



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, SangamonLink.org

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MAY 2016

Annual Dinner June 21 at Island Bay Yacht Club; Author, Past President Taylor Pensoneau to Speak

The Sangamon County Historical Society will hold its annual dinner at the Island Bay Yacht Club on Tuesday, June 21 starting at 5:30 p.m. with a cocktail hour, followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m.

The event will include election of officers and directors for 2016-2017, announcement of winners of the Society's 2016 Special Project grants and a keynote address by well-known author and journalist Taylor Pensoneau who served as president of the Society 10 years ago.

The buffet dinner will be held outdoors on the roofed patio of the Club overlooking Lake Springfield. The menu includes mixed green salad,



Pensoneau

dent and is the author of eight books:

beef, chicken and salmon, potatoes, and a selection of desserts. A cash bar will be available. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased either online at the Society's website, www.sangamonhistory.org or by mail (see form, page 7). Payment must be received by June 16.

Pensoneau, a resident of New Berlin, spent 12 years as the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Illinois political correspon-

Dapper & Deadly: The True Story of Black Charlie Harris; Brothers Notorious: The Sheltons, Southern Illinois' Legendary Gangsters; three biographies of Illinois political heavyweights: *Dan Walker: The Glory and the Tragedy; Richard Ogilvie: In the Interest of the State; and Powerhouse: Arrington from Illinois* and as his ghostwriter, the autobiography of the late U.S. Senator Alan J. Dixon, *The Gentleman from Illinois: Stories from Forty Years of Elective Public Service*. He also has penned one work of fiction, *The Summer of '50*, a mystery that revolves around Jake Brosky, a colorful investigative reporter for the

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May, June Garage Sales to Replace Annual Dinner Auction

Scratch the fundraising live and silent auctions that in recent years were an integral part of the Sangamon County Historical Society's annual dinners.

"Everything has a life span and the auctions are no exception," notes SCHS president Mary Alice Davis

in announcing plans for their replacement: a moveable feast of antiques and collectibles that will be on sale at two SCHS garage sales, one on Saturday, May 14, the other Saturday, June 4. All proceeds will going to Society projects and programs.

"We were fortunate that two of our members offered to host a Society sale as part of their annual community garage sale, the first in Springfield, the other in Jerome. Since these neighborhood and municipal events are widely publicized and draw large crowds, we

expect we benefit from both the publicity and traffic," Davis noted

Members of the Society who want to contribute items to the sale will need to pre-price their goods. Sought are: home décor pieces,

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BEER HISTORY EXPERT Roy Mayfield displays the newest addition to his collection, an SCHS coffee mug that can take the brew too. It was presented to him by SCHS president Mary Alice Davis, right, following his April 19 talk to the Society on the brewing history of Central Illinois. More photos, page 5.





Putting A New Twist on An Annual Event

It's tough to break routine, but the Sangamon County Historical Society has never been one to keep doing the same event over and over or in quite the same way. That's what makes us such an interesting organization...and keeps us on our toes.

Such was the case with the silent and live auctions we've been doing for the past three years at our annual dinner. They had their origin in our series of Trivia Nights. The first three of those events included silent auctions, but buyer interest in the latter waned and this year, as those who attended may have noticed, there was no silent auction attached to the 4th Annual Trivia Night.

About three years ago, we added both a silent and live auction of history items to the annual dinner, a little diversion, so to speak, for an evening that traditionally centers on the annual business of the Society: elections and speeches. But with many of us reaching an age where we'd rather get rid of things than collect them, the thrill of bidding and buying not to mention assembling, researching and setting up both auctions, also dulled over the years.

Still, the Society and its programs directly benefitted from these events, posing a problem, albeit short-lived, on what to replace it with.

The solution: a moveable feast of cherished and not-so-cherished collectibles for the public to pick through and purchase in the setting of a traditional mid-west venue: the hometown garage sale.

A board member and a committee chair each volunteered their garages for the sale, both in areas and at a time when their larger civic association or municipality is holding an area-wide garage sale. That works well for us, since we will not have to expend valuable dollars for advertising and signage and can be virtually guaranteed a good turnout, weather permitting.

We think its worth a try and hope you will contribute items to it and/or offer to help the morning of each sale. There's a contact number for each site host in the article about the garage sales that starts on page 1. If you want to donate an item or help on the day of the sale, please make that call.

* * *

Our annual dinner is in a new location this year, one we think you will enjoy both for its vista of Lake Springfield and the program we have planned. It will be outdoors, but under the permanent roof that covers the large patio of the Island Bay Yacht Club. The lake front breeze should keep us cool, but do dress accordingly.

