

THE LAMPPOST

July 2009

SOLOMON COTTAGE UPDATE, JULY, 2009

We continue planning for renovation of the historic Solomon Cottage as the new headquarters of the Society.

Asbestos removal is now complete. The grounds around the Cottage set aside for Society use are staked (and we do have permission to use other areas adjoining these for outdoor Society events and parties).



Not unexpected with a 100-year old building, some repairs and maintenance are necessary, and we are getting estimates for minor repairs to the chimney and rear door jamb. Some tree pruning will reduce the number of branches hanging over the roof.

After much deliberation, the Society Board of Trustees has crafted its 'vision' or program for the renovated Cottage. By the time you read this, architect Walker Johnson and his associate Meg Kindelin, of JL Architects, will have received this program, and we expect to see their conceptual plans during August. (Please visit www.jlarchitects.com to view some of the historic preservation work in progress by Walker Johnson's team.)

After the Board selects the final layout of the building, we will formally launch our fund-raising campaign, most likely at an outdoor event on the Cottage grounds late this summer.

**The Park Ridge Historical Society
Antique, Collectible and Flea Market**
Saturday, September 12, 2009
9 AM - 4 PM

Hodges Park at Vine & Prospect - Park Ridge, IL
(rain date Sun. Sept. 13, 2009)
Free Admission - Free Parking
Limited Vendor Space Available
Call Millie O'Brien 847-825-5012

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GENEROUS BENEFACTORS

History evolves from the people who lived it and the artifacts they leave behind. We at the Historical Society are continually piecing together the history of Park Ridge by sifting through the various donations given to us by local residents. One recent acquisition is a lovely wedding dress from 1911, worn by the grandmother of one of our members.

Another special gift, contributed by member Ruth Olsen, is a 1935 Park Ridge/Des Plaines phone book which offers a wealth of information. From it, we learn that the Park Ridge Country Club had phone # 1, and Park Ridge School for Girls had # 8. George Sharringhausen's drug store was already situated at 110 Main Street, and Leed's Grocery and Market occupied 108 Main Street, where Kelly's Meat Market operates today. Anton Anderson Meat Market was at 22 Main Street. Hills Park Ridge Music Store was at 17 South Prospect, along with the Pickwick Recreation Bowling Alley. Next door to Dr. Buchheit's dental office in the Buchheit Building on Vine, you could find Schelt's Flower Shop and Sidney Stinton's Grocery. An artifact such as this phone book is a valuable source of information about our town's past, and we're grateful to the individual who thought to donate it to the Society.

You may recall that, several years ago, we were also blessed with a very sizeable donation from the estate of Ms. Gloria Boye, a former Society member. Gloria was born in 1922, and lived her entire life in the Sears home her father, Bill, had built at 409 South Cumberland. Bill Boye operated a car repair shop at 28 Main Street, a location that in recent years was Walter's restaurant. Gloria worked in City Hall for nearly 33 years, starting at the old Carpenter House on the Touhy triangle, and then moving to the present location, across from Hodges Park. Among the artifacts donated to the Society from Gloria's estate are paperwork and records from Bill Boye's garage, elbow-length kid gloves, a 1940 Maine Township High School yearbook, and numerous family photographs, all of which give wonderful insight into how people lived in Park Ridge years ago. In addition, Gloria remembered the Society in her will, leaving a generous amount of money which will be used to continue the work of the Park Ridge Historical Society in keeping the history and heritage of our community accessible and alive to the people of Park Ridge for years to come.



Gloria Boye at the Public Works Department when City Hall was in the Carpenter House, 1954.

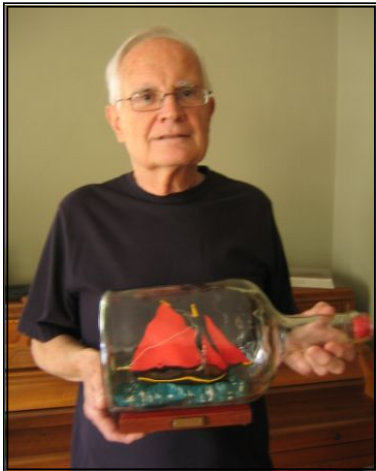
Standing to Gloria's right is hotel builder Caesar Marconi, paying for the building permits for the new Park Ridge Inn. On her left is Verne Soderstrom, Park Ridge City Engineer."

