

ROCK-TALK

The Gibraltar Neighborhood Association, Inc. Newsletter



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Gibraltar Neighborhood Assn. Website!

Gibraltar Neighborhood Association has a new website! This site will be your up-to-date source for the latest happenings and neighborhood news. From meeting notifications to contact information for Board Members to photos from meetings and events, you'll find it online!

In the coming months, we hope to grow the site to be an interactive space where neighbors can share concerns, safety issues, news, and request input from other neighbors on topics like home remodeling, service provider recommendations, lawn care, and much more! We would appreciate your feedback and suggestions for website content—just contact the newsletter staff. Bookmark our site and visit often: www.GibraltarNA.org ■



Upcoming Dates to Remember

- Sept. 13, 7:00 p.m.
GNA general meeting
The Hannan house
207 5th Ave.
- THURSDAY evenings
Don't forget that the Main Street Farmer's Market runs from 5:00 to 8:00 at the corner of 9th & Main

Mark Your Calendar for Sept. GNA Meeting

Please make it a point to come to the bi-monthly meetings. We need your input, suggestions, experience *and help* in making our neighborhood a clean, safe, wonderful place to live!

The next member meeting is **September 13th at the home of Rich & Patti Hannan, 207 5th Ave., at 7:00 p.m.** Join us for a **Summer POTLUCK** meeting. The GNA will provide the main course, **so we need your RSVP by September 9th** if you'll be attending (we need to know how much food to order!). Please bring a side dish to share. We hope you can join us to discuss important issues that are impacting our neighborhood, and plans for the future.

Don't forget: member meetings take place on the second **Tuesday of every ODD-numbered month**, and the meeting locations have been moved to member's homes in order to provide a more friendly, interactive atmosphere. ■



Newsletter copies furnished courtesy of The Neighborhood Center.

Support our Neighborhood Businesses, by Paulette Brandt

The Sweet Shop is a recently-opened, family-run business located at 156 West Broadway. Owned by sisters Laura Mendoza and Julie Lamb, they launched their dream business in April of this year. They had worked together for about five years doing daycare and making cakes, etc. for friends and family, and decided it was time to spread their wings. “Starting work at 6:00 a.m. is just part of the fun,” says Laura. “We make our cupcakes and baked goods fresh from scratch, every day.”

The sisters grew up in Council Bluffs and knew this type of business was needed in the area.

The shop is open from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. They are closed Sunday and Monday.

They have specialty cupcakes (at least five flavors daily), cookies, homemade pies, candy and cheesecakes. They also have many types of special occasion cakes (which need to be ordered in advance). Also, if you are looking for a refreshing treat, stop in for a root beer float along with your cupcake! They do

have a facebook page, so you can check out the flavor of the day and any special offers. ■



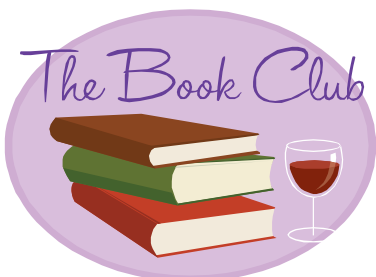
THANK YOU for Participating in Neighbors Night Out

About 20 neighbors met at the home of Paulette Brandt and David Eyre on August 2nd for the annual **Neighbors Night Out**. Informational flyers were distributed to the entire Gibraltar neighborhood the week before so all would be aware the event was coming.

The purpose of the “night out” event is to get to know your neighbors, to promote safety and a sense of community. With today’s busy schedules, many people living right next door to each other don’t know one another.

In conjunction with Omaha’s Neighborhood associations, we also collected cleaning supplies which will be donated to help local flood victims with clean up. These items were taken to the Salvation Army for distribution. We were amazed at how generous people were.

It was a warm evening with just a hint of a breeze, but well worth a little discomfort to enjoy the companionship of our neighbors. ■



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 assignment. We are currently reading Ernest Hemingway’s “**To Have and Have Not**,” and plan to get together in September to discuss the book. In the meantime, we’re all seeing the movie “The Help.” If you enjoy reading, contact Patti Hannan for more information at 323-8600. We’d love to see you at our next meeting! ■

Bayliss Park Fun!

