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The Bluffs Food & Wine *gazette*

Event Report:

Lucky Friday the 13th Celebration

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A publication of the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine and Food Society





Presidents Comments

I know I keep saying that if you missed an event, you missed a good one, but it is true. And our Lucky Friday the 13th Celebration was no exception. We definitely shed the reputation of Friday the 13th being unlucky because it was a delightful dinner with a wide range of luck being dispensed. We had "Luck of the Irish," "Lucky Duck," and "Press Your Luck" courses, for example. We had a course which Thomas Keller of French Laundry fame still has on the menu called Oysters & Pearls. We were able to test our skills in identifying three mystery quaffing wines. We even got to learn about how the superstitions of the number thirteen and Friday the 13th got started. Read all about it.

Jill Goldstein volunteered to write her Note from the Board on John Fischer. She wanted to know why the Council Bluffs Branch was founded in 2003 by the founding President himself. So she did what any lawyer would do: she ~~depositioned~~ interviewed him. I especially enjoyed his Mafia connection (yes, you'll have to read about that one). I think it is important that we write this kind of historical information down. As time passes, the story gets forgotten. We've come a long way, baby, since those days 13 years ago, where the wines were mostly grocery store wines for the first event.

Speaking of John Fischer, he is at it again with another of his series of wine quizzes. Rumor has it that number 5 will be the last **quiz...for** awhile, at least. I can't say that this quiz is any easier than its previous brethren. It deals with a more mysterious subject: Taste. What is the old cliché? "There's no accounting for taste." But perhaps that refers to fashion, not the in your mouth taste. However, like the other quizzes, it is based on scientific research and facts, so there is an accounting for taste after all. Again, the purpose of the quizzes is to be used as a teaching device. So even if you are wrong, it is your opportunity to learn. Thanks John for providing a challenging opportunity to test our knowledge of wine and taste.

Finally, there has been a date added and a date changed to the Upcoming Events Page. John Fischer discovered there was a conflict with Nebraska football so change the September date to Friday September 16th. Patti Hipple has come up with a cool venue for our October event: The Cornerstone Mansion. This was originally the Offutt mansion which is very near Joslyn Castle. Offutt AFB was named after the builders' son.

A lot of good stuff to read, and good things coming up in the future events section!

Cheers,

Tom Murman

On this day in 1637 Cardinal Richelieu of France invented the table knife. Distinguished by its rounded tip the Cardinal ordered his kitchen staff to file off the sharp points on all the knives to improve his guests' table manners. It was common at the time to stab meat, eating it off the knife, and to pick ones teeth with the instrument after the meal. This also had the side effect of making dinner a much less dangerous affair, and in 1669 King Louis XIV banned all pointy knives at the table and on the streets of France.

—*Writers Almanac 5-13-2016*



Event Report: Lucky Friday the 13th Celebration

by Tom Murnan

It was our lucky day, and a Friday to boot: dinner at the Happy Hollow Club with one of the best chefs in the city. A very imaginative dinner was paired with some very nice wines, all in a room with a view that overlooks the grounds, which were lushly green from recent rains. This is a tough time of year to have an event, with numerous graduation activities. But 29 adventuresome souls, with no fear of triskaidekaphobia or even paraskevidekatriaphobia, (fear of Friday the 13th) attended, since we were previously assured it would be "lucky". Of the total, three were guests, including Chef Jason Hughes' wife Brandi. Our hosts were Stacie & Duke Matz, and Jill & Joe Goldstein. John Fischer admitted to me that he helped with the wine selection.

John's influence could be immediately felt with his selection of three different quaffing wines. For the past four months, he has been in quiz mode in the Gazette, viewing quizzes as a way to learn about wine. He put this into practice by serving the wines blind. Each person was to decide whether the wines were: 1. Pinot Noir or Côtes du Rhône; 2. Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot; 3. Shiraz or Zinfandel. Passed hors d'oeuvres provided sustenance and included ceviche and skewered beef and cheese rolls with tomato.

