

**P1 / FEATURE ARTICLE**

Meet two extraordinary women who left legacies that need to be remembered.

**P3 / PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

Thanks to all who renewed their memberships! Please do so if you haven't yet.

**P6 / DISPATCH LOOK-BACK**

The Park is bordered by legendary golf courses; along its western border it is home to a less-well-known venue that made national news in 1959.

**P7 / MEMBERSHIP & GIFT FORM**

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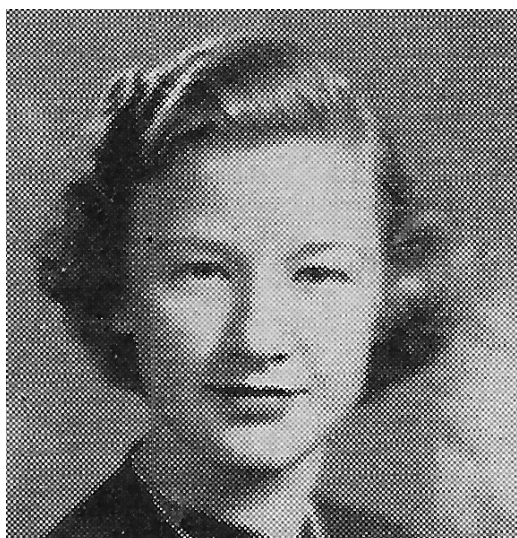


# ReEcho

PARK HISTORY TODAY

Collect. Preserve. Share.

Volume 18.1 / SPRING 2019



In high school, Mara, left, wrote for the Echo student newspaper and took snapshots for the Echowan yearbook – “She rushes in where angels fear to tread.” Susan, right, also wrote for and edited the Echo – “Susie...fun anytime, anywhere...an unusual girl with different ideas...a gifted writer and a true philosopher.”

## MARA AND SUSAN: ST. LOUIS PARK'S INTREPID COUSINS

BY BILL BEYER, FAIA

As new editor of the *ReEcho* and non-Park native trying to absorb our city's history as documented on our bounteous website, I randomly discovered a profile of Margaret Fornell Maunder — an accomplished international journalist, photographer, health care entrepreneur, writer about the law and feminist gadfly. I was smitten.

Margaret (Mara) was lost to us in 2017 at age 97, but not before sending us some of the photos she took of the Park as a high-schooler in 1937.

Digging for more, I found that Mara was related to a former SLPHS board member, her first cousin Paul Linnee. Paul filled me in on the family history, pointing out that his sister

Susan Linnee also had a distinguished and varied career as an international journalist. Susan was also lost to us in 2017, succumbing to brain cancer at age 75.

Both women graduated from St. Louis Park High School, but a generation apart, Mara in 1937 after being voted “Most Talkative” and Susan in 1960 after a stint in France as a foreign exchange student.

Mara got her college degree from the University of Minnesota's renowned journalism school; Susan raced through U. of M. in two years, majoring in political science.

Their stories are parallel but distinct and demonstrate that perhaps there is “something in the water” here in the Park.

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# MARGARET FORNELL MAUNDER

The Fornells appear with children Margaret and Willard in the 1935-36 Park directory living at 2944 Alabama, a modest home built in 1934. Mara was clearly a daredevil in high school, evidenced by photographs she took from atop the adjacent city water tower of Lincoln School, which was sold to the city in 1938 for a dollar and served as Village/City Hall until 1963.

Mara graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Journalism, then went on to report from St. Louis, MO; Washington, DC; Boston; London; Dublin; Colombia and the USSR.

When she covered the one-and-only all-St. Louis World series in 1944, gender discrimination barred her from the press box. She wrote about being denied access. The Cardinals beat the Browns, 4 games to 2.

About that time Mara became a union member of the American Newspaper Guild, working as byline staff feature writer for the *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, where she interviewed Hollywood celebrities Mary Pickford and Jack Benny. In the foreign field she became a stringer for the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*.

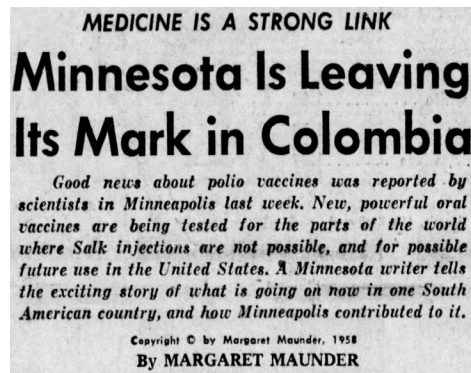
During the polio epidemic that paralyzed or killed many in the 1950s, Margaret traveled to the Andes of Colombia with a World Health Organization and University of Minnesota team for a field trial of the live virus polio vaccine.

