



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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VOLUME 58 NO. 7

SEPTEMBER 2022

Meeting Season Opener September 20

On-Site Insight on New Route 66 Fairgrounds Historic Area Long a Stopping Point for Monarchs

No, not the ones that wear a crown.

The Monarchs in this case are the beautiful butterflies who long before there was a Route 66, twice a year instinctively follow the path of the historic highway, stopping at the Illinois State Fairgrounds as they migrate from eastern and northern United States to Texas and on to breeding areas in Mexico, a 3,000 mile journey.

On Tuesday, September 20, starting at 5:30 p.m., members and guests of the Sangamon County Historical Society will learn how and why their flight ties into the site's new year-round *Route 66 Experience* complex that not only melds the man-made route to local history, but also provides the delicate creatures with plants that provide nourishing nectar for their trip as well as shelter from predators and harsh weather.

"The Monarchs were already stopping here before the first settlers came to town, drawn by the area's natural abundance of milkweed. They have never veered from the path," notes Society president Susan Helm, one of a group of preservationists who helped create the new lush planting areas that have drawn the butterflies to the new site just west of Peoria Road and north of Gate 2. In addition to being able to tour the site, meeting goers will hear experts talk about its design and historical significance and its future development as

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NOTED: SCHS president Susan Helm checks out one of the new Historic Route 66 signs in downtown Springfield incorporating the local connection to the Monarch butterfly migratory route.

Society Readies Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk Set for Sunday, October 2

With a little help from Mother Nature, the Sangamon County Historical Society will hold its popular cemetery fall walking tour, "*Echoes of Yesteryear: A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery*"

from Noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, October 2 at Oak Ridge Cemetery.

The annual event had to be cancelled at the last minute last October when thunderstorms and isolated downpours swept the area.

"We're keeping our fingers crossed that Mother Nature will be a bit kinder this year," said Mary Alice Davis, chair of the free event that over the years has drawn thou-

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HAVE A BRIGHT IDEA? History related, of course. Newly elected Society president Susan Helm would love to hear from you as she begins her first term. Read more about her plans and how to share your ideas and thoughts about what the Society can offer in the coming year.

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From the President's Desk



Susan
Helm

A Great Year Ahead With Your Help and Input!

It is truly an honor to serve as the next president of the Board of Directors for the Sangamon County Historical Society. I am humbled and grateful to follow in the footsteps of the individuals who have forged the path before me.

Our immediate past president, Stephanie Martin, led our organization through one of the most challenging times in our history and she did it with grace, patience and commitment. At different times over the last two years, she wore many hats and juggled them all without ever complaining. We are all very appreciative of everything she did to get us through the last two plus years, continuing to connect our audience with local history and complete our mission.

I look forward to this first year of my presidency, hoping to get us back on track with regular in-person programming (or possibly a hybrid offering both in person and taped programming), field trips for members only to unique places, our beloved and well known Cemetery Walk and finally a fundraiser to support our Community Grants.

If you have any suggestions for programs, please consider reaching out to me at susan.helm@comcast.net or 217-502-3992. I'd love to hear from any of our members.

I'm well known for partnering with other like -minded organizations and people so I look forward to doing that this year. History is such an important part of any community's legacy and we hope to continue to share some of our unique stories.

Thank you for your continued membership and support of SCHS. We look forward to seeing you at our programs, field trips, fundraiser and cemetery walk.

Sangamon County's history has so many stories to tell and we look forward to continuing to share them with you on a variety of platforms from our newsletter *Historico* to our website SangamonLink.org to our programs.



Historico, published 9 times a year (except July, August & December), is the official bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. Springfield, Illinois.

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. Catch us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor.

Cinda Klickna, Mike Kienzler, *contributors*

Society Elects New Officers, Board At Annual Meeting in Clayville

Members of the Sangamon County Historical Society unanimously voted in a new slate of officers and directors at the organization's annual dinner meeting held June 21 at the Clayville Historic Site in Pleasant Plains. The elections and introduction of the winners of the Society's Annual Special Projects Grant competition capped the evening.

Four officers and six directors whose terms range from one to three years were elected. Top spot went to Susan Helm, president, who previously served as vice-president. Cinda Klickna was elected vice-president; Sarah Adams, secretary, and Jerry Smith, treasurer. Klickna and Adams had previously served as directors. Smith is continuing as treasurer, a post he has held since 2014. Former president Stephanie Martin, whose two-year term ended with the annual event, will continue to serve on the board as past-president, a non-elective position.

