

Urbandale Historical Society Newsletter

4010 70th Street

Urbandale, IA 50322

(515) 270-2917

www.nrbfil!.dal historicalsociety.org



January 2017

January Meeting

Bob Simon has an interesting schedule of program meetings for 2017. All the programs are held at the Olmsted-Urban House. No reservations are needed, no fees, just come and join us. Plan to bring a friend.

The traditional Soup Supper / Potluck will be held on January 9 beginning at 6:00 p.m. Bring cooked or canned vegetables to add to the soup base and a food item to share, plus your own table service. If you do not care to come for the dinner, please come at 7:00 for an interesting program by one of the Historical Society's favorite presenters - Ed Monow. This month's topic is old-time beauty products. Ed has items he has collected and advertisements from magazines of years past.

February Meeting

Bruce Kruger will share "My Life with Lincoln" for the program meeting on February 6 at 7:00 p.m. Bruce lived in Illinois and even worked at the Lincoln Home in Springfield. Now an archivist at the Historical Building Bruce has had a long-time interest in all things associated with Abraham Lincoln and has some memorabilia to share.

Meeting Cancellation

Iowa's unpredictable weather sometimes causes a meeting to be cancelled. If it is announced that local schools are closing and other community events are being cancelled, you can assume that the Historical Society will not be meeting. The answering machine message at the Olmsted-Urban House may not reflect this. Call Virginia Gee's home phone at 276-0222 if you are wondering whether the meeting is going to be held.

March Meeting

On March 6 Beth Haigh will present Cemetery Art - Art Reflects its Culture. This program will include photographs to illustrate types of gravestones over the years and the symbolism of the icons carved on the stones. Gravestones provide insight into the culture in which the deceased lived and can be used to trace family history. Do you know how the word gravestone originated? Learn the answer when you attend this 7:00 meeting on March 6th.

April Meeting

Did someone in your family have a Radio Flyer coaster wagon? The company that produced this family favorite is also celebrating its centennial. Bob Simon has been in touch with representatives of the company and has some interesting information to share at the meeting on April 3 at 7:00 p.m. This is an appropriate subject for Urbandale's centennial year.

Fall Bus Trip

Adams County was the destination for the fall bus trip. The first stop was the Corning Opera House Cultural Center. Later the group toured Precision Pulley Company, Adams County House of History, and Johnny Carson's birthplace. The final stop was at the site of the historical Icañon Colony. Thanks to Bob Simon and Pat Finnerty for planning another interesting trip. Please give Bob or Pat any ideas you have of a location they could consider for a future trip within an approximate two hour driving time.

Light Up Urbandale

Light Up Urbandale was a special celebration planned as a Centennial event on December 4.

It started with our traditional Holiday Open House at the Olmsted-Urban House. Appropriate holiday decorations were placed throughout the house. Carol Lee Riekenberg was responsible for the children's room and later served as a hostess for the visitors who came to tour the house. Board members served as greeters and tour guides, and answered questions about items in the house and Urbandale history.

Norm Huitt set up a special display of larger toys, many from his personal collection, including a model trolley that operated around the base of the beautifully decorated traditional Christmas tree.

Katlyn Brush and Pat Nawrocki served punch and the special cookies baked by Historical Society members. Jean Swift played the piano during the first hour of the open house.

Many of the families touring the house said it was their first visit. More than 200 people signed the guest book.

Meanwhile, many new activities were planned by U-CAN and the Urbandale Centennial Committee outside, as part of the special tree-lighting event. Holiday craft activities were offered for children and a visiting Santa took his place on the front porch. The Kiwanis group passed out candy canes, and U-CAN members provided hot chocolate and cookies.

The Tain wagon was brought out of the Wayne Robbins Barn and decorated with

Christmas lights. Families could have their picture taken for free, using the wagon as a backdrop.

