

KENDALL COUNTY
Historic Preservation Commission
Kendall County Historic Court House
110 W. Madison Street
Yorkville, IL 60560
5:30 p.m.
December 15, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Marty Shanahan called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Eric Bernacki, Kristine Heiman, Elizabeth Flowers, and Marty Shanahan

Absent: Jeff Wehrli

Also Present: Matt Asselmeier, Director, and Natalia Borowska, Management Analyst

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member Flowers made a motion, seconded by Member Heiman, to approve the agenda. With a voice vote of four (4) ayes, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Flowers made a motion, seconded by Member Heiman, to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2025, meeting. With a voice vote of four (4) ayes, the motion carried.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation by Natalia Borowska Regarding America 250

Natalia Borowska, Management Analyst of Kendall County, spoke about the semi quincennial, the two hundred fiftieth (250) birthday of the United States of America, that will take place in 2026. Ms. Borowska stated that Kendall County will celebrate this milestone birthday throughout the year. The County met with some of the municipalities working on ideas on how the milestone birthday will be celebrated. A website will be launched called Kendall250.com and it will contain information about what the county and municipalities will be doing to celebrate the semi quincennial.

Ms. Borowska spoke about a Veteran's Ball and Wall display which is a special event honoring the sacrifice of our veterans. It will take place from May 18, 2026, to May 20, 2026, at the Administration Building. Another event is Daughters of the American Revolution, Oswego Chapter, is going to present a two hundred fiftieth (250th) plaque to the County Board in June or July. This will be to honor two (2) Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Kendall County.

Member Bernacki asked if the Veteran's Ball and Wall event will be specific to Kendall County. Ms. Borowska stated that it will be specific to Kendall County or the Chicagoland Area.

Mr. Asselmeier asked Ms. Borowska if she had a veterans list available. Ms. Borowska stated she will provide the contact information of the individual who runs the organization. Mr. Asselmeier stated that the Kendall HPC Meeting Minutes 12.15.25

County website has the Roll of Honor from 1956. Mr. Asselmeier has asked for updated information and veterans' organizations were reluctant in providing the information for privacy reasons. Member Bernacki asked if the Veterans Ball could be held annually.

Ms. Borowska announced that there will be display cases on the third (3rd) floor outside of the boardroom that will consist of Revolutionary War artifacts.

Ms. Borowska mentioned if anyone has ideas, they would like to share on how to celebrate the semi quincennial next year to reach out to her.

Mr. Asselmeier asked if there are any plans to have a time capsule. Mr. Borowska stated that the bicentennial capsule is still active is set to be opened in 2073.

Member Bernacki expressed an idea to coordinate with the Farm Bureau in creating special recognition for the Centennial Farms.

Mr. Asselmeier mentioned having Ms. Borowska attend the Historic Preservation Group Meeting on February 18, 2026, and share ideas with the attendees.

Mr. Asselmeier stated that LaSalle County created a Museum Passport Program that residents can visit the various museums in the area. Kendall County has quite a few museums to visit as well.

Member Bernacki stated that the Museum Passport Program would be ideal for schools to participate in.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of Consultation Regarding 16929 Ridge Road

Mr. Asselmeier reported that he received an email asking what township the County should request for a structure survey. Mr. Asselmeier stated that, if Oswego was the selected township, a decision would need to be made whether the survey would be of Oswego or separate surveys for rural Oswego and Boulder Hill. Vice Chairman Shanahan stated the whole county can be surveyed. Member Bernacki stated Big Grove, Lisbon and Oswego without Boulder Hill can be surveyed. Mr. Asselmeier will reach out to Ken Itle for the cost of those three townships to be structure surveyed.

Update on the Application of Landmark Status for the Norway Temperance Hall

Mr. Asselmeier reported he does not expect to hear back until January 2, 2026, about the status of the Norway Temperance Hall.

Discussion of Future Historic Preservation Group Meetings

February 18, 2026, at Historic Courthouse, Yorkville

Discussion of Speakers/Topics

Review of Invitee List

Other Meeting Logistics

Mr. Asselmeier asked if anyone had any other meeting topics they would like to go over. Member Bernacki would like a structure survey update. Member Flowers asked if any of the invitees have responded. Mr. Asselmeier stated he has not sent the invitation yet. He plans on sending it after the new year.

Mr. Asselmeier asked if the usual refreshments of Panera would be acceptable. The response was yes.

Commissioners reviewed the invitee list.

Update on Historic Structure Survey

Mr. Asselmeier reported he received an email from Ken Itle. There is not much to report. Mr. Itle will continue to work as long as weather permits. Mr. Itle requested Commissioners to volunteer to assist with the structure survey.

