

URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Preserving Yesterday and Today for Tomorrow

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Summer 2021

News of the Urbandale Historical Society

Things have been progressing around the Olmsted-Urban House this spring and early summer. If you have been by lately, you should have noticed our new roof on the Barn. The damage from the

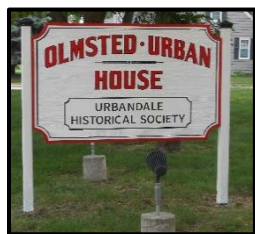


Derecho last summer has been repaired and the roof replaced with new 'steel' shingles. They look quite nice.

You should notice several other changes around the house. The north side has been scraped, windows reglazed and a new coat of paint applied. The entry way on the south has been replaced and we even have a new mailbox. The railing and will be painted later this summer. We have the materials and plan to repair the columns on the front porch yet this summer as well.



As you look around the grounds, you might notice the sign was missing. It has been redone by Kness signs and has been returned as good as new.



Inside, we have added supports under the kitchen floor in the basement.

Along with all this, we have had help from a variety of volunteers to keep the grounds picked up and looking spiffy.

If you would like to help us with any of the projects to maintain the house, please send us a note (Urbandalehistory@gmail.com) or call the Historical Society number 270-2917 and leave a message.

Please watch our website (www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Urbandale-Historical-Society) for updates and more information.

Life is Returning

The Annual Ice Cream Social, traditionally held in June, will be held this year on **Sunday, September 12**. This not only is an important fundraiser for the Historical Society, but has become a favorite community event.

What You Can Do:

1. Tell others a date has been set, Sunday, September 12, so they can get it on their calendars.
2. Invite friends and family to attend.
3. Agree to donate pie(s) or other baked goods. (Callers will be trying to obtain 60 donations)
4. Volunteer to help on one of the serving shifts. (Several of our regular helpers are no longer available)
5. Come and enjoy the fellowship of this special day.

In addition to the Ice Cream Social in September, we intend to resume our monthly programs. Our September program will be the Ice Cream Social followed in October, then through the year. Our programs and meetings will be on Sunday afternoons, **Second Sunday of the month at 2:00 p.m.** The October program will feature the Urbandale Roller Rink. Further program topics will be announced soon. Watch our Facebook and Website for more information.

History of the Ice Cream Social



The Ice Cream Social has an interesting history with the Historical Society.

Records show the first Social was organized by then

president, Wayne Robbins, and some volunteers in 1994. Calls went out for donated homemade ice cream and pies. Madeline Kaloides writes: "We underestimated the number of people who would come. Wayne Robbins was desperately cranking ice cream on the back porch while people stood in line. Ann Ulm went home and got some baked goods out of her freezer. The weather cooperated and the music kept the crowd interested. Our profit was \$519."

The next year, 1995, Madeline wrote: "The Ice Cream Social was enjoyable with the old-fashioned banjo and accordion music. We served over 300 people. The only person complaining was Wayne Robbins. He planned to simplify procedures by renting a 5-gallon ice cream maker to supplement the small hand freezers. He did not discover it was a hand crank machine until he picked it up that morning. He cranked the freezer with some help and suffered a pain in his shoulder. We appreciate everyone willing to donate pies, cakes and freezers of ice cream."

In 1996 Madeline's notes stated: "We were grateful for the nice weather and had a good crowd. Thanks to the Chamber of Commerce for the donation of the music and Anderson-Erickson Dairy and Fareway Stores for donating the ingredients for the ice cream. The event went smoothly under the direction of our committee: Katherine and Don Brush, Ginny and Jerry Campbell and Beth and Gene Haigh. Our profit was \$677."

Successful events were held each succeeding year. In 1997 Banjo/Revival headed by LaDee Mommer provided a feeling of good old-time music. Wayne Robbins and his group that year made about 26 gallons of ice cream. Wayne said he started at 6 AM and after some problems with a freezer finished by noon. Our profit that year was \$1,120.

There has always been a time for friends and family to visit. In 2008 the Urbandale High School class of 1958 made the Ice Cream Social a part of their 50th reunion. The next year, the class of



1959 enjoyed a get-together. Clancy Lamoureux and Ted Michelfelder have provided the music in those and later years.

Norm and Faith Huitt took over the organization in 2011. They oversaw the many details of planning, obtaining supplies, and setting up for the serving. Faith provided the flowers for the centerpieces on the picnic tables. On special display that year was Annebelle the black and white cow from Roberts Dairy. She has appeared in numerous parades and is on display at the dairy. Donors of ingredients needed for the Ice /Cream Social have been Hy-Vee, Fareway, Hiland Dairy and Quik Trip.

In 2015, to meet the promise of homemade-style ice cream, Tom and Patty Foster brought their special equipment to make and freeze the ice cream on-site. Calls are made each year for nearly 60 items of donated baked goods (pies and cakes). The Urbandale High School Alumni Association donates about 6 pies each year.



