



# THE SPIRIT

Preserving the life of America's unique community

A publication of  
the  
Park Forest  
Historical  
Society

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## The 1950s Park Forest House Museum is in Its New Home!

### View of the new 1950s Park Forest House Museum



The 1950s Park Forest House Museum, now located in St. Mary's Catholic Church, 227 Monee Road, is settled in its new home. The Society has not yet re-established regular open hours, but the museum can be shown by appointment, if a volunteer is available. Those wishing to see the museum by appointment should contact us via email, or should call Jane Nicoll, Museum Director, at 708-481-4252; or Michael Gans, at 708-305-3308.

Target hours will be Wednesday and Saturday afternoons, 1-3:30 p.m. **We are not open for a regular schedule yet because we need more people to help!** Anyone interested in being trained to be a volunteer museum guide or docent should also call Jane or Mike.

The museum now represents a home in the first five years the village was settled, 1948-1953. Although no longer in an original rental unit, the layout is very similar, and it looks like a home furnished as it might have been in those first years.

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The Society will hold its Annual Meeting and Election of Board Members Sunday, September 27, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. in Ryan Hall of St. Mary Catholic Church. \_

**THIS MEETING WILL BE OPEN FOR MEMBERS ONLY, AND WILL INCLUDE AN OPEN HOUSE OF THE MUSEUM FOR PAID MEMBERS.**

Our membership year begins in September and we are hoping to lure more people in the community to become active, paying members to support our mission and this museum by holding this Open House for MEMBERS ONLY! \_

**Not a Member? Come! People may sign up for membership at this meeting!**

# The 1950s Park Forest House Museum is in Its New Home!

(Continued from page 1)

Andrew Brown, our former landlord at Central Park Apartments, generously allowed us to take the kitchen cupboards, which his staff carefully removed. Superior Cabinet and Window employees, Al Jones and Tom Grant, with permission of owner, Frank Klauck, built us a rolling platform on which they mounted the upper and lower cabinets. It looks great and very authentic. **Thanks to all the owners and staff involved!!**

Many people helped pack the museum carefully before the move. Museum Director, Jane Nicoll,



Superior Cabinet and Window employees, Tom Grant and Al Jones with the kitchen cupboards they mounted on the rolling platform they built.

worked on the layout, which required measuring all of the pieces and arranging them on a grid until most of the collection could be fit into the two rooms. She used a few volunteers to help unpack some of the collection. Jane put in many hours beyond her work as Society Archivist setting the museum back up. Volunteers Carl Stover and Bill Wilkinson built Bedroom and Living Room closets and a wall divider for display material. Mike Wiater of Crete donated a standing kitchen pantry which replaced the built-in pantry we had in the original rental townhome.

The move took place on May 19, 2015. It took until late-July for everything to be in place. The bathroom sink and medicine cabinet (originals from

141 Forest Blvd) still need a wall built to support them for the bathroom display to be complete.

**Now we need a Volunteer Coordinator or Scheduler and more volunteers before we can get fully up and running again. We have been open a few sporadic times since August 1, and we are working on some tours by appointment.**

**One advantage of the museum being in St. Mary's is that it is now accessible.**

We hope this means that more senior citizen groups and nursing home visitors can enjoy the Nostalgic trip down Memory Lane that the museum provides. We do need to set up appointments for such visits.

**Spread the word to neighbors, friends and family that the museum is ready to be shown, and that we need volunteers!! Volunteer yourself!! It takes a village to support a museum!**

**Like us on Facebook at "1950s Park Forest House Museum" and "Park Forest Historical Society"**

**Like both, please.**

**Follow us on Twitter "@1950s Museum, @ parkforesthstory"**

**Could you help us by posting to Social Media?**

## **In My Own Little Corner**

### **By Jane Nicoll**

## **S**eptember is membership drive month! **Renew or Join Us!**

I hope non-members understand they may attend our September 27 Annual Meeting and Open House of the new museum, as long as they join at that meeting! We welcome you! We need you!

Look at your schedule to see if you can volunteer to show the museum on a Wednesday or Saturday from 1-3:30 p.m. If enough people are interested we will do Saturday mornings as well. There **MUST** be more volunteers so we can advertise a regular schedule. We also need trained volunteers who can show the museum for group or private tours at other times.

