



URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

4010 70TH STREET

URBANDALE, IA 50322

(515) 270-2917

www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org

WINTER 2012-2013



Holiday Open House

The Historical Society continues to share the traditions of the holiday season with the community. The large evergreen trees in the front yard of the Olmsted-Urban House were lit with many strings of colored bulbs. Thanks go to Wayne Robbins and Norm Huitt for completing this major project with the help of several workers from the public works department.

The traditional Holiday Open House was held Sunday, December 2nd. It was coordinated by Beth Haigh. The house was decorated in vintage style by Kay Readinger, Ginny Campbell, Cynthia Dabrieo, Janice Winey, Carol Lee and Warren Riekenberg. A special display of old-time toys and games was prepared by Virginia Gee using items from the toy room and the collections of Wayne Robbins and Carol Lee Riekenberg.

Ginny Campbell, Kay and Ann Readinger, Beth and Gene Haigh, Carol Lee Riekenberg and Virginia Gee welcomed visitors during the afternoon. Joanne Hanson and Janice Clements coordinated the refreshments using the holiday cookies provided by Joyce Cretors and Carol Lee Riekenberg. Don and Kathryn Brush greeted guests and served the punch and coffee.

Visitors enjoyed viewing the lovely decorations and sharing information about Urbandale in the friendly environment. If you did not get to participate this time, plan now to make it a part of your observance next year. Invite your friends and others in the community to join you on December 1st.

During December the Urbandale Garden Club, Lioness Club, and two groups from Aldersgate Methodist Church planned events at the house.

Emancipation Proclamation Topic for January Meeting

Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation will be the timely topic to begin the New Year. Miles Browne will present the program Monday, January 7th at 7:00 p.m. Miles has for many years been a student of America's 16th President, and on January 1, 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation was issued.

For those who are interested, a soup supper will precede the program at 6:00 p.m. Bring some canned or cooked vegetables to put in the pot to add to the soup stock prepared by Joanne Hanson. Also bring an appetizer or dessert to share and your own soup bowl and table service.



February Meeting on Monday, February 4th

What do you know about the Brownies? Harold Eklund will present a program Monday, February 4th at 7:00 p.m. about these early comic characters. Palmer Cox was a 19th century Canadian illustrator and author. His fanciful drawings are considered the forerunner of modern cartoon characters. Dr. Eklund will show examples of how these images were used for all types of books, figures, games, and advertising.

Dessert will follow the program. Please invite friends to attend!

Civil War Fashions March 4th

Focus on Civil War Fashions will be presented by Laura Poresky at the meeting on March 4th at 7:00 p.m. Laura has had an interest in the study of period clothing since high school days . . . What was worn, how it was constructed, and what fabrics were appropriate.

For a number of years Laura has been involved with Living History Farms and helped the members of the popular Choral Society select appropriate attire for their appearances. In her presentation she will highlight fashion examples from proper undergarments and hoop skirts, to the buttons, laces and accessories used to complement the rich colorful fabrics used for dresses.

Tell people you know about this interesting program and encourage others to attend.



70th & Douglas in Urbandale April Meeting

"Meet me at the Corner" . . . Bob Simon will lead a discussion of the location of some of the Urbandale businesses that have been located on 70th and Douglas at the Historical Society meeting on April 1st at 7:00 p.m.

From the small general store opened by Fred and Frank Beach in 1908 near the trolley turn-around at 70th and Roseland, to the recent demolition of the Welter Storage Equipment building at 6920 Douglas, there have been many changes. Long-time Urbandale residents are especially encouraged to come and share their memories of some of the locations of these early business establishments.

Meeting Cancellation

Winter weather can prove to be very unpredictable. If you have questions about whether a scheduled meeting is canceled, please call Wayne Robbins at 276-1370. It is impossible to try and call all those who might consider attending.



Cave Project

Were you aware that there is a cave on the grounds of the Olmsted-Urban House? Left from days when the farmhouse was built in 1904 on the 80 acre farm, a cave was usually built to serve both as a storm cellar and a place to store canned fruit and vegetables over the winter months.

Alicia Manning, an Urbandale student at DMACC, stopped by one day needing a project for a history class. She and Virginia Gee came up with the idea of researching how a farm family used a cave, then cleaning it up and preparing it as a learning exhibit.

Fake vegetables and fruits were collected and displayed on temporary shelves and wooden boxes. Janice Winey donated some filled blue glass canning jars and a burlap sack, and other items are planned to be displayed. There is also now a light in the cave.

The concrete steps are in poor condition so for safety sake, tour groups and other visitors will not be allowed to go down into the cave; but when the door is raised they can look down to see what it was like. As part of her project, Alicia prepared information that can be used to explain the importance of a cave to a farm family. This is another way the Historical Society can help people learn about life for a farm family years ago. Thanks to Alicia for her work!

