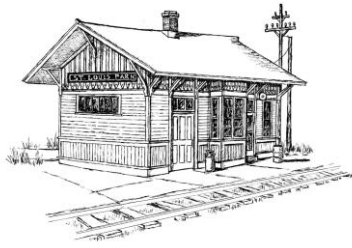


THE



RE-ECHO

Newsletter of the St. Louis Park Historical Society

Volume 12 No. 4

Issue No. 50

CELEBRATE THE '70s!

Remember green shag carpet, lava lamps, the Captain & Tennille, and the soundtrack from “Saturday Night Fever”? We’ve got ‘em! And we’re turning the Historic Milwaukee Road Depot into a winter wonderland from the ‘70s. Last year several historical societies got together for a special event where they each decorated their spaces for the holidays in different decades. This year we’re joining Fridley and Richfield, and the ‘70s is our theme. Come see the Depot’s waiting room transformed into a green shag living room, decorated with items those of us “of a certain age” will remember from childhood (or you younger folks from granny’s house). We may even turn the Agent’s Office into a disco ala Uncle Sam’s!

The event spans several days so you have many opportunities to come join us. This would be a great time for all you “Flashbacks of St. Louis Park” Facebookers to visit us and each other Face to Face at the Historical Society. The dates and times are:

Saturday and Sunday, November 29 & 30, 1-4pm
Tuesday December 3, 6:30-8:30pm
Saturday and Sunday, December 6 & 7, 1-4pm
Tuesday, December 10, 6:30-8:30pm
Saturday and Sunday, December 13 & 14, 1-4 pm

Do you have items from the 1970s you could lend us for the month of November and December? We would love to see what you have and add some of your treasures to the exhibit. We especially need a St. Louis Park letter jacket (vintage 1970s, of course) and other ‘70s icons. For a holiday touch we’d like the loan of an artificial Christmas tree (tall and skinny) and ornaments and Hanukkah decorations.

Want to help with the exhibit? We will need extra volunteers during the dates. We also need a few helpers to bake cookies. Please contact Kathy Johnson with donation ideas or to volunteer: call 952-926-5040 or email drjksj@msn.com

The event is absolutely free, with donations gladly accepted. Better yet, sign up to become a member of the St. Louis Park Historical Society for the 2014 calendar year and support us all year ‘round.

Hope to see you there! The Depot is at 37th and Brunswick Ave. So.

DONATIONS

The Historical Society is extremely grateful for all of the generous donations we have received since the last *Re-Echo*. This has been a phenomenal response and we can't wait to get our own museum so we can display these – and so many of our other artifacts – so that everyone can see them!

Jackie Morlock sent in an article about her store, The Left Center, which she owned from 1977 to 1982. The store, at 4400 Excelsior Blvd., had everything from soup ladles to power saws, all designed for left-handed people. Read more about this unique store at www.slphistory.org/history/leftcenter.asp

Carol Hartvigsen, our true blue Hanke descendant, sent a box just full of old photos of her Hanke and Watson relatives. Christopher Hanke was one of Park's first pioneers, homesteading on Excelsior Blvd. Louise Hanke married Dr. John Watson and they lived at 38th and France Ave. That house has new owners who are restoring it, and Carol couldn't be happier!

Not exactly a donation but a trade: After inventorying St. Louis Park Directory holdings around town it was discovered that the Minneapolis Downtown Library had duplicates of three directories that we did not have, and we had several duplicates that they didn't have, so a trade was made. Many thanks to Minneapolis Librarian JoEllen Haugo for working with us on this. We now have 1952, 1954, and 1960 directories – very important boom years in the Park!

Manny Camilon. What can we say about Manny? He's a City Inspector, loves antiques, and is incredibly artistic and creative. The list of great things he's brought us is a long one: an old pill box from Brookside Drug, dog tags from Park Pet Hospital, copies of the *Echo*, and other school-related items, including an underground school newspaper called *The Current* that was published in 1970. Manny also looked at our list of things we needed done from the last *Re-Echo* and volunteered for three of them! He's taken on the restoration of the tiles that were removed from Brookside School before it was turned into condos. It will be tricky work, but we have faith in Manny!