After moving to table and waiting for the first course, John asked how everyone did on identifying the quaffing wines. From my vantage point of the far table that overlooked the whole room, it seemed to me that no more than 30% got any one of the three pairs correct. Less than 20% got all three correct. Of course you know what this means. We need more practice! We need more education!! John supplied some of the latter on the spot. Many had opted for Côtes du Rhône (CduR) instead of the correct Pinot Noir (**2013 Leyda Single Vineyard Las Brisas Pinot Noir** from Chile). Pinot Noirs are lighter in color than a CduR. It also has low acidity and few tannins compared to a CduR. The second correct answer was Merlot. Our wine was a **2013 Markham Napa Valley Merlot**. Many had voted for Cabernet. Some of the clues were the same as the last pairing. Merlots are lighter colored and lower in acidity than a Cabernet a Sauvignon, which tends to be full bodied and tannic. The lower tannins are a big clue. The final correct answer was Zinfandel. We tried a **2014 Seghesio Sonoma County Zinfandel**. This was perhaps the most difficult tasting of the three since the flavor profiles can be similar. For example, black pepper flavors can be found

in both Zins and Syrahs. In this case, the color was about the same. The Zinfandel has raspberry and blackberry fruit, but Syrah is typically more powerful and full bodied, with cassia and black cherry favors. Both are high in tannin.

Chef Jason Hughes came out for every course to give his take on the food, while **Duke Matz** spoke of the wines. The first course, "**Oysters and Pearls**," was based on the signature dish of Thomas Keller and his iconic French Laundry: Sabayon of Pearl Tapioca with Malpeque Oysters topped with Oestra Caviar. The dish went wonderfully with the wine, a **2012 Schramsberg Vineyards Blanc de Blancs**. Made from 100% Chardonnay that was barrel fermented. Blanc de Blancs means that the wine was made from only white grapes (no Pinot Noir). The brand was made famous when President Nixon brought 10 cases of Schramsberg with him to toast China when that country agreed to open up trade with the USA in 1972. Very lucky for Schramsberg, I might add.

Next, we moved on to the "**Luck of the Irish**." Yukon Gold Potato Veloute, Dungeness Crab Salad, Grilled Corn and Crispy Local Leeks. Jason said the crab came from Washington State while the leeks and micro fennel components came from his office. We had a laugh at that. The soup was rich and creamy, a contrast to the taste of the sea from the crab. The **2014 De Morgenzon Reserve Chenin Blanc** from Stellenbosch, South Africa was our wine. Low acidity and dry, it paired well with the relatively mild potato soup. I liked the 25% oak aging, which made the wine come off as quite smooth and refined, taming any acidity.

"**Lucky Duck**" referred not to the protein in the dish but to the duck fat use to roast the potatoes. Cedar Planked Wild Columbia River Salmon, Duck Fat Roasted Potato, Local Calabrese Broccoli and Beurre Rouge were the components of this dish. The salmon slow roasted on a cedar plank and was very smoky in nose and flavor, with woody (cedar) notes. Cooked rare, it melted in the mouth. The Beurre Rouge was a reduction of Pinot Noir with butter added. The wine was a classic pairing of Pinot Noir with salmon. From the Central Valley of Santa Rita Hills, the **2013 Melville Estate Pinot Noir** is a bit lighter than an Oregon Pinot, but it was fresh and clean. I thought the wine matched superbly. It was deep, well balanced, earthy, soft but with some noticeable acidity.



"**Press Your Luck**" was nowhere as risky as the tables at Las Vegas. A Sous Vide cooked Colorado **Rack of Lamb** sat atop Wild Mushroom and Barley Risotto. Jason cooked the barley the same way he cooks risotto. Sharing the plate was **Shoulder Terrine** of Lamb. Cut up and braised, it was formed into a disc. A Basil-Mint Pesto formed the sauce for the terrine along with Natural Jus. Since we had two different lamb entrees, two wines were chosen. The **2012 Château Malartic-Lagravière** from the Pessac-Lèognan district in Bordeaux (the old name was Graves) was chosen for the lamb chop because of its relatively mild flavors. Pessac-Lèognan was given its own AOC in 1987 in the Graves area because winemakers felt wines coming from the northern part of Graves were superior, and the French government agreed. For the lamb shoulder, the **2013 Taken Proprietary Red** from Napa Valley was chosen. A bit heavier than the Bordeaux, it is a blend of 60% Cab and 40% Merlot and full of heavier, ripe fruit.

