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LANDSCAPING  
AT THE CASTLE

THE PRECIOUS  
NATURE OF TIME





# Landscaping at the Castle

by *Thea Hartzler*

**A**nnette Hollaway is originally from Chillicothe, Illinois. She has worked in landscaping for twenty-one years and has made the landscapes of many homes on Grandview Drive, corporate buildings, and other areas her life passion. She is currently the landscape manager for the Soderstrom Castle, and other properties owned by Dr. Carl Soderstrom. She oversees the





maintenance of the flowers, grounds, and all the season's beauty that encompasses the Castle. Her talent was recognized by Doug Hoerr on a visit from his Chicago based landscape company to the Castle. He commented on the beauty of the landscape at the Country Club of Peoria and suggested finding the person who had an eye for such beauty. Annette joined the Castle, initially working part-time for a couple of years and eventually took on the job full-time. The castle has never been happier!

Annette is masterful at planning the spring planting of hundreds of annual flowers, along with her unique skill set to create twenty magnificent and decorative flowerpots. When asked what she enjoys most she commented, *"I enjoy doing containers or container gardens. They allow for my creative side to really be seen by all who visit the Castle. Every container needs a start or focal point. It is personal for me, and I try to create containers suitable for any home."*

She cares for everything that blooms throughout the hot months, maintaining the gorgeous vivid pops of color featured around the Castle. As the leaves begin to turn, there can easily be 1,000 daffodil bulbs to plant, which will give way to new beauty the following spring. She maintains the grounds through the fall, raking and clearing a million



photos by Natalie Jackson

leaves from the massive oak trees and the glorious Maple trees seen along Grandview Drive. Annette has created her own recipe for the long-term seasonal care and what she feels works best. She states, *"But of course, everyone has their own techniques, helpful hints, and creative ideas to master the ever-changing Illinois climate."*

The English Garden, one of the newest masterpieces recently added to the Castle in 2021, is in the Sunken Garden surrounded by Arborvitae. It has come to life this year with much-needed care given by Annette. It is a particular treasure that requires attention almost daily. There are many varieties of flowers that bloom from early spring all the way through winter. Annette has continued to study and learn about the thirty varieties of flowers that enhance the garden. You

can see the Avenus with their colorful yellow flower blooming in early spring, then Russian Sage and Chinese Astilbe with late summer plumes of rich rose purple flowers. The beautiful Giant Hyssop and Liatris known as Blazing Star will give way to bright purple flower spikes in the fall.

Annette has another unique talent that adds beauty to special events and parties hosted at the Castle. She creates flower bouquets ranging from something as simple as a single vase to large centerpieces for the main dining room. She has an eye for color, table design, and an ability to make a room come to life. Be sure to check out the Castle this upcoming holiday season where you will see her amazing skills bring the Castle grounds to life with festive holiday decor!





# HEIGHTS

*Life*

A Social Magazine For The Residents Of Grandview Drive  
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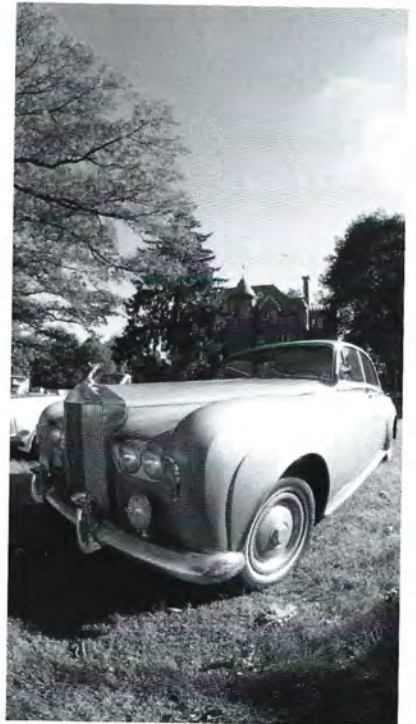
Contributed by resident Dr. Carl Soderstrom

# Rolls-Royce

*fall event at the castle*



Members of the Lake Michigan Region of the Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of America and Marisa Buchheit, opera singer/Miss Illinois 2014. Photography by Natalie Jackson-O'Neal



