Ridge Historical Society

RECORD

BEVERLY HILLS, MORGAN PARK, WASHINGTON HEIGHTS & MT. GREENWOOD

Tribune columnist to speak at BAC Sept. 16th

Rick Kogan *knows* Chicago neighborhoods

Mark your calendar for September 16th, 7-9 p.m. at the Beverly Arts Center. Rick Kogan is coming!

Who, you say? Pick up the Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine, flip to the "Sidewalks" column, that you always read, and laugh about or remember your own memories of. That's Rick Kogan.

Unofficially he is a neighborhood guru, which is well displayed in his new collection of stories about Chicago, Sidewalks. Kogan's more than that though.

He's a great storyteller, celebrated Sun-Times journalist, WGN talk show host, author –Yesterday's Chicago and Sidewalks—to name a few.

The Beverly Arts Center joins the RHS hosting Kogan on the southside to tell neighborhood tales, answer your burning questions, and sign and sell his authored works.

Come join your neighbors for talk, refreshments, and a good belly laugh or two. Tickets are available at the door for $10 each or $15 per couple. A cash bar will be available at 7:30 pm with book signing and discussion to follow.

Photo by Charles Osgood

Acclaimed journalist and talk show host Rick Kogan will share his insights into what makes Chicago a great city.

FALL 2006

Vol 35, No. 3

RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10621 S. Seeley Ave.
Chicago, IL 60643

T 773/881-1675

ridgehistory@hotmail.com

Open to the public
Tuesday 2 - 5 p.m.
Thursday 2 - 5 p.m
Sunday 2 - 5 p.m.
or by appointment

Historically Modern exhibit to open at RHS

Ridge Historical Society will feature "Historically Modern: Early to Mid-20th Century Architecture in Beverly Hills and Morgan Park," opening September 15 and running through November 12, 2006.

The exhibit, with text and photos by historic preservation consultant and RHS board member Jennifer Kenny, delivers a refreshing look at how Chicagoans embraced or reacted to Modern architectural design trends of the 20th century.

While the Chicago area has very few existing modernistic single-family residential designs, examples of the Art Deco, Art Moderne, International and Late Prairie styles were constructed in architecturally rich Beverly Hills and Morgan Park between 1925 and 1965.

"Historically Modern" highlights the community's early to mid-20th century Modern architecture in hopes of fostering interest in buildings from this innovative design period to promote their preservation for future generations.

A program and lecture by Jennifer Kenny and architect Joel Morbito is scheduled for Sunday October 15, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at Ridge Historical Society in the Graver-Driscoll House 10621 S. Seeley.

Ridge Historical Society is open to the public from 2-5 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, or by appointment. Information is available at 773-881-1675, or by e-mail at ridgehistory@hotmail.com. The work of the society can be viewed at www.ridgehistoricalsciety.org.

The Benjamin & Addie Pollyea House in north Beverly was designed in the International Style in 1956 by Fisher & Shaffer.

Scholar to lead Chicago Fire tour on October 8th

Docent Herman Schell will host

On Sunday October 8, RHS will host a Chicago Fire Tour by bus commemorating the 135th anniversary of the fire, which took place October 8, 1971.

Artist's rendering of the Chicago fire, by John R. Chapin, originally printed in Harper's Weekly.

Independent Chicago Fire scholar, Herman Schell, will conduct the tour. Mr. Schell worked for the Illinois Department of Tourism for eight years. In that time, while working in the historic Water Tower, the most popular building to survive the Fire, he developed an interest in the background of the building and the events that contribute to the building's notoriety.

Mr. Schell has been the docent for the Chicago Department of Tourism, Neighborhood Tours—Chicago Fire Tour for the past six years. He has participated in a number of speaking events with WTTW, Voice of America, local historical societies and local schools as part of their study of Chicago History.

In 1999, Mr. Schell was a historical advisor for The John Marshall Law School 100th Anniversary Mock Trial of the events leading up to and the cause of the Chicago Fire. He has had the honor of having nine members of the Catherine O'Leary family on one of the Chicago Fire Tours. His greatest compliment came from a member of the family who said, "You're very entertaining and also very accurate."

Cost of the tour is $35 per person and includes light snacks and a beverage. The tour is not recommended for children under the age of 14. Seating is limited, so early reservations are encouraged.

