

# FOUNDERS' GROVE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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## Saving Santa

Neighborhood artist restores a local holiday tradition of 'ole

Compiled by Rhonda Massie on Kreitzer

*(Information & photos shared with permission from The McLean County Museum of History)*

During the holiday season from the 1940s to the 1970s, two 14.5-foot-tall Santa Clauses were mounted to the awning at Livingston's Department Store at 110 W. Washington Street, Bloomington. For many, visiting the store's Santas became a beloved family tradition. And thanks to Jeffrey Alan Wandell, the McLean County Museum of History, Founders' Grove Artist Andrew Jumonville, and a slew of others, this tradition is being revived.

### Where have the Santas been hiding?

Livingston's permanently closed in 1979, and the Santas were purchased by College Hills Mall where they were displayed for several years before being sold to Wandell, owner of Jeffrey Alans in Normal and Prairie Gardens in Champaign. Wandell continued displaying the Santas until they became too fragile for outdoor use and were put into storage.

In December 2023, Wandell donated both Santas to the History Museum, along with \$10,000 to help pay for significant restoration, site preparation and installation. Since that time, the History Museum has raised more than \$59,000 toward the projected renovation cost of \$85,000, with a goal to raise the remaining funds by December 31, 2024.



FGNA resident Andrew Jumonville is restoring two historic Santas. ➡

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### Your Neighbor, the Restorer ...

Jumonville, of the 100 block of Kreitzer Avenue, has finished restoring the first Santa and will continue work into late November to restore the second.

It's been quite the undertaking. "Over the course of the Santas' lives, they've been patched many times, and those patches needed to be redone," Jumonville said. "In addition to suffering water damage during their years in storage, at least one of the Santas had sustained injuries from a fall or from toppling over. They weren't supposed to last this long."

Jumonville explained the plaster Santas were originally hollow, covered in sign maker's paper (like cardboard), with a couple small pieces of steel tubing running through the inside. They were originally situated atop an awning and attached to the

**For more information or to contribute** to the Santas restoration and preservation, visit [bit.ly/mchistorysavingsanta](https://bit.ly/mchistorysavingsanta).

Read on, **SANTA** — page 4

## HOT OFF THE PREZ - By Todd Vincent on Grove, Board President

As 2024 comes close to an end, I reflect on all the successful FGNA events during the last year. Despite a little threatening rain, the 4th of July had a wonderful turnout. The Palooza was extremely well attended, with perfect weather, great food options, and unbelievable entertainment throughout the weekend (thanks once again to Matt Lollar for facilitating the Palooza). We introduced trivia to the monthly socials, which seems to be a hit so we'll continue into 2025.

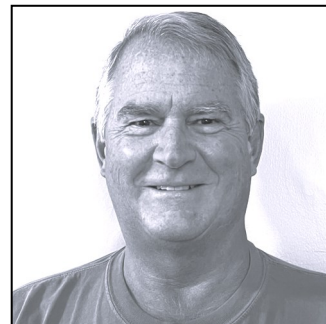
As you can see in the calendar, other than regular monthly events (book clubs, euchre club, etc.) we only have the bake sale, caroling night and

December Social remaining in 2024. Socials will be suspended until April 2025, at which we will be stuffing Easter eggs for the hunt.

It's been an honor serving as your president, and I look forward to another exciting year in 2025. In the spring, you'll receive a survey soliciting ideas of things you, the neighborhood, would like to see more of (or less of) in 2025, as well as suggestions you might have for quarterly meetings or FGNA activities. If something pops to mind before or after the survey, don't hesitate to drop your ideas to fgnabloomington@gmail.com.

It has been nice seeing some new faces at FGNA activities and in the neighborhood. As I mention in my column, please come out and join the fun. Just a few, quick neighborly requests: Please pick up after your animals; please keep yard waste out of gutters and storm drains; and please clear sidewalks of snow and ice (yup, it's getting to that season!).

The FGNA Board wishes you and your family a joyful holiday season and a Happy New Year!



**Visit the OHS Architectural Salvage Warehouse for all your old house needs!**

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### About Founders' Grove Neighborhood Association

FGNA is a 501c3 organization formed to enhance the community in which we live. Every residence on and between Oakland, Mercer, Washington and State streets is a member invited to join any and all events. No dues are required, and activities are funded by donations.

