

# James Millikin Homestead Gazette

VOLUME XLV

125 N. PINE STREET DECATUR, IL 62522

NOVEMBER 2020

## Upcoming Events

### Sunday, November 22nd

Sweet Treats Bakery orders due

### Saturday, December 5th

10:00 am – 2:00 pm  
Drive through pick up of Bakery orders

### Sunday, December 6th

12:00 pm – 4:00 pm - Drive through pick up of Bakery orders

### Wednesday, December 16th

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
A Drive Through History

### Dates to be announced –

James Millikin Homestead Virtual Events – Check our Facebook for updates and availability of these exciting projects

## Mission Statement

Through the preservation of the Homestead, we engage, educate, and entertain visitors with the stories of the Millikins and Decatur.

## Sweet Treats Bakery and Early Bird Kiwanis Cheese Sale

The Sweet Treats Bakery will have a new look this holiday season. Although the Homestead's annual Christmas Open House has been cancelled due to the pandemic, the Homestead bakers stand ready to help you with your holiday baking. Orders are being accepted now through November 22, 2020 for cookie trays, candies, and mini loaf breads. The following three (3) selections will be available on a pre-order and pre-paid basis: 2 ½ dozen assorted holiday cookies packaged on a tray with festive wrapping - \$18/tray. 1 dozen assorted candies - boxed or plated with festive wrapping - \$10/box. Assorted mini loaves - wrapped festively - \$5/each.

As is our tradition, we will package and decorate your selection(s) ready for gift-giving. So...think of all those folks on your holiday list—neighbors, colleagues, teachers, the mail carrier, hair stylists, etc. and place your order today! All funds generated from this sale will support the Homestead's ongoing operating expenses. An order form has been included with this newsletter, so be sure to place your orders early.

A drive-by pick-up for your pre-paid order will take place on Saturday, December 5, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm and Sunday, December 6, noon – 4:00 pm. In addition, during the Sweet Treats drive through pick up, the Early Bird Kiwanis will be selling their delicious cheese wheels at the Homestead. Choose from Colby, Colby-Jack, Cheddar, Amish Swiss, Pepper Jack or a 4-in-1 variety. These cheese wheels are approximately two pounds at a of cost \$16 each and make wonderful holiday gifts. Plan to stock up on these tasty holiday gifts when you drive through to pick up your Sweet Treats goodies!!

Should you have any questions, please call 217-422-9003.





## From the President's Desk

Happy Fall from Homestead! I hope this newsletter finds you all doing well. With our challenging times, as we head into the holiday season, we find that a lot our usual "favorites", both at home and at the Homestead, are either on hold or significantly modified. One of our favorites is the Christmas Open House and Sweet Treats Bake Shop. Fortunately, we have a modified COVID-friendly version on tap to look forward to. See details in this newsletter! In addition, new episodes of *From the Homestead Live* will be coming your way.

On a more somber note, as you have seen by now, our inability to run our normal fundraisers has severely impacted our funds and required us to issue a special appeal. Please be generous in your response to this and thank you for your support of James Millikin Homestead.



## A Drive-Through History

Without our traditional Christmas Open House, the holidays at the Homestead will look different this year but we still want to celebrate the season with you! On Wednesday evening, December 16th from 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm, we invite you to hop in your car and drive through the historic near west end to enjoy the holiday lights of the neighborhood. The exteriors of the Millikin Homestead and the Staley Museum will be decorated. As you drive by, you will hear the sounds of the season, and each car will receive a holiday treat. Many of our Millikin Heights neighbors will also have their Christmas lights on for you to enjoy as you cruise through the area. We look forward to sharing the holiday season with you!



## 2020 Financial Shortfall

In the first week of October, approximately 800 letters were mailed to our members and to our community requesting assistance with a budget shortfall of \$10,000. This budget crunch was caused by the cancellation of normal Homestead activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If 500 of the 800 letter recipients donate \$20 each, the budget will be back in the black and we would be able to move forward into 2021 on sound financial ground. At this writing, the response has been very gratifying. We are not to our goal, but the initial outpouring of support has been humbling.

The Board of the James Millikin Homestead is grateful for your trust and faith in us as we navigate these uncharted waters and ensure that the Homestead continues to be a center of historic significance in our community. If you have already responded, thank you so very much! If you are contemplating a donation, we appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you either through snail mail or through our PayPal account at [jamesmillikinhomestead.com/give.html](http://jamesmillikinhomestead.com/give.html).

