



The Re-ECHO

St. Louis Park

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

Please send your 2005 Membership Application/Renewal now

The El Patio

The nightclub at 5016 Excelsior Blvd., now Bunny's, has a rich history. The building was built in 1920. Evidence of the El Patio Cafe and dance club (pronounced El Pay-sho) goes back to at least 1930. It was a bar, restaurant and dance hall, and was one of the classiest establishments on Excelsior Boulevard and catering to the Country Club and University crowds. Its proprietors were strict on liquor, although one Sunday night a big band came in and a lot of cold coffee was served. When Prohibition ended, 3.2 percent beer was legal, and customers could buy a bottle and add their own hard stuff.

In 1937 the establishment was listed in the St. Louis Park directory as the El Patio-Cotton Club. The Cotton Club may have existed earlier because it is remembered as a "bootleg joint" that during Prohibition officially offered setups only. It featured black musicians who were barred from playing in Minneapolis. Local musician Bill Kenney remembers when Lester Young played there. For years, the name "Cotton Club" was written on the building's roof.

During the depression, the cafe provided meals to the needy. In 1939 the owners were fined \$25.00 for staying open too late. In a Village council hearing about the matter, the

indignant crowd and even the Mayor himself mentioned rumors about the place. One citizen was quoted: "It is a known fact that they have been catering to high school kids for years, serving near beer to be spiked."

From 1946 to 1968, Ted Culbertson ran Culbertson's Cafe, an upscale steakhouse. This restaurant, along with Jennings, was patronized mostly by people from outside St. Louis Park. A 24' by 60' room was added to the west side in August 1948.

In October 1968, George Faust, a former U of M football hero, bought the establishment, heading up George Faust's Restaurant and Liquor Storium which included an oyster bar, sportsman bar and a piano bar. George's glory days were back in the 1930's and his name no longer drew clientele, so in 1971 George went back to his previous profession selling frozen meat.

Next came the Anchor Inn, run by Lyle Ebling and his wife. It opened in January 1972 and featured an all-you-can-eat format. This was a disaster for the waitresses who had worked for Culbertson and Faust, as they no longer got the same tips. The restaurant had a long run, lasting until 1981.

A man named David Bongiorno then opened the Bon Giorno Italian restaurant at the site in 1981. This did not last long, and in September 1983 it was replaced by Duggan's Steakhouse. In

The Re-ECHO is published quarterly by the St. Louis park Historical Society and is written 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

(952) 470 1762

rcreiss@aol.com

El Patio cont'd

1998, the original Bunny's building was demolished to make room for the Excelsior and Grand project. Bunny's owner, Gary Rackner, moved Bunny's up Excelsior Blvd. Its clientele include many long time residents of St. Louis Park, full of stories about the old days.

This story was researched and written by Jeanne Andersen. More information is available from her Brookside Timeline website, WWW.Jeanneandersen.com. If you have stories to share, please contact her at Jeanneandersen@comcast.net or 612 396 6292.

Calhoun Dairy

Carl H. Pehrson was a milk delivery business that had customers in south Minneapolis and did business as Calhoun Dairy. He bought milk daily from the Engell Dairy. When Carol Tranberg (Carl's daughter) read the information on the Engell Dairy in the Re-Echo she took the time to write the following paragraphs:

The company name came from the Engell Dairy. Engell had several registered names including Lake Calhoun Dairy which her dad shortened.

Perhaps you wonder about retail milk delivery. In those days, people had milk delivered to their home daily because it did not stay fresh for more than a few days. No preservatives were added to any dairy products. Families did grocery shopping once every week or two. Another factor was that some people were still using ice boxes, electric refrigerators gradually replaced them.

Each morning Carl drove to the creamery, Engell Dairy, 4900 Excelsior Boulevard in St. Louis Park. He picked up the estimated amount of milk, buttermilk, coffee cream and whipping cream he expected to sell that day. Milk was bottled in round one quart bottles about four inches in diameter on the lower half tapering to a two inch diameter on the top. At that time milk was not homogenized, and the bottle design was a good indication of the richness of the milk. Cream rises to the top, the deeper the cream line the more butterfat it had. Regular milk was 3.5% BF. Some people poured the cream off the top to be used separately but most used whole milk, shaking it before each use. Coffee cream was 20% BF, whipping cream 35% BF. Both were sold in pint

and half pint bottles.

Carl took care in keeping the milk at a cool temperature while on the truck. In summer he used twenty five and fifty pound blocks of ice on top of the wood and metal twelve quart milk cases. A heavy canvas tarp covered the entire load. During the winter heat was needed in back of the truck to prevent the products from freezing.

When the milkman came, the lady of the house paid for the purchases; some charged by the week or even by the month. At the end of the day, the drivers balanced their cash, charges and returned products not sold.

There were many different milk companies, competition was always keen. Carl gave extra service. Some customers wanted milk put into the ice box or refrigerator, even wiping the bottles and putting the fresh behind that from the day before. The paper lids on the bottles were dated for the day they were to be delivered. For those who wanted their delivery left outside, he made wooden milk boxes. Each could hold three quart bottles.

