



THE **FINIAL**

FALL 2016



SPIRITS IN THE NIGHT: FOURTEEN  
DAYS OF FRIGHT

CHILL@OAKHILL RETURNS

THE HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

ENJOY A TALLMAN CHRISTMAS

TREES OF CHRISTMAS PAST

**Spirits** in  
the **Night**

COME IF YOU DARE



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## DIRECTORS COLUMN

The holidays are never dull or boring. They are always filled with fun, frivolity and most importantly, time with family and friends.

As we enter the cool crisp fall and winter seasons, the Society has a litany of programs and offerings for all ages and interest groups that are entertaining and educational:

### Spirits in the Night

For the first time ever, we are bringing you a terrifying tour, Spirits in the Night, a fictitious tale of a family beset by a mysterious tragedy, unveiled before your very eyes as you are guided through the Lincoln-Tallman House! Come inside our Spookey either before or after your tour to have a drink with friends and extend your tour experience!

### A Tallman Christmas

You can be part of our holiday celebration this season by sponsoring one of the trees that we will showcase in our traditional holiday tours and our Christmas with the Tallmans event on December 3rd! Looking for a place to create holiday memories? Use the Tallman house for your 2016 holiday party or as a backdrop for those special family photos!

### Annual Kick-Off

Like RCHS@PLAY in 2016, we are excited to announce our 2017 annual theme and event/program schedule for the entire year at the end of January! Come inside the Museum Center for a warm beverage and snacks as we give you a sneak peek and our new exhibit and events, complete with takeaways and prizes!

Many thanks and heartfelt appreciate to all of our business sponsors, donors, volunteers and especially, our board and staff, who work tirelessly throughout the year to offer the campus to you as a one-of-a-kind entertainment and educational destination! You all have played a part in the Society's success in the past year and our work could not have been successful without you!

Happy Holidays!

**Michael Reuter**  
*Executive Director*

# Spirits in the Night

**Fourteen Days of Fright  
Await You on Campus!**

Experience a new Rock County Historical Society specialty tour in which history, haunting and horror converge in the dark shadows of the majestic Lincoln Tallman House. Discover the mysterious fates of an innocent — but cursed — family in an epic, three-act Victorian-style tragedy.

Enjoy drinks and refreshment in our Spookeasy, located in the Frances Willard Schoolhouse either before or after your tour and continue your scare!

**Follow us on Social Media using the hashtag:  
#Spirits2016**

**For more detailed tour information and disclaimers, please visit our  
website at:**

<http://www.rchs.us/event/spirits-in-the-night/2016-10-13/>

**October 6-8, 13-15, 20-22 & 27-31  
7:30pm to 11:30pm**

**Tours starting every 15 minutes**

**\$20 per person**

Tour recommended for ages 13 years and older.

**TOURS BEGIN AT THE WILSON KING STONE HOUSE**

*(located next to the Lincoln-Tallman House)*

915 Mineral Point Road • Janesville, WI 53548

Purchase: Online by visiting:

<http://www.rchs.us/event/spirits-in-the-night/2016-10-13/>



**Get your commemorative  
Spirits T-shirt for \$20**

**THANK YOU TO OUR  
SPIRIT TOUR SPONSOR**

**JP CULLEN**  
THE TOUGH JOB EXPERTS

**AN ADDITIONAL  
THANK YOU TO**

**DRYWATER  
PRODUCTIONS**

**Scare Your Clients & Employees  
to Death with our Special**

# Spirits in the Night

**CORPORATE TOUR  
PACKAGES!**

The Society is now offering you the opportunity to purchase a tour package for six that's guaranteed to be a thrill-a-minute for your business! And at the end of your Spirits tour, you can relax, bond and have a drink with your party in the adjacent Spookeasy in the Frances Willard Schoolhouse!

**EACH CORPORATE PACKAGE INCLUDES:**

- 6 Spirits Tour Tickets
- 6 Complimentary Drink Tickets in the Spookeasy
- 6 Commemorative Spirits Posters
- Private Tour (guaranteed with only your guests and a personal tour guide)

Simply contact Michael Reuter, Executive Director for more information and scheduling at 608-756-4509 ext. 1 or visit [www.rchs.us](http://www.rchs.us)

## Discover the Unexplained with Strange Incorporated's TV Series!

In 2001, John Gage of Videogeneics of Janesville filmed a two-episode series of noted paranormal activity at two notorious haunted locales in Northern Illinois: the haunted graveyards in Bachelor's Grove and Manteno State Hospital.

With the work of Gage's daughters, these episodes, called *Strange Incorporated*, have been re-mastered and completed for public viewing for the first time. View this never-before-seen series and get a behind-the-scenes account of the paranormal activity that awaits.