Photography by Buckman Portrait Art



Photography by Buckman Portrait Art



Photography by resident Amy Frank



Photography by resident Amy Frank





Carl Soderstrom, M.D. with his 1948 Silver Wraith Limousine. Made for a sheik, imported by MGM Studios for the James Bond movie, Spectre. Photography by Natalie Jackson-O'Neal



Photography by Buckman Portrait Art



Photography by resident Amy Frank



Dr. Carl Soderstrom and his red Rolls-Royce Corniche convertible. Photography by Natalie Jackson-O'Neal

**O**ctober brought the beautiful changing colors to the neighborhood, and also a rare event to Soderstrom castle - The Lake Michigan Region of Rolls-Royce Owners' Club of America Fall Event. Approximately 25 vintage Rolls-Royce motorcars arrived in the Peoria area for a fall gathering. The club gathers at different destinations throughout the Midwest to share with one another and enjoy the local scene.

Resident, Dr. Carl Soderstrom, hosted the most recent event at his home on Grandview Drive. The club membership is made up of both owners and those with a passion for Bentley and Rolls-Royce motorcars. They focus on preserving the history of the vintage vehicles from an era when the brands were still hand built. Many of the motorcars at the event are rare. One such vehicle is a Springfield Rolls-Royce (1 of 27) in honor of vehicles made in Springfield, Massachusetts in the 1920's and 1930's. When asked which model Rolls-Royce he preferred, Carl Soderstrom said with a smile, "The one I get to drive." Spoken like a true enthusiast.

Members were invited to share in many local area experiences. They stayed at the Par-A-Dice hotel, toured Wheels O' Time Museum and Caterpillar Visitors Center, enjoyed spa services at Skin Dimensions Day Spa, dined at Country Club of Peoria and visited Tanner's Orchard. A busy weekend filled with the sights and sounds of our area! Dr. Soderstrom also hosted a dinner for his friends one evening, featuring vocal entertainment by well-known soprano, Marisa Buchheit.

We wish to thank Dr. Soderstrom for sharing about the club, his friends and this unusual event with the neighborhood. Anyone with a love of vintage Rolls-Royce or Bentley motorcars who would like to learn more about the Lake Michigan Region Rolls-

Royce Owners' Club of America is welcome to check them out on-line or ask Carl Soderstrom.



If you would like to share your story with the neighborhood, please reach out to us at [heightslife@n2pub.com](mailto:heightslife@n2pub.com)

*Happy Holidays*

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# HEIGHTS

# Life

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See inside for details about fall  
community events & socials.



# MEET YOUR *Neighbors*

Contributed by Resident Carl W. Soderstrom, M.D.

## *Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

When I learned that the Castle, the famous Castle, was potentially for sale, I jumped at the opportunity. In late 2012 and in the winter of 2013, a friend of David Haase, Aaron Warr, talked to my son and daughter in law, Steve and Carrie Soderstrom, about selling the Castle. Carrie quickly got in touch with Rhonda Milburn, and I made a hasty visit to David Haase one afternoon.

David was an interesting and very intriguing fellow. A short visit to view the Castle turned out to be a three hour conversation of seemingly old friends, though we had just met. In the end, it became apparent that David loved the Castle and didn't want to leave. He needed to sell the Castle, so he could eventually move on to a home with fewer stairs, since he was ailing. Within that three hours, we discussed my purchasing the Castle, his remain-

ing in it as a rent free guest as long as he wished, and eventually, the two of us teaming up to write some of the history of the Castle in a book. David took a holiday cruise over Christmas and New Year's, and when he returned, the sale was signed. David remained there until the middle of August 2013, when he moved on to a new, old house, where he had grown up years ago. David passed away earlier this year.

I love castles. I have twice studied at New College in Oxford, England; once with my son, Bob, and another time with my son, Erik. My sons, Steve and Carl, have also visited England, and our interest in English architecture and gardens goes back many decades. Since David Haase had lived in the Castle for over forty years, the opportunity to purchase the Castle had not been a possibility. Castle architecture and English gardens have been a lifelong appreciation of mine.