Don't forget about the awesome resource we have just blocks from our doorsteps... Bayliss Park! All summer long, the Council Bluffs Art Council hosts **FREE** family events on Wednesdays and Fridays in the Park! On Wednesdays, from 6:30 to 8:00, pack your lawn chairs, blankets and snacks and **enjoy live music!** Or, on Fridays, starting at dusk, bring the family, friends and **enjoy a movie!** A listing of performing bands and movie titles can be found online at: www.bluffsarts.org/page8.asp



July General Meeting Minutes

The **July meeting of the GNA** was held at the home of Cory Peters. We were honored with a special guest, Sgt. Mark Gelvin of the PAR office of the Council Bluffs Police Dept. Sgt. Gelvin and his staff of officers work specifically with neighborhoods to form Neighborhood Watch groups.

He discussed with us how to form a calling tree, choose block captains and things to watch for. He also gave us numbers to call for assistance should we see something that may be of a criminal nature the neighborhood (Mark Alba: 329-1825 or Mark Gelvin: 329-18569). Above all he said, "Do not hesitate to call 911 should you feel threatened or think you see a threat in the neighborhood." It is the job of the Police Dept to protect us.

Other issues discussed were:

- Speeders on 5th Ave. He will try to get some manpower to watch for speeders.
- Vandalism at Kirn Park. Again, don't hesitate to call if you see anyone driving on the track or doing damage to the park.
- Suspicious looking people (not known to you) walking around the neighborhood.

He also left us a supply of the Neighborhood Watch placards you have seen in neighborhood windows. More are available and can be picked up at the next meeting or by calling Paulette Brandt at 328-7399.

We also decided to celebrate the **Night Out with Neighbors** on August 2nd by sending a flyer out to invite anyone interested to meet at the home of Paulette Brandt and David Eyre for refreshments and to gather donations of cleaning supplies to help the flood victims.

It was suggested that we might add a list of known contractors to the newsletter to assist those wishing to have repairs or improvements done. Angies List (website) was mentioned as a source of information.

The next meeting will be September 13th at Patti and Rich Hannan's home at 207 5th Ave. This will be a POT LUCK with GNA providing the main course and everyone else bringing side dishes and or desserts. **An R.S.V.P. is requested to Paulette 328-7399 so we can determine how much food to order.**

Meeting was adjourned and we enjoyed ourselves with the "finger food" everyone brought and the wonderful mint tea that Cory made. *Visit the GNA website to see photos from the meeting: www.GibraltarNA.org.* ■

Researching Your Home's History *Courtesy of Marge Leaders, Realtor*

If you own an older home, you've probably at some point wondered about its secret past. Exploring the history of your home can be fun, fascinating, and fulfilling. It can provide you with insight about the previous owners, neighborhood or community at large.

First step in compiling information about your house is to determine what era it was built. Look at the house in relation to the other buildings on the block. Are all the homes the same architectural style? How does your home relate to other homes in size and setback – are the lots equal or different sizes?

Examine the physical evidence. The building materials and construction methods used for your home contain many clues. Check out how your house was built and what type of building materials were used. Examine the walls and moldings. Look for original materials, such as the bricks of the fireplace. Housing design has changed dramatically over the years, and you may be able to find some clues as to when your home was built, what substantial changes it has endured, and how well off the original inhabitants were. If you don't know how old the house is, try looking under the water tank lid on the toilet. Toilets are usually date-stamped under the lid, giving you a rough estimate of when the house was built, since the toilet would presumably have been installed shortly after it was manufactured. You can also get a good idea of how long it has been since a room was remodeled. Different styles of kitchen cabinets and appliances, for example, go in and out of vogue every few years. **Keep in mind that the physical features reveal a lot, many hidden features have been uncovered in renovation processes.**

Official records should back up any guesstimate about construction dates and alterations, especially for a house built in the 1900s. Around the turn of the century, owners had to start getting permits for alterations, for plumbing, that sort of thing. Every state has a preservation officer who can guide a homeowner to the right resources: county archives, state preservation trusts, and most importantly, local city or town

historical societies. The latter will have the best catalogs of municipal information, including maps, local newspapers, and the genealogical information that reveals fascinating details about the people who lived their lives in your home.

