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MAGAZINE

Connecting people to the river

Stunning river views add to the appeal

Dining on the River

Enjoy a closer
look at a few
of the 12
riverfront
restaurants
in our area.





Kathy Wine

A Little Bit About A Lot of Things


I am excited about the Quad City Chamber's Q2030, which has had strong civic leadership from the beginning, now becoming its own non profit organized to move us to act. There was a robust response to the challenge of planning Q2030; I think the public is excited to start implementing those action plans.

Historic places are like a library for a community. They are a storehouse for all the stories and memories, differences, and commonalities that bind us together. However, unlike the books in a library, each historic landmark is unique. I was reminded of this fact when I had a call from Gates Thomas, a freelance composer and professor at Berklee College of Music. He just completed a film score for George Washington's letters. A native of Davenport and graduate of Davenport Central, he recently moved back and called because he sees direct links between the restoration of our physical history and the work of historians and composers as well as other kinds of artists. "The richer and more inspiring the environment, the stronger the sense of place—the better the work. After several years of reading up on early Davenport history, there's so much here to inspire me and inform a new line of work. To come home and see the dramatic changes downtown and along the riverfront inspires possibilities for new musical directions I could take. To me, restoring and preserving our historic sites and landmarks and creating more

physical beauty in our public spaces is part of the same impulse that drives me to write music," he explained. I can't wait to hear the stories he tells because I believe First Bridge can be a vibrant beacon of community history and could be one of the most iconic landmarks of the Quad Cities.

Moline and Davenport have undertaken new **riverfront planning**. The challenge today is the that of simultaneously making riverfronts more accessible while making them more resilient. I hope the emphasis is on the norm, not the storm. In other words, we should accommodate everyday public use and offer high-quality experiences at the river's edge, while also being able to recover quickly from either a small storm or large flood. A tall order, but one that cities can take on to make life here even more livable.

Finally, River Action's **Channel Cat Talks and Riverine Walks** this summer feature beautiful scenery, interesting history, friendly people, and time well planned to cover big subjects in less than two hours. Sign up now to be assured a place.

See you on the river! 

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Our Mission:

River Action strives to foster the environmental, economic, and cultural vitality of the Mississippi River and its riverfront in the Quad City region.

The Quad Cities have been working to build hip downtowns with dense housing alongside a mix of restaurants, shops, and theaters; they all contribute to the richness of in-town living. Many of the restaurants along the river have a neighborhood feel, others incorporate special attractions that appeal to out-of-town visitors. Some are accessible by ramps, walkways, elevators, or bike trails. Whether you arrive by car, bike, or boat, you'll enjoy the spacious outdoor patios that surround these restaurants, decks with sweeping river views, or inside tables oriented to windows on the river.

Enjoy a closer look at a few of the 12 riverfront restaurants in our area.

Go Eat at Go Fish!



Go Fish in Princeton, Iowa, features indoor and outdoor seating on the second floor, with a tiki bar on the deck. It also offers outdoor seating at The Landing, level with the river, where patrons can enjoy full food service and an outdoor bar.

— by Noah Truesdell

Go Fish Marina Bar & Grill in Princeton, Iowa, features one of the best riverfront views in the Quad Cities. You can choose to sit inside the second floor of the restaurant with a panoramic view of the river and Illinois riverfront from the windows along the entire wall, on the second floor deck with outdoor tiki bar, or in the shade at The Landing, the area below the deck with its own bar and full food service from upstairs.

Owners Kris and John Kay are also big supporters of local musicians. Live, Local, and Acoustic is their Thursday night live show where you can hear local musicians on the deck from 6-9 p.m. This summer Kris is excited to be featuring some of our local female artists on Sundays. Catch the Local Female Vocalist Spotlight at the Landing from 3-6 p.m. every Sunday.

Some of their other specials to sample are their award-winning breaded tenderloin, BBQ ribs on Thursdays, and Shrimp Boil

Sundays. On July 10, John and Kay will lead a local Jeep Run (big caravan of Jeeps) called 'Go Fish, Go Topless.' A convoy of 300-400 Jeeps, convertibles, and motorcycles meet at Go Fish to enjoy a day of fun visiting local bars and restaurants. Last year's route took the group to Sabula and Bellevue, Iowa and Savanna, Ill.

