

The

# NOW 'n' THEN

## Preserving the ♥ of Romeoville

The official newsletter of the  
Romeoville Area Historical Society

### SUMMER ISSUE 2015

Within less than two weeks in June, we presented a two-day display at Lockport's Canal Days, held a successful fund-raiser at Culver's, and had an Open House at our museum. During the first two, we advertised the Open House. At all of these, we spoke with people who didn't know about the society and museum. In July, we were at Cruising the Square, a car show organized by the Chamber of Commerce.

This summer we expanded on the use of National Honor Society students from the high school to help us with new projects and catch up on old ones. Three of the students worked at Culver's with us, and five others helped at the Open House. Since then, some are assisting with our files, writing this newsletter, keeping track of our obituaries, and assisting on other projects in return for credit for their volunteer hours and the chance to learn about our village.

Aiman Ghani, one of our National Honor Society volunteers, created this month's newsletter. She used our title as her theme, with articles and ads from early Hampton Park and today.

We now have a telephone and internet access in the museum! You can reach us at (815)886-0146 or [historicalromeoville@yahoo.com](mailto:historicalromeoville@yahoo.com). There are still some technical problems with both that we hope to resolve soon.

Birthdays and Anniversaries are not included in this issue due to a glitch in the spreadsheet program. Several times, it has converted the dates (entered as 11/18) to decimals. Changing the program back to the date format did not always return to the same date. Until we receive correct information to enter with the month spelled out, we will omit this feature. You can send corrections to us at our new email address or include it when you pay your next dues.

The first firehouse in Romeoville, moved out of the Village Hall to a building across the street, was closed in July to be replaced by a new building on the same site. On the day it closed, a flag ceremony was held as the flag was lowered for the last time.

### Upcoming events of interest:

We will have an exhibit featuring Route 66 at the Bolingbrook/Romeoville Kiwanis Club's Route 66 Art Fair and Car Show at the Romeoville Sports and Event Center on Route 53 (old Spartan Square site) on Saturday August 22 from 10 AM to 5 PM.

The moving Viet Nam Wall will be at the Lockport American Legion, 15052 Archer Ave. from August 20-24. Opening ceremonies are Thursday Aug. 20 at 6:00 PM.

State Senator Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant and Representative Natalie Manley will hold their 2015 Women's Fair at the Recreation Center, Saturday, August 29 from 9 AM to Noon. Women's services and products will be featured. This will be a new event for the Society. We hope it will be as beneficial for contacts as McAsey's Senior Fair.

State Representative Emily McAsey's annual Senior Fair will be Friday October 2, from 10 AM Noon, also at the Rec Center. The displays are all planned for the interests and needs of seniors. Our Society will have a display booth. This has become one of the best events for us to talk with people who are interested in old Romeoville. The event includes presentations to seniors who have made a difference in McAsey's district.

The Historical Society will present a wreath to honor our veterans during the Veterans Day ceremony at 10:00 AM November 11 at the Veterans Memorial on Route 53 and Montrose.

### CALENDAR

full information above

8/20-22 Viet Nam wall  
Sat. 8/22 Rt. 66 art & car show  
Wed. 8/26 Meeting 2-4\*  
Sat. 8/29 2015 Women's Fair  
Sun. 9/20 Founders Day Parade  
Fri. 10/2 McAsey Senior Fair  
Wed. 11/11 Veterans Day ceremony  
Wed. 11/18 Society Meeting 2-4

### ANTHONY J. FAZIO

Born: July 26, 1936

Died: May 24, 2015



Anthony J. "Sonny" "Arch" Fazio, age 78 years, late of Crest Hill, passed away Sunday, May 24, 2015, at the Joliet

Area Community Hospice Home with his loving family by his side.

Born in Joliet on July 26, 1936.

Retired from Romeoville High School after many years of service. He was a teacher and head football coach at Romeoville High School for many years. He was a member of the Joliet Elks Lodge. He was a co-manager at the Woodruff and Inwood Golf Courses for the Joliet Park District. He loved golf, sports and physical fitness and will be remembered at the Charlie Club and the Inwood Athletic Club.

