



## President's Corner

**By Sean Fitzsimmons, Co-President  
Iowa Lincoln Highway Association**

The days continue to get longer and warmer, which gives me and my father time to start working on the many of projects that lay ahead of us in the coming months. Nothing new has really transpired, other than the regular situation of me buying another car and dragging it into our yard where my mother waits and tells me, "Really? You didn't have enough of them already?"

As the days fly by, I become more and more excited about our upcoming conference. Recently, I've been hearing the conference advertised on many major news outlets, which is great! I feel like Jeannie is getting it shaped up to be one of the best conferences the Lincoln Highway Association has ever had! I hope you all are doing well and have a prosperous spring.

Safe travels!

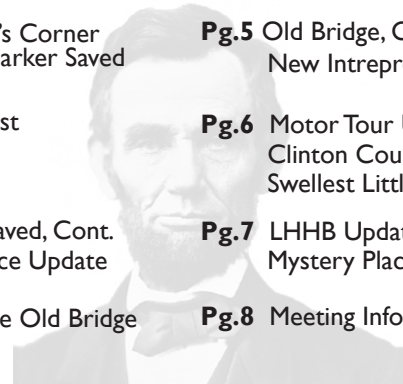
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Photo courtesy of Vicki Gach

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## Lincoln Highway Marker Saved By Barbara Hackfort, Carroll County Consul

Ken and Collette Huntley of Westside found a treasure when they bought and moved onto an acreage a mile west of Westside in 1981. Their new home was located along the Lincoln Highway, a road that was familiar to both, because Collette had grown up in Vail, a few miles to the west, and her husband, Ken, had worked for the DOT in Ames. While trying to clear away some debris in the roadside ditch, they struck what they thought was a cement post. Further effort revealed that it was indeed a cement post, a very special cement post – a Lincoln Highway marker. It was in pretty fair shape, considering that it had been struck off its base and was covered with tar, damage that was probably done when Highway 30 was resurfaced many years ago.

Realizing the significance of what they had discovered, Ken tackled the task of reclamation. The two most pressing problems were the removal of the tar and the building of a new base. Gasoline was carefully applied to remove the tar, and today very little trace of it remains. The problem of resetting the post was solved by drilling a hole in the bottom, inserting a piece of rerod, and then placing the marker in a new cement base.

Now only one problem remained. What could

*Continued on Page Three*

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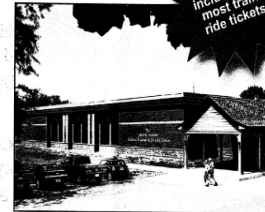
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*Continued from Page One*

be done to forestall future damage? Two major concerns were the preservation of the original medallion, and the protection of the post from wayward vehicles. The first measure taken was to remove the original medallion and to replace it with a realistic facsimile. Then to secure the post itself, it was set back and to the right of the stone pillar located at the entrance of the Huntley driveway. The post is further safeguarded by large rocks arranged in front of it.

If you are attending the National Conference in Denison this June, be sure to stop at Ken and Collette's antique shop, "The Ornery Goat," on the east end of Westside. Learn more about the Lincoln Highway marker, find out about the 1878 schoolhouse, Hayes #6, also located on the acreage, and ask for the story behind the name of their business. You will be glad you did.

**L**



Ken Huntley with the Lincoln Highway marker.  
Photo courtesy of Vicki Gach.

**Due to space constraints,  
January's meeting minutes are  
available on our website.**

## **National Conference Update** **By Jan Gammon, LHHB Coord.** **Prairie Rivers of Iowa**

Plans are being finalized for the National Conference. The registration form went out with the latest national Lincoln Highway Association's Forum and Jeannie Parr reports people are beginning to send them in. Forms may also be downloaded from the Iowa LHA website at [www.iowalincolnhighway.org](http://www.iowalincolnhighway.org)

Polo shirts and T-shirts will be for sale at the conference. But to ensure to get your desired size, please pre-order them on the registration form.

The committee is collecting give-away items for the conference bags and Meredith Ponder is working on the conference program. Please get text into her by April 1st for placement in the program.

Press releases have gone out state-wide to publicize the conference. Jeannie Parr was interviewed by KFJB radio in Marshalltown and several papers published the press releases.

We are getting closer to June 20-24th.  
Hope to see you all in Denison!

**L**



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## **Should the Old Bridge Go?**

**By John Brassard, Guest Writer**

**DeWitt Observer Columnist and Blogger**

Do you remember that magical time when you were a teenager and you first had your driver's license? You could just jump behind the wheel of your car and drive wherever and whenever you chose. Well, as long as it wasn't your parents' car, and you still obeyed their rules. But still, you didn't have to rely on anyone to get around anymore.

