

**JOHNSTON (STATION) HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
P.O.Box 109 Johnston, Iowa 50131  
6161 Northglenn Drive - Johnston Commons Park

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JSHS is a 501(C)(3) organization Web Site: [www.johnstonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.johnstonhistoricalsociety.org)  
President: Mary Jane Paez Treasurer: Robert Thomas  
Vice President: Keith Westbrook  
Membership: Garland Seibert Secretary/Newsletter: Marlys Seibert

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JSHS Annual Report 2008

Another year has past in the history of the Johnston (Station) Historical Society. Who would have guessed that when we started fourteen years ago, that we would be sitting today in a beautiful farmhouse surrounded by a multitude of artifacts relating to our past. We have accomplished so much thanks to all our hard work.

We can primarily be thankful to the Simpson family for sharing this house and barn with us. This past year, we have finished with the residing and painting of the house. A grant from Polk County, and donations from Denny Elwell, the Weatherspoon family and smaller contributions from members made that project possible. A 2008 grant from Supervisor Giovannetti will help to pay for the final improvement of wooden storm windows. We can thank Dick Tarlton and his son for their handcrafting of the windows. Garland Seibert has been persistent with his priming and painting of the frames.

We can't forget our enduring gratitude to Russ Slauson for creating our beautiful cellar door.

We can be thankful to Pioneer Hi-Bred International for their donation to make it possible to buy a laptop to be used for our presentations. Marlys Seibert and Dick Hyde have been video recording interviews with Johnstonians willing to tell their story.

We are most thankful to Kathy Wallerstedt for restarting our website and to Keith Westbrook for updating the site. Keith and Dick Hyde have brought our archive files up to date. Shirley Adams and Virginia McGinn have worked to create displays that have been used at City Hall, the Johnston Public Library, the Johnston High School Library, Crown Point and at the Simpson barn.

One cannot begin to estimate the value of Dick Tarlton's obituary project for future researchers.

As an outreach effort to network with Johnston businesses, we have become members of the Johnston Chamber of Commerce. Sunny Duvick is our liason and has paved the way for us to host a Chamber Breakfast Before Business in May.

Our 2007 Bravo grant has funded a summer intern for this summer. We are fortunate to have found a college graduate who will assist us.

We have been very grateful for the support that we have received from the Johnston Post Office, the Johnston School District, the Johnston Planning Department, and the Johnston Public Library.

The Historical Resource Development Program grant we have received from the State Historical Society of Iowa, will be a boon to all researchers who want to learn more about the history of Johnston from thirty-seven years of newspaper coverage.

We are grateful to our Board of Directors, namely, Virginia McGinn, Shirlee Herrold and Dick Tarlton, who have been active this year. Virginia has been faithful in providing homemade treats for our meetings.

Judi Bogaard stepped down as Vice President. She has been steadfast in finding excellent programs for our meetings.

Garland Seibert has been amazing as our groundskeeper. The flower beds are the pride of Johnston.

We all owe a special thanks to Bob Thomas for keeping things running smoothly at the museum. No task is too daunting for him. He never complains (too loudly) about keeping the flag flying and keeping his cell phone on for any Society business.

Sometimes we don't realize how much we have done and how fortunate we are to have a strong group of dedicated members. I thank you all. *Mary Jane Paez*

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**Welcome to new members:**

Virginia H. Soelberg  
Shane Goodman

**Thank you to:** Ruth Biddle for your additional contribution along with the renewal of membership to the Historical Society.

**Thank you to:** Vivian Zimmerman for your gift of perennial plants: anemones, hosta and other plantings. The plants are doing well and getting tender-loving-care.

***INTRODUCING OUR INTERN:***

In 2007, a Greater Des Moines Community Foundation Bravo Cultural Enrichment Grant was awarded to the Johnston Historical Society to be used to fund the activities of an intern to work with our volunteers. The grant was for someone who could help us with researching for displays, newsletter articles, presentations, etc. We were fortunate to find Matt Hoehamer to be our summer intern. He is the son of the Research Librarian at the Johnston Library, Lynne Hoehamer.

Matt just graduated with a B.A. in History from Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. He just completed an internship at the Reformed Church of America Archives in New Brunswick, New Jersey. As a part of that, he acquired skills relevant to the preservation of documents and other materials. He is applying to graduate schools to work on his Masters in Library and Information Science. We are looking forward to his help with our collections.

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*YES. IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR, AGAIN!* It is time to renew your membership (unless that number behind your name is '09 or greater -- Any number '09 or larger is current). ***THANK YOU*** to all who have already renewed.

[ **Membership renewals**

YES! I AM INTERESTED IN MY 'HOME' COMMUNITY AND IT'S HISTORY  
I WANT TO BE A PART THINGS  
JOHNSTON (STATION ) HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership dues: **\$10 single** membership and/or **\$12 family** membership  
Dates for the next two monthly meetings: May 21 4:p.m. and June 25, 4:00 p.m.

