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# FLORENCE DAYS

FLORENCE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION PRESENTS

## BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY

VISIT OFTEN: [FlorenceDays.org](http://FlorenceDays.org) | [FlorenceReceptionHalls.com](http://FlorenceReceptionHalls.com) | [HistoricFlorence.org](http://HistoricFlorence.org) | [FlorenceTheater.org](http://FlorenceTheater.org)

# Parade's Grand Marshals Mark 100 Years of Florence Residency

by Riley Cullen

This year's Grand Marshals of the Florence Days Parade are the Notre Dame Sisters who have been residents of Omaha for 100 years.

The women who formed the Notre Dame Sisters' Omaha province have been providing their service to both our community and others around the globe since the arrival of the first Sisters in Omaha in 1917.

Sr. Anita and Sr. Margaret, two long-time Notre Dame Sisters, were gracious enough to lead a tour



Sr. Margaret (left) and Sr. Anita (right) in the chapel.

through their building on 35th and State Street and to talk about the Sisters' history in the area, their evolution, and future of their presence in Omaha.

The tour began on an elevator ride which opened to the old infirmary. That space has since been converted into affordable housing for seniors, but retains the original woodwork down the corridor. Around the corner, a lobby opens in front of the chapel, and the Sisters call attention to some old

photos which they brought up from their archives in a big, yellow file.

They explain that Mother Qualberta Krivanec of the Notre Dame Sisters in Czechoslovakia received word that some American dioceses were in need of assistance caring for Czech immigrants and orphans.

Soon after, she and four other sisters made the journey to provide that aid, first to Fenton, MO in 1910 then on to Omaha six years later. Upon their arrival in Omaha, Sr. Rose Slevin, who spoke only English, and Sr. Martha Djobek, who spoke no English, were sent to help a young Fr. Flanagan run his first Boys' Home in Omaha from 1917 until 1923.

"How they communicated is a good question," said Sr. Anita, noting how Fr. Flanagan's thick, Irish accent likely didn't aid their already complicated dialogue. The picture she hands over shows Srs. Rose and Martha with Fr. Flanagan in front of the first Boys' Home, surrounded by their very first group of young men.

Somehow, despite the language barriers, the group found the strength to work together for nearly four years until the home was relocated outside Omaha city limits.

The year before that move, Fr. Flanagan decided to sell a property he had purchased. Originally, the Seven Oaks Farm, was meant to house the Boys' Home, but when a different location was selected for that project, the farm was no longer necessary.

The property ran from what is now 34th Street to 36th Street, and from King to State Streets. When the women surveyed the plot of land in North Omaha, it was love at first sight.

"Mother Qualberta came here to look at it...and thought it was ideal for a convent," said Sr. Anita,

"but she had to get permission to buy the place because they didn't have the money." The Notre Dame Sisters, eager to have their own space, bought the Seven Oaks Farm for \$14,000.

"In some of those early years, there wasn't enough room... in the house, so some of the sisters lived in the barns," Sr. Margaret added. Eventually, the Sisters' hard work turned the old poultry farm into a convent and school for girls which ran from 1926-1974. After 58 years of educating young women, Notre Dame Academy would merge with Rummel High School to create Roncalli Catholic High School, now in its 44th year.



The last original oak tree stands in front of the Seven Oaks property, framing the cross which sits atop the building.

As the tour continued down the hall, Sr. Anita took out several more pictures of the property taken when it was originally purchased. While the corridors feel very school-like now, the pictures portray a much wilder place, close to nature. She mentions that Seven

(Continued on page 2)

# An Honor to Florence: Our Own Nancy Halstead Bohnenkamp Gets Prestigious Recognition

by Ann Wilson

In her generous spirit she accepts my request to interview her for this article.

Nancy Bohnenkamp was selected as this year's recipient of the Mother Qualberta Service Award owing to her generous spirit, her advocacy for people's needs and establishing a business rooted in Christian faith.

For the few of you who may not know, Nancy is the owner of Harold's Koffee House on North 30th street in the heart of downtown Florence.

The award, Notre Dame Sisters' highest recognition, is presented to those who exemplify the pioneering, service-oriented and generous spirit of

Mother Qualberta, founder of the Omaha Province of the Notre Dame Sisters.

Nancy shared that it was an incredible honor to be selected.

Her family has owned Harold's Koffee House -- founded by her father after WWII -- and has been part of the Florence community and St. Philip Neri-Blessed Sacrament parishes for decades.

This legacy of service and community continues today with the help of her son Matt, Harold's general manager and the support of her husband, and all the family members, along with extended employees/family who over the years have been a part of Harold's Koffee House.

After pondering briefly, Nancy admits she can always count on three things when it comes to the day-to-day routines of running a business.

"When people come in here," Nancy said, "they get a smile ... and we know their names."

(Continued on page 3)



**HONORING**  
Mother Qualberta Service Award  
Nancy Bohnenkamp,  
Co-Owner of Harold's Koffee House

# Letter from the President

Dear Friends of Florence,

Let me introduce myself. My name is Dick Brown. Although I am not the New Kid on the Block, I am the new President of the Florence Historical Foundation.

As our Florence Historical group continues to thrive, our big focus this past year was the old Bank of Florence. Thank you for your support last summer at our "Save the Bank" fundraiser. An overwhelming response packed the Florence City Hall as we danced the night away with our neighborhood friends and families. Last summer, the entire north side of the bank foundation was reinforced. After stabilizing the foundation, we painted the entire main floor of the museum. The newly-painted Historic Bank of Florence is worth a look. It was great to see new faces and old friends at our annual Christmas Open House this past winter!

Our area businesses are busy with many new faces filling our restaurants, shops, and bars. We all are anxiously waiting for the return of The Mouth of The South. While in the area don't forget to check out the many great shows that our Florentine Players present each year. Did you know they actually host five shows in addition to the big melodrama done in connection with Florence Days? We have quite a talented group of actors and actresses who all help support the Florence Historical Foundation.

Did you know that The Florence Historical Foundation maintains the Florence Depot, The Florence Fire Barn, The Bank of Florence, the Florence City Hall, and Dick's Place? In addition to the work done on the Bank this past year, the Florence City Hall also received upgrades.

We were part of the Restoration Omaha Wyman Heights tour that was a huge success last fall. It seems like we always have a project going on to help preserve our historical buildings.

This is where our friends and members come into play. Your membership dollars help preserve our historic buildings and your gifts are tax deductible for the 2018 tax year.

Please consider sending your support again this year if you have not already done so, to help continue the efforts of the Florence Historical Foundation in Building a Strong Community.

Enjoy your 58th Annual Florence Days!

*Dick Brown*

President, Florence Historical Foundation

(Continued from front page)

Oaks Farm was named for the seven large oak trees which stood on the property when the Sisters bought it in 1920. Only one of them still stands today.

"That tree over there," Sr. Anita said, pointing to a large oak out the window of the Heritage Room at the end of the hallway. "That's the last original oak tree." The Seven Oaks property itself is perhaps the best symbol of the evolution of the Notre Dame Sisters over the last 100 years.

A poultry farm, a convent, an academy for young girls, and now a senior living facility, the building has evolved again and again to help the Sisters achieve their mission and meet unmet needs in the community.

"Traditionally, we were all teachers at the beginning, but when we were no longer needed in the classroom we kind of spread out [to other ministries]," said Sr. Margaret. She noted that some Sisters have worked as nurses, caregivers, and ministers.

They also provide volunteer services to vulnerable groups like women and children who fall victim to human trafficking and domestic violence and Dreamers who sought safety under the DACA policy before it was dismantled. "We believe in the consistent ethic of life...so that's where we focus our efforts," she continued.



Sister Anita holds a picture taken from the archives of the Notre Dame Sisters.

Walking into the Heritage Room, Margaret and Anita recounted story after story about how the Sisters have built onto, torn down, remodeled, and added additions to the building over the years to make it fit their needs. The Heritage Room, for example, was originally the chapel, but currently serves as a library and computer room for residents.

An area downstairs which was the auditorium when Sr. Anita attended the Notre Dame Academy had become a cafeteria by the time Margaret attended years later. It now serves as a community center that provides a monthly food bank and other services to the Omaha community at large.

Even after all those remodels, an old, lighted sign is perched atop the same elevator which was installed over fifty years prior.

