



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

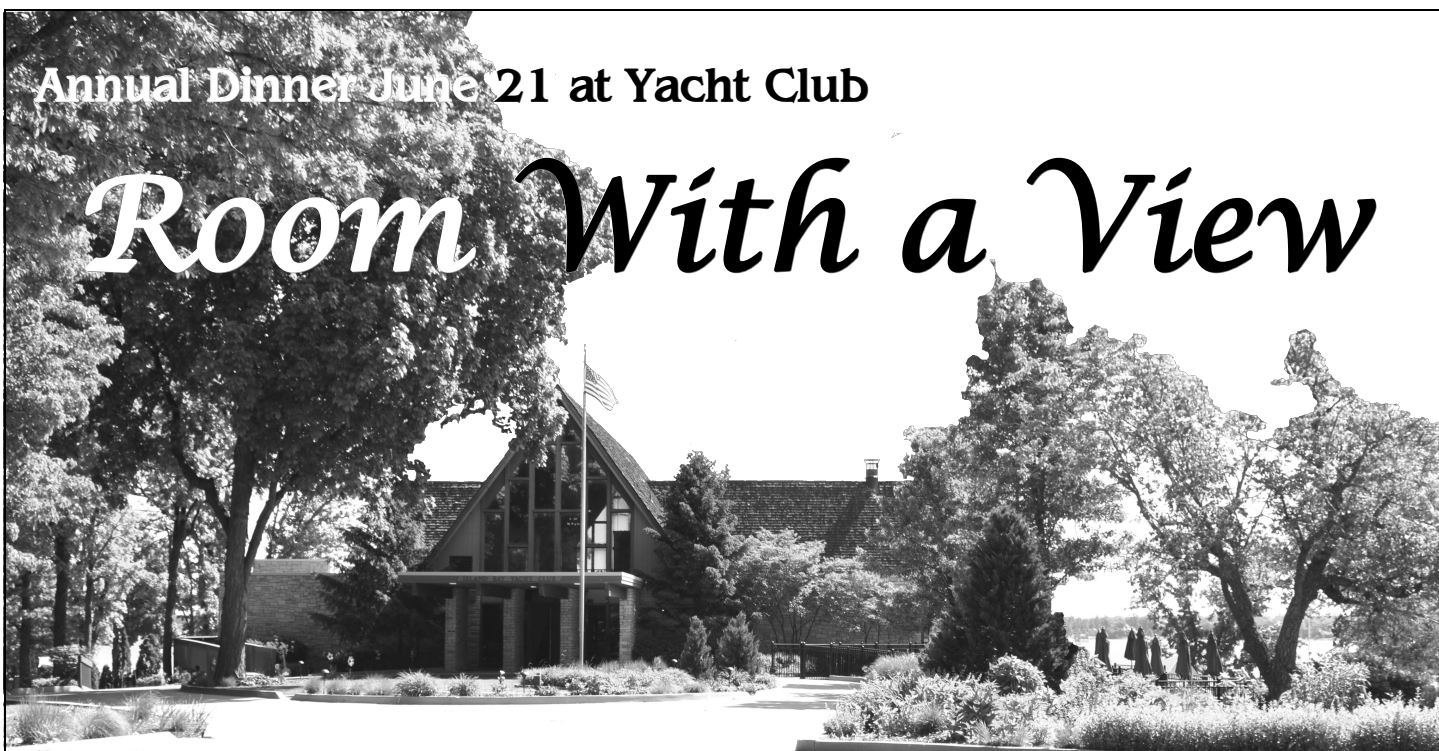
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VOLUME 52 NO. 8

JUNE 2016

Annual Dinner June 21 at Yacht Club

Room With a View



Elections, Awards, and Talk by Author at Lakeside Event

The Sangamon County Historical Society will hold its annual dinner at the Island Bay Yacht Club on Tuesday, June 21. If you want to attend, you'll need to purchase a \$30 per person ticket no later than Thursday, June 16.

