

Going nose to nose



Take a safari into the wild side at the Oleson Park Zoo in Fort Dodge. The outdoor park offers firsthand animal experiences like getting nose to nose with an alpaca or feeding a muntjac deer while it roams the open areas of the zoo.

The not-for-profit park showcases both the typical and not-so-ordinary animals such as a coatimundi or a capybara.

A variety of animals call the spacious zoo home with many being housed in outdoor enclosures that are similar in nature to their natural habitats.

A number of animals, including goats, rabbits and deer, roam the grounds and

mingle with visitors as a part of the park's petting zoo.

The petting zoo has animals that are common to Iowa farm life as well as wildlife from various areas throughout North America and exotic birds and animals from around the world.

Just a few of the creatures at the Oleson Park Zoo include a bobcat, emus, porcupines, rabbits, raccoon, alpaca, swans, kinkajou, hedgehogs, sloth, white ferret, turkeys and even a wallaby.

The free petting zoo is open from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays in May. After the school year ends, it will also be open the same hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



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Oleson Park Bandshell

The Oleson Park Bandshell, which was named to the National Register of Historic Places in May 2003, was recently restored and is again ready for concerts.

The bandshell is in Oleson Park at the south end of 17th Street. It was built in 1935-36 by the Federal Works Progress Administration.

The 1930s structure was restored to its former glory while adding a handful of 21st century improvements.

The bandshell project has four major goals: restoring the structure, upgrading its essential systems, marketing it as a place for more events and educating the public about Karl L. King, the noted bandleader who once called Fort Dodge home.

The bandshell was designed by internationally known architect Henry Kamphoefner and is a rare example of a totally, cast-in-place, reinforced concrete structure.

The municipal band that's named after King has performed regularly at the bandshell since it was built.

Over the years, the bandshell has



played host to a number of high-profile musicians and musical events. Its 1938 dedication concert drew more than 12,000 and past fund-raising concerts

have drawn more than 4,000 music fans.



Leader of the band lives on



Karl King's distinguished career as a musician and a composer made him a legend in his own lifetime. But his bond and continued service to the Fort Dodge area also made him one of the most prolific musicians the state of Iowa has ever seen.

King started as a baritone player with the Robinson's Famous Circus. He quickly became a master at writing music that matched the rhythm of the circus acts and quickly rose to a leadership position in some of the most famous circus bands in the country as he composed and led the bands for the Buffalo Bill and the Barnum and Bailey circuses.

One of his most famous compositions, Barnum and Bailey's Favorite, was written during his time as a euphonium player in the Barnum and Bailey Circus Band in 1913.

King was also one of the first composers to write special music for school band programs. He composed marches intended especially for schools as well as waltzes, overtures and other musical selections.

Coming off the road with the circus, King settled in Fort Dodge where he formed the Karl King Band that gave concerts in the afternoons and evenings and accompanied the vaudeville acts.

When King finally put his pen down after more than 50 years of composing, he had created nearly 300 musical works.

His legacy lives on throughout the Fort Dodge area as the Karl L. King Municipal Band continues to play Sunday night concerts throughout the spring and summer seasons entertaining large crowds while still honoring Fort Dodge's legendary bandleader.

In 2006, Comedia Musica, performed the world premiere of "Cardiff," a musical based on the nationally known 19th century hoax that originated in Fort Dodge. All of the musical selections performed during "Cardiff" were Karl King compositions.

A life-size bronze statute of King was installed in 2006 in the middle of Karl King Memorial Park surrounding the Fort Dodge Public Library.

KARL L. KING **MUSEUM**

When: Open Year Around

Where: Fort Dodge

Public Library, On the City Square

Cost: Admission is free