



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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JUNE 2015

Society's Website Wins State History Award

Calling it “perhaps the wave of the future in historical writing,” the Illinois State Historical Society put the Sangamon Historical Society’s on-line encyclopedia, SangamonLink.org, on its winners list for the 116th “best of the best” Illinois history awards to individuals, organizations, publishers, and exhibitors around the state.

The award, for Superior Achievement, was accepted by editor Mike Kienzler on behalf of the Society at a recent ISHS awards dinner held at the Old State Capitol, Springfield. Several members of the board including President Mary Alice Davis, were on hand for the presentation. Competition judges said the site—introduced last June—“energized the local historical society,” describing it as “a great example of crowd-source encyclopedia” that is “a very important contribution to the history of Sangamon County.”

The website, which is approaching 1,000 entries, is built around research and writing by Kienzler and articles and photos contributed and edited by SCHS members and the general public.

A column prepared by Kienzler

based on information on the website, is published twice a month by the *State Journal Register*. Kienzler, a long-time Society member, is a retired SJ-R editor.

The site grew out of more than a decade of discussion and planning for a 200th anniversary encyclopedia of Sangamon County history. The SCHS committee charged with developing the encyclopedia eventually took it in a new direction.

Given today’s internet use and capacity, the committee decided that producing an on-line version that could be continuously enhanced, updated, expanded, even corrected, would be of greater value and more relevant than a published version that would be outdated the minute it was printed.

SangamonLink.org was introduced at an afternoon press conference last June prior to a debut demonstration that evening at the Society’s annual dinner.

This is the second time the ISHS has cited the Society. In 2013, it awarded the Society a Certificate of Excellence for its monthly newsletter, *Historico*.



CITED: SangamonLink.org editor Mike Kienzler and SCHS president Mary Alice Davis following the awards ceremony.

Donna Catlin photo

Annual Dinner, Elections, Awards Presentation Set for June 23

Tables are filling fast for the Sangamon County Historical Society’s Annual Dinner slated for 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 23 in the Fellowship Hall of historic Westminster Presbyterian Church, 533 S. Walnut, Springfield. The deadline for receiving

payment for reservations is Monday, June 15. Tickets are \$30 per person. You can reserve on line at sangamonhistory.org or use the mail-in form on page 7. The buffet dinner will be catered by Carol Fraase.

The annual event will include voting on

officers and directors, presentation to winners of the Society’s annual grants, and silent and live auctions.

The proposed slate includes three of the four current officers who will be seeking

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CITED: Kathryn Harris, a past-president of the Sangamon County Historical Society, wins a top honor from the Illinois State Historical Society.



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AUTHOR Ken Mitchell fills the house in a talk focusing on Lanphier High School and Springfield’s North-End.



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Some Words of Thanks for a Job Well Done

With our fiscal year rapidly coming to an end, it gives me an opportunity to look back at one of the Society's most successful years in its history. You can take credit for that and so can the Society's board and committee chairs. Without all the elements working together, from planning events to attending them, we would not continue to be one of the largest and fastest growing organizations in Sangamon County and beyond.

As you can see from the articles in this issue of *Historico*, we continue to be non-stop in providing our members with programs and events and special opportunities to expand their knowledge of county history. We're proud of the fact that the judges of the Illinois State Historical Society's 116th annual "Best of the Best" history awards competition singled out our new county history website, *SangamonLink.org*, not only for what it is, but for its significance as an example to other history groups that have, because of costs, floundered in their efforts to produce a printed version of local history that, in today's fast-moving world, becomes obsolete the day it is published. As the judges noted, *SangamonLink.org* may well become what they called "the wave of the future in historical writing." We're pleased to have our effort recognized and hope others will follow our example.

