

MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEPING HOMETOWN MEMORIES ALIVE

MUSEUM



JOURNAL

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HEARTH & HOME CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

BY JEAN MURPHY

Happy 50th anniversary to Hearth & Home at 530 W. Northwest Highway in Mount Prospect and the O'Donnell family! H&H has a long and interesting history in this community.

Its founder Bob O'Donnell went into partnership to start the business with Dave Waldman in 1971 and they opened the doors in September that year. The O'Donnell family lived in Prospect Heights at the time.

"Both my father and his partner, Dave, were salesmen for Northern Illinois Gas Co.," Pat O'Donnell, current president, explained. "They sold gas appliances, gas lights, gas grills, gas heaters, etc. for the sales department of the gas company. My father had worked there for almost 15 years when Northern Illinois Gas decided to eliminate their sales division. At that point both my father and Dave decided there would be a gas appliances market to address in the area and since they both had young families to support, they decided to go out on a limb and go into business together."



Hearth & Home storefront at 530 W. Northwest Highway, 2021

The partners ran "OWL Appliance and Heating" (which stood for O'Donnell ---- Waldman --- and they went out on a Limb) until 1977 when Waldman died. They sold, installed and serviced gas fireplaces, gas logs, gas space heaters and gas ovens and cooktops. Wood-burning fireplaces were added soon afterward.

OWL was located at 15 W. Busse Avenue in the small triangle (across from Busse-Biermann Hardware) until 1980 when the Village began talking about redevelopment of that triangle.

After Dave died, Bob's wife, Marilyn, stepped in to help with the books. Soon afterward, in December 1978, Bob's son, Pat, graduated from St. Norbert College (DePere, WI) and while looking for a post-graduation job, he began working for his dad to earn some money.

"A neighbor of ours was an outdoor furniture sales representative and we were talking about my future and he

talked about his industry. The idea of a career in a family business sounded intriguing to me. I then talked to my parents about adding outdoor furniture to our product mix and expanding and moving the business."

So, in 1979, Pat formally joined the family business and the next year they moved to a



OWL storefront at 15 W. Busse Avenue, 1971

larger space at 430 W. Northwest Highway, added patio furniture to their product line and changed the name to Hearth & Home Shoppe. Eight years later, in 1988, the O'Donnells bought the current building at 530 W. Northwest Highway, renovated it and moved there that April. Pat's sister, Mary, also joined the business that year. In 2011, after five years in the banking industry, Ryan O'Donnell, the third generation, joined the business.

"Our future is in good hands," Pat said.

Today they boast a staff of 15, including five family members – Pat and his sister, Mary Schappert (who are co-owners), Pat's wife Anne, their son Ryan, and brother-in-law Ed Schappert.

Congratulations, Hearth & Home!

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

After a busy summer and fall here at the Historical Society, I am thrilled to announce that the Dietrich Friedrichs House is now open again for guided tours on Wednesdays. We have an amazing new group of volunteer tour guides who will show you around the 115-year-old house and share the story of the Friedrichs family who built it and lived there for 60 years. Tours are by appointment only and can be made over the phone or on our website.

Central School is also open on the second Sunday of each month for our “Second Sunday at the Society” program. Stop by to see the schoolhouse, and stay to make a seasonal craft!

As the world opened up a little more, we were able to attend events around the community. You may have joined us on our bus tour of Chicago’s Pullman Neighborhood and the Robie House, seen us at the Lions Club Farmers Market, or filled out a survey for our Pandemic Moments Project while at

the Mt. Prospect Park District concerts at Lions Memorial Park, the Downtown Block Party, or at Randhurst Street Fest. If you haven’t yet, you can still submit your photos and stories to the Pandemic Moments Project on our website.

Since the last newsletter, the Historical Society has received many wonderful artifact donations. Our artifact collection now contains an almost complete collection of Prospect High School yearbooks, pieces from Prospect Place Shopping Center (including items from Sam’s Place), Mount Prospect Baseball Association memorabilia (see below), and several hats that belonged to Historical Society cofounder Gertrude Francek, just to name a few of the amazing contributions.