The Ice Cream Social continues as an important community event. Traditionally being the last weekend of June, it has served as the kickoff for the Urbandale 4th of July celebration. Families enjoy getting together even; out-of-towners come back. Car Clubs, such as the Cadillac-LaSalle, Central Iowa Model A and Heart of



Iowa Model T Club have encouraged members to participate and put their cars on display. The House and Barn are open for visitors. The 2017 Social, Urbandale's Centennial year, was probably our most successful with an estimated attendance of over 400 and revenue of over \$2,000. We even had a replica of Lamb's Dairy wagon. With the Social cancelled in 2020 and postponed till September 12 this year, we hope to re-establish the tradition.

The Important Role of Our Presidents

The Historical Society was organized in 1977. A dozen or so families kept the Society going for the first 10 years. Serving as President were Larry Hindert, Edwin Spiller, Robert Lamb and Dave Hartsook.

In the 1980s the opportunity to purchase the Urban property on 70th street presented itself. Madeline Kaloides, president at the time, work with John Urban, City officials and the City Council to obtain Hotel-Motel tax funds. Donations were solicited from various groups and individuals with the Olmsted-Urban House being officially purchased in 1987.

Madeline provided leadership for various programs, restoration projects, grant applications and fund-raising, met with architects and the media and worked on plans to build a barn on the property. Starting in 1986 she began publishing a newsletter with articles of historical interest sent to members. She resigned in 2001 due to health concerns.

Wayne Robbins assumed the presidency after Madeline. He had been active with the Historical Society since the purchase of the house, leading the work on restoration, upkeep and maintenance of the property, even helping with the construction of the barn. He also planned exhibits and donated farm items from his own collection.

Wayne was the contact with City Departments, the paid workers and volunteers and did much of the actual work himself. A favorite accomplishment of Wayne's was instituting the annual Ice Cream Social. With the help of volunteers, he cranked dozens of gallons of ice cream to be served to the visitors. This became our major fund-raising event. He also helped present programs sharing his memories of his days in Urbandale. With Bob Simon, they planned bus trips to various places throughout Iowa.

At Wayne's urging, Norm and Faith Huitt became Society members in 2007 and began work on membership. Norm soon became Wayne's 'right-hand man' on Buildings and Grounds and the Ice Cream Social.

Wayne retired in 2015 after 14 years as President. Norm was elected to succeed him. Again, in addition to providing leadership for other Board members, Norm serves as the contact for all decisions related to maintenance of the property. Norm has spent many hours actually doing work at the Olmsted-Urban House and grounds.

Fund-Raising for the Historical Society

When the opportunity came for the Historical Society to purchase the Olmsted-Urban House property, a plan for funding was needed. A Board position was established and a committee organized. Marilyn Kollmorgen originally served as the committee chair until she stepped down in 1994 to become President of the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce. Members serving at various times on the committee were: Don Brush, Daryl Henze, Bob Simon, Tom Dunbar, Marianne Graech, Don and Pat Avaux, Karen Erickson and Gwen Essex. Bob Simon still comes up with fund-raising ideas.

Fund-raising was planned to contact corporations, businesses, local organizations and individuals. Names of major donors were to be recognized on a plaque. The highest donor from the campaign was Norwest Bank at \$10,000. Most were one-time donors, but Charles Gabus Ford (now Gabus Automotive Group) has continued through the years and their continuing contributions are most appreciated. Other original major donors were Bankers Trust, Employers Mutual, First Interstate Bank, Iowa Realty, U. S. West Communications, American Concrete, Reilly Construction, Tower Grading and Construction and the Urbanews. Local organization donors were the Urbandale Lions club, Lioness Club, Breakfast Lions club, Kiwanis of Merle Hay/Urbandale, Urbandale Senior Citizens and the Urbandale Women's club.

Various fund-raising events were held over the years: Plant/Bake Sale, Flea Market, Lemonade/pop sale on July 4th, Little Girls Tea Parties, Raffles, Antique classes, Bus Tours, Holiday Tours of Homes and the ever-popular Ice Cream 'Social'. The Ice Cream Social is the only one currently scheduled.

Various grants have been obtained over the years from Bravo, Prairie Meadows, Endow Urbandale and the City of Urbandale for special restoration projects and upkeep of the grounds. These grants have to be applied for each year and the amount awarded can vary.

Unfortunately, the Historical Society has no Endowment Fund. While fund-raising activities have declined, necessary expenditures have increased. Basic expenses incurred each year include insurance, utilities (electric, water, telephone), security system, household supplies for the kitchen and bath and office supplies for printing and mailing. Property maintenance includes snow removal and lawn care.

Income last year came from memberships, donations and one-time grants to cover some of the basic maintenance needs of the Olmsted-Urban House. The Urbandale Lioness club provided a \$100 donation and the Urbandale Garden Club another \$25. Memorial funds have been received from family and friends of members Marilyn Finnerty, Sandy Porter Vandermulen

and Wayne Anderson. These memorials will be used for special projects, not basic expenses.

