

ROCK-TALK

the newsletter of

The Gibraltar Neighborhood Association, Inc.

APRIL 2015 | Volume 7, Issue 2

isit the GNA website: www.GibraltarNA.org oin the GNA Networking site: www.Gibraltar.Nextdoor.com

SPRING HAS SPRUNG! Time to thin out

your gardens and at the same time help support the Gibraltar neighborhood and the Dodge House!

As we have done in years past, the Gibraltar Neighborhood Association is once again hosting a plant sale in conjunction with the Dodge House Heirloom Plant Sale on Saturday, May 16 (more info inside the newsletter). Traditionally, GNA residents have contributed pots containing perennials that they've thinned from their own gardens (hostas, lilies, iris, grasses, phlox, veronica, coneflower, asters, etc.). We then



sell those 'starters' to raise money, sharing a portion of the proceeds with the Dodge House!

PLEASE consider donating some plants to the cause — we have extra pots to put them in if you need them! Just contact Paulette Brandt (who is spearheading the sale) at pbrandt45@yahoo.com or call and leave a message at 328-7399. **We thank you for your support!** ■

MAY 2015 GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 13, 2015—6:00—8:00 p.m. WHERE: Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Corner of Bluff Street and Story Street

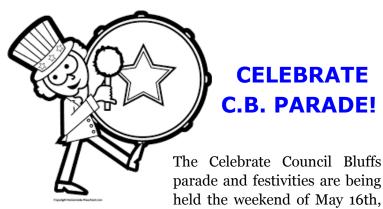
If you are able, please bring a non-perishable food item to contribute to their food pantry!! Also, bring your ideas, concerns, news, suggestions, etc. as we discuss ways to improve our neighborhood. ALL residents are encouraged to attend!

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: Future Meeting Dates Second Quarter GNA Social:

We're thinking about doing a potluck at Kirn Park in June (kids would have a place to play or ride bikes, etc.) What are your thoughts on this?

Future GNA General Meetings:

Wednesday, July 8, 2015 -- 6:00 to 8:00 pm Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2015 -- 6:00 to 8:00 pm Wednesday, Nov. 11 -- 6:00 to 8:00 pm



and again this year the Gibraltar Neighborhood will participate in the parade on Saturday!!

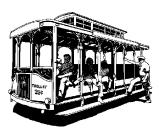
While we aren't making a FLOAT this year, we will have a decorated pickup that folks can ride in or walk alongside and hand out candy. Families are encouraged to participate! *Those who took part last year had a blast*. If you are interested in joining the fun, you need to have a burgundy-color shirt, as parade participants need to be "in matching uniform." Contact any board member for more information or to get on the participation list!

Bluffs Arts Camps 2015

The Bluffs Arts Council is sponsoring a wide variety of summer camps for students ages 7-12. There are 3, 4 and 5-day camps covering a variety of visual arts fundamentals and experimentation with real techniques in multiple art forms, including painting, mixed media, jewelry, cooking, clay, textiles and more! For general camp information and descriptions, go to the website at www.bluffsarts.org or call the office at 712-322-4656 and they can send you a brochure. ■

Have Trolley, Will Tour

The Trolley Tours of Historic Council Bluffs are scheduled on the 4th Thursday of every month from May through October, at 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. The trolley will take you through the four historic districts surrounding downtown Council Bluffs (3 of the 4 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places). The tour guide will share a glimpse of the early history of Council Bluffs through the architectural styles of selected homes and a brief history of the first families who



lived in them. Boarding on Ollie the Trolley begins at 5:30pm. Tours are approximately one hour and 15 minutes. Tickets are \$10 per person and can be pur-

chased by sending your check with a SASE #10 envelope to Bluffs Arts Council, PO Box 795, CoBluffs, IA 51502. Please indicate for which tour (date/time) you want tickets. Make the check payable to Preserve C.B. ■

THANK YOU to our GNA newsletter delivery & distribution team:

Chris and Steve Gorman, Tom Emmett and Nate Brown. Without you, our Newsletter would not be possible!!!!

Understanding your GNA: Why have an Association?

