

NEWSLETTER

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Secretaries: Marlys Seibert & Pat Wallerstedt

Treasurer: Donald Zarley
Membership:
Newsletter: Selma Duvick

November Meeting

Sunday, November 24,

4:00 p.m.

At the Crown Point Meeting Room

Program:

Informational meeting on
Renovation of our House and Barn:
Current Status.

We will have a Potluck meal
Bring your table settings and a dish
to share
(No meeting in December)

Meeting reports:

September and October

Discussion of progress in restoring the house and barn, various problems in contracting, construction and financing have taken up most of our meetings recently.

Bob Thomas sends out reports on progress to those who have e-mail. If you would like to be on his list, his address is
<RLT50310@aol.com>

From the President.....

A lot has happened since June 25th, the day of our move. For one thing, we have spent nearly \$165,000.

This paid for architectural and engineering drawings, insurance, the move and utility costs, soil sampling, excavation, footings, concrete walls for the barn and concrete basement for the house; also waterproofing, retaining walls, masonry work, beams and columns, 29 trees, grading, and tons and tons of dirt that were hauled in and placed around two walls of the barn.

This does not include the many tradesmen who reduced their fees for us to accomplish our goals.

With the donated services of Mobile Equipment and Repair of Grimes, the old windmill was winched out of its treed site and hauled over to the new site. Volunteers are researching parts and maintenance needs before it will be erected next spring. We also hope to get the old pump piped so that the windmill will appear to be pumping water.

The old barn site is cleared out and the clay tile walls are now someone's riprap.

A great deal of volunteer labor has been spent on the old house basement walls.

Thousands of century-old bricks were removed and transported to the new site. These will be used for the barn patio. And these are the bricks, which will be inscribed with names of those who have ordered a memorial brick. (It's still not too late to order!)

In addition to bricks the members saved, the Johnston Lions Club helped us and salvaged bricks they plan for a patio project at their facility. Volunteers have spent many hours carefully cleaning the bricks so that they may be re-used. The last of the broken bricks and concrete have been cleared away and the old basement filled in, thanks to Chris Kinsey.

Volunteers have spent many days working on the inside of the house preparing the downstairs for its renovation into a museum. The pine floors are being prepared for sanding and refinishing. The old kitchen will be a half-bath. Gas and electricity will soon be connected to the house and barn.

Johnston's mayor Bob O'Hollearn is a member of the board of the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitor's Bureau. Through his help the city has received a grant for the JSHS house and barn project for \$35,000 that will be used to pay for most of the water and sewer service to house and barn. After the plumbing is stubbed in we will pour the basement floor and concrete steps in the house.

We have been receiving bids for heating and air conditioning costs and for electrical wiring. And we are looking into estimates for doors, windows, plumbing fixtures and deck costs for the barn.

Over the last four months I have really known the power of prayer. Every time we would be close to the end of our funds, new

support would come through to carry us on. We are getting close again. I hope our prayers will be answered.

Mary Jane Paez



Letters



After a recent visit to Johnston, Jim Thomas, JHS class of 1940 sent us an e-mail, commenting on changes in the town, and on the JSHS and our House and Barn project. No doubt all of our members will enjoy his remarks, as follows:

My, my, Johnston Station, former Mega Plex on the old Interurban Line to points north, how you've changed! The RR tracks are gone, as is the station house, so welcome on a cold, damp day 65-75 years ago. The old school building has also disappeared along with its tall, smoke-belching landmark chimney. The adjacent gas station with the penny candy case remains tho it's considerably modernized.

I wonder if they still sell penny candy.
(Ed: Now the 4 Corners Feed Store)

Let's face it, Johnston Station, you've changed, positively changed!

Pioneer Corn is no longer one or two buildings with many overalled folks chasing chickens and corn pollen sacks about, but a bevy of computer-carrying ISU Ag Doctors figuring food production techniques for the entire world from a sea of modern facilities!

Definitely Space Age and an amazing sight to a visiting 1940 JHS graduate.

Beautiful homes and housing areas, outstanding school facilities; you are no longer a brief stop on the commuter rail line but a handsome, popular and prosperous support community for the Capital of Iowa and a source of agricultural knowledge for the world.

You've progressed so competently that the JHS Pride we honored so many years ago has been immeasurably enhanced. Mega thanks to you Johnston folks for creating such a neat place to live, educate and work.

One thing that exemplifies the caring energy of Johnston folks is your hard working Historical Society, an obviously energetic group of people seriously intent on preserving the History and Heritage of Johnston. Their establishment of an early era farm complex beside the new and outstanding Johnston Library is a significant step in marrying the historical and intellectual.

Access to books of and for all ages along with visible, useable historic objects right outside the Library door which demonstrate how local folks lived, schooled and worked years ago is a giant step and one Johnston can be proud of. The entire complex is a profound compliment to the academic climate of Johnston; it creates an attitude that will prevail for a very, very long time.