Discussion of Having Commission Meetings at Historic Locations in the County; Commission Could Determine Meeting Locations and Times

Plattville Lutheran Church on January 21, 2026

Historic Courthouse, Yorkville February 18, 2026

Church of the Good Shephard, Oswego on March 16, 2026

Mr. Asselmeier stated that going forward the weather will get warmer and it should be easier to find locations to have Historic Preservation Meetings. Vice Chairman Shanahan stated the Commission could have their summer meeting at the LaSalle Manor. Mr. Asselmeier stated there is a new Director at the LaSalle Manor.

Member Heiman mentioned the Gaylord house in Oswego. Mr. Asselmeier stated he would check with the Gaylord house about the possibility of having a Historic Preservation Meeting.

Discussion of Historic Preservation Awards

Mr. Asselmeier reported the press release will be sent for Historic Preservation Awards on January 13, 2026, and the application deadline is March 2, 2026.

Discussion of Native American Tribes Associated with Kendall County

There were no updates on the Native American Tribes associated with Kendall County.

Member Bernacki inquired how much would it cost to perform a LiDAR structure survey at The Pickerill Pigott House. Mr. Asselmeier stated that Dave Guritz was working on the possibility of performing a LiDAR structure survey at the Pickerill Pigott House.

Discussion of 13860 Fox Road

Mr. Asselmeier reported the State is still working on this building at 13860 Fox Road. It is not structurally sound. It will take some time to complete.

Discussion of Amendments to the Kendall County Code Pertaining to Commission Review of Certain Building Permit Applications; Commission Could Recommend Amendments to the Kendall County Code and/or Approve a New Policy for Review of Certain Building Permit Applications

Vice Chairman Shanahan requested if this could be placed on the next Historic Preservation Commission meeting agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

November 26, 2025, Email from Edith Farnsworth House Regarding Supporting the Edith Farnsworth House

Commissioners reviewed the email.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

ADJOURNMENT:

The next meeting will be on January 21, 2026, at Plattville Lutheran Church.

Member Flowers made a motion, seconded by Member Bernacki, to adjourn. With a voice vote of four (4) ayes, the motion carried. The Historic Preservation Commission adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Wanda A. Rolf
Part-Time Office Assistant

Enc.

**KENDALL COUNTY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 15, 2025**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE CONTACTED ON FUTURE MEETINGS REGARDING THIS TOPIC, PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR ADDRESS OR EMAIL ADDRESS

NAME	ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)	EMAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL)
Natalia Borowska		nborowska@kendallcountyil.gov

Matt Asselmeier

From: Itle, Ken <kitle@wje.com>
Sent: Friday, December 12, 2025 10:17 AM
To: Matt Asselmeier
Subject: [External]RE: Structure Survey

CAUTION - This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello Matt:

Nothing major to report at this time. Field survey work has begun, and will continue as weather permits. Please do encourage the commissioners to respond and volunteer to assist. We have completed some surveying on our own (WJE only), and Joan Soltwisch was able to help out one day in November. I'll circulate another questionnaire next week for availability in January.

Thanks,
Ken

Kenneth M. Itle

Associate Principal

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

Engineers | Architects | Materials Scientists
330 Pfingsten Road, Northbrook, Illinois 60062
tel 847.272.7400 | direct 847.753.6465
www.wje.com
kitle@wje.com

From: Matt Asselmeier <masselmeier@kendallcountyil.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 12, 2025 9:49 AM
To: Itle, Ken <kitle@wje.com>
Subject: RE: Structure Survey

Ken:

Do you have anything that you want reported at the December 15th HPC meeting?

Thanks,

Matthew H. Asselmeier, AICP, CFM
Director
Kendall County Planning, Building & Zoning
807 West John Street
Yorkville, IL 60560-9249
PH: 630-553-4139



The Bell Tower

The newsletter of the Oswegoland Heritage Association...

December 2025



Roger Matile, editor

The Oswegoland Heritage Association's

Board of Directors

Judy Wheeler, President
Ken Holmstrom, Vice President
Linda Dean, Secretary
Erik Pienkos, Treasurer
Tina Beaird
Mary Church
Brian LeClerc
Dayton LeClerc
Roger Matile

In this issue...

...Page 3: New internship program off to strong start

...Page 4: Full slate of programming set to start

...Page 4: Park district funds building upgrades

...Page 5: OHA Board changes announced

...Page 7: Memorials create lasting tributes

We are tax-exempt!

Remember, the Oswegoland Heritage Association is a federal tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization. All cash donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Civil War letter enriches collections

On Sept. 1, 1864, after returning with his Civil War infantry regiment from a march through eastern Louisiana, former Kendall County farmer Charles McLaren sat down to write to his brother, Lachlan McLaren Jr., reporting what he'd seen on the march.

This past summer, the Little White School Museum in Oswego was fortunate enough to receive the donation of McLaren's letter, a valuable addition to its collections, from a McLaren family descendant.

The McLaren family—Lachlan Sr., his wife, Isobel (Brown) McLaren, and their children, Lachlan, Isobel, John, and Charles—had immigrated to Kendall County shortly after 1850 from their home in Lanarkshire, Scotland. They settled on land just south of Oswego, along and on what are now Plainfield and Ridge roads in Oswego and NaAuSay townships, where they farmed.