Later in the afternoon a children's chorus from Rolling Green School sang songs in Spanish. A Bell Choir from St. Stephens Church and students from Urbandale High School vocal music also performed holiday songs. After a welcome from E. J. Giovannetti and Mayor Robert Andeweg, lights on the three large evergreen trees in the front yard were turned on. Lights were purchased by the Centennial Committee and had been put in place by a crew of city workers. Lights were also placed along the porch roof and outlining the balcony. The lights were to be on each evening during December.

Visitors for the tree-lighting could also pick up their kits of white sacks and candles for the special "Light Up Urbandale" luminaries event which was scheduled for December 11. People in neighborhoods all around the community participated, although the weather was not as cooperative as for the December 4 celebration.

Valentine View Open House

Have you had a chance to visit the Olmsted-Urban House recently? We frequently get the questions, "When are you open?". This is your chance - on Sunday, February 12 between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. to bring a child, grandchild, or friend to take a leisurely look at the rooms and Urbandale memorabilia. Of special interest will be a display of the vintage Valentines that were first given to Matie Evans Urban, Mae Nelson, Howard Nelson, John Urban, and Madeline Kaloide.

Feature Story - History of Urbandale Garden Club

Oldest club in Urbandale - 85 years

The Urbandale Federated Garden Club has the distinction of being the longest established organization in Urbandale. In 1931 Mrs. John Eby was installed as the first president of what was called the Urbandale Community Garden Club. Other charter members were Mrs. Peter Eby, Mrs. Otto Laverrenz, Mrs. John MacRae, Mrs. J. O. Munn, Mrs. Frank Pratt, and Mrs. J. M. Williamson.

Time of the meetings, held in member's homes, varied during the early years – noon potlucks, May breakfasts, dessert luncheons, picnics in the park, and a rose show and party on the lawn. Most of the programs were presented by members on flower and vegetable gardening. By 1935 membership was 25. Dues were one dollar.

During the war years, Victory Gardens were encouraged. Gardeners expanded their family gardens with conventional vegetables, and some tried new plants such as celery, lettuce, peanuts, and soybeans. Many of the programs were devoted to vegetable growing and new methods of canning and storage of those home-grown fruits and vegetables. Many recipes were exchanged trying to use sugar substitutes. Members were urged to bring their own coffee and sugar to meetings because there was a critical wartime shortage of both.

In 1943 the club purchased an Austrian pine tree and planted it on the high school grounds at 70th and Douglas in honor of the men and women in the Armed Forces.

In the early 1950s a benefit variety show was sponsored with proceeds going toward equipping the Urbandale Park (now Lions Park). Flower shows, exhibits, flower arrangements, and table settings were an important part of the club's activities with members exhibiting at the Iowa State Fair. Plant exchanges were common. To encourage gardening, the club set up junior and intermediate groups in the junior and senior high schools, and gave the students seeds to grow.

Monthly meetings had been held at the Urbandale Congregational Church and later at St. Stephens Lutheran Church. The object of the club was expanded to "stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening, to aid in protection of native trees, plants and birds, to encourage civic plantings and to cultivate the art of flower arranging and displays".

The Garden Club continued to play an active role in the community. Public flower shows were held at Plaza State Bank and Sears Department Store. The club planted flowers at Merle Hay Plaza (then an open mall) and later petunias in front of businesses along Douglas Avenue. Later in 1982 Shasta daisies were being promoted as the Urbandale flower. The group received a special grant to plant flowers at the new Cedar Ridge Shopping Center.

Through the years Urbandale Garden Club has supported the community in a variety of ways. Books on gardening have been donated to the Urbandale Public Library. Planting is done at the entrance of Karen Acres Care Center. Some planting was done at Lions Park for the Urbandale Parks and Recreation and a serviceberry tree was donated for Lakeview Park.

In 2006 two flowering pear trees were planted at the Urbandale Senior Center honoring young men from Urbandale who were killed in Iraq - Army Medic PFC Eric Wood and Marine PFC Brandon Sturdy.

Though members through the years have been primarily women, men are welcome to join. Membership is encouraged, but anyone is welcome to attend the after noon meetings held now at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, the second Tuesday of the month September through May.

