



# HISTORICO

*Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter*

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744, Phone: 217-525-1961, e-mail: schsoffice@gmail.com web: [www.sangamonhistory.org](http://www.sangamonhistory.org), [SangamonLink.org](http://SangamonLink.org)

VOLUME 51 NO. 4

JANUARY 2015

## Portrayers to Tell What It Takes

### January 20: When History Becomes Personal

Slipping into a period costume is one thing. Portraying a historical figure may be far more complex.

Just how much more will be explored at the Society's Tuesday, January 20 program meeting when a panel of "re-enactors" face a tag-team of history experts to reveal the stories and preparation behind what has become a popular way to bring history alive.

The program, "When History Becomes Personal," begins at 5:30 p.m. at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library's Carnegie Room North and is open to the public. Panelists will include Pam Brown, best known for her

portrayal of Mary Todd Lincoln; Larry Werline, a General and President Ulys-



Werline (left) as Grant, Ferricks (center) in Militia garb, Brown (right) as Mary Lincoln.

ses S. Grant re-enactor who heads a living history troupe of general lookalikes called Grant, Lee, Customer

& Co., and Donald Ferricks, who portrays soldiers from several history periods including the Blackhawk War, the Civil War, the 1916 Border campaign and World War II Rangers. Assistant curator at the Illinois State Military Museum, he has been a re-enactor since 1976.

Moderators Sarah Watson and Justin Blandford, who both use re-enactors in their work, will field the broad range of questions that will include how re-enactors research and prep for a role, finding costumes, staying in character, and public response.

*(Continued on page 6)*

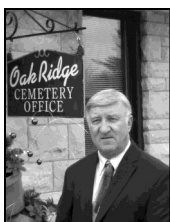
## Society Teams to Rekindle Fall Walk

### February 17 Meeting to Put Eye on Oak Ridge Cemetery

The rich history of Springfield's Oak Ridge Cemetery gets center attention February 17 when Michael Lelys, its executive director, talks to the Society about what is one the nation's foremost historic sites, drawing nearly a million visitors a year, second only to Arlington National Cemetery.

Lelys has been working closely with the Society for the past several

months in mapping out a return of the Society's popular Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk this coming fall.



Lelys

His talk, at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North and open to the public, will provide general underpinnings for the October 11, 2015 event that had been on a hiatus for

several years. SCHS president Mary Alice Davis and members of the Society board have been meeting informally since the summer to plan the event and related activities that in the past has drawn several thousand visitors.

After passing legislation the previous spring to forbid further burying

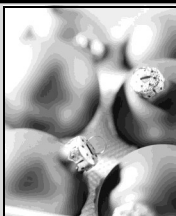
*(Continued on page 7)*

#### **INSIDE**

- From the President's Desk.....2
- Winter Weather Guide.....6
- Calendar.....7

*SCHS Celebrates In Style*

Pages 4-5



NOW ON [SangamonLink.org](http://SangamonLink.org):

New history stories you won't want to miss!

Page 3





## 2015 Shaping Up to Be Busy Year for SCHS

If our plans and coming programs are any measure, 2015 will be a very busy year for the Society.

With a little help from Mother Nature, our winter-spring program season will kick off later this month with a different perspective on the way re-enactors approach portraying historical figures. As you might have already figured out, it's not simply donning make-up and a period costume to do the job. Each member of the panel has carved his or her own niche in the re-enactment field. We're looking forward to learning more about how they work and how what they do fits into popularizing the way the public learns about history. Our "tag-team" moderators, Sara Watson and Justin Blandford, have the depth of experience to ask the right questions. We're looking forward to their answers.

Then, in February, we will be hearing more about Oak Ridge Cemetery from its executive director, Mike Lelys, with whom we've been working for the past several months. For many years, the Society sponsored an annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk, a hugely popular community event that was shelved a few years ago at the request of a now former cemetery administrator.

Despite the passage of time, no one forgot about the Cemetery Walk. In fact, it was

probably the singularly most-requested activity that came across the desk of several SCHS presidents over the years. We were delighted, make that thrilled, that Mike Lelys shared our vision to bring this great event back to Springfield. The date, October 11, 2015, has been on our unofficial calendar for some time. We're happy to go public with it now and encourage you to join in planning the event.

Oak Ridge is brimming with history. Our annual Cemetery Walk will bring its story anew to the community.

\* \* \*

We're also looking forward to History Trivia Night in March at the Old State Capitol. It's a fun evening and helps the Lincoln Troubadours, a group of young people worthy of our support. We'll be sharing the details of this year's event in February.

