



RE-ECHO

Newsletter of the St. Louis Park Historical Society

Volume 5 No. 5

Issue No. 23

SAVE THE BEEHIVE!!

You may have noticed it as you drive along Highway 100 – that strange, igloo-like structure that's just always been there. It's what we call a "beehive" – a barbeque that can accommodate up to three families at a time, as they roast their Peter's Wieners and marshmallows. But the beehive is in trouble and it needs your help. It's in the path of future highway construction, and we need to move it to safer ground. This is an all-out campaign to raise the money to move and restore this very important artifact.

The beehive sits in what is left of Lilac Park, one of one of several roadside parks that were built when the highway was built in 1939. It is located northeast of Highway 100 and Minnetonka Blvd. The park has been bisected by a highway on-ramp, and it's difficult and dangerous to get to.

Our other existing park is St. Louis Park Roadside Park ("Park Park"), located southeast of Highways 7 and 100 at the Nordic Ware tower. This park is essentially intact, with many of its original fixtures: stone picnic tables, rock garden, fireplace, and other Flintstone-like features. The park is maintained by Nordic Ware, and we thank them for this wonderful effort.

The Historical Society has participated in many meetings, chaired by Rick Birno from SLP Parks and Rec, that have included representatives of the State, County, and City, as well as Nordic Ware. And the news is good - we have recently been notified that it is indeed possible to move the beehive from Lilac Park to Park Park!

It will cost money, though, and although governmental entities are involved, it will still take participation from the community to accomplish the move. We know there are a lot of people in this area who love that old beehive, and remember picnicking in those parks back when the speed limit was 45 and you could pull right off the road. This is a real treasure, and we need to preserve it.

Won't you help? The St. Louis Park Historical Society has set up a fund specifically for the beehive. It was started with donations made in memory of Bob Reiss, one of our most dedicated participants in these discussions. All funds donated to this account are fully tax deductible. Send your check to the St. Louis Park Historical Society Beehive Fund, 3700 Monterey Ave. So., St. Louis Park, MN 55416. Make sure "beehive" is on your check if you want it earmarked for the beehive fund. Thank you in advance for your generous contribution.

For a more detailed account of the roadside parks, see www.slphistory.org/history/roadsideparks.asp

THIS 'N ' THAT

7th GRADERS ON THE MARCH

This year, as in the past two years, the 7th graders at St. Louis Park Jr. High were given assignments to research the past, present, and future of certain Park landmarks. Last year we had perhaps 150 students who came to our Lenox site and used the SLPHS collection for their research. Students were able to take notes and make copies of materials for their projects. SLPHS members were at Lenox every weeknight for two weeks to accommodate the demand. This year was different, in that the students now had access to information on the SLPHS web site, but we still had young customers who needed our help. The teachers found in earlier years that other State, County, and City facilities just did not have the needed information – the Historical Society is the place to go! Our thanks to the teachers and librarian June Gross for coordinating this effort with us.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Starting with this issue we would like to list the donations of artifacts that we have received since the last Re-ECHO. Our most recent donations are:

George Rye donated 9 very old pictures - in perfect condition - of the Laycock and Earle families, two of the earliest and most important families in the Park.

Bob Schoonover donated a copy of the genealogy of the Zabel family. Fred Zabel had an upholstery shop at his house in Brookside for 35 years.

Joyce and Lester McGown donated two vintage pictures, one of Lester in his first or second grade class at Fern Hill, 1929.

Don Olson donated a 1939 *Echowon*, aerial photos and action shots of homecoming 1941.

Rick Sewall donated a picture of 4090 Brookside Ave. ("Upland View"), taken around 1915. Rick grew up in the house, and got the picture from a descendant of Father Walter Thomas, who built it in 1910.

Tim Layeaux donated some wonderful artifacts from former Park businesses.

We apologize if we left anyone out. Thank you for your generous donations!

