



The Re-ECHO

St. Louis Park

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

Ken Wolfe

The first Council of the new St. Louis Park Charter City consisted of the former elected village trustees and two additional appointees. This Council governed for all of 1955, but the members were required to run for reelection in 1955 for staggered terms until 1959.

With the new slate in 1956, the complexion of the Council changed. Newcomers Gene Schadow, Robert Erhenberg and Ken Wolfe replaced the traditional old guard. Erhenberg and Schadow were new to the political arena, but Ken Wolfe had been active in the St. Louis Park Community for many years -- although not in any elective capacity.

Ken Wolfe moved to the Park in 1941 and with his family, had run Associated Lithographers on Lake Street across from the football field. He started his community service as an air raid warden in 1942. He became active in the Better Government League and in the St. Louis Park Rotary Club.

The Council seat that Wolfe won was for a four-year term ending in 1959. At the end of that term, with support from the existing Mayor, Herb Leffler, he ran successfully for the office of Mayor. He served in this position for four two year terms and in 1966 his supporters urged him to run for governor of Minnesota. Instead he ran for State Senator from District 30. He won that seat and tried to serve as State Senator and Mayor, but it was too much. He resigned as Mayor, and

represented District 30 until 1972.

Through out his years as Councilman, Mayor and State Senator, Ken Wolfe was an exceptional public servant. He gave more time and energy to the city than his constituents had a right to expect. He was really a full-time Mayor and a part-time business man.

Forceful and creative, Ken Wolfe seemed always in the center of controversy. In 1958, he tendered his resignation from the Council over annual salaries. He believed strongly that the Councilmen should not have to set their own salaries every year. A letter with 250 signatures urging him not to resign convinced him to continue on the Council.

Ken Wolfe was one of the plaintiffs to petition a panel of judges for reapportionment because he thought the suburbs were under represented. He and Mayor Melton Honsey of New Hope paid most of the court costs for this action. He was verbally abused by Minneapolis Mayor Arthur Naflin in a meeting at Central Junior High School over the issue of transferring Minneapolis General Hospital to a county hospital operation. By a vote of 13 to 0, the Minneapolis City Council publicly censured him in 1962 for his advocacy for a metro sewer district.

During Ken's tenure there were a great many new needs, and he put the energy into addressing them. He had very strong feelings about the need for a Metropolitan Council and metropolitan services such as transit, airports and sewers. For the Park, he established a city wide acquisition and development program for parks and playgrounds. Wolfe Park is a monument to

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.

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Parkettes

Many former Parkettes responded to the idea of having a reunion, but many more names and addresses are needed. The fan club needs to be included. They were important and will want to be part of a reunion. With Fran Libby's death after twelve years, Toni Swiggum provided the leadership with dedication and purpose.

Parkette parents were responsible for the sale of Viking programs. The concessionaire commissions earned from these sales contributed the major share of

the cost for vacation breaks to many countries including Greece, Italy, Venezuela, Mexico, the Bahamas and Panama. They visited Hawaii several times.

Continue to send information about former Parkettes and Fan Club members to:

Jennifer Davis Newell
E Mail JLN7550@AOL.com
or 7550 Dogwood Road
Excelsior, MN 55331

Al's Place

Al's Place has been bar at the same location for 85 years, but this is about to end. It is located on one of the prime locations on Excelsior Boulevard and the area is to be redeveloped. The developers are negotiating with St. Louis Park, the neighbors, and Al's to find a suitable design similar to the Excelsior and Grand development.

Al's Place was built in 1920. The original owner is unknown, but in 1927, Al J. Lovass and Mary Vlavianous obtained a license to sell soft drinks and operate a restaurant. Whatever was going on upstairs bootlegger, Al and his wife supplied their customers with more than soft drinks in their basement party room/speakeasy featuring a large fieldstone fireplace. Al's friendship with the constable ensured that his customers were safe from prosecution.

In 1933, the establishment was listed as Al's Cafe in the first St. Louis Park directory, reflecting its status before the end of prohibition the following year. The first addition to the east was built in 1934. The liquor store was added but closed in 1980. Because its grandfather status, the bar cannot be

expanded into this space without having to add food service.

Al died in 1952, and Paul Haugejorden became the manager and owner dying in 1963. Jim Holme, Al's nephew, and Walter J. Holme, Al's cousin, ran it to 1977, when Jim Holme sold it to bartender Woody Jones and to David Payne.

Al's was an especially popular place when all the bars in Minneapolis were closed for an election because it was the first bar west across the city line.

Al's had a collection of "character bartenders." Gar Case was a song and dance man from the old vaudeville days. He knew every joke and story ever told and liked to share them with his customers. If he started to tell a story he never quit until he finished regardless of who was waiting for a drink. Another bartender was Know Delaney. He had a diamond in one of his front teeth and loved to flash a big smile, especially to the ladies.

During the 1940 Armistice Day blizzard, people walked on tops of cars to find refuge at Al's, where they partied for 3-4 days.

Membership Application/Renewal

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

Select the membership category that is best for you.

Family \$25.00
Senior \$15.00
Student \$ 5.00
Business Donation

Please send your check and 2005 membership application/renewal to:

The St. Louis Park
Historical Society
3700 Monterey Drive
St. Louis Park, MN
55416

Ken Wolfe, cont'd

him. He established open council meetings and appointed a library committee. He changed the city elections to November when everyone else voted and he extended the Mayor's term of office to

four years.