I, like most others of my generation, got my driver's license when I was sixteen. At that time, I didn't have a car of my own, but my parents allowed me to drive our Ford Tempo pretty much whenever I wanted. Maybe it was because my mom hated that car with a fiery passion and she hoped I would crash the thing. I should ask her that one of these days... but I digress.

Anyway, at that time, I had a friend that lived on the outskirts of Massillon, Iowa, a wide spot in the road north of Lowden. There were many days that Mom and I would take the half hour or so drive out there from our home in DeWitt to visit the family. During those visits, Mom would let my friend and I take the car out for drives.

And drive we did. More than once we would drive all the way back to DeWitt to visit the comic shop there. One time we drove down to Tipton, Iowa, just because we could. We had a great time, and I got to see a lot of rural Iowa during those days.

One day, I decided to take a turn down a narrow road that I'd never been on before. Now honestly, I can't remember where I got on. But I do know that at one end that road crosses a very old bridge by a golf course called Wapsi Oaks. I do recall how narrow the road was, and there were no painted lines. Memory seems to whisper to me that we passed one other vehicle, and that I was a little afraid of going across the old bridge. I didn't realize that on that day my friend and I had driven down some of the original expanse of the Lincoln Highway.

In 1912, a man named Carl Fisher came up with the idea of a graveled highway that would stretch across the continent from coast to coast. While gravel may seem like an almost silly choice to us today, in those days most roads were made of dirt. During several different times of the year, they would transform into muddy quagmires that were virtually impassable.

Over the next several years, Fisher's dream

would become a reality. Along with the help of Frank Sieberling, the president of Goodyear, the tire manufacturers, and Henry Joy, the president of the Packard Motor Car Company, a route was established between Times Square in New York City and San Francisco. It was also decided to name this new road the Lincoln Highway, in honor of President Abraham Lincoln.

The highway would be the first transcontinental route that stretched across the United States. It would also become the first major concrete road in the nation. Not only could it take you across the county, but it could do so reliably year round, as well. I mean, you're having a really bad day if your car sinks in concrete, right?

Eventually, the government would give all highways and interstates a numbered designation. The history and the name of the Lincoln Highway would fade and eventually be largely forgotten.

But in 1992, the Lincoln Highway Association, a group of concerned individuals across the county who were dedicated to the preservation of the route's history, was formed. They did not want this important part in the history of United States travel to disappear altogether, and they have worked like hell to preserve it ever since.

And that brings us back to that old stretch of road and the bridge in Clinton County. You see, after all these years, the county and the state are trying to figure out what to do with it.

Ultimately, what's at stake is whether or not to tear down the bridge. On one hand, we'll be losing one of the last remaining original sections of the Lincoln Highway in Iowa. On the other, it's going to cost over a million dollars to keep that bridge open for use. So what to do?

The Clinton County chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association has already weighed in on the issue, and they are, obviously, all for preserving the bridge and all it represents. Todd Kinney, Clinton County Engineer, is seemingly trying to look at the issue from the county's standpoint.

Apparently, if the bridge is conserved by barricading the road, there is still the issue of the cost of putting up the barrier to begin with, and the county may have to compensate people who use that route to get to their property. If the county does choose to repair it, then in addition to the cost of repairs and upkeep, Kinney is concerned that the permits required to perform the work may not be granted.

He also says that the bridge, if left alone, will collapse on its own. He just doesn't want the bridge to collapse while someone is driving across it. His goal is to close the bridge so that this doesn't happen.

And so there we have it. Do we tear it down? Do we block it off and allow it to rot into dust and twisted metal? Or do we repair it and preserve it? These are tough questions, with no easy answers.

No matter what, the project is going to cost a lot of money, and it's going to keep costing the county and the taxpayers of Clinton County money to keep it up, just like all the other roads in the nation. But it's a fairly low traffic area, so are the repairs going to be make the effort worth it?

Outside of all this, hovering in the background like an ominous shadow is the decision that the state of Iowa may make to turn the road into a four lane highway, which will take the bridge out of the right away of travel.

Historically speaking, we will be losing one of the last remaining bridges of the original Lincoln Highway, as well as access to an original concrete stretch that passes through rural Iowa. By having that and preserving it, it would allow us to see how travel was in the early days of the 20th century and get a taste of life as it was, giving us a better appreciation and understanding of the past.

