

MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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A HERO COMES HOME

This article is dedicated to the valiant service and memory of Army 1st Lt. John E. Terpning and the crew of his B24 Liberator, "Toughy".

Arguably millions of people have passed by the Mount Prospect Metra station, formerly the Chicago and North Western Railroad Depot. It has undoubtedly been the site of many homecomings, whether from a daily commute or long voyage. The current station was built under the direction of a Mount Prospect resident named Bert E. Terpning in 1929. Terpning was an early community leader in Mount Prospect, serving on the Improvement Association and residing in the model home of the Lonnquist Subdivision on South Pine Street. He also served as the General Superintendent of the Chicago and North Western Railroad, which operated the rail lines running



(Above): The Mount Prospect train depot seen shortly after its construction, circa 1930s (Below): Bert Terpning, Chicago and North Western Railroad Superintendent.

through Mount Prospect for over a century. Prior to the construction of the station, the rail depot was little more than a shack. As Mount Prospect developed itself into a "luxury community" during the 1920s, residents - Terpning especially - decided the outdated station had to go. What followed was one of the most modern stations the line had seen, built within the bounds of Mount Prospect's traditions of frugality and utilitarianism. In a testament to its utility, the station still stands. By all accounts, Bert was quite an effective and well-liked administrator. A *Chicago Tribune* article noted in December of 1938, he had logged an

incredible forty-six years of service to the Chicago and North Western Railroad. His retirement party at the LaSalle Hotel in downtown Chicago was attended by over 1,500 "railroad men", where he was even presented with an order for a new automobile as a retirement gift. Around this time, Terpning's Grandson, John E. Terpning, was making headlines (literally) for his leadership and service to the Chicago-area R.O.T.C. as the nation was in the grips of the century's ultimate struggle, World War II. A *Chicago Tribune* article reported in 1941 that young John was "an outstanding

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FROM THE ARCHIVES...

" 'WE JUST GOT A CALL FROM O'HARE AIRPORT AND THEY ARE REROUTING THEIR AIRCRAFT BECAUSE OF YOUR KITE...'"

MOUNT PROSPECT RESIDENT ROBERT "MIKE" PETRIE, QUOTING THE MOUNT PROSPECT POLICE DEPARTMENT, AFTER HE AND A GROUP OF FRIENDS ATTEMPTED TO BREAK A "KITE FLYING HEIGHT RECORD" AT THE BOXWOOD APARTMENTS, CA. 1967

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Greg Peerbolte
Executive Director

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

It has been an honor to serve as the Executive Director of the Mount Prospect Historical Society over the past five years. Our organization is enjoying a prominent place in Mount Prospect, and is a visible, viable, and active partner in the tapestry of organizations that make Mount Prospect a first class community. It has been my pleasure to present our stories to a wider audience, enjoying regional and national exposure, and a groundswell of support and energy from the community in response to our events, publications, and campaigns. My experience as Executive Director of this organization, in this community has been beyond formative. As Lincoln was

recently the centerpiece of a very successful event, I feel this quote especially appropriate: "To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything."

That said, I have accepted a full-time position as the Executive Director of the Joliet Area Historical Museum. Therefore, as of June 1, 2013, I have stepped down as Executive Director.

I truly wish this organization the very best. Know that I will always consider Mount Prospect a treasured piece of my life, as so many of you do.

While I am proud of what has been and what will be accomplished, this organization's success is not about one person

or one event. It is because YOU as a community have joined us in the contribution of your time, dollars, and energy to make the Mount Prospect Historical Society such an active organization. It is my wish that you will continue your commitment.

I extend an invitation to all my friends and colleagues in Mount Prospect to pay me a visit at the Joliet Area Historical Museum. (though as I recently joked, please give me a few weeks to convince them I know what I'm doing!) It is an amazing facility that I am humbled to have an opportunity to lead.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you, and farewell.

