

# URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

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## Winter 2022

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### Urbandale Citizen of the Year

Dick Christian, founder of Christian Photography has been named the 2021 Citizen of the Year. Dick is the 35<sup>th</sup> Urbandale resident who has been honored by the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce. Barney Wilder, local pharmacist was the first recipient in 1965.



Dick Christian has quietly helped hundreds of people behind the scenes for a number of years. He never seeks recognition for any of his good deeds, in fact most of the time he specifically asks he not receive any recognition.

Dick is the founder of Christian Photo in Urbandale, actively involved in Kiwanis, Masons, and the Shriners. He has served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Des Moines and has been a long-time, active member of the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce. His business, Christian Photography is a long-time business. He started primarily with wedding and studio photography. In 1993 he moved to the present location on Douglas. They undertook significant renovation of the former Urbandale Open Bible Temple at 68<sup>th</sup> and Douglas. They still do a lot of photo work as well as sell camera and accessories. They are one of the last film processors and developers in Iowa. While most of the operation today is headed

by Dick's son Brian, Dick still keeps his hand in the business, as illustrated by his most recent promotional pen.



### Citizens of the Year of the last decade:

- 2010 - Mary Polson: City Council, Parks and Rec., U-CAN
- 2011 - Sheila Twaroski: Community volunteer
- 2012 - Bruce Bernard: Community organizer, U-CAN
- 2013 - Larry Jablonski: School principal, 4th of July Committee, Lions
- 2014 - Monte Halferty: Community volunteer
- 2015 - Rodger Curnow: Little League, Miracle League Field
- 2016 - Jackeline Baldwin Dunlap and Paul Dunlap (posthumously): Donated Arboretum
- 2017 - Betty Devine: Community worker on several Boards, U-CAN
- 2018 - Pat Finnerty: Community groups, schools, Lions Club, Historical Society
- 2019 - Tom Gayman: City Councilman
- 2020 - Robert Andeweg: leadership as Mayor since 2006

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### Urbandale Alumni Association

Urbandale High School Alumni Association is playing an important role in school and community relations. Organized in 2013 as part of the planning for the Urbandale Centennial observance, the group now cooperates with the Urbandale Education Foundation in providing scholarships to Urbandale High School students and financial grants to teachers.

### Christian Photo



Then



Now

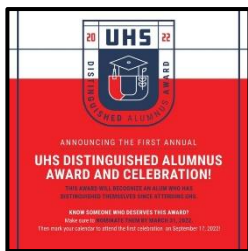
The organization's mission statement is to connect alumni, supporters and the community by promoting a sense of pride and engaged participation through programs, education and student scholarships.



Information about the Alumni Association appears on Facebook and the website [www.urbandalealumni.com](http://www.urbandalealumni.com). Currently more than 2300 former students and faculty members from all over the United States and in foreign countries are enrolled.

Through a quarterly newsletter on-line participants can read profiles of other alums and learn about planned activities. An interesting feature has been the posting of tributes to former staff members who have passed away such as Ernie Doeringsfeld (high school principal), Dennis Brand (track coach), Sally Bartlet (English teacher), Dick Cory (School counselor-and softball coach) and Kathy Collins Reilly (coach of the Jaywalkers).

A new feature planned is to honor a Distinguished Alum at a banquet at the Urbandale Golf and Country Club, Saturday, September 17. The goal is to make this recognition an annual tradition.



Criteria for nomination is someone who attended or

graduated from UHS no fewer than 15 years prior to the nomination and has made significant accomplishments in one or both of the following areas while maintaining high standards in personal integrity and character:

1. Outstanding leadership in their field.
2. Service to the community through local, state, national or international organizations.

Anyone can nominate an Urbandale graduate for this award. Nominations are due by March 31. Details and paperwork can be found on the Alumni website ([www.urbandalealumni.com](http://www.urbandalealumni.com)). Debi Spiller (Class of 73) heads the committee who will make the selection. The name of the person honored will be added to a special UHS Distinguished Alumni Award plaque

which will be displayed at Urbandale High School.

The Alumni Association has scheduled a number of events for 2022. They will be working with the Urbandale Education Foundation to sponsor the annual Golf Tournament at Hyperion Field Club on Monday June 27 to raise money for scholarships.