The bus will board at the Seeley Avenue driveway entrance at 11:30-11:45 a.m. The tour will begin at noon and will return to RHS at 4:00 p.m.

Sites visited will include the Chicago Fire Academy, site of the O'Leary home and the start of the fire of 1871. The tour will follow the route of the fire through downtown Chicago to approximately North Avenue where Mother Nature extinguished the fire.

Reservations and advance payment for the bus tour will be accepted at Ridge Historical Society 10621 S. Seeley Avenue during public hours, Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, 2-5 p.m.

Call RHS at 773-881-1675, or e-mail ridgehistory@hotmail.com for more information.

Thursday Night Community Events planned for members and interested community residents

New history-based presentations at RHS

RHS introduces new programming on Thursday nights this fall. Once a month beginning September 21st, RHS will offer members and interested community residents history-based presentations on topics of interest about the Beverly Hills/Morgan Park community.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

On the third Thursdays of September, October, and November, come out and enjoy a short, one-hour program. The Thursday night programs will begin promptly at 7:30 p.m. at the Graver-Driscoll House, 106th and Seeley. These programs are FREE to members and residents.

Sept 21st - "The Status of Our Historical Districts" by Maureen Gilligan & Mary Olsson

Oct 19th - "Victorian Clothing – with examples from the RHS Costume Collection" by Pat McGrail

Nov 16th - "Genealogy & Family History" by Peg Kapustiak & Linda Lamberty

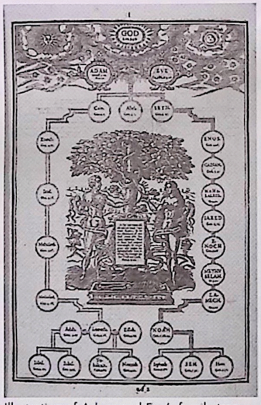


Illustration of Adam and Eve's family tree, courtesy of Ancestral Quest.

September 21st --The District at 30!

The first in the series discusses the Ridge Historic District. Through an interactive slide show, lecture, spontaneous game play, and stylistic tour through the 30-year old Ridge Historic District, Dr. Maureen Gilligan, historian and RHS Board Member, reintroduces community residents to the awesome historic resources in our midst—our homes, businesses, streets, and parks. Dr. Gilligan discusses the history of the district, its national importance, how the district distinguishes

PLEASE SEE **FALL PROGRAMS**, PAGE 3

BIKE RUN EVENT A WINNER!

BY LORI MCGUNN

On Friday, July 7, Mother Nature provided fabulous weather, BAPA provided sensational racing action, and as promised, the Ridge Historical Society provided the best views of everything!

Nearly seventy adults and a dozen children witnessed excitement beyond description in a setting like none other at the historic Graver-Driscoll House, 10761 South Seeley.

All attendees were treated to a feast from Bartolini's Restaurant featuring chicken tetrazini, roast pork, wild rice, salads, fresh fruits and more. Desserts followed later in the evening including cannoli, tiramisou, cookies and key lime pie - perfect for the summer evening!

While the racing naturally captured most of the attention, children were entertained in the driveway and the front lawn. Games kept kids busy while the adults enjoyed the company of their neighbors. This was truly an event to behold with something for everyone. I heard more than one person exclaim that there is nowhere else they would rather be! Thanks RHS.

Thanks to the many volunteers and huge participation of our board, all of whom made this a event a winner.

And then there are our fabulous sponsors who really put us over the top: Tastefully Simple, Computer and Software Help, On The Move, Klees Golf Shop and Nature's Way all shared the front lawn with a variety of displays to promote their businesses and draw attention to Ridge Historical Society. *Thanks!* We wouldn't have made our goal without you!

With all of the fun, food and friends, it would be easy to forget that this was a FUNdraiser. Our goal was $3,000 and I am pleased to deliver checks totalling $3,515! Hooray!

All of the food and equipment rental was donated by my husband, Ed McGunn. Thanks Ed for the signs, the help with set-up, the food, the equipment and for all of your support. The board should note that even if the McGunn family did not underwrite these expenses, this event still would have raised nearly $2,000. I'm hopeful that there might even be a couple of checks forthcoming from the few who made reservations but were not able to attend.