September is the last month for us to supply the volunteer hours required to make the match for the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant. Thank you to the many who have given several hours or a few here and there since September 2013. The work we have been doing- describing and labeling both collections- will continue. If you have some time, have good handwriting or can type into Word or Excel, call me at 708-481-4252 to see if I have a job for you. We have been working Tuesday 11-3; Thursday 11-4; and Friday, at least 10-12:30. During the hours listed I can be reached on my mobile phone, 708-638-4815

By September 30, I have to complete the Final Performance Report for the National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grant which paid for a Conservation Consultant and much needed clean acid-free cartons, along with many other preservation supplies.

“Step Back Into a 1950s Halloween” exhibit, September 12-November 7, 2015 would be a fun way to get a good look at the new museum. Hopefully, volunteers fill our remaining shifts and we can advertise regular hours!

This week, we received word that the Village of Park Forest has awarded us a Fourth Matching Challenge Grant of \$5,000! Your memberships, annual fund donations, and purchases from the museum and online store all go to the match. Thank you to Village Manager Tom Mick, Mayor Ostenburg and the Park Forest Village Board of Trustees for your support!

Some extra square footage in our new museum will be used for small exhibits on Park Forest history. If you have a suggestion for one, and/or would like to help research & mount the exhibits planned, contact Mike Gans, 708-305-3308. He will be recording ideas and names to relay to the PFHS Board.

Do you have ideas for programs? Let the PFHS Board know, via Mike Gans, 708-305-3308, or via email on our website, [parkforesthistory.org](http://parkforesthistory.org). Our program dates: September 27, 2015 at St. Mary's Catholic Church; November 15, 2015, February 28, 2016, and June 26, 2016 will all be in Village Hall, 350 Victory Drive. Please put the correct locations in your Village of Park Forest calendar.

## The Historical Society bids “Bon Voyage” to two Former Board Members and three Dedicated Volunteers

In August Jim and Helen Sylvia moved to San Antonio, Texas.

Helen had served as a docent at the museum, along with her many musical volunteer tasks in the Village and the area.

Jim had been Society Treasurer for several years. He also inspected the House Museum twice a week since 2007. When the Society moved the Archive into St. Mary's Catholic Church, Jim helped with the move, then led the volunteers in setting up several sections of industrial shelving—doing a great deal of that himself.

Since January 2012, he also checked in at the Archive on a bi-weekly basis. He was an immense help to the Archivist in setting up payment plans and working on the budgets for the two federal grants we have been administering for the past two years.

Jim was also very involved in St. Irenaeus, PADS, South Suburban Food Co-op, and drove many friends for doctor appointments.

Jim and Helen will be missed in our community.



**Jim Sylvia**



**Suzie Brown**

Suzanne Brown (Hall of Fame 2008), served on the 50th Anniversary of Park Forest Committee. That involvement evolved into becoming a Board Member of the Park Forest Historical Society for many years, where she served as Secretary for some time. In 2002, Suzie undertook oral histories of Park Forest World War II veterans, a project called, “GI Stories from a GI Town.” For seven years, she put together the PFHS November program with selected veterans and their wives telling parts of the stories from their oral histories. Suzie eventually recorded 92 oral histories and transcribed 57 of them herself.

During the 50th Anniversary of Park Forest, Suzie created a Park Forest History Packet which we sent to all of the schools educating Park Forest students. Along with Jean Bernstein and May Wiza, Suzie created a Park Forest History Curriculum on CDROM and marketed it to all schools serving Park Forest students. Suzie began each fall to contact the school districts and to set up when the unit would be taught. As school funding waned, she began teaching the curriculum herself in Districts 162 and 163 to fourth and fifth graders. Anne Marie Leofanti has agreed to continue this effort for the Society.

Suzie also served monthly as a docent at the 1950s Park Forest House Museum. She was a volunteer at Respond Now and a dedicated member of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Park Forest. She is moving to Eugene, Oregon to live near her daughter and grandson.



## **IF NOT YOU, WHO? IF NOT NOW, WHEN?**

Dear Members and Friends,

### **Thank you for your continued support!**

Your membership helps support our mission to preserve Park Forest's unique history, diversity and achievements.

### **The Society marked 30 years of preserving YOUR history on January 30, 2015.**

We may still hold a celebration. Our membership has climbed to 129+—a wonderful improvement over the 44 members we had in September 2013.

