



URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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URBANDALE, IA 50322

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Fall 2023

CHRISTMAS AT THE OLMSTED-URBAN HOUSE

Continuing a long tradition, the Urbandale Historical Society welcomes the community to start the holiday with a visit to the Olmsted-Urban House, **Sunday, December 3 and December 10 from 2-4 p.m.**

Walk through the historic house that will have holiday decorations in each of the ten rooms. Of special



interest will be the old-time toys displayed in the children's room upstairs and around the Christmas tree in the front room. Stop in the dining room for holiday refreshments. We may even have someone playing familiar songs on the piano or organ. Take time to visit with friends.

On December 3, additional outdoor activities are planned for children and families, including make-and take crafts in the barn, listen to Christmas carolers and more. Of course, Santa will be on the porch to visit with children, and volunteers will take a family photo with your phone, plenty of time to use it on your holiday cards!

On December 10 from 2 to 4 p.m. the house will be open and decorated. We will still have some holiday refreshments, but Santa will be back at the North Pole and most of the outdoor activities will be put away. The house will still be decorated and photo opportunities will abound. It will be a good time to tour the house and see how Christmas was celebrated 'back in the day'.

HAPPENINGS AT THE OLMSTED-URBAN HOUSE

The Olmsted-Urban House benefitted from the UpLift Urbandale project this year with some much-needed work done around the house. In addition to painting the screen doors and pergola at the Butterfly Garden, we received a number of trees courtesy of



Luke Miller, member of the Urbandale Tree Board. Luke has volunteered to work with us on the ground

and maintenance of the trees. These will be a beautiful addition to our grounds. Much thanks to the Urbandale City Hall crew for all their work.



October was a fun and spooky time around the Olmsted-Urban House. Urbandale Lions Club again provided the Historical Society with a show of their superb pancake flipping

skills by hosting a Pancake breakfast at the House. Despite the cold we had a good turnout and the Lions raised over \$500 for the Historical Society. This Fall Pancake breakfast has become an Annual with this year's breakfast our third. Thank you, Lions.



Two day later, on Urbandale's Beggars night, Jo Henry and Marisa Beal revived an old Historical Society and Urbandale tradition, Punch on the Porch. Years ago, Matie

Urban would serve punch on the porch of her home (Olmsted-Urban House) to the youngsters out trick or treating. Being a proper woman of her time, Mrs. Urban served the punch from a crystal bowl in glass cups.

This tradition continued over the many years with Kay Readinger and others carrying on. With 2020 and the Covid restrictions, the Punch on the Porch event seemed lost till this year. We had over 50 visitors this Halloween so maybe this tradition is back.



Polly Carver-Kim is working on a project for her Master's degree through Drake University that will benefit the Society. She is working on developing a marketing plan for the historical society. There are

several elements to this including a survey about the Historical Society. Watch for an e-mail or the Historical Society Facebook page for more information.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMS

We have had some very interesting and informative programs this Fall and look to have a full slate in the coming months.

In September 10, Carl Johnson and Judy Blessington entertained us with the history of the Urbandale Community Theater. Karen Dannewitz started the entire endeavor with her desire to start a theatre in Urbandale. Over the past 28 years they have presented us with 25 shows (22 musicals, 1 play, 1 review and 1 talent show).

October featured Dane Anderson and the Paranormal Society of Iowa telling us about themselves and most importantly if we have any Spirits at the Olmsted-Urban house. We don't! Dane and his crew explained how they examine houses for spirits in general and showed us their examination of the Olmsted-Urban house. They spent the night with Norm Huitt at the house.

In November Jan Herke shared with us where and what the Urbandale Parks and Recreation has been and become over the years. Between Jan and Rick Boals, they have provided Urbandale with 49 years of service. Beginning with Lions Park in 1950 through today, we now have 58 parks and 41 playgrounds in the 1,008 acres of parkland in Urbandale. The Parks and Rec. department is also responsible for the 19 city facilities, including McDivitt Grove Cemetery.