Monthly Open House on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday afternoon

Dues Payable to: The Johnston (Station) Historical Society  
P.O.Box 109  
Johnston, IA 50131

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**ALSO:** We have space for many more commemorative bricks.  
Two rows of lettering with 14 letters/spaces per row.

Brick order form


**COMMEMORATIVE BRICK ORDER FORM - EACH ENGRAVED BRICK \$85**

NAME AND ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to: Johnston (Station) Historical Society  
P.O.Box 109  
Johnston, IA 50131**

**The weather now permits the placement of bricks that were engraved over the winter months. Those bricks will be in place within the next week or so.**

The next regular meeting will be held Wednesday - May 21, 2008 – Learn about the “SCHOOL ROOM” and all the resource information located there.

In the succeeding monthly meetings we will all become more knowledgeable about Johnston, The Museum, and what we have to offer in the way of history, documents, genealogy, photo galleries, information available for research, and much more. Let’s grow brain cells together.



*On Thursday morning, May 15, at 7:00 A.M., we hosted the Chamber of Commerce Breakfast-Before-Work, and enjoyed a warm response from those who attended from the Johnston business community. This endeavor really helped "put us on the map". With your help we can keep the momentum going even if it only means giving a couple hours of your time or skill to help care for the plantings, arrange displays, 'tidy things up', or simply bring your friends and relatives to show off the Simpson House. We have a treasure here that is still almost a "secret". We do not want to remain a "secret"*

*Thank-you to Judi Bogaard for bringing muffins, Richard Hyde and Bob Thomas for greeting and guiding tours, and to Selma Duvick for 'pulling' the morning together for us. Our guests were served donuts, muffins, juice and coffee.*

*Mary Jane Paez, Garland & Marlys Seibert*

**Green Days are June 19-21.** The Green Days Committee and Sue Harney, of Polk County Bank, has suggested that the JSHS be open for tours on another evening of Green Days. Sue sang the praises of the historical society and said that anyone who hadn't been there needed to come see us. We are scheduled to have the museum open on Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup> from noon to 5:00. The crafts are scheduled for the same time. We will also be open on Thursday evening, June 19 from 5 to 7 P.M. for people coming to the 'Taste of Johnston' event. Volunteers are needed to be available to meet and greet visitors. We also can use volunteers to help with the Children's Craft experience in The Barn on Saturday afternoon – just an hour or two between noon and 5:00 P.M. is a great help.

*Mark your calendars for the Second Annual Craft Sale at The Barn. The date is October 4, 2008 at the Simpson Barn beginning at 9:00 A.M. The exact number of vendors coming is not known at this time. There will be a wide variety of items available for purchase. Come and shop!!*

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**PUTTING YOU ON THE SPOT**

Have **YOU**, the reader of this newsletter and member of the Historical Society, ever considered writing down your own personal connection to Johnston and some of the vivid memories you have? Written history is as important as all the objects and visuals we have. Some suggestions are: the location where you lived, some of the prominent businesses there at the time, special teachers you recall, participation in school activities and the accomplishments of those activities you participated in, what you did for entertainment, or where you might have worked as a high-school aged child. Who might be some of the people you remember as your neighbors, or simply someone who did something special for you. Be innovative and we hope you will take action and be in touch.

We are all familiar saying: "If it is to be, it is up to me"

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Ten years ago, the Newsletter featured a program by Forrest McClure about his family and his grandfather, John Johnston, Superintendent of the Beaver Valley Division of the Interurban Railway, for whom the City of Johnston is named.

Bill Wagner, architect and local historian, was named an Honorary Life Member in recognition of his help in establishing information on the farmhouse on the Daniel Rittgers property located on N.W. Beaver Drive. Ms Sue Nystrom, a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Johnston Middle School, spoke on her work with school children on Iowa and local history. The goal stated at that time was to utilize local resource people to speak to classes, suggesting topics that would be of interest to students. There was the suggestion of having

Community History Week to encourage further interest in Johnston History. That newsletter contained communications from Gene Hoover, Nick Orlich, Raymond Orlich, Frances Badgley - something that would be so nice to have during the present time. We have cooperated with the Johnston Public Library for a wonderfully done hands-on display of Johnston History. Please stop by to visit the Library. It is a cheerful, bright, inviting place. One of Johnston's treasures.

Anyone interested in revitalizing that initiative? Begin with sending us your story!!

## A Tribute to John Theisen



Our most sincere sympathy to JoAnn Theisen on the death of her husband on 13 May 2008. John and JoAnn are long-time members of the Historical Society. John Theisen was a very special person. In spite of his health challenge, he made the most of the remaining time he had in life. One of those projects was making a gift for each of the members of the JSH Class of '62 . John and JoAnn came back to Iowa to present his classmates with these gifts on October 20, 2007, at the time of that classes' monthly breakfast gathering. John had obtained blackboards from the old Johnston High School building. Cutting the blackboards into about 9" X 12" pieces, then framing each one, the finished gift measured about 9 1/2" X 12 1/2". A 'treasure' from a treasured person.      *Thank You, John*

**“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart” - - - Helen Keller**