The event will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a cocktail

hour (cash bar), followed by a buffet dinner and desserts at 6:30 p.m. on the Club's covered, fan-cooled patio overlooking Lake Springfield. "It's a beautiful view," notes SCHS president Mary Alice Davis. "Even on a summer evening, air conditioning is not needed." Tickets can be purchased either

on-line at the Society's website, sangamonhistory.org or by regular mail (see form, page 7) provided the Society receives the latter by the deadline.

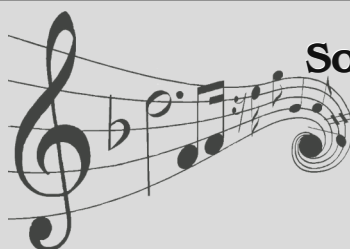
"We have a great program planned," Davis said, one that includes the keynote address by well-known author and journalist Taylor

Pensoneau who headed the Society a decade ago, and the announcement of the winners of the Society's Special Project Grants. The dinner wraps up the Society's 2015-2016 meeting season. The dinner will also include the election of officers and directors. The proposed

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**Society Summer Social:
A Musical Night
at the Muni**

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End Paper: Looking Back on Great Success

It's been a great two years, a term as president filled with growth and success for the Society at every level. I can't express enough thanks to my board and fellow members for the legacy you have left me as president. With your help and cooperation, we have made so many great strides that it is hard to list them all let alone each of the individuals who have contributed so much to the Sangamon County Historical Society's success. You know who you are and you have my thanks for a job well done.

I think of all the projects that propelled the Society into the public eye this past year, the restoration of the Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk is closest to my heart. The free event, that over the years attracted thousands of visitors to this important historical site, was so closely

This year's annual dinner will have several facets including the election of officers, the announcement of our Special Project grant winners, and a report on our Legacy Fund, about which you received a letter a few weeks ago. If you haven't responded to it yet, why not take a moment to read it anew, send a check, or include a donation with your renewal on-line at sangamonhistory.org.

* * *

Congratulations are in order to several Sangamon County residents and a local historical society honored by the the Illinois State Historical Society. They include Stuart Fliege of Springfield, cited for Lifetime Achievement; the Rochester Historical Society, a Certificate of Excellence for its *Orange Judd Histori-*



RESTORATION of the Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk in October was the singularly most successful public service event sponsored by the Society.

Donna Catlin photos

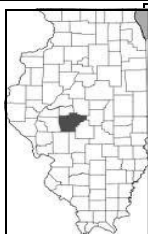


identified with the Society that when it was halted a few years ago as the result of a broader event policy change by a previous Oak Ridge administrator-- it remained the most singularly popular event asked for by the community judging by the reaction we received after its cancellation. But a good idea is a good idea and time and administrative changes never dampened the Society's desire to restore an event that is a cross between public service and a broader, non-commercial lesson about our history.

* * *

cal Walking Tour Guide; Christopher McDonald of Rochester, a Certificate of Excellence for his book, *Three Lying or Four Sitting' from the Front in a Ford: The WWI Letters of Kent Dunlap Hagler*; a Certificate of Excellence for Springfielder Bernard Sieracki's book, *A Just Cause: The Impeachment and Removal of Governor Rod Blagojevich*; and a Superior Achievement award to John H. Lupton of Springfield for his book, *Prairie Justice: A History of Illinois Courts under French, English, and American Law*.

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, www.sangamohistory.org or sancohis.org. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.

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

Historical Society's "Second Chance" Garage Sale on June 4 in Jerome

Missed the big sale? Not to worry. The Sangamon County Historical Society holds the second of its two-part garage sale on Saturday, June 4 in Jerome, with lots of new merchandise and some items from the first sale still up for grabs.

Your "second chance" opportunity will be on display in and out of the garage at 9 Calland Drive, paralleling Wabash Avenue on the north, between South Park Avenue and Filmore Street. The event will be part of the Village of Jerome's annual garage sale and will run from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. To contribute additional items to the garage sale, call 793-5224.

