

Fort Atkinson Hot Spots & Happenings

Compiled by Jason Francis

Hot Spots

The Fireside Dinner Theatre, 1131 Janesville Ave., offers runs of six top-rated Broadway musical productions each year, plus delicious meals in a 1,000-seat restaurant and five gift shops featuring 50,000 items. Each show features professional talent, beautiful costumes and exceptional choreography in a 700-seat theatre-in-the-round. This summer and fall, shows include "South Pacific" (through June 4), "Back to the 50s" (June 8-July 23), "Church Basement Ladies" (July 27-Sept. 10), and "Elvis Lives" (Sept. 14-Oct. 29). Numerous concerts are also featured each year at The Fireside. 800-477-9505, 920-563-9505, www.firesidetheatre.com

The **Glacial River Bike Trail**, trailhead at 30 N. Water St., is an 8.6-mile former rail bed bike trail running south from downtown Fort Atkinson to the Jefferson/Rock county line. The northernmost 4.5 miles are asphalt paved, the rest is surfaced with crushed limestone. This recreational attraction features an archway, bronze sculptures, rest areas and fountains. The trail is open year-round during daylight hours. 920-563-7781, www.fortparkandrec.com

The **Hoard Historical Museum and National Dairy Shrine**, 401 Whitewater Ave., is a local history museum and center that showcases the dairy industry's history. The museum focuses on Sauk warrior Black Hawk and the 1832 Black Hawk War, the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, William Dempster Hoard (the father of American dairying), and world famous poet Lorine Niedecker. The National Dairy Shrine includes historical dairy farming exhibits, providing information on the significance of dairy farming to our culture and industry pioneers. The Dwight Foster House, the first frame home built in Fort Atkinson, is also on site. In addition, the museum partners with the UW-Extension Jefferson County Master Gardeners help to develop and maintain the museum's five gardens: the Roger and Sandra Peony Garden, the Foster House Herb Garden, the Fence Garden, the Entry Garden and the Rain Garden. Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is free; donations are appreciated. 920-563-7769, www.hoardmuseum.org

Happenings

Saturdays, May-Oct.-Fort Farmers Market: Saturday mornings 8 a.m. to noon. More than 45 local vendors each Saturday. Organic cheese, cheese curds, grass-fed beef, organic chicken, local elk, sausage and fish, specialty breads, honey, jam, syrup, arts, crafts and more. Across from the post office on Milwaukee Avenue. 920-563-3210, fortfarmersmarket.com

First Saturday of month, May-Oct.-1901 Water Tower Open House: Tours sponsored by the Fort Atkinson Historic Preservation Commission. Visitors must be 48 inches tall to climb to the top of the viewing platform. All ages may enter the ground floor. Allow 20 minutes for the climb to the top. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Corner of South High and South Fort Street. 920-568-8069, fortpreserves.org

Second Mondays of month, May-Sept.-Fort Atkinson Cruise Nights: Music, food, old cars, and more. Featuring more than 400 vehicles including restored vintage trucks, tractors and classic automobiles. Summer/fall dates include June 12, July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11. 5:30-8:30 p.m., Jones Park, Janesville Ave. 920-563-7501

Select Mondays and 4th of July-Fort Atkinson Community Band Concerts: Dates include June 19, July 4, July 17, and Aug. 21, all at 6:30 p.m. Founded in 1960, the band is a volunteer group of around 45 musicians. Barrie Park, 210 Robert St. 920-563-3210, www.fortatkinsoncommunityband.org

Select Wednesdays-Summer Charity Concerts in Barrie Park: Summer concert series at the Barrie Park bandshell (210 Robert St.). All funds raised will be donated to various local charitable efforts. Concerts run from 6-9 p.m. The schedule this year includes Rod Ellenbecker's American Standard Music followed by The Radio Wranglers on May 31, The Merry Horde and Euphoria on June 14, Listening Party and The Belle Weather on June 28, Driftless Music and The Brothers Quinn on July 12, Jill and the JAX followed by a band to be announced on July 26, and Altar Boy Picnic followed by Katie Scullin on Aug. 9. www.facebook.com/FA-SummerCharityConcerts

June 4-Wings & Wheels Fly-In Breakfast: Municipal airport on Highway K, 8 a.m. to noon. Featuring a traditional all-you-can-eat country breakfast prepared by Jones Dairy Farm, 50/50 cash raffle, raffle baskets, airplane and helicopter rides for purchase and car show. www.bgcfortatkinson.org/wingswheels

June 15-18-Fort Atkinson Generals Baseball

Festival: A Home Talent League tournament is the highlight of this event hosted by the Fort Atkinson Generals. Festival also includes a carnival and concessions. 920-563-3210, www.fortgenerals.com

June 17-6th annual Mason Jar Jamboree: Celebrate Fort Atkinson's local history and enjoy great local tunes in Dorothy Carnes County Park (Radloff Lane). Featuring live music, nature walks, demonstrations, historical entertainment, kids activities and food. The event raises money for the restoration of the Mason log home, which was discovered on the grounds of the park in 2004. 2-7 p.m. www.fortchamber.com

July 15-Adult Contra Dance and Pot Luck: 5 p.m., Fort Atkinson Club Community Center, 211 S. Water St. East. Contra can be described as a cross between bluegrass and square dancing. 920-568-1720, www.fortatkinsonclub.org

July 28-29-Sidewalk Sales: Retail merchants take to the streets with the biggest bargains and hottest deals of the summer. Bring the whole family and enjoy the best brats, burgers and hot dogs at the Chamber Brat Stand. Proceeds from the stand go towards the city holiday decorations. 920-563-3210, www.fortchamber.com

Aug. 20-Tour de Fort Metric Century: Metric Century Course (63-mile) with Half-Metric Century (36-mile) and Quarter-metric Century (18-mile) options. All on paved, scenic and enjoyable roads. General mass start at 8:30 a.m. for all bikers from Jones Park at the corner of Janesville Avenue and Park Street. 8:30-11:30 a.m. 920-542-4099

Aug. 26-Rhythm on the River: Live music, food, and fun for all ages on the riverwalk in downtown Fort Atkinson. Start your night with a "Taste of Fort" featuring everything from cheese curds to cupcakes from local food vendors. Dance the night away to the sounds of live bands, including Katie Mack and the Moan followed by the headliner, The Love Monkeys. Back by popular demand, "The Balloon Guy" will be offering balloon animals and airbrush tattoos for the kids. Free admission to the public. 4 p.m. to midnight. 920-563-3210, www.fortchamber.com

Sept. 29-30-Lorine Niedecker Wisconsin Poetry Festival: Offers a weekend of workshops, speakers, open poetry readings, round tables, landmark tours and the infamous writers' cafe. The festival is in honor of local Fort Atkinson poet Lorine Niedecker (1903-1970), a twentieth-century, second-wave, Modern American poet often identified with

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