This past year we have not been able to provide programs, the Ice Cream Social, a bus trip and receive donations from people visiting or using the house. A new fund-raising committee has been organized, chaired by Todd and Polly Kimm. Serving with them are Jo Henry, Meribeth Haynes and Susan Bonnicksen. More volunteers will be added. Plans are being made for a variety of activities to enhance the visibility and recognition of the Historical Society and a major fund-raising campaign directed to individuals and businesses in the community. The committee would welcome your ideas and support. A **'Movie Night at the Barn'** is being planned for August. Please watch our website (www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Urbandale-Historical-Society) for updates and more information.

Thanks to Kay Readinger

After more than 20 years of serving on the Board of the Historical Society, Kay Readinger is retiring as our secretary. She and husband Dale first joined the Society when they lived in the Jensen neighborhood. In 1994 she first served as the Society's Publicity chair. In 1996 she was elected to serve as the Board Secretary succeeding Karolyn Hatch.

Kay has always actively participated in the upkeep of the Olmsted-Urban House and special events such as the Little Girl Tea parties, Ice Cream Social and Holiday Open House. Of special interest has been the continuation of the Punch on the Porch event in October, she even recruited her daughter Ann to help greet the young visitors. Though Kay is relinquishing the job of Secretary she will continue as an active member. Thank you, Kay, for your years of service.

With Kay's retirement, we are in need of a replacement for her. The Board meets the third Monday each month at 1:00 pm at the Olmsted-Urban House. If interested and willing, please contact the House (515-270-2917) or any Board member.

Pollinator Garden



The Urbandale Garden Club has for a number of years maintained a Pollinator Garden on the property by the pergola. The garden is in full bloom and a beautiful contribution. As a matter of fact, we recently had a couple use the garden as a backdrop for their wedding pictures.

Memorials of those we have lost

Don Avaux

Don who passed away May 12, 2021 was one of the most dedicated members of the Historical Society from the day of the prospect of purchasing the Olmsted-Urban property became known. Don worked with his long-time friend Wayne Robbins on every aspect of the restoration - clearing brush, replacing the porch roof, renovating the kitchen, turning the den into an office, building a handicapped bathroom, planning the walk and parking lot and working on the barn using all his 'fix-it' skills. He was very instrumental on the fundraising campaign to help pay for the projects.

Don was a graduate of Urbandale High school in 1949 and with his personal stories added much to any program about living in the community. He and his wife Pat enjoyed participating in all the meeting, pot lucks, and fund-raising activities, especially the Ice Cream Social. Several times he drove his old John Deere tractor as part of the Historical Society's winning entry in the Urbandale July 4th parade.

Don had served the community on the Library Board, Parks and Recreation Board and supported the many athletic events at the Urbandale schools. In 1983 he was named the Urbandale Citizen of the Year.

Jan Lawson

Jan Lawson and her husband Bill were long-time Urbandale residents before they moved to Johnston where she passed on June 6, 2021. Jan spent many years as an employee of the Urbandale Library where she shared an interest in Urbandale history with Hazel Demirjean. The Lawsons became active supporters of the Historical Society and particularly enjoyed helping with the Ice Cream Social.

New Members

We are happy to welcome the following new members to the Urbandale Historical Society.

Dave & Amy Osborn 4412 163rd St. Urbandale, IA 50323	Sondra & Larry McMahon 10524 Meredith Dr. Unit #4 Urbandale, IA 50322 515-276-1009
Todd Readinger & Susan Schultze 32 Dunlap St. S. St. Paul, MN 55105 651-276-6902 startfarms@aol.com	Brad & Dede Zaun 7032 Holcomb Ave. Urbandale, IA 50322 515-276-2025 bjzaun@gmail.com
Bill & Faith Sherman 3928 Twana Dr. Des Moines, IA 50310 515-278-2242	

New addresses phone numbers, etc.

New Address: Dennis & Regina Linn 9405 Wilson St. West Des Moines, IA 50266 641-780-8475	New Address: Delores VanHorn 1701 Campus Dr. #3423 Clive, IA 50325 515-276-0305
e-mail address: Merle & Shirley Alexander shirleymerle@gmail.com	e-mail address: Jan Hall jhall7gk@gmail.com

Membership and Financial

We appreciate all of you who have renewed your memberships and all the extra donations you have made. Those funds have been a tremendous asset to keep the Society operating. While we continue to seek other revenue sources, we are and will continue to be dependent on our membership. If you have renewed your membership, **Thank You**. For those who have not, please do so. Also, please share with your family, friends and neighbors to encourage them to join us in helping to preserve the history and legacy of Urbandale.

Acknowledgement of Supporters

None of our work could be done without the support of our benefactors and members.



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