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Days Parade  
&  
North Bowl Fair  
May 14, 2016

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# FLORENCE DAYS

The Florence Historical Foundation Presents

*A Salute to Taste of Florence!*

## *A Salute to Taste of Florence!*

### Grand Marshall Harold's Koffee House Roots Began Before WWII, Offers a Taste of Florence Today *by Joan John*

Sometime leading up to World War II, a slim, witty, former army clerk named Harold Halstead worked at a local shoe store where he met a heckuva woman named Pauline Palmer who worked at the federal land bank as a legal secretary. Pauline was too "darling" for Harold to resist marrying before being sent off to the war. Once Harold returned from the war, he began working for The Harkert's Hamburgers chain of diners and discovered his love for the restaurant business. When Harkert's went out of business, he joined up with two fellow business men to form the Koffee House Systems of diners. With Pauline in command of the books and a knack for knowing which homemade meals and desserts were a hit with the crowds, Koffee Houses began their reign along busy Omaha streets such as Dodge, Locust, Leavenworth and Ames Street.

After several years, the trio decided to split up. Confident in what he knew best, Harold chose to open his very own café at 8505 North 30th street in Florence. The established and now popular misspelling of the word "koffee" was a namesake that Harold decided to keep.

Little did Harold and Pauline know that what started out as a successful business venture, became a uniquely blessed lifestyle for his own family and would touch the lives of so many people in the community. Their oldest son John, followed in his father's footsteps and began cooking at the age of 14. Soon after, their 2nd son Tom joined the ranks by washing dishes and their four daughters (Judy, Nancy, Susie and Beth) rounded out the employee roster as wait staff, cashiers and table bussers. Harold expanded his business by acquiring two truck stops in western Nebraska. After a period of about six years, Harold made the decision to release the two businesses in western Nebraska and focus on his family and the café in Florence.

In 1968, Harold moved "The Koffee House" to the corner of 30th and State Streets, added his name, stuck up an orange "FOOD" sign and Harold's Koffee House has made history ever since. Harold's daughter, Nancy, manages her Dad's place now.

The atmosphere is exactly what you want in a diner. Sit at a booth or take a seat at one of the stools at the counter. This neighborhood cafe won't dazzle you with garnished plates, they are simply very good at what they do: friendly service and tasty food.



*The established and now popular misspelling of "koffee" was a name that Harold kept.*



*Friends and Family in front of the Koffee House in the 1960s.*

Breakfast is served all day at Harold's. One of the favorites for breakfast is made from Harold's signature hash browns, the Susie Special (an original dish created by Harold) with seasoned hash browns and diced onions scrambled with two eggs and folded together on the grill. Comes with biscuit, toast or pancake.

A favorite for lunch is Matt's Meatloaf Mountain, a dish introduced by Nancy's son Matthew. It's a double helping of Harold's homemade meatloaf stacked between Rotella bread and topped with mashed potatoes with gravy poured over the "summit" and seasoned green beans on top. It's everything you want in a lunchtime special!! But nothing can beat Harold's wonderfully seasoned hand-pattied Harold's Baconburger. All of our burgers are seasoned with a salt mixture that Harold created himself!

Pies are made fresh every morning from the same recipes that Harold used in his diners back in the 50's. You can still taste the same love and dedication in each and every pie today. When

Nancy was asked the secret of the pies, she said, "Pie secrets will not be told. Suffice it to say the recipes came from a wonderful friend of the Halstead family. Marie Ellis was employed as the baker way back when we first started. She allowed us to keep her recipes when she retired. What a blessing she was!"

Select a slice from their pie case or call ahead to order a whole pie for any occasion. And/or be sure to try a gooey pecan roll, "cinnamommy" cinnamon roll or one of the best homemade donuts in Omaha. If you're eating breakfast or lunch, be sure to get there early and order dessert along with your meal because they may be sold out of the sweet treat you have your heart set on if you don't.

Harold's was the location for a part of a movie written by Alexander Payne, "About Schmidt" with actor Jack Nicholson. Nancy was asked to suit up in a waitress uniform and appear as an extra in the movie. The cast and crew spent all day at the restaurant which was closed for the day ... although a few customers actually showed up for their morning ritual of coffee and newspaper and had to be told the place was closed for the day!!!

According to Nancy, Harold's wait staff is absolutely the best there is! Longest serving waitress to date is Pam, about 25 years. She is the resident holiday gal. Pam has a costume for every occasion and, of course, Nebraska red if it's football season. Heather, the next longest serving at 16 years, is fast and friendly. She could handle the whole place by herself!! Nancy adds that Yvonne, who has been with them about 13 years, has the biggest smile in Florence! Lisa, a transplant from Florida, fits right in but doesn't like the cold weather.

One of the most interesting customers in the cast of customers is a guy who frequents Harold's. Nancy says they call him "Don Juan." He loves to challenge the kitchen with requests for multi-level and very unique sandwiches and burgers, usually at least 5 layers and toppings of various types. The kitchen can handle it because Don compliments the cooks and the girls for pleasing his pallet.

If you haven't been to Harold's, "What are you waiting for?" If you have, "See you next time!! ❖"

**HAROLD'S OPEN 7 DAYS**  
MO 7am - 2pm  
TU thru FR 6am - 3pm  
SA 6am - 2pm  
SU 7:30am - 1pm (Breakfast Only)

# Letter from the FHF President

Dear Friends of Florence,

We are excited this year for our annual Florence Day parade saluting our local restaurants in "A Taste of Florence". We invite everyone to try our many new places and look forward to some new additions to the area.

The Florence Historical Foundation continues to work hard to preserve the history and educate the community and our visitors about our small town of Florence. Don't forget that the Florence Depot and the Florence Bank are open every weekend during the summer months.

I hope you all make a point to come out and show your support for the annual parade during Florence Days. Make sure you check out all the activities along the parade route, many are listed in this newspaper. Our Florentine Players will be performing their annual Melodrama this week too so get your tickets early. Last year's show was sold out every night.

The Foundation is constantly at work trying to keep up with the maintenance of all our Historic Sites. This is where our friends and members come into play. Your membership dollars help us preserve our Historic Florence and are tax deductible for the 2016 tax year.

Please consider sending your support again this year if you have not already done so to help continue our efforts.

Enjoy Florence Days!

*Lynn L. Farris, Jr.*

President, Florence Historical Foundation

## A Taste of Florence from A to Z (Restaurants in Florence, Ponca Hills & Minne Lusa)

by Joan John

Whether you want a quick meal or a unique dining experience, you can find it in the charming Ponca Hills-Florence-Minne Lusa neighborhood areas north and south of the Mormon Bridge. Take your pick from typical fast food to coffee houses to elegant in-house dining. Independent locally-owned restaurants feature a plethora of foods to satisfy the most discriminating taste buds, including Fried



Mark Your Calendars Now!

1-5pm | Sept 11, 2016

## FIRST ANNUAL "TASTE OF FLORENCE"

by Mark Kresl, Midwest Geriatrics Fund Development Manager, Taste of Florence Coordinator

Join your neighbors and local businesses for the "First Annual Taste of Florence" celebration. We will showcase some of the best dining in Omaha on a fun-filled Sunday afternoon. Sample food from the finest restaurants in the area and visit with local businesses and groups. All ages are welcome. There will be a special "Kid Zone" with fun activities for our younger guests.

Do you know what the best-kept secret in Omaha is? That's right. Florence. Florence boasts three of the top restaurants in Omaha (Omaha World-Herald). We have so many great restaurants in our neighborhood that it's time we share our secret with the rest of the city. But Florence is so much more, you say. Yes it is! That's why all Florence businesses are invited to showcase their goods and services to all our guests.