\* \* \*

And last, but certainly not least, our apologies to R-Lou Barker, a Life Member whose name was inadvertently left off our annual directory that was included in your November *Historico*. We've always been proud to call R-Lou a member and thank her for her support over the years.

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](http://sangamon-history.org) or [sancohis.org](http://sancohis.org). Send event announcements to [historicoeditor@gmail.com](mailto:historicoeditor@gmail.com).

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

## Newest SangamonLink.org Entries: Pallbearers, Sheriff's Ouster, SCHS

Checked *SangamonLink.org* lately?

Several new entries---from a piece on the pallbearers at President Abraham Lincoln's Funeral, to the bizarre circumstances that led to the ouster of a former county sheriff and the death of his successor---can now be found on the Society's new searchable on-line encyclopedia of county history edited by Mike Kienzler.

Kienzler also provides items from *SangamonLink.org* to the **State Journal Register** which publishes them twice a month. Anyone can contribute information to the site, which the Society envisions as an ongoing and comprehensive guide to county history.

In his recent entry, Kienzler provides a profile and the circumstances around which

newspaper publisher Allen Cole became sheriff of Sangamon County from 1933 to 1934. His predecessor, Samuel T. Metcalf of Buffalo (1867-1945) was ousted from office in 1933 after displaying erratic behavior thought to be brought on by a head injury Metcalf suffered in a fistfight in 1932 with an *Illinois State Journal* police reporter outside the newspaper's office on South Sixth Street.

Cole, who published the *Pleasant Plains Argus* and the *New Berlin Bee*, won the Democratic primary for state representative in 1934 but died with his wife in a car accident on way to Jacksonville for a political rally.

Also new to the site is a history of the Sangamon County Historical Society written by a former president, David Scott.



### 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**

Please make note of our official mailing address:

**SCHS**  
**Box 9744**  
**Springfield, Illinois,**  
**62791-9744**

**SCHOOL BELLS:** The Society's entry into Memorial's 2014 Festival of Trees drew its share of close looks as visitors to the event that featured more than 200 trees, frequently stopped to inspect the handmade school bell ornaments that featured gold foil-backed photos of some 50 historic school houses across Sangamon County. A photo of one of the bells, similar to the one below, was also featured in a recent photo display in the *State Journal Register*. The Society tree was purchased by the Corporation Service Company. Close to 35,000 people visited this year's Festival, held at the Orr Building on the State Fair Grounds in Springfield.

