

# Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Volume 23, Issue 1

Newsletter

Spring 2015

## From the President

With the arrival of spring the society is now busy at the museum, cleaning inside and out, to get it ready for the opening of its doors starting on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 to 4:00p.m. Also, with the coming of warm weather, Peterson Painting should be starting the paint job that was delayed last fall because of the cold weather.

In the recent board election, Deb Krambeck was re-elected for her second three-year term and Marilyn (Law) Coonley was elected for her first three-year term. Thank you both for serving.

We want to welcome back Keith Westbrook who will be the webpage/computer specialist for the society. Keith has the website up. Go to [www.johnstoniowahistorical.org](http://www.johnstoniowahistorical.org) to see what is happening with the society.

Thank you for your support.

Lois Waggoner, President



## Election of Officers

The board voted the following people into office in January:

Lois Waggoner, President  
Nancy Budrevick, Vice President  
Deb Krambeck, Secretary  
Carla Johns, Treasurer  
Jan Jensen, Archivist

## New Museum Hours

The museum will reopen on Monday, April 6 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The museum will again close the end of November.

Our regular hours will be each Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday and the second Sunday of each month from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Please call the museum to schedule a time other than the times listed above. Museum phone: 515-331-0687.

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## **Annual Meeting Scheduled**

The annual meeting for members has been scheduled for Sunday, April 12th, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. at the museum. All members are encouraged to stop by and see the changes that have taken place at the museum. The board members will be present for you to meet. There will be coffee, tea, and dessert.

## **Annual Membership Dues**

We recently sent postcards to those who, according to our records, have not paid their dues for 2015. If you have not paid your dues, please do so soon.

The annual dues are \$20. Make checks payable to the Johnston Station Historical Society. Our address is 6161 Northglenn Dr., Johnston, IA 50131.

## **Garage Sale Fundraiser**

This year's Garage (Barn) Sale has been scheduled for Friday and Saturday, July 17 and 18. Begin collecting items to contribute to our annual garage sale this year. As you know, we are a non-profit, so we will provide a receipt for all items donated.

Items can be brought to the museum after April 6th during open hours or call Nancy Budrevich at 255-4030 to schedule a delivery time.

## **Farmers Market**

We will be setting up a table at the Johnston Farmers Market once or twice a month in order to become more visible. The market opens Tuesday, May 19th.

## **Donations**

Below are the individuals/foundations who have donated to the work of preserving the history of Johnston since the last newsletter. We would like to recognize these individuals:

Vivian Zimmerman  
Charles Burkett  
Scott Temple  
Howard Hunt  
Mark Putney  
Karen Miltenberger  
Vivian Kinsey  
Judy Christy  
David Goss, Jr.  
Joseph Miller  
Eva O'Brien  
Jean and Don Heldenbrand  
Janet and Jim Schuessler  
Denny Elwell Company  
Roger and Betty Wigton

The Board of Directors would like to thank each of you for your generous donation. The Johnston Historical Society could not survive and continue to preserve the valuable history at the museum without you.

## **New Members**

We welcome the following individuals who have joined the Johnston Historical Society:

Rosie Spencer  
Mary Brown  
Shirley Dinsmore  
Pat Salem  
Nancy Morlan  
Rae Dunlap  
Carol Schleih

Correction. We apologize to Tom Leffler for getting his first name wrong.

## Lions Club Celebrates 70 Years

The Johnston Lions Club recently celebrated its 70th anniversary. Founded in 1944, the Lions Club is the longest functioning service organization in Johnston.

In the 50's the club members built a 50 x 100 foot concrete slab that served both as a basketball court and a roller skating rink. Many Johnston graduates have fond memories of roller skating on the slab in the out of doors. The club members also built and paid for the new bleachers in the new gymnasium built at the school around the same time.



Lions Club members building new bleachers.

Prior to Johnston's incorporation in 1969, the Lions Club provided street lights and warning sirens.

Today they continue the good work. A book sale is held in March which benefits the library. They have an annual pancake breakfast in May and at the same time distribute trees to residents that have been purchased with proceeds from the farmers market which they host.

The club also offers vision checkups to preschoolers at day cares and schools in Johnston. They have special equipment that takes photographs to determine if a child is experiencing a vision problem.

The club also continues to help the schools. They provide scholarships, teacher appreciation events and volunteer in many ways.

## A Lesson from Johnston

My years as a student in the Johnston Consolidated School District began in the fifth grade when I joined the clamor of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students being bused to individual classrooms in Camp Dodge barracks because there was not sufficient room to accommodate the bulging enrollment in the single K-12 school building. Our teacher, Mrs. Lumsden, gathered her 20 plus charges in a small cinder block barrack that included two restrooms, a coat area that contained a water fountain we dubbed "Old Faceful" and a classroom with desks lined in neat rows. She handled everything, for the administrative and support staff were three miles away in the main school building that was located at the site of the current Johnston Middle School. The privacy of the classroom and the wide expanse of the fields and grounds that invited running and exploring made this a very special year.