After the tour wound down through rooms, offices, and staircases, it ended once more in front of the chapel. From the other side of the room, two more display cases which had previously gone unnoticed frame the exit. They each serve a different purpose.

One display case outlines years of missionary work in Honduras and Chile through beautiful artifacts from Central and South America. Their work in Porcupine, South Dakota with the Lakota Sioux, which lasted from the 1930s all the way up until last year, is illustrated by shelves of hand-painted dishes and gifts in the case as well.

These beautiful pieces remind the Sisters of their continued mission of service and the value of each individual they have aided over the years.



The china cup Sr. Margaret carried from what used to be the motherhouse in Czechoslovakia.

The china in the second case speaks more to the history of the Sisters themselves. "That has a story" says Margaret, pointing to a particularly elegant cup. "I personally carried that all by myself from Czechoslovakia in 1980 when we visited what was our motherhouse.

The area had been taken over by the Communists and was serving as a barracks... but we went to visit the sacristy and we found some things. Since they weren't being used, we kind of each took a little piece," she stated, smiling slightly.

The china reflects both the beauty and the grit that helped create their history. The strong women of the Notre Dame Sisters can look to these artifacts as a reflection of their own handiwork, and how it has allowed them to continue their mission in Omaha for a century.

Whether they're buying a property they couldn't afford because of a love for the land and the need for a place to live, or "borrowing" a teacup from a Communist, the Notre Dame Sisters have always done what is necessary to keep their mission and history alive, while simultaneously caring for the most vulnerable people around them. If their past is any indication, these women are sure to remain a staple in our community for many years to come.

Look for the Notre Dame Sisters during the Florence Days Parade. Members from the organization will be waving from the first float in the procession. ❖

Aspiring writer Riley Cullen is former Florence resident who grew up in this community. Riley is currently a full-time student at University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



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Thank you members & advertisers! Your dollars help fund many Florence projects to build a strong community.



## 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

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(Continued from page 2)

Everyone is welcome at Harold's. About Harold's many regular customers she adds, "We know what they're going to eat before they sit down, half of them."

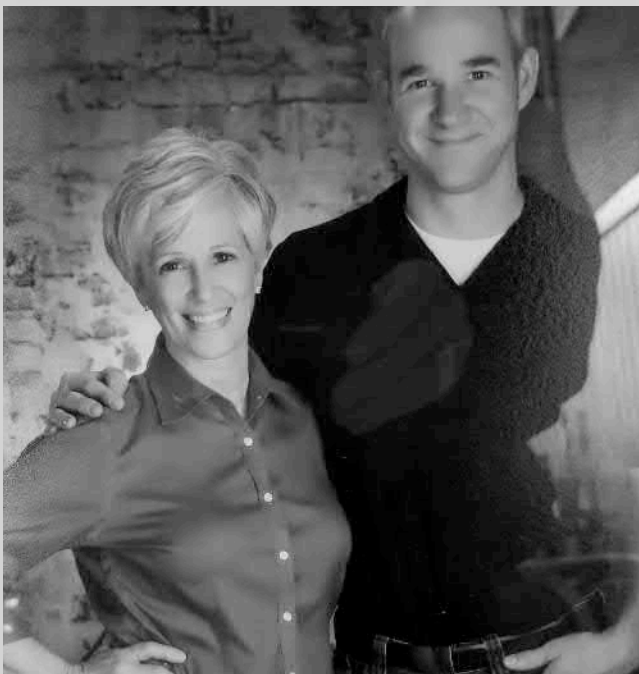
Third thing, "We care about their day, their stories," she said, "and we love serving them a nourishing meal."

She openly praised her son and all the recent appearances on the Morning Blend, the latest touting National Grilled Cheese Day!

I asked her what is it that drives her to continue after so very many years and economic changes that hit other established restaurants (Mr. C's,) Minne Lusa Restaurant long ago, and many others.

"We are an integral part of Florence," she said, "and with certainty I knew this was where I was supposed to be." Nancy candidly explains that her faith in God and knowing what is good for family and community are the things that really matter in making a difference in someone's day.

"A piece of pie, is always nice too!" ❖



A true family business: Nancy Bohnenkamp with her son and Harold's General Manager Matt.



"Notre Dame Sisters raised \$80,000 at its 24th annual Celebration of Spirit Dinner on March 18. The event drew 300 people...."

"... The highlight of the evening was the Celebration of Spirit's annual Mother Qualberta Service Award presentation."

Source: Omaha.com article by Kate Malott / World-Herald staff writer. Apr 8, 2018 issue.



# The Miller Park/Minne-Lusa Neighborhood

by Kathy Holtz



**MINNE LUSA**  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

**MILLER PARK  
MINNE LUSA  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
ASSOCIATION**

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

[millerparkminnelusa.com](http://millerparkminnelusa.com)

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

The Miller Park/Minne Lusa Neighborhood is a neighborhood of wonderful historic homes with people that make a conscious effort to know their neighbors, and make it a great place to raise your family. We all know that you are not going to care about your neighbors, unless you get to know them. We stay connected by attending citizen patrol and neighborhood association meetings the 1st Thursday of every month at 7pm, in the pavilion in Miller Park. We also use the Minne Lusa House, Precinct Advisory Council meetings, nextdoor.com and our website: [millerparkminnelusa.com](http://millerparkminnelusa.com) to stay in touch with each other. We are one of the most active neighborhoods in the city.

On March 10th, we all met in Miller Park for Place Games. In case you haven't heard, Miller Park is going to be completely rehabilitated courtesy of the Lozier Foundation. At Place Games, 35 neighbors contributed their ideas regarding what they would like their park to look like. There were lots of great suggestions, including better lighting, more visible signage, benches, grills, walking and bike trails, improved landscaping, amphitheater, fountain, and art. The goal is to make the park more useable for community events like music, artwork, farmers market, and things of this nature. One of the items, already in the works, is a state-of-the-art ballfield. This is going to be the best ballfield

in the city with stadium seating and concession stand, and will aptly be named The Kerrie Orozco Ball Park after the officer who gave her life serving this community. We are really proud to have her ballfield in our neighborhood.

On March 20th, the neighborhood association sponsored precinct appreciation and provided a meal and homemade cookies to all three shifts of the Northeast Precinct, which is something we do annually. The officers really appreciate this gesture of kindness and we, of course, appreciate all the work they do in our community.

April 28th, we are looking forward to seeing 125 new trees being planted along Minne Lusa Blvd and in Florence, as well. Thanks to Diana Paila, President of Neighborhood Alliance and the Urban Bird &

about anything except flammables, liquids, tires, yard waste and large appliances. About anything else is fair game. Our neighborhood association will have volunteers there to direct traffic and help you unload your vehicle. This is another event that we do every year, as we feel that it helps people keep their property clean, and keeps them from dumping illegally. If you have anything you need to get rid of, just stop by.

In Miller Park/Minne Lusa, you can see that we always have something going on all the time, such as neighborhood garage sales, Fun in the Park, Cops N Bobbers, Annual Golf Tournament and Trick-or-Treating on the BOOlevard. We really try to work together in our neighborhood and encourage people to "be the change you want to see in your neighborhood".

Longtime Florence resident Kathy Holtz is a successful realtor by profession and a 25-year community advocate. Kathy gives back in many ways. She is currently a member of the Florence Christian Church and she serves as Secretary and Webmaster for the Miller Park/Minne Lusa Neighborhood Association. She is President of the Minne Lusa Neighborhood Citizen Patrol. She is an administrator for Nextdoor.com, and she sits on the Board of Directors for Omaha Coalition of Citizen Patrols. Citizens like Kathy inspire Strong Communities! ❖



Nature Alliance, we were gifted 125 trees. Volunteers will be out at 8 am planting them.

Also on April 28th, we're hosting an annual Neighborhood Spring Clean Up at McMillan Magnet, 9am to 2 pm. This is an opportunity to get rid of all your old junk for free. We take



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# Got Photos? We Want to See Them!

# Help Uncover Hidden Histories



You can help uncover the past. The Florence Historical Foundation has teamed up with the Omaha World-Herald to gather and digitizing images of Florence's past for a future book. It's people. It's businesses. It's homes and buildings and all the stories behind each one. Bring your photos and stories and join us on Saturday, May 12 before the Parade kicks off. Drop by the Historic Bank of Florence Museum on the corner of 30th & Willit Streets between 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We'll look at your photos, hear your stories and scan the photos we're able to use on site.