Our speaker for the evening, Taylor Pensoneau, is well-known to Society members, not only for his engaging style as a speaker, but also for his broad depth of knowledge about Illinois and the people who have shaped both its system of government and underbelly of crime. We're delighted he will be our keynoter and that it will mark his 10th anniversary as a President of the Sangamon County Historical Society.

Mary Alice



Historico, published 10 times a year (except July and December), is the official bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. *Winner, 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*

Membership Renewal Time Nears, On-Line Will Be First, Fast Option

On-line renewal reminders will be going out this month to SCHS members who regularly use the Society's website and e-mail services to keep up with meetings, events, and reservations.

"A major segment of our growing membership now draw information about Society activities and sign up for tours and special events electronically. The most convenient way for them will be to renew their membership on line rather than by mail as well," explained membership chair Claire Eberle. "In fact, even though our fiscal year begins July 1, many people have already paid their 2016-2017 dues on line, finding it the most convenient and quickest way to keep it up to date."

Those who prefer to send in a check will of course still be able to do so and will

be receiving a reminder in the mail. Dues must be paid no later than June 30, Eberle noted.

"We are well into planning programs and activities into the next year, including some summer events, some of which will be for members only. In addition, our mailing list gets revised during the summer to reflect changes and additions to the membership list as it applies to the distribution of our newsletter, *Historico*, which is printed 10 times a year.

"We're delighted that so many people have already signed up for what looks like an exciting year ahead. In the long-run, switching to on-line renewals does save the Society a significant amount of money, a very cost-effective method both for our members and the Society" she noted.

Linking to the Link

Editor's Slice-of-Life Look at Springfield Gets Second Look on Society Website

It's not every day that you can get an instant glimpse back in time.

But *SangamonLink.org* editor Mike Kienzler found just that, in an old newspaper column he recently added it to the Society's prize-winning on-line and searchable encyclopedia of Sangamon County. You can check it for yourself at *SangamonLink.org*.

Kienzler discovered a description of nightlife in Springfield in the 1930s as interpreted by J. Emil Smith, a journalist who wrote a daily column, "Making Conversation," for nearly 28 years, starting when he became editor of the Illinois State Journal in 1930.

"Much of the column was made up of briefs, jokes, poems and birthday notices for friends and acquaintances. But "Making Conversation" often started with a longer essay or reflection on the news," notes

Kienzler, particularly a piece published on Oct. 16, 1935 that described downtown Springfield late at night."



Strolling through Springfield's downtown streets late at night and in the small hours of the morning, Smith realized that that "while the city's activities slow down, the city as a whole never sleeps." Smith discovered a litany of night people "whose work or habits keeps them up while the great majority is slumbering, "from a news-

(Continued on page 4)



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Nominating: Donna Catlin
Membership: Claire Eberle
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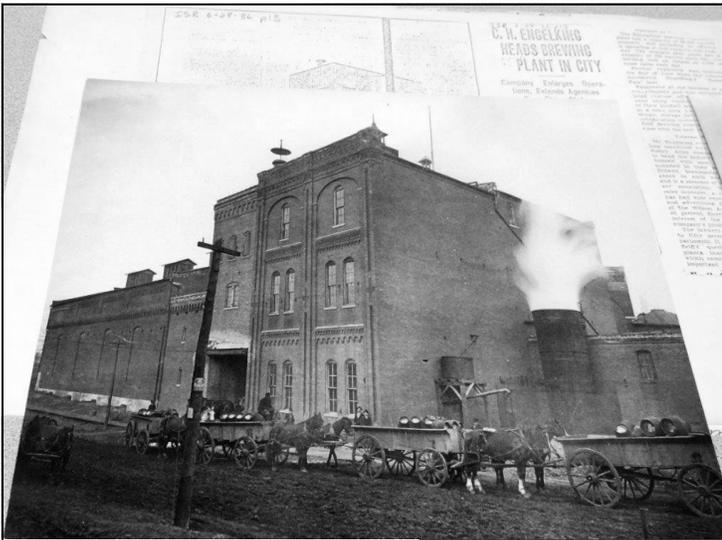
Dr. Samuel Wheeler, **Executive Coordinator**
 Mike Kienzler, **SangamonLink.org Editor**

Please make note of our official mailing address:
SCHS
Box 9744
Springfield, Illinois,
62791-9744

MAY 2016 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Society welcomes the following new member to its ranks:

Fletcher Farrar, Mary Jessup Farrar, Susan Helm, Thomas Turpin, Anita Walbaum, Robert C. Walbaum.



