

WEST DES MOINES HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



**WEST DES MOINES
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Preserving the past for the future.



FALL/WINTER ISSUE

NOVEMBER 2013

President's Comments

Dear Friends,

I write to you as our fall colors blaze in reds, yellows, and browns, and yet snow is forecast for northern Iowa later today! Your West Des Moines Historical Society has been busy building new capacity during 2013. We are embarking on a major fundraising initiative to raise our organization's profile, rebuild capacity, and provide funds for much needed repairs to the exterior of the Jordan House and the Bennett School.

In support of this effort, last month we launched a \$250,000 Community Enrichment Initiative with a hosted event at the Stine Hospitality Barn, courtesy of Harry and Molly Stine. On a beautiful, warm mid-October afternoon, we had about 100 guests including West Des Moines Historical Society members and volunteers, elected officials, and local area residents and business leaders interested in learning more about the work of the Society. Pat Berkley Jordan from Minnesota, Bob Jordan from Cedar Falls, and his daughter, Jenna DeRoos, and her daughter Jordan, from Urbandale were special guests--three generations of Jordan family members!

We also had special guests Debbie Dean and two Valley High School students, Abby Edgar and Natalie Dean, who were part of the Hyperstream club that produced a 5-minute video, telling the inspiring story of early West Des Moines settler, James C. Jordan. Our program also included the viewing of a 9-minute Community Enrichment video produced by Three Razors Media, which the Society produced to help raise awareness for our cultural and historic activities. The YouTube links for these two videos can be found on our website, www.wdmhistoricalsociety.org. If you haven't seen either video, please spend a few minutes viewing them and share them with others who you think might be interested in learning more about the Society. They provide a helpful context for the Community Enrichment Initiative and why we believe our education-oriented mission is worth supporting.

Finally, I wanted to bring you up-to-date on our membership development efforts. We began the year with 85 memberships and a goal of getting to 300 by year end. With your help, we can get there! As of September 30th, we are at 172. Membership levels range from \$10 for student/seniors to \$1,000 for benefactors. Individuals, foundations, and corporations are eligible to join, too. We are also looking for major support-

ers. These levels range from Trailblazer at \$500 to Legacy at \$10,000. Every little bit of support helps us move toward a sustainable base of support -- approximately \$125,000--which the Society will use to continue to deliver our high-quality educational programming to area schools, local residents, and out-of-town guests.

In a typical year, more than 1,500 school children from 40 schools visit our two Society properties, which feature early Iowa history from 1850-1945. With adequate funding we can expand our educational programming and our reach to more central Iowa schools. We also draw about 1,000 members from the general public each year, with visitors coming from around the Midwest, places like Omaha, Minneapolis, and Kansas City. With your support, we'd like to grow our visitor numbers while we add new special events, like seasonal music and theatre, and other opportunities to experience the properties throughout the year.

Whether you donate cash, volunteer time, or contribute in-kind services (hint: we are looking for lawn and gutter care and window cleaning services), we appreciate your contributions to the Society. Your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

If you have suggestions for improving our operations, building our membership, or expanding our programming, I can be reached at john@tblventures.com. Thank you, again, for taking time to review our newsletter and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

John Norwood
President, West Des Moines Historical Society



Stine Hospitality Barn, West Des Moines

2013 Events by Mary Sheldahl

This year, the West Des Moines Historical Society was busy with many fun events!!

To kick off the event season, an Ice Cream Social was held in conjunction with the Historic Valley Junction Spring Art Market. Children's activities, tours of the Jordan House, entertainment by singer-songwriter Lily DeTaeye, and (of course!) ice cream were featured during this fun event.



Children playing at the Spring Ice Cream Social



Historical Society float at Independence Day Parade

Sunday, July 14, found the Historical Society partnering with Iowa Shakespeare Experience for a second year of Shakespeare on our Lawn at historic Jordan House. This year's attendees enjoyed a performance of Shakespeare Shorts, a family friendly sneak peak of Othello. It was a lovely summer evening for sitting under our trees and enjoying the performance of the actors.



Shakespeare on our Lawn



Dracula by Iowa Shakespeare Experience

It was a dark and cloudy night October 30th as guests arrived at the Jordan House for the evening's performance of Cabaret Macabre – Day of the Dead Show. We partnered with The Iowa Shakespeare Experience for 6 performances of this show from October 19th to November 1st. Our historic Jordan House was turned into the perfect setting for Dracula, and the audience filled our parlor for an “up close and personal” intimate performance. Readings of Poe were held during intermission to add to the intrigue of the evening.

To complete the events this year, be sure to visit us during the Christmas Time at the Jordan House and Bennett School events!