Thanks in part to Joyce Black, we sold over 200 raffle tickets for the great items donated by Board Member Paula Everett, Board Member Jennifer Kenny and Mike Nix of the Beverly Arts Center.

Guests attending the event included noted artist Jack Simmerling, Beverly Art Center Board President Jude Blackburn, and State Representative Kevin Joyce for whom this was a first visit to RHS! BAPA Executive Director Willie Winters and race sponsor Tom Jacobs also stopped by during the evening as did race photographer Kirk Shepard.

Thanks to all of you. We did a great job.

P.S. I welcome your comments and suggestions and offers of support for next year. Please e-mail me at RHS-Party@hotmail.com.

FALL PROGRAMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

our community from others in Chicago and the WORLD.

- For example, did you know that Ridge has one of the largest and most diverse residential historic districts in the nation?! It's true—and yet, it could be even better. We'll discuss how.
- We will play an architectural styles game and "locate the house" based on the audience's knowledge of the historic district.
- We'll discuss city-wide efforts to encourage preservation and answer the REALLY, BIG questions like—why do we have a historic district anyway?

Members, bring a friend, a teenage son, daughter, niece or nephew, your parents or your own adult kids. You'll be AMAZED at what you learn.

October 19th – Victorian Clothing

We pull out the dresses, hats, shoes, and corsets Victorian women loved to wear. RHS has a fabulous clothing collection, of which only a small portion is ever displayed. This is your chance to see how clothing was worn, cared for and passed on to family members. Costume Chair Pat McGrail and Board Member Carol Flynn lead this hands-on presentation.

November 16th – Family Roots

November is the perfect time to begin work on your family history. Whether you are just getting started in genealogy or have been collecting information on your family for a long time, you will be amazed at some of the new resources available. We will explore the secrets of finding your genealogy with new resources, including internet sites and local genealogy research centers and libraries. We will demonstrate using records and conducting research. Plus there will be tips and helpful ideas for researching here in the USA and in Europe. Will include handouts with lists of resources. Bring along a family mystery you'd like to solve. Also, if you are stuck on one point and need help, bring in your information for some one-on-one help with a genealogist.

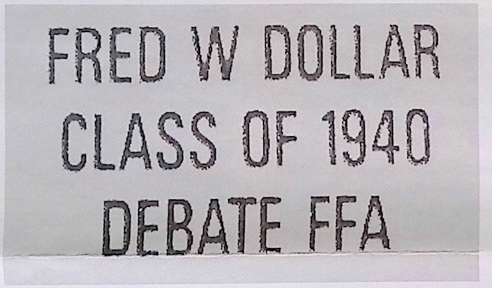
Peg Kapustiak, President of the Tinley Moraine Genealogical Society and RHS Board Member, along with RHS Vice President and genealogist Linda Lamberty will lead the program. E-mail: tinleymoraine@yahoo.com or ridgehistory@hotmail.com.

Paving our way to the future with commemorative bricks

Ridge Historical Society invites citizens, groups and businesses of the Ridge to purchase commemorative pavers

Ridge Historical Society 10621 S. Seeley Avenue is celebrating its 35th Anniversary this fall.

The society is undertaking a multi-faceted program to preserve the architecturally significant Graver-Driscoll House, and also to safeguard the rich, growing collections within it for the benefit of future generations.



An example of a paver brick, key to a new fundraising program that will be used for critically needed restoration of the Graver-Driscoll House, archival conservation of the collections within, and for the educational outreach programs of the Ridge Historical Society.

Landscape enhancements

Another element in the preservation plan is the implementation of landscape enhancements offering members and friends the opportunity to participate in the preservation of the history of the Ridge.

The residents of the Ridge communities are invited to contribute to these projects while making their message or family name a permanent part of the historical "journal" of life on the Ridge for future generations to read and enjoy. Current or former residents may wish to honor an individual or a family, or to commemorate a noteworthy event such as a birth, wedding date, anniversary, or graduation. Individuals, families, organizations, businesses, and institutions, which have made this community an integral part of Chicago history, have the opportunity to be memorialized.

The cost of each brick is $100, representing a tax-deductible contribution to the society, to the extent permitted by law. The goal of the society is to secure 1000 dedicated bricks during the inaugural stage of the project. The present flagstone terraces on the west side of the building will be replaced with individually inscribed paving stones, creating a stately and welcoming area at the main entrance. Donors will receive an official certificate of acknowledgement for each brick purchased.