The purpose of our neighborhood association is stated in our bylaws as follows:

"Article II Section 2

The purpose of the Association is to seek to enhance and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood through encouraging communication and relationships among neighbors in matters of community betterment, crime prevention by promoting the neighborhood watch program, and to promote and participate in the civic life of Council Bluffs. The Association does not seek to attempt to dictate the specific and particular color scheme of similar of any given household. The Association does seek within reason and practicality to maintain the historical character of the neighborhood."

Through neighbors getting to know each other, our association hopes that all residents (whether owners or renters) will experience a better quality of life and increased pride in our community. ■



The GNA Book Club is a fun, social gathering where we get together and share a bit of news, a glass of wine and discuss our latest book. We are currently reading **"The Girl on the Train" by Paula Hawkins**. If you enjoy socializing, contact Patti Hannan at 712-323-8600 for more info. We'd love to see you at our next meeting! ■

FROM PRESIDENT PETERS

Greetings fellow GNA residents!

I've noticed that folks seem to be in a happier mood now that the weather is getting warmer and lawns are greening up! As things start to pop-up in your garden, please take note that we are once again raising funds through our annual plant sale at the Dodge House. Please see the news blurb on page one and contribute some plants if you are able to do a bit of thinning in your gardens! Thank you in advance!



WOW did we have a great turnout and a fun evening at the Gibraltar 1st Quarter Social Event on March 28! Bud and Susie Dew were wonderful hosts, and Bud tells me he counted 38 party attendees!! As was evidenced by the amazing spread of food, we sure do have some great cooks in our neighborhood! It was SO FUN to see a bunch of NEW faces at the party — <u>and</u> some faces I haven't seen in a while! A big "thank you" to everyone for attending, and to the Dews for hosting! I know we are all looking forward to the next party!!

Your GNA Board has been discussing SEVERAL new projects, and we are hard at work taking measurements, gathering costs, and laying the ground work, including writing some grant requests. I'll have more information for you as things start to firm up, but just as an FYI, we are working towards getting funding to start a repair initiative for the damaged sidewalks in our area. We are also hoping to be able to apply for and get funding to put some banner-type signage on the power poles throughout our neighborhood. More on this to come.

WE'RE GROWING!! If you've not done so already, PLEASE take a moment to join our private neighborhood social group at www.gibraltar.nextdoor.com. This site is an *excellent* way for residents to post news, share alerts, ask questions, pose ideas and get to know one another. There is NO COST to join the group, there's no spam or advertisements, etc.; you just need to live in the Gibraltar boundaries. *Please help us to keep you informed by becoming a part of this group!* (and contact ME if you have trouble joining!!)

Join the Parade!! The Gibraltar Neighborhood Association will once again be participating in the Celebrate C.B. parade on May 16th. While we aren't making a FLOAT this year, we will be either riding in a decorated pickup or walking & handing out candy. *Those who participated last year had a blast*. If you are interested in participating, you need to have a burgundy-color shirt, as groups need to be similarly 'in matching uniform.' Contact any board member for more information or to get on the participation list!

If you are reading this newsletter as a NEW homeowner or renter in our boundaries, WELCOME!!! PLEASE take a moment to join the Nextdoor group (referenced above) and introduce yourself! We'd love to get to know you! We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event. AS ALWAYS, you don't need to be a GNA MEMBER to attend – ALL Gibraltar residents are welcome! Let's get together and make our neighborhood even better!

Speaking of making Gibraltar better, **PLEASE** take a moment to fill out the survey located on page 11!! Your input is critical as we work to make our neighborhood the best it can be. It will just take a few moments, and if you don't want to spend the \$\$ on a stamp, feel free to tuck the survey in any board members' door! And as a friendly reminder, if you would like to be a paid GNA "member" (which gives you voting rights and a few other perks), please remember to send your dues in! (Submission form & mailing address are on the page 10.)

SUPPORT CHANTICLEER

The Secret Garden

May 8 - 17 Chanticleer Theater 830 Franklin Avenue



In this Tony-award winning musical, a young boy and girl living on an estate discover a secret garden and "The Dreamers." Beautiful music by Lucy Simon; great storyline by Marsha Norman.

For tickets call 712-323-9955.

