

SWELL LETTER
October 2026 Volume 6, Issue 10

SWELL Picnic



If you haven't done so, please RSVP by Tuesday October 6th
SWELL PICNIC

Wednesday October 7th, Rain Date Thursday October 8th

STARTS 4:15-4:30 PM

EAT AT 5:00 PM

16674 WITTMAN HAMM CT.

DUBUQUE, IA 52001

BRING TABLE SETTING, DRINK, YOUR FAVORITE DISH TO PASS, AND CHAIR

SWELL WILL SUPPLY PULLED MEAT AND BUNS

RSVP SELF AND GUEST /

RSVP if you want a bun or not for the pork.

RETURN TO THIS EMAIL

garydonaldwittman@gmail.com

We could use a few volunteers to help with parking.

Growing up at 833 West Locust in the '60s wasn't all that bad.

Growing up at 833 West Locust in the '60s wasn't all that bad. In fact, it was pretty great. Jackson School was the closest spot to home, the center of our universe, just seven houses down. Everything else was well within striking distance. The Boys Club at 14th and White Street, St. Pat's School, and the Strand Theater were all about a mile away, while Bunker Hill sat 1.5 miles out. Going to Bunker Hill meant pedaling all the way up "Senior Hill" with golf clubs strapped to our backs, but coming home was a breeze—literally. Gas was 10 to 15 cents a gallon, so our parents weren't driving us anywhere! If we were in a hurry, we'd hit the sidewalk at a jog, or flat-out run. Longer trips to Riverside for Little League or to Bunker Hill for golf meant riding our bikes. Summer trips to Flora Pool were the one exception where we'd walk, mostly because kids loved to steal bikes. More often than not, we'd find our bikes abandoned at the bottom of the hill. One of the local hoodlums would take your bike, but they wouldn't actually steal it—the moment the coasting ran out, they'd just drop it.



Summer Rec at Jackson School was where it all started. Gary Reed was our first supervisor, and that's where I first learned to toss horseshoes—and learned the old saying, "Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades." We played hard all morning, trekked home for lunch, and headed right back down for round two. Saturdays were reserved for the Strand Theater. Movies were 10 to 25 cents, and every show kicked off with the latest chapter of Batman, keeping us hooked week after week. If our parents were feeling generous and handed over 50 cents, we were living large: movie ticket, popcorn, a large pickle, and a drink. The Boy's Club was a massive gray building on 14th and White

Dave Finn and Gary, playing horseshoes 1966

where every floor offered a new adventure. Down in the basement they had crafts, while on the 1st floor housed the main office run by Cletus Meyer alongside the pool tables. A wrestling room sat at the mid-level, and the 3rd floor was home to the gymnasium. A year's membership costs

anywhere from 25 cents to a dollar, mostly just so they knew who we were. The crown jewel of the Boys Club was the legendary Bean Feed, where they'd thread a movie through the projector, and we'd get free hot dogs and beans for lunch. The memories of running those streets with neighborhood friends—playing pickup games of baseball, basketball, and football at Jackson School—are unforgettable. Unlike today, where everything is organized and supervised by adults, we figured things out on our own. We settled our own disputes, decided what was fair, and just played hard. We never sat inside playing video games or staring at a screen. Our TV only had three channels, mostly fuzzy black-and-white, and we quickly learned that wrapping aluminum foil around the rabbit ears