The board is also composed of 15 directors, with groups of five elected each year to three year terms.

Elected as Directors were Scott Pillsbury, Kathy Dehen, Elaine Hoff, Larry Stone, Angela Weiss and Vicky Whitaker. Pillsbury, Dehen, Stone and Weiss previously served as Directors. Hoff is a past vice-president of the Society. Whitaker is a past president.

Special Project Grants recipients for 2022 are:

Friends of the Original Leland Farm House Inc. - \$1,000 to restore the Leland Farm House Summer Kitchen which has been moved from its original site to Washington Park. The funds will be used to reinstall the windows, a door and staircase as well as mason work for the foundation and a brick walkway outside the historic 1860s building. The building will be used to display information about the Leland family and original farmhouse.

Illinois State Museum Society - \$900 to restore Vachel Lindsay's Lincoln Top Hat at the Illinois State Mu-

seum. The three-foot tall fiberglass version of Lincoln's stove pipe hat was painted by artist Felicia Olin in 2009 as part of the City of Springfield's "Hats Off to Lincoln" project that celebrated the 200th Anniversary of Lincoln's birth. Being displayed outside the museum for a number of years, the hat has suffered weather damage and now needs repainting.

Oak Ridge Cemetery - \$1,000 to create a brochure and map which will identify and celebrate distinguished individuals of color buried at the cemetery. The booklet will assist descendants, historians and other interested parties in locating burial markers of African Americans interred at the cemetery.

Preservation Inc. - \$1,000 for supplies and labor costs associated with dry-walling the damaged ceiling and walls in practice rooms around the stage of the 1908 music conservatory on the former Ursuline Academy campus. Future plans include making the building useable for music lessons for which it was originally designed.

All projects are required to be completed between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

SCHS WEATHER ALERTS

Any bright sunny day can quickly turn stormy, no matter what time of year. But as we approach fall and look ahead to winter, meetings and special events are particularly vulnerable to the elements. As we get into our meeting season, you need to know that the Society uses several ways to alert you to cancellations. For information:

- ▶ Check our website/Facebook pages
- ▶ Call us at 1-217-525-1961 to hear a recorded announcement.
- ▶ Check local television and radio weather updates for our meeting or event cancellations.



2021-2022 OFFICERS

President.....Susan Helm
Vice-President.....Cinda Klickna
Secretary.....Sarah Adams
Treasurer.....Jerry Smith
Past-President....Stephanie Martin

DIRECTORS

Term Ending June 2023

Vincent Chappelle
Peter Harbison
Mary Mucciante
Ruth Slottag

DIRECTORS

Term Ending June 2024

Mary Alice Davis
Kathy Hoffmann
Scott Pillsbury

DIRECTORS

Term Ending June 2025

Kathy Dehen
Elaine Hoff
Larry Stone
Angela Weiss
Vicky Whitaker

Please make note of our official mailing address:

SCHS
Box 9744
Springfield, Illinois,
62791-9744

Society To Eye New Fairgrounds Permanent Exhibit Tied to Route 66 and Monarch Butterfly Migration



WHERE HISTORY AND BUTTERFLIES ROAM: Sangamon County Historical Society members and guests will not only get a tour on September 20, but also the inside story on how and why this new Monarch butterfly landing field and Route 66 history have a new permanent year-round exhibit spot on the grounds of the Illinois State Fair in Springfield.

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as a permanent ecological as well as Springfield historical destination both for amateur and professional entomologists and tourists world-wide looking to travel and explore every aspect of the 2,448 mile highway, one of the nation's first interstate hard roads that was made even more popular by author John Steinbeck who in his novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, called it "The Mother Road."

For Route 66 fans, historians, preservationists and scientists, the 66-mile wide Monarch Flyway is one of fascination and study.

"The site includes 50 species of native plants and appropriate annuals to support all pollinators, particularly Monarchs," says Helm of the project underwritten by state and local grants.

Several speakers are lined up for the program, representing a cross-section of the business, governmental, historical and conservation communities to create and maintain the permanent year-round Fairgrounds

site, said Helm. They include Stephanie Dobbs, a Habitat Specialist with the Illinois Transportation Department, representatives from Ace Sign Company which is providing historic signage for the site, exhibit specialist Casey Claypool, executive director of Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway and a member of the Mother Road Festival board, and Sarah Waggoner, Tourism Manager for the Springfield Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

Program goers will be able to tour the site and talk to the experts about what Route 66 represents both in local history as well as the area's ecology.