NOTICE OF NEED:

New Board Member (Treasurer)

It was with very heavy hearts that we announce the upcoming resignation of our GNA Treasurer, Bob Rosser. Bob has been an integral part of our GNA team, and a constant cheerleader and team player. He and Ellen have hosted gatherings, painted signs, hauled trash, attended workshops and much more, and the two of them jumped into neighborhood involvement with both feet only a month after moving to Gibraltar.

We offer heartfelt congratulations to Ellen on her exciting new employment in western Nebraska, but the resulting move out of state will leave us with a big, big void at the corner of 3rd Street and 9th Avenue. *The Rossers will be sorely missed*.

Bob will be functioning as GNA treasurer for a bit longer while they arrange the sale of the house, so if we can find a volunteer soon, he/she can "shadow" Bob to learn the ropes. Please contact Cory Peters or Bob Rosser (contact info on page 10 of newsletter) if you would be willing to volunteer for our awesome GNA board!!

And, if you know of someone interested in a <u>beautifully</u>-restored Victorian home, contact Bob for a tour. The house is stunning!

DODGE HOUSE NEWS

Spring Tea "Blue & Gray" - Sunday, May 3, 2015

Enjoy a lovely afternoon Tea in the Dodge House Ballroom, served by the General's Ladies. This annual event is always enjoyed by guests of all ages. Guests will be



treated to delicious savories, scones and sweets and hear a fantastic program, called "The Soldier's Aid Society", based on what the women did to assist in the war effort. Tea to begin at 2pm, doors open at 1:30pm. Hats and gloves are always welcome, but not required. Reservations are a must and you can make yours by calling the office at 712-322-2406. Cost is \$18.00 for members and \$20.00 for non-members. Seating is limited. ■

Heirloom Plant Sale - Saturday, May 16, 2015

This annual gardeners favorite is getting more popular every year. Make it a point to stop on by the Dodge House grand front porch on Saturday, May 16 (immediately following the Celebrate CB Parade) to buy some of the best heirloom vegetables and flowers



available. Our seeds are shipped to us and grown by Diller's Greenhouses and will be ready to be planted by you in your backyard garden. Please no early sales.

Summer Garden Walk - Sunday, June 28, 2015

Start your day at the Historic General Dodge House with a continental breakfast and tours of the Dodge and Beresheim House. Your ticket will also allow entrance into several area private gardens, showcasing many different types of landscapes and plant varieties. Tickets may be purchased at the Dodge House office at 621 Third Street, Hy-Vee Madison Avenue, Diller's Greenhouse and Sherbondy's Garden Center. Please call ahead to make sure tickets are available. Advance tickets \$10.00 and \$12.00 at the door. Member tickets \$8.00 (available for purchase only at the Dodge House).

GNA HOMES: 333 Willow — John Bennett

Visitors to the new Council Bluffs Public Library are given a special treat: a view of the historic Bennett House on the southwest corner of Bluff Street and Willow Avenue. Built in 1880, the "big white house with the green roof" was the home of John Bennett, early pioneer, merchant, public official, and banker.

John Bennett was born in 1832 in Allegheny, PA. The death of his father at age two and his mother at age six left him an orphan. He was raised by his uncle, John Keller, and his wife, Rebecca, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Bennett entered the business world at an early age. When he was twelve years old he went to work in a hardware store. At age nineteen he left Cincinnati with the Keller family and spent the next two years in western Missouri. The Kellers and John Bennett came to Council Bluffs in 1853. It is said that John Keller brought the first fruit trees to the area. Bennett worked as a clerk for the next three years, then he and Keller, a real estate dealer, established a lumber yard on the corner of Broadway and Fourth Street. He worked at the lumber yard until 1862, and then as a salesman for five years at the store of J.M. Philips.



The John Bennett House, 333 Willow

Bennett operated a grocery store, on his own, from 1867 until 1871 when he was elected county auditor. Ten years later, he was elected county treasurer. He also served as an alderman. In 1888 he became head cashier at State Savings Bank, of which he was an organizer. He held this position until his death in 1909.

