



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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FEBRUARY 2013

Attenshun!

Special Members-Only Guided Tour of Illinois State Military Museum February 19; Reservations Required

The Sangamon County Historical Society resumes its regular meeting schedule this month with an exclusive, members-only tour of the Illinois State Military Museum in Springfield on Tuesday, February 19 starting at 5:30 p.m.

Reservations can be made on-line through the Society's website, (www.sangamonhistory.org) or by calling 525-1961 no later than Friday, February 15.

The unique, castle-like building tucked in the northernmost end of MacArthur Boulevard, houses an array of exhibits that will give tour-goers a look at the legacy of Illinois militia from the early settlers in the Illinois Territory who volunteered in the Revolutionary War militia to today's service in the Illinois National Guard. The Museum's artifacts include the wooden target board President Abraham Lincoln used to test fire the Spencer rifle in 1863, a brass 1883 Colt Gatling Gun, even Mexican General Santa Anna's artificial leg!

Museum director Stewart Reeve will be guiding the tour. Reeve, appointed to the post in 2011, is the former chief of staff of the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. An Army veteran with a career in publishing and public relations that spanned 30 years, he joined the Illinois Army National Guard in 1977 and retired in 2008 as Deputy Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division.



MILITARY HISTORY comes to the fore this month when Stewart Reeve, Illinois State Military Museum director, gives Society members a tour of its unique collection. The Museum is at 1301 North MacArthur Boulevard, two blocks north of North Grand Avenue, Springfield.

Society Launches Effort to Curb Vandalism at Historic Sites

The Sangamon County Historical Society will be seeking stronger laws and penalties at the local, county, and state level for those who vandalize historic sites.

It doesn't expect to do it alone.

"In coming weeks we plan to contact several organizations with historic proper-

ties or interest in historic preservation, community-oriented associations, and those concerned with tourism and the local economy to join us in this effort," said Society president Roger Whitaker.

By mid-March, the Society plans to re-

view existing legislation and gather information on historic site-specific anti-vandalism laws in other jurisdictions that might serve as models for local lawmakers to protect the area's historic sites.

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SOCIETY EYEING TEACHERS, STUDENTS

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Tough Farewell to a Good Museum

Our sympathies are with Bob Church and Matt Parbs as they pack up the wonderful displays that made the Abraham Lincoln National Museum of Surveying a real asset to this community.

A lot of time and effort went into creating the exhibits, much of it from Church's personal collection. Opening on the square in Springfield was a long-time dream. We only wish he had been able to garner more support, not only locally, but nationally, to keep the operation going.

In addition to the surveying displays, we will miss that wonderful room size suspended globe—"Science on a Sphere"-- provided to the Museum by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We were transfixed by the real-time images of atmospheric storms, climate change, ocean temperatures and other environmental processes that were displayed from every angle.

If you want to see "Science on a Sphere" in the future, you'll have to travel to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago-- the only other institution in Illinois to have such a NOAA installation-- or head west to Kansas City, Missouri, the next closest site.

As you may have already read on page 1 of this edition of *Historico*, the Society will be moving aggressively in coming weeks to research laws and penalties in Illinois and nationwide which have been written exclusively to protect historic sites. We will be looking for examples of successful legislation and the legal consequences that have worked successfully in other areas to protect and preserve our precious history.

It's always painful to hear or even experience de-

struction of property at the hands of vandals, but in the case of historic sites here, it is more than personal. They not only destroy our heritage, they threaten the community's tourism-dependent economy and public perception that our community is safe for both visitors, site volunteers, children and adults alike.

We've already had some Society members indicate they'd like to help do the research. If you would like to volunteer, please feel free to drop me a line at schspres@gmail.com.

Make sure you set aside the evening of Saturday, April 27. That's the date of the Society's History Trivia Night, an event at the Old State Capitol that you'll be hearing about more next month.

Although we're doing much of the initial organization, we won't be the only sponsors. In coming weeks we expect to participate in a meeting with reps from several history organizations who've indicated they want to work side by side with us to make this a fun evening...one that will test your table's knowledge of local history.

Dan Usherwood, president of the Pleasant Plains Historical Society which operates Clayville, has signed on as our History Trivia night emcee and all-around trivia master. Mary Alice Davis and Vicky Whitaker, who handle Special Events, are representing the Society.

All proceeds from the event will benefit the Lincoln Troubadours, the phenomenal a capella choral group made up of highly talented area high school and college students who spend the summer performing Civil War-era music at the Old State Capitol and other key historic sites.

Roger



Historico, published 10 times a year, is the official monthly bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society.