We have some very special things planned for that day that include honoring Omaha first responders on this, the 15th anniversary of 9-11. We also have some very fun entertainment and activities for you to enjoy.

Florence Days 2016 is honoring our great restaurants with the Taste of Florence theme. We are joining in by inviting the rest of our city to come to Florence and taste the best food in town. Tickets are just \$15 for adults and \$7.50 for kids 12 and under. All the food and soft drinks and bottled water are included. ❖

TO PARTICIPATE or VOLUNTEER

Contact Mark Kresl  
Florence Home Healthcare  
402-827-6051  
mkresl@shf.org

Visit [TasteofFlorence.net](http://TasteofFlorence.net) for more details.

Chicken, Diner Foods, Chinese, Southern/Cajun, Comfort Foods, Italian, Barbecue and American. The following is a list of many wonderful choices:

**ALPINE INN** at 10405 Calhoun Road is where to go if you're looking for somewhere fun and different. If you love gizzards and/or wings, this is your place. All are cooked to order. Added amenities include the entertainment of watching raccoons and feral cats eating leftover chicken bones through huge picture windows. Go at night to see the wildlife. For more information, call 402-451-9988.

**BURGER KING** at 7606 North 30th "Flame-grilled burgers!" Cheap fast food, including chicken, salads, fries and more. 402-457-4442

**CABIN BAR & GRILL** at 9226 Mormon Bridge Road. Owner Bruce Bessey has been providing the Omaha area since 2007 with a wide menu and a comfortable cozy atmosphere. Their kitchen is open all day everyday with the longest happy hour in town from 11 am to 6 pm Monday thru Friday. Signature dishes include Chicken

*A Taste of Florence from A to Z continued on page 3.*

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- James Beard (1903-1985)

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# In Spirit of Danish Folk Schools, UCHA Combines All Human Aspects to Learn

by Kara Anand-Gall

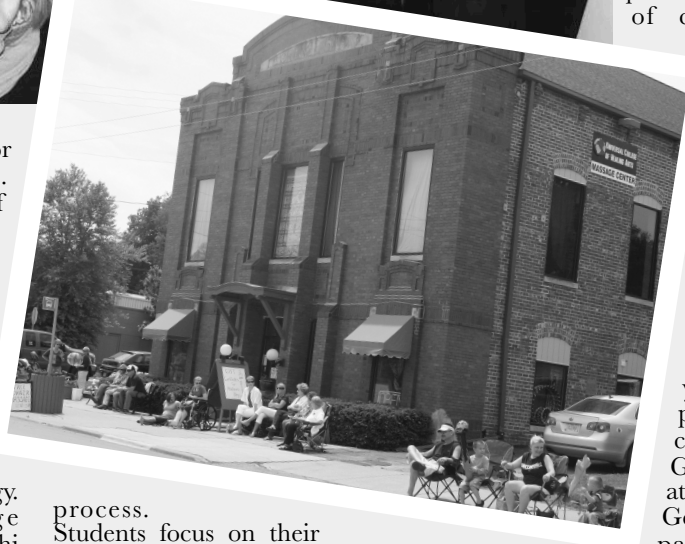
It is noon on a bright Saturday in May. Inside a brick building on the corner of 30th and Clay – home to the Universal College of Healing Arts (UCHA) – students lay out a spread of delicious fresh vegetables and organic meats. “It’s Big Burrito Day – my favorite!” says a student in UCHA’s state-approved, ABHES Accredited Massage Therapy Program. The sound of friendly banter and laughter fills the bright kitchen, echoing through the gymnasium where the students share meals together. Some are talking about their wellness goals. Others discuss new massage techniques. Instructors sit scattered among them, partners in the shared ideas, food, and laughter.



This is exactly the kind of learning environment UCHA’s founders were aiming for when they created the school in 1995. “UCHA was founded in the spirit of Danish folk schools, where students learn by eating, working, and playing together,” says Paulette Genthon, President. “Even though they are not in class right now, they are still actively engaged in learning.”

Lunch is over; students head back to classrooms where they receive extensive training in Anatomy, Pathology, and Kinesiology. They study various massage techniques. They practice yoga, chi gong, tai chi, and meditation. They learn basics of running a small business. “People think that I’m just learning about the body,” says a student. “But it’s so much more holistic. We learn about the whole person, how mind, body, and spirit interact.”

U C H A intentionally strives for whole-person learning. “Research shows that learning, thought, creativity, and intelligence are not processes of the brain alone, but of the whole body,” says Genthon, who holds a Master’s degree in Adult Education. “There is a combination of intellect, emotion, spirit, and body in their learning



process. Students focus on their hearts, and listen to their intuitive qualities. They learn from their touch. They become healthier, more self-aware. They take charge of their lives.”

Students are mature, diverse, and

*“There’s no way I could have pursued this diploma if it wasn’t a blended program.”*

passionate. One student recently turned 70. “I wanted to develop a new skill to be useful during my retirement.” Students come from Omaha, across Nebraska, other states and countries.

The Massage program involves monthly on-site intensive weekends

enhanced with an interactive online format during the week. “I really appreciate the flexible classroom hours,” says another student. “I work traditional hours. There’s no way I could have pursued this diploma if it wasn’t a blended program.” The Hellerwork Program consists of (six) 16 day intensives, also enhanced with an online format.

Community is at the heart of everything UCHA does. “Even before our students graduate, they make a difference in their communities,” says Julie Lesser, Community Service Director. “Students have provided over 20,000 hours of community service through hospice, nursing homes, schools, and non-profit events.” Those hours have big effects: stress relief to military families and others, weight gains in premature babies, comfort to the dying, self-esteem through good posture to youth. “They bring peace to our communities,” says Genthon, “one person at a time.”

Genthon is particularly passionate about the Florence Community. “We found our new home in Florence in 2005, and the community has been extremely supportive. We are proud to contribute to the health and wellness of Florence.” Located at 8702 North 30th Street, the UCHA campus includes the school building, a campus cottage, and a community garden.

Consider joining UCHA in Massage Therapy or Hellerwork Structural Integration Program.

Or just come to receive massage or bodywork at the UCHA clinic. Call 402-556-4456.

For more information, visit UCHA.EDU. ❖

## Taste of history.

Florence is the oldest city in Nebraska and the home to some of the most historic sites in Omaha.



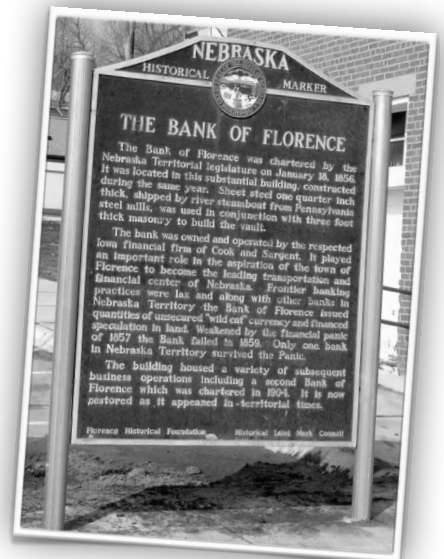
### The Bank of Florence

Established in 1856, The Bank of Florence is the oldest bank in the state of Nebraska.

Currently a museum, the bank is open for tours 11am-3pm on Saturdays and Sundays from mid-May thru August 31.

**Call 402-453-4462**

to schedule a private group tour.