This December we will be having our Annual Christmas Open House (Dec. 3) the first Sunday of the month, which is our typical Open house day (first Sunday of each month, 2-4 pm). For our December program we will be hosting another Open House at the Olmsted-Urban house (Dec. 10, 2-4 pm).

The 2024 programs will be at the Urbandale Library from 2-4 pm. They look to be another set of informative and fun events.

- Jan. 14, Dr. Angela Franklin, President of Des Moines University, sharing the history of Des Moines' medical school (DMU).
- Feb. 11 will feature Mike Knight (Urbandale American Legion) and Dennis Appelhons, (Urbandale VFW) telling us of the history of our American Legion and VFW as well as some of our veterans.
- Mar. 10, Retired Fire Chief Jerry Holt will be with us for his history of the Urbandale Fire Department.
- Apr. 14, Mr. Will Page will offer us a chance to learn about our homes with a presentation on 'What Style is My House?' Bring a photo of your home and he will

share information of the architectural style and period of your home.

- May 19 will either be Staci Stanton sharing the history of the Urbandale Library or Pat Finnerty telling us about Dale Cruickshank, Urbandale's own Rocket Boy.
- June 9 will be the Library or Rocket Boy program.

That will bring us up to the Annual Ice Cream Social and 4th of July.

URBANDALE AMERICAN LEGION

Last year the Urbandale VFW Post 9668 and American Legion Post 663 participated in the Wreathes Across America project by providing 105 wreaths for the veterans at McDivitt Grove Cemetery. They are again this year working on this project. They we are seeking assistance in the way of having additional sponsoring groups help provide the 112 wreaths needed.

Jan Herke and her staff at Urbandale Parks and Rec. have done a great job assisting with the project and getting notice to all of the event this **December 16th**.

You can purchase wreaths online or by writing a check and mailing the order to the Wreathes Across America or online. For more information: www.wreathesacrossamerica.org. The *McDivitt Grove Cemetery ID is: IAMDGC*.

The Urbandale Legions needs to have orders in by **NOVEMBER 28, 2023.**

URBANDALE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The Urbandale Graywalkers will be performing once again on Tuesday, **November 28th**, during halftime of the BOYS' basketball game against Ankeny. Many of these ladies are former Jaywalkers themselves, including the CURRENT Jaywalker coach, **Olivia Hennings**, who has joined the group to perform to a truly classical song! You won't want to miss this one!

URBANDALE'S FLAG

In July of 2000 Urbandale unveiled their new city flag. This flag was resigned by Chris Mendelsohn and Phil Hockett. Doug Hodgson, Chair of the Urbandale Beautification Committee, headed the design project which saw 72 entries from the community. The Flag project came about from a larger project begun a couple of year earlier. The *Imagine Urbandale* was a community wide activity headed by E. J. Giovannetti, Marilyn Kollmorgen and



Pat Finnerty. Among the outcomes was a desire of the community group focused on beautifying Urbandale and developing a symbol for Urbandale, a flag.

Actually, Urbandale already had a flag. Our pre-2000 flag was an eagle encircled by a U on a white background with vertical red and blue stripes at the edges. It essentially was the Iowa flag with the eagle and U in the center. The process of designing a new flag was fun. And it brought the Urbandale together and talking about what makes Urbandale a special community where we want to live and work. Urbandale has changed so much in the time from the inception of the original Urbandale flag till the new design that a reexamination seemed warranted. Consider that the old flag (Eagle and U) captured the small Urbandale centered on 70th and Douglas that did not extend much beyond the confines of the Urbandale School District. By 2000, Urbandale had grown spectacularly and then included three different school districts.

Today, over 20 years later, Urbandale has grown to about 47,000 people encompassing not only 'old Urbandale' but extends into Dallas County and include parts of six different public-school districts not to mention St. Pius and Des Moines Christian. Just as previously, now might be a good time to redefine what makes Urbandale Unique and Special.