There are lots of great times happening out at Go Fish, so get out to Princeton have some fun! ☺

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Floating Tiki Bars in Princeton!



— by Noah Truesdell

*When renting the Tiki
Tavern, Zac Hamilton
will take you along the
Mississippi River near
Princeton and to the
Princeton Beach.*

Local dock producer Big Docks, in Princeton, Iowa, has been branching out with its own invention these past three years, the Floating Tiki Bar! These unique built-to-order watercrafts are perfect for cruising with friends. They are constructed from the floating dock pieces that Big Docks has been producing for years, then owner Bill Hamilton and the Big Docks crew strap on two motors and build a tiki bar, complete with pseudo-thatch roof and bamboo poles. There are railings around the edges of the watercraft and room and seating for twelve, plus the captain and bartender.

If you aren't in the market for a floating tiki bar of your own, you can rent one for the day! Zac Hamilton and Chelsea Carroll run Tiki-Tavern.com where you can rent time on the river for \$45 per person, per two-hour cruise. Zac (who also builds the floating tiki bars) will be captain for the day, and Chelsea will bartend while you and your friends cruise the river and have some fun. This is a BYOB (bring your own beverage) operation, so pack your coolers before you go!

Find out more about the floating tiki bars and place an order for your very own at Big-Docks.com or book your day on the river with Zac and Chelsea at Tiki-Tavern.com. ☎



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*The sunset views are
glorious from UP.*

UP: The Current Hotel's Rooftop Bar

— by Kathy Wine

A cocktail with a name like “The Current” has to be good, especially when sipped on the rooftop of the drink’s namesake, The Current Hotel in Davenport. UP is the name of its unique rooftop bar, and it features stunning, sweeping views of the Mississippi.

With seating for 100, the indoor/outdoor café offers cocktails, wine, and beer from a menu featuring small plates of appetizers meant to be shared. Private parties can reserve the entire floor; smaller parties of up to 20 can be accommodated during regular service times.

Dining at a fire table makes cool evenings comfortable; large patio heaters stretch the seasons for months into spring and fall. But it is the panoramic views of the river with the lights of the Centennial Bridge and Rock Island at night that makes the 5-9 p.m. window on weeknights and 5-11 p.m. on weekends so spectacular.

Find UP and The Current Hotel at 2155 Main Street, Davenport, IA; phone 563-231-9555 for reservations and information. ☎

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For a true change of pace, Taste of Ethiopia

— By Philip Tunnickliff



View from the outside deck of the Taste of Ethiopia.

Along the Davenport riverfront bike trail across from Le Claire Park is a well-appointed restaurant nestled next to Union Station. Taste of Ethiopia is a family restaurant run by George and Genet Moraetes that brings authentic and varied delights for any palate. The menu is divided into spicy, mild, and vegan-friendly foods and everything is made fresh, even the coffee is roasted in the restaurant, or outside in the summer.

Taste of Ethiopia opened in 2016 at the nearby Farmer's Market and only moved into a brick-and-mortar establishment in 2019. Its interior is entirely renovated and has persevered through the historic flood of 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic, which Genet Moraetes credits to the strong loyalty of their customers. Taste of Ethiopia is open for regular hours Wednesday through Sunday 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5-8 p.m., open an hour later Friday and Saturday. The restaurant requires masks and does have both indoor and outdoor seating available. So, the next time you're riding a bike along the riverfront stop by and try Taste of Ethiopia for a true change of pace. Visit Taste of Ethiopia at 102 S. Harrison St., Suite 300, Davenport, Iowa; for more information, call 563-424-1848. ☎

Just-From-the-Field Freshness and Fun at *Outdoor Markets*



— By Kathy Wine

Outdoor markets have high visibility, a wide variety of products, and often entertainment or special events to increase interest and attract new customers. Our markets contribute and benefit from beautiful, active public spaces that are people friendly. We are grateful for what agriculture brings to us all, and in the case of Mercado, what the Mexican culture gives us

so abundantly. Make time to visit, eat, and shop at these vibrant markets this spring and summer!

