

Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Volume 26, Issue 2

Newsletter

Summer 2018

From the President

I hope everyone is having a wonderful summer. Keep in mind that the Johnston Station Historical Society museum is open the second Sunday of each month from 1 to 3 pm. Stop in to see the displays regarding the history of Johnston, Iowa. As you approach the farmhouse, please note the lovely garden areas maintained by our conscientious volunteers. We really appreciate their efforts.

We have had some vandalism recently. Someone turned the water on from our outside tap. It ran for several days. The faucet has been immobilized and further steps will be taken to secure the property.

The farmhouse is a testament to the hard-working Iowans who founded our great state. Please come to see the collection of memorabilia that has been assembled to preserve our history.

Michael B. Knight, President

We are posting pictures on FACEBOOK.
Check them out at
Johnston Historical Society!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President's Message, Flowers A-Bloom
- 2 Volunteers, Thanks, Green Days, Johnston Chamber Support, Green Days, Searching for Pennies, AmazonSmile
- 3-4 Growing Up in Johnston by Alene Aulich Fink
- 5 Johnston 50th, AASLH Recognition, Interurban Power House
- 6 Johnston School News, Wishes
- 7 More Flowers, Obituaries, Simpson House Rental



Flowers A-Bloom!

The museum gardens are beginning to show fruit of all the hard work by our volunteers. After a late start due to the cold weather, our gardeners have been working overtime. With a generous donation of plants from Piney Ridge Greenhouse, colors are blooming.

Our volunteer horticulturalists – **Carla Johns, Deb Krambeck, Elaine & Larry Egan, Riana O'Keefe and Marilyn Coonley** -- have all lent a hand. We also must thank **Jack Johns** who made some emergency repairs on our drainage system. Thanks to you all!



Volunteers Larry Egan, Deb Krambeck, and Carla Johns select flowers at Piney Ridge Greenhouse.

Opportunities for You

Do you have a very particular set of skills? Skills acquired over a very long career? Visit with us to put those skills to good use.

- *Like people? Be a museum greeter.
- *Got a green thumb? Be a gardener.
- *Can't clean enough? We need you!

Leave a message at 515-331-0687 and we'll be in touch.



"No duty is more urgent than that of giving thanks."

~James Allen

Thank you to our kind members and benefactors for their generous donations of time, talent, memorabilia and money:

Jack Johns
Joseph Miller
Keith Westbrook
Piney Ridge Greenhouse
JSHS Volunteers!

The Board of Directors would like to thank each of you for your generous donation of cash and items. With these gifts, we are able to preserve and share the rich history of Johnston.

Johnston Chamber Support

The Johnston Station Historical Society was proud to support the Johnston Chamber of Commerce Educator Appreciation Event on May 9. We provided bookmarks and society information. In addition, we provided a free membership as a door prize. Liz Van Zomeren coordinated this effort.

Johnston Green Days Results

The museum was open on June 16 during the 2018 Johnston Green Days celebration.

Thank you to our volunteer guides Liz Van Zomeren, John Brown, Lois Waggoner and Elaine Egan who showed 38 guests through our museum. Our visitors came from near and far – as far as Houston, Texas.



SEARCHING FOR PENNIES

You can help us earn some money right from your computer! **Goodsearch.org** is an organization that helps non-profits raise funds by donating a penny for each search done through their site via Yahoo. Simply create a free account and designate the Johnston Station Historical Society as your charity of choice. Then, when you are logged into their site, search away – and we'll get paid!

Support us through AmazonSmile

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Historical Society

Donations Generated:
\$1.58



When you buy items on-line at Amazon, shop smile.amazon.com. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from eligible AmazonSmile purchases to your designated charity (US!).

Products eligible for charitable donations will be marked on the site.

Growing Up In Johnston

By Alene Aulich Fink



Growing up in Johnston from 1945-1960 was the best of two worlds: semi-rural and semi-urban.

There were Pioneer fields and Hy-Line chickens, a passenger-freight interurban, and businesses such as Iltis Lumber, George & Mary Witt's gas station, Worthy Surber's Barber Shop, the Carter Store, and a corner grocery. Our home on Johnston Road, later named 62nd Avenue, sat in the middle of all these commercial enterprises. My parents, Al and Irene Aulich, didn't move into the house—they moved IT into Johnston.

When I was born, our house was on a farmstead rented and occupied by my dad's parents, near Camp Dodge and across the road from the little Dodge Airport. When I was three, my parents had our house moved down Merle May Road to a lot that is now occupied by Walgreens and its parking lot. My parents had the pitched roof removed and we had one of the only flat-roofed houses in the area for many years. Our driveway was bordered

by two of the tallest cottonwood trees in Polk County, or so I was told. One side had a big gash burned off by lightening. Today a chiropractor's clinic is across the road from our former home site.