Sous Vide means the meat was cooked "under vacuum" by sealing it in airtight plastic bags and then immersing it into (in this case) 134°F water for 2 hours. It was then finished briefly on the grille to add flavor with a quick char. Intensely lamb flavored, the rare, moist meat was enhanced by the earthiness of the barley and the savory-ness of the wild mushrooms. With the Bordeaux, it was a classic match. A light, aromatic oaky nose, it was well balanced and all elegance. Wonderful. I did not think the shoulder terrine was quite as successful. A bit dryer, the shredded shoulder meat was not as intensely lamb-y, and was a bit dryer than the chop. The Taken was a good match for this rougher cut of meat.



"Shit out of Luck...It's the Last Course!" Our lucky streak came to an end with an Imploding Chocolate Sphere, Pecan Brownie, Dulce de Leche Ice Cream, Sea Salt, a touch of 24 Karat Gold Leaf and Dark Chocolate Ganache. This was a complex dessert, with hot ganache working as the activation agent. Plates of brownie, ice cream and a hollow chocolate sphere were delivered to the table. The hot ganache (or chocolate sauce) was poured over the sphere, which caused it to collapse. Luckily, it did not explode!

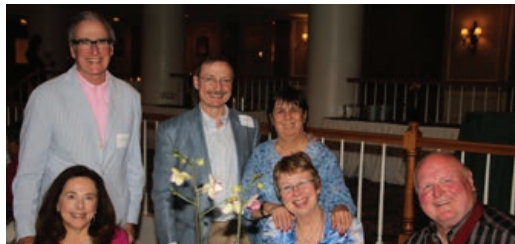
Accompanying this was a bottle of **2010 Taylor Fladgate Late Bottled Vintage Port** wine from the Branch cellar. Late Bottled Vintage, or LBV as it is commonly known, is a cheaper alternative to Vintage Port (VP), which takes a decade or more to mature. VP only spends two years in the barrel, while LBV spends about six. The result of the extra oxidation is to speed up the aging process so it is ready to go sooner than VP. All this aside, it was a wonderful match to the chocolate. Port has a great affinity to chocolate, and brings out its good side. A great combination.

