



# MARION HERITAGE CENTER & MUSEUM

News from the Marion Historical Society

MARCH 2026

## From the President's Desk

I am wearing a couple of hats these days...and as cold as it was in January...they have been quite welcome! As many of you know, in order to be the best stewards of the Society's limited funds; the Board made the difficult decision to let our part-time Director go in November. Since that time your Board of Directors have volunteered countless hours to keep the Museum open, clean and organize our space, and plan for the future. Your Board Members, Victor Klopfenstein, Helen Hunter, Vicki Barnes, Susie Stutterheim, and Judy Petersen deserve a great deal of appreciation.

I have taken on the Administrative duties of the Museum for the time being. I am not a stranger to this type of work having run Ushers Ferry Historic Village for 21 years in a previous lifetime. It is interesting to find that the skills, though rusty are still there. I have been busy meeting with people young enough to be my grandchildren, but who are now in leadership positions in our Chamber, Schools, and Museums. My biggest challenge is this blasted computer. I am from the days of the Yellow Legal pad!

Your Board has many exciting plans for the future of the Society and the Marion Heritage Museum. We are committed to developing a permanent exhibit on the History of Marion. We are working with Jack and Doreen Zumwalt who have a wealth of information to assist us.

Finally, I would like to personally thank Mayor Nick AbouAssaly for his support and confidence in our vision for the Marion Heritage Museum. He has been a wonderful ally along with our previous Mayor Victor Klopfenstein. Together we will ALL work toward a bright future for our organization.

Yours in History, *Vicki Hughes*  
President, Marion Historical Society  
Acting Director  
Marion Heritage Museum

## It was the Coldest Day of the Year...



**January 24th** was easily the coldest day of our winter season and your Marion Heritage Museum in collaboration with Historian David Wendell had planned a program called "From Tragedy to Triumph" to remember the Challenger Tragedy but to also look forward to the Artemis Mission this Year. People actually showed up and enjoyed the program and stayed to view David's vast array of Space memorabilia...but it was a little chilly in the Museum that day. Clearly something was wrong with our furnaces (yes, it takes three to heat our building). A technician from Foster-Krauss was called and many hours later the verdict was in...all three furnaces would need to be replaced. The nearly \$13,000 price tag was far more than our budget could handle, so we began to look for emergency help. A late night text to Mayor Nick was answered at 6:30 the next morning and he was on the case. Through his assistance along with City Manager Ryan Waller, he presented the problem to the Marion City Council who agreed to fund this much needed improvement. So, the next time you see one of your Council Members, the City Manager, or Mayor Nick please thank them for our shiny new furnaces!





**The Marion Heritage Center** will open its doors on Saturday, May 16th to the TWENTY-FIFTH annual “Art by Your Friends and Neighbors” art show. This year’s exhibit is expected to feature over 50 works of art by area artists - mostly Marion residents. Included will be drawings and photography, ceramics, watercolor, oil and pastel renderings. In announcing the event, exhibit chairman, Jay Kacena, said that the hundreds of visitors attracted to this event each year confirm the fact that “there are not only a lot of talented people in our town, there is a strong interest by others who enjoy seeing what they can do.” Many of the works are offered for sale. A popular display, dubbed “Repeat, Repeat and Repeat,” features three interpretations of the same subject, painted by three different members of the Creative Artists of Iowa group along with the photograph on which the work is based.



One of last years winners was **David Christiansen** with his graphite drawing : “Treehouse”

As in the past, the exhibit is sponsored by Hills Bank and Trust Company. Visitors will be invited to vote for their favorite entry with \$100 going to the three most popular artists when the show closes on July 25th. **In addition** to the excitement indoors, David Wendell has organized an exciting outdoor event which will include WWII re-enactors. Look for the re-enactors in the grassy area across Tenth Street.

**Can you Help With the Heritage Rummage Sale?**

Last summer your Board was tasked with sorting through 20 years of accumulation when we lost our storage space at the Area Ambulance Barn. We found some wonderful artifacts that will be a part of our permanent exhibit...but we also found some really random things like a fondue pot and a set of goblets! In order to clear out our limited storage space, we will be having a rummage sale on **Saturday, April 29th**. If you have household items that you would like to donate to add to our accumulation please contact Suzy Stutterheim at 319-560-0750.



Support comes from the  
  
 Hotel Motel Grant Fund

*Remembering the Challenger  
40th Anniversary*

**Space Exhibit Continues  
From March 4th to April 18th**

Thursday-Saturday, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Note: On Saturday, January 24, 2026, historian David Wendell gave an illustrated talk on the Challenger tragedy. Even on a very cold day, the talk was attended by some 40 people who wanted to hear the history.



On January 28, 1986, Space Shuttle Challenger broke apart 73 seconds into its flight, killing all seven crew members aboard. The spacecraft disintegrated 46,000 feet (14 km) above the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Cape Canaveral, Florida at 11:39:13 a.m. EST (local time).

**Celebrating Flag Day June 14**



Join the Marion Community Band as we celebrate Flag Day with Patriotic Music and Displays of David Wendell's Historic Flags. Festivities kick off at 1:00 pm.



**WHO WERE OUR ANCESTORS?**

It is a fairly well known fact that our fair city is named after Revolutionary War General Francis Marion...but a paragraph from *Pioneer Life* by George R. Carroll provides important insight into the founding members of our city: "But of the men and women here mentioned, challenge anyone to present a like number, chosen from any community or city, in any stage of their development, whose characters will bear closer scrutiny, or will rank higher in the scale of morality of intelligence than they."

Marion has been blessed with excellent leadership from it's earliest days through today!

**Here Is the Marion Historical Society Board of Directors**



Vicki Barnes, Susie Stutterheim, Vic Klopfenstein (vice-president), Vicki Hughes (president), Judy Petersen, Helen Hunter (treasurer)

## DUES ARE DUE!!

We have heard from many of you and have been gratified to find that a number of you have chosen to support us at the \$100 or higher level. Please know that each and every one of you are appreciated by your Board. If you have not returned your 2026 Membership for the Marion Historical Society we ask that you consider doing so TODAY! If you have misplaced your Membership Letter; here's what you need to know:

Marion Historical Society	Single Membership	\$36
PO Box 753	Family Membership	\$48
Marion, Iowa 52302	Supporter:	\$100
	Super Supporter	\$150+

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



### VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME!

**Do you enjoy meeting new people? How about looking through old books? Whatever your gift happens to be, we can use you at the Marion Historical Museum. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Suzy Stutterheim at 319-560-0750.**



# SAVE THE DATE!

## Marion Historical Society Pancake Fundraiser

The Marion Historical Society Pancake Fundraiser will be Saturday, June 13th. This is one of our most important Fundraising efforts of the year and we need your support...and your help! If you can help that day please contact Vicki Hughes at [vshughes@gmail.com](mailto:vshughes@gmail.com) or text or call her at 319-471-3733.

### Marion Historical Society Mission

The Marion Historical Society is a membership organization that serves to engage the public in the history, traditions, resources and on-going preservation of the Heritage Center museum for the enrichment of the community.

For more information about joining call 319-447-6376.

E-mail to: [marionheritage@marionhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:marionheritage@marionhistoricalsociety.org)

See our website: [www.marionheritagecenter.org](http://www.marionheritagecenter.org)

[www.facebook.com/MarionHeritageCenter](https://www.facebook.com/MarionHeritageCenter)

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