Joan when she first arrived at Johnston

The environment welcomed me and helped to soothe my troubled soul. I was the tenth child in a family of boisterous, fun-loving folk who entertained themselves with music, dance and laughter and knew how to "make do" with very little while living on a farm in Buckhorn, Arkansas. Two more sisters followed me and, tragically, my mother died during the birth of the last one. The family had recently moved to Iowa where there were good wages to be had at jobs at the ordnance plant in Ankeny, a main supplier of bullets for World War II. With my mother's death, the safe, happy world of my early childhood disappeared. After four chaotic years of living with various relatives, in an orphanage and foster homes, a younger sister and I were adopted to an older childless farm couple at Johnston. The couple believed a "clean break" was best and they promptly gave us new names, a different religion, and their set of values which frowned on dancing and the devil's music. Most painful of all,

they severed all ties with our biological family.

The close-knit Johnston community, small classes and caring teachers held a bit of the familiar for me and I found the school to be a place of comfort and encouragement. My foster parents made it clear that I should not expect to attend school beyond the eighth grade; but rather, consider clerical work to supplement the family income—after all; females needed little formal education to prepare them for their life work of becoming wives and mothers.

The Johnston teachers, however, had other ideas. One in particular, Edith Cassaday, who was barely five feet in her square chunky heels, tucked me under her wing and went to battle. She made home visits, bought our vegetables and other produce, and developed a friendly relationship with my foster mother. When my foster father died during my freshman year, Mrs. Cassaday increased her attention to my future. She convinced my foster mother that everyone would benefit from my continuing in school, for I would be able to earn more money as a high school graduate.

I was thrilled that I got to remain in school. Although I couldn't participate in most of the extra-curricular and social activities due to the religious beliefs of my foster mother, I was allowed to continue my studies with the stipulation that I avoid college prep classes and concentrate on business and clerical preparation. The business teacher, Marthe Varner, was the wife of the Johnston Superintendent. When I graduated, most of the teachers simply signed their names by

their yearbook picture. Mrs. Varner, however, wrote me a message: *Thanks for the help this year. Don't forget to use your talents and imagination! Remember: There's always room at the top and the view is better. Affectionately, Marthe Varner.*

Like Mrs. Cassaday, Mrs. Varner never let go of an idea. Fifteen months after graduation when I was securely ensconced in my clerical work compiling directories for Northwestern Bell Telephone Company, I received a phone call from Superintendent Charles Varner inviting me to have dinner with him and his wife. I was stunned and nervous, not knowing what to expect when after a delicious meal of fried chicken at the Blue Diner, Mr. Varner leaned back in his chair and said, "Marthe and I asked you to dinner because we want you to know something. We think you should go to college."

I was speechless. I stuttered out some mumbled reply: "How do you do that? I didn't take any college-prep courses. I don't have any money. I don't know how to apply."



Joan as Principal at North High School

Mr. Varner said, "Contact the admissions office of the college. They will help you. You're smart. You'll figure it out."

That short dinner conversation was a turning point in my life. I thought if the Superintendent and my teacher believed in me, I should believe in myself. I did figure it out and four years later graduated with a teaching degree from State College of Iowa (now University of Northern Iowa). For the next forty years, I was a teacher and administrator for secondary schools. Many times I reflected on how the teachers and administrators at Johnston were responsible for placing me on the path I longed to follow. It was their caring and dedication to my development and learning that made the difference. As a middle and high school principal I often had the opportunity to remind faculty and staff of the wide sphere of their influence and their ability to touch lives in unexpected and beautiful ways.

That was a precious lesson taught to me by some of my Johnston teachers and one that is cherished yet today.

Joan Roberts

**Joan E. Roberts, Ed.D., a 1957 Johnston High School Graduate, was awarded the Alumni Hall of Fame in 2006 by the Johnston Community School Foundation.**

## New Board Member



Marilyn Law  
Coonley

Marilyn (Law) Coonley grew up in the seemingly idyllic 50's and 60's at Camp Dodge with her father and mother - Colonel Russell E. (Bus) and Kay Law, her older brother - Dick Garland, and her younger sister - Sandy. She attended K - 12 in one building at Johnston, graduating with the Class of '64 which celebrated its 50th Class Reunion last September.