#### Donate by:

- Cash in FGNA jars at events; or QR code available to pay digitally
- PayPal to fgnabloomington@gmail.com
- Venmo: @FGNABloomington
- Check to: FGNA (c/o Neil Gridley), 1219 E. Washington St., Bloomington, IL 61701

### GOALS

- Celebrate and preserve our neighborhood's unique character and history.
- Promote communication and a sense of community between neighbors, with many social gatherings.
- Keep neighbors informed about city projects that may affect them and give our neighborhood a voice in city decision-making.
- Keep the neighborhood safe and traffic under control.
- Help our neighborhood schools & businesses thrive.
- Share expert info on topics of interest such as gardening and home restoration.

### 2024-2025 FGNA Board

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## HELLO, NEIGHBOR! Meet the neighbors behind the **Pop-Up Art Show** in FGNA

By Leisa Barbour, FGNA Social Co-Chair

In 2018 three local artists that reside in Founders' Grove were sitting around the dining room table discussing how to share their art with the community. From this a pop-up art show was planned.

- **Mandy Pierce-Ghahramany** (*left*) is an artist of hand-blown art. She creates many unique and colorful hand-blown ornaments in a studio here in town and in northern Indiana.
- **Erin Furimsky** (*center*) is a ceramic artist. Erin has a studio behind her house where she creates wearable ceramic art. She has many unique earrings and necklaces. Erin also teaches classes at ISU.
- **Sue Jansky** (*right*) has a love of working with wood that led her to create functional art projects with reclaimed wood. Sue has focused on curb rescue of different types of wood, and other sources of rescued wood that come with a story. Some of her art includes: bird houses, ornaments, Christmas trees and serving trays. She includes the history of the wood with many items.

Check out their art show for a unique opportunity to meet local artists and ask questions about their medium of art.



### Pop-Up Art Show Details

**December 6th** 4 - 8 p.m.

**December 7th** 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**1919 East Jackson Street**



### *In Memoriam:*

Two very special neighbors active in FGNA

#### **David Beich**

March 1950  
to June 2024



#### **Leon Everman**

November 1938  
to September 2024





## Continued... SANTA (from page 1)

side of the department store. Going forward, with Jumonville's reinforcements, the Santas will be freestanding.

After removing all the fiberglass, cardboard and plaster patches that had been added over the past 80 years, Jumonville built two sleds made of box steel on which each Santa will stand. He then added a substantial

steel structure to the inside of each before filling the Santas with spray foam and attaching the new interior structures to the box sleds. Jumonville estimates he added 400 pounds to each Santa's bottom half and 150 pounds to each upper half.

### What's next?

The plan is for the Santas to be displayed annually from late November to mid-January.

**Santa 1:** A dedication ceremony for the first Santa is scheduled for **11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 30**, on the southwest corner of the Museum Square in Downtown Bloomington.

**Santa 2:** The second Santa will eventually be displayed in Uptown Normal near the Children's Discovery Museum. The specific location will be confirmed after a nearby underpass project is complete – in 2026 or later.

Once the interior structure was in place and each Santa was filled with foam, he carved the foam into the proper shape, sanded the structures, added multiple coats of epoxy, then paint.

Jumonville usually works out of his art studio on Kreitzer Avenue but had to move this endeavor offsite due to the Santas' massive size. In addition to

his many other projects, Jumonville also created "The Convergence of Purpose," the statue featuring Abraham Lincoln, David Davis and Jesse Fell which welcomes people to the south lawn at the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts.

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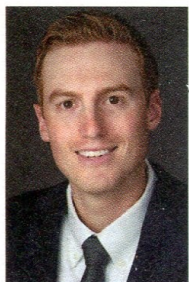
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## Winter bird watching

By Julie Murphy & Sue Anderson, FGNA residents & gardeners

Winter bird watching can be a source of joy during the dreary winter months. It can be a fun family activity, as well as for those housebound during this season.

### Here are some basics to getting started:

- Purchase a field guide to birds, feeder/s, seed and binoculars.
- If you are going to feed, do it regularly. Birds tend to depend on a source where they have found food.
- Clean your feeders at least once a month and change the seed at least every two weeks.
- Provide a water source nearby but not under the feeder.