There, they joined the growing immigrant community of German, Scots, and English farmers that settled eastern Oswego Town-

ship in Kendall County and western Wheatland Township in Will County. They joined the Wheatland United Presbyterian Church, established by previous Scots immigrants and nicknamed the Scotch Church. And they began intermarrying with other newly arrived Scots families with names like McMicken, Stewart, and Clow.

The McLarens' youngest son, Charles, was born in 1844 in Glasgow. He didn't enlist to fight in the Civil War until Dec. 23, 1863 when he joined Company I, 46th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment as a replacement.

The 46th had been mustered into federal service in 1861 at Camp Butler in Springfield, and had seen some hard campaigning. At the Battle of Shiloh, it lost nearly half its officers and men. By the time Private Charles McLaren joined the regiment it was serving in Louisiana securing the state from Confederate raids.

By the late summer of 1864, the regiment
Continued on Page 2...

Your membership expires January 1...

It's time to renew your Oswegoland Heritage Association membership. OHA memberships run from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 of each calendar year, so send yours in now.

Annual dues are \$20 for Friends, \$75 for Sponsors, and \$150 for Business/Organization members.

Member benefits now include three issues of *The Bell Tower*, the heritage association's newsletter, each year, one free copy of the *Oswego Discovery Walk*, a self-guided walking tour of some of old Oswego's most historic neighborhoods, and other perks.

Current membership categories and benefits include:

☛ **Friend:** \$20 one-year membership includes three newsletters each year; one free admission to an OHA program, a 10% discount at the museum store, and one free copy of the *Oswego Discovery Walk* self-guided

historical tour of the village per family.

☛ **Sponsor:** \$75 (or more) one-year membership includes all the benefits of Friend membership.

☛ **Business/Organization:** \$150 one-year membership includes all the benefits of a Sponsor membership, plus recognition in three newsletters as a patron and benefactor of the Oswegoland Heritage Association.

☛ **Lifetime Gold:** \$1,000 lifetime membership includes all the benefits of the Sponsor membership, plus a free copy of *Oswego Township*, the 128-page 2008 pictorial history of the township; a special permanent membership card and a framed Lifetime Gold membership certificate.

Memberships are designed to keep supporters informed about OHA activities, promote participation, and provide regular oper-

Continued on Page 2

The Bell Tower...Page 2

Memberships now due...from Page 1

ating revenue to maintain the Little White School Museum's collections, activities, and other operations.

"Oswegoland Heritage Association memberships also make great Christmas

and birthday gifts for family and friends," OHA President Judy Wheeler noted.

To join or renew your membership, just fill out the membership form on the back of this newsletter. For a gift membership, send your name, address, and

phone number, along with the name and address of the person you wish to gift with the membership, and a check for the appropriate amount to Oswegoland Heritage Association, Membership, Box 23, Oswego, IL 60543. ♡

Civil War letter added, from Page 1...



Believed to be a photograph of Charles McLaren, who died while serving during the Civil War in 1865.

was encamped at Moranzia Bend on the Mississippi River in Coupee Parish, Louisiana. The small settlement took its name from the Morganza Plantation of Charles Morgan, an early surveyor, political figure and first American sheriff of Pointe Coupee Parish.

As the 46th regimental history put it: "On August 13th the Regiment was assigned to the First Brigade, Second Division, Nineteenth Army Corps; Colonel Dornblaser commanding the Brigade, General Dennis the Division, and General Reynolds the Corps. On August 23d the Regiment marched to Port Hudson. La., arriving there on the 24th. The Regiment then moved to Clinton, La., returning via Port Hudson to Morganzia, arriving there on the 29th."

In his letter back to his brother in Illinois Charles McLaren recounted the details of the regiment's August march, and reported he wasn't much impressed with the bayou country of Louisiana. In neat handwriting, McLaren observed:

Morganza Bend, Louisiana
Sept. 1st 1864

Dear Brother Lachlan,

I received your kind and welcome letter some time ago. I expect it had been at the regiment sometime before that, for I was at Vicksburg for 20 days after the regiment left and I came down to Morganza on the 22nd & on the 23rd we went on a scout out to Clinton, La. That is about 30 miles east of Fort Hudson, that is 20 miles below this point. It was a pretty hard march. Went down on the boats to Fort Hudson and started at 5 o'clock in the evening, and march all night until next day 3 o'clock and we laid there the next day and started back for camp & got back on the 28th. There was but little cavalry skirmishing. It was a poor looking country -- swampy, low, marshy land. We took 5 day rations with us. All we had was coffee & 15 hard tack for the five days. We was ordered not to take any meat that we could forage. But when we come to see there was not enough of meat to feed a cat. It was the poorest country I ever saw. It was rather unhealthy down here but I am in pretty good health and I hope when these few lines reaches you that you & Mrs. Mack will be the same. I was glad to hear that you had got married. I hope you will settle down & that you may both live a long & happy life.