## Two Historic Museums Open on Parade Day

Open every Saturday and Sunday Starting Parade Day | May 14, 2016

**BANK OF FLORENCE MUSEUM**

8502 N. 30th St. | SA & SU 11am-3pm

**FLORENCE TRAIN DEPOT MUSEUM**

29th & Dick Collins Rd. | SA & SU 11am-3pm



### Florence Train Depot Museum

After loving care and extensive repair, this quaint building stands proudly as a charming relic of bygone days. Visit the Florence Train Depot Museum from 11am-3pm on Saturdays and Sundays beginning on Parade Day!

Omaha with rave reviews for their Eggrolls, Chicken Fried Rice, Mongolian Beef, General’s Chicken and Hot Glazed Shrimp, just a few to mention. Portions are generous and prices are very reasonable. Dine in or take out. For more information call 402-455-8800.

**ENZO’S ITALIAN** at 8510 North 30 is proud to serve traditional Italian foods and pizzas with homemade pastas, doughs, sauces and breads with only the freshest and highest quality ingredients. Everything is made from scratch. Among appetizers are oysters Rockefeller, calamari, crab cakes and eggplant rollatini. Chef Enzo Zurlo has altered several items on the menu to accommodate gluten and dairy free diners. Call 402-933-9755.

**FAT BBQ SHACK** at 7440 North 30th had humble beginnings in a food truck in North Omaha in 2013 and

gained a reputation for the best barbecue in Omaha. In 2015 they won an award for having the best smoked brisket in Omaha. Shortly thereafter, they moved into a brick and mortar building in Weber Place. Along with Fat BBQ Shack’s award-winning smoked brisket, they are known for their smoked ribs, pulled pork and burnt ends, to name a few of their menu items. In addition to smoked meats, the Shack also offers sides such as collard greens, black-eyed peas, fries, chips and more. Their homemade desserts include fried pies. Owner Cary Dunn is expanding to add wood fire brick oven pizza with homemade crust and sauces. The new space will include an all-natural deli, homemade soups and organic salads. Fat BBQ Shack will also serve a number of dishes with their own freshly ground hamburger. Their

*Taste of Florence A-Z continued on page 4.*

*Taste of Florence A-Z continued from page 2.*

Fried Steak, Onion Rings, Tenderloins and Burgers. Meeting room holds up to 100 and is available to diners at no extra charge. Dine in or take out. For more information, call 402-453-6300.

**CUBBY’S** – 920 Mormon Bridge Road. “The beary best in convenience! Great convenience store food, including pizza, fried chicken & gizzards, hamburgers and more. For more information, call 402-453-1103.

**DRAGON 88** at 4528 North 30. This hidden gem for Chinese food opened at its current location in 1990 with James Shin as “chef-owner”. Prior to opening their restaurant at their current location, the Shin family had a grocery store in South Omaha. According to customer reviews, this is one of the best Chinese restaurants in

special invitation for you to ...

# DIG in the DIRT!

from No More Empty Pots *by Shelby Andersen-Holt*

Come and dig in the dirt at the Florence Community Garden! Have fun participating in garden activities like: create a garden in a glove, decorate a pot, then plant a flower, help plant our communal raised beds. The garden is located on 30th and Bondesson Street (behind Shell Gas Station), from 2:30 to 4 PM, all ages invited to attend, and it's FREE!

Florence Community Garden Program was established in spring of 2014. The purpose of the garden is to provide open space for local residents to garden together: to enhance quality of life, to work collaboratively and to cultivate a place for individuals, families and friends to learn about growing healthy food. The following garden partners are Universal College of Healing Arts, Crayon Castle Daycare School, USD Natural Resource Conservation Service, Florence Public Library and No More Empty Pots. ❖



Currently, there are garden plots available. If you are interested in signing up for a garden plot or just want more information, please contact:

**Shelby Andersen-Holt**  
402.502.1642

[sandersenholt@nmepomaha.org](mailto:sandersenholt@nmepomaha.org)

*Taste of Florence A-Z continued from page 3.*

homemade sausage will be used in many of their dishes. All menu items will be made with no preservatives. For great food at affordable prices, give Fat BBQ Shack a try. AND, watch for grand opening of expansion coming soon. Dine in or take out. For more information, call 402-639-7275.

**FINICKY FRANK'S** at 9520 Calhoun Road. Kesa Kenny first met snowy-haired Frank when she moved to her farm in Ponca Hills. Frank, born in a cabin tucked into Ponca Hills just north of Omaha, grew up fishing on the banks of the Missouri and eating fresh produce from the gardens down the road. He knew the woods like the back of his hand. He was not a shy man. Known for his gregarious sense of humor, a keen knack for business and a gravelly-voiced charm, Frank grew up to become somewhat of a legend in the hills. Not just because he threw large parties for hundreds of neighbors and friends or because he knew the best spots to find morel mushrooms ... he was a legend because of his picky eating habits. He was downright finicky.

In keeping with Frank's finicky expectations, Kesa opened Finicky Frank's in 2007. She uses the freshest ingredients wherever possible. We think you'll agree, Frank was on to something. Just a few of her signature dishes include soup of the day, made from scratch at the chef's whim and served with warm bread. A favorite is the French Onion Soup. And then ... there is a large choice of uniquely flavorful sandwiches (including but not limited to) Crab Cake. For more information, call 402-451-5555.

**GODFATHER'S PIZZA** at 7403 North 30th Street. A neighborhood favorite serving pizza, calzones, wings and more. "Just do it!" Call 402-453-5533 to place your order.

**HAROLD'S KOFFEE HOUSE** at the corner of 30th and State Streets is exactly the atmosphere you want in a diner. Sit at a booth or take a seat at one of the stools at the counter. "This neighborhood cafe won't dazzle you with garnished plates, they are simply very good at what they do." Pies are made fresh every morning from the same recipes that Harold used in his diners back in the 50's. You can still taste the same love and dedication in each and every pie today. Select a slice from their pie case or call ahead to order a whole pie for any occasion. And/or

be sure to try a gooey pecan roll, "cinnamony" cinnamon roll or one of the best homemade donuts in Omaha. If you're eating breakfast or lunch, be sure to get there early and order dessert along with your meal because they may be sold out of the sweet treat you have your heart set on if you don't. For more information, call 402-451-9776.

**JIMMY JOHN'S** at 7406 N. 30th St. "Freaky fast!" Fresh subway sandwiches made to order. Call 402-557-6022 to order.

**KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN** at 7601 N. 30th St. "A real meal when and where you want it!" Fried chicken. Combination restaurant with Long John Silver. 402-453-9700.

**LITTLE CEASAR'S** at 7446 North 30th Street. "Pizza, pizza!" and more! Call 402-932-2898 to order.

**LONG JOHN SILVER'S** at 7601 N. 30th St. "We speak fish!" Fried seafood. Combination restaurant with Kentucky Fried Chicken. 402-453-9700.

**MCDONALD'S** - 7400 N. 30th St. "I'm lovin' it!" Burgers, fries and more. Breakfast all day. 402-453-6889.

**MOUTH OF THE SOUTH** at 8505 N. 30th St. is an honest-to-goodness Southern/Cajun-BBQ restaurant. Owner-Chef Ryan Ernst lived in Florence and enjoyed the small town feel of his neighborhood. After excelling in Metro Community College's Culinary Arts program and working in restaurant kitchens throughout Omaha, Ernst felt drawn to opening a restaurant in historic Florence hoping that Florence could return to what it once was if someone would just invest in it. His hopes have paid off as Mouth of the South celebrates its second anniversary this month at serving "Homestyle Southern Cooking" to patrons from all over Omaha and surrounding areas. The menu is unique to Omaha in that you can find a wide variety of tastes in one place: Po'Boys, Catfish, Pecan-crust Tuna, Crab Cakes, Smoke Pit Burgers, Hand-battered Onion Rings, Boudin Balls (if you don't know what these are, you'll be back for more after you try them). The list goes on and on. Dine in or take out. For more information, call 402-453-4099.