Yearbook Collection

Acquiring a complete collection of the yearbooks from Urbandale High School for reference has been a goal of Virginia Gee, the Historical Society board member who collects and organizes historical material for the society. After recent donations by Berneda Milligan (Echo 1965) and Hazel Demirjean (Echo 1968 Fighting Blue jays) only copies for 1987, 1993, and 1994 are still needed to complete the collection of nearly 60 volumes. Cooperation with the Reference Department of the Urbandale Public Library also resulted in an exchange of several duplicate copies.

The first edition of the U. H. S. yearbook was published in 1954. The High school was then located at 70th and Douglas. Members of the Senior Class were Richard Bice, Carol DeYoung, Verlyn Breeden, Sondra Hill, Danny Corsbie, Bryce Culver, Marilyn Little, Donald Dingman, Joy McDivitt, Charles Horner, Wallace Jardine, Jane Mott, Lawrence Johnson, Carol Walton, Richard Kallaus, Bill Reynolds, Nona Wilson, Larry Richeson, and William Whitten. In addition to underclassmen, the book also included students from morning and afternoon kindergarten to 8th grade.

In this first volume "The Senior Class of Urbandale High School proudly dedicates its first volume of the Urban Echo to a teacher and sponsor whose service deserves our recognition. In 1941 Mrs. Mabel Wilcox first came to Urbandale where she has served in the Mathematics, English, and Science departments. She was acting principal for six years and served many years as either junior or senior class sponsor. We wish to thank 'Willie' for her patience and understanding. It is with this dedication we of the senior class wish to show our admiration and respect to a teacher who has always opened her home and her heart to her students."

Other staff members pictured in the 1954 book were Mrs. Carol Lucchini, James Forsyth, Mrs. Orpha Phillips, Norman Landess (Superintendent), Mrs. Mary Sherer, John Raband, Mrs. Argo, Jerome Donovan, and Mrs. Williams. Cafeteria staff included

Mrs. John Reynolds, Mrs. Clarence Van Pelt, Mrs. Harold Foote, Mrs. Frank Gibson, and Mrs. Sue Battina. (Many familiar names.)

The following year the yearbook staff again thanked Mrs. Wilcox. They also honored Mrs. Lucchini for her work in directing the class plays and taking students to state speech contest and debate sessions.

Honored in 1956 was Jerome Donovan, Principal, Sociology teacher and track coach. In 1957 class sponsors Mary Sherer (English and Bookkeeping instruction and counselor) and Jack Marriott (Algebra, Physics, Trigonometry and Geometry) were honored. In 1958 "We the Senior Class of Urbandale High School dedicate this edition of the Urban Echo to our school, community and parents whose guidance have made these four years of high school our most successful and enjoyable years. Through the combined effort and patience of these, we have gone into life better prepared for what may come."

The tradition of a printed dedication seems to have ended after 1959, when Norval DeWitt was honored. He was the baseball and girls basketball coach and taught Physical Education, World Geography, Commercial Law, and Typing.

Much can be learned about changing times of the students of Urbandale from looking at yearbooks. The original high school built in 1925 was torn down in 1975. A new building with several wings and a gymnasium had been constructed at 7111 Aurora. The first colored picture appearing in the UHS yearbook was of this building in 1977.

As the school population and staff, and activities offered have increased, so have the number of pages. The early books were printed in just black and white. Starting in 1985 a few introductory pages were printed in color. Most of the books now feature a theme; since 2006, with new technology, all pages are printed in color.

The collection of yearbooks is kept in the history room upstairs at the Olmsted-Urban House and can be viewed during Open House events or by special appointment.

Marshalltown Trip

Although some changes in itinerary had to be made, the bus trip to Marshalltown in October was a big success!

First, travelers were called to be at the Olmsted-Urban House parking lot. The original site of the Welter Equipment Company parking lot was closed because the building was to be demolished. A new Kwik Trip will be located there.

The planned first stop in Marshalltown was at the Fisher Community Center for coffee and rolls from a local bakery. After an informed tour of the art work, the group went to Fisher Control Company. After donning the safety glasses, the members were divided into groups for a walking tour followed by an interesting question and answer session. The next stop was the tour of the Orpheum Theater Center.

Lunch was served at the historic Tremont Building on Main Street. There was time to visit the Main Street Antique Mall and other shops in the area. Lenox Industries was not available for a tour, so the final stop was the Marshall County's Grimes Farm and Conservation Center. There were informative displays, an interesting presentation by the conservation officer, and even some wildlife moving outside.

Thanks to Bob Simon and Wayne Robbins for planning another interesting trip. Where would you like to go in May? Give them your ideas!



2013 – Membership Renewal

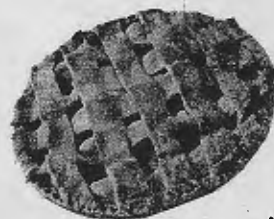
Recently a reminder letter was sent out by Membership Chairpersons, Norm and Faith Huitt regarding membership dues for the year 2013. If you have not yet responded, please take time to use your new pen and send a check so all memberships can be received by January. We need your support!

Donation

Several items that once belonged to an Olmsted were brought this fall from California by Stephen and Barb McKinney. His mother was Ruth, one of five daughters who grew up in the Olmsted home.