Unfortunately, this has always been the state of historical preservation. One side wants to save the past, and the other side is thinking of progress and money. While it's easy to make it a black and white issue, that's not always the case. As are many things in life, there are deep shades of grey that run through this.

Obviously, the past should be preserved and kept. But sometimes certain things, like roadways, have to make accommodations for the needs of modern people. While we may not be able to keep everything, is there a way that we can make a compromise, so that both sides get something out of the deal?

There are too many questions, and some very, very tough answers. I'm afraid that no one is going to walk away from this entirely happy, and it makes me more than a little sad that the little bridge near Wheatland might not be there one day.

But one thing that I have learned is to appreciate what I have while I still have it. Thanks to that bridge and that little stretch of road, I had the opportunity as a very young man to experience travel as some of my ancestors did, and because of that, I feel a little more kinship with them.

So one of these next days, I'd like to gather up my family and head up to Clinton County for a reunion with that bridge. I'm going to tell some stories and take a lot of pictures. Even if the county chooses not to preserve our past, it doesn't mean that I can't get up there and chip off a chunk for myself.

Read more of Brassard's articles on his blog:  
[www.jbrassardjrcom.wordpress.com](http://www.jbrassardjrcom.wordpress.com).

**L**

## New Interpretive Panels in Greene County By Jan Gammon, LHHB Coord.

### Prairie Rivers of Iowa

Four interpretive panels will be installed in Greene County this spring. Under the leadership of Bob and Joyce Ausberger, Greene County LHA, these panels were created to tell the story of the relationship between the Lincoln Highway and the railroad, the story of the Scranton water tower, and the story of the Deep Rock Gas Station in Jefferson. Design work was done by Meredith Ponder, Prairie Rivers of Iowa, under the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway Interpretive Plan. This project was partially funded with a grant from the Greene County Community Foundation.

Each panel will be installed on a weathered steel base with the Iowa Byways logo carved into the bottom base and a unique cutout design at the top of the base. Each interpretive panel contains a mixture of photos, text, and the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway logo.

Be sure to check these signs out when you attend the National LHA Conference this summer!

**L**



## **Motor Tour Update**

**By Bob Osberg, Motor Tour Coordinator**

Things are ramping up for this year's Iowa Lincoln Highway Motor Tour, which is August 18-20 this year. We'll start with pre-tour activities in Sioux City on Thursday August 17. On Friday, we begin the tour from Sioux City heading south for a little time in the Blair, Nebraska and Missouri Valley area.

We'll come back into Iowa through Council Bluffs and make our way to Carroll, Iowa, for our banquet on Saturday evening. Our tour will end in Grand Junction on Sunday. Please join us for the sites, the great people, the fun and the history.

The registration form is currently on the website. Stay tuned for more information.

**L**



## **Clinton County Update**

**By Cathie Nichols, Clinton County Consul**

The bridge over the Wapsipinicon River at Syracuse will be closed within the next two weeks, for safety reasons. The Clinton County Board of Supervisors is against demolishing the bridge, because they hope we can find a way to save it/repair it. We were told it will still be eligible for federal funding for up to 10 years after being removed from service. I have been contacted by several individuals wanting to help, and I am looking for other area organizations that may be able to assist with grants or funding. The middle of the three bridges will remain open for now, and the county is pursuing options for repair, replacement, or removal in the future. No date has been proposed for closing that bridge. John Brassard, a local writer, is going to write an article about the importance of the Syracuse bridges for the DeWitt paper, and it will be timed to coincide with our April meeting and subsequent tour of the area. The tour will be open to the public, and will follow our quarterly meeting in DeWitt on April 8. We're hoping the newspaper article will attract some interest locally, and we will have a good turnout. Along with the three bridges, the tour will include the restored Fire Station/Town Hall in Grand Mound, which recently won a preservation award.

**L**

## **The Swellest Little Spring Tea**

**By Kristine Pope, President of the Herring Hotel Building Alliance**

Join the Wallace Winkie Foundation and the Herring Hotel Building Alliance for the Swellest Little Spring Tea on Saturday, April 8th at 1523 Sunset Dr. Cruise in wearing your 50's tea attire and enjoy a variety of delicacies and music/entertainment. Doors will open at 1:00 PM. Tickets are \$20, but they are holding four tickets for LHA members who are interested in attending.

Please RSVP to Beverly Winkie at 319-434-2079. There will be door prizes and a fundraising auction. All proceeds go to Belle Plaine's historic Herring Hotel and to benefit area scholarships for lifelong learners.

Please note that this is the same day as the ILHA meeting in DeWitt.