Concerned parents by the hundreds came out of the coffee plantations carrying babies and small children, each couple hoping to get a spoonful of the pink liquid for their child. Mara's reporting was translated into many languages and published with her photos, including in the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*.

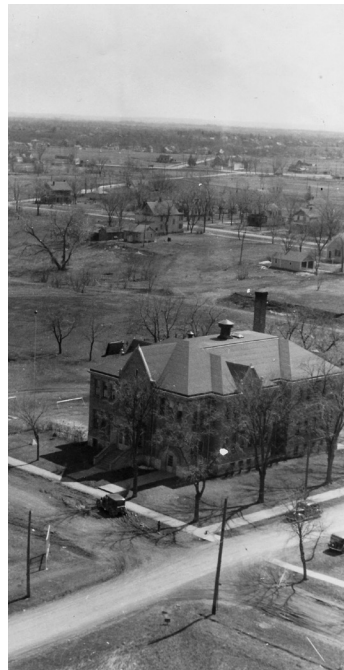
In Moscow in 1959, Margaret reported on the state of journalism under communism and covered the Nixon-Khrushchev "kitchen debate." That assignment won her, along with Ann Andersen and WCCO radio, a George Foster Peabody Award. From Wikipedia:

"The Kitchen Debate...was a series of impromptu exchanges (through interpreters) between then U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev at the opening of the American National Exhibition at Sokolniki Park in Moscow on July 24, 1959. For the exhibition, an entire house was built that the American exhibitors claimed anyone in America could afford. It was filled with labor-saving and recreational devices meant to represent the fruits of the capitalist American consumer market."

As her younger cousin Susan graduated from SLP High in 1960, Mara's three young daughters kept her closer to home. In St. Paul she edited a weekly paper, *The Highland Villager*, her newborn third daughter sleeping in a baby carrier near her desk. She also freelanced articles to national magazines and Sunday supplements.



Clipping from the Minneapolis Sunday Tribune, May 25, 1958, courtesy of Newspapers.com.



(Left) Mara's photo looking southeast at Lincoln School from atop the old city water tower shows how lightly the Park was developed in 1937. The intersection in the foreground is now 37th Street and Alabama. (Right) Mara snapped this picture of her classmate, Dorothy Strate from the roof of Lincoln School, the city water tower beyond.

Mara and her family moved to Connecticut in 1964 when her husband accepted a teaching position at Yale. After the couple divorced in 1971, Mara bought a 4-acre farm in Hamden, CT and founded an advertising and public relations business.

On the farm she ran a pick-your-own operation with the original farmer's strawberry plants. When those petered out, she tried pumpkins for a while, then evergreens. After ten years, West Woods Farm became the go-to place to cut your own Christmas trees.

While running her ad agency and her farm, and well before home healthcare became a thing, Mara recruited two friends, a nurse and a social worker, and founded the state's first home health care agency, HealthPower, Inc.

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

# LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Greetings,

After a long winter, spring is nearly upon us! This also signals a busier time at the Historical Society as we plan for more events and work on a variety of projects.

First, thank you to everyone who has sent in their membership donations. Those funds serve as the majority of our budget for the year, so we value every individual donation that comes in! If you haven't gotten around to your 2019 donation, you can find a membership form at the back of this newsletter.

Back in January, we were able to get out of the office to share some history with Boy Scouts Troop 307. They showed great interest in their town's past and were making interesting connections to the present. For the boys, attending the presentation was one of the final steps in achieving their Citizenship in the Community merit badge – something this world could use a little more of right now.

The endless snowstorms in February might have forced us to cancel our Board meeting, but they didn't stop us from sharing our city's history with the Wolfe Park and Minikahda Vista neighborhood annual meetings. And upcoming, we will be at the Rotary Club April 8, Children First Ice Cream Social May 19, and of course Parktacular June 15.

Looking forwards to summer, we are thinking about more ways to spend time at the Depot when the weather is nicer. In fact, this year on Nov. 25 marks the 50th anniversary of its designation to the National Register of Historic Places! More to come on how we will celebrate this milestone.

Thanks again for your financial support, and please stop by one of our various events, office hours or open houses this year to say hi and renew your love for all things St. Louis Park!

Happy Spring,

Ted

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Society online at [slphistory.org](http://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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As HealthPower grew to serve more of the community, Connecticut changed the rules and mandated licensing for home health care businesses. Mara and their other employees suddenly lacked required credentials, and lack of deep-pocket funding played havoc with the business. With a valid home health care license as a major asset, HealthPower directors voted to sell — for a price that barely let Mara keep her home and farm.

