

Bartlett Arboretum to Host Chautauqua

By Laura Lombardi

The Bartlett Arboretum in Belle Plaine will host its inaugural Chautauqua on October 3 and 4, bringing a weekend of learning, creativity and community to the historic 20-acre arboretum.

The Chautauqua movement began in the late 1800s as a way for communities to come together for education, arts and cultural enrichment. Bartlett Arboretum's event, themed "Cultivating Community," will carry on that tradition through workshops, lectures, music and hands-on activities.

Throughout the weekend, regional presenters and artisans will offer opportunities to explore a variety of interests. Activities will include acoustic music and songwriting clinics, creative writing, restorative outdoor yoga, broom making and traditional book binding. Authors and community leaders will also lead educational discussions.

"We are returning to a Victorian tradition set in a Victorian garden,"



said event organizers Shirley Lefever and Annie Friesen. "This Chautauqua is designed to be a dynamic gathering of artisans and

educators sharing their talents and wisdom. It is an invitation for the public to learn from one another and build a stronger, more resilient community spirit."

Saturday evening will feature a communal soup supper followed by an old-fashioned barn dance with live string band music.

The weekend will conclude Sunday afternoon with a concert by Nashville recording artist Mo Pitney on the Loblolly Stage. The performance continues the arboretum's tradition of presenting outdoor acoustic music among its century-old champion trees.

The Bartlett Arboretum is located at 301 N. Line St. in Belle Plaine. Workshop registration, scheduling information and ticket options are available at bartlettarboretum.com/events/chautauqua.



Kent Ronald Johnston, 82, passed away on Saturday, September 26, 2026. A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, October 10 at 10am in the chapel of Cornejo Funeral Home & Crematory. Memorial donations may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project or the Sumner County Veterans Memorial Foundation.



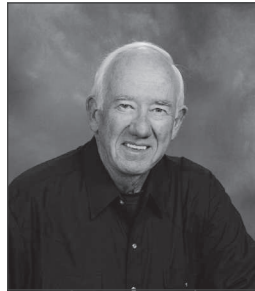
PRECIPITATION AS OF MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

For the month: 3.37"
YTD: 30.33"

Obituaries

RICHARD MEYER BYLER

Oct 1, 1943 – Jul 5, 2026



Richard "Dick" Byler, beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend, passed away on July 5, 2026, in Parker, Colorado. He was 82.

Dick was born in Wellington, Kansas on October 1st, 1943 to Joe and Wilma Byler. He grew up on his family's

dairy farm where he learned the value of hard work early in life, rising each day at 4 a.m. to milk the cows. He graduated from Wellington High School, where he and a teammate won the Kansas state high school golf championship, playing on the sand greens of the time.

Dick attended the University of Kansas, where he studied pharmacy and met Bonnie Buss, who would become his wife. They married in 1968 and moved to Durango, Colorado in 1969, drawn by his love of the outdoors, a seed planted during childhood trips to Colorado with his family. They made Durango their home for over 35 years, building a life together as practicing pharmacists, parents and active members of their church and community.

Dick loved the outdoors, especially hunting, fishing and golf. He and Bonnie spent many winters in San Carlos, Mexico, where Dick loved interacting with the locals, speaking Spanish, and giving to those in need. Later they settled in Green Valley, Arizona, where Dick remained active in his church and community and made many lasting friendships.

Dick was a hard-working, selfless and grateful man who believed in taking care of what you had and helping others. He was also, by any

reasonable measure, extremely resourceful. But his frugality was never about keeping things for himself. He was always willing to give his time and skills to help others, whether regripping golf clubs, cutting firewood or taking garage-sale bicycles and clothing to people in need in Mexico. At family dinners, when asked what he was grateful for, Dick's answer was invariably, "Indoor plumbing."

He had a uniquely dry sense of humor and a knack for making connections with people. He was known for his jokes, his lasting nicknames and many memorable sayings. He formed friendships wherever life took him, from Kansas and Colorado to Mexico and Arizona.

Richard loved his family deeply. He and Bonnie were married for 57 years, until her death in 2025, and he missed her tremendously after she was gone. He is survived by his son, Brett Byler and his partner Allison Greene; granddaughters Natalia and Sienna Byler; brother Bruce (Susan) Byler, and brother Tom (Jeanie Crittenden) Byler; and numerous cousins, nieces, nephews and friends. He was preceded in death by his wife Bonnie, his parents Joe and Wilma Byler, his sister, Mary Ann Ciochon, and sister-in-law Marsha Byler.

Dick will be remembered for his kind heart, subtle humor, generosity, resourcefulness, and gratitude and for the many people who called him a friend. In lieu of flowers or donations, Richard would be most happy if you performed an unexpected act of kindness for someone in need or simply shared a fond memory of him.

A public celebration of life service will be held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Wellington, Kansas, at 11:00am on October 13, 2026.

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