The Urbandale City Council has initiated a project to design a new symbol for our community. This is an exciting opportunity to create a symbol that encompasses the spirit and vitality of all Urbandale. The project includes not only your creative ideas for a flag but includes your thoughts about the symbols and icons that define Urbandale. You do not have to be a talented artist, just share your thoughts. Designing a new flag for our community was a fun and unifying experience twenty plus years ago and will be again. More information about this project and how you can participate can be found at the Urbandale City website: www.urbandale.org/flag.

HALL OF FAME HONOREES

Audrey DeCarlo and **Jerry Holt** were named to the prestigious Urbandale Hall of Fame by the Urbandale Chamber at the *Sample Urbandale* event this September.

Audrey was a UHS graduate in 1964. She and husband Eddie raised four children in Urbandale: Dan, Bob, Jenny and James. She was always an active supporter of all their activities and continued as a booster for UHS with the Urbandale Alumni Association. She played a primary role in the activities of other groups in the community including the United Church of Christ, the Urbandale Historical Society and the Fourth of July celebration. She showed her support of the

community in a variety of ways, though she was limited somewhat in later years with health concerns. Audrey passed away on January 30, 2023 and will be greatly missed.

Jerry Holt recently retired as Urbandale Fire Chief. Prior to his arrival in 1998, the Urbandale Fire Department (UFD) was the largest all-volunteer fire department in the State of Iowa. Jerry had the vision to transition the UFD from a volunteer unit to a full-time professional department. There are now three fully operational fire stations: 7100 Douglas, 3027 121st and 15100 Meredith Drive. He has also developed a closest unit response agreement with the City of Clive that provides enhanced protection to the residents of both communities while providing cost savings. This is only one example of the leadership Jerry has provided while instilling strong values within the Fire Department including an oath that promises Pride, Respect, Duty and Unity. Urbandale has been fortunate to have him for his years of service. He will be presenting our program in March on the history of the Urbandale Fire Department.

Citizen of the Year

For many years the Urbandale Chamber has recognized Urbandale citizens for their contributions to the community. In 1964 **Barney Wilder** was named the first *Citizen of the Year*. Since that time 59 individuals have been honored. In recent years the name and year have been inscribed on a brick placed in the *Walk of History* leading up to the front entrance of the Olmsted-Urban House.

The 2022 honoree was **Pat Boddy**. She retired as a Senior Partner of RDG Planning and Design and established her own consulting business *Urbandale 900 Views LLC*. She is known for her public service outside of Urbandale as past chair of the Great Outdoors Foundation and playing a key role in the development of the Central Iowa Water Trusts project to develop opportunities for kayaking, rafting and paddling in the region. She has also served on Urbandale's Water Utility Board, Capital Improvements Committee, Complete Streets Committee and informally advised the Parks Department. This November she was elected to serve on the Urbandale City Council.

Doug Gulling was named 2023 *Citizen of the Year* at the Chambers 2023 Sample Urbandale Celebration Event this September. Doug has been involved in the Urbandale community for decades. He was a UGRA softball coach for his daughter and has served on the Urbandale Community School Board (president in 2004). He retired after years as chief financial officer for West Bank and continues to serve on the Board of Directors. Among other interests, he served as president of the Board of the Greater Des Moines

HISTORY OF THE URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

The Urbandale Historical Society Newsletter is sent to members three or four times a year serving to keep you aware of important projects and programs, and providing a historical record. Past issues are posted on the Society website (www.urbandalehistoricalociety.org) and provide a lot of interesting information about people, places and events and of importance to Urbandale history.

Historical Society President Madeline Kaloides prepared the first newsletter in 1986 and continued for many years until she chose to step aside and devote her time to authoring and publishing two books on the subject of retirement. As a member of the Historical Society for over 40 years I (Virginia Gee) have taken a variety of roles with a priority of researching, recording and preserving local history. I enjoyed helping Madeline by writing some of the articles for the newsletter. When she retired, I continued work on the newsletter with the help of Beth and Gene Haigh. Starting in 2017 Pat Finnerty has played a major role in

the production. (You may have noticed that with his computer he has been able to add pictures.)