MAILBAG

In the mail came this inquiry from Historical Society member Marlen Rice Warren:

"Is there anyone who may have known my cousin, John (Jack) Woodhead, wife Marjorie and son John III? They lived at 6505 France in 1952, and from about 1956-60 at 8318 Virginia Circle, St. Louis Park. Jack was a Research Supervisor at Munsingwear and Marjorie a nurse at the Maternity Hospital, 301 Queen Ave. No. They died in North Carolina in 1985 and 1992 respectively."

If you have any memories of Mrs. Warren's cousin, please respond in care of the Re-ECHO and we will forward it to her. Thank you.

HISTORY'S MYSTERY

We are constantly on the lookout for famous or noted people who had some connection with St. Louis Park. We have some leads, but we need your help. Do you know anything about:

Harry Reasoner
Michael Blodgett
Carl Noren
Dr. John J. Wild

WELCOME TO MIRACLE MILE, HOIGAARD'S!

Hoigaard's, that venerable St. Louis Park business, has moved to Miracle Mile, St. Louis Park's landmark shopping center. It's time to review the history of this important Park business.

Conrad Hoigaard learned sailmaking during a brief stint as a sailor in Norway, and starting in about 1879, he honed his skills at a tent and awning firm in Minneapolis. When he opened his own business in 1895, the company's products were limited to tents, tarps, and awnings. He soon expanded into fly nets, horse covers, cow blankets, and custom-made products.

The business became a going concern in the early days of the 20th Century, with factory and office located on Washington Ave. No. (an area known as the Gateway). During World War I, the company manufactured canvas products for the military. In the 1920's, the company moved into products like sporting goods, directors' chairs, and sun umbrellas.

World War II: the factory converted to wartime production and suspended retail sales for the duration. All 125 employees worked to produce gun mount covers, aircraft covers, machine covers, and tents. Conrad's son Cyrus J. Hoigaard took over the business in 1947. Conrad died in 1950.

By 1960, the Gateway had become an embarrassment to the City, filled with liquor stores, bars, and flophouses. The wrecking ball of Urban Renewal eliminated the blight, but as a result, many businesses were displaced. Hoigaard's took this

opportunity to move to larger quarters, and purchased three acres in St. Louis Park from Charles Friedhem. The new building had an expanded showroom that replaced the small showroom and a fleet of salesmen. Hoigaard's opened for business in May 1960 at 3550 So. Highway 100.

Business at the new location was successful; in 1961, the *Dispatch* reported that "the company operates in 16 states and had gained national recognition for its unique, patented football field cover." In 1963 the Ski Chalet was added to beef up sales in the off-season, and by 1966, skiing had really taken off.

Hoigaard's made one of their most unusual products in honor of a 1965 visit to the Cities by the Beatles. Archie Walker owned West Side Volkswagen, which for years featured a revolving VW Beetle on its roof. In honor of the mop tops from Liverpool, Archie decided to put a Beatle wig on his Beetle, and Hoigaard's was up to the challenge, making the wig out of dyed... mopps!

Cyrus's son Conrad J. Hoigaard II became President of the company in 1975. In 1989, the adjacent City incinerator was demolished, ending the shower of white ash over the area. Hoigaard's expanded onto the land, keeping the chimney as an advertising landmark.

Hoigaard Village will now stand on the site, and we hope the move will be successful for both Hoigaard's and Miracle Mile.

WHAT WE HAVE AND WHAT WE NEED

Here's a rundown of what we have in our collection and what we're looking for.

ECHOWANS: We have many of the early editions (1929-1932, 1936-1946), but curiously very few of the later ones.

NEWSPAPERS: We have wonderful bound copies of the *Dispatch* and *Sun*, but are missing the years 1964 to June 1969.

PHONE DIRECTORIES: We have all copies from 1962 on, but our collection of earlier editions is spotty. These books are tremendously helpful in researching families and businesses.

