

P1 / FEATURE ARTICLE

Inside the Milwaukee Road Depot and the inspired efforts to save the depot.

P2 / RECENT DONATIONS

A WWI uniform, SLP baseball memorabilia, Jaycee's jacket and neighborhood improvement association documents.

P5 / CP HOLIDAY TRAIN

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train returns to St. Louis Park for the second year in a row.

P7 / MEMBERSHIP & GIVING

Your support helps us collect, preserve and share our history. Become a member, donate or volunteer now!



REeCHO

PARK HISTORY TODAY

Collect. Preserve. Share.

Volume 16.4 / Autumn 2017



OUR HISTORY AND THE HISTORIC MILWAUKEE ROAD DEPOT

ADAPTED FROM JEANNE ANDERSEN'S ARTICLE ON OUR WEBSITE BY INGRID MOE

As the year winds down and the weather changes, our attention turns inward and homeward. It is fitting then, that we turn our attention to the symbol of the St. Louis Park Historical Society: the Milwaukee Road Depot. The Depot was saved from demolition in the late 1960s by Marie Hartmann, a lifelong citizen of the Park and an especially dedicated and persistent collector of information, documents and memorabilia that documented the City's history. She led the Historical Society until her death in 1996.

Built in 1887, the Depot of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (known also as the Milwaukee Road) was originally located just south of the tracks, at 36th Street and Alabama Avenue. Given the ornamentation on the gable and exterior surfaces, it is said to be in the Eastlake style, named for Charles Lock Eastlake, an English architect and designer of

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

NEW TO OUR COLLECTION

A World War I Naval uniform worn by the father of longtime Society member **Jack Hagen** has been added to our collection. Jack's father moved to St. Louis Park in 1923.



Mark Jackson donated files and a Jaycees jacket from 1954-55 worn by his father, Duane Jackson, who was a founding member of the St. Louis Park Jaycees.



In addition, Mark donated papers related to the West Side Neighborhood Improvement Association, which Duane Jackson headed during that same time period. While the Jackson family

moved to Iowa many decades ago, Mark tracked us down to find a good home for the jacket and documents.

Leslie Ostrem donated scorebooks, photos, news clippings, handwritten statistics, schedules and more items collected by her father, Ron Ostrem. Ron coached many baseball teams in St. Louis Park between 1954 and 1966 and his 1959 Paper Calmenson Babe Ruth team won the state tournament! Though Ron passed away in 2012, Leslie brought this goldmine of St. Louis Park Little League and Babe Ruth history back home to us.

Recruiting Volunteers

We are in need of a volunteer to scan pictures and organize the materials, including other Little League scans sent in by **Charles M. Grisham**. Please contact us if you are interested in helping out here!

HISTORIC DEPOT LIGHTING CEREMONY



The St. Louis Park Historical Society invites you to join us at our 3rd annual holiday tradition!

We'll turn on the holiday lights at the Depot and enjoy live music, seasonal refreshments and cheer!

Dec. 2 at 6 p.m.
Historic Milwaukee Road Depot
in Jorvig Park
37th St. and Brunswick Ave.

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I find myself reflecting on the things for which I am grateful as a new holiday season approaches. In a time marked by charged political rhetoric, numerous natural disasters and tragic events, I am so thankful to have a loving family, to be in good health and to live in a close-knit and secure community. These feelings of gratitude extend to the large and growing community of people who care about the history of St. Louis Park.

That community of history lovers was felt most recently when we hosted a fundraiser at the Copperwing Distillery. Located in the Elmwood neighborhood, Copperwing is not far from the site of some of the city's original saloons dating back to the early 1900s. While there, I had a couple conversations at the event with members about WWI and WWII. They shared some stories they knew, but also wondered what information we had about how the wars impacted our community and wanted to hear more from those who served. Our website contains information about our community during times of war and about the men and women who served in the Civil War, WWI, WWII and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Have a look at what's on the site at slphistory.org/war and please feel free to share photos, memoirs or items related to this topic. We have less information from veterans of more recent wars and would like to honor those stories as well.

If you are in town on Saturday, Dec. 2, I hope you will drop by the Depot at 5:30 p.m. when we turn on the holiday lights for the season. Now in its third year, I enjoy this new tradition when we can briefly reconnect and remember how our Society started back in 1971 by saving that very Depot building from being lost to history.