**NITE HAWKE Cafe**, on the corner of 16th

Street and Carter Boulevard, is a four generation Hawke's family-owned restaurant since 1942. This neighborhood cafe has all the friendly service you might expect, only more.

Reviews of Nite Hawkes say if you are going for breakfast there are no bad choices. One of the most requested breakfast orders is the "Stacker" (biscuits topped with hash browns and smothered in sausage gravy and 2 eggs cooked the way you like 'em. Or, you could go with their "Scrambler" (similar but with green peppers, onions, mushrooms and cheese). And, you never have to worry about them giving you enough gravy. They load it on! You can't go wrong for lunch either. Most popular is their chicken fried steak and roast beef sandwich with potatoes and gravy. check out the white board for specials...and if you see the fried chicken...order it! You will be glad you did.

**NORTH BOWL GRILL** at 8701 N. 30th St. is your classic bowling alley from your youth (you know that 70's/80's vibe) with the early 90's 'Cosmic Bowling' upgrades. This mom and pop business is owned and operated by Pat and Judy Haines. Full bar with full assortment of sandwiches including their most requested, the Philly and Swiss. They also have appetizers, most requested of which are the hot wings. Hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, salads and pizza are just a few of the other items on the menu. When the kids get bored, give them some quarters to go play some of their favorite video games. And when adults need a break from tossing balls, they can head for the bar and grill for live broadcasted football games and chow down on some good food. For more information or for take-out call 402-453-5500.

**OJ's CAFE** sits at 9201 North 30th Street (just east of the Florence Mill off N. 30th). For 40 years this family-owned cafe has served Mexican food to folks throughout

*Taste of Florence A-Z continued on page 6.*

*The family of Harold's Koffee House would like to thank all of our Omaha patrons and especially our Florence customers who have supported us for almost 60 years as a fun, family cafe. We look forward to bringing the flavor of Florence to you for many more!*

We've Got



*Gene Haynes continued on page 6.*

*Gene Haynes continued from cover page.*



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**Congratulations to Harold's Koffee House and the Halstead Family!**



Thank you Lord for toast and jam.  
Thank you Lord for eggs and ham.  
Thank you Lord for all our gifts, especially for the Halstead Family!

Thank you for sharing your hospitality with us!  
Love, Your Parish Family at St. Philip Neri-Blessed Sacrament

St. Philip Neri-Blessed Sacrament Parish  
8200 North 30<sup>th</sup> St. Omaha, Nebraska 68112-2202  
<http://saintphilipneriblessedsacrament.org/>

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★★★★★  
**WANTED**



**FLORENCE MEMORABILIA**

Anything relating to Florence History: Snap shots, newspapers to 1960, deeds and family history -- anything we need.

**STUFFED ANIMALS**

*When you clean out the toy box, please think of us!*

For 25 years, the Florence Historical Foundation and Florentine Players have rented a bus during the holiday season and paroled for various nursing facilities and shut-ins throughout the Florence area. We pass out more than 200 stuffed animals every year. Small ones for the nursing homes and large ones for the Christmas Open House -- join us for a rewarding night. Details will be in the Holiday Flyer.

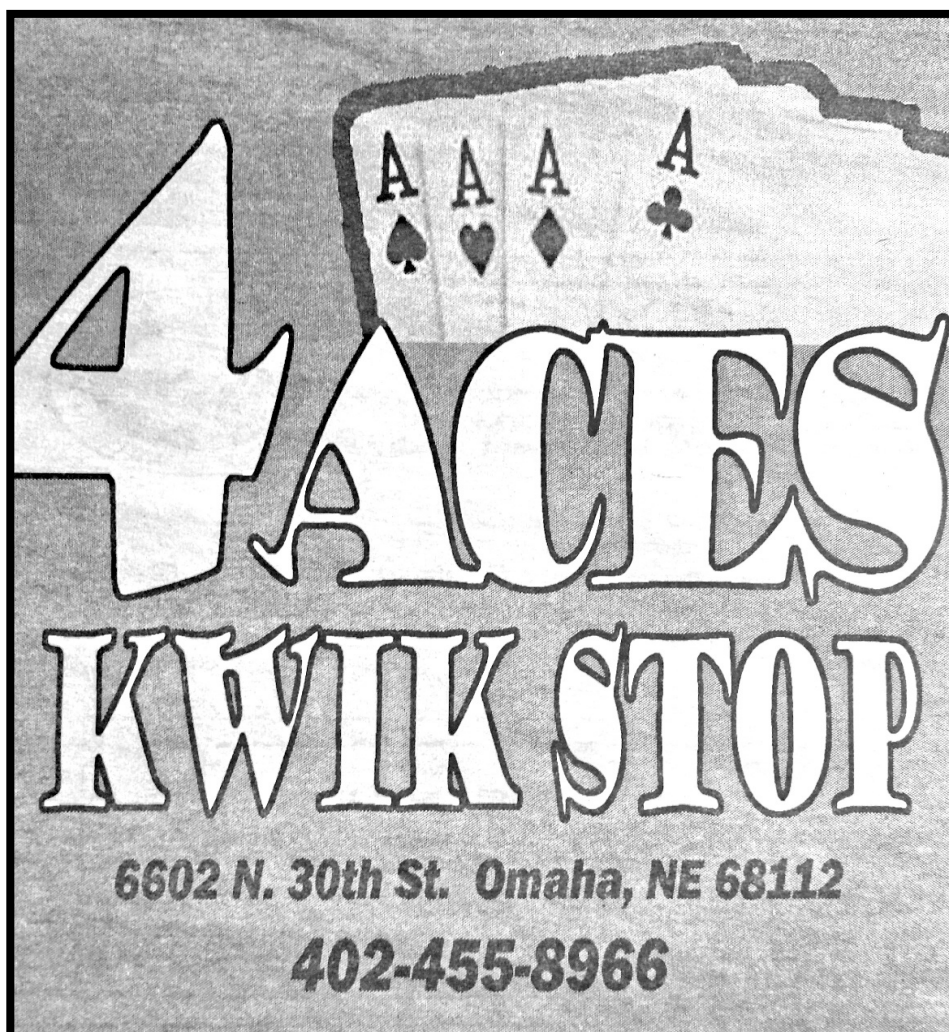
**FLAGS**

From May thru September, we fly a 5'x8' flag at the Florence Depot. This is the size the government gives to deceased veterans' families. It takes a large flagpole to display these flags properly. We welcome any flag to display in veterans' honor. Please donate.

**REWARD**

Our deepest gratitude!

PLEASE CALL 402-453-4463 FOR PICKUP



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# Proud to be a part of A TASTE of FLORENCE



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*A Taste of Florence!*

## Florence Historical Foundation

Florence City Hall is the lifeblood of the Florence Historical Foundation. Help support your community by planning your next event with us. See our ad on page 11 or visit [FlorenceReceptionHalls.com](http://FlorenceReceptionHalls.com) for rates and details.

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*Taste of Florence A-Z continued from page 4.*

Omaha. OJ's claim to fame is that all their family recipes are homemade. Their signature dish is their gigantic enchilada. OJ's describes their fresh hot sauce as "a sauce to die for". They also invite you to try one of their great margaritas. Dine in or take out. For more information, call 402-451-3266.

