



The Bell Tower

The newsletter of the Oswegoland Heritage Association...

April 2021

www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org

Roger Matile, editor

The Oswegoland Heritage Association's Board of Directors

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Ken Holmstrom
Roger Matile
Judy Wheeler

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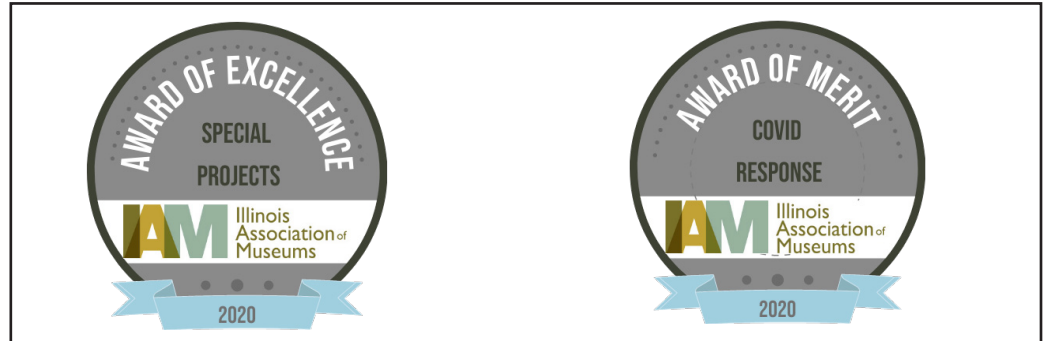
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Little White School wins two state awards

Oswego's Little White School Museum earned two Illinois Association of Museums (IAM) awards for virtual exhibits it mounted during the past year for its efforts to continue to interpret the area's rich history and heritage for local residents.

The awards were presented at the IAM Virtual Conference, "Adapting to New Realities," on Feb. 4.

The museum earned an Award of Excellence for best practices in the Special Projects category for last fall's "Cemetery Stories." Because of the Covid epidemic, the museum was unable to marshal its usual partnership of the Oswegoland Park District and the Oswegoland Heritage Association to produce the Oswego Cemetery Walk. As a result, museum staff decided to try a virtual cemetery walk. Five "ghosts" portrayed by members of the park district's Limelight Theatre Company

and volunteers, entertained through videos produced by park district staff using scripts researched through the cooperation of the heritage association. The resulting videos were posted on the museum's Facebook page—where all five are still available for viewing—as well as on the museum's web site, www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org.

The IAM's Award of Excellence recognizes work of excellent quality that uses available resources well, is creative, and meets professional standards. Multiple Excellence Awards may be presented each year by IAM.

The museum also took home a best practices Award of Merit in the Covid Response category for their online "Toys from the Attic" Christmas holiday exhibit. "Toys from the Attic" has become a winter holiday tradition at the Little White School Museum. For

...see "Awards," page 2

Annual meeting set for May 27

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of the Oswegoland Heritage Association, an Illinois not-for-profit Corporation, is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Little White School Museum, 72 Polk Street, Oswego, Illinois, on the 27th day of May at the hour of 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of electing three (3) directors and for the transaction of such business as may come before the meeting. The meeting date and time may be rescheduled due to the COVID-19 emergency. Check www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org for updates.

The eligible members voting will be called upon to elect three (3) directors. To be eligible to be a director, a person must be an active member of the Association, at least 18 years of age, and a United States Citizen. A nominating committee appointed by the President will present nominees. Nominations from the floor shall be entertained. All directors shall be elected by a plurality of votes cast by secret ballot. ♡

Dated: April 1, 2021
Mary Church, Secretary

"Awards" from Page 1...

each year's exhibit, staffers select vintage toys, games, greeting cards, and other items from the museum's collections that are then presented in the museum gallery's seasonal exhibit case.

"Since the museum was closed due to Covid this year, the staff thought making a slide show of images of the toys and other items in the exhibit would still be a fun way to help observe the season," explained museum manager Tina Heidrich.

The slide show, produced by museum staff, was posted on their web site in time for the holiday season. Those interested can still visit the exhibit by going to the web site, <https://littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org> and clicking on "Special Exhibits from Home" in the right sidebar.

Memorials create lasting tributes for friends and family

A memorial gift 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 mission of the only organization dedicated to protecting and preserving Oswegoland's rich heritage and history.

Since our last newsletter, memorials were received in the name of David Rogerson from Ken and Jane Wolf; in memory of Fred Mitchell from Roger and Sue Matile, Jean Kent, Richard & Lisa Kinnear, Gordon & Catherine Hinzmann, and the

Chicago Suburban Antiques Association; and in memory of Linda Gates from the Oswego High School Class of 1957.

New exhibits now open...

Projects that make significant contributions in their categories and meet professional standards are eligible for Awards of Merit from the IAM. Multiple Merit Awards may be presented each year.

