



The Re-ECHO

St. Louis Park

A Newsletter for the members of the St. Louis Park Historical Society

50 Golden Years

This year is the 50th anniversary of St. Louis Park under the Home rule Charter and will celebrate "50 Golden Years as a Charter City--Then and Now". The St. Louis Park Charter Commission is planning a year's worth of events and opportunities for learning about the charter and how it effects the community. Sunday, June 20, there will be a

public reception at the Amphitheater featuring remarks from past and present city officials and with a reception to follow. The Charter Commission is composed of 15 members who all live in St. Louis Park and are appointed to four year terms by the Chief Justice of the District Court.

St. Louis Park Home Rule Charter

The Re-ECHO is published quarterly by the St. Louis park Historical Society and is edited by Robert C. Reiss. Its purpose is to acquaint the members, volunteers and friends on how the activities, programs and resources of the Society are used to preserve the history of St. Louis Park. The name was inspired by the ECHO newspaper published by and for the students of St. Louis Park High School since 1917. Robert C. Reiss
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On November 16, 1886 the residents voted to organize the Village of St. Louis Park. Of the sixty eight votes cast sixty five were in favor and three opposed. The first village officers were:

President	Joseph Hamilton
Trustees	H. E. Butler
	O.K. Earle
	George Goodrich
Treasurer	J. J. Baston
Recorder	Charles Hanke

The village structure remained about the same for the next 50 years. The president and trustees were elected on a yearly basis and governed on a part time basis. They were civic minded people but had little expertise in fire protection, policing, water, zoning, building permits, etc. Each trustee served as the administrative head of one of the village departments. By the nineteen thirties, the population had increased and the tenor of the village had changed. It was no longer an "industrial village" but was a bedroom community for people who worked in Minneapolis. The village-trustee arrangement that had worked well for a population of a

few hundred people was not adequate for a population of thousands. The one solution was to take the administrative duties out of the hands of the elected officials and hire paid professionals. The Better Government League and George Arneson saw the City Manager form as a way to better a government for St. Louis Park. The League had been formed to encourage capable men to run for elected office and then let them do their job. They felt an experienced professional city manager would handle the administration. The council members could devote their time to the larger problems of the city. This would attract better people to run for office. In nineteen thirty five the council-manager form of city management was a very new concept. Only about 300 cities in the United States were using this form of government. One of the few cities in the state that was using the plan at this time was Albert Lea. Several members of the Better Government League visited Albert Lea. They came back very enthusiastic about the plan and felt that it was

Skip Liepke

Malcom "Skip" Liepke was the subject of a two page article in the February 1, 2004 Star Tribune. Skip was raised in the Elmwood neighborhood of St. Louis Park. He graduated from St. Louis Park High School in 1972 as did his wife, Michelle. His Mother and Father were decorators for commercial property. Skip is a very successful painter whose work is very much in demand. His paintings sell from \$20,000 up to \$100,000. They are purchased as soon as they are finished.

Skip attended the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California for a year

and a half. He left to work on freelance art such as movie posters and sports illustrations. He moved to New York in 1978. He was financially successful by doing magazine covers and other award winning projects but he hated it.

In 1991 he quit doing commercial art and started painting fine art. His painting caught on quickly and today it is in high demand by the higher and more educated collectors.

In 1995, Skip and his wife moved back to Minneapolis. Today they live with their two sons in a home on Lake of the Isles.

New Faces

The Better Government League supported the Home Rule Charter because they thought that form of government would attract new and better people. For example the first council consisted of the following people:

Mayor R. Fernstrom
Councilman C. R. Middleton
C. L. Hurd
H. Perkins
H. Davis
H. J. Bolmgren
Torval Jorvig

Many of them had served on the Board for multiple terms, some for as long as 10 years, with few new faces.

Since none of the first Council members had been elected under the new Home Rule Charter, it required they all run for

reelection by 1956. In the election held in November 1955, new names appeared on the ballot. Schadow, Wolfe, and Ehrenberg won their contests to replace Middleton, Hurd and Perkins. In the 1956 election, another newcomer, Herb Lefler, replaced Mayor Fernstrom. New younger faces were now running the new city.

Membership

Individual	\$ 25.00
Family	\$30.00
Individual Senior	\$15.00
Senior Family	\$25.00
Student	\$5.00
Business	Voluntary Donation

The St. Louis Park Historical Society meets at Lenox the first Tuesday of every month. The next meeting dates are:

April 6 2004

May 4, 2004

June 1, 2004

You are invited to attend.

Did you remember to renew your membership for 2004?

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Street Address: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ During the winter months (_____ to _____) please mail to:

Winter Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Make checks to: St. Louis Park Historical Society and mail with membership application to The St. Louis Park Historical Society 3700 Monterey Drive, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Home Rule Charter

the right plan for St. Louis Park. With their support, the District Court was approached and appointed a Charter commission of fifteen people. This commission selected a model charter written by Professor William Anderson of the University of Minnesota. It was essentially the same charter in use by Albert Lea. On September 10, 1940 this proposal was rejected by a vote of 1340 to 937. Tremendous opposition developed from the existing Trustees because of the Better Government League's involvement.