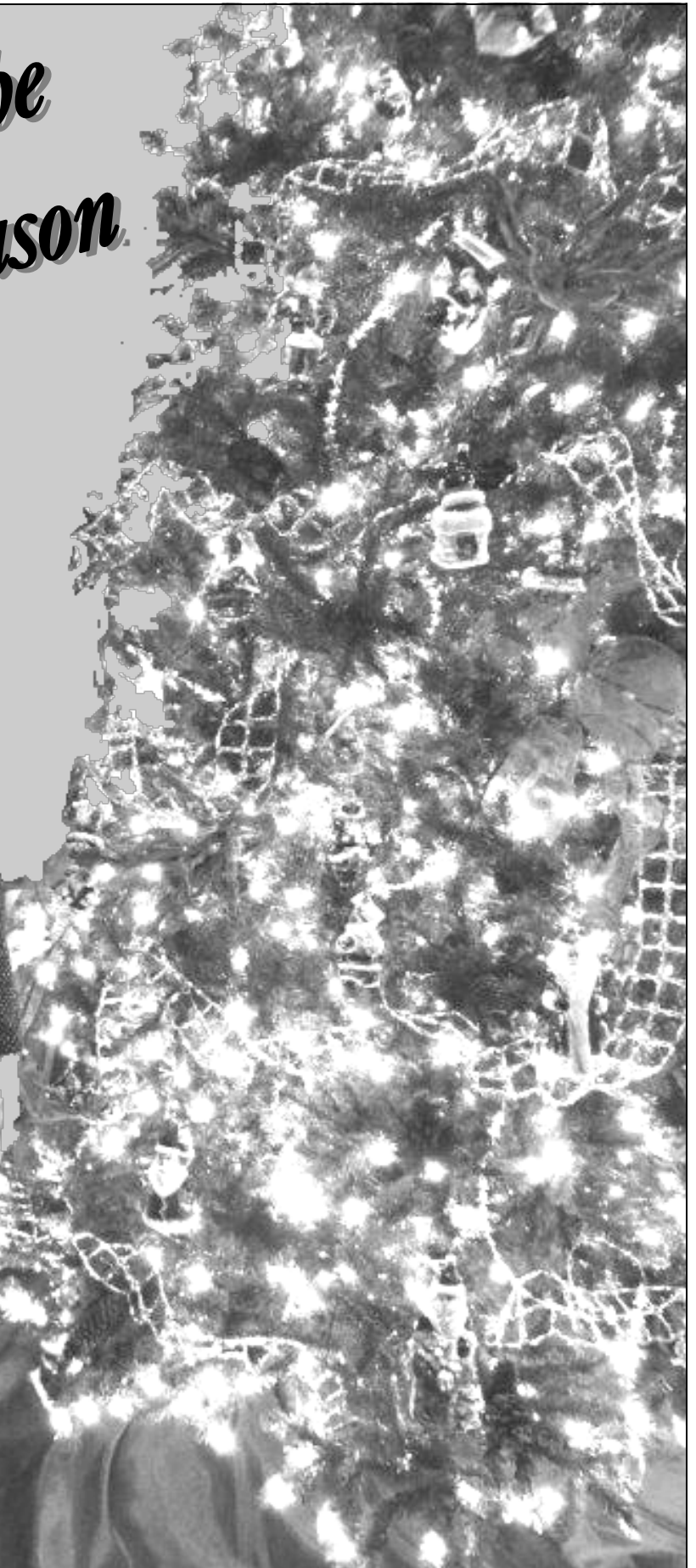
*Donna Catlin photos*



### JANUARY 2015 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Society welcomes new members *Kim Effrid, Mary Mucciante, Seth McGee*

*Celebrating the  
Holiday Season.*





Over 80 Society members gathered at the Springfield home of president Mary Alice Davis (far left) for the organization's annual Holiday Party on December 16. In addition to a sumptuous buffet (above) created by Carol Jean Fraase, and holiday décor throughout the house, the evening offered members ample opportunity to socialize and share the holiday spirit.

*Donna Catlin photos*





# Portrayers of History to Share Their Stories

(Continued from page 1)

Watson is executive director the the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, the coordinating entity for the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. Blandford is Superintendent of State historic sites in Springfield for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Brown, of Springfield, holds a bachelor of arts degree in acting/directing from the University of Oklahoma. She has portrayed Mary Todd Lincoln in a broad number of venues including several productions at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum's Union Theatre including "The Heavens and Hung in Black," "The Last of Mrs. Lincoln," and the "Mary Lincoln Insanity Re-Trial" held in Springfield and Chicago. She has

also portrayed Mary Todd Lincoln in the **National Geographic** documentary, "The Real Abraham Lincoln." She is serving as director of the Springfield Theatre Center's April 2015 production of "Our American Cousin."

Werline, a Chatham resident and alumnus of Purdue, has been a first person presenter of General and President Ulysses S. Grant since 1997. Prior to that he had been an avid enthusiast of history, particularly the American Civil War, participating as a member and presenter at his local Civil War Round Table and eventually a field Civil War re-enactor rising to the rank of Captain of the largest Union Artillery Battery in the Midwest.

Armed with presentation skills as well as period military skills, he

moved on to become the person of General U.S. Grant. His exact height and similar features made him an ideal Grant re-enactor and presenter. Werline does well over 100 presentations each year at re-enactments, museums, libraries, schools, historical societies, round tables, etc. He is a featured presenter for the Springfield "History Comes Alive" program at the Illinois Old State Capitol. He has participated in numerous films including *Gettysburg*, *Gods and Generals*, and *Antietam*. He is also a member of the U.S. Grant Association, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Lincoln Funeral Coalition, and the Macoupin County Civil War Round Table.

## Third Annual History Trivia Night Set For Old State Capitol, March 21

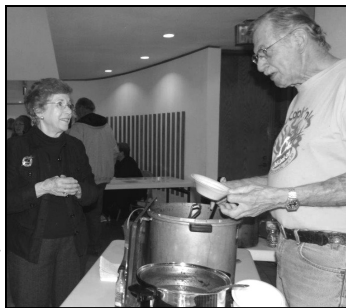
Circle Saturday, March 21 on your calendar!

That's the date of the Society's third annual History Trivia Night for benefit of the Lincoln Troubadours. The event, will be held at the Old State Capitol in Springfield in conjunction with the Old State Capitol Foundation.

With a limit on 130 players, prizes, great food and drink, it's no surprise that last year was a sell out. You'll be hearing more about the popular event in next month's *Historico* and on-line at the Society's website, [sangamonhistory.org](http://sangamonhistory.org), along with ticket and table ordering information.

Doors will open at 6 p.m., with game time at 7 p.m. in Foundation Hall on the lower level of the Old State Capitol building. Entrance will be through the lower level, or via elevators and stairs from the plaza above. The site's underground parking facility will remain open after-hours to accommodate the event. Usual underground parking fees apply.