*'TO THIS PLACE,
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ABRAHAM
LINCOLN*

FROM THE COLLECTION:

What do a secret agent, space station captain, and "Tron" all have in common with Mount Prospect? The answer is that all are roles which have been made famous by Prospect High School graduate and star of film and screen Bruce Boxleitner. Famous for his portrayals as undercover agent Lee Stetson in "The Scarecrow & Mrs. King", as Captain John Sheridan in the sci-fi series "Babylon 5", and as the title character in the original version of the film "Tron" (even reprising his famous role in the recent remake of this film, "Tron: Legacy"), Boxleitner has proven himself a versatile and enduring actor in what is undoubtedly a fickle business, active in theater, television and film since 1972 and portraying characters as varied as Confederate General James Longstreet in 2003s "Gods and Generals". He graduated from Prospect High in 1968 where he reportedly was bit by the acting bug with involvement in the high school theater program, as well as his job working at a local movie theater. According to a recent release, he has been cast as a series regular in Hallmark Channel's first-ever primetime series, "Debbie Macomber's Cedar Cove" which will debut this summer, and is rumored to be a part of the next "Tron" installment. Boxleitner's legacy has also been enshrined at the Mount Prospect Historical Society, where a copy of his textbook from Prospect High School, "The New American Speech" donated in 1996, remains in the Museum's collection (book plate seen above).

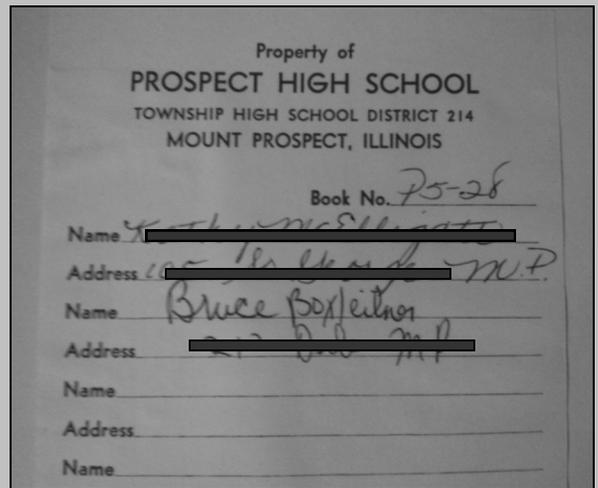


Photo courtesy of the Mount Prospect Historical Society (1996.2.8)

TERPNING, CON'T FROM PAGE 1
 cadet in the Lake View High School R.O.T.C. unit for the last 3 1/2 years was chosen recently as lieutenant colonel and commander at the Lake View regiment. President of the senior class and the Officers' club and holder of the Tribune, American Legion and V.F.W. medals. Terpning was chosen from six high ranking cadet officers who were candidates for the position." Terpning, the young man brimming with potential, went on to serve his country in its darkest hour, piloting a B24 Liberator in the Japanese Theater during the last years of World War II. Tragically, the *Tribune* reported on June 1, 1944, just days after Terpning's 21st birthday on May 22 and days before the epic "longest day" of the D-Day invasion of June 6, the devastating news that Terpning's plane and its crew had gone missing after taking off from an American base in New Guinea on May 7, 1944. By 1946, the Army had declared the crew "presumed dead". Nearly 30 years after the crash, in 1973, an official from the Papua New Guinea Forest Department reported finding a wartime

aircraft in the mountains about 15 miles from the airfield, and remains were recovered. At the time, technology did not allow for individual identification of the servicemen, so they were interned at Arlington National Cemetery as a crew beneath a single headstone in 1974. In 2008, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), team was sent to the crash site, and was able to recover additional remains and identification from the aircraft. JPAC Scientists were then able to conclusively match Terpning's DNA to that of his brother Howard, himself a veteran who followed in his brother's footsteps, serving as a Marine from 1945-1946. Howard is alive and well today, residing in Arizona. If the name sounds familiar, it is because he is considered one of America's preeminent artists of Western scenes and "cowboy" paintings, having previously been an illustrator featured in publications such as *Reader's Digest*, *Time* and *Newsweek* in the 60s and 70s. During this period, he also illustrated movie posters for over 80 films, such as "Cleopatra", "Dr. Zhivago", "The Sound of Music" and "Lawrence of Arabia." Howard, who has since had his work displayed all over the world, recently reminisced about his older brother with *Daily Herald* reporter Eric Peterson, who tracked him down with the

assistance of Mount Prospect Historical Society resources. Terpning recalled, "He was a natural born leader." Of the 1974 burial, which Howard attended, "It was a very cold, blustery day. It was certainly a very moving experience."