In other news, we are working on more events for next year. We hope to have another big speaker in the spring and a presentation or two on new topics of interest. In the coming year, though, we need your help to make our desires realities. Please reach out to anyone on the Board if you want to learn how you can contribute; we can easily find an opportunity that fits your desires, available time and skill set. What will the future bring? While the possibilities are many, one is an event focusing on our veterans with the help of your photos and stories!

Best wishes this holiday season,

Ted



CONNECT WITH US

Stop by: 3546 Dakota Ave. S., Suite C
St. Louis Park
Saturdays, 1-4 p.m.,
and by appointment

Call: 952-583-9893

Email: history@slphis.org

Visit online: www.slphistory.org

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Founded in 1971, the St. Louis Park Historical Society collects, preserves and shares the history of St. Louis Park. The *ReEcho: Park History Today* is an official publication of the Society.

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furniture. Originally it was chocolate brown accented by green door frames, and it is believed that the original roof was cedar shingle. During the 1920s, the depot was painted bright yellow with orange trim. The original roof was replaced with asphalt in 1954.

By 1893 the Milwaukee Road provided two trains a day into Minneapolis with two return runs. The train carried passengers until 1955. Freight included farm products, scrap materials during war years, coal and even caps and gowns for Park High graduations.



Jack Felber and Edith Rue

John A. "Jack" Felber was the depot agent for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific (Milwaukee Road) from February 25, 1925 to 1966. The photo above is of Felber and Clerk Edith Rue, as published in the *Minneapolis Star* on February 1, 1955. The photo provides a look at the inside of the Depot when it was in use, including the original potbellied stove.

When the railroad discontinued use of the Depot in 1968, it threatened to tear the building down. Marie Hartmann headed a "Save the Depot" committee that got the building on the National Register of Historic Places on Nov. 25, 1969. The Milwaukee Road donated the building to the City, and, with the help of a Federal grant, the committee was instrumental



Marie Hartmann

in getting the Depot moved to Jorvig Park in August 1970. At that time, the only furnishing in the building was an oil can. Marie and her group were successful in obtaining many artifacts, often from the Milwaukee Road. One example was the potbellied stove; the railroad shipped that in from Denver. Other changes have served to maintain the Depot. Since its move in 1970, it has been partially or completely repainted in 1970, 1971, 1973, 1998, and 2008. In 2011, the City replaced the furnace, installed air conditioning, replaced rotted interior boards, installed a ceiling in the baggage room and made one of the sliding baggage doors functional.

After Marie's death in 1996, the Historical Society had to regroup and the collection was moved to various locations until it was returned to the Depot. Great strides were made in 2004 when the group rented space from Lenox Community Center and purchased new furniture in which to keep much of the collection. Materials pertaining strictly to the railroad, as well as other oversized or fragile materials, are retained at the Depot.

In 2014 the Historical Society moved its office from Lenox to 3546 Dakota Ave. Because most of the research materials that had been stored in the Depot were moved to the new office, the Depot is primarily used for storage and is available for tours by appointment only. However, it is open for special events, such as the holiday lighting, and open houses scheduled during the summer. A memoir about the Milwaukee Road Depot written by the daughter of Depot Agent Jack Felber is available in *Something in the Water*.

PARK HISTORY TODAY eNEWSLETTER

Stay current on our new programs, merchandise and Society news. Subscribe to our monthly eNewsletter at slphistory.com.

MEET OUR CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

President Ted Ekkers and his family live in the Minikahda Vista neighborhood. With two children enrolled in the district, he is especially interested in the history (and future) of St. Louis Park schools. He has been President since 2014 and has been elected to another three-year term.

Secretary Jane Hagstrom grew up in the Westwood Hills neighborhood with fond memories of playing at the Nature Center on a rope bridge and rope swing put up by the City.

Treasurer Henry Solmer has been a board member since 2012 and continues in this key role for the Society. He enjoys travel and collecting Schwinn bicycles. In terms of goals for the Society, he feels increasing our profile in the community is a good first step to the key goal of finding a permanent home.

Jeanne Andersen grew up in the Brookside neighborhood, graduating from St. Louis Park High School in 1975. She has been a member for 20 years and on the Board for 15. She divides her time between Park history and the history of music in the Twin Cities, and her favorite primary sources are old newspapers. She currently lives in Minikahda Vista.