Preceded in death by his father, Sebastian Fazio (1937); his mother, Rose Fazio (nee Crosetto) Drobnak (2004); his step-father, Michael Drobnak;

Survived by his loving wife of 57 years, Madeline (nee Martin) Fazio;

3 sons, Michael (Gina) Fazio, Matthew Fazio and Mark (Sara) Fazio; dear papa of Anthony, Nicolas and Francesca Fazio; two brothers, Michael Drobnak and Joseph (late, Rita) Drobnak; one nephew, Robert Drobnak; and one niece, Melissa Drobnak; and many wonderful and dear friends also survive.

"Tony will be remembered as a loving husband, father, papa, brother, friend, mentor and coach to many."

Visitation will be held at the Carlson-Holmquist-Sayles Funeral Home 2320 Black Road on Thursday, May 28, 2015, from 2:00 to 8:00 pm. Funeral services will begin following the visitation at 8:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, memorials in Tony's memory to Joliet Community Hospice or the American Cancer Society would be appreciated.

For information call (815) 744-0022 or visit [www.CHSFUNERAL.com](http://www.CHSFUNERAL.com).



**ROMEOVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
10 MONTROSE DRIVE  
ROMEOVILLE, IL 60446**

**Preserving the ♥ of Romeoville**

(815) 886-0146      [historicalromeoville@yahoo.com](mailto:historicalromeoville@yahoo.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/RomeovilleAreaHistoricalSociety>

## **BE A PART OF ROMEOVILLE'S HISTORY!**

The Romeoville Historical Society would like information about families and businesses in Hampton Park and Romeoville, including Mikan and College View, from the 1950s to 1990s for a sequel to Mabel Hrpcha's *Romeoville*, which ended with the beginning of Hampton Park.

A short history of the family could include, as appropriate:

**family history**

where you came from, when the family moved here

children and their families

**involvement in Village activities**

positions on Village staff or Board

elected or volunteer positions in the Village

activities with local organizations, schools and churches

**family business, with pictures**

several family photographs, with each person identified

Memories of family activities and of village events would add insight into the daily life in town. These may be placed in a separate chapter or become another book.

This can be written out or in outline form. Businesses, churches, and organizations will also be highlighted, with their history, location, activities, and photographs. For clarity, original photographs are best. Photos brought to us while we are open can be scanned and returned immediately. Each family or agency will have from one to three pages. Emailed histories are encouraged.

Provide the name, phone number, email address of a contact for more information. The contact data will not be shared.

Please share this with family and friends who have moved away.

The museum is open on Mondays and Fridays from 9:00 AM to noon, and at other times by appointment.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Culvers Fundraiser

We held our second fundraiser with Culvers (located on Weber) on Wednesday, June 24, 2015. From 10AM-10PM we had a tent set up nearby the front doors of Culvers where Nancy Hackett, along with a few other members of the Historical Society, sat in front of a table set up with their latest newsletter, information on the open house, flyers, and information about their upcoming book. The National Honors Society volunteers (as pictured below) and the Historical Society members present approached customers as they headed inside and kindly requested they mention they're supporting us with their purchase. Free to them, all they had to do was bring up our name to the cashier and 20% of their total purchase was donated to us. A huge thank you to Culvers and everyone who stopped by and supported our cause!



Culvers Volunteers, from left to right: Joe Miraglia, Aiman Ghani, Nancy Hackett, Erlindha Firdha, Sydnie Rizaldo, Barbara Hively

Culvers: Erlindha Firdha, Aiman Ghani, Sydnie Rizaldo, Annette Eichorst, Barbara Hively, Kyle Eichorst



# Romeoville Historical Society Summer Open House

We held our second open house (the first being in January) on the Saturday of June 27, 2015. From 10AM-4PM about 30 people came and took tours of the museum.

The museum, which is located in a joint room with the Historical Society offices, contains several artifacts, antiques, and household objects donated by senior citizens and the family members of some of Romeoville's first inhabitants. There's also a display on old toys, the first schools we had, some wedding dresses and old-fashioned outfits, and tons more, all presented with the story of how they were used or what they did in the 1800s and 1900s. A free raffle was held for prizes such as a gourmet food and wine basket for adults, tickets to a Joliet Slammers game, and more, all donated by various sources and attracting visitors. Light refreshments were offered and all visitors had an amazing time getting to experience some of our town's history. Keep your eyes peeled for our next open house and stop by to learn a little more about the Romeoville Historical Society.