- **The Freight House Farmer's Market**, 421 W. River Drive, Davenport runs May 1-Oct. 31. Saturdays 8 a.m.-1 p.m., Sundays 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m. "Davenport's Freight House Farmer's Market has become the signature riverfront destination that brings together all that our riverfront offers, while supporting and enjoying local agriculture and small businesses in one convenient location," reports Steve Ahrens, Riverfront Improvement Commission. It offers outside eating at tables, a great number of local food trucks, and local musical groups play in the Freight House bandshell for entertainment.
- **Mercado en el Rio**, Quinlan Court (River Drive and Brady St.) "We are thrilled to welcome Mercado to Davenport's Riverfront! The food, music, and culture presented in the riverfront's newest venue will be a huge hit with our community." It will open June 12, 5 - 9 p.m., and the following Saturdays during the summer: July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, and Oct. 9.



- **Mercado on Fifth** in Moline hosts vibrant markets celebrating the Mexican culture every Friday evening in the summer from 5-10 p.m. on 5th Avenue. Its family-friendly events feature food trucks, mobile boutiques and retail vendors, children's activities, and live music and entertainment. The organization works with both English and Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs to help start and grow their businesses. It opens June 4.
- **The Official Bettendorf Farmer's Market** is at 2117 State Street, Bettendorf, next to Alter Building, on Thursdays, 2-6 p.m. May through October. It offers farm-fresh food and produce, bakers, makers, and artisans. ☎

Beautiful Bierstube Views

— By Kathy Wine

Along LeClaire's western Canal Shore Drive is Bierstube, a restaurant where one comes for the view and stays for the authentic German cuisine and imported and local brews. Green Tree beers, brewed just up the road in LeClaire, are among the most popular beers on tap.

Behind the front door entrance, but what feels rather like the front porch, is a deck with tables seating 50-60 guests. Because it is on the main channel of the river, tows and barges along with pleasure craft from the nearby marina are constantly in view. Eagles and waterfowl are often flying or floating by as well. Few things are more pleasant.

Visit Bierstube at 1001 Canal Shore Dr SW, Le Claire, IA 52753; call 563-289-2121 for information. ©



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What's new this year in summer education?

— by Philip Tunnickliff

A new Art Along the River program, "Writing Your Song," will debut Sunday, May 23 at 2 p.m. presented by professional musician, David G. Smith. David will present forms of songs and how they are put together-- what comes first, the words or the music?

New Channel Cat Talks this year include: Mariachi Compiranos, a Mariachi band performance on the Mississippi River showcasing a unique and beautiful musical style, and "Learning from Lives along the River," led by Paul Osman, of P Oz Consulting. From aboard the Channel Cat he will talk and take questions on what we have learned from flood buyouts, floodplain management, and cities' approaches to planning for future floods.

There are new Riverine Walk presentations as well this year. Two new presentations are "Wetland Banking 101" and "Hampton's Historic Riverfront" walking tour. Wetland Banking 101 is presented by Brian Ritter from Nahant Marsh and explains the concept of wetland banking and how it can be used to fund and expand conservation programs around the state of Iowa. On the Illinois side of the river Tom McKay will take us on a stroll through historic Hampton to show the houses, businesses and customs that linked Hampton to the Mississippi River.

Registration is available online at riveraction.org/education. Brochures are available at River Action's office, 822 E River Dr., Davenport, IA 52803. ☺

Don't miss these fun and educational programs during May, June, and July in our Explore the River Series! Register now at riveraction.org/education.

Riverine Walks		Channel Cat Talks		Art Along the River	
German American Heritage	6/2/2021 6/5/2021	Raptors Along the River	6/1/2021 6/3/2021	Writing your Song	5/23/2021
Wetland Banking 101	6/9/2021 6/12/2021	Commercial Fishing	6/8/2021 6/10/2021	Reader's Theater	6/20/2021
The Story of the Sears Dam	6/16/2021 6/19/2021	The Mississippi's Bounty	6/15/2021 6/17/2021	Watercolors	7/18/2021
The History of the Heights	6/23/2021 6/26/2021	Operations and Maintenance of our Nation's Waterways	6/22/2021 6/24/2021		
Regenerative Farming Practices	7/7/2021 7/10/2021	The Mississippi River, Where We've Been and Where We Are	6/29/2021 7/1/2021		
Saving a Life: Caring for Trees with an Arborist	7/14/2021 7/17/2021	Mariachis Compiranos	7/6/2021 7/8/2021		
Sylvan Island History Tour	7/21/2021 7/24/2021	Where Does all that Sand and Gravel Come From?	7/13/2021 7/15/2021		
Hampton's Historic River front Walking Tour	7/28/2021 7/31/2021	Learning from Lives Along the River	7/20/2021 7/22/2021		
		Building a Better Riverway	7/27/2021 7/29/2021		



