

Jeff Around Town – February 27th, 2024

Otis: Another fond memory, Jeff Koterba.

Jeff: I have a memory that hasn't happened yet. A Night on Bald Mountain, Otis, is this our new theme song? Is that what you're trying to say here?

Otis: Yes, it is. It is. That scared me so much in Fantasia when I saw it as a very young whippersnapper.

Jeff: Is that how you came to do... that was, you know, some of my first classical music. You know, it was in cartoons in Fantasia, in Bugs Bunny, Wagner.

Otis: True for Yo-Yo Ma.

Jeff: Yes, exactly.

Otis: That's how he got into the game.

Jeff: Absolutely.

Otis: Hey, Jeff, you've been around town.

Jeff: I have been around town.

Otis: This is a thing, folks, he's going to be dropping in from time to time. Totally...

Jeff: Parachuting in.

Otis: There you go. It's a personal pop-up, as they say.

Jeff: Personal pop-up.

Otis: If you know what a pop-up is, that's something that just appears and then disappears suddenly.

Jeff: Exactly.

Otis: Your work here is finished.

Jeff: I'm not offering sandwiches or donuts, but I'm a hometown guy. I was born and raised here. I love my city. There's so many incredible things happening around here, around town, and I want to celebrate that and celebrate the people. It's mostly the people and the stories and the connections. I've also lived all over town, too, but I get around. I'm not one of those people who just stays in his little neighborhood. I like to get out and about. The other day, I'm on the riverfront. Have you been down to the river?

Otis: I've been down there, yeah. I have to admit, I was a skeptic about redoing the whole thing.

Jeff: Me too. Incredible. Beautiful. They did it right. There's a wonderful new coffee shop, Fig. It's next to Luminarium. I'm down there having a coffee, watching the river flow, and I overhear this conversation. Next to me, these two women are there, and they're talking about the riverfront and how amazing it is.

Otis: You're eavesdropping.

Jeff: I'm a creative. I'm a writer. You never know when you're going to come up with a cartoon or something. They're talking about it, and I say, excuse me, but I couldn't help but overhear you. Are you visiting from out of town? They said, no, we're from here, but this is our first time on the riverfront, and it's incredible. We were celebrating all of that, and it was lovely. We got to talking. It was Stella Sideris. Not Sideris like the writer...

Otis: Not like Amy.

Jeff: ... but it's a different spelling. Her sister-in-law, Sue. Well, it was flattering. Stella says, wait a minute, I recognize your voice from KVNO. So, she's a KVNO listener, and she listens all the time, and listening now, I'm sure. So that was delightful. So, we're talking, and her sister-in-law, Sue, is from Pittsburgh. Her career was in advertising drawing, making those. Back in the newspapers, back in the day, for whatever reason, shoes and clothing didn't photograph as well.

Otis: No.

Jeff: It's improved greatly, of course. But back in the day, you had to draw a shoe, and back when the models were elongated. So, we're talking about that, and I said, oh, you used a bende process, which is an antiquated, but to shade. And she said, you know what that is. And I said, yeah. So, then I find out that her uncle was a cartoonist by the name of Jack Cole, who did magazine cartoons and also invented *Plastic Man*, a comic. So back in the day, growing up in South Omaha, my dad would go out to garage sales all over town. That's my first intro to getting around Omaha, and we'd buy these for a box of comics for a couple bucks. And I'd take them home, and there was *Plastic Man*. So there, meeting the niece of the inventor of Plastic Man.

Otis: Yeah.

Jeff: And I guess the point is, it's like everybody has a story, and it's beautiful to celebrate that and to ask questions and get to know people. And it was a lovely experience.

Otis: So, you're going to be wandering around town listening in on people's conversations?

Jeff: That's pretty much. If you see a guy with a sketchbook.

Otis: I'm just trying to boil this down.

Jeff: That's my whole thing. But you never know where I'm going to pop up. Papillion, Elkhorn, Council Bluffs, you just never know.

Otis: So, you look for Jeff, Jeff Around Town, his personal pop-ups, and you make sure you've got your phone password secured.

Jeff: And then I'll pop up with you, maybe on a Thursday, maybe first thing Monday morning, we'll just have to see.

Otis: The Luminarium. Now, I've not been in there since they finished it, so I've got to go down there. That's what you've reminded me of.

Jeff: Yeah, I've been in the gift shop. I actually haven't been through the Luminarium, but they have some cool stuff.

Otis: Okay, cool.

Jeff: All right, buddy.

Otis: All right, buddy.