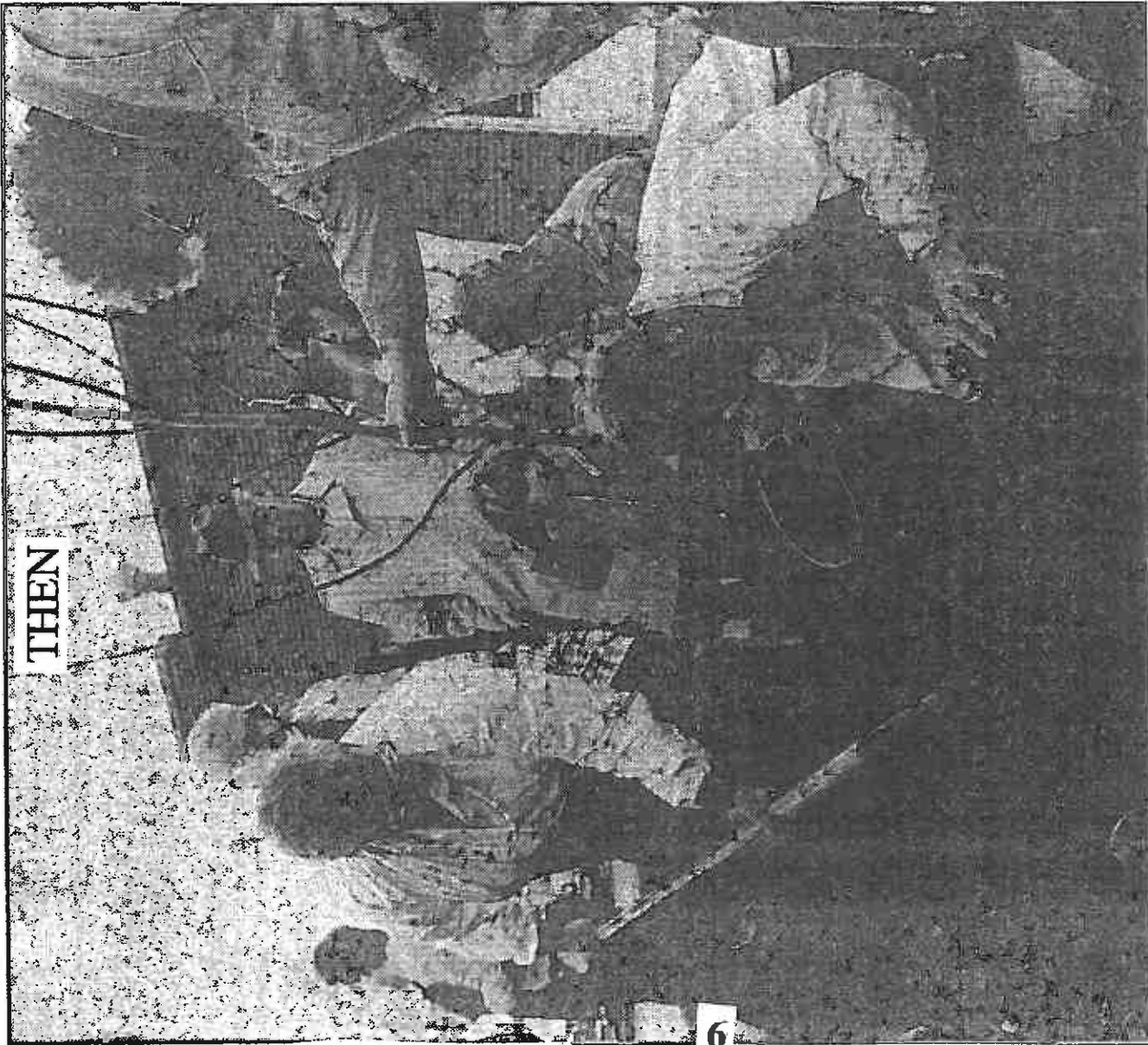


Open House crew, from left to right: Bart Lichon, Josh Gitogo, Nancy Hackett, Julia Sakutyte, Shireen Haiderali, Sam Andrews

