

# The Scribe

HISTORY CENTER OF OLMSTED COUNTY

FALL 2022

Newsletter



**HISTORY CENTER**  
OF OLMSTED COUNTY

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**REMINDER: Please make sure we have the most up-to-date email and mailing address for you. Thanks!**

## NURTURING THE MOTHER TREE: PARTNERING TO CULTIVATE A HEALTHY CULTURAL AND CIVIC ECOSYSTEM

By Wayne Gannaway, Executive Director

Recently the History Center staff participated in a training session with public artist Sarah Nassif, who we were able to bring to the History Center through a partnership with the Rochester Art Center (RAC) and a generous grant from the Olmsted Medical Center's Community Investment Program. She oriented us to her participatory art project called "leaf trace / land trace." I was particularly intrigued with it because it deals with one of my favorite topics: townships and the Public Land Survey system. Her project invites participants to engage in activities to better understand how the United States has divided up land it won as a result of the American Revolution—and to explore the historical injustices stemming from that. I found it refreshing, although a challenge to fully grasp.

In her presentation, Sarah also described recent research that suggests that trees (in groves or forests) can help one another by sharing resources in times of stress. She referenced the work of Suzanne Simard and her book "Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering Wisdom in the Forest." Her research refutes the notion that a clump of trees are in a zero sum game—survival of the fittest. Instead, trees are

## NURTURING THE MOTHER TREE - continued

linked through their extensive system of roots, along with fungi, and by this network share nutrients. They are also connected in a hub-like relationship to established trees, or a Mother Tree.

I'm a historian, not a biologist, so this idea of communication and cooperation among trees boggles. But it got me thinking about how Olmsted County's nonprofit community supports one another and how we are stronger for it. Several examples of this can be found right here at the History Center.

In addition to our partnership with the RAC to host Artist Talks with Sarah Nassif, I am pleased to announce that the History Center and the Art Center are offering reciprocal memberships. Our Household Members will get access to the RAC for two adults, while their members at Duo-level and above get free admission to the History Center. Access to two great museums with one membership!

We are also very pleased with our partnership with the Village Agricultural Cooperative, a nonprofit that helps immigrants and refugees find accessible land to grow culturally appropriate food for their families and to earn income. Since 2020 we've donated garden plots from our community garden to Village gardeners. This year the Village began gardening on three acres of our cultivated fields and they started up a farmer's market under our pavilion. Held on Tuesdays from 4 to 7, the markets are proving very popular.

But we could not have made the acreage available to Village gardeners without the cooperation of our oldest partner, the Mechanical History Roundtable. They have been farming our fields for nearly fifty years, as well as maintaining the Ralph Stoppel farmstead, restoring vintage agricultural equipment, holding the annual Days of Yesteryear threshing show, and volunteering at HCOG. They not only gave up three acres from their annual yield, they are also helping the Village in tilling and other farm work.

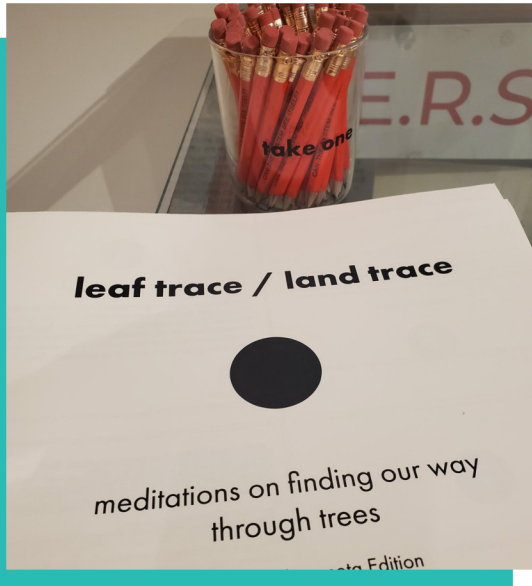
A number of nonprofits pitched in to help us decorate Maywood for Christmas last year. After a year-long pandemic, many decorators from past years were not available. Our friends from the RAC, 125 Live, and Rochester Civic Theatre all pitched in to decorate rooms. This year we have invited Spark Children's Museum to join in the fun.