## Lights, Camera, Action!

In this strange year of restrictions, the Homestead has missed our community of supporters, history lovers, visitors, and friends. And, we thought maybe you were all missing us too, so we are jumping on the "virtual content" bandwagon with video content that can be enjoyed from the comfort and safety of your own home. We have several projects in the works including the story of the Homestead as a Red Cross Emergency Hospital during the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic, a holiday visit with the Millikins, and the story behind Mr. Millikin's run for the Illinois Senate. President Donna Williams filmed some virtual tours of the Homestead over the summer and this content will also be available for viewing soon. Please check our Facebook and our website for more information about accessing this new content as it becomes available.



Characters from our first video. Many thanks to Jim Wilkerson of Vieweg Real Estate for donating his time and videography skills.



## Around the Grounds

AKA – The Adventures of Ruby (Board member and Master Gardener) and Dewayne Mathews

The viburnum on the southwest side of the house had grown out of bounds. One might well be surprised how tough viburnum can be for pruning and shaping. This needed "hair cut" will encourage the viburnum's growth, flower, and scent next spring.

Last summer, due to safety concerns, a Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) tree near the kitchen back porch was removed by Millikin University. To make up for the loss of this tree, Mother Nature sent literally thousands of Black Locust root suckers (even popping up in the dirt floor portions of the basement with little or no light). Snipping a Black Locust sprout with a pruning shears at ground level will not remove the pesky growth; one must spade the sprouting tree, severing it from the old root system or it will be back within days stronger than ever. Very heavy work for Ruby and Dwayne but the improvement on the north side of the Homestead is astounding.

At the Carriage House, the Millikin University Art Department staff were having problems opening the door to the second floor because a Winter Creeper (some call it Winter Berry) had grown to a fair size shrub right in front of the doorway. Enter the Mathews, the doorway is now free and clear.

The southwest most downspout running from the roof gutters down had become packed with debris. Millikin Facilities Maintenance brought a forty-foot boom "lift" and routed out the impacted downspout. Adding to this resolution of our stormwater issues, Ruby and Dewayne added a downspout extension which will carry stormwater from the gutters at least 12 feet away from the building. This is an ongoing project.

Ruby and Dewayne noticed the smell of natural gas when working near the meters on the northeast corner of the Homestead. Ameren Illinois sent out a repairman immediately and the leak was found and corrected on the meter that controls the flow of natural gas to the Carriage House. A tip of the hat to the Mathews and to Ameren for correcting this problem.



## Around the House

The Homestead maintains a phone line for incoming calls, and it is the lifeline of the alarm system. In June, we received an unhappy surprise in the form of a bill from the phone company that had nearly quadrupled in price! After a long call to AT&T, requiring the patience of a saint (thank you St. Douglas), a new rate was negotiated which is more manageable, but we are working on a significant change in basic phone service.

Ameren Illinois awarded James Millikin Homestead Inc. a Covid-19 hardship grant of \$394 in the form of a credit applied to our account. We wish to thank Ameren Illinois. This bolster to our operations is greatly appreciated. On October 1st, the furnaces and boilers were prepped for winter. As the HVAC is new, all went well with no surprises and with no additional costs incurred.

The Board voted to host our first Open House of 2020 on Sunday on June 28th. Visitor groups were limited to five (plus the docent) and only two groups were allowed in the Homestead at any one time. Social distance of six feet between visitors was maintained and the entrance and exit patterns were modified to minimize the crossing of people. We did a lot of cleaning, sanitizing, sign posting, and face masks were available.

June and July had only limited draw but by August we had twenty-five visitors.

On July 14, 2020, the monthly Board meeting was held outside at 5:30 PM. This writer had been in the Homestead at noon on the same day and all was normal but upon opening the Homestead at approximately 5:10 PM, the large oil painting in the dining room was found to be hanging from only one of two supports. This is a large and very heavy piece. The one support held and thus the frame and painting did not fall to the floor. The 2" lag screw which appears to have been in a 'stud' had somehow worked its way loose. A carpenter has been engaged to assess and rehang the painting.

After 144 years of service, the front door lockset has worn out. The spring that causes the bolt action in the lock has lost its tension. The lockset has been temporarily corrected as we search for a permanent solution. One option is to try to find a lockset at an antique store of the same manufacturer and with some luck the spring still has life in it. Alternately, Atlas Lock is in the process of attempting to hand make a replacement spring. Thank goodness there are still craftsmen who will attempt to do this sort of work.

James Millikin Homestead, Inc.



125 N. Pine St.  
Decatur, IL 62522

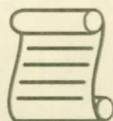
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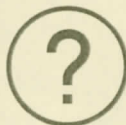
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Please consider making your support of the James Millikin Homestead a part of your legacy by including the Homestead in your estate planning.



Not a member of the James Millikin Homestead? Memberships are inexpensive and the support you provide through a membership is immeasurable. Please contact the Homestead for more information.



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