He married Charlotte Dunning in Bentonsport, Iowa, in 1868. The Bennetts had two daughters, Georgia and Gertrude. Georgia was married to Louis Zurmuehlen, who was elected mayor in 1918 and served for three terms. Zurmuehlen worked in sales at Peregoy & Moore Company and operated a wholesale tobacco company of which Georgia, his wife, was president. Louis Zurmuehlen was killed in an auto accident in 1930 while on his way to a meeting in Des Moines with the mayor of Council Bluffs.

Gertrude was married to Frederic Empkie, of the Empkie-Shugart-Hill hardware company. John Bennett built the Queen Anne house next door at 216 Bluff Street for his daughter, Gertrude. The Empkies were also killed in an auto accident, on an icy road near Woodbine, seven months after the death of Louis Zurmuehlen.

The Mid-Victorian Italianate house is maintained in much of its original condition. The many notable features include an elaborate roof cornice with large flower button sided brackets and sawtooth design work, an intricate pattern of side set bricks, dentils on the bay window, an ornamental wood canopy above the frosted glass front doors, and an unusual flower and sawtooth design on the door and window lintels. Clover and sunburst cutout designs set off the wraparound porch with turned columns connected by wooden spindles. Three of the four stepped chimneys remain in the original condition. The turret on the east side is typical of the Victorian period. In its 133 years, only three families have lived in the Bennett House.

John Bennett's name is familiar today in Council Bluffs. The Bennett Building (aka the Ervin Building) at the corner of Fourth Street and Broadway, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was built in the 1920s and named for him after his death.

John and Rebecca Keller's son, Victor, was married to Mary Voorhis, daughter of Council Bluffs' first mayor, Cornelius Voorhis. Bennett and Keller and their extended families are buried in Fairview Cemetery.

Preserve Council Bluffs acknowledges the following sources of information for this series: National Register of Historic Places nominations, the reference department of the Council Bluffs Public Library, the auditor's office of the Pottawattamie County courthouse, homeowners, family members, individual research and, for this article, Patricia Murphy. Feel free to contact <u>Mary Lou McGinn</u>.

GNA General Meeting Minutes, March 21, 2015

Attendees: Cory Peters, Jeff Ketcham, Bob Rosser, Bud Dew, Adrienne McElderry, Steve & Chris Gorman, Patti Hannan, Cathy Hill, Abby Colburn (and her mother).

Guests: Mayor Matt Walsh and, briefly, Beverly-Melchor-Young, who dropped in to remind us to deliver the Rock Talk newsletter to the church.

The meeting came to order at 10:00 a.m. Attendees introduced themselves.

Association Business:

- 1. Mayor Matt Walsh was officially presented a GNA check for \$300 towards new holiday lights for Bayliss Park through Neighbor Works. This organization's purpose is facilitating neighborhood intercommunication as well as supporting neighborhood building. Cory will challenge other neighborhood associations to respond in kind. Donations must be submitted by early June, according to the Mayor.
- 2. Cory shared information about the Spring 2015 Residential Tree Program co-sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources and MidAmerican Energy Company. The Plant Some Shade movement enables citizens to purchase deciduous and ornamental trees (5-8 feet tall) or conifers (3-5 feet tall) for \$30 each. Maximum purchase is 2 trees per household. Cory will put out detailed information via Next Door site. Mayor Walsh reported that the city will begin to remove ash trees, which are being plagued by the ash bore. This will be a multiyear project as money is available. Patti Hannan reported that the Department of Natural Resources spoke to the Master Gardeners members to encourage citizens to only plant trees that are indigenous to our area to avoid similar problems in the future.
- **3.** This year's "Celebrate CB" parade is Saturday, May 16th. GNA will participate in some fashion, so anyone interested in joining the float/truck can let Cory know. The theme this year is "Picture Me in CB."
- **4.** A quick reminder was issued about the first quarter GNA Social event, a potluck at Bud and Suzie Dew's on Saturday 28th at 6:30 p.m. Beverages will be provided. People are asked to bring a dish to share.
- 5. Further discussion about Block Captains ensued. Points of discussion are as follows:
 - This allows us to keep up-to-date on new people coming into the neighborhood.
 - We could keep up on things going on in our area.
 - People throughout the association area would be asked to volunteer to take responsibility for their assigned areas. Patti Hannan made a point that contacting people <u>personally</u> might result in greater commitment/interest in serving. Our own Jeff Ketcham and Meka Tate from Habitat for Humanity have developed a neighborhood survey to gain information about neighbors. The idea was floated to include the survey in the newsletter. The Board will develop a method of survey collection at their next meeting.
- **6.** Cory reported that she has contacted Meka (Habitat for Humanity) about possible grant-writing training. Bob Rosser commented that a major obstacle to getting grants is the daunting amount of preparation work required contractor estimates, materials charts, etc. Each owner has had to do so much that few are willing to pursue that route. Mayor Walsh suggested that, rather than applying for single home grants, the neighborhood hire one contractor to work with us on <u>all</u> GNA projects. Once said contractor had all of the necessary data, the GNA could apply for one large grant that would cover multiple projects. Steve Gorman suggested that we begin with sidewalks in ill repair throughout the neighborhood. He already as aerial photos of the neighborhood and will identify and prioritize sidewalks based on condition. He will report at the next general meeting. Adrienne reported that her home improvements through the Community Development Corporation are set to begin.
- 7. Cory shared the update on our Free Little Library. The location on the corner of Clark and 5th Avenue is being considered by the owners of that property. The discussion moved to the empty lot offered by the Our Savior's Lutheran Church. The group wondered if there might be more traffic by that site than the Clark and 5th one.
- **8.** The final item of concern was the two white German shepherds on the NW corner of 5th Avenue and 3rd Street. Abby Colburn was reported to the group that she was accosted by them during a walk with her dog. The shepherds were extremely aggressive towards both her and her dog. Others reported similar issues with aggressive behavior as well. The consensus was to contact Animal Control with any concerns.