Charles McLaren's marker in the Wheatland United Presbyterian "Scotch" Church Cemetery.

*From you affectionate brother,
C. McLaren
Co I, 46 Regt Ill Vet Vol Infantry
By Cairo
Write Soon*

Charles McLaren continued to serve with the 46th when it left Morganza Bend and headed north to Arkansas on Sept. 13, moving through Duvall's Bluff in October, and reaching Memphis, Tennessee by Dec. 31. Somewhere along that road north, McLaren became ill and after reaching Memphis, he died on Jan. 4, 1865, becoming one more young man who went off to fight for the Union who never returned alive.

Possibly because Charles never returned home alive—his body was apparently sent back to his family to be buried in the Wheatland United Presbyterian "Scotch" Church cemetery—the McLaren family valued the letter he'd sent back to his brother, and kept it, although Lachlan did use the back of the letter's page 2 to keep what appears to be a year's farm account.

This year, Mary Lou Jackson on behalf of the McLaren family descendants donated the letter to the Little White School Museum to assure it will be safely maintained to offer a glimpse into a bit of personal history during one of the nation's most trying times.

Other museum acquisitions...

Besides the Charles McLaren letter, museum donations received since our last newsletter included a collection of Oswego memorabilia, Bob Stekl; a collection of Oswego government and newspaper-related memorabilia, Dave Krahn; a 2005 Kendall County plat map and land atlas, Roger Matile; a 1950s Wheatland Township wooden road sign, Darryl White; a Shuler's Drug Store fever thermometer from the Mickle Family; a 1905 photo album with 23 views of the lower Fox River

Continued next page...

Museum acquisitions...

and Illinois River in the LaSalle-Peru area with photos of Deer Park (now Matthiessen State Park) and Starved Rock, John Foose; combat boots, mess kit, and web belt used by his father during World War II, John Potter Jr.; collection of Oswego and Rogerson family memorabilia, Pat Rogerson; and arrowheads collected by the late Donald Neal Swanson and copies of two Oswego area farm area photos the family lived on in the 1970s by his siblings, Jennifer Swanson Houston, Gregory Swanson, and Carol Swanson Nicholson; and one *Save Our School* and a *60 Minutes to Fun* brochures, Fred Wooley..

In addition, Kathy Roeli and her cous-

in, Kevin Raufman, visited from Wisconsin researching the Shumway family and donated a packet of family photos and other information for our Shumway surname genealogical file.

Occasionally, we find valuable items for sale that we purchase for our collections. Recent purchases included a matchbook from the Collins Sinclair Station at the west end of the Oswego Bridge, an Associated Press Wire Photo of King Paul of Greece having dinner with the J. George Smith family in 1953; and a picture postcard of the old original Oswego water tower that we did not previously have in our collections.

The museum's cataloging process is

handled by Museum Collections Assistant Noah Beckman and Museum Director Roger Matile.

OHA members and the general public, are invited to make use of the Little White School museum's collections.

The museum's archives and research area is open Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to noon. We can also usually accommodate researchers outside of our regular hours by special appointment. Email us at info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org to arrange for a research appointment. For more information, either send us an email or give us a call at 630-554-2999. ♡

New museum internship program off to a fast start...

After receiving an inquiry about intern opportunities at the Little White School Museum, the Oswegoland Heritage Association Board of Directors decided last spring to institute an internship program. As approved, the OHA sponsors the program, which is overseen by LWS Museum Coordinator Joe Noce. The board approved the program's initial guidelines and goals at their March 2025 meeting that stated: "This internship is designed to provide hands-on experience in various aspects of museum work, including collections management, research, exhibit development, and public engagement."

The program is aimed at high school and college students with strong interests in public and local history and in museum studies. Candidates must commit to

spend at least one 3-hour day a week during each 8 – 12 week program.

During their stint as interns, candidates will be actively involved with cataloging collections, research, exhibit design, and community engagement and local history interpretation, as well as other opportunities as they arise. Interns work under Noce's direct supervision and direction. At the end of their stint, interns participate in an exit interview with Noce.

"We'd been thinking about an internship program but it never got off the ground until Joe volunteered to get it going," said museum director Roger Matile. "That was perfect, since Joe has had experience both working with interns and actually working as an intern. And so far, the program's been a huge success."

The program's first intern, Ronja Schmitz-Weincke, came onboard in May. She volunteered to research and create an exhibit that would complement the upcoming PrairieFest Quilt Show, held at the museum every June by the Quilters Dozen Quilting Club. Her exhibit proved so popular it was extended throughout the entire summer.

At the time, she was finishing up her sophomore year at Waubensee Community College and was on her way to attend the University of Wisconsin – Madison in the fall, where she planned to major in history.

Other members of the museum's growing corps of interns include Ben



Madeleine Chenault will wind up her internship at the Little White School Museum in December.