William Beyer moved to St. Louis Park in 1986 and both of his children have gone through St. Louis Park schools. He lives in the Minikahda Vista neighborhood and is a licensed architect

who has designed several projects adapting National Register properties for the University of Minnesota.

Ingrid Moe moved to the Fern Hill neighborhood of St. Louis Park in 2004 and both of her children attend St. Louis Park schools. She currently edits the *ReEcho* newsletter and feels glad to be a member of a community with rich resources and a history of welcoming immigrants.

John Olson has been a member of the Historical Society since he was a teenager! He is a past President of the Society and his particular interest is railroads.

Jim Robbins grew up in the Fern Hill neighborhood on Toledo and Quentin avenues. He was a caddy at the Minneapolis Golf Club and graduated from Park High in 1965. A lifelong choral singer, he has also performed in musicals, including *Li'l Abner* and *The Music Man*.

Rick Sewall grew up in the Brookside neighborhood during the 1960s and 1970s. After receiving a Bachelor's in History from the University of Minnesota and an advanced degree from Moorhead State University, he headed to Denver for work. In 1995 he returned to St. Louis Park and currently lives in Minneapolis.

WELCOME ALL

Everyone is welcome to attend board meetings. Board meetings are typically held on the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. at 3546 Dakota Ave. So., Suite C. (Please note that our office is on the second floor and there is no elevator.) Next board meetings: Nov. 14 and Dec. 5.

And we invite you to read about the Society's mission at slphistory.org/purpose.

CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH THE HOLIDAY TRAIN!

BY JOHN OLSON

The Holiday Train has been a part of the Canadian Pacific Railroad for 17 years. Typically, CP Holiday Trains run across the U.S. and Canada between late November and mid-December. In every town in which they stop, people are encouraged to bring food items or donate money to the local food shelf.

Last year was the first time the CP Holiday Train came to St. Louis Park and it is scheduled to come again this year at 6 p.m., Dec. 10. For additional details, check the *Sun Sailor*, City publications, City website or social media. The Canadian Pacific Railroad expects to raise a total of \$1.2 million and 250,000 pounds of food along this year's route.

This photo is last year's train coming around the corner near Brunswick Ave., heading towards Dakota Ave.



Help support the train's mission and be sure to bring a food or financial donation for STEP!

SOLVE THE AUTUMN MYSTERY PHOTO



Here's a famous photo of an infamous weather event. On what thoroughfare are these nearly-buried automobiles?

Solve this mystery and you can win a Target® GiftCard.

SUMMER MYSTERY PHOTO REVEALED



Photo credit: Phil Webber

Gust Erickson, Sr. in front of Park Tavern, 1925

This photograph is the earliest of the series of filling stations/confectioneries/taverns that evolved into the Park Tavern we know today. See and read more at slphistory.org/parktaVERN.

Congratulations to **Jerry Timian**, who was the first to identify our last issue's mystery photo! Jerry won a Target® GiftCard.

Dan Bell, Mark Saba and Mary Hager are runners-up.

WHAT'S YOUR PARK STORY?



Do you have a St. Louis Park story to share with our readers? We would love to hear from you! We're looking for articles, stories, reminiscences and photos.

Submission Guidelines

- Articles are relevant to the St. Louis Park Historical Society audience
- 1,000 words maximum
- Articles are published at the discretion of newsletter staff and may be gently edited to accommodate space limitations
- Submit your article to slphs.newsletter@gmail.com — include your name, email address and phone number

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Are you interested in becoming more involved at the Historical Society? We looking for members who want to contribute time as a Society board member. For information about time commitment, expectations and community, visit slphistory.org/volunteer.



St. Louis Park Historical Society

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- Members-only special events
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☐ I have items to donate to the St. Louis Park Historical Society

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Founded in 1971, the St. Louis Park Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve and share St. Louis Park's rich and unique history. The St. Louis Park Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. Your dues and donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Questions? Contact us at 952.583.9893 or history@slphis.org.



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Note: We will be returning to a calendar year dues cycle as called for in our bylaws, so all memberships will come up for renewal as of January 1, 2018. Dues received in November and December 2017 will count for all of 2018.