**"Olmsted  
County's  
nonprofit  
community  
supports one  
another."**



**Maywood Christmas**

## PARTNERING TO CREATE BETTER PROGRAMS - continued



Experience the Leaf Trace in our Townships exhibit!

A very recent partnership is with the Drifters Car Club. Earlier this summer they held their car show on our grounds and they'll do a second on September 17, the day of our Hootenanny. Not only are they fantastic to work with, but a portion of the funds they raise will go to the History Center.



It occurs to me that all of our nonprofit partners (and our respective members, donors, and volunteers), are not only supporting one another, but also the Mother Tree Suzanne Simard writes about. Think of that tree as our community's cultural and civic canopy. Mutual support provides a tree with deep roots, strong limbs, and broad leaves and its gift to us is beauty, shade, and fresh air. For nonprofits, it provides shared programming ideas, a place to meet or hold an event, and sometimes simply moral support from colleagues who face similar challenges. HCOC looks forward to continuing to support our community's cultural and civic ecosystem in partnership with our fellow nonprofits.



For tickets to events and more info, visit

[olmstedhistory.com/mayowood](http://olmstedhistory.com/mayowood)

## 2022 MAYOWOOD EVENTS & PROGRAMS

- September 24  Conserving Mayowood Tour: Past, Present, & Future
- October 22  Influential Friends at Mayowood
- November 4  Christmas Tours Begin

# LETTER FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT: EXCITING TIMES AT HCOC!

By Paul D. Scanlon, M.D, Board Vice President

Board President Roger Stahl is travelling, so I was asked to provide a letter for this issue of The Scribe. I am relatively new to the HCOC Board, having joined in the spring to fill a vacancy. I am a retired Mayo Clinic physician and an almost lifelong resident of Rochester and Olmsted County. I am also the author of Rochester Stories: A Med City History.

Although I have had a longstanding interest in local history, I am a relatively recent devotee of HCOC. When I was doing research for my book, I made my first acquaintance with the HCOC archives. I found them to be extremely helpful as was the staff. That led to further interactions with HCOC and an invitation to join the board, which I gladly accepted. I have served on other boards in the past, including the Rochester School Board and the Rochester Art Center Board among others.

These are exciting times at HCOC. After weathering some uncertain times in the post-2008 world, HCOC has strong leadership from both board and executive director, a clear mission, well-organized finances, strong local support, and wonderful resources. The restoration of Mayowood in partnership with Mayo Clinic is gratifying. The long-term plan to restore the Stoppel Farmstead is enticing though challenging. And plans for exhibition of our many resources are exciting.

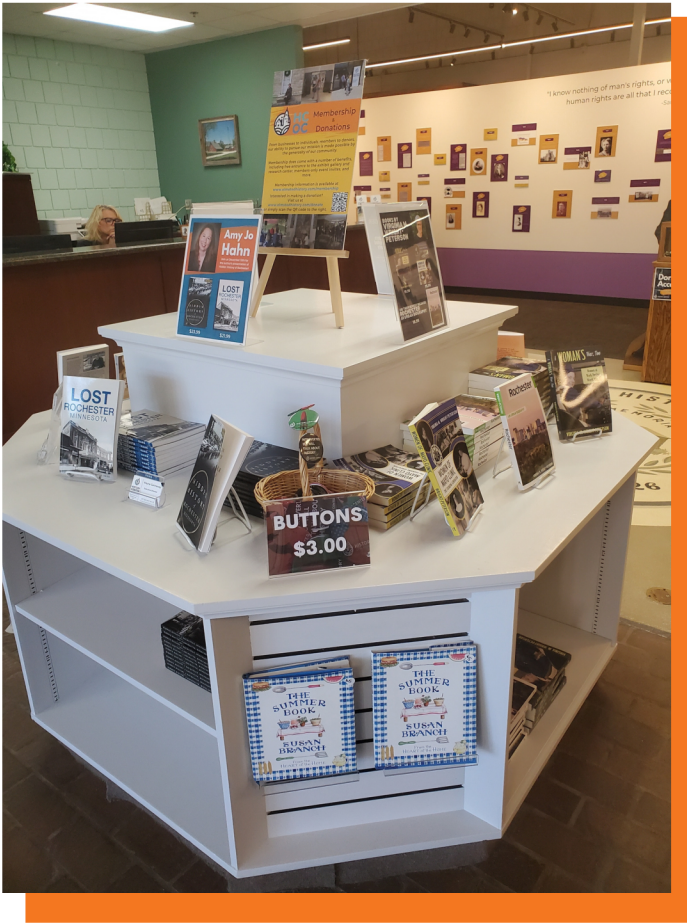
"The long-term plan to restore the Stoppel Farmstead is enticing though challenging."



