Executive Director’s Report

It goes without repeating that the first seven weeks of 2020 have advanced quickly, and the advent of spring looms large, as do the first and second events of the ISHS 2020 calendar. I sincerely hope you have all made plans to attend the Best of Illinois History Award Gala, which offers us an opportunity to celebrate our colleagues in the profession, and with the UIS/ISHS Public History Symposium following on April 25, an opportunity to encourage the next generation to follow in our footsteps.

The first issue of Illinois Heritage, our first music issue, came out in early January, and the second is in the hands of our designer. I’ve tried to focus some of the February-March issue on African American and women to coincide with national celebrations, and I think we have had some success. Last month a submitted our popular history magazine for a national award from the American Association for State and National History (AASLH), and I’m hopeful that our humble publication will earn some recognition at the national level. Thanks to all who contributed letters of recommendation. Your words about Illinois Heritage were encouraging and are appreciated.

In coming weeks you will hear about our plans to host a cemetery restoration workshop in iMay with John Heider, a widely recognized historian and cemetery advocate. Watch for details if this something you are interested in.

The Spring series for the UIS/ISHS Lunch and Learn begins on Tuesday, March 3, with “Mysteries of the Past,” two programs on archaeology in Illinois. The first examines what has been uncovered in the burned-out sections of Springfield that were ground zero for the 1908 race riot. UIS history student Katie Brethorst participated in the excavations, and she will report her findings. William Iseminger, who has spent more than 40 years as historian and administrator at Cahokia Mounds, will be our second speaker. If you are able, please show your support for these excellent programs. Future programs this spring include a talk on the architecture of Allerton Park in Champaign, the Andrew Carnegie organ benefactions in Illinois, the historic Clayville Stagecoach stop, and a talk about non-Mormon Nauvoo. All good stuff for the ISHS to be talking about.

Thank you all for your attendance today, and my apologies for having to be elsewhere. I have left a copy of the remarks I will be sharing at Rodney Davis’ memorial service today, should any of you be interested in how the Society remembered this important Illinois scholar.