

# Red Oak Grove Reporter

Issue No. 34

Red Oak Grove Church and Cemetery

May 2024

## Annual Celebration and Reunion on May 19

**O**n Sunday May 19, 2024, at 11 am, Red Oak Grove Church will host a service celebrating the great history of this special place. With the windows open on a warm day, a breeze rustling through the church and the green tree tops visible, it reminds one of sitting in their favorite tree house. The message is usually thought provoking and the music uplifting. Jeff Kaufmann will speak this year -he always provides an insightful and interesting historical perspective of Red Oak. A potluck lunch will follow the service; please stay and enjoy conversation, and share stories and memories over a delicious meal.



## A Time for Special Reflections



**J**oanne (Seitz) Thomson and her daughter TJ Becker (in the photo left) bring a trunk full of flowers to Red Oak to place on relatives graves every year. TJ said, “All my family grew up in Cedar County and now those who have passed away are all buried together here at Red Oak. It’s such a beautiful cemetery and so peaceful. You just don’t get that beauty everywhere.” Near Memorial Day, Joanne and family pick a lovely Iowa morning and drive from Benton County to Red Oak. They place pretty spring flower arrangements on the graves

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# In Memoriam: Red Oak Grove Cemetery

**Lane Hanon**, 48, Tipton, was born Aug. 20, 1975 and passed away Nov. 7, 2023 at UIHC in Iowa City. A Celebration of Life was held in his honor on March 16, 2024, at First United Church of Christ in Tipton. His interment was at Red Oak on March 16, 2024. His parents Larry Hanon and Jean Goodman Hanon and sisters Nicki (Matt Smith), and Anjie (Tracey Emanuel) and nieces and nephews survive him.

**Robert E. Woode**, 88, Davenport, Iowa was born March 22, 1935 and passed away on Dec. 5, 2023. Funeral services were held Dec. 9, 2023 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Davenport; with interment following the service. His wife, Marilyn Ellen Thomas, and daughters Wendy Holland, Nancy, Sarah and Diane (Darl) Osborne and sons David (Debbie) Thomas, and Stephen (Angel) Thomas and sister, Sandra Willert, along with 11 grandchildren and other relatives survive him.

**Joanne Murphy Reiling**, 90, Clarence, was born Dec. 22, 1933, and died on March 12, 2024 at St Lukes Hospital in Cedar Rapids. Funeral services took place at Fry Funeral Home on March 18th and burial followed at Red Oak Cemetery. She is survived by daughters Rhonda (Bob) Paul, and Susan (Mark) Johnson, and grandchild Kalynn Troupe and her daughter, Willow Troupe.



## *Reflections continued...*

of Joanne's husband, Gary Thomson and numerous other relatives. TJ explained that Gary farmed and was a science teacher in Clarence while Joanne was a nurse at the nursing home in Clarence where they lived. Besides Gary's grave, they also put flowers at the headstones of his parents Dick and Anne Thomson, his brother Roland and Shirley their two daughters, Dianne and Wendy Thomson (they are buried together), and his brother-in-law, Bob Ehlers. Joanne said that Dick and Anne farmed row crops and raised beef cattle on their farm on Highway 30 but lived in Tipton.

TJ said all of her grandparents were in agriculture and lived near Red Oak. Joanne chimed in and pointed out that her parents, Gene and Margaret Seitz, were buried here too. They lived and farmed three miles south of Red Oak Church on a farm raising corn and beans, milked dairy cows, and raised beef cattle. TJ proudly added her grandma raised chickens and was always very active in their farm operation. She remembered that prior to crop and livestock farming, near Red Oak, they raised tomatoes for Heinz Ketchup.

They both enjoy driving the rural countryside to get to Red Oak and TJ is especially happy to see the church where she was baptized. Sometimes other family members join them, and this time together allows them to reminisce about loved ones' lives and stories from their past.

