

Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Volume 18 , Issue 5

Newsletter

September 2010

President's Column:

We are working to preserve our artifacts for future generations to enjoy. Jan Jensen is very knowledgeable about preservation procedures and is working hard to get this mammoth task completed. Grant monies were used to purchase two dress forms. One has been used to display Shirley Simpson's wedding dress.

The Museum recently received a Bravo Grant for \$4000 to be used to upgrade current displays and create new ones. Displays will be created in triplicate: one for display off-site, one on display at the Museum, and one to be kept on file.

The signage around the Museum

Continued on page 2



Congratulations to Russ and Wanda Slauson who were married July 28, 1950 and are celebrating 60 years of love.

Thank you to Vivian Zimmerman for donating a wedding photograph of Bernice and Jack Scott along with Bernice's State of Iowa Teaching Certificate and one of her teaching contracts.

Thank you to Brian Garlock for donating a CD of photographs of the Garlock family.

Thank you to Grimes Sweet Corn for donating the corn for the Society's Sweet Corn Feed.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President's Column
- 2 New Hours of Operation
- 3 Sycamore Park
- 4 Just a Field of Corn?
- 5 City News
- 6 Mark Your Calendars

was rusting and displayed incorrect information. These signs have been removed, sand blasted and powder coated to prevent rust. This project was completed thanks to Russ Slauson.

The Board of Directors authorized the installation of a fire alarm system for the Museum. ADT will install the system which will provide continuous monitoring.

The sweet corn feed held in August was a success with over 25 members in attendance.

Dick Hyde
Board President

New Hours of Operation

Starting September 1st, 2010, the Museum will be open Tuesday through Thursday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and the second Sunday of the month from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The Museum will no longer be open Monday evenings or Friday afternoons as there were few visitors during these times.

Johnston Schools 2010 Trivia Quiz

How many school busses will be operating in 2010?

How many full and part-time people are employed?

Approximately how many breakfasts will be served during the school year?

Answers are on the bottom of page 5

Sycamore Park Ballroom and Picnic Grounds Plagued by Flood, Thieves, and the Law



Sycamore Park Surrounded by Flood Waters

Sycamore Park was a privately owned park located near the current Sycamore Access to the Des Moines River on N.W. 66th Avenue. Early directions stated, "Sycamore Park is 7 miles N.W. of Des Moines, Go North on Merle Hay Road to Johnston Station, turn East."

The park featured a screened-in pavilion where dances, picnics and parties were held. It was called "the poor man's place to dance" and rumored to be a place that Ronald Reagan took some of his dates.

News accounts reveal that other activities also took place at the pavilion. In August of 1939 State and Polk County law officials raided a picnic held at the pavilion and seized six slot machines and a blackjack table. Another gambling raid in 1957 netted a blackjack table, a dice game, playing cards and cash.

The park was beset upon not only by the law but also by thieves. In 1946 someone made off with the grand piano, five electric fans, 15 benches, 25 tables, the railing around the dance floor and the wood from the bandstand. Thieves struck again in 1958 taking two furnaces, an exhaust fan and two stoves. The pavilion was destroyed by fire in 1961 and was not rebuilt. The land is currently a wildlife refuge and a part of the Des Moines River greenbelt.

Much of the above information was taken from a Des Moines Register article entitled: Sycamore Park Had Its Problems.

Just a Corn Field? by Karl Jarvis



Plump golden seed in the warm earth prest
Clear green rows on the earth's sweet breast
Stalks reaching up with their leaves adrape
God's gift to man in this sweet clean shape.
Rich gold grain fills the world's empty bowls
But God given beauty fills our own hungry souls.

Karl Jarvis graduated Magna Cum Laude from University of California Berkeley. Karl and his wife Revo moved to Johnston in 1941. Karl worked for the next 26 years as a plant breeder for Pioneer Seed Corn. Their three sons, Mark, Don, and Ken graduated from Johnston High School.

City News

Beaver Creek Reaches Second-Highest Stage Ever



Torrential rain beginning on August 8th, 2010, and continuing for three days sent Beaver Creek over its banks and caused considerable flooding in Johnston. The official rain gauge on Beaver Creek in Johnston registered 10.18 inches for the three-day period. Many residents battled water in basements and shop vacs were in high demand. Flooding also occurred in low lying rural and industrial areas in and around Johnston. Water poured across N.W. 62nd Avenue causing the road to be closed for three days. The highest water level recorded for Beaver Creek was 16.58 feet on July 10, 1993. The water level on August 8, 2010 was 14.90 feet.

Answers to History Quiz

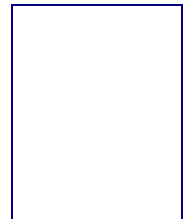
1. 56
2. 854
3. 86,000

Mark Your Calendars

On October 6th at 5 p.m., Tim Kline will conduct a tour of the Johnston High School. We will meet at the front door of the school just before 5 p.m. The high school is located at 6501 NW 62nd Avenue, just west of Merle Hay Road.

November 10th at 5 p.m., we will have an early Thanksgiving dinner. Turkey, dressing, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes, gravy and a variety of pies will be served. Hors d'oeuvres will be served at 5 p.m. and the meal will be served at 6 p.m. Please call the Museum and leave a message by the 5th of November if you will attend so we can plan the meal. Phone: (515) 331-0687

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



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED