The 2021 Holiday Home Tour had a very different look and feel this year, thanks to COVID. Ideally, we love offering in-person tours but finding willing participants to open their homes during these uncertain times was difficult, to say the least. We also wanted to keep everyone safe and healthy. So, back to the proverbial drawing board we went to find another avenue to share this beloved holiday tradition. As you may recall, we were unable to offer anything in 2020, therefore no additional income was realized.

As the calendar turns to 2022, we look back on the successes of the past year with grateful hearts. What could have been a very challenging time for Peoria Historical Society proved to be full of blessings thanks to our many volunteers and donors. We ended 2021 fiscally sound, with donations and memberships surpassing budgeted expectations. In addition, the Peoria Historical Society Endowment Fund has exceeded $270,000. And in another success, almost $200,000 was received in the first phase of the Capital Campaign to begin much-needed restoration work at the Pettengill-Morron and John C. Flanagan House Museums. More information about how you can help support work at these historical and architectural gems will be forthcoming soon. Thank you, in advance, for your interest in learning about the various projects that are needed to restore and maintain the museums’ historic character and further our mission.

Guests continued to be fascinated and informed about local history by their visits to Pettengill-Morron House Museum and John C. Flanagan House Museum. There were regularly scheduled house tours and the beautiful Christmas open houses planned with such care and creativity by house managers Mary Hamm and Leann Johnson and their faithful volunteers. The annual Holiday Home Tour was presented virtually this holiday season, showcasing six beautiful Peoria homes. The tour still can be accessed at 309tix.com. Don’t miss it!

Thanks also to those who shared their local history knowledge as guides on the successful walking tours and bus tours under the leadership of Beth Johnson. And gratitude is expressed to the dedicated Peoria Historical Society Board of Trustees and other volunteers who spend hours helping in various ways, from assisting Maureen, Janet and me in the office, to planning events, to raising funds, to pulling weeds! It’s all vital work in our mission to “preserve, share and celebrate the stories of the Peoria area.” With your help, we look forward to an exciting, and historic, 2022.

Colleen O. Johnson, Executive Director

Holiday Home Tour 2021

By Susie Papenhause, Chairman

The 2021 Holiday Home Tour had a very different look and feel this year, thanks to COVID. Ideally, we love offering in-person tours but finding willing participants to open their homes during these uncertain times was difficult, to say the least. We also wanted to keep everyone safe and healthy. So, back to the proverbial drawing board we went to find another avenue to share this beloved holiday tradition. As you may recall, we were unable to offer anything in 2020, therefore no additional income was realized.

Tom Krupa as Scrooge
Photo by Linda Herron

Continued on page 2
From the President

Let me start by thanking all volunteers, donors, attendees and staff for their commitment to making Peoria Historical Society successful in 2021. In spite of many new opportunities and challenges, the team pulled off numerous successes with the history walking and bus tours; the Springdale Cemetery Virtual Tour, which continues to be available; the Art & Artifacts event recognizing our collection as well as the Nymphs and Satyr painting; increased interest and events at the Pettengill-Morron and John C. Flanagan House Museums; showcases at WTVP; exhibits around our community such as Wheels O’ Time Museum; and finishing our year with a superb virtual tour of six private homes for the Holiday Home Tour. Our in-person experience at our historic homes Dec. 4 and 5 were second to none. I’d be remiss if I didn’t also mention some very generous gifts to the organization that have put PHS on a path for long-term stability. Preserving, sharing, and celebrating Peoria’s past is our mission and everyone really delivered on that this year. In working with the staff and volunteers, there are some exciting things on the horizon for 2022.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy 2022!
Zach Oyler, President

We were fortunate to secure six beautiful Peoria homes to photograph and capture their history to offer in a video format. Thanks to the phenomenal, artistic work of Ami Kocher of Multimedia Services, the always impressive writing skills of our own Liz Klise, and the wonderful voice of Christine Zak-Edmonds, a beautiful video was created. We could not have asked for anything more professional or exciting to offer our followers.

A “premiere” of the video was held Dec. 3 at WTVP, where guests enjoyed hors d’oeuvres and cocktails and a first look at this creation. It was a wonderful way to officially kick off the holiday season. The event was well attended and the video was met with very positive comments. Many attendees stated they learned so much more about the homes than they had previously when touring homes in person.

The video and all events were widely marketed by Shelly Lehman and offered on 309tix.com to purchase access to the link for viewing at the leisure of the buyer. It is still available and we hope it will be a great success. This event was made possible due to the support of our wonderful sponsors:

Connor Co.
Dr. Lindsey and Kathy Ma
Zach and Heather Oyler
Peoria Title
Mike and Susie Papenhause
Alexis and Beth Khazzam
Bob and Susie Hall

Caliber Home Loans
Dr. Sheila Quirk-Bailey
Good Earth Landscaping
H Wayne Wilson and Shelly Lehman
Hecht-Stout Insurance
K and S RV
Mike Miller Auto Park

Peoria Architectural Salvage
Remax
Ron and Camilla Rabjohns
Sid Ruckriegel and Andrew Rand
Stellar

In Memory

By Marilyn Leyland

Two former Peoria Historical Society presidents recently passed into history.

Joseph’s late mother, Rosemary, also was especially involved as a PHS volunteer. Joseph was an attorney for many years.

John was active in many organizations and city of Peoria commissions. He retired in 2019 as development director for the Peoria Catholic Diocese. John is survived by his wife, Camille.
The weekend of Dec. 4 and 5, our lovely house museums were open to the public for in-person tours. The John C. Flanagan House Museum featured Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol” theme, complete with amazing costumed characters. The Pettengill-Morron House Museum hosted an elegant holiday theme, and elegant it truly was. Thank you to Leann Johnson, Trisha Noack, Mary Hamm, Deb Maxwell, and the numerous volunteers for your hard work and dedication to making our museum homes always shine! They both looked magnificent and your work did not go unnoticed!

Six beautiful raffle baskets were offered and we thank the donors and winners for their support:

*Cigars and Spirits: Donated by Peoria Historical Society Board and Dr. Lindsey and Kathy Ma Winner: Gene Quint

*Hearth and Wine: Donated by Hearth and Dr. Lindsey and Kathy Ma Winner: Bob Hall

*Let’s Read Under the Covers: Donated by Liz Klise Winner: Susan Rasmussen

*Let’s Eat: Donated by Connected, Kelleher’s, W.E. Sullivan’s, Castle’s Patio Inn and CxT Winner: Kathy Johnston

*Time to Wine: Donated by P-M Gift Shop, Dr. Lindsey and Kathy Ma, and Mike and Susie Papenhause Winner: Barb Honings

*It Plays in Peoria: Donated by Elizabeth Arcot Winner: Connie Pogue

Last, but certainly not least, a heartfelt thank you to our planning committee consisting of Colleen Johnson, Zach Oyler, Shelly Lehman, Liz Klise, Beth Johnson, Mary Hamm, Leann Johnson, Kathy Ma, and Trisha Noack; to our PHS office staff for always helping in time of need; to the volunteers who worked many, many hours on creating the video; to Kathy Ma for your vision; to the volunteers at each of our historical homes; and to the homeowners – thank you for decorating your homes (some before Halloween!) and allowing us to capture their beauty, history and interesting artifacts to share with our loyal followers. We could not have done this without your generosity.

What a memorable kick-off to the holiday season!

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**Mark your Calendars for Trivia Night**

*By Beth Johnson*

Make plans to get your team together for a fun night of Peoria–based trivia! It all happens on Saturday March 26, 2022 at the IVY Club at 5102 N. Galena Road. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.; trivia starts no later than 6:30 p.m. The fee is $25 per person; $200 for teams of eight. Individuals can sign up and we will pair you up with others. H Wayne Wilson of WTVP-TV will emcee the event. Eight rounds of trivia will be played. Guests may opt to pre-order a boxed dinner if they choose. Mulligans will be sold. Register by calling (309) 674-1921 or buy your ticket at 309tix.com. Space is limited so call early!
Cutting the Ice
By H Wayne Wilson

The water has attracted people to the Peoria area for centuries. Beginning with Native Americans, followed by French explorers, then settlers and the United States military, they all relied on Lake Pimiteoui, the native reference to Peoria Lakes. And so it was for Henry Detweiller, who emigrated from France as a youngster. Upon reaching his teens, he spent 42 days traveling from New York to Peoria, making the entire trip on water, across lakes, through canals and down rivers to join his brother, John, in 1837. With all that time afloat, it was natural for him to eventually hire on with one of the boats plying the Illinois River. He became a riverboat pilot and captained the U.S. Transport Yankee during the Civil War. He made a good living on the water but found himself idle during the off-season. The ice that blocked his boat in winter became a second source of income.