Alums are encouraged to participate in the Urbandale July 4th Parade. Some classes may even plan to have a reunion.

Planning now underway for a repeat of **U-Fest** a family event to be held at Walker Johnston Softball Diamonds with the tentative date of August 5. Admission and sale of raffle tickets serves as a fundraiser for scholarships for Urbandale graduates and to provide teacher grants for activities and educational projects beyond the classroom budget.

Increased participation is also planned for Homecoming week-end, with the Parade Thursday, September 15 and the Football Game, Friday, September 16. This year the Alumni Association in inviting back former Kings, Queens and Homecoming Court graduates for both the parade and the game. (If you are able to attend one or both events, please contact Dave Lollman ([dl.1960@hotmail.com](mailto:dl.1960@hotmail.com))).

Current Board Members of the Alumni Association are Meribeth Haynes and Linda Biermann Hoobin (Co-chairmen), Shari Zimmerman Stevenson (secretary), Jonathan Koele (treasurer) and Dave Lollman, Amy Drake Bogie, Jodi Gilson Schrage, Kirk McGowan, Audrey Decarlo and Debi Spiller.

## Urbandale American Legion Post

The Urbandale American Legion Post No. 663 is the oldest original organization in Urbandale having received its charter more than 80 years ago. There is now no one available to give a firsthand interview. Information about these early days in available in some issues of the Blue Jay Chatter school/community newspaper printed in the 1940,'s which the Historical Society has in our files.

November 1940 issue - The Blue Jay Chatter

### A Legion Post for Urbandale

*During the past several weeks there has been a growing interest among the World War Veterans residing in the*

*Urbandale area for organizing an American Legion Post. Several special meetings of the "boys" have been held in the high school annex, and indications are strong that some active organization will result in the near future.*

*The Highland Park Post, one of the city's oldest and largest posts, has generously assisted the local boys in laying the ground work for establishing a charter out here.*

*With such a sponsorship, it is believed that a plan can be submitted at the next meeting, December 5, at 8 p.m. whereby a minimum number of names can be secured for the granting of the charter.*

*Any World War veteran, whether or not a member of any post, who may be interested in establishing a post in Urbandale, should contact Bill Elhke, Bob Dixon, or Bill Graul before the next meeting date and leave his name. A preliminary survey shows that some 70 men live in the incorporated town of Urbandale, and are eligible for membership in the Legion.*

*Membership cards are now in circulation throughout the community, and it is believed that most of the veterans will be contacted before the December meeting.*

February 1941 issue - The Blue Jay Chatter

### **Urbandale Legion Post Receives Charter**

*The veterans residing in and around Urbandale have received their charter from the National Department in Indianapolis and are now organized as a full-fledged Legion Post. It will be known as the "Urbandale American Legion Post No. 663." The Constitution and Bylaws have been adopted and a copy is being prepared for each of the paid-up members of the Post. The mimeograph work is being prepared by the advanced class in typing in the Urbandale High School.*

*Among the numerous projects to be sponsored by the Veterans in the newly organized Post are: A post office for the Urbandale Community; sponsoring a public park and play ground; securing benefits for World War Veterans to which they may be entitled under the present laws; and urging new legislation through Congress for aiding dependent children.*

*The Post's regular monthly meetings fall on the first and third Thursdays of the month. The next meeting will be at the high school building on March 6, 8:00 p.m. At the April 3, meeting, Wilbur Bridges, Des Moines attorney, will be guest speaker.*

*All veterans not already signed up for membership are*

*cordially invited to get in touch with Bill Elhke, Post commander or attend the next meeting of the Post on March 6.*

*At present the adjutant's roll shows 19 full paid members, and Commander Elhke reports that some 25 prospects are being contacted for membership this spring.*

*A recent benefit dance sponsored by the Post has netted better than \$25 for the treasury.*

The group immediately became involved in the community. One of the first activities was to help sponsor a summer carnival, June 17-21. Frizzell United Show was expected to include a merry-go-round, Ferris wheel, other motor driven rides, a fun house, live ponies, cold drink stand and other entertainments. "After arousing the town and farm folks' enthusiasm in preparation for the biggest gala occasion to visit our community, word was received by telegram that the show would be delayed by bad weather and would have to be rescheduled." (We do not have a later paper to know if this did get to take place, but carnivals were held in later years.)

