



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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"History Served on a Plate"

SCHS Annual Dinner, Elections June 13

When members and guests of the Sangamon County Historical Society gather at Clayville on Tuesday, June 13 for the organization's annual dinner, they'll be doing more than electing a new slate and reviewing a financial report.

The guest speaker--traditionally a past president from a decade earlier--will be providing something special: History Served on a Plate." That will be past president (2007-2008) Carol Moore's theme as she talks and shows some of the pieces of her extensive collection of historic plates and platters like the one she's holding (at right).

"That's a cobalt blue and gold plate with Martha Washington's monogram in the center," she says. The rim is ringed with the names of the 15 states that were in the

Union in the mid 1790s and the gold links binding the

produced in England for Daniel Low & Company in

site—the Stagecoach Barn—(at left) starting at 5:30 p.m.



The Clayville Historic Site, owned and operated by the Pleasant Plains Historical Society, is located on County Route 129, a 15 minute drive northwest of Springfield. Tickets are \$30 per person for members, \$35 for guests and can be made on-line at the Society's website, sangamonhistory.org or by sending in the form on page 7 with your check. Payment must be received by Tues-



states are symbolic of the strength of the country."

Moore will show the plate and others that were

Salem, Massachusetts, a firm, she found, that dates back to 1867. An informal pre-dinner reception will be held at the site's new Education Center starting at 4:30 p.m. across from the dinner

day, June 6.

Society members will be voting on a slate of officers and directors for 2017-2018. For a look at the candidate and their profiles, turn to page 4.

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FULL HOUSE: For the third time in a row, the Society's powerpoint presentation on the Sangamon Ordnance Plant drew a full house May 16 at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library. The look-back was previously shown in Buffalo and Illiopolis last fall. Roger Whitaker (right) provided the narration.





Annual Meeting, Elections Part of Society's June Fare

June is a very important month for our Society.

Highlighting the month will be our Annual Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 13, at the Clayville Historic Site.

Immediately prior to the meeting, Bette Franke will host an informal reception at 4:30 p.m. at the site. We thank her for her generosity to the Society.

We hope many of our members will attend to enjoy each other's company over a good meal and participate in the election of new officers and board members for the coming year.

Our nominating committee has developed an outstanding slate of candidates who will help plan and conduct the Society's business throughout the year. Each of the candidates bios are on page 4 of this newsletter.

Recipients of our Special Projects Grants also will be announced at the meeting. Congratulations to the awardees, who have planned exciting new history projects that we can enjoy for many years.

You can register for the meeting online at www.sangamonhistory.org or by mailing the registration form on page 7, along with your check.

* * *

We are happy to report that the Society's membership drive which concluded at the end of May was a tremendous success. Thank you to all who renewed their memberships and many new members who joined for the first time.

If you haven't yet renewed your membership, there is still time to do so before the Annual Meeting. Membership also qualifies you to attend "members only" events such as the tour of the remodeled Illinois Supreme Court building in July and the tour of the ACE Sign Company Museum in September. For more about these events and others when our regular programs resume in the fall, see page 3.

* * *

Many local historical events have occurred during the month of June, which Mike Kienzler has recorded on www.SangamonLink.org. These stories are interesting and informative so be sure to check them out:

June 1832. Poet William Cullen Bryant traveled through pioneer Sangamon County; his letters home, describing the area, were published in 1884.

June 1921. The four double arches on all four corners of the downtown square in Springfield were dismantled.

June 7, 1904. Carnegie Library (the predecessor to the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library) was dedicated.

June 12, 1961. Sangamon County Historical Society was established.

June 18, 1913. Two robbers held up the Illinois Central's "Diamond Special" train near Glenarm.

June 24, 1920. A blast killed four people at Western Cartridge Company, north of Springfield (now the site of the Sangamon Valley Landfill). The plant made powder for WWI small-arms cartridges.

June 26, 1949. An Open house was held for Lustron all-steel home at 2255 South State Street in Springfield. Lustron prefab homes were built to solve the post-World War II housing shortage. They did not accomplish that goal, but Sangamon County still has five such homes. The State Street one, however, was demolished after being damaged in the 2006 tornadoes. Read more about the Lustron homes on page 6.



Historico, published 10 times a year (except July & 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

Court Tour Set for July, Fall Museum Visit As Society Shapes 2017-2018 Season

Online sign-up will begin June 15 for the Society's Tuesday, July 15 members-only tour of the refurbished and architecturally breath-taking 111-year-old State Supreme Court Building in Springfield. Pre-registration will close when the first 50 members indicate they wish to attend. If the number exceeds the maximum, your name will go on a waiting list and you will be contacted if there is a cancellation or an opportunity to tour the building on some future date.