The Facebook group, “Grew Up in Park Forest,” with 3000+ members from all over the country, constantly exchanges stories and photos of the “Golden Age” of their youth. Several have contributed to our two matching Grants from the Village of Park Forest.

**Thank you! But wouldn't it be wonderful if all 3000+ joined the Society!!**

**We need money and active volunteers to carry the torch of our missions and projects into the future!** If you live nearby and you are not visiting or attending or volunteering in some way, this is the year! Come on Park Foresters, past and present, we can do better than 129 members! Put your money and talents where your memories are!!

### **Where is that Park Forest Spirit?**

We need the continuing support of memberships to sustain our projects. To put it bluntly, **we need cold hard cash and active volunteers** to continue the Society!!

**The Society needs help from each of you to build our membership and working volunteer numbers! Please “talk us up”** with current or former Park Forest friends or neighbors, and with grown family members who have not joined or visited, or who may not have heard we exist. Tell them about our meetings, the museum, and the Park Forest Local History Collection and Archive! **We are doing this for YOU!**

**Please help us do it!** Do not assume people know about us! Tell everyone you know, and ask them to visit the museum and archive, **and to JOIN!**

### **A fourth \$5000 Matching Challenge Grant from the Village of Park Forest Has Been Approved!**

All memberships, \$ donations, sales of merchandise, and admissions would count toward our match. **This matching grant is what has kept the museum doors open!**

**We need your match!**

**The Museum moved to St. Mary's Catholic Church, 227 Monee Road in May 2015. It took until late July to be fully settled.** We do not have regular open hours, yet, while we rebuild our volunteer group. We will be open fewer hours, and by appointment. We hope to get more tours because we are now accessible (all on one floor). **We need volunteers!**

Please read our newsletters and program fliers online at [parkforesthhistory.org](http://parkforesthhistory.org). We are working hard on two federal grants--one from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and a Preservation Assistance Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Official work on these ends September 30, but we will keep working on what was started with the grants!! A new volunteer plans to take Park Forest History curriculum into the schools each spring. The museum is ready to be shown, but **we have to advertise as being open by appointment due to a lack of active volunteers**. (We are having some success in scheduling some Wednesday and Saturday open hours, but have not covered all, yet.) We are promoting the museum on Social Media and want those doors open!

**Please fill out our enclosed membership form, and send us a check. Or go to [parkforesthhistory.org](http://parkforesthhistory.org) and pay via PayPal with a message, "Membership."**

**Find our "Time and Talents Survey" on our website. Fill it out and return it to us!**

We want to **include YOU** in accomplishing our missions and projects. Our small board includes several people 70 years and over. **Two of our "movers and shakers"--volunteers doing huge jobs for us--have just moved out of state!** Some volunteers serving at the museum and archive do not now and never have lived in Park Forest. They just believe in what we are doing and enjoy showing the museum.

**Imagine the very real possibility that the Society fades away like the Park Forest Lions just did, Park Forest Womans Club has, and so many others, in spite of all the people so proud to have lived here!**

**[The 2nd, 3rd and 4th generations of Park Foresters, as well as past residents and brand new residents Must Step Up to the Plate NOW, for us to continue!](#)**

**[We appreciate your verbal support, the rewarding reactions of a buzz of comments after we put up posts on Facebook about the Society and the 1950s Park Forest House Museum.](#)** We love your visits, attendance at our programs, and stories you share with us. Your past financial support through memberships, annual fund donations and purchases from our museum and online stores keep us working on this.

**[But we can not continue much longer without additional active volunteers!](#)**

**Your membership will serve as the "pat on the back" this Society needs to continue its work this year. Your attendance, visits and full participation ([translation: active volunteering](#)) in what we do will become the backbone of the future Park Forest Historical Society.**

**Let's go Park Forest! Let's GO!**

For the Park Forest Historical Society Board of Directors,

Jane Nicoll, Archivist/ Museum Director/ Board Member/ Co-founder of PFHS

**Like us on Facebook at "1950s Park Forest House Museum" and "Park Forest Historical Society."**

**Follow us on Twitter @Park Forest History, and @ 1950s museum.**

**Can you help us get on even more Social Media platforms and to post to the ones we are on?? Contact me, Jane Nicoll, at 708-481-4252.**



**Park Forest  
Historical  
Society  
Projects**

**1950s Park Forest House Museum**

**In St. Mary's Catholic Church**

**227 Monee Road**

Open By Appointment

Donation: Adults \$5; 12 &  
under free, with adult.

Small groups by appointment.

School and group tours.

**Park Forest Local History**

**Collection and Archive**

**227 Monee Road, and PFPL**

**Archive Open Friday 10-12**

Oral History Transcripts

Photographs, Slides

Videotapes, DVD's

Audiotapes, CD's

Manuscript Collections

Select Village Government

Documents

Scrapbooks

Architectural History

Biography Files

Maps

Shopping Center History

**Your membership preserves history.**

**Programs**

**We hold programs 5-6 times a year on Park Forest and regional history**, with occasional speakers on topics of general historical interest or on preserving family photographs and resources. **Each spring we hold the Park Forest Hall of Fame Induction**, recognizing people nominated by the public for consistent, beneficial service to the community over a long span of time. Nomination forms, sent to members each fall and available on our website, are accepted between October 1 and December 15 each year.

**Speakers available**

We can talk to schools or groups, including to scouts working on local history.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

Museum Tour guides during regular hours;  
and for arranged tours

Assisting at programs and public events

Graphics, website design, and Social Media

Fundraising

Cataloging, describing, numbering collections

Researching and photographing architecture

Transcribing veterans' oral histories

Job descriptions at parkforesthistor.org.

**\*\*Take our Time and Talent Survey\*\***

**\*\*\*Help us record and preserve our history\*\*\***

**"If not you, who? If not now, when?"**

**Yes! I want to be a member.**  
**Members receive four newsletters,**  
**invitations, and one free museum visit.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please send newsletters and  
announcements via my email.

**Membership Category**

Student, with I.D. (New 2014-15) \$ 10.00

Individual \$ 20.00

Family \$ 40.00

Contributor \$ 75.00

Benefactor 1 (One month museum rent) \$400.00

Benefactor 2 (One month Archive rent) \$225.00

Corporate (Ask about sponsorships) \$ 50.00

**Our membership year begins in September.**

**Enclosed is a check made payable to:**

☐ "Park Forest Historical Society"

Mail to: Park Forest Historical Society

400 Lakewood Blvd.

Park Forest, IL 60466-1619

**Or use website-PayPal, message, "Membership"**

☐ **Please contact me about volunteer  
opportunities.**

Park Forest Historical Society is an independent 501 (c) (3)  
corporation. Your donation is tax-deductible to the extent  
allowed by law.

## Who we are:

The Park Forest Historical Society was founded in 1985, and became an independent 501 (c) (3) corporation in 1989. Its mission was to support the Local History Collection and Archive of the Park Forest Public Library, which had been started by the Reference Staff in 1981. In 1998, the Society helped form the 50th Anniversary House Museum at 397 Forest Blvd. In January 2007, the Archive was moved to remote storage by the library. In the same month, the museum changed its name to 1950s Park Forest House Museum. In May 2007, the museum at 395-397 Forest Blvd lost its lease and was put into storage. In October 2007, Central Park Townhomes and AIMCO offered the museum a unit at 141 Forest Blvd, allowing the Society to pull the basic house museum out of storage. As of May 2015, the museum is at St. Mary's Catholic Church. In January 2012, the Archive and our office moved into St. Mary's, 227 Monee Road. Much of the Local History Collection is available in the adult services area of the Park Forest Public Library. The Society has the photograph collection. At present, the Society is seeking a permanent home for the museum, the archival collection, office and the digital computer lab. For more information on our story, what our past and current programs are, and how you can help, visit

[www.parkforesthstory.org](http://www.parkforesthstory.org).

## The specific mission of this society shall be:

To preserve, interpret, and celebrate the unique history, diversity and achievements of the Village of Park Forest, Illinois through exhibits, publications, and special programs;

To educate residents, students and visitors, in all aspects of the village history;

To promote and support historical research;

To encourage donations, and enlist volunteers for the Park Forest Local History Collection and Archive and the 1950s Park Forest House Museum;

To honor those who have contributed to our community over a long period of time.



**Park Forest Historical Society**  
Mail: 400 Lakewood Blvd  
Park Forest, IL 60466-1619  
[parkforesthstory1 at yahoo.com](mailto:parkforesthstory1@yahoo.com)  
[www.parkforesthstory.org](http://www.parkforesthstory.org)

## Membership Form



**Preserving  
Park Forest's  
Unique History,  
Diversity and  
Achievements**