What's poppin' at HCOC?



The Stoppel Farmstead



**Browse our new selections and other titles on Rochester history in our Museum Shop!**

You may be interested to learn of two new books to consider for your local history bookshelf: Rochester: An Urban Biography by Virginia Wright-Peterson and Hidden History of Rochester Minnesota by Amy Jo Hahn. Both are available at the History Center, and proceeds benefit the History Center. Anthony Bianco, who has been writing a new history of Mayo Clinic, tells me we can expect the first of two volumes to be published in 2023, and the second volume in 2024.

This is a great time to become more deeply involved with local history and the History Center. I took the tour of Mayowood this week and enjoyed it immensely. Also, I drove with a childhood friend and visited historic structures in Wasioja (1858 Seminary ruins, 1855 Civil War Recruitment Center and Memorial, and the 1860's schoolhouse) and Mantorville (the 1854 Hubbell House, the 1864 Dodge County Brewery ruins, the late 1850's Cooper's Log House, the 1865 Dodge County Courthouse, and the 1869 Dodge County Museum). It was a good reminder to value and preserve the historical artifacts that are bequeathed to us.

I hope you had an enjoyable summer and have a satisfying transition into fall. Be sure to check out the "new" histories of Rochester! See you at the History Center!

A Special Thank You To



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For All Their Work Towards the Stoppel Smokehouse Restoration Process!



# LESS IS MORE: DEVELOPING A REFINED COLLECTION

By Krista Lewis, Archivist, CA

Any institution that actively collects material for research or exhibit will tell you that they need more space. Without expansion or mitigation, a growing collection will inevitably surpass its physical space. HCOC is no exception.

The archival storage space has nearly reached its limit and any large donation would pose a logistical problem. The material artifact storage spaces reached their capacity long ago. Smaller donations can still be accommodated, but there is no room in the main building for anything of true bulk. Our solution to this has been storing items in out buildings on site and even an off-site storage location at the Rochester airport, all of which are full. With few exceptions, these structures have no environmental controls, which is potentially detrimental to the collection pieces. This situation is unsustainable. Expansion of our storage areas is an expensive route, but one way to increase space without increasing square footage is to plan more efficient use of space, particularly with the use of compact shelving (shelving that sits on rails that can be moved to abut another shelf, so only the aisle you need is accessible).



**Compact shelving can help with storage, but refining collections and collection goals can help more.**

Before pursuing either option, though, we should assess our existing holdings and consider whether we can refine them. For nearly 100 years we have been collecting anything and everything related to Olmsted County. This not only accounts for our lack of space, but with a static collections staff, this strains our capacity for organizing and caring for the collection, even with our robust and dedicated volunteer force.

Refining our collection means focusing on quality over quantity and asking the questions “What stories do we want to tell?” and “What communities do we want to reach?” The result will be the removal of some items from our collection and the addition of others as we seek to fill gaps in the stories we tell. These will not be easy decisions to make, but we believe we will be rewarded with a strong, active collection, a more satisfied and engaged visitor, and room for our collection to breathe and grow purposefully.

**"Refining our collection means focusing on quality over quantity."**

## COMINGS AND GOINGS 2: MEET OUR NEW COLLECTIONS MANAGER AND WISH ABBY THE BEST!



**Welcome to the team, Jenna!**

Greetings to the wonderful supporters of the History Center of Olmsted County! My name is Jenna Collins, and I am the new Collections Manager here at the center. I am so pleased to have become part of the team here in Olmsted County, and I have jumped right into my new duties taking care of the artifacts in the collection, and developing new exhibits for the museum.

Some background on myself: I was born and raised in Alexandria, Minnesota, and went to school at Concordia College up in Moorhead, Minnesota. I studied History and Museum Studies, and developed a love for historic objects and material culture; I am fascinated by the complex stories that objects can tell about history and culture. I have held several positions in the museum field, most recently as a Collections Assistant in Moorhead, Minnesota at the Historical & Cultural Society of Clay County. During my time there I finished my master's degree in Museum Studies through Johns Hopkins University. I am particularly interested in finding the "hidden" stories of objects—how we can consider an object in a new light. For example, if we look at a sofa, we can tell the story of the people who owned it, who sat on it, et cetera—but we can also tell the story of who built it, who designed it, who created the fabric, and on from there.