Amazing Customer Service in the GNA

By Bob Rosser

The GNA Spring Clean-up held on March 20, 2015 was a successful activity and service for Gibraltar residents and Habitat for Humanity. We were able to bring over five (5) truckloads of junk and useful donations for Habitat's Restore. Habitat held an Open House earlier in the day to show folks their newly-remodeled Restore facility. The building has been transformed into a cool space that was still in the preparation stages for opening the business, at which point they will have useful home items available for sale. Watch for future announcements when they officially open for business and check it out if you have a remodeling project in mind.

Habitat did a great job recruiting volunteers to streamline the unloading and separation of junk vs. recycled items, as well as donations. This truly was a Win/Win/Win effort for all parties involved as we were able to deliver some donations that folks could use, clean up for some neighbors yards, and have a great team building service exercise for GNA that we can build upon. It was amazing to see the variety of stuff we picked up and delivered, from electronics junk to unwanted furniture to yard waste, remodeling waste, and garage clutter. Folks really appreciated getting rid of stuff! We kept the unloading team from Habitat very busy!

Speaking of that team, I want to thank Gordon Hitchcock for letting us borrow his flatbed pick-up truck and Steve Gorman for helping with his truck and muscle. Our other fellow GNA crew clean-up team helpers included Bud Dew, Gary Lopez, Abby Jares and Turner Morgan. Many thanks to Cory for getting the pics taken and thank yous put out on Next Door so quickly. We will definitely look for more partnering opportunities to work with Habitat for Humanity and other organizations like them that can help benefit the Gibraltar neighborhood.



Page 8

If you didn't attend the 1st Quarter GNA Social, you missed a lot of fun!!

Come join us and get to know your neighbors! The next Social will be in JUNE—watch for more info.



GNA PET NEWS, by Jeff Ketcham



A holiday treat for our four-legged friends from newcomers to the neighborhood.

For anyone who's walked their pups in Gibraltar and found themselves at the corner of Bluff and Story, they may have found a lovely little gift waiting there.

Matt and Lori Walker moved into 329 Story St. back in December. Both are pet lovers, having owned a pet store themselves in the past, and have taken to leaving holiday-themed treats in the basket of a dog statue that sits on the corner of their retaining wall. A simple gesture, but one that's greatly appreciated.

Welcome to the neighborhood, Mr. and Mrs. Walker! And thank you for your warm gift to our four-legged friends. ■

Other GNA News

The Gibraltar Neighborhood Association stepped up to the plate and "put their money where their mouth is" by making a \$300 donation to the City's "Christmas Lights for Bayliss Park" fund.