This will be the second time the Society has gotten an after-hours look at the art and history-filled historic site. The last tour, in 2013, came just before it closed for \$16 million in renovations. in 2013. The Spcoety had hoped to go back in 2014 but lack of a state budget quashed after hours tours and a busy Society schedule prevented us from returning until now.

Our host, then as now, will be John Lupton, historian of the Illinois Supreme Court Preservation Commission and an SCHS member. Those who were on the original tour will be especially pleased to see that all the extensive artwork has been cleaned and woodwork restored. Dirty and fraying tapestries in the old Fourth District Appellate Courtroom, also were repaired and cleaned.

The Society resumes its meeting season on Tuesday, September 19 with a members-only tour of the ACE Sign Company's Sign Museum in Springfield, a nostalgic look at the area's past in neon, wood, and metal!

"Echoes of Yesteryear: A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery, is scheduled for Sunday, October 1, a week earlier

in the month than in past years. The event will run from Noon to 4 p.m.

If you're interested in being involved in the planning process, now is the time to contact chair Mary Alice Davis.

November will bring us a look at one of History's Mysteries, the Story of What Sangamon County Tree Rings can tell us about local history (November 14) and in December, get set to party at our annual holiday celebration.

We'll be rolling out our January 16, 2018 program soon, but you can pencil in February 20, 2018 when you'll learn how a Riverton company adds historical accuracy to the movie industry. And what for March. We're already planning our 6th Annual Trivia Night.



American Pickers At Your Door?

History Channel buffs here will instantly recognize "American Pickers" Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz who travel around the country's back roads in search of historically significant objects that tell about America's past.

They'll be in Illinois through the month of June, looking for sizable, unique collections and the people who own them for future television segments. If you'd like to be in the running or know someone who might meet their programming needs, send your name, phone number, location and a description of the collection to americanpickers@cinetflix.com or call 855-OLD-RUST.



OFFICERS

President.....Ruth Slottag
Vice-President.....Vicky Whitaker
Secretary.....Kathy Dehen
Treasurer.....Jerry Smith
Past-President.....Mary Alice Davis

DIRECTORS

Term Ending 2019

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 Terri Cameron
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Term Ending 2018

Larry Stone
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Term Ending 2017

Troy Gilmore
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 Cathy Mosley

Committee Chairs

Legal: Bruce Beeman
Finance: Doug Polite, Larry Stone
Nominating: Mary Alice Davis
Hospitality: Marion Leach
Publicity and Marketing: Ruth Slottag, Susan Helm
Publications: Roger Whitaker
Programs & Special Events: Mary Alice Davis, Vicky Whitaker
Social Media Chair: Mary Schaefer
Special Projects: Elaine Hoff

Staff

Mike Kienzler, SangamonLink.org Editor

JUNE 2017 MEMBERSHIP/DONOR REPORT

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Evelyn Thomas, Peter Levin, Ronald D. Ladley, Mary Renner, Lucy Smith, Barbara McKean, Irv Smith, Lois Dunbar, Chuck Murphy, Jennifer Murphy, Darrin Moore, Shelia Smith, Greg Smith, Barbara Papp, Jolene Vollmer, Tim Curry, and Jason Shanle.

And thanks the following members for their generous donations:

Dr. Mark & Jackie Hansen (in memory of Floyd Barringer), Elvin & Sharon Zook, Cathy Caughlin, Irv Smith, Francie Staggs, Mary Townsend, John & Ida Noll, Ron & Ann Tucker, Thomas & Linda Yokley, Tom & Sharon McSwiggin, Robert and Anita Walbaum, and Mary Barringer.

Please make note of our official mailing address:

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

Meet the Candidates

Members of the Society will be voting on four officers on June 13 along with five candidates who are seeking three year terms ending in 2020, one candidate seeking a two year term ending in 2019 and one candidate seeking a one-year term ending in 2018. The slate was advanced by the nominating committee and approved by the board in May. All of the officer candidates are incumbents seeking re-election.

Officer Nominees:

For President: RUTH SLOTTAG



Prior to her election as president last year, Slottag, who joined the SCHS board in 2011, served as vice-president. A public relations and communications industry professional for more than 20 years, she retired from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine's Public Affairs Office and is now a partner in Slottag Communications, Springfield. Before 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, served on the boards of the Family Service Center and the Springfield Area Arts Council and is a former member of the Illinois Women in Leadership. She is a member of the Illinois Bicentennial Commission. Slottag 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.