You can download back issues of *Historico* in PDF format by going to our website, www.sangamonhistory.org.

Event updates also can be found on our **Facebook** page (www.facebook.com) and **Twitter** (www.twitter.com). Log in and search for *Sangamon County Historical Society*.

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

Students Get a Break, Educators Get a Division As Society Reaches Out to Attract Youth, Teachers

Students across Sangamon County and their teachers will now occupy a special division in the Society's membership categories, the result of action taken by the board on recommendation of the Membership Committee.

As a result, students will get a break on their membership fee, a reduction of \$5 from the previous \$15 fee to \$10 and educators for the first time will be able to join at a \$15 individual rate.

"Our executive coordinator, Dr. Sam Wheeler, has been meeting with area history educators as we forge ahead with

efforts to develop an on-going relationship with school districts and institutions of higher learning across Sangamon County.

"We felt it was important that we offer an attractive and affordable membership level to students and their teachers so that they will become part of the Society and its programs," explained Board vice-president Claire Eberle, chair of the Society's membership committee.

The board unanimously voted to create the new rates and levels. The rates are effectively immediately. (*Editors note: A membership form is on page 8.*)

Society to Explore Laws, Penalties to Protect Historic Sites

(Continued from page 1)

In January, the Society's board voted to launch the effort on news of the latest incident, vandals damaging a \$3,000 Lincoln statue and outdoor items at historic Pasfield House in Springfield.

"That and other recent incidents including graffiti and theft at historic sites here may require some specific laws and stronger penalties for those who would destroy them," said Whitaker, reflecting the board's position. With facts in hand, the Society and its partners plan to present their findings to local, county and state lawmakers for action.

Inclement Weather Announcements

Freezing, snowy weather and/or less than safe road conditions could affect the Society's winter meeting schedule.

To make sure that our members stay safe under such circumstances, the Society will post cancellation or postponement notices by 3 p.m. of the day of the meeting on our website (www.sangamonhistory.org) and on our phone, 217-525-1961.

Where possible, we will also post any cancellation notices on media websites and other outlets.

Register Now to Get Society's e-mail Notices, Alerts

The Sangamon County Historical Society currently has e-mail addresses on file for about 60 percent of its membership

From time to time, the Society sends e-mail reminders and alerts about coming programs to its members.

To register your e-mail with the Society, contact Executive Coordinator Samuel Wheeler at swheeler.schs@gmail.com or call the office at 525-1961.

FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP/DONOR REPORT

The Society welcomes its newest members:

Rachel Beckett, Robert E. Church, Mike Burke

Ryan McCaffrey, Randall McDaniel, Matt Parbs, Pamela Wilcockson Levi

...and thanks the following for donors for their generosity:

Susan Hammond and Phyllis Brissenden in honor of R-Lou Barker's birthday.

Marion Leach



OFFICERS

President.....Roger Whitaker
Vice-President.....Claire Eberle
Secretary.....Mary Alice Davis
Treasurer.....Richard Herndon

DIRECTORS

Term Ending June 2013

Linda Bee
Bruce Beeman
Elaine Hoff
Logan McMinn

Term Ending 2014

Patricia Davis
Kathy Hoffmann
Brenda Holmes
Doug Polite
Vicky Whitaker

Term Ending 2014

Donna Catlin
Les Eastep
David Grimm
Ruth Slottag
Francie Staggs

Presidential Appointees To Board

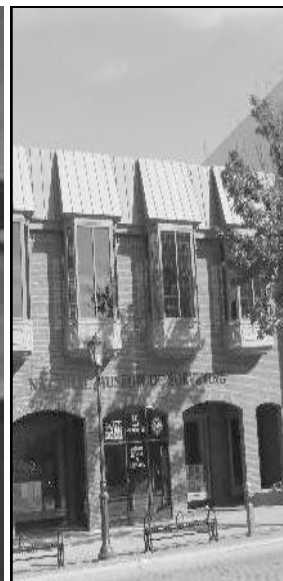
Marion Leach,
Membership Relations Chair
David Scott,
Special Projects Chair

SCHS Coordinator

Dr. Samuel Wheeler

Please make note of our new mailing address:

SCHS
Box 9744
Springfield, Illinois,
62791-9744



Giving It One Last Spin

It was an opportunity that will not be repeated: a tour of the Abraham Lincoln National Museum of Surveying in Springfield on January 8.

The Museum officially shut its doors on January 9.