**THE PARK RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS
TWO SPEAKING PROGRAMS AT THE
PARK RIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

*Mark your calendar for these special family events,
to be held in the first floor meeting room.*

Wednesday, August 12, beginning at 7:00 pm

**Title: ‘The Magic of Ships in Bottles’
Speaker: Jim Kingston**



Mr. Kingston is well-known for his artistry in recreating miniature sailing ships in glass bottles of all sizes.

His work has been displayed in the Library showcase, as well as at many other exhibits in the local suburban area.

For the first time, he will demonstrate the secrets of putting a ship in a bottle, and will display the materials used in making the ship and its nautical setting.

Jim Kingston resides in Park Ridge, and is a member of the Historical Society, the Ships in Bottles Association of America, and the Chicago Maritime Society.

Monday, September 14, beginning at 7:00 pm

**Title: ‘The History of the Park Ridge Fire Department’
Speaker: Ralph Bishop**

Captain Ralph Bishop served 28 years in the Park Ridge Fire Department. He brings a special insight into the growth and development of our fire-fighting services from early days as an all-volunteer service, to modern times: his father Ralph E. Bishop was a volunteer fireman for 50 years, and his brother Emmet also served as a volunteer fireman.

At this evening’s program Captain Bishop will tell us about the history of our fire protection service from the early days in the 1890s through the formation of today’s modern Park Ridge Fire Department. Find out why George Carpenter ordered construction of a pumping station and artesian well as one of his first actions as our first Village President in 1873, and how the Fire Department served Camp Fort Dearborn in the Forest Preserve along Higgins Road.

Enjoy his slide show and stories of the fires he fought, equipment he worked with, and changes in technology seen over the many years he devoted to our community safety.

Ralph Bishop is a Member of the Society and lifetime resident of Park Ridge.



FOCUS ON SOCIETY MEMBER LEN JOHNSON

Leonard Johnson and his wife Frances are Life Members of the society. As a proud 42-year resident of Park Ridge, Leonard wanted to share with our Lamppost readers a few very neat stories. Such as, that his home of 20 years is the only known house in town designed by, built by and lived in by W.F. McCaughy, who was responsible for the architecture of the Pickwick Theatre along with Harold Roscoe Zook.

Len is a 19-year veteran and Lieutenant with the North Maine Fire Protection District in Des Plaines. In June of last year, he was honored as the Firefighter of the Year in the District. For the past 32 years he has also worked as a bricklayer and stone mason, which ties in with our early heritage as Brickton, Illinois, and has built many important structures in town including the Park Ridge Metra Station, Park Ridge Fire Department addition and additions to our Roosevelt and Washington Schools.

An interesting contribution to the good story of Park Ridge is the recent accomplishment of a group of High School students at St. Andrews Church who became amateur rocketry scientists



under Len's guidance. The St. Andrews Team Orion went to the Team America Rocketry Challenge National Finals, and then further distinguished themselves by receiving a contract from NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center to build and test a rocket plus payload.

These outstanding students were honored by City Proclamation for their exceptional achievements in 2007. Included here is a photo of Team Orion from the April, 2007 Northern Illinois Rocketry Association newsletter.

We salute Len Johnson for sharing his time with the youth of Park Ridge.