In 1972, the St. Louis Park Sun ran the following headline:

Ken Wolfe: 'The Little Giant' Steps Down.

Dudley Moylan

The last major naval battle of surface ships perhaps for all time, was the battle off Samar in Leyte Gulf for the recapture of the Philippines in WW II. The battle between the main Japanese fleet consisting of four battleships, eight cruisers, and eleven destroyers and the American fleet consisting of six escort carriers, three destroyers and four destroyer escorts was a watershed event.

Against overwhelming odds, the thirteen American ships began a

fight they could not win, but did. The American destroyer, Samuel B. Roberts was sunk in this battle. One of the sailors aboard the Roberts was Ensign Dudley Moylan. Dudley is a resident of St. Louis Park, and is a member of our St. Louis Park Historical Society.

The story of the battle off Samar is told in a recently released book, "The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors." Two copies of this book are available from the Historical Society.

What ever happened to

Mildred Dudding?

She is now Miki Duddington. She suggested a "What ever happened to" feature for the Re-Echo, and we thought it was a good idea. She agreed to tell us first. Do you have someone who you wonder? Send us a name. We will try to find out find out.

Before becoming St. Louis Park's first art teacher, I had just graduated from the University of Minnesota. In my new job we had art from 4th grade through high school.

At precisely the same time, the U. S. Government offered free flight training at Wold Chamberlain airport, which I took, and earned my civil Air Patrol license. The flying proved to be very expensive and I did not continue it.

I made a trip to Mexico and loved the beautiful country, its people and the many interesting products they made, such as hand blown glassware, handmade pottery, snake skin shoes, silver jewelry, baskets, hand woven fabrics, paintings, etc.

This was at the time of the Second World War and there was a shortage of shoes and many things. I took samples of the things they made to wholesale outlets in Minnesota and thus started "Pan American Importation's."

I married a man from North Carolina. The wedding was on a beauti-

ful yacht, "The Flying Cloud," anchored in the harbor of Acapulco. We honeymooned in Guatemala and went back to North Carolina.

My new sister-in-law had five month old twin boys, Johnny and Billy. I invented the Johnny Jump Up to help her take care of them. Our Johnny Jump Up factory in Minneapolis branched out and we made other baby items, tarps, etc. The jumper has sold world wide. We have made special ones for special needs. The Shrine Hospital finds it helpful in some special cases.

The jumper is a canvas seat suspended by a large spring and then hung in a doorway. It allows the baby to jump and bounce; developing strong back and legs.

Plasticfilm, Inc. was our second company. We made plastic bags and medical garments, etc. In Mexico, we had a pottery factory, and in Minneapolis we had "The Gallery" where we displayed and sold our products.

We have bought a number of buildings, refurbished, and sold some and kept some. I have always worked with the Humane Society and believe it is very important work.

My daughter was born in Minneapolis and lives here in St. Augustine, Florida. We think St. Augustine is a great place to live. I'm glad we are here!

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:

April 4, 2005

May 3, 2005

June 7, 2005

You are invited to attend.

Membership Checks

Some members have been asking why the checks that were sent to us for membership renewal have not shown up on their bank statement.

Your checks were received and recorded. When we sent the checks to the bank through the mail, the envelope on one of our deposits was destroyed and the checks were loose. It has taken some time to recover these checks. Most

of them have been recovered, and deposited and should soon show up in your statement.

A few of the checks have not been recovered because they were returned to the person writing the check. If you have received your check back from the post office, please resend it to the Historical Society.

The "Real" Charlie Brown

Good grief! Believe it or not, Charlie Brown, not the cartoon but his namesake, once lived in St. Louis Park. His home was on 36th Street between Highway 100 and Wooddale. It was a thriving neighborhood in the 1940's and '50's before the houses were demolished for offices. Now the offices are being demolished for condos.

Charlie Frances Brown (not Charles) was born on February 23, 1926, probably in Wisconsin. His father, Harry Joseph Brown, was a vaudeville performer when he met and married Mattie Laughnan in 1922.

Charlie's parents ran Browns Grocery at 3253 Girard Ave. So. In Minneapolis and the family lived in the basement for a time. Harry Sr. died suddenly in 1937 and Mattie and her extended family continued to run the store. Charlie graduated from DeLaSalle High School in 1944.

In the late 1940's, the family lived at 5710 W. 36th Street in St. Louis Park. Sometime between 1949 and 1956, the family moved to 3971

Princeton, also in St. Louis Park.

Charlie Brown met Charles Schultz when they were both instructors at Art Instruction Schools in Minneapolis. Schultz was a budding cartoonist and asked Charlie Brown if he could use his name. Brown said yes, although his head was not round, he did not own a zig zag shirt and was not wont to say "Good grief!" The first cartoon featuring Charlie went to press on October 2, 1950. Other Minneapolis folks who lent their names to the strip were Frieda Rich and Linus Maurer. Brown insists there was no Pig Pen.

After two years directing a young people's journal, Charlie Brown returned to Minneapolis and spent 20 years as director of the Hennepin County Juvenile and Detention Center. Charlie died on December 5, 1983 at the age of 57 after a seven year battle with prostate cancer.

This article was written by Jeanne Andersen and based upon Charlie Schultz autobiography, "Me And Charlie Brown: A Book of Good Grieffs," published by his friend, Virgil Burns.