

# The Charlemagne

215 East Main Street - St. Charles, Illinois 60174 - (630) 584-6967

VOLUME XXIX  
ISSUE 2  
WINTER 2012  
ST. CHARLES  
HERITAGE CENTER

Tickets Still Available  
Late Reservations Accepted



## Second Annual St. Charles Heritage Ball

Saturday, April 14, 2012

6:00 p.m. to Midnight

Royal Fox Country Club

4405 Royal and Ancient Drive

Limited Seating by Reservation Only

\$125 per person \*

Black Tie Optional

Open Bar & Silent Auction

Followed by Dinner

Music, Dancing, Live Auction



*Second Annual St. Charles Heritage Ball*

*Celebrating 90 years of the  
St. Charles Chamber of Commerce*

*RSVP*

*Call Natalie at 630 - 584 - 6967  
by March 21, 2012 for tickets*

\* Ticket price, silent auction bid and/or raffle purchases are partially  
tax deductible as allowed by the Internal Revenue Federal Tax Code.

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## A Look Back 100 Years: St. Charles' Connection to the Titanic

By: Phil Johnson

Alice Berg Johnson, a St. Charles native, was on board the RMS Titanic with her two children that fateful night it sank into the Atlantic Ocean. After joining the exclusive club of Titanic survivors, she and her daughter became reluctant local celebrities. Alice, and later Eleanor, wrote and spoke about their experience on Titanic and Eleanor even met with movie director James Cameron about the Titanic film. Yet, it wasn't supposed to happen this way.



Alice Berg Johnson,  
mother of Eleanor  
Shuman, after surviving  
*Titanic*

In 1911, months before the sinking, Alice had received word that her father was seriously ill in Finland. Traveling by train to New York City, she was prepared for the journey across the Atlantic when she received word that her father had passed away. Faced with the choice of returning to Saint Charles or visiting with her grieving family in Finland, she chose to make the journey.

In April of 1912, after 9 months abroad, it was time to return to her husband, in St. Charles. Alice had arranged to travel by boat to New York from Southampton, England. However, the boat

was still on Titanic's deck, in the arms of Elin Braf while collapsible Dö was being lowered into the water. Elin, a new friend to Alice, was frightened and had refused a seat on the lifeboat. Hearing Alice's screams, a nearby man snatched Harold from Elin's arms and tossed him over Titanic's edge, and into the lifeboat.



Any other day, it might

have been a different boat, but today was not any other day. All was seemingly well on the night of April 14th, 1912. Alice, three year old Harold and one year old Eleanor were sleeping soundly in their cabin when Titanic took evasive measures to avoid collision with an iceberg. The measures failed, and the force of the ice tearing into Titanic's hull threw Harold to the floor. After the collision, a dining room steward came to their cabin and told them to wear their lifejackets because the ship was sinking.

Making their way to the lifeboat, Alice struggled to hear the instructions from Titanic's crew over the screams of other doomed passengers. Noticing that many lifeboats were already in the water, she rushed with Harold and Eleanor through crowds of panicking people to what may have been the last remaining lifeboat, collapsible Dö. After climbing in, strangers handed Alice her daughter. However, Harold

was still on Titanic's deck, in the arms of Elin Braf while collapsible Dö was being lowered into the water. Elin, a new friend to Alice, was frightened and had refused a seat on the lifeboat. Hearing Alice's screams, a nearby man snatched Harold from Elin's arms and tossed him over Titanic's edge, and into the lifeboat.

Collapsible Dö drifted in the ocean for 5 hours before rescue by The Carpathia, where sailors gave Alice, Harold and Eleanor their shirts to wear on their cold feet. Upon arrival in New York, Alice wired her husband, Oscar, in St. Charles about their safe return. Oscar hadn't

known about the coal strike in Southampton, and was shocked to discover his family had been on Titanic. He quickly left for New York to collect his family and bring them back to St. Charles.

Alice did not enjoy the attention she received after returning to St. Charles and spent much of the rest of her life avoiding speaking about the Titanic. After passing away in 1968, Alice was buried in North Cemetery in St. Charles.



Alice and her children, Harold and Eleanor, looking at a movie poster for *A Night to Remember*.