By adding a brick to this paving program, donors will not only be placing their brick(s) into the historic record of our community, they will also assist in the preservation of the proud history of the Ridge.

Funds generated will be used for critically needed restoration of the Graver-Driscoll House, archival conservation of the collections within, and for the educational outreach programs of the Ridge Historical Society.

Each brick can have up to three lines of fifteen characters each commemorating a person or anything else a donor wishes.

Example of wording

IN MEMORY OF (12 characters)
JANE B. DOE (11 characters)
OLD HOUSE BUFF (14 characters)

How to order pavers

Order blanks for the bricks are available at the society, which is open to the public, Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons from 2-5 p.m.

To find out more about the paver program, visit RHS at 10621 S. Seeley Avenue, call 773-881-1675, or e-mail ridgehistory@hotmail.com.

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MEMBERSHIP
A newsletter subscription is a benefit of membership.

ANNUAL DUES
Individual $25
Family $35
Contributor $50
Supporter $100

Do you recognize this building?

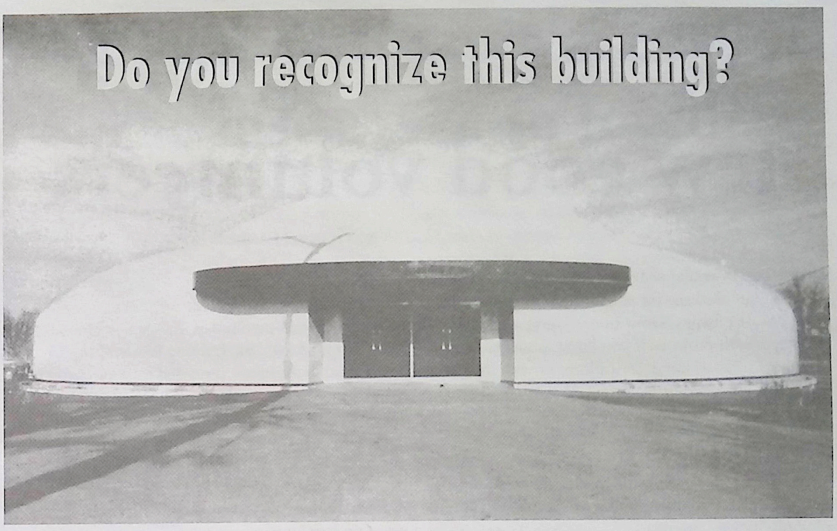


Photo of the Chicago Bridge and Iron restaurant is from the Hedrich-Blessing Collection at the Chicago History Museum, and appeared in the Architectural Forum, 1942

A photo mystery from history

This month's photo is another example of how you can help Ridge Historical Society solve a photo mystery in our neighborhood.

Do you recognize this building? Was it on the former Chicago Bridge and Iron site on Vincennes? Or was it from another site in our neighborhood? We found it in an architectural periodical from the 1930s when researching Modern architecture in our neighborhood.

Follow-up to last months photo, the old time Morgan Park baseball team: A few people have ideas of how to research this photo, but no one yet has been able to assign names to the players.

As side point, if you like history, we have volunteer opportunities for you. Send an e-mail to ridgehistory@hotmail.com or phone or write RHS.

Restaurant Building, Winston Elting, Architect

Engineering principles developed for steel storage tanks account for the unique form of this windowless, air-conditioned restaurant and recreation building, virtually eliminating the usual framework and permitting use of steel bearing walls only 3/16 in. thick. Its owners, who erected the building for their employes, are originators of the Horton Spheroid tank which is shaped like a huge, liquid-filled bag, thus distributing the load of its contents uniformly over the entire surface. In the restaurant the same principles of curvilinear form and the company's experience in shaping and welding together "dished" steel plates have been applied to the external loads encountered in ordinary shelter, eliminating the need for interior columns and permitting the use of unusually light materials.

Building a nest egg

BY BILL SANDSTROM, TREASURER

RHS has been dependent for continued operation by money provided through Member dues, the Annual fund, net proceeds from Programs and a few Special Contributions. As you know we now have an Executive Director (long overdue) and a budget that is approximately 50% grater than last year.

