

The ROCKSPIRIAN

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OPERA IN THE OZARKS (OIO) returned to Rockspire on May 20th as part of its community outreach. Since 1950 Inspiration Point near Eureka Springs has been a place for students in voice, instrumental music, and related arts to come to prepare for professional careers. To learn more about this renowned international training and performance site, visit www.opera.org.



Opera in the Ozarks at Rockspire
Photo by P. O'Neill 5.20.23

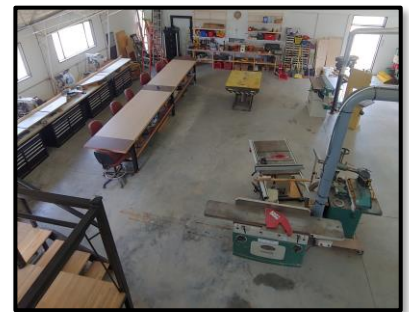
This year's performance at Rockspire featured a newlywed couple originally from Seoul, South Korea -- Ilhee Lee, tenor and Yeonjae Cho, soprano, from the New England Conservatory in Boston. They were joined by Joseph Cantor, baritone from Florida. The master of ceremonies for the evening's performances was voice coach and pianist, Daniel Weber who gave insights into the opera pieces performed.

Chis Cathcart, Operations Director for OIO also announced the groundbreaking for their new performance theater at Inspiration Point funded by a \$34 million grant from the Walton Family Foundation. The new facility is expected to be completed in time for the 2025 season.

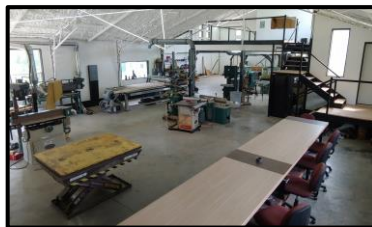
Videos of some OIO performances at Rockspire are viewable at <https://rockspire.com/performances-2/>

ROCKSPIRE'S SHOP EXPANSION - "Studio C", is operational! This 4,000 square foot expansion is the fourth structure in the expanding studio complex we now call "**Makers at Rockspire**," and it brings the complex to over 6,400 square feet. Currently, *Makers at Rockspire* create in three studios with others to follow:

- Studio A: a Quilters' studio with a second story for storage.
 - Studio B: a small project crafting studio.
 - Studio C: a large project woodworking studio with a mezzanine level for smaller projects and a conference room.
- The Drying Shed: an open air, covered space for air-drying wood and storing large project components. This space will soon be converted into additional workspace for larger wood and/or steel projects.



Makers at Rockspire – Studio C - Interiors
Photo by G. Mvers 7.31.23



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✍️ GUEST COLUMN ✍️

Retaining a Fitness with Place – Part I

By Christopher Fischer

Our primal ancestors gravitated and prospered by developing hubs or centers of habitat and adapting to the constraints of many environments and climates. Resiliency was the result of balancing livelihood and survival with changing environments and conditions.

As humans, we're still transforming from the nomadic tribes of ancient times, struggling to fashion resilient contemporary civilizations, and keeping the "hub" concept alive.

Landscape architect and environmental activist Ian McHarg, in his wonderful "Design with Nature" published in 1969, speaks directly to the notion of our compatibility with place "... we can accept that within any generalized area there will be an ideal expression of fitness. In these locations, presumably, there are some special successes that are visible and comprehensible. The ecosystem, the organisms and their organs are not only fit but are most fitting. This is an important conception because it has relevance to the man who wishes to design with nature."

Here in Carroll County, it's always prudent to take stock of our progress in achieving an ecosystem in tune with nature. We do this by measuring what's observable and envisioning how we might do things better. The more we understand how our community is changing by actively working the land, managing natural resources (including letting nature take its course), and being cognizant that resiliency is a friend in the process, the more likely we will have a thriving ecosystem.

How do we determine if this place is fit? Examining the story of place is a first step, by observing transitions, thresholds, or tipping points, and envisioning the fragile line between change and the limits of self-imposed conformances upon the landscape.

McHarg suggests that we revisit our caretaking: "*Apperception¹ was surely the key to man's role, he was the uniquely perceptive and conscious animal, he who had developed language and symbols, and this was clearly his opportunity. What of his role? Surely it was as a cooperative mechanism sustaining the biosphere, and this was the great value of apperception, the key to man's role as steward, the agent of symbioses.*"

¹ *ap.per.cep.tion : mental perception, especially the process of understanding something perceived in terms of previous experience.*

Editor's notes: Chris Fischer, our guest columnist and Rockspire Nature Advisor is a local artist who is also active as a Certified Arborist and consultant to the native gardens and forests in Eureka Springs. Chris was recently instrumental in obtaining a forestry grant for the Eureka Springs' Parks and Recreation Department from the Arkansas Division of Forestry, and he is now working to develop similar concepts for the Trigger Gap region surrounding Rockspire. He and his family moved to Eureka Springs in 2005 from New Orleans where he owned a landscaping company that created some of New Orleans' beautiful native gardens.