My daughter in Ames has encouraged me, at the age of 90, that it is time to move from my two-story house on 64th Street, where we moved

to in 1969, to a more manageable apartment at Northridge Village in Ames. I will continue my interest and support of the Historical Society, but my days of active participation are past.

Pat Finnerty will of course continue publishing the newsletter. Board members Jo Henry and Meribeth Haynes, with the help of some volunteers, are working to preserve objects, memorabilia and printed records of Local History. They welcome your donations of historical items and information you can share of days in our community.

Virginia Gee

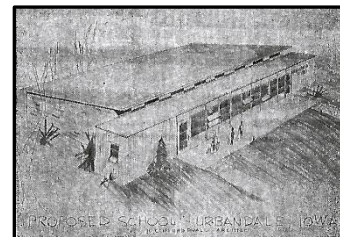
HISTORY OF KAREN ACRES SCHOOL

There were many changes when the school year began in Urbandale this fall. Students who had attended Karen Acres Elementary and the old Valerius were

welcomed to the new \$29 million Valerius Building at 3305 92nd. Students who had attended Rolling Green Elementary with its alternative year-around program are now going to the Karen Acres building. Students throughout the District are eligible to enroll for this program with bus transportation provided. The Rolling Green building is presently being used to house the Metro West alternative program while their building is being remodeled. The eventual fate of the Rolling Green building has not been determined.

The Karen Acres site is filled with much history of Urbandale. The land was originally owned by the Des Moines Ice and Fuel Company for Central Services Coal Mine# 6. The mine was closed and the mine shaft filled in by 1947. The land and a few above ground structures stood vacant for several years.

Don Benton, a major developer in Urbandale appears to have purchased much of the old mine property south of Douglas. He had donated the site of the mine entrance and old shower house to the school district for a future school. In the 1950s space was needed to



serve the growing school enrollment. The school leaders felt that the old shower house used by the coal miners near the entrance of the mine could be put to use. According to a letter to the community, it was estimated that \$7500 would be needed to convert the building into a three-room school house. The materials were to be purchased at cost from supply firms in the area and the labor was being provided by contractors operating in Urbandale and volunteers. The estimated cost was \$2-3 per sq. foot as opposed to a new building at \$10-12 per sq. foot. (Wonder what Olmsted and Valerius cost). Organizations in Urbandale, along with the city were supporting this project in some fashion. To help raise the funds, a dance was organized at a cost of \$1 per ticket.



Dancing for a School

Many parents in the Urbandale area attended this outdoor dance at Northridge apartment and Douglas Avenue Elementary. The net proceeds were and contributed toward a \$7,500 fund to be used to remodel an abandoned coal mine shower house for use as a three-room school building. The building fund a picture book was prepared with event and receipts which is being donated to the Urbandale school board by Don Benton, building developer. The school will provide copies for about 50 elementary pupils.

The building was remodeled by volunteers into a three-classroom school house. A strong wind came along ripped off part of the roof and the volunteers went back to work. Many boys and girls attended class in this



Karen Acres Elementary
3500 214th Street Bldg #1964

building before the new brick Karen Acres Elementary opened in 1964. The old wooden structure was used as an annex and for storage until it was torn down in the 1980s. One

neighborhood around the school was named by Benton for his daughter Karen and the name Karen Acres was carried on when the new elementary school opened at 3500 74th St.

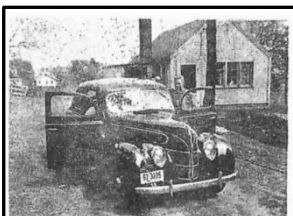
Substantial changes have been made to the building. In 1975 a multi-purpose room was added to the basic structure for physical education instruction, a lunchroom, musical performances and as a community room during evenings and week-ends. In 1989 a community bond referendum provided funds for increased instructional space and updating of the media center. Classrooms in the southeast area were remodeled in 1992. In 2016 Karen Acres began a new remodeling effort with the construction of six large classrooms, a full-sized competitive gymnasium and expansion of the kindergarten area, front office and enhanced security. Later work gave a complete facial for the rest of the building, i.e. fresh paint, flooring and carpet in some areas.