**What:** Premier of *Strange Incorporated*

**When:** Saturday, October 15th

**Time:** 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** Toys @ PLAY Exhibit Gallery- Helen Jeffris Wood Museum Center

426 N. Jackson Street

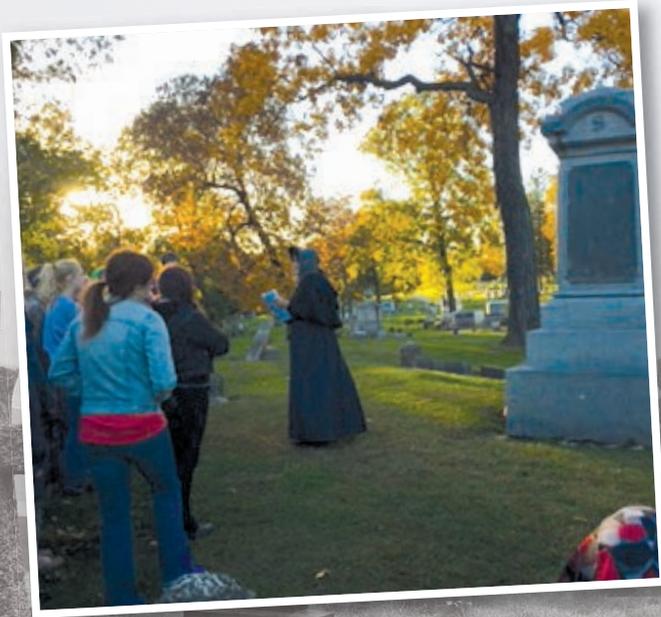
**Cost:** FREE to the public.

**NOTE:** Seating will be limited to the first 60 attendees.



**STRANGE  
INCORPORATED**

# Chill @ Oak Hill Returns!



**What:** Chill @ Oak Hill

**When:** October 5, 6, & 7; October 12,13, 14

**Time:** 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

**Where:** Oak Hill Cemetery, Janesville

**Cost:** \$5 / person

Have you ever wondered what happens in a cemetery after dark? For six select dates in October, gravestones and ghoulish tales await you at Janesville's largest city of the dead, Oak Hill Cemetery. Local expert Sherry Thurner will lead guests through the cemetery, while spinning tales of the mystery and mayhem surrounding its residents. Tour spots are limited for this popular event, so please visit our website at [www.rchs.us](http://www.rchs.us) for more details and to purchase your tickets to reserve your spot today!

**Note:** This event is an educational program and is not intended as a haunted tour. Limit 35 guests per tour slot



## Making History Spooky, Kooky & Cool!

**What:** Snap Apple Eve

**When:** Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Time:** 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** Toys @ PLAY Exhibit Gallery- Helen Jeffris Wood Museum Center • 426 N. Jackson Street

**Cost:** \$5 per child, adults are FREE

Don your coolest and scary Halloween costumes and learn about Halloween traditions based on the historic print, "Snap Apple Night", which hangs in the Lincoln-Tallman House hallway. Listen to a story and garner a treat! Make a "pumpkin moonshine" and enjoy Victorian games.

**NOTE:** This is not a haunted house event. This event is limited to 50 children.

# The Jeffris Family Foundation

*Dedicated to Midwestern Historic Preservation*



## Our Mission & Values

To preserve the cultural history and heritage of the Midwest through the preservation of regionally and national important historic buildings and Decorative Arts projects.

Support the preservation of history, culture, and the unique sense of place in small towns and cities.

Develop significant historic sites in eight Midwestern States.

Assure sustainability and quality restoration through good research and planning.

Inspire and motivate community leaders and local families to support historic preservation in their towns.



Villa Louis



Lincoln-Tallman House



Yawkey House

# Connecting through History - The History of Halloween

By Keighton Klos • Operations Manager

The days are growing shorter, the wind has become brisker, and Starbucks has released its Pumpkin Spice Latte. All of these things are signals that summer has come to a close and fall is back in force. Along with back to school and football, another popular event that happens in the fall is Halloween. Halloween is so popular in fact, that according to [www.historyofhalloween.com](http://www.historyofhalloween.com), Americans spend an estimated \$6 billion annually on Halloween, making it the country's second largest commercial holiday. Yet many of the beliefs and foundations for traditions commonly associated with the holiday have been forgotten over the years.

Halloween's origins can be traced back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). Over 2,000 years ago, Celts celebrated their new year on November 1, as a signal of the end of summer and beginning of the long, dark season of winter, which was an uncertain and frightening time for the ancient Celts. Food supplies often ran low and the short dark days of winter caused constant worry. They believed that the night before the new year, the boundaries between the world of the living and the dead blurred, allowing spirits to roam the

earth. Celts worried about coming into contact with these spirits, so they found ways to try and trick them. They would wear masks so that the spirits would mistake them for another spirit instead of a human and also put food outside their homes to try to appease the spirits. These beliefs and traditions are the basis for our costume wearing and trick or treating that we enjoy today.