He brought a heavy duty kitchen food grinder, a small kerosene lamp, brass bell, flour sifter, wooden puzzle of the United States, and a beautifully illustrated children's book first published in 1927.

We appreciate all the items that have been donated to the Urbandale Historical Society over the years by various members of the Olmsted family.



Made with Love

A Special Tribute

Special thoughts are with Don Avaux and his family following Pat's death in November. Pat (Jeffreys) was a local girl who when she married Don became a member of one of Urbandale's heritage families. She and Don lived on N. W Country Club Drive for many years before they built a home on an acreage outside of Adel, where Don enjoyed farming. They continued as active members of the Urbandale Historical Society. Pat supported and actively participated in many of the projects that Don and Wayne Robbins worked on when the Historical Society bought the Urban property. Pat was also known as a great cook as she supplied baked goods for the Ice Cream Socials and special dishes for many Society pot-lucks. She helped the Society in so many ways through the years and will be greatly missed.

Additions to the Brick Walk

Several memorial bricks were recently placed in the Walk of History that leads up to the front entrance of the Olmsted-Urban House.

They include:

UHS Class of 1960 Rules

“Bull Market”
David Smith Sr.
VP Wells Fargo

Greatest Dad Ever.
Robert E Peterson
10-1936 to 11-2011

Paul Woodard

The Bentzingers
Deb-Dana-Chris and Eric

The Fogelson and
Jackson Family

Dick and Ruth Carey

Nehemiah Paul
Winey 4-11
Winey Grandchild

Granddaughter of
Millard and Olive
Carol Hird

John and Mary Nell
Charlotte and Kenny
Johnny Urban

Citizens of the Year
2009 John Forbes
2010 Mary Polson
2011 Sheila Twaroski

There is still room for bricks to be included. (3 lines of 17 letters / spaces each for \$35.00) Bob Simon places the order. Please call 270-2917 and leave a message to request an order blank. Consider making a holiday or birthday gift. Honor someone in your family or a person, place or event that deserves to be recognized.

Electrical Work – Bravo Grant

The Urbandale Historical Society was successful in receiving a Bravo grant. The bulk of the money is being used to improve safety and security for the Olmsted-Urban House and grounds. Some of the recommendations were made by the Leadership Urbandale group, Urbandale Police Department, and Biermann Electric Company. Work included lighting directed toward the front of the house, lighting of the Historical Society sign, repair of existing lights around the flag pole, security lighting at the back of the house, repair of the electric boxes to prepare for Christmas lighting, updated the timer for parking lot lights, and a light installed in the cave. We greatly appreciate being selected for this grant!



Talking About History

In October 1912 a group of citizens met at the Hays General Store near the location of the trolley turn-around to discuss some “matters of importance”. Another meeting was held at the Center School in the western part of the township. This led to the decision to raise money to build a grade school in the area.

To commemorate this event, a meeting was sponsored by UCAN and DUNA at the Legion Hall on October 31st. Virginia Gee presented some information on the history of the area that led to Urbandale becoming an incorporated community and an independent school district in 1917. Bob Simon showed a display of centennial coins.

Prior to this meeting E. J. Giovannetti and Scott Raecker had volunteered to head a group that will make plans for the celebration of Urbandale’s Centennial in 2017.

Punch on the Porch

Punch on the Porch was again a successful event on October 30th. Kay Readinger, her daughter Ann, Joanne Hanson, and Virginia Gee greeted the young visitors and the adults who accompanied them. It was estimated about 70 cups of orange punch were served.

Again, many had come in previous years, and considered the stop part of their holiday tradition.

Susan Clemmensen Remembered

The Historical Society lost a loyal supporter this fall with the death of Susan Clemmensen of the Urbandale Public Library. Susan had been a Library employee for 41 years, working first when the library was located temporarily in the Phipps building on 71st Street. She was originally a children's librarian and had additional audio-visual responsibilities when the Library was moved to the new building on Aurora and later on 86th Street. She worked closely with Historical Society members Verda Simon, Jan Lawson, Mae Nelson, and Hazel Demirjean and was always interested in the growth of the Society. She shared in our attempts to preserve Urbandale's history, and presented the program on the history of the Library in 2009.



Reward oft times is slow
to fall
To those who earned it best
of all.

A Palmer Cox Brownie from *Brownies Around the World* (1894)

This is an example

Of Palmer Cox's Brownies

Learn more at the February

Meeting!

Clip and Save Important Dates

January 6	Olmsted-Urban Open House 2:00 - 4:00
January 7	Soup Supper 6:00 Meeting - "Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation" 7:00
February 3	Olmsted-Urban Open House 2:00 - 4:00
February 4	Meeting - "Advertising with the Brownies" 7:00
March 3	Olmsted-Urban Open House 2:00 - 4:00
March 4	Meeting - "Civil War Fashions" 7:00
April 1	Meeting - "Old Businesses at 70th & Douglas"
April 7	Olmsted-Urban Open House 2:00 - 4:00
May 4	Plant Sale 9:00 am

Happy

New

Year!

2013