To balance the budget we've included Endowment fund income. The Endowment fund, which is now about $220,000 has grown almost exclusively through bequests. We have not, however, received any bequests that could be applied to the Endowment Fund this year.

> An endowment to RHS can easily be done with an addendum to an existing will, as I have done.

All members should seriously consider providing some funds to RHS in their will. It can easily be done with an addendum to an existing will, as I have done. A small bequest can make a big difference in the success of our operation in the coming years.

We're looking for a few good volunteers

Volunteer opportunities abound at RHS

RHS is an ideal site for students who require community service hours. Scout troops could also sign up to help with projects. If you know students in museum studies or communications, or who intend to become librarians or historians, they can apply to RHS for an internship.

Age is not important

You don't have to be a student, be young or old, or have special skills to be a volunteer. We can use you in any capacity you choose.

> If you know students in museum studies or communications, or who intend to become librarians or historians, they can apply to RHS for an internship.

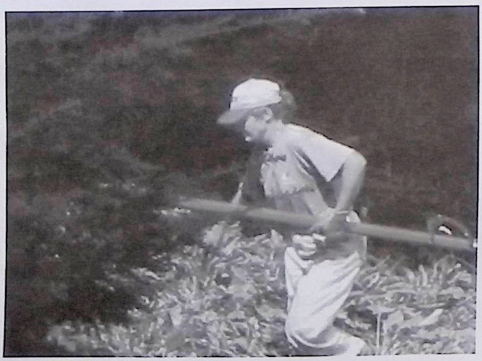
There are many, different ways you can help out right now:

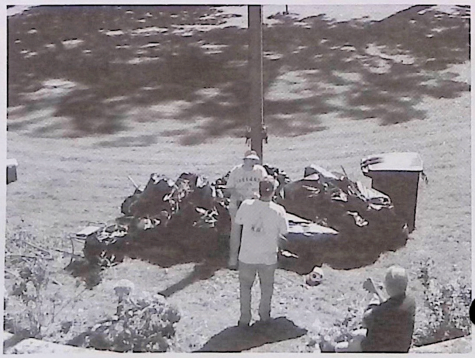
- Help us rearrange space, install shelves and move furniture; great for those of you who want a one time project.
- Clean up the old spaces, the old attic bathroom (a storage area) and another bathroom floor—a prep job for new shelving and another one time project.
- Take on a small garden plot on either the Seeley or Longwood side of the lot. There are board members who will get you started.
- Be a Docent on Sunday, Tuesday or Thursday, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Training is provided.
- Research assistance is needed for a variety of ongoing projects, especially house history research that has to be done both on and off premises.
- Word processing and some Microsoft Office functions for printing new labels and updating lists.
- Interest in or knowledge of PastPerfect Museum software to help us archive our collection. This is a great project for someone who wants experience with an excellent database management program.
- Help with every day maintenance, such as changing light bulbs; scraping some outside woodwork and weatherizing the Driscoll House.

Thinking about helping out?

If any of these jobs sound like just the thing you want to do for RHS, or if you want to suggest another job you might like to take on, call Jane Nicoll at RHS, 773-881-1675, or email her at rhsexec@hotmail.com.

There is a Volunteer Application form to fill out. Come in and look it over. Even if you don't think you have any special skills we could use, you might get ideas from the skills we list on the form. We look forward to having you join us!





Walter J. Kelly now a part of the history he so loved

Walter Kelly (1932-2006) at age 34 in 1966, while teaching at South Shore High School.

Although Professor Walter J. Kelly served in many roles throughout his 73 years -- father, teacher, History Dept. chair at Chicao State, lecturer - at Ridge Historical Society he was our "utility fielder."

Missing a speaker when another cancelled? There was Walt with a slide presentation. Need a docent to cover Thursday afternoon? Walt would sign up for at least one afternoon a month.

He especially liked to talk about presidential politics and would tell us what to watch for as presidential campaigns played out, giving us historical antecedents for various campaign activities. Walt could also draw from his classroom lectures to expound upon immigrants in Chicago, or national politics in the pioneer period of the Ridge, with an endless font of stories to go wih them.