Working at the Open House: Sam, Josh, Bart



THEN



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**Arbor Day planting**

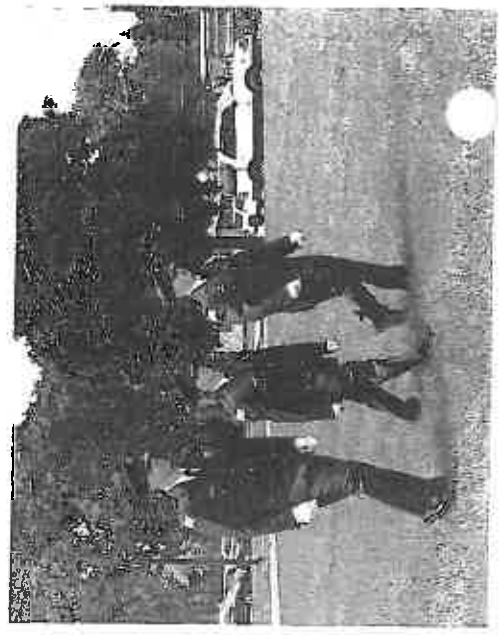
Friday, in celebration of Arbor Day, the village of Romeoville and the Romeoville Historical Society planted a crimson maple on the village

Herald-News/John Patsch  
hall property. The tree is in memory of Dewey "Red" Chambers, former village president, who died last September. April 11, 1997

NOW



Chief Kent Adams, Village Manager Steve Gulden and Assistant Manager Dawn Caldwell at the memorial tree



# CEREMONY AT THE LAST LOWERING OF THE FLAG AT FIREHOUSE 1



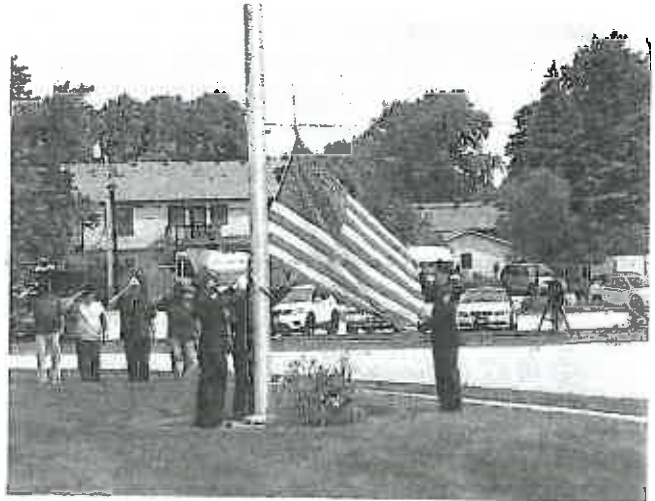
**Color Guard**



**American Legion representatives**



**Brian Clancy speaks about the beginning of the firehouse, on the field where he and his friends played ball**



**Final lowering of the flag**



**Color Guard present the flag to Chiefs Kent Adams, Al Stadelmeier and Carl Churulo**



**Chiefs Al Stadelmeier and Carl Churulo present the flag to Nancy Hackett for the Historical Society**

# SUMMERS THEN, SUMMERS NOW

By: Aiman Ghani

There's something so beautiful about summer- something that's found alluring by even the most broken, weathered souls. There are several things which contribute to this (you'd be better off reading *Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury to get a full understanding of them all) but a big one is that as the earth seems more awake than ever before while flowers bloom, we, too, begin to shed our mossy overcoats and mud-like anxiety. Then come the standards, which are always appealing in the way that knowing a weekend is approaching is comforting: homemade lemonade, cold ice-cream (Culvers, anyone? A special thank you to them for partnering with us in our fundraiser!), long days of warm sunshine glistening on your neck, the husky smell of smoky wood, sand stuck to the soles of your feet (a mother's worst nightmare, a child's greatest joy), and, most of all, the freedom that feels endless, full of a sun rising on the sky to start a new day or hours of nothing but play, chatter, and screaming to your heart's desire because no one can tell you not to. It's summer; but to summarize it in a short span of words, I'll use one: happiness. The fun of it isn't new, though. It's been around for generations and generations past, dating back to as far as the early 1900s.