For Vice-President: VICKY WHITAKER

Whitaker has served as editor of the Society's newsletter, *Historico* since 2009 and as a director prior to her election last year as vice-president. With more than 50 years experience in the media business, she served as chief spokesperson for State University of New York at Stony Brook for 14 years prior to retiring and moving to Illinois 18 years ago and resuming her journalism career. She served 10 years as a regional director and national board member of the Society of Professional Journalists and was honored for Lifetime Achievement by the Press Club of Long Island Chapter, SPJ, last June, which inducted her into its Journalism Hall of Fame. Co-chair of Memorial's Festival of Trees entertainment committee for the past 12 years, Whitaker is 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. Born in New York City, Whitaker holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Hofstra College.



For Secretary: KATHY DEHEN

A Springfield native, Dehen grew up in the house in which her great grandfather lived when he came to work for the Secretary of State in 1910. Like her grandmother and parents, she graduated from Springfield High School and like her father and brother, graduated from Springfield Junior College. Dehen completed her undergraduate education at the University of Illinois. She taught at the elementary school level for 20 years and then worked at Sangamon State University/University of Illinois for 16 years, first in the Payroll Office and then in charge of Student Employment in the Financial Aid Office. She has been active in the community as a volunteer for 20 years. She is a past president of the Junior League of Springfield, a founding member of the Good as Gold that recognizes outstanding community volunteers, and a member of Lincoln Land Community College's Academy of Life Long Learning. She has served on the Sangamon Auditorium Advisory Board and is a member and past officer of the Springfield Chapter, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and a member of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants. She is a member of the Springfield Ceramics and Crafts Club. Her interests include genealogy reading, arts and crafts, photography, travel, and music.



For Treasurer: JERRY SMITH

Smith, who will be seeking his third 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. For almost 35 years, he traveled the United States opening and managing various hotels in Florida, Colorado, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, Montana, Maryland, Alabama. 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.



BOARD CANDIDATES: Three Year Terms Ending In 2020

Harbison, a lifelong resident of Springfield, has deep ties to the community. His father Shelby T. Harbison, who moved here after WWII to work at radio station WTAX with his navy friend O.J. Keller, eventually became General Manager and the majority owner of WTAX and WDBR-FM. The younger Harbison, a 1974 graduate of Springfield High School, worked at WCIL radio from 1981-1983, while earning a bachelor of arts degree in communications in from Southern Illinois University and pursuing graduate work. He worked in Education Services for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency from 1985 to 2016. He volunteers with the Oral History Department at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

PETER HARBISON



SUSAN HELM



Helm, first elected to the board in 2016 to fill a one-year vacancy, has served on the Society's Publicity and Marketing Committee. Retired from SIU School of Medicine where she served as the Surgery Department's Director of Marketing, her interests extend to historic preservation, gardening, Alzheimer's education and family support, and running. She has served on the boards of the Springfield Junior League, 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. In her spare time, directs a trail run at Lincoln Memorial Garden.

Martin, a librarian in the Sangamon Valley Collection at City of Springfield's Lincoln Library in Springfield, pursued undergraduate work in American Studies at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, and earned a Masters degree in Historical Administration from Eastern Illinois University. She also holds a Masters in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Martin serve on the Illinois Bicentennial Coordinating Committee of Springfield, volunteers at the Iles House, and is the secretary of the Springfield Jaycees. Along with Curtis Mann and Erika Holst, she developed the exhibits Shifting Sands I & II at the Springfield Art Association.

STEPHANIE MARTIN



EUGENE WALKER



Born in Canton, Illinois near Peoria, Walker graduated VIT high school in Table Grove, going on to earn an associates degree from Canton Community College in 1963 before joining the Navy, serving in Vietnam. With the electronic training from Navy, he joined Illinois Bell in Peoria and retired from AT&T in 2005 with 34 years service in Illinois and California. He moved back to Illinois in 2010. A history buff, Walker has portrayed General Grant's Chief of Staff John Aaron Rawlins at the Old State Capitol and in other Civil War re-enactment activities in a number of states. He also participates in Civil War ballroom dancing. He is a member of the Veterans of Wars Post 755, Land of Lincoln Honor Flight and Sons of the Union War Veterans of the Civil War Camp 4, all of Springfield.