The Kresowik family came to the River Action office to tell us a little about their Ride and Seek adventure last year. Seven-year-old Caroline, “loved the giant” Will B. Ridin’ statue in Port Byron; eleven-year-old Jack had fun exploring parts of the riverfront he’d never seen before, and nine-year-old Alex showed off the inflatable T-Rex costume the family won in last year’s ride.



Grab Your Bike for Ride & Seek in June!

—by Noah Truesdell

River Action’s riverfront scavenger hunt returns in 2021 with new clues to follow, puzzles to solve, and more places to discover! Embark with your family on an adventure of discovery as you sleuth and solve over 30 puzzles along the Quad Cities’ riverfront trails.

This year the adventure includes a fun Bingo card for kids 12 and under. When they spot the animals, activities, and sites to make a Bingo, kids can bring their completed card to any Country Style Ice Cream location and receive a free ice cream cone. A big ‘Thank You!’ to Country Style Ice Cream and our other Ride & Seek sponsors: Sears Manufacturing, Nelson Brothers Agency, US Bank, Mancomm, WHBF Channel 4, iHeartMedia, and the Quad City Times!

Ride & Seek supports River Action’s mission of improving access to the riverfront. When Ride the River began there were only two miles of riverfront trail in the Quad Cities along the Ben Butterworth Parkway in Moline. Now there are over 30 miles of trail on each side of the Mississippi. River Action also advocated for the \$2.2 million Credit Island pedestrian bridge completed in 2012. This year your support will help us build the iconic First Bridge span across River Drive in Davenport, to allow safe access to the riverfront trail from the new YMCA and the neighborhoods

to the north. First Bridge will also provide a safe crossing for visitors arriving to our area via American Cruise Lines and Viking River Cruise Line, which will soon be docking at River Heritage Park.

Get registered for Ride & Seek today at riveraction.org/rideandseek. 🎯



Join us for the 12th annual Floatzilla paddling event on Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021. This year we are keeping our COVID-19 precautions in place through registration and planning, but we are hoping to make a return to the group photo and setting the world record by August! This year we are also making an exciting new addition to Friday night activities!

New this year: on Friday, Aug. 20, during packet pick-up hours at Credit Island Lodge, we will offer a free kayak fishing tournament on the Mississippi upstream from Credit Island. Anyone registered for Floatzilla can sign up to participate in the fishing tournament free of charge. Participants only need to bring their kayaks or canoes, fishing poles, and valid Iowa or Illinois fishing licenses to participate. Check-in for the tournament will be at the Credit Island docks from 5-6 p.m. and the tournament will run from 6-8 p.m. Registered participants will be given bait and a yardstick, donated by K&K True Value, then sent out to fish the Iowa side of the river from Credit Island to the Crescent Bridge. Safety boats will be on the river in case of emergency. At 8 p.m. all participants will return to the Credit Island docks with a photo of themselves holding up their largest catch next to their



— by Noah Truesdell



yardsticks. The winner will get a prize and bragging rights! Sign up now for Floatzilla and our fishing tournament for a weekend of paddling fun!

Paddlers at this year's Floatzilla will have their choice of five different launch sites to start their day. Launch locations at Leach Park in Bettendorf and Lindsay Park Yacht Club in Davenport will require locking through at Lock and Dam 15. Paddlers launching from the Bass Street YMCA Rowing Center in Moline will have a short, assisted portage over Sylvan Island.

Construction of the new I-74 Bridge has once again prevented us from launching further upriver. There will be live music and a selection of our popular local food trucks at Lake Potter before we attempt the world record for largest flotilla of kayaks and canoes.