The Romeoville Recreation Center holds its annual fireworks show the evening of July 3, attracting over hundreds of onlookers. Turns out the thrill of these sparkling beauties caught the attention of Anthony Startz (1890-1938) many years back, too. A holder of various political positions in the early 1900s of Romeoville, he, along with a man named Mr. Chilvers, would "[...] combine their talents to provide the village with beautiful fireworks displays on the Fourth of July." (*Romeoville, Illinois* by Mabel Hrpcha). According to the book, the men would set up fireworks in the baseball field after a day of playing baseball. In a time where we spend years and years not knowing the very *names* of our neighbors, the next part comes as a true surprise: at dusk, the entire neighborhood would gather together to *ooh* and *ahh* at the display. That's the thing about summers then- the neighborhoods were so tight knit they may as well have been extended families living in separate homes. There was no abundance of loneliness or boredom, whereas now, finding a playmate requires a lot more effort than walking out to the street and waiting for the others to join you.

Nowadays, people are pretty used to a set system: we go to school for nine months and get three (usually during June, July, and August) off, including the occasional holidays and winter break. Back then, summers weren't always summers. At least not in the Valley View School District. In the beginning, before A. Vito Martinez Middle was AVM and the large "M" in the gym was actually a "W", there were only one room schoolhouses being built. Romeoville was blooming so quickly it was all the school supervisors could do to manage to fit all the students in for learning time. From 1970-1980, a new idea was partially developed by Patrick Page, who formed the present day District 365U for grades 1-12. Students would be on a year round track system, resulting in them attending school for nine weeks and having three weeks off. This system was referred to as the 45/15 plan. Although some complained and it did prove to be a bit of extra effort on everyone involved, most thoroughly approved of it. Young schoolteachers, especially, found it easier to teach young kids after three weeks of break and not



three months, which allowed less time for the information to be lost to the rules of neighborhood games. What do you say? Three weeks or three months?

You saw this coming- come on, admit it. You knew there'd be one paragraph reserved just for ice-cream. And you're right! The creamy, delicious treat has been bringing sticky smiles and melted puddles to boardwalks since, well, it was invented. One man called Thomas, part of the Sprague-Phelps family after which the District 99 Sprague-Phelps School is named, came to Romeoville from Erie County, NY around the year 1837. His son Charles eventually, after having wed and left, returned to the homestead to help his father with the dairy business, which they moved to Joliet in 1886. Located on Jefferson Street, Joliet was The Sprague Dairy and Ice Cream Parlor, which must've been a hotspot for young and old alike on the blistering July days. Nowadays, ice-cream is created by machines anywhere and everywhere, available at at least three destinations you spot on your way to the grocery store. A cold treat back then meant going to a special dairy place, not the frozen food section of a large supermarket.

Summertime is all about the festivities, and what better way to show off that free spirit than by dancing? Local dances were available during the summer months, sure to be riots with records spinning and dresses flapping. On Saturday evening of July 22, 1933, the winning all-girls baseball team *The Romeo Aces* gave a dance to raise funds for themselves. Their dance cost fifteen cents per lady and was held at Gleaner's Hall (see ticket stub below). Not everything was fun and games, though. Nowadays summer means frolicking and jump roping and playing four square after our chores are done. By chores I mean doing the dishes, cleaning our rooms, and occasionally dusting the mantelpiece. During the Great Depression, summertime for any kid old enough to do chores meant lots and lots and lots of work. Time was spent "[...] weeding cornfields and keeping the cows in the right pastures." (*Romeoville, Illinois* by Mabel Hrpcha).

The hard work didn't come without reward. Sure, it's true that it's much easier to simply run to the store (Did I say run? I meant drive. We *drive* to the store.) and buy cucumbers and carrots in packaged bulk, but you get out of life what you put into it. In the 1930s, large gardens provided fresh (probably non-GMO sprayed) produce and summer vegetable stands. The closest we'll get to that is a lemonade stand, but that's more for fun than for necessity, unlike the farmers who lived in Romeoville during the Great Depression and had to sustain life with their own crops. Anything not sold was canned to be used later (like during the colder months) and wild grape, blackberries, and strawberries made jelly. When someone bought the produce on a tree for canning, the children would get it down for the customer. Hm. So maybe *that's* why climbing trees is a recreational activity.