Weiss has been a fan of history since childhood, favoring reading historical books and novels even as a pre-teen. Her love of history took a more interesting turn, she says, when her husband became involved in the Surveyors Historical Society, a decision that has taken them across the United States for studies of various surveys and surveyors in different parts of the U.S. and in different eras. She and her husband also belong to the Menard County Historical Society. Weiss has served an interpreter at the Old State Capitol and on the Old State Capitol Foundation board. She and her husband were among the costumed interpreters at Fort Du Bois in celebration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition and in other costumed events throughout the years.

ANGELA WEISS



Two Year Term Ending in 2019: MARY MUCCIANTE



Mucciante retired from the Illinois Department of Human Services after 43 years of state employment. She holds an Master's in Public Administration and a Bachelor's in Legal Studies from the University of Illinois at Springfield. In 1996, she became a graduate of the Leadership Springfield Institute. Mucciante was appointed by Mayor Langfelder to serve on the City of Springfield Lincoln Library Board of Trustees this past February. She is a member and past board member of the Springfield Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution and holds associate memberships in the Sgt. Caleb Hopkins and Captain William Penny Chapters. A Mayflower descendant of John Alden, Mucciante has a pending membership in the Illinois Society of Mayflower Descendants.

One Year Term Ending in 2018: DOUG POLITE

A semi-retired real estate broker who owns and operates the historic Flagg Farmstead Bed and Breakfast 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. They both share a love for antiques and historic properties. Polite has served as co-chair of the Society's Finance Committee since 2014.



Award-winning *SangamonLink.org* Hits New Mark

By the time you read this, it's likely that *SangamonLink.org*, the Society's on-line and searchable encyclopedia of Sangamon County History, will have reached its 1000th entry, thanks to the efforts of editor Mike Kienzler and the many contributors who have added or suggested articles for the site launched three years ago this month.

"From the start, the Society has viewed *SangamonLink.org* as a long-term and important history project that will continue to be of benefit to both our members and anyone interested in the history of Sangamon County and its people," noted SCHS president Ruth Slotag. "It is an invaluable and growing resource, made accessible and viable even more so because of its internet access." *SangamonLink.org* was among innovative projects and literary works cited for excellence last year by the Illinois State Historical Society.

Among the most recent entries is an article about a historically dangerous railroad crossing in Springfield, the introduction of prefabricated steel homes here and the Hicklin family, who provided two of Sangamon County's earliest successful black politicians, as well as leadership in the local civil rights and African-American history movements.

The railroad intersection, at 16th Street and Sangamon Avenue, earned the nickname "Deadman's Crossing" in the years before an underpass was built to route traffic below the train tracks. "At least 16 people were killed at the crossing between 1903 and construction of the underpass in 1935,

many in gruesome fashion," notes Kienzler.

"Deadman's Crossing" was the focal point of a successful 1930 push for a referendum to build "subways"-- as underpasses were called at the time--at 16th and Sangamon, 10th Street and South Grand Avenue, 19th and Cook streets, and on Cook Street at the "belt line" east of Springfield at a cost of \$600,000. For more about how

million in 1947, but the company paid back only \$1 million before going bankrupt in 1950.

You can read more about what made these homes so unique... and their fate and read present-day comments from those who grew up in a Lustron home by going to *SangamonLink.org*.

Also new to the site is an in-depth look at Hicklin family, and the political climate that shaped their success, starting with Hezekiah Hicklin (1835-1904), the first black person in the county to hold public office, serving on the Sangamon County Board of Supervisors.

"Hicklin had been a civil rights advocate even before electoral politics were opened to African-Americans by the 15th Amendment in 1870.

In 1866, Hicklin was a member of Springfield's delegation to the Illinois State Convention of Colored Men, where he was named to the group's state central committee as well as to the education and resolutions committees," notes Kienzler.

His wife, Martha also was prominent in a variety of civic positions, among them the Women's Christian Temperance Union, where she was one of the original Springfield members; the board of the Lincoln Colored Home, where she was the first treasurer; and a member of the Illinois State Historical Society and the Illinois Colored Historical Society. In 1895, their son Frank B. Hicklin was elected an alderman making him Springfield's first African-American city council member.



NEW ADDITIONS to *SangamonLink.org* include the history of Springfield's underpasses, the fate of Lustron steel homes and the political back story of the Hicklin family whose members included the first African-American city council member.