As area residents noticed this past Christmas season, the decorations in Bayliss park were abysmal. The City is hoping to raise funds to build an energy-efficient stock of lights, and has already developed plans for installation that makes them less susceptible to vandalism and other downside factors. The photo below shows some of our GNA members giving the donation to Mayor Walsh.



DUES are (over)DUE!

If you want to be a voting member of the GNA, you must pay yearly dues, which are payable in January. We have some long-standing members who have not re-upped, and hope that is just an oversight! We would also like to see some NEW members join up! (You get one of the cool GNA garden flags as part of your membership!) If you were unable to attend one of the Spring meetings, please just mail your payment in using the form on the bottom of page 10 of the newsletter (the mailing address is included on the form). Your support enables us to fund future projects, social events, grants, etc.

We thank you for your support!

Your 2015 GNA Board:

Cory Peters, President 712-329-8526

Jeff Ketcham, Vice President 712-310-2031

> Bob Rosser, Treasurer 712-256-5708

Cathy B. Hill, Secretary 402-980-8177

Steve Gorman 712-256-8890



KEEP INFORMED!!

Share news, updates, inquiries, refer business people or services, get the latest GNA news and much more! It's FREE and it's only open to residents within the GNA boundaries!!

Register TODAY for GNA's "Nextdoor" social website: www.gibraltar.nextdoor.com.

Preserve the Wonderful History of C.B.!

Your Gibraltar Neighborhood is one of the *largest historical neighborhoods* in the city of Council Bluffs. If you appreciate that historical aspect, then you should know that the **Historical Society of Pottawattamie County** is a group of people with a common goal as stated in their Mission: "to preserve the past for current and future generations." The Historical Society has been instrumental in saving many of the historical sites in our county, and they are looking for new members who also seek to preserve our community's history. If you would like more information or might be interested in becoming a member, visit: www.thehistoricalsociety.org

Preserve Council Bluffs has a similar mission: "to preserve and restore historic sites in the city of Council Bluffs." This non-profit organization is active in preserving the history and culture in our community, and are responsible for saving the amazing Bregant House. They also organize and host amazing fund-raising dinners in historic homes, trolley tours, and historic homes/sites walking tours. To learn more about the great things that Preserve C.B. is involved in, or to become a member visit their website at: www.preservecouncilbluffs.org

Visit Gibraltar online: www.GibraltarNA.org

Newsletter copies furnished courtesy of Habitat for Humanity of Council Bluffs. **THANK YOU!**



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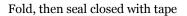
Name_	Email
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Become a Gibraltar Neighborhood Association Member!! Yearly dues are \$25 per household. In order to be eligible to vote for board candidates and other issues, you must be a paid association member. Make checks payable to and mail payment to:

HELP MAKE GIBRALTAR A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE!

PLEASE take a few moments to fill out this survey! Then fold in thirds, tape it shut, apply postage and mail.

1. A range of your head(s) of household: 18-24 years 25-34 years	7. What types of events would you attend or participate in if offered by Gibraltar?
35-44 years	
☐ 45-54 years ☐ 55-64 years	
65-74 years	
☐ 75 or older	
2. How many children (under age 18) are in your household:	8. What do you like most about the Gibraltar neighborhood?
5 or more	
☐ 3 to 4	
☐ 1 to 2	
☐ None	
3. How many neighbors do you know? ☐ All of them	9. What do you like least?
☐ Most of them	
About half of them	
A Few of them	
☐ None of them	
4. How strong is the "sense of community" in the Gibraltar neighborhood? ☐ Very strong	10. What changes would most improve the Gibraltar neighborhood?
☐ Moderately strong	
☐ Not at all strong	
E How often do you attend Cibralter meetings	
5. How often do you attend Gibraltar meetings and/or events and activities?	
☐ I attend most or all	
☐ I attend occasionally	
☐ I never attend	
6. If you do not attend any events or	11. Overall, what is your satisfaction level
meetings, why not?	with living in this neighborhood?
	☐ Extremely satisfied
	 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
	☐ Moderately dissatisfied
	Extremely dissatisfied



Place

Stamp

Here

Gibraltar Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 1971

Council Bluffs, IA 51502-1971