Paul Pegors brought in three copies of a CD version of the 1946 Oriolians record. If you want to borrow one just let us know.

Marcy Byers got the word that we have NO school photos from Park Knoll, so she sent in one of hers. A start of a collection, we hope!

Dick Sigurdson left town and gave up his beloved Roger's Gas Station coffee mug. This was a tremendous sacrifice but a great addition to our collection!

Mark Toretsky continues his quest for business history in the Park, and donated a video of the 2013 Parktacular Parade and a 1987 City map.

Mark Lapakko dropped off the cutest artifact: a combination bottle opener and phone dialer that says "Bunny's is for Swingers!" Mind you, in the mid' 1960s, "Swingers" only meant people who were cool. See this delightful implement in our showcase at Lenox.

Mary Lorvick, Mary Lorvick: How can we thank you for donating your (husband's) 45 record collection from the '60s?! They represent all of the major recordings by bands in the Twin Cities put out on Amos Heilicher's Soma and Garrett labels. Heilicher had many St. Louis Park ties – at one time he was a resident, and his company merged with Musicland, which had its distribution center on Excelsior Blvd. These great records include three by the Trashmen; two by the Castaways, the Chancellors, and the Underbeats; and one each by the Del Counts and St. Louis Park's own High Spirits. Oh, and Mary also gave us a milk bottle from the Baldwin Dairy, which was on Excelsior Blvd. for a brief time.

Elizabeth Fuller graduated from Park in 1939 and is still going strong. She had a scrapbook from one of her class reunions and her daughter, Gail Fuller Girard, scanned everything to a DVD for us. Elizabeth grew up in Brookside and still remembers who lived where when she was growing up!

Paul Linnee, brother of distinguished alum Susan Linnee and cousin of SLP Historical Society Trustee Bob Jorvig, found some old *Echo* newspapers for us. Always great to add to our *Echo* collection!

WHERE THE BODIES ARE BURIED!

This is a chapter in the continuing saga of the Pest House. Not familiar with the Pest House? Technically it was the Minneapolis Quarantine Hospital – a place for people with contagious diseases like smallpox, diphtheria, and such to be sent so as not to infect other patients in Minneapolis hospitals. Since it was located in St. Louis Park but owned by Minneapolis, its history has been difficult to track, but lately there have been new developments.

The City of Minneapolis purchased 8.7 acres in what would become St. Louis Park for a "quarantine station" in 1883, three years before Park was incorporated as a village. The site was described as "in an isolated place," which the area certainly was at the time. It was located on Minnetonka Blvd. south to the railroad tracks, between approximately Kipling and Joppa Avenues. It was gone before Highway 7 was built in 1934, but the section south of where the Highway is now, where the cottages were located, is now the Diamond Hill building. The part that was between Minnetonka and Highway 7 – now Park Place Apartments – was a Potters Field (cemetery).

Conditions at the Quarantine Hospital in the late 1880s appeared to be dicey, according to available information, with orders to clean the place up. The responsibility for it also seemed to bounce around from department to department within the City of Minneapolis. But they must have cleaned it up: the Aldermen of the City made annual inspection trips, and in 1899 one exclaimed, "I wish I had the smallpox, just for the privilege of coming out here and spending a few weeks. It is one of the finest places I have ever visited."

The folks in St. Louis Park weren't too fond of it; in a classic show of hindsight, in 1892 the Village Council passed an ordinance prohibiting "the erection or maintenance of hospitals or pesthouses within St. Louis Park for the treatment, harboring, or care of persons sick from infectious or contagious diseases and prohibiting the sending, bringing or coming into [SLP] of persons so afflicted."

Although most of the patients at the hospital had horrible diseases, some were just there while their houses were being fumigated and some just to make sure they weren't contagious to others. Ben Welter of the *StarTribune* recently posted a story on his blog about a Valentine's Day party in 1902 subtitled "Merry Social Function Given by Pitted Smallpox Patients." Part of it reads:

According to [a] report, life is a continuous round of pleasure at the public institution referred to. There are afternoon card parties, evening whist tournaments, debating tilts, spelling bees, and not a day passes that there is not some jovial amusement that drives away dull care, and many a friendship is made at the pest house that in future may be more productive of happiness than those at the seashore hotels.