Can't make it May 12? Contact Kristine Gerber at (402) 444-1082 or [kristine.gerber@owh.com](mailto:kristine.gerber@owh.com) for an appointment.

**Drop by the Bank of Florence Museum with your photos & stories 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 12 PARADE DAY!**

Photos on left, from top to bottom:

**Moving day for Florence Stables** Volunteers move horses owned by Marjorie Furstenberg and her father, Roy, from the old location of Florence Stables, 9292 N. 30th St., to a new location pictured here at 31st and Calhoun Streets on Nov. 15, 1945. The new stables featured cement floors, drains connected with the city sewer system, 19 stalls including five box stalls and, over the front door, an oil painting by Omaha artist Eldon Fratt of Majorie's pedigreed thoroughbred gelding, Rainbow Beauty. - *The Omaha World-Herald archives*

**Florence Fountain** The fountain in front of Florence's Minne Lusa Pumping Station in 1935. The fountain was dismantled in the 1960s and was donated to Heartland Park in 1990 by Metropolitan Utilities District. - *M.U.D.-Bostwick/Frohardt Collection*

**Bank of Florence** The Bank of Florence, pictured here in 1946, was built as a wildcat bank in 1856. It fell in the Panic of 1857. The bank was reopened in 1890 and remained in business until the Great Depression. The building was used as a grocery store, a dry cleaner, an antique store and the Florence Telephone Company. The bank was eventually donated to the Florence Historical Foundation, which restored it to its original appearance and opened it for tours. It is the oldest bank in Nebraska. - *The Omaha World-Herald*

**Giant Elm Slated for Demolition** Cowboy Dick Kinsler, 10, perches on the base of an old elm tree on July 2, 1946. The tree was in front of the Florence Bank and is believed to have been planted by the first cashier, J.D. Brisbin, when the bank opened in 1856. At the time of this photo, the tree's base was six feet wide. It was ordered to be razed in 1946 because the city forester pronounced it dangerous. - *Earle "Buddy" Bunker/The Omaha World-Herald*

Photo credits: Omaha World-Herald & M.U.D. archives by permission.

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Douglas County Historical Society is  
**A Community Gem**  
*by Joan Allen*

One of my favorite places in Omaha, which happens to be situated in our community, is the Douglas County Historical Society (DCHS), consisting of the General Crook House Museum and the Library Archives Center, both located on the campus of historic Fort Omaha Metropolitan Community College, 5730 N 30<sup>th</sup> St., building #11b. DCHS was created in 1956, but it was not until 1976 that the building that now houses the Museum was acquired and restorations to its original Italianate-style Victorian state begun. The Library Archival Center, acquired in 1982 and located immediately north of the Museum, serves as the official county archive, holding more than six million documents and over 8,000 artifacts. Newspapers, clipping files, books and government records are housed here and available to the public.



The General Crook House is a living museum (open 7 days a week), hosting many activities. Charles Dickens productions, teas, classes, book discussions, special events and, of course, tours are all conducted at the museum. All events and classes are open to the public, many at a minimal cost. (Reduced price for DCHS members.) DCHS hosts the highly popular Second Sunday Series talk, Reader's Circle book club, Vintage Wheels at the Fort, Anniversary of Standing Bear Trial, Women Defining History Luncheon and Fashion Show, Omaha Collects, and the biggest garage sale in Omaha every August. (Look for flyers advertising events at Harold's Koffee Shop.) The Museum, between Thanksgiving and Christmas, is not to be missed. Dozens of skilled volunteers decorate every room for the holidays.



The grounds around the two buildings are a gardener's delight. The larger garden sits south of the Museum and showcases over a hundred varieties of heirloom flowers, trees and shrubs native to Nebraska. The Heirloom Garden, designated a Nebraska Statewide Arboretum in 1997, was renovated in 2013. Plantings change annually. An additional garden, the Ethel C. Flannigan Memorial Architectural Garden, so named for the stone architectural remnants from Douglas County's old Post Office, was dedicated last summer.

Our community is fortunate to have the opportunities DCHS has to offer --- practically at our feet --- and frequently at no or nominal cost. The number of visitors, students and volunteers this institution draws give our business community greater exposure and enrich the lives of our citizens with opportunities for personal growth and enjoyment. ❖

*For information call 402.455.9990 or DouglasCoHistory.org*



Florence Historical Foundation continues to restore and maintain many historical buildings in Florence. 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.

Plan your events at [FlorenceReceptionHalls.com](http://FlorenceReceptionHalls.com)

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**Worship Times in the Community**

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA**  
 6340 N. 30th St. | 402-453-4080 | [Trinityomaha.org](http://Trinityomaha.org)  
 Traditional Sunday Service: 8:45 a.m.  
 Sunday School for All: 9:45 a.m. | Praise Service: 10:45 a.m.  
 Interim Pastor James Holthus

**ST. PHILIP NERI CHURCH - BLESSED SACRAMENT: Catholic**  
 8200 N. 30th St. | 402-455-1289 | [www.saintphilipneriblessedsacrament.org](http://www.saintphilipneriblessedsacrament.org)  
 Saturday Service: 5 p.m. | Sunday Services: 7:30 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.  
 Father D. Mario Rapose

**MOUNT OLIVE LUTHERAN CHURCH: LCMS**  
 7301 N. 28th Ave. | 402-455-8700 | [MountOliveOmaha.com](http://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](mailto: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](http://Florencepc.org)  
 Sunday Worship: 10:30 a.m.  
 Pastor Al Zimmerman

**ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH: LCMS**  
 11120 Calhoun Rd. | 402-451-2441 | [stjohnomaha.com](http://stjohnomaha.com)  
 Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.  
 Rev. Ronald Holling

# Family History Builds Community with Library's Rich Resources

by Martha Grenzeback, Genealogy & Local History Librarian, Omaha Public Library

As Florence launches its 58th Florence Days celebration, community gatherings are a wonderful time to exchange family history information and swap stories -- it's stories that make community!

We can generally rely on professional historians to record the major historical facts about a place, but who will preserve the stories that bring a community to life if not the family historians?

Some of those stories will become part of the collective community memory -- such as the one about how the territorial legislature filibustered right here in Florence for an entire turbulent week back in 1856 -- quite an amusing story retold at [historicflorence.org/HistoricEvents/TerritorialLegislature.php](http://historicflorence.org/HistoricEvents/TerritorialLegislature.php), you'll enjoy reading it.

Others stories remain part of an individual family's personal heritage, to be passed down through the generations, providing family members a sense of who they are as a family -- even if those tales are not much more than a tradition of Native American ancestry, or Grandma's memories of a time when Florence bragged of having "one mile of brick-paved streets."

Those families are lucky, particularly if someone has taken the trouble to write their stories down so they won't be lost.



"The prettiest mile in Omaha Boulevard, Omaha, Neb." postcard. This street is now called Florence Blvd. Source: Omaha Public Library's Nebraska Memories collection at [memories.ne.gov](http://memories.ne.gov). Free access.

The celebration of Florence Days is a reminder to make your own contribution to those community and family traditions, by sharing your own family stories with others (orally or in writing) and tracking down the stories that risk being lost.

Some can be found in the books, records, and pamphlet files in the Nebraska and Genealogy Reference Collections at the W. Dale Clark Library. Many more await in old newspapers such as Florence

Items (1903-1908), the Florence Tribune (1909-1916), and others available on microfilm at the W. Dale Clark Library, the Omaha World-Herald (online digital access, 1878-1983, with an Omaha Public Library card), and the Omaha Bee (digitally available free at <http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu> for the years 1872-1922, and on microfilm at W. Dale Clark Library 1872-1937).

One example is the story (see sidebar) of how young Iner Johnson was buried alive back in 1903 but rescued by valiant Margaret Franklin and the local mail carrier.

Researching your family history in Omaha Public Library's genealogy databases, Ancestry Library Edition and MyHeritage Library Edition, may reveal more fascinating aspects of your family and community history. Did your great-grandfather serve in World War I? Or maybe he was a worker at the Florence

pumping plant--considered such a far commute from Omaha in 1915 that the Metropolitan Utilities District provided housing in Florence for its employees. All these details work together to build a picture of a thriving community--and every contribution makes that picture more compelling.

So celebrate Florence Days by finding out a bit more about your family and your community!

## What Exactly is "No More Empty Pots"?

by Talia McGill, Director of Strategic Communications, No More Empty Pots



No More Empty Pots is a grassroots non-profit corporation that connects individuals and groups to improve self-sufficiency, regional food security and economic resilience of urban and rural communities through advocacy and action. To help support this effort, No More Empty Pots, collaborates with an array of public and private organizations, businesses, communities, individuals, and entrepreneurs.

This is an exciting time for No More Empty Pots. The lower level of The Collaborative Community Centered Food Hub is up and running. Since its completion in the spring of 2017, the Shared-Use Kitchen has welcomed over 10 local food entrepreneurs starting and growing businesses.

Our motto is "We Fight Poverty with Local Foods. Training. Jobs. Entrepreneurship."

The Food Hub is based on a system of interdependent activities including commercial kitchens, a community café, cold/dry storage, and food systems focused incubator rooted in proven models that deliver positive outcomes in job training, workforce readiness, food waste reduction, healthy food access, income generation and business development.

This past fall, The Production and Training Kitchen piloted the 15-week Culinary Workforce Training Program where participants learn skills to



A great example of a successful community collaboration is when No More Empty Pots and the Florence Mill teamed last fall to present a "Blues & BBQ Harvest" Fundraiser to support Phase 2 of the NMEP Food Hub and the restoration of the Florence Mill Cob Shed.

prepare them for a career in the food and beverage industry through culinary skills training, career development, internship and job search/placement assistance.

The upper levels of the Food Hub are currently under construction with projected completion in late 2018 to include; Kid's Kitchen, Business Incubator, Community Café and Rooftop Garden.

No More Empty Pots has also introduced new programs. Reading Time, hosted at No More Empty Pots, is an intergenerational program focused on literacy.

NMEP in partnership with the Omaha Public Library invites the community in for themed reading and activities.

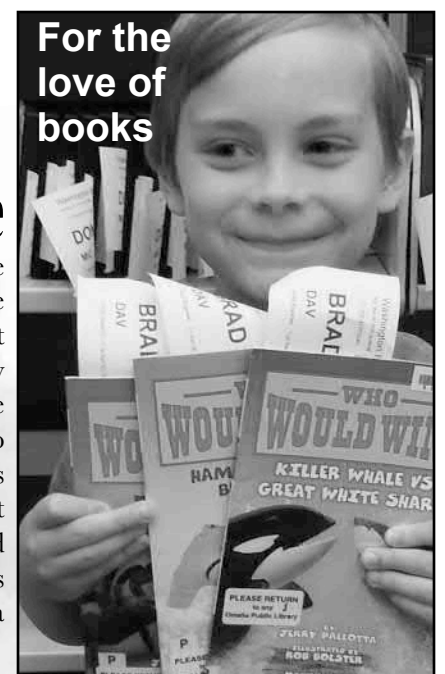
Additionally, NMEP will offer a CISCO Internet of Things curriculum in which 12 - 24 year olds will use technology to solve problems today's farmers are facing.

To learn more about No More Empty Pots, visit [nmpomaha.org](http://nmpomaha.org) or email [info@nmpomaha.org](mailto:info@nmpomaha.org).

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### Discovering Library's Hold Service

Six-year-old David Bradley III is a bibliophile who knows his books. While in the Florence Branch Library recently, he had his heart set on checking out a particular title that was only available at a branch across town. So he insisted that he and his mother drive there to pick up the book immediately. When his mom, Andrea Montana, gently explained that a long drive is unnecessary because he could request the book be delivered directly to this branch by truck, the wide-eyed child shot a fist in the air and shouted YES!





# Save the Date

by Lois Jordan

## Third Annual Taste of Florence Sept 9, 2018

Hey Newbies to Taste of Florence! – you have to experience the fun and camaraderie of this special event and you too will become a repeat visitor! Senior Health Foundation is pleased to announce the 3rd Annual Taste of Florence food festival this fall at the Florence Home Healthcare Center – between Reynolds & Sheffield Streets on North 30th.

For those of you who have shared in this delectable experience the past two years, you are in for another fantastic treat!

“You won’t want to miss this spectacular event!”



Taste of Florence 2018 will feature mouth-watering food samples from the best local restaurants in the Florence neighborhood and surrounding areas. You will enjoy games for the kids, music for adults and fun for everyone! Details and ticket info at [TasteOfFlorence.net](http://TasteOfFlorence.net).

Heartfelt thanks to all the vendors and visitors who participate, indulge and support Florence in “Building a Strong Community.”

Senior Health Foundation helps fill the gaps in funding for critical programs for seniors in Omaha through Midwest Geriatrics, Inc. MGI has served Omaha seniors since 1906 and been a ‘neighbor’ in the Florence community since 1916.

You won’t want to miss this spectacular event! See you in September. ❖

*President & CEO of Midwest Geriatrics in Florence, Lois Jordan is this year's 2018 Taste of Florence Coordinator.*



**Mark your calendar now!**

*Taste of Florence 2018, Sunday Sept 9, 1-5 p.m.  
Florence Home Healthcare, 7915 N 30th St.  
This year will feature over 20 restaurants, live music and activities & games for kids. A surprise autumn-themed contest will round out the afternoon and promises to be fun for all.  
Visit [tasteofflorence.net](http://tasteofflorence.net) for details and tickets.*



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**Collaborative Community Centered Food Hub**

No More Empty Pots empowers the community through local foods, training, jobs and entrepreneurship. The Food Hub provides educational opportunities, access to affordable healthy foods, and community collaboration.

**Now Open**

- Shared-use Commercial Kitchen Available to rent by the hour for prep, production & storage.
- Training & Production Kitchen Houses the 15-week Culinary Workforce Training Program Available to rent by the hour for prep, production & storage.

**Coming Soon**

- Kid's Kitchen
- Community Café
- Business Incubator
- Rooftop Garden

Contact Us: 8511 N. 30th St. Omaha, NE 68112 // 402.502.1642 // [info@nmepomaha.org](mailto:info@nmepomaha.org) // [www.nmepomaha.org](http://www.nmepomaha.org)

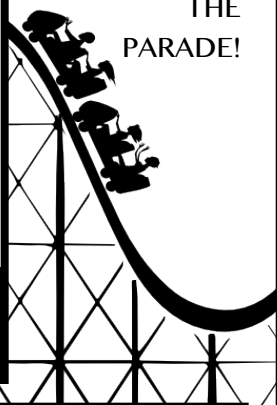
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## Neighbors Join Florence Citizen Patrol to Support Building a "Safe" Community

by John Lemen

Florence resident Linda Workman was fed up with the criminal activity in her neighborhood; thefts, car break-ins, vandalism were on the increase and she was mad! She made phone calls, printed flyers, and used email and social media to get the word out about a kick-off meeting for organizing a Citizens Patrol in Florence.

Florence Historical Foundation donated use of the West Wing meeting room this past Sept 25 at Florence City Hall for the gathering ... and the room was packed!

Presenter Roger Hansen of the Omaha Coalition of Citizen Patrols focused on the differences between a Neighbor Watch group and a Citizens Patrol, how the city-wide Omaha Coalition of Citizens Patrols assists the 35 neighborhood patrol groups and the procedure to form a neighborhood patrol in Florence.

The crowd's response made the high level of interest in getting a group started obvious and the Coalition immediately scheduled a training session and 23 neighbors completed the course. (As of this writing, seven more folks have completed training.) The new official Patrol group jumped right in. By our first Florence Citizens Patrol meeting (Oct 23, 2017), we had racked up more than 2500 miles and 360 hours of patrolling in just 3½ months! So, what do we do?

## FAQs:

Got questions? Here are some

### What is the Citizen's Patrol?

We are the eyes and ears for the police. We patrol the neighborhood and report any suspicious activity to the police. We do not leave our vehicle and we do not confront or apprehend anyone.