Program topics have expanded from primarily floral and gardening topics, to include concerns related to the environment, bees, birds, wild life, and conservation. A fund raising plant sale with members donating plants is held in May, and garden visits may be scheduled in the summer.

The group supports and receives information from Benton Arboretum, Iowa Arboretum, Nature Conservancy, Iowa State University Extension Service, Polk County Conservation, and Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa. A future project of the club is to establish a garden for monarch butterflies, bees, and other pollinators with the Urbandale Historical Society at 4010 70th Street in Urbandale.

To learn more about the Urbandale Garden Club, contact long-time members Jean Swift (986-0093) or Virginia Gee (276-0222). Other Garden Club members who are also Historical Society members are Maxine Edwards and Norma Needham.

Grant from Endow Urbandale

This fall the Urbandale Historical Society received a \$2,000 grant from Endow Urbandale. The primary objective of this group is to create a permanent ever-growing General Community Endowment Fund to support a broad range of existing and future charitable, cultural, and civic needs throughout the community of Urbandale. The first grant was made in 2012 to the Urbandale Community Action Network.

This year's grant to the Urbandale Historical Society is to be applied toward the purchase and/or update of technology to digitally record and archive the historical records at the Olmsted-Urban House. Other recipients were the Urbandale Fire Department, Urbandale Education Foundation, Northwest Rotary Service - Above - Self Foundation, and the Urbandale Miracle League.

In 2014 the Historical Society received a \$4,000 grant to repair the memorial walkway in front of the Olmsted-Urban House and the walkways around the parking lot of the property. Other recipients that year were the Urbandale Centennial Steering Committee, Urbandale Police Department, and the American Legion Post #663.

As you can see, there are a variety of public service groups competing for the grants. An individual's gift to Endow Urbandale is a wonderful opportunity to give back in a way that will have a profound and lasting impact on our community and our families for generations to come. To show your support, please send your gift in any amount to Endow Urbandale, PO Box 42201, Urbandale, IA 50322.



Directory Changes

You received an Urbandale Historical Directory last fall. Here are some additions and changes:

Additions:

Phyllis Barry
4112 64th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322
515-276-2268

Bruce Bernard
4708 83rd Street
Urbandale, IA 50322
515-278-5725

Sydney Coder
4505 73rd Street
Urbandale, IA 50322
515-278-5703

Address Change:

Tom and Joni Claik
13900 Sheridan Avenue
Urbandale, IA 50323

Norma Needham
2727 82nd Place - Unit 215
Urbandale, IA 50322

Phone Number Changes:

Charles and Joyce Cretors
515-278-4448

Kevin and Jo Henry
515-360-5768

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Clip a Save Important Dates



January 9 Soup Supper 6:00pm
Meeting - 7:00pm
January 16 Board Meeting 7:00 pm
February 6 Program Meeting 7:00 pm
February 12 Open House - Valentine
View 2:00 - 4:00
February 20 Board Meeting 7:00 pm
March 6 Program Meeting 7:00 pm
April 3 Prog Tam Meeting 7:00 pm
April 17 Board Meeting 7:00 pm
Election of Officers

2017 Membership Renewal

Recently a reminder letter was sent out by Membership Chairpersons, Norm and Faith Huitt regarding membership dues for the year 2017. If you have not yet responded, please send a check so all memberships can be received as-soon as possible. We need your support!

URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY Membership Renewal

Membership is on a calendar year: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31
Contributions are tax deductible.

___ Supporting\$25. ___ Patron\$100. ___ Name on permanent plaque.....\$1,000. and up
___ Sustaining\$50. ___ Benefactor\$500. and up ___ Other

SPECIAL GIFTS - Bequests and Memorials are appreciated.

Name _____ Spouse _____
Address _____ Phone _____
State _____ Zip _____

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Please indicate your interests on the reverse side.

___ Have Urbandale information, photographs or memorabilia to donate or lend for copying.