## Reading History: The St. Charles Heritage Center Book Club

The St. Charles Heritage Center Book Club has book discussion scheduled on **May 1**.

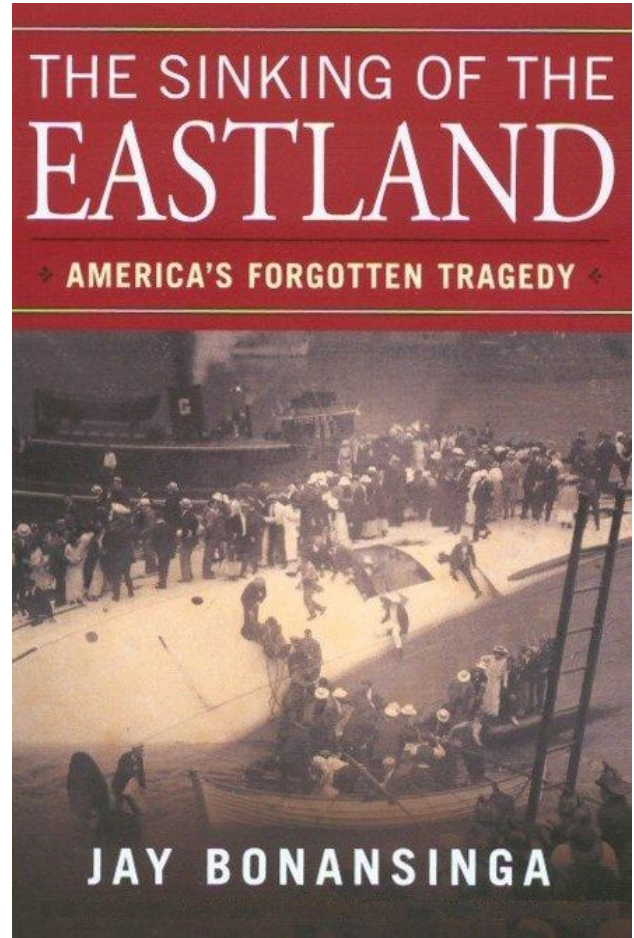
Join us as we discuss ***The Sinking of the Eastland: America's Forgotten Tragedy***, by Jay Bonansinga.

On the morning of Saturday, July 15, 1915, the passenger steamer Eastland was filled to capacity with some 2,500 passengers aboard. The passengers were Western Electric employees, heading out for a joyous company picnic on the other side of Lake Michigan from their homes in the environs of Chicago, Illinois. As the ship prepared to cast off, it suddenly rolled over, taking some 844 men, women and children to their deaths. This is the story of the Eastland disaster, a horrifying catastrophe by any standard, and the worst disaster in Chicago's history.

### 50/50 Raffle Tickets Available

One again the St. Charles Heritage Center is holding a 50/50 Raffle. Last year the winner of the raffle took home over \$5,200!

The winning raffle ticket will be drawn at the 2nd Annual St. Charles Heritage Ball on Saturday, April 14. The winner does not need to be present. The winner's share is already over \$4,500 and continues to grow weekly. Watch the thermometer sign out in front of the St. Charles History Museum to see how high the winner's portion will climb. Tickets for the raffle are available at the St. Charles History Museum and can be purchased for \$5 each, 3 tickets for \$10, 8 tickets for \$20 or 50 tickets for \$100. For more information visit or call the St. Charles History Museum, 215 E. Main Street, 630-584-6967.



The St. Charles Heritage Center's Book Club meets on the first Tuesday of every other month at the St. Charles Public Library from 7 - 8pm. We will be meeting in the Bisbee Conference Room right of the main lobby. There will not be a meeting in July. For more information please call Natalie at 630-584-6967.





## Gift Memberships & Membership Sale

A large portion of the Heritage Center's budget comes from membership dues and we cannot operate without the support of our members.

To celebrate May being Historic Preservation Month, all St. Charles Heritage Center memberships will be discounted 20% for the entire month. In addition, any current member who purchases a gift membership for a friend or family member in May will receive a special gift from our Gift Shop. Members enjoy benefits including our quarterly newsletter, *The Charlemagne*, a 10% discount in the Gift Shop year round and other special discounts throughout the year, and discounted or free admission to our programs.