### What is the Florence Area?

Our "official" boundaries are Forest Lawn Avenue / Potter Street on the south, Cook Street on the north, 27<sup>th</sup> Street on

the east, and Mormon Bridge Road on the west. Teams also patrol the 30th Street business district between Forest Lawn and Martin Avenues, Florence Heights and Wyman Heights and the neighborhood near High Point pool.

### How Does it Work?

We go out with at least two people in a vehicle; we patrol any day of the week, at any time that works out for the teams. If two teams schedule a patrol at the same day and time, they coordinate efforts so that one team patrols the North-South streets and avenues, and the other covers the East-West streets. Each vehicle is marked with magnetic signs, and the teams carry photo ID badges. The teams can use scanners or a smartphone app to monitor Police Department radio traffic, and use their personal cell phones to contact 911 to report suspicious activity.

### Who Are We?

We are fathers, mothers, grandparents, single, married or divorced people of every race and creed. We are a diverse group of neighbors who live in and care about the Florence community, and want it to be a safe place to live and work. We also enjoy getting to know our neighbors on a more personal level and love making new friends. Our current officers are: President- Linda Workman, Vice President - John Lemen, Secretary - Laura Jacobberger, and Sharon Perrigo is our Treasurer.

### Do You Have Meetings?

Yes, and we welcome everyone! Meeting are held 6:30 pm at the North Bowl on the second Monday of every month; the meetings start at 6:30 PM and run about an hour long. Meetings are open to the public and new dues required!

### What Do I Need to Bring?

Just yourself! ... and your concerns, fears, strengths, ideas, friends and neighbors. What we really need is a small investment of your time and a willingness to make a positive difference in your community.



### How Much Time Does it Take?

On average, each team usually patrols two or three times a month, and it takes about two hours to patrol our area, so the time commitment is very small. There's no minimum or maximum - whatever time you donate is appreciated!

### Where Do You Get Your Funding?

Government sponsored grants and donations from neighbors and area businesses; we will be conducting fund-raising events to enable us to purchase equipment such as two-way radios, police scanners, spotlights, magnetic signs for our vehicles, etc.

### How Do I Get Started?

Send an email to: [FlorenceOCCP@gmail.com](mailto:FlorenceOCCP@gmail.com)  
Training is easy. Register to attend an evening Omaha Citizen's Patrol Training Class, normally held at the Police Department's Northwest Precinct Headquarters (102nd St, north of Fort St) Upon completion, you'll be issued a photo ID badge.

### ALL NEW FLORENCE CITIZEN PATROL

Come to a meeting. Held 6:30PM, 2nd Mondays of every month at the North Bowl.

No dues! Always open to all!

--- safety is everyone's business ---



# WELCOME

## New Businesses

GTR Sales - Real Estate/Property Mngmt  
30th Redick Ave  
Auto Insurance Mart  
Cameron H. Thomas, Owner  
Audrey Thompson, Insurance Agent  
Shelly Farrester, Property Management

Dye's & Cuts  
Hair Salon | 8319 No 30th St

American Family Insurance  
Reasonable Lawn Care  
Telecom Rescue  
8315 No 30th St

the GET DOWN Ultra Lounge  
8509 No 30th St

Prairie Piece Goods &  
Rock Bottom Books & Antiques  
8523 No 30th St

Beauty-Rama Antiques  
8604 No 30th St

The Florence Everything Store  
Antiques - Collectables - Memorabilia  
8611 No 30th St

Rogers Hair Design  
8808 No 30th St

REIGN Lounge Package & Grill  
8919 No 30th St

Stick & Stone Brick Oven Bakery  
Bakery & Ice Cream  
9518 Calhoun Rd

Junior's FORGOT STORE  
Bar & Grill | 11909 Calhoun Rd



# “Love Potion #9” --or-- “All is Love in Fair and War”

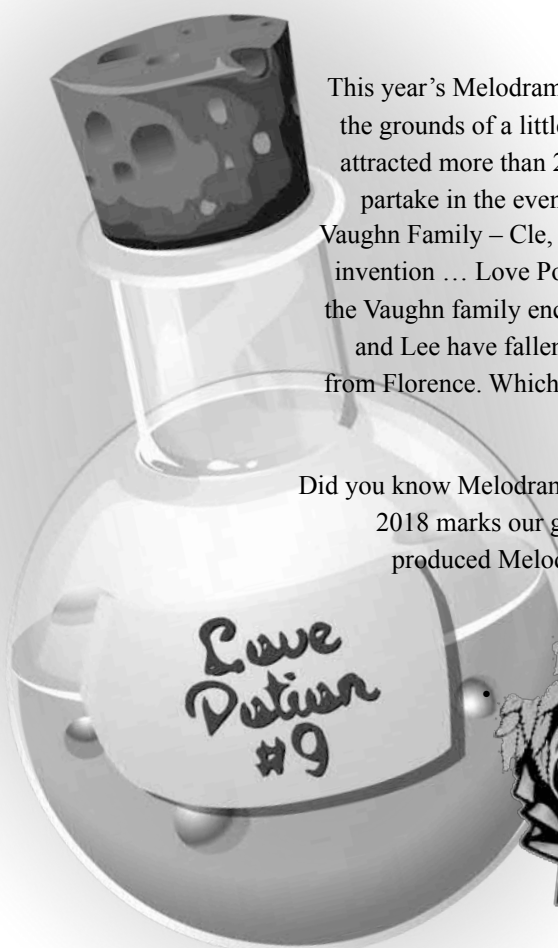
**Producing Theater:**

The Florence Community Theater and The Florentine Players.

**Show Summary:**

This year's Melodrama is set during the World's Fair (Trans-Mississippi Exposition of 1898), on the grounds of a little park in North Omaha. The 1898 Fair sprawled across 108 city blocks and attracted more than 2.6 million visitors. Even President William McKinley arrived in Omaha to partake in the event. This is the backdrop for our little story. A family of inventors / cons, the Vaughn Family – Cle, Lee, Dee and Vince – have arrived at the World's Fair to launch their latest invention ... Love Potion #9 (the first 8 potions just didn't work out). While at the World's Fair, the Vaughn family encounters an interesting cast of characters; and for the first time brothers Cle and Lee have fallen in love with the same woman, a vaudeville performer named Lady who is from Florence. Which brother will win her heart? Will good or evil prevail? Will they ever find a cure for the swelling Love Potion #6 caused?

Did you know Melodramas have been produced by “The Florentine Players” since 1928? Although 2018 marks our group's 54th regular season, 2018 marks the 90th year of Florentine Player-produced Melodramas! Come out and audition to be part of a fun, over-the-top, and nearly century-old tradition in the heart of the oldest city in Nebraska!



**Production Dates:**

May 10, 11, & 12, 7pm

Shows performed at Florence City Hall

2864 State St., Omaha

**Contact Information:**

Derek Kowal, Director

[DerekKowal@gmail.com](mailto:DerekKowal@gmail.com)

Tel: 402-216-4944



## KNOWN FOR GREAT PROGRAMS

*Contributed by Ruth Kruse*

Florence AARP is a time of great fellowship, excellent food and good humor.

After a hearty meal, friends become informed on issues which concern senior citizens. Several programs include health information and financial concerns of seniors.

Programs include presentations from other countries as well as lively musical sessions. Ira Combs (NOAH), Johnny Ray Gomez and Greg Owen are all presenting programs this year.

Meetings are open to all every third Monday. Dinner at NOON.

Mountview Presbyterian Church, 5301 Hartman.

Reserve your seats, call Gerry Goldsborough 402-571-0971

Rides are available, call Ruth Kruse, 402-453-4825.

### FLORENCE AARP's 2018 PROGRAM LINEUP

MAY 21  
Mickey Wilroth & Walter Garrow  
Impersonations

JUNE 18  
Theresa Jordan  
CareMatrix

JULY 16  
Dr. Gabriel Long  
AWAKEN Chiropractic

AUGUST 20  
Johnny Ray Gomez  
Music with Humor

SEPTEMBER 17  
Annual Picnic

OCTOBER 15  
Tom Neal  
Nebraska Organ  
Recovery

NOVEMBER 19  
Nathan Morgan  
The Big Garden

DECEMBER 10  
Greg Owen  
Holiday Music

## KIWANIS CLUB OF FLORENCE WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

~ connecting with your community is rewarding for all ~

Join us at our next KIWANIS CLUB of FLORENCE meeting to get acquainted and see the amazing things we do for the community -- such as:

- Adopt-a-School Partner for Florence Elementary School
- K-Kids Sponsor for Ponca Hills Elementary School
- Annual Florence Days Partner
- B.U.G. (Bring Up Grades) Award Partner
- Florence Historical Foundation Partner
- Host for New Citizens at Monthly Naturalization Ceremonies
- And more!