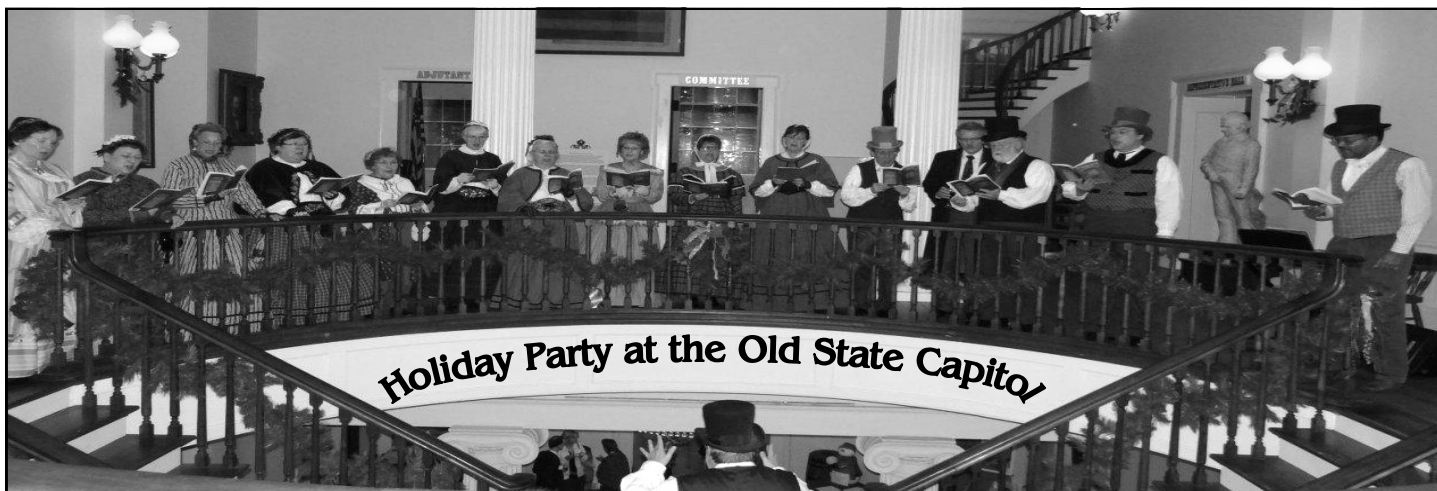
“The tour of the museum had been in our plans since last year,” noted program chair Vicky Whitaker, “but we had envisioned it for early 2013 because of other commitments

that ran through the end of 2012. We had originally planned to take the tour in mid-January on a Tuesday consistent with our normal third week program schedule.

“We switched it to January 8 after the museum’s director, Bob Church, let us know back in November that it might close in mid-January. We had to hold that information in

(Continued on page 6)





Holiday Party at the Old State Capitol



FESTIVE: With the Old State Capitol as its setting, members of the Society gathered for a holiday celebration December 11 that featured holiday treats, a re-gifting grab-bag, pictorial history contest and more. The Old State Capitol Singers (top) entertained throughout the evening. At left, member Roni Betts admires the Society's Festival of Trees entry that helped decorate the site. *Donna Catlin photos*

LLCC's "Six Degrees of Separation" a History Lesson in the Making

Is everyone in the world separated by a handful of intermediaries?

That "six degrees of separation" theory, first broached by Hungarian writer Frigyes Karinthy in a 1929 short story, spawned scientific research, a prize-winning play and a parlor game that morphed actor Kevin Bacon into its title.

Next month will take on an even newer twist: local history.

"**Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon Abe Lincoln**" will be staged at Lincoln Land Community College's Trutter Center on Saturday, March 2 in an unusual production

featuring seven re-enactors including one portraying Abraham Lincoln. They will lead the audience through stories of people and events in Illinois and Springfield. The presentation, sponsored by the college's Community Learning Department, begins at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. In addition, several of the re-enactors will offer afternoon interpretation workshops. For information on tickets and workshop fees, call 786-2432.

"We expect it to be an enjoyable evening, with entertainment and learning combined," said Lincoln Land Community Education di-

rector Judy Wagenblast, a Society member who came up with the concept.

"Some connections might be easy to predict. Others will be a surprise to the audience. That's part of the fun."

The phrase "six degrees of separation" was inspired by the groundbreaking research of American sociologist Stanley Milgram, who suggested that human social networks have a short path. Ironically, Milgram never used the term himself, even in an article about his findings in *Psychology Today*. It was play-

wright John Guare's Broadway play, *Six Degrees of Separation*, that added the phrase to pop culture lingo. In the 1990s, three Albright College students—Kevin Bacon fans—developed a "Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon" parlor game based on Bacon's remarks in a magazine interview in which he said he had worked with everyone in Hollywood and with someone who's worked with them.