Who We Are

The St. Louis Park Historical Society was founded in 1971 to record and preserve the history of St. Louis Park. The archives of the Society are located in the Historic Depot in Jorvig Park (37th and Brunswick) and at the Lenox Community Center (6715 Minnetonka Blvd.). Office hours at the Lenox site are Mondays and Thursdays from 10 to noon, and by appointment. Our mailing address is:

3700 Monterey Drive
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

To contact us by phone, you can call 952-924-2550 (note corrected number). Leave a message, and someone will return the call. Our email address is history@slphistory.org. You may also contact a member of our board of directors:

President: John Olson. 952-929-6156
jronwr@juno.com

Vice President: vacant

Secretary: Robert Jorvig. 952-938-6553
rjorvig@mn.rr.com

Treasurer: Megan Crosby. 952-933-1399
mcrosby@mmrf.org

Trustee: Barbara Reiss. 952-470-1762

Trustee: Don Schimmel. 952-890-7107
donaldkschimmel@comcast.net

Trustee: Kathy Johnson. 952-926-5040
drjksj@msn.com

Trustee: Jeanne Andersen. 612-396-6292
jeanneandersen@comcast.net

Join us on our web site at
www.slphistory.org.

About the Re-Echo

The Re-ECHO is published quarterly by the St. Louis Park Historical society. Its purpose is to acquaint our members, volunteers, and friends with the activities and resources of the Society. The Re-ECHO was started by Robert C. Reiss. The name was inspired by the ECHO newspaper, which has been published by and for the students of St. Louis Park High School since 1917

Fun Facts

Did you know that, in 1914, there may have been a dynamite plant in St. Louis Park? The map shows that the block bounded by Cedar Lake Road, Ottawa, 16th Street, and Princeton (just east of Highway 100) belonged to the E.J. DuPont de Nemours Powder Co. Today that block is all residential – but could they be sitting on a power keg? Probably not – all we know is that they owned the land; we have no record of a plant there. It would be great to know the whole story – anyone know?

Join Us!

The St. Louis Park Historical Society is a nonprofit organization and is wholly dependent on membership dues and donations for its operating costs, including the cost of mailing the Re-ECHO. Although for now you don't have to be a member to receive the Re-ECHO, we really need new members, and are looking for people to become active in the Society. Dues are only \$25 per year (tax deductible), so come join us! Meetings are on the first Tuesday of every month, and are open to everyone. They are held at Lenox Community Center October-May and at the Historic Depot June-September.

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

The St. Louis Park Historical Society Invites You



To renew or become a member now....

If you enjoy the stories in the Re-ECHO and want to help the Historical Society continue its work collecting and preserving Park history, we invite you to please support us by sending in your membership. Although we are working on getting a bulk mail permit, our newsletter now is going to over 900 people at first class rates. We do not get any kind of financial support from the City, County, or State, and we rely on memberships to keep us going. So won't you sign up today?

Your financial support is not the only way to contribute - we want your stories! We encourage you to write down some of the experiences you've had along the way. Younger generations can't imagine what life was like before Miracle Mile and Texa Tonka. Were you there? Tell us about it!

Share your memories of:

- **The rich life you've lived with families, friends, and neighbors**
- **The business opportunities you've built a life around**

Share your time as a volunteer:

- **Newsletter publication and distribution**
- **Planning special events**
- **Fundraising**
- **Video interviews**
- **Cataloging the collection**
- **Historical research.**

We invite you to sign up or renew your membership now!

ST. LOUIS PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GOALS FOR 2007

- Continue to work with the City and others to preserve historic Highway 100 beehive and other stone structures
- Make the "Re-Echo" newsletter available to all interested persons
- Enhance Historic Depot with model train display
- Assist Jr. High teachers with the 7th grade SLP history component
- Continue to enter data about the collection into PastPerfect program
- Continue to add information and pictures to the Society's web site:
www.slphistory.org
- Obtain bookshelves that will enable us to move the bound newspapers into a heated area of the Depot
- Tape interviews with longtime and notable Parkites, to be shown on Community TV
- Obtain funding through public or private grants

2007 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

_____ I am a current member _____ I am a new member

Annual Individual/Family Membership: _____ \$25

Business and Individual Benefactor Member Donation:

_____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 \$ _____ Other

Name(s): _____

Address _____

Email address: _____

During winter months from _____ to _____:

Address _____

Email address: _____

Mail membership dues to:

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

Phone: 952-924-2550

Donations are 100% tax deductible