HCOC has a vast collection that I am currently getting to know—I learn something new every day. As I get settled in, Rochester is already starting to feel like home. I am looking forward to learning and sharing history with you and our visitors!



**Good luck on your exciting opportunity, Abby!**

Winnie the Pooh once said, "How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." I have been thinking about this quote a lot.

As some of you may know, I have recently accepted a new position with the Jamestown Yorktown Foundation in Virginia as their elementary education specialist. Basically, I will be overseeing their K-6th grade programming.

While I am excited about what the future holds, I am sorry to have to say goodbye to all of the wonderful people I have met and befriended here in Minnesota. So, maybe instead of saying goodbye, we will leave with a less permanent, until we meet again!

# MORE THAN JUST KEEPING BUSY: WHAT'S GOING ON AT HCOC?

By Caleb Baumgartner

We've had so much going on at the History Center this summer, and our busy season is just getting started!

Let's open with a moment to talk about our partnership with The Village Cooperative. Our Tuesday Farmers Market has been a great addition to the HCOC schedule. It's proof positive of our commitment to become a bigger part of the community at large, and it aligns perfectly with many of the issues we're aiming to discuss with our exhibits and programming in the future, namely topics of immigration and agricultural history. If you haven't stopped out yet, the market will run through mid-October, so there's still time.

As for the busy season, where to start? We have a full day on our plate on September 17th with the Drifters Car Club's second car show in the morning running through to the Hootenanny kicking off at 4pm! This is going to be an amazing day of great cars, great food, great music, and great beer at the Hootenanny thanks to a partnership with Forager Brewery.

If you're a fan of folksy bluegrass, you'll love our Hootenanny Headliners, The Pistol Whippin Party Penguins. Check out our Hootenanny playlist on spotify for a few select tracks to get you excited for the show!

Heading into October, we're back with Fall Fest over MEA weekend. On Thursday, October 20th our campus will be loaded with family-friendly activities for kids of all ages, including pumpkin painting and bandana dyeing. There will be fun and games, hands on activities, and so much more to keep the little ones busy on the long weekend.

**"If you're a fan of folksy bluegrass, you'll love our Hootenanny Headliners!"**



**Our Hootenanny Headliners - The Pistol Whippin Party Penguins!**



## KEEPING BUSY - continued

Of course, October wouldn't be complete without mentioning our Creepy Doll Contest and Cocktail Party. The dolls are all glammed up to take to the red carpet for this year's movie-based exhibit and party theme. This unique and diverse cast of dolls are ready for their close-up, and we hope you'll be there to help us determine who amongst this year's nominees happens to be "The Creepiest of Them All!"

While we may not want to think about the snow quite yet, it is worth noting that our Mayowood Holiday Tours begin not long after the Creepy Dolls Cocktail Party. There is a distinct beauty to Mayowood during the holidays, as the whole house is transformed and decorated for the season. If you've never seen Mayowood in these months, make sure you swing out this year for a tour you won't soon forget!

The end of 2022 is near, and we're pretty excited for the future. We hope you can make it out to some of our events, and we thank you for your consistent support of our organization!



Meet this year's dolls!

## 2022 EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Please check our website and Facebook regularly as the schedule is subject to change, [olmstedhistory.com/events](https://olmstedhistory.com/events).

- |              |   |                            |
|--------------|---|----------------------------|
| September 17 | ○ | Hootenanny/Car Show        |
| October 20   | ○ | Fall Fest                  |
| October 29   | ○ | Creepy Doll Cocktail Party |
| December 6   | ○ | Quarter 4 Members Meeting  |

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**Caleb Baumgartner**

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Coordinator

**Darla Buss**

Member Services

Coordinator

**Jenna Collins**

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**Krista Lewis**

Archivist

**Dan Nowakowski**

Historic Site Manager

**Barb Whipple**

Accountant

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**Christine Rule**

**Paul Scanlon**

**Roger Stahl**

**Mark Warner**

**Samuel Wick**

**Linda Willihnganz**

## MAYOWOOD SPOTLIGHT: GRACE CURRY AND JOAN HUNZIKER-DEAN

By Dan Nowakowski

This has been an exciting year! With the re-opening of Mayowood in March after a long period of pandemic closure, our tours are up and running again and we have been busy ever since. These tours are able to run smoothly because of the help of our wonderful guides, who have a great passion for telling the Mayo Story along with the history of the house. We want to take a moment to give acknowledgement to two guides who have done an excellent job giving our visitors an amazing experience.