Everything that the Historical Society has accomplished, especially during these tough times, has been made possible by the generosity of members and donors like you. Your financial donations allow us to continue preserving Mount Prospect’s history through

our artifact collection and educational programs, as well as allow us to share that history with the community. Thank you for all you do to help us fulfill our mission!



Emily Dattilo
Director

FROM THE COLLECTION

This signed baseball reflects a time of transition for youth baseball in Mount Prospect. It’s signed by the members of the 1976 Angels team in the Broncos division (ages 9-12) of the Mount Prospect Baseball Association (MPBA). One of those signers, Lisa Scelsi, was one of the first girls allowed to play in the league. She clearly loved baseball. The local sports pages of the *Daily Herald* show that Scelsi also played in the 1975 and 1977 seasons, even hitting a triple during a May 1977 game.

Scelsi, and many girls like her, were able to play on boys’ baseball teams because of the 1972 passage of Title IX, a federal civil rights law. This act was one of the Education Amendments enacted that year, and it prohibited discrimination based on sex in educational programs or activities that received federal funding. Importantly, it also challenged established assumptions about girls’ ability to play traditionally boy sports. The impact of Title IX was so widespread that, after a 1973 legal battle in New Jersey, Little League amended their charter in 1974 to allow girls to play baseball and establish the Little League Softball program.

Many communities around the United States needed to reevaluate their youth baseball programs as a result of these changes. Mount Prospect was no exception. Their program was called the Mount Prospect Boys Baseball Association until the mid-1970s when the name changed to the Mount Prospect Baseball Association. These names were used interchangeably in local newspapers at least as recently as 1975, but the revised name seems to have stuck by 1976. This transition was by no means a smooth one. The baseball’s donor, Carl Kraft, was one of the players on this team, and he noted that his father, Bob, was an MPBA board member who worked hard to make it possible for girls to play in the league. It is because of the courage and determination of girls like Lisa and adults like Bob that girls growing up in Mount Prospect today have so many opportunities to play sports.



HOUSEWALK TO RETURN

After a one-year COVID-19-imposed hiatus, the Mount Prospect Historical Society's annual Holiday Housewalk will return on Friday, December 3 in the neighborhood immediately north and slightly northwest of St. Raymond Catholic Church – originally known as “Colonial Manor.”

Holiday Housewalk tickets will go on sale November 1. The Holiday Housewalk will begin in the St. Raymond Parish Ministry Center on the northwest corner of its block (at the corner of I-Oka and Milburn Avenues) and will run from 3:30 to 9 p.m.

The interiors of five private homes, built between 1929 and 2019, will be featured on the tour this year. Two additional homes, built in 1929 and 1946, respectively, will be featured from the outside.

The homes which will have their interiors featured this year are: 218 S. I-Oka Ave., owned by Rob and Stephanie Berman; 204 S. I-Oka Ave., owned by Jamie and Debbie McGough; 16 S. I-Oka Ave., owned by Ray and Jill Doerner; 122 S. Elmhurst Ave., owned by Chris and Amanda Manna; and 112 S. Wa-Pella Ave., owned by Shawn and Nicole Stoltz. In addition, the exteriors of 101 S. Wa-Pella Ave., owned by John and Julie Johnson, and 216 S. Hi-Lusi Ave., owned by Tyra and Tim Jambois, will be featured.

All of the homes will be exciting to tour in their own ways, whether because of the historic flavor, lovely decorating or the renovation work that has been done, according to JP Karlov, Housewalk co-chairperson. It should also be noted that COVID restrictions will be in place. Tour-goers and event volunteers will be required to wear masks inside homes and the Walk's headquarters.

As usual, this walking tour will be accented by beautifully-lit luminaria. Ample parking will be available along neighborhood streets.