* * *

Looking forward, we have added two member-only summer events to the schedule, a tour of the recently renovated historic Supreme Court

Building in Springfield in July and a backstage tour and talk on the history of the Springfield Muni that includes an optional opportunity to attend that evening's performance of "West Side Story." Both events require pre-registration through our website and a registration cut-off date, the former a State Supreme Court security requirement, the latter to secure seats for those who want to see the show.

As with in past years, the Society usually takes a hiatus from programs in July and August, but if a terrific opportunity comes our way, we put down the glass of lemonade, ease out of the hammock, and get working on an event we think everyone will enjoy. That's the case this year. We hope you will be able to attend.

* * *

Planning for our 2015-2016 schedule is well underway, including a major event this fall, the re-emergence of the popular Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk scheduled for October 11 that in its earlier years attracted thousands of visitors. We hope to re-establish the popularity of the tour as a major community activity.

You'll be reading more about other fall and winter programs when the next volume of *Historico* makes its debut in August in time for the opening of our fall meeting season in September. And look for more special events as the 2015-2016 season gets underway. We're well into planning our winter and spring season too!

Mary Alice



Historico, published 10 times a year, is the official monthly bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. *Winner, 2013 Certificate of Excellence, Illinois State Historical Society.*

You can download back issues of *Historico* in PDF format by going to our website, sangamon-history.org or sancohis.org. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor, Donna Catlin, *Photographer*

Kathryn Harris Wins Lifetime Achievement Award from ISHS

Kathryn Harris, a former president of the Sangamon County Historical Society, has been awarded a "Lifetime Achievement" award from the Illinois State Historical Society. She was one of four Illinois citizen/historians cited for "significant contributions to their communities and to the state. The other recipients, R. Eden Martin, William Daniel Wilson, and Mark Sorensen were from Wilmette, Albers, and Decatur, respectively.

The award was presented at a recent ISHS luncheon at the Old State Capitol in Springfield.

Harris, who served as SCHS president from 2004-2005, recently retired as director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, a position she assumed in 2004 with the opening of the facility. She previously was director of the Illinois State Historical Library, a position to which she was appointed in 1996. A graduate of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Urbana, joined the ISHL staff in 1990 as Supervisor of Reference and Technical Services. She has been a member of several key boards and associations. Her talents extend to the stage. She is frequently called upon to re-



HONORED: Kathryn Harris holds her award and certificate for "Lifetime Achievement." Donna Catlin photo

enact historical figures, ranging from Sadie Delany, the African-American educator and civil rights pioneer, to Elizabeth Keckley, as former slave who became a successful seamstress, civic activities and author in Washington, D.C.



OFFICERS

President.....Mary Alice Davis
 Vice-President.....Ruth Slottag
 Secretary.....Sue Massie
 Treasurer.....Richard Herndon
 Past President.....Roger Whitaker

DIRECTORS

Term Ending 2015

Donna Catlin
 Les Eastep
 David Grimm
 Francie Staggs
 Vicky Whitaker

Term Ending 2016

Kathy Dehen
 Cathy Mosley

Term Ending 2017

Troy Gilmore
 Amy Henrikson
 Genevieve Kaplan
 Jerry Smith
 Sara Watson

Committee Chairs

Legal: Bruce Beeman
Special Projects: Elaine Hoff
Finance: Patricia Davis, Doug Polite,
Nominating: Brenda Holmes
Membership: Claire Eberle
Membership Relations/Hospitality: Marion Leach
Publicity and Marketing: Ruth Slottag
Publications: Roger Whitaker
Programs & Special Events: Mary Alice Davis, Vicky Whitaker

Staff

Dr. Samuel Wheeler, **Executive Coordinator**
 Mike Kienzler, **SangamonLink.org Editor**

July Sign-Up Deadlines Set for Supreme Court Tour, Backstage History at the Muni (Plus Show)

Two member-only summer events, one in July, the other in August, will require making reservations well in advance.