"We were pleased with the turnout on May 14," noted Society president Mary Alice Davis. "It turned into a busy morning, and we made several hundred dollars despite the unusually cool weather that kept the crowds down." Like the coming event, the previous sale at the home of Ruth and Ernie Slottag, was part of a area-wide garage sale jointly sponsored jointly by several civic associations. "With it being a few weeks later, we hope the crowds will come out even more strongly for this second op-

portunity," Davis said. All funds from the sale will support Society programs and activities. The Jerome garage sale annually draws several thousand people to the village.



GARAGE SALE HOSTS Ruth and Ernie Slottag (left and center) share a moment with Sue Massie, one of several Society volunteers who helped with the first of two such fundraising events to benefit Society programs and projects. The second sale is June 9 in Jerome.

Donna Catlin photo

SCHS Summer Social: Muni Show With Gershwin Tunes Set for July 30

Sangamon County Historical Society members and their guests can take a break from the summer heat in July at the Springfield Muni. A bloc of seats is being set aside for the Muni's Saturday, July 30 performance of "Nice Work if You Can Get It." The curtain goes up at 8:30 p.m. Rain date is Saturday, August 6.

Set in 1927, on the weekend of his marriage, a Jazz Age playboy gets involved with bootleggers, rumrunners and gold diggers, all to the tunes of George and Ira Gershwin, including such musical classics as "Someone to Watch Over Me," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," and "S Wonderful."

First staged in 2001 at Connecticut's Goodspeed Opera House, birthplace of some of the world's most famous musicals including "Annie" and "Man of La Mancha," it opened on Broadway in 2012 starring Matthew Broderick and Kelli O'Hara, followed in 2014 by a year-long national

tour. The Muni production is directed by Doug Hahn and Gary Shull.

Ticket information and ticket ordering procedures will be available later this month on the Society website, sangamonhistory.org and at the annual dinner on June 21.



OFFICERS

President.....Mary Alice Davis
Vice-President.....Ruth Slottag
Secretary.....Sue Massie
Treasurer.....Jerry Smith

DIRECTORS

Term Ending 2018

Valerie Patterson
 Larry Stone
 Roger Whitaker
 Heather Wickens

Term Ending 2017

Troy Gilmore
 Genevieve Kaplan
 Doug Polite
 Sara Watson

Term Ending 2016

Pamm Collebrusco
 Kathy Dehen
 Elaine Hoff
 Cathy Mosley
 Vicky Whitaker

Committee Chairs

Legal: Bruce Beeman
Special Projects: Elaine Hoff
Finance: Patricia Davis, Doug Polite,
Nominating: Donna Catlin
Membership: Claire Eberle
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

Executive Board Candidates for 2016-2017

When Society members gather for the organization's annual dinner, they will be part of a decades-old tradition, casting ballots for officers and board members for the coming year.

Successful candidates for the executive board--president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer--are elected annually. Board members are limited to serving three year terms unless they are filling a vacancy, but can run anew after a year. Candidates are selected by a Nominating Committee, the slate subject to board approval. Any member in good standing can seek a seat through the nominating process.

Executive board nominees for 2016-2017 are Ruth Slottag, president; Vicky Whitaker, vice-president, Pamm Collebrusco, secretary; and Jerry Smith, treasurer.

Ruth Slottag

Presidential candidate Slottag was first elected to the SCHS board of directors in 2011 to fill a one-year vacancy. She was elected to a three-year term on the board in 2012, but in 2013 gave up her director's seat to serve the first of three consecutive one-year terms on the executive board as vice-president under the presidencies of Roger Whitaker and Mary Alice Davis.



Slottag has more than 20 years' experience in the public relations and communications industry. Retired from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine's Public Affairs Office, she now is a partner in Slottag Communications, Springfield. Prior to joining SIU, she served as Public Relations Director for the Illinois Association of Park Districts and Community and Media Relations Manager at the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

Slottag is a past chair of the Springfield Commission on International Visitors and a past president of the Central Illinois Public Relations Society of America. She is a member of Daughters of the American Revolution and was formerly on the on the board of directors for Family Service Center and Springfield Area Arts Council and a member of the Illinois Women in Leadership. She holds a master's degree in

communications from the University of Illinois at Springfield and a bachelor's degree in speech communication from Western Illinois University.