Although the previous traditions may make sense to modern Halloween revelers, many people today would not associate Halloween with the search for true love. In the 18th century many people believed Halloween was an opportunity for a young woman to identify her true love. Some women hoped to identify their future husband by eating a sugary concoction of walnuts, hazelnuts and nutmeg before bed, causing the woman to dream of her future husband. Other traditions were more competitive. At some Halloween parties the first guest to find a burr on a chestnut-hunt would be the first to marry; at others, the first successful apple-bobber would be the first down the aisle.

Although many traditions associated with Halloween began out of fear or want of knowledge about the future, today Halloween traditions tend to be aimed more at having fun. Although there are still haunted houses and scary parts of Halloween, most of the holiday is about cute ghosts, baby pumpkins, and super heroes running around their neighborhood gathering candy. Traditions associated with holidays tend to change over time, and Halloween is no exception.



# FALL 2016 EVENT CALENDAR

For more info on 2016 Rock County Historical Society events, visit: [www.rchs.us/events/](http://www.rchs.us/events/)

## OCTOBER



### Spirits in the Night: A Tallman Thriller

Select Dates in October (check [www.rchs.us](http://www.rchs.us) for details)

Tours offered from 7:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. (every 15-minutes)

\$20 for adults. (This tour is for ages 13 and older)

915 Mineral Point Road (Tours start at the Wilson King Stone House)

Experience a new Rock County Historical Society specialty tour in which history, haunting and horror converge in the dark shadows of the majestic Lincoln Tallman House. Discover the mysterious fates of an innocent — but cursed — family in an epic, three-act Victorian-style tragedy.

### Chill at Oak Hill

October 5,6,7, 12, 13, 14  
5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Oak Hill Cemetery  
(1725 N. Washington St.)

\$5 per person

What happens in a cemetery...after dark?

Gravestones and ghoulish tales await you at Janesville's largest city of the dead, Oak Hill Cemetery. Come along on a tour of the cemetery and learn some interesting stories about people from Rock County's past. Led by local expert Sherry Thurner, you will hear stories of mystery and mayhem all while enjoying a lovely evening stroll through among the gravestones.

NOTE: 35 guests per tour limit. Guests are strongly encouraged to dress for the weather.

### Tallman Talk #8: Political Mudslinging

October 11  
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

426 N. Jackson St.  
(Toys @ PLAY Exhibit Gallery)

Guests are FREE, a \$2.00 donation is suggested.

Mudslinging in a campaign is nothing new and is almost an American pastime! Come and join us for a quick 25 minute Tallman Talk about the history of mudslinging in American politics and see & hear some of the absolute worst things people have said during a campaign. Then try out your best impersonation of campaign attack ads, while discovering what issues you care about the most.



### Strange Incorporated - Premier Viewing

October 15  
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

426 N. Jackson St.  
(Toys @ PLAY Exhibit Gallery)

Adults and Children are FREE.  
Attendance capacity is 75.

In 2001, John Gage of Videogeneics of Janesville filmed a two-episode series of noted paranormal activity at two notorious haunted locales in Northern Illinois: the haunted graveyards in Bachelor's Grove and Manteno State Hospital. View this never-before-seen series and get a behind-the-scenes account of the paranormal activity that awaits.

### Strange Incorporated - Premier Rock County Walking Tours: Beloit

October 15  
10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Meet at Grinnell Center - 631 Bluff St.  
FREE to the general public

The Rock County Historical Society is collaborating with the Beloit Landmarks Commission to bring you an exciting event featuring the diverse historical sites around Beloit.

The program lasts for approximately one hour as we explore the city, with many historic stops along the way. The event is completely FREE and all ages are welcome to join in on the fun. Wear comfortable walking shoes as you walk with us to discover Beloit.

### Snap Apple Eve

October 22  
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

426 N. Jackson St. (Toys @ PLAY Exhibit Gallery)

Children are \$5.00, Adults are FREE

NOTE: This event is limited to 50 children.

Don your coolest and scary Halloween costumes and learn about Halloween traditions based on the historic print, "Snap Apple Night", which hangs in the Lincoln-Tallman House hallway. Listen to a story and garner a treat! Outside, make a "pumpkin moonshine" and enjoy Victorian games.

## NOVEMBER

### Tallman Talk #9: The Weary Armchair Traveler: Antebellum Adventure Edition

November 15  
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

426 N. Jackson St. (Toys @ PLAY Exhibit Gallery)

Guests are FREE, a \$2.00 donation is suggested.

Come join us for a Tallman Talk-Armchair Traveler event as we talk about traveling south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Special guest Keighton Klos will share her experiences traveling to various plantations in the Southern US. Check out all the neat places she and her family have visited, and hear all about the history and culture of these historic locales. Then be sure to stick around to share your own experiences and have a southern snack or two. Participants are encouraged to ask questions and to share comments.!