After her idyllic farm was ravaged by an unscrupulous real estate developer/contractor, she sued, then was abandoned and shafted by her lawyers and the local judge. Outraged, but undeterred, Mara fought back, eventually losing again, but then winning the right for herself and other small business owners to represent themselves in court.

Her major victory for pro se representation was *Margaret Maunder Assoc. Inc. v. A-Copy, Inc.*, 40 Conn. Supp. 361, 499 A.2d 1172, which became a landmark case cited as precedent by many, including the Vermont Supreme Court.

At age 90, after some wins and some losses butting heads with lawyers and judges over the previous fifteen years, Mara published her nonfiction book, “Those Darn Lawyers”, a fascinating and comprehensive critique of the U.S. civil justice system and the self-serving self-regulation of the legal profession.

It is telling that Mara chose to end her book with a copy of The Declaration of Sentiments, a manifesto signed in Seneca Falls, NY in 1848 by attendees of the country’s first women’s rights convention which included this:



Vice President Richard Nixon and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev at the Kremlin. NARA. Special Media Archives Services Division (Still Pictures). RG306-RMN-1-21; Credit: <http://www.archives.gov/research/cold-war/conference/>; Author: NARA; Licensed under Creative Commons

“Resolved: That all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore of no force or authority.”

## SUSAN LINNEE

Susan showed an interest in both journalism and foreign affairs while at Park High. In all three years she worked on the staff of the *Echo*. In her junior year she was co-editor of Page Two; as a senior, she was the assistant managing editor, and chosen for a student exchange program with the American Field Service in France.

Attending University of Minnesota in 1962, she invited a group of Macalester College students she had met at a campus party to visit her parents’ house in the Park. A couple of the invitees were black. One of the neighbors called the police; Susan’s parents embraced the diversity.

One of her guests that day was Kofi Annan, who in 1997 would become the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. They remained life-long friends.

After earning a four-year degree at the University of Minnesota in half the time, she married a classmate in



Susan in Ethiopia, 1969.

1963. Susan's husband was one of the original Peace Corps volunteers and became a U.N. diplomat whose career took the couple to many distant lands.

Speaking several languages fluently, Susan had a career with the Associated Press that took her to Jackson, MS; Houston, TX; New York City and Abidjan, Ivory Coast. She served as AP Bureau Chief in Madrid and in Nairobi, Kenya. She also did a stint with the *International Herald Tribune* in Paris.

After being aged-out at the AP, she became Program Director for the International Crisis Group for Central Africa and the Horn of Africa and was a consultant in Nairobi, Kenya, providing editorial advice for various newspapers in the Nation Media Group.

Susan's sudden illness and untimely death in 2017 brought out many tributes to her and her work. Collected by her brother, Paul Linnee, they tell her story best:

**Craig Nelson**

***Wall Street Journal* Afghanistan Bureau Chief**

Her 5th-grade teacher in St. Louis Park had allowed her class to listen once a week to a Minnesota School of the Air radio program called "The Distant Land," which was introduced by a deep-voiced narrator intoning: "For you, the comfort of four walls. For me, the distant land." By the time she died November 6th at a hospice in Edina at the age of 75, Linnee had visited and worked in 97 countries and spent 40+ years as a reporter for The Associated Press. She played a formative role in challenging the bias towards women in the newsroom, becoming the first American woman to be appointed as an AP bureau chief in Europe. She wanted, perhaps more anything, to be thoroughly alive to her times. She succeeded.

**Sarah Provan**

**Editor at the *Financial Times***

She expanded my horizons in a way nobody else had ever done. I may be desk-bound in London but my mind is often in Luanda, Huambo or Lobito; Maputo, Madrid or Lisbon; Buenos Aires or Cabinda. Many places I had never heard of but because of her I became intimately involved in their story.

Nobody is ever intrepid, she told me sharply, as she whipped it from my copy without a second thought. You know something, Paul, she was...she lives on in my fingertips as I slice and dice and execute our craft. I love what I do and she helped me find my voice. Just as she did I imagine for all of those she touched.

**Beautiful Outrage, By Mort Rosenblum**  
**Former AP co-worker and her boss at the**  
***International Herald Tribune***

Susan Linnee stumbled into the foreign correspondent biz in Buenos Aires, freshly divorced from an American diplomat with whom she had bounced around from Lake Geneva to the Great Lakes in Africa...It took her no time at all to see that journalism needed help, badly. An aging Juan Peron, back from Spanish exile in 1973, announced he would bring home the remains of his wife, Evita. Susan called the NBC desk in New York, bursting with excitement. "They're bringing back Eva Peron," she said. "Yeah?" the editor replied. "See if you can get an interview with her in English."

