

Johnston (Station) Historical Society  
Post Office Box 109  
Johnston, Iowa 50131  
www.johnstonhistoricalsociety.com

# NEWSLETTER

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May 2004

President: Mary Jane Paez  
Vice-Pres. & Programs: Judy Bogaard  
Secretary: Marlys Seibert

Treasurer: Robert Thomas  
Membership: Garland Seibert  
Newsletter: Selma Duvick

## May Meeting

May 23, 2004 (Sunday) at 4:00 P.M.

At the Simpson House and Barn  
6161 Northglenn Drive  
Guests are welcome!

The Barn looks great; come and see!

In his report, Bob Finney recommended that the original by-laws of the JSHS and more recent revisions be pulled together and integrated into a clearer and more useful document. The board will present such a revision at a future meeting of the Society.

The Board will meet in April, July and October.

## Looking Ahead:

June 23 (Wednesday)

July 25 (Sunday)

August 25 (Wednesday)

All meetings: 4:00 p.m. at the Simpson House or the Barn, unless otherwise announced.

Nominated and elected as officers for the coming year are:

President, Mary Jane Paez

Vice-President & Programs: Judy Bogaard

Secretary: Marlys Seibert

Treasurer: Robert Thomas

## Annual Meeting Report

Our annual meeting took place following discussion of current business on April 28, 2004 at the Simpson Barn.

Board members Bob Finney and Don Duvick represented the current board; nominated for Board for 2004-05 forward and elected were: Bob Finney 1 year  
Marilyn Finney 1 year  
Garland Seibert 2 years  
Lloyd Michael 3 years.

## From the President.....

It's time again to bring you all up to date on our progress with the house and barn. Things have happened since my last column! We got tremendous help from inmates from Newton Correctional Facility. The men arrived March 15<sup>th</sup> and we had a tremendous snowstorm that afternoon. After we dug out, the men returned and worked with a vengeance for two weeks. The interior walls of the barn were finished. The loft staircase was built as well as the house basement staircase. To make a really long

story short, the barn is nearly finished! Women from Mitchellville Correctional Facility also came in April for a week. They finished installing half of the brick patio for the barn and worked at completing drywall projects that the men had started.

We have a short list for a punch list to do on the barn. We received a grant from the Polk County Community Betterment program of \$2000. We wheeled and dealt and got all the appliances plus the cabinets for the barn kitchen for the amount of the grant. The plumbing and electrical work is totally completed. We will have the cold air return and air conditioning unit installed soon. High winds have raised havoc with the roof of the barn. We will need over \$20,000 to redo the shingles.

We have also received a grant from Paint Iowa Beautiful and Vogel Paint for 25 gallons of paint. We got "Antique White" and have started on the house. We also purchased a "Slate Blue" to paint the 9 steel doors in the barn and 2 in the house. The roof of the house is in need of new shingles. That will take about \$12,000.

The City has completed the final grading around the house and barn and has created a pathway to the brick patio. They hauled in load after load of dirt and have created a beautiful setting for our "barn yard". They seeded the grounds and the place is looking like a "chia pet". They intend to pave the pathways and lane in the future.

Now that the barn is nearly finished, we can devote time, energy and resources (what little we have) to the house. We are still hoping to hear that we will receive a grant from the American Legion to help with the museum kitchen.

Visitors who have come to visit the project are very impressed. The vision has started to take shape and we are nearing our goal.

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## Green Days Auction

The annual Johnston Green Days event at the Johnston Commons will include an auction sponsored by the Johnston Lions Club and the Historical Society in support of our House and Barn project and the Lions.

The auction is scheduled for Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 p.m. at the Simpson Barn.

Tim Busby will donate his services as auctioneer, and the Lions and the JSHS are looking for contributions of items for auction.

The organizers are looking for household items, sports equipment, furniture, services, antiques, gardening and other similar items, gift certificates, even cars in running condition, and the value of donations is tax-deductible.

You can help support the House and Barn and the Johnston Lions by calling Mary Jane 278-1170, Judy 278-0939, Joe 276-5079, or Ray 270-0963 to arrange for items to be dropped off.

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## Local Educators, JHS Grads Honored

The Johnston Community School Foundation has created an "Alumni Hall of Fame" to honor alumni who have made significant contributions to their community.

Those inducted into this first class at a ceremony and banquet on April 30 are: Marvin Caruthers, '58, Ken Jarvis, '62, Ray Schleih, '35, and the late Donald Zarley, '47.

Ray Schleih is a Charter Member of the JSHS, has served the society well, and was secretary for a number of years. Don Zarley was also a Charter Member, and was treasurer and a strong supporter of the Simpson House and Barn project before his death.