Commentary in the homes will be provided by volunteers from local organizations, businesses, schools and the community. Local florists and homeowners will provide the decorations. This year's featured florists are Busse Flowers and Gifts of Rolling Meadows, The Purple Rose of Mount Prospect, Pesche's Flowers and 7 Red Roses Floral Design Studio of Des Plaines and The Flower Studio of Rolling Meadows.

Non-refundable tickets will be sold for \$28 each through Dec. 2 at Busey Bank, 299 W. Central Rd.; River Trails' Weiss Center, 1500 E. Euclid Ave.; RecPlex, 420 Dempster St.; the Central Community Center, 1000 W. Central Rd.; Millie's Hallmark, 1024 S. Elmhurst Rd.; LePeep, 10 E. Northwest Hwy.; and the Dietrich Friedrichs House museum, 101 S. Maple St. Tickets are also available at www.mtphist.org. Those tickets can be picked up at a “will call” desk located at the St. Raymond Parish Ministry Center during the walk. Visitors may also purchase tickets on the day of the Walk, beginning at 3 p.m. at the St. Raymond Parish Ministry Center, but the cost will be \$30 per person at that time.

“The Housewalk is the Society's largest fund-raiser of the year,” Karlov explained. “Its proceeds support the many educational endeavors of the Society and help to pay for upkeep on our museum. We urge the public to support our effort to preserve local history through enjoying the Housewalk and our other activities throughout the year.”

Phone the Society at 847-392-9006 for more information or log onto www.mtphist.org.

This year's Walk is sponsored by Busse Automotive, Novak and Parker appliances and Mrs. P & Me. Realtor sponsors include Bill Farrell of Re/MAX Suburban, Jim Regan of Re/MAX Suburban, Mary O'Malley of @properties, Kelly Janowiak and Laura Parisi of @properties, and Tom and Mary Zander of Picket Fence Realty.



PROSPECT PLACE MYSTERY SOLVED

In the summer newsletter we asked readers if they knew how or why the Mount Prospect Park and Shop changed its name and one of you had the answer! (Thanks, Tom!) During the Mount Prospect Façade Improvement Project of the 1980s, Park and Shop owner Mike Weinberg worked with Ken Fritz to give the shopping center a new look. One of these changes was adding an arch above the central driveway. While the arch was a nice feature, it still seemed to be missing something. Mike suggested adding a clock as a focal point and his wife Penny, an artist, drew the design. At this same time the Park and Shop, the Village of Mount Prospect, and Ken held a contest to pick a new name for the updated shopping center. Children from around town were invited to submit their ideas and the child who submitted the best name would receive a \$100 savings bond. “Prospect Place” was the clear winner.





MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Holiday Housewalk

Location: Area north and northwest of St. Raymond Church
Friday, Dec. 3
3:30p.m. — 9 p.m.



\$28 before Dec. 3; \$30 on day of walk. Purchase at various locations in town or online at www.mtphist.org. Historical Society members can purchase tickets for \$26 in advance at the museum only.

The 33rd Annual Holiday Housewalk features five private homes in the area north and northwest of St. Raymond Church in Mount Prospect. Homes will be open to masked members of the public for tours and decorated for the holidays by the homeowners with additional floral arrangements and décor provided by area florists. Tickets go on sale Nov. 1. Tickets are

Second Sundays at the Society

Location: Mount Prospect Historical Society Central School (103 S. Maple Street)
The Dietrich Friedrichs House (101 S. Maple) will also be open for tours.

Fee: Free!

Please note, masks are required for everyone.

Turkeys

Sunday, Nov. 14
11:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.
Stop by Central School for a variety of hands-on activities and make-and-takes for all ages inspired by this month's theme of turkeys.

Gingerbread Open House
Sunday, Dec. 12
11:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.
Stop by Central School for our annual Gingerbread Open House. This popular event includes a variety of holiday make-and-takes for all ages.



Looking for unique holiday gifts?

Send a little love from Mount Prospect this year and support the Historical Society!

Shop at www.mtphist.org/shop or over the phone at (847) 392-9006.