Visit the Court House. Tax rolls in the Assessor's Office lists each person who owned your property, and the value of the property. Over the years, the value usually climbs at a steady pace. An abrupt increase often means that new construction occurred. The year your property became more valuable may be, in fact, the year your house was built on a previously empty lot. The Register of Deeds office can tract index or a grantor-grantee index for your house, listing all transactions involving your property. In addition to providing dates, these records will give you names of everyone who ever purchased the land your house is on.

Use the library to search through historical records and lists of addresses of previous owners. Research the history of your neighborhood. Neighborhood names as well as street signs change with the times. Sanborn fire insurance maps are a record of buildings between 1884-1950. Sanborn maps show the historic building footprint, accessory structures, lot lines, construction type, exterior cladding, streets and alleys. Sanborn maps are available online through the State Library of Iowa,

Research is addictive, however. You may not be able to resist scouting out nuggets of information buried in resources like these:

- Biographies of people who lived in your area
- Guidebooks of your town
- Local newspapers
- Census records
- City directories and phone books
- Academic papers
- Family bibles and genealogies
- Insurance records
- Wills and probate records
- City plans and feasibility studies

Neighborhood Watch

Hopefully you've noticed the green **Neighborhood Watch** signs posted on many area homes. At the last general meeting of the neighborhood association, we were honored with guest speaker Sgt. Mark Gelvin of the PAR unit of the Council Bluffs police force.



He came to speak with us about creating a neighborhood watch in our area. In order for this to be successful, we would like to ask for volunteers to be **BLOCK CAPTAINS**. **It is not a time consuming task.** It basically would involve a few phone calls to your neighbors if the need should arise. We would meet 2 times a year to discuss issues. If there was a crisis (missing child, missing pet, break-ins, etc.) you would be notified and would in turn notify your designated list of neighbors. Also, if you are at home during the day and see anything unusual, or anyone in your "block" sees anything unusual, you would be asked to call the designated captain coordinator. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Paulette Brandt at 328-7399 or Liz Matis at 323-6400. We need **YOU** to help make a difference for our improved neighborhood safety!



Sgt. Mark Gelvin spoke at our July GNA meeting on the value of having a neighborhood watch in place.

Get to Know Your Neighbors: Bud & Susie Dew, by Cory Peters

Bud and Susie Dew moved into their unique home at 527 Clark Avenue in October of 2010, and right from the start have been active members in contributing to Gibraltar. Susie is currently serving as GNA's Vice President. Bud is our Association's representative to the Downtown Neighborhood Alliance.

Both Council Bluffs natives, they previously lived on Valley View and were planning to stay in that area when the Clark house came up for sale. Just wanting to "take a look," they fell in love with the place, put in a bid, and before you know it become our neighbors.

Their house, while appearing deceptively small from the street, is a wondrous amalgamation resulting from the combining of two formerly separate houses into one. It contains a large number of cozy rooms, with a big, bright sun room, a spacious kitchen, beautiful hardwood floors, and a private patio and deck. Sadly, Susie says the paperwork containing the property's history is missing, so they aren't quite sure when or how the two properties were combined. They are attempting to piece together as much of the story as they can by talking to neighborhood residents, so if you have any knowledge of the house(s) and the various renovation stages, please be sure to share it with them!

Bud and Susie have three sons. The oldest, Joe, lives in the west end. Jordan and Jacob, both in their early

20s, are living at home for the time being. Their family also includes a feisty nine year old Jack Russell Terrier named Maggie.

Susie has worked for Metropolitan Utilities District for 18 years in the department that distributes energy assistance dollars to needy families. Bud has been with Black Hills Energy for over 20 years. He is a storekeeper at the main warehouse which ships to the four states they service.

In their free time both enjoy gardening and plant shopping. Bud told me that much of the work that's been done so far since they've moved in has been removing old shrubs and trees from the front of the property and doing a lot of planting and sprucing things up to dress up the "curb appeal" of the house.

They also enjoy going out to dinner on a regular basis with four other couples they got to know through the soccer program that their kids'

played in. Even though the kids are no longer in the program, they still enjoy getting together, and each time they pick a different place to eat, ranging from local eateries to road trips to Atlantic, Anita, and just about everywhere else in the area!

