

Fruitport's Famed Pavilion is Reborn...just a bit smaller

By Brian Zwart

The Fruitport Pavilion in Pomona Park is one of the most cherished landmarks that once stood here in Fruitport. From its original opening in 1902, the dance house hosted some of the biggest musical talents in the country and attracted visitors from all over the state. It was built by the Grand Rapids, Grand Haven and Muskegon Railway Company, but many just called it the Interurban, as a way to get people to ride the electric line from Grand Rapids and Muskegon to Fruitport. To many music and dance lovers, the .25 cent round trip fare was an easy price to pay for a night of fun and dancing.

The music stopped in January 1963 when fire quickly engulfed the structure and left it in ruin by the next morning. But thankfully, the Pavilion has been rebuilt for all to enjoy once again. However, it's a bit smaller than you may remember it...

Local craftsman Mark Sorensen decided it was time for the Pavilion to come back to Fruitport. Over the winter he began making a scaled replica model of the famous structure. Using old photographs and postcards, Mark was able to recreate the Pavilion in beautiful detail. During Old Fashioned Days this year the Village Pharmacy has graciously agreed to display the model in their front window. Be sure to stop by and see one of Fruitport's most iconic buildings...in miniature form.



Local craftsman Mark Sorensen with the completed Pavilion model

Bring a new culture into your home!

by Elvira Marfil

Lions Clubs International are looking for families in the community who can open their hearts and homes for 3 weeks during the summer of 2026 to host Youth Exchange Ambassadors. These Exchange Youths are part of the Lions International Youth Camps & Exchange Program, bringing young adults from various parts of the world to the United States during the summer program July 16-August 6.

Host families need not be Lion members, nor must they have children at home; they are responsible for the youth's room and board. Visiting youths come with spending money, costs for additional activities are at the host family's discretion.



If you are interested in becoming a Host Family, please contact Elvie Marfil via email: epmarfil5@gmail.com, or cell phone: 818-800-1060.

Pictured right:

Virgil at his 95th Birthday Party with great grandkids Garrett, Alaina, Wyatt and Bennett Zwart

Virgil and Patty Lee took part in the Fruitport Centennial Celebrations in 1969.



When the structure first opened it had a sign that read 'Pomona' on the roof. Later in history the sign was removed.



One of the few pictures to exist of the inside of the Pavilion, hundreds packed in to enjoy the music and dance.



The Interurban station, where the parking lot off Park Street is today, brought guests from all over West Michigan.

Longtime Fruitport Resident, Virgil Lee, celebrated his 95th Birthday!

By Brian Zwart

On April 18, the Lee Family gathered to celebrate an amazing milestone for their patriarch. Virgil Lee celebrated his 95th birthday recently surrounded by his family.

Virgil was born on April 18, 1931 in Scottville, Michigan. He married Patty Skocelas on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 1950. The couple eventually settled in Fruitport in 1966 and have remained ever since. Patty passed away from cancer in 1994, but not before the couple brought eight children into the world, all of which attended Fruitport Schools. Virgil was remarried in 1999 to Shirley Polanyi, and they were together for 20 years when Shirley also passed away in 2019.

Today, the Lee Family of Fruitport continues to grow. Virgil has 8 children, 33 grandchildren and 54 great-grandchildren with 4 more on the way. Most of which were present at his recent birthday party and all but a few still live in the Fruitport or Muskegon area. Virgil was seen cheering on his great grandkids at Fruitport sporting events such as softball and wrestling. He'll be the guy wearing a "Making America Great since 1931" hat.

In fact, over the years, Virgil Lee has proven to be a Fruitport Super Fan, by attending THOUSANDS of games and tournaments for his kids, grandkids and great grandkids.

Virgil has always been a proud supporter of his family, his God and his country.

We love you, Grandpa Lee. Happy Birthday ole' fella!



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