First up will be an after hours tour of the recently refurbished and restored State Supreme Court building in Springfield, rich with architectural details and works of art as well as history. The event, scheduled for Tuesday, **July 21** at 5:30 p.m., is free and open to the first 60 members who register, but you must sign-up on line at sangamon-history.org by **July 8** so that the names can be vetted by the Court's security division. No walk-ins will be permitted.

On Thursday, **August 13**, at 6:30 p.m., SCHS members will get a behind-the-scenes tour and talk on the colorful history of the Springfield Muni, followed by watching an optional performance of "*West Side Story*" from one of 50 reserved seats. The tour is free. Show tickets are \$13.25 per person and must be ordered and paid for through the Society website, sangamon-history.org, no later than **July 20**. Before and between the tour and the 8 p.m. show, attendees can purchase and eat food, snacks, and drinks from vendors in a

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JUNE 2015 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Society welcomes new members *Joan Walters, Chuck & Jennifer Murphy, Dennis & Janet Faulk and George & Dodie Dresch* and thanks the following donors: *Mary Barringer, Sandra & Claudio Pecori, Kathy & Fred Hoffmann, Barbara Ferris, Mary Lynn Cleverdon, Tara McAndrews, Richard & Dana Saal, Sheri Boner and Jackie & Dr. Mark Hansen* (in memory of Dr. Floyd Barringer).

Please make note of our official mailing address:

SCHS
Box 9744
Springfield, Illinois,
62791-9744

Nominees for Board, Officers Await Voting

(Continued from page 1)

second terms: president Mary Alice Davis, vice-president Ruth Slottag, and secretary Sue Massie. Seeking office for the first time will be treasurer candidate Jerry Smith who will step down from his position as a director (through 2017) to seek the post. He would succeed Richard Herndon who is not seeking re-election.

Davis will be running for her second term as president. The Springfield native, a Life member of the Society, is a graduate of Denison University, Ohio. Involved in numerous community activities, she is an Elder at Westminster Presbyterian Church, serves as vice-president of the Old State Capitol Foundation and is a past board chair and current trustee of the Illinois State Museum Society.

Davis is also a past vice-president of the Land of Lincoln Girl Scout Council.

Slottag, who is seeking a third term as vice-president, holds a master's degree in communications from the University of Illinois at Springfield and a bachelor's degree in speech communication, has more than 20 years experience in the public relations and communications industry.

Recently retired from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine's Public Affairs Office, she previously served as Public Relations Director at the Illinois Association of Park Districts and Community and Media Relations Manager at the Illinois Student As-

sistance Commission. She is president of the Central Illinois Chapter Public Relations Society of America, first vice regent of the Caleb Hopkins Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, past chair of the Springfield Commission on International Visitors, past vice president of the Family Service Center, and former member of Illinois Women in Leadership and Springfield Area Arts Council.

Also seeking a second term as secretary is Sue Massie who joined the board in 2012 and was first elected secretary in 2014. President and senior landscape architect for Massie, Massie and Associates, Springfield, she is a past president of the Iles House Foundation. Massie is a 1974 graduate of the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana.

Treasurer candidate Gerald (Jerry) Smith joined the board 2014. A graduate of Southern Illinois University, prior to his retirement, he spent 35 years as an executive in the hotel industry.

Smith is a volunteer with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum & Library, Westminster Presbyterian Church Elder, and serves as vice-president of the Pleasant Plains Historical Society which operates the Clayville Historic Site.

Directors Through 2018

Proposed as directors for three year terms ending in 2018 are: Valerie Patterson, Jane Running, Larry Stone, Roger Whitaker, and Heather Wickens.

Nominees Patterson, Stone, Wickens, and Running would be filling three-year term board seats for the first time. Roger Whitaker, who chaired the Society's Publications Committee for 2014-2015, was president of SCHS for two years, 2012-2014. Prior to becoming president, he served three years as a Society director.

Patterson is a Williamsville Village Board trustee and a member of the Williamsville Public Library and Museum Collection Committee among other community activities. She holds Masters Degrees in Communications and Arts and has a professional background in sales and marketing.