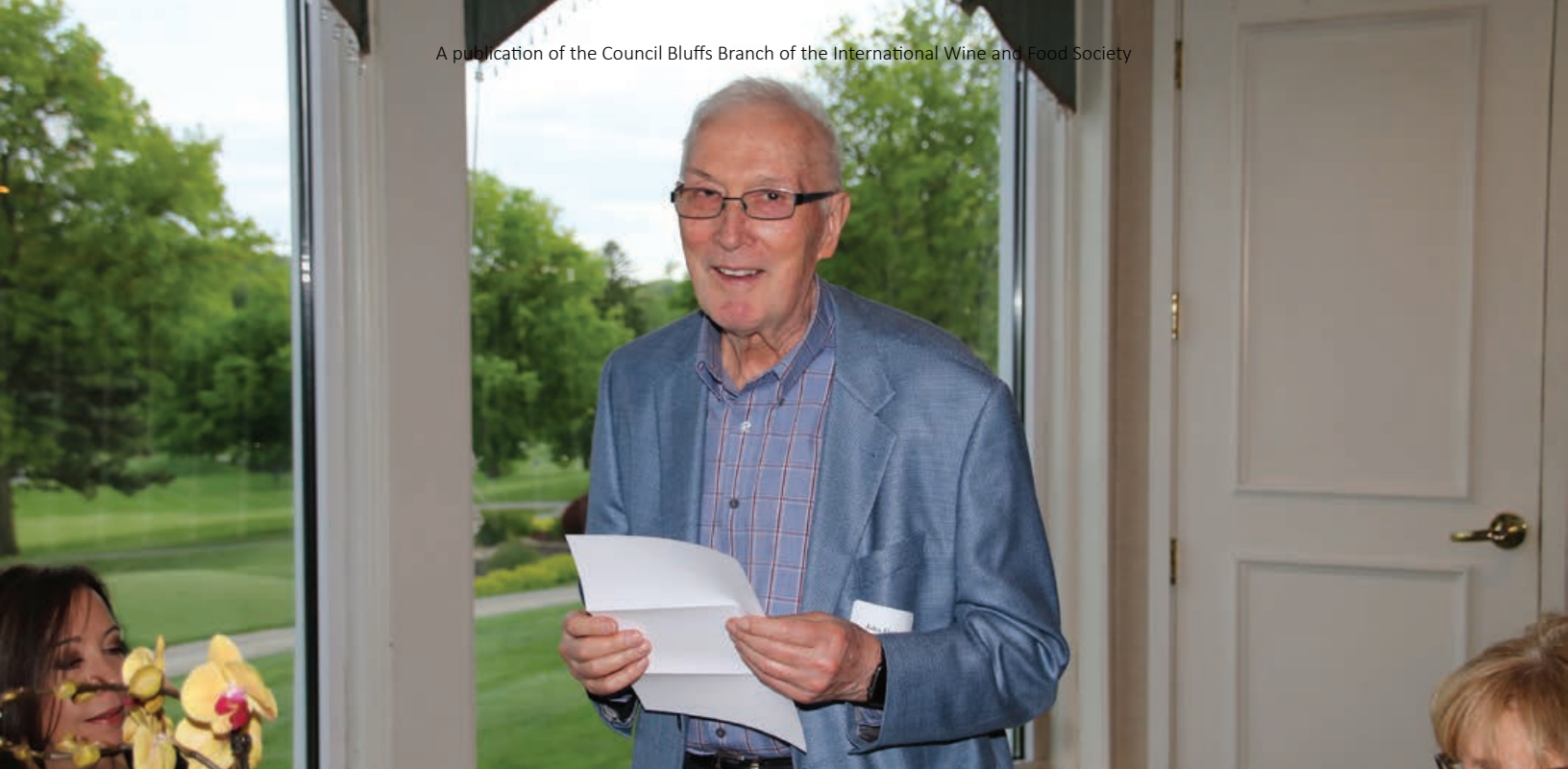
Our final bit of entertainment was a presentation of **paraskevidekatriophobia** trivia, with research presented by Co-Host **Joe Goldstein**. In Western superstition, the day Friday the 13th was considered unlucky. The superstition may have begun in the Middle Ages, originating with the story of the Last Supper, where there were 13 individuals present, the meal took place on the 13th of Nisan, and the crucifixion the next day on Friday. Joe gave us too much information to pass on here, so feel free to call him anytime of the day or night on any Friday the 13th for more information.

Thanks for all involved with this delightful event. The theme was imaginative, the cuisine delicious, and the wines all perfectly matched. We had education from everything from wine to food to more than we knew before about the number 13. Merci bien to first time event producers Jill and Joe Goldstein, along with Stacy and Duke Matz. Thanks as well to Chef Jason Hughes for a stellar meal, as well as the polished staff of the Happy Hollow Club for their service.









A Note from the Board: An Interview with Dr. John Fischer About the Founding of the Council Bluffs Branch

by Jill Goldstein

My husband Joe and I, like many members of the IWFS Council Bluffs branch, joined by way of IWFS Omaha. I remember the first event we attended at the Champions Club and a distinguished gentleman got up and talked with no notes so very knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the wines. I then heard he was a doctor and had written two books on food and wine pairings. I was fascinated. I looked them up on Amazon and there they were--written by Dr. John Fischer. I was so impressed! We joined the Council Bluffs group later that year and quickly found ourselves at home in this intimate and fun group, attending events nearly every month. I recently learned that Dr. Fischer was the founding member and the first president of the Council Bluffs group, and I wanted to learn more about how this great group got started. I also wanted to learn more about how this doctor from Vermont became so interested and involved in food and wine pairings. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Fischer as the founding and still very active member of the branch! My interview with him in his beautiful backyard in the Oak Hills neighborhood (which he gardens himself!) follows:

JG: How did IWFS-Council Bluffs get started?

JF: I along with **Morris Caudle** (who was in the original and first group of branch members) owned a company called Custom Wines Retailing in Council Bluffs. We marketed wines for the Hy-Vee grocery stores in Lincoln, Omaha and Council Bluffs. At that time [around the late 90s], the Hy-Vee stores were not consistently stocking the same wines, so marketing the wines among the stores was a challenge. Our goal was to educate the salespeople on wine and the art of matching wine with food. One of my responsibilities in the company was writing a periodical about wine and food pairings called the "Cork Report," which helped promote the wines and educate readers on the topic.