Because of the historic nature of the building, players cannot bring their own food to the site, but can once again purchase regular and vegetarian chilli prepared by nationally-known chilli champion Les Eastep, a member of the SCHS board. As in past years, members of the Lincoln Troubadours will be on hand to perform and assist with the event. The vocally-talented high school and college students, directed by Lincoln Land Community College music prof Sue Hamilton, receive a small state stipend to that does not completely cover their travel and other expenses incurred in performing free at historic sites across Central Illinois each summer. Proceeds from the March 21 help supplement their costs.



**CHILLI MAN Les Eastep will be cooking up his favorite dish again for History Trivia Night.**

## Weather-Related Cancellations On Line, Phone

A heavy evening snowfall predicted? Icy roads too hazardous to drive?

Winter is here and with it the possibility that a Sangamon County Historical Society meeting could be cancelled if weather conditions call for it. Here's how you can find out before heading out the door:

If road conditions or hazardous weather prompts a general meeting or event cancellation, an announcement to that effect will be posted by **3 p.m.** of the day of the meeting/event several different ways.

Notices initially will be posted on our main website, [www.sangamonhistory.org](http://www.sangamonhistory.org) and on our phone, **217-525-1961** by 3 p.m. on the day of the meeting. This should give you ample time to change plans.

Where possible, we will also post any cancellation notices on media websites and request that they be broadcast through local radio and television outlets.



# Calendar of Historical Events

**Tuesday, January 20:** "When History Becomes Personal." Sangamon County Historical Society program meeting, 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield. Free. Open to the public.

**Tuesday, February 17:** "All About Oak Ridge Cemetery," with Oak Ridge exec director Michael Lelys, guest speaker. Sangamon County Historical Society program meeting, 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield. Free. Open to the public.

**Saturday, February 28:** *Edwards Place Grand Unveiling Gala, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.* Join Benjamin and Helen Edwards, Ninian and Elizabeth Edwards, Stephen A. Douglas, and Abraham and Mary Lincoln at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be among the very first people to see Edwards Place newly restored to the splendor of its 19th century appearance. The \$200 per person ticket includes

a four-course dinner inspired by the 1865 Inaugural dinner. All proceeds will go toward second floor restoration of Edwards Place. For more information, call 523-2631.

**Saturday, March 21:** *3rd Annual History Trivia Night* for benefit of the Lincoln Troubadours, Old State Capitol, Springfield. See story, page 6. Ticket information and details in the next issue of *Historico*.

**Tuesday, April 7:** *SCHS Members Only Pre-Public Private Tour of Edwards Place renovations, 5:30 p.m.* Free but pre-registration will be required. Information and details will appear in the next issue of *Historico*.

**Saturday, April 11:** Edwards Place opens to the general public.

**Sunday, October 11:** *Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk* sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society. Details to come.

## Meeting to Focus on Oak Ridge, Then and Now

(Continued from page 1)

grounds within the city, in 1865, Springfield purchased a 28.5 acre site two miles north of the Capitol.

Today, Oak Ridge is the largest municipal cemetery in Illinois, encompassing 365 acres of rolling prairie land, thousands of hardwoods and conifers, and over 75,000 interments.

It is the final resting place for President Abraham Lincoln, his wife, and all but one of his children and over 80 other notable dignitaries including several former governors and legislators. Labor

leader John L. Lewis and John Kelly, the first settler in Springfield as well as world famous poet and singing troubadour Vachel Lindsay are also among those interred at Oak Ridge. There are also three state war memorials located at Oak Ridge, com-

memorating Illinois lives lost in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

A native of Linz, Austria, Lelys grew up in Springfield, attending St.

from Sangamon State/University of Illinois.

Prior to being named executive director of Oak Ridge in 2011, Lelys was executive director of the Springfield Community Federation, director of Community Service and Grants for the Springfield Housing Authority, Director of Recreation for the City of Springfield, and Assistant Superintendent of Public Works, also for the City of Springfield. Prior to that, he was principal of St. Joseph Elementary School and a teacher at Little Flower Elementary School.

Lelys currently serves on the NEHEMIAH Affordable Housing and Daycare Development Boards and is a former member of the boards of the Diocese of Springfield School Board, the Lincoln Library Board, the Springfield Community Federation Board, and the Springfield Homeless Task Force.



Joseph Elementary School and later graduating from Springfield High School. He holds and associate in arts degree from Springfield College, a bachelor of arts degree in education from Illinois State University, and a masters in educational administration

**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](http://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