**POPEYE'S FRIED CHICKEN** at 5223 N. 30th St. "Cajun our way!" Fried Chicken, Fries, Cajun sides, sometimes fried fish and shrimp. 402-451-3630

**SAGE BISTRO** at North 30th and Sorensen Parkway operates as a customer focused classroom for Metropolitan Community College Culinary Program providing students with an opportunity to refine their culinary, bakery, service and supervisory skills in a setting where the element of time is as important as the food and service. Because this is a class, the Bistro is open when the students are in session. Standard menus are offered for lunch. Weekly student-designed prix fixe specials are offered during dinner when classes are in session. Reservations are strongly encouraged for dinner. If you have a special occasion or have never experienced

fine dining, Sage Bistro is the place to go. The food is out-of-this-world and prices are extremely reasonable! Metro Culinary Arts students do a bang-up job every single time. Many reviewers say that every time they eat here, they experience something they have never had at any other restaurant, anywhere, EVER! The Bistro will be open for the 2016 Spring session from March 28 to May 19. For more information, go to their website - <http://resource.mccneb.edu/bistro> or call 402-457-2328.

**SCOOTER'S COFFEEHOUSE** at 48th and McKinley in Mormon Bridge Plaza, is a nice little coffee shop just outside of Florence. With strong roots and ties to the Florence area, a group of friends and North High School graduates, who were looking to invest in a business together, opened Scooter's almost nine years ago. Scooter's proudly serves the Florence area by offering a place for businessmen and friends to gather or for patrons to grab a cup of coffee and a bite to eat. Scooter's has a drive-thru, outdoor seating with plenty of tables and a few comfy chairs inside. The staff is friendly and the service is quick. Scooter's has typical coffee and espresso offerings, along with smoothies and various pastries. This location also has a small meeting room in back. Dine in or take out. Call 402-991-1250.

**SONIC DRIVE-IN** at 5214 N. 30th St. "This is how you sonic!" Burgers, coneys, corn dogs, chicken fingers, ice cream shakes, slushes, etc. 402-898-7770

**SUBWAY** at 7254 N. 30th St. "Eat fresh!" Subway sandwiches made to order. Goodrich ice cream. 402-455-2628.

**SURFSIDE CLUB** at 14445 North River Drive is a one-of-a-kind type place. It has been said that if you don't own a boat but

want to understand the Missouri River Rat culture this is your best chance. You go here to eat fried chicken or catfish, maybe put down a couple drinks and watch people on boats go up and down the Missouri River. Surfside is known as much for their corn fritters as their chicken and catfish. They've added more outdoor seating, including a stage for live music. A large section of the seating is now under an awning, which is a great addition because of the sun. All in all, it's just very American. Like old-fashioned 1950's America where things were as simple as chicken, fish, beer and a river. Surfside is open from early Spring to early Fall. For more information, call 402-457-4000.

**TACO BELL** at 7516 N. 30th St. "Think outside the box!" Mexican fast food. 402-451-3845.

**TUSSEY'S CASUAL GRILL** at 48th and McKinley in Mormon Bridge Plaza, is a locally-owned restaurant and catering business in Omaha, is operated by Chef Mark Tussey. After over 25 years in the Omaha food business, Mark felt there was a dining need not being met by area restaurants in his Florence neighborhood. So ... he decided to open his own in 2008 From standard grill fare to dishes served in five star restaurants, you can find it all at Tussey's. Not only

*I eat merely to  
put food out  
of my mind.*

*~ N.F. Simpson*

can you order a burger and fries, you can select a glass of wine from a list that some call one of the most extensive in the area. Enjoy the in-house made soup de jour plus daily lunch and dinner specials. Tussey's party room hosts groups of up to 50 people. Whether you want to impress a date or show off the sophisticated side of North Omaha, keep Tussey's in mind. Wine pairings, prime rib nights, steak and catch of the day nights, catering and orders to go are also available. Dine in or take out. For more information, call 402-884-2288.

**VFW POST 3421 RESTAURANT** at 3434 McKinley. Serving breakfast the first Sunday of each month. If a month has five Sundays, breakfast will also be served on the third Sunday. Tuesday is Hamburger Night and Friday nights feature dinner specials. All of these are open to the public. 402-457-5007

**ZESTO SHOPPE** at 8608 N. 30th St., a family-owned and operated business, has been an Omaha landmark for more than 60 years! Currently owned by Chris and Rick Minturn, they pride themselves for their excellent service and great quality food, specializing in creating any ice-cream dessert you can dream up. Though the restaurant was the recipient of the Best of Omaha Winner for Best Ice Cream in 2014 and 2015, they offer more than just sweet treats with a full service, made to order lunch and dinner menu priced just right! Favorite food items include the chili-cheese dog and the fresh, never frozen made-to-order double cheeseburger. However, Zesto is not just about ice cream, food and service; they offer a fun, family friendly environment that is reminiscent of a simpler time. Stop in and enjoy the nostalgia in Florence! Or visit their second location in Cherry Hills near 680 and Irvington Road. For more information, call 402-451-0581. ❖

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## ArtLoft Gallery

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**June 18 - July 24:** Deborah Murphy, Paintings & Denis Wattier, Woodworking

**July 30 - Aug 28:** Diane Murphy & Ken Heimbuch, Photography & Paintings

**Oct 1 & 2:** North Hills Pottery Tour with extended hours

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# FLORENCE AARP CHAPTER 2269 2016 PROGRAMS

May 16: Lutheran Refugee Center  
Lacey Studnicka

June 20: Nigerian Medical Mission  
Joseph & Sabina Dumba

July 18: Unique Recycling  
Linda Hughes

August 15: Picnic

September 19: Restoring Bee Hives  
Carol & Fred Richart

October 17: Years at North High School  
Mark Schulze

November 21: Music with Greg  
Greg Owen

December 12: Christmas Music

Florence AARP meets monthly at Mount View Presbyterian Church, 5308 Hartman Avenue. Dinner (\$8.00) at 12:00 noon with program following at 12:45. Rides are available: call Ruth Kruse (402 453 4825) or Marge Willard (402 455 8401). It is not necessary to be an AARP member to attend meetings. ❖



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**LIBRARY SUMMER KICKOFF**  
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omahalibrary.org

**REC'S KIDS CLUB**  
Visit us online for summer activities and  
camp details:  
cityofomaha.org/parks

**HUMMEL DAY CAMP**  
9 weekly sessions  
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----- a neighborly public service announcement -----



*Friendly people,* good food, interesting programs and short business meetings are what persons over 50 come to celebrate -- noon every third Monday of the month. 2015 programs include issues pertaining to seniors: legislative priorities, safety, growing old gracefully, musicals and holiday specials.



*Non-members Welcome!*

Meetings held at **Mount View Presbyterian Church,**  
5308 Hartman Avenue

For more information or  
**TO REQUEST A RIDE,** give us a call!

Marjorie Willard **402-455-8401**  
Ruth Kruse **402-453-4825**

# Library: Pride of Florence

by Emily Getzschman

The Florence Branch of Omaha Public Library (OPL) opened in 1923 when 600 citizens formed the Florence Improvement Club and hosted a fundraising event to raise \$100, resulting in the opening of the community's first public library in the Florence Building. Florence Branch was the fourth library to join the OPL system and the pride of the Florence community. In 1976, the current location (2920 Bondesson St.) opened in a new building shared with a community center, becoming the Florence Library-Recreation Center.

Capital Improvement Project funds were used to remodel the branch in 2010, increasing its size by 1,500 sq. ft., and incorporating a computer lab, meeting and study rooms, and designated spaces for children and teens. The branch continues to be a priority to the Florence community today.

Florence Branch will celebrate summer reading with at kick-off party on June 4, 1-3 p.m. Visit and get registered for the Summer Reading Program. Track your reading throughout the summer to earn great prizes! Join us for free, fun programs for all ages this summer. There's something for everyone, including craft and storytime programs, book clubs, the Dr. Oxygen Science Show, gardening and food programs, and so much more!