Carter's store occupied the corner opposite our house on the corner of Merle Hay and Johnston Road, and next door to us was a grocery store, attached to the house of the owners, and rental apartments in the back. The first owners I remember were Gordon and Helen Dixon. Helen's brother, Vince McDermott, worked at the meat counter. They had three daughters, Elizabeth "Dixie", Mary, and Kathy. There was a small hallway connecting their living quarters to the store, and it was an adventure to pass through it. Later the Elwell family ran the store, with the help of several of their children. One of the younger ones, Denny Elwell, is a well-known businessman in the area today.

The Carter store also had attached apartments that faced Merle Hay and another attached to the back. The store, with its creaky wooden floors, was always fun to explore. My mother bought material and patterns for all our clothes, and one of my favorite activities was looking through the flat, wooden drawers with their spools of thread.

The neighborhood was full of children who were always ready for a game of "Mother May I" or "Red Rover, Red Rover," or something we called "Annie, Annie Over", where you heaved a baseball over the roof for someone on the other side to catch. One of my earliest memories is sitting on the front step of a neighbor girl's house that faced Merle Hay Road, watching the army transport trucks carrying WWII soldiers to Camp Dodge to be discharged.

West of our home was an apple orchard owned by the Krantz family whose home faced Dewey Lane and whose four children were childhood play mates. Running beside Dewey Lane were the tracks for the interurban that ran from Des Moines to Perry. And on the other side of the tracks

was Dave Miller's gas station, which my father bought and operated during my high school and college years. My mother also operated an ice cream shop in part of the building for several years.

And on the other side of THAT it was a straight shot down the cinder path from our house to the elementary-junior-senior high school my sister and I attended all thirteen years! So what a lot of life was swirling around that little semi-rural, semi-urban community during the years our family lived in Johnston. In 1999, my parents left it after 60 years to live in Northfield, MN, where my husband and I were raising our three children. My 98-year old mother still lives in a care center nearby.

I have such fond memories of going to school in Johnston, working in Pioneer's corn fields and swimming at Camp Dodge in the summer, going to 4-H Achievement Days at the Fairgrounds, roller-skating at the Urbandale roller rink, catching the bus into Des Moines to shop at Younkers, going to 5 cent Wednesday at Riverview, and eventually driving to the Chili King and Merle Hay Mall. It was a safe, exciting environment to explore and grow up in, and I'm grateful to all the adults who were there to guide, encourage, and tolerate the children in the community.



Al's Service Station and Irene's Ice Cream Shoppe on NW 62nd Avenue just east of the school

Do you have a Johnston story to tell? Share it with us! Contact us at jshs@q.com or leave a message at 515-331-0687.

Digital Newsletter

Would you like to get your newsletter hot off the press and directly into your inbox? Sign up for the Johnston Historical Society Digital Newsletter. This service, offered to our members, would allow us reduce our printing and mailing expenses and allow us to use these savings for other programming.

Email us at jshs@q.com with your name and email address to be added to our digital distribution list.



50th Anniversary Committee

The city of Johnston was incorporated on September 18, 1969. The city is putting together a committee to celebrate all things Johnston in 2019. The first meeting was held on Wednesday, May 29th at City Hall. City Administrator Jim Sanders served as facilitator.

The committee will plan and coordinate activities to celebrate the founding, history and growth of Johnston. The committee will recognize citizens, businesses, and organizations that have been instrumental in the history of Johnston and will work to create a lasting tribute in recognition of the 50th anniversary. John Brown and Liz Van Zomeren are serving on the planning committee representing the Johnston Historical Society.

Stay tuned for future updates; there will be a need for more people to serve on the various committees yet to be identified.

JSHS Recognized for AASLH StEPs Achievement

The American Association for State and Local History has recognized the Johnston Station Historical Society for its achievement of

Bronze status in the areas of Stewardship of Historic Structures and Landscapes.

JSHS has been working through the Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs), spearheaded by Board member John Brown. The society has now received bronze awards covering Stewardship of Collections, Mission, Vision and Governance, Audience and Interpretation.

Saving the Interurban



The Interurban Power Station located at NW Johnston Driver near NW Beaver Drive.

This Interurban Railway electric power station is the oldest commercial building in Johnston. It is owned by ACCO Unlimited. Current plans call for demolition of the building in August, to make way for new construction.

The City of Johnston is currently evaluating alternative uses for the building and is working with the ACCO Unlimited owners to create a solution that saves the building without requiring that it be moved and converting it to a suitable city use. The Johnston Historical Society is also pursuing pictures of the structure and is working with the owners of the building and land, to preserve any artifacts related to the building's history if it is demolished.