Our local Legion post was active in many ways. A story in October 1941 headlines Urbandale Legion Post Sponsors Athletic Field. The story reads "The Legion Post has given more than moral support. It has gone so far as to underwrite a considerable bill of expenses on the equipment of the field. The work done on the field was a good example of co-operation for many gave freely of their time and energy to put the field in shape and to pay for the expense involved." (This field was of course located in connection with the first High School building at the corner of 70th and Douglas.)

In November 1941 the paper describes the annual football banquet held at Dixieland Lunch sponsored by the American Legion. The chicken dinner was followed by a speech from Coach Dan Perkins followed by team captain Carl Johnson. The Legion presented each player with a souvenir.

By 1943 the American Legion Auxiliary had been organized. Meetings were held the third Thursday each month. Mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of World War I and II were welcomed. A lot of support was given to the War effort. "The American Legion and Auxiliary agreed to pay postage on all issues of the Blue Jay Chatter that will be sent to the boys from Urbandale who are in the service whether they are serving overseas or in this country."

The biggest accomplishment was the building of the Legion Hall described in the November 1944 issue of Blue Jay Chatter.



November 1944 issue - The Blue Jay Chatter

### Legion Home Near Completion

*Dixon Hall, the new home of Urbandale Legion Post 663, is now, near completion. The purpose of this legion hall is primarily a place where the Legion and auxiliary can center their activities, but will also be available as a community building where our young people's groups, such as the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, can meet.*

*The hall is built with cement blocks and has a cement floor. The building is so constructed as to accommodate a second floor, if desired. The building is one large room, 44x60 feet with an additional room 13x30 feet. A stage and a kitchen are special features. The hall is heated by a furnace. Members of the Post generously donated their time to assist with the construction and design of the building.*

*Fifty per cent of the cost of the building was raised by donation from the Urbandale townfolk and Des Moines businessmen. This is a large undertaking for a post as small as Urbandale's with a membership of only 52 in the Legion and 45 in Legion Auxiliary. The post is however progressing favorably. It is already 20 per cent over. last year's quota of members with all memberships not up to date.*

*One of the first activities in Dixon Hall will be a Christmas party for the youngsters of Urbandale. One of the objectives of the legion is to provide a youth program for our young people and the new legion hall will be instrumental in providing this. It is hoped that Dixon Hall will be ready for occupancy within the next three weeks. The exact date of the dedication will be announced later.*

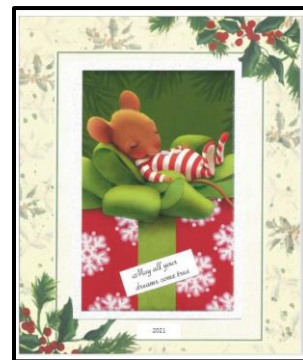
*The building is located at Sixty-eighth and Douglas Avenue, facing south on Douglas.*

### Carol Lee Riekenberg

Carol Lee Riekenberg is well known as the friendly Open House greeter in the children's room at the Olmsted-Urban House. She arranges the many items of clothing, small furnishings, toys and other entertaining items for children years ago in changing displays. She especially enjoys sharing information with young visitors.

Another of Carol Lee's contributions over the years is the preparation of story booklets related to special events at the House, Ice Cream Social, Fall Festival, Holiday Open House, etc. She includes colored photographs, the story of the event and personal narratives of times past.

The format is printed pages in plastic sleeves held together with yarn. The collection of booklets can be viewed in the Office at the House. Copies can be purchased by special order. We will be putting some of them for view on our website ([www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org)) as well.



Though no public Holiday Open House was held this year Carol Lee has prepared one of her special booklets with a combination of special memories and a look in the House.

"May all your dreams come true"

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### Website

Our website: [www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org) has been slowly evolving over the past several years. Most recently we have upgraded our site to allow us to accept membership payments by credit card. This is not functional yet, but should be soon. Please visit our website for information of events and news of the Society. Also, try your hand at our Question of the Month.

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### Acquisitions

In our Fall 2021 Newsletter we highlighted recent acquisitions from Dick Cory. We should mention that the items from Dick were generous donations from his family.