Beyond its amazing programs, OPL offers so much more. Check out the selection of print and downloadable books, as well as music, movies and magazines! Access databases such as Consumer Reports, Chilton Auto Repair Online, and Ancestry.com. Discover some of OPL's unconventional items available for check out, such as Watt Detectors, seeds from the Common Soil Seed Library, and Sensational Science Kits. Get involved by joining a book club or fitness class, or by



Boy outside Florence Library playing with science.

volunteering at OPL. Connect with OPL online through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. There's so much to explore at OPL, and it's all there for you.

For more details about everything Florence Branch has to offer, stop in, call 402.444.5299, or visit online at omahalibrary.org. ❖

# North Omaha Commercial Club Works for the Community

NOCC WELCOMES ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO HELP CONTINUE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FLORENCE COMMUNITY

by Mele Mason

Tangible results of some of the efforts led by the North Omaha Commercial Club include, but are not limited to, the recent streetscape improvements along the North 30th Street corridor in Florence.

Wider parking spaces, storefronts made more attractive with cast-iron decorator benches for pedestrians to relax. Planters. And more. No small feat.

In order to accomplish these goals NOCC first had a vision, then they organized Town Hall meetings and coordinated with Florence Futures to raise money for a Master Plan to submit to City Hall.

Then they worked with the Mayor, City Council and Planning Board to secure funds for the streetscape. We are now enjoying the results.

For more than 70 years NOCC has served the Florence community by living by its motto "To Further the Interests of North Omaha."

This motto is promoted through NOCC's 10-point program:

1. To insure an orderly growth comparable to that enjoyed by other sections of Omaha.
2. A better business climate in which to work and grow.
3. The development of new residential and shopping areas.
4. Increased recreational facilities for both children and adults.
5. The upkeep and improvement of our beautiful residential areas with proper and reasonable zoning regulations.
6. Better educational opportunities for all.
7. The location of new business and industry in our area.
8. Better employment opportunities for all citizens.
9. The improvement and rejuvenation of sub-standard housing and business areas.
10. Greater co-operation between all of our business and professional groups for the common good.

The NOCC traditionally meets on the last Monday of the month (excluding holidays).

The NOCC team currently meets at Harold's Koffee House on 30th and State Streets. Every meeting kicks off at 6 p.m. with a casual 30-minute social time followed by a yummy dinner prepared at Harold's. The special hourlong speaker events begin at 7 p.m.

NOCC also awards The Community Betterment Award each December to a person or group who has impacted the community in a positive, enriching way.

Membership is open to anyone interested in supporting the growth and development of Historic Florence and the businesses that make Florence the amazing community it is. We welcome newcomers!

Annual dues, billed each January, are \$50 per year. A significant portion of the annual dues is used to pay for printing and mailing the monthly newsletter and facility fees for holding Town Hall Meetings. ❖

For more information, please contact NOCC President Mele Mason at 402-455-9422 or [melemason@aol.com](mailto:melemason@aol.com).

Visit us at [Facebook.com/northomahacommercialclub](https://www.facebook.com/northomahacommercialclub)

Welcome!

**AARP**  
Real Possibilities

This is an invitation from the friendly local AARP Chapter. It is a chance to meet new friends, have a delicious catered dinner and enjoy an interesting program.

2016 programs include talented musical groups, trips to exotic countries, information about current legislation and local health opportunities. Every third Monday, March through December,

AARP meets noon for dinner, program and short business meeting.

For transportation or more info call Marjorie Willard 402-455-8401 or Ruth Kruse 402-453-4825



A Special Thank You to Kathy Rossitto for her hard work and dedication to the Florence Historical Foundation and the Florence Community for providing excellent service to all of our Florence Days Newspaper advertisers!



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- 7-11PM on SA June 11 at the VFW Post 2503, 8904 Military Rd.
- 8-11PM on FR June 24, at The 21st Saloon, 4727 S. 96th St.
- 9PM-1AM, SA June 25 at Deja Vu, 1021 S. 178th St.
- 9PM-1AM, SA July 16 at Horseshoe Casino, 2701 23rd Ave. (Council Bluffs)
- 9-11PM, FR July 29 at The 21st Saloon, 4727 S. 96th St.
- 8-11PM, FR Aug 5 at Bogie's Bar & Grill, W. 14334 U St.
- 8-11PM, FR Aug 19 at The 21st Saloon, 4727 S. 96th St.

A heartfelt thank you to ... Mike Brock, and the Bo'Dell and the Relics, for the terrific "Lover's Day" performance on Saturday, April 23 at the Florence City Hall. They played to raise money for the preservation of the Florence Bank Museum. A good time was had by all!



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# A Remembrance at the Mormon Pioneer Cemetery

by Elder Jay Crandall

Eliza Partridge Lyman, a Mormon pioneer, was a young mother living in a log home in Winter Quarters, the name given to the Florence area in 1846, and was a resting place on the way to the Salt Lake Valley. The winter of 1846-7 was very hard on the pioneers.

Eliza's baby, Don Carlos, died December 12th and she wrote: "The baby is dead and I mourn his loss... he is gone and I cannot recall him, so I must prepare to meet him in another, and I hope a happier world than this... I believe that there is a power that watches over us and does all things right."



He was buried on the west side of the Missouri on the second ridge back, the eleventh grave on the second row counting from right to left, the first row being farthest from the river. This will be no guide as the place cannot be found in a few years."

Eliza didn't know how important this journal entry would be when combined with the original sextons' record of grave numbers and names and the one surviving gravestone. From these sources a burial grid was created that we use today to find the location on each of those buried in the cemetery between 1846 and 1848.

When the Winter Quarters Temple was built 15 years ago the cemetery became part of that property.

The cemetery is open every day. You can request a tour at the Trail Center across the street or just enjoy quiet contemplation in beautiful surroundings. There is a beautiful sculpture by Avard Fairbanks as the centerpiece of the cemetery. We have the original surviving gravestone of Amy Porter which can be found in the Mormon Trail Center's Memorial Room. We offer free tours every day from 9 am to 9 pm.

The Trail Center will be hosting a quilt show, "A stitch in Time" which runs from September 12 to October 22. Our 31st

annual Gingerbread Show "Christmas Memories" will be from November 19th to December 31st. These two displays are available for tours from 10am to 8pm daily. Anyone is welcome to participate by showing a quilt or creating a gingerbread display. Call the Mormon Trail Center for details at 1-402-453-9372. We have over 2,000 school children tour the Mormon Trail Center each year as part of their Nebraska history studies and welcome individuals, families and groups to visit us. We have a short video about pioneers and a large gallery full of informative displays. Over 55,000 people visit the Trail Center each year.

Our second historic site is found in Council Bluffs, the Kanessville Tabernacle, at 222 East Broadway. In July of 1846 the US Government asked for 500 men to form the Mormon Battalion and join in the war



*Witness glimpses of the great "Mormon Migration" as you walk beside a covered wagon, pull a handcart, climb in the bunks on a steam ship, and imagine a railroad journey. Exhibits also explore the expulsion from Nauvoo, the crossing of Iowa, and temporary settlements in the Middle Missouri Valley, including Winter Quarters, where the center is located.*

against Mexico. This year celebrates 170 years since the Battalion left Council Bluffs and marched 2,000 miles to San Diego in support of the US. The Tabernacle is open daily. ❖

*an invitation to you from*  
**Mormon Trail Center at  
Historic Winter Quarters**  
3215 State Street

*We will be hosting an outdoor concert at Florence Park immediately following the parade. After the concert enjoy "Mormon-style" sliders, cookies & and free tour at the Mormon Trail Center.*

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# The Townspeople of the 1800s

by Vern Hauger

This is a story about townspeople who traveled from the east around the time of the mass migration of immigrants heading west across this country from the 1840s through the 1870s.

