

Urbandale Historical Society - Fall 2011 Newsletter

September 12th Meeting

The program year for the Urbandale Historical Society begins on Monday, September 12th, with a look at an area floral business that started before Urbandale was incorporated.

Tom Boesen, florist, will recount some of the highlights of the family business from when his grandparents came to Iowa and purchased a greenhouse in the Beaverville area in 1912. Most Urbandale residents are familiar with the location at 3422 Beaver Avenue, though in recent years it has been possible to also purchase a variety of Boesen floral items at the Dahl's stores.

Tom has many interesting stories to tell of how the growth, purchase, and distribution of flowers and arrangements has changed in nearly 100 years.

The program begins at 7:00 p.m. at the Olmsted-Urban House located at 4010 70th Street. A person does not have to be a Historical Society member to participate in the monthly meetings. Invite your friends.

For those who would like to participate, a potluck supper will be held preceding the program. Come at 6:00 p.m. and bring a food dish to share and your own table service.

October Open House Sunday, October 2nd

Join us on the first Sunday in October for our Autumn Open House! The fall mums, hay bales, pumpkins and gourds will brighten the outside of the house. Inside it will be tours, fall treats and drinks. It is a fun time to tour the barn and grounds. See you then!

October Meeting Monday, October 3rd

An item everyone is familiar with, but haven't really thought about is toilet paper. Marilee Patterson of Gilman will present the program for the meeting on Monday, October 3rd at 7:00 p.m.

From the 14th century, there have been many recorded substitutes for the paper product we now consider indispensable. There are stories of snow, cornstalks, leaves (sometimes with unfortunate results) and of course pages from a catalog being used in old times or on outdoor family vacations. Do you have any stories to share with this humorous program?

Tell your friends now about this program so they will save the date. There will also be time for visiting as refreshment are served.

November Meeting Monday, November 7th

An overview of the history of the use of food sacks will be given at the meeting on Monday, November 7th at 7:00 p.m. Sharon Meisenheimer who is a teacher, seamstress, and storyteller, will share examples of clothes that were made from these cotton bags.

The sacks from the local feed stores or elevator originally held grain, chicken feed, etc. There was a great effort in trying to find several sacks with matching design to provide enough cloth for the housewife to make a dress or children's garment, or serve as curtains or tablecloth. They came in a wide variety of colors and patterns, and have now become quite collectible.

Refreshments will be served following the program.

“Christmas Long Ago” December Open House Sunday, December 5th

Save this date and begin the holiday season with a relaxing afternoon at the house. Come and see the house decorated for Christmas. We will have the coffee and refreshments ready to serve in the dining room. Children are welcome and tour guides will be available to share stories of Christmas long ago and give tours of the house.

A Perfect Sunday Afternoon

Another successful Ice Cream Social was held in June. Norm and Faith Huitt helped organize the many details of planning, obtaining the serving supplies, getting workers, and setting up for serving. Faith provided the beautiful flowers from their garden to fix centerpieces for the picnic tables.

Wayne Robbins got supplies from Hy-Vee, Roberts Dairy, Dahls, and Fareway, and ice from Quik Trip. He and his crew prepared 29 gallons of ice cream. They started at 6:00 a.m. to get ready for serving at 2:00 p.m.

Pat Helms, Linda Coop, and Mary Russell led the work of cutting the many donated pies and cakes. Joanne Hanson was in the kitchen taking care of beverages.

Members of the LaSalle-Cadillac group again brought their cars for display.

Thanks to all of you who came to share in this great community event. Wayne estimated we served over 350 people and raised about \$1,500.

A special “visitor” to the lawn of the Olmsted-Urban House was Annabelle, the black and white cow model which appears in displays and parades for Roberts Dairy. She attracted a lot of attention, and helped publicize the event. Some of the visitors even had their

picture taken with her. It is hoped she will be back for next year’s Ice Cream Social on Sunday, June 24th.

It was a nice June afternoon
Contributions cut expenses
Enjoyed homemade pies and cakes

Classic cars displayed
Relaxed and listened to music
Everyone enjoyed visiting
A real community event
Many volunteers appreciated

Served over 350 people
Old fashioned fun
Canning jars and flowers
Interested guests toured barn and house
A big thanks to all who helped
Lasting memories to cherish

Little Girls’ Tea Parties

Big Dreams was the theme for the 12th annual tea parties held on June 6, 8, and 10. The feature story was called Dream Big Little Pig by Kristi Yamaguchi. The main theme was to always dream and try new things.

A highlight of each party was having Trisha Richards sing two show tunes. Trisha shared with the little ones that she attended the teas as a young girl. She shared her big dream of performing on Broadway someday.

Each attendee created two crafts, an ivy headband made with ivy garland, ribbon, raffia, and flowers, and also a felt cupcake ribbon barrette holder.

Each girl also received a party favor bag and had a tour of the upstairs at the Historical

House. Thank you to the committee for making this event so special.

Fall Bus Trip to Waterloo, Iowa

Waterloo is the destination for the fall bus trip on Tuesday, October 11th. There will be something of interest for everyone on this historical tour.

The bus will load at Welter Office Supply at 70th and Douglas, at 6:45 a.m. This is earlier than in past years, so we can meet our reserved time for a guided tour of John Deere operations, where tractors are assembled. The tour includes the engine works, drive train assembly, and service parts operations. A tram is provided for the factory tour; but there will be some walking, and visitors are asked to not wear open-toed shoes.

Lunch will be served at the historic CU Restaurant with its distinctive décor that features a number of copper items and artwork.