2013 Corporate Partners



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**Todd Hanson
Graphic Design**

Volunteers

The West Des Moines Historical Society relies on volunteer support to help execute our mission to educate, to preserve, and to promote the heritage and history of West Des Moines. Without volunteer help, many of our needs would go unmet. We would like to thank the following volunteers for their dedication in 2013: West Des Moines Historical Society Board of Directors, Ann and Don Beeson, Wynanda Ferguson, Louise Gately, Elvin McDonald, Kathy Meyer, Jane Reitz, Penny Schiltz, Bob and Megan Volp, Carmen Wade, Dorothy Wilson, Wendy Zohrer, the Newcomers Compass Club of Greater Des Moines, Iowa, and the Drake Historical Society.

2013 Members

Thank you to our generous donors! To become a member, or to renew your membership, please complete the remittance envelope enclosed with your newsletter. If you have questions, please call us at 515-277-6652.

PATRON \$500+

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*Represents donors who gave between January 1, 2013 - November 1, 2013



Thank you for your support!

West Des Moines Historical Society is a privately funded nonprofit institution that relies on the generosity of its friends and supporters to meet the enormous cost of providing unique and valuable exhibits, programs, and events. Your continued support throughout the years has helped the Historical Society conserve and convey our local history.

Please consider supporting the West Des Moines Historical Society in two ways:
-Your financial support is necessary and vital for our organization.
-Your time and talent as a volunteer is just as necessary and vital.

Membership Form

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City/State _____

New Member

Renewal

Membership Level

Senior & Student - \$10 Friend - \$25 Supporter - \$50 Contributor - \$100

Sustainer - \$250 Patron - \$500 Benefactor - \$1,000 Other \$ _____

I am interested in volunteering in the following capacities:

West Des Moines History/Archives Jordan House/Bennett School Guide

Promotions/Marketing Support Office Support Facilities/Maintenance support

Research/Archives Assistant Special Events General Volunteer

Please make checks payable to:
West Des Moines Historical Society
PO Box 65563
West Des Moines, IA 50265



Historic Jordan House
2001 Fuller Road
West Des Moines, IA 50265

Holiday Time at the Jordan House

Sunday, December 1 & Sunday, December 8
1:00-4:00 PM with guided tours at 1:00 and 2:00
Price: Adults, \$5; Children under 12, \$3

The West Des Moines Historical Society invites you to visit the Historic Jordan House for our Holiday Open Houses. Come for cider, entertainment and a tour of the circa 1850 Jordan House. The Jordan House, a stately Victorian home of Italianate Gothic design, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Jordan House is also a member of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.

For more information, visit www.wdmhistoricalsociety.org or call 277-6652.
A members-only Open House will take place from 4:30-6 pm on December 8.

Holiday Time at the Bennett School

Saturday, December 7
9:00-11:00 AM and 1:00-3:00 PM
Price: \$5 per child, FREE for parents!

Join us for a family-friendly experience at the Historic Bennett School for our holiday activities. Families will enjoy making ornaments, decorating holiday desserts, and other activities. Activities are appropriate for children ages 4 - 9. The Bennett School, built in 1926 or 1927, was one of the last one room schools to be built in West Des Moines and was in use until at least 1941.



Historic Bennett School
4001 Fuller Road
West Des Moines, IA 50265

For more information, visit www.wdmhistoricalsociety.org or call 277-6652.

West Des Moines Historical Society Tours

Jordan House Tour Times

Every Friday: 11:00 am & 4:00 pm
First Sunday of each month: 1:00 pm & 2:00 pm

Bennett School Tour Times & Prices

Private tours may be scheduled for groups of eight or more by calling 515-277-6652

Private tours, breakfast groups, and evening group receptions may also be scheduled for groups of eight or more by calling 515-277-6652.

Private Tours: \$5 per person (minimum of \$40)

Jordan House Tour Prices

Every Friday and First Sunday tours

Adults 13+: \$5.00

Children 6 - 12: \$3.00

Children 0 - 5: FREE

Private Tours: \$5 per person (minimum of \$40)

Breakfast Groups (Bring your own food & drink): \$100 + \$5 per person (up to 20)

Evening Group Receptions (option to bring wine & cheese): \$100 + \$5 per person (up to 35)



Jordan House Tour conducted by Louise Gately



Jingle in the Junction

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The mission of the Society is to educate, to preserve, and to promote the heritage and history of West Des Moines.

Preserving the past for the future.
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West Des Moines Historical Society
PO Box 65563
West Des Moines, IA 50265

Meet the Staff

This summer, the West Des Moines Historical Society hired Katie Getting as our Project Manager. Katie, originally from Sheldon, Iowa, is a graduate of Drake University where she majored in History. She started working with the West Des Moines Historical Society in May as a summer intern, and was hired full-time in September. Her duties with the West Des Moines Historical Society include event planning and preparation, tour development and delivery, marketing communications and membership development, and administration.

Katie says her favorite part about working with the West Des Moines Historical Society “has been meeting all the people involved and hearing their stories and learning from them. There are so many wonderful people that have dedicated countless hours to the Society and seeing that and building relationships with those people is definitely my favorite part of working here.”

Please join us in welcoming Katie to the West Des Moines Historical Society!