In other museum news, two pieces of priceless Oswego history are now on exhibit at the Little White School Museum. Last October, the travel chest that held Georg Michael Schoger's belongings when he immigrated to Oswego from Germany in 1854 went on exhibit in the museum's pioneer section, followed in early February by the travel chest used by Ane Hornbeck when she immigrated to Oswego from Denmark in 1891.

The Schogers--who changed their

name to Shoger--arrived in the Oswego area in two waves, the first of three Shoger sons in 1854 and the second by Georg Michael and his wife and seven additional children (he had 21 in all by two wives) arrived in 1856.

In 1891, 24 year-old Ane Hornbeck packed her belongings in a sturdy wooden chest for the journey from Denmark to Oswego in northern Illinois. To make sure she didn't lose it on the way, she had painted in script on the front of the chest: "Ane Hornbeck, Oswego, Ill., Kendall Co., U.S. Amerika."

Last September, Hornbeck's grandson, Winfield resident Donald Hubbard, donated the chest to the museum.

See Exhibits on back page...

All contributions are acknowledged with personalized thank-you notes.

In addition, the names of those memorialized are recorded in a permanent record book kept by the OHA for visitors' inspection at the museum's reception desk. Finally, the names of the individuals honored are listed in the next available issue of *The Bell Tower*.

With the help of thoughtful friends of Oswegoland history, we've collected and preserved tens of thousands of rare and irreplaceable Oswego-related artifacts, documents, and photographs. ♡

Oswegoland history preserved thanks to our donors...

Donations to the Little White School Museum have continued to roll in since we issued our last report in the December Bell Tower. As of March 20, there were a total of 31,867 items in the museum's collections database.

Items received since the end of November included a collection of Oswego village and school related items and a collection of Oswego-related advertising items, Bob Stekl; Ruth Weidert's button collection and 1917 Standard Diary, Audrey Weidert Otto; a mounted and framed photo of the Moving Vietnam Wall during its appearance in Oswego, Ed Wolsfeld; a collection of Cutter family books, Cathy Cutter; brand new "Game of Oswego," Anthony Augsburg; scans of the Jessup

Family History, Carol Jessup; a collection of Oswego advertising memorabilia and family information, Jerry Rucks; the Wertheimer Cattle Company's 1943 Rand McNally commercial atlas along with a short history of the company, headquartered at the Montgomery stockyards, owned by the Wolf Family of Oswego Township from Bonnie Wolf Rhoades; a Kendall County plat book from about 1935, Roger Matile; Wooley family genealogical files, Jean Kent; a scrapbook with Walker family genealogy, a few documents, and two photographs, Cerise Escobedo; and the Lantz family milking stool, Nathaniel Matile.

Items purchased included a collection of Oswego dog license tags from the

1960s and 1970s.

Are you moving, breaking up house-keeping, or just doing some spring cleaning? If you are, don't throw anything away with a direct Oswego connection including photographs, documents, and advertising items. Don't think it's old enough? Remember, 50 years ago this year was 1971--time really flies when you're having fun! Before you throw Oswego-related family, school, or business memorabilia away, give us a chance to see whether we'd like to preserve it in the museum's collections. Contact us via email at info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org or give us a call at 630-554-2999 during museum hours and we'll chat. ♡

Historical Notes...

Note: All programs are subject to cancellation or rescheduling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please check the *Oswego Ledger*, or the museum or park district's web sites for current information about all museum programming. Web site addresses are: <https://littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org> or <https://www.oswegolandparkdistrict.org/>

For more information or to register for all programs go to the park district web site, or call 630-554-1010 or 630-554-4494.

Lego® Trains in Action Special Exhibit, Saturday and Sunday, April 10-11, 12-4 p.m. by reservation. Free admission. View an extensive Lego® exhibit sure to delight and impress all ages at the Little White School Museum! The exhibit will be available by reservation and space will be limited. Details and reservation forms are now available at <https://littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org>.

Oswego History Walk – Homes (#19779): Saturday, May 15, 1 p.m. Registration \$5. When you drive down Main Street from Washington Street to Route 71, do you wonder about the histories behind the distinctive houses you pass? Join us during National Preservation Month, for a walk down Main Street to discover the early Oswegoans who built and lived in these homes. Participants should be able to comfortably walk for approximately 1 hour and be prepared to be part of the conversation. Face coverings and social distancing will be practiced for this outdoor walk. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. Presented by the Oswegoland Heritage Association in partnership with the Oswegoland Park District. NOTE: Walk begins at Tyler and Main Streets in downtown Oswego. Rain date is Sunday May 16. Check our web site for more walks in June, July and August.

Brick by Brick: Tracking Your Home's History (#19762): Saturday, May 22, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Registration \$5. If walls could talk...Was your home moved, damaged by fire, or enlarged to accommodate a growing family? Spend the afternoon with Oswegoland Heritage

Association Board member Tina Baird as she provides strategies for researching the history of your home by using government records, newspapers, phone directories, maps, and other resources. Every home tells a story, what does yours say? Pre-registration is recommended but walk-in registration at the door is welcomed. Hosted by the Oswegoland Heritage Association in partnership with the Oswegoland Park District.