Stone, a resident of Sherman, has a life-long background in finance and accounting including serving for 36 years as an Internal Auditor and then Chief Auditor for the State Retirement System and Information Systems Audit Manager for Central Management Services.

Running, now retired, spend most of her working career as a reference librarian for the Illinois State Library. She holds an undergraduate degree in English Literature and General History from Washington University, St. Louis, and a Masters in Library Science from Emory University, Atlanta. She is a Docent at First Presbyterian Church where she is working on the church history. She is also vice-regent of the Springfield Chapter,

Daughters of the American Revolution.

Wickens is Program Manager for the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. Both cover the the same 42 counties of Central Illinois, sharing a mission to preserve, interpret and promote the heritage and culture of the area in the context of Lincoln's life in Illinois.

Wickens holds a Masters Degree from the University of Illinois in History. She previously worked for the National Park Service and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Roger Whitaker, a Life member of the Society, is a native of Virginia, Illinois. An electronics engineer, with a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Missouri, he serves as the Cass County, Illinois manager for genealogy-trails.com.

Whitaker taught electronics technology at Lincoln Land Community College for six years before spending more than two decades as chief engineer at Long Elevator, a regional elevator company later acquired by Kone, a worldwide elevator and escalator company, where he is still employed.

A ham radio operator and a 56-year member of the American Radio Relay League, he is president of the Sangamon Valley Radio Club and serves on the board of CAARERT, the Capital Area Amateur Radio Emergency Response Team, working with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency to provide back-up communications to the state in the event of a major emergency.

(Continued on page 6)



Davis



Massie



Patterson



Stone



Slottag



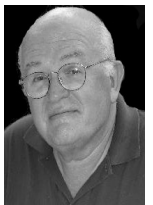
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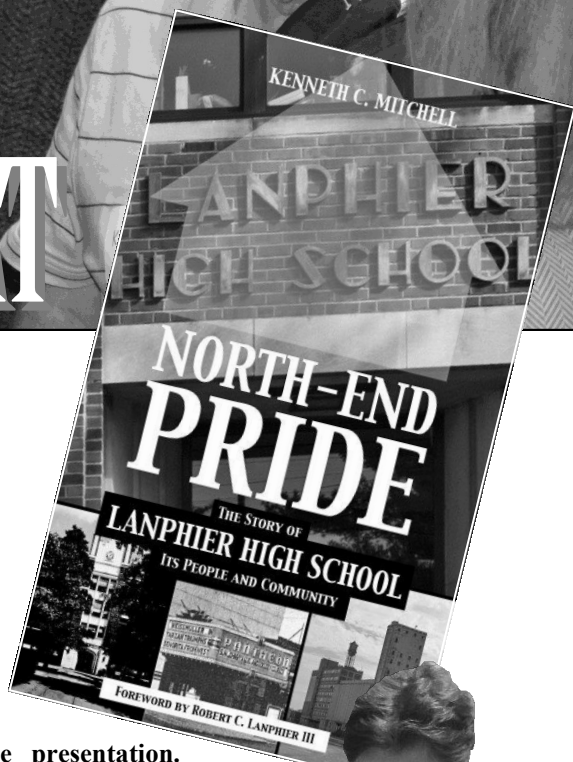
Running



Wickens



Whitaker



AUTHOR Ken Mitchell (above, top left) is surrounded by friends and fans who turned out in force for the Sangamon County Historical Society’s May 19 meeting at the City of Springfield’s Lincoln Library, to hear the Springfield writer talk about his newest book, *North-End Pride, a History of Lanphier High School*. Mitchell, who grew-up on Springfield’s North-End and graduated from Lanphier, shared backstories about the people and places mentioned in his book including popular Reservoir Park, demolished in the 1930s to make way for construction of the high school. The book covers several decades of North-End life and municipal decisions that shaped the area. Below, left, former SCHS president Nancy Chapin and her brother, Bob Lanphier, also an SCHS member, chat with Mitchell