The settlers came seeking a better life for themselves and their families by homesteading on newly opened government land. Most of the settlers farmed the land or used it for grazing cattle, while the incoming townspeople provided goods and services.

They were the merchants, butchers, bankers, boot makers, saloon keepers, doctors, barbers, traders and so forth. Included in the fold were bad guys, shysters, prostitutes, thieves and other low-life scalawags.

The merchant was usually the most popular person in town and the most indispensable. The blacksmith ranked high in the pecking order, as did the operators of the livery stables and the boarding houses. Most towns also had a newspaper.

In 1854, Nebraska became a U.S. Territory and Congress also passed the Town-site Act which allowed a group settlers or speculators — or a combination of both — to stake out 320 acres and take possession for a sum of \$1.25 per acre. The land was then divided up into lots of 125 by 25 feet and sold to prospective townspeople at whatever price the market would bear. The profit on these lots could be anywhere from \$50 to \$1000.

At the urging of his friend Colonel Peter A. Sarpy, Mr. James C. Mitchell, a merchant in Council Bluffs, laid out the plans for a city to be built where the Mormons' Winter Quarters had been. When the Nebraska Territory opened for homesteading he purchased the land under the Town-site Act.

In 1855, the City of Florence became a reality. Mr. Mitchell had done his homework. The City was quickly populated and Florence flourished for a good spell. If Florence had had the right contacts in the right places like Omaha did, perhaps Omaha would now be a part of the City of Florence.

The railroads, with their huge land holdings, played a major role in where towns would be established. One such city was Merna, Nebraska, whose life came to a



people lived there and some of the better lots sold for \$2,500. In 1857, there were 3,000 people and some lots were valued at \$4,000.

One time, a group of 300 immigrants became stranded when their steamboat ran aground on a sandbar in the Big Blue River in the Nebraska Territory. By the time their craft was freed from the sandbar the people had decided this was a good place to build a town, and so they did. They named that town Beatrice.

How Grand Island came to be is another story. In 1857, a group of speculators in Davenport, Iowa, fast-talked some mostly German settlers into purchasing land in a place called Grand Island. Grand Island was established along the Wood and North Platte Rivers. It was the largest inland island in the world.

The speculators told settlers it was going to be an important railroad center and, since it was located in the center of the United States, it would one day become the Capitol of the United States. But the financial panic of 1857 cost these promoters most of their money. Two years later an emigrant set fire to the City of Grand Island because he hated the Germans. All but one of the houses burned to the ground.

But the tough citizens rebuilt the town. In 1866, when the railroad finally did come through, it missed the City of Grand Island by several miles. The people dismantled whatever they could of the town and relocated close to the railroad.

At one time all of the villages across Nebraska were located about ten miles apart. This allowed the pioneer farmer to make a trip into town to buy whatever he needed and still get home in time to feed his livestock in the evening. Today, most of those smaller towns no longer exist.

When the Nebraska Territory first opened for homesteading there was no judicial system nor any laws on the books. Most cities had their own system of justice which worked rather well for the times. Everyone had a speedy trial — if found guilty, the sentence was quickly carried out and there were no appeals. ❖

quick end when the railroad laid its tracks two miles away! The townspeople solved this problem by abandoning their Merna and rebuilding it next to the tracks.

Town promoters were a special breed of salesman who worked very hard and received large returns on their investment. Omaha was a good example of this. In 1854, Omaha consisted of one small log house. In 1856, 1,600

Sources: Florence Historical Foundation, Google, Wikipedia

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for details  
on the  
north bowl fair



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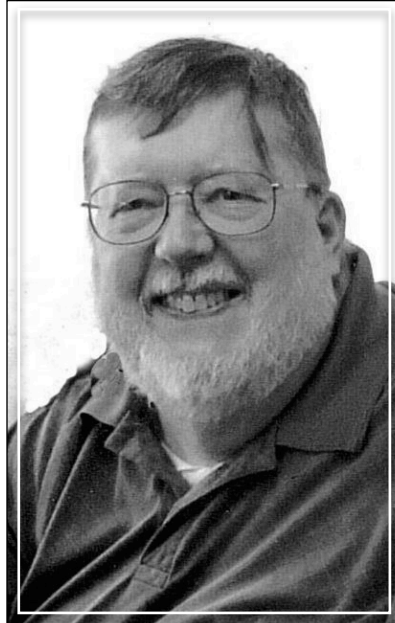


# A Tribute to Jim Herron

by Molly Anderson

In December 2015, The Florentine Players lost a wonderful and dedicated member. Jim Herron spent many years as our lighting designer and operator. He served as our faithful President of the board of trustees for many years. He was a mentor and a friend to me, as I assumed the role of President.

Many of us knew Jim as the quiet man who sat in the tech corner making us look vibrant on the stage. But there was so much more to Jim. Jim the son who started working hard at a young age to help support his family after his father's passing. Jim



never stopped working hard. Jim the decorated war Veteran. Jim the faithful Scooters patron who knew all of his baristas well.

During Jim's final show with the Florentine Players last August, I had the honor of giving Jim rides down to the hall every night during Hell week. It was a great time to listen and share stories. If I would have known that those would be the last conversations we'd have, I would have asked so many more questions. I miss Jim. People still ask me questions about Players business and my first inclination is to ask Jim. I don't think that will ever go away.

We miss you Jim. We love you Jim. Thanks for being part of the family. ❖

# DUDA

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### Florence Historical Foundation

#### Membership Form

*Your Tax Deductible Membership maintains the Bank of Florence, Toll House, Florence Train Depot Museum, Florence Fire Barn & traditions such as the Florence Days Parade!*

Name and/or Business Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership:**

Individual	\$15.00	\$ _____ Tax Deductible Amount
Family	\$25.00	
Business	\$50.00	
Large Corp.	\$100.00	
Angel Level	\$1,000.00	

**If this is a memorial gift, please add the name below:**

\_\_\_\_\_

~ Checks payable to: Florence Historical Foundation, P.O. Box 12331, Omaha, NE 68112 ~

# Understanding the Role of the Florence Historical Foundation & Florence City Hall

*compiled from Robert Sanders, HistoricFlorence.org*

Florence's historic preservation is due in large part to an organization called the Florence Historical Foundation. They own and operate the Bank of Florence Museum, the Florence Depot, the Florence Fire Station and the Toll House. These places have been restored and are now important parts of the Florence landscape.

In 2004, the Florence Historical Foundation built a new community center called the Florence City Hall.

A subgroup of the Florence Historical Foundation forms the Florentine Players. They put on a melodrama for Florence Days each year, and put on other plays throughout the year. A younger group, called the Florenteenies, have put on their own play at different times in the past (most are grown up now). These events help support the Florence Historical Foundation, housed at Florence City Hall. So you can think of the Florence Historical Foundation and Florence City Hall as partners that are helping to raise funds for, and the visibility of, the proud Florence Community. ❖



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*Above: The Historic Florence Depot, just up the hill from the Historical Florence Mill that hosts a weekly farmer's market. Stop by for a visit after your shopping.*



*Left: The beautiful refurbished building at 8702 N. 30th houses the Universal College of Healing Arts. Photo credit: Paulette Genthon*

A Salute to



Sept. 11, 2016

The rides and games are back again!