## Historic Holiday Tour

November 14 – December 30

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

426 N. Jackson St. – Helen Jeffris Wood Museum Center

**\$10 / adult; \$9 / senior or college student; \$6 / Children (ages 6 -17); Free for members, military veterans – Group rates are available for groups of 10 or more**

Come tour the Lincoln-Tallman House while it is dressed in all of its Christmas finery. As you walk through the house, view the over 20 trees that local businesses and individuals have decorated, while being told about Christmas traditions from years gone by. Experience the warmth and festivity of the holidays, while viewing the decorations that are only in the house for the 2016 holiday season.

**When:** November 14 – December 30; please see website for details on tour availability

**Time:** 10:00 am – 4:00 pm; please see website for tour details

**Where:** Lincoln-Tallman House

**Cost:** \$10 / adult; \$9 / senior or college student; \$6 / Children (ages 6 -17); Free for members, military veterans – Group rates are available for groups of 10 or more

## Christmas with the Tallmans

December 3

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

440 N. Jackson Street (Lincoln-Tallman House)

**\$5.00 for Adults, Children under 5 are FREE**

Come inside from the winter chill and enjoy all of the classic beauty of the holiday season. At all levels of the Lincoln-Tallman House, we will present over 20 Christmas Trees, each sponsored by local businesses or individuals, allowing their unique decorating style to shine. When you are finished touring the house, you can enjoy a cup of hot cocoa or hot cider, while sampling tasty holiday treats

### What's Happening in Beloit @ the Beloit Historical Society?

#### Hanchett-Bartlett Christmas Open House

December 9, 10, 11

2149 St. Lawrence Avenue

The Hanchett-Bartlett House will be decorated in holiday finery with a variety of lighted/decorated Christmas trees adding Christmas cheer to every room. Refreshments will be offered as well as a bake sale. Music will fill the front parlor adding to the merriment of the occasion and tours will be given explaining the history and heritage of the pioneer families who lived there. The house will be open on Friday, Dec. 9 from 4-8 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 10 from noon to 4 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 11 from noon to 4 p.m. The event is free. Donations welcomed. For more information on the Beloit Historical Society, visit: <http://www.beloithistoricalsociety.com/>



## Wise Words: RCHS Book Club *Haunted Wisconsin, Third Edition,* Michael Norman. 2011.

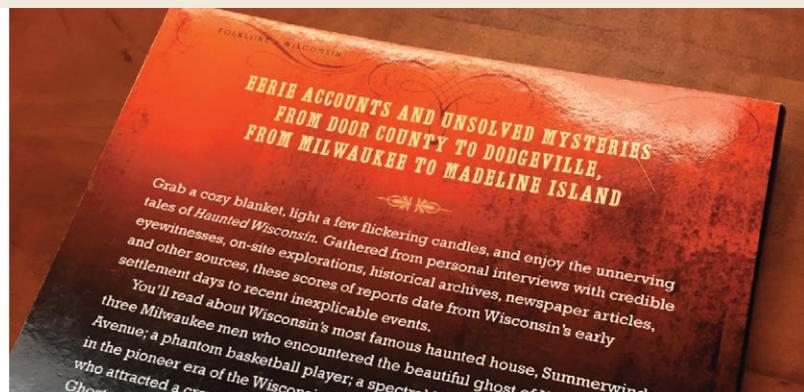
By Amanda Strobel Wise • Volunteer & Internship Program Manager

Pick up Michael Norman's *Haunted Wisconsin*, a chilling compilation of tantalizing tales from all over the state (of Wisconsin), and put a little fright into your fall reading list. Norman shares tales that will send a chill down your spine, and make you think twice about the shadow in the window. The stories span the entire history of Wisconsin. From the early settlement of the state, including the eerie return of a deceased wife in a rural farming community and inns with noisy boarders who are long dead, to the tales from today of homes still inhabited by their original owners, you are sure to find something that will scare you.

Norman also captures stories that range from businesses inhabited by friendly presences who help out the current owners, to not so friendly past owners who are not pleased with their new roommates.

The encounters with the unknown range from unexplained lights to cold rooms and even ghostly apparitions. Norman highlights hauntings of all kinds, from the mildly upsetting unexplainable noises or voices, temperature changes, to the more extreme encounters, such as one very malicious manifestation that moved an axe several times from a porch and very firmly embedded the heavy tool into nearby trees. In his retelling, Norman also explores the reasons why places may be haunted; from bloody and violent murders, to spirits who just simply never left. These stories will make you wonder who might still be living in your home.

The book is divided into the geographical sections of "The Haunted North" and "Southern Frights", for easy reference and Janesville is mentioned several times. There is a little something for everyone in this easy to read anthology, and the stories focus primarily on all the eerie things that go thump in the night. Be sure to check it out and Happy Hauntings!





# A Tallman Christmas

CREATING HOLIDAY MEMORIES

## STEP BACK INTO TIME AND ENJOY A TALLMAN CHRISTMAS!

Enjoy our **A Tallman Christmas** holiday season! Tours, holiday events and gifts for the entire family and more await as you celebrate a festive end to 2016!