The Edison phonograph and Howe Sewing machine were gracious gifts to the Society from Bill and Sally Adams in memory of Bill's parents Bill and Ellen Adams of Central City, IL.

### Recent Losses

**ELEANORE GRONEWOLD** passed away November 8, 2021. She had been an RN while in the Des Moines area and particularly enjoyed gardening. After retirement she and husband Marven made several moves before settling in Yuma, Arizona where Marven died in 2006. Through the years Eleanore continued her membership in the Urbandale Historical Society and commented that she enjoyed receiving the newsletter to keep in touch.

The Historical Society lost a longtime supporter, neighbor and friend with the passing of **HAROLD JACOBS**, December 24, 2021, a few weeks short of his 104th birthday. Harold and his wife Edna had lived in the house at 4044 70<sup>th</sup> just down the street from the Olmsted-Urban house where they raised their daughters, Debra, Susan and Marla all graduates of Urbandale High School. He enjoyed gardening and had a special interest in the American Legion and other community groups.

### Newsletter

Beginning with our Spring 2022 Newsletter we will begin sending the Newsletter electronically to those for whom we have e-mail addresses and indicated they are willing to receive the Newsletter in this format. For those not able to receive the Newsletter electronically, we will continue to mail the paper copy. If you have not sent us your e-mail address and would like to receive the newsletter electronically, please send us your e-mail address ([urbandalehistory@gmail.com](mailto:urbandalehistory@gmail.com)). We are doing this because of the increased cost of mailing. We will be going through our membership lists in the coming Spring to prepare for a new Directory. If you have not renewed your membership please do. We have a number of members who have not renewed in several years yet we have continued to send the Newsletter.

### New Members

Carol Boals 1433 Wilcrest Rd. Naperville, IL 60540 630-527-0996	Janet Dunn 3821 38th St. Des Moines, IA 50310 515-277-9742 <a href="mailto:jkdunn_1@msn.com">jkdunn_1@msn.com</a>
Lyle & Clarice Brecht 6913 640 <sup>th</sup> St. Wheaton, MN 56296	Ron & Mary Hintz 3940 Greenview Dr. Urbandale, IA 50322
Michael Callison 4711 94th Place Urbandale, IA 50322 515-490-8966 <a href="mailto:mcall78869@aol.com">mcall78869@aol.com</a>	Craig & Diane Johansen 4406 95th St. Urbandale, IA 50322 515-729-2001 <a href="mailto:craigajohansen@icloud.com">craigajohansen@icloud.com</a>
Jeff Couch 7007 Oliver Smith Dr. Urbandale, IA 50322 515-240-5799 <a href="mailto:jlc7007@aol.com">jlc7007@aol.com</a>	Mark & Carolyn Milligan 742 W. Hawthorne Blvd. Wheaton, IL 60187 630-205-8482 <a href="mailto:mark.milligan@bridgecommunities.org">mark.milligan@bridgecommunities.org</a>
Dale Cruikshank & Yvonne Pendleton 3713 W. 10th St. Anacortes, WA 98221 408-306-2800 <a href="mailto:dpcruikshank@comcast.net">dpcruikshank@comcast.net</a>	Barbara & Jerry Sheets 4124 73 <sup>rd</sup> Place Urbandale, IA 50322 515-633-7281 <a href="mailto:bajeliad@msn.com">bajeliad@msn.com</a>
Joyce Daly 13327 110th St. Keswick, IA 50136 641-660-2159 <a href="mailto:our4+6@gmail.com">our4+6@gmail.com</a>	Michelle Stites Image 360 8445 Hickman Rd. Urbandale, IA 50322 515-222-4880 <a href="mailto:meliissa@image360urbandale.com">meliissa@image360urbandale.com</a>
Mark & Kay Dostal 317 Redstart Rd. Naperville, IL 60565 630-596-3661 <a href="mailto:kdostal@me.com">kdostal@me.com</a>	Luisita Thompson & Larry McBurney 2511 134th St. Urbandale, IA 50323 515-4941042 <a href="mailto:lattymcburney@yahoo.com">lattymcburney@yahoo.com</a>

### Acknowledgement of Supporters



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