Thanks, Johnston Visionaries, for encouraging and supporting such things. We old Johnstonites certainly appreciate the recognition of our past that is so capably presented to the future.

James E. Thomas, Jr.
San Antonio, TX



HOUSE AND BARN CONTRIBUTIONS

BRICKS:

Add to donors of a memorial brick for
Roy and Marian McDowell:
Dale McDowell

Evelyn Carlson
West Des Moines, IA
The Temples

James and Gloria Thomas
San Antonio, TX

Ferne Michael
Windsor Heights, IA
Two bricks: Ezekial Hunt
Family, Sept. 1846

Richard Reay, DDS
Johnston, IA

Robert Grahl
Potomac, MD
Phil Grahl
Bob Grahl

Community State Bank
Johnston, IA

CONTRIBUTIONS:

DRAGON (\$10,000 to 24,999)
Denny and Candy Elwell
Ankeny, IA

SODBUSTER (\$5,000 to \$9,999)

Wagonmaster (\$1,000 to \$4,999)
Ferne and Lloyd Michael
Windsor Heights, IA

SCOUT: (\$100 to \$999)
Irene Aulich
Northfield, MN.

In Memoriam

Laverne and Shirley Simpson
Johnston, IA

James and Gloria Thomas
San Antonio, TX

CARETAKER: (\$1 to \$99)
Marilyn Jean Gates
Clearwater, FL

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

Ferne Michael
Windsor Heights, IA
In memory of Meyer Pennington



Memorabilia

If you have been doing some “cleaning out”, and wonder what to do with your High School mementos, your photos of scouts, church, businesses, clubs; your scrap books, clippings of important (to you at the time) events that happened in Johnston, the JSHS reminds you that soon – we hope – our House/Museum will be ready to accept your contributions.

Jerry Gorden has offered to help our archive committee set up systems to acknowledge, file, preserve, and display materials documenting the history of Johnston.

All of the “stuff” you have been accumulating may be a treasure for someone trying to document an event, an organization, or a place in the community. So hold on to it a bit longer!!

Your editor recently had the opportunity to purchase two large volumes of Polk County plat maps, from 1953. They will eventually be a part of our collection.

Meyer Pennington, of Des Moines, died on September 8 of injuries from a fall. He was born in Dexter, Iowa, and taught in the Des Moines schools for much of his adult life.

Meyer was a veteran of the U.S. Army, active in teachers’ associations, and a Charter Member of the Johnston Historical Society. The JSHS sends sympathy to his wife Margaret (Swanson), also a Charter Member of the Society, and to his family.



When the JSHS began publishing a newsletter, the late Charles (Chuck) Roberts, as editor, initiated the practice of sending copies to various other Iowa Historical groups. They have reciprocated, and so we have news of what others are doing. Here are a few recent activities:

The Urbandale Historical Society has completed and paid for their barn, and now have a place to display larger items, such as a 1926 Maytag washing machine. They plan an open house on Dec. 1st, and welcome visitors to their house & barn on 70th street.

The Big Creek Historical Society (Polk City) is working on the nomination of their “Schoolhouse-City Hall”, built in 1863, for national historic registration. We wish them well!!

Recent speaker at the Polk County Historical Society was Bob Thompson, who told of the early history of Altoona. He reported that in 1857, when the state capital was moved to Des Moines, a “stage transporting the Treasurer’s safe became mired in a slough near here in a blizzard. The safe contained all of the state’s cash, and was marooned for several days. Ten yoke of oxen were required to free the safe”.

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GOLD STAR COMMITTEE

As a part of the Gold Star Ceremony held at the Johnston High School on December 7, 2001, the Johnston Historical Society presented a 24X30 inch plaque to the School and the Community, honoring the seven JHS graduates who lost their lives in the service of our country.

The ceremony was sponsored by our Society in cooperation with the High School faculty and students.

The plaque has now been mounted in the atrium of the high school, and will serve as a lasting memorial to these brave Johnston military veterans.

Members of the Gold Star Committee are:

Ray Schleihs, Ferne Michael, Donald Duvick, Robert Thomas, Kathy Wallerstedt, and Donald Zarley.

Donald Zarley,
Gold Star Committee Chair



GOLD STAR MEMORIAL PLAQUE, ATRIUM, JOHNSTON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
DEDICATED DECEMBER 7, 2001

HARRY ELDER DONATES CADILLAC

Johnston Historical Society member Harry Elder tells us that he really wants to support our House and Barn project; his way of doing this is to donate his 1990 Cadillac Seville to the cause! (See photo below)

The car is a beauty; it is buff-colored with a deep brown cabriolet (cloth) top. Leather seats and a Bose sound system add touches of real luxury to this Cadillac.

We hope to sell this car for between \$5,000 and \$6,000. If you or anyone you know is interested in seeing the car, or finding out more about it, contact Don Zarley at:
515-288-3467