Brock, an Oswego resident and senior at Northern Michigan University who came aboard this past summer and helped mount the museum's "The Oswegoland Park District: 75 Years of Growth" exhibit; and this fall's Madeleine Chenault, a junior at Aurora University who assisted in mounting November's "Remembering Our Veterans" exhibit.

Noce reports he is always seeking intern candidates for the program. Interested persons should contact him by email at jnoce@oswegolandpd.org, or send a resume and curriculum vitae to Joe Noce, Museum Coordinator, Little White School Museum, 72 Polk Street, Oswego, IL 60543. For more information, email Noce at his above address or call the museum at 630-554-2999. ♡



The Little White School Museum's first intern, Ronja Schmitz-Weincke, helps mount an exhibit this past summer.

Museum's winter/spring museum programming set..

The Little White School Museum and the Oswegoland Heritage Association have wrapped up another successful fall/winter programming season.

December 2025 and winter/spring 2026 museum programming kicked off with the Oswego Christmas Walk on Dec. 6. Starting at 4:30 p.m. Some of Oswego's junior high choruses were to present half-hour Christmas music programs.

Museum programming continues with these offerings, all held at the museum, 72 Polk Street, Oswego. Pre-register by calling the Oswegoland Park District at 630-554-1010 or visiting the museum registration page at bit.ly/LWSMPrograms:

Share Your Stories, Jan. 5- March 30: Did you know that you—yes, YOU—are not only essential to making history, but have the opportunity to be a part of it? This winter, the Little White School Museum invites you to share your stories with us in this FREE program. Whether your family has lived in Oswego for generations or you just moved here last month, you are an important part of what makes Oswego's history so rich. We're interested in your autobiographical statements, family histories, perspectives on past local events, and even literary or artistic compositions. Not a writer? No problem! We welcome stories of any length, in any format—typed paragraphs or bullet points, videos, images, and more. When composing your stories, here are a few helpful questions to guide you: What happened? Who was there? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Why did

it happen? If you'd like to share your stories but need help, reach out to Museum Coordinator Joe Noce at jnoce@oswegolandpd.org. Note that once your stories are submitted, it will be reviewed by our staff. If accepted, it will become part of the Museum's permanent collections and will be made available to researchers upon request. To share your stories, email your files to jnoce@oswegolandpd.org, or drop them off at the museum's front desk during regular operating hours between Monday, Jan. 5 and Monday, March 30.

History Book Club, Sunday, Jan. 11, 11am - 1pm: History comes alive through the pages of captivating books! History and literature enthusiasts are invited to connect and discuss A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn on January 11, and Everything Is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection by John Green on March 15. Join us for a journey through time as we explore the stories that shape our world! Participants must obtain their own copy of the book or contact Museum Coordinator Joe Noce (jnoce@oswegolandpd.org) to check one out. (\$5 registration)

Junior Dragstrip Days, Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 24-25, 11am - 1pm: Racers, start your engines! If your child has a need for speed, then this is the program for them. Drop by the Little White School Museum anytime between 11-1 on Saturday or Sunday or both to create your own miniature racecar and race it on our own toy track! Participants

walk away with their own wooden vehicle and a medal for participating. Price is per racer. An adult must accompany children. (\$12 resident; \$15 non-resident)

Historical Movie Night, Friday, Jan. 30, 6pm: Spend an evening at the museum with a special feature showcasing the classic film, "Kansas City Confidential" (1952), a gripping noir thriller about an ex-GI framed for a daring armored car robbery. Determined to clear his name, he dives into the criminal underworld to uncover the real culprits, leading to unexpected twists and shadowy betrayals. Experience the artistry and storytelling of this iconic film on the big screen. Popcorn will be provided—please bring your own non-alcoholic beverages. (\$5 registration)

The History of Fermilab, Saturday, Feb. 7, 12 - 1pm: Fermilab is the United States' premier particle physics laboratory. This talk by Fermilab's archivist will give a brief overview of the lab's history from its founding in 1967 to the present day. It will cover key aspects of the lab's organization, science, art, and natural areas (including the bison!). There will be time for questions at the end. (\$5 registration)

Puzzle Palooza (Adult Edition), Wednesday, Feb. 25, 6 - 8:30pm: Escape the winter chill and enjoy a night of

Continued next page...

All Friend, Sponsor and Business memberships expire Dec. 31, so why not send yours in right now?

Park district funds Little White School maintenance and upgrades...

During the past summer and autumn, the Oswegoland Park District has funded a number of maintenance projects at the Little White School Museum, making sure ongoing maintenance of the historic building is a top priority.

The building's alarm system was updated during the past year to help safeguard the priceless artifacts the museum houses.

In addition, outdoors, the parking areas were resurfaced and re-stripped.

Inside, the railing on the main entrance stairway have been modified to bring them into compliance with building safety codes. The old railings were designed to accommodate primary school students who attended classes in the building 90 years ago.

The new railings will be closely modeled after the originals, but will be at a safer height for adults.