For Walt, the world divided into two groups: members of the Democratic Party and the terminally clueless. You could raise objections to the candidate of the Democrats and Walt would politely hear you out, but then he would carry on about the salvation of Illinois that would shortly occur when the Democrat was elected.

Walt Kelly had ordered his priorities -- family, his church, opera, the Democratic Party and community service through such organizations as RHS. Those priorities drew on wellsprings of wisdom rooted in Irish-American family life.

For Walt, the world divided into two groups: members of the Democratic Party and the terminally clueless.

He will be missed by all who knew him.

A moving playpen ... on Western Avenue

A childhood reminiscence written by Elizabeth Compher Hall (nee "Bid" Kraft) at the annual August reunion of the 1943 class of Morgan Park High School.

(RHS is always invited to have representatives in attendance at class reunions.)

Filling in my questionnaire with our memories of businesses and other landmarks reminded me of something we did as children. There were three of us, "stair steps" Florence, Charles and Elizabeth. When we were little, ages 8, 6, 4 -- and [throughout] all our childhood -- my father took us many places: downtown, museums, Midway, the stock yards, forest preserves, ice skating and tobogganing, etc.

One of our special days was the trip on the streetcar. We would walk from 106th and Drew to Western, where we would board the Western Ave. Street car, ride all the way to the end on the north side, then get off and come back.

Dad liked to read, so he would recite the "rules," then sit down and read a book. We could not get off, could not talk to the "motorman," could not put our arms outside the window.

We could look out the windows, count the street numbers and addresses, read our books, and color (Mom had packed a shopping bag of stuff). We could change seats, talk to anyone who got on, talk to the ticket man, and stand on the back where people got on. We enjoyed listening to all the accents and different languages. It was a long day. We loved it, especially talking to all the people!

In retrospect I think it ingenious of my father to take us aboard the big red street car -- "ding ding" all the way! Where else could you find a bigger, safer moving playpen than that?

• RICK KOGAN at the Beverly Arts Center.

Kogan "knows" Chicago's historic neighborhoods and loves to talk about them. Meet celebrated syndicated Tribune columnist ("Sidewalks") and author (Yesterday's Chicago, Sidewalks) Rick Kogan at the Beverly Arts Center, September 16th from 7:30-9:00. Tickets available at the door are $10 each or $15 per couple.

• THURSDAY MEMBER NIGHT

September 21st, Driscoll House, 7-8 p.m., will explore the Ridge Historic District.

Dr. Maureen Gilligan, local historian and RHS Board Member, takes the audience on an interactive tour of the Ridge Historic District, now 30 years old! Come prepared to learn where you live.

• NEW EXHIBIT

"Historically Modern: Early to Mid 20th Century Architecture in Beverly Hills and Morgan Park"

Opens September 15 and runs through November 12, 2006. Created by historic preservation consultant and RHS Board Member Jennifer Kenny, delivers a refreshing look at how Chicagoans embraced and reacted to Modern architectural design trends of the 20th century. Graver-Driscoll House. Free to members.

• CHICAGO FIRE TOUR

Board Member Herman Schell has led this exciting and informative tour to an array of Chicago aficionados and visitors alike. Don't miss it!! Only one bus will go.

Sunday, October 8th from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. $30. Reservations required. Tour begins from the Graver-Driscoll House. Call 773-881-1675.

• LECTURE

"Historically Modern" highlights the community's early to mid-20th century Modern architecture presented by Historian, Jennifer Kenny and Architect, Joel Morbito. October 15, 2006, 2:00 pm at the Driscoll-Graver House, 106th and Seeley. Free to members.

• THURSDAY MEMBER NIGHT

"Victorian Dress and Design"

Reaches deep into the RHS clothing collection to divulge the demure and decorous designs of the Victorian decades and tell tales about those who wore the fashions. Board Members Carol Flynn and Costume Chair Pat McGrail present. October 19th, 7:30 p.m. at the Graver-Driscoll House.

• THURSDAY MEMBER NIGHT

"Family Roots"

Explores the secrets of finding yours using the RHS collection to demonstrate using records and conducting research. Turn your questions into answers.

RHS Board Members Peg Kapustiak, President of the South Suburban Geneological Society, and RHS Vice President Linda Lamberty, also a genealogical consultant, present. Thursday, November 16th, 7 p.m., Graver-Driscoll House.

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