Vicky Whitaker

New York City native Whitaker, candidate for vice-president, has been a resident of Springfield for the past 17 years. She has more than 50 years experience in the media business and is currently a syndicated feature writer for Creators Syndicate.



Prior to her retirement in 1999, she was chief spokesperson for State University of New York at Stony Brook for 14 years. Her journalism career included working as a reporter and editor for a business daily, managing editor of a newspaper chain, and 10 years as a regional director and national board member of the Society of Professional Journalists. She has also judged numerous state and national newspaper contests including the media industry's prestigious Sigma Delta Chi awards. Earlier this month, the Press Club of Long Island chapter, Society of Professional Journalists, presented her with its Lifetime Achievement award in ceremonies in New York. Whitaker is a past president of PCLI and also served as vice-president of the Deadline Club in New York City.

Co-chair of Memorial's Festival of Trees entertainment committee for the past 12 years, she has served editor of the Society's newsletter, *Historico* since 2009 and co-chair of Programs and Special Events. A licensed amateur radio operator, she is public information officer for the Sangamon Valley Radio Club. She is a past vice-chair of the Springfield Area Arts Council, past chair of the Sangamon Auditorium Advisory Board and has served on the boards several other local organizations including the Association of Women Journalists and the Family Service Center. Whitaker holds a bachelors degree in journalism from Hofstra College.

Pamm Collebrusco

Collebrusco, candidate for secretary, was first elected a director in 2015, filling a one-year vacancy. She moved to the Springfield area in 1976 and recently re-

tired as a public services librarian at Becker Library for Benedictine University at Springfield (formerly Springfield College in Illinois).

Because of her interest in libraries, Collebrusco was active at the Riverton Area Library, assisting with the referendum that made it a village library, and then serving on its board (1997-2010), both as a member and as president.

Currently she transcribes historical documents for the Chronicling Illinois project and is on the editorial board for **Quiddity International Literary Journal** and Twelve Winters Press.

Collebrusco graduated from the University of Chicago with a master's degree in English and in 1996 received a master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Jerry Smith

Smith, who will be seeking his second term as treasurer, is a Springfield native. After graduating from Springfield High School he attended Springfield College in Illinois and went on to Southern Illinois University.

Smith's first paying employment was as a houseman, helping to open the Howard Johnson's Motor

Lodge South-East in 1966. For almost 35 years, he traveled the United States opening and managing various hotels in Florida, Colorado, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, Montana, Maryland, Alabama, and finally back to Springfield to retire. After returning "home" in 2006

he managed the conversion of the Springfield Renaissance Hotel to the independent President Abraham Lincoln Hotel for three years. Since that time he has been an active volunteer at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum & Library, Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Pleasant Plains Historical Society's historic site, Clayville, where he presently serves as vice president and general fixit-guy.



Seven Running For Seats on Board of Directors

Three Year Terms Ending 2019

Jennie Battles

Battles began her working career as an English teacher at Dixon High School. When the family moved to Peetersburg, Illinois in 1977, she worked for several years at Famous Barr in Springfield. In 1986 she joined the staff of the newly organized Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, starting as an interpreter at the Old State Capitol. In 2001, she became site manager for the Vachel Lindsay home in Springfield's until her retirement in 2014.



Donna Catlin

Though born in Springfield and raised in Sherman, in 1961 Catlin made the first of what would become several moves across the nation and around the world as the wife of a career Navy man. Throughout those years Sherman and its history stayed close to her heart. When she returned more than 20 years ago, Catlin plunged into researching the area's history. Today she is the Village of Sherman's official historian. She first joined the Society board in 2010 and has worked in both board and committee positions for the past several years. A skilled and award-winning photographer, her work often appears in the **State Journal Register** and on the pages of *Historico*. Catlin is active in many community organizations including the North County Teen Court.