"The idea for the site came from Scott Dahl, the Convention and Visitors Bureau director," noted Helm, who has served as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Route 66 Monarch Flyway Project.

"The enthusiastic response from the history, business, government and ecological communities underscores how the simple flutter of a butterfly wing can bring powerful results," she noted.

September 20 SCHS Meeting Driving, Parking Directions



How to Reach the Site:

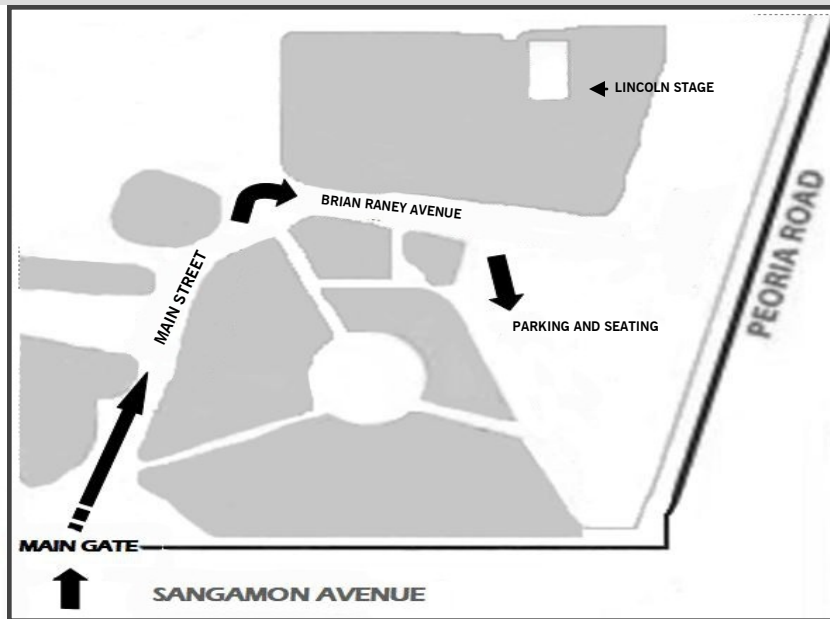
The new outdoor complex is on the eastern end of the Illinois State Fairgrounds, bordered on the south by Sangamon Avenue and on the East by Peoria Road. Enter through the Main Gate (Gate 1) off Sangamon Avenue and turn right on Brian Raney Avenue (the road is well marked). Keep heading east. You'll quickly see the large Route 66 Sign and some buildings that flank the garden area and walkways. Drive past them to the parking area. A small pavilion is on the east end. Parking and outdoor seating will be adjacent to the area. Rest rooms are nearby.



What If Rain Rolls In?



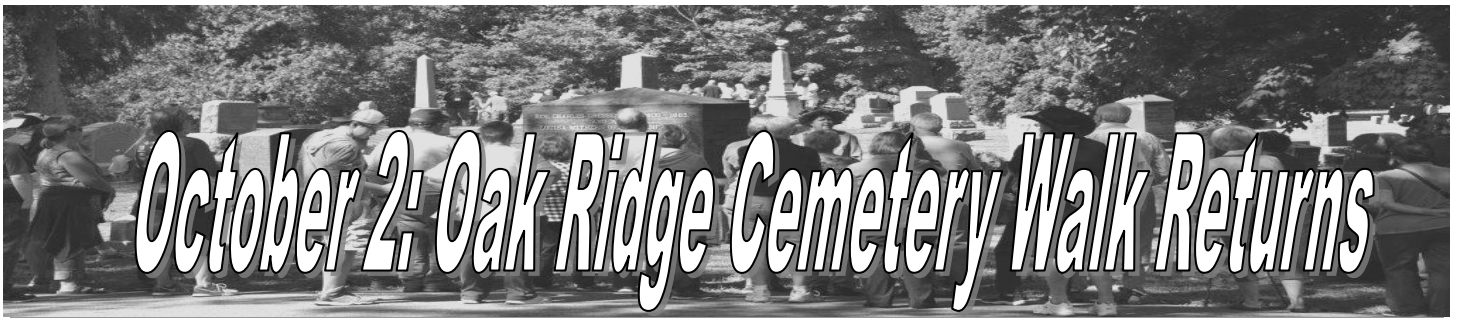
Not a problem. We'll move the speaker presentation (and seating) to the nearby Lincoln Stage and when the showers pass, you'll be able to tour the garden area and hear more about what's planted in it. (All the plantings are identified).