Over the years new dairy products were added. Cottage cheese was sold in twelve ounce jars. Sweet cream butter was sold in one and two pound crocks. Five percent and skim milk were also added. Later a homogenizing process was developed. By homogenizing the milk butterfat was broken down so that it mixed evenly with the low fat portion of the milk. No longer did the customer have to shake the bottle.

Carl continued his milk business through the WW II years of the 1940's. That brought on gas and tire rationing. As a result, Carl began three day a week delivery; Monday, Wednesday and Friday for some and Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday for others. In 1952, after more than twenty five years in the business, Carl was offered a purchase price and sold.

The St. Louis Park Historical Society meets at 7:00 PM on the first Tuesday of every month. The next meetings will be held at Lenox on:

February 1, 2005

March 1, 2005

April 5, 2005

You are invited to attend.

Lake Conference

St. Louis Park High School will leave the Classic Lake Conference (CLC) in the fall of 2005. This will close out an association and tradition that began in 1932, when the Lake Conference was organized, and continued with the more recent association with CLC. Tentatively, Park will join a new league to be established that will include Benide-St. Margaret's, Fridley, Ironwood, North Branch, St. Francis, Spring Lake Park, Totino-Grace, and Robbinsdale Cooper. The expectation is that Park teams can be more competitive with schools similar in size.

In recognition of the historic nature of this change, Larry Ronglein, the boys varsity basketball coach, has asked that former players of Park boys teams as well as former coaches be invited to the last scheduled CLC home basketball game. The game is set for Friday, February 25, 2005 at 7:15 p.m. Against Edina Hornets in the SLP Senior High School Gym.

If you plan to attend, please let Don Schimmel know:
donaldkschimmel@comcast.net;
telephone (952) 890 7107

Mildred Dudding

In 1938, with the completion of the new Central High School, the school board hired its first, art teacher, Mildred Dudding. She had just graduated from college and this was her first job. And she looked it. She was young and attractive. Anyone that did not know she was a teacher easily mistook her for one of the students.

Miss Dudding (now Dudding-ton) is a member of the St. Louis Park Historical Society and gets a copy of all

Re-Echos. After the last issue she called from Florida and delightfully related the following story.

After she was hired the superintendent, Leland F. Leland, introduced her at a student assembly. When he asked if anyone would be interested in taking an art class, all the boys stood up.

"Miss Dudding," Bob Reiss was one of those boys!

Did you remember to become a member or renew your membership application?

2005 Membership Application/Renewal Form

Select the membership category that is best suited for you.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Membership	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Senior	\$15.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	\$ 5.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business	Donation

Clip this form. Make sure the mailing address on the back is correct. Add a winter/summer address if applicable.

Please send your check and 2005 membership application/renewal to:
The St. Louis Park Historical Society
3700 Monterey Drive
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

This and That

The Minnesota Rubber office building on Alabama and 337th is on the site of the former Lincoln School. The property east of the school was Sewall's cow pasture until it was filled in to make a parking lot. Many of the trees on this property were planted by teachers and school children on Arbor Day with the names of the teachers and children put in a bottle and buried beside the tree. We wonder if any of these bottles showed up with the construction going on?

When Omar McGary's successor took over as Fire Chief there were two yellow trucks and many red trucks. It seemed easier to paint the two yellow trucks red so that was done. Anyway, fire trucks are supposed to be red.

No one offered a computer for the Historical Society use but two of our members offered to donate the required software when the Society acquires a computer.

Parkettes

In the spring of 1956, someone decided that a dance line would be a wonderful addition to the St. Louis Park spirit. They approached Mrs. Fran Libby with the idea of being the group's choreographer. Her enthusiasm moved the idea forward, and for the next twelve years she was the dance line leader. All of the girls were from St. Louis Park High School.

For the first years they danced at Park High basketball games and then at the District and regional games in Williams Arena. They went on to perform in the Aquatenial, St. Paul Winter Carnival and many other occasions.

In 1958, they became the Lakerettes and performed at the Laker games in the Minneapolis Armory. They became well known and were invited to perform nationally on television, conventions, at the Rose Bowl and many other events. In 1964 they were invited to act as the cheerleaders at the Viking games. This continued through 1983 when the Viking Manager, Mike Lynn, decided that he wanted more mature cheerleaders a la the

Dallas Cowgirls.

The purpose of the article in the last Re-Echo was to get information on the Parkettes for the Historical Society. The response was great, and they all included a desire for a reunion. Since 2006/2007 will be the fiftieth anniversary, why not? To get started, we need your help. We need to compile a list of members and fan club members. Originally all members had to be 15 to 17 years old and many have since changed their names and moved. We need current information on you and any of the dance mates with whom you may have kept in contact. For now we need current names and addresses, the name you danced under, and the years you danced. Send this to:

Jennifer Davis Newell

E Mail JLN7550@AOL.com

or 7550 Dogwood Road
Excelsior, MN 55331

Once we get the information from you we will expand our search and proceed with the planning of a reunion.