Rose Harmon

Harmon moved to Springfield in August 2006 to attend the University of Illinois at Springfield. She obtained a Masters in U.S. History with a focus in Museum Studies in 2008. Harmon is employed by the National Park Service, working as a park guide for the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. She has also worked for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the Lincoln Presidential Library, and was able to work on archaeological digs in Ireland and Illinois. This past spring Harmon wrote and directed "*Love is Eternal*," a play about the wedding of Abraham and Mary Lincoln that was written for and performed at the Springfield Art Association's historic the Edwards Place Historic Home. She is currently following it with "*Visitation*," a play about the death of Mary Lincoln that opens in July.



Devin Hunter

Hunter is an assistant professor of United States and Public History at the University of Illinois Springfield. Born and raised in rural northwestern Oklahoma, he holds history degrees from the University of Colorado at Denver and Loyola University Chicago. At UIS, he teaches historic preservation, museum studies, archival management, 20th-century United States history, and urban history, among others. He also worked as an archivist at the National Archives, Washington, D.C. and Chicago, and at the Pritzker Military Museum and Library. Chicago. He is currently adapting his dissertation research for a book manuscript focusing on the ways liberals and radicals conceived ideas of cultural diversity on the neighborhood level in Chicago from 1955 to 1975. Dr. Hunter also serves on the board of directors for the Vachel Lindsay Association and the Mother Jones Museum.



Christian McWhirter

McWhirter, originally from Ontario, Canada, earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto and a master's and doctorate in U.S. history from the University of Alabama. Since 2010, he has worked as an assistant editor for The Papers of Abraham Lincoln, first at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and then at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. Dr. McWhirter is the author of *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War*. He is also editor of the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*. Aside from his book, his writings on the Civil War, Lincoln, and popular culture have appeared in the **New York Times**, **Civil War Monitor**, and the **Blackwell's Companion** series, as well as his own blog, *Civil War Pop*.



Two-Year Term Ending 2018



Sue Massie

Massie, who just completed a term as board secretary, is a senior landscape architect/planner at the consulting firm of MassieMassie+Associates, Springfield. On moving to Springfield, Massie directed the state's abandoned mines reclamation program. She is currently chairman of the Illinois Landscape Architects licensing board. Massie, who first joined the Society board of directors in 2012, has also been a board member and past president of the Elijah Iles House Foundation. She is currently secretary of the Oak Ridge Cemetery Foundation. Her career and volunteer activities have largely focused on preservation and restoration of historic sites. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Champaign/Urbana.

One Year Term Ending 2017



Sue Helm

Helm, retired Director of Marketing for SIU School of Medicine's Department of Surgery, is interested in gardening, historic preservation, Alzheimer's education and family support, and running. She has served on the boards of the Junior League of Springfield, Old Capitol Art Fair, Festival of Trees, Friends of Memorial, Lincoln Memorial Garden, Springfield Road Runners Club, and University of Illinois Sangamon County Extension Horticulture Committee. Helm was the original editor and chair of the Junior League cookbook, *Honest to Goodness* which is still in print. At SIU, she started its successful men's health event, SIU Men's Night Out. In her spare time, she directs 25 University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener volunteers at the Dana Thomas House, volunteers as a Master Gardener at the Elijah Iles House, and co-race directs a trail run at Lincoln Memorial Garden.

Buffet, Election, Awards and Talk to Highlight Dinner

(Continued from page 1)

slate of officers for 2016-2017 are: Ruth Slottag, president; Vicky Whitaker, vice-president; Pamm Collembrusco, secretary; and Jerry Smith, treasurer.

Proposed for board seats are Jennie Battles, Donna Catlin, Rose Harmon, Devin Hunter, and Christian McWhirter (three year terms ending in 2019); Sue Massie (two-year term ending in 2018, filling an existing vacancy); and Sue Helm (a one-year term ending in 2017, filling an existing vacancy).

Profiles of all the candidates begin on page 4.