Upon the sale of the house, rumors swirled around Grandview Drive. Of course, only a few asked me my real intentions, but some of the good humor involved, a) the Castle is becoming a spa (well, if anyone had seriously thought about it, since I have Peoria's signature spa just two miles away, why would I put another one at the Castle?); and b) that I was going to make a bed and breakfast out of the Castle. Those that know me well know that I don't know how to make a bed. And, when I'm on my diet, I usually have yogurt, berries, or cantaloupe for breakfast, and when I'm not on my diet, I have Krispy Kreme, so a bed and breakfast is out of the question. Not to mention the fact that this is a residential Castle on the World's Most Beautiful Drive.

Once the Castle was in my possession, we made an intense survey of the architecture and structural needs. My niece, Natalie Clemens, NCARB, LEED AP, is a licensed architect, having worked



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several years in Chicago and now studying at the Architecture Association School of Architecture, in London, England. She is the official Castle architect, and has been in charge of a multitude of repairs and renovations that were necessitated by time. These included such things as multiple leaky spots in the roof, broken windows, unused brass door latches, twenty five fire or life risky electrical wirings, air conditioning and heating, and many, many more items, including the sound system, the phone system, and many cleanings and upgrades to the indoor pool. Over the past two years, these improvements and upgrades have been methodically accomplished, and there is still more to go.

Somewhere in the near future, hopefully 2015, my good friend, Doug Hoerr of Hoerr Schaudt landscape design will be helping to make some upgrades and improvements to the outdoor landscaping. Doug has studied in England as well, and is a prominent, nationally recognized landscape designer.

The very first thing we did was to install a modern multisensory alarm and security system throughout the structure and premises.

My Swedish brother, Bo Persson, and his friend, Michelle Doury, an interior designer from Paris, have visited the Castle to give us further incredible ideas and thoughts.

The Castle has been in many commercial ventures over the years, including a book, "Melinda's Dollhouse," photographs, many stories about it, the Peoria Journal Star stories, video, Peoria magazines, and of course, a famous yard for photographs.



Carl Soderstrom, MD, Maestro George Stelluto and world renowned violinist Sarah Chang at the Peoria Symphony reception.



Halloween Festival at the Castle



Cooks Tour September 2014

We plan to put together a Castle Facebook page, which will encourage anyone who has ever had their family photographs, weddings, anniversary, or other, done at the Castle, to put them on the Friends of the Castle Facebook page.

I fully plan to enjoy this personal residence with friends and business associates and others to help further celebrate the Castle. We also plan to have it in ads and marketing material. We have already enjoyed many wonderful events, bringing the Castle back into the social scene, including the Peoria Zoo auction dinner, Miss Illinois and Miss Black Illinois photo shoots, local beauty queen photo shoots, the Peoria Medical Society Alliance, the Woodford County Automobile Club, the Peoria Symphony Orchestra receptions, and many other personal social occasions. Also, I plan to continue Castle traditions, such as the Festival of Halloween, and welcome anyone to use this magnificent backdrop for photographs for graduations, weddings, or the like, to continue the legacy that is the Castle.

Yours very truly,  
CARL W. SODERSTROM, M.D.

Get to know your neighbors by having your family featured in the next available issue! Email [cheryl.schlumpf@n2pub.com](mailto:cheryl.schlumpf@n2pub.com) to be a future featured family.





# HEIGHTS *Life*

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**CLASSICS AT THE CASTLE!**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BUCKMAN PORTRAIT ART



**YOUR STORIES. YOUR PHOTOS. YOUR COMMUNITY.**





# HEIGHTS

# *Neighborhood*

## *Classics At The Castle*

Photography by Buckman Portrait Art

Many people are drawn to Grandview Drive for the magnificent view, but, on July 16, there was more than the landscape capturing attention – the National Antique Oldsmobile Club cruised to the Castle! The club holds its national annual meet in a different location around the country each year, and this was the first time the event came to central Illinois. Dr. Carl Soderstrom hosted a luncheon at his home on Grandview Drive, which is known to most as the “Castle.”