First, Grace Curry has been a guide at Mayowood for a number of years. She shows such passion when she leads her tours at the house. She has an abundance of knowledge when talking about the Mayo family and the history of the house. Grace's enthusiasm shines through especially well when she is asked about the artwork at the house. Her extensive knowledge of the artwork in the home provides visitors a unique perspective during Mayowood tours. Grace also gives tours at the Plummer House as well!

We'd also like to acknowledge Joan Hunziker-Dean. Joan is one of our newer guides. She has previously worked at Mayo Clinic and her experience there provided an inspiration for researching about the family and the clinic. Because of her own research and background, Joan is able to provide extra information about the family on her tours which provides additional perspective on the history of the home and the context of its day-to-day use.

It's a pleasure to work and learn from the different guides we have at Mayowood. They all show immense passion for their jobs and care about the history at the historic home. Each guide provides a unique perspective on their tours and have different stories to tell. One of the biggest comments we have at the house from guest is they learn something new every tour because of the research our guides have done, and we're grateful for that enthusiasm that goes so far to improve the visitor experience!

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# VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!

Visit [www.olmstedhistory.com/volunteer](http://www.olmstedhistory.com/volunteer) for more information!

# LETTERS FROM MEMBERS: OPENING THE DOOR TO HEAR FROM YOU!

By Caleb Baumgartner

We say it time and time again - our members make this work. You help us fine-tune our mission, create clear goals, and you give us direction for our exhibit planning and programming. Cliche as it may be, you're the wind in the sails of the S. S. HCOC, and you've yet to blow us off course, Gilligan's Island style.

With that in mind, we would love to hear from you more often! Which is why we're giving space in the Scribe for member questions, comments, or whatever you'd like to share. Have a small question about local history? A comment about a recent event? Do you enjoy the mystery of why our sign out front reads "IT" right now? (Answer, our marquee letter changer broke. We ordered a new one, it's on the way!). Let us know and we'll likely print your feedback in the next edition of the scribe!

Shoot us an email at [comm@olmstedhistory.com](mailto:comm@olmstedhistory.com) (please put "Scribe:" in your subject line, followed by your subject) or send us mail the old fashioned way to Scribe c/o The History Center of Olmsted County - 1195 West Circle Dr SW, Rochester, MN 55902.

Share what's on your mind! Maybe even suggest a snappy title for the section. We look forward to hearing from you!



Dear Editor,  
I shuddered a little when Len Wein took over *Batman* from David Freed. For while Wein is an imaginative writer, he is also a longwinded one with a tendency to make every balloon a soliloquy. But he is a reformed character, as the first few issues (concluding with #310) have proved.  
Not only has he compacted his style to regular syllable words without losing his ability to plan a story, he has also introduced half-a-dozen subplots into the series. *Batman* always had a strong lack of continuity that sometimes proved annoying, but things are now stronger than ever, wound like a steel coil and ready to spring.  
And wherever Irv Novick was hiding, mark the spot so he doesn't get away again. He is without doubt the best of the *Batman* artists, and his return made this issue a double pleasure. You have taken the old villains and the detective story and mixed them better than you have ever done before.  
Charles D. Brown  
39 Stockton Street  
Brentwood, New York 11717

Looking back over our time-worn archives to the first modern *Gentleman Ghost* story, we find no proof that the spirit of *Gentleman Jim* Craddock is indeed the criminal known as the *Gentleman Ghost*. As we read it, there's plenty of room for interpretation to prove it true, or false, as you will—and as the end caption of that story implies, inter what you will, we're not telling—and as is obvious from his conduct, the *Ghost* has already decided what his story is.  
Your other objections, curiously enough, are similar to some raised by editor emeritus Julie Schwartz when he took a friendly look over our shoulder at the final copy. Our best defense is that *Batman* is still a man firmly rooted in the real world, and uncomfortable with anything—or anyone—seemingly beyond his understanding. His justice-oriented mind can easily relate to *Deadman* and the *Spectre*, but he lacks even basic knowledge of why the *Ghost's* existence might be permitted.—PL