I asked Bud and Susie if they thought this would be their "forever home," or if they had plans for retirement that would take them elsewhere. They both smiled and said, "We love this house. We plan to be here for a long, long time."

If you have a chance to meet Susie and Bud, please introduce yourselves. They have a great sense of humor and are so easy to talk with. More importantly, they are anxious to meet more of their neighbors! Thank you Susie and Bud for welcoming me into your lovely home! ■



The Value of Owning a Home in a Historic Neighborhood



The last several months, your GNA has been in the process of creating a brochure that will eventually be made available to all of the real estate agencies in the area. It ad-

addresses the important topic of “what to know before purchasing a home in a historic neighborhood.”

The brochure will discuss what it means to purchase a home in a historic neighborhood, and the steps the neighborhood had to take to meet the requirements for the historic designation.

Ultimately, choosing to live in a historic neighborhood is one way of preserving a heritage that is quickly disappearing in America. ■

Keeping the Integrity of Neighborhoods

With people on the move and homes for sale on a regular basis, you have likely thought about the importance of good neighbors. If you know of a home for sale in your neighborhood, pass along the information to friends or others you know who might be a good fit for the home! By encouraging people we know to move into our neighborhood, our alliances with each other are strengthened, and thus improves our safety, communication, property upkeep, etc.

A property that come to mind immediately is **208 Turley** -- a charming home in need of some TLC. It is in a great location with off street parking, and is reasonably priced. So even if you are not interested, you may know someone at work or church that is looking and had not considered living in this historic area. Have them come take a look! If there’s a “for sale” home on your street, let us know - we’ll get the word out in the newsletter! ■

Security Camera Purchased for Kirn Park, but More \$\$ Needed

We are excited to announce that the Pottawatomie County Community Foundation has just awarded our neighborhood association a grant of \$5,000 to help purchase a **permanent security camera for Kirn Park**. The camera will be ordered shortly and will be installed by the Parks Department as soon as it is received. The days of unchecked vandalism at our Park will soon be a thing of the past.

Both the Gibraltar and Fairmount neighborhood associations worked together on obtaining this grant. We are now looking to neighborhood mem-

bers for donations or monetary pledges to help cover the additional cost for this expensive equipment (the

\$5,000 grant will cover most, but not all, of the cost). Even if it’s just \$10, your contribution will help ensure that our wonderful park remains beautiful for all to use. This is a wonderful example of folks banding together for the public good. Contact Paulette Brandt to make a donation. ■



GNA: Our Past, Present and Future, by Liz Matis

To prepare of GNA's future, we must know our past!

This edition will begin our journey into the past of our area. We will begin by going back to the early 1700s of Council Bluffs, when the Fur Traders were plying the Missouri River waters and establishing hinterland trading posts well north of St. Louis. So let's begin the journey together!

Steamboats brought the American Military to the Council Bluffs area in 1839, where they erected a fort, or "Block House," as part of the Indian removal effort (this site is marked on Pierce St. today). It was meant to protect the Pottawatomie Indians who occupied the region from the 1830s to 1846, when the Federal government moved them to Kansas.

During the 1840s, the Mormons established a settlement along what is now East Broadway, and established a business area at Broadway and First. The settlement was called Kanessville, and it profited by outfitting miners heading for the California Gold Rush. By 1853, most of the Mormons had departed for Utah and the local post office's name was officially changed to Council Bluffs. That year was also important when the town was incorporated and designated Pottawattamie County, and the Federal government opened an office to sell land. One of the first residents was suffragette Amelia Bloomer, who arrived in 1856 with her lawyer husband, Dexter. The Bloomers moved into a wood frame house (nonexistent now) on 4th Street, just outside the Willow/Bluff/3rd St. residential district, where she lived until she died in the 1890s.