We invite you to come and experience our offerings below:

### HISTORIC HOLIDAY TOUR

Come tour the Lincoln-Tallman House while it is dressed in all of its Christmas finery. As you walk through the house, view over 20 trees that local businesses and individuals have decorated, while being told about Christmas traditions from years gone by. Experience the warmth and festivity of the holidays, while viewing the decorations only showcased during the 2016 holiday season.

**When:** November 14 - December 30; please see website for details on tour availability

**Time:** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm; please see website for tour details

**Where:** Lincoln-Tallman House

**Cost:** \$10 / adult; \$9 / senior or college student; \$6 / Children (ages 6 -17); Free for members, military veterans - *Group rates are available for groups of 10 or more*

### CHRISTMAS WITH THE TALLMANS

Come inside from the winter chill and enjoy all of the classic beauty of the holiday season. At all levels of the Lincoln-Tallman House, we will present over 20 Christmas Trees, each sponsored by local businesses or individuals, allowing their unique decorating style to shine. When you are finished touring the house, you can enjoy a cup of hot cocoa or hot cider, while sampling tasty holiday treats.

**When:** December 3, 2016

**Time:** 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Where:** Lincoln-Tallman House

**Cost:** \$5 / adults; kids under 5 are FREE

# A Tallman Christmas Tree Sponsorship:



Area businesses and individuals are invited to decorate a Christmas tree in the Lincoln Tallman House for the 2016 holiday season. A variety of tree sizes and locations ensures that there is a tree for any budget.

This unique sponsorship offers businesses the opportunity to have their information shared with the close to 600 guests who come through the Lincoln-Tallman House during the holiday season. Businesses are encouraged to be creative with their decorating themes, and to bring their own unique style to their tree.

**When:** November 2 - December 30

**Where:** Lincoln-Tallman House

**Cost:** \$100 to \$250 based on tree size and location.

**Deadline:** Trees are available for purchase until October 10<sup>th</sup>. Get yours today!!

## Looking for that Perfect Holiday Setting? Search no more!

Choose the one-of-a-kind venue, the Lincoln-Tallman House, for the site of this year's **holiday party or family photos!** Revel and regale in the ambiance and history of



the Jewel of Janesville! Festively decorated, the Tallman house is a charming atmosphere for any party, business or pleasure or photo shoot backdrop.

**For more information on holiday parties or photos, please call 608-756-4509 ext. 1**



*Merry Christmas*



**New name.**

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**Mercy Health System is now Mercyhealth**

Passion drives everything we do to deliver medical excellence with compassionate care for the very best patient experiences. It inspires us to rise above what's good and make lives better every day. **So go bolder, shine brighter and live the passion that moves you.**

 **Mercyhealth**<sup>TM</sup>  
A passion for  
making lives better.<sup>TM</sup>

# STORIES FROM THE STACKS

## Purchase History from Yesterday for Today!

By Ruth Anderson • Archives Manager

Browse our Charles Tallman Archives and its 5,000 images and pick out the perfect scene or event for your library or next gift for family or friends!

Landscapes, city scenes, and many more categories of photographs from throughout the decades of Rock County are at your fingertips to access! Work with our archives staff to pick the perfect picture for your office or home!

Call Archives Manager Ruth Anderson at 608-752-5891 to schedule an appointment or feel free to stop in at the Archives:

**Where:** Charles Tallman Archives (430 N. Jackson Street)

**When:** Wednesday through Friday (from March 1 to December 30)

**Hours:** 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Email:** [research@rchs.us](mailto:research@rchs.us)

**Cost:** \$10-\$75 per image depending on size.



# Collections Corner

## Trees of Christmases Past

By Laurel Fant • Collections Manager

Historically themed Christmas trees, such as the Civil War tree and the White tree, generally fill the Lincoln-Tallman House in November and December. Ornaments collected over the past years are carefully arranged on each tree by our volunteers.

This year will be different! Businesses and individuals are encouraged to sponsor and decorate one of the twenty-four trees that will be in the house this season.

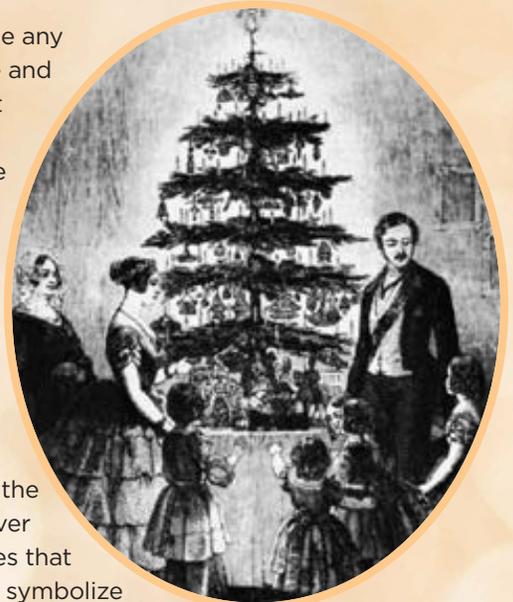
They have been invited to use any theme they wish to decorate and use ornaments that highlight their creativity. Will we discover an ethnic tree? One that uses a color as the focus? A Pokemon tree? The sky is the limit when it comes to designs and we know you will enjoy the creative talent of these sponsors during the holiday tour season.