In addition, a new railing will be installed on the side of the stairway leading

to the main floor where the photo mural now is.

"There's never been a railing there, and we've noticed during well-attended events the lack of a railing for those going both up and downstairs at the same time is a safety concern," said museum director Roger Matile.

Finally, the museum now sports a new lighted "Open" sign above the main Jackson Street entrance door to invite more visitors. ♡

Little White School Museum winter/spring programming, continued...

puzzling fun at the Little White School Museum. Teams of 2-4 individuals will race against each other and see who can put together their puzzle first. Each team will be given 2.5 hours to put together a 500-piece puzzle they get to keep. Bring your own adult beverage and snacks and enjoy an evening of puzzling fun! All individuals must be over the age of 21. The first-place team will receive a prize. Only one member needs to register. (\$41 resident, \$51 non-resident)

D.O.A. (Radio Play), Saturday, Feb. 28, 7pm: Businessman Frank Bigelow has a problem—he's been poisoned and has just days to solve his own murder. Time is running out, but the list of suspects sure isn't in this radio drama based on the 1949 film. Actors who have been cast in each Radio Play will rehearse all day on Saturday for a 7pm performance at the Little White School Museum. (\$12 adults, \$10 children and seniors at the door)

Fording at the Fox- Tabletop Role-Playing Game (Adult)- Friday, March 6, from 4-7pm: Help test the museum's latest project: a locally based tabletop role-playing game called Fording at the Fox during this FREE event! We are looking for adventurers ages 16 and up to help play-test this brand-new game. All you need to bring is yourself—and a zest for adventure! Once the event begins, it will last approximately three hours. Characters will be provided. Once you register, you will be emailed a form to fill out prior to your arrival at the event to indicate your character preferences. Before embarking on our quest, we will explain the purpose of the game and provide criteria to help you evaluate it during play. After the session, you will be asked to complete a survey to give feedback and help us improve the game. For more info, contact Museum Coordinator Joe Noce at jnoce@oswegolandpd.org.

Saw Wee Kee and Waa Kee Sha History Lecture, Saturday, March 7, 12 - 1:30pm: Today, Oswego knows Saw Wee Kee and Waa Kee Sha as two of its premier natural area parks—the former nestled along the Fox River and offering extensive hiking and biking trails, and the latter featuring a wide range of outdoor

adventures. But Saw Wee Kee, Waa Kee Sha, and their surrounding areas have long been more than just recreation sites since well before American settlers first arrived. Whether you couldn't join us for last year's history hikes, want to learn about both parks' rich pasts, are looking for tips and points of interest for the upcoming season, or simply enjoy history without the hiking, join us at the museum for a fascinating history lecture exploring the stories behind these beloved parks. (\$5 registration)

History Book Club, Sunday, March 15, 11am - 1pm; History comes alive through the pages of captivating books! History and literature enthusiasts are invited to connect and discuss A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn on January 11, and Everything Is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection by John Green on March 15. Join us for a journey through time as we explore the stories that shape our world! Participants must obtain their own copy of the book or contact Museum Coordinator Joe Noce (jnoce@oswegolandpd.org) to check one out. (\$5 registration)

Fording at the Fox- Tabletop Role-Playing Game (Youth), Saturday, March 28, 11am-2pm: The Little White School Museum invites you to help test our latest project during this FREE event: a locally based tabletop role-playing game called Fording at the Fox! We are looking for adventurers ages 10 to 15 to help play-test this brand-new game. Parents are not required to stay for the event but may stay and help or observe. Once the event begins, it will last three hours. Characters will be provided. Once you register, you will be emailed a form to fill out prior to your arrival at the event to indicate your character preferences, please fill out the form with the help of a parental figure if necessary. Before embarking on our quest, we will explain the purpose of the game and provide criteria to help you evaluate it during play. After the session, players will be asked to complete a survey to give feedback and help us improve the game. For more info, please contact Museum Coordinator Joe Noce at jnoce@oswegolandpd.org.

oswegolandpd.org.

Historical Board Game Day, Sunday, March 29, 12 - 3pm: Gather with fellow history enthusiasts for a night of fun at Historical Board Game Day. This event invites participants to explore whimsical and historical fun through board games designed to engage minds and spark conversation. Whether you're a seasoned strategist or just looking for a fun, low-pressure experience, there will be something for everyone. The event will run for 3 hours, with plenty of time to dive into the gameplay and connect with others. Bring your curiosity, your competitive spirit, and maybe even a friend or the whole family as we roll the dice and explore the past in a whole new way! An adult must accompany children. Registration is per family. (\$10 resident, \$15 non-resident)

Nature Impressions: Floral Press Canvas, Saturday, April 11, 10 - 11:30am: Celebrate the beauty of spring with a workshop that blends painting and nature. In this workshop, you'll start by painting a soft background, then learn how to press and arrange flowers to create a personalized floral design. Our instructor will guide you step by step as you combine paint and petals into a one-of-a-kind work of art. Beginners and experienced artists are welcome. Come create something beautiful to brighten your home! (\$29 residents and \$39 for non-residents.