Weekly Meetings NEW LOCATION  
7 a.m. every Wednesday

Stick & Stone Brick Oven Bakery & Gifts | 9518 Calhoun Rd.  
Stop by or email us for more information: [FlorenceKiwanis@cox.net](mailto:FlorenceKiwanis@cox.net)



# 58th Annual Florence Days

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Sisters  
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BUILDING A  
**STRONG**  
community



*Make the Rounds  
on Parade Day  
May 12, 2018*

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Free Hot Dogs & Drinks 11AM-1PM

UNIVERSAL COLLEGE of HEALING ARTS  
Free Chair Massages Noon-1PM

FLORENCE MILL

OPEN HOUSE 1-5PM

DURING & AFTER PARADE

Opening: Family Ties: Art of the Apron

AFTER THE PARADE

3:30 pm Tidbits & Ties Talk

with Betty Davis, Retired Director of the

Douglas County Historical Society

Farmers Market Sundays

11AM-3PM starting June 5

More info on page 14.

ENZO's ITALIAN

DURING & AFTER PARADE

Outside grill, meatball burgers,  
sausage & peppers, beer & wine

THE NEW FRONTIER BAR

PARADE DAY OPEN at 10AM

8516 N 30th St

Live Music featuring

CIRKLE OF FIFTHS AT 3PM

CRAYON CASTLE

Root beer floats, hotdogs, games &  
BOUNCY HOUSE!

HISTORIC BANK of FLORENCE MUSEUM

PARADE DAY 11AM-1PM

3502 N. 30th St.

Bring your photos of people, businesses,

homes, buildings and the stories

behind them. More info on page 4.

HYVEE

Grilled burgers, brats,  
hotdogs & smoked ribs

BEARD CONTEST

Registration at 11PM

Contest at NOON

At the mini park - 30th & Willit

More info on page 14.



THE 54<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FLORENCE

## MELODRAMA

"LOVE POTION NO. 9" OR  
"ALL IS LOVE IN FAIR AND WAR"

MAY 10-12, 2018  
7:00 PM

FLORENCE CITY HALL  
2864 STATE ST.

TICKETS \$10  
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FLORENCETHEATER.ORG



*Parade begins at Miller Park (3*

# Parade

ers - 2018 Theme: Building a Strong Community

Saturday May 12

PARADE STARTS at 1PM

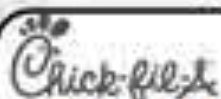
Miller Park, 30th & Redick

**SUPPORT  
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Check out the food, arts, &  
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Activities & fun for the whole family ... all day & into the evening!

## Florence Home

7915 N 30th Street  
Health Fair / Career Fair  
Blood Pressure / ACCE Check  
Saturday, May 12, 2018

 Brought to you by  
North Omaha Kiwanis & Chick-Fil-A

## \$5 Lunch Boxes

Serving sandwiches, chips & water  
at FLORENCE PARK  
11:30am to 3pm  
Saturday, May 12, 2018

Sponsored by Florence Kiwanis

## Operation Lifesaver Inc ROCK BOTTOM BOOKS

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Locomotive Simulator - Crashed Car  
Storyboard After Parade  
Saturday, May 12, 2018

## American Family Insurance

8315 N 30th Street  
SPIN THE WHEEL NOON-3pm  
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Saturday, May 12, 2018

## Mormon Trail Center & Museum

34th & State Streets  
FREE TOURS: 9am to 9pm  
Saturday, May 12, 2018

## MUSEUMS OPEN

Bank of Florence | 8502 N. 30th St.  
Florence Depot | 9000 N. 30th St.  
Open 11am to 3pm  
Saturday, May 12, 2018

River City Carnival & North Bowl Proudly Presents Building a Strong Community Fair

## RIDES . GAMES . FOOD

North Bowl Fair - May 10, 11, 12

Friday 5-11pm

Saturday noon-11pm

Sunday Noon-6pm

at the North Bowl Parking Lot

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Live Music on the Lanes

Sat., May 12, 2018 | 5-10pm

"Building a Strong Community" Fair

Sponsored by North Bowl

30th & Redick) & proceeds north to McKinley

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# Was the First Florentine Players Melodrama Performed in 1964, or in 1929, or ... ?

by John Lemen



This is Ruth Lonergan, who will play the leading role in the melodrama, "Eyes of Love," which will be presented by the Florentine Players under the direction of H. C. Smith at the Florence Community Building, Tenth and Clay streets, Friday and Saturday.



Ruth Lonergan, who will play the leading role in the Florentine Players' production of "The Pace at the Window," a comedy-drama, at the Florence Community House, Tenth and Clay streets, Friday and Saturday nights, June 5 and 7. H. C. Smith is directing the play.

The Florentine Players are promoting this year's Melodrama, "Love Potion #9 or All is Love in Fair and War", as their 54th season. However, a couple of World-Herald articles that recently surfaced feature sisters Mary and Ruth Lonergan starring in Florentine Players Melodramas back in 1929 and 1930, respectively.

The 1929 and 1930 plays were both directed by a "H.C. Smith", and were performed at the Florence Community Building at 30th & Clay St. Margaret Kelly Menius, one of Ruth Lonergan Kelly's daughters, says that her father, John J. Kelly, and her aunt Una Kelly also performed in those old melodramas. Una Kelly Lemen was a member of the group that revived the Florentine Players in the mid 1960's.



Rosemary Allen, Historical Bank of Florence Museum Curator, found another old photograph labeled "Original Florentine Players", showing actors from Florence Presbyterian Church on the Florence Community Center's stage – unfortunately, the photo is not dated. The photo's label does identify the third lady from the left as Susie Klever, "operator of the confectionary store at the end of the street car line at 30th & Fillmore Streets." But who are these other Florentine Players?



If any of our readers can identify other performers in the photograph or the approximate date this photo was taken, please email a message to us at [florencecnewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:florencecnewspaper@gmail.com).

Gather your photos & stories and drop by the Bank of Florence Museum 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **PARADE DAY** May 12 (details page 4)



See our ad on page 10



Don't miss our next show

# Northern Lights Garden Club Needs You!

by Paige G. Wagner, President, Northern Lights Garden Club

Northern Lights Garden Club meets the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm at the Mormon Trail Center and is open to the public. On site meetings take place during "winter" months of November, February and March, with informative talks in climate change, edible fungi and the art of



Photo by Joan Allen

using re-claimed woods.

When no one can stand to be inside any more, trips to Lauritzen Gardens, Glacier Creek Preserve, Paradigm Gardens, Lavender Farm, nursery tours and private garden visits are arranged. The group organizes frequent work parties to clean up, weed, mulch, and plant bulbs (look for the colorful tulips and daffodils), perennials, and annuals along the N. 30<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. In fact, the Club was recently awarded The Community Betterment Award by the North Omaha Commercial Club at the December holiday gathering.

It is the hope that all stakeholders in the Florence community--- commercial and otherwise--- continue to work together to beautify and improve the area where we all love to work, live and play.

During this years' parade, please be mindful to help keep our corridor clean. Throw litter in receptacles, not on the sidewalk. We need your help to keep our community beautiful. When you see a weed, pull it and when you see litter, pick it up!

**Be a proud citizen.  
When you see a weed, pull it.  
When you see litter, pick it up!**

# Well-Designed Public Spaces Add Value

by Crystal Sierra

Public spaces are all around us. Whether we are addressing a narrow sidewalk or your neighborhood park, these physical features in your community shape the way you use or don't use them. Public spaces play a critical role in the social fabric of our communities.

Imagine your favorite park, it could be here in Florence or Minne Lusa or in a city you like to visit. Is it a place where community members gather and welcome visitors? Are there cultural and social functions held regularly? Is it accessible by public transportation? Does it feel safe? These questions matter not only in your community, but in all

**"never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."**

— margaret mead

neighborhoods across the globe because every community has a right to great public spaces.