Whether it's the bright sun or the fragrant flowers attracting you, summer is full of charms seen as generation after generation passed through Romeoville. Though some games, chores, and activities change, others will forever remain the same, like this town's love for ice-cream. One thing's for sure, and that's this: summer will always be a magical era of timeless joy because summer is summer, no matter how fancy our clothes dryers and kitchen appliances become. Before you jump in your car think about (*don't Google!*) how far you live from your nearest ice-cream shop. Not too far away? Skip the fuel-emitting, energy-wasting, summer-fun-stealing automobile and grab some exercise by walking there. No gym club membership required!

THEN

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NOW

# CANDID MOMENTS

CAPTURED EVENTS AROUND THE COMMUNITY



Mom Holly Bueno and Manny share a moment at the end of the race. (Photo By Laura Katakuska | Bugle Staff)

## SUPERMANNY BRINGS COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Almost 600 participants came out to the second Annual Heroes Vs. Villains Supermanny Shuffle 5k and Superkids Miller on May 3, running through the streets of Romeoville.

With more than 80 volunteers and hundreds of onlookers, the community came out in full force to support 3-year-old Manny Bueno. His family organized the event last year with the help of the Community Service Council in their mission to fight Cerebral Palsy with hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

Participants were encouraged to dress as their as their favorite super hero or super villain, while they shuffled through the streets of Romeoville to show off the pride and support for people of all abilities.

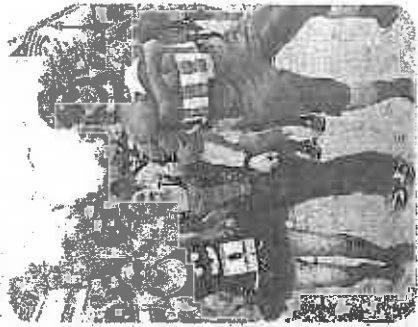


PHOTO BY LAURA KATAKUSKA | BUGLE STAFF

Energy is high at the starting gate of the 5k, where participants were dressed as their favorite hero or villain.

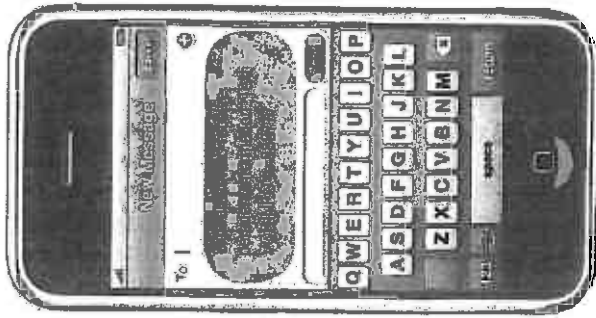


The Village of Romeoville is excited to announce a new communication service that allows residents to receive valuable community information through text messaging. Messages may include emergency weather notifications, traffic updates as well as other relevant safety and community event information.

The service is provided by Nixle and is secure. When citizens receive information from our agency via Nixle, they know it can be trusted. Subscribers can also choose the way in which alerts are received, whether it is by email, text message or over the web.

Residents can immediately begin receiving pertinent information via text message, email and web by registering here, by texting **VORINFO** to **888777**.

*No charge for service, but message and data rates may apply. AT & T, T-Mobile, Sprint, Verizon Wireless and most other carriers are supported.*



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Boyle 5/7/15

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL

Please use this form to join or to renew your membership. The NOW & THEN

The newsletter is the official publication of the *Romeoville Area Historical Society* for its members. Mail check and membership application form to the address at the right. *Romeoville Area Historical Society*  
10 Montrose Drive  
Romeoville, IL 60446

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## ALL MEMBERSHIPS \$7.50 PER YEAR

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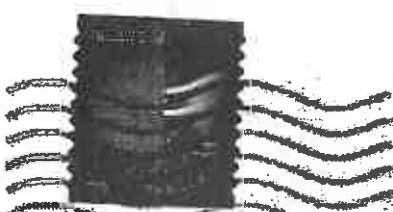


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