**L**



**LHHB Coordinator Report**  
**By Jan Gammon, LHHB Coord.**  
**Prairie Rivers of Iowa**

The Byway is excited for upcoming 2017 projects! In December 2016, we completed the Corridor Management Plan and implementation began right away. We have been working with Greene County LHA on interpretive panels. Four have been completed and will be installed before the LHA National Conference in Denison. A grant was written to fund 5 more and, if funded, we hope to have them installed before the conference as well.

The City of Tama is looking for funds to repair/restore the Lincoln Highway Bridge over Mud Creek on E 5th St. We have applied for grants and will continue to help them find the dollars to sustain this iconic feature of the Lincoln Highway.

We are also working with Cathie Nichols (the Clinton County LHA Consul), the Clinton County Board of Supervisors, and others interested in the 3 Lincoln Highway bridges east of Wheatland. The good news is although the Board of Supervisors will eventually close the 2 currently open bridges, they will not remove them. We have some time to find funds for repairs and get a plan together for this area.

The Byway intern, Jill Conniff, is working on a Camping and Recreational Guide for the Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway. We will have that completed in June and hope to have it available at the LHA Conference.

The Lincoln Highway Heritage Byway Advisory Board met March 2nd and shared information and discussed/prioritized the projects listed in the Corridor Management Plan. Other projects will depend on the grant funding. We will continue to work on interpretation in Greene County and hope to have a few more installed before the conference.

**L**



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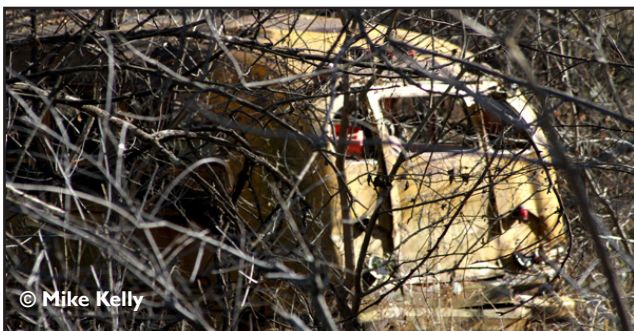
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### Last Issue's Mystery Place

### Mystery Place

By Mike Kelly



This abandoned yellow van is located inside the Tama County line near a deserted "ghost" town.

### This Issue's Mystery Place



This place is located in a small town that has six features that are the bane of transcontinental highway builders. On a per capita basis this Iowa location must hold the national record for these "sore spots."

Congratulations to Tim Quigley who correctly guessed last issue's Mystery Place!

If you think you can identify the Mystery Place, send an email to [lincolnhighway@prcd.org](mailto:lincolnhighway@prcd.org) or call 515-232-0048. Call with the correct information and we will take your name and contact information. We then will hold a random drawing for a winner to receive a 2013 Iowa Lincoln Highway Map Pack! This is to accommodate for the varying time and travel the postal system can take and to give all a fair try.

**The next ILHA meeting will be  
April 8, 2017 in DeWitt, Iowa at the Community Center.  
Refreshments at 9:00 AM general meeting to follow.**

The next meeting will be held April 8th at the Community Center in DeWitt's Lincoln Park. Enter DeWitt from either the east or west on the Lincoln Highway (11th St) and head towards the main part of town. At the intersection of 11th St and 6th Ave, you will find the Lincoln Park. The Community Center is on the south side of the park.

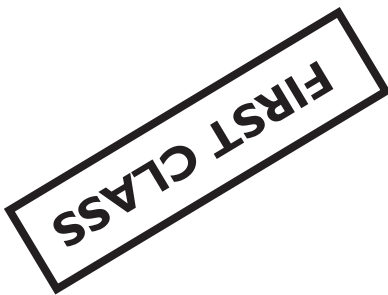
After the main meeting, we will travel to Grand Mound to see the restored Fire Station building, then on to Syracuse to visit the area with the 3 Bridges, including a walk in the woods to see the original 1913 segment of the Lincoln Highway and some 1921 pavement and bridge abutments from the prior route. It will be a fun-filled and interesting day. The meeting is open to the public. Hope to see you there!



Upcoming Iowa LHA Meetings

April 8, 2017: DeWitt, General  
June 20-24, 2017: National Conference in Denison  
July 8, 2017: Hotel Pattee in Perry, Business

**Content Sneak Peek: Articles about perserving history, new interpretive panels  
for Greene County, and updates on this summer's Motor Tour!**



[www.iowalincolnhighway.org](http://www.iowalincolnhighway.org)



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