Henry Detweiller did not create the ice harvesting business in Peoria. The Fash brothers were butchers who needed a convenient method to preserve their meats and started cutting ice from the river in 1837. Later, there were other icehouses operated by J. C. Moore, B. M. Whittington and the team of Hilliard and West, all of whom shared a common interest with Detweiller. They were steamboat operators looking for winter occupations.

Ice Harvest

The ice generally was thickest in February. At that point, a horse and two men dragged 8-foot-long steel rods onto the lakes that would slowly cut into the ice. When the rod had etched grooves deep enough, a man would saw through the remaining depth. Ice to be used locally was about 10-inches thick, while 14-inch-thick ice was sold wholesale and shipped down river. Of course, the temperature some winters didn’t always cooperate, leaving ice blocks on the slim side. When the ice was particularly thin, the harvesters kept ropes around the horses’ necks so they could be retrieved if they fell through the ice. As rail replaced river barges for transportation, it was more effective to ship ice by train to St. Louis because the train cars could go straight to the warehouses whereas wagons had to transfer the ice from the barges at the river.

Ice Storage

Early storage techniques in underground cellars proved ineffective as moisture caused dirt and other materials to adhere to the ice. So, ice harvesters started building warehouses along the edge of the lake with 2-foot-thick walls filled with pine sawdust. The floor was gravel with tiles to drain ice runoff. Evenly spaced 1-inch boards sat on top of the gravel. Harvesters used long poles and large tongs to maneuver the cakes of ice into the warehouses. Eventually, steam elevators modernized the process by hoisting the blocks into place. The lowest level of cakes was stored on edge on top of the floorboards. The second layer stood perpendicular to the first layer, alternating that pattern to the uppermost tier, which was laid flat. Two feet of straw covered the top.

Ice Delivery

For local deliveries, the driver of a horse-drawn wagon would toss a 22-inch square cake of ice over the household fence and yell “ice” to notify household members. Nearly every house at the time had a fence to keep livestock, which roamed the streets freely, from eating garden vegetables. In the 1870s, a family paid between six and eight dollars for an entire season of ice delivery, running from May 1 to Oct. 1.

Wanted: History Lovers
By Beth Johnson

People who love history and want to share that love with our guests are needed to give historic walking and bus tours for the 2022 season. These tours run from June to the end of October. Scripts and assistance are given to help new guides get ready to share the stories. Sixteen different scripts from which to choose are available and winter months are the perfect time to study a new script! When a new guide is ready to give a tour, they first give it with an experienced guide. After becoming certified, guides choose when and how to give tours. For more information, contact Beth Johnson, Chairperson of History Tours, at (309) 264-6119 or johnsm2@comcast.net.

Early Peoria History Class at OLLI

Mark Johnson, former president of the Peoria Historical Society, will be teaching a class on the early history of Peoria. The class will be held in April during the spring session of OLLI at Bradley University. It will be held in four one-hour sessions (exact dates and times to be determined) and begin with the Native American presence in the Illinois River valley, continuing through 1835, when Peoria was first incorporated as a village. A comprehensive study guide covering each session will be available for purchase at the beginning of the class. For further information on enrolling in the class, please contact the OLLI offices at Bradley at (309) 677-3900.
Fall Fundraiser at WTVP Offers Three Unique Art Shows  
*By Maureen Naughtin*

At the Peoria Historical Society’s fall fundraiser, graciously hosted by WTVP on Oct. 26, guests were treated to three unique shows of historic art and artifacts.

--The first show, “Inspired by Peoria: Artists who Captured the Beauty of Peoria – Landscapes and Structure,” curated by PHS curator Maureen Naughtin, focused on artworks held in the Peoria Historical Society’s collection. Several works by renowned master Hedley Waycott were featured. While best known for his distinctive landscapes, Waycott also periodically painted still lifes, and PHS is fortunate to possess a stunning oil painting titled Gladiolus. Gladiolus was commissioned in 1936 by Mrs. Henry (Mary) Lynch to replicate the bouquet in her husband's hospital room. Her husband, former mayor Henry W. Lynch, passed away later that year. Other important Peoria artists featured in the show included Grant Wright, Raymond Knuth, Camilla Kenyon, Grace Van Norman Correll, Dean Howard, A.P. Bennett and Patricia Dale.