But starting in about 1914 St. Louis Park started getting serious about ousting the Pest House. Because, as it turns out, Potters Field was not just a burial ground for those who had died at the Pest House, but it was THE cemetery for any dead person in Minneapolis who simply had no other place to go. The *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* described:

The practice was begun of burying the pauper dead in the same plat of ground without consulting the village officials. Several hundred bodies have been buried there, it is said, without so much as a notification to the village health department. For the last two or three years it has been the practice, according to the commercial club members, for long trenches to be dug for the graves. When a body is buried it is incased in a rough pine box and placed in the trench beside the coffin of the last pauper. In Summer the coffins are well covered with earth, but in Winter the coffins near the unused end of the trench are covered very lightly. Sometimes, after a windy day, the surface covering of earth is blown away, according to the protestors, and as many as two or three coffins lying near the end of the trench are exposed.

The contagious hospital is located near the street car line. Often, residents of the village say, convalescent patients discharged from the place take the cars while their faces are still scarred from disease and their clothing is heavy with the odor of formaldehyde. While not perhaps in a condition to spread disease the appearance of much patients, the villagers say, is sufficient to ensue a near panic.

THE PEST HOUSE, Continued

The Pest House was finally closed in 1918 but caretaker John O. "Jack" Johnson continued to rent a house on the property. People referred to his children as the "Pest House Johnson Kids." A series of at least five photographs were taken of the grounds in 1921, which showed that the buildings were still standing. In 1922 the City of Minneapolis briefly floated the idea of turning the site into a tuberculosis sanitarium, but St. Louis Park passed an ordinance against hospitals (apparently forgetting about the 1892 ordinance) and threatened to take the City to court, and it was dropped.

In order to sell the property Minneapolis had to move the bodies, and kids of that era, now in their 80s, remember the men from the Workhouse digging them up. But where did they go? After chasing red herring after false rumor for years with no answers, all of a sudden there are huge breakthroughs! It seems that John Ryan was searching for an ancestor who had been buried at the cemetery, and had the smarts to contact Bob McCune, Records Coordinator for the City of Minneapolis and coincidentally a 1964 graduate of Park High. Bob and John used their research skills and access to records to answer these burning questions!

At first an arrangement was made to cremate the bodies at Lakewood Cemetery and bury the ashes at Crystal Lake Cemetery. However, Lakewood could not keep up and the deal was discontinued. It was then decided that there was "plenty of space at Crystal Lake for the bodies to be buried without cremation, and that the cost would only be \$4 per box." Bodies were removed in 1927 and 1928. To many peoples' surprise (especially ours!) there turned out to be nearly 3,000 bodies buried in Potters Field! On July 10, 1928, Minneapolis announced that the project had been completed, leaving the property "in a very fine and presentable condition." The Committee on Penal and Correctional Institutions commended "the Superintendent and his staff for the very efficient manner in which the work was carried out with Workhouse labor, without any disturbance or any attempt to escape."

CODA

In 1947-48, during the installation of the water line for the five large apartment buildings (variously called Park Point and Burning Tree) that now occupy the cemetery site, the dragging equipment dredged up portions of wood containers, clothing, and even some human remains. This discovery was reportedly hushed up by the builder of the apartments, who suspected that the secret in the dirt below might dissuade potential renters of the apartments above.

In 1955 the part of the property south of Highway 7, which had stood empty for many years, was developed into the Reinhard Brothers Building at 4301 Highway 7. This is now the Diamond Hill building.

In 1988 some of the dead had not reached their designated final home, as renovation work yielded human remains – on October 31. Assistant State Archaeologist Barbara O'Connell determined that the remains consisted of two jaw bones belonging to a male in his late 20s or early 30s and a bone fragment from an infant's leg. Who knows if the ground below doesn't play host to yet more of St. Louis Park's more unfortunate guests from the Big City?

Bob McCune says, "While it seems that the Potter's Field occupants have been overlooked by history and their fate a possible indignity, all the activity surrounding the business of removing and replanting their remains suggests that a thorough and careful operation took place to assure that they could be afforded a modicum of dignity."