Antique Oldsmobile owners brought their cars to central Illinois from 25 different states for the event, which was coordinated locally by Phil Fischer of Metamora. The oldest Oldsmobile at the event was a 1905 from Minneapolis, MN. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful location and history that Grandview Drive has to offer. Dr. Soderstrom catered the luncheon from the Country Club of Peoria, and the rain cleared off just in time to enjoy viewing the rare automobiles.

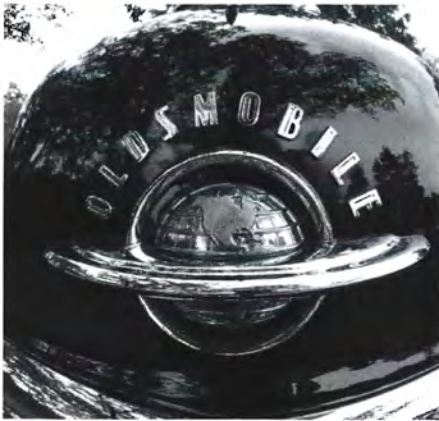
The automobiles remained on display in East Peoria for several days, as the event continued with a full slate of activities. Two long time attendees even held their wedding reception during the national convention. Rick and Stacy Winn were married in Texas in May of this year but chose to celebrate with their Oldsmobile friends!

We wish to thank Dr. Soderstrom and Phil Fischer for the opportunity to share in this unique event. If you are interested in more information on the National Antique Oldsmobile Club, you can find more on their website: [www.antiqueolds.org](http://www.antiqueolds.org).





Rick & Stacy Winn celebrate their recent marriage with Oldsmobile friends.



Phil Fischer, Dr. Carl Soderstrom, Jim Schultz (NAOC President) with a 1905 Oldsmobile.

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# RUNABOUTS To ROCKETS

The Monthly Magazine of  
The National Antique Oldsmobile Club

FEBRUARY 2016

*Featured Photo*  
Natalie Jackson O'Neal  
Peoria, Illinois

Tour of Private Castle Collection  
Peoria, Illinois





# Better Late Than Never Department...



Meet Host Phil Fischer, Dr. Soderstrom and President Jim Schultz in East Peoria

## —Editor's Note

The 2015 NAOC National Meet was one for the record books. Not only were all years and models of Oldsmobiles in attendance, the tours and events were excellent and the meet turned a large profit for the NAOC—all thanks to Meet Host Phil Fischer.

Phil followed up by sending the Editor a DVD in September and an announcement was to be made about the availability of the DVD to the membership. Waiting for copy, I held onto the DVD without viewing it and a couple of months went by with no announcement. Then it turned out to be blank and another was sent. Editor sincerely regrets the error and delay.

The good news is that the DVD is available now! See some of the more than 600 photos on these pages, then get your copy from Phil.



—Phil writes, "The professional photographer, Natalie Jackson O'Neal, hired by Dr. Soderstrom, has provided us with DVDs with over 600 spectacular photographs of our 2015 National Meet. There are all kinds of conventional and many very unique pictures. For your copy, send \$5.00 to Phil Fischer, 605 W. Mt. Vernon St., Metamora, IL 61548. We have 50 copies containing 649 pictures taken at the Castle and show field. Individual pictures can be ordered from the photographer; her contact info will be provided with each DVD order. All the photos are copyrighted. There is no profit, this charge is for the DVD case, mailer and postage. When the 50 DVDs are sold there will be no more! You may also be able to see the majority of the pictures on her web site, NatalieJacksonONeal.com. You may also contact her directly by telephone at 309-674-7546 (extension 231), by email at natjack007@aol.com or by mail, Natalie Jackson O'Neal, 305 SW Water St., 2nd floor, Peoria, IL 61615.

Dr. Soderstrom and Warren Danz are good friends of mine and they were very generous during the meet. In addition to their providing tours and food, they provided funds which enabled me to turn in the highest "profit" ever recorded from a national meet. Many thanks to them."

—Phil Fischer (#4486)  
Metamora, Illinois





# 2015 NAOC Meet: Natalie Jackson O'Neal Photography