Milk and More: Discovering Oswegoland's Dairy Industry (#19892), Saturday, June 12, 1:30 p.m.; age 16+, \$5 pre-registration or at the door. Celebrate National Dairy Month in June by discovering the history of the dairy industry in the Oswego area! Enjoy an engaging presentation, small exhibits, and time for sharing your favorite dairy stories and memories. Pre-registration is recommended but walk-in registration at the door is welcomed, space permitting. Hosted by the Oswegoland Heritage Association in partnership with the Oswegoland Park District.

PrairieFest moved to Labor Day weekend: Like many other community events, Oswego's annual PrairieFest community celebration has been moved to the Labor Day weekend due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally, each year's PrairieFest is held over Father's Day weekend in June

Pollinators on the Prairie, July 1-31, by reservation; free. How well do you know the pollinators in your neighborhood? Do you know why they are important to our environment? How have they shaped our past and how will they impact our future? Learn the answers to these questions and more during this special exhibit for all ages featuring the Paly Foundation's Pollinators: Little Helpers, Big Results exhibit and specially curated exhibits from the museum's collection. Check the museum website www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org for companion and special programs and activities available throughout July. Hosted by the Oswegoland Heritage Association in partnership with the Oswegoland Park District.

Celebrating Boulder Hill at 65, Saturday, Sept. 11, 1:30 p.m.; age 16+, regis-

**Be a Bell Tower sponsor!
Your company's name
could be in this spot**

To become a Bell Tower sponsor, purchase a Business/Institutional membership, and your name will appear in this space in three consecutive issues. See pages 1-2 for membership information.

Transitions...

Long-time OHA board member dies

Fred Mitchell, who served on the Oswegoland Heritage Association Board from 1981 until 2020 died Jan. 8 at his home in Oswego. He was 81.

Mitchell retired from the board due to health reasons in December.



During his board tenure, Mitchell served in a variety of offices. Most recently he was acting as the OHA's fundraising chair. In the 1980s, he'd worked on doing some of the Little White School Museum's original collections cataloging. He also organized and conducted the OHA's popular "Antiques Road Show" fundraisers, among other projects. Mitchell, a retired chemist, owned Ancient Argosy Antiques with his wife, Lurena "Renie" Mitchell for more than 45 years. They enjoyed living in the stately and historic Gorton-Bartholomew House on Ill. Route 25. ♡

tration \$5 in advance or at the door. This fall marks Boulder Hill's 65th birthday. Whether new to Oswegoland or a long-time resident, join us as we celebrate this historic event exploring the development of "The Hill" from its origins through today. Following the presentation, participants will have the opportunity to share their own stories, accounts, memories, and more! Pre-registration is recommended but walk-in registration at the door is welcomed. Hosted by the Oswegoland Heritage Association in partnership with the Oswegoland Park District. ♡

Free!
Please Take One

Oswegoland Heritage Association
Box 23
Oswego, Illinois 60543

Exhibits...from Page 2

“It is my prayer and hope that the display of this trunk with both her name and the town ‘Oswego’ prominently painted on the front will help tell the story of immigrants such as herself that were a part of the fabric of the earlier days of Oswego and Kendall County history,” Hubbard wrote in a note accompanying the donation.

“The two chests, built 35 years apart, illustrate part of the long history of immigration to the Oswego area,” noted museum director Roger Matile. “The Shogers arrived, stayed, and married into many Oswego area families. Ane Hornbeck came, married, and farmed for a few years before moving on. Both families, and entire groups like them, as well



Little White School Museum Manager Tina Heidrich adjusts the label for the Ane Hornbeck travel chest as it went on exhibit in early February.

as those who continue to arrive to this day, all contribute to the Oswego area’s culture and heritage.”

The Little White School Museum is currently open by reservation Thursday through Saturday, and by special arrangement on Monday.

To make a reservation, call 630-554-4494, email heidrich@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org, or visit the museum web site. The museum is closed to all visitors on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. ♡

✂ *Clip and mail*

Gift membership?

The Oswegoland Heritage Association has some exciting plans for the future. Why not take out a membership for a friend or relative who has an interest in Oswego’s fascinating history and heritage? Benefits include museum store discounts, three newsletters a year, and more. Just fill out this form and mail.

Name: _____

Address 1: _____

Address 2: _____

City: _____ **St.** _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: _____

I prefer to receive my newsletters electronically: _____

Membership type:

Friend, \$20 per person: _____

Sponsor, \$75 per person: _____

Business/Institution, \$150 _____

Lifetime Gold, \$1,000 _____

Make checks payable to the
Oswegoland Heritage Association and mail to:

Membership
Oswegoland Heritage Association
Box 23
Oswego, IL 60543

Check out our web site at www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org