When Does It Start?

The program begins at 5:30 p.m. Bring a camera if you like (or use the one on your cell phone)! Think comfortable shoes if you want to stroll the garden area.





October 2: Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk Returns

(Continued from page 1)

sands to tour significant sections of the historic cemetery at 1441 Monument Avenue in Springfield. (Bus service is provided to and from the parking area to the walking tour site. The last tour begins at 3:15 p.m.).

"As in the past, this year's Cemetery Walk will provide visitors with a glimpse into the history and heritage of Springfield and Sangamon County," Davis said.

Actors dressed in period costumes will portray eight individuals who made significant contributions to the community. The personal stories of each historic figure will be interpreted at his or her respective family gravesite, taking the audience back to an earlier time to provides insight into their lives. On this year's tour:

Harriett Knudson (1883-1969) was the driving force behind the creation of Lincoln Memorial Gardens. She also organized the Springfield Civic Garden Club and started the Springfield PTA Council.

Harriet Palmer Crabbe (1857-1948) and **Gertrude Wright Morgan** (1861-1931). Palmer Crabbe was the daughter of Springfield School Board member John M. Palmer (1817-1900) and a future Governor of Illinois who successfully led a change in the racially segregated District that would allow black students to attend Springfield High School. Because of his efforts, Gertrude Wright, the daughter of a wealthy land owner and farm pro-

prietor, became the first African-American student to attend all-white Springfield High School. [Palmer's daughter attended private school]. Following graduation, Wright went onto a teaching career (but not in Springfield, which didn't employ a Black teacher until 1950). Instead she had a stellar teaching career in St. Louis where she met and eventually married a fellow instructor Clement Morgan, the first African-American to graduate from Harvard and Harvard Law School. After moving to Massachusetts, the two became a power-couple in the early Civil Rights movement that led to the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Morgan is buried in Massachusetts.

Richard Dodds (1851-1921) was the owner and operator of a Springfield landmark drug store on the corner of Fifth and Monroe streets known as Dodds' Corner, which became a *de facto* city meeting place near street car routes.

Thomas Rees (1850 -1933) was the long-time publisher of the *Illinois State Register* and Illinois State Senator. Upon his death, he left funds to build the carillon in Washington Park that bears his name.

Salome Paddock Enos (1791-1877) was the wife of Pascal Enos who opened the first land office in the Springfield District. He died at a young age, leaving her to manage his sizable land holdings. In 1837 she do-

nated \$3 million worth of property for a new State Capitol.

William A. Northcott (1854 -1917) served as Illinois Lieutenant Governor and U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Illinois. He later became Head Consul of Modern Woodmen of America, a fraternal life insurance company that erected his monument.

William Carpenter (1787 -1859) was an early settler who owned a ferry operation along a stagecoach line. The settlement was known as "six -mile house." He later served as Springfield postmaster and had extensive real estate holdings. Carpenter Street and Carpenter Park are named after him.

Attendees will be transported by bus to the first gravesite, then walk to the other grave-sites before boarding the bus back to the parking area. The walk is approximately one-half mile. Refreshments will be available for purchase by the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum.

The popular cemetery walk, which is sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society and co-sponsored by Oak Ridge Cemetery, was held annually for 12 years beginning in 1996 and ending in 2008. Brought back seven years ago by popular demand, Covid and then weather conditions prompted cancellation for the past two years.

"While the event is free to the public, donations will be accepted," Davis noted. "Parking will be in designated areas of the cemetery. Just follow the signs."

WANT
TO
HELP?

The Society welcomes volunteers interested in working before, during and after the annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk in a variety of jobs: providing parking and traffic instructions, helping load and unload buses, assisting with the set-up and signage, working at the refreshment and information table, and finally, closing down activities. If you'd like to help, drop a note to schsoffice@gmail.com or leave a telephone message with your contact information at 1-217-525-1961.