Puzzle Palooza (Family Edition), Saturday, April 18, from 10am - 12pm: Enjoy a cozy fun-filled event for all ages! Teams of 2-4 individuals will race against each other and see who can put together their 300-piece puzzle first. Only two team members can be over the age of 18. Bring your own snacks and beverages and enjoy a morning of puzzling fun! The first-place team will receive a prize. Only one member needs to register. (\$41 resident, \$51 non-resident) 🍷

We rely on memberships to fund museum operations, so please send yours in today!

Unique Oswego-themed books, Cat's Meow miniatures our specialty...

Make the museum store your holiday headquarters



The landmark Dairy Hut soft-serve stand is one of the iconic Oswego architectural miniatures now on sale at the Little White School Museum Store. Proceeds benefit the museum's operations.

The holiday season is upon us once again, and many are looking for gifts with a unique flare. If you're one of them, the Little White School Museum Store may be just the shopping venue you're looking for.

A fine gift that lasts for an entire year and also benefits the museum's mission to preserve and protect the history of the area within the 68 square miles of the Oswego School District's boundaries, is a membership to the Oswegoland Heritage Association.

The OHA depends on membership proceeds to finance operations ranging from purchasing museum-quality storage materials for its collection of nearly 40,000 archival items, photographs and negatives, and artifacts to maintaining the computer system that keeps track of it all. Friend Memberships are just \$20 per year and feature three editions of *The Bell Tower*, the OHA's newsletter, one free admission to an OHA-sponsored event; and a 10% discount at the museum store. Sponsor Memberships are \$75 and are designed to help members supply even more resources to the museum and its mission. Business Memberships are \$150, and entitle the holder to three consecutive mentions in *The Bell Tower* editions. Finally, Lifetime Gold Memberships are \$1,000 and along with the regular perks also include a copy of *Oswego Township*, the pictorial history published in 2007.

And speaking of Oswego Township, copies of the 128-page softbound book are just \$25. Published as part of Arcadia

Publishing's Images of America series, the book includes dozens of historic photos that help tell the fascinating story of the Oswego area's rich history.

If you're looking for something REALLY unique, you might try buying one, or all, of the OHA's collection of Cat's Meow brand Oswego historic building miniatures. There are

more than a dozen miniatures in the collection available at \$25 each or five for \$100. Popular selections are the historic Little White School Museum itself; the iconic 1960 Boulder Hill sign once located at Briarcliff Road and U.S. Route 30; and the Dairy Hut. Other available miniatures include the Robert Johnston house at the busy "Five Corners" intersection of U.S. Route 34 and Ill. Route 25; the Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist, the Hoze-Cherry House; the Chapman House, the Dairy Hut, the Schwartz House (Tripp Insurance), the A.O. Parke Building (American Male & Company); the Durrand House (The Village Grind); the Oswego Fire Barn (Fox Valley Winery); the Knapp Building (Masonic Hall-Oswego Family Restaurant building); the Rank Building; the Schickler Building

(The Marmalade Tree and barber shop); the Little White School Museum; the Rank Building; the Oswego Public Library's downtown Oswego campus; and the Oswego Woman's Civic Club's iconic "Welcome to Oswegoland" sign.

The museum store also features booklets on Oswego area history including *By Trace and Trail*, the history of the stagecoach era west of Chicago by Roger Matile (\$10); *Faith on the Prairie*, the history of religion in Oswego Township from the settlement era to modern times by Paul Shoger (\$10); and *The Community of Boulder Hill: Highlights of the First Thirty-Six Years, 1955 through 1991*, an outline history compiled by Ruth Skaggs (\$5).

In addition, the museum store features a limited variety of Oswego-marked pottery items that make fine holiday, birthday, and other special occasion gifts.

The museum store is open during regular museum hours, Sunday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Monday, 4 to 8 p.m.; Thursday, 2 to 6:30 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The museum is closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

For more information, visit the museum web site at www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org; send an email to director@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org; or call them at 630-554-2999. ☺

OHA Board changes announced...

Eagle-eyed readers of *The Bell Tower* may have noticed some changes in the "Board of Directors" box on this edition's front page.

After adding new board member and Oswegoland Heritage Association Treasurer Erik Pienkos to the board last year, this year the board was faced with the loss of long-time and extremely valued board member Ted Clauser.

Due to some on-going health and other issues, Ted decided this past summer that he didn't feel able to give his full attention to his board duties, which included managing the museum store, serving as board secretary, and, with Linda

Heap Dean, organizing and conducting the OHA's bus and walking tours. The board accepted his resignation with much regret. The good news was, however, that he agreed to continue to be a historical tour resource and to participate in them whenever and however he could.

Board member Linda Heap Dean volunteered to step into Clauser's secretarial position, and was unanimously approved by the board. She will also continue to work on the OHA's historical tours.

