2012 NISO Garden Tour  
4-8pm Tuesday, June 26  
9am-1pm Wednesday, June 27  
By Shirley Matheis  

Tim and Julie Bajema  
546 11th Avenue NE  
Julie and Tim Bajema live in her grandparents’ former house, and their garden is a sort of family “memory book.” The tiger eye sumac in the southeast corner was planted when their first daughter was born, and the flowering tree in the southwest corner was planted when their second daughter was born. (There’s a fossil of a prehistoric squid-like creature in the large rock by this tree. Their oldest daughter can tell you all about it!) The younger oak tree by the play set was planted when their third daughter was born.  
The bleeding heart belonged to Julie’s grandmother and is well over 20 years old. The day lilies in the front circle are also from her grandmother. All the plants in the lower, north terrace came from Tim’s mother, and the deep purple clematis from Tim’s dad. Also, the entryway landscaping was a Father’s Day gift to Tim. The rocks that form a wall around the stairs in the back were handpicked from Julie’s dad’s field.  
The other flowers are planted and grown by little girls who love to get dirty, dig in the dirt, and bring the flowers inside to light up the house. It may not all be perfect, but it’s done with a lot of fun and love!  

Katie and Jim Gorman  
550 11th Avenue NE  
The Gormans are just beginning to develop their garden and yard, which was so overgrown with shoulder-high weeds when they purchased the property that they didn’t even know they had a patio. Katie’s goal is to have a garden like her grandma’s--unorganized and full of surprises--so she has planted basil, tomatoes, and peppers in the midst of flowers. She began with spring flowers--irises, tulips, daffodils, lilies and columbine--and will be adding and experimenting with new summer flowers each year. This year she’s trying dinnerplate dahlias, potted orange, and lemon trees. Some day she hopes to add a path and a garden house.  

Char & Randy Kooima  
336 7th Street NW  
The Kooima’s large yard of about three acres has mature trees, several perennial gardens, a playground, and a patio. In their backyard, they enjoy entertaining large groups of family and friends for dinner, roasting marshmallows, or just sitting and watching the kids play. They’ve incorporated colored stamped concrete, cedar, and plants in the rock perimeter around the house and driveway. The largest garden is nearly 120 feet long; it is against a wooden fence and has been used for many photo sessions in different seasons throughout the year. The Kooimas hope to include a water fall and pond in the two other gardens that are being developed.  

Roger and Jill Ver Mulm  
418 First Avenue SE  
The Ver Mulms have always loved plants and gardening. When their house was moved to this property in 1998, the sloping back yard necessitated the building of a retaining wall below the deck. This area has been filled with perennial flowers and shrubs. In 2000 Roger designed, dug, and landscaped the double pond area, using stones collected locally and from several other states. The windmill, built by Roger’s late father, was incorporated into that design. Last year Roger built a large storage shed/greenhouse with windows on the south and west for “wintering” many of their flowers. Jill loves to change the front porch seasonally, using flowers and other accessories.
The Trip as General Manager
By James Koldenhoven

As I prepare to hand off the steerage of the Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra to someone else in July, the editor of NISO NOTES asked me to share a few highlights from my twenty-some years as General Manager.

My story begins with the American Bicentennial in 1976, when the Sioux County Board of Supervisors invited me to spice up the celebration in Sioux County. That led to a musical production of 1776, using county singers, actors, and musicians. The show played to seven packed houses in Rock Valley, Orange City, Hawarden, and Sioux Center. Only one of the places we played in had air conditioning that hot July!

Coming off that high and hot experience and being involved with building a new theatre program at Dordt College, I couldn’t resist an encore when the opportunity arrived in 1985. That’s when Henry Duitman came on the scene, and we collaborated to bring together musical talent from both “town and gown.”

The idea was to mix and meld adult musicians from across Sioux County with college and high school instrumentalists under a non-profit roof with an educational mission. Henry brought musical talent to this collage; I had the organizing experience and lots of contacts (after 1776) to help support the formation of what was first called the Sioux County Symphony Orchestra. I was named General Manager and answered to a newly formed Board of Directors.

As General Manager, my main job was to steer NISO along a course outlined in its mission, which has not changed since adopted. Duitman sparked the idea of an educational mission, which I articulated and have promoted ever since: NISO’s purpose is “to provide performance opportunities for qualified musicians of all ages.” Over the years, that mission gave rise to an annual children’s concert, scholarships to worthy students in the orchestra, and the formation of a youth orchestra.

As the orchestra grew and attracted players and audiences from a wider region, the name was changed to the Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra (NISO). Growth for the orchestra involved playing more challenging music, hiring teaching principles for the orchestra. We also added a Guest Concert to fill out NISO’s otherwise short season. The Sioux Center Recreation & Arts Council typically underwrites thes

In recent years, NISO has seen some other important changes. We negotiated a new agreement with Dordt College that provided us with the use of facilities, staff time from Music Director Bradley Miedema, and the talents of an administrative assistant, Mary Hulstein. NISO also hired its own conductor, Christopher Stanichar, to replace Henry Duitman.

Now with a new course set, it is time for the “old” manager to get in his skiff and paddle into the sunset—with an offer to serve on the advancement team going forward.

Looking back, I really can’t say why I have been General Manager of NISO for so long. Nor can I say why I have supported the arts in Sioux Center and Sioux County—ever longer. Is it because I have a net full of artistic talent? Not really. Is it because I thought our town and county were artistically impoverished? Emphatically, NO. Is it because I love to hear symphonic music and understand it? Love it, yes; but understanding it is another story.

It must be the call of the wild, or maybe the wild call of my Maker. It has to be a “God Thing.” See you at a concert next fall, or earlier if you are a loyal supporter and on my call list. It’s been quite a trip!