SCHS ON-LINE PROGRAM GUIDE

When the Corona virus prevented the Society from having face-to-face meetings back in early 2020 and through most of 2021 and the start of 2022, we did the next best thing: videoed our programs and put them on-line. We returned to a live format with the March meeting, but you can still catch those earlier on-line meetings. Just follow the instructions below:

HERE'S THE BASIC HOW-TO:

1. Go to the Society's website. sangamonhistory.org.
2. At the top of the page, go to the menu and tap **BOOKS & VIDEOS**
3. On the **BOOKS & VIDEO** page, you will find links--by month and year.
4. If you're watching it on You Tube Hit the iconic "Skip the Ad" button [that's part of the You Tube experience unless you like commercials.]
5. Enjoy!

February, 15 2022: Black Experiences in Education. The Sangamon County Historical Society marked Black History Month on Tuesday, February 15 with an on-line presentation focused on education that looked at the experiences of two Black female educators—one in the 1870s, the other in the 1950s, who overcame prejudice in their careers and at the history and fate of the Ambidexter Industrial and Normal Institute for Black students established in 1857 in Springfield and almost erased from the history books when the building in which it was housed was twice threatened by razing, once in 2013 and again in 2018. Catch the full presentation on You Tube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0G96IRHE9k>.

January, 2022: History of Springfield's Movie Theater Industry. It's a Powerpoint available both as a downloadable PDF and on You Tube and just like the silent movies it includes, there is no sound, but if your computer has an extra drive, you might want to add a little background music, you might want to pop in "The Very Best of Ragtime." To download it, go to https://sancohis.org/PDFs/THEATER_PDF.pdf or watch it on You Tube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTAV7maS-sE>.

November, 2021: The Mysterious Bard of Sangamon, can be found on Vimeo (a video sharing website), at <https://vimeo.com/626671152/daae07f0cc?m0>

May 2021: A Pictorial History of the Construction of the Vachel Lindsay Bridge. Kansas City-based Lance Warren, Research Librarian/Archivist with Burns McDonnell, provides a pictorial and in-depth look at this iconic Springfield landmark and the story and people behind its creation and Lake Springfield.

April 2021: Virginia Eifert: Springfield Native, Prolific Naturalist. Learn about the life and legacy of Virginia Eifert from researcher John Hallwas and the Illinois State Museum's Tracy Pierceall. Eifert, a naturalist, author, and artist, worked at the Museum where she created, wrote and edited its *The Living Museum* magazine and publications on Illinois flora and fauna, rivers, people, and history. In 2019, Hallwas, who specializes in "forgotten voices from Illinois history," provided the cover story on Eifert for *Illinois History Magazine*, whose archives are housed at the Western Illinois University Library.

March 2021: Lake Springfield In Illinois: Public Works and Community Design in the Mid-Twentieth Century. The perfect primer for the Society's May meeting, historians Curtis Mann and Robert Mazrim provide details from their new book and the story-behind-the story that motivated them to take a closer look at a public project that helped shape Springfield's future.

February 2021: Shine A Light Project: Historic Preservation and Interpretation on Springfield's East Side. Preservationists Sue Massie and Kathryn Harris take a look at efforts to preserve the John Taylor House, the Lincoln Colored Home and Fire House No. 5 and how each site contributed to the lives of African-Americans here.

January 2021: In The Beginning: A Look at Sangamon County 200 Years Ago. Using maps, illustrations and a knowledgeable voice-over, Curtis Mann, head of the City of Springfield Lincoln Library's Sangamon Valley Collection, provides an illustrated look at both the people and geography that played into the development of Springfield.

November 2020: "I Think That We Will Soon Be In Springfield": An Illinois Civil War Soldier's Quotations About Sangamon County from their Personal Letters. Author Mark Flotow brings the Civil War to its grass roots, in a program that illustrates the letters home by including audio readings of some of these moving stories provided by Sangamon County Historical Society members

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Sangamon County Historical Society 2022-2023 MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form

Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. Our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31. All memberships cover adults and children 16 and over at living at the same address. Be sure to list their names. *PLEASE PRINT.*

Your Full Name _____ Spouse/Significant Other First Name _____

Spouse's maiden name where applicable _____ Your e-mail _____

Your address _____ City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

Full Names of other family members included in your membership:

Choose Your Level of Membership: Regular (\$30) Pioneer (\$100) Settler (\$250) Trailblazer (\$500)
 Lifetime (\$700 one-time fee) College/University Student (individual) (\$20)

This is a GIFT (Name of recipient, mailing and e-mail address):

I am adding a donation to the Society in addition to my membership in the amount of \$ _____

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