Source: Randy Maslovich / audubon.org

### Excellent resources for more in-depth information:

- Illinois Department of Natural Resources - Wild About Birds is a very good intro to the 457 birds found in IL (as of 7/24) <https://dnr.illinois.gov/education/wildaboutpages/wildaboutbirds.html>

- Cornell Lab - All About Birds. One of

the premier birding research centers in the US. This article is a guide to seed types for which birds. [www.allaboutbirds.org/news/types-of-bird-seed-a-quick-guide/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/types-of-bird-seed-a-quick-guide/)

**We interviewed Bill Inks, owner of AB Hatchery & Garden Center**, to discuss the basics of bird watching in winter. Here are his answers:

**1. What birds can be seen in winter?** *cardinals, finches, woodpeckers, chickadees and songbirds.*

**2. Is it true you will have better luck getting the birds you want to see by providing specific seeds?** *Absolutely. AB has a special blend the former owners designed specifically for central IL birds. This blend will attract many of the birds in our area. Specific seeds for specific birds: finches like thistle; cardinals like safflower; blue jay like peanuts and woodpeckers like suet.*

**3. How do you decide what birdfeeder to buy?** *The tube feeder will attract a variety of birds and is a good place to start. Finch seeds are tiny, so they fit best in a mesh bag. Suet has its own wire mesh holder - a tail prop makes it easier for woodpeckers to feed. Hopper feeders have a larger storage area and bigger birds such as songbirds feed from it. Cardinals need a bigger perch than the tube feeder usually provides.*

- Audubon - Mississippi Flyway. A beginning source for winter feeding. <https://gl.audubon.org/news/dos-and-dons-80-99ts-winter-bird-feeding>
- Audubon - 11 Tips for feeding in winter [www.audubon.org/news/11-tips-feeding-backyard-birds](http://www.audubon.org/news/11-tips-feeding-backyard-birds)
- AB Hatchery - FGNA local source for bird info and products <https://abhatchery.com/birds-wildlife/>
- Birds and Bloom Magazine - both online and paper form has excellent articles about bird watching [www.birdsandblooms.com/](http://www.birdsandblooms.com/)
- Birds and Bloom - 12 tips for feeding in winter [www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/feeding-birds/top-10-tips-attract-birds-feeders/](http://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/feeding-birds/top-10-tips-attract-birds-feeders/)
- Available at AB Hatchery: Field Guide to Hotspots and Birds by Colin Dobson of Champaign.

**Would you be interested in a springtime birding article?** Email Sue to let us know if we should pursue one: [ssstroyan@iwu.edu](mailto:ssstroyan@iwu.edu). Also send specific bird or other gardening questions.

**Edward Jones**

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## DECEMBER

### Fri, Dec. 13 from 6 p.m. to ??? – Annual “Out of the Hood” Holiday Social



- **Where:** 209 E. Washington St., 5th floor loft (above Castle Theatre)
- **What:** A gathering with neighbors for music, games, food.
- **Bring:** Wear festive holiday attire (there will be prizes!) and bring your beverages, a dish to share (light appetizers provided), cash for extended 50/50 prizes, and consider bringing baked goods for the sale on Sat.
- Suggested \$5 donation

### Sat, Dec. 14 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

#### FGNA Holiday Bake Sale

- **What:** Stock up to fill some platters for upcoming events!
- **Where:** AB Hatchery, 916 E. Grove
- **Proceeds:** Support FGNA events



#### Calling all bakers!

FGNA seeks baked goods or other treats for our annual sale. Drop off at AB Hatchery the morning of Dec. 14, at the Dec. 13 Social or on Leisa Barbour's porch, 108 Fairview Ave.

### Sun, Dec. 15 at 5 p.m.

#### Holiday Caroling

- **Meet:** Centennial Christian Church parking lot, 1219 E. Grove St., and we'll walk from there. Bring the kiddos out for this tradition!

## 2025

### FGNA Friday Socials are taking a winter hiatus!

None in January, February or March; resuming again in April!

Would you consider hosting? Please contact a Board member or email [fgnabloomington@gmail.com](mailto:fgnabloomington@gmail.com)

## RECURRING MONTHLY EVENTS

- Play cards at **Euchre Club**. At **Music Guild**, share songs from bands/artists around a monthly theme.
- **Mystery Book Club** usually meets 3rd Thurs of month; **Washington Street Book Club** the 1st Tues.
- For more info, email [fgnabloomington@gmail.com](mailto:fgnabloomington@gmail.com)

Events, dates & times listed are to the best of the Board's knowledge at time of printing. Stay up to date at [www.facebook.com/FoundersGrove](http://www.facebook.com/FoundersGrove), [fgna.org](http://fgna.org) or sign up for email updates at [bob@dawson1.com](mailto:bob@dawson1.com)