Thus began Susan Linnee's four decades of beautiful outrage, deep compassion tinged with controlled fury as she reported the human condition on four continents. She loved reporting and getting her facts straight. She did not love fools or phonies...Susan left AP when a new breed of New York executives imposed early retirement on correspondents totaling 500 years of experience abroad. She stayed in Nairobi working with the International Crisis Group and mentoring young reporters.

>> CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



(Top) Susan working at a story in her office apartment, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 1982. (Bottom) Susan as AP Madrid Bureau Chief, enjoying a meal with colleagues in Morocco.



# 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](mailto:slphs.newsletter@gmail.com) — include your name, email address and phone number



## DISPATCH LOOK-BACK

We check in with the editors of the St. Louis Park Dispatch to see what was on their minds in 1959. While Margaret Maunder was in the USSR reporting on the Nixon-Kruschchev "Kitchen Debates," the Professional Golfers Association of America held their flagship tournament at the historic Minneapolis Golf Club in the Park, an event then comparable to a Super Bowl.

Dispatch editors patted the organizers on the back for the well-run event, noting the publicity benefits accruing to city and state. Bob Rosburg's win was front page news on Aug. 3 in both the morning Minneapolis Tribune and the evening Star.

The 3M Open will be held in Blaine starting July 4, 2019, marking the return of the men's PGA tour to golf-crazed Minnesota after half-a-century. From 1930 to 1968 the St. Paul Open was held at Keller. According to the website Explore Minnesota, golf visitors ranked Minnesota fourth on a list of 13 golf destinations, behind only Florida, Arizona and South Carolina. Minnesota hosted the 1932, 1954, 1959, 2002 and 2009 PGAs, the 2016 Ryder Cup (coming again in 2028), the 1957 and 1993 Walker Cups, plus U.S. Opens in 1916, 1930, 1970 and 1991....and that's just the men.

## PGA Tourney . . . Triumph Of Committee Action

Minneapolis Golf Club's hard working committees . . . the hundreds of men and women whose months of work made possible the P.G.A. tourney there last week . . . are receiving buckets-full of deserved praise for the manner in which that colorful contest was handled.

There were some complaints. Spectators protested the 60 cent hamburgers, 40 cent hot dogs and 20 cent cokes dished out by the concessionaires, atop the \$5 entrance fee . . . vowed they'd bring a picnic lunch next time.

But those matters generally were beyond committee control. What did count was the

smoothly efficient manner this complicated spectacle was handled, the elaborate precautions which guaranteed the best possible view of the play for the greatest number of visitors.

What did matter was that Minneapolis and Minnesota generally received nation-wide notice as an ideal place in which to live . . . that millions of Americans, for the first time, learned St. Louis Park is the state's fourth largest city.

The players themselves (who provided drama enough for a decade of conversation) were firm in their praise of the club's tournament arrangements. Most of us will concur—enthusiastically.

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**From a snotty little brother's perspective, By Paul Linnee (Bloomington, MN, about August 25, 2017, about 10 weeks before Susan's death.)**

Months after April, 1942, Carl and Jane Linnee moved from Sioux City, Iowa (where Susan was born) to a little bitty tract house they had just purchased at 3236 Georgia Avenue in St. Louis Park. It sat on a treeless block of other new tract houses, half a block north of what would later become the land where the SLP High School would be built. It was filled with other kids. And it was just a couple of blocks from Lenox School, where Susan's journey of discovery would begin...

Her last major 'journalist/book reviewer' activity was in April of this year when she interviewed St. Louis Park's own Thomas L. Friedman (another of St. Louis Park High's Distinguished Alums), the *New York Times* Pulitzer Prize winning columnist and best selling author at a highly successful SLP Historical Society fundraiser. Recently, upon learning of Susan's rapidly failing health, Tom wrote, "Besides being bound together by St. Louis Park (and The Echo, where we both got our starts), we are fellow wire service reporters and life-long journalists."



Snotty little brother Paul, left, with Tom Friedman and Susan.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

My dictionary defines the word "intrepid" as, "adj, Resolutely courageous, fearless, bold." Mara and Susan, daughters of St. Louis Park, were all of that.

They reported the news from distant lands and were fiercely "alive to their times." They championed the rights of women to participate fully in every part of professional life. Their "beautiful outrage" sets an example for us all, and their stories have much to teach us.

Jeanne Anderson noted in her website profile that Mara's motto was, "J'ecrit, donc je suis," or, "I write, therefore I am."

I hereby adopt it as my own.