

# The Nosy Neighbor

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## Ornamental Light Poles Coming to Main Street

April 2005 began the long and bumpy process of improving the downtown streetscape. It was then that Main Street Orion received \$4,150 from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to develop a schematic for a downtown streetscape.

The plan, which included ornamental street lights, bollards, planters, benches, and brick-paved sidewalks, was developed and submitted by the village for an Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program grant. In June of the following year, the village board learned the Main Street Orion Streetscape plan was not funded. In 2008, the village again applied for ITEP funding and was denied.

As the old saying goes, the third time is a charm. In October 2010, the village board learned the Illinois Department of Transportation awarded \$174,840 in ITEP funds to improve Orion's

streetscape. Though funding was approved, most of the pretty stuff was eliminated—no bollards, planters, or benches—but it did include lighting, brick pavers for sidewalks, and trees.

Though the award was made by the IDOT, the funds were appropriated by the federal government. This added numerous unforeseen requirements to the plan, for which the village was not financially prepared.

After many redesigns and modifications, caused by changes in federal design standards, the village board finally scrapped the project. Its scope and costs increased substantially from what was estimated for the original design.

A letter was sent to the Illinois DOT, in 2012, formally announcing the village board voted to cancel the streetscape project.

This year, the village board agreed to utilize Tax Increment Finance funds for the purchase and installation of 12 ornamental street lights, six in the 1000 block of 4th Street and six in the 1100 block of 4th Street.

Main Street Orion and the Wyman G. Coulter Trust have also committed funds to be used for the street lights.

Others donating to the project are Orion Mart, Bloomberg Appraisal, SVEA Mutual Insurance, BankORION, and Western District Library. There were also two anonymous donors.

Finally, a project visualized in 2005 will come to fruition in the summer of 2016, not with grant funds, but with the village, Main Street Orion, and business owners working together.

## Senior Housing Update

Since the results of Orion's Senior Housing Survey were determined, Denise Bulat, Executive Director of Bi-State Regional Commission, has assisted Orion by contacting the manager of senior homes in West Liberty and Wilton, Iowa, regarding not-for-profit senior living facilities.

Bulat also had contact with a

village administrator from a nearby municipality, who recommended several companies

that deal with senior living facilities.

The village will follow up with these contacts and others to determine a method of investigating development of a senior living facility - be it independent living, assisted living, nursing home care or all three.



## Adopt-A-Hydrant Program Continues



*Can you help this hydrant get a shiny coat of paint?*

The village had great success with its Adopt-A-Hydrant program last summer. Fifty-five percent of Orion's hydrants were painted by individual residents, church groups, and scout groups.

It is hoped the village can complete the second half of the program by getting volunteers to paint the remaining hydrants. A hydrant typically requires some scraping and one or two coats of paint. This can be completed in about two hours.

Anyone with an interest in this community service project should contact village staff at 309-526-8139. Participants can choose from a list of unpainted hydrants. Paint, brushes, and scrapers will be provided at the village hall.

The base of all hydrants will be painted red, with the top varying in color. The different-colored tops indicate the pressure per square inch of flow. Village staff will provide the appropriate color for each hydrant.

If you think you can spare a few hours of your time this summer, join in and help the village complete its task to have all hydrants bright and shiny before year's end. And thanks to those who helped the village get 55% of the way there last year!

## Robert Dean O'Leary



*O'Leary's Orion High School senior picture, proving he had not lived in the days of covered wagons.*

On February 21, 2016, Robert 'Deano' O'Leary departed this Earth as a result of a series of health complications. He had served as village trustee for 17 years, most recently in charge of the Sewer Committee and a member of the Finance Committee.

O'Leary had a self-deprecating sense of humor and often told the village board he was so old he had ridden in a covered wagon. He had an ability to recall countless things that occurred in the community long ago. Known for being a creature of habit, or maybe stubbornness, he would start wearing shorts on a certain date each spring, continuing through Thanksgiving Day no matter the weather.

O'Leary often referred to his wife Betty as his fine bride. As village trustee, he made it a point to reduce burning in Orion by urging residents to utilize the village's landscape waste site, as a result of his wife's breathing difficulties when smoke was present.

O'Leary's loyal service, personality, and presence on the village board are missed. He was 79 years old.

## Benefits of Landscape Waste Site

*Be cognizant of conditions when burning.*

*Sheriff's deputies can use their discretion to ask you to extinguish a fire.*

*Penalties may apply for those who violate Open Burning regulations.*

For years, the village board fought the problem of smoke-clogged air due to residents burning landscape waste. The worst time of year was leaf burning season, followed closely by summer, when residents burned grass collected from lawns.

A stench would hang over the community, keeping those with asthma or allergies confined indoors and forcing those who wanted to open windows for fresh air to keep them closed. It became a serious problem.

A fence installed around the rock yard area turned out to be the solution. Wyman G. Coulter trust funds became the answer to a prayer. The money

funded the purchase of the fence, and the area soon became familiarly known as the landscape waste site.

The site is open in spring and fall during certain days and hours. Residents can deliver landscape waste to the site, with the exception of grass and mulch, which will be burned under the watchful eyes of village employees.