Keynoter Pensoneau, a who served as SCHS president 10 years ago, is a resident of New Berlin. He spent 12 years as the **St. Louis Post-Dispatch** Illinois political correspondent and is the author



Pensoneau

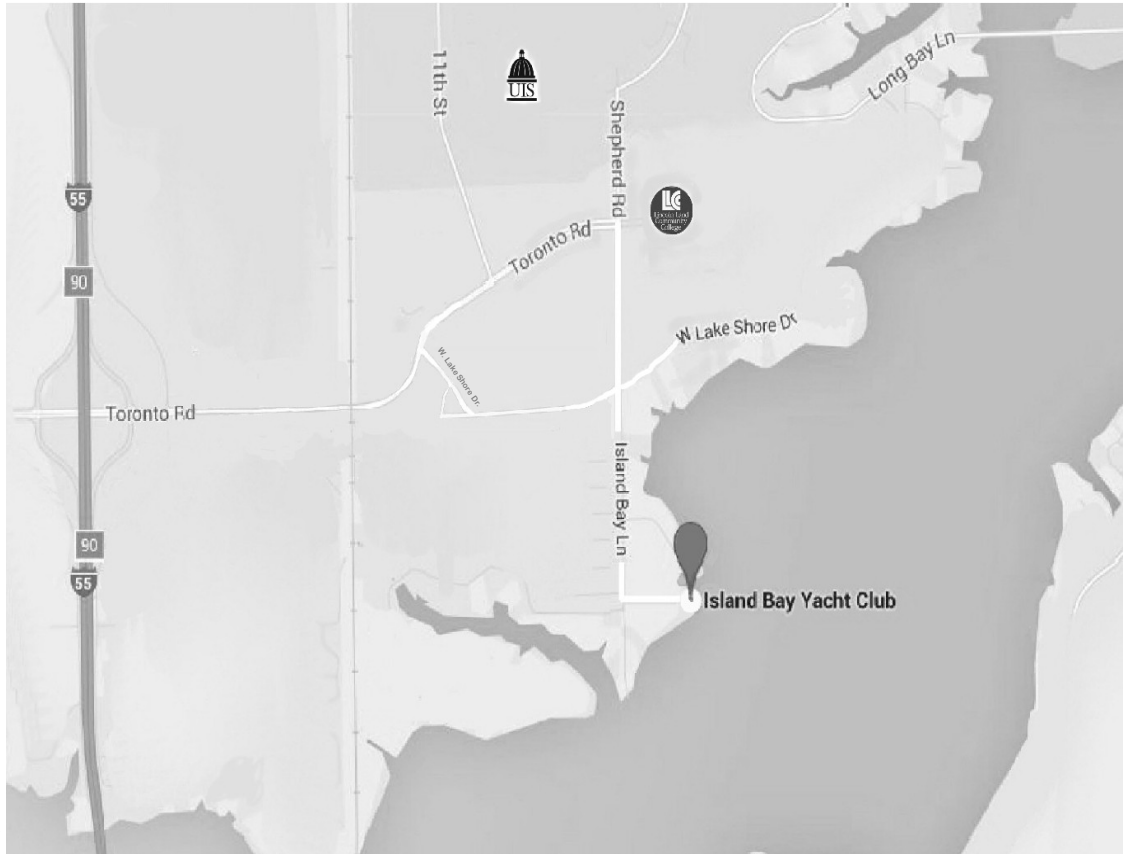
of eight books: *Dapper & Deadly: The True Story of Black Charlie Harris*; *Brothers Notorious: The Sheltons, Southern Illinois' Legendary Gangsters*; three biographies of Illinois political heavyweights: *Dan Walker: The Glory and the Tragedy*; *Richard Ogilvie: In the Interest of the State*; and *Powerhouse: Arrington from Illinois*. He also served as ghostwriter for the autobiography of the late U.S. Senator Alan J. Dixon, *The Gentleman from Illinois: Stories from Forty Years of Elective Public Service*.