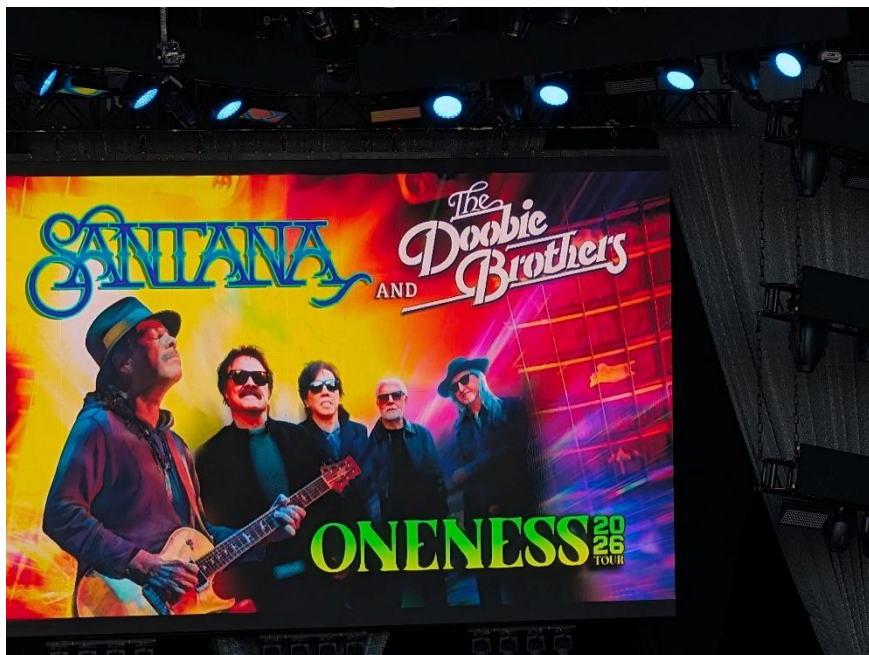


Dubuque Boys' Club 14th and White Street

gave us a slightly better picture. Just the other day, while walking with Lisa across from our house in the Daisy Trail neighborhood, we noticed something striking. Kids today rarely walk or pedal bikes anymore, even four- and five-year-olds are zipping around on electric devices. Growing up at 833 West Locust required creativity, inventiveness, and plain old effort. We never had to worry about getting enough exercise because our own two feet or our bike pedals were our only ticket anywhere. Sometimes I can't help but wonder what would happen if today's kids had to grow up the way we did. Then again, we did have one distinct advantage back then—we were never cyberbullied.

--Gary

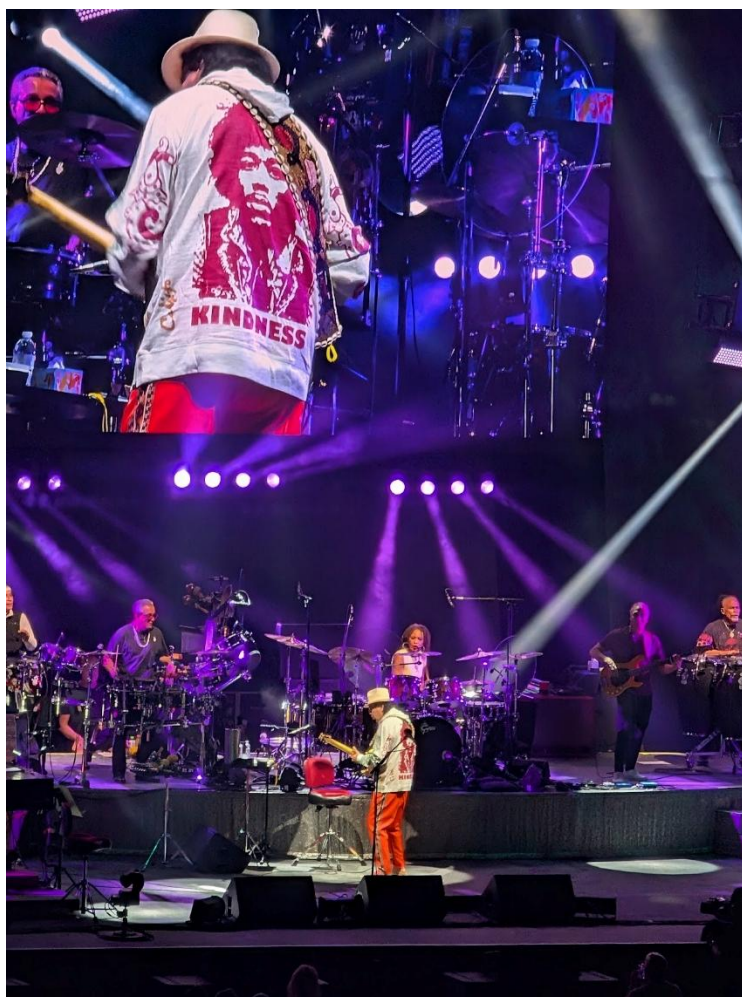
Linda and Randy Glass Catch Santana and The Doobie Brothers Live