BEER HISTORIAN Roy Mayfield shared his knowledge of the rich tradition of beer and brewing in Central Illinois with members of the Sangamon County Historical Society on April 19, providing both a display and Powerpoint show at the Society's monthly program meeting at Springfield's Lincoln Library. Mayfield is founding president of the Reisch Brew Crew, a group of more than 55 men and women hobbyists from across Central Illinois who collect breweriana such as old bottles and special advertising premiums like those shown here, many from once thriving area breweries, now long gone, including the Reisch Brewing Company, Springfield Brewing Company, and Dick's Brewing Company. Mayfield is currently vice-president of the Reisch Brew Crew, an affiliate of three nationwide Breweriana clubs and a Life Member of the Sangamon County Historical Society.

Donna Catlin photos



Editor's Eye On Springfield Offers Look Back on City Life

(Continued from page 3)

paper delivery man to the cop on the beat to the maestro of the orchestra leaving to go home from the last show at the Orpheum theater. Smith's mini-portraits, yours for the reading, are each stories in themselves, capture a slice of 1930s life to which few Springfielders were ever exposed.

Smith, who died in 1969, was a politician as well as a newspaperman, serving as city clerk in 1907, and three terms as finance commissioner, starting in 1915. After Mayor Sam-

uel Bullard died in 1926, the city council appointed Smith as his replacement. He was overwhelmingly elected in his own right the next year but resigned the post in 1930 in order to begin his tenure as Journal editor. He was promoted to publisher of both the Journal and the Illinois



Smith

State Register in 1942, while continuing to edit the Journal. Smith was named publisher emeritus in 1955, but continued

to write his column for three more years.

You can read Smith's account of Springfield nightlife and more about his career on SangamonLink.org.

Also new to the on-line encyclopedia of Sangamon County history is a look at Springfield's first mausoleum, Oak Ridge Abbey, built in 1910. In promoting the project, the builders "played on people's fears of disease, grave robbery, decomposition and neglect," says Kienzler. "What's more, they promised interment in the Oak Ridge

Abbey would protect against the possibility of premature burial."

Its name was meant to invoke Westminster Abbey in Britain, Kienzler adds, and was built with crypts to hold 1,051 remains.

Its developer the National Mausoleum Company, that bought the site from Oak Ridge for \$13,000, said it spent \$250,000 on construction. Work began in 1910 and finished in 1912.

When it opened, a crypt cost \$250. Among those buried in the Abbey is J. Emil Smith.

Reservations Open For Annual Dinner At Yacht Club June 21

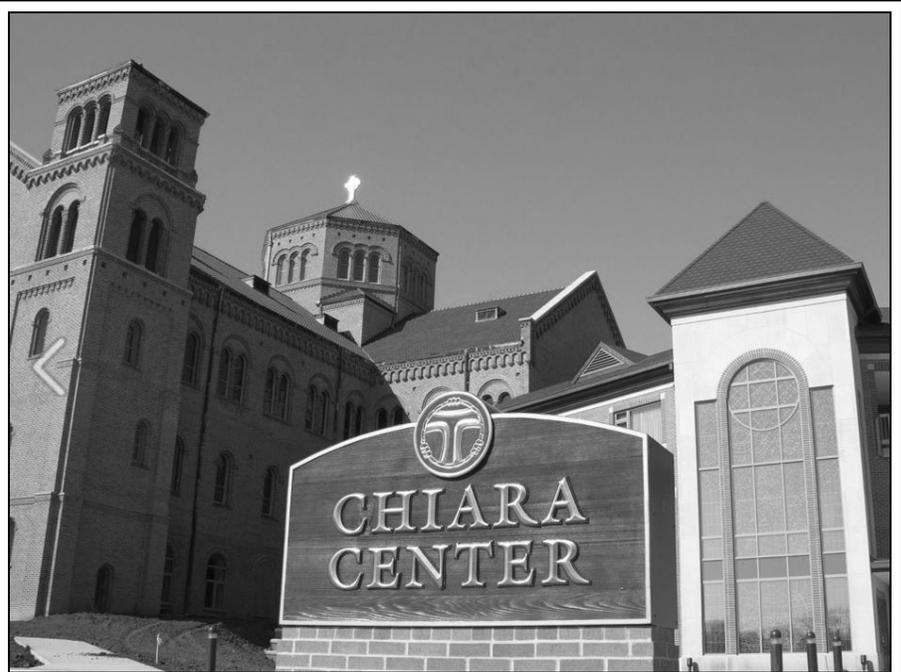
(Continued from page 1)

St. Louis World and a memoir, *Reporting On Life And People Along The Way*.