~  
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 Sustainable Agriculture Society

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 Sunday School for All: 9:45 a.m. | Praise Service: 10:45 a.m.  
 Pastors Elizabeth & John Backus

**ST. PHILIP NERI CHURCH - BLESSED SACRAMENT: Catholic**  
 8200 N. 30th St. | 402-455-1289 | www.saintphilipneriblessedsacrament.org  
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 Rev. John Andrews

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 8019 N. 31st St. | 402-455-4883  
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 Friday Service: 7 p.m. | Sunday Service: 11 a.m.  
 Pastors Gary & Denise Hopkins

**MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH: LCMS**  
 7301 N. 28th Ave. | 402-455-8700 | MountOliveOmaha.com  
 (Two blocks east of Godfather's Pizza)  
 Sunday Service: 9 a.m. | Educational Hour: 10:20 a.m.  
 Rev. Roland A. Jank, Jr.

**MAPLEWOOD UNITED METHODIST**  
 3535 Maplewood Blvd. | 402-572-1430 | email: office@maplewood.com  
 Sunday School: 9 a.m. | Sunday Worship: 10:15 a.m.  
 Rev. Jim Johnson

**FLORENCE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
 8314 N. 31st St. | 402-455-8343 | Florencepc.org  
 Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.  
 Pastor Al Zimmerman

**ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH: LCMS**  
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A Salute to  
**a taste of  
 florence**

Sept. 11, 2016

*Food is our common ground, a universal experience.*

*~ James Beard*



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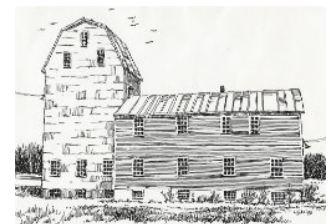
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See center spread  
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- *B.U.G. (Bring Up Grades) Award Partner*
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Weekly Meetings  
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# Grandma Bacon: the Pioneer Woman

by Vern Hauger

After researching the life of the pioneer woman one can only conclude that, it was a dismal existence for a human being. She had little contact with other women and her work was never done. She was expected to help her husband with the plowing and planting of the crops. She had to tote the water and fuel (cow chips etc) to the house to cook and heat with. She planted their garden and raised all of the vegetables they ate. She made most of the clothing they wore and washed it with soap that she made. She ironed it with an Iron heated on their Franklin stove that was used to cook their food and to supplement the heat from the fireplace during the winter. During the spring and summer months she also had to tend to the live stock while her husband was working in the fields. She doctored her children when they were sick, and in most cases if they could read or write it was because she had taught them how. Most of the women gave birth to a child each year. Surprising they looked forward to the arrival of the new child. It gave them someone to talk to since they were so lonely. Their husbands worked in the fields from sunup to sundown, and most of the time when they were home they were either doing chores around the house or sleeping. Do to the imbalance of men and women



during that time period there weren't many women for them to talk to. The new baby filled that void and as they grew up they would help with the chores.

Gladys Bacon was a pioneer woman. She and her husband Steve farmed West of Florence on land that her father gave to them. They built a nice two story

house on it with a large barn. Steve farmed forty acres and they had ten more in pasture and timber. Gladys became a widow early in life when Steve suddenly died leaving her with eight children and expecting a ninth one. She was determined to keep the family together. She sold the farm and bought a large house in Florence. There she became a laundress washing and ironing clothing for other people. She did all the laundry for the Tucker House and her children helped her.

Gladys saw to it that all of her children went to school and received a proper education. After her children left home she rented out the upstairs bed rooms as sleeping rooms to traveling salesmen. There were a lot of them in those days, and the Tucker House would send them over to her when they ran out of rooms. She cut back on the laundry business, and then several years later she quit renting out rooms. She still had a garden, and some chickens each Saturday she would be at the North Market square selling fresh produce and eggs. She often brought a couple of hens along in a cage and someone would buy them.

Everyone in the neighborhood called her Grandma Bacon. She was a gifted person who understood children

*Grandma Bacon continued on page 19.*

Food is an important part of a balanced diet.

~ Fran Libowitz

**a taste of  
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*Grandma Bacon continued from page 18.*

and they were drawn to her. During the summer months she would sit in her rocking chair on her front porch and there would always be children with her. They would listen to her stories for hours. She told them stories about how she came to this country from England on a ship, and how beautiful the Atlantic ocean was. She often talked about the 18-month drought in Florence that lasted from June 1859 until November 1860.

Every growing thing turned brown and the earth broke into hideous cracks. They planted crops but nothing grew. She also told them about the prairie fires and how there was no water to fight the fire with. She saw men kill their cattle, split their bellies open and spill their entrails onto the ground. Then they would drag the carcass back and forth over the grass around their homes with a team of horses to wet it down hoping the fire would not cross over the wet grass and burn their house down.

The women took their children into the storm cellar and stayed there until the fire passed over them. The men stayed outside to fight the fire for as long as they could before they too had to seek shelter in the storm cellar. They used wet blankets to beat the fire out and keep it from burning their

homes. She talked about the plagues of locust that came down out of the sky and covered the earth eating everything on the ground that was green.

She told them stories about hail stones that were as large as hen's eggs. She said she once saw a man carrying a wash tub full of apples to his house from the orchard when a hail storm came up. He was able to dump the apples and cover his head with the tub and run for cover. The hailstones would have killed him if he hadn't of had the tub to put over his head.

She told many stories and the children never tired of them. She smoked tobacco in a corn cob pipe, but she didn't want anyone to know she smoked. When someone came to visit her she would slip the lighted pipe into her apron pocket. The smoke would rise up and out of her pocket until the pipe burned out. No one ever said anything to her about it and surprisingly she never caught on fire. She lived alone in that house for over forty years.

One day she told her daughter that she was afraid to stay in the house any longer, she couldn't sleep at night because she feared someone was going to break into the house and harm her. Her daughter took her to live with them and she sold her house.

She was never heard from again. ❖

# MEMORIALS

*Florence Historical Foundation*

2008-2016

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## FLORENCE DAYS NEWSPAPER

Sponsored by FLORENCE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

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[millerparkminnelusa.com](http://millerparkminnelusa.com)  
\*Citizen Patrol Meeting at 6:30 p.m.


Food to a large extent is what holds a society together and eating is closely linked to deep spiritual experiences.

~ Peter Farb and George Armelagos, 'Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating'

*Florence Historical Foundation thanks you for your generous donations. For membership or memorial donations see page 14.*



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**a BIG thank YOU!**  
goes to all the volunteers — React Team, Boy Scout Troop 20, Omaha Police Department, the Florence Historical Foundation Board and its active members, the Shriners and all the parade entrants for making this year's 2016 Salute to Taste of Florence a success! Thanks also go to our wonderful advertisers, the Kiwanis Club of Florence, and the FD Newspaper Committee for their work getting this paper to press — and on schedule!  
Sincerest Gratitude from *Mikki Barna* and *Dick Brown*  
Co-chairs, 2016 Florence Days Parade & Newspaper



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The Florence Historical Foundation continues to restore and maintain many historical buildings in Florence. The Florence City "Reception" Hall is the original site of Florence's City Hall, jail and fire station back in the 1880s. The Florentine Players continue to be a part of the fundraising arm of the Florence Historical Foundation. The facility was built by your donations and is truly a "community building". We take pride in what we've built and hope you do, too, when using the Florence City "Reception" Halls.

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A Salute to

**a taste of  
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Sept. 11, 2016



### MINNE♦LUSA HISTORIC DISTRICT

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We meet the first Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. \* at the Miller Park Pavilion.

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\*Citizen Patrol Meeting at 6:30 p.m.



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Did you know?

- You can dry two loads of laundry with a gas dryer vs. one load with an electric dryer.
- Your clothes have fewer wrinkles and less static cling.
- Your dryer's operating costs are 73 percent lower annually.



**METROPOLITAN**  
UTILITIES DISTRICT