(right), following the presentation. Chapin and Lanphier are the grandchildren of Robert Lanphier for whom the high school is named. Bob Lanphier wrote the forward for Mitchell’s latest book, noting that Mitchell provided “*fascinating insight into not only the beginnings of Lanphier High School, but also a very candid look at the tremendous pressures that faced educators, students and parents in the 60s, 70s, and 80s.*” At right, one of the attendees takes a closer look at one of Mitchell’s works. Close to 80 attended the presentation and participated in a lively question-and-answer session that followed. Copies of several of his books were on display and sale after the program.



Members to Choose Officers, Board on June 23

(Continued from page 4)

Two Year Term

Nominated for a two-year term ending in 2017 for the seat being vacated by treasurer candidate Smith is Doug Polite. If elected, he will join Troy Gilmore, Amy Henrikson, Genevieve Kaplan, and Sara Watson.



Polite

Polite is also a former board member who this past year served as co-chair of the Society's Finance Committee. A semi-retired real estate broker who owns the historic Flagg Farmstead B&B in Sherman, Polite graduated from Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois in 1964 and received a Masters degree from the University of Tennessee in 1969. He and his wife served on the historic committee for the 150th anniversary of the Village of Sherman and hosted part of that event at their home. He and his wife share a love for antiques and historic properties. Polite first joined the SCHS board in 2011.

One Year Terms

Nominated for the three one-year terms to fill existing board

vacancies through 2016 are Pamm Collebrusco, Elaine Hoff, and Vicky Whitaker. If elected, they would join current directors Kathy Dehen and Cathy Mosley.



Collebrusco

Collebrusco, who holds Masters degrees in English and Library and Information Science, is a public services librarian at Benedictine University at Springfield's Becker Library. She is on the editorial board for *Quiddity International Literary Journal* and Twelve Winters Press.

Born, raised and receiving her education in Michigan, Elaine Hoff taught special education in Michigan and northern Illinois before moving to Springfield in 1967. For most of her professional life she worked in the field of disability rights, most recently as a Policy Advisor for the Illinois Attorney General, retiring in 2003.



Hoff

Hoff has been affiliated

with a number of disability rights and community organizations, founding a local group addressing needs of "kids at risk" and an organization that advocated gifted children programs. She supports efforts to preserve and pro-mote the rich history of Sangamon County. First elected to the board for a three-year term in 2011, she gave up her seat in 2013 to run for board secretary. She served as chair of the Society's Special Projects Committee from 2014-2015.

Editor of *Historico* since 2009, Life member Vicky Whitaker previously filled a two-year vacancy on the board. The New York City native moved to Springfield in 1999, after taking early retirement as chief spokesperson for State University of New York at Stony Brook to wed her husband, Roger, the Society's past president. A former daily business reporter and later managing editor of New York State's largest weekly newspaper chain, she holds a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from Hofstra. Whitaker served on the national board of the Society of Professional Journalists for 10 years, was president of SPJ's

Press Club of Long Island and vice-president of the Deadline Club, New York City chapters. She also served as the organization's regional director for the northeast and later Illinois-Indiana and Kentucky. In Springfield, she has served as



Whitaker

vice-president of the Springfield Area Arts Council and on the board of the Association of Women Journalists. A licensed ham radio operator, she is public information officer for the Sangamon Valley Radio Club and CAARERT, the Capital Area Amateur Radio Emergency Response Team.

She is also a past chair of the University of Illinois Sangamon Auditorium Advisory Board and for the past 10 years has chaired/co-chaired Memorial Medical Foundation's Festival of Trees entertainment committee. She has co-chaired the Society's program/special events committee with President Davis for the past two years and also serves on the membership committee.

Pre-Registration Required

Members-Only State Supreme Court Revisit Slated For July 22

(Continued from page 3)

covered dining area.