A membership to the Johnston Station Historical Society is a wonderful gift!



Johnston High School Ranked #9 in State

Johnston High School ranked in the top ten of Iowa high schools, taking the #9 spot according to U.S. News and World Report. This earned the school a silver award through the national ranking program. It also ranked 2,313th out of 20,500 schools examined nationally.

Data was collected on reading and math assessments, graduation rates, college-level coursework and performance of underserved student populations. Johnston High School had 1,548 students enrolled served by 83 full-time teachers. The school enjoyed a 96% graduation rate.

Johnston Sports Honors

We would like to congratulate the Johnston High School students who were honored as All-Iowa Athletes of the Year:

Cari Naanep, 2A tennis singles champion,
Brooke Wilmes, girls' softball standout
Jack Dreyer, Baseball pitching ace

These athletes were selected by the Des Moines Register and Iowa City Press-City sports writers.

I wish I may, I wish I might...

The Johnston Station Historical Society has some big plans to keep our organization an asset to the community. To match those plans we have some big wishes. If you can help with any of them, let us know.

- *Sprinkler system
- *Gutters for the house
- *Paint for the outside of the house
- *Video Services

Summit Odyssey Champs

Summit middle school students were named Odyssey of the Mind World Champions at the May 26 competition at Iowa State University. The students competed against 70 other teams from 13 countries and 26 states.

The team consists of members **Jack Coen, Jack Gabby, Kennedy Kramersmeier, Drew MacGregor, Wil Safris, Caroline Throener and Lauren Wessling.** The team is coached by **Kate and Steve Safris.**



Johnston History Winners

The Johnston Historical Society has sent personal notes of congratulations to the nine Johnston students who won their category at the National History Day event held on April 30th. This year's theme was "Conflict and Compromise in History".

The winners were: **Lauren Fergus, Angela Cia, Marianne Aldrich and Obsee Abbajaba** who won for their website. **Jenna Woodsmall**, a middle school student, won for her individual performance in the junior division and **Allie Tubbs** won for her individual performance in the senior division. **Maddie Gregurek** won the senior individual exhibit category. **Matthew Ding** won in the senior high school paper category and **Will Morlock** won for his individual documentary on Ding Darling.

These students were engaged in a year-long academic enrichment program that challenged them to conduct research, develop and present papers, exhibits, documentaries, websites and performances based on the theme. We congratulate these students on their success and hope to engage them in the future events and activities.



Enjoy our Flower Gardens

Obituaries

Obituaries are compiled by Nancy Budrevich. If anyone knows of others, please let Nancy know. Nancy can be contacted

- by mail: 6161 Northglenn Dr., Johnston, IA, 50131
- by email: jshs@q.com
- by phone: 515-331-0687

Over 1,000 Johnston related obituaries are now on file at the museum.

Name	Relationship to Johnston	Date of Death
Candice Anstaett Reed	Class of 1994	04/16/2018
Margaret Paul	Resident	04/25/2018
Ruth Stientjes	Resident	05/05/2018
Mavis Hertzbert	Resident	05/18/2018
Andrew Ciccelly	Resident	05/19/2018
Gladys Sweeney	Resident	05/22/2018
Theobelle Mauk	Former Resident	04/27/2018

Member Benefit: Simpson House Rental

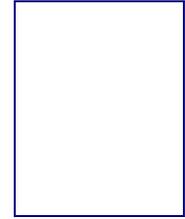
Are you looking for a charming spot for your small group gathering? The Johnston Historical Society would like to offer the use of the 1902 Simpson House as a new membership benefit.

You can reserve the facility for private events for free as a part of our continuing efforts to serve the local community and our members. A small, refundable deposit is required, and certain restrictions apply.

If you are interested, contact us at 515-331-0687 or at jshs@q.com.



Johnston (Station) Historical Society
6161 Northglenn Dr.
Johnston, IA 50131



Mission Statement

The purpose of the Johnston (Station) Historical Society is to bring people together who are interested in the history and preservation of the Johnston area, which includes the early settlements of Johnston Station, Beaver Creek Settlement, Ridgedale, Huntsville, Herrold and Dodge City.

To this goal, we work to get the community engaged and involved in Johnston's rich history by providing a museum and events to the public.

Johnston Historical Board Members

Michael Knight, President
Elaine Egan, Secretary
Jan Jensen, Archivist
Marilyn Coonley, Membership

John Brown, Vice President
Nancy Budrevich, Treasurer
Liz Van Zomeren, Associate Archivist
Alan Lathrum, Membership

Museum phone: 515-331-0687
Website: www.johnstoniowahistorical.org

**The museum will be open the 2nd Sunday of each month, 1:00p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Other times by appointment
If you are interested in a tour, please call the museum phone and leave a message.**