Television interviews, a book and board game followed and the rest, as they say, is history, except in the case of Lincoln Land Community College where on March 2, it really will be history!

Society Members Get Last Look at National Surveying Museum

(Continued from page 4)

confidence until a final decision was made and announced publicly.

"Fortunately the date didn't stop our members from turning out for what would be the last event held at the Museum. We were pleased that more than 80 people attended, but felt sad for the museum staff and our

community that they would be losing a one-of-a-kind jewel-box of information with its beautiful and informative displays."

The meeting did give the Museum's assistant director, Matthew Parbs, a chance to discuss Lincoln's history as a surveyor and offer some theories on how it played into his later decisions as President.

Attendees also got an opportunity to view *Science on a Sphere*, the animated 68-inch room-size globe hanging from the museum's ceiling that animated dynamic real-time images of the Earth's atmosphere, oceans, and weather as well as the solar system. Developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, it was one of only 81 on display world-wide.

March Meeting to Focus on 2015 Lincoln Funeral Re-enactment

An event that could bring more than a quarter of a million visitors to Springfield the first weekend in May, 2015 will be detailed next month when the Society hosts a panel discussing the 2015 Lincoln Funeral Coalition. Members of the Coalition, led by Coalition chair and Society member Katie Spindell, will talk about various aspects of this major event that will begin with symposiums starting in April, 2015 and culminate with the reenactment of the original 1865 funeral during a three-day historic experience from May 1-3.

The meeting will be held in the Carnegie Room North at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library starting at 5:30 p.m.

The session is open to the public.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All Sangamon County Historical Society (SCHS) events are open to members and non-members unless otherwise specified.

- MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11:** *Lincoln Symposium.* Texas Christian University's Steven E. Woodworth is keynote speaker for this two-day Abraham Lincoln Association symposium that opens at 6:30 p.m., Brookens Auditorium, UIS-Springfield. Free.
- TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12:** *Lincoln Symposium.* The second half of this two-day ALA event continues at the Old State Capitol with "War Governors, Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation" at 11 a.m., free, and a \$25 luncheon talk on "I really Wish To See You: How the Lincoln Household Changed in 1863." A free, round table discussion, follows at 2:30 p.m. at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.
- TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12:** *2015 ALA Abraham Lincoln Birthday Banquet,* 6 p.m., President Abraham Lincoln Hotel, Springfield. Sponsored by ALA, this year's banquet speaker will be Yale University law professor and author Stephen L. Carter. Tickets \$85. For information call 866-865-8500.
- WEDNESDAY, February 13:** *SCHS Board Meeting,* Carnegie South, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South 7th Street, 5 p.m.
- TUESDAY, February 19:** *SCHS Program Meeting, Illinois State Military Museum,* Springfield, 5:30 p.m. Members only. Pre-registration required via SCHS website or call at 525-1961 by Friday, February 15.
- SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23:** *Civil War Fashion Show,* 2 p.m. Local Civil War re-enactors will don period dresses and uniforms and walk the runway at the Springfield Art Association's Gallery of Art, historic Edwards Place, 700 North Fourth Street, Springfield. Tickets \$15. Call 523-2631 for reservations and information.
- SATURDAY, MARCH 2:** *"Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon Abe Lincoln,"* 7 p.m., Lincoln Land Community College Trutter Center, \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Seven individuals will lead the audience through stories of people and events in Illinois that demonstrate how to interpret history and nature. For information on the program and related interpretation workshops that afternoon, call the Community Education program at 786-2292.
- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13:** *SCHS Board Meeting,* Carnegie Room South, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South 7th Street, 5 p.m.
- TUESDAY, MARCH 19:** *SCHS Program Meeting Lincoln Funeral Reenactment Update,* Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South 7th Street, 5 p.m.
- SATURDAY, APRIL 27:** *History Trivia Night,* Old State Capitol, 6 p.m. Sponsored by SCHS, the event will benefit the Lincoln Troubadours.

sangamon county historical society friends and sponsors



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Our names are **Jilly** and **Fergus**
And We Love History



SIX DEGREES OF KEVIN BACON ABE LINCOLN

An entertaining evening of interpretive culture – history and personalities!
Saturday, March 2 • 7 p.m. • LLCC-Trutter Center • \$12 in advance (\$15 at the door)
Call Lincoln Land Community College-Community Learning at 217.786.2432 for ticket information.

Sangamon County Historical Society
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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.



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.
- 05 - Pioneer Level Membership - \$100.
- 06 - Settlers Level Membership - \$250.
- 07 - Trailblazer Level Membership - \$500.
- 08 - Lifetime Membership - \$700