The building was now a welcome site this fall for the students and staff that had been a part of the Rolling Green program and others who chose the year-around option.

BOB LAMB DAIRY OPERATION

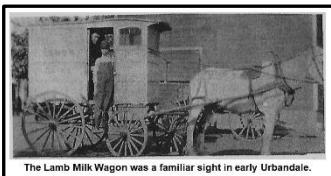
A major donation has recently been made for display in the Wayne Robbins Barn. Joe Lamb has constructed scale models of the buildings associated with his father Bob Lamb's historic dairy business in Urbandale.

Bob Lamb was the son of Rev. Harold and Jessie Lamb who moved to Urbandale in 1920. Bob grew up in Urbandale and as an 18-year-old worked for Ray Stuart who had a small dairy as part of farm at 63rd and Douglas. At that time milk delivery was made using a Model A Ford truck. The milk sold for 10¢ a quart.



3402 64th was a milk house in 1941. open pasture allowed sight of the Robert Lamb home at .3520. A cow barn was then under the tree at upper left. Rev. H. D. Lamb is shown at car door.

When Bob decided to go into business for himself, he purchased a pasteurizer and built a milk house at what is now 3406 64th St. Some of the milk needed came from the Valerius dairy herd. About 40-60 quarts a day were processed. Milk was put in quart bottles and delivered sometimes twice a day to families in the area. Most people did not have any way to keep the milk cold. The Lambs purchased ice from the Ice House at 70th and Roseland to keep the milk fresh. Bob delivered his



The Lamb Milk Wagon was a familiar sight in early Urbandale.

milk using a horse and wagon until 1949.

Bob remodeled the milk house from time-to-time increasing production to several hundred quarts a day. Continually increasing demands from State milk inspectors presented new challenges and he eventually closed his operation. For another 18 years Bob drove some of the same routes as a deliveryman for Fairview Dairy of Des Moines.

Bob and his wife Louise were some of the first members of the Urbandale Historical Society with Bob serving a term as president. Woodworking was one of his hobbies and he constructed several cupboards and shelves for the newly purchased Olmsted-Urban House. He began to work on scale models of the Lamb Dairy buildings. He died in 2007 at the age of 94.



His son Joe decided to complete work on the scale models depicting the house, barn, outbuildings and milk house.

They are now displayed on a large table in the south area of the Barn. Some dairy equipment and photos are also on display to tell the story of this historic dairy operation.

Joe also built a replica of the dairy delivery wagon which he showed in the 2017 Urbandale July 4th parade.

NEW MEMBERS

Gene & Betty Hamilton 4850 72 nd Urbandale, IA 50322 515-979-2736 bpete103@aol.com	Deb and Daniel Cashman 8401 Sharon Cir. Urbandale, IA 50322 515-661-1615 dcash59@hotmail.com
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MEMBERSHIP

Our Membership year runs from Jan 1 through Dec 31. For all those who have renewed for 2024, thank you. Enclosed is a renewal form. As well you can go online at www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org under the Membership tab.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORTERS



URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP AND RENEWAL APPLICATION

Membership is on a calendar year: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31

Donations are tax deductible.

<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting: \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron: \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Name on permanent plaque: \$1,000 and up
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining: \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor: \$500 and up	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Special Gifts – Memorials are appreciated

Name: _____ **Spouse:** _____
Address: _____ **Phone:** _____
City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip** _____
e-mail address: _____

Would be willing to receive the newsletter electronically (need e-mail address)

Please indicate your interests below:

<input type="checkbox"/> Collecting & preserving Urbandale's history	<input type="checkbox"/> Gardening /Yard work
<input type="checkbox"/> Tour Guides for School Groups & others.	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs and Trips
<input type="checkbox"/> Building/Grounds/House Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Events and Projects (Ice Cream Social Christmas	<input type="checkbox"/> Housekeeping
<input type="checkbox"/> Office work	<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments
<input type="checkbox"/> Have Urbandale information, photographs or memorabilia to donate or lend for copying.	

Website: www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org

e-mail: urbandalehistory@gmail.com

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