Residents can still burn landscape waste on their own property, but burning of grass is entirely prohibited. Residents are encouraged to mulch or compost cut grass.

## Mizen Sets Retirement Date

Sandy Mizen, a 14-year employee of the village, will be relinquishing her title of deputy clerk/treasurer on June 30th in a quest to become semi-retired. She will continue employment with Western District Library.

Mizen's duties with the village have included accounts payable, reconciling financial records, managing the website calendar, and learning all aspects of the village government. As deputy clerk, she has operated as a backup to the clerk/collector and performed a variety of functions.

Those duties include payroll, utility billing, code violations, customer service, utility collections, and knowledge of the water, sewer, street, park, and police departments among other things.

Mizen has become a valued employee during her tenure with the village but wishes to be able to spend more time with family and do a bit of traveling.

She has two grown children, Jeremy and Sarah. Her husband Steve is recently retired from a truck driving career and works part-time for River Valley Co-operative.

Before Mizen's departure she will train her replacement, Dee Lundburg. Lundburg assisted the village during an extended absence of the village clerk two years ago. She also worked as a cashier at Orion IGA and previous to that, a trust account administrator for a major bank in the Quad Cities.



*Sandy Mizen*

*Jolly good job,  
Sandra.  
Enjoy your  
retirement!*

## Permits and Inspections

Permits are required for any construction work, including electrical and plumbing, valued at \$500 or more. In the recent past, some homeowners have been told by their contractors that permits and inspections are not required. Homeowners are encouraged to contact the building inspector for permit information. Failure to obtain a permit can result in a job being shut down. Failure to get an inspection can result in completed work being torn apart.

Permit cost is based on the value of the construction project. Additional fees are required for plumbing openings, electrical services, and new water and sewer connections.

Bart Sampson is the building inspector and he is responsible for issuing all permits. Sampson can be reached at 309-781-5408. A permit and display card will be issued for eligible work, and the card must be displayed in a conspicuous place while work is being performed.

The village's electrical inspector is Tony Stiles and the plumbing inspector is Dean Larson. They can be reached at 309-798-6245 and 309-526-3650, respectively.



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## Central Park Host to Memorial Day Service and Summer Concerts

A Memorial Day service will be held May 30, 2016 in Orion's Central Park, at the Veterans Monument. Services begin at 10:00 a.m., and 12th Avenue will be closed between 4th and 5th Streets for public seating. If weather is inclement, the service will be moved to Orion High School.

In addition to Main Street Orion events, the Orion Community Band, formed by Tony Hamilton and consisting of volunteers from Orion, its surrounding communities, and the Quad Cities, will perform in the Central Park Band Shell this summer. Concerts are free and will be played on the dates of June 15th, July 20th, and August 17th.

The Orion Community Band is a dedicated group of musicians, who play favorite Disney tunes, The Sound of Music, Phantom of the Opera, and many more. Bring a lawn chair and refreshments and enjoy an evening listening to your hometown band.

*Don't miss concerts  
by the Orion  
Community Band!*

*June 15th  
July 20th  
August 17th*



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### Inspiring Women

By chance, one spring day, my mother-in-law Jean Sampson offered me a ticket to her church's salad luncheon and quilt show. The day of the event dawned bright and beautiful, making for a great turnout.

After arriving and filling my plate with an array of salads, I looked around for an empty seat. My decision to sit at a table with three 90-year old women was the best thing I did all day.

I knew Dorothy Manacke but not the other two women. First-name introductions went around and soon we were chatting our way through lunch. Before long, my table mate Millie was explaining to me she was Lyle Grundstrom's sister. Lyle, who is deceased, was an Orion resident and business owner. He operated Grundstrom Pump Co. for many years.

We were soon joined by the mother of one of my classmates. She struck up a conversation with Dorothy while Millie, my other table mate Marie, and I continued to talk. Marie said Millie had a career as a nurse, working for Deere & Co., and is a golfer. Millie explained that she now rides in a cart for her golf game, but she used to walk. She also recently received a computer as a gift and is learning how to use it.

All during our conversation, I kept thinking Marie looked familiar. I told her so, and she proceeded to tell me her maiden name was Riggs. She is John Riggs' sister. John and his wife lived in Orion for years, just selling their house in December 2014. Sure enough, I could see the family resemblance in Marie's face.

These three women, Marie, Millie, and Dorothy, all graduated from Orion High School's class of 1944, three of only seven living classmates. Certainly, they'd seen their share of hard work and trying times, but there they were enjoying the day and remaining actively involved in life.

It is inspiring, and somewhat comforting, to know life as we age can still be an adventure. Former mayor Barb De la Paz is always on the go and still drives from a suburb of Chicago to the Quad Cities for doctor appointments and visits with me. She turns 85 this year. My mother-in-law, at age 88, worked the church's salad luncheon and never sat down. My own mother will turn 80 in July, after living with a chronic disease since age 32. Such perseverance.

It was time to return to work, and I hadn't even looked at the quilts. But that was okay. The conversation was better.

-Lori Sampson