MORE TO COME...

And there are still more questions to answer. What happened to the buildings and when? Who did the City sell the land to? Who were these poor souls? Are their graves marked at Crystal Lake? As to the last two, John Ryan says that Minneapolis took meticulous records of the people who were buried in Potter's Field, and he's working on a database that matches up with data from Crystal Lake. Stay tuned for more developments! For updates, photos and more information, visit our Web site at www.slphistory.org/history/pesthouse.asp

THIS 'N' THAT

VETERANS MEMORIAL: Mr. Refugio “Cookie” Rivera stopped by the Depot one Saturday and brought in some things from the VFW left over from when Park’s chapter disbanded. Included was a large sketch of the building, a cap, pins, and a photo of a Veterans’ Memorial that preceded the Amphitheater in Wolfe Park. It turned out that there was another Veterans’ Memorial placed by the American Legion, consisting of two plaques on a very large rock. It was placed in a rather obscure location in Carpenter Park, and after consulting with Bill MacMillan of the American Legion, Rick Beane, Superintendent of Parks, had it moved to a more appropriate and visible location at the Veterans’ Memorial in Wolfe Park. Thanks to everyone who made this happen! Photos of all of these memorials can be seen at www.slphistory.org/history/war.asp

THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS! In an answer to our request for help, Dolores Lenore and her husband James Jenkins volunteered to place photos of our 52 parks in our City Parks photo album. They did a perfect job and we thank them for spending their time helping us. There’s still lots to be done, so if you’re looking for a winter project, please let us know! It would be great if someone wanted to honcho an “Antiques Roadshow” event for us – we already have a volunteer appraiser who’s done this for other Historical Societies.

GIVE TO THE MAX DAY is Thursday, November 14. This is an opportunity for nonprofits to raise funds easily and efficiently and compete for extra donations throughout the day. There are five Power Hours that increase our chances of receiving additional funds: 2:00-2:59 a.m.; 5:00-5:59 a.m.; 5:00-5:59 p.m.; 6:00-6:59 p.m.; and 11:00-11:59 p.m. We don’t have a mechanism to collect donations by credit card or paypal, so this is a great way to make your donation to the Historical Society. To make your donation, just go to giveMN.org on November 14. Thank you for any donation you can give!

GREAT REUNIONS: There were several reunions this summer, and two really stood out. First was the 50th Reunion of the Class of 1963. Judy Anderson Hole and the rest of the committee put on a textbook event that people said was “magical!” Activities included golf, a memorial gathering at Oak Hill Park, grade school mini-reunions, a pep fest, and a dinner. The class also raised \$4,500 to be given out as scholarships. Well done!

The other notable reunion was the 70th Reunion of the Class of 1943. There were 19 participants at a lunch at the Doubletree, and these sprightly octogenarians had fun telling stories and getting caught up. A photographer from the *St. Louis Park Magazine* took pictures, so keep an eye out for them in an upcoming issue. It was so interesting talking to these members of the Greatest Generation. One explained how the boys had to enlist in the service before they were 18 or they would be drafted, so there were literally no boys at commencement that year as they were already off to war. And there was an oft-told story about how two members of the class were reunited at a POW camp in Germany – imagine bumping into your classmate in such a situation!

MEMBERSHIP TIME COMING UP: A million thanks to the 208 members who supported us in 2013! We get all of our financial support through memberships. We are on a calendar year, so all memberships are up for renewal in January. Memberships received now until the end of 2013 will count toward 2014. Please fill out the enclosed form or download one from <http://www.slphistory.org/about/default.asp> under Become a Member.

GOODBYE, RICK BIRNO! We were saddened to learn that our very best friend, Recreation Superintendent Rick Birno, left for a job up north in Golden Valley. He had been the driving force behind our preliminary efforts to obtain a museum of our own, and we were very sad to see him go. Everyone in the City has been great to us, but Rick is special. We wish him well in his new job!

