



Every member of the Park Forest Hall of Fame who attended the 2023 Induction Ceremony on April 16, 2023 at Freedom Hall.

PARK FOREST HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

# ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023  
PREPARED BY CHRIS JANOTA





# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Mr. Chris Janota

I am extremely proud to report that fiscal year 2022-2023 was a year of great progress for the Park Forest Historical Society.

At the beginning of the term, I requested an efficiency review of all facets of the Society to make sure we're prepared to preserve and protect Park Forest's history for generations to come. This has led to a complete refresh of our website to increase user-friendliness and function. We're also in the process of onboarding a Contact Relationship Manager (CRM) system to streamline tasks, improve our reach, and utilize all of the information used in daily operations.

We are able to make these investments in our future due in large part to our solid financial footing. That is provided to us by our members, donors, and corporate sponsors. I must also thank the Village Board of Park Forest, Former Mayor Jon Vanderbilt, Mayor Joe Woods, and Village Manager Tom Mick for their support of us with the \$5,000 matching grant that they offered us once again last year, which we met. I'm honored to say that we've once again been offered this generous support for '23-'24. We also thank the Park Forest Public Library Board of Directors once again for their generous support of our archive office.

We also received significant personal donations from Therese Goodrich, Jan Klose, James & Judith Klutznick, Terry Medhurst, Bruce & Julia Ziegler, and John Annett. We thank them once again, as we are so very thankful for their support.

While we still uploaded content to YouTube, most of our events were in-person this year. It was great to see everybody again. Of special note, the 2023 Park Forest Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony was back in person for the first time since 2019, and we were so proud to host that event and all of our great inductees from '20, '21, and '22, as well as the current '23 class.

We also continued to get out in the community with efforts that I'm extremely proud of. Besides the Hall of Fame, we also participated in many events, including the annual Independence Day Parade, the Unity Day Community Resource Fair hosted by the Park Forest Police Department, the Fire Prevention Week Open House hosted by the Park Forest Fire Department, and the 67th Park Forest Art Fair, hosted by the Tall Grass Arts Association, among others.



Where we are  
**TODAY**

# Where we are GOING

We are so excited for the remainder of 2023 and into 2024, as we help Park Forest celebrate its 75th Anniversary! We are in the planning stages with the Village Planning Committee, as well as other entities, to bring some truly great events and content to the public over the coming year.

As for future goals of the Society, we seek to grow our membership into the next generations; the "kids", grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of those who not only told Park Forest's early stories -- they wrote them. If you're interested in Park Forest, or history in general, [we want you here with us.](#)

We have also tasked several members of our Board of Directors to begin increasing our reach with local corporate sponsors again -- an area of weakness for us since the pandemic. If you're a local business, owner, we'd love to talk to you more about how you can partner with us!

Our big project ahead of us remains the digitization of our archive. We have countless hours of video content and paper documents that must be digitized so that they can be preserved and shared with current and future generations. We remain vigilant for vendors who can help us accomplish this on such a large scale, volunteers to organize and execute the work, and funding to see the project through. This year, we restarted the process of applying for grants to help us reach this important goal.

2023 also brings the 25th Anniversary of the 1950s Park Forest House Museum. Both the archive and museum remain under the leadership of Jane Nicoll, who has been with PFHS since inception and has done so very much for the Society over the years. She is integral to our operations, and I truly can't thank Jane enough for her continued service and expertise.

If you wish to be supportive of our efforts, we humbly ask that you join us in working towards them. You can do this in many ways; becoming a member, donating (including legacy planning), volunteering, or reaching out to join our Advisory Board or the Board of Directors. Your support helps us keep Park Forest's history alive!

Here's to a great 2023-'24 term on the horizon!

With gratitude,  
Chris Janota  
President, Board of Directors  
Park Forest Historical Society



President Chris Janota and Treasurer Kerry Adams host a table for PFHS at the 2023 Unity Day fair.





9/1/2022 to 8/31/2023 (FY 2023) PARK FOREST HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