Early registration for Floatzilla 2021 ends June 1. Sign up now to be entered into all of our registration giveaways including a kayak donated by Theisen's and a car-top kayak rack donated by Thule. Register now for Floatzilla at riveraction.org/Floatzilla!

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Challenge, Adventure & Giving Back

— by Noah Truesdell

River Action caught up with Zurcher Tire President, Ryan Moylan, for a conversation about challenge, adventure and giving back.

- RA:** What drew your interest to River Action's Taming of the Slough for your sponsorship?
- RM:** "I'd participated in both Taming of the Slough and Floatzilla prior to sponsorship and was impressed with the level of organization, and the participants those types of events drew from all walks of life. In looking for ways to promote our brand, we strive to be a part of the communities that we serve and this was the perfect platform to support a cause that we are passionate about and have fun doing!"
- RA:** You also compete in the race, so what do you like about the event from a participant perspective?
- RM:** "As participants, it allows us to do a few things. We love competing in the corporate challenge because we have a group of competitive folks within our organization, and we want to be the best. And even though we want to be the best, we have thoroughly enjoyed our interactions with other participants and the sense of community belonging we feel as participants."
- RA:** Zurcher Tire is our Corporate Challenge sponsor this year; what do you like about the corporate challenge as a competition sub-category in the event?
- RM:** "For us, it's an opportunity to build camaraderie among our teammates and get to know the folks in the community that share similar values and work ethic while promoting our brand. Bragging rights don't hurt either, but we've got to win to get those, and last year it didn't work out for us."
- RA:** This year we are offering an endurance option for our racers. How do you think that will impact participation?
- RM:** "The endurance offering has the potential to open the door to new participants that thrive on the adrenaline of a challenging course. That's not to say that the "standard" isn't challenging enough, but it takes a special type of person to participate in endurance offerings and having that as an option will surely attract the most awesome of endurance athletes."
- RA:** We are running through downtown Moline and the Stephens Park trails this year; what do you think about the new run route?
- RM:** "We're excited about it! I think the change of scenery will offer variety and keep folks coming back for more!"



David A. Johnson, D.D.S.

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Take me out to the Ballpark for Fish & Fire!

— by Noah Truesdell

River Action's Earth Day Celebration, Fish & Fire, is back on for 2021! We will be hosting our fundraiser and friendraiser at Modern Woodmen Park on Friday, June 25. We will be outside in the stadium, with the silent auction set up around the concourse, and seating in the stands. Guests will enjoy a fish and chips basket while we present the Eddy Awards in person to both our 2020 and 2021 winners with their accomplishments displayed on the Jumbotron. Come celebrate their achievements with us! To purchase tickets, visit riveraction.org/fishandfire.

SAVE THE DATES FOR RIVER ACTION'S 2021 EVENTS

Explore the River :: May 23 through Sept. 16

Ride & Seek Scavenger Hunt :: June 1-30

Fish & Fire :: June 25

Floatzilla :: Aug. 20-21

Senior Citizen RiverWay Golf Cart Tours :: Sept. 2-3

Taming of the Slough :: Sept. 12

Upper Mississippi River Conference :: Oct. 5-7



ENVIRONMENTAL BOOK CLUB DATES

May 25, *Where the Crawdads Sing*, by Delia Owens

June 22, *The Green Boat*, by Mary Pipher

July 27, *Hit by a Farm*, by Catherine Friend

Aug. 24, *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes*, by Dan Egan

Sept. 28, *The Wizard and the Prophet*, by Charles Mann

Oct. 26, *One Man's Wilderness: An Alaskan Odyssey*, by Sam Keith

Nov. 23, *The Souls of Animals*, by Gary Kawalski

Contact the River Action office at 563-322-2969 for more information.

COMING SOON: FILM SERIES

The 2021 QC Environmental Film Series has reserved the following Sunday afternoons at Figge Art Museum for showing the latest environmental documentaries. Save the following dates:

- August 29
- September 12
- October 3
- October 24
- November 14

Titles and discussion leaders will be announced on River Action's website; check for times and titles at www.riveraction.org/filmseries.

The film series is sponsored by the Joyce and Tony Singh Family Foundation, River Action, Sierra Club Eagle View Group, and Nahant Marsh, with additional support from community donors.



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