Following this conclusive identification, the Army News Service reported at long last that on April 3, 2013: "In keeping with the Army's mandate that no Soldier is left behind, and under full military honors, horse-drawn caisson, escort platoon, casket team, firing party and bugler to play Taps, 1st Lt. John E. Terpning from Mount Prospect, Ill., was repatriated and interred to his final place of rest at Arlington National Cemetery." Howard's son, Steve, attended the solemn occasion, accepting his uncle's folded flag on behalf of the Terpning family. Nearly a century after his grandfather ensured a place for homecomings in Mount Prospect, it is fitting that we respectfully acknowledge and honor the homecoming of Lt. Terpning to his rightful place among the hallowed ground of American heroes in Arlington National Cemetery. May he rest in peace.



The gallant crew of the B24 Liberator "Toughy", circa 1944

MPHS PRESENTS "POWER OF THE PURSE" AUCTION, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

Ask almost any woman and she will tell you that there is no more important accessory than a handbag. It tells you something about a woman's personality and state of mind and since most women carry them day in and day out for an entire season, a purse gets identified with its carrier in a way that a single outfit does not. Even former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is not immune to the "power of the purse." She told Harper's Bazaar in a recent interview, "I do love a good handbag. I think [handbags fill] a deep psychological need. It's a desire to kind of organize and contain that which is important to you in your daily life."

So mark your calendars for the evening of **Thursday, October 10**, for the Mount Prospect Historical Society's "Power of the Purse" handbag auction, to be held in the community room of the Village Hall, 50 S. Emerson St. It will feature a wide variety of new and almost-new designer, vintage, quirky and handmade purses, donated by retailers, members and friends of the Society. The evening will feature a fun mix of refreshments, entertainment and both silent and live auctions to help you pick up some truly unique and entrancing handbags for yourself and others and at the same time support the restoration of the 1896 Central School, located at 103 S. Maple Street on the Museum campus.

If you have a purse that you would like to donate to the Society for this event, please phone the office at 847-392-9006 and someone on the committee will contact you.

**ON BEHALF OF THE MPHS
 GARDEN CLUB, THANK YOU
 TO LOWE'S OF ARLINGTON
 HEIGHTS FOR THEIR
 RECENT DONATION!**





MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

101 South Maple Street
Mount Prospect, IL 60056
WWW.MTPHIST.ORG

Located on the southeast corner of Maple Street and Busse Avenue, across from the Chase Bank Building

Phone: 847-392-9006
Fax: 847-577-9660
Email: info@mtphistory.org



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"DINNER AT THE LINCOLN WHITE HOUSE" A PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESS!

Over 130 guests filled Rob Roy Country Club in celebration of the 150th Anniversary of 1863, the high water mark of the Civil War, to dine at the "Lincoln White House". This colorful evening was a great success and plans are already being made for next year's "History in the Headlines" Dinner! Clockwise from top right: Ed Juracek plays the interloper, General Robert E. Lee; MPHS President Frank Corry and Mayor Arlene Juracek greet guests at the door; Mary Bowman of Peterson Roofing converses with Mary Todd Lincoln and her Southern-sympathizing sister, Emilie Todd Helms, who presented the after-dinner program; "Abe Lincoln," played by Tom Novack, looks over the shoulders of Mary Zander of Picket Fence Realty and Joann Smith.

Eat at Buffalo Wild Wings June 19th

Portion of Proceeds Benefit MPHS

Coupon needed - Available at www.mphist.org

NEW MPHS SUMMER HOURS
Tuesday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