A few weeks ago, Miller Park Minne Lusa Neighborhood Association, Nelson Mandela Elementary School, Black Police Officers Association, Omaha Parks and Recreation, and Lozier Foundation partnered with Omaha by Design to host a Place Game at Miller Park. A Place Game is an organized and simple way to re-envision improvements to a public space.



It is an interactive opportunity for community members to be the experts on the spaces they use. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 over thirty participants examined seven areas of Miller Park, provided recommendations, and identified potential partners to help with the implementation of these improvements. In order to build strong communities, we must organize our efforts together. A participant shared, "I want a safe place to bring my grandkids and this is the way to get it." Another participant wrote, "This gives me hope for the future of this place." Remember to never underestimate the kind of change a small group of committed citizens can make!

For more information on a Place Games and Placemaking visit [pps.org](http://pps.org) or [omahabydesign.org](http://omahabydesign.org). If you're interested in hosting a Place Game contact Omaha by Design at [info@omahabydesign.org](mailto:info@omahabydesign.org). ❖

Omaha by Design is an urban design and policy nonprofit that contributes to a thriving community by convening, engaging, education, and advocating for excellence in urban design and policy.

Omaha by Design Program Manager Crystal Sierra moved from Southern California and is currently pursuing an Urban Studies Master's degree at UNOmaha. Her research focus is in enhancing public life and public spaces. She is also an active member of the Restoration Exchange Omaha Education Committee.



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details on page 4

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## 2018 Florence Mill: Agriculture, History & Art... & fun too!

Open 1-5 Wed thru Sat... AND Market Sundays 10-3 June thru Sept.

**May 12: Florence Days Open House... Opening of a special exhibit, "Family Ties: Art of the Apron"** Come to the Mill after the Parade for a 3:30 Tidbits & Ties Talk with Betty Davis, retired Director of the Douglas County Historical Society. (our matriarch in the Know!)

**Winter-Quarters Mill Museum** Nebraska's oldest business site tells the story of the Florence Mill, its Pioneers founders, its 1856 rebirth...and its rebirth again in 1998.

### ArtLoft Exhibits

**May/June...** "Family Ties: Art of the Apron" ...A wonderful collection of aprons from our own backyard (Minne Lusa) With thanks to Donna Shonkwiler for sharing.

**July/August...** "TinkerBell's Mausoleum"...Assemblages from Whimsical to Macabre

**September...** "Becoming Flesh" Drawings by Mary Heldridge  
2018 recipient of the Connor Meigs Art Award

### Special Events

**May 19 "Family Ties: Lunch for the Loo"** Wear your favorite apron to a fundraiser luncheon & a talk with Sarah Baker Hansen & Matthew Hansen, authors of "The Better Half: Nebraska's Hidden Treasures"

**May 24 Omaha Gives...** Calling for recipes from your favorite matriarch/patriarch

**October 6&7: Omaha North Hills Pottery Tour...** Extended hours for a mill-full of ceramic arts. Also Pumpkin Patch & Notre Dame Sisters Kolache Bake-Sale.

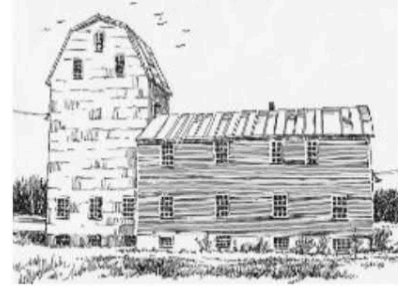
**Florence Mill Country Market... 10 am to 3 pm**  
**Every Sunday from June thru September**

Alpacas start the Market's 2018 "Country School" season on June 3

Every Sunday: Special Agricultural Guests (often critters) & Live Music  
Last Sundays: Free Pony-Rides, Giant Bubbles & Miss Joan's Craft Table

Many thanks to North-Omaha Commercial Club, Florence Kiwanis & North Omaha Kiwanis Clubs for kindly sponsoring port-a-potties at the Florence Mill since 2009.  
**New this summer: Real bathrooms will be installed under the rebuilt cob-shed!**

**9102 North 30th Street, Next to I-680 Exit 13 and OJ's**  
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## Florence Mill

**Museum & ArtLoft opens Florence Days!**

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# For the Love of Facial Hair (& contest)

by Keith Hauger

Annual Beard Contest  
Registration at 11am  
Contest at Noon  
May 12 PARADE DAY

Along with being on the board of the Florence Historical Foundation, I'm a member of the Omaha Facial Hair Society. I travel around the country competing in facial hair competitions which are held to raise money for different charities. I'm currently ranked 4th in the nation and 23rd in the world.

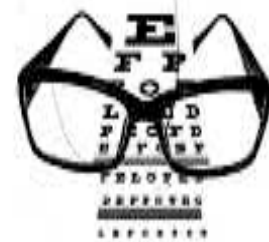
Along with helping out many charity groups, it's a lot of fun for all involved, so last year I reintroduced beard contests to Florence Days. It was a minor success so we will be doing it again!

So come out and join in the fun by entering in one of the four categories: Full Beard under 8 inches, Full Beard over 8 inches, Partial Beard and Moustache.

We will meet by the Florence Bank at 11:00 A.M. to register; judging will be at noon. Thanks to Blue Bottle Beard and Monster Engraving, we will have some great prizes for the winner. ❖

*Vintage photo in public domain.*

Why is the word "phonics" not spelled the way it looks?



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# Strong Community: a teen perspective

by Sarah Schonberner (AKA sarahsuz)

My name is Sarah Schonberner, I was born in Florence and I have lived here my whole life, which would be around 15 years! I know almost every street, store, and park like the back of my hand. Now where should I start? Oh, of course, the beginning!

Florence became a city in 1855, and still has some of the VERY old houses that are over 100 years old, including my house. Interesting story about my house is that it was originally a cabin by the river built by the guy who owned Chicago Lumber as a getaway place for himself. My house has a "murphy bed" that comes out of the wall, a fancy barbecue pit made out of flagstone in the backyard, a cool cellar door that leads to the basement and a cobblestone fence around the front. You can't find houses like these anywhere else! There are so many cool buildings and houses that I just love. So much so, that I am thinking of becoming an architect.

Now about my time in Florence explain...

Like I said, I have lived my whole life; the first thing I remember from my childhood is the Park near the church (St. Phil's). That park has been there and there have been parties at the park, some with neighbors and some with the neighborhood at the church.

How about the Florence Day Parade?

It's always around the beginning of summer about the time school gets out so everyone is excited!! I have been in the parade many times. With my baton twirling group, with the library holding the banner and then once, when I was around 11, I rode my unicycle in the parade with the library group with one of those colorful umbrella hats.

Now a little about my church, St. Philip Neri/Blessed Sacrament. The church is a big part of my life here in Florence. I was baptized there, had my first communion there, my confirmation there and hopefully I will someday get married there like my mom and dad did. Our church is so fun! We have movie night, the pancake breakfast and the festival and a lot more, but the best is bible camp. I have been going to bible camp at St. Philip Neri every year

since I was 3 years old. I have never missed a bible camp, and now that I am older I volunteer there.

Florence is a great place to ride a bike because everything is so close, like the pool, the library, the store, the parks, and my cousins' house. I would ride my bike to the stores once I was old enough and pay for my own things and look around and maybe stay out a LITTLE longer than I was supposed to, and sometimes I would go see if the church was open and park my bike inside and pray a little. I thought life was great here. Everything was perfect, until one day mom and dad said they were going to sell the house. "WHAT?!!!" It looked like my time in Florence was coming to an end.

My mother and father wanted to move because they were tired of fixing up our old house and were moving to a different part of Omaha or maybe even to Florida! Just because they had their second honeymoon there. Whatever. I was devastated. My oldest brother Jacob and I really didn't want to move, my second oldest brother Robert didn't care, but the house was old and falling apart and my parents were getting tired of having to keep fixing things over and over again. My mom and dad said they were so surprised that we didn't want to move and that we loved our old house. They thought we wanted to move too! I said, "We can't leave! We need our old

house - it needs us because we love it and take care of it. We need Florence and Florence needs us to stay as a family so it can keep growing with more good families and as the theme says, build a stronger community".