OFFICERS RE-ELECTED: At our Annual Meeting in September, Bob Jorvig, Sue Ainsworth, and Barb Reiss were re-elected to three-year terms as Trustees on the Board of Directors. President John Olson and Secretary Kathy Spence Johnson are entering the third year of their three-year terms, and Henry Solmer was reappointed Treasurer. We currently have no Vice President and have openings for two additional Trustees. Please consider becoming active in the Historical Society – we need your input and ideas!

IT'S ALL IN THE FAMILY... BUSINESS, THAT IS!

What a great idea for an article in the *Re-Echo*: Multigenerational businesses in the Park. Turns out, almost all of them are! These are some of them, but there are most likely many more. If you are in a “family business” and are not mentioned here, please contact us and we’ll be sure to include you, either on the web site, the next *Re-Echo*, or both.

NORDIC WARE, the big daddy of them all, was founded by brothers David and Mark Dalquist and friend Donald Nygren in 1946. The company has been phenomenally successful, especially with sales of its bundt pan, and has never wavered in its support of St. Louis Park and the SLP Historical Society. David Dalquist’s son David III has run the company for many years.

TOM MOTZKO was one of Park’s earliest plumbers, arriving in the Village in the 1920s. Word has it he made as much money selling bathtub gin as he did installing bathtubs! Tom’s sons Frank and Cletus became plumbers, and Frank’s sons Joe and Phillip are still in the business.

JENNINGS: And speaking of bootleggers, Mike Jennings reportedly ran one of the many establishments on Excelsior Blvd. where one could get some refreshment during Prohibition. The first liquor license issued after Prohibition ended in 1934 was to Harriet W. Jennings, Mike’s wife. Jennings’ Tavern was a fun place to go dining and dancing. Mike’s son Jim took over the business when Mike died in 1951, and owned Timothy O’Toole’s and Gipper’s before Excelsior and Grand displaced them. Jennings still owns the Excelsior Blvd. liquor store.

VESCIO’S: Frank T. Vescio founded Vescio’s Restaurant in Dinkytown in 1956. In 1983 grandson Fred Vescio, along with his mother Charlotte Vescio, expanded the restaurant tradition with the opening of the second location in St. Louis Park. Fred’s wife Theresa and their son Frank now run the St. Louis Park restaurant.

SNYDER ELECTRIC was started in 1960 by Jim Snyder. His father, Clifford Snyder, was an also an electrician and worked for the company when it first started. Jim’s brother, Jerry Snyder, joined the company later, as well as another brother, Jack Snyder. The company is currently owned and operated by Jerry’s son, Pat Snyder. Jerry’s daughter Aimee is the Office Manager. They are located at 6102 Excelsior Blvd.

MIRACLE MILE was owned by Leo Corrigan, Sr. as of the mid 1950s. When he died his properties were divided among his family and Miracle Mile became a holding of Intercity Investments, owned by Leo’s son-in-law, Burt Jordan, who still owns it today.

KOVAL’S APPLIANCE at 4317 Excelsior Blvd. was started by Ben Koval in 1946 in North Minneapolis. Ben was assisted by his sister-in-law, Harriet, who still runs the company today. Ben moved the store to St. Louis Park in 1966. He died in 2002 but his son Jeffrey and Jeffrey’s son Ryan carry on the family business.

REDDY RENTS: In December 1962 Bill Jasper and John (Jack) Fitzgerald began doing business as J&F Reddy Rents at 4909 Excelsior Blvd. at Quentin. In 1989 Jack moved the company’s St. Louis Park store to a larger building at 3320 Republic Ave., and the company now concentrates on the rental of trucks, cars, trailers, and general rental equipment. Jack passed away in 2008 but his daughters Rachel Fitzgerald O’Brien and Maureen Fitzgerald continue to run the business.

CITIZENS’ INDEPENDENT BANK: Connie Bakken bought this St. Louis Park icon in 1980. Connie’s son Brad Bakken was elected president/CEO in July 1998.

PAVEK MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING: Speaking of the Bakkens, Earl Bakken was a major force in starting the Pavek in 1984. His son Jeff is now the Executive Director and Chairman of the Board, and Jeff’s daughters have also worked at the museum, which is located at 3517 Raleigh Ave.

