



Field Notes

THE EUGENE FIELD HOUSE & ST. LOUIS TOY MUSEUM

National Historic Landmark • City of St. Louis Landmark • National Register of Historic Places



Volume 20 - Number 2

Winter/Spring 2014

Changing of the Guard

by Brian Abel Ragen

This past year saw a great change in the life of the Eugene Field House Foundation. After serving on the board for 28 years, including several years as president, many more as chairman of the board and even more as president again, William Piper has left the board. He will remain as trustee emeritus, and all the friends of the Field House look forward to seeing him and all the Piper family often in the future.

Mr. Piper has stepped down from his position in part as a result of the need to reduce stress in response to a cardiac condition. Though some might not associate the word “stress” with a pretty old house downtown, those who have any experience with the Eugene Field House or any operation like it, know that it is a constant burden to the person responsible for keeping the place functioning. William Piper has been that man for the Field House for many years, and so has been at the mercy of unpredictable and implacable forces such as the weather, the highway department, the federal government, and arbiters of historic preservation. All are urgent in their demands—whether for the repairs or reports. Beyond them he has had to face both human malice (in the form of the vandals and thieves) and human charity (in the form of volunteers and donors): in their different ways, all are threats to the smooth functioning and historical integrity of the House.

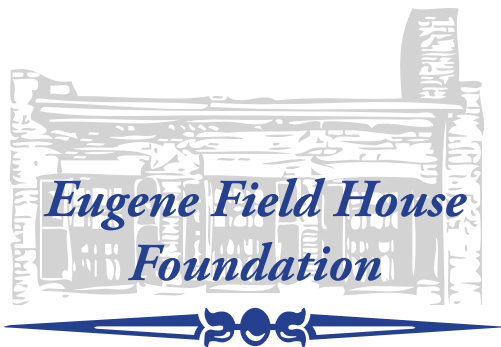
Mr. Piper has had a hand in keeping the house intact and changing it just enough so that it is a good example of a 19th-century town house, not a perfect example of 20th-century repository of junk. He has been there through the renovations, through the grant applications, through the events that will be remembered as great successes, such as Hal Holbrook’s recent appearance at a Eugene Field House fund-raiser, and events that will be remembered more for the leaky tent than the program. He has dealt with several executive directors, to whom adjectives ranging from “irreplaceable” and “omni-capable” to “ineffectual” and “enigmatic” could be applied. He has presided over a board of directors that has included a number of members who might be described with British term, “a strong colleague,” or in several less euphemistic American locutions. He has dealt with all of them—and with the government officials, the contractors, the reporters, the tourists, the artists, the actors, and little children with tact, good-will, honesty, and aplomb.

He has done all that while pursuing at least two other careers. This year also saw Mr. Piper’s retirement from the U.S. Army Reserve with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He has served his country in uniform with the same distinction with which he has served the local community. Most recently, he has held a post in the JAG Corps, and his other career has been as an attorney-at-law. The Field House has constantly been the beneficiary of his legal acumen, even though it has never shown up a single billable hour on the books of his law office.

Having done so much, it is perfectly natural that a man with growing children should want to devote himself to one career, instead of three. All associated with the Eugene Field House can rejoice that while they have lost a model president, they are keeping a good friend. We will look forward to seeing his ready smile and items from his extensive collection of neckties at many gatherings in the future. And when we need free legal or political counsel, some quick information of the Missouri statutes or the Corps commanders in the Army of the Cumberland in 1864, or a word of encouragement, we will know who to call.

“On the Board with Piper” (A Marching Song)

See page 2



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On the Board with Piper

(A Marching Song, to be sung to the tune of "I Goes to Fight Mit Sigel")

I've come to tell all decent folk
Who want to serve their city
That those who play the culture game
Have got to feed the kitty.
You have to write a hefty check
Or be the memo-typer,
Or if you're made of sterner stuff,
Serve on a board with Piper.

When I was young and looked at things
They keep in the museum,
I thought it fine that they were there
Where I could go and see 'em.
I little thought they had to pay
Each guard and window-wiper,
And wouldn't last a single day
Without the guys like Piper.

From break of day, when he broke bread
Along with a committee,
Till dinner time, when he yawned
through
Bores trying to be witty,
To early morn when the alarm
Down at the House went hyper,
The answer to the problem was
"Let's leave that up to Piper."

He's served his country at the bar;
He's "Colonel" in the service,
And all he knows of codes and regs
Could make a fellow nervous.
Some think a hero's got to be
A SEAL or else a sniper,
But the heroes of the culture wars
Are men like William Piper.

Brian Abel Ragen

October 18, 2013

Holiday Exhibit Returns to the Maplewood Library



The Eugene Field House & St. Louis Toy Museum was invited to create another exhibit for the Maplewood Library. This past year the exhibit, "Holiday Toys through the Decades," focused on popular Christmas toys from the 1920s through the 1980s from the



museum's collection. The continuing collaboration with the Maplewood Library has allowed the Eugene Field House & St. Louis Toy Museum to share many of our toy collections with the Maplewood community.

The Eugene Field House is always looking for new places to showcase temporary exhibits! If you know of an establishment that has temporary exhibit space and is looking for a unique exhibit, please have them contact us at 314-421-4689 or info@eugenefieldhouse.org,

EXTENDED by Popular Demand!



“Liberty of London” Doll Collection

Due to such a popular response and many requests to see the “Liberty of London” doll collection before it is returned back to their safe sleeping spots... the EFH has extended the exhibit. Our amazing collection of over 200 “Liberty of London” dolls will be featured in our rotating toy exhibit space, but we will be adding the full coronation on display in the first floor parlor. A rare treat to see!! These hand-sewn dolls from the 1950s include English rulers and notable figures in politics, literature, and science. On display through May 30, 2014.



Eugene Field Joins the Class of 2013’s St. Louis Media Hall of Fame

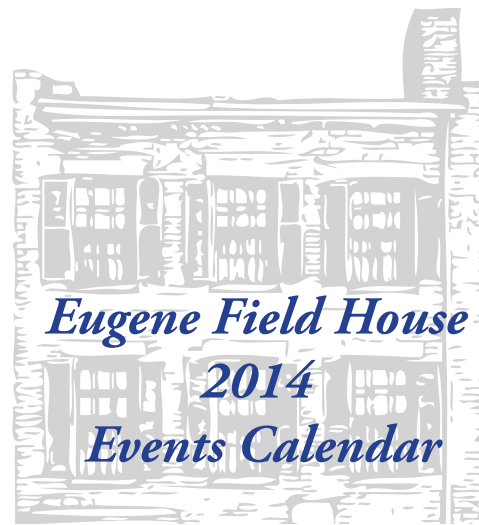
The Eugene Field House is proud to announce that Eugene Field has been inducted into the St. Louis Media Hall of Fame, Class of 2013. The St. Louis Media History Foundation is recognizing and paying tribute to 21 St. Louisians who have made important contributions across all media. The induction ceremony took place on Monday, February 10, at Triumph Grill.



Eugene Field House Fund-A-Need

The Eugene Field House is looking for your help to fund our next restoration project within the museum. One of our Victorian mahogany lady’s chairs is in need of a little tlc. The chair’s arm needs mending along with recoiling and padding of the seat. Additionally, this very delicate piece requires reupholstering. The total cost for the restoration for this chair to be completed is \$1,715. Big or small, your donation to help fund our need is greatly appreciated!

Donations can be sent to The Eugene Field House & St. Louis Toy Museum or you can go online to our website at www.eugenefieldhouse.org and click on the donate button on the left side of the page.



~ February ~
Black History Month

~ March 8th ~
**57th Anniversary of the
Dred Scott Decision**
*(hosted by the Dred Scott Heritage
Foundation & the Old Courthouse)*

~ March 22nd ~
**Museum Garage Sale at
The St. Louis Zoo**



Visit Us Online
www.eugenefieldhouse.org

Collection Restoration

The first floor parlor has a new look this year with the addition of two restored settees. The pair were given a makeover by restoring the woodwork and reupholstering of fabric by Zollinger Furniture Co. These two pieces add a lovely touch to the 1850s décor and are now on display in the parlor.



The Eugene Field Questers is working on another conservation project with the museum. This summer the Questers picked a Eugene Field oil painting that needed restoration of its frame. The frame of the portrait, painted by famous artist John Mulvaney, needed replacement of parts of its

carved wood. The piece was sent off to Zollinger Furniture Co. to be restored to its original grandeur and is now hanging in the Library on the 2nd floor of the museum.

Forsyth Poems

Every Christmas brings the Eugene Field House & St. Louis Toy Museum visitors from all around the globe to view our display. One group in particular comes with a purpose and left a contribution on our third floor landing. This group of 52 third graders come from Forsyth Grade School after learning a few of Eugene's more famous poems. After touring the museum the children are asked to draw a picture of their favorite object from the tour, then over Christmas break write an original poem connecting their objects with the poem. The teachers choose the top five and then we display them until next years winners are chosen.



HONORARIA, MEMORIALS & DONATIONS

March - December 2013

~ Honorariums ~

Marianne & Peter Gleich
in honor of Mr. William R. Piper
Mr. Ken Miesner
in honor of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Zork
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald O'Gorman
in honor of Mr. Brian A. Ragen
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald O'Gorman
in honor of Marianne & Peter Gleich
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald O'Gorman
in honor of Drs. Michael & Soraya Wolverson

~ Individual donations ~

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Ms. Karen Klohr
Ms. Virginia MacDonald
Mrs. Gladys Myles, Myles Family Fund of the
Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation
Ms. Judith Nesbit
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Officer
Mrs. Laura Orthwein
Mr. & Mrs. William R. Piper

2014 Museum Schedule Expands

Beginning in 2014 the Museum will open a month earlier. Below is the 2014 schedule.

February - December
Wednesday - Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 4 p.m.

Monday, Tuesday & National Holidays Closed
January - By Appointment Only

WELCOME MEMBERS

The Eugene Field House Board of Trustees and the Staff would like to thank the following members who have continued to support the mission, preservation, and programming of the foundation with their generous membership donations.

~ *Renewing Members* ~

March - December 2013

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 Ms. Doris Austin
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 Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Bateman
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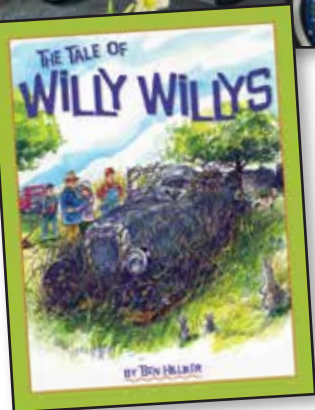
Mr. & Mrs. William Schneck
 Ms. Mary Kina Shapleigh

The Tale of Willy Willys

This past summer the Eugene Field House & St Louis Toy Museum added a new children's book, *The Tale of Willy Willys* by Ben Hilliker, to the Sugar Plum Tree gift shop. On July 13 Ben Hilliker came to the museum with his 1926 Willys Overland, the inspiration for his book, and signed copies of his book. The event was a great success with face painting and frozen

treats provided by the Kona Ice truck. Admission to the museum during the event was free and several tours were taken by visitors enjoying both the book and the car. Get your copy of *The Tale of Willy Willys* from our gift shop for \$9.95 today!

*Photos: Top left, 1926 Willys Overland -
 Bottom left, book cover - Top right, Ben Hilliker signing book
 - Bottom right, face painting station*





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Stop on in at The Sugar Plum Tree Gift Shoppe to get that one-of-a-kind item that you have been looking for. We have everything from the works of Eugene Field to a variety of vintage toys and games. Come on by during our regular museum hours and don't forget that members get 15% off their entire purchase!

