

## **Report of the Gilbert 125 Group Meeting**

Convened at 7 pm on April 14, 2003

Gilbert City Hall; Gilbert, Iowa

Nine persons gathered at City Hall at 7 pm on Monday, April 14, for the third meeting of the Gilbert 125 Group that is planning a celebration for Gilbert's 125th anniversary in the summer of 2004. To date there are a total of 15 people who have participated in the planning meetings. Those who attended the April 14 meeting are Mary Dodds, Helen Gunderson, Lynn Henn, Danielle Kroehling, Jake Kroehling, Joy Leister, Gwen Thompson, Cindy Wirth, and Greg Wirth. Other planners include: Mike Adams, Margot Eness, Bob Jaquis, Kurt Jensen, Gary Selof, and Randy Thompson.

### **GHS Alumni Reunion Plans**

The meeting began with introductions, then Gwen and Mary reported on a meeting of the Gilbert all-class reunion committee that was held earlier this month. The alumni have decided to shift their reunion from 2005, which would have been its regularly scheduled year, to 2004 to coincide with the celebration of Gilbert's 125th anniversary. There will be an alumni banquet, probably on Saturday night of the G125 weekend. In addition, alumni will be encouraged to participate in the various quasiquicentennial events to be held around town.

### **The Date for the Quasiquicentennial Celebration**

The GHS alumni representatives and the G125 group decided the weekend celebration should begin on Friday night and conclude on Saturday night with no events planned for Sunday. The planners also established priorities for a date for the celebration. The first choice is July 30-31. The second is August 6-7. And the third is July 24 and 25. The alumni group will begin contacting various sites in the Ames area to select a place for holding the banquet and schedule a date. The reunion date will determine the weekend for the G125 celebration, and the two groups will coordinate both their plans and publicity for the various events.

### **Relationship of G125 Group to the City of Gilbert**

The group discussed their relationship with the city. First, Helen pointed to an article in the Iowa League of Cities magazine that she had distributed to the group that talked about municipal celebrations. She acknowledged that much of the material was geared to towns with celebrations much larger than Gilbert's. However, she also noted that it would good to read through the article and develop a checklist of issues to think about — things such as parking, first aid, rest rooms, and coordinating volunteers.

Helen also told about how the G125 planners would be wise to work under the umbrella of the city in order to benefit from the city's insurance policy, book-keeping system, legal advice, etc. She said that otherwise, the members of the group would be vulnerable if something went wrong with the celebration. She also noted it would take a lot of work for the G125 group to incorporate or otherwise become an official organization.

Helen and Mike attended the April 7 city council meeting for a preliminary discussion with the council about how the G125 group and city could work together on the quasiquicentennial.

Lynn is a member of the community activities committee of the city council and was present at the April 14 meeting of the G125. (Craig Allen is the other member of the community activities committee). Lynn told how the city has had the one conversation about the event and would like to be a part of planning it but that the council decided to wait to make any commitment until after it got feedback from the city attorney on how to proceed. Lynn also indicated that as the G125 group solidifies more of its plans, it will be easier for the city to know the scope of the quasiquicentennial event and decide its role. Lynn will keep the G125 planners apprised of the council's progress on the matter.

### **Quasiquicentennial Activities**

The G125 planners reviewed a list of activities for the celebration that they had brainstormed at an their first meeting. Gary and Joy had met over the weekend to trim down the list, cutting off those ideas that would be too cumbersome to organize.

- 5-K run
- antique tractor show/parade
- antique car show
- art exhibit
- bake sale
- band concert
- beard-growing contest
- bicycle ride
- bologna and corn feed
- face painting
- fireworks
- garage sales
- golf cart rides (for event organizers and to escort walking impaired visitors)
- horses drawn wagons
- in parade or exhibition
- horse shoes
- horses in parade
- hot air balloon rides
- jazz band gig
- karaoke
- large scale inflatable slide and other kids games
- lawn tractor pull
- model airplane flying
- oral history project
- pancake feed
- parade — regular
- parade — kids
- petting zoo
- photo exhibit (images of Gilbert)

quilt show  
senior citizen activities/outreach  
side walk art  
softball/baseball/volleyball  
street dance  
Vision 2000 prairie walk  
water games (fire department)

### **G125 Liaisons and Recruiting**

The G125 group also designated liaisons to reach out to other groups in order to recruit them to participate in the core planning process or to organize a specific element of the quasiquicentennial celebration. Eventually the G125 group will have a flyer that includes information about the celebration and the list of proposed activities that the liaisons can share with the groups. Each group will be able to pick an idea for the list or to create their own ideas.