FAMILY BUSINESSES IN THE PARK, Continued

BUNNY'S was originally owned and operated by Henry Aretz, and his family actually lived behind the bar for a time. On January 1, 1988, father and son Sherman and Gary Rackner bought the bar. Sherman Rackner passed away in 1997. In January 1999 Gary brought in a new business partner, Steve Koch, and they moved the bar down the street to 5916 Excelsior to make way for Excelsior and Grand.

HOIGAARD'S: Conrad Hoigaard founded the business in Minneapolis in 1895. His son Cyrus J. Hoigaard took over the business in 1947. The company moved to St. Louis Park in 1960. Cyrus's son Conrad J. Hoigaard II became President of the company in 1975. In October 2006 the store moved to Miracle Mile. The company was sold to Vail Resorts in 2013.

PARK TAVERN was originally on Minnetonka Blvd. and Louisiana Ave. Ben Weber bought the tavern on September 9, 1957. In 1979 the City had plans to widen Louisiana and forced the Tavern to move. In 1980 Ben built a new entertainment complex at 3401 Louisiana, only blocks away. The bar was expanded and bowling was added. Ben Weber died in 1990 and left the bar to son Phil and daughter Diane. In 1999 the complex was remodeled to accommodate 200 people. The Park Tavern is one of the city's most popular venues today.

SCHADOW INSURANCE: Gene Schadow was one of the most active members of the Park community in the 1950s through the 70s, insuring most every bar and restaurant along Excelsior Blvd. Son Bruce joined the firm in 1965, and son Mark in 1971, working out of the Schadow Building at 6100 Excelsior Blvd. Gene retired in 1980 and died on February 25, 2000. Mark is still in the insurance business in Golden Valley.

TEXA TONKA SHOPPING CENTER was built by Adolph Fine, who also built hundreds of homes in St. Louis Park. The shopping center and other properties are still owned by Fine's son Jeffrey.

THE YNGVE FAMILY OF ATTORNEYS: This is one of the best examples of a family business! Anton Yngve became a lawyer late in life in 1932 at the age of 58. In October 1942 he was appointed Justice of the Peace. He also served for three years on the St. Louis Park school board. His wife Esther graduated law school in 1941 at the age of 47. Anton and Esther Yngve started St. Louis Park's first law firm, Yngve and Yngve, in January 1941, first located in the Park Theater Building. Son John Yngve took his law degree from the University of Minnesota. In 1962 he was elected to the State Legislature. And son Albert, born in 1929, graduated from Park High in 1947. He attended the Minneapolis College of Law and entered the bar in 1957. He practiced in St. Louis Park for ten years. Albert eventually changed careers and went into the travel business, owning Travel Specialists, Inc.

LERUM AUTOMOTIVE (6329 Lake Street) has been in St. Louis Park for over 20 years. Dean Lerum is the owner and his nephew Tim Lerum has been the manager/service adviser for the past 15 years. Dean now works at the Richfield location and his son Andrew Lerum has just started working at St Louis Park location last summer after spending five years in the Marine Corps.

THE ROLLER GARDEN was purchased by Russell C. Johnston in 1969. Johnston's son-in-law, Bill Sahly, took over management, and it is still very much a family business.

DR. IRVING POSNICK began his dental practice in St. Louis Park in 1949 at 3400 Dakota Ave, just around the corner from the High School. In 1976 his son Steven (SLP Class of 1968) joined him in practice. Irving retired from dentistry in 1991 after serving and caring for his patients for 42 yrs. Irving's son Rick (Class of 1975) is also a dentist, practicing in Colorado.

More information about these and other business can be found at <http://www.slphistory.org/history/businesses.asp>

The Re-Echo
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The St. Louis Park Historical Society was founded in 1971 to collect, preserve, and disseminate the history of the City of St. Louis Park, Minnesota. The archives of the Society are located in the Historic Depot in Jorvig Park (37th and Brunswick) and at the Lenox Community Center (6715 Minnetonka Blvd.). Office hours at the Lenox site are Thursdays from 10 to noon, and by appointment.

Our mailing address is 3700 Monterey Drive, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Our Web Site is www.slphistory.org

Our email address is history@slphis.org

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KJ JA HS FR