	FY 2023		FY 2022	
Old National Bank / checking	40,210.92		37,124.58	
US Bank /checking	10,114.00		10,114.00	
Hartford Investment account (as of 6/30 statement)	10,348.53		11,966.35	
<b>STARTING BALANCE</b>	<b>60,673.45</b>		<b>59,204.93</b>	
		<b>YOY Change</b>		
<b>REVENUE:</b>	<b>16,951.34</b>	<b>(478.86)</b>		<b>17,430.20</b>
Museum Admissions	395.00	(55.00)	450.00	
General Donations	356.54	30.39	326.15	
Memberships	3,513.86	(374.90)	3,888.76	
Annual Fund Donations	4,521.24	98.26	4,422.98	
Memorial Donations	0.00	(198.51)	198.51	
Corporate Sponsorships	0.00	(176.44)	176.44	
Municipal Grants	5,000.00	\$0.00	5,000.00	
Park Forest Library Archive Cost Share	1,650.00	\$0.00	1,650.00	
Governors State University Cost Share	n/a		n/a	
St. Mary's reimbursements (air conditioner)	0.00	(389.00)	389.00	
Museum Store Sales	507.56	(1,600.14)	2,107.70	
Archives Usage / Rights Fees / Royalties	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Investment Gains / Losses	1,007.14	(172.20)	(1,179.34)	
Fundraiser Luncheon	n/a		n/a	
<b>EXPENSES:</b>		<b>(13,821.46)</b>		<b>(15,771.29)</b>
Rent (Archives & Museum)	(7,800.00)	0.00	(7,800.00)	
Insurance (Archives & Museum & Board)	(673.90)	69.22	(743.12)	
Programs / Events - Speakers and Services	(1,070.76)	(76.35)	(994.41)	
Operational Expenses	(3,541.94)	548.17	(4,090.11)	
Advertising	(150.00)	226.00	(376.00)	
Purchases to Stock Museum / Museum Store / Archives	(106.86)	1,412.66	(1,519.52)	
Organization Dues	(478.00)	(229.87)	(248.13)	
Fundraiser Luncheon	n/a		n/a	
Change in investments between fiscal year statements			(190.39)	
<b>CURRENT BALANCE:</b>	<b>63,803.33</b>	<b>3,129.88</b>	<b>60,673.45</b>	<b>1,658.91</b>

## **Archivist/Museum Director's Report. Annual Meeting. October 1, 2023. Jane Nicoll**

1. Chris Long has been working with me for over a year to tackle the backlog in museum and Archives collection accessioning. She has also helped by typing our thank you letters.
2. Kerry Adams, our treasurer and also Archives Manager at Governors State University Library, and I, will be participating in a class project for the History Department at GSU. This is a project funded by a GSU grant to teach teachers how to do local history curriculum plans by doing research in primary documents. The class will come to our Archive and Local History Collection, and Kerry, myself and Larry McClellan will do some instruction. The professors involved in the GSU grant hope to get an NEH grant to widen the scope of the project to provide some paid internships to local history groups in the region and to pull in local teachers to learn to use local history. The class will take place Tuesday, October 17.
3. PFHS is looking for a retired teacher volunteer to take our CD-ROM curriculum unit into schools with Park Forest students. We hope the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Village will make this more attractive to our own schools. It has been difficult in the past to get the schools to invite the volunteers in. We may also ask for volunteers to help put the curriculum into a format that the teachers would use themselves.
4. We have been invited to put up rotating displays in Village Hall and Freedom Hall on the history of Park Forest as part of the Strategic goals of the Village to make the residents more aware of Village history in order to instill more sense of place. This goal was inspired out of meetings with villagers, many of whom felt more exposure to Village history was important. Displays have been put up, mostly in Village Hall, since February 2023. Now that Freedom Hall will begin its season, I will have to try to get things there as well. I am the only person working on these displays.
5. Dr. Larry McClellan has a new initiative to work on a Chicago to Detroit Freedom Trail, hopefully to be approved by the National Park Service. Since the McCoy farm was not accepted as part of the nomination for the national freedom trail along with the Crete nomination, Larry is now referring to this part of the trail as the PARK FOREST and Crete location. The McCoy's were involved in the Underground Railroad along with the Crete Congregational Church members, but were deemed to be too many miles away from Crete to be included in the other nomination.
6. An Underground Railroad Gathering for Chicago Southland was held at South Suburban College, September 28, 2023. Neither Kerry Adams nor I were able to attend. Valerie Butron of 201-U has developed an Underground Railroad Curriculum unit to be taught for one week, which can be used anywhere.
7. I will be serving at least in advisory capacity to the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Park Forest Committee which has just been formed and will be headed by Theresa Settles. Although the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Park Forest began with the August 30 move-in Anniversary, the 75<sup>th</sup> seems to be starting with the February incorporation date.
8. Our programming this year will be centered around the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Park Forest, and we will have material on display in the museum all year. We will be advertising the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Calendar again because it is full of anniversary dates of organizations and events in Park Forest history. If you have thrown yours out we have them for sale for \$2.
9. September 13 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary House Museum, now the 1950s Park Forest House Museum.
10. I have been working on the Local History Collection and Archive for 42 years, have been co-founder and on the board of the Society for over 38 years, and volunteer director of the museum for 25 years.