After his overall 16-year stint with the *Post-Dispatch* ended in 1978, Pensoneau began a 26-year career with the Illinois Coal Association, the trade organization for the state's coal industry. He retired in December 2003 as president of the association.

Pensoneau and his wife Elizabeth, the retired editor of *Outdoor Illinois* magazine, own and operate Downstate Publications. In addition to his role with the Sangamon County Historical Society, he is the former president of the board of the West Sangamon Public Library District.

A map to the Island Bay Yacht Club, located at 76 Yacht Club Road, Springfield, will be published in the next issue of *Historico* along with the 2016-2017 proposed slate of officers and directors.



ABOUT 50 MEMEBERS of the Sangamon County Historical Society are expected to participate in a May 10 guided tour of the historic Chiara Center, St. Francis of Assisi Church and Franciscan Heritage Museum near Riverton. The tour will be in place of the Society's regular Tuesday monthly program meeting but will also be a week earlier than the norm. The Center, a conference and meditation complex, is part of a 300-acre campus established by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis who have the sick in Central Illinois since 1875. Its centerpiece is St. Francis of Assisi Church, designed by Helmle & Helmle and built by local contractor Frank Fitzsimmons from 1920 to 1924. The church was dedicated on April 29, 1924. *Donna Catlin photo.*

Society Gearing Up For Two Garage Sale Fundraisers

(Continued from page 1)

housewares, books, toys, dolls, china and glassware, silver, antiques, and collectibles and small pieces of furniture, lamps and other easily portable items.

"Anything that does not sell at the first garage sale will be transported to the other site for the June event. The only thing we do not want are clothes."

If you'd like to contribute items to the May 14 sale or volunteer to help at the site at 142 Lost Tree Drive in the Country Estates area of Springfield, call 793-8200 prior to the event.

Lost Tree Drive is west of Veterans Parkway and east Old Jacksonville Road off Golf Road. The sale will run from 7:30 a.m. until Noon but may be extended into the early afternoon. Anything left over will

be transported to the site of the June 4 event, part of the village of Jerome's annual municipal-wide garage sale that will begin at 8 a.m. and run until Noon, with the time extended if neces-

essary.

To contribute additional items or volunteer to help at the to the June 4 sale, call 793-5224.

Calland Drive is located one

block north of Wabash Avenue, between Filmore Street and South Park Avenue.

"Any items that remain after the second sale will be contributed to charity," Davis said.

Save the Dates!

SCHS Garage Sale Duo

May 14:
Springfield

June 4:
Jerome

More Events Planned

Illinois State Military Museum Revvs Up Free May 21 Display of Military Vehicles

Ever wanted to look under the hood of an Army jeep or kick the tires?

You'll get a chance on Saturday, May 21 at the Illinois State Military Museum in Springfield.

Dubbed "Motorpool Mania: The 2016 Military Museum Vehicle Show, the display—free and open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.—will feature U.S. and military vehicles from the iconic jeep to 21st Century equipment culled from the Museum's resources and from private collectors.

The event is one of several planned in coming months at the Museum, 1301 North MacArthur Boulevard, two blocks north of the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and North Grand Avenue.

On Saturday, June 25, members of the Museum's Living History Detachment and the Illinois National Guard and Militia Historical Society will display uniforms and equipment of Soldiers, Airmen, Sail-

ors and Marines who served during World War II, discussing how service members lived



and fought the war in the Pacific and European Theaters. The free program will run from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Then, on Saturday, July 23, the Museum will be the site of a Vietnam Encampment, with living historians establishing

Fire Base Castle on the Museum grounds to display equipment, uniforms, and weapons

used in Southeast Asia and during the Vietnam War Era. The display, sponsored by the Museum, its Living History Department and the Illinois National Guard and Militia Historical Society, will run from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission and

parking are free.

Three other events are planned for the fall. The Museum will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the 1916 Border Campaign on September 10, in which Illinois troops were deployed in pursuit of Major General John Pershing's campaign into Mexico to capture Pancho Villa.

On Veterans Day, November 11, visitors will be able to learn more about the role of the Illinois National Guard in World War I.

The series will be capped on December 10 with "Christmas At the Front," an overview of how soldiers celebrated Christmas during four conflicts: the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I and World War II.