--The second show, also curated by Maureen Naughtin, highlighted specific PHS works of art in need of conservation. While all works in the PHS collection have been well cared for, some works have begun to show their age and are in need of some tender loving care. The Peoria Historical Society is committed to conserving these extraordinary pieces and has reached out to local conservators for assessments and estimates. Twelve paintings in need of conservation were displayed in the WTVP hallway, each accompanied with an approximate cost. To date, $2,500 has been received allowing for the conservation of five paintings. PHS greatly thanks these generous donors and continues to accept donations to help offset the cost of the work. If interested in helping to preserve a historic work of art, please call or email the office. Any monetary amount is welcomed and appreciated!

--The third show was curated by Kathy Ma, past president. This exhibit delighted guests with items from the collections of PHS board members. Beautifully displayed and diverse, the show included graceful textiles from a century ago to baseball pennants celebrating Peoria’s Gipps Brewing. An impressive bust of an un-bearded President Lincoln accompanied playful creations by local artist Bob Doucette. A big thank you to all board members who generously lent their prized possessions to the show.

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Henry Detweiller entered the ice business in 1854, developing Peoria’s first regularly scheduled ice wagon delivery service, partnering with Peter Schertz, who was a grocer. The partnership dissolved after one year, but Schertz continued delivering ice. Later, in 1870, Detweiller bought a half interest in an ice company operated by the Woodruff family, forming the Peoria Lake Ice Company. It operated out of warehouses at the foot of Persimmon and Caroline Streets. Six years later, the pair went their separate ways, with the formation of the new Detweiller Ice Company and the resurrection of the previous Woodruff Ice Company name.

That company originally began in 1855, and by 1879, had the largest storage facilities in Peoria capable of stocking 13,000 tons of ice. A mere three years later capacity had doubled to 26,000 tons in warehouses at the foot of Caroline and Hayward Streets. There were many ice houses by the 1920s, but the economy of 1929 forced them to sell to an out-of-town company with a local name—the Peoria Service Company. That company operated until 1966 on SW Adams just north of the Cedar Street Bridge at Locust Street, which is now Spencer Street. By this time, ice machines had long since replaced the lakes as a source of ice.

The first sign that ice harvesting from Peoria Lakes had a limited future came in 1885 when the Gipps brewery installed the first ice machine. The first ice company to use such a machine was the appropriately named Peoria Artificial Ice Company. Woodruff Ice soon followed suit and by 1912 was advertising both lake and machine ice.

**Icy Politics?**

The president of Woodruff Ice Company was Edward N. Woodruff, who shared another common interest with Henry Detweiller – politics. Detweiller served many terms as city treasurer in the late 1800s. Woodruff was elected to his first term as mayor in 1903 (mayoral terms were two years in length until the election of 1941) and served a total of eleven non-consecutive terms, last holding the office in 1945. He served more years as Peoria mayor than anyone else.

The old Woodruff High School was named for him, and the former Eckwood Park along Peoria’s downtown riverfront also honored his service.

The Peoria Business Illustrated publication had the following entry about Woodruff: “It is said his administration is as pure as the ice he sells, but it should be noted that it is by no means so cold.” As history has unfolded, some observers might substitute the word “slippery” for “pure.” But let’s put that opinion on ice for the time being.

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*continued from page 4*
One More Feather in the Pettengill-Morron Cap

By Edward Barry, Jr.

The Pettengill-Morron House, built in 1868, has been a beloved icon of the Peoria Historical Society for well over half a century. The property itself is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and was also listed as a “contributing property” for the West Bluff National Register Historic District. Despite such a flawless pedigree, this architectural jewel has never been officially designated as a local historic landmark, in accordance with the City of Peoria Historic Preservation Ordinance. In an effort to “right this wrong” and put our proverbial “money where our mouth is”, the Peoria Historical Society formally applied to the City’s Historic Preservation Commission on Oct. 27 for this local landmark designation. In casting her vote in favor of such designation, long-time commission member and neighbor of Pettengill-Morron, Lesley Matuszak said, “I have advocated for this accolade for a very long time, and I am delighted that it is finally happening”. On Dec. 14, the Peoria City Council affirmed the commission’s unanimous vote, making the Pettengill-Morron House an official City of Peoria Historic Landmark.