"Deadman's Crossing" and similar sites changed the face of Springfield, see *SangamonLink.com*.

And while you're there, check out the history of the prefabricated steel Lustron model home at 2255 S. College Street, that drew more than 4,000 people to the grand opening here in June 1949.

The first of five that eventually were built in Springfield and Southern View (and another in Pleasant Plains) by the Lustron Corporation, it was envisioned as helping solve the post-World War II housing shortage in the United States. The federal government loaned the Lustron Corporation \$37



Sangamon County Historical Society Annual Dinner

The annual meeting/dinner will be held at the Clayville Historic Site, Pleasant Plains, on Tuesday, June 13 starting at 5:30 p.m. Members, \$30 per person, Guests \$35. Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744 or sign up online at sangamonhistory.org., Payment must be received by June 6.

Name: _____ Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Address: _____ City/Zip _____

Phone: _____ e-mail address: _____

No. of Guests: _____

Full Names of those attending (For nametags. Please print):

Calendar of History Events

Now Through July 30: "The Story of New Philadelphia." The Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum exhibit showcases the first town in the United States platted and registered by an African American in 1836, former slave Free Frank McWorter. The Museum is located at 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield. Museum hours are Noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

Tuesday, June 13: SCHS Annual Meeting & Dinner, Clayville Historic Site, Pleasant Plains 5:30 p.m., Pre-dinner reception, 4:30 p.m. Keynote speaker will be Carolyn Moore, president of the Society from 2007-2008. Moore will show and discuss her collection of historic plates. Reservation form above or on line. Reservations and payment must be received by June 6.

Tuesday, June 13: Book Signing and Presentation. Wyndham Springfield City Centre Rendezvous Room, 5:30 p.m. best-selling author, Route 66 historian, and voice actor Michael Wallis discusses his new project, "The Best Land Under Heaven: The Donner Party in the Age of Manifest Destiny." Free.

Saturday, June 24: Lincoln's 8th Circuit as Lincoln Experienced It Bus Tour. Guy Franker will provide the expertise for this day long Abraham Lincoln Association tour. Fee is \$45 ALA members, \$55 non members. Mail check, cell number and e-mail address to ALA 8th Circuit Bus Trip, 6820 Wagon Ford Road, Chatham, IL 62629.

Tuesday, July 18: Members-Only Tour, State Supreme Court Tour. Free but reservations at sangamonhistory.org required by July 1. Registration starts June 15.

August 21-24: Interpretive Guide Certification Course

for Tour Guides, Educators and Interpreters, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Lincoln Home National Historic Site. The Lincoln Home, in conjunction with the National Association of Interpreters, will offer a certification course (\$10 with instructional fees waived without certification) or \$150 for national certification. For information call 391-3257 or write to cassie_branstetter@nps.gov to register by August 6.

Tuesday, September 19: Members-Only Tour, ACE Sign Company Sign Museum. The Society kicks off its fall meeting season with a members-only tour of this unique, privately run museum that charts Springfield's history through its signage heritage led by ACE president Dennis Bringuet. The tour will begin at 5:30 p.m. at 2540 South First Street, Springfield.

Sunday, October 1. "Echoes of Yesteryear, A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery," sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society. Noon to 4 p.m.

Tuesday, November 14: History's Mysteries: What Tree Rings Can Tell Us. Sangamon County Historical Society general meeting, 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library. Scientists Glenn Freimuth and Guy Sternberg detail their tree ring research for which the Society provided a \$1,000 Special Projects Grant.

Tuesday, February 20, 2018: Adding Historical Authenticity to the Big Screen. The Sangamon County Historical Society plays host to Karl Luthin, owner of KEL Equine Productions, who will share both his expertise and the stories that go along with being internationally known for providing historically authentic horses, uniforms, crews, riders, drivers and stunt men to the movie industry. 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library.

Sangamon County Historical Society
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Sangamon County Historical Society MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form

Mall 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 June 1 to May 31. All memberships except Business/Corporate cover adults and children 16 and over living in the same household. Be sure to include their names.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ E-mail: _____



Status

___ New Member

___ Renewal

___ GIFT of Membership from:

Phone _____

2017-2018 Membership Levels

All the levels listed below cover adults and children 16 and over living in the same household. Please list their names in the space provided.

- Regular Membership - \$30
- Pioneer Level - \$100
- Trailblazer Level - \$500
- Lifetime Membership - \$700 (*one time fee*)
- College/University Student - \$20.
- Settlers Level - \$250

Business /Corporate Membership - \$200