Throughout the 1860s, before the railroad, Council Bluffs served mainly as an outfitting stop for settlers moving west. By 1869, new businesses boomed and trains arrived in the city from the East. The Missouri River was the only barrier along the entire route of the Transcontinental Railroad. The water was bridged in 1872, with the construction of the Union

Pacific's first bridge at Council Bluffs. By the 1880s, local businesses included three stockyards, three packing plants, three flour mills, three music halls, one opera house, 26 physicians, 28 law firms, a cigar factory, a greenhouse and 30 saloons. The south of downtown became known as the Implement District due to the number of manufacturing companies producing the equipment.

During the early 20th century, to the north of downtown at 211 West Broadway, the Woodward Fine Candy factory grew into the largest candy company west of the Mississippi River, employing almost 700 people, with goods distributed in 36 states. Aggressive growth in the business district continued up to the Great Depression of the 1930s. (Note: much of the history of our area was presented in the application for our designation as a Historic District.)

In our next edition of Rock Talk we will explore the residents and the residential area of Willow/Bluff/3rd Street. This area prospered during this period of local growth. Eighty-three percent of the houses in our area were constructed during the period from 1890 to 1928.

We will explore the residents and their occupations, how the city grew between 1870 to 1900, and how it began to expand its original boundaries. We'll also explore how the area we live in now grew, and how those residents helped grow it into what we are today! **See you all next time to continue our journey!** ■



(L): Woodward Candy Factory employees on the loading dock, early 20th century. (Above): Woodward Candy delivery wagon in 1910.

Your Newsletter Staff

Cory Peters

712-329-8526

Paulette Brandt

712-328-7399

Liz Matis

712-323-6400

We welcome your input!

Please contact us with suggestions on content you want to see covered. ■

Visit us online:

www.GibraltarNA.org

Your GNA Board:

Paulette Brandt, President

712-329-7399

Susie Dew, Vice President

712-366-7606

Liz Matis, Secretary

712-323-6400

Mary Madison, Treasurer

712-328-8073

Pam Bogardus

712-322-2214

Steve Gorman

712-256-8890

Sheila Graham

712-256-0195

Marge Leaders

712-322-3366

Roland Lynch

712-323-0522

GNA Board Minutes: Aug. 15, 2011

Members present: Steve Gorman, Bud & Susie Dew, Paulette Brandt, Mary Madison and Liz Matis.

Mary shared a thank you note from Chad Primmer and family. They just recently purchased the Girl Scout House on So. 3rd Street, and our welcoming committee sent them a welcome gift. They are looking forward to becoming active members in the GNA as soon as they are settled in.

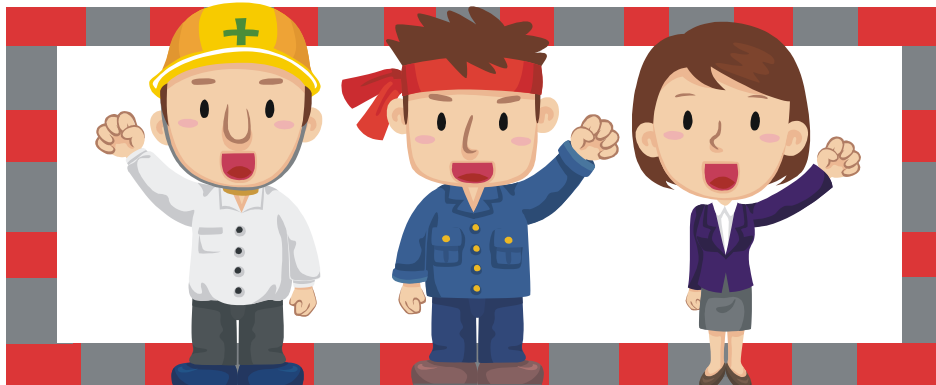
The Board has been looking into the possibility of selling ads in our newsletter to business in our area to raise funds.

Block Captains will be assigned for each section of our Neighborhood Watch areas. This will make it easier to get information out faster.

The Garden Club is looking towards an active Fall. The flooding, heat and other things during the Summer took time away from the members.

More exciting ideas were discussed for GNA activities and fundraisers. The Board will keep members posted as information becomes available.

Have a Safe & Happy Labor Day!



Gibraltar Neighborhood Association: Membership Registration Form

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

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:

Gibraltar Neighborhood Association ■ P.O. Box 1971 ■ Council Bluffs, IA 51502-1971