A few weeks later, Joanne and I were at the 2023 Annual Celebration and Reunion where Jeff Kaufman gave the church service message, "Forever is All Around Us." Jeff stressed that death is all of our end result since it is part of life's journey and that Red Oak evokes something about 'forever' and the beginning of an end. He emphasized we each handle our 'forever' in our own way and are fortunate to be able to do that in this great nation. He said the Red Oak pioneers were incredible educators evidenced by their financing and building of the church, cemetery, roads, school, park and library in Red Oak Township. Jeff emphasized these settlers lived dangerous lives and labored in love exclaiming, "They are why we remember our roots and what they did to get us here – because they added so much to our lives." They are still talking to us and we are listening since we continue to support and labor for the Red Oak Grove Church and Cemetery.



# Bob Mowery Received a Commemorative Certificate and Gold Medal for being an Atomic Veteran in February 2023

The speaker at the 9th Annual Wreaths Across America Celebration was Bob Mowery. Bob received top secret clearance in special weapons training to work with atomic bombs in 1952 as a seaman in the U.S. Navy. He explained he was on numerous naval fleets including the Admiral's barge which moved from island to island in the Pacific Sea. He witnessed Operation Red Wing and the fireball explosion and mushroom cloud in the pre-dawn atomic bomb tests done in 1956. Bob was sworn to secrecy about his military service when discharged later that year. He currently is the oldest atomic veteran alive. He is pictured right, with wife Elaine.



“This Wreaths Across America event, planned by Daisy Wingert, was superb,” said Board President, Bob Rickard. He added, “A total of 109 attended which was by far the most attended in the past, with a great number laying/observing others laying wreaths on gravesites and then taking part in coffee/cookies,” he added.



*Remember, Red Oak Church is a serene and beautiful spot to hold a Wedding! Please spread the word.*



# Grateful for All Volunteers!

Dwight Hughes is a 'regular' outdoor volunteer at Red Oak Grove Church and Cemetery. He and his dog, Jackie, pull up in his "Hughes Nursery" landscaping truck each May, ready to work! He delivers and spreads over 50 heavy bags of mulch annually around the trees to keep them healthy, safe and as a bonus adds to the beauty and sanctity of Red Oak Grove Cemetery's beautiful park-like surroundings. Dwight planted the twenty-five Crabapple Trees winding along Valley Drive in the middle of Red Oak Grove Cemetery about five years ago.

When rainfall was short, three generations of the Herring family watered them with 5 gallon buckets



*Carolyn Herring, Dwight Hughes (and dog Jackie), Mike Herring and Brenda Emick-Herring (taking photo) mulched all the trees and hostas in spring of 2023*

the first two years and then Bob Rickard used a water tank the next couple of years. Dwight's sons Tom and John, who now own "Hughes Nursery" in Cedar Rapids, were busy again in the fall of 2023. They planted five additional crabapple trees on the north side of the church and sold them to Red Oak Grove at a generous discounted price.

Volunteers will gather on Saturday, April 27 at 9 am to 'spring clean' the church and to spruce up the grounds. All hands are wanted and welcome; bring a friend too. Please join us and stay for refreshments afterwards. The more the merrier! Let Bob Rickard know that you can help by emailing him at: [bbrick@iowatelecom.net](mailto:bbrick@iowatelecom.net)

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For information about purchase of plots, church rental, the wedding venue, or other matters pertaining to the church or cemetery, contact Bob Rickard, Red Oak Grove Cemetery Association President

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Mail: P.O. Box 452, Tipton, IA 52772

Our web site is: [www.redoakgrovecc.com](http://www.redoakgrovecc.com) • Find us on Facebook: [redoakgrovechurchandcemetery](https://www.facebook.com/redoakgrovechurchandcemetery)

## Mark Your 2024 Calendars So You Can Attend:

- **Spring Clean Up – Saturday, April 27 at 9 am**  
(email Bob's address above to help-all hands welcome; bring a friend too)
- **Annual Celebration/Reunion/Potluck – Sunday, May 19 at 11 am**
- **Pie Social – Sunday, October 6 at 1 pm**
- **Wreaths Across America – Saturday, December 14 at 11:30 am**  
(cookies/coffee/cocoa afterwards)

*Please consider making a lasting legacy to Red Oak Grove Cemetery Association, Inc. by asking your attorney to include, in your will, a final gift to the Red Oak Grove Association.*