

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

Stone Circle not a one-man show

BY L.M. SMITH

Special to the Record-Eagle

Each Friday and Saturday, 10 miles north of Elk Rapids, just off a gravel road that winds to the right,

the night's silence is broken by the voices of the Stone Circle poets.

And at the center of it all is poet-bard Terry Wooten.

The chirping of crickets

and noise of the blowing leaves competes with the voices raised into the evening. Some 80-odd giant boulders form a series of broken circles surrounding a crackling fire, which gets larger as the night grows darker.

Through the darkness, the words of Joyce and Shakespeare and original poetry by Wooten and others who frequent his circle dance on the ears of attendees.

These attendees range in age from four months to many, many years. Around the circle, it is clear there are some who have been coming since its inception in 1984. There is a sense of community between the old guard and the night's new blood.

"It's different each week," said Wooten, who travels all over the state reciting poems — his own and those by others. "I have 447 poems committed to memory, filed alphabetically and chrono-



Record-Eagle file photo

The only rule at Stone Circle is that a recited poem cannot be read; it must be memorized.

logically."

It is by no means a one-man-show at Stone Circle, though. In fact, each night often ends up being a pot-pourri of poetry, with the only rule being that the recited poem cannot be read; it must be memorized.

An exception was made one recent evening for a Girl Scout who had just completed a poem that day and hadn't had a chance to commit it to memory yet. When she finished, she met applause and supportive "that was wonderful!" responses from audience members.

On July 11, Stone Circle was unable to meet because of rain, yet Wooten and his wife waited outside underneath an enclosure to hold the event if people did arrive.

At 9 p.m. on July 12, the crowd was pretty sparse, but as Wooten began, and darkness crept over the sky, the boulders surrounding the fire began to fill with people. It was as if the voices spouting poems served as calls and the constant trickle of attendees were the answers.

Stone Circle will continue to meet each Friday and Saturday through Labor Day. A suggested donation of \$4 for adults and \$2 for kids is accepted at entrance. For more information, call 264-9467.

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