Linda and Randy have been passionate concertgoers since their high school days, continuously traveling throughout the Midwest—and far beyond—to catch legendary talent live on stage. Just last year, they were in the crowd for Sir Paul McCartney!

If you ever want recommendations on great venues or want to hear incredible stories from decades on the road, be sure to ask Linda and Randy during one of your class walks. Their sheer depth of musical experience and the wide range of genres they've seen over the years will absolutely blow your mind.

True to form, they keep the tradition alive every single year. Here is a look at their latest unforgettable concert experience: taking in the iconic sounds of The Doobie Brothers and Carlos Santana.



16 SWELL People



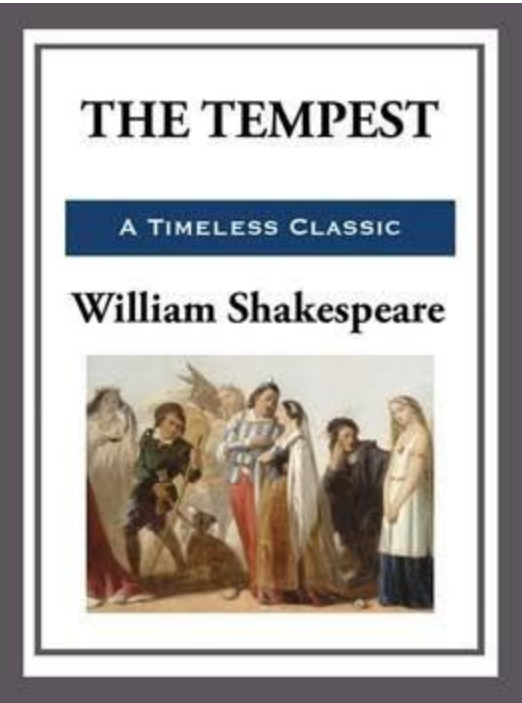
To the dedicated crew who showed up on a cool, damp, overcast morning: you inspire me. Seeing you tackling a wet track with smiles on your face reminded me once again what makes our SWELL community so extraordinary. You don't let adverse conditions stand in your way—and that grit is the true fountain of youth.

I asked Roger Maiers today if he knew the official minimum attendance needed to hold a SWELL class. After a minute of thought, he gave up. The answer? ONE. As long as one person shows up, class is on!

Don't ever shy away from coming, no matter what it looks like outside. Rain or shine, we show up, we stay dedicated, and we keep feeling young.

Be well, be SWELL!

Gary



***The Tempest* by William Shakespeare**

The University of Dubuque's Department of Fine and Performing Arts will perform *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare at 7:30 p.m. Friday November 13th, 2026, in Babka Theatre, Heritage Center. Set on a mysterious island full of mischief, magic, and plots of revenge, Shakespeare's final masterpiece conjures a timeless story of love, betrayal, redemption, and forgiveness. *The Tempest* will be directed by Joe Klinebriel, MFA, professor of theatre at UD.

We are getting a SWELL discount of \$5.00. There is limited seating, so we need a count to reserve our seats. I will count hands in class.



Joseph Boge 2026 Fall SWELL Inter

"My name is Joseph Boge—I'm from Farley, Iowa, and I study Wellness and Exercise Science. A couple of quick facts about me: I compete as a thrower in track and field, and I collect Pokémon cards in my free time."

THE STAFF

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Feature Writer Linda and Randy Glass

Thanks to those who submitted wonderful articles to our SWELL newsletter