Handicapped parking will be available close to the site and golf carts will be provided to transport tour takers in need of such service. Season ticket holders who want to see the show should notify the Society when making reservations. SCHS will notify the box office of their status.

The Muni is located at 815 East Lake Shore Drive, Springfield.

The Supreme Court tour will be the second time Society members have been able to see

areas of the historic building some of which are normally reserved for those involved in judicial proceedings. In April, 2013, members were able to see the building's legendary woodwork, marble, and frescos, their history detailed by John Lupton, acting executive director of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission and a Society member, who will lead the tour once again.

The building, at 220 East Capitol Avenue, Springfield, was closed for more than a year, shortly after the SCHS visit, to permit renovations that included cleaning the many works of art hanging on its

walls.

Designed in 1905 by W. Carby's Zimmerman, the state architect, and built by V. Jobst & Sons of Peoria at a cost of about \$450,000, the State Supreme Court Building in Springfield opened in 1908.

Similar in design to the U.S. Treasury in Washington, D.C., the three-story building had offices on the first floor court rooms and conference rooms on the second floor and private apartments on the third for use by that time for seven Supreme Court justices and three Appellate Court Justices.

A marble Louis XV-style stairway with wrought iron

balustrades and mahogany handrails lead to the second floor. Its elevator cabs, original to the building, are considered among the most beautiful in the State.

HALL OF JUSTICE: Society members will get another chance to view the interior of the State Supreme Court building in July.





Calendar of Historical Events

Tuesday, June 23: SCHS Annual Dinner, 5:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall, Westminster Presbyterian Church, 533 South Walnut Street, Springfield. Annual election, awards ceremony, live and silent auction. Buffet dinner. Tickets \$30. Order on-line at sangamonhistory.org or use the form below. Reservations/payment deadline is Monday, June 15.



Thursday, August 13: Members-Only History of the Muni Tour and Talk, 6:30 p.m., followed by an 8 p.m. performance of "West Side Story" (optional). Tour and talk are free. Tickets for the show, at \$13.25 for



reserved seats, must be made through the Society's website, sangamonhistory.org by July 20,



Tuesday, July 21: Members-Only Tour, State Supreme Court Building, 5:30 p.m. Free, but advance reservations required online at sangamonhistory.org by July 8. Limited to first 60 who register. No walk-ins. See story, page 3.



Sunday, October 11: Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society and back by popular demand! Plans are now underway that will return this major community event that annually drew thousands of participants before being put on hiatus a few years ago. Check the next issue of *Historico* for more details.



Sangamon County Historical Society Annual Dinner Reservation Form

Please reserve ____ seats (at \$30 per person) for the annual dinner, 5:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 23 in the Fellowship Hall of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Springfield.

Enclosed is my check for: \$ _____.

Your Name: _____

Name of Guest(s): PLEASE PRINT

Your Phone Number _____ e-mail: _____

Send this form and your check by to SCHS at Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. Save time and a stamp by making your reservation on-line at sangamonhistory.org. **All reservations/payment must be received by Monday, June 15.**

Sangamon County Historical Society
P.O. Box 9744,
Springfield, IL 62791-9744
Return Service Requested

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 777
Springfield, Illinois

Sangamon County Historical Society MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form

Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. You may also join or renew on line by going to sangamonhistory.org. Our membership year runs from July 1 to June 30.



Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ E-mail: _____

Status

New Member

Renewal

Gift of Membership from:

Phone _____

Membership Levels

- 01 - Regular Membership - \$25
- 02 - Not-For-Profit Membership - \$20 (Must show proof of status).
- 03 - Student Membership - \$10. (Must show proof of status).
- 04 - Educator, \$15. (Must show proof of status).
- 05 - Pioneer Level Membership - \$100.
- 06 - Settlers Level Membership - \$250.
- 07 - Trailblazer Level Membership - \$500.
- 08 - Lifetime Membership - \$700