The Peoria ‘Nymphs and Satyr’ Hangs in Weast’s Golden Palace

Kathy Ma continues the story of the “Nymphs and Satyr” painting.

The “Peoria” version of “Nymphs and Satyr” reportedly was purchased by Pete Weast for $4,000 in Germany in 1890. It hung in Weast’s Golden Palace saloon, on what is now Jefferson Street, from about 1888-1908.

The painting is not signed by Bouguereau, but by L.O. Kurz, with the word Munich beneath the signature. Kurz may be Louis Kurz, an Austrian born in 1833 who settled in Chicago in 1848 and began a career as a scene painter. He founded lithography firms in Milwaukee and Chicago, including Chicago Academy of Design, which burned in the Chicago Fire in 1871 and was the predecessor to the Art Institute of Chicago. Kurz fought in the Civil War and was a friend of President Lincoln. His lithographic sketches of the war were the first to be issued after the war.

A Chicago newspaper ad circa 1890 reads: “Five oil paintings: “Nymphs and Satyr” copy of Hoffman House painting: will sell cheap. A. Wilsey, 824 East, 84th St.” Another newspaper notice reads: “At a recent sale in Chicago a native of that city paid a stiff price for Bouguereau’s Nymphs and Satyr. Shortly afterward he was surprised to learn that Bouguereau’s Nymphs and Satyr was hanging in Stokes’ palatial gin mill in New York.”

This begs the question: How could Pete Weast purchase a painting signed by L.O. Kurz in Germany in 1890, when Kurz came to the U.S. in 1848? Could Weast have purchased the painting in Chicago thinking it was the original, or not, to attract the same crowds to his establishment as Stokes received with the original? Regardless, the copy made its way to Peoria and hung in Weast’s Golden Palace until it closed in 1908.

Notorious Pete Weast

Weast was a prominent figure in Peoria sporting circles, owning a number of horses and automobiles. He had large property holdings in Peoria at the time of his death in Los Angeles in 1922, including a greater part of the block of South Jefferson Street between Main and Fulton, and he was an investor in Peoria enterprises. He was known to be generous to a fault and a warm friend. His donations to charity were large and many.

But there was another side: A newspaper article from 1887 recounts that Weast had “completed his commuted prison sentence.” He had a pretty, young wife who played the piano in his establishment in Streator, and Weast became jealous of one Parks, who visited the saloon frequently, and Weast shot him. It was revealed in the trial that Weast returned home one night after a trip and found the man Parks occupying his place. Weast was sentenced to five years. While imprisoned, his two young daughters died from neglect. One had been kidnaped by the mother from the prison chaplain’s home to extort money from Weast. Due to the influence of his wealthy friends, the governor allowed Weast to be escorted to the funerals of his daughters. The governor commuted Weast’s sentence from five years to 18 months.

Next Timeline: Carrie Nation visits Weast, painting hidden away for years.

Welcome New Members!

PHS would like to extend a warm greeting to those who have become new members since our last publication.

Kate Pastucha
Lynette Steger
Lynne Ostfeld
Thomas Peterson
Carl Victor Asche
Paul Reber
Breckin Brubaker
Pass along your passion for history and consider becoming a Peoria Historical Society Membership Sponsor. Someone you know has the same interest in “preserving, sharing, and celebrating the stories of the Peoria area”. Your gift of membership not only helps further the PHS mission, but encourages others to do the same. Please use the form below or go online to peoriahistoricalsociety.org for a printable membership form and add a note that you’re sponsoring the new member when you submit the form.

Thanks for your continued support.

Become a PHS Membership Sponsor!

Yes, I would like to sponsor a one year membership to the Peoria Historical Society.

New Member Information

Name __________________________________________

Address ______________________________________

City________________________ Zip________________

Sponsor Information

Credit Card # (Visa or Mastercard) _______________________________________________

Expiration__________ Security Code_________

Membership Level: Student: $25___ Individual: $35___ Family: $60___

Patron: $100___ Legacy: $1,000___ Corporate: unlimited, starting at $250_____

Your Name___________________________________________________________________

Address______________________________________________________________________

City________________________ State_________________ Zip____________

Please mail this completed form to the
Peoria Historical Society
611 SW Washington St.
Peoria, IL 61602

Thank you! The new member will receive a special “Welcome to PHS” note in your name.