Pensoneau penned one work of fiction, *The Summer of '50*, a mystery that revolves around Jake Brosky, a colorful investigative reporter for the St. Louis World and a memoir, *Reporting On Life And People Along The Way*.

After his overall 16-year stint with

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



Directions to the Island Bay Yacht Club From I-55

Get off at Exit 90 (Toronto Road)

If you are heading south, turn left onto Toronto Road.

If you are heading north, turn right onto Toronto Road.

Travel one mile and turn right onto West Lake Shore

Drive, heading southeast along the curve for .6 miles.

Turn right at the intersection of West Lake Shore Drive and Island Bay Lane.

Travel south on Island Bay Lane, .6 miles.

Turn left onto Yacht Club Road to the Club.

the **Post-Dispatch** ended in 1978, Pensoneau began a 26-year career with the Illinois Coal Association, the trade

with the Society, he is the former president of the board of the West Sangamon Public Library District.

Deadline Nearing to File for ISHS Sesquicentennial Church Awards

Houses of worship in Sangamon County that have been continuously operating here for 150 years or more can be among those statewide that will be honored through the Illinois State Historical Society's Ses-

quicentennial Church Awards Program in 2016. The deadline for applying for the designation is June 30.

Churches or synagogues will need to fill out an application form, available from the ISHS

in Springfield and provide documentation such as minutes of early board meetings, an official charter grant, marriage or baptismal records, even old city directories that verify the founding date. Old photos,

slides, digital images or logo are also welcome. A non-refundable \$50 fee must accompany the application.

For more information call 525-2781 or visit the ISHS website at historyillinois.org.



Calendar of Historical Events

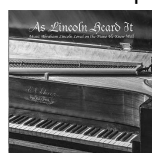
Tuesday, June 21: Sangamon County Historical Society Annual Dinner, 5:30 p.m., Island Bay Yacht Club. Tickets \$30 per person. Tickets must be purchased by Thursday, June 16. See story, page 1.

Saturday, June 25, World War II Military Uniform and Equipment Display, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Members of Illinois State Military Museum's Living History Detachment and the Illinois National Guard and Militia Historical Society will display uniforms and equipment of Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines who served during World War II, discussing how service members lived and fought the war in the Pacific and European Theatres. Free. The Museum is located at 1301 North MacAr-

thur Boulevard, two blocks north of the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and North Grand Avenue, Springfield.

Friday, July 1, Lincoln Piano Concert at Historic Edwards Place, 7 p.m. The Springfield Art Association, which owns and operates this landmark site in Springfield, offers a rare opportunity to hear the music that Abraham Lincoln enjoyed on the same instrument he listened to,

the square grand piano that once belonged to Ninian and Elizabeth Edwards. Made by Emilius N. Scherr of Philadelphia and dating to about 1835-1840, Lincoln was entertained by its sound on his many visits



to the Edwards' house, first as a young suitor to Elizabeth's sister Mary Todd, and then a relative by marriage socializing with his in-laws. For this event, "Mr. and Mrs. Edwards" will host "Mr. Lincoln" and ticketed guests for an evening of Mr. Lincoln's favorite songs, as well as music from Mrs. Edwards's 1850 song books. A wine and dessert reception will follow. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased on-line at edwards-place.org or at the door.

Saturday, July 23, Vietnam Encampment, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Living historians will establish a Fire Base Castle on the Illinois State Military Museum in Springfield, to display equipment, uniforms, and weapons used in Southeast Asia and

during the Vietnam War Era. The display is co-sponsored by the Museum's Living History Department and the Illinois National Guard and Militia Historical Society. Admission and parking are free. The Museum is located at 1301 North MacArthur Boulevard, two blocks north of the intersection of MacArthur Boulevard and North Grand Avenue, Springfield.

Saturday, July 30: SCHS Night at the Muni, 8:30 p.m. Join fellow Society members in watching the Springfield Muni production of "Nice Work If You Can Get It." For ticket prices and reservation information, check sangamonhistory.org in mid-June. Information will also be available at the June 21 annual dinner. Rain date August 6.

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.



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