All decorators will start with the basic evergreen tree, used over the centuries. Plants and trees that remained green all year long symbolize everlasting life. In many countries, it was believed that evergreen boughs hung over doorways helped ward off evil spirits and illness.

Although there are many accounts of the origin of the Christmas tree, we have Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to thank for the popularity of the Christmas tree as we know it. In 1848, they and their children were shown in an illustration standing around their tree filled with ornaments, with unwrapped gifts covering the table the tree stands upon.

Decorations held meaning. Lit candles on the tree appear as starlight in the sky. Happily, Thomas Edison's assistants created electric lights for a safer holiday. Early trees used mainly homemade ornaments as well as apples and nuts. Apples were used to depict the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. By the 1890s ornaments were imported from Germany to the United States.

Do you have a great idea for a tree at the Lincoln-Tallman House? There still may be trees left to sponsor. Contact Laurel at [lfant@rchs.us](mailto:lfant@rchs.us) or Keighton at [kklos@rchs.us](mailto:kklos@rchs.us) to learn more about this exciting new holiday project.



# CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS – RECEPTIONIST & HOLIDAY TOUR INTERPRETERS

2016 is coming to an end, and we are looking for more volunteers to help us welcome the many guests we receive in the fall and winter every year. We are especially in need of volunteers who can work weekend shifts!

## **Receptionist (formerly Front Desk Volunteers)**

These volunteers greet guests, answer phones, and assist customers with tour tickets and gift shop purchases. Comfortable with technology such as iPad and computers. Previous customer service and cash handling experience are preferred, with training available as necessary.

This is great position for those who are looking for ways to build their resume, or anyone who would like to be more involved in the community!

## **Holiday Historical Interpreters**

Interpreters leads groups of visitors through the historic Lincoln-Tallman House (LTH), and provides



educational information in an engaging format. These volunteers shape our guest experience, and get to share the LTH with guests from all over the world!

The ability to think critically, problem solve, and manage time effectively are beneficial. Previous customer service, and public speaking experience are necessary, and trainings are very comprehensive.

During the holidays, there is a special tour, filled with information about the historical celebration of Christmas.

Those who are interested in applying for these positions should contact Amanda Strobel Wise (astrobelwise@rchs.us | 608-756-4509 x313).

As always, there are many other exciting opportunities too! Visit our volunteer page at <http://www.rchs.us/volunteer-interns/>, or contact Amanda Strobel Wise (astrobelwise@rchs.us | 608-756-4509 x313) to see how you can make history today!

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Sharyn Sheen

By Amanda Strobel Wise • Volunteer & Internship Program Manager

Sharyn Sheen has been a Friday afternoon vigilant volunteer at the Charles Tallman Archives since Jan 2014. Sharyn was trained as a genealogist by her mother Walworth County's Sherlock Shirley Sisk. If information can be found, she will find it. She is one of the archive's go-to people for the tough research questions and projects.



She works well with clientele and offers great ideas for improving the archive's research products and procedures. She is a strong supporter of the Rock County Historical Society's mission with her time and talents.

She is a recently retired school guidance counselor. Sharyn is married to retired firefighter David. They have traveled to England in pursuit of family genealogy.



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[www.boardtrackerhd.com](http://www.boardtrackerhd.com)



# THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT

Through our Annual Business Sponsorship program, the Society is able to connect our slate of fun, educational and engaging tours, exhibits and programming to clients and employees of businesses from throughout Rock County!

Thank you for your support of our mission!

As we continue through 2016 with an emphasis on RCHS@PLAY, we aim to bring a higher level of interaction to all who visit our campus. Please consider being a part of our 2017 sponsors!

To join, or for more information on our Annual Sponsorship Program, please contact Alexis at [asiker@rchs.us](mailto:asiker@rchs.us)

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR 2016 SPONSORS

### LEGACY LEVEL



We're here to help.™



### HISTORIC 100 LEVEL

- Hufcor • Gilbank Construction •
- Anda O'Connell • Johnson Bank •
- Boardtracker Harley-Davidson •
- First National Bank • maryterrydesign

# WISH LIST 2016

Fall is a great time to clean your attic, basement, or garage, and perhaps you have come across some stuff you no longer need or want. Check out this wish list below and see if you have any of the following and are willing to donate to help our education programs succeed!