To purchase a gift membership or to renew your membership please fill out the membership form in the back of the newsletter. For more information please stop in or call Natalie at 630-584-6967.

## *The Junior Historical Society Update*

The JHS is currently working on a year long project to create a video walking tour of the downtown area. The history themed tour will cover buildings from 7th Avenue on the east side to 7th Street on the west side.

Members of the JHS have been hard at work for the last few months planning the route and researching the history of the people, businesses, and buildings that will be included in the tour. Once completed the video will be posted on the St. Charles Heritage Center's YouTube channel.

Membership in the JHS is open to all 8-13 year olds interested in history. The group meets one Saturday a month at the St. Charles History Museum. Anyone interested in joining the group should call Natalie at 630-584-6967

Our neighbors across 3rd Avenue have offered to help us in our fundraising efforts! Wells Fargo Home Mortgage will make a \$300 donation to the St. Charles Heritage Center for each closing or loan refinance when you indicate the St. Charles Heritage Center as your organization of choice.

Thank you Jay for your support!



## Enrich your community through a neighborhood network of caring

Achieve your homeownership goal, and help make a positive difference — right in your own backyard. Our **Sharing Advantage**<sup>®</sup> program enables you to support a worthy local or national cause. When you close a purchase or refinance loan with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, we'll make a \$300 contribution to the faith-based or non-profit organization of your choice.<sup>1</sup> Designate a recipient that serves your community, and extend the benefits of your customer relationship to your neighbors. With our **Sharing Advantage** program, charity really does begin at home.



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1. The recipient organization must have status under 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Contact a home mortgage consultant for details.  
Information is accurate as of date of printing and is subject to change without notice.  
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## St. Charles Heritage Center & History Museum

215 East Main Street  
St. Charles, IL 60174  
Office & Museum 630-584-6967  
Fax 630-584-6077  
www.stcmuseum.org  
info@stcmuseum.org

Hours of Operation  
Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 4pm

### Board of Directors

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Stay up to date with information about events, promotions and news from the St. Charles Heritage Center. ðLikeö our fan page on Facebook or follow us on Twitter @STCHeritageCent Links to both can be found on our website  
www.stcmuseum.org

# Calendar of upcoming meetings and events for the St. Charles Heritage Center

## April

- 14 **Second Annual St. Charles Heritage Ball**, Royal Fox Country Club, 6 p.m.
- 18 **Education Committee meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 10 a.m.
- 21 **Junior Historical Society meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 1-2:30 p.m.
- 25 **Fundraising Committee meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 4 p.m.
- 25 **Board of Directors meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 5 p.m.

## May - Historic Preservation Month

- 1 **Book Club**, St. Charles Public Library, 7 p.m.
- 19 **Junior Historical Society meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 1-2:30 p.m.
- 23 **Fundraising Committee meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 4 p.m.
- 23 **Board of Directors meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 5 p.m.

## June

- 9 **Junior Historical Society meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 1-2:30 p.m.
- 20 **Education Committee meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 10 a.m.
- 27 **Fundraising Committee meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 4 p.m.
- 27 **Board of Directors meeting**, St. Charles History Museum, 5 p.m.

Program dates and times are subject to change, please call to confirm all events (630) 584-6967

## From the Archive



Spring has sprung in the Fox Valley! Soon the bike paths and parks will be full of people enjoying the many recreational activities our great city has to offer. The Fox River has always been a popular place for recreation in St. Charles.

# Membership Form



*Please check the yearly membership level of your choice:*

- Grantor \* \$5,000+
- Benefactor \* \$1,000 - \$4,999
- Corporate \* \$500 - \$999
- Patron \* \$250 - \$499
- Sponsor \$100 - \$249
- Family \$45
- Individual \$30
- Senior \$20
- Student/Junior \$10

*My check # \_\_\_\_\_ for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. \* Your name will be on Wall Recognition Plaque*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

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City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

**NOTE: We do not rent or sell our private mailing list.**

*I would also like to be involved with the following:*

- Grave Reminders Cemetery Walk
- Award Winning Junior Historical Society
- Museum Docent
- Office Assistant/Data Entry
- Gift Shop Assistant
- Special Events
- Book Club
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Print & Mail to:**

**St. Charles Heritage Center  
215 E. Main Street, St. Charles, IL 60174**