To fill Clauser's unexpired term on the OHA Board, members voted to approve Dayton LeClercq. An Oswego High School

Continued next page...

Oswegoland Heritage Association Memorials and Bequests: creating lasting tributes to loved ones

A memorial gift or a bequest to the Oswegoland Heritage Association is an especially meaningful way to recognize friends, family, business associates, and special occasions, while at the same time supporting the collections, educational programs, and mission of the only organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the rich heritage and history of the Oswegoland area. All families have to do is make sure their funeral director is informed that memorials should be made out to and addressed to the Oswegoland Heritage Association, Box 23, Oswego, IL 60543.

Friends and relatives honored through memorials to the Oswegoland Heritage Association included Mark & Lori Koskie, Omer & Wanda Horton, Ralph & Sally Smith, Sons of the American Legion, Teresa Hoch, and the Janis Hoch Estate in memory of Janis Hoch, the Oswegoland Heritage Association's first president; Mark Lichtenberger in memory of Bert Gray; and Jim Mayer in memory of Jeff Hoch. After their 60th class reunion, the Oswego High School Class of 1964 decided to donate their entire remaining class treasury to the Oswegoland Heritage Association in memory of all 104 members of their graduating class.

In addition, the museum received a grant from the Boeing, Inc. related Blackbawk Giving Fund.

In total, \$6,720.74 in memorials, bequests, and grants were contributed to the heritage association during the past calendar year.

With the help of hundreds of thoughtful friends of Oswegoland history tens of thousands of rare, irreplaceable Oswego-related artifacts, documents, and photographs have been collected and preserved for future generations. Making use of our custom-designed computerized database, we've catalogued more than 39,000 separate items, each of which has been safely stored in acid-free and other appropriate media to assure that it will be available for future generations to study and enjoy.

Memorial gifts to the Oswegoland Heritage Association are deposited in the Oswegoland Heritage Association Endowment Fund, earmarked for use only on items considered to be vital to the long-term safety and integrity of the museum's priceless collections.

Your contribution will be acknowledged with a personalized thank-you note sent to the honored individual or family without reference to the amount of the gift. In addition, the names of the individuals being honored will be listed in future issues of *The Bell Tower*. ♡

New museum assistant on board...



When you next visit the Little White School Museum, a new face will greet you at the reception desk. Our new Saturday Museum Assistant, Riley Harper, joined the Little White School Museum staff on Oct. 25.

A Plainfield native, Riley brings a strong background in education and museum work to the position, having completed his master's in Arts Administration and Museum Leadership in December of 2024. He has previously interned with the Illinois Railway Museum at Union,

Illinois and the Brookfield Grossdale Station Museum, as well as at several schools throughout suburban Chicago.

"I chose to sign on with the Little White School Museum because of its strong commitment to community storytelling and its unique role in connecting people to their local heritage," he explained. "And I look forward to contributing to new programs, strengthening visitor engagement, and helping the museum continue to grow as a valuable resource for the Oswegoland community."

Harper is replacing Museum Assistant

Emily Dutton who stepped down to complete her college career.

"Emily was an extremely valuable member of our museum staff, working to digitizing a number of items in our collections, including the high school yearbooks in our collections from the 1930s and 1940s, the 150 Years Along the Fox history of Oswego and other materials," said museum director Roger Matile. "She also helped mount numerous exhibits, assisted in getting newsletters ready to mail, and many other tasks too numerous to mention. We'll miss her." ♡

Board changes, continued...

grad and Oswego business owner, she is the descendant of the pioneer Pearce family on her mother's side and the Minnich family that arrived in Oswego in the 1870s on her father's side. Along with that lineage, she has a strong interest in Oswego's rich history and heritage. At age 28, she also brings a younger person's valuable perspective to the board.

If you think you might be interested in

serving on the heritage association board the next time a vacancy occurs, send us your name and a short paragraph on why you'd like to help preserve and protect Oswegoland history. The board meets at 7 p.m. the last Thursday of each month at the Little White School Museum, 72 Polk Street, Oswego.

For more information, email director@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org. ♡

Free!
Please Take One

Oswegoland Heritage Association
Box 23
Oswego, Illinois 60543

✂ Clip and mail today

2026

Oswegoland Heritage Association Membership Form

Now is the time to renew your membership in the Oswegoland Heritage Association. Memberships extend from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 of each year. Just select from the membership categories below, and send your check to us today to assure Oswegoland's rich heritage and history will be preserved. Please add your email address to receive news about upcoming programs and volunteer opportunities.

Please remember to include one membership for each family member.

Select your membership category:

Friend, \$20 Sponsor, \$75 Business/Organization, \$150 Lifetime Gold, \$1,000

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Email address: _____

Make checks out to Oswegoland
Heritage Association and mail to:

Memberships
Oswegoland Heritage Association
Box 23
Oswego, IL 60543



www.littlebiteschoolmuseum.org

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