The program will include a brief talk by Lincoln Land Community College political science professor Dr. Chris McDonald on Soldier's Christmas letters, and a performance of holiday carols.

Historical Mix

Murder, Music, Porch Chat Among Area Offerings This Month

Murder and mystery returns to the Springfield Art Association's historic Edwards Place this month, as does an evening filled with Civil War music. And just a few blocks away, Iles House will be launching Summer Front Porch Chats. Here are the details:

At Edwards Place on Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7, at 6 p.m., the fictional Springfield Art Academy is hosting a glittering fundraising gala to honor world-renowned artist Janette Herbert, but someone has a secret they would kill to protect. It's up to the audience at this "Murder Mystery Dinner" to discover "whodunit" in this interactive event. The \$45 per person ticket includes appetizers, dinner, dessert and table wine.

"Songs of the Civil War" are next on

the Edwards Place docket, a May 21 after-



noon of music from the Civil War played on the same antique piano that Abraham Lincoln listened to. Refreshments will follow. Members of the 10th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry will be on hand to add to the Civil War atmosphere. Tickets for the 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. event are \$10.

For more information on the Edwards Place events, call 523-2631. Edwards Place is located on the grounds of the Springfield Art Association, 700 North Fourth Street.

Iles House, at 628 South Seventh Street, launches its Summer Front Porch Chats on Friday, May 27 at 7 p.m. with Richard E. Hart, Charles B. Strozier and James Cornelius discussing Thomas Lincoln, his character, status in his community and his relationship with his son.



Calendar of Historical Events

SATURDAY, MAY 7 - SUNDAY, MAY 8: MURDER MYSTERY DINNER AT HISTORIC EDWARDS PLACE. 6 p.m. The Springfield Art Association's historic Edwards Place at 700 North Fourth Street, Springfield, hosts a make-believe gala in which the guest of honor is the target of murder. The audience will have to figure out this who-dun-it puzzle as they dine over dinner, finish their dessert and sip wine. Tickets are \$45 per person. Call 523-2631 for ticket information.

TUESDAY, MAY 10: CHIARA CENTER, ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH AND FRANCISCAN HERITAGE MUSEUM TOUR. 6 p.m. Sangamon County Historical Society members will get an exclusive guided tour of the church and museum of this historic 300 acre retreat at 4875 LaVerna Road near Riverton operated by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis.

SATURDAY, MAY 21 - SUNDAY, MAY 22: CLAYVILLE SPRING FESTIVAL, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday. Artisan demonstrations, historic building tours, kids crafts and games, vendors, reenactments, period music, entertainment, food, refreshments. Admission \$5; ages six-12, \$3; under six, free. Clayville Historic site is located on Route 125, Pleasant Plains.

SATURDAY, MAY 21: MOTORPOOL MANIA. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Illinois State Military Museum brings together its collection of military vehicles and those of private collectors ranging from the iconic jeep to today's sophisticated equip-

ment. Illinois State Military Museum, 1301 North MacArthur Boulevard, Springfield. Free.

SATURDAY, MAY 21: SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR. 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Members of the 10th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry will help provide the visual atmosphere for this afternoon of Civil War era music played on the newly refurbished antique piano to which Abraham Lincoln listened when he visited historic Edwards Place, a restored mansion on the grounds of the Springfield Art Association at 700 North Fourth Street in Springfield. Tickets are \$10. For information call 523-2631

FRIDAY, May 27: SUMMER FRONT PORCH CHATS. 7 p.m. Iles House, at 628 South Seventh Street, launches its Summer Front Porch Chats on Friday, May 27 at 7 p.m. with Richard E. Hart, Charles B. Strozier and James Cornelius discussing Thomas Lincoln, his character, status in his community and his relationship with his son.

TUESDAY, JUNE 21, SANGAMON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER, 5:30 p.m. Past president Taylor Pensoneau will be the keynote speaker at this annual event that includes elections and the presentation of Special Projects awards. Tickets are \$30 per person and *must be purchased no later than June 16.* See page 1 for details. Island Bay Yacht Club is located at 76 Yacht Club Road off Island Bay Road (the southern leg of Shepherd Road) in Springfield.

SCHS Annual Dinner Mail-In Reservation Form

Please use this form if you cannot or do not wish to register for the SCHS June 21 Annual dinner on-line. Your reservation form and check must be received no later than June 16. Checks should be made payable to SCHS and sent to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Enclosed is a check for _____ for _____ seats at the June 21, 2016 Sangamon County Historical Society Annual Dinner at the Island Bay Yacht Club, Springfield.



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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