THE 2009 PARK RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Officers:

Jeff Caudill – President
Lauren Maloney – Secretary
Patrick Mastrolonardo – Treasurer

Trustees:

Millie O'Brien	Leo Rizzetto
Judy Matzen	Mary Ellen Jones
Nancy Pytel	Bonnie Tinder
Pat Adlaf	Maureen Connelly
Paul Adlaf	

DOWN MEMORY LANE



*Contributed by Society Member Jane Downton of Park Ridge August 7, 2008.
Miss Downton taught 1st grade in Room 102 of Merrill School for 26 years.*

Park Ridge has been called “home” for a long time! My parents moved to Park Ridge in 1921. My father enjoyed gardening and wanted a house with a yard. Park Ridge seemed a most convenient place. He could take the Chicago-Northwestern train downtown for work, and my mother could walk to Edison Park School where she taught third grade.

They purchased a house on the west side of north Washington Street, which at that time was the last street in that part of town. My mother especially liked the chestnut tree in the front yard. Our view was east to Milwaukee Avenue, where we could see car lights at night. On snowy days, the milkman often came by sleigh. But that didn’t last long. Soon, the land was divided into lots and streets were paved. One by one, new houses went up across the street. Our view was gone.

The last section to be paved was the area called Michael John Terrace. For a long time, no houses went up there. It was an excellent place to ride our bicycles. In the spring, there was always a good amount of pollywogs for us to catch in the swampy land!

Early on, our neighbor raised chickens in his yard. Later, he and my father would take their garden tools up to the area near the School for Girls. They rented plots of land to grow Victory Gardens. Crops were always good!

Every school day, my mother and I would walk to school in Edison Park. We would pass St. Vincent’s Villa - a summer orphanage for children in Chicago. At the corner of their property was a woodsy area which was great for ice skating in winter. Near the corner of Washington Street and the Highway was a home with a field of Lilies of the Valley - they were beautiful in the springtime!

Our town was growing! A new high school was built at Potter and Dempster in Park Ridge so students no longer needed to go to Des Plaines. It was about three miles from my house to Maine Township High School. On good days, we could walk or ride our bicycle. On rainy days, we took the bus for 10 cents each way. If we got off at Six Corners (Uptown Park Ridge), we could go to Wilsheks Bakery for a treat. Their sweet rolls were delicious!

Looking across from the bakery, we could see the home of the Carpenters. It was like a southern mansion - a landmark in Park Ridge! A son, John Alden Carpenter, was a noted musician and composer.

Near this home, on a point of land facing the old circle, was the city hall and fire department. For years, they entertained children of the town on Halloween. We always wore a costume! We ducked for apples and got treats.

I joined the Camp Fire Girls group meeting at the old Community Church building. Mrs. Turley and Mrs. Hayles were the leaders. The Camp Fire Girls had a Council Fire Meeting for girls graduating in rank to each level. Florence Otteson, Jeanette Risler, and Dorothy Fleming led the girls with their beautiful voices. “Mudge” Brown had charge of the May baskets for delivery to shut-ins.

Opposite Hodges Park was Dr. Buchheit’s dental office. After my appointment, my mother let me choose a toy from the variety store beneath the office, or an ice cream cone at Sharringhausen’s Drug Store.

My house is now almost 100 years old. The beautiful chestnut tree had to be taken down. But Park Ridge is still going strong.

MORE ON PARK RIDGE CENTENNIALS FROM THE MAY, 2009 LAMPOST....

In our May **Lamppost**, four organizations were mentioned in our introduction to the City Centennial year May, 2010 – May, 2011. In addition to the *City of Park Ridge*, the other three were, with the year in which the centennial occurred/will occur in parentheses: *The Park Ridge Country Club* (2006), *the Park Ridge Public Library* (2013) and *The Youth Campus* (2008).

Other long-standing centennial organizations in continuous operation in Park Ridge are: *St. Paul of the Cross Church* (2011), *Boy Scout Troop 1* (2012), *Fred Gillick's Office* (2009), the *First United Methodist Church*, established here in 1856, and the *Park Ridge Community Church*, established here in 1843 as the Monroe Congregational Church, taking the current name in 1917. Incidentally, the First United Methodist Church has hosted Boy Scout Troop 1 for all of its years, and this Troop is believed to be the oldest in continuous operation in the United States.



*Park Ridge Historical Society
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