#### Specifically, we are looking for:

- 6'-8' Christmas trees (pre-lit is preferred)
- White linen sheets
- White China (plates)
- Silverware sets
- Old pairs of leather shoes

We are also in need of a "new to us" gas stove here at the Helen Jeffris Wood Museum Center and we would love to have your older model, just as long as it works! Updating your refrigerator? Consider donating your older model to us.

**If interested in donating, please contact us  
at 608-756-4509. Thanks**





## ROOTS IN ROCK COUNTY: Toyland at Blain's Farm & Fleet

Over the past 50 years, Blain's Farm and Fleet's Toyland has been a tradition for many Midwest families, offering quality toys, games and activities at competitive prices. With Toyland right around the corner on October 15th, 2016, kids of all ages can get ready to create their plan of attack for the best day of holiday shopping.

For years, parents and grandparents have been able to find great brands including Lego, Ertl, Barbie, Hot Wheels, Melissa and Doug, Fisher Price, Crayola, V-Tech and Little Tikes. Blain's also has a great collection of the traditional standby items like board games, puzzles and Lincoln Logs.

As fun as it is shopping for all the kids on your list, Blain's Farm and Fleet is proud of their Kids Helping Kids program. The program allows customers to shop for children less fortunate, ensuring kids in their own communities can also have a very Merry Christmas. Customers can donate new, unwrapped toys to the Kids Helping Kids donation box located near the exit door at any of the 38 store locations and Blain's will

match up to \$200,000 in toys across the communities they serve.

Blain's Farm and Fleet hopes families will take advantage of this opportunity to show their children the real meaning of Christmas. Children can shop Toyland with mom and dad to pick out their favorite toys but also to pick one out for another child. Allowing them to choose a toy to place in the bin themselves may seem like a simple act, but it will instill meaning that lasts a lifetime.

"It is such a great feeling to be involved in something so meaningful," says Kristin Mickelson, PR Manager for Blain's Farm and Fleet. "There is something so special about watching children shop for another child who may not receive a gift this holiday and learn the true meaning of the season. Knowing the toys donated are going right back into the communities we serve and live in, makes it even more special."

Co-Founder of Blain's Farm and Fleet, Bert Blain was known for saying 'selling toys was a good way to make friends, not money'. Not only that, but

that the holiday season should be about family. Bert's daughter, Jane Blain Gilbertson, now CEO and sole owner of the company is proud to keep that tradition alive with their Kids Helping Kids program.



## BLAST FROM THE PAST:

# Hello from the Other Side

By Nathan Fuller • Education Curator

The autumn season is often a time of reflection. People tend to get nostalgic for the good old days as the leaves turn colors and fall, children return to school, apple season begins, and important holidays approach. For some, autumn is a time to remember the dead, in both somber (e.g. Veteran's Day) and sensational ways (e.g. Halloween). Victorian era people embraced both sides in equal measure and often pondered an even more outrageous idea; what if we could contact the dead?

Attempting to commune with one's dead ancestors or recently deceased friends and family is nothing new. Ancient oracles, such as the one at Ephyra in Greece and the old traditions of honoring the dead at temples or holy places such as wells, indicate that many cultures around the world believed that there was a tangible experience in the beyond. Furthermore, those sympathetic family members could bring luck, reveal hard truths, and even curse one's enemies, if only they could be spoken to. This usually involved the services of a magician, priest, or shaman to show the way and to open the lines of communication; such rites ranged from the

benign offering of foodstuffs and money, to violent, bloody sacrifices. The Bible even mentions a communing with a dead person; the reanimated spirit of the prophet Samuel chastised King Saul for his wickedness and told him of his impending doom.

The Victorians, living in a much more scientific era were prone to combining the new discipline of psychology with all forms of mysticism and occult practices. Spiritualism, a fad beginning in the 1850s, served to capitalize on the interests of those who lost loved ones due to war, disease, or personal actions. The famous Fox sisters of New York claimed that they had communed with the dead in their home through "wrappings", unexplained sounds made on the floors and walls of the house, as well as reporting the moving of furniture by unseen hands. Others reported similar phenomena. These eerie sounds, along with moving tables, cold sensations, the flashing of light orbs, the sudden appearance of objects, and the sensation of touch convinced many that the portal to the spirit world could be opened and loved ones freely visited.



Spiritualism quickly became mainstream and launched the careers of many mediums who held séances in all social circles of society.

The problem was, many of these experts were complete and total frauds, including the celebrated Fox sisters. Furniture moving, loud sounds, and lights were easy tricks to accomplish, especially in a dark room. Classic medium tactics such as the Ouija board word spelling trick or the sensation of hot/cold temperature fluctuations, are classic examples of how the brain is often much more powerful than we think. Participants at séances weren't stupid in the conventional sense, but rather given to feeling a particular way through crafty manipulation of the senses to create a particular outcome; in this case, convincing them that the dead were speaking through objects in a room. The idea of ectoplasm, an energy expelled during a séance usually in the form of a cloth, was a particular gross way of proving a medium's powers, since it involved artfully swallowing and then regurgitating the fabric! Most mediums were eventually revealed as hucksters, but the movement was a boon to new theories in the emerging field of neuroscience, revealing a great deal about the power of suggestion.