JG: How did you and Morris get enough people interested to start a group in Council Bluffs?

JF: We held wine tastings at the old Hy-Vee store in Council Bluffs. People got to know me because I wrote the "Cork Report." They called me "Corky." We were able to get more people interested through wine tasting events. These events got started around 2000.

JG: How did the wine tasting events evolve into the IWFS branch?

JF: In the early 2000s, a group of regulars at the wine tasting events decided to organize a branch of the IWFS. It was the first and only branch in the State of Iowa. We had no charter when the club started. There were 40 people at the first organizational meeting we held. Everyone at the meeting was to bring a bottle of wine, and everyone at that meeting joined the group. The group started out more social than educational at first. The quality of the wines at our events were not as great back then, but we were new and had not had yet had an opportunity to build up a cellar. It took us a few years to get a charter from IWFS but finally got one in 2003. So the branch has been formally in existence for only about 13 years. It is still a very young club. Current Board Members **Debbie & David Tritch** and **Diane & Garry Forristall** were also founding members of the club. We are the only remaining members of the initial 40 people who started the group. It was hard to get people to participate in the Board back then. As time went on, that situation has greatly improved!

JG: What was the impetus for starting the Council Bluffs branch, considering there was already one in Omaha?

JF: IWFS Omaha has always been (and still is) a men's club only. A lot of men like and want stag events, and if so, the Omaha branch is for them. We wanted a club where every event was a couples' event and women could join. About half of the Omaha events are stag events. It is harder for women to get involved and get to know people in the Omaha club. The Council Bluffs branch gives people in both Council Bluffs and Omaha an opportunity to join a club where they can attend as couples every month. If that's what a person wants, then the Council Bluffs club is for them. The Omaha and Council Bluffs branch events are pretty comparable to one another. The Omaha branch has been around longer so it still has better wines, but **Patti and Steve Hipple** have done a great job quickly developing our young wine cellar.

JG: How has the IWFS-CB branch changed over the years since its inception?

JF: The first organizational meeting was held at **Dr. Joel Bleicher's** home and everyone brought a wine. Everyone had fun but again, the purpose was primarily social. The events have evolved into higher quality events with better wines over the years. It has helped tremendously that we have developed a good wine cellar, which has given the branch more respectability and credibility.

JG: How did you become interested in wine and food pairings?

JF: I was a resident in Newark and one of my colleagues was Italian and had mafia ties [true story!]. He often took everyone out to eat and would pay for it. The meals would include fine wines and champagne and I became interested in it. One night we were at a restaurant called "Vesuvius" and a mafia boss sent over some nice wines. I found out later he was murdered in a barbershop! Anyway, I am very analytical. I like math and chemistry and I became interested in how wine and food pairings come together. I began writing the Cork Report for Hy-Vee and articles on the subject for local newspapers. I found that no one had written a book on wine and food pairings. My first book takes the wine apart into pieces like chemistry, and then puts it back together. It talks about how the different pieces work together to create the whole. The second book is a simpler version of the first one. I also taught wine and food pairings at the Institute of the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College.

JG: What is your vision for the club going forward?

JF: I would like to see the branch become more than just a social club, and I think it has moved and continues to move in that direction. I hope people are reading my wine quizzes and stories in the Gazette and learning from them. I want the club to be educational and informational. My hope is that all members will come away with wine expertise.

Dr. Fischer, I think we can all agree you are helping all of us do just that! Many thanks for sharing your talents, expertise and delightful personality with us!



Wine Quiz Number Five

by John Fischer

The taste sensations: pick the best answer

Quiz #5

1. Which of the following is a taste sensation

- (a) spicy heat
- (b) umami
- (c) Champagne's bubbles
- (d) tannin

2. How many taste sensations are there?

- (a) 3
- (b) 4
- (c) 5
- (d) 6

3. Which of these are not experienced through the sensation of feel

- (a) Champagnes bubbles
- (b) Zinfandels tannins
- (c) Tabasco's sensation of heat
- (d) Zinfandel's flavor of black pepper

4. Savoriness is detected in

- (a) some mature high quality wines
- (b) umami rich foods
- (c) many oriental foods
- (d) certain processed foods
- (e) all are correct