I'm 99.9% sure that Florence will always be my home. I don't think anywhere in the world could top it. It's not too dusty like the country or too over the top and fancy like big cities. Its cozy - the perfect fit for me. Florence means a lot to me and everyone in it. I'm so lucky and proud I get to live in this place in the world I call home. I know it sounds cheesy but I'm being honest! I love it here! So let's just say.....

FLORENCE. Is the place to be. It's a great place just come and see. I don't think I'll ever leave.

Hello, I'm Sarahsuz!



There is no place like this place anywhere near this place ... so it must be the place!

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# Healing Arts School Touts Their Community Service Hours

by Paulette Genthon

Universal College of Healing Arts (UCHA) prides itself in the belief of Community Service for a STRONG COMMUNITY! This sense of community has been a deciding factor for many in their selection process for this school. UCHA offers programs in Massage Therapy and Structural Integration (Hellerwork).

UCHA is an ABHES Accredited College. UCHA feels so strong about giving to our community that a course was created called Community Service. The course allows for compassion, integrity, and personal values. It creates a sense of empowerment and fulfillment. For some, it is the beginning of a life dedicated to social responsibility. Just this past year, UCHA worked with 25 different groups, averaging 2-4

events per month in our communities!! UCHA's goal is to offer massage/bodywork to those who cannot afford or travel to a massage clinic. Such examples were at Group Homes, Fire Stations, Health Fairs, Creighton Athletics, Hospices House, Florence Nursing Home, Charles Drew Center, Girl Scout Volunteers, & American Cancer Society.!

UCHA sets up a clinic on-site both at the College World Series and the Olympic Swim Trials for Athletes and Staff. Gift Certificates are distributed through CHI to give to patients in need. UCHA has even opened its campus grounds for a Community Garden.

Since 1995, UCHA prides itself with 20,000 hours of Community Service and is still going STRONG.



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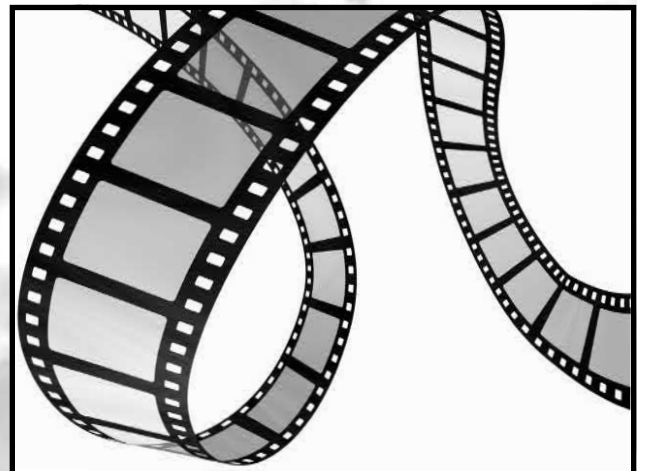
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# Celebrating Spring by Building A Strong Community



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Justin Wayne  
District 13

## 2018 FLORENCE DAYS

# 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 2018 Building a Strong Community! 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 *Dick Brown*  
Chairman, 2018 Florence Days Parade & Newspaper



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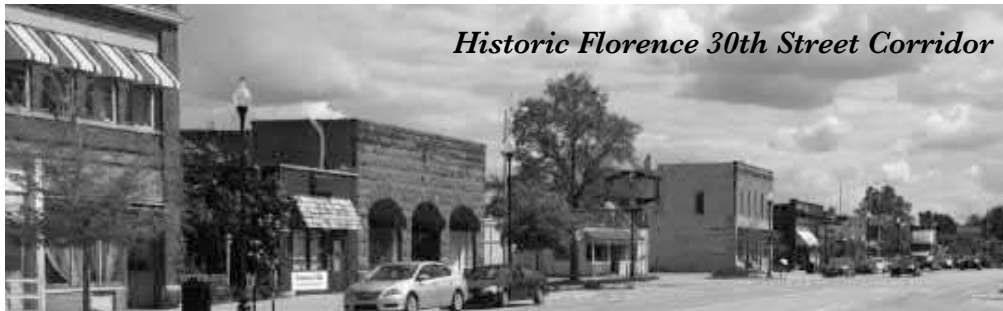
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# North Omaha Commercial Club Helps Keep Florence Community Connected

by Mele Mason

The NOCC has been a community organization in our area for well over sixty years. The Club usually meets the last Monday of the month from September through June. The purpose of the meetings is to highlight businesses, events and causes in the area, and to keep the communication between different organizations in the Florence area flowing.



*Historic Florence 30th Street Corridor*

Source: NOCC Facebook profile at [facebook.com/pg/NorthOmahaCommercialClub/about/](https://facebook.com/pg/NorthOmahaCommercialClub/about/)

One of the highlights of our year is our annual presentation of the Community Betterment Award each December. This year, the Award was presented to the Northern Lights Garden Club for their hard work and dedication in planting flowers and maintaining the flora along 30<sup>th</sup> Street. NOCC also hosted a lively Town Hall at the Florence Library featuring City Councilman Pete Festersen, County Board Representative Clare Duda and State Senator Justin Wayne.

NOCC normally hosts meetings at different local restaurants, providing members dinner and a speaker for \$15 per person. They also host a Picnic each June. The cost to become a member of the North Omaha Commercial Club is \$55 per year. The cost covers our monthly newsletter printing and postage. Members are included in an annual NOCC roster, and are put on a Community Email Newsletter.

Contact Mele Mason for more information at [melemason@aol.com](mailto:melemason@aol.com).

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Jane McClurkin, Seth Sommers, Nicole Bobier and others at the Florence Mural celebration in August 2016.  
Source: NOCC Facebook page at [facebook.com/pg/NorthOmahaCommercialClub/](https://facebook.com/pg/NorthOmahaCommercialClub/)

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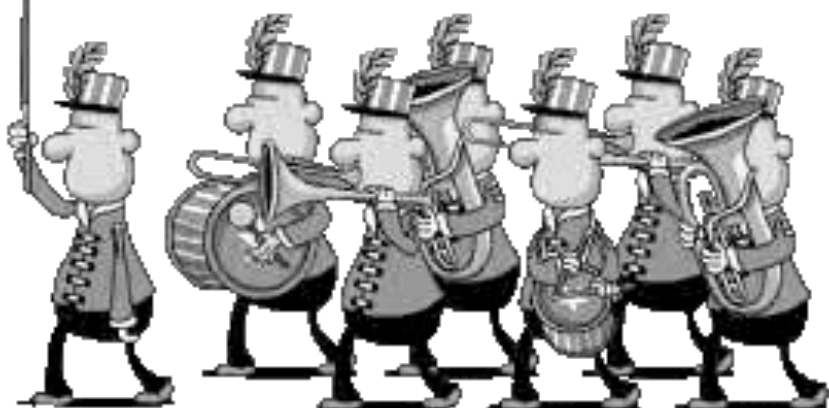
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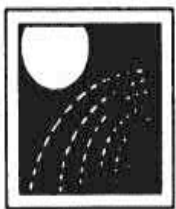
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| Mike Haines            | Perry Douglas Smith                  |
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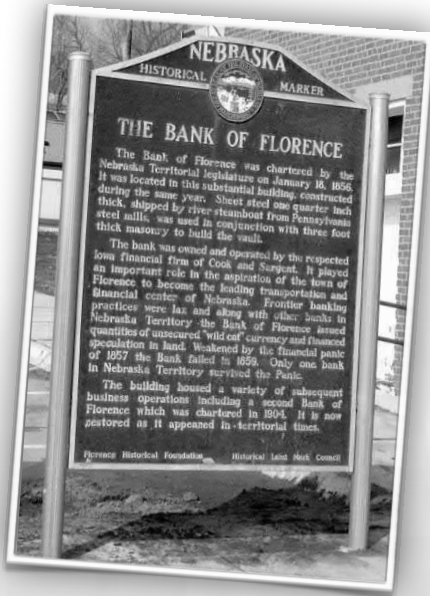
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Established in 1856, The Bank of Florence is the oldest bank in the state of Nebraska. Currently a museum, the bank is open for tours 11am-3pm on Saturdays and Sundays from mid-May thru August 31.  
**Call 402-453-4462**  
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Open every Saturday and Sunday  
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**BANK OF FLORENCE MUSEUM**  
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