4-H clubs — Joy Leister  
5K run — Gary Selof  
Beta Sigma Phi — Mike Adams and Cindy Wirth  
Brownie and Girl Scouts — Danielle and Jake Kroehling  
Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts — Lynn Henn  
GHS Athletic Boosters — Cindy and Greg Wirth  
GHS Fine Art Boosters — Joy Leister  
GHS Parent Teacher Organization — Cindy Wirth  
Lions Club — Helen Gunderson  
Soccer and baseball clubs — Mike Adams  
The Fabricators quilting group — Gwen Thompson  
The schools (mailings to Superintendent Williams) — Helen Gunderson  
The Gilbert Fire Department — Lynn Henn  
Triple G Square Dance Club — Joy Leister

In terms of some of the specific activities on the brainstormed list, the following persons volunteered to do some research:

Antique tractors — Greg Wirth  
History project — Mary Dodd  
Horses for parade, etc. — Helen Gunderson  
Petting zoo — Greg Wirth

### **Organizational Structure for the G125 Group and Recruiting Co-chairs**

There was some discussion about how the G125 planners wanted to organize as a group. Helen suggested that aside from what decisions the city makes about how to be involved in working with them, the G125 members would be wise to think about their vision of how to structure themselves. She said that among the group, there were probably people who would be willing to

serve as treasurer or secretary. She volunteered to work on publicity and convene meetings. She also acknowledged that she knew of no one in the group who wanted to be the chair or co-chairs of the G125 project. Everyone in the room nodded in agreement. She often referred to the analogy of developing a strong trunk of a tree in the initial months of planning. That way, she thought, other groups would be more included to participate, knowing that there was a strong foundation for the project. She also thought that if the group got to the stage of having a secretary and treasurer and other volunteers in place, perhaps the group could do some specific recruiting to find people who have the aptitude and energy for event organizing who would be willing to be co-chairs of the quasiquicentennial celebration.

### **Schedule of G125 Meeting Dates**

The G125 planners discussed how often they wanted to meet during the rest of the year. Jake asked for clarification about the scope of the celebration. The planners explained some of their thoughts. For instance, they are not sure of what is possible. A lot depends on how much other people and groups are willing to get involved. In past years, the town had a history of holding Gilbert Days with a rodeo and other events. However, the G125 group acknowledged how difficult it has been in recent years for Gilbert to organize community events. For sure, part of the theme of the G125 group has been that of keeping the event simple enough and manageable. And there was a definite decision that there would be no activities organized for Sunday of the quasiquicentennial weekend.

There was unanimous consent at the G125 meeting that there should be no May, June, or December meetings in 2003. The planners did set their next meeting date for 7 pm, Wednesday, July 16 at City Hall. They will decide at the end of that meeting how often they want to meet during the rest of the summer and fall seasons.

The alumni planners will hopefully be able to report a reunion date when they come to the July 16 meeting, and the G125 planners hopefully will have much to report from their contacts with various individuals and groups. Also, by that time, the city council will probably have a response from the city attorney about how best to relate to the G125 group in preparation for the quasiquicentennial. The G125 group did not designate representatives to meet with the council the next time that the G125 event is on the council agenda. However, most likely, some of the members of the G125 group will be willing to attend said council meeting when it is announced.

### **Expansion of Gilbert's City-Wide Garage Sale on May 3, 2003**

The G125 group also discussed plans for Gilbert's city-wide garage sale on May 3 of this year. The G125 planners want to help expand the scope of the event. At the last meeting, Randy Thompson of the Open Flame said that his restaurant could be open that day.

Helen circulated a tentative flyer she had played around with creating for the day. It had an announcement of the garage sale on one side with a city map on the other side. There was some discussion of whether those residents holding garage sales should be asked to contribute toward the expenses for the flyer as well as any ad that is put in the Advertiser. Alys Stull initiates the

event each year and usually places the ad. Helen thought that it might be wise to not ask the garage sale hosts for a fee but instead show them that the G125 group was willing to go to bat for them. She also said that the flyer could be good publicity for the quasiquicentennial celebration so that people would at least start thinking about it over a year ahead of the actual event.

Danielle is a recent graduate of Iowa State with a degree in advertising and a relatively new resident of Gilbert. She volunteered to talk with Alys and offer help with placing the ad in the Advertiser. Danielle also volunteered to work on the garage sale flyer and map. When it is ready, it will be placed at various key locations around Gilbert and Ames. The G125 planners and garage sale hosts will also have access to copies of the flyer to distribute to their friends and colleagues.

**The meeting adjourned around 8:35 pm.**

Report prepared by Helen D. Gunderson, meeting convener.