In the afternoon we will first visit one of the newer Iowa museums, the Sullivan Iowa Veterans Museum. It honors all Iowa veterans who served in the defense of the nation from the Civil War to the present conflicts. Artifacts, uniforms, photos and other historical items are displayed with narrative accounts in an inspiring tribute to our servicemen and women.

In the adjoining Grout Museum the historical collection focuses on life from the period of 1833 when Iowa was opened for settlement to the present. Family life during the pioneer era is depicted with full scale dioramas in Pioneer Hall. Community growth and new inventions in the last 100 years are shown in Industrial Hall. Artifacts throughout the building represent all types of memorabilia and you can spend time viewing the many collections that are of greatest interest to you.

The cost of the trip is \$70.00 which includes transportation, lunch and museum fees. Coffee, water, pop and muffins will be provided on the bus.

Final details and sign up will be available at the September 12th meeting, or call 276-2752 for more details. Checks to hold your place can be mailed to the Olmsted-Urban House at 4010 70th Street in Urbandale. Please mark "Bus Tour" on the envelope and include an emergency name and phone number.

Cost of the trip is kept low, but after enough riders sign up to cover the cost of transportation this can be a fund-raiser for the Historical Society. Encourage others you know to help fill the bus and participate in this informative day.

Urbandale Historical Society has a New Website

www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org

One of the goals of the Leadership Urbandale Class of 2011 was to get a computer presence on the Worldwide Web for the Historical Society. Volunteers Graham Giles and Shelly Stoppel helped establish the web site with basic information about the Society and a few pictures.

Now that new funds have been obtained, a professional web site developer will be hired to design and maintain the web site in the future. Procuring additional server space will allow for more pictures and videos of interviews with Urbandale residents. The interviews that were completed last April will be available for viewing.

Keep checking for current information and new developments. Log on today and visit our new site.

Leadership Urbandale Class of 2011 / BRAVO Grant

The Leadership Urbandale Class of 2011 has been instrumental in helping the Urbandale Historical Society plan for the future. Paul Pletzsch and Kirsten Phillips helped Wayne Robbins prepare the application for a Bravo Cultural Enrichment Grant. The Society has been notified that a grant of \$5,000 is to be awarded.

The request was based on this summary, "Urbandale Historical Society was incorporated January 13, 1977. Its mission is to collect, preserve, and maintain historical memorabilia of Urbandale and to education and make available to all people information pertinent to the development and growth of the area immediately surrounding and including the city of Urbandale. Use of the funds requested is to assist in modernizing our communication and archiving system, upgrading our marketing tools, signage and security to increase visibility, and awareness of our organization and therefore experience growth in our membership and volunteer base. These functions would take place by: gaining internet access and having a presence on the worldwide web, purchasing archiving software to preserve and scan historical documents / pictures in a digital format and by updating outside lighting, signage and securing around the Olmsted-Urban House for added visibility in the community."

The grant received will not cover all the items initially requested, but will give us a good start and help us establish some goals for the future. To follow-up with the requirements of the grant, the Society will be required to provide statistics of attendance and participation in programs and activities sponsored by the Society. This is to document how we impact not only Urbandale, but other are municipalities. Visitors will be asked to sign their name and zip code at each event. Please try to attend as many of our

programs as possible, and invite your friends, to show we deserve the grant money and are putting it to good use.

Computer Cataloging

A big challenge for the Historical Society is to provide a more permanent record of the items that have been donated or purchased for the Olmsted-Urban House and Barn since 1987 when the property was purchased from John Urban.

One of the goals established by the leadership Urbandale Class was to help the Society purchase a computer to help us organize our records. Past Perfect Museum software is an archival program used by "museums" all over the United States including the Living History Farms and the Warren County Historical Society in Indianola.

The purchases were made this spring. Darlene Danielson of the Leadership group has continued to help this summer to install the computer software and get the program started. Although this program has more capabilities than we will need at this time, it provides a systematic way to get started. Currently most items have just been listed on a page in a notebook under the name of each donor. Some acquisition lists were recorded on her home computer by Carol Lee Riekenberg several years ago.

One of the first steps is to make a list and assign a number for each donor. More than 150 donor names have been recorded so far. Next, a computer record will be established for major items as they are acquisitioned and catalogued according to specific standard terms and categories. Eventually, for larger and more valuable items a picture can be included with the computer record. There are hundreds of items to be catalogued from single documents, kitchen utensils, dishes, hand tools, toys, dresses, etc. to large pieces of furniture and farm equipment. Let Virginia know if you can help in some aspect of this work in progress.

A Special Tribute to Veterans

Bill Lawson and Urbandale Friends of the Park are leading an effort to add a “Memorial to Veterans” in the Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park and Garden, south of the Urbandale Library.

Engraved bricks can be purchased with three lines for \$100 per brick. Suggestions include name, branch of service and war. Proceeds will go toward the cost of the memorials.

Bill will be at the September 12th meeting of the Historical Society to explain the plans. When funds are raised and plans finalized it is hoped the memorials can be completed next spring.

For further information contact Bill at 276-1276 or Mary Polson at Urbandale Community Action Network, 278-3936.

The Historical Society will also benefit by being able to establish a record of Urbandale residents who have been or are veterans, as we do not have such information at this time.

Clip and Save Important Dates

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| September 12 | Potluck and Meeting |
| October 2 | Fall Open House |
| October 3 | Meeting |
| October 11 | Fall Bus Trip |
| October 30 | Punch on the Porch |
| November 7 | Meeting |
| December 4 | Holiday Open House |