A second Home Rule Charter was rejected again in March 1949. The District Court had appointed a new Charter commission with only Morton Arneson and Leland F. Leland the only holdovers. This commission thoroughly restudied and rewrote a new charter proposal. Again there was active opposition. C. L. Hurd took out a full page newspaper ad

in opposition. The night before the election, pamphlets were distributed personally attacking Morton Arneson. After this charter was rejected the Better Government League immediately began work to get a third charter commission appointed. In 1951, the League of Women Voters questioned the mayoral candidates about their preference for the city government of St. Louis Park. As an answer, C. L. Hurd declared himself in favor of the city manager plan. After he was elected Mayor in this election he appointed a new study group. The League of Women Voters vigorously campaigned for the passage of the Home Rule Charter when it was put to a vote in November, 1954. With C. L. Hurd's support and Morton Arneson moving out of St. Louis Park to Edina the Charter passed and in early 1955 St. Louis Park became a city.

Famous Parkites

St. Louis Park has had many people who have gone on to become rich and famous - or at least famous. Did you know that the prime minister of Greece, Andreas Papandreou, lived at 41st and Brunswick in the 1950's? On the national level, Guy Bannister, an FBI agent and figure in the JFK assassination lived at 31st and Edgewood, also in the 50's. And the man who played Wyatt Earp, Hugh O'Brien visited his folks while they lived in the Park for about six years in the 1940's. Amelita Galli-Curci, an internationally renowned opera singer, was a frequent guest of her brother-in-law, who lived in Oak Hill. Sports broadcaster Halsey Hall, the man who invented the phrase "Holy Cow," lived at 32nd and Alabama for 55 years.

Of the baby boom generation, we have some nationally-known folks as well, starting with Ethan and Joel Coen, who lived at 14th and Flag. They did not graduate from Park High, opting for a college in Massachusetts that accepted student as young as 16. Al Franken lived on W. 25th Street and Thomas Friedman on W. 23 Street. Prince drummer, Bobby Zee, (born Robert Rifkin) grew up at 37th and Glenhurst. Then there are two sportscaster, Mark Rosen (Stanlen Road)

and Jeff Passolt (W. 26th Street). For more information and pictures of these boyhood homes, come see us at the Historical Society. If you know of any other famous Parkites, please send an email to jeandersen3@mn.it.com. The above article was written by Jeanne Andersen who also wrote the article "Rock 'n Roll in the" for the fall Re-Echo. The article was originally titled "Rock 'n Roll in the Park" before my computer swallowed "Park". Jeanne maintains a web site on St. Louis Park History The site is: WWW.jeanneandersen.com

"Something in the Water" a early history of St. Louis Park , written by Don Swenson, is available from the St. Louis Park Historical Society for \$18.00 plus \$2.00 for handling. Send your name and address to:

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952 470 1762

Open House

On March 11, 2004, The St. Louis Park Historical Society held an Open House in their new home to celebrate the new partnership with the Lenox Community Center. Our new furniture was all in place and over 50 people viewed our exhibits.

Our plan is to have someone available Monday and Thursday from 10:00 AM until 12:00 and Tuesday night from 7:00 until 9:00 PM. Other times can be made available by appointment. Call Bob Jorvig (952 938 6559) or Bob Reiss (952 470

What's in a Name

When the second Charter Commission first met in 1946 to plan for a revote on the Home Rule Charter they thought that there was a better name than St. Louis Park and this would be the time to change it.

The common theory how the village was named St. Louis Park was that the St. Louis Railroad insisted on the name as a condition for establishing a depot. Since the railroad name was actually Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad and did not even go to St. Louis, a more logical explanation it was originally described as just the park on the St.

Louis line. What is now called Jorvig Park was one of the suburban parks. It got shortened to the St. Louis park and eventually became the village name. The new Commission thought that Meadowbrook would be a good name but it turned out that there was already a Minnesota town by that name. Glenwood, Glenhurst, and Westgate were also suggested but there was no consensus. The subject was dropped when it was determined that a "vote" to change the name would require a petition containing the signatures of twenty percent of the electors would be needed. St. Louis Park

This and That

No one responded to John Reid's request for the name of the St. Louis Park graduate who was married in EPARATA, Washington in 1943. An article did appear in the Dispatch saying that Alvin Myers, a commissioned pilot was sent to Seattle on July 29, 1943 with no other information. Myers lived at 4073 Xenwood Ave. John is still wondering.

The only person we were able to determine that climb up the old water tower was Joan Whalen, a 1933 graduate. She climbed in skirt and high heels

to promote the class play "Oh Doctor". She does not remember who the boys were that climbed with her. There has to be more people who did this. At least there must have been some boys. It's OK to admit to this.

A couple that lived on North Street many years ago, first met at a beer garden called Cobble Quest. He was a musician and she was a waitress. The time frame would have been early 20's. The Historical Society has no information. Cobble Quest may have been located on Minnetonka Blvd. Does anyone remember it?

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