



October 22, 2011

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### Historical Society of Pottawattamie County

Carla Borgaila and Ed Ritchie spoke about the Squirrel Cage Jail and the Railswest Railroad Museum at the Treynor Optimist Club on October 22. Ed is the administrator and Carla is from the historical society.

This is the first winter the jail and railroad museum will be open. They will be open Wednesday through Sunday with limited hours. Actual open hours are available on their website, [thehistoricalsociety.org/](http://thehistoricalsociety.org/)

The jail was one of the first with running water. The water ran from the top to the bottom. The original cost was \$28,200, but it would cost about \$1 million today.

The only full-time paid staff was the jailor and his wife. They hired large guards to intimidate the prisoners. In the 1920s, it cost \$50,000 for all the paid staff for the jail for the year. Today jails costs about \$50,000 per inmate.

There were 18 similar jails built, but only three are left. The one in Council Bluffs is the only three story squirrel cage jail left. There was one in Wichita, Kansas that was probably three stories, but it was torn down.

The cells are not very tall and not very roomy. The cells are 8 feet on the outside, but since it is a circular jail, they are very narrow in the center. There are ten cells on each level. The jail was used only for men. Its use ended in 1969.

In 2008 the jail and museum had 50 school tours. This year there were 6 or 7. The State of Iowa ruled in 2009 that students could not be asked to pay for tours, so now the school must pay the entire bill. In

a normal year, about 7000 people tour the jail and railroad museum.

### Meeting Minutes

Gary Funkhouser and Chuck Nielsen provided jokes before the Optimist Club meeting on October 22. Chuck Nielsen opened the meeting with the pledge and the prayer.

Gary Funkhouser contributed to the Youth Fund in recognition of being able to watch the Treynor football game through the internet. Judy Guttau celebrated the bank hosting a speaker spoke at 7 schools in the area. The bank also had an exciting week with Mitt Romney holding an economic roundtable there. Reporters came from across the country. The club also celebrated Marsha Underwood's birthday.

Chuck Nielsen won the 50/50 drawing. Steve Irvin won the attendance drawing. There were 11 members and 2 guests at the meeting.

### Calendar

Oct 26 – Can Kennel sorting for Treynor Optimist Club, 5:00 p.m.

### Birthdays

Sep 30 – Tim Greiner  
Oct 17 – Marsha Underwood (recognized)  
Oct 29 – Bill Vorthmann

### Anniversaries

Sep 26 – Bill & Ann Vorthmann  
Oct 6 – Eric & Kelly Allen  
Oct 13 – Dale & Dianne Willenborg (recognized)  
Oct 17 – Dennis & Kay White (recognized)

### Speakers

Oct 29 - Jeff Danker - Pott. County Sheriff

### Programs

Oct – Gary Funkhouser  
Nov – Arlyn Norris  
Dec – Chuck Nielsen

Dale Willenborg, Editor, 14186 230<sup>th</sup> Street, Council Bluffs, IA 51503 712-366-6815 [dalewill1@juno.com](mailto:dalewill1@juno.com)

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### Age

You know you're past your prime when every time you suck in your gut, your ankles swell.

I don't like to do things now that I did 20 years ago—like look in the mirror.

I'm middle-age, middle-class, and middle-of-the-road. I feel like that white stuff in the middle of an Oreo.

Heck, I don't feel a day older than I did a hundred years ago.

Sometimes I feel old enough to be my own father.

I'm suffering from Mallzheimer's disease. I go to the mall and forget where I parked my car.

You know you're past your prime when you start getting air-guitar elbow.

Age always corresponds inversely to the size of your multi-vitamin.

My neighbors have been married for 60 years. They look like identical twins. One of them wears a dress. I don't know which one.