After college she moved to Hampton, Iowa, where her husband diligently pursued his law practice and other business ventures while she became a full-time, small-town volunteer. These activities included: chairing the bloodmobile, Republican Women, the Centennial Ball, and Eastern Star - serving on the School Board and as the Treasurer of the Hospital Auxiliary-teaching Sunday School and bridge classes for Community Ed - and directing and acting in Community Theater.

In 1992, Marilyn moved back to Johnston where she has lived for the past 23 years. Just this week, she sold her home and will move into a townhouse in Urbandale in May. However, "Camp Dodge and Johnston will always be my home."

Marilyn is thrilled and impressed with the items and information that have been collected and preserved in our JSHS museum. As a new Board Member, her goal is to help increase our membership by conveying this excitement and enthusiasm to those who are not yet aware of the historical treasure-trove being housed right here in our wonderful Johnston community.

## Signage for Museum

During my tenure as a board member, I have been asked by more than one alumni not only what the museum is, but also where it is located. If one isn't familiar with the "old Simpson house" or "the barn," people have difficulty locating the museum. The point is, it isn't very well "advertised." The signage outside the building is very difficult to see, let alone read.

My thoughts have been toward a larger sign to the left of the brick walkway. This sign would be built with a brick column on the left and right, with wood and glass inner framing. Ideally, this would be equipped with a programmable marquee, in order to advertise hours of operation as well as special events.

I strongly believe that, if we let people know who and where we are, this would strongly increase membership, as well as museum exposure. This will, of course, be funded through member donations designated especially for this project.

This is only in planning stages at this time. Conceptual drawings and figures will be forthcoming. I am looking for member feedback right now. Is this a worthwhile project, or is what we presently have good enough? Remember, this is your museum.

Thank you for your consideration.

Al Lathrum, Board Member

## 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](mailto:jshs@q.com); or by phone: 515-331-0687. Over 1,000 Johnston related obituaries are now on file at the museum.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship to Johnston</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>
Paul Willcockson	Class of 1954	09-09-2014
William Foshe	Class of 1954	12-14-2014
Joann Hennings Johnson	Class of 1962	02-12-2015
Dane Beirman	Class of 2003	01-05-2015
Sherry Bieghler Hornbacher	Class of 1988	03-22-2015
Richard Thomas	Teacher 1960s	01-16-2015
David Pitz	Teacher retired 1995	03-18-2015
Loa Nalley	Resident	10-20-2014
Francis "Dave" Hennessey	Resident	11-09-2014
Lois Vawter	Resident	11-02-2014
Tommy "T.C." Thomas	Resident	11-04-2014
Virginia Lewis	Resident	11-10-2014
Arlene Lepon	Resident	11-15-2014
Charles Pierce	Resident	11-18-2014
Nancy Lee Paulson	Resident	11-26-2014
Marilyn Frederick	Resident	12-06-2014
Donald Zimmerman	Resident	12-12-2014
Bill Wilkinson	Resident	12-12-2014
Ned Carter Brandt	Resident	12-13-2014
Stephen Kroner	Resident	12-16-2014
Marvin Deer	Resident	12-20-2014
Michael Martin	Resident	01-27-2015
Robert "Bob" Sullivan	Resident	01-28-2015
Kenneth Flaskerud	Resident	02-05-2015
Richard "Dick" Huss	Resident	02-08-2015
Ron Vander Leest	Resident	02-17-2015
Lewis Hazlewood	Resident	03-12-2015
James Richard Winter	Resident	03-14-2015
David L. Shoultz	Resident	03-19-2015

## Johnston Historical Board Members

Museum phone: 515-331-0687

Lois Waggoner, President  
Deb Krambeck, Secretary  
Jan Jensen, Archivist  
Alan Lathrum, Membership

Nancy Budrevich, Vice President  
Carla Johns, Treasurer  
Marilyn Coonley, Membership

### Mark Your Calendars

#### Society Events

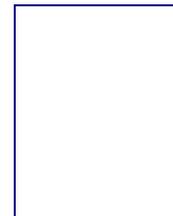
April 12, 2015 Member Meeting and Open House 2 to 4 p.m. in the Museum  
July 17-18, 2015 Annual Garage Sale in the Barn 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday  
November 5, 2015 Annual Chili Supper in the Barn 5 to 7 p.m.

#### City Events

May 2, 2015 Kites on the Green 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. in Johnston Commons  
May 19, 2015 - Johnston Farmers Market each Tuesday from 3:30p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in City  
October 6, 2015 Hall parking lot  
June 18-21, 2015 Green Days in Johnston Commons  
July 26, 2015 Jazz in July 6 to 8 p.m. in Johnston Commons  
September 25, 2015 Art in the Barn 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Barn

**Reminder: The museum will be opening on April 6, 2015.**

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



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED