-4:00,
Sun 9:00-2:00

UN54416

Vol. 127, No. 4

Thursday, July 23, 2009

12 pages, 1 section

\$1.00

Library, Historical Society team for community book

By Bill Livick

The Oregon Public Library will be celebrating its centennial in October 2010, and library officials had been planning to mark the occasion by producing a library centennial booklet.

However, following a proposal by a local grant writer and editor to lead the production, the Library's planned centennial booklet has grown into a larger community book project that will "celebrate the past, embrace the present and envision the future," says Lisa Hustad, president of the Oregon Public Library Board of Directors.

Hustad explained that earlier this month, Sarah White submitted a proposal to serve as project manager, writer and editor of the book. White recently produced a book for the Goodman Community Center in Madison titled "An East Side Album," and proposed producing a similar book for Oregon, at a total cost of about \$25,000.

Meyers, a member of the Oregon Area Historical Society Board of Directors, have met with White and are excited about the chance to produce a new story of the village's past, present and future.

The cost and scope of the project "depends on grants and what we can raise here in the community," Hustad said. "It's hard times right now, but hard times are often when communities pull together and do the type of work that we're hoping to see done in producing this book."

She said White's proposal is "a work in progress. The timeline and the RFP (request for proposals) are changing as we go along."

Library officials are working with the Oregon Area Historical Society in a joint effort on the book project.

"The two boards are working together because both agree it doesn't make sense to duplicate energy, volunteers and available grants on two separate projects,"



Jean Hanson, owner of Century Trout Farm near Oregon, incites a small fish riot by tossing a handful of food into the pond, while the resident swans glide by.

Trout fishing made easy

and we're all very happy to be part of the community. But she and Julia

Please turn to Book, page 2

Straw Hat Players buy building for storage, meetings

Aaron Swannum

Unified Newspaper Group

The Oregon Straw Hat Players theater group has purchased the former Schnabel Plumbing building at 201 Market St., with a July 31 closing anticipated.

The building itself is only 1,200 square feet, but it will allow the group to store items there as well as do set construction on site. It will also give them a place to hold meetings, but the building is zoned industrial so performances cannot be held on site; plus is not large enough to hold performances.

Please turn to BUILDING, page 2

OREGON OBSERVER



8992153575

3

Mailing information here

*****CAR-RT LOT**R002
MARK & JEAN HANSON -- 20895
882 US HIGHWAY 14
OREGON WI 53575-2825

Unified Newspaper Group

Walking up the hill, friends Henry Johnson and Joshua Ewing are all smiles. The sun is out and the temperature perfect - mid 70's. Walking a few paces behind them, Ewing's grandfather, Jesse, carries a round, white bucket, brimming with fish.

For the three, it was a fruitful afternoon at Century Trout Farm, a privately-operated fishery located two miles south of Oregon.

While grandpa writes out a check for the boys' catch, the two "oooh and ahhh" over their fish and even debate who caught the bigger one while in a Jean-to dating back to the 1880s, one of the proprietors cleans and guts his customer's catch.

Owned by Mark and Jean Hanson - two retired school teachers, the pair took over what was Jean's father's farm in 1992. The land has been in Jean's family for almost 150 years. Her father, Ralph Sholls, purchased the farm in 1929 from relatives and operated it with dairy, livestock and crops for 66 years, until health matters caused him to cut back on his work.

In 1960 Sholls expanded the pond, widening and deepening it and stocking the quarter-acre pond with fish.

"My dad loved this pond and his farm," said Jean, who, along with her brother formed a partnership and worked the huge parcel of land together for their father. Later, when Sholls passed away, Jean's mother let the pond get fished out and closed it.

Later, Jean and Mark moved on to the farm and took over the pay per fish business.

"Mark and I moved here in 1992; I took this part of the farm and my brother took a larger half across the street," she said.

Open 10 a.m.-5 p.m. every day but Monday, guests do not need a license to fish. In fact, everything you need to catch your evening meal is right on the farm for convenience: traditional bamboo cane poles are provided free as are canned corn for bait. Worms (purchased from a local Kwik Trip and sold at cost) are available for \$2.25 per dozen.

The Hansons purchase their fish from a hatchery near Antigo three times a year and stock the pond with rainbow and brook trout - the latter fish native to Wisconsin.

The Hansons even offer fish cleaning at a cost of 5 cents per inch.



Madison youth Henry Johnson shows off his catch of the day during a recent visit to Century Trout Farm.

- Autumn Drussell photos

swears they barely make a dime off it.

"You could never support yourself on the income this place makes," said Mark. "If people don't come we don't fret because this is a retirement business."

So why do they do it?

"Happiness in life comes in many different ways," said Mark.

For the Hansons, it's a shared love of the sport, the farm and living on and working their land.

"I'm like my dad - I don't like to leave the farm and he was very much the same way," admitted Jean.

That means Mark does a lot of things solo - or with grandchildren instead.

That's one of the challenges of owning your own business - especially one as specialized as a trout farm. As the Hansons pointed out, "You can't leave your business in the hands of just anyone - they have to know a little something about it."

With three cats, a dog, two swans, eight horses and thousands of fish, it's easy to understand that reasoning.

Problems can quickly arise - especially if that problem involves a dead muskrat.

"When the pond plugs up that's usually what it is," explained Mark.

"You have to act quickly or else the water continues to rise and you lose your embankment."

That's because the spring-fed pond receives 70 gallons of new water every minute - healthy turnover for the pond's inhabitants. That being said, an overflow valve is in a far corner and leads excess water to a drainage ditch joining 700 acres of wild land owned by the Department of Natural Resources.

The Hansons work closely with the DNR to ensure the pond's natural state. Instead of using chemicals to kill the "weeds" Jean frets about so much, the Hansons utilize high school students to rake the bottom of the pond and even get a little help from two mute swans who enjoy eating the pond's green stuff as well.

The swans' flying feathers have been clipped as per DNR requirements, because they are considered an invasive species, native to Europe.

Please turn to TROUT, page 12



– Submitted photo

Pictured (clockwise from left): Patrons enjoy a fruitful day of fishing at Century Trout Farm; owner Mark Hanson cleans fish caught by Jesse Ewing, who chats with owner Jean Hanson in the background; Madison youths Henry Johnson and Joshua Ewing debate who's fish is bigger outside an 1880's lean-to, where the fish are cleaned and packaged. Century Trout Farm is located two miles south of Oregon on US Highway 14. The quarter-acre pond is stocked three times a year with rainbow and brook trout.

TROUT: Century Farm near Oregon

Continued from page 1

"We call them eye candy because they are just fun to look at," said Mark.

The serene setting of the pond could easily be considered the same. Tall, mature trees (maple and weeping willow to name a few) provide a canopy over parts of the pond, and the swans gliding across the smooth water provide an idyllic setting. That's why the Hansons also provide picnic tables for people to eat their lunch, sit back and enjoy the view.

For the Hansons, enjoyment not only comes from taking care of a family business, it comes from watching people enjoy all the farm has to offer.

"We meet the greatest people – some come over and over," said Jean. "We've even made friends with many of them."

"For a lot of families, coming here is almost a tradition," added Mark. "They come every year."

That's the case with grandpa Jesse and his grandson, who find the pond relaxing. "You know your probably going to catch a fish, but it's a great time anyway," he added.

They come as groups (Boy Scouts, birthday parties or seniors), families or grandparents looking for something different to do with their grandkids. They come as individuals, looking for a little quality time alone.

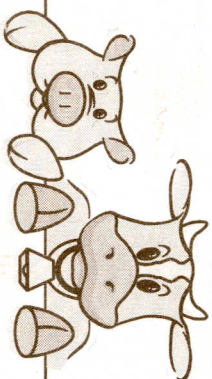
And then there's the people who come for the first time.

"That's the great thing about this place," said Mark. "You never know who's going to come through the door."

For more information about Century Trout Farm, visit www.wis trout.com



– Autumn Drussell photo

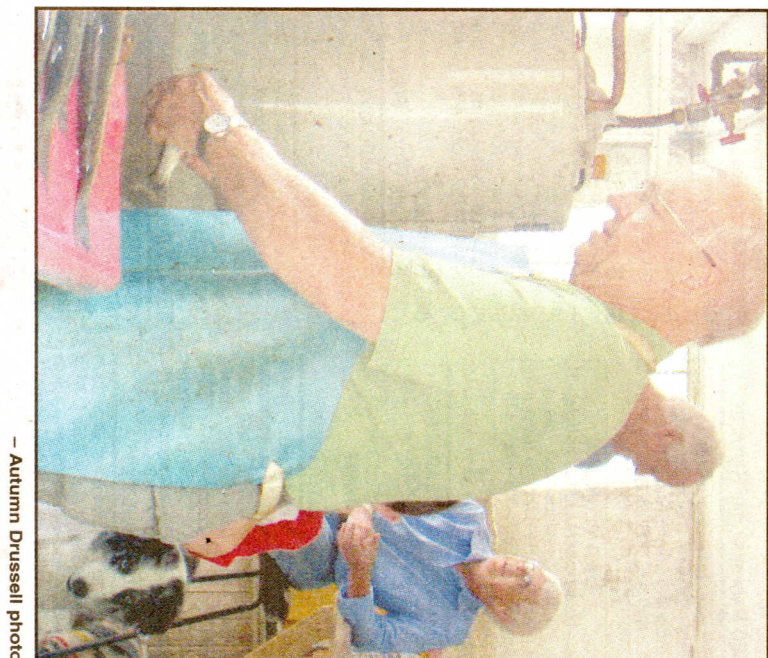


We would like to thank Fahy Pumps & Electric, Conant Autobody, Conant Construction, and Olsons Kent Feeds for their support in purchasing our steers and pigs at the Dane County Fair.

Thank You!

Luedtke-Storm-Mackey Chiropractic Clinics

Feel Better... Live Better!



– Autumn Drussell photo