Educators honored at the ceremony were Helen Billings, an elementary teacher for 28 years, and Oburn "Obie" Herrick, who taught for 39 years before retiring.

Others honored were: students Douglas Fuller, Melissa King, Stephanie Robinson, and teachers Terry Frisch and Kay Oberender. George Frampton was named a "Friend of the District" for his contributions to the Foundation.

Our congratulations and thanks to them all for their contributions to our community and schools.

### New Members

Welcome to:  
Mary Davis  
Johnston, IA

## Contributions:

Scout;  
Denny Elwell  
Ankeny, IA

Caretaker:  
Howard Hunt  
Anchorage, AK

Vivian Kinsey  
Urbandale, IA

## Memorial Gifts:

Don & Jean Heldenbrand  
Montezuma, IA  
In Memory of Marianne Surber Olmstead

Ferne Michael  
Windsor Heights, IA  
In Memory of Donald Zarley

Thanks to all who make gifts to the JSHS above and beyond membership dues. Your help makes a real difference in our ability to pay the bills for the House and Barn renovation.

## Bricks:

Jeanne Jennings Des Moines, IA	IN MEMORY OF RALPH JENNINGS
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Lyle & Sharon Kreps Johnston, IA	LYLE & SHARON KREPS
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Mary Davis Johnston, IA	JACK & MARY DAVIS
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Don & Judy Nielson Portland, OR	THE SEAMAN FAMILY
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D.D. AND R.D  
SIMPSON

Don & Jean Heldenbrand Montezuma, IA	JEAN WIGTON 42 JUDY 64 MONICA 85 (in honor of JHS graduations)
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## Earth Day at the Simpson House

In celebration of Earth Day, we had volunteers representing the Johnston Park Board, Johnston Tree Board and the Mayor's Youth Council come to the house and help with painting four rooms on the second floor.

Lucia and Matthew Berry, Carolyn Christiansen, Mary Brown Mehalovich, Scott Walter, Lia Yoon, Sherra Wendel, Rex Davidson, Ginger Soehberg, Connie Maxwell and Sherry Brown spent the morning, May 15<sup>th</sup>, putting some of the gallons of Vogel Paint to good use.

Walls and ceilings of the two west and two middle rooms were completed by the contingent of volunteers. Each one was told the significance of the work and given a full tour of the whole project. Volunteers were also interviewed by a Des Moines Register reporter and photographed. A good time was had by all and we are a few steps closer to our goal.



## Lawson School Murals

The students from Lawson Elementary School, with the help of artist in residence Dennis Adams, have created seven murals depicting events and personalities in the history of Johnston. Members of the JSHS served as consultants and advisers in the process of selecting subjects for the murals, which hang in the school hallways.

Pictured in the murals are, among other things, the horse-drawn and the first motorized school bus, Merle Hay (the soldier for whom the road is named) and the entrance to Camp Dodge, John Johnston and a building representing the small Interurban station, a stage coach representing the stage route along the ridge, pictures of Moses Lawson, Henry Wallace and Raymond Baker (the latter two both of Pioneer Hi-Bred), and a Sac and Fox Indian girl holding ears of corn. Also depicted are a coal miner, a one-room school house and the old Johnston Consolidated School building.

Still planned for the display are frames, informative captions and a booklet describing the elements of the murals in more detail. The project was funded by a grant from the Iowa Arts Council.

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## BARN OWL BAND BENEFIT CONCERT

The Barn Owl Band, a nationally recognized traditional American string band and regular house band for the Central Iowa Barn Dance Association, presented an evening of lively and toe-tapping music on Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup> in the Simpson Barn. The Owls donated

their talent that evening to benefit the ongoing renovation of the Simpson House and Barn, and the audience responded enthusiastically to the folk tunes, jigs, reels, and dance music played with some innovative touches.

Six members of the group performed: Jason Hartley and Ehler Orngard on fiddle, Brad Johnson on mandolin, Marty Miller on bass, also Merle Hall JHS '72, banjo and Jon Duvick JHS '72, guitar and vocals.

Our Historical Society was concerned about the weather after 2 days of rain, for the yard

in front of the barn is freshly seeded, and there are no sidewalks. But the weather cleared into a beautiful May evening, and we discovered what we had suspected, that the barn with its high vaulted ceiling is a perfect and a beautiful place for an evening event, with wonderful acoustics.

The JSHS is most grateful to the Barn Owl Band for contributing time and talent in a fine performance; they expressed interest in returning in the future to this great venue to play for a real "barn dance."

(For more information about the Barn Owl Band, see website: [www.barnowlband.org](http://www.barnowlband.org) )



THE BARN OWL BAND PERFORMS IN THE SIMPSON BARN