Proving that one can speak with dead loved ones has been a hard sell, at least scientifically speaking. Spiritualism persists to this day and it is easy to see why. The idea that one can speak with loved ones is an innocent request, born out of love for one's family and friends. The problem is knowing whether or not the experience is real or imagined. In that vein, we encourage you to come to the Tallman House this October season and discover your own Spirits in the Nights. Who knows, you may become a believer yourself...

For more information, please check out <http://www.rchs.us/event/spirits-in-the-night/all/>



PLATE XV

\* "Phantoms" photographed during a séance with Mrs. Duncan at her home. Note mask-like faces, "coat-hanger" shoulders, and warp and weft of material.



Get ready to kick start  
your imagination in our  
newest interactive exhibit  
**TOYS@PLAY!**

**Exhibit Open through December 31, 2016**

Embracing all decades and encouraging playtime, this exhibit features toys past and present, and offers many unique experiences unlike you have ever seen in a museum exhibit.

**Superheroes • Dolls and Teatime  
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## **Birthday Party Packages Available!**

The TOYS@Play exhibit is the perfect place to hold your child's next birthday party. Start the day off with cake and pizza and then PLAY!

For information contact:

Mike Reuter at [mreuter@rchs.us](mailto:mreuter@rchs.us) or call (608) 756-4509.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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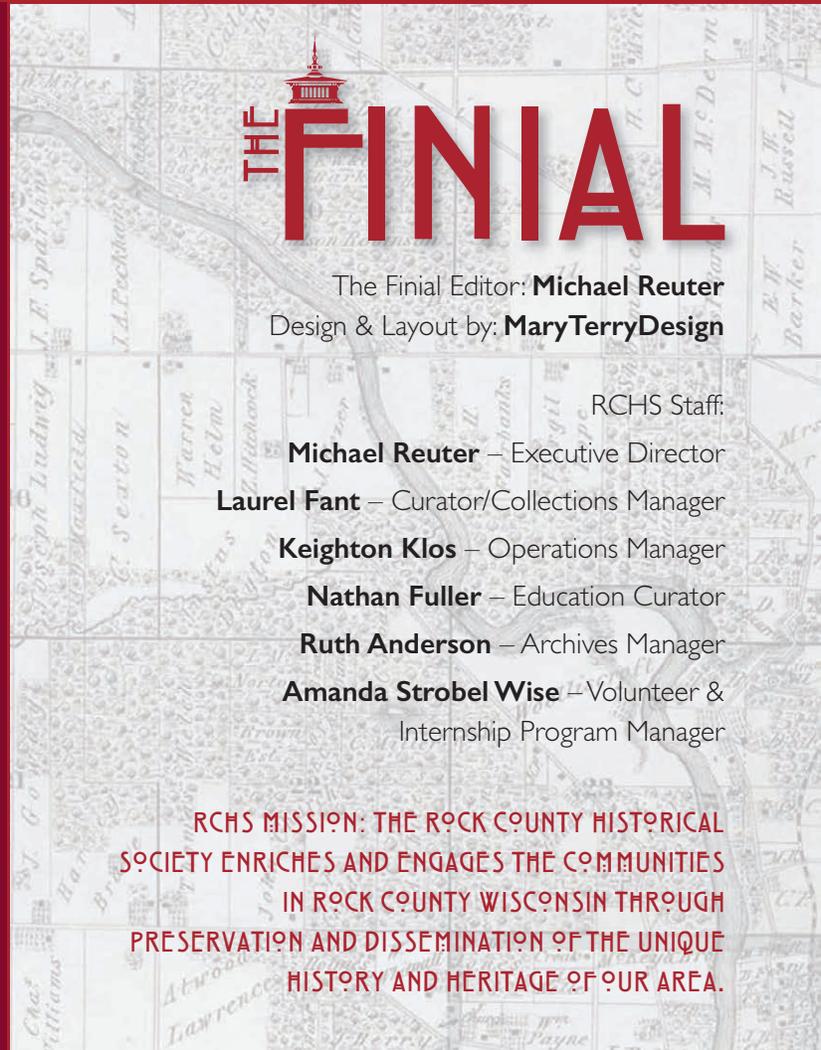
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## Gift Shop

By: Keighton Klos • Operations Manager

From Spirits Terror T-shirts, to fall scarves, and pickle ornaments, the RCHS gift shop has a wide variety of items that will make the perfect gifts to check off of your list this holiday season!



# THE FINIAL

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RCHS MISSION: THE ROCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ENRICHES AND ENGAGES THE COMMUNITIES IN ROCK COUNTY WISCONSIN THROUGH PRESERVATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE UNIQUE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF OUR AREA.