5. What creates flavor?

- (a) taste
- (b) smell
- (c) taste and smell
- (d) taste and feel

6. Which of the following is a flavor?

- (a) the mouth dry feeling from tannins
- (b) the mouth watering effect derived from acids
- (c) the bitter sensation from tea leaves
- (d) none of the above

7. Nerve stimuli from the nose combine with which of the following to create flavor

- (a) nerve signals from the brain
- (b) tactile stimulation from the tissues of the mouth
- (c) tannins
- (d) sweetness and tartness in the wine

8. The taste buds

- (a) are limited to the surface of the tongue
- (b) can detect more than one taste sensation
- (c) can detect umami
- (d) can detect bitterness
- (e) all of the above are correct except (a)

9. Some older people lose their sense of smell and can no longer

- (a) experience sweetness
- (b) distinguish tartness from saltiness
- (c) taste their food
- (d) all are correct

10. Tartness in wine and foods

- (a) enhances flavors
- (b) decreases richness
- (c) counters sweetness
- (d) all are correct.

**Answer key on page 14*

Upcoming Council Bluffs Branch Events

Mark Your Calendars!



June 26, 2016

Corkscrew Wine & Cheese (Blackstone District).
Dinner on the Patio. John Benker Catering
Producers: Jill and Joe Goldstein



July 23, 2016

Connie & Gary Martin open the Martin Cabin.
Come early for more lake time.
The chef from The Rail Car is catering
Producers: Connie and Gary Martin



August TBA

Producers: Jill Panzer and Michelle Heyder



September 16, 2016 NOTE DATE CHANGE

Biaggi's
Producer: John Fischer



October 7, 2016

Cornerstone Mansion
Producers: Patti & Steve Hipple



November 18, 2016

Council Bluffs Country Club
Producers: Tom & Jeanette Schierbrock



December 3, 2016

President's Holiday Dinner at Le Bouillon
Theme: French Comfort Food
Producers: Tom & Mary Murnan

Quiz #4 Answers:

1. (b) umami
2. (c) 5
3. (d) Zinfandel's flavor of black pepper. This is a taste sensation
4. (e) all are correct. Umami is a taste sensation that is difficult to define; however, the term savoriness is perhaps its best description.
5. (c) taste plus smell create flavor. The taste sensations are tart, sweet, salty (not found in wine), bitter, and umami
6. (d) none of the above.
7. (d) sweetness and tartness in the wine
8. (e) all of the above are correct except (a)
9. (c) taste their food
10. (d) all are correct

If you have difficulty with these quizzes or you wish to learn more, you can purchase my book *Wine and Food-101* by John R. Fischer, which is available on Amazon or for a signed copy contact me at jrudyf@cox.net

Hosting an event?

Let us know when, where and a little bit
about what's going on!

We would love to include YOUR event on the calendar!

email details to:

iwfs.councilbluffs@yahoo.com



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The mission of the Council Bluffs Branch of the International Wine and Food Society is to develop a profound understanding and appreciation of both wine and the culinary arts and to enjoy this experience in the camaraderie of friends. Our task is to educate our membership about wine and to develop the skill of matching wine with food. We strive to drink high quality wines and to experience an eclectic array of foods prepared by the area's top chefs.

*The International Wine & Food Society of London, England
Council Bluffs, Iowa Branch - Executive Committee*

President: Tom Murnan

Vice President: Stacie Matz

Treasurer/Membership: Diane Forristall

Secretary: Jill Goldstein

Cellar Master: John Fischer & Patti Hipple

Gazette & Photos: Tom Murnan

Webmaster: Bob Kossow

murnantom@gmail.com

smatz1@cox.net

Diane@Forristall.us

Jill.Goldstein@KutakRock.com

jrudyf@cox.net | stephenhipple@hotmail.com

murnantom@gmail.com

bob.kossow@cox.net



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PUBLISHER: Todd Lemke

EDITOR: Tom Murnan

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Matt Wieczorek

Keep In Touch!

Please notify Club Membership Chairman Diane Forristall at Diane@Forristall.us to let her know if you are interested in hosting an IWFS event.

To access past Gazettes and other features about our Branch, go to the international website following this link: www.iwfs.org/americas/council-bluffs

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