Good writers tend to suit their styles to the series they're writing, and the *Batman's* adventures naturally call for a terser delivery than, say, *The Phantom Stranger*, which Len has also done. So the change that struck you as such a pleasant surprise was one we expected.  
As for the sub-plot question, we're enthralled by the stories lurking behind the characters recently introduced in both *BATMAN* and *DETECTIVE* to follow both up in the months to come. That's the kind of continuity which was the reason we were given the whole *Batman* group of titles, and we aim to prove it was sound reasoning.—PL

Dear Editor,  
It was probably his seven year tenure drawing the Flash which accounted for the noticeable lack of starch so evident in his past *Batman* pencils, but Irv Novick's return in issue #310 turned my apprehension into solid enjoyment of a crisp storytelling too long absent from these pages with the untimely departure of Ernie Chan.  
The atmosphere was somber and moody and the *Gentleman Ghost* seemed to bask in each scene with all the conceit of Claude Rains at his finest, which made the novelty of his scheme to refurbish Wayne Manor in a decor a century or two removed even more enthralling.  
*Gentleman Ghost* seems to be a bit too supernatural for *Batman*, we might see some more wonderful Joe Kubert covers.  
Jeffrey Lovndes  
808 Sunst Street  
Scranton, Pennsylvania 18509

Dear Gothamites,  
I'm certainly glad to see one of my favorite villains, the *Gentleman Ghost*, back in *BATMAN* #310. The *Ghost* fits *Batman's* midnight world better than *Hawkman's* world of the ancient and futuristic mixed together, although now the *Ghost* has no one to do his ladies' man act with, as he did with *Hawkgirl*.  
But *Batman's* refusal to believe the *Ghost* is what he claims to be is less credible than *Hawkman's*. Both heroes know about *Deadman* and the *Spectre*, and *Batman* has encountered quite a few ghosts in his time. So why does he refuse to believe the *Gentleman* is a ghost, too? If he's not, how could he possibly pull off all these tricks? How could he control *Alfred*?  
Moreover, it's hard to sympathize with the hero's confusion about the *Ghost* when we, the readers, know positively that he is a spirit. We were given his story by an omniscient narrator (who wouldn't lie to us, right?) back in the first GG story, and nothing we've seen indicates that he isn't in fact a ghost. If he isn't, why does he claim he is when he's along with his mind-slave, *Alfred*, or with the woman psychic who once befriended him?  
*BATMAN* #310 was an enjoyable issue, and certainly many steps above last issue's *Blockbuster* atrocity, which contained so much saccharine it should've been banned by the Food and Drug Administration. But the *Ghost* story could have been better, and I'm sorry it wasn't.

Now, if you can think of any more *Hawkman* foes for *Batman*, we might see some more wonderful Joe Kubert covers.  
Peter Sanderson  
Room 521 Johnson Hall  
Columbia University  
411 West 116 Street  
New York, New York 10027

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We're not waiting for more "excuses" to get Kubert on the cover. Two covers already in our drawer for future issues, done in the fashion that once dominated both comics and pulp writing: the covers were plotted and designed before the tales that will now be written around them. At least one of the two is sure to appear by the end of the year.—PL

UNABASHED PLUG DEPARTMENT: If you get to your newsstand quickly, you might still find a copy of *DETECTIVE COMICS* #485 on sale, and get in on the beginning of the *Batman's* deadliest quest. It's the opening gambit in the war of the *League of Assassins*, and the price of admission is the death of a member of the *Batman* Family. Be there for "The Vengeance Vow" (and our other full-length stories, of course).  
And NEXT MONTH, in this magazine, *Robin* rejoins *Batman* in a different sort of story. On the one hand, it's a very human dilemma of people in trouble—and on the other, the return of one of the bizarrist villains ever to appear on the four color page. Join us in thirty days for *Crazy Quilt's* comeback in "Color Me Deadly!"—Paul Levitz.

Think of it like an old comic book letters page, if that helps you envision it!

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