



THE SPIRIT

Preserving the life of America's unique community

A publication of
the
Park Forest
Historical
Society

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Society to Explore Holiday History



Two views of the historic Holiday Theater
(Images by permission of the Park Forest Historical Society)



Annual Meeting Focuses On Famed Park Forest Theater

The history of the Holiday Theater is the featured program at the Annual Meeting of the Park Forest Historical Society on **September 26, 2010 at 2:30 p.m. in the Park Forest Village Hall in the Village Board room.**

At that time the Society will present the PFHS Board nominees to be voted on by the membership. Brief annual reports will be given by the officers.

The program on the Holiday Theater is being presented by Jack Black and Becky Maller Black. Becky's father Bill owned the theater from 1952 to 1978, and Jack once worked at the theater. We are looking for people who worked at the theater during any ownership to join us on September 26 to share their memories. We are interested in finding photographs of the interior of the theater through the years.

The Holiday Theater was possibly the largest theater built in the Chicago area since the Depression. It was one of the very first built in a shopping center. In fact it was Tom Klutznick, son of American Community Builders President, Philip Klutznick, who helped start the national trend of theaters attached to shopping centers when he built the theater at River Oaks.

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Holiday Theater History

(Continued from Page 1)

The Holiday Theater is included on the website, "Cinema Treasures." A model of the theater is part of the Theatre Historical Society of America in Elmhurst, Illinois. Memories of the theater, which was a social hub in the early days of the village, are vivid for the early residents. It was used by several churches for Sunday morning services. Hopefully, we can get access to the Local History Files at the library before September 26 to fill in more historic details from our file on the theater.

Watch our website at www.parkforesthistory.org for more information on who will be speaking on the panel

PFHS PROGRAMS

September 26, 2010
Annual meeting; Holiday Theater History

November 13, 2010
Author Greg Randall
"America's G.I. Town"

January 29, 2011
Anniversary Celebration

April 3, 2011
Hall of Fame Induction

June 26, 2011
Final Program

MEMBERSHIP DEADLINE NEARS

Membership in the Park Forest Historical Society helps carry on our specific mission to preserve, interpret and celebrate the history, diversity and achievements of the Village of Park Forest.

All memberships are renewable each September. Your support at this time is needed. Funds obtained through memberships support the 1950s Park Forest House Museum and ensure its continued operation. If you are not a Society member or have not renewed your membership, please consider doing so today by returning the membership form at the bottom of this page.

YES! I want to join the Park Forest Historical Society

\$20 Individual \$40 Family \$75 Contributor \$300 Benefactor (One month's Museum rent)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE (_____) _____

E-MAIL _____

New membership Renewal Contact me about volunteer opportunities

Please mail to:

**Park Forest Historical Society
400 Lakewood Boulevard
Park Forest, IL. 60466**

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

In My Own Little Corner

By Jane Nicoll, Museum Director

We hope you will all join us for our Annual Meeting on September 26, 2010 when our program will be on the history of the Holiday Theater. See more information in the newsletter and watch for more details on the website at www.parkforesthistor.org.

Donations to the museum have included marbles, a Jay's Potato Chip can, an Erector set in the original metal box, a Lady Schwinn bicycle with shopping baskets on the back, and a set of yellow plastic canisters (minus the Sugar canister).

If anyone would be interested in rehabbing the lady's bicycle, which needs new tires and to be cleaned of rust, please contact me at 708-481-4252, or at parkforesthistor1@yahoo.com.

We have been experimenting with keeping the museum open on Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m. and using it as a site where The Southland Voice can be purchased for 50 cents. However, the publisher cannot be there every Wednesday, so this may not work out as a regular set of hours, but will be intermittent. If anyone is interested in volunteering on Wednesdays, who would not otherwise be able to volunteer on Saturdays, please contact me. It would help the museum to be open an additional day each week, but we can't spare any Saturday people to cover it.

I will be contacting people who have been interested in being trained to docent or be a museum guide. My goal will be to train several people at one time. If you are interested in becoming a docent, please contact me to be included in this training. We have lost 12 of our regular docents over the past two years. If you have time to help out once every few months, we need you!

"Donations...have included marbles, a Jay's Potato Chip can, an Erector set in the original metal box..."

There is a Facebook group, "Grew Up in Park Forest," which now has 1,946 members. Check out the discussions and add your memories. While you are there, go to "1950s Park Forest House Museum" and "Like" our page.

Our next program will be on **Saturday November 13, 2010**. Gregory Randall has just published a second edition of, *America's Original GI Town*. He will present a program on it and do a book signing. Copies of the book will be available for sale at the program.

We sell "use rights" to our photograph collection. The first edition of the book has been responsible for some profitable interest in our photograph collection. A number of authors and publishers have contacted us because of seeing our photographs in Greg's book.

Join the Society as a Volunteer!

The Society needs volunteers. If you are retired, unemployed, underemployed, or have time available to help out, *We Need You!* Check out the website for volunteer opportunities which are listed for the Society, the Museum and the Archive. The Society has ambitious plans, and the job of carrying them out is falling on too few shoulders.

We need your support in furthering our goals. Please join our volunteer corps and help keep the history of Park Forest alive for future generations.

THE CIRCLE THAT IS OUR HISTORY

I sometimes think our lives take circular paths, beginning and ending at the same point. The other day I was listening to a taped interview with the late Ivan A. "Ike" Baker, the longtime Superintendent of Schools for District 163 in Park Forest that was made in 1980 for the Park Forest Oral History project.

We are taking these cassette tapes out of remote storage and archiving them to CDs in an effort to make them available.

In one portion of the recording, Baker recalls his difficulty in hiring teachers for the new schools in the then young community. He recalled that at the time salaries for teachers seldom exceeded

\$2,000 to \$3,000 for the school

year. Baker himself would venture into the real-estate business during the summer, selling houses in Park Forest.

But when a new teacher was hired, Baker would contact Tom McDade, who was in charge of rental units for American Community Builders. "I would tell him we had a new teacher, and Tom would find an apartment," said Baker.

McDade stayed with American Community Builders for nearly two generations. His old company was now an international powerhouse, whose projects ranged from Water Tower Place, shopping centers in Oakbrook, Calumet City and Skokie as well as redeveloping the



Jerry Shnay

city of Ashdod, Israel.

When he retired in the 1980s, Tom and his wife Mignon moved out of their Lake Shore Drive apartment overlooking Lake Michigan to a two-bedroom ranch house in Park Forest. He loved the community and he helped build and he was now able to see that it continued to flourish. Tom died 18 years ago, but his legacy to Park Forest continues to this day through a financial gift he made to the Historical Society in his will.

The circle begins to close.

Tom McDade was my stepfather-in-law. In 1964, before she married Tom, it was mother-in-law Mignon who made sure we had a place to stay when we moved from Albuquerque to Chicago. She chose Park Forest because it was within easy commuting distance of my new job with a newspaper in Indiana.

Our lives have been connected to others in this unique community for nearly 50 years. The reason you receive this Historical Society newsletter is because you too, have a similar connection through family or friends and in your personal circles with Park Forest. That's why we invite you to the annual meeting of the Society on September 26, and urge you to support our work of saving Park Forest history either through membership in, or as a volunteer for many of our activities.

Please remember that our membership renewal deadline is September 30, 2010.

This year the Society is celebrating its 25th anniversary with a dinner scheduled for early in 2011. You will be able to read more